'EDWARDVS REX AIN'
de Bury or Hatfield?—A New Approach to an Old Problem
By F. ELMORE JONES


It is a work of the highest merit but, as the author himself admits, it has one failing. Shirley-Fox was baffled by the problem of finding a satisfactory sequence for the all-important episcopal coins of the Durham Mint and admitted that he did not find it possible to arrange them in any order which could be regarded as wholly convincing.

The principal reason for this was that no place could be found for the very rare coins, quite different in style and lettering to any other ‘Florin’ pennies, with the strange obverse reading +EDWARDVS REX AIN, afterwards in this paper referred to as Rex Ain.

Some half-dozen or so of these rare coins are known. They are all struck from the same obverse die but this is combined with two reverse dies both having the episcopal mark of a crozier (only), the one die reading GIVITAS DVNOHSE and the other GIVITAS DVNEIM. It is important that the absence of the chevron-barred ‘A’ on the latter should be noted because this can only mean that the coin is a mule.

As Shirley-Fox remarks these Rex Ain coins must be put somewhere in the series, and presumably at one end or the other, but whether they come first and should therefore be attributed to Bishop de Bury (1333–45), or last and be attributed to his successor Bishop Hatfield (1345–81), has long been a matter of much controversy.

That these Rex Ain coins stand alone in the series was very apparent to Shirley-Fox’s artistic eye—he underlines the points of difference and illustrates the distinctive form of the crown from his own drawing. He does not fail to record that the chevron-barred ‘A’ also occurs on one other die in the series and, so far as is known, one die only.

This is the all important reverse die with the equally strange reading of VILLA DVNOHME (hereinafter referred to as the Villa Die) and the episcopal marks of both a large pellet in the centre and a crozier and which is unquestionably the last of the series, since it is muled with an obverse die of the recoinage of 1351.

1 In many ways though it is an infuriating paper to have to study closely. The subject is made even more complex than it actually is by the order of the types ‘B’ and ‘C’ being transposed as between the text (p. 26) and the plate, and the numbering of the Durham coins on pl. iv does not follow that on pp. 33 and 34. All references to these latter herein are to the plate numbers. Further, the description of the reverse die of no. 8 on the plate (pl. iv) on p. 34 does not tally with that on p. 44. The latter is correct but the die described on p. 34 does exist. It is the die of the B.M. specimen and of Lawrence Sale, lot 513. The die of the coin of Fox’s plate (which is now in Mr. Blunt’s collection) is the same as that of the Balcombe find specimen (Num. Chron. 1898, pl. iv, no. 10).

2 It should be made clear that this does not apply to the halfpennies and farthings, since these are not classified and they do not conform to the types of the pennies.
Two Villa Dies are known; there are two die duplicate specimens of the 1351/Villa Die mule in the British Museum and a few others in private collections. My specimen (ex Raymond Carlyon-Britton) is from a different reverse die to the B.M. examples.

The counter mule, 'Florin'/1351, is also known and it will be noted that the 1351 coinage repeats the Villa reading and continues the same episcopal markings of both a pellet in centre and a crozier head.

Although Shirley-Fox made a point of noting the chevron-barred 'A' on the Villa Die, I do not think he does anything like sufficient justice to the other points of similarity between the lettering of the Rex Ain obverse die and the Villa reverse die. These similarities are very marked; nor, apparently, did Shirley-Fox appreciate the significance of the fact that no 'true' obverse die can be assigned to the Villa Die unless it is the Rex Ain die itself, or another similar.

The Villa Die coins are all mules, either with a later (1351) obverse die or with an obverse die of what is quite a uniform little group of Florin pennies with the unusual obverse inscription +EDWARDVS REX AIN D N S H Y B and which, it is here submitted, almost certainly preceded Rex Ain and which for convenience and brevity is afterwards here referred to as the 'Edwar Group'.

It is not my submission that Rex Ain is in fact the 'true' obverse of the Villa Die but for the purpose of my classification it is necessary to emphasize that we have here a reverse die of which the true obverse is not known to exist. All the coins produced from it, and they are fairly plentiful, are mules.

This must also apply to one or other of the two Rex Ain reverse dies, presumably the die of No. 4 on Shirley-Fox's plate which is the one without the chevron-barred 'A' (Pl. XXVII, 6). The coins from this reverse die must also be mules, but this die is combined with only one obverse die (the Rex Ain die) whereas the Villa Die is combined with both an Edwar Group obverse die and a die of the 1351 recoinage. Such extensive muling can only indicate a shortage of obverse dies at the episcopal mint just at a time when they were most needed.

