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ELIZABETHAN NUMISMATICS

by Gillian Faringdon Davis

My late husband John suggested the basis of this investigation, as we browsed through a history of England published in 1611: the "*Historie of Great Britaine under the Conquests of the Romans to King James*". Noting that each chapter covered one ruler and showed examples of his coins, he wondered if any pieces were illustrated which are no longer in modern catalogues. If we could not find any "new" coins, there was at least a chance of an unknown variety, mint, or moneyer.

Using J. J. North's *English Hammered Coinage*, Vol. I, 600 - 1272, as our base reference, we listed all the rulers who issued coins starting with Eanred of Northumbria (810) through to 1272, the last year when moneyers were named on coins. Because most coins in this period show the moneyer's name, they may more reliably be traced and compared. We worked on the theory that since 1611 many silver coins must have been lost, damaged, or even melted down for King Charles' military campaigns, and we might find a glorious lost heritage. However, knowledge of numismatics in Elizabethan times, when Speed did his research, left a lot to be desired.

First, a look at our authority. John Speed was a prominent historian, cartographer and antiquarian (1552 - 1629). He was able to devote himself to antiquarian pursuits through the patronage of Sir Fulke Greville, who held office under Elizabeth I. Speed's most famous works were this history and the "Theatre of the Empire of Great Britaine", a series of 54 maps with descriptive material.

Speed was highly regarded for the extent of his research and the quality and impartiality of his writing. Although he repeated some earlier writers' traditional errors, he added a substantial contribution of valuable material

to the history of his country. He methodically quoted his sources in the margin opposite each statement, adding to the impression of honesty and accuracy. He cites at least 23 earlier writers and historians in the Anglo-Saxon section, including such famous names as the Venerable Bede, GylDas, William Monke of Malmesbury, the Saxon Chronicle of Worcester Church, the Chronicle of Wales, Matthew of Westminster, and many others. In addition, he had access to the private collections of the English "establishment", and is known to have made "antiquarian" expeditions in the company of people such as Sir Robert Cotton to Hadrian's Wall and other spots where even today hoards are being unearthed.

Having established Speed's credentials, to the hunt!

After listing the basic names in North, they were matched with the historical account in Speed, noting those where a coin was illustrated. Speed was honest: where he did not know of a coin he made no attempt to concoct something but showed two blank circles. In the period under review he had nothing to offer for minor Northumbrian kings; in Mercia, nothing for Ceolwulf, Beornwulf, or other leaders succeeding Offa; and none for the assorted early Aethelreds, although all the above and more (including some extremely apocryphal rulers such as Arthur) were the subject of histories. Any temptation to attribute Aethelred II's coins to his namesakes was resisted.

Speed ignored all except one of the archbishops who issued pennies, offered no examples from the Hiberno-Norse kings of York except for Anlaf Quaran-Sihtricsson, and also omits the Viking invaders' pennies, except for (possibly) one which is misattributed. This is not surprising as many of the

issues known today are from the Cuerdale hoard unearthed in 1840.

The survey concluded with the round figure of 40 illustrations in Speed which could be positively identified - not always in the way he did! These are listed on the accompanying chart, showing North's dated list of rulers; Speed's rendering of the moneyer's name; remarks; and North's identifying number for checking purposes. Full notes follow regarding anomalies and errors including mistaken identifications.

Our findings on the 40 basic coins were:

26 checked correct.

12 were real coins but wrongly identified.

One was Irish, not English, but attributed to the correct king. One was a Frisian coin wrongly named as East Anglian (although it could have circulated there.)

65% correct!

As for the search for new moneyers or mints, the notes will show that we discovered the following "possibles" which would repay further investigation and cross-checking against other early descriptions, if any:

- Four new moneyers.
- Either one or two new mints for the type.
- No new types of coin, no completely unknown mints.

Some of Speed's illustrations are reproduced here to show the standard of the work, and all the coins mentioned are pictured in North. Naturally, in those pre-photography days much depended on the dedication and ability of the engraver. Speed's enormous volume gives no indication of who the illustrator might be, but it is likely to have been supervised by the author, as a professional cartographer, with assistance from staff.

As the coins are obviously copied from those available at the time, it is possible to check his accuracy in the lettering and general design in many cases, and hence draw conclusions about the remainder. However, when the engraver cannot decipher a letter he is liable to deduce what he thinks it must be -

not always successfully; and it is hard to rely on his rendering of busts for identification of types except in obvious cases such as "two sceptres", because he glorifies royal portraits past belief. Probably the political climate of the times, particularly for one depending on royal favour for the privilege of inspecting the coins, inhibited any overly frank copying of the unflattering Anglo-Saxon representations.

