

THE BUCKINGHAM MINT

By R. H. M. DOLLEY, D. J. ELLIOTT and F. ELMORE JONES

[Pl. IV]

THERE is no evidence for the existence of a mint at Buckingham before the recoinage which undoubtedly took place in the last years of the reign of Eadgar. At this time, evidently to facilitate this and subsequent regular recoinages, a mint was opened in virtually every centre of any importance, whereas before mints had tended to spring up sporadically in major towns or to meet peculiar local needs. The earliest coins of Buckingham to have survived both belong to the first recoinage issue which continued to be struck under Edward the Martyr and for a year or so under Æthelræd II. As it happens, neither penny has the name of Eadgar and both have the name of Edward the Martyr, and so can be dated between 975 and 978. None may have been struck for Æthelræd II, but the probability is that some were issued in the reign of Eadgar, in which case the creation of the Buckingham mint could be dated a year or two before 975, and Mr. Dolley would still suggest Michaelmas 973 as the most likely time. The two coins of Edward the Martyr, silver pennies like all the other pieces here considered, are of the greatest rarity. One is in the British Museum, the other in the Statens Historiska Museum at Stockholm, and both are as it happens from one and the same reverse die. The moneyer is one Tunulf, a personal name unusual where Anglo-Saxon coins are concerned.

That there are no coins surviving from the first year or so of the reign of Æthelræd II does not surprise, and especially since it is not impossible that none were struck, but a *lacuna* which is perhaps unexpected embraces the first two substantive issues of the reign, the so-called *First* and *Second Hand* types which carry the story down to 991 or thereabouts. Coins of the next issue, the *Crux* type, are even more common, and Buckingham reappears on the scene with three pennies, all of Tunulf and from two pairs of dies. One is in the British Museum and two are at Stockholm. Probably in 997 there was felt the need for a small supplementary issue, and Tunulf appears to have been no longer available for the moneyer is Sibwine, possibly a journeyman from London as he is almost at once superseded. The unique coin of this issue is in the Royal Coin Cabinet at Copenhagen. The ensuing *Long Cross* type was struck on a very large scale at every available mint in England, and a pointer to the output of Buckingham being comparatively exiguous is the circumstance that the five pennies extant today, two specimens in English private cabinets, one in the British Museum, and one apiece at Stockholm and at Copenhagen, not only are all by one moneyer, a certain Ælfwi(g), but are from a single pair of dies. There follows a second major *lacuna* in our knowledge of the operations of the Buckingham mint. That we have no coin of the *Helmet* type could be due to chance, but if the mint had not been already closed there would be an obvious occasion in the winter of 1009/1010 which would explain the absence of the relatively common so-called *Last Small Cross* issue, the Viking attack, which, as Mr. C. S. S. Lyon is in process of showing, brought coining at Oxford and Wallingford to an abrupt halt.

The interruption in the output of the Buckingham mint was only temporary, and, if closed, it certainly reopened early in the reign of Cnut. There was a very large emission of coin from mints all over England, and this time Buckingham's share was more than nominal. Of Cnut's

first type there are extant no fewer than nine pennies, and indicative of striking on a considerable scale is the circumstance that they are from seven obverse and seven reverse dies. The moneyers are Ælfward, of whom there is a unique coin in the British Museum, and Leofric, six of whose coins are at Stockholm and two at Copenhagen. There is some reason to think that a pair of dies could strike £40 in silver pennies, possibly more¹, and on this telling Buckingham's contribution to the coined wealth of England may well have been of the order of three or four hundredweight of silver pennies—some allowance has to be made for the probability that the extant coins are not representative of all the dies that in fact were employed.

