

SOME FURTHER CRITICAL DIE-LINKS IN THE HIBERNO-NORSE SERIES

By R. H. M. DOLLEY

IN 1850 there came to light on the Baltic island of Gotland, at a place called Sibbenarve in the parish of Västerhejde, a hoard of nearly eight hundred coins (SHM Inv. 1597: SG 612). The great majority were German, and the date of deposit must fall a little after 1060, but there were also included coins from England, Denmark, Hungary, Ireland, Bohemia, the Eastern Caliphate, and Sweden. Unfortunately the hoard seems to have been somewhat neglected,



FIG. 1.

and there is some reason to think that the mass of the English coins were sold in 1885 to the London coin-dealer Lincoln.¹ By a happy chance, however, three of the Irish coins have remained in the Royal Coin Cabinet at Stockholm, and they are published here by kind permission of Dr. N. L. Rasmusson. Not one is recorded in the 1881 edition of *Anglosachsiska Mynt*, and the third is of quite exceptional interest for every student of the Hiberno-Norse series.

All three of the Irish coins were struck at Dublin some fifty or sixty years before the presumptive date of the hoard's concealment. Probably the latest is a very creditable imitation of a Last Small Cross penny of Æthelræd II of England (Fig. 1*a*). The reverse legend reads +CCOLBRANDIIODY, and the initial dittography does not appear to be due to double-striking. The weight

¹ A telegram from Lincoln to 'Riksantiquarien [Hans] Hildebrand' dated 16 Dec. 1885 is preserved in the Stockholm coin-room in the same box as the remainder of the coins from the hoard. It clearly envisages a purchase of some kind by Lincoln, though admittedly there is no reference to a specific hoard.

is 0.94 grammes (14.5 grains) which is on the light side for a coin of this issue but not so light as to cast doubt on the piece's authenticity. The die-axis is 90°, and the obverse legend begins at 11 o'clock. The portrait is of slightly unusual work, and the coin would have provided a most useful variant of Hild. Sihtric 13 even if the mint-signature had not read so clearly DX. This



FIG. 2.

spelling can only be for DYFELIN, whereas the other dies recorded for Colbrand had the equivocal spellings DM and DNM where one was always tempted to try to see some other significance.¹

Probably struck a few years earlier is our second coin (Fig. 1b), a passable imitation of a Long Cross penny of Æthelræd II by the London moneyer Ælfwine. No comparable piece is recorded in *Anglosachsiska Mynt*, but a die-duplicate is listed and illustrated as No. 21 in Roth's *Hiberno-Danish Coins*.² The weight is 1.41 grammes (21.7 grains), and the die-axis 90°. That the coin was struck not more than a year or two after the millennium is suggested very strongly by the occurrence of a cut halfpenny which may be presumed to be from the same dies in the great find from List.³ From this it would seem clear that Dublin almost immediately adopted a standard for the imitations appreciably lighter than that of the prototypes, another fundamental distinction between the Crux ('Clondalkin') and Long Cross coinages of the Ostmen.

Most important of all the Irish coins from Sibbenarve, though, is the coin of the same issue which has a reverse copied from that of a penny of the Derby moneyer Godwine (Fig. 2). As will be seen from the block, the obverse legend runs +S·IH·T·RICCVNVIEDYH. The weight is—significantly—on the high side, 1.76 grammes (27.2 grains), and the die-axis 345°. The interest of the coin is that it provides an obverse die-link between 'Derby' and 'Winchester', cf. the die-link between 'Lincoln' and 'Winchester' recently published in the *Numismatic Circular*,⁴ the obverse die being that employed

¹ DM cf. Hild. 13 and coins from same obv. but different rev. die at Leningrad and in British Museum (ex Lockett 485, ex Roth): DNM cf. Stora Sojdeby 2270 (Bror Schnittger, *Silverskatten från Stora Sojdeby*, Stockholm, 1915, p. 74—reprint with new pagination from *Fornvännen*, 1915).

² Bernard Roth, *Hiberno-Danish Coins*, London, 1910 (reprint with new pagination from *B.N.J.* vi). The coin is now in the British Museum (ex Lockett 495).

³ List 680 (K. Kersten and P. La Baume, *Vorgeschichte der Nordfriesischen Inseln*, Neumünster, 1958, p. 474).

⁴ R. H. M. Dolley, 'Significant New Die-links in the Hiberno-Norse Coinage of Dublin', *Spink's Numismatic Circular*, January, 1962, p. 6.

to strike Hild. Sihtric 99. Moreover, this is the first time in the Hiberno-Norse series that the critical CVNVNC title has been associated with a reverse legend purporting to belong to an English mint other than Winchester (cf. Roth, *op. cit.*, pp. 16–19).

