There are many references in the Pipe Rolls to the great re-coincage of 1180. In particular the salaries paid to Philip Aimer and to fifteen other Cambiatores are documented in some detail. Not all of these exchangers were working together at any one time, nor are the periods of activity at all exchange towns of equal duration. It must not be forgotten, moreover, that the Pipe Rolls are primarily a record of income due to the King, and that items of expenditure are only recorded therein when an accounting party claimed them in diminution of his debt to the Exchequer. The notes we have of the exchangers’ salaries are therefore in all probability to some degree incomplete. The records are not usually explicit as to which town or towns each individual exchanger was assigned. Nevertheless we can infer with some confidence at least seven places where exchangers were employed, viz. London, Exeter, Lincoln, Northampton, Winchester, Worcester and York. Previous writers have included Nottingham and Norwich in this category, but there is no real evidence for them. All of the seven exchange towns were also the seats of mints during the issue of the early classes of the Short Cross coinage.

The coins, however, prove the existence of three mints which apparently were not exchange towns, viz. Carlisle, Oxford and Wilton. An explanation for this apparent anomaly with respect to Carlisle and Oxford has been published by D. F. Allen, who went on to say ‘There is some mystery about the Wilton mint in the Short Cross period’. So far as we are aware no possible explanation for Wilton as a Short Cross mint has yet been put forward.

That something unusual did happen in the coinage of Wilton at this time is evidenced by our discovery not only of an obverse die-link in class Ia between Wilton and Winchester, but also of a reverse die of Winchester having been altered from Win to Wil. It is the purpose of this paper to put these discoveries on record and to see whether it is now possible to put forward an explanation for this third apparently anomalous mint.

The much maligned Ruding provides a clue to the mystery. In his account of the Winchester mint he wrote:

‘1180. In the 27th year of Henry II, the king having ordered a new coinage to be made, whilst the workmen of the mint here were employed in fabricating the coin, a fire broke out, which consumed the mint, and the greater and more valuable part of the city’.

As his authority he quoted ‘Annal. Winton. an. 1180’. On reference to the published Annals the following passage is found under 1180:

1 In addition to the absence of documentary evidence may be remarked the fact that no coin is known which could reasonably be assigned to Nottingham and it is virtually certain that this town was not a Short Cross mint. Norwich, however, certainly was a Short Cross mint (it took part in the great re-coincage of 1205) and hitherto it has always been assumed to have been a mint in class I. Recent numismatic evidence has, however, cast doubt on the validity of this latter (see BNJ xxxiii, pp. 70–72). It is now the writers’ opinion, partly based on documentary evidence from the period, that the Norwich mint did not open up until circa 1194.

2 The classification used is that evolved by Dr. L. A. Lawrence, BNJ xi, pp. 59–100.

3 D. F. Allen, BMCH 2, p. xci.

4 Op. cit. p. 216. The sentence continues ‘which it is beyond the scope of this catalogue to investigate’.

'Nocte vigiliae sancti Swithuni accensa est monetaria in Wintonia, et egressus indi ignis consumit majorem partem et meliorem Wintoniae'.

A translation of this passage is as follows:

'During the night of the eve of St. Swithin (i.e. the night of 1st/2nd July) the mint in Winchester was burnt, and the fire spreading from there destroyed the greater and better part of Winchester.'

The following is a possible explanation for the die-alteration and the die-linking. Winchester was an important centre of trade and politics, and was still at this time the central depository of the treasury. In mid 1180, soon after the re-coinage had started, there would be a large unsatisfied demand for the new pennies. It would therefore be imperative to have readily to hand a mint available to strike the new coinage. Wilton, less than thirty miles away, had been in operation earlier in the reign, and presumably the coining facilities there could have been put into working order again quite quickly. Following the great fire in which the mint at Winchester was put out of commission, and with the pressing need for the new coins to be available, the most likely place to have turned to in an emergency would have been Wilton.