In any case it is certain that no classification of the coins is possible without distinguishing between those which are 'true' die combinations and those which are mules. It is my submission that this can be done with tolerable certainty and that the overall picture which results is overwhelmingly in favour of Rex Ain coming last, or at any rate very nearly last, in the classification.

For reasons to be given later it is my contention that the coins with no episcopal mark (the so-called Sede Vacante coins) can be shown to be the earliest of the 'Florin' series and therefore that the whole of the 'marked' coins, i.e. those with (1) a pellet in the centre, (2) with a crozier head and (3) with those two marks combined should all, in that chronological order, be attributed to Bishop Hatfield.

Brooke took the opposite view and favoured the attribution of the Rex Ain coins to de Bury and decided that the coins of the Edwar Group with the crozier (only) as episcopal mark must go with them.

1 Its combination with a second obverse die has only recently come to light and is referred to in the postscript to this paper.
That is his attribution in *English Coins* and the Florin type pennies in the British Museum are arranged in accordance with it.

The remaining coins with an episcopal mark, i.e. those with a pellet in the centre and a pellet and crozier combined, are assigned by Brooke to Bishop Hatfield and the B.M. arrangement follows that attribution.

The result of this is that the quite well-defined Edwar Group of coins with the two episcopal markings of (1) a crozier only and (2) a pellet in centre only is split into two; also that the coins with no episcopal mark, a large issue and with only one notable exception all of completely uniform normal Fox Type 4 style and distinctive lettering, are put between the coins of the two parts into which the Edwar Group is divided.

Further, too, the coins with the chevron-barred 'A' are separated and put at the extreme ends of the classification.

In my opinion these anomalies are absolutely fatal to a de Bury attribution of Rex Ain and that they are anomalies can be proved from die-links which have not hitherto been noticed.

Shirley-Fox notes that nos. 7 and 10 on his plate (Pl. XXVII, 8 and 9) are from the same reverse die (the Villa Die) and also that the obverse die (an Edwar Group die) of nos. 7 and 8 is the same (Pl. XXVII, 8 and 10).

He did not, however, notice two further die-links between the coins which he illustrated and which, in conjunction with those mentioned above, undoubtedly provide the solution to part at least of the problem of Rex Ain, viz. the position in the series of the whole of the Edwar Group including those which, in common with Rex Ain, have the episcopal mark of a crozier (only) on the reverse.

These two further die-links are:

1. *The obverse die of his no. 5 (Pl. XXVII, 5) is the same as that of his nos. 7 and 8 (Pl. XXVII, 8 and 10).*

It has only been possible to establish this die-link with certainty by an examination of other specimens, particularly those in Mr. Blunt's collection, in the B.M. and in the Lockett collection but actually one such further specimen, a die duplicate in the B.M. of no. 5 on the plate, must have been seen by Shirley-Fox in 1928 as it was then in the Lawrence collection.

2. *The reverse die of Fox's no. 9 (Pl. XXVII, 3) is the same as that of Fox's no. 2 (Pl. XXVII, 2).*

No. 9 on Fox's plate is the principal stumbling block to any arrangement which does not bring the whole of the Edwar Group together and is the coin which he found so difficult to fit into place anywhere.

The recognition of these die-links goes a long way to fulfilling Shirley-Fox's wish that his bringing together of all the coins on one plate might eventually result in a convincing classification being evolved.

The only possible conclusions to be drawn from these further die-links are (1) that all the coins of the Edwar Group with the three different episcopal marks (and these form the whole of the group) must be classified together as one group and assigned to Bishop Hatfield because at least two of the obverse dies are still in use in 1351 and (2) that the Edwar Group immediately followed the Sede Vacante coinage because that most significant coin no. 9 on Fox's
plate (which is now in Mr. Blunt's collection) is in effect a mule between the Sede Vacante and the episcopal coinages.

From this and from what I have said previously with regard to the two reverse dies with which the Rex Ain obverse die is used, it will be apparent that no less than five of the ten coins on Shirley-Fox's plate are mules, viz. his nos. 4, 7, 8, 9, and 10.

