


## THE ANGLO-SAXON MONEYS TORHTULF AND CHARACTERISTICS OF DIE-SINKING.

By L. A. LAWRENCE, *Director*.

HE recent appearance of a fourth specimen of the coinage of Æthelbald, whether spurious or otherwise, naturally directs attention to the moneyer's name appearing upon it. All the specimens are from the same dies and bear the name TORHTULF. A reference to the published text-books containing numismatic researches into the times represented by these pieces, discloses several coins of this moneyer. The kings under whom they were struck were Æthelwulf, A.D. 838 or 839 to 858, and his two sons, Æthelbald, who died in 860-61, and Æthelbearht, who died in 866.

The types of all the coins are the same, viz., obverse, the king's head to the right within an inner circle; without the circle, the king's name followed by his title REX. Reverse, inscription upon the limbs and within the angles of a broad and beaded cross, legend TORHTULF MONETA. On all the coins of this moneyer bearing Æthelwulf's name the head is filleted with a circlet of dots. The same peculiarity is noticed on the four pieces of Æthelbald. Some of Æthelbearht's coins bear filleted busts, but no notice is taken of this variety in the second volume of the British Museum Catalogue of Anglo-Saxon Coins. Although there are the gravest doubts as to the authenticity of the coins of Æthelbald, the same, happily, cannot be said of the large majority of Æthelwulf's pieces, and no exception has ever been taken to those of Æthelbearht. The whole coinage of this type seems to have been struck for use in the kingdom of Wessex, on the throne of which kingdom Æthelwulf placed his son Æthelbald in 856, who was succeeded by Æthelbearht in 860. The type also was clearly Æthelwulf's last, as it was continued by Æthelbearht and is the only type of

his coinage that is at all numerously represented in our cabinets of to-day. Genuine coins of Æthelwulf bearing the name of the moneyer Torhtulf are not uncommon, although the National Collection seems to possess but one example, and there are pieces struck from several different dies. Specimens of Æthelbearht's coins by this moneyer are much scarcer.

All the pieces bearing Torhtulf's name appear to be of precisely the same workmanship irrespective of the king's name on the obverse. This fact gives rise to the question as to the actual maker of the coins and would seem to point to Torhtulf as the engraver. A careful examination, however, of the coins of these monarchs, unfortunately, will not bear out these conclusions. The variety with the fillet in Æthelwulf's time was struck by at least three moneyers, *DIAR*, *MANNAN*, and *TORHTULF*, and if these coins are examined together, without reference to the moneyer's names, the workmanship cannot be used to distinguish the moneyers from each other. In other words the workmanship on these coins is the same. Manna's pieces do not differ from Torhtulf's more than do specimens from the different dies of Torhtulf when compared together. It must therefore be understood that all the coins with the filleted head exhibit the same general style of engraving. When notice is taken of the coins without the fillet which were struck by eight other moneyers, the same rule holds good. There is nothing to distinguish one from another, and the comparison of the reverses would not lead the observer even to guess whether the head bore a fillet or not. To go one step further, it is very doubtful whether coins of Æthelwulf could be distinguished from those of Æthelbearht without actually reading the king's name. These facts seem to clearly prove that the moneyers themselves had practically nothing to do with the engraving of the dies. Many views have been put forward by different writers as to the places where this work was done. The sole tenable theory, however, would point to London as the only place where the dies could have been engraved. The City was undoubtedly then, as it is now, the place of paramount importance, and as such would attract the most skilful. Winchester in these early times may have had some claim to have been the place of engraving the dies, but this idea is

negatived when the coinage of Ceolnoth, as Archbishop of Canterbury, is considered. This prelate had pence of the same design, so far as the reverse is concerned, and it would be unlikely in the extreme that dies for an archiepiscopal coinage in Kent should have been engraved at Winchester, although Winchester was undoubtedly the capital of Wessex. The uniformity in workmanship and style of the coins therefore leads to the supposition that the dies were engraved at one centre.

Where coins exist showing a marked difference in their workmanship, the conclusion would possibly be correct that the dies were engraved elsewhere. Several examples of this class can be pointed out in the earlier coins of this country. Even of as early a date as the time of Ethelwulf's son, Alfred, an obvious example is the coin illustrated in Hawkins, Fig. 619, which is copied on both sides from the pieces bearing the London monogram as the reverse type. The coin in question is a most barbarous imitation, and precludes all idea that it was issued from the same skilled hands that perfected the splendid coins of Alfred from which it was copied. This is but one example consisting of a single coin. When Æthelred II.'s reign is considered, another example of a far different character is at once noticed. The reference is to the type of small, round, and well-made coins of the king, helmeted and crowned, and reading on the reverse **ODÐENCLAR ON LVD**. These, at a glance, are judged as being quite different from the regular coins. Their analogues are found on the Continent in the kingdom of Denmark, and these coins, therefore, are considered, and rightly considered, as of Danish origin. A little later, during the reign of William I., someone, not one of the regular engravers, found it necessary to copy the common Paxs type. The very poor attempt he made of it is only too evident when the coins reading **TVRRI ON DEVITVN** are looked upon. Some of these pieces were found at Beaworth in the great find of William's coins and they are all of good silver, but several of the specimens bear reversed legends. Their origin and uses were unknown and unthought of, until our President showed the probability of their having been issued in Wales.<sup>1</sup>