However, most of the mistakes were illuminating because these honest errors in identification showed only that Speed was trying to use logic to fill in gaps in knowledge: e.g. attribution of two William I pennies to the Conqueror and William II respectively, and great confusion between the various early Edwards.

Edward the Elder is given Edward the Confessor's Expanding Cross penny, while Edward the Martyr is given the two-line type of Edward the Elder; and Edmund Ironside is presented with a coin of King Eadmund.

The writer did not deliberately present coins under the wrong name or change the design to give the appearance of a fuller coverage. We were sufficiently impressed by his good faith, evidenced in the gaps where he had no knowledge, to accept the drawing as the best that could be made at the time. This demonstrates the poor quality of some of the best material available compared to some of the coin hoards of the last two centuries (see the appalling effort with a Richard I penny - no. 37, note 17.)

Speed's dates for reigns are slightly at variance with those accepted today, but this is irrelevant and understandable, especially in view of the different dates in local versions of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. At one time there were three regional dates for New Year's Day (September 24, more or less the modern New Year, and March) and this does not even include the people who dated happenings by the last comet or similar events. The Roman system of Kalends, Nones and Ides was child's play compared to that of Saxon England.

Anecdotes of early rulers add interest to the coins. For instance, regarding the issue showing Offa's wife Cynethrith, or Quendred, we are told (p. 314):

An ancient Saxon coyne inscribed with her name, Cenedred Regin, we have found and here placed, which the judicious suppose to be hers, and that not unlikely, shee being so powerfull, proud and ambitious". (Seaby no. 909, North 339.)

He was obviously impressed with the story of Anlaf Sihtricsson (No. 15 - N. 540). Anlaf and his brother, offended that their father had forsaken the pagan gods for Christianity as part of a dynastic marriage deal, made war against Athelstan in 924. Disguised as a harper, Anlaf went from tent to tent in the English camp, even the king's tent, until he had spied out their plans. After Anlaf slipped away the secret was told by an English soldier who had formerly served under him. Naturally, Athelstan was angry to find that the man had not identified the enemy while he was still in the camp. But as Speed writes (p. 340):

"I once served Anlaf, said he, under his pay for a souldier, and gave him the same faith that I doe now unto you, if then I should have betrayed his designes, what trust could your Grace repose in my truth? Let him therefore die, but not by my treachery, and by his escape secure your royal selfe from danger; remove your tent from the place where it stands, lest at unawares he haply assaile you."

The king forgave the soldier, moved his tent, and that night the new occupants of the spot were slain by an attack from Anlaf; who was however repelled, with the death of "five petty kings, twelve dukes, and well neere of the whole army which Anlafa had brought". And Speed comments:

"The memory of this man is made the more lasting by a peece of ancient Saxon coine of silver, inscribed with his name, Anlaf Cynyne, which for the antiquity of the thing and honor of the man we have here imprinted, though in the texture [text] of our English Saxon kings."

The story says something for the English sense of fair play, in that Athelstan did not execute the soldier before he finished his tale; and it is relevant to Irish history that Anlaf was also the king of Ireland - aggression did not always flow from east to west across the Irish Sea.

Possibly those with better access to museum collections could illuminate Speed's work even more; but I believe the exercise has been useful if only to illustrate how much collectors have benefited from the careful examination of coin hoards. Cuerdale, for instance, contained more than 7,000 coins of which about 1,000 were English, 1,000 Continental, and 5,000 Viking, deposited in 905 AD. (Much useful information is provided in "Anglo-Saxon Monetary History", 1986, a collection of essays in memory of Michael Dolley edited by M. A. S. Blackburn. This book contains a revised check-list of hoards between 500 and 1100.)

Any errors and misapprehensions in the above are my own; but the original concept and the photography were contributed by my husband who is now beyond the possibility of error.