The two moneyers of Wilton, Osber and Rodbert, have the same names, as represented on the coins, as those of two of the Winchester moneyers. It is accordingly well within the bounds of possibility that, following the Winchester fire, two of that city’s moneyers transferred their operations to Wilton on an emergency basis until such time as new premises could be provided for them in Winchester. In our opinion this explains the use of the same obverse dies at both mints. It also explains the alteration of the mint-signature on a reverse die as being an emergency measure pending the preparation and delivery of dies with the new de facto mint-signature.

The Wilton mint need only have operated for a very short time, a matter of months, if not even only weeks, as the coins with a Wilton mint-signature (quite rare today) are of classes Ia and Ib only. A short gap in the issues at Winchester is not noticeable from the evidence of the coins themselves, and no doubt the mint was returned to Winchester, the principal city, just as soon as was practicable.

Ten coins figure in the complex of die-links which is the raison d'être of this paper. All of class Ia, they stem from combinations of five obverse dies (distinguished as A–E on the list below) and five reverse dies (distinguished as a–e) as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Reverse</th>
<th>Obverse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>a. Gocelm, Winchester</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>b. Rodbert, Winchester</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>same die</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>c. Henri, Winchester</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>same die</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>same die</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>d. Rodbert, altered</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>same die</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>same die</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>e. Rodbert, Wilton</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Their inter-linking may perhaps be more readily perceived from the illustrations on Plate XV, nos. 1–10, where the die-links are indicated in the conventional manner. It would seem


\(^2\) We are indebted to Mr. R. J. Trett for translating this passage for us.
that at least four of these obverse dies were in use at Winchester (A, B, D & E) and that three of this set A, D & E) were transferred to Wilton and used there at the outset of the emergency.

Although having no direct bearing on the particular subject which is the title of this paper, the die-linking shown above raises an interesting point. Recently there was put forward the proposition that during the re-coinage of 1205, only a quarter of a century later than the coins now being discussed, the obverse dies, or at any rate those in the provincial mints, were not appropriated to the exclusive use of any one moneyer, and may have formed a common pool for the use of all moneyers as and when needed. We have here some evidence that a similar situation may have existed in Winchester in 1180, obverse die A having been used there by at least three moneyers. Moreover, the single reverse die of Henri was used with three different obverses: this cannot be explained by their use in succession as the dies wore out, for all three of these obverses were later used at Wilton. The altered die of Rodbert is also used with three obverses but, assuming as we do that the dies had been transferred hurriedly and were used at Wilton as an emergency measure, it would hardly be appropriate to deduce from this any principles of general application. We can, however, assume that the altered die would be worn out before the die with the Wilton mint-signature came into use and accordingly No. 10 in the list must be the latest coin in the complex. Nevertheless it is possible that other coins exist which would fit into the complex and, if so, the writers would very much like to be informed of them.

It will be noted that the other Wilton moneyer, Osber, who must surely be the same as the Winchester moneyer of that name, is not, so far as is known, involved in the complex. Wilton coins in class Ib are by no means common, but in class Ia it is very possible that the single specimen recorded of each moneyer (by which is implied in the case of Rodbert the coin with the unequivocal Wilton mint-signature) is in fact unique. These two coins are in the British Museum. Class Ic is unknown of Wilton, and Wilton is in fact the only class I mint of which Ic is not known. All the indications are that the mint was closed very early in the run of class Ib when both moneyers, Osber and Rodbert, returned to Winchester and continued striking there.

As already mentioned, Wilton as a Short Cross mint has been something of an anomaly as there is no direct evidence for it in the Pipe Rolls. However, the coins speak for themselves and in the opinion of the writers their story can now be seen to make complete sense when once the significance of the destruction of the Winchester mint by fire in 1180 is appreciated.

We cannot close without thanking the Keeper of Coins and Medals at the British Museum for permission to photograph and to illustrate three coins (Nos. 2, 5 & 10) which are in the National Collection, and also Mr. Peter Woodhead for photographing all the coins here illustrated and which include one (No. 4) from his own cabinet. The remaining eight coins on the plate are in Mr. Elmore Jones’ collection.

