CORNISH NUMISMATICS.

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In treating this subject it is not purposed to attempt to form a catalogue of Ancient-British, Roman, or other coins which may happen to have been discovered within the county of Cornwall, but the object is to endeavour to ascertain what coins were, in fact, minted within its boundaries.

Those Ancient-British coins which are attributed to the south-western part of the kingdom, including what is now the county of Cornwall, cannot be regarded as exclusively Cornish, nor do they bear any inscription or mark to render possible their identification with any place or potentate connected therewith. The same remarks hold good with reference to Roman and Romano-British coins.

That there was a coinage issued in Cornwall in early times is, fortunately, a matter of record, as we shall see from the extracts from the Pipe Rolls when considering the coins of Henry II. struck at Launceston.

The earliest coin which can, with any degree of certainty, be attributed to a Cornish place of mintage is the unique silver penny of Æthelræd II., which formed lot 770 of the Montagu collection. This was sold by Messrs. Sotheby, Wilkinson, and Hodge, on November 23rd, 1895, for £4 7s. 6d., the purchasers being MM. Rollin and Feuardent, and the catalogue disclosed the information that the coin came from the Warne collection.

It is of the type figured in Hildebrand’s plates as B.I., and in Ruding’s as 22, No. 9. The obverse bears a diademed bust of the king to the right within an inner circle. Around is the usual inscription +ÆDELRED REX ANGLOX, the last word being an abbreviated form of Anglorum. The reverse has the representation of an open
hand extended downwards from a segment of a double circle, probably intended to represent the Hand of Providence issuing from clouds; on either side are the letters Alpha and Omega; all within an inner circle. Around is the legend + BRVN M-0 LANSTF. An outer beaded circle at the extreme edge of the surface of the coin, completes, as is usual, the design of both obverse and reverse. Plate, No. 1.

Brun is, of course, the name of the moneyer; the abbreviation M-0 signifies his office, and the letters Lanstf, the name of the place of mintage. A moneyer of the same name coined at Exeter in the same type, and Bruna appears on several types at Lydford.

The abbreviation Lanstf. would seem to point to the Saxon name of Launceston having been Lanstefanton, meaning, what it in fact was, the town of the Church of St. Stephen. Somewhat similar early names are quoted as appertaining to Launceston by the earlier Cornish historians, who, however, prefer the termination don or dun, meaning hill, to ton or tun, meaning town.

Mr. C. T. Martin, F.S.A., in The Record Interpreter (1892), gives Lanstaventum and Lanstuphadonia as early Latinized forms denoting Launceston. On the other hand, Messrs. R. and O. B. Peter in The Histories of Launceston and Dunheved (1885), remark, p. 67, "We have never found in an original document the fanciful names 'Lanstuphadon,' or 'Lancesterton,' which some preceding historians have furnished for this place."

Domesday Book is the earliest original record concerning the town which the present writer has been able to consult. On folio 120b the following entry occurs:

The Canons of St. Stephen held Lanscavetone. There are four hides of land which were never subject to the payment of geld. There is land for twenty ploughs. There are three ploughs and three leagues of pasture, and sixty acres of wood. It was formerly worth eight pounds. Now it is worth four pounds.

From this manor the Count of Mortain took away a market which lay there in the time of King Edward (the Confessor) and was worth twenty shillings.

On folio 120 the Canons of St. Stephen of Lancanetone are recorded as holding land in the Manor of Paindran, of the Count of
Mortain. In each case *Sancti Stephani* is rendered *S. Stefani*: a point to which attention is drawn to illustrate and confirm the spelling of the mint name on the coins attributed by the writer to Launceston.

The third and last entry in Domesday Book relevant to the subject occurs on folio 121b, and the following is a translation of it:

The Count (of Mortain) himself holds Dunhevet. In the time of King Edward (the Confessor) it was assessed to the geld for one virgate of land. Yet there is one hide. Land there is for ten ploughs.

In demesne is one plough, and there are three serfs, one villein, and thirteen bordars with four ploughs. There are two mills which render forty shillings, and there are forty acres of pasture. Formerly it was worth twenty pounds. Now it is worth four pounds.

There is situate the castle of the Count.

Around his castle of Dunhevet, the Count of Mortain built the walled town or burgh of Dunhevet, and thither he transferred the market which in King Edward’s time appertained to the original town of the Canons of St. Stephen’s, viz., *Lanstefanton*.