It would seem that this bout of activity was short-lived. For the *Pointed Helmet* issue precisely two Buckingham coins of Leofric are known, one in Stockholm and one in Copenhagen, and they prove to be from one pair of dies, while for the *Short Cross* issue, which appears to have coincided with the last six years of Cnut's reign, the Buckingham mint is attested by a fragmentary coin, apparently of Leofric, which again is in the Stockholm collection. The accession in 1035 of Harold Harefoot saw Leofric replaced by a certain Brihtwine who is known from die-duplicate coins in Stockholm and in Copenhagen, but he in turn was very soon superseded by one Leofwine whose five coins, each unique of the type and mint, span the last years of Harold, the sole reign of Harthacnut, and the first five years or so of that of Edward the Confessor. Four are in Stockholm, and the fifth in Copenhagen. An interesting detail is that in the period c. 1045 Leofwine was also the Aylesbury moneyer, but there is no die-link with Buckingham. A minor *lacuna* occurs in Edward the Confessor's fourth substantive type, but Leofwine probably did strike it as he is known, from a unique coin in the Aylesbury Museum, for the *Expanding Cross* issue which seems to have been current between 1050 and 1053. Again there is a minor *lacuna*, and the moneyer of the unique coin of the *Sovereign/Eagles* issue is a certain Theodred. His career was very short, for in the very next issue the Buckingham moneyer is one Æstan or Æthelstan. Four coins of his are known, all from one and the same pair of dies. Two, like the preceding coin, are in the Guildhall Museum in London, and two are in English private cabinets. The indications are that the output of the Buckingham mint was exiguous in the extreme, and, though the mint may have lingered on for a few years, the probability must be that it did not survive the Norman Conquest.

There are known to us, then, 36 coins of the Buckingham mint, the earliest struck c. 975 and the latest c. 1060, and of these only one third are in English collections. The number of obverse dies represented is 24, and of reverse 23, and it may be calculated from probability theory that if the surviving coins can be taken as a random sample of the whole output of the mint and that the number of coins struck from each die did not vary greatly (assumptions which may or may not be sufficiently close to the truth), the number of dies actually used at Buckingham down the years is unlikely to have been less than thirty pairs nor more than double this number². On this telling something of the order of a ton of silver may have passed through the Buckingham mint in 85 years, but little of this would have been in the shape of bullion. At each sexennial or triennial recoinage the bulk of the silver was obtained by calling in and melting down the coins of the previous issue. It must be admitted that there were few 'county towns' where the mint was so comparatively unimportant, and this is doubtless a measure of the extent to which Buckingham was overshadowed by London and, to a lesser degree, by Oxford and by Wallingford. There is no occasion when we need

¹ Cf. *NC* 1963, p. 106.

² This computation is based on C. S. S. Lyon,

'The Estimation of the Number of Dies employed in a Coinage', *SNC* September 1965, p. 180.

suppose that more than one moneyer was at work, and the impression is left that the mint may have operated not so much to meet a genuine local need for coin, but to serve as a reminder that the place had borough status. In the tenth century a code of laws had prescribed that any borough might have one moneyer without further ado, and, though we must be careful not to assume that this principle necessarily obtained a century later, there can be little doubt that the possession of a mint was in some way a status symbol. To put the economic importance of Buckingham in its proper perspective, though, we should perhaps recall that in the period *c.* 1017–1023 the Oxford mint had been staffed by a total of at least fourteen moneyers, and the Wallingford mint by at least six, while if the surviving coins are indicative of the total output the contribution of Buckingham to the coined wealth of England over the whole period may be thought of in terms of 0.05%.

The names of the nine Buckingham moneyers are composed of seven protothemes (Ælf-, Æ(thel)-, Briht-, (for Beorht-), Leof-, Sib-, Theod- and Tun-) and seven deuterothermes (-ræd, -ric, -stan, -ward, -wi(g) -wine and -(w)ulf), and it is possible that the office of moneyer was to some extent hereditary, though this is far from being prosopographically obvious. What the coins do supply, though, is a rich series of closely dated though highly abbreviated forms for the name of the mint, and students of English place-names may welcome the following summary of the present position:—

<i>approx</i> <i>date</i>		<i>approx.</i> <i>date</i>	
973–979	Bucm	1037–1040	Bu
991–997	Bucig, Bucin	1040–1042	Bucin
997	Buccinga	1042–1044	Bu
997–1003	Bucci	1044–1046	Bucii
1017–1023	Buci, Bui, Buh (3) †	1046–1048	Buen
1023–1029	Bucci	1050–1053	Bucien (for Buccin)
1029–1035	Buc	1056–1059	Buc
1035–1037	Bu	1059–1062	Bucie

† also blunderings Duh (for Buh) and (?) Bruc.

CORPUS OF EXTANT COINS OF THE BUCKINGHAM MINT

The coins are arranged chronologically in the sequence adopted for other recent papers of this kind. Where die-duplicates are concerned, specimens in public collections are listed above those in private cabinets, but for purposes of illustration priority has been given to pieces which have not been illustrated elsewhere, and within this category to the less accessible coins.

