

“CROSRAGUEL” PENNIES—REATTRIBUTION TO BISHOP
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When in 1919 Sir George Macdonald described¹ the remarkable collection of 205 coins found earlier that year in a drain at Crosraguel Abbey in Ayrshire, he deduced that 51 copper pennies and 87 copper farthings should be ascribed to a mint working at the Abbey itself. Previously such pennies were little known to numismatic literature, and the James whose name appeared on them had been supposed to be some continental ruler.² At Crosraguel the other coins included 39 of James III and 9 of James IV, and a similar date for the bulk of the find seems probable.

The ecclesiastical origin of “Crosraguel” pennies was shown by the reverse type—the opening words of a hymn of Prudentius *crux pellit omne crimen* surrounding a Latin cross (figs. 1–3). The orb-and-cross on the obverse was interpreted by Sir George as a rebus on the name of the Abbey, *Crux Regalis*. He showed that abbey coinages occurred abroad though not in medieval England, where, however, various bishops struck coins under royal authority.

Some of his paper remained rather unconvincing. In particular it was hard to believe that a somewhat remote abbey of no very particular importance should issue coins that were current far beyond its own district. Yet Sir George himself cited, in addition to other finds from the south-west (11 pennies from Glenluce Sands, Wigtownshire, and 1 from Ayrshire), 8 pennies from the Culbin Sands, Morayshire, 4 from Fife and 5 from S.E. Scotland. Since then our Museum has further acquired 1 from Orchardton Tower, Kirkeudbrightshire, 2 from Tantallon Castle, East Lothian, 1 from Crichton Castle, Midlothian, 1 from Melrose Abbey and 1 from Dunfermline Abbey—weights in grains $40\frac{1}{4}$, $28\frac{1}{2}$ and $17\frac{1}{2}$, 24, $28\frac{1}{2}$, 29. The Holyrood coin mentioned by Sir George, now also in the Museum, weighs $17\frac{1}{2}$ grains. Dr Richardson has brought for record a new find from North Berwick

¹ *P.S.A.S.*, liv. 20–44, reprinted *Num. Chron.*, 4th series, vol. xix.

² To the literature he cited we may add *P.S.A.S.*, iv. (1862), 377, where it is said that such coins “have very frequently been found in Scotland mixed up with the money of the Scottish kings of the same name.”

($22\frac{1}{2}$ grains). No particular district is underlined by this distribution, and of course a hoard such as that from Crosraguel Abbey drain has, in this connection, little more importance than a single find. No known find-spot is outside Scotland and Berwick-on-Tweed.

The interpretation of most of the miscellaneous small metal finds from Crosraguel as scrap ready to be minted is open to two objections. Firstly, 213 tags for cord ends and 43 pins bulk largely, yet are almost pathetic in their smallness. It would have been a poor mint indeed that needed such scrap, and scarcely one to have its products used widely through the kingdom. Secondly, only one-tenth of the metal was copper and over five-tenths brass, whereas of all the coins from Crosraguel only 21 farthings were brass and the bulk were copper. All the known pennies are copper.



Fig. 1.



Fig. 2.



Fig. 3.

Sir George stressed the presence of two copper "blanks," of which one showed slight signs of an attempt at striking it, and of a "waster" struck on one side only. The latter is only half a coin thick, the obverse having flaked off. Yet one may doubt whether, in the case of coins of such a low denomination, any mint would be so careful as to check that each coin issued was properly struck. A bagful of coins some of which were faulty can be imagined as arriving at Crosraguel from elsewhere. Finally, two tiny drops of copper from a melting-pot need suggest no more than that someone at the Abbey was melting small scrap for making small objects. Possibly the copper and brass coins were themselves an important part of the scrap.

The range of weight of the "Crosraguel" pennies from the Abbey is not much wider than of those found elsewhere, but they are lighter on the whole, as Dr James Davidson has pointed out in conversation. The same lightness was remarked on by Sir George in the case of the James III and James IV coins from the find, with the opinion that they were "contemporary imitations." "Crosraguel" coins might have been minted officially at a more

central spot and "imitated" at the Abbey. A more probable alternative is that the acids in the drain have reduced the weight of the coins.

