

III.

ON COINS ATTRIBUTED BY MR LINDSAY TO KINGS OF THE HEBRIDES. By EDWARD BURNS, Esq., F.S.A. Scot.

In Mr Lindsay's "View of the Coinage of Scotland," three coins are placed at the head of the Scottish series, presumed by Mr Lindsay to bear the appearance of having been struck by certain kings of the Hebrides in the eleventh century. These pieces form Nos. 1, 2, 3 of plate I. of Lindsay's Work on Scottish Coins. Two of the coins, Nos. 1 and 3, passed into the possession of Mr Wingate, and appear in his "Illustrations of the Coinage of Scotland," from specimens in his own cabinet, under the head of Coins of the Hebrides, exactly as attributed by Lindsay. The remaining coin, thus assigned to the Hebrides, is in the collection of the Rev. John H. Pollexfen.

The one thing indisputable about these three pieces is, that they are imitations of the Crux coins of Ethelred II. In all probability, but for the passion which possessed the genial and distinguished author of the "View of the Coinage of Scotland,"—and of other able numismatic works—of giving to the different homeless and nameless coins that came in his way "a local habitation and a name," no one would ever have supposed them to have been anything else but mere imitations, or current forgeries, of the Crux pieces of Ethelred II. So far as regards the coins themselves, there is nothing in them, save to a very fertile imagination;

to suggest a connection with the Hebrides; in respect to which, moreover, we have no grounds for believing that a native currency ever existed. It is quite true that the types on the money of Ethelred II. were imitated in other countries; and it will be interesting, although not of importance to our immediate subject, to glance at a few instances where the Crux type was obviously followed by other States. Olaf Scotkonung, king of Sweden, a prince well affected towards Ethelred II., adopted it as the model of his coinage, and, it is said, applied for and obtained from Ethelred a number of skilled moneyers. Another king of Sweden, Haco the Red—A.D. 1067—has had a coin of the Crux type assigned to him; but, as Annund, the predecessor of Haco, and the immediate successor of Olaf, followed the types of our Canute, while Haco himself was the contemporary of William the Conqueror, it is more probable that this piece belongs to Haco the Bad, Duke of Norway, who was assassinated A.D. 995. Ethelred II. reigned from A.D. 979 to A.D. 1013. There is every reason to believe that the Crux type must have been issued in England some time previous to A.D. 995. Professor Holmboe, from the evidence of Finds, contends that it was the very earliest type of Ethelred II. Hildebrand, a high authority, ranks it the third in order of precedence, giving the first place to the small cross type, and the second to the Hand of Providence variety.

Perhaps the most interesting imitation of the Crux type of Ethelred II. is the coin, formerly given to Svend Estrithson, king of Denmark, A.D. 1048-74; but now, with more probability, attributed to Svend Tveskjog, the conqueror of England, and its acknowledged king, after the flight of Ethelred II. into Normandy, A.D. 1013. This piece will be found engraved in the "Danske Mynter," Tab. viii. No. 85, and also in Lelewel, pl. xiii. No. 9. It reads on obverse, + Z'ÆN · REX · ADDENER, and, on reverse, GODPINE · M-ANDNER. These legends, Lelewel renders thus—obverse, "*Sven · Rex · Anglorum · D denerum, ou bien · Danorum;*" reverse, "*Godwine Ne' Lundner.*" There is no doubt that Godwin, as stated by Lelewel, was a well known moneyer of London in the time of Ethelred II., and also that he struck pennies of the Crux type. But it may well be doubted whether Godwin or any other English moneyer would have employed *Vndner*, or *Lundner*, to designate *London*; or *Addener* to represent *Anglorum, Danorum*. There is no such outlandish

rendering of the name of London as *Vndner*, or *Lundner*, among all the 509 pennies of the London mint of Ethelred II. given by Hildebrand. The coin was probably struck at Lunden in Denmark, before Svend became King of England.