Present ownership is indicated by the following codes:—

A	Buckinghamshire County Museum, Aylesbury, No. 22.
AHFB	A. H. F. Baldwin, Esq., No. 24c.
BM	Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum, London, Nos. 1, 3a, 6a, 7.
FEJ	F. Elmore Jones, Esq., Nos. 6d, 24d.
GML	Guildhall Museum, London, Nos. 23, 24a & b.
HHK	H. H. King, Esq., No. 6c.
K	Royal Coin Cabinet, National Museum, Copenhagen, Nos. 5, 6c, 8b, 12b, 14b, 16b, 21.
SHM	Royal Coin Cabinet, Statens Historiska Museum, Stockholm, Nos. 2, 3b, 4, 6b, 8a, 9, 10, 11, 12a, 13, 14a, 15, 16a, 17, 18, 19, 20.

Every die and die-combination is illustrated on the accompanying Plate IV. Die-duplicates numbered 3a, 6 c & e, 8b, 14b and 24c will be found illustrated in the different works cited. Photographs of the remaining pieces (6a & b, 12a, 16b and 24a & b) are in the possession of Mr. D. J. Elliott. Thanks are due to the owners and/or custodians of the different coins for supplying photographs or for making them available for photography, and also for permission to reproduce them here.

Moneyer TUNULF.

EDWARD THE MARTYR (975-978).

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| (1) <i>Obv.</i> | +EADPEARDREXANGLOX(lig) | [Pl. IV, 1] |
| <i>Rev.</i> | +TVNVLFM-OBVCM | |
| | BM, <i>ex</i> Lockett 2758. | Wt. 18.4 gr. (1.19 g.) |
| (2) <i>Obv.</i> | +EADPEARDREXANL(or G?)OX | [Pl. IV, 2] |
| <i>Rev.</i> | From same die as (1) | |
| | SHM, Hild. 1. | Wt. 16.1 gr. (1.04 g.). |

N.B. The common reverse die of the above two coins in each case is used in a very rusty state.

ÆTHELRÆD II (978-1016).

Cruz issue (991-997?).

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|-----------------|---|-------------------------|
| (3) <i>Obv.</i> | +ÆDELREÆDREXANG(lig)LORX(lig) | |
| <i>Rev.</i> | +TVNVLFM-OBVCIG | |
| | (a) BM, <i>BMC</i> 14 (ill. Pl. XV. 3). | |
| | (b) SHM, Inv. 21613/16. | [Pl. IV, 3]. |
| | Wts. (a) 22.3 gr. (1.45 g.). | (b) 24.1 gr. (1.56 g.). |
| (4) <i>Obv.</i> | +ÆDELREÆDREXANG(lig)LORX(lig) | [Pl. IV, 4]. |
| | +TVNVLFM-OBVCIN | |
| | SHM, Hild. 116. | Wt. 23.7 gr. (1.54 g.). |

*Moneyer SIBWINE.*Diademed *Cruz* variety with sceptre (summer 997?).

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|-----------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| (5) <i>Obv.</i> | +ÆDELREÆDREXANG(lig)LORX | [Pl. IV, 5]. |
| <i>Rev.</i> | +SIBPINEM-OBVCCINGA | |
| | K, <i>SCBI</i> 37. | Wt. 23.7 gr. (1.54 g.). |

N.B. This variety is known only for Aylesbury, Buckingham and Totnes, *cf. BNJ* xxix, ii (1959), pp. 259-264.

*Moneyer ÆLFWI.**Long Cross* issue (997-1003?).

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|-----------------|---|-------------------------|
| (6) <i>Obv.</i> | +ÆTHELRÆDREXANG(lig)LORI. | |
| <i>Rev.</i> | +ÆEL FPIM n OB VCCI | |
| | (a) BM, <i>ex</i> Evans, <i>ex</i> Sweden. | |
| | (b) SHM, Hild. 115. | |
| | (c) K, <i>SCBI</i> 36, <i>ex</i> 1853 Iholm find. | |
| | (d) FEJ, <i>ex</i> Parsons (1954) 165. | [Pl. IV, 6]. |
| | (e) HHK, <i>ex</i> Lockett 700 (ill.). | |
| Wts. | (a) 26.7 gr. (1.73 g.); | (b) 27.6 gr. (1.79 g.). |
| | (c) 26.7 gr. (1.73 g.); | (d) 26.0 gr. (1.68 g.); |
| | | (e) 26.7 gr. (1.73 g.). |

Moneyer ÆLFWARD.

