

A groat die of Edward IV used at Waterford and Cork, linking with the Cork readeption groats of Henry VI

Oisín Mac Conamhna



Figure 1. Obverse die of Edward IV used at Waterford (left) and Cork. Waterford images © Numista user Alfleur ([CC BY-NC 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)). Cork coin ex Dix Noonan Webb auction 13 May 2015, lot 1178.

The purpose of this note is to record an obverse die of Edward IV that was used at Waterford and Cork, the Waterford attestation of the die noted by the author while browsing the numismatic website Numista; the weight of the Waterford specimen was not available. To the author's knowledge, this is the first example in the Irish series of Edward IV of an obverse groat die that was definitely used at two mints.¹ It joins the recent discovery of an Edward IV penny die used at Waterford and Cork,² and the observation of the use of the same groat letter

¹ There is an example of a Trim "scowling bust" obverse die that was used at Dublin, Sovereign Rarities 2025 155 plate coin for 6366E, which was almost certainly made at Trim; however to the author's knowledge there is no evidence, in the form of a surviving specimen from this obverse die paired with a Trim reverse, of its actual use at Trim.

² Lee and Mac Conamhna 2026.

punches on certain dies at both mints,³ in providing strong evidence of the transfer of a working moneyer, with their equipment, between the two mints. The obverse die identified here is of particular interest because not only does it link with reverses of two different mints, it also reverse-links with a Cork redeption obverse of Henry VI, and so provides direct evidence of the connection of (one of) the Cork redeption moneyer(s) with Waterford. The use of the obverse at Cork was known before; the new evidence of its use at Waterford is shown in Figure 1.

The Cork coin of Figure 1 was Fig. 8 of Mac Conamhna 2023, part of the “redeption series” of Cork groats defined in that work. The dies of the series – essentially, and up to one other die pair, the known Cork groats with roses by neck – were discussed and described there, but not labelled. Two further redeption specimens have come to light since.⁴ The second of these (from the die pair HEN_O_2/HEN_R_4 below) has no roses by neck, has different portrait punches and (mostly) different letter punches, was almost certainly the work of a different moneyer who appears to have transferred to Limerick after the redeption,⁵ and is included for completeness, although peripheral to the discussion here. In order to elucidate clearly and concisely the linkage pattern of the now-expanded redeption series, it is useful to recapitulate and label the relevant dies here, Figures 2 and 3. Also included is one further die pair of Waterford which is clearly closely related.



Figure 2, obverse dies of the redeption series. EDW_O_1 Seaby 1970 36, © Seaby’s Numismatic Publications Ltd.; EDW_O_2_CORK_WAT © Numista user Alfleur ([CC BY-NC 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)); EDW_O_3_HEN courtesy Spink; HEN_O_1 courtesy Jack Pope; EDW_O_1_WAT © the Trustees of the British Museum.

³ Mac Conamhna 2023.

⁴ Mac Conamhna and Pope 2023, Edmund et al 2024.

⁵ Mac Conamhna 2024.



Figure 3, reverse dies of the readaptions series. EDW_R_1 and HEN_R_1, © National Museum of Ireland; HEN_R_2 courtesy Spink; HEN_R_3 courtesy Jack Pope; EDW_R_1_WAT © the Trustees of the British Museum; EDW_R_2_WAT © Numista user Alfleur ([CC BY-NC 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)).

The reverse die with which the unique specimen of EDW_O_1 pairs was not published by Seaby 1970 and is unknown to the author. The linking of these dies is summarised by Figure 4. In the link diagram, rectangles represent obverse dies, ovals reverse dies, and a line joining two dies indicates an attested link between them, ie that at least one specimen exists that was struck from that die pair. The numeral associated to each link specifies the number of specimens attesting to it, with the associated reference(s) to the specimens in question. The abbreviations are NMI (National Museum of Ireland), NMNI (National Museums Northern Ireland), BM (British Museum), PAS (Portable Antiquities Scheme), DNW (Dix Noonan Webb, now Noonans), with the associated data either a museum or PAS catalogue number, auction date and lot, or article reference. The three domains of the diagram cover coins struck in Cork in the name of Edward, or in Cork in the name of Henry, or in Waterford in the name of Edward. Dies placed on a domain boundary are attested on both sides, ie EDW_O_3_HEN is a single obverse die that was made in the name of Edward, and subsequently overpunched to strike the name of Henry; EDW_R_2_HEN is a Cork reverse that links with obverses in both the names of Edward and of Henry; and EDW_O_2_CORK_WAT is the obverse of Figure 1, that pairs with reverses of both Cork and Waterford.

