A PARCEL OF REFORM-TYPE PENCE OF EADGAR
AND HIS SUCCESSORS

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For some years now, the proportion in English cabinets of Lincoln, Stamford and York coins of Eadgar’s last type, of the only type of Edward the Martyr and of the very first issue of Æthelræd II, has induced the suspicion that in the eighteenth century there must have been in north-eastern England a major discovery of Reform-type pence of these three kings.1 Further colour has been given to this surmise by Mr. Blunt’s recent visit to Leningrad where he was able to inspect part of the Hermitage collection. A great number of the tenth-century English pence in that cabinet seem to be purchases in the London sale-room dating back to the second quarter of the nineteenth century, and it is illuminating that of the three coins of Eadgar’s last type, one is of Lewes, one of Stamford and one of York, while of five coins of Edward the Martyr, one is of Stafford, an unpublished mint for the reign, no fewer than three of Stamford, and one of York. This contrasts most markedly with the position obtaining in the Systematic Collection of the Royal Swedish Coin cabinet, a collection essentially composed of coins found within the boundaries of the modern kingdom of Sweden. Of 55 pennies of Eadgar’s last type, three are of York, three of Lincoln and only one of Stamford. Of 27 coins of Edward the Martyr, two are of Stamford, and one apiece of Lincoln and York.

Fresh support for the hypothesis of a major unrecorded hoard in the Stamford area c. 1750, or a little earlier, is afforded by a remarkable parcel of 13 coins, the property of Mr. E. J. Willes, dispersed at Sotheby’s London sale-room on 23 May 1966. The coins comprised lots 120–132 in the sale, and all were illustrated in the sale-catalogue. Through the kindness of Messrs. Sotheby we are able here to reproduce the admirable direct photographs in colotype instead of half-tone, and to give a number of additional details concerning the individual coins, including a note of the weights. We are particularly grateful to Mr. Daniel Fearon for assistance in this matter, and also to Mr. and Mrs. Willes for the information that the coins had come down in the family without any tradition as to the original provenance. It is entirely our suggestion that they represent a parcel from that great eighteenth-century hoard, the source of William Hunter’s unrivalled run of coins of the types in question,2 but it is a suggestion that we believe to be well-founded. Five of the coins are of Stamford, four of Lincoln and one apiece of Newark and of York.

The coins may be listed as follows:—

EADGAR

Reform type (Hild. C.2 = BMC VI = Brooke 6 = North 752)

(1) Canterbury (c.ÆXT), Bogea.

Pl. II, 1. Lot 120.

Boiga, to employ the usual normalisation, is well-attested as a Canterbury moneyer in this type

1 e.g. A/S Coins, p. 139. The relative plethora of coins of Stamford of this period was remarked by Wells (BNJ XXIII (1938-41), p. 23).

2 SCBI Hunter shows that the great Scottish surgeon had 19 of the Reform pence of Eadgar, 30 pence of Edward the Martyr and no fewer than 15 of the exceptionally rare First Small Cross pence of Æthelræd II. A further breakdown reveals that 10 of these coins had been struck at Lincoln, 6 at Stamford and 8 at York.
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cf. BMC 5 and BEH 4, both it would appear from different pairs of dies. A die-duplicate is however Carlyon-Britton 343, later Drabble 435 where it is illustrated, and we may further note BEH 3 and another coin in the British Museum from the 1914 Chester find (Hill 1).

(2) Newark (stip), Ingolf. 22-4 grains (1-49 g.).
Pl. II, 4. Lot 123.
The mint and moneyer are only formally unpublished for the type, a second coin from the same reverse die having been illustrated by Professor Berghaus in his ten-year old account of the coins in the Sigsarve hoard from the Gotland parish of Hejde, where the tentative attribution proposed is to a Newport.1 The style of the reverse die strongly supports the new attribution to Newark, and especially now that Newark is acceptable as a mint of Eadwig (nihe), Edward the Martyr (nihe), Æthelred II (nihe) and Cnut (nihe). Newport Pagnell has been suggested as an alternative attribution for the Edward the Martyr coin (SCBI Hunter 752), but on the Eadgar coins by the same moneyer the na form of the copulative, just plausible and explicable in the case of a very late Eadgar die from north-eastern England,2 must surely preclude a mint so far to the south.

(3) Northampton (HAMT), Thurferth. 23.9 grains (1-55 g.).
Pl. II, 2. Lot 121.
Thurferth appears to be unpublished as a Northampton moneyer in this type, but he is known for the mint in the slightly earlier circumscription issue (Hild. B = BMC iii = Brooke 3 = North 749) on a coin from the Chester (1950) hoard (No. 454) and on coins without mint-signature but with the obverse legend ending em or m. The mint signature on the mint-signed coins is ambiguous, but our preference for Northampton as against Southampton, while not perhaps final, is based on the general appearance of Thurferth's two mint-signed coins and also on the greater probability that a name such as this would occur in the context of the borders of the southern Danelaw rather than on the coast of Wessex.

(4) Stamford (STANNO), Riculf. 23-1 grains (1-50 g.).
Pl. II, 3. Lot 122.
Riculf (? = Ringulf but not necessarily so) is already recorded as a Stamford moneyer in this type on the basis of a coin, perhaps a die duplicate, in the nineteenth-century S. Sharp collection (Wells (BNJ XXIII (1938-41), p. 21, 35), and another which passed through the hands of Sharp's contemporary, the dealer W. Webster (Wells 36). Since the present whereabouts of both these pieces are unknown, it is particularly satisfactory to be able to illustrate photographically a coin which completely vindicates the orthography of a moneyer's name that in this form cannot be matched at the mint in question. The spelling is one found, however, on very rare coins of Æthelred II struck at Chester and Shrewsbury during the closing years of the tenth century (BEH 1561 and 3379).

