

TWO NOTES ON THE COINAGE OF HAROLD II

HUGH PAGAN

1. A Harold II Ipswich-London obverse die-link revisited

In the article on the coinage of Harold II which I contributed to the Bror Emil Hildebrand memorial volume edited by Kenneth Jonsson and published in 1990¹, I drew attention to the use with the same obverse die of reverses of three different moneyers, Aelfwine at Ipswich (Hunterian Museum, Glasgow, *SCBI* 2, 1190); Leofsige at London (Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum, *SCBI* 24, 744); and Wulfgar at London (P.W.P.Carlyon-Britton sale, 1918, lot 1825, illustrated)².

The obverse die involved is a variant of what is, under the classification set out in my 1990 article, Group D. Dies of Group D are distinguished by the fact that the circlet which forms the lower element of the king's crown is curved, and that the beard on the king's chin is represented by parallel vertical lines rather than (as is normal for Harold II) beads. On most coins of Group D the crown is surmounted by a group of three pellets arranged in a triangular form, but on the present die these are replaced by a single pellet. Additionally, the present die incorporates a sceptre before the king's face, while the majority of dies of Group D omit the sceptre.

Obverse die-links in the later Anglo-Saxon period which involve the use of the same die by moneyers operating at different minting places, although never very common, are nonetheless familiar enough for reigns such as that of Aethelred II (978-1016), during which the administrative system governing how coining took place was at times disrupted at a local level as a by-product of Viking attacks on the English kingdom.

Die-links of this nature are very much less familiar for the reign of Edward the Confessor (1042-1066), by when the kingdom had recovered a good measure of political and economic stability, and this Ipswich-London obverse die-link was the first inter-minting place die-link to be published for the brief reign of Harold II, Edward the Confessor's successor.

A problem in giving publicity to this die-link in 1990 was that the photographic image of the Salisbury Museum coin as published in *SCBI* 24 was a poor one³. Happily, a good image is now available of a further coin of London, moneyer Leofsige, that has been reported to the *EMC/SCBI* site, *EMC* 2020.0041, which is struck from the same obverse die, although from a different reverse die.

The available images of the Hunterian coin, the *EMC* coin, and the Carlyon-Britton coin now evidence the die-link plainly.

¹ H.Pagan, 'The Coinage of Harold II', in K.Jonsson, ed., *Studies in Late Anglo-Saxon Coinage, in memory of Bror Emil Hildebrand*, Stockholm, 1990 (Numismatiska Meddelanden XXXV), 177-205.

² Pagan, 1990, 191. The Ipswich coin is illustrated on p.182, coin 6.

³ This brought about my statement, Pagan, 1990, 191, that the obverse die used by the two London moneyers "seems" also to have been used to strike the Ipswich coin.

Here, left to right, are images of the coins concerned :



2. Svartlingr, a moneyer for Harold II at Wallingford and not also at Winchester

During the process of research leading to my 1990 article, I noticed that a coin of Harold II's *PAX* type in the British Museum of a moneyer Svartlingr⁴, with the reverse inscription SPEARTING ON PI, *BMC* 118, attributed to Winchester, was struck from the same obverse die as another coin in the British Museum, *BMC* 90, reading SPEARTLINC ON PAL, attributed to Wallingford.

Further investigation revealed die-linkage which can be summarised as below :

Obverse die of Edward the Confessor, *Pyramids* type, reading EADPARD RE

(a) Found with reverse die of Harold II, *PAX* type, reading +SPEARTING ON PI. Three specimens known : British Museum, *BM* 1891 5-8-2; British Museum, *BMC* 1519 (listed under Edward the Confessor); *SCBI* 9, 1089 (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford).

Obverse die of Harold II, *PAX* type, my Group B, reading +HAROLD REX ANG

(a) Found with reverse die of *PAX* type, reading +SPEARTING ON PI, (same reverse die as above), British Museum, *BMC* 118.

(b) Found with reverse die of *PAX* type, reading +SPEARTLINC ON PAL, British Museum, *BMC* 90.

⁴ Svartlingr is the recognised normalised form of the name of the moneyer concerned.

(c) Found with reverse die of *PAX* type of moneyer Beorhtmaer, reading +BRIHTMAER ON I. Three specimens known : British Museum, *BMC* 125; British Museum, *BM* 1944-4-1; National Museum of Wales.

