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MATTIA FRANCESCO ANTONIO CANTATORE AND DOMENICO LUCIANO MORETTI

22. The Circulation of the Coinage of Lucca in Emilia-Romagna (Italy) in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries

▾ **ABSTRACT** This study aims to provide a first overview of Lucchese money circulation in Emilia-Romagna in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, analysing written and material sources. This approach will allow an initial assessment of the use of this currency in a strategic area of connection between North and Central Italy. Far from providing a definitive framework, we hope this study will form the basis for further reflection on this issue.

▾ **KEYWORDS** Emilia-Romagna, medieval numismatic, coinage of Lucca, written sources, material sources, Canossa family

Introduction

During the eleventh century, the homogenous monetary system desired by Charlemagne disappeared. As a result of alterations in weight and alloy made with different rhythms, the various Imperial mints began to strike coins with very diverse intrinsic content, changing their face value. This dynamic is the basis of the birth of the so-called monetary areas (Cipolla 1975, 48–49) that reflected the political and administrative divisions of the territory of central-northern Italy in which the main cities were Pavia, Verona, and Lucca: the *Regnum Italicum*, the *Marca Veronensis*, and the domains of the Counts of Canossa. It is possible, in part, to have a perception of this fragmentation from the written documentation, which, starting from the eleventh century, began to record the origin of the currency necessary for payment because coins of different mints also had diverse value (Saccocci 1999, 41–65). Based on this premise, we screened the currencies mentioned in the main editions of documents (for references, see Moretti and Cantatore 2021, 39–59) and compared them with known coin findings. We identified two areas characterized by different monetary dynamics that would only later conform using Lucca coins (for the classification of Lucca coins, see Matzke 1993 and Baldassarri 2021). From the eleventh century, money from Veneto (Veronese and Venetian) circulated in the Bolognese, Ferrarese, and Romagna, while in central-western Emilia, the currency used was the money of Pavia. As a result, the two areas in this article are dealt with separately, and only in the conclusions do we provide a general overview.

(M.F.A.C., D.L.M.)

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Bolognese, Ferrarese, and Romagna: Provinces of Bologna, Ferrara, Ravenna, Forlì-Cesena, and Rimini

In Bologna, the money of Lucca appeared for the first time in 1084 (Fig. 22.1) and then became a majority from about 1130. This dynamic was substantiated in 1180 when the Commune of Bologna made a pact with the City of Lucca in which they undertook to use only the Lucchese currency. In 1191, after the opening of the mint of Bologna, the Bolognino money was immediately imposed, replacing practically every other currency. From the archaeological point of view, excavations recovered one Lucca coin in Castel San Pietro Terme (Moretti and Cantatore 2021, 43) and one in Ozzano dell'Emilia (Chimienti 2009, 65–66 — Fig. 22.2).

In Ferrara, the Lucchese appeared in 1130 (Fig. 22.1) and circulated with Venetian money until 1190, when it was replaced by Imperial coins and Ferrara money, then by those of Bologna and Ravenna. From the excavation of the Church of San Giorgio in Argenta, in Ferrara's territory, on twenty-six legible coins, datable between the eleventh and twelfth centuries, 84% are coins of Venice and only 4% of Lucca (Moretti and Cantatore 2021, 48 — Fig. 22.2).

In Romagna, the Lucchese appeared for the first time in Rimini in 1068 (Fig. 22.1). Around the middle of the twelfth century, it became the only currency mentioned in the city contracts, but from 1186 it was supplanted by money from Ravenna.

The Lucca coins occurred in the parchments of Faenza in 1092 (Fig. 22.1) but began to be used with frequency only from the middle of the twelfth century, without ever supplanting the Venetian denarius. In the early thirteenth century, Ravenna money replaced it.

In Imola, however, the Lucchese first appeared in 1133 (Fig. 22.1) and remained the principal currency used until Bologna imposed its coins in the last decade of the twelfth century.