The Rex Ain coin no. 4 on Fox's plate must be a mule because the 'A' on the reverse is not chevron-barred and neither of the reverses of Fox nos. 7 and 8 (the former with the chevron-barred 'A' and the latter a die of 1351) could possibly be a true reverse for the obverse of no. 5 on the Fox plate; therefore the latter must itself be the 'true' die combination.

The Rex Ain coin no. 3 on the Fox plate does have the chevron-barred 'A' on both sides and so can be assumed to be a 'true' coin.

Thus there are two reverse dies on the Fox plate to which it is at present impossible for any 'true' obverse to be assigned, viz. the Villa Die of Fox's nos. 7 and 10 with its chevron-barred 'A' (Pl. XXVII, 8 and 9) and the die of no. 4 without the chevron-barred letter (Pl. XXVII, 6).

The possibility exists that the true obverse die of the latter might prove to be that of Fox's plate no. 9 as that coin has an obverse die which cannot be associated with any reverse, but an examination of all the relevant coins in the B.M. and in the private collections most likely to furnish new material has failed to produce any additional die combinations. That being so it would seem that Shirley-Fox was quite justified in saying that he had brought together on the plate all the coins of the Durham mint.

Until such time as further die combinations come to light (if any exist), it is not possible to claim that the problem of Rex Ain has actually been resolved. However, I think it is fair to say that the finding of a satisfactory place in the series for the whole of the Edwar Group coins (and therefore a place for all the episcopal coins with the single exception of Rex Ain) and the attribution of the whole of the Edwar Group coins to Bishop Hatfield has resulted in a classification which at least is convincing and which has by implication virtually resolved the problem of Rex Ain as well.

It is unthinkable that Rex Ain could be separated from the other episcopal coins and still be assigned to de Bury by itself. To do so would mean that it would be necessary to account for the anachronism of one chevron-barred 'A' coin (Rex Ain) being dated to 1345 and the other (the Villa Die) to 1351 or, assuming it might be argued that the Villa Die was a survival of 1345 which had lain dormant at the mint for the intervening six years (a very unlikely hypothesis considering the output from the mint during that period), the greater anomaly that two dies, one for Bishop de Bury in 1345 and another for Bishop Hatfield in 1351, would both reproduce exactly the same episcopal marks in conjunction with the same extraordinary title for Durham of Villa instead of Civitas.

It is only on the Villa Die and on the coinage of 1351 that this quite unprecedented reading is found.

In the main, therefore, my case for the attribution of Rex Ain to Bishop

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1 With the exception of Mr. Fred Baldwin's collection which unfortunately was not available at the time this paper was written (see Postscript).
Hatfield must rest on the epigraphical evidence in conjunction with the overall picture which the series now presents and especially the consideration that this is the only possible classification of the Durham 'Florin' coinage which gives continuity in the sequence of the episcopal marks.

The letter forms on the Rex Ain die and those on the Villa Die which is still in use in 1351 are so similar to each other and so different to those on any other 'Florin' pennies (as distinct from the halfpennies, a distinction which is most important) that they must belong to the same issue.

Shirley-Fox also remarks on the affinity of the Rex Ain lettering with that of the gold noble of 1346, a feature which by itself is almost sufficient to invalidate the de Bury attribution.

The mint-name DVNOIiH on one of the two Rex Ain reverses is a most extraordinary one, and the reason for the change from CIVITAS to VIIlI at the end of the 'Florin’ coinage is as great a mystery today as it was to Shirley-Fox in 1928.

Before summarizing my conclusions on the rearrangement of the episcopal coins it remains for me to discuss quite briefly the relative position of the Sede Vacante coins in the overall picture and the question of their dating. This is necessary not only because their present allocation to the Sede Vacante period of April-July 1345 is vital to the chronology of one of Shirley-Fox's main Florin types, i.e. type 4, but also because it is now necessary to show that they come first in the Durham sequence.

It is a well-known fact that these Sede Vacante coins are far less rare than are the episcopal ones and that, with the single exception of the B.M. coin which is no. 2 on Shirley-Fox's plate (PL. XXVII, 2) and which can safely be assumed to be later than any others because it is muled with the obverse of Fox no. 9 (PL. XXVII, 3), they all conform exactly to Fox type 4. All the evidence goes to show that this type probably comprised the major part of the huge recoinage of 1344-5 the volume of which, from London alone, is apparent from the figures extracted from the mint accounts which Shirley-Fox records on page 20 of his paper. Further, all the evidence goes to show that Fox type 4 is in fact the latest of his four types and it may well be the case that Shirley-Fox is absolutely right in dating its inception, at any rate so far as the ecclesiastical mints are concerned, to this exact period of the Sede Vacante at Durham on the death of Bishop de Bury. This is not in conflict with the figures of the London mint accounts and is borne out by the evidence of the coins of the other two ecclesiastical mints of York and Reading, both of which, like Durham, had been inactive for many years previously and both of which are only known in this one type.

