THE STEPHEN MINT OF BRAN . . . : A NEW ATTRIBUTION

By F. ELMORE JONES

HITHERTO numismatists have only studied the Pipe Rolls of Henry II's reign for the light they shed on Henry II's own coins. This is perhaps surprising since the four-year overlap of coins bearing Stephen's name into the reign of his successor (from 1154 to 1158) has long been known.

The rolls commence in 1155-6, and therefore in the early ones one would quite expect the names of Stephen's moneyers to be mentioned.


It is clear, however, that the author assumed that all the seventy-five names of moneyers which he had extracted from the Pipe Rolls might be looked for on Henry II's coins; this at least is implied by the title of the paper.

This assumption is particularly surprising in view of the fact that the names in the Pipe Rolls include that of the moneyer responsible for an extraordinary and irregular coin of Stephen, well known to the author of the paper and one to whom reference is made therein, namely, Wakelin of Derby. As the author was aware, no other coin by that moneyer is known.

Subsequent writers both on Stephen's coinage and on Henry II's first issue have followed in Carlyon-Britton's footsteps, and it is clear that when the coins of Stephen's last type in the British Museum were catalogued, no eye was kept open for information which might be available from the Pipe Rolls of the succeeding reign.

This is apparent from Brooke's statement in the introduction to Norman Kings (p. cxliv) where in discussing the documentary material he says that "in the reign of Stephen we have no reference to the coinage and mint officials except the brief allusions to baronial issues".

I am indebted to Mr. Derek Allen for first drawing my attention to the fact that many, if not most, of the moneyers whose names are mentioned in the Pipe Rolls of Henry II were moneyers of Stephen's reign. He has also told me that in his opinion there was a clear sweep of moneyers in 1158, and that one should not expect to find the names of Stephen's moneyers continued on the early coins of Henry II.

If right, this latter point opens up a new field for research; it is fully borne out by the evidence of the coins, and means, in fact, that the evidence of the entries in the Henry II Pipe Rolls is just as indispensable to a study of the coinage of the latter part of Stephen's reign as it is to the first coinage of his successor.

A re-examination of Carlyon-Britton's paper in this light leads to interesting results. For example he gives the names of nine moneyers appearing in the Pipe Rolls of Henry II under Norfolk and Suffolk
who cannot be identified on "Tealby" coins, namely, Albold, Aluric, David, Geoffrey, Jordan, Joscelin, Osbert, Thort, and Wiger.

Three of these names are to be found in Norman Kings as Norwich moneyers in Stephen's last type (type VII), namely, Alfric, David, and Thor (B.M.C., nos. 205, 222, and 207 respectively); one name, Geoffrey, appears under Thetford in the same type (B.M.C., no. 215), and under Sudbury we get one coin of Stephen's last type reading ..SEBERT (B.M.C., no. 211) which must I think be the OSBERT of the Pipe Roll entry.

Albold was probably a Stephen moneyer—the Copenhagen Museum coin illustrated in Norman Kings, Pl. lv, 15 may be his, in which case he was an Ipswich moneyer. To my knowledge there is no other known Ipswich coin of that type. I have a Stephen type VII coin on which this name seems to be visible, but unfortunately it is far from certain, and the mint signature cannot be read.

We have therefore five (or possibly six) of these nine hitherto unidentified names now identified by the coins of Stephen.

I have analysed the seventy-five moneyers' names referred to in Carlyon-Britton's paper in Brit. Num. Journ. (loc. cit.) and obtained the following result:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stephen names</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen and &quot;Tealby&quot;</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Tealby&quot; names</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still unidentified</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>75</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Were Stephen's type VII coins less rare than they are I am convinced the number of still unidentified names could be substantially reduced.

All this made me wonder whether there might be anything in the Pipe Rolls which would throw any light on the identity of the mint of BRAN . . ., only known from a few coins of Stephen's last type and a subject to which I have recently given a good deal of thought as I have been lucky enough to acquire one of these very rare coins myself.

When I asked Mr. Allen this question and mentioned that the names of the two known BRAN . . . moneyers were Orgar and Willem, I was delighted to get the reply that he definitely thought there was a clue in the rolls.

He was good enough to tell me that a moneyer named Orgar is recorded under Sussex in the Pipe Roll for 7 Henry II (1160–1) as having discharged an unexplained debt of £1 to the Crown by a payment to the Knights of Pevensey.

This led Mr. Allen to think that the mint of BRAN . . . should probably be sought in Sussex.

