

# THE DROITWICH MINT AND *BMC* TYPE XIV OF EDWARD THE CONFESSOR

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THERE has recently appeared a coin of the very rare *BMC* type XIV of Edward the Confessor which we believe should be attributed to a mint at Droitwich. This significant piece throws light on a number of important aspects both of its mint and of its type. Although consideration of the two interacts at a number of points we have felt that, since the implications in each case go rather wider, it would be more convenient to discuss them in two separate but related notes.<sup>1</sup>

## *An Eleventh-century Mint at Droitwich*

More than seventy years ago Carlyon-Britton drew attention to the fact that eleventh-century coins were known to have been struck at mints situated in all but a very few of the composite boroughs in Domesday, and suggested that it might be worth trying to identify coins of the others.<sup>2</sup> In the case of Axbridge he correctly supposed that they might be found amongst those attributed to Axminster (?) and Exeter, but adequate evidence has hitherto been lacking to establish that coins were struck in any of the four other boroughs which he regarded as possible mints, Calne, Droitwich, Grantham, and Wimborne. More recently Professor Loyn, in observing that 'there is scarcely a single "Domesday" borough of importance in 1066 that has failed to preserve at least some coins as evidence of its activity in the late Anglo-Saxon period', remarked that 'Droitwich and perhaps Grantham seem the two conspicuous exceptions.'<sup>3</sup> He went on to suggest that in this connection 'numismatists might well ponder' the mint-signature PICNEH on a coin of Harold II, by a moneyer Godric, from the Rotherham hoard. Professor Dolley had already doubted the attribution of this coin and before he left the British Museum had placed it beside a new ticket reading 'DROITWICH?'. Subsequently, in the Elmore-Jones sale catalogue it was suggested that lot 900, an Edward the Confessor coin of the Facing Bust type (*BMC* XIII) and with the mint-reading PICC, might be from the same mint.

The attribution of these coins to Droitwich, however, remained speculative in the absence of some evidence of localization. This has now been supplied by the new coin, which is of Godric, with a mint-signature beginning PIC— and is of *BMC* type XIV, the variant of the Confessor's last type (Pyramids; *BMC* XV), which has a facing bust instead of the usual profile. The significance of this is twofold. First, the five undoubted mints of type XIV are situated in two small areas, one in Kent (Dover

<sup>1</sup> For detailed comments on a draft of this paper, we are greatly indebted to Mr. F. Eimore Jones, who had himself noticed the significance of the new coin. We would also like to thank Professor Michael Dolley, Mrs. Margaret Gelling, Mr. Peter Mitchell, and Professor

Dorothy Whitelock for responding to our inquiries on various points.

<sup>2</sup> *BNJ* iii (1906), 167.

<sup>3</sup> *Anglo-Saxon Coins*, ed. Dolley, 1951, pp. 132 and 134 (n. 23).

and Sandwich), the other in a corridor up the west side of southern England that embraces Droitwich (Cricklade, Worcester, and Tamworth). Second, amongst the type XIV coins that have been attributed to Worcester are two in the name of Heathwulf, a moneyer with clear western associations in the 1070s, whose mint-readings from the Hammer Cross type of Edward the Confessor to the Conquest prove, in fact, to be more akin to those of Godric than to the normal Worcester readings of the period.

Droitwich lies between Worcester and Tamworth and is therefore a natural candidate for coins of type XIV with a suitable mint-signature. In the eleventh century it was the centre of the salt industry in the west midlands.<sup>4</sup> Its normal name was *S(e)altwic*, but in Domesday Book it is *Wich* alone, and in Saxon times it was also variously referred to as '*the Wic*', '*Wictune*', *in vico (emptorio) salis*, etc.<sup>5</sup> Worcester, on the other hand, normally appears on coins of Edward the Confessor in a form of *Wihreceastre* or similar, e.g. PIHR, PIHER, PIHRA, PIHRECE, and so on. Some coins by Ægelwine of BMC type IX (Sovereign) read PIGR, representing the form *Wigra-ceastre*, but in other types he has more usual spellings. Not surprisingly, Worcester coins have often been listed as Winchester, and in some cases there is doubt between the two.<sup>6</sup> But neither of these mints seems likely to have been represented by forms beginning PIC—, except perhaps by an isolated error for PINC or PIG, and any moneyer who regularly uses PIC forms was presumably striking elsewhere.