1 The correction of Shirley-Fox's reading of DVNOIiH (which Brooke repeats in English Coins, p. 125) should be noted. This correction is possible from a die-duplicate specimen in the B.M., ex Evans collection (PL. XXVII, 7a), on which the reading is perfectly clear, as is also the crozier. The use of the letter form 'H' for 'M' is a most extraordinary reversion to a peculiarity of earlier pennies of the Durham mint—as is also the presence of the contraction mark ("\) above it. The former occurs in Fox type X of Edward I (and I think in that type only) and the latter is in general use with the spelling DVNOIiH throughout the types of Edward II but it is not found with the spelling DVNEIiM in type XVd. Prima facie these two strange features are indicative of an early dating for Rex Ain but against that are the considerations of the chevron-barred 'A', the letter forms generally, and the other factors brought out in this paper, all of which point conclusively in the opposite direction.
Presumably type 4 continued to be struck spasmodically at London down to as late as May 1348 since there is a further £9,000 of London pennies to be accounted for in the mint accounts for the period from June 1345 to that date and this is the period into which the Edwar Group of Durham coins must fit.

Why the obverse legend should have been slightly varied for the episcopal coins of Durham is inexplicable but is typical of the background of the Durham mint throughout the Edwardian period.

I cannot avoid being tempted to postulate that Rex Ain might conceivably be the Durham counterpart of the ‘missing’ London penny of June 1349–April 1350, a period when the infinitesimal quantity of £47 of pennies were struck at London and to which it is impossible for any known coin to be assigned. The possibility exists but to do more than simply hint at it would be to embark upon the realm of fantasy.

On the other hand, one cannot but be struck by the superficial resemblance of Rex Ain to some of the halfpennies (all of which incidentally were struck after de Bury’s death) on which the obverse inscription is invariably **EDWARDVS REX** or **EDWARDVS REX AN** and in particular to the resemblance of some of the letter forms.

The Edwar Group/1351 mules and the counter-mules with the Villa Die reverse can only be accounted for by conditions of urgency and confusion obtaining at the episcopal mint immediately prior to the inception of the 1351 recoinage.

One Edwar Group die (that of Fox plate nos. 5, 7, and 8) is also used with two other reverse dies making five in all. This could mean that in order to meet an immediate urgency old dies were brought back into service and used in haphazard order with the results apparent from nos. 7, 8 and 10 on Fox’s plate.

To sum up, the evidence of the Durham ‘Florin’ coins as a whole points conclusively to the Sede Vacante coins being the earliest of the series and to Rex Ain being virtually the last and that is the basis of my reclassification.

For this I have adopted the Shirley-Fox basis of classification by the obverse inscriptions and these I put in the following chronological order:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Inscription</th>
<th>DIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘A’</td>
<td>+EDW R TIEL DNS HVB</td>
<td>All of normal Type 4 work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘B’</td>
<td>+EDW R TIEL DNS VB</td>
<td>A die on its own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘C’</td>
<td>+EDWAR R TIEL DNS HVB</td>
<td>Four (or possibly five) known and used in combination with 8 reverse dies of which only three represent ‘true’ die combinations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘D’</td>
<td>+EDWARDVS REX AN</td>
<td>A die on its own.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A table of the reverse readings with the sequence of the ecclesiastical marks in chronological order makes the classification easier to understand and gives a better perspective of the overall picture.