Orgar's payment to the Knights of Pevensey need not be taken to imply any direct connexion between the location of his mint and Pevensey; it was quite normal at that time for payments to be made on behalf of the Exchequer to a third party.
It is clear from Carlyon-Britton's remarks on Orgar that he assumed this entry to relate to a Pevensey moneyer and consequently he thought that Pevensey should be expected to occur as a "Tealby" mint. In point of fact no "Tealby" coin of Pevensey is known and the name Orgar does not occur as a moneyer on any "Tealby" coins.

The fact that the name of Orgar's mint is not mentioned in the Pipe Roll entry is not unusual—the rolls were drawn up under counties, not towns, and it is the exception rather than the rule for mention to be made of the name of the moneyer's town. Very often this can be deduced from the evidence of the coins in conjunction with the name of the county under which the entry is made. Occasionally two counties are grouped together with one sheriff accounting for both, e.g. Bucks. and Beds., Norfolk and Suffolk.

Is it possible to find a place which shows whether Mr. Allen's surmise of a Sussex site for BRAN... is well founded? I hope to show later that it is possible and the place I am going to suggest for it is Bramber.

Brooke in English Coins gives the name of the mint as BRAN... and leaves it at that, as he had done earlier in his notes on the mints in Norman Kings (p. clxiii) where he affirms that its attribution is quite uncertain.

Clearly Brooke had little confidence in the late Mr. W. J. Andrew's attribution of the mint to Bradninch in Devon, formerly BRANE or BRANES (see Numismatic Circular, 1914, p. 632), which attribution is, so far as I can discover, the latest attempt at a solution of the problem.

At this point a description of the few known BRAN... coins should be given—they are all of Stephen's last type, B.M.C. type VII—the "Awbridge" Type. Two moneyers' names, Orgar and Willem, are known and details of the reading are:

1. Obv. + STIEFNE Rev. + ORGAR : ON : BRΑ - - R. C. Lockett, Esq. ex Carlyon-Britton (lot 1,470), Capt. Wills (lot 391), and Drabble (lot 710) collections. Described in the two former Sale Catalogues as probably unique. Brooke, however, in Norman Kings, mentions a second specimen from the same dies in Copenhagen Museum, which misses the same two letters of the mint name.

2. Obv. + STIEFNE :: Rev. + PILLEM : ON : BRΑΝ B.M.C., no. 181 and Pl. lv, 6. My coin is from these dies.

3. Same obv. and probably same rev. reading, but a different pair of dies. B.M.C., no. 182.

Reverting to the Bradninch attribution, Andrew based this on a reading of the mint name on the Orgar coin as BRAES, and supported it by the assumption that the Willem of the BRAN... coins was the same as the Launceston moneyer of that name who struck on Stephen's first type (and so far as is known that type only) at the Cornish mint,
it being presumed that Willem was brought from Launceston to BRANES to institute the mint there.

Unfortunately, although the BRA is perfectly clear, the last two letters on the Orgar coin (now in Mr. Lockett's collection) are illegible, and further, the second of Andrew's reasons for his attribution is not convincing. In fact the same argument applies in favour of a Sussex mint as a Willem also coined at Lewes in Stephen type I, and so far as is known that type only. We cannot be certain that Launceston was inactive during type VII, whereas Lewes was undoubtedly active throughout Stephen's reign, and the only moneyer recorded in type VII is Hunfrey.

Andrew's theory as to the opening of a new Stephen mint by a type I moneyer Willem therefore applies more forcibly to Sussex than it does to Cornwall.

As to the reading of the mint name on Orgar's coin Brooke (see Norman Kings, p. clxiii) thought the last two letters might be ME (which would fit very well with the attribution to Bramber) or NE; they are, however, completely illegible.

The earlier (Hawkins) attribution of BRAN... to Brampton in Hunts, may, I think, definitely be ruled out. Although there was a royal residence at Brampton in the reigns of Henry I and Stephen, and the name occurs not infrequently in charters, the place itself does not seem to have been of the importance we normally associate with mint towns.

There can be very little doubt that Brooke was justified in rejecting the attributions to Brampton and Bradninch, and that being so the reading BRAN... remains one of the few Norman mints still unidentified.

We get no help from the Pipe Rolls as to the BRAN... moneyer Willem. This name is not particularly common on Stephen's coins, but it occurs throughout the reign at Norwich and on type I only at Canterbury, Carlisle, Launceston, Lewes, and Wilton.

The name Orgar occurs as a moneyer at London during the reigns of William II and Henry I in the last three types of the latter reign, and including the very rare variety of type XIV with a scallop shell in the reverse design which must associate that particular Orgar with the abbey of Reading. The name does not occur subsequently at London, and it occurs at only one mint in Stephen's reign, namely, BRAN...

