MONEYERS AND MINTS, c.973–1158

INTRODUCTION

In medieval England money principally consisted of precious metal coinage made by English mints. The English currency often included some foreign coins, and base metal tokens had a minor role as small change by the fifteenth century, but the issue of paper money from English banks began only in the seventeenth century. The coinage of late Anglo-Saxon and Norman England was produced by large numbers of moneyers in dozens of towns and cities (see Map 1.1): in this period the word ‘mint’ is a convenient term for all of the minting facilities in one town or city, but until 1180 English moneyers usually had their own individual workshops. From 1279 the moneyers’ names were removed from the coins, and the king’s mints were placed under the management of masters supervised by wardens. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries there was a radical reduction in the number of mints, and by the second half of the fifteenth century London had the only regularly functioning royal mint, supplemented by temporary mints at times of recoinage and a small number of ecclesiastical mints.

MONEYERS IN BOROUGHS AND SHIRES

Anglo-Saxon law codes contain some illuminating references to the activities of moneyers and to the numbers of moneyers allowed in each borough, but they do not refer to mints as institutions. Boroughs were expected or permitted to have moneyers, and minting was not allowed outside a borough. No law code states that a moneyer could not operate in more
Names of possible mint locations are in italics.
than one borough, and there is reason to believe that they often struck coins or exchanged their new coins for old coins and bullion at several different places. Henry I’s writ of 1100 concerning false money and exchangers (de moneta falsa et cambiatoribus) states that no moneyer should exchange (mutet) outside his own shire, apparently implying that it was legitimate for moneyers to exchange anywhere in their shire, travelling around to provide a moneychanging service.¹ In a survey of the estates and revenues of Peterborough Abbey during a vacancy of 1125–8 the moneyers of Stamford owe 20s. at Easter for the exchanges at the markets of Oundle and Peterborough, and another 20s. at a recoinage (de torno monete).² Stamford was partly in the same shire as Oundle and Peterborough (Northamptonshire) and partly in Lincolnshire. A charter of Henry I issued in 1129–33 granted to the bishop of Norwich the customs, exchange (bursam), market and port of Lynn in Norfolk, which did not have a mint and presumably would have needed the exchanging services of Norwich moneyers.³ Reading Abbey was granted a moneyer at London in 1125–6 or 1127–8, with the provision that the moneyer could exchange within the abbot’s land in Reading (cambiet in terra abbatis Rading).⁴ In this case Reading and its shire (Berkshire) did not have a mint when the grant was made.⁵

There is no known documentary evidence for the operation of moneyers in more than one borough before 1100, but there is evidence from the coinage itself. Coincidences of name between moneyers at different mints may sometimes indicate that a moneyer struck coins in more than one borough, although they cannot show when a moneyer simply exchanged coins in another borough without using dies bearing its name (the Stamford moneyers exchanged in Oundle and Peterborough but they did not use dies naming those places).⁶ Studies of the dies used to produce the late Anglo-Saxon coinage have provided numerous examples of the use of an obverse die at more than one mint, some of which may have occurred when a moneyer worked in two or more places, but there are other possible explanations of this phenomenon. Some transfers of dies may have occurred when minting in a particular place ceased entirely, which may explain for example the die-links between Cissbury and Chichester in Cnut’s Quatrefoil type (c.1016–23), and between Guildford and Chichester in the Paxs type after the Norman Conquest (1087–c.1090?), while others may have been caused by a loan of

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¹ Davis et al. 1913–69, II, 4, no. 501; Stewart 1992a, 547; Symons 2003, 51–2, 169; 2006, 547. The writ also states that the moneyer must exchange before two lawful witnesses of the shire, and that nobody was to exchange (cambire) except a moneyer.
² Stapleton 1849, 166; Wells 1934–7b, 54, 57; King 1996, 15.
³ Davis et al. 1913–69, II, 279, no. 1851; King 1996, 15.
⁴ Ruding 1840, II, 156; Andrew 1901, 373–5; Wells 1934–7b, 52; Stewart 1991, 6.
⁵ Blackburn (1990), 68, notes that the reduction of the number of mints after the assize of moneyers in 1124–5 would have left many counties without a moneyer to exchange silver.
the die from one moneyer to another or by the die being returned to the die-cutting work-
shop and reissued to a moneyer from another mint."