We find another Crux piece in the *Danske Mynter*—Tab. xxviii. No. 1—identical in type with the penny of Svend. It reads on obverse, **ONLAF · REX · NOR ·**; on reverse, **BODPINE · M—ONO**, that is to say, **GODWINE · MO · NO**. This coin apparently belongs to Olaf Tryggveson, king of Norway, who accompanied Svend Tveskjog in his expedition against England in A.D. 994. Olaf visited Ethelred II. at Andover, where he received the rite of confirmation. He further pledged himself never again to invade England, a promise faithfully observed. According to some theorists, the Crux type was introduced in the English coinage to commemorate this occasion. To us in Scotland, Olaf Tryggveson is memorable for the striking feat of missionary enterprise and muscular Christianity, which has connected his name with the conversion of the people of Orkney. By mere chance, this zealous proselytiser had put in, with his fleet, into the harbour of Osmundwall, where that rank heathen, Sigurd the Stout, earl of the Orkneys, with only a small force, was lying in fancied security. Profiting by the occasion, Olaf made the earl prisoner, and gave him the option of instant death, or immediate conversion. Sigurd, as the less disagreeable alternative, chose the latter, and was baptised along with such of his people as were with him. The faith of this interesting convert appears to have suffered a relapse, for he was killed, fighting on the heathen side, at the battle of Clontarff.

The Crux coins of Sithric III., king of Dublin, another contemporary of Ethelred II., are well known. Strange to say, not one of the coins of this type of Sithric III. seems to bear proper legends, while on those of his usual type the inscriptions are in general correct. Mr Lindsay himself thus describes them:—"The coins are neatly executed, but the legends in general rude; the most perfect bearing the legend **ZITIR · DIFLMEORVM**, the last word being contracted, as we find on English coins of Ethelred II." Mr Lindsay might have added, that on some of these pieces the inscriptions bear so very little resemblance to the name and style of Sithric, that it is difficult to understand why they should be attributed to the Irish coinage at all. With equal propriety, at least,

might they have been employed to swell the series of those so-called coins of the Hebrides, with which we have now to deal.

With a trifling exception, the legend on obverse of the first of the three coins, assigned to the Hebrides, has been correctly rendered in the engravings of the piece in the plates of Lindsay and Wingate. I ought here to mention, that through the courtesy of Mr Wingate, I have had the opportunity of examining the two coins belonging to him, and my best thanks are also due to the Rev. Mr Pollexfen for allowing me the same privilege with respect to the coin in his possession. The exception above referred to, is that the second letter of the inscription is Ð , equivalent to TH, not D, as given in both of the plates, so that the whole legend, allowing for the contraction for RVM at the end, should read **ETHEL · REX · EVGORVM**. Through some recondite process, not quite palpable to ordinary understandings, Mr Lindsay has persuaded himself that **EVGORVM**—to quote his own words—is “the genitive of Eubudae, Æbudae, or Hebudae, which last was the ancient name of the Hebrides, or Western Isles.” But with what Hebridean celebrity to associate this coin, with the words **ETHEL · REX** so plainly staring one in the face? Nothing daunted, Mr Lindsay turns to the legend on reverse to see what he can find there to help him. He imagined that he could make out the name **SVENO** at the beginning of the legend, and, presuming that Svend Tvëskjog in his earlier years may have ruled over the Hebrides—of which there is no proof—he thought it highly probable that either he, or Svend Alfifason, the son of Canute, in his capacity of king of Norway, may have caused the coin to be issued. But while there is some doubt about the proper reading of the legend of the coin on reverse, there is no doubt whatever that it does not commence with the word **SVENO**. The first letter is not an S, but a P, the Saxon W, as may be distinctly seen from the drawing of the piece in Mr Lindsay’s own plate. The next two letters, which are in monogram, and which are rendered by Mr Lindsay in his Descriptive Catalogue as **VE**, ought rather to be construed as **AE**, for there is a connecting link, or bar, between the characters, quite visible on the coin itself, although not shown on either of the plates of Lindsay or Wingate. The two letters that follow are **ND**, making in all, **PAEND** or **WAEND**. The remainder of the legend seems to be **EWVSEVRO**, whatever that may mean; not that we need trouble ourselves very much

to extract a meaning from this jumble of letters, for, by no twisting or tinkering of the inscription, can the coin be made to appear to have any connection with the Hebrides.

On the second of these pieces, the name on obverse is ANEGMD, or rather ANNEGMD, there being a cross stroke between the N and the E, which gives us a double N. The remainder of the legend is CNEROX, but between this word and the preceding part of the inscription, a neat cross patée has been interposed. It is not so very clear how the legend on reverse should be rendered, owing to some of the letters having been indicated rather than expressed. The literal representation, as seen on the coin, is $\text{O}\Lambda\text{R}\text{E}\text{P}-\text{O}\text{C}\text{E}\text{A}\text{N}\text{D}$, which Mr Lindsay in his descriptive catalogue treats as equivalent to $\text{O}\Lambda\text{I}\text{R}\text{C}\text{M}-\text{O}\text{H}\text{E}\text{A}\text{N}\text{D}$, although perhaps better rendered by $\text{O}\Lambda\text{N}\text{R}\text{C}\cdot\text{M}\text{O}\cdot\text{C}\text{N}\text{E}\text{A}\text{N}\text{D}$.