The mint-readings on coins of Godric and Heathwulf are set out below. All except the first and last coins are illustrated on Pl. III to which the numbers in brackets refer:

	<i>Godric</i>	<i>Heathwulf (or -wi)</i>
Edward the Confessor		
BMC type XI (Hammer Cross)		PIC <sup>7</sup>
XIII (Facing Bust/Cross)	PICC <sup>8</sup> (1)	PIC <sup>9</sup> (2)
XIV (Pyramids with facing bust)	PICRIC <sup>10</sup> (3)	
	(OR -PIC, OR -RVF)	PI, <sup>11</sup> (4) PIEPIC <sup>12</sup> (5)
Harold II	PICNEH <sup>13</sup> (6)	PIC <sup>14</sup> (7)
William I		
BMC type IV (Two Sceptres)		PIG <sup>15</sup> (8)
V (Two Stars)		HREF <sup>16</sup>

<sup>4</sup> See *FCH* i, 269–70.

<sup>5</sup> *The Wic* in the will of Wulfgeat is probably Droitwich (D. Whitelock, *Anglo-Saxon Wills* (Cambridge, 1930), pp. 56–7; see also A. J. Robertson, *Anglo-Saxon Charters* (Cambridge, 1956), pp. 116–17). *Wictune*, which occurs in BCS 1282, also denotes Droitwich, according to P. H. Sawyer (*Anglo-Saxon Charters* (London, 1968), p. 250). For the phrase *in vico emptorio salis*, see T. Hearne, ed., *Hemingi Chartularium Ecclesiae Wigorniensis* (Oxford, 1723), p. 565. We are indebted to Professor Whitelock for these references.

<sup>6</sup> e.g. BMC 1439 is of Worcester (as noted by Brooke in his copy of BMC) not Winchester, while BMC 1314 is apparently of Worcester, but might be Winchester. We have resisted the temptation to attribute Hildebrand 201 of Harthacnut, reading PICR, to Droitwich in view of other coins with the same moneyer's name of Harthacnut (H. 202) and Harold I (H. 1001–3) with undoubted Winchester signatures, but such a form is most unusual.

<sup>7</sup> City hoard, NC 1876, p. 369.

<sup>8</sup> BM ex Elmore-Jones 900; Carlyon-Britton 640 (ill.). Both are from the same pair of dies.

<sup>9</sup> BMC 1486 ('Winchester').

<sup>10</sup> Lucas lot 18 (Glendinning, 9 June 1976). The Lucas coins, mostly late Saxon and Norman, were largely drawn from the Chaneton (1866) and Shillington finds (for which see C. E. Blunt and B. H. I. H. Stewart, 'A Parcel from the Shillington (1871) Hoard?', *Num. Circ.*, Sept. 1977, p. 354).

<sup>11</sup> SCBI Norweb 217.

<sup>12</sup> J. J. North, *English Hammered Coinage*, vol. i, pl. XII, 26.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. 28; Dolley, *Anglo-Saxon Pennies*, 1964, fig. 48 (enlarged); BM ex Rotherham hoard (BNJ xxiii (1938–40), 273).

<sup>14</sup> BMC 113 ('Winchester').

<sup>15</sup> Hunterian Museum, Glasgow. We agree with Brooke's reading of the mint-signature on this coin (written on the back of the cast in BM) as PIG (cf. BMC, p. ccl). A round c is not found at this period.

<sup>16</sup> BMC 320 (pl. XI, 15).