In Forlì, the first mention of Lucca money dates from 1135 (Fig. 22.1). Within a few years, it became predominant, although the Venetian money never completely disappeared, especially in the areas bordering Ferrara territories. In the Forlì parchments, of particular interest are the mentions of brown and white denarii from Lucca that appear from 1159 to distinguish issues with different intrinsic content (Matzke 1993, 191). Thus, both old and new coins circulated together, and it was necessary to specify in the documents not only the mint of origin but also the issue. In 1194, the money of Ravenna appeared, becoming the dominant currency at the beginning of the thirteenth century.

Based on the cards of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, in Ravenna, the money of Lucca imposed itself from 1123 (Fig. 22.1). In 1130, we found for the first time, in Cervia, the definition of Lucchese *infortiatus*, an issue that probably began to be minted in this period (Matzke 1993, 163). It is probable that the adjective *infortiatus* is used as a synonym of white and, therefore, indicates coins that were intrinsically better (here, being reinforced) than the previous issues (Matzke 1993, 156). In 1194, the Ravenna denarius appeared for the first time, taking over the other currencies.

Even in Romagna, the data on the coin finds for the eleventh and twelfth centuries at our disposal are meagre but confirm the circulation of Lucchese money in different areas and the prevalence of Venetian money. In Ravenna, in the excavation of the Basilica of San Severo in Classe, the medieval numismatic finds count sixty-eight coins of different mints, including five of Ancona, one of Bologna, four of Lucca, one of Macerata, ten of Ravenna, one of Siena, forty of Venice, and six of Verona (Baldi 2013). In Ravenna, from the ongoing excavation of the castle of Zagonara (Lugo), five Lucca denarii were recovered between 2017 and 2020 (Cavalazzi and Moretti 2023, 13–64) and a sixth one in 2021 (Cat. 1). One Lucchese comes from the excavation of Cervia Vecchia (under study). Two excavated contexts are known from Rimini: four Lucca coins from the tomb of San Giuliano (Gerola 1911) and one from Palazzo Diotiallevi (Stoppioni 1992, 409–32). Two Lucca denarius were found in Montecopiolo (Sacco et al. 2019, 197–232) and four in Casteldelci (Baldassarri 2021, 135). Finally, from the Imola territory, two Lucca coins come from the Cavassona survey (Abballe 2023, 234 — Cat. 2–3) and three from Villa Clelia (Ercolani Cocchi 1978, 367–99; MEC 12, 690 — Fig. 22.2).

(D.L.M.)

Western Emilia: Provinces of Modena, Reggio Emilia, Parma, and Piacenza

The written sources of Piacenza never mention the Lucca coin, and, as of now, there are no archaeological traces either (Saccocci 1999, 41–65). Analysis of the written sources suggests the seamless use of denarii of Pavia until 1140. After that year, payments in Piacenza coins began to appear.

For the Parma territory, the first mention of Lucchese currency in written sources dates back to 1092 (Fig. 22.1). The Tuscan money never imposed itself entirely in this area, as the most mentioned currency remained the Pavesi until the end of the twelfth century, when the Milanese replaced it. Only one coin minted in Lucca between 1039 and 1056 has been found in the Parmense area of Rivalta in the municipality of Lesignano de' Bagni (Fig. 22.2). There are two other finds of Tuscan coins: one perhaps from Volterra of the twelfth cen-

tury, in imitation of that of Lucca, from Vairo in the Municipality of Palanzano and, always from Rivalta, one of Pisa in the name of Frederick I issued from 1181 (Bazzini 2006, 105–13).