This coin Mr Lindsay assumes to have been struck by a Norwegian named Ingemund, "who," he states, "in the eleventh century is known to have ruled over these islands." But it was in the twelfth, not in the eleventh century, that we find the name of Ingemund occurring in connection with the Hebrides, and it is quite certain that he never ruled over them. He had been invited, during the minority of Olaf, the king, to succeed Donald O'Brien in the regency of Man and the Isles—A.D. 1111. On his way to Man to undertake this office, he landed with his followers at the Lewis, where he gave himself up to every kind of license. Dissatisfied with the minor dignity of regent, he aspired to be king, and commanded the island chiefs to meet at an early day and proceed with his election. But the islanders do not seem to have appreciated the manner in which Ingemund and his associates were making themselves at home among them. Before the day appointed for the election of their would-be sovereign arrived, the men of Lewis gathered in force, and surrounding the place of his abode, roasted Ingemund and all his Norwegians alive. And this was the beginning and the end of the connection of that worthy with the islands.

We now come to the consideration of the third and last of the coins ascribed by Mr Lindsay to the Hebrides. It bears on obverse the inscription $\text{S}\text{X}\text{O}\text{M}\text{A}\text{T}\text{C}\text{E}\text{D}\ \text{R}\text{O}\text{A}\text{E}$. The legend on reverse, in Mr Lindsay's opinion, is "partly retrograde, and partly turned upside down, and probably blundered." There cannot be much doubt, however, but that it is

simply retrograde from beginning to end. According to my reading it is **VOLVENORGEVE/E/ENESTHR·ON·NENELOV**; which, reversed, gives **EENEZDRONWAELOV**; equivalent probably to **ENENESTHR·ON·NENELOV**; under reservation, of course, that it has any intelligible equivalent.

On this coin Mr Lindsay chiefly founds to prove his case that these three pieces belong to the Hebrides. "This last coin," he remarks, "I consider as the key of the whole, for if the name of the king is *Somerled*, as will, I think be admitted, there can be little doubt but it belongs to the Western Isles, and the other two, from their strong general resemblance to it, must evidently follow the same appropriation; indeed, the name *Somerled* is peculiar to the Scottish Isles, and I have not found it connected with the history of any other country."

There is something charmingly vague about this style of argument. In quietly assuming that **SXOMATCED** is intended for *Somerled*, Mr Lindsay makes no attempt whatever to show that any prince of the name of *Somerled* was connected with the Western Isles at the period when, presumably, these coins were struck,—i.e., about the end of the tenth, or at latest, at the commencement of the eleventh century. And, indeed, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to show that any person of the name of *Somerled* played an important part in the history of these islands at the period indicated, or for long after. We know that when Sigurd the Stout, earl of the Orkneys, whose conversion to Christianity came about in the manner above related, fell at Clontarff on that memorable Good Friday, A.D. 1014, he left four sons—*Somerled*, *Einar*, *Brusi*, and *Thorfin*. The three elder inherited the Orkneys, and ruled over these as joint earls. *Thorfin* the youngest, by a different mother, the daughter of *Malcolm II.*, secured, through the influence of his royal grandfather, the Earldom of *Caithness*, and the mainland possessions of his late father. We have very little information about this *Somerled*. All that the *Orkneyinga Saga* says of him is that he was the shortest lived of the brothers. But it does not appear that either he, or the two brothers associated with him in the earldom of the Orkneys, had anything to do with the Hebrides. Apparently the chiefs of these islands had shaken themselves free from Orkney domination after the disaster at Clontarff. At a subsequent period, when his three elder brothers were dead, *Thorfin*, who had succeeded to their title and estates, seems to have made himself master of the Hebrides