The persistence of the PIC element on four consecutive types in the 1060s, without any of the forms associated with Worcester, appears to us to constitute an overwhelming case for removing Heathewulf's pre-Conquest coins from that mint. This case is not affected by the PIC coin of William I's fourth issue, which must be attributed to Worcester, since there are no post-Conquest PIC coins known and the same name, probably indicating the same person, occurs on a coin of the next type with the reading HREF, which clearly denotes the not very distant mint of Hereford. Taking these points together with the geographical pattern of BMC type XIV of the Confessor, we are left in little doubt that the PIC of Heathewulf's pre-Conquest coins represents the place known in the eleventh century as *Wich* and now as Droitwich. Although assuredly of the same mint and moneyer, it is difficult to interpret the longer form PIEPIC made possible by shortening the moneyer's name to HEDEWI.<sup>17</sup> (This itself is a curious spelling, since *-wi* would normally represent *-wig* or on coins occasionally *-wine*; it is not to be expected as an abbreviation of *-wulf*, and Professor Whitelock has suggested to us that it might result from copying *Hethew*.) The reading PIEPIC, however, is apparently akin to Godric's PICRIC (or PICPIC?, or PICRVF?) in the same type, and in spite of the curious form PICNEH, which is just as difficult to explain in terms of a mint name *Wich*,<sup>18</sup> we do not think that Godric's coins can reasonably be attributed to a different mint from Heathewulf's.<sup>19</sup>

The name Godric had earlier appeared on Edward's Expanding Cross type (BMC V) with a clear Winchester reading,<sup>20</sup> but it is missing in the three main types which intervene between this and the PICC coins, and there is no reason to associate the two. Equally, the occurrence of a Godric in BMC type XIV at Sandwich also can be regarded as no more than coincidence. Godric was at this period an extremely common name, but it is perhaps worth remarking that Domesday is full of references to land in Worcestershire belonging to Godric, thegn of King Edward.

It is clear that Droitwich possessed considerable local importance as a result of its saltworks in the mid eleventh century, and it is quite possible that its activities as a mint are by no means fully represented by the few coins so far recorded. Its earliest identified coin is of the same issue as the unique coin from the other small mint in the county, Pershore.<sup>21</sup> Otherwise, the dominance of the county mint of Worcester seems to have been as great as that of Gloucester, and suggests administration of a quite different kind from that of the West Saxon counties of Somerset and Wiltshire to the south, where coinage was much more often produced at smaller, local mints.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>17</sup> BMC 113 of Harold reads HEADEPI and BMC 320 of William, HEDEPI. The Hunterian coin of Worcester reads HEADEPVLF.

<sup>18</sup> Regarding the longer forms, Dr. Gelling has suggested to us (letter 28.8.76) that the die-sinker might have been 'dissatisfied with the undistinguished name *wic*' and have tried to make it more distinctive by doubling or amplifying it. Professor Whitelock (letter 20.8.76) wonders if PIEPIC might possibly be a corrupt form of the *Wic*. Both these ideas are, of course, admittedly speculative.

<sup>19</sup> Carlyon-Britton attributed his coin of Godric to

Watchet. No coins of that mint have been identified between BMC type VII (Helmet) of Edward and BMC type VI (Sword) of William I, when the moneyer is Sigolf, whose coins of this and later types read PICDE, PICED[1], and PIC[ (M. A. S. Blackburn, 'The Mint of Watchet', *BNJ* xlv (1974), 13-38; note Dr. Gelling's comments on the abnormality of the *W*-spelling, p. 37).

<sup>20</sup> PINC, City hoard, *NC* 1876, p. 371.

<sup>21</sup> Lockett 847 (*BNJ* vi. 35). The coin is on a typically small west midlands flan.

<sup>22</sup> There are several other *WIC*s in western Mercia, for example, Middlewich, Nantwich, and Northwich. It has

*BMC type XIV of Edward the Confessor*

*BMC* XIV is an extremely rare type. In *BMC* itself there is one specimen only (no. 157). Six were noted in 1905 by Carlyon-Britton,<sup>23</sup> while Elmore-Jones was able to add four more in 1957.<sup>24</sup> The total can now be increased to fourteen, of six mints and from ten or eleven pairs of dies, which we now list, with some additional information. Die-duplicates are listed under the same number.