In Reggio Emilia territory, the Lucchese appears for the first time in a document copied in the twelfth century but dated to 1084 (Fig. 22.1). The first attestation from an original parchment is from 1093. The Lucca coin became the substantially unique numerary reference from 1100 until the sixth decade of the twelfth century, when Imperial money appeared and supplanted it. The other currencies are in an almost irrelevant percentage compared to the majority (Moretti, Cantatore 2021, 50–51). It is interesting to note, however, that out of twelve documents mentioning the Milanese money for payments, nine at least were signed or refer to properties in the Parmense or the territory of Reggio Emilia close to the Enza river, testifying perhaps to a border area more permeable to currencies outside the majority monetary circuit. From an archaeological point of view, findings of Lucca coins of eleventh and twelfth centuries are from: the city of Reggio Emilia (Baldassarri 2021, 134); the village of San Martino in the town of Guastalla (Nicola Mancassola's survey — Cat. 4); the castle of Taneto in the municipality of Gattatico (from an eleventh-century context: Storchi, Colagrande 2022, 1–17); the Monte Lucio castle in the town of Quattro Castella (from a thirteenth–fourteenth-century context: Cantatore and Marchesi 2020, 151–71); the Borzano castle in the municipality of Albinea (two Lucca denarii, type H. 3a and H. 3b — personal communication of March 2023 by Marco Bazzini, who is currently studying and publishing the coins found at the castle); the Bismantova castle, in the municipality of Castelnovo ne' Monti (from a twelfth–thirteenth-century context: Mancassola et al. 2014, 151–70); the fortified site of Castel Pizigolo in the town of Toano (out of context: Cantatore 2022, 193–209); the castled parish of Santa Maria di Toano (Cat. 5–6 — Fig. 22.2).

In documents written in Modena, the Lucca coin occurred for the first time in 1076 as a penalty, and then as a payment in 1080 (Fig. 22.1), when it became the principal currency (Saccocci 1998, 39–58). The oldest mention of Lucchese money is from Nonantola, where it appeared in 1014, but it is still an isolated case. The second payment in Lucca denarii dates from 1085 (Fig. 22.1), and Lucchese became dominant in the abbey's documents only at this time before being replaced by Imperial money between 1176 and 1184. Lucca coins were found in the tomb of San Geminiano in the Cathedral of Modena within a twelfth-century context (eighteen denarii of Lucca inserted in the opening of the tomb from 1106 and one in that from 1185: Missere Fontana and Travaini 2005; MEC 12, 688–89). In the excavation of Novi di Modena, in the medieval settlement of Santo Stefano, out of thirty-nine coins from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, thirteen are denarii of Lucca from the twelfth century (Moretti, Cantatore 2021, 41). Eight Lucca coins of the eleventh and twelfth centuries come from Nonantola; seven are from excavations in tenth–fourteenth-century contexts (Chimienti 2005, 54–57; Chimienti, Cantatore 2018, 243–52) and one from a reliquary (Marchesi 1995, 15–16). Four Lucca denarii come from the coin hoard of Rosola in the municipality of Zocca (Bellesia 2010) and one from the castle of Gorzano, in the town of Maranello (Sogliani 1995, 25–33). Finally, the excavations at the castle of Formigine have returned one eleventh-century Lucchese (Baldassarri 2013, 143 — Fig. 22.2).

(M.F.A.C.)

Conclusions

It is not simple to draw valid conclusions because the research deserves to be deepened and expanded. What we propose here are just preliminary considerations: lines of research to develop.

On a documentary level, Lucca money appeared in the last two decades of the eleventh century in Modena and Reggio Emilia territories, becoming predominant there until the arrival of the Imperial coinage. The Parmense, instead, was little affected by the penetration of the Tuscan currency, while the Bolognese appears to have been an area straddling the Lucchese and the Venetian money, the both of which were widespread in Romagna and Ferrarese.

The scarcity of excavation editions detailing contexts of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, along with publications containing the classification of numismatic finds, restricts the contribution archaeology could make to this research topic.

The data proposed here roughly confirm what the literature had indicated about the monetary evolution of this area: the Emilia plain, with the exclusion of Piacentino and substantially also of Parmense, is characterized by a switch from the Pavia currency to Lucca coins at the end of the eleventh century, probably due to the rise to power of the Canossa family (Saccocci 1998, 40–41; Saccocci 1999, 41–42, 63). Instead, the Ferrarese and the Romagna have remained linked to Venetian money for a longer time, which seems to have been supplanted by Lucca coins only from the fourth decade of the twelfth century.