In these circumstances the only coin which can be assigned to the Orgar of the Pipe Roll entry under Sussex is the BRAN... coin.

If it is right that this place should be sought in Sussex, then my suggestion is that it should be identified as the ancient borough of Bramber, once the site of a famous Norman castle and a place of considerable strategic importance.

Bramber was a borough by prescription and it returned members to Parliament from 23 Edward I (1295) up to the time of the passing of the Reform Bill.

It is situated about 1 mile south-east of Steyning, and reference to the Victoria History of Sussex shows that the castle, an old Saxon
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stronghold, was renovated and rebuilt by William de Braose, a close friend of the Conqueror and the Sussex founder of the Duke of Norfolk's family.

At the time of the Domesday Survey it was one of the five Lordships of the county, although apparently not actually so mentioned by name, the others being Hastings, Pevensey, Lewes, and Arundel.

After the Conquest the importance of the castle as a strategic stronghold was greatly enhanced, and the author of the Victoria History considers it likely that Steyning was supplanted for military purposes at this period by the neighbouring position of Bramber.

Mr. H. H. King's comprehensive paper on the Steyning mint in Brit. Num. Journ., vol. xxiv, p. 1, shows that the last known coin of that mint is of William II's last type. We may infer that it was closed at that time; at any rate no coins of Stephen, or for that matter Henry I, are known of it. This is important in view of the close proximity of the two places; it may well be that Bramber succeeded to the minting rights of Steyning.

The Domesday spelling of Bramber was BRE (M) BRE, a spelling which is by no means so unhelpful from the point of view of my attribution as it at first appears. Not only were these coins issued some seventy years after the Survey, by which time changes in the spelling of place-names had no doubt occurred, but there was considerable variation in spellings at any one time.

Domesday spellings are by no means always exactly repeated on Norman coins even in the early types. The following are instances obtained from data given in Brooke's Norman Kings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Domesday Book</th>
<th>Coins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hythe</td>
<td>HEDE</td>
<td>HITHE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhuddlan</td>
<td>ROELENT</td>
<td>RUDILI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romney</td>
<td>ROMENEL</td>
<td>RUME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shrewsbury</td>
<td>SCIROPESBERIE</td>
<td>SALOPES (on &quot;Tealby&quot; coins)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The letters A and E seem to have been more or less interchangeable in some instances during the Norman period, e.g.:

- Barnstaple: {BARD, BERD, &c.} William I
- Wareham & Warwick: {PER, PAR, &c.} William I

and on "Tealby" coins we find the name William spelt either WILLEM or WILLAM.

As to the letter N in the mint name, Bramber may well be another instance of N being the Norman equivalent of M in the present-day spelling of a place-name. In the case of Pembroke the last letter of the mint name on the Stephen coin in the British Museum (B.M.C., no. 88A) reads N, not M as given in Norman Kings.

Northampton is NORHAN at this period, and if Mr. D. F. Allen's attribution of the "Tealby" coins reading PAIN to Pembroke is right we get the same feature on "Tealby" coins as well. Incidentally
Pembroke is a further instance of the use of £ and A alternately in the spelling of a place-name at this period.

Prima facie, therefore, I consider that a good case can be made out for the acceptance of Bramber as a Norman mint. The attribution is, I suggest, the best possible in the light of the known coins—in the main, however, it stands or falls on the assumption that the Orgar of BRAN... is the Orgar of the Pipe Roll entry.

Whatever the true explanation of its identity may be, it seems clear that the mint of BRAN... only remained active for a very limited duration. It is unlikely to have been a mint under Henry I, and it is almost certain to have been closed with numerous other Stephen mints on the introduction of the Tealby coinage. I do not exclude the possibility of its having been a mint in the earlier issues of Stephen’s reign.

Owing to the absence of any large finds the coins of Stephen’s last issue are very rare, and they are considerably rarer of the northern mints than those of the south. For example, there is only one York coin of this type in the B.M.C. and not a single specimen of Lincoln. This, no doubt, is due to about half the fifty or so coins of this type in the Museum having come from a Hampshire find, viz. Awbridge near Romsey (1903), which was, I believe, the provenance of the Orgar coin.

I have always been attracted by old castles, and I should like to feel that I have been instrumental in adding a fourth to the present list of three mints established in the then newly built Norman strongholds, viz. Pembroke, Pevensey, and Castle Rising, even if the fourth is today little more than a site. I trust any partiality of mine in this respect has not influenced my interpretation of the numismatic and historical evidence adduced in support of Bramber’s claims for inclusion.

In conclusion I wish to acknowledge the help and advice which I have received from Mr. D. F. Allen in preparing this paper, and without which it could not have been written.