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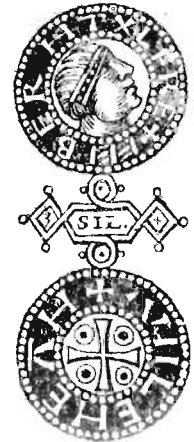
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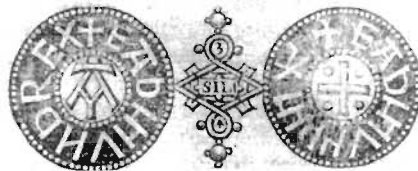
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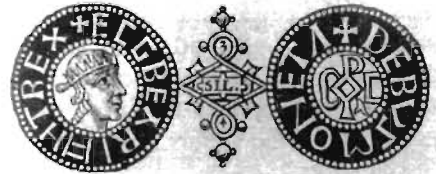
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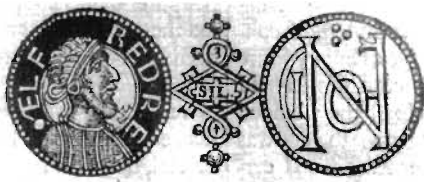
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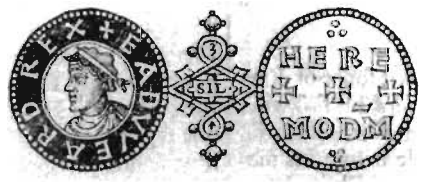
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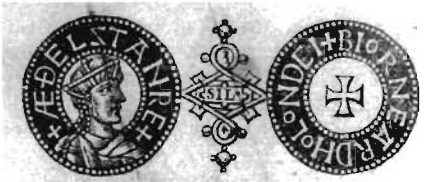
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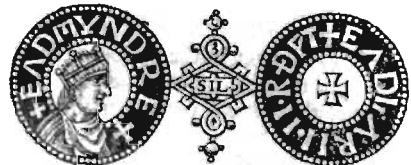
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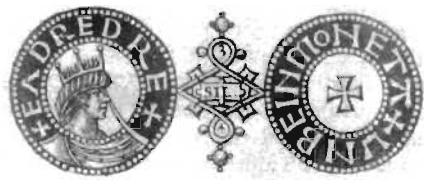
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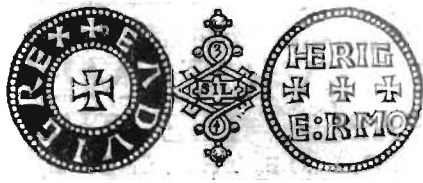
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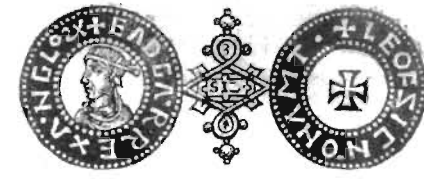
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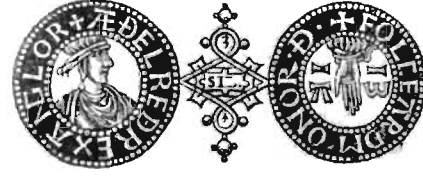
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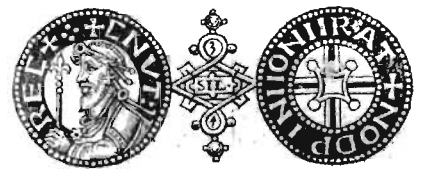
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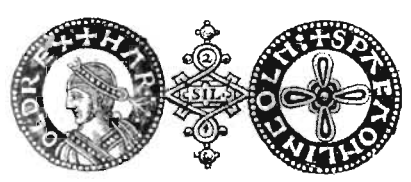
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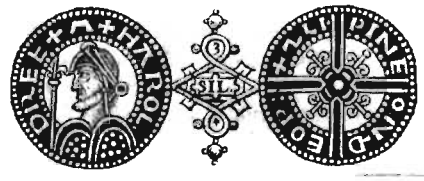
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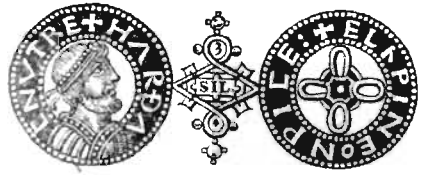
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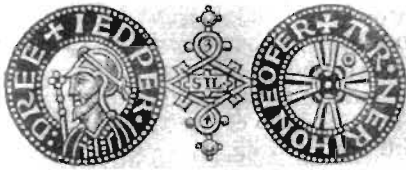
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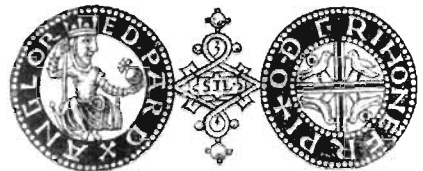
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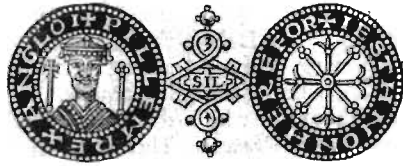
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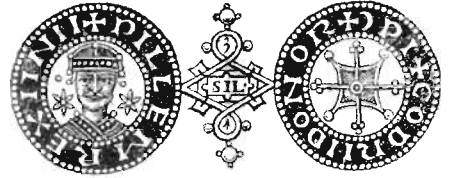
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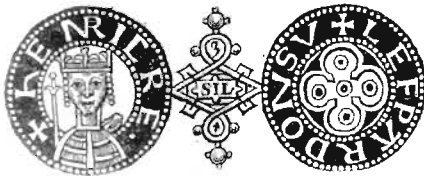
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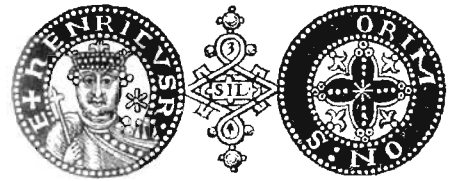
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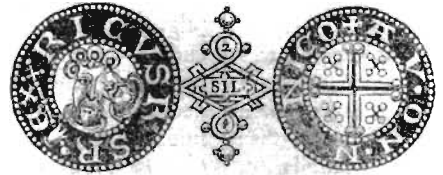
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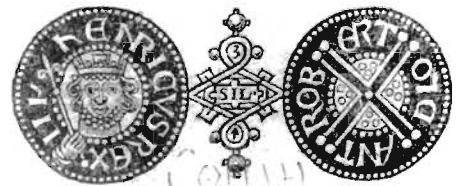
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JOHN SPEED AND J. J. NORTH: COIN IDENTIFICATION