Such doubts about Sir George's ascription of the pennies to a Croraguel mint were current among numismatists when the writer came across, in Dr A. I. Dunlop's recent *Life and Times of Bishop Kennedy* (p. 346), a reference to a charter by James II dated 14th June 1452, and to the comments on it by George Martine, a seventeenth-century antiquary. The Bishop of St Andrews was authorised, among other things, to strike coins: the phrase is *cum monetæ fabrica*. Martine¹ pointed out that this was already granted to the Bishop of St Andrews in the reign of Alexander III, but went on to say, "For prooffe that sometimes this priviledge has been in use, I have seen copper coines bearing the same mond, chapletted about, and adorned with a croce on the top just in all things like the mond set by Bishop Kennedy in sundry places of St Salvator's colledge, both in stone and timber, and the same way adorned; with a common St George's croce on the reverse. The circumscriptions are not legible. And some think that the magistrates of St Andrews their keeping in their charter-kist some of these pennies, have done it in honour of their over lord, and for an instance and remembrance of this royall priviledge, which no subject in Britanne has beside."

From this it is clear that Martine not only had seen "Croraguel" pennies, but had evidence that the orb-and-cross on them was connected with the Bishop's College.

It was in fact the principal charge of the College arms. This was entirely forgotten until Mr R. G. Cant's investigations, which resulted on 16th May 1949 in the arms being at last matriculated by authority of the Lord Lyon as "an Imperial orb surmounted of a Latin cross." The evidence has been summarised by Mr Cant in the *University of St Andrews Alumnus Chronicle*,² and he has most kindly permitted and assisted the following use of his work.

Though the stone carvings mentioned by Martine have disappeared, the orb-and-cross is still to be seen on three objects.

(1) The College mace (1461)³ has a shield charged with the orb-and-cross within a tressure flory counterflory, which A. J. S. Brook considered to be, like one of the two companion shields, much later in date than the mace itself (fig. 4). It is reasonable to suppose that it was a replacement based on remembrance of what was missing—extensive repairs are recorded, one in 1685. The tressure appears on the other shields and seems in this case merely to be for artistic uniformity.⁴

¹ *Reliquae Divi Andreae*, p. 108; pub. 1797, but with dedication dated 1683.

² No. 33, 1950, pp. 21-2, and illustration facing p. 36.

³ *P.S.A.S.*, xxvi, 460 ff., and *R.C.A.M.*, *Fife*, p. liii.

⁴ R. G. Cant, *The University of St Andrews* (1946), p. 139.

(2) A wooden panel has the orb-and-cross carved in high relief on a shield without a tressure¹ (fig. 5). It is believed to have come from the Great Hall of St Salvator's, and was returned to the College by Dr Hay Fleming in 1927.

(3) The inscription on a bell, given to the College in 1679 by its principal, Dr George Patullo, and now in the belfry above the porter's lodge, terminates in the orb-and-cross.²

Mr Cant's further researches have shown that the orb-and-cross was used on now vanished college plate, in the seventeenth-century inventory of which it was described as "the colledge armes."³ Various authorities, not knowing of the arms, have made suggestions as to the significance of the orb-and-cross,



Fig. 4.

particularly upon the mace, *e.g.* that it represented the Church of Rome. Mr Cant describes it as intended to symbolise the sacrificial dominion of the Saviour of the World, to whom Bishop Kennedy dedicated his college, and has added that it is almost the keynote of Kennedy's outlook as bishop and statesman.

This view is supported by the placing of it as a device on another of Kennedy's interests as well. For in the light of all this evidence we may accept as correct Martine's attribution of the orb-and-cross pennies to a mint operated by Bishop Kennedy. There is no reason to suppose that it was situated elsewhere than at St Andrews. Though not raised to an Archbishopric till 1472, the See was of prime importance, and the coins minted there under the King's authority might readily circulate throughout Scotland, though perhaps primarily in ecclesiastical territories.

The "Crosraguel" farthings, whose inscription was apparently intended to be read *moneta pauperum*, have no orb-and-cross, and can only be ascribed to "an unidentified mint." The Museum has no specimens other than those from Crosraguel.



Fig. 5.

¹ *P.S.A.S.*, ix, 404 ff.

² *R.C.A.M. Fife*, p. 245. It is not practicable to photograph the inscription.

³ St Salvator's College Paper, A.P., 14 (St Andrews University Muniments).