1. Cricklade, Leofred.  
LEOFRED ON CREELA. Same rev. die as *BMC* 158 (type XV). *BMC* 157, ex Chancton hoard (NC 1867); North, *English Hammered Coinage*, vol. i, pl. XII, p. 25.
2. Dover, Manwine.  
MANPINE ON DOPER. Same rev. die as *BMC* 193 (type XV).  
(a) Ashmolean Museum (SCBI 1062), ex Lockett 857 with pedigree going back to Brice. Ruding, pl. 25, 25 (then Rebello) is probably this coin; the Dymock manuscript adds above 'Rebello', 'Bluett' of which the meaning is not clear.  
(b) Carlyon-Britton 643 (ill.), later Mann sale lot 177. No pedigree but probably the specimen recorded as being in the City hoard (NC 1876).
3. Droitwich, Godric.  
GODRIC ON PIERIE (OF -PIC, OF -RVF.?). Glendinging, 9 June 1976, lot 18 (ill.); see note 10.
4. —, Heathewulf.  
HEAEPVLF ON PI. *SCBI* Norweb 217, with pedigree going back to Martin, 1859.
5. —, —.  
HEDEPI ON PIEPIC. J. J. North (ill. op. cit., pl. XII, 26), ex Argyll and with pedigree probably going back to Bearman (in 1905).
6. Sandwich, Godric.  
GODRIC ON SANDPI. City hoard (NC 1876, p. 362), present whereabouts unknown. Moneyer otherwise recorded for this mint only in *BMC* type XIII (BM ex Taffs 104).
7. Tamworth, Bruning.  
BRVNING ON TAM.  
(a) Birmingham Museum, *SCBI* Midlands 484, ex Staunton, 1875.  
(b) Tamworth Castle, *SCBI* Midlands 485, with pedigree back to Bearman (in 1905).  
(c) Elmore-Jones sale, lot 811 (ill.).
8. Worcester, Æglwine.  
IEGLPINE ON PIHRIC (OF -RE?). *Num. Circ.*, Apr. 1957, col. 157 (ill.), no pedigree.
9. —, Ælfgeard.  
IELFGEARD ON PH. Drabble 889 (ill.), ex Ready (1920) 183; later A. E. Bagnall. (Formerly attributed to Winchester: see *BNJ* xxvii, 373.)
10. —, —.  
—EARD ON PN. Dymock MS, c. 1850 (Revd. T. F. Dymock, then in his collection, from which there were several sales, the final one in 1858, after his death: it is not identifiable in any of these); perhaps a fragment; not traced. (Possibly from the same dies as no. 9, since H and N are sometimes confused.)
11. —, Wicinc.  
PICINE ON PIREC. Guildhall Museum, ex City hoard (*Num. Circ.*, Apr. 1957, col. 158).

been suggested to us that Nantwich might have been a borough at this period, but we have found no evidence of this. Even if it were, Droitwich is, in our view, numismatically preferable to Nantwich. All three places may, we consider, safely be ignored in the context of these coins.

<sup>23</sup> P. Carlyon-Britton, 'Edward the Confessor and his Coins', *NC* 1905, pp. 179-205.

<sup>24</sup> F. Elmore-Jones, 'An Unpublished Penny of Edward the Confessor', *Num. Circ.*, Apr. 1957, cols. 157-60.

The attribution of nos. 3–5 to Droitwich reduces the number of Worcester moneyers to three, Æglwine, Ælfgeard, and Wicinc. The first and last of these are well-attested names at Worcester at this period, but Ælfgeard does not otherwise appear before the Conquest. His coins of type XIV, reading PH or PN, had previously been attributed to Winchester, but Elmore-Jones pointed out that the name Ælfgeard, not otherwise recorded at Winchester, occurred at Worcester under William I and II.<sup>25</sup> Ælfgeard's post-Conquest types run from *BMC* IV (Two Sceptres) of William I to the last type of William II, *BMC* V, which cannot have started more than two or three years before 1100. Even though *BMC* type XIV may have been struck at Worcester up to Edward's death, the span of time between this and the last occurrence of Ælfgeard is more than thirty years, with Harold II and the first three post-Conquest types missing. Although not impossible, this would be a long career for one man and needs to be considered critically in view of the doubtful mint-signature. There are, however, comparable cases at other mints of the same name appearing more or less continuously for fifteen or twenty types at this period—Sæwine at Exeter and Winraed at Lewes, for example—and a gap between Edward's last issue and *BMC* IV of William I is not unusual since the intervening types are quite rare. To this argument in favour of the Worcester attribution two others may be added. First, accumulating evidence emphasizes the special associations of *BMC* type XIV with minor mints and in particular with Worcestershire—half of the known coins and more than half of the known moneyers; of Winchester, on the other hand, indeed of any mint in that region and of any of the principal mints throughout the country, no specimen of the type is recorded.<sup>26</sup> Second, the name Ælfgeard was not a common one and its only certain occurrence at this period is in a Worcestershire context—Eadgyth, daughter of Godwine and Edward's queen, had a foreign waiting-woman, who married a rich man in Worcestershire, Ælfgeardus.<sup>27</sup>