EDWARD THE MARTYR

Sole type (Hild. A = BMC I = Brooke sole type = North 763)

(5) Lincoln (li), Adelavern. 22-4 grains (1-45 g.).
Pl. II, 5. Lot 124.
Adelaver is well-attested as a Lincoln moneyer at this period. In this type we may adduce SCBI Hunter 743, a coin in the British Museum from the 1914 Chester find (Hill 34), and a coin in the Sir Francis Hill collection, all three pieces being die duplicates of the former Willes coin, and also SCBI Ashmolean 427 with the same reverse legend but from other dies.


2 Frequently met with on coins of this area and at this period is the replacement of 'O' by 'A'—a normal sound-change under Scandinavian influence cf. Aslac for OE Oslae—while 'N' for 'M' is an epigraphical quirk only too often met with on coins of this region; we might instance SCBI Hunter 771 where 'M' is consistently rendered as retrograde 'N'.
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(6) Lincoln (LNDCOL), Levig. 20-2 grains (1-31 g.).
Pl. II, 7. Lot 126.
Levig (? = Leofing) is particularly well-attested as a Lincoln moneyer in this reign. Mr. Mossop's forthcoming corpus of coins of the Lincoln mint lists a total of 15 from 5 obverse and 9 reverse dies. The only die-duplicate appears to be SCBI Hunter 748.

(7) Lincoln (LIN), Rodbert. 19-6 grains (1-27 g.).
Rodbert is already known in this type from SCBI Hunter 749 which is, however, from other dies. The ex-Willes coin is now in the Sir Francis Hill collection.

(8) Stamford (STAN), Æscman. 21-2 grains (1-36 g.).
Pl. II, 8. Lot 127.
Wells (op. cit., pp. 25 and 26) has recorded a number of coins of this moneyer and reign, but the reverse die at least appears to be unrecorded.

(9) Stamford (STANF), Cnape. 22-7 grains (1-47 g.).
Coins of Cnapa are by no means rare, and at least eight specimens underlie the entries in Wells' corpus of coins of the reign and mint (op. cit., pp. 26 and 27). The ex-Willes coin would appear to be a die-duplicate of BMC 26 and of a coin formerly in the Wells cabinet (op. cit., p. 27, no. 34). A coin unknown to Wells but certainly from the same dies is in the Hermitage Museum at Leningrad.

(10) Stamford (STANF), Hild. 23-7 grains (1-54 g.).
Pl. II, 10. Lot 129.
Again coins of the reign, mint and moneyer can scarcely be considered rare, a total of eight specimens being known to Wells (op. cit., p. 27). The ex-Willes coin seems to be a die-duplicate of one in his cabinet, and is certainly from the same reverse die as a ninth coin in the Hermitage Museum at Leningrad (itself ? a die-duplicate of Wells no. 43).

(11) Stamford (STANFORD), Ogea. 20-5 grains (1-33 g.).
Pl. II, 11. Lot 130.
Ogea(r) is one of the less common Stamford moneyers of the reign. No more than three coins need underlie the entries in Wells' corpus (op. cit., pp. 27 & 28). The present coin is a die-duplicate of BMC 30 and of a coin formerly in the Wells cabinet (no. 48).

(12) York (EFERBJ), Beolan. 21-8 grains (1-41 g.).
Pl. II, 12. Lot 131.
Beolan, from his name a moneyer of Hiberno-Norse descent (cf. supra, p. 43), was already known for the reign. We may instance a coin in the British Museum from the 1914 Chester find (Hill 71), and SCBI Copenhagen I, 820 which is apparently from the same obverse die as the ex-Willes coin.

ÆTHELRÆD II

First Small Cross type (Hild. A = BMC I = Brooke I = North 764).

(13) Lincoln (LINC), Grind. 19-4 grains (1-26 g.).
Despite the overall rarity of coins of this issue, Mr. Mossop's forthcoming corpus lists five coins of this mint and moneyer. BMC 151 and a coin in the Sir Francis Hill cabinet appear to be from the same obverse die, but the reverse die of the ex-Willes coin would seem to be new.

This concludes our review of the thirteen coins dispersed in May of last year. What we would stress is the fact that so many are die-linked with coins which can be traced back to the eighteenth century, or for which a pre-1800 English provenance may be presumed. There
is, for example, no call to suppose that SCBI Copenhagen I, 820 necessarily derives from a Danish hoard—Thomsen was an enthusiastic collector who bought at English sales—and the authorities of the Hermitage Collection are thought to have purchased important English coins in London. The die-links with SCBI Hunter 743 and 748 and with BMC Eadgar 26 and Æthelræd 151 appear all to take us back into the eighteenth century, and that with BMC Eadgar 30 at least as far back as 1854. This pattern of die-linking is surely critical, and it cannot be coincidental that the mints concerned lie all in north-eastern England. To be further noted is the fact that the parcel of coins handed down in the Willes family included no other mediaeval pieces. We can safely rule out the hypothesis of an early collector attempting to build up a collection of coins of his local mints—for one thing the date-bracket is much too narrow, while the coins of much more common issues are far too conspicuous by their absence. The preponderance of the evidence, then, must suggest very strongly that the Willes coins represent a parcel from the eighteenth-century hoard which made Lincoln and Stamford coins relatively common where English coins from the late 970's are concerned. More and more, too, one is left with the feeling that the find-spot was one not all that far removed from Stamford.