As Fig. 3*a*, there is illustrated Hild. Sihtric 99, but here the chain of die-



a

b

c

d

FIG. 3.

linking is only beginning. The reverse die of the 'Derby' coin is found with at least two other obverses, Hild. Ethelred 348 (Fig. 3*b*) and Hild. Sihtric 1 (Fig. 3*c*). In other words there is now an unshakeable *nexus* not only between coins on which Sihtric uses the titles CVNVNC and REX, but also between coins of both those classes and coins which imitate the name of Æthelræd II. Unfortunately I have not yet been able to find either of the obverse dies employed with a Dublin reverse—though in the case of Hild. Sihtric 33 (Fig. 3*d*) the correspondence is so close that the possibility of recutting cannot be excluded. Indeed, one might well have claimed the die-link were it not for the apparent discrepancies between the first of the Rs in the legend, discrepancies that cannot quite be resolved by the supposition of double-striking.

For the sake of completeness there are here illustrated the two remaining dies so far recorded on which Sihtric is styled CVNVNC. The first coin (Fig. 4*a*) is Hild. 100 with a 'Winchester' mint-signature. A die-duplicate in the Lockett collection has been acquired by the British Museum.¹ So far I have been unable to trace the reverse die in the Hiberno-Norse series, though I suspect that Hild. Ethelred 4245 which exhibits much the same workmanship will one day be proved to emanate from the same stable. The second coin was published by Schnittger in his account of the great Gotland hoard from Stora Sojdeby,² but has had to wait until now for illustration (Fig. 4*b*). This is despite the fact that it is the only coin which formally links the coins with the CVNVNC title with the Hiberno-Norse mint at Dublin, the retrograde legend on

¹ Lockett 495.

² *Op. et pag. cit.*, 2278.

the reverse assigning the coin to the most prolific of all the Dublin moneyers, the celebrated Faraman or 'Færemin'.¹ Again I have not yet found the reverse die used with another obverse, but my suspicion is that such a coin will one day be found. The weight of the Stora Sojdeby coin is 1.54 grammes (23.7 grains), and the die-axis 270°. To date I have noted eight of the CVNVNC coins at Stockholm, and the weights are as follows:

1.76, 1.73, 1.60, 1.54 (2), 1.52, 1.49 1.30 grammes
27.2, 26.7, 24.7, 23.8 (2), 23.5, 23.0, 20.1 grains.

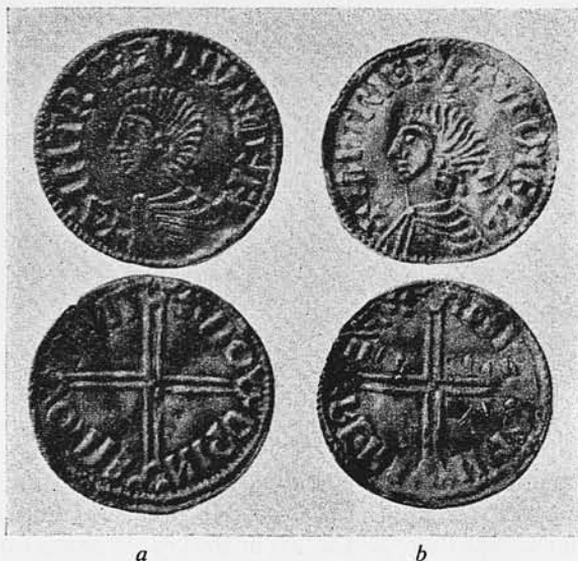


FIG. 4.

These figures must surely vindicate the suggestion made on p. 280 of Volume XXIX of this *Journal* that 'coins reading SIHTRIC and CUNUNC are generally "heavy"', and I think that it is becoming clear from the style of the coins as well as from the metrology that they belong at the head of the Long Cross imitations. In this connexion, too, it cannot be without significance that the die-linked REX and 'Æthelræd' coins are both 'light' and 'heavy', Hild. Ethelred 348 weighing 1.59 grammes (24.5 grains) and four specimens of Hild. Sihtric 1, 1.32 grammes (20.3 grains), 1.29 grammes (19.9 grains), 1.24 grammes (19.2 grains), and 1.22 grammes (18.9 grains).

¹ There is a more subtle but none the less valid connexion between the Stora Sojdeby coin and the 'Derby' piece from Sibbenarve. In the British Museum there is a coarse Hiberno-Norse penny which has the +GIODPINE M'C DEOR legend RETROGRADE.