There were many exceptional movements of moneyers in the reigns of Æthelred II and
Cnut that can be plausibly related to the Danish raids or to the resulting collection of geld. Wilton was sacked in 1003 and its moneyers seem to have moved to the greater security of the
original site of Salisbury at the ancient hillfort of Old Sarum at about this time, although Old Sarum may also have been successfully attacked by the Danish army in 1003. Other Iron Age
hillforts were also used as mints, with Ilchester moneyers at Cadbury (c. 1010–17) and another mint at Cissbury Hill in Sussex (c. 1010–20). In Æthelred II’s Crux type (c. 991–7) London
moneyers worked in a series of eastern mints from Southwark to Thetford (and possibly also at the Thames Valley mints of Aylesbury and Wallingford), presumably to mint silver for geld payments. There are die-links between London and Buckingham, Hertford, Huntingdon, Rochester and Southwark in the Long Cross type (c. 997–1003) which may indicate that moneyers from the non-metropolitan mints were working in London to produce coinage for geld. A coin of the Rochester moneyer Ælfwold in Cnut’s Quatrefoil type, which is exception-
ally from dies of a Stamford style, may have been struck in Stamford during the collection of the 1018 geld.

After the Norman Conquest there are many examples of moneyers moving permanently
from one mint to another. The moneyer Cild of Bedwyn moved to Marlborough in the same
shire (Wiltshire) soon after the Conquest, between William I types 1 and 3. The Droitwich
moneyer Heathewulf moved to Worcester and possibly then to Hereford in the 1070s. There seem to have been several permanent movements of moneyers between Devon and
Somerset mints in the reign of William I (1066–87). A moneyer named as Sæward, Seword
or Siword is recorded at Exeter in William I types 2, 3 and 5, and at Barnstaple in the same
shire (Devon) in types 5, 6 and 8. Brihtric and Ælfwine may have moved from Exeter to Taunton, the main mint of Somerset. Stewartby has suggested that some moneyers moved
to other mints after the assize of moneyers in 1124–5, which is a suggestion that receives some support from twelve coincidences of name at different mints before and after the assize. The twelve moneyers concerned include Tovi (Tovius the engineer (Inganet)) in the 1129/30

10 Stewart 1978b, 98. See pp. 115–17 for a discussion of die supply in the Anglo-Saxon and Norman periods.
11 Dolley 1954a; Brand 1984b, 50; Blunt and Lyon 1990.
13 Stafford 1978, 40, 46. 
15 Blackburn and Lyon 1986, 238 n.16; Eaglen and Grayburn 2000, 27–8, 31, 33.
16 Stewart 1978b, 103; 1992a, 74. 
17 Carlyon-Britton 1902a; Elmore Jones 1971.
18 Symons 1003, 112–4, 179, 310.
19 Stewart 1970a, 26. A coin of William I type 3 of the Exeter moneyer Ælfwine is from the same obverse die as a coin of Sibode at London, in a later state (Brooke 1916, I, clx; Stewart 1970a, 25).
Moneyers in boroughs and shires

Table 1.1 Moneyers of the same name at London and Southwark, 1066–1125

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moneyer</th>
<th>London</th>
<th>Southwark</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>William I types</td>
<td>William II types</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ælred</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ælfwine</td>
<td>1–2, 4, 7</td>
<td>1–5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Algar a</td>
<td>1–4</td>
<td>3, 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dereman b</td>
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<td>Edward</td>
<td>5–6</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>Godric</td>
<td>1–3, 5–6, 8</td>
<td>1–2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Godwine</td>
<td>2–8</td>
<td>1–4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lifwine</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wulfgar</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
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Notes: 

a A Henry I type 3 reverse die of the Southwark moneyer Algar was found in spoil from the Thames exchange site in London in 1990 (Archibald, Lang and Milne 1995, 185–7), but no coins of the moneyer in this type are known at present.

b The listing of Dereman as a Southwark moneyer is based upon a coin of Henry I type 4 with the ambiguous mint signature S (BNJ Coin Register 1988, no. 211).

