

SOME ATTRIBUTIONS OF COINS OF EDWARD THE CONFESSOR OF THE *POINTED HELMET* TYPE CORRECTED

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In earlier notes on this blog devoted to Edward the Confessor's *Expanding Cross* type, struck in the early 1050s, I have drawn attention to the non-existence in this type of a moneyer Wulfwine at Wallingford, magicked into being by a printing error in a Glendining auction catalogue, and I have also put on the record a number of errors and omissions, some more serious than others, exhibited in the treatment of coins of this type on the websites managed by the British Museum for the Portable Antiquities Scheme and by the Fitzwilliam Museum for the Corpus of Early Medieval Coin Finds Project, as well as in the published volumes of the *Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles* series.

I have recently begun to turn my attention to Edward the Confessor's *Pointed Helmet* type, the successor type to *Expanding Cross*, and one of the first fruits of my research are some rather unexpected discoveries in relation to the production of coins of *Pointed Helmet* type by moneyers named Wulfric.

Recourse to the very convenient table of moneyers for the later Anglo-Saxon period compiled by Kenneth Jonsson and by the late Drs Gay van der Meer for the Hildebrand memorial volume in 1990¹ shows that moneyers named Wulfric were regarded at that time as having been working during the *Pointed Helmet* type at as many as seven minting places : Chichester, Hastings, Leicester, London, Shaftesbury, Stamford and Steyning. This still remains the accepted view today.

A little further investigation shows that the citation of Wulfric as a Hastings moneyer seems to be founded solely on the asserted presence of a solitary coin of such a moneyer, said to read PVLFRIC ON HAESTI, in the list of the content of the hoard of well over a thousand coins of the period found at Sedlescombe, East Sussex, in August 1876, compiled by William Augustus Raper, a solicitor in the nearby parish of Battle, and published some years later in *Sussex Archaeological Collections*². No such coin is known today, to the present writer's knowledge, and it may easily be that Raper had misidentified the coin in question, whether by misreading the coin's inscription or by mistaking its type, since Hastings's more certainly attested moneyers for the type, Brid and Dunning, were both well represented for the type in the

¹ K.Jonsson and G.Van der Meer, 'Mints and Moneyers c.973-1066', in K.Jonsson, ed., *Studies in Late Anglo-Saxon Coinage in memory of Bror Emil Hildebrand (Numismatiska Meddelanden XXXV)*, 1990, 47-136.

² W.A.Raper, 'On the silver coins of Edward the Confessor found at Sedlescomb', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* xxxiii, 1883, 1-19. Raper was not himself a numismatic scholar, and although his list of the coins is followed in the volume by 'Notes on the Sedlescomb hoard', on pp 20-38, supplied by Ernest Willett, who had previously published a major article in *NC* on the City of London hoard of coins of the same period, it looks as if Willett was working from Raper's list rather than from a fresh examination of the coins concerned. The Sedlescombe specimen of the coin by Wulfric was the only one known to Anthony Freeman, *The Moneyer and the Mint in the Reign of Edward the Confessor 1042-1066 (BAR British Series 145)*, 1985, table at p.495, although Freeman had not himself consulted Raper's article.

Sedlescombe hoard, reflecting the fact that the hoard was found not far from Hastings itself, and it would be surprising if the production of a colleague of theirs also operating in the type would have been represented in the same hoard by one specimen only. Nonetheless, it is not entirely inconceivable that Raper's identification of the coin in question was correct, for Wulfric is evidenced as a Hastings moneyer for the succeeding *Sovereign/Eagles* and *Hammer Cross* types of Edward the Confessor³, and it is not the objective of this note to strike Wulfric off the roster of Hastings moneyers for the *Pointed Helmet* type, at least for the present.