However, some grey areas remain open to further investigation. In particular, the role of Matilda of Canossa in the spread of the Lucca coin seems unclear: the political context is inconsistent with the monetary one. Why should the Canossa family have encouraged

the use of a coin minted by an Imperial mint just at the time when the Investiture Controversy, which saw the Pope and Matilda opposing the Emperor, began to rage? Could Matilda have had control over the Imperial mint in Lucca? If not, what advantage would she have had in bringing her silver there and paying taxes to the Emperor? Is there a connection between these events and the staggering increase in the minting of Lucchese money in this period?

Another aspect to investigate is the impact of the 1152 Ficarolo route on commercial carriers. This event caused a significant change in the final course of the Po which was always being exploited as a waterway, negatively impacting the commercial network. It remains necessary to verify, through the study of all the documentation, if this change had an impact on the circulation of money having a role in the decrease of the Venetian currency to the advantage of others in the territory of Romagna (Moretti and Cantatore 2021, 39–59).

This initial survey of currencies mentioned in the parchments has also raised the problem of understanding which Lucchese coinage corresponds to the definition of *infortiati*, white, or brown, and what the chronological span of their coinage was.

Finally, it remains to understand fully the dynamics that led the mint of Lucca between the eleventh and twelfth centuries to mint such a large number of specimens — so many that, during the First Crusade, Lucchese money was among the coins used by the Crusaders. The reason for its use has not yet found a convincing explanation, with David Michael Metcalf (1983, 3) hypothesizing such a choice to honour the first Latin patriarch of Jerusalem, Dagobert, former archbishop of Pisa, who used this type of coin in his home city.

We believe that a study that goes in this direction, considering the historical, economic, and monetary aspects, could lead to a better understanding of dynamics that remain unclear.

(M.F.A.C., D.L.M.)

Catalogue[1]

N. 1. Zagonara, Lugo (Ravenna), 2022, survey
Silver *denaro*, Enrico V, 1129-*c.* 1160, Lucca; ? g, 17 mm, ?°
Obverse: [+ INP]ERATOR; TT monogram, cabled border
Reverse: [+ ENRICV]S; LV/CA around central pellet
Reference: Matzke 1993, 190, type H. 4a (Fig. 22.3)

N. 2. Cavassona, Imola (Bologna), 2020, survey
Silver *denaro*, Enrico V, 1129–1181/1182, Lucca; ? g, 15 mm, ?°
Obverse: [+]INP[ERATOR]; TT monogram, cabled border
Reverse: [+ ENRICVS]; LV/CA around central pellet
Reference: Matzke 1993, 190, type H. 4a–b (Possibly false) (Fig. 22.4)

N.3. Cavassona, Imola (Bologna), 2020, survey
Silver *denaro*, Enrico V, 1129–1181/1182, Lucca; ? g, 16 mm, ?°
Obverse: + INPE[RATOR]; TT monogram, cabled border
Reverse: [+E]N[RICVS]; LV/CA around central pellet
Reference: Matzke 1993, 191, type H. 4a–b (Fig. 22.5)

N. 4. San Martino, Guastalla (Reggio Emilia), 2009, survey, TU 505
Silver *denaro*, Enrico IV, 1056–1105/1106, Lucca; 0.92 g, 17 mm, 195°
Obverse: + INPERATOR; TT monogram, cabled border
Reverse: + ENRICVS; LV/CA around central pellet
Reference: Matzke 1993, 189, type H. 2b (Fig. 22.6)

N. 5. Santa Maria di Toano, Reggio Emilia, 2021, survey around the hill of the church
Silver *denaro*, Enrico V, *c.* 1160–1181/1182, Lucca; 0.66 g, 16 mm, 95°
Obverse: [+ INP]ERATOR; TT monogram, cabled border
Reverse: [+ ENRIC]VS; LV/CA around central pellet
Reference: Matzke 1993, 191, type H. 4b (Fig. 22.7)

N. 6. Santa Maria di Toano, Reggio Emilia, 2021, archaeological excavation, sector Omega, SU 1102bis
Billon *denaro*, Enrico V, *c.* 1181/1182–1200, Lucca; 0.63 g, 16 mm, 200°
Obverse: [+ INP]ER[ATOR]; TT monogram, cabled border
Reverse: [+ ENRIC]V[S]; LV/CA around central pellet
Reference: Matzke 1993, 191, type H. 5b (Fig. 22.8)

(M.F.A.C., D.L.M.)