1 J. D. Brand, Some Short Cross Questions, BNJ xxxiii, pp. 61-4.
2 Henri is only known at Winchester in class I from this single die of class Ia. Twenty-five years later the name reappears at this mint in class Va, again from a single die, though this Henri can hardly have been the same moneyer. In class Vc (very rare of this mint) the name appears yet once more, and after a further lapse of some twelve years. Presumably this Henri is also a different moneyer, but this time we know his full name to have been Henrieus de Templo (LTR 2 H.III m.5). We assume that these fleeting appearances by three moneyers of this name in widely separated types must be purely coincidental.
3 An obverse die-link does exist between Osber and Rodbert at Wilton in class Ib. The two coins are in Mr. Elmore Jones’ collection.
4 The coin of Osber is illustrated in NO 1948, pl. xiv, no. 15.
5 In BNJ xi Lawrence records Oxford as being unknown in class Ic, but we are convinced that the coin there recorded as being class Ila is in fact class Ic, and that it is IIa which is unknown.
THE EMERGENCY MINT OF WILTON IN 1180

APPENDIX

There is one further coin which is very relevant to the problem discussed above. Also of Rodbert, it is from another reverse die which has been altered from WIN to WIL. (Plate XV, No. 12). In this instance, however, the coin is of class Ib.

It should be emphasised that the dividing line between classes Ia and Ib in the Lawrence classification is very narrow in that it is simply the difference in the form of the three letters C, E and M, and, as is typical of this coinage, the one sub-class fades into the next. As a normal occurrence a single die may include these letters in both the old and the new forms, and Lawrence defined class Ia as any die on which at least one letter is in the old form. This form is square in the cases of C and E, and round in the case of M. In illustration of this point, an excellent example is the coin of Goeelm of Winchester which is No. 11 on the plate. This is virtually a class Ia coin and yet all the e’s and c’s (of which there are five in all) are round and only the m is of the early form. The bust is completely typical of class Ia, but under a strict interpretation of Lawrence’s criteria it would have to be classified as a Ib/Ia mule.

With Rodbert of Winchester there is only one of these variable letters, an e, in the reverse legend, and a coin with this letter in the round form instead of square could well be very early in the issue of class I. Indeed one of the dies of Rodbert in the class Ia die complex itself (the altered die!) has a round e on the reverse, and if the Lawrence criteria were to be accepted literally would be classified as a Ia/Ib mule. Although this further coin of Rodbert is of class Ib it is evidently early in the issue. It is one of a small sub-group of Class I noted by us some years ago, but not yet written up for publication. On these coins the letter x has well defined serifs and the bust has strong affinities with that on the ‘true’ coins of class Ia. The writers feel that this sub-group (which in their own private notes they refer to as Ia*) must come immediately after the ‘true’ coins.¹

How can this second altered die fit into the chronology of the die-complex of the class Ia coins? It is too early to be the last die used at Wilton and then taken back to Winchester. Moreover, from the two specimens which we have seen it would definitely seem to be win altered to win and not vice versa. If, instead, it is regarded as one of the first dies used at Wilton we are faced with an apparent anomaly. There are two dies of Rodbert issued for use at Winchester and altered for use at Wilton, one of which (this further one) is prima facie later than the die with an unequivocal Wilton mint-signature which is no. 10 on the plate in the class Ia complex.

However, it is thought that in normal circumstances a moneyer would have two reverse dies at any one time: one in use and one in reserve. When the first became unserviceable through wear he would continue striking with what had until then been his ‘reserve’, and in the meantime would surrender the worn-out die to be exchanged for a new one. In this way continuity of striking would be achieved. It could well be, therefore, that Rodbert had both of these two reverse dies in his possession at Winchester at the time of the fire and took them with him to Wilton where they were altered. One was used with the obverse dies also taken from Winchester and the other a little later. This presupposes that the die was not merely an error made by the die-cutter and corrected before leaving the workshop (a not uncommon occurrence in the early coins of class I), but that it was actually altered at the mint.

Nevertheless, whatever the true explanation of this second altered die may be, we do not think that it in any way detracts from the evidence of the die-linking complex in class Ia and the inferences to be drawn therefrom.

¹ Another example of this sub-class is illustrated in BNJ xxxiii, pl. vii, nos. 8 and 9 (same die), and two more in NC 1903, pl. iv, nos. 3 and 4.