*BMC* XIV differs from the substantive Pyramids type (*BMC* XV) only in the bust being shown facing and not in profile; the bust itself, crown, trefoil pendants, drapery, sceptre, are all as nearly equivalent on the two types as they can be, given the different angle. The reverses are identical, as Hildebrand recognized in calling the normal Pyramids coins type I and *BMC* XIV, type Ia; indeed there are die-links between XIV and XV in the case of the only two moneyers, Manwine of Dover and Leofred of Cricklade, who are known for both types. Type XIV was described by Carlyon-Britton as a kind of mule of types XIII and XV, but has been more usually regarded by others as transitional between the two.<sup>28</sup> Carlyon-Britton, who did not know of the unique real type XIII/XV mule (by Ægelwine of Leicester)<sup>29</sup>, developed an elaborate theory about the types of Edward the Confessor in which he argued that mules with an obverse of the preceding type were struck for a few months at the start of each new issue—the “artificial” mules with full face resembling Type X [= *BMC* type xiii] and the reverse of Type XI [= *BMC* type xv] present the strongest argument in favour of this theory, as in those instances new obverse dies had to be

<sup>25</sup> *BNJ* xxvii. 373.

<sup>26</sup> The entry for London on p. 340 of the City hoard report. *NC* 1876, is not corroborated by any of the other tables and is presumably an error.

<sup>27</sup> E. A. Freeman, *The History of the Norman Conquest of England*, 3rd edn. (1877), p. 46 n., citing Worcester

Cartulary, 253.

<sup>28</sup> North, *op. cit.*, p. 131; Elmore-Jones, *Num. Circ.* 1957, col. 158.

<sup>29</sup> Guildhall Museum, ex City hoard 1872; Elmore-Jones, *loc. cit.*, col. 160.

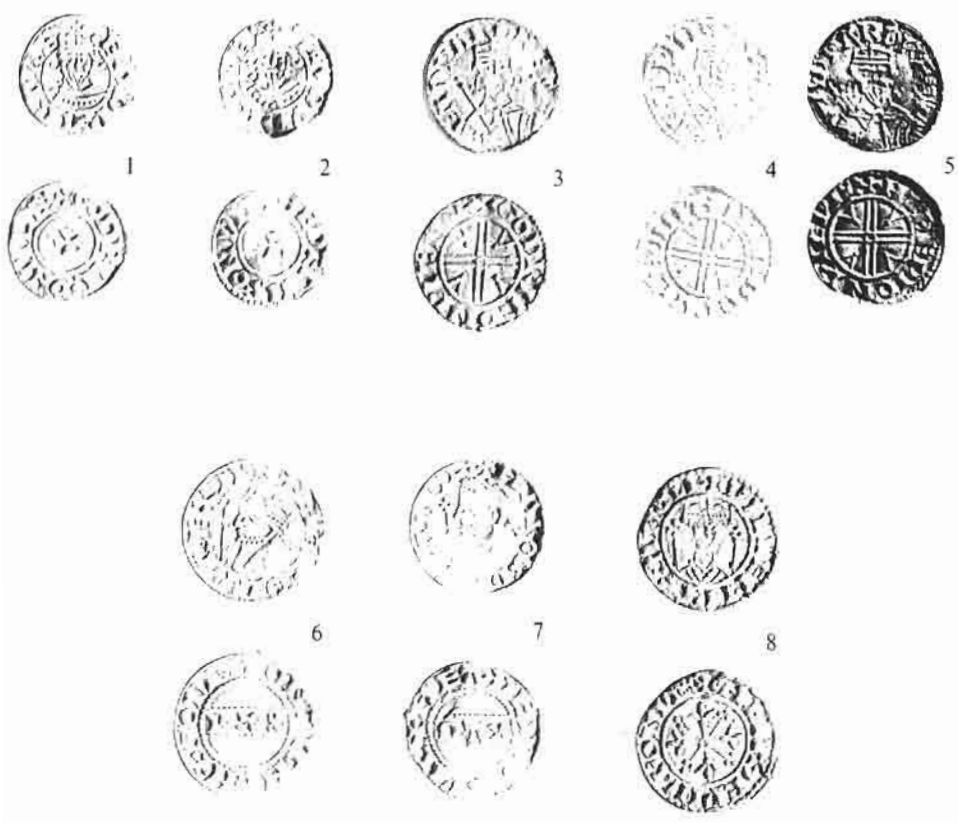
specially engraved' and 'the increased size of the flans of Type XI, as compared with Type X, permitted a fuller representation of the obverse of that type'.<sup>30</sup>

