

A Medieval coin brooch from Rauceby, Lincolnshire
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The conversion of coinage into jewellery is a historically well attested activity, for example Roman coins are found with holes pierced through them so they could be worn as pendants and Medieval coins were converted into brooches, sometimes even involving cutting out the monarch's portrait.

This Medieval silver coin, discovered at Rauceby near Sleaford in August 2010, is an unusual example of the practice. The silver penny was minted between 1100 and 1131 by Friedrich I, Archbishop of Cologne, making this the first recorded example of a foreign coin being converted into jewellery in Britain. The style of the conversion, the application of two strips of silver to act as loop and catch-plate for a now lost brooch pin, matches other English examples and suggests that the conversion took place here rather than in Germany. The coin was also gilded at this time.

The newly created brooch displayed an image of the façade of Cologne cathedral, relegating the portrait of the Archbishop to the unseen reverse. The choice of the cathedral building was no doubt deliberate when choosing this particular coin for conversion into a brooch, and may have had personal significance to the owner, perhaps as a souvenir of a pilgrimage or even reflecting his own cultural origins.