The following Table records all the known reverse readings and the position of the coin on the plate (Pl. XXVII, 1-10). This is a reproduction of the Fox plate with the same coins rearranged in the sequence of the table. The Fox plate numbers are added in brackets and the die-links are indicated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref. No.</th>
<th>Episcopal marks</th>
<th>Reverse inscription</th>
<th>Associated obv. group</th>
<th>Fox plate IV no.</th>
<th>Plate XXVII no.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>GIVITAS DVNEIHM</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>GIVITAS DVNEIHM</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Pellet in centre</td>
<td>Same die as no. 2</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Crozier</td>
<td>GIVITAS DVNEIHM</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Do.</td>
<td>GIVITAS DVNEIHM</td>
<td>Not known to exist</td>
<td>D (Rex Ain)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Do.</td>
<td>GIVITAS DVNEIHM</td>
<td>D (Rex Ain)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Crozier and pellet</td>
<td>VILLA DVNEIHM</td>
<td>Not known to exist</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Crozier</td>
<td>VILLA DVNEIHM</td>
<td>A die of 1351</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>pellet</td>
<td>Same die as no. 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Do.</td>
<td>A die of 1351</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three supplementary coins are figured on the plate, viz. no. 7A, the B.M. ex Evans collection die duplicate of no. 7 which is referred to earlier in this paper, no. 6A, a fine die duplicate of no. 6 (ex Lawrence sale, lot 510) and no. 5A, the coin in Mr. Fred Baldwin's collection which is referred to in the postscript to this paper and which combines the obverse die of nos. 5, 8 and 10 with the reverse die of no. 6.

It will be apparent from this table that no new material whatsoever has come to light since Shirley-Fox wrote his paper in 1928 and that his hope that a reclassification might be made from 'all the known coins brought together on the plate' has, I submit, now been fulfilled.

It will now be seen that the revised sequence of Fox's plate is 1, 2, 9, 6, 5, 4, 3, 7, 10, and 8 and that Pl. XXVII does, in fact, cover the whole series.

It is apparent that my table contains one anomaly, and one which Shirley-Fox himself wished to avoid, viz. fluctuating spellings of the mint-name, but this seems to me to be an insignificant factor in relation to the removal of the anomalies which are inherent in any other classification; further, it is typical of the Durham mint throughout the Edwardian period.

If the reattribution of all these 'Florin' coins to Bishop Hatfield is accepted another revision of Brooke's classification of the pennies of Edward III in his standard work English Coins is called for. The 'Crown in centre' coins of Durham which form Edward III's first coinage (Fox Type XVd) should now be attributed to Bishop de Bury instead of Bishop Beaumont, thus leaving the 'Lion and Lis' of Fox types XIII to XVc as the latter's sole episcopal marking.
This is a reattribution which I do not think is likely to cause controversy and is one which is discussed elsewhere in this Journal.

POSTSCRIPT

Since this paper was written I have seen the Durham ‘Florin’ pennies in Mr. Fred Baldwin’s collection and one of these, a ‘new’ die combination, proves to be a key coin in the solution of the Rex Ain problem.

It is a coin which combines the ΘΥΝΘΙΩΜ reverse die of the Rex Ain coin no. 6 on the plate (Fox plate no. 4) with the obverse die of no. 5 on the plate (Fox plate no. 5). It is therefore comparable in every way with the latter coin, of which there are several other die duplicate specimens in existence, but to the best of my knowledge Mr. Baldwin’s coin is the only one which is actually from the same die as that of the Rex Ain coins with the ΘΥΝΘΙΩΜ reverse. It is the only instance I have been able to find of die-linking between Rex Ain and any other coin.

Its significance from the point of view of the dating of Rex Ain lies in these two factors: (1) Mr. Baldwin’s coin with its Edwar Group obverse is undoubtedly an earlier striking than any of the Rex Ain coins from this same reverse die, and (2) its obverse die (the same die as nos. 8 and 10 on the plate as well as no. 5 and for which this coin now makes a sixth reverse die) is a die which was still in use in 1351.

The coin is therefore strong evidence in support of the conclusions set out in my paper and I am very grateful to Mr. Baldwin for his permission to publish and illustrate it here (Pl. XXVII, 5a).

Whilst I feel that the vexed problem of de Bury or Hatfield may now have been resolved once and for all, I should make it clear that I make no claim to have written anything like the last word on the subject of the whole of this fascinating little group of coins, which have no counterpart at London or any other mint, the Durham episcopal ‘Florin’ pennies.

Other puzzling features remain to be cleared up such as the reason for the change from CIVITAS to VIIΛΙΑ at the end of the type and the strange feature (which opens up interesting possibilities) that, whilst there is die-linking between the coins with the two ecclesiastical marks by themselves and the coins with the two marks combined, there is apparently no die-linking between the coins with the crozier head only and those with the pellet in centre only.

These are matters which must wait for the present; I feel that I have taken the subject as far as is possible in the light of our present knowledge of the coins.