Dunheved was, in effect, an *imperium in imperio*, or rather a *burgus in burgo*. That this was the position is shown by a charter of Reginald de Dunstanville, Earl of Cornwall, 1140 to 1176, a natural son of Henry I., quoted by Messrs. R. and O. B. Peter, pp. 4–5, of which the following extract is sufficient for the purpose:—

Moreover, I wish to bring to the notice of all men that R, the Prior of Lanstone, in full court before me at the Castle of Dunhevede, the Provost and Burgesses of that town being present, sufficiently and lawfully explained that at the time when the Count of Mortain transferred the Sunday market from the town of St. Stephen at Lanstone, to the new town of the Castle of Dunhevet, the Canons of Lanstone, with the assent and will of the aforesaid Count of Mortain, retained for themselves and their borough of Landstone, and the Burgesses remaining in it, all liberties pertaining to a free borough, with the same integrity which they had of old, except only the Sunday market. And the same Canons have of the Provost of the Castle twenty shillings annually at the Feast of St. Martin. And that they had and held the same liberties fully and quietly and without contradiction during the whole time of Henry, the King of England, my father. Wherefore I have granted, and by this my charter confirmed, to the aforesaid Canons and their town of Lanstone, and to the men having:
hearth and habitation therein, *all the liberties pertaining to a free* 
borough, with the aforesaid twenty shillings annually.

The liberties pertaining to a free borough included the right to 
one moneyer, for at a Synod, held at Greatley, in Huntingdonshire, in 
or about A.D. 928, it was enacted that there should be one kind of 
money throughout the whole realm, and that no one should coin save 
in a town. Certain specified places were to have two or more 
moneyers, but the other burghs only one moneyer for each. See 
Liebermann's *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, 1898, Part I, p. 159.

The coin of Æthelræd II., above described, shows that 
Lanstefanton, or Launceston, enjoyed this privilege of coining as early 
as the reign of that king, and it is, of course, possible that coins 
minted there in earlier reigns may yet come to light. To the date of 
the above cited charter of Reginald, Earl of Cornwall, nothing seems 
to have occurred to take away from the town of the Canons of 
St. Stephen's their right to a moneyer.

It is now purposed to enquire what coins subsequent to that of 
Æthelræd II. may be attributed to this place.

The next coin in chronological order which has come under the 
writer's notice is a silver penny of Harold I., Hildebrand Type B, 
variety A. *Obverse*: the king's bust to left with sceptre; legend 
+ HAROLD R : EEDX : *Reverse*: long cross voided, in centre an annulet 
enclosing a pellet; in each angle a trefoil composed of three pellets; 
legend + GÁPINE ON LÁHE. Plate, No. 2.

This coin is, perhaps, the only one of the series of which the 
appropriation can be questioned, but as the third letter of the mint 
name is clearly ligulated, it resolves itself into NZT, and makes the 
complete mint name LANZTE and the whole Gawine on Lanste.

The moneyer's name, Gawine, is interesting in that it still survives 
to us as a West-country or Cornish name in the Arthurian legends, 
and in early pedigrees such as that of the Carew family.

There is at present a gap that may or may not hereafter be 
bridged over, namely, from the reign of Harold I. to that of William I.

There are preserved to us several specimens from the Launceston 
mint of Type V of the Conqueror's coins, having on the obverse
The Launceston Mint.

a full-faced representation of the king's bust, crowned, a star on either side of the neck. This type is represented by Hawkins as No. 238, and the date of its issue has been assigned by the present writer to the period between Michaelmas, 1077, and Michaelmas, 1080. The reverses of the Launceston specimens bear the unusual legend *SASOTI STEFANII, which has generally been read as *SASOTI STEFANII. Plate, No. 3.

In the British Museum there are two specimens of this coin, one being placed in the cabinets there under "uncertain" mints, and the other being attributed to Stepney. The writer has an example; a fourth, from the Allen collection, is the property of Mr. W. Talbot Ready; and others are known.

The unusual characteristic of the legend is that it appears to be in Latin and in the genitive case, whereas all other coins of this type—nay, more, of all the types of William I. and William II.—bear the name of the moneyer, followed by the word ON, equalling of or in, and, lastly, the name, more or less abbreviated, of the mint town. It is offered as a solution of the puzzle that the legend is intended for sancti Stefani, the word moneta being understood, the Latin equivalent to "money of St. Stephen's."

This interpretation may seem fanciful, but when it is considered that the form of the legend is only adopted in this particular instance, and that the dies were probably engraved in London on the written instructions of the then dean of St. Stephen's, the Latinity and the partial blundering of the word sancti are to a great extent explained.

As regards the British Museum attribution of these and other coins hereafter mentioned to Stepney, it is sufficient to say that a colourable likeness to the modern name can only be obtained by reading a very distinct series of Ps as Ps; but were the Ps in fact Ps, the case would not be bettered, as Stepney is called Stibenheide in Domesday Book and even as late as in a charter of Richard I. it appears as Stebeheie.