by conquest. We may dismiss from our consideration the claims of this Somerled to royal honours, and to the coin in question. The only Somerled, of whom we have actual proof as having exercised sovereignty in the Western Isles, was Somerled, Lord of Argyle, and, by virtue of the strong hand, King of the Isles from A.D. 1158 to 1164. To this Somerled, Mr Wingate—improving upon Lindsay, who is judiciously vague, and merely says that “the name Somerled is peculiar to the Scottish Isles,” as if Somerleds had been as plentiful there as any of the natural productions of the soil—has ventured to assign the coin. “It is natural,” Mr Wingate remarks, “to suppose that Somerled, who was contemporary with David I., and a chieftain holding sway over a large portion both of the Islands and the Western Mainland, should strike money after the type of the Anglo-Saxon coins which were brought in such quantities to his dominions by the Danish pirates, who had their head-quarters among the Islands.” But the day of the Vikings was over before Somerled had established himself on the throne of the Isles, and he was too powerful a chief to allow Danish or other pirates to make their head-quarters in his dominions. Nor were Anglo-Saxon coins the circulating medium in England in the reign of Henry II., of whom Somerled was the contemporary. It is *not* natural, therefore, to suppose that Somerled, if he struck coins at all, would have overlooked the coinage of his own time, and have made his money facsimiles in type and texture of the Crux coins of Ethelred II., just about a century and a half after that unfortunate monarch had ceased to reign. Long odds may safely be taken that Somerled never saw a Crux coin of Ethelred II.

It seems like killing a dead horse to say anything further on this subject, but a few words more may be permitted. Mr Lindsay has jumped to the conclusion that the letters RO AE, which terminate the legend on obverse of this coin thus attributed by him to some mythical Somerled, represent REX AEBVDAE. He informs us that “the word RO, as on other Northern coins, probably denoted the word King.” But on what Northern coins is the word RO so employed? Not certainly on the Hiberno-Danish coins, as we find them described by Mr Lindsay himself in his *Irish Coinage*; not on Danish or Norwegian coins, as they appear in the splendid plates of the “*Danske Mynter*,” not on Swedish coins, as they are described in the pages of Brenner. Nor can the letters AE represent AEBVDAE, on a

coin of the period at which this piece has presumably been struck—for the simple reason, that no such name appears to have been known for the Western Islands in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The Norwegian and Orkney Sagas always call them the Sudreyar (Southern), or by some similar name, in reference to their geographical position to Norway and the Orkneys. Hector Boëce, in reviving in the sixteenth century Pliny's ancient appellation for these islands, now corrupted into "Hebrides," has much to answer for. Lindsay and Wingate would have been saved the publication of their coins of the Hebrides, and the present writer would have been spared the thankless task of writing this article.

A passage in Mr Lindsay's "View of the Coinage of Ireland," published by him in 1839; six years previous to the appearance of his "View of the Coinage of Scotland," shows that at one time Mr Lindsay entertained the intention of carrying back the coinage of Scotland to a period still earlier than his coins of the Kings of the Hebrides. He remarks at page 20 in the above work, "The discovery (?) of the name Indulf"—A.D. 954-962—"on a coin similar to No. 12 of Snelling's 1st Ad. Plate to Simon, has enabled me to assign that coin, and others of the same type, to the early Scottish Kings" (!) Fortunately, by the time the "View of the Coinage of Scotland" appeared, Mr Lindsay had thought better of the matter, and allowed Indulf, and the other early Scottish kings, quietly to sleep in the tomb of their fathers. To this oblivion, or, rather to the limbo of things that never were, let these poor ghosts of Kings, Messrs Lindsay and Wingate's *Reges Aebudae*, henceforth be relegated. The object of this paper having been to clear away from the Scottish coinage certain pieces that obviously should never have been attributed to it; a few remarks may be permitted with respect to another coin, which Mr Lindsay has assigned to Scotland—No. 4 of his first plate. This piece, to quote Mr Lindsay's description of it "exhibits a rude full face without legend (unless what appears like an A or V under the head may be considered such); reverse, a large cross potent, with a large pellet in each angle." With so very little to guide him regarding its allocation, Mr Lindsay has not ventured to appropriate this coin to any particular prince, but he remarks, "from the strong similarity between the type of its reverse and those of the coins of Alexander I. and David I., I think there appears a high degree of probability that it is Scottish, and struck by some of the kings who

preceded Malcolm III., or perhaps, with still greater probability, by some of the princes of the Isles, contemporary with David I., to the reverse of whose coins (*viz.*, of David I.), that of this coin bears the strongest resemblance; it was found in the North of Ireland." The piece is now in the possession of the Rev. Mr Pollexfen, to whom I am obliged for the opportunity of examining it. At the left side of the coin, appears an object which at first glance might be mistaken for a sceptre, but which is really a crosier. Taking into consideration that the type of reverse is common to the Episcopal coins of the Rhenish provinces, there is "a high degree of probability" that this coin belongs to some of the ecclesiastical princes in this district, probably to some of the Bishops of Metz in the eleventh century. There are no grounds whatever for assigning the coin to Scotland.