CNUT (1016–1035).

Quatrefoil issue (1017–1023).

- (7) *Obv.* +CNVTREXANGLOR (beginning 7 o'clock) [Pl. IV, 7].
Rev. +EL | FPI | RD | BVI
BM, *BMC* 493 ('Romney') – ill. Pl. XIX, 7). Wt. 23.0 gr. (1.49 g.).

N.B. Ælfward is the Aylesbury moneyer in this issue, *cf.* Hild. 4 which also is of this style which is one associated with London.

Moneyer LEOFRIC.

- (8) *Obv.* +CNVTREXANGLOR(lig)X.
Rev. +LE | OFR | ICM | BVC
(a) SHM, Hild. 114. [Pl. IV, 8]
(b) K, *SCBI* 120, *ex* 1859 Kelstrup find.
Wts. (a) 9.5 gr. (0.62 g.); (b) 19.3 gr. (1.25 g.).
N.B. The style of these coins is one associated with East Anglia.

- (9) *Obv.* +CNVTREXANGLORV [Pl. IV, 9].
Rev. +LE | OFR | ICB | VCI
SHM, Inv. 5804/21. Wt. 9.3 gr. (0.60 g.).

N.B. This obverse, and the four that follow, are of a style peculiar to the general area of Oxford.

- (10) *Obv.* +CNVTR——LOR. [Pl. IV, 10].
Rev. + — | — FR | ICE | RVC
SHM, Hild. 115. Fragment.

N.B. The mint signature BRVC should indicate Bristol, but is more probably a blundering of the dittography BBVC. Leofric is not known for Bristol, the style of the coin points to the area of Oxford and the coins that follow evidence a remarkable progressive deterioration in the mint-signature.

- (11) *Obv.* +CNVTREXANGLOV: [Pl. IV, 11].
Rev. +LE | OFR | ICM | BVH
SHM, 16925/625. Wt. 16.1 gr. (1.04 g.).
- (12) *Obv.* +CNVTREXANGLORV
Rev. +LE | OFR | ICM | B (or D?)VH
(a) SHM, Inv. 5804/37. [Pl. IV, 12].
(b) K, *SCBI*, 121, Bruun Gift 37.
Wts. (a) 14.9 gr. (0.97 g.); (b) 15.0 gr. (0.98 g.).
- (13) *Obv.* +CNVTREXANGLOV: [Pl. IV, 13].
Rev. +LEO | OFR | ICM | DVH
SHM, Hild. 361 ('Dunwich').

N.B. The attribution of this coin to Dunwich, a 'mythical mint', was rejected as early as 1958 (*cf.* *SNC* 1958, p. 229). Although there is no die link to clinch the argument, Leofric is the Buckingham moneyer in this issue, and the coins listed above not only are consistent in style with Leofric coins certainly of Buckingham, but are of a style found otherwise to predominate only at near-by Oxford.

Pointed Helmet issue (1023–1029?).

- (14) *Obv.* +CNV: TREXAN
Rev. +L·EOFR·ICONBVCC·I [Pl. IV, 14].
(a) SHM, Hild. 116.
(b) K, *SCBI* 122, *ex* Thomsen 9044.
Wts. (a) 16.7 gr. (1.08 g.); (b) 17.9 gr. (1.16 g.).

Short Cross issue (1029–1035?).

- (15) *Obv.* ———T REC——— [Pl. IV, 15].
Rev. +————CONBVC
SHM, Hild. 117. Wt. 10.2 gr. (0.66 g.)—cut halfpenny.

Moneyer BRIHTWINE.

HAROLD I (1035-1040).
Jewel Cross Issue (1035-1037?).

- (16) *Obv.* +HARO LDREX
Rev. +BRIHTPINEONBV
 (a) SHM, Hild. 37. [Pl. IV, 16].
 (b) K, ex 1943 Haagerup Find.
 Wts. (a) 17.6 gr. (1.14 g.); (b) 17.3 gr. (1.12 g.).

Moneyer LEOFWINE

Fleur-de-lis issue (1037-1040?).