Six minting places for which a moneyer Wulfric is recorded as a moneyer in this type remain. At Chichester and at Steyning the evidence for his activity during the type is entirely sufficient, although it is more extensive for Steyning because the production of Steyning moneyers in all the later types of Edward the Confessor's reign from *Pointed Helmet* onwards is particularly well represented in the 1865 Chancton hoard from West Sussex, found in Steyning's immediate vicinity⁴. At Leicester, as will be seen in what follows, and at Shaftesbury the evidence for Wulfric's activity is very much slighter, but is nonetheless reliable⁵.

That leaves the production in this type claimed for Wulfric respectively at London and at Stamford. In each case just a single coin is involved. The London coin of this moneyer, which has long been in the National Museum at Copenhagen, *SCBI* 18, 1113⁶, is of the very rare sub-variety of the type with a left-facing bust, classified by H.A. Grueber as far back as 1893 as *BMC* type vii b⁷, and it is fortunate in this connection that Michael Dolley and Francis Elmore Jones contributed an excellent article over sixty years ago to the *Numismatic Chronicle* on this very sub-variety, in which they provided an illustrated corpus of the twenty-five specimens of the type then known to them⁸. The Copenhagen specimen was not at that time known to them, for its existence was first brought to the attention of British numismatists when Dr Georg Galster submitted the text and plates of his catalogue of the Anglo-Saxon coins in that collection for publication as a volume in the *SCBI* series, and Galster's publication of this particular coin served to add both a new specimen and a seemingly unrecorded London moneyer for the sub-variety.

³ Freeman, *loc.cit.*

⁴ For the Chancton hoard see B.V.Head, 'An account of the hoard of Anglo-Saxon coins found at Chancton Farm, Sussex', *NC New Series* 7, 1867, 63-126. Although Head's description of the hoard is admirably accurate in its transcriptions of the reverse inscriptions of the coins involved, it suffers from the disadvantage that Head only chose to record the different varieties of reverse inscription present, and does not specify the number of coins in the hoard carrying any particular reverse inscription. This has the result that Head's listing gives virtually no idea at all of the very numerous number of coins in the hoard struck at Steyning, the nearest minting place to the hoard's find spot, since these were produced from just a few pairs of dies only, and therefore evidence no more than three different reverse inscriptions for any type of Edward the Confessor.

⁵ Wulfric appears to be recorded as a Shaftesbury moneyer in the *Pointed Helmet* type from just two coins known today, both coins of the variety of the type with left-facing bust, *BMC* type vii b, *BMC* 1168 and *SCBI* 24, 960. These are struck from the same obverse die but from different reverse dies.

⁶ It formed part of the vast personal collection of European medieval coins put together by Christian Jürgensen Thomsen (1788-1865), Keeper of the Royal Danish Coin Cabinet from 1842 onwards, and acquired for the National Museum after Thomsen's death.

⁷ H.A.Grueber and C.F.Keary, *A Catalogue of English Coins in the British Museum. Anglo-Saxon Series. Volume II (Wessex and England to the Norman Conquest)*, 1893, 336.

⁸ R.H.M.Dolley and F.Elmore Jones, 'Some Remarks on BMC Type VII Var.B. of Edward the Confessor', *NC 6th series*, 20, 1960, 183-90.

It is understandable that Dolley and Christopher Blunt, the editors of the *SCBI* volume concerned, should not have focused on the coin concerned, for they had much else to deal with during the editing of the volume, as diplomatically recorded in a preliminary editorial note, and they were also much handicapped in their editorial function by the less than perfect quality of some of the photographs which had been taken of the coins that were to be published.

Nonetheless it should have been clear, both at that time and at any time over the long years that have followed, that *SCBI* 18, 1113, assumed by Dr Galster to have carried a London mint signature, is in reality a die-duplicate of coin no.5 in Dolley and Elmore Jones's corpus, on which the reverse inscription is PVLFRIC ON LEHR, and that its moneyer Wulfric was therefore operating at a minting place with the mint signature LEHR, i.e. *Leherceaster*, the present-day Leicester, not at London. The coin recorded by Dolley and Elmore Jones, given in 1919 to Leicester Museum by Joseph Young, a specialist collector of coins of that mint, had already been published as being of Leicester both in their own article and as *SCBI* 17, 410, and this, and the Copenhagen coin which has now been recognised as its die-duplicate, remain the only known coins which have so far been identified as having been produced by this moneyer at Leicester during the type.