Before discussing the chronology of the Waterford – Cork link, some remarks on punches used for the dies of Figures 3 and 4 are in order. The pair HEN_O_2/HEN_R_4 is clearly different to all the rest, both in terms of portrait and letter punches, and is excluded from the discussion henceforth. Considering the obverses first, it appears that the face and shoulder punches of all the rest are the same. The hair on left and right appears to be different

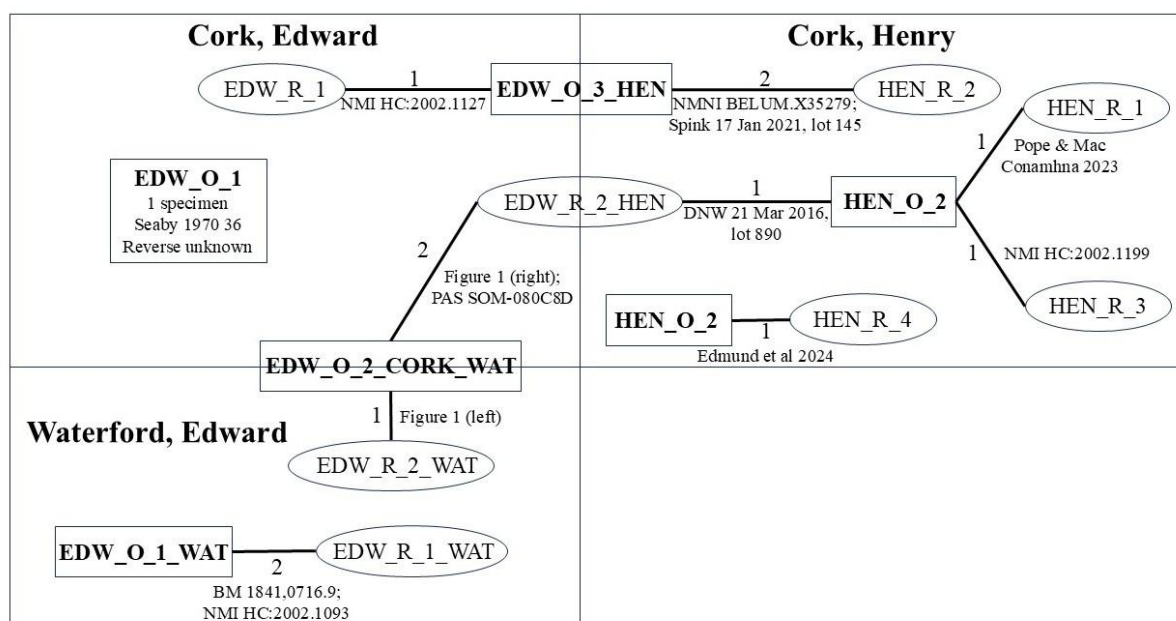


Figure 4. Corpus and link summary diagram of the Cork reademption series.

on EDW_O_1 and perhaps EDW_O_1_WAT; it is broadly similar on EDW_O_2_CORK_WAT, EDW_O_3_HEN and HEN_O_1, although it is difficult to be sure due to the different wear, and perhaps divergence of detail; it may be that the hair was rendered with some combination of punching and hand engraving, with associated idiosyncrasy. The crown punch on EDW_O_1, EDW_O_3_HEN and HEN_O_1 is the same. A different crown punch is used for EDW_O_1_WAT, and this punch is also used (significantly, in a slightly modified state) for EDW_O_2_CORK_WAT, Figure 5.



Figure 5. Top left, the crown punch of the Waterford specimen of EDW_O_2_CORK_WAT, © Numista user Alfleur ([CC BY-NC 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)); top right, the crown punch of the Cork specimen of EDW_O_2_CORK_WAT; bottom, the crown punch of EDW_O_1_WAT, © the Trustees of the British Museum.