- (17) *Obv.* +HARO: LDREX [Pl. IV, 17].
Rev. +LE | OPF | INEO | NBV:
 SHM, Hild. 38. Wt. 15.9 gr. (1.03 g.).

HARTHACNUT (1040-1042).

Arm-and-sceptre issue (1040-1042?).

- (18) *Obv.* ———R: DA———— [Pl. IV, 18].
Rev. —————NEONBVCIN
 SHM, Hild. 10. Large fragment.

EDWARD THE CONFESSOR (1042-1066).

Pax issue (1042-1044?).

- (19) *Obv.* +EDPERD REXA: [Pl. IV, 19].
Rev. +LE | OPF | INE | OBV
 SHM, Hild. 27. Wt. 17.1 gr. (1.11 g.).

Radiate/small cross issue (1044-1046?).

- (20) *Obv.* +EDPER DREXA [Pl. IV, 20].
Rev. +LEOPINEONBVCII
 SHM, Inv. 14091/705 (Stora Sojdeby find). Wt. 18.5 gr. (1.20 g.).

Trefoil-quadrilateral issue (1046-1048?).

- (21) *Obv.* +EDRE REXA [Pl. IV, 21].
Rev. +LEOPINEONBVCIN:
 K, ex 1927, Kirke Væriøse find. Wt. 13.6 gr. (0.88 g.).

Expanding cross issue (1050-1053?).

- (22) *Obv.* +EDPE RDRE [Pl. IV, 22].
Rev. +LEOPINEONBVCIN
 A ex Carlyon-Britton 695 (illustrated) Wt. not recorded. Unusual work.

Moneyer THEODRÆD

Sovereign/eagles issue (1056-1059?).

- (23) *Obv.* EADPARDREXANGLO. [Pl. IV, 23].
Rev. +DEODREDONBVC
 GML, ex 1872 Walbrook ('City') find. Wt. 19.8 gr. (1.28 g.).

This coin was exhibited by Mr. Elmore Jones at a meeting of the British Numismatic Society in June 1952, but no detailed listing of the readings of the 21 coins exhibited on this occasion appeared in the *Journal*. Theodred is not otherwise known as a Buckingham moneyer, but BVC is an impeccable if very abbreviated mint-signature, and we are not entitled

to entertain seriously the suggestion that it could be for BRVC (Bristol), it being much more plausible to intercalate a *hapax* at Buckingham, a mint not otherwise known for this and the preceding type, than at Bristol where the pattern of the coinage of a very substantial mint is so much better attested.

Moneyer ÆSTAN (Æthelstan).

Hammer cross issue (1059–1062?).