No.	Ruler named by North	Moneyer by Speed	Remarks	North ref. no.
1	Eanred 810-54	Eadvini Moneyer	Eadwine known for Eanred	186
2	Cuthred (Kent) 798-807	Eaba (see note 1)	Triple tribrach type	208
3	Arch. Ceolnoth 833-70	Diala/ Moneta/Doro	The only clerical coin issue quoted by Speed	244
4	Offa 757-96	Ibba	Group 2, with portrait	301
5	Offa	Lulla	Wrongly identified, see note 2	313
6	Cynethrith	Eoba	Offa's wife. Cross behind bust	339
7	Coenwulf 796-821	Lul	Quatrefoil with letters of moneyer's name on leaves	362
8	Beornwulf 823-5	Monna	Cross crosslet, bust 2	397
9	Ludica 825-7	Werbald	Three line type	398
10	Berhtwulf 840-52	Sigeheah?	"Berhtulf Rex"	410
11	Burgred 852-74	Wine	Type B	424
12	Aethelweard 850-55	Eadmund?	Dated 726 by Speed, attributed to "Ethelard of Wessex" (see note 3)	450
13	Eadmund 855-70	Eadmund	Wrongly attributed to Eadmund of England, 939-46 (note 4)	456
14	St. Eadmund Memorial	Undeciphered	Similar to late issues (see note 5)	? 483
15	Anlaf Quarar- Sihtricsson	Farman	Triquetra/standard type	540
16	Beorhtric 786-802	Ecghard	Error in name ("Beormiric") suggest poor quality specimen	558
17	Ecgeberht 802-839	Debus	Dorob C. type, Canterbury Moneyer Deibus known	573
18	Aelfred 871-99	—	Londinia monogram	644
19	Edward the Elder 899-924	Heremod	N.W. Type (see notes 6 and 8)	651
20	Aethelstan 924-39	Biorneard	London mint, crowned bust	675
21	Eadmund 939-46	Eadgar	Small cross pattee. Mint ?? (See notes 4 and 7)	698
22	Eadred 946-55	Unbein	Crowned bust	713

23	Eadwig 955-59	Heriger	2 line type, no rosettes on rev.	724
24	Eadgar 959-75	Leofsig ?	Northampton mint (“Leofsig no Namt”). Reform coinage.	752
25	Aethelred II 978-1016	Folceard	First hand type, “Folceard mo NorD” - Norwich?	766
26	Cnut 1016-35	???	Arm and sceptre type (posthumous)	799
27	Harold I 1035-40	Swafa	Jewel cross, Lincoln mint (see note 9)	802
28	Harold I	Aelfwine	Long cross and fleur de lis (see note 10)	803
29	Harthacnut 1040-42	Elfwine	Jewel cross, second type. Mint “Pice” (see note 11)	809
30	Edward the Confessor	Arngrim	Expanding cross, York mint	820
31	Edward the C. 1042-66	Othgrim	Sovereign/eagles, York	827
32	William I 1066-87	Iestyn?	2 sceptres type, Hereford (See note 13)	844
33	William I	Godred	2 stars type. (See note 14)	845
34	Henry I 1100-35	Lefward	Annulets and piles. (See note 15)	860
35	Henry I	? Sagrim	Pellets in quatrefoil type (See note 16)	870
36	Stephen 1135-54	???	Watford type	873
37	Richard 1189-99	? Nicole	Probably class 3a. (See note 17)	967
38	John 1199-1216	Roberd	Irish penny from Dublin mint, “Johannes Rex” (See note 18)	N/A
39	Henry III 1216-72	Robert	Canterbury mint. Long cross, probably-class 5g.	997
40	Aldulf	Victor	Not an English coin. See text.	N/A