While Carlyon-Britton's idea clearly cannot be taken seriously, we also doubt whether it is quite right to regard type XIV as transitional. As Elmore-Jones remarked, no type XV coins are known of Worcester, and although it is a relatively rare type and the mint is a generally rare one too, this absence contrasts with the comparative abundance (three moneyers and four coins) of type XIV. Elmore-Jones concluded that 'Worcester must have continued to use these dies long after other mints had gone over to the profile portrait of the substantive type.' We can now suggest that the same may have applied to the second Worcestershire mint, Droitwich, of which we have three coins by two moneyers of type XIV but nothing so far of type XV. Both mints are known under Harold II and it therefore seems quite likely that in Worcestershire type XIV continued in issue (to the extent that such small mints were active at all after the early stages of the Pyramids type) until Edward's death. Since they account for seven out of fourteen known coins of the type, *BMC* XIV would perhaps be more fairly described as a localized variant of Pyramids than as a 'short-lived transitional issue'. A century ago Willett suggested that the type may have been simultaneous with the substantive Pyramids and that the engraver, accustomed to draw the facing bust of *BMC* type XIII 'altered his type to suit the new coinage, but retained the full-faced bust'.<sup>31</sup> Quite what happened we cannot tell, but the concentration of type XIV at minor mints in two peripheral areas suggests the almost immediate withdrawal of new dies because the type was thought to be unsatisfactory. The reason may well have lain in the superficial similarity between the obverse of type XIV and of type XIII which it was designed to replace. Although the difference between successive obverse types in the 1030s and 1040s had become rather less clear-cut, a conscious attempt seems to have been made in the 1050s (and after the Conquest) to make each new type readily distinguishable from its predecessor by obverse as well as reverse, and the innovative Sovereign and Facing Bust types may have resulted from such a policy.

We do not know how many mints may have received obverse dies of the second consecutive type with a facing bust, and other mints of type XIV may await discovery. But clearly in most cases, certainly so far as the principal mints were concerned, type XIV dies either never reached them or were replaced, before they could be used, by the new design of type XV which would be less confusing to the eye for the purposes of recoinage. The circumstances of issue and nearly total withdrawal (or of replacement before issue except in a few insignificant cases) are apparently comparable to those of the Agnus Dei type of Æthelred II which is confined to lesser mints in the midlands. But the reasons for aborting the two types were presumably different, and type XIV continued to play a small and isolated part in the Pyramids issue as a whole. While, therefore, the type XIV dies must have been made and issued at the beginning of the Pyramids issue, and their design is indeed transitional between those of types XIII and XV, we feel that it would be misleading chronologically to regard the coins themselves as transitional between the two issues since some of them at least could have been struck as late as any of the type XV coins at other mints.

<sup>30</sup> Carlyon-Britton, *op. cit.* 196 and 204.

<sup>31</sup> *NC* 1876, p. 336; however, he did not know of the *BMC* type XV coins of Dover, Cricklade, and Sandwich.



STEWART AND BLUNT: DROITWICH