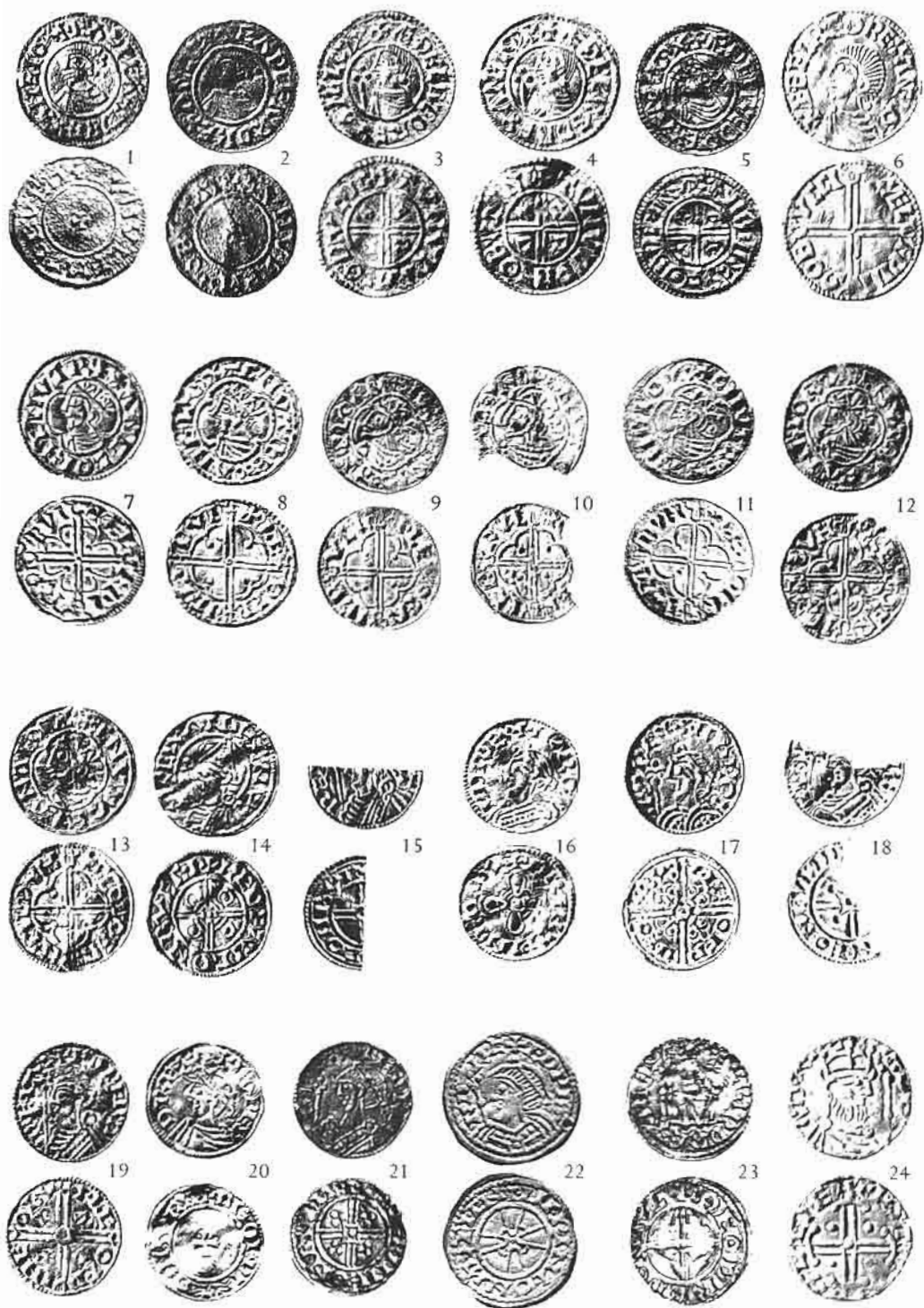
- (24) *Obv.* +EADPA RDRE
Rev. ÆSTANONBVCIE (additional pellet in each angle).
 (a) GML, *ex* 1872 Walbrook ('City') find.
 (b) GML, *ex* 1872 Walbrook ('City') find.
 (c) AHFB, *ex* Carlyon-Britton 622 (illustrated), *ex* Sir John Evans,
ex 1872 Walbrook ('City') find
 (d) FEJ, without provenance. [Pl. IV, 24].
 Wts. (a) and (b) 18.0 gr., 17.7 gr. (1.17g., 1.15 g.); (d) 19.1 gr. (1.24 g.).

APPENDIX

Mention should perhaps be made of two coins which in the past have been associated with the Buckingham mint. The first is in the British Museum, *ex* Drabble 442 and there attributed to Buckingham. It was acquired by the Museum as a particularly interesting example of a Scandinavian imitation, the obverse copying with fair success a *Last Small Cross* penny of York, but the reverse, also of *Small Cross* type, exhibiting a completely blundered legend optimistically rendered by the Drabble cataloguer 'TOEHAFBSCIT+EBVFXE (Toenaf fecit?)'. The second is in the Hunterian Museum at Glasgow (*SCBI* 1228), and is a perfectly genuine Bristol penny of Harold II on which the reverse legend has been altered by tooling, the mint-signature BVCTN clearly superseding the original BRVCCE. The culprit is almost certainly the notorious White, and the alteration suggestive of the extreme rarity—and hence desirability—of Buckingham coins in eighteenth-century cabinets. There is some evidence, too, that Hunter and Taylor Combe had seen through the deception.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The thanks of the authors are due to a number of museum curators and not only those whose coins are listed above—in an enquiry of this sort negative answers are no less valuable and may involve the curator in as long a search through his records and cabinets. The writers of this paper must also acknowledge their indebtedness to Mr. C. S. S. Lyon who read through an early draft and offered a number of most useful suggestions.



DOLLEY, ELLIOTT, AND ELMORE JONES;
 COINS OF THE BUCKINGHAM MINT.