FOOTNOTES ON THE COINS ILLUSTRATED

1. A coin of Cuthred of Kent, 798-807, is attributed by Speed to Cuthred of Wessex, brother of king Ethelard or Aethelweard (also see note 3.)
2. A coin of Offa of Mercia, issued between 787 and 792, is attributed to Offa, son of Sighere of East Anglia, dated before 701.
3. A coin of Aethelweard of East Anglia, 850-855, is attributed to "Ethelard" of the West Saxons, 726.
4. A coin of Eadmund of East Anglia, 855-870, was thought to be of Eadmund of All England, 939-946. Speed must have thought the "A" stood for "Anglorum".
5. A coin attributed to "Sighere, son of Sebba" in East Anglia in 694 is certainly an error by Speed. North reports "practically nothing is known of the history of East Anglia between 793 and 870" and dates the kingdom's first coins to 758. The example illustrated could be a blundered St. Edmund memorial penny.
6. The coin attributed to Edward the Elder (899-924) is in fact the Expanding Cross issue of Edward the Confessor (1042-1066).
7. The coin allocated to Edmund Ironside (1016 - no coins known) is actually an issue of King Eadmund, 939-946.
8. The coin attributed by Speed to Edward the Martyr (975-978) is really of Edward the Elder (899-924), two-line type.
9. Speed assigns a Jewel Cross coin of Harold I to Harold II (1066). This could indicate that no examples of Harold II's sole type (PAX) were known before the beginning of the 17th century.
10. Harold I's Long Cross/Fleur de lys penny, moneyer Aelfwine, int "Deor", appears to be by a new moneyer for the type. "Deor" indicates Derby, which was named "Deoraby" by the Danes; but no Aelfwine is known there during Cnut, Harold I or Hardicnut's reigns. THIS COULD INDICATE A COIN WHICH HAS DISAPPEARED SINCE 1611.
11. The example of Hardicnut's second Jewel Cross type gives a mint name of "Pice" (= Wice) with moneyer "Elfwine". A moneyer Aelfwine is known for this type at London, Oxford, Southwark and Winchester. "Wicell may possibly refer to Winchester, although North quotes Wintonia, Winc, Wintcesre for this town, and the writer also has "Wincst". THIS COULD BE A NEW MINT FOR THE TYPE, possibly Droitwich or Norwich. Droitwich is known as "Wicc", Norwich as "Norwic". Again, this could be a coin no longer known.
12. This coin of Edward the Confessor, Expanding Cross type, was attributed by Speed to Edward the Elder (899-924.)
13. A moneyer "Aestan" is known at Hereford for William I's Two Sceptres type shown by Speed. "Iesthn" may be a NEW MONEYER or a misreading of Aestan.
14. The Two Stars type of William I was wrongly assigned to William II. The moneyer appears to be Godred. NO GODRED IS KNOWN for William I except at Thetford, for which North quotes renderings of "Theodfor, Thitfori, Tetford, Tief, Teffo". Could the mysterious legend, "OR=)PI", represent Oxford? It is probably not Bamborough, which has been rendered as "Obci", as this mint is only known for Henry II.
15. The Henry I Annulets and Piles type is clearly marked "Lefpard on SV" (Lefward in either Sudbury or Southwark). Sudbury is an UNKNOWN MINT FOR THIS TYPE; and if SV should be Sudbury this means a new mint and new moneyer. However, Southwark did issue this type; the most similar moneyer's name is "Liford", but the legend is very clearly written and well spaced, so that even if the mint is Southwark it could well be a new moneyer.
16. A Henry I coin, B.M.C. xiv (Pellets in Quatrefoil) is attributed to Henry II. (Note: not many Henry II pennies were known before the Tealby hoard of 1807). Part of the inscription is missing, but it is probably by Sagrim of Shaftesbury.
17. The coin given for Richard I is grotesque (a two-headed monster) and must have been drawn from a badly damaged specimen, presumably the best available. Speed seems to be aware that Richard's coinage was inscribed "Henricus" and does not make the mistake of giving it to one of the Henries.
18. The coin shown for John is from Ireland, the only place to issue coins in his name. The identical penny is illustrated in Martin Jessop-Price's "Coins", plate 663, p. 148. This gives an opportunity to check the accuracy of Speed's drawing where a reasonable specimen is available.