This is not quite the last word on the topic. First, a single find of a further coin of *Pointed Helmet* type with left-facing bust, of this same rare sub-variety *BMC* type vii b, made near Stanford-upon-Soar, Nottinghamshire, in July 1995, was reported to the *EMC/SCBI* website, *EMC* 2001.1129, as being of a Leicester moneyer Leofric previously unrecorded either for the *Pointed Helmet* type or for the *BMC* type vii b variety. Unfortunately no image of the coin is available, and its present whereabouts appears to be unrecorded, but, as all that could be read of the coin's reverse inscription was L[]FRIC ON LEHR, it is not difficult to conjecture that the true reading should have been PVLFRIC ON LEHR, just as on the two coins already discussed.

Second, Wulfric is recorded as a London moneyer in the *Sovereign/Eagles* type, the successor to *Pointed Helmet*, from another solitary coin, *BMC* 1022, ex Chancton hoard. Now that the evidence for Wulfric having been a moneyer at London during *Pointed Helmet* has vanished, it is proper to look again at the case for Wulfric having been a London moneyer during *Sovereign/Eagles*. I have not as yet had the opportunity to look at the coin in the British Museum, but it will be sufficient to share with the readers of this blog the careful transcription of the coin's inscriptions made by Grueber for *BMC*. The obverse inscription was read by Grueber as +DREDND PENDREDRE and the reverse inscription as +RVLFRIIX ON LVNNII, with the Ns in ON and in LVNNII retrograde, and anyone who is aware of the customary range of spellings of the king's name and of the London mint signature on regular coins of Edward's reign will recognise that *BMC* 1022 is very likely indeed to be an imitative coin and in no way evidence for Wulfric operating at London at this period.

I come finally to the single coin believed to evidence Wulfric as a moneyer at Stamford. The misidentification and consequent mispublication of this coin, *SCBI* 27, 1443, as being a coin of Stamford, is altogether regrettable, for the coin, although broken and repaired, is very clearly a die-duplicate of *SCBI* 17, 417, *SCBI* 17, 418 and

of other quite numerous existing coins struck from one of the three pairs of dies utilised in this type by the Steyning moneyer Wulfric⁹, and it should not have been very difficult at all to spot that the mint signature on this coin in fact reads STAE, with A and E ligate, rather than just STA, as would have been appropriate for Stamford. It is explicable that Henry Mossop and Sir Francis Hill, through whose hands *SCBI* 27, 1443 in turn passed, might have failed to recognise that this was a coin of Steyning, for neither collected coins of Sussex mints, but Steyning coins of this period have been common in the coin trade ever since the discovery of the Chancton hoard, and the coin in question certainly ought to have been recognised before or since as a coin of Steyning rather than a coin of Stamford.

We can thus see that Wulfric should be deleted as a moneyer of coins of *Pointed Helmet* type struck at London and at Stamford, and almost certainly also as a moneyer of *Sovereign/Eagles* type at London; that Leofric should probably be deleted as a moneyer of coins of *Pointed Helmet* type struck at Leicester; and that Wulfric needs verification as a moneyer of *Pointed Helmet* type at Hastings.

Those who are not deeply engaged with the study of the Anglo-Saxon coinage may wonder how much such information really matters, but all conjectural reconstructions of the organisational structure at individual Anglo-Saxon minting places depend on the accuracy of the data on which they are founded, and it is not remotely sufficient to rely for this period on the tabulations of moneyers for different minting places and types separately provided in publications by Jonsson and Van der Meer, and by Dr Anthony Freeman, however useful these may be.

⁹ A coin struck from these dies that had belonged to Horace King featured as lot 193 in the Glendining sale of 'Coins of the Sussex Mints', 14 October 1985, and the illustration of its obverse die in the Glendining catalogue is superior to those of the two coins from these dies published in *SCBI* 17.