The name Stepney has no connection with Stephen or Stefan, however spelt, and there is nothing in the history of the place to warrant the supposition of it ever having possessed a mint. Stepney,
moreover, is almost adjacent to the Tower of London, which in Norman times, and until a comparatively recent date, was the chief mint of the Kingdom.

The next coins of the Launceston series are those of Type VIII of William I., the last type of the reign, and commonly known as the PAXS type, Hawkins 241. Plate, No. 4.

Upon these the reverse legends are in the usual form.

The following varieties are known of the legends on the reverse, namely, *GODRIL ON STEFNI and *GODRIL ON STFANI.

Of the first variety of reading, four specimens are recorded as having been included in the Beaworth hoard, discovered in 1833, and in the same hoard were two specimens bearing the second reading.

The British Museum specimens of each variety are placed under Stepney. The writer has a specimen of the variety reading STEFNI.

The first type of William II., Hawkins 244, is represented by a coin reading *IEGLIER ON STEFN, but the writer has no knowledge of the present ownership of the piece and relies on a reading furnished to him by Mr. W. J. Webster.

Of the second type of William II. (Hawkins 246) the late Mr. J. G. Murdoch possessed a specimen also reading *IEGLIER ON STEFN. This was found at Shillington, in Bedfordshire, and formed lot 337 at the sale of the late Mr. William Allen’s collection, on March 16th, 1898, and is illustrated in the autotype Plate II of the catalogue. At Mr. Murdoch’s sale this important coin formed lot 203, and is now in the cabinet of Mr. Reginald Huth. Plate, No. 5.

Hitherto in Norman times it seems to have been the intention of those responsible for the preparation of the coins, to give prominence, in the necessarily abbreviated mint letters, to the principal name Stephen, but by the early part of the reign of Henry II. the more general course of giving enough of the commencement of the place-name to ensure its identification was followed and, as a consequence, we find the form LANST, which, minus a letter, was the reading on the coin of Æthelræd II. In a charter of Henry, Bishop of Exeter, dated September 3rd, 1196, the name is spelt Lansrevetun.

This circumstance leads to the conjecture that two coins of
Henry I., of Andrew Type XIV, Hawkins 262, in the collection of the writer, may be of Launceston. They read on the reverse *EDMVND ON LAPA. The P in LAPA, of course, equals the Roman W, and LAWA may well stand for Lawanston, a rendering of the present name phonetically exact. Plate, Nos. 6 and 7.

The Pipe Roll of Henry I. for the year 1129-1130 contains an entry referring to Edmund and two others, men of William Fitz-Richard. This entry is under the nova placita of Cornvalia (Cornwall) and may possibly refer to the Edmund of the coins, as the date of the roll is comprised in the period of issue of this type of Henry I.'s coins, namely, Michaelmas, 1128-1131. Edmund's lord, William Fitz-Richard, was a great Cornish magnate, whose daughter and heiress carried his fief to Reginald, afterwards Earl of Cornwall. See Round's Feudal England, p. 487.

The author of the Acts of King Stephen, under the year 1140, tells us that William Fitz-Richard, a man of noble descent, and who held the county of Cornwall in full lordship under the king, traitorously broke his oath of fealty, and admitting Reginald, son of King Henry, into a castle (presumably Dunhevet) which had always belonged to the royal jurisdiction, gave him his daughter, with the whole county of Cornwall. This passage shows how Reginald became Earl of Cornwall and also how, in the years 1128-1131, Edmund, a man of William Fitz-Richard, may well have been a moneyer at Launceston.

Mr. W. J. Andrew, F.S.A., anticipates a note from his Numismatic History of the reign of Stephen, which will, when completed, be published in The British Numismatic Journal, by furnishing the following reverse readings of coins of that king. Of Hawkins, Type 270, he gives +PILLEM ON [L]ANSA and +PILLEM : ON : [L]ANPA, and of the very rare type, Hawkins 276, of this reign +W . . . . [ON] STFANI, the moneyer being probably Willem, as on the two previous coins.

The last of these examples is clearly a Launceston coin and the latest in date, so far as our present knowledge extends on which the form STFANI occurs.
The series of Launceston coins is brought to a close with those of Type I of Henry II., Hawkins 285, which was current from 1158 till 1180.


In his "Historical Notes on the First Coinage of Henry II.,” British Numismatic Journal, vol. ii, pp. 185-242, the present writer gives (pp. 193-194) the following account of the Launceston mint:

"Launceston (Lanzauentona).