The Waterford specimen of EDW_O_2_CORK_WAT is gouged and apparently deformed in the vicinity of the crown; allowing for this, it is clear that the form of the prongs, and the jewels on the central and second-to-left prongs, are identical. However, the flat lower band of the crown of EDW_O_1_WAT has been modified, and apparently hammered upwards to close the intra-band void, and increase the curvature, on EDW_O_2_CORK_WAT. This suggests that EDW_O_2_CORK_WAT may post-date EDW_O_1_WAT; although this cannot be concluded with certainty.

Turning to the reverses, and excluding HEN_R_4, the coincidence of letter punches is striking. Restricting attention to the letters that appear in the inner inscription of the mint signature, the A, C, E, O, R and T punches are the same on all the remaining dies. The E is punched retrograde on both the Waterford reverse dies, and prograde on all the Cork reverses. The G punch is the same across all the Cork reverses; and the W punch is the same on the two Waterford reverses (and the D is represented with a reversed C on these). The S punch is the same on all the Cork reverses, but a different and slightly narrower S is used on both the Waterford reverses. Otherwise, the only remaining differences appear in the I and V punches. One I is used on HEN_R_1, EDW_R_1_WAT and EDW_R_2_WAT, and another on the remaining reverses. Also, one V is used on HEN_R_1 and HEN_R_1_WAT, and another on the remainder (with some uncertainty as to which V is used on EDW_R_2_WAT, owing to a patch of wear). In summary, a very consistent set of letter punches is used, with variation in only three letters, and all the reverses are clearly closely contiguous chronologically. A final observation is that both the Waterford reverses, and the Cork reverses EDW_R_1, EDW_R_2_HEN and HEN_R_1, render the mint signature CIVI-TASX-, where X is the first letter of the city name, while the Cork reverses HEN_R_2, HEN_R_3 render it CIVI-TAS[Rosette].

It is clear that the moneyer who made the redeption coins, with the exception of those from the HEN_O_2/HEN_O_4 dies, also worked in Waterford. The question remains as to whether they worked in Waterford before, after, or both before and after the redeption. The fact that a different S punch appears on the Waterford reverses, and a different crown punch on the obverses EDW_O_1_WAT and EDW_O_2_CORK_WAT compared to all the others, argues against the moneyer working at Waterford both before and after. Why would the “Waterford” crown and S punches have been put away like this, to be used again on return to Waterford, when the evidence is that all other punches travelled with and were used by the moneyer in Cork? The reasonable possibilities therefore appear to be that the moneyer worked at Waterford either before or after the redeption, but not both.

Of these remaining possibilities, the first seems much more likely. The political circumstances of the establishment of the Cork mint are discussed in detail in Mac Conamhna 2023; it suffices here to state that it was an outlaw mint, born of rebellion most likely in 1469, that according to the extant documentary record never received parliamentary authorisation. By contrast, Waterford was an established mint with parliamentary authority to coin from 1463-70 (but not, it seems, from 1470-5). Furthermore, the Cork moneyers were subject to draconian parliamentary condemnation in 1472, with the extant evidence that they were attainted traitors and outlaws. Such individuals would in all likelihood not have been welcome back to Waterford after the redeption; although Waterford was remote from the Pale, the evidence is that it remained a controlled mint under central authority throughout the period in question. Conversely, expertise to establish the Cork mint in the first place must have come from somewhere; and Waterford is an obvious possibility geographically, with a

historical precedent for just such a migration of moneyers in the reign of Edward I. It is therefore concluded that on balance the best chronological interpretation of the obverse die of Figure 1 is that it was made in Waterford, and then brought to Cork as part of the process of establishing the Cork mint, in or around 1469, before the redeption.

This conclusion is tempered somewhat by the observation that the rosettes-by-neck marks on the die are intrusive in Waterford; indeed, the specimen of Figure 1 is the first exemplar known to the author of the type at Waterford, while the type is more commonly attested at Cork, Figure 3. One must therefore invoke the coincidence of an innovative set of marks at Waterford being brought to Cork immediately, rather than an established Cork mark being brought the other way. This is somewhat unsatisfactory, but set against the political circumstances, the interpretation that the obverse EDW_O_2_CORK_WAT began its life in Waterford and was brought to Cork, still seems more plausible to the author than the converse. A consequence of this interpretation of the new evidence of the use of EDW_O_2_CORK_WAT at Waterford is that the conclusion of Mac Conamhna 2023, that this die post-dated the redeption, should be revised.

References

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