Obverse die of Harold II, *PAX* type, my Group A, reading +HAROLD REX ANGL:

(a) Found with reverse die of *PAX* type, reading +SPEARTING ON PI (same reverse die as above), *BMC* 120.

(b) Found with a different reverse die of *PAX* type, reading +SPEARTLING ON PI, *BMC* 119.

(c) Found with a reverse die of *PAX* type of moneyer Beorhtmaer, reading +BRIHTMAER ON PAL, Montagu sale, 1897, lot 54, illustrated.

The coins of the moneyer Svartlingr listed here were the only coins of this moneyer for Harold II then known. His die-linked colleague Beorhtmaer was known for one further coin, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, *SCBI* 9, 1112, struck from an obverse die of *PAX* type, my Group A, reading +HAROLD REX ANGLO, and a reverse die of *PAX* type reading +BRIHTMAER ON PALII.

Since Svartlingr is not otherwise recorded as a moneyer at Winchester, and both Svartlingr (for William I, *Profile/Floreate Cross* type, *BMC* type 1, onwards to William I, *PAXS* type, *BMC* type 8) and Beorhtmaer (for Edward the Confessor's *Hammer Cross* type onwards to William I, *Canopy* type, *BMC* type 3) are well recorded as Wallingford moneyers in other types, I concluded on the basis of these die-links that the traditional attribution to Winchester of the three examples of the Edward the Confessor *Pyramids*/Harold II *PAX* mule and of the three coins of Harold II's *PAX* type, *BMC* 118, *BMC* 119, and *BMC* 120 was incorrect, and that all the coins involved were struck at Wallingford.

The interpretation in such circumstances to be put on the mint signature PI, indirectly buttressed by the appearance of a mint signature comprising the letter I only on one of the Beorhtmaer reverse dies, would seem to be that the die-cutter concerned, finding himself with insufficient space for a fuller Wallingford mint signature, engraved the first letter of a normal Wallingford mint signature and followed it with a letter I which was merely intended as a space-filler.

I set out a summary of my conclusions about these coins in a short note for the December 1984 issue of *Spink's Numismatic Circular*⁵, and they seem to me to be entirely justified today.

This reattribution was accepted by Dr Anthony Freeman in his monograph on *The Moneyer and the Mint in the Reign of Edward the Confessor 1042-1066*, published in 1985⁶. By contrast, it is a matter for some regret that in the great volume devoted to the Winchester mint published in 2012 as vol.8 in the *Winchester Studies* series edited

⁵ H.E. Pagan, 'A die-linked group of coins of Wallingford', *NCirc* Dec 1984, 322-3.

⁶ A.Freeman, *The Moneyer and the Mint in the Reign of Edward the Confessor 1042-1066*, Oxford, BAR British Series 145, 2 vols, 1985, 127 and 465.

by Martin Biddle⁷, the coins in question still appear as items 1862 and 1875-7 in the corpus of coins of Winchester put together for this volume over very many years by the late Yvonne Harvey⁸.

Finally, I should record that when a further coin of PAX type struck from the same dies as BMC 120, and thus with the reverse inscription +SPEARTING ON PI, turned up in the sale room, Baldwin auction 30, 7-8 May 2002, lot 58 (attributed to Winchester : G.S.Hopkins coll.), I purchased it for my own collection. Here is an image of the coin concerned :



⁷ M.biddle (ed), *The Winchester Mint and coins and related finds from the excavations of 1961-71, the catalogue of the coins of the Winchester mint* by Yvonne Harvey, Oxford, 2012.

⁸ They are listed as having been struck by a moneyer Svertingr, Yvonne Harvey not having drawn the appropriate conclusion from the fact that on one of the PI reverse dies the moneyer's name is spelled SPEARTLING that the normalised form of the name of the moneyer concerned will have been Svartlingr. In her *Money Talks, Reconstructing Old English*, Berlin & New York, 1992, 329, Fran Colman lists the Edward the Confessor/Harold II mules, correctly, under Wallingford, but, unfortunately but understandably, gives the moneyer's name in the normalised form Svertingr, since the coins of Harold II showing that the name should be normalised as Svartlingr fell outside her terms of reference.