1 The two authors want to thank Andrea Saccocci, William R. Day Jr., and Monica Baldassarri for their valuable advice in coin cataloging.

Figure 22.1. Map indicating the year of the first documented reference of Lucca denarii in Emilia-Romagna: Emilia in white, Romagna in grey. Image processing and copyright by Domenico Luciano Moretti.

Figure 22.2. Map with the findings of Lucca denarii of eleventh and twelfth centuries in Emilia-Romagna. Image processing and copyright by Mattia Francesco Antonio Cantatore.

Figures 22.3–22.8. Images of the coins described in the catalogue. Reproduced here with the permission of the Italian Ministry of Culture – Superintendence of Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape for the metropolitan city of Bologna and the provinces of Modena, Reggio Emilia, and Ferrara, and Superintendence of Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape for the provinces of Ravenna, Forlì-Cesena, and Rimini. Reproduction in future publications is prohibited for profit, including indirect profit.

Figure 22.3. N. 1. Silver *denaro*, Enrico V, 1129-*c.* 1160, Lucca; ? g, 17 mm, ?°.

Figure 22.4. N. 2. Silver *denaro*, Enrico V, 1129–1181/1182, Lucca; ? g, 15 mm, ?°.

Figure 22.5. N. 3. Silver *denaro*, Enrico V, 1129–1181/1182, Lucca; ? g, 16 mm, ?°.

Figure 22.6. N. 4. Silver *denaro*, Enrico IV, 1056–1105/1106, Lucca; 0.92 g, 17 mm, 195°.

Figure 22.7. N. 5. Silver *denaro*, Enrico V, *c.* 1160–1181/1182, Lucca; 0.66 g, 16 mm, 95°.

Figure 22.8. N. 6. Billon *denaro*, Enrico V, *c.* 1181/1182–1200, Lucca; 0.63 g, 16 mm, 200°.

Fig. 22.1

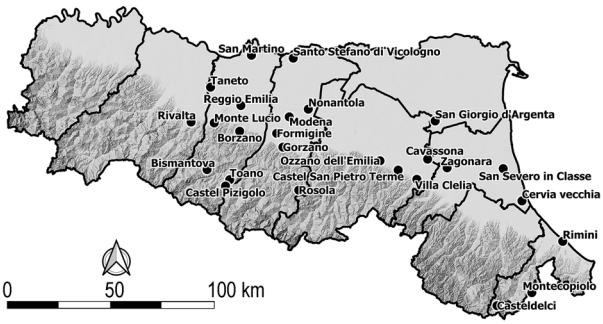

Fig. 22.2

Fig. 22.3

Fig. 22.4

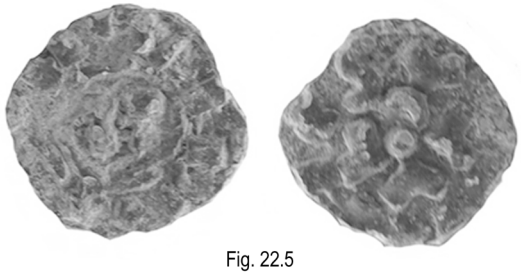

Fig. 22.5

Fig. 22.6

Fig. 22.7

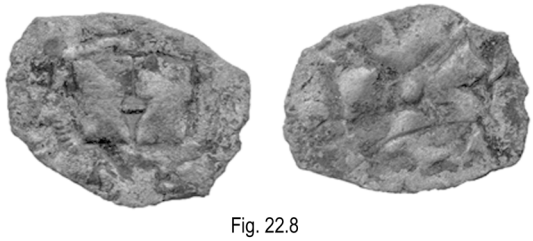

Fig. 22.8

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