"The Roll of 4 Henry II. under Devonshire, contains the following entry:—‘The same sheriff (William de Boterell) renders an account of 20 marks of silver for Roger Peck (Pechus), the moneyer of Cornwall.’ Cornwall was, in effect, a County Palatine, and the references to it in the Rolls are by way of exception rather than rule.

"The Roll of 22 Henry II. contains the following entry under Cornubia: ‘Eustace Fitz Stephen renders an account of £153 12s. 6d. for the rent of the county of Cornwall for the mines of tin, and for the rent of the Borough of Launceston (Lanzauenton’), according to the roll of the Bishop of Winchester by the testimony of Bernard, the Chaplain of that part which is in the king’s hand. He had paid into the treasury £152 14s. 8d. And in the appointed alms to the knights of the temple 1 mark. And in land at Helston which the king confirmed to Baldwin the Chamberlain, after the death of the Earl himself 20s. And he has a surplusage of 15s. 6d. The deceased Earl was Reginald de Dunstanville, a natural son of Henry I., and he had died at Chertsey in 1175.

"The name of Roger, the moneyer of Cornwall, does not correspond with either of the names appearing on the coins of this issue attributed to Launceston, but it is possible that further evidence may exist amongst the Records of the Duchy of Cornwall.

"A Roger (Rogier) struck coins of this issue at Exeter.”
With the coins of the first issue of Henry II. an account of "Cornish Numismatics" also, if confined, as is proposed, to coins as distinguished from tokens, comes to a swift conclusion, for there is no other place in Cornwall which, so far as is known, had the privilege of a mint.

It is perhaps desirable, however, to refer to a paper by Sir John Evans, "On a Hoard of Saxon Pennies found in the City of London in 1872," published in the Numismatic Chronicle for 1885, wherein on pp. 256–258 he essays to attribute certain coins of Edward the Confessor to Newport, a borough in the county of Cornwall, adjoining that of Launceston.

By what Sir John Evans terms "a process of exhaustion," he states that we are driven to fix the mint of Newport in this Cornish borough. Before arriving at this conclusion he summarily disposes of the claims of seven other places bearing the name of Newport to the honour of possessing a mint. He is doubtless right as to six out of the seven, but, it is thought, wrong as to the remaining one, and also wrong as to the Cornish attribution.

A reference to Messrs. R. and O. B. Peter's book, already twice cited, p. 53, shows that the earliest notice of the Cornish Newport occurs in a document dated in 1274 when Edmund, Earl of Cornwall, conferred certain privileges upon "the men of La Niweport" and of the Priory and Convent of Lanceuton. These men dwelt on the two banks of the little river Kensey, and were naturally associated in temporal rights. Messrs. Peter add that "Newport was the New Gate, the new suburb, of the then modern Conventual buildings."

Sir John Evans in his paper remarks with commendable and characteristic caution: "The weak point in the attribution of these Newport coins to a Cornish mint consists, I think, in the fact that we cannot with certainty determine the date when Lanstephadon assumed the name of Newport. It is a matter which I commend to the attention of Cornish antiquaries. In the meantime I would assign these coins provisionally to Newport in Cornwall."

Members of Parliament were first summoned for the borough of
Newport, Cornwall, in 1529, but the name “Nuport Burgh, juxta Launceston” does not occur until 1 and 2 Philip and Mary, 1554. Two Members for “Dunheved, alias Launceston” were elected for all Parliaments from 1295 to the date of the Reform Act, 1832, when the membership was reduced to one.

Even if by any stretch of our historical imagination Newport could be carried back to the time of Edward the Confessor, which, in face of the facts, would seem to be impossible, the attribution of coins to Newport, in Cornwall, would be rendered still more difficult by reason of the existence of a coin of Eadgar reading—obverse: + EADGAR RX ANGLORVM, small cross pattée: reverse + ÆLFSIÆ GE MONO NIPANPO, small cross pattée, which formed lot 721 at the sale of Mr. Hyman Montagu’s coins in November, 1895, and is figured in Plate VI of the catalogue. This realised £8 2s. 6d., the purchasers being MM. Rollin and Feuardent.

In a footnote to the above-mentioned paper by Sir John Evans, p. 256, the following remark occurs, “Unless possibly the coins of Eadwig struck by ELAE ON NEPE belong to this mint (Newport).”

In vol. ii of the British Museum catalogue of Anglo-Saxon coins the coin of Eadwig reading NEPE is attributed, with a query, to Newark, in Northamptonshire. This, like that of Eadgar, is probably a coin of a place called Newport, but certainly not Newport in Cornwall.