

## A NOTE OF TWO PROBLEMATICAL PENNIES OF ÆTHELRÆD II

IN a previous paper I commented on the necessity of checking the London coins of Æthelræd II in the Stockholm Systematic Collection, in order to eliminate incorrect readings from Hildebrand's *Anglosachsiska Mynt*.<sup>1</sup> There I was particularly concerned with moneyers' names. With the two coins under consideration here, it is the mint that is in question. In the case of one, reattribution is fairly certain, whilst the other is rather more problematical.

On p. 120 of the 1881 edition of *Anglosachsiska Mynt* the following entry appears:

2856 a 3 + OSFERÐ M·O LVN Typ E.

This is at first sight unexceptionable. It is preceded by three entries for coins of a London moneyer Osferth, in types B1, B2, and B3. It might seem a little odd that the moneyer should reappear in type E after an interval of twelve years, but other examples are not lacking where there is evidence for a moneyer's activity in an early and a late type but none for the intervening types.

This particular coin is in poor condition, but the mint-signature looked sufficiently unlike the form in which it is recorded for me to turn to the other mints at which an Osferth is known in this type. Among the coins of Lincoln I found the same reverse die, and was able to supply the correct reading as + OSFERÐ M·O LINT, and to conclude that the supposedly London coin is a duplicate of Hild. Æthelræd 1820. This latter coin is attributed to Lincoln by Hildebrand and in my opinion this attribution must stand. Mr. H. R. Mossop has kindly shown me a photograph of another coin on which it is possible to read the mint-signature as LINT, but there is no other known mint which such a reading would fit, and it would certainly be unwise to postulate a new mint on the grounds of these coins. Forms such as LING and LINE are found, and their attribution to Lincoln has not been questioned; the cutting of τ for c is surely an error in the same class. It is almost certainly to Lincoln that the misread 'London' coin should be reattributed.

In the case of the second coin such a definite reattribution is not possible, but it is worth calling in question Hildebrand's attribution to London. The coin is Hild. Æthelræd 2869, the moneyer Osmund, the type Long Cross or Hild. Typ D and the mint-signature is recorded as LVN. It must in fairness be said that Hildebrand did not overlook

the coin's irregularity, and provided a footnote 'slutet af inskriften oredig'—the end of the inscription is uncertain, or indistinct. In fact the whole of the mint-signature is so blundered as to make it almost valueless for purposes of assigning the coin to its mint. The form would appear to be IAVH.

A moneyer Osmund is known in Æthelræd's reign at London, Lincoln, and Stamford. There is no other Long Cross coin of Osmund at London, and at Stamford a moneyer of the name is known only in the Last Small Cross type. For Lincoln, the Systematic Collection has eight coins of an Osmund in Long Cross, seven listed in *Anglosachsiska mynt* and one added since the compilation of that work. This unlisted example appears to be struck from the same obverse die as our problematical coin.

The pattern that has emerged in the study of die-links in this phase of the Anglo-Saxon coinage is this: the same obverse die may be found on coins of different but adjacent mints, but where the same obverse purports to share reverses of widely spaced mints, there is usually evidence that some at least of the coins in question were not struck in England.<sup>2</sup> It is unlikely, then, that the Osmund penny is a genuine London coin die-linked with Lincoln. Two possibilities remain. The simplest is that the blundered coin is in fact a coin of Osmund of Lincoln, with no complications of an inter-mint die-link. This possibility has the added attraction that there is plenty of evidence for the moneyer in the type. The other explanation notes the presence of an Osmund at Stamford and postulates a die-link between that mint and Lincoln. We know of a die-link between these same mints occurring in the reign of Harthacnut<sup>3</sup> so this is by no means impossible. If the four blundered letters of mint-signature can bear any interpretation at all, it is perhaps easier to read STAN in them than a contraction for Lincoln. Against the Stamford theory is the fact that we have no evidence that the Stamford Osmund was striking earlier than 1009, the inception of the Last Small Cross type. Whilst we can be fairly certain that the coin should not be attributed to London, the claims of Lincoln and Stamford cannot well be resolved, unless future finds should give us an example of the obverse die with an unquestionable reverse of Osmund at Stamford.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Some Misread Moneyers of London', *BNJ* xxx (1961), p. 221.

<sup>2</sup> R. H. M. Dolley, 'The Relevance of Obverse Die-

links . . .' in *Commentationes de nummis in Suecia repertis*, i (1961), p. 171.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170, quoting Miss G. van der Meer.