During the short-cross coinage of the twelfth and thirteenth

<sup>1</sup> See page 47.

centuries there was a fairly large issue at Rhuddlan, as also described by our President.<sup>1</sup> Nearly all the dies were of local manufacture, probably not in Rhuddlan itself but possibly at Chester. The work of these is quite different from that of the regular short-cross coinage, and it is the only exception in the whole series. Curiously enough, a few very rare specimens from this mint are known showing the good workmanship and style characteristic of the other mints.

Shortly after these times Berwick takes on the rôle played by Rhuddlan, and most of the coins of Berwick struck during the reigns of Edward I. and Edward II. can at once be told without reading the mint name. Here, however, as of Rhuddlan, there are coins known from what might be called the true Regal dies, which are quite indistinguishable from the rest of the coins of the country as regards workmanship. Where the clumsy Berwick dies were engraved is not known, but the usual accuracy is wanting in weight as well as in engraving, for one example, at any rate, is known of the weight of 30 grains. In the reigns of Richard II. and Edward IV. examples of the same character survive. Some of Richard's York pence are barbarous in the extreme, and the heavy Durham pennies of Edward IV. reading **DOROU** are as uncouth as any evil wisher could desire. The last case is one of particular interest, as Durham had the liberty of engraving its own dies, certainly for pence, a liberty which happily was not often exercised.

Though the moneyer did not himself engrave the dies, the coins were probably struck more or less under his direct supervision.

Over and over again the Pipe Rolls tell us of a moneyer who was fined or mutilated for the making of false coin. In the earlier times when the moneyer placed his name on the money, there seem to have been mules only in type, but later, during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, several curious coins were struck, and have survived to be present in our cabinets. They appear to show that the money was not always struck at the places named thereon, and therefore suggest that when the moneyers' names were no longer on the coins, there may have been centres for striking. The mules referred to are :

<sup>1</sup> Page 41.

1. Pence, of Edward the First's time on which the obverse bears the head in a triangle and the reverse reads **QIVITAS LONDON.**
2. The opposite mule, head as usual in a circle, reverse **QIVITAS DVBLINIA.**
3. Obverse, head in a triangle ; reverse, **QIVITAS CANTOR.**
4. Penny of Edward II., Lion and Lys (Durham), Beaumont mint-mark ; reverse, **QIVITAS LONDON.**
5. Groats of Edward IV., obverse, **Q** on the king's breast for Coventry ; reverse, **QIVITAS LONDON.**
6. Groat, obverse, **B** on the king's breast for Bristol ; reverse **QIVITAS COVENTRIA.**

A consideration of these pieces certainly shows that the dies were not made in the places whence the coins issued. The English and Irish coins of Edward I. only differ in legends and in the obverse triangle. The work is precisely the same. If we are asked to choose between London and Dublin as the place where the dies were engraved, there would be no hesitation in choosing the former. The same remark applies to No. 3, a coin bearing the name of Canterbury : where the dies were, there the coins were struck. As the English and Irish coins are of precisely the same work, and as the English coins outnumber the Irish in an enormous proportion, clearly the dies for all were made at one centre, that centre being London. The dies, therefore, for the Irish coins of Edward I. with the obverse head in a triangle, must have been in London at the time that Nos. 1 and 2 were struck. As regards No. 3, the Canterbury coin, the same must hold good. The suggestion that an Irish obverse die could have found its way to Canterbury is clearly untenable. With regard to the other three mules, the London-Durham penny of Edward II. and the London-Coventry and Bristol-Coventry groats of Edward IV. exactly the same applies. London, where the dies were made, must be considered the place of mintage of all these pieces ; even of the Bristol-Coventry mule. It would be a natural inference to suppose that all the coins were struck in London and sent to the various towns ; we know, however, that such cannot really have been the case. One documentary proof to the contrary exists in an undated letter from Bishop de Bury of Durham, asking that his dies

be sent back as their absence in London was causing grave inconvenience. The suggestions therefore brought forward in reference to the dies and moneyers are :—

1. That the dies were, with few exceptions, made in London and not by the moneyers mentioned on the coins.
2. That the coins were, with few exceptions, struck in the places named thereon.
3. That the exceptions to the first suggestion are proved by the presence of unusual workmanship among the ordinary types.
4. That exceptions to suggestion 2 are exemplified by the presence of mules between far distant towns but of ordinary workmanship.