Sources: Harris 1983–8; 1991; EMC; SCBI.

pipe roll), whose services for the king seem to have included acting as an itinerant moneyer in London, Oxford, Twynham (Christchurch) and Winchester at various times during the reigns of Henry I and Stephen. 11

Table 1.1 shows that there are many coincidences of moneyers’ names between the London and Southwark mints in 1066–1125, which is perhaps not surprising in two places only separated by the River Thames. Only one name new to the coinage at Southwark in William II’s types 1 to 5, Sprot, is not also found at London, and in the reign of Henry I all of the names of the Southwark moneyers can be matched on coins of London apart from Lifwine. The prohibition of moneyers exchanging in more than one shire in Henry I’s writ of 1100 de moneta falsa et cambiatoribus does not seem to have had any significant effect upon the activity of the London and Southwark moneyers, although London was in Middlesex and Southwark was in Surrey. 12

Nightingale has connected many of the London moneyers of the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries with prominent inhabitants of the city recorded in written sources. 14

12 Davis et al. 1913–19, II, 4, no. 501; Stewart 1992a, 547; Symons 2006, 547.
14 Nightingale 1982.
reconstruction of the family history of Deorman (who died c.1093) Nightingale suggests that each of his four sons (Algar, Edwine, Ordgar and Theoderic) may have become a moneyer. Deorman’s son Algar cannot have been responsible for all of the London and Southwark coins in the name of a moneyer Algar, if the assumption that he died no later than 1104 is correct, but Nightingale argues that he may have been succeeded in office by a son of the same name. The London alderman Brithtmar, documented in about 1150, was a moneyer, and Ulgarius, an alderman in 1117, may have been the London moneyer Wulfgar. The London moneyers may have had workshops in the area around St Paul’s where many goldsmiths operated their businesses. In 1128 the moneyer Theoderic held land in Old Fish Street, later known as Old Exchange, which ran past the east end of St Paul’s into Cheapside.

The best evidence for the location of the moneyers’ workshops and houses in an English town or city before 1158 is provided by the two surveys of properties in Winchester compiled during the first half of the twelfth century. The Winton Domesday (c.1110) bears witness to the destruction of five moneyers’ workshops (monete) in High Street on the king’s orders, presumably to make way for the enlargement of the royal palace. There were at least eighteen forges (forgiae) at the north-eastern corner of the extended palace (shown in Map 1.2), which were evidently recent developments. Seven forges were held by Robert son of Wimund (Wimund being a Winchester moneyer of the period), and the others were occupied by people with no discoverable connection with the coinage, but they may well have been used by moneyers. The moneyers lived elsewhere, and they presumably acted as exchangers at their own houses. The survey names five holders of properties in the time of Edward the Confessor (probably in the 1050s) as moneyers, with properties in High Street and Brudenestret and outside West Gate. One of these five moneyers, Godwinus Socche, is given the title of master moneyer (magister monetarius), and another, Andrebodus, has the byname canger (exchanger). Nine other people in the survey may have been moneyers in the reign of Edward the Confessor, although they are not named as moneyers. Two moneyers are specifically identified as such at the time of the survey in c.1110: Odo (unknown from the coins) had a house in Snidelingestret, and the wife of Wimund (possibly recently dead)

52 Nightingale 1982, 36, 41. Ordgar is recorded as a London moneyer from William II type 2 to Henry I type 2, and in Henry I types 15 to 15.
53 Nightingale 1982, 48. Nightingale suggests that the London alderman Alwold may have been a moneyer of Stephen’s reign, but this name is found only at Winchester in the coinage of Stephen (in type 1).
56 Biddle 1976, 400–3, 405, 421–2; Symons 2003, 173–4. Godwinus Socche may have had some kind of seniority amongst the Winchester moneyers.
57 Biddle 1976, 403–8.
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had a property in High Street.\textsuperscript{13} Twelve other Winchester property holders in c.1110 may have been moneyers in the reign of Henry I.\textsuperscript{34}

The Winchester survey of 1148 names two moneyers: Sanson (who was a moneyer in Southampton) and Siwardus.\textsuperscript{35} Six other moneyers of the reign of Stephen (1135–54) might be identified with people named in the survey, mostly holding properties in the vicinity of High Street, and other holders of property in this area may have become Winchester moneyers in c.1110.\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{13} Biddle 1976, 407, 409–10.

\textsuperscript{15} Biddle 1976, 415–16; Dunger 2009. There are no known coins of Winchester between those of Stephen types 1 and 7, and Blackburn (1994, 190–1) suggests that the moneyers Sanson and Willem may have relocated the Winchester mint’s operations to Southampton in the interval.
Henry II’s *Cross-and-Crosslets* coinage of 1158–80. Only two forges appear in the survey of 1148, held by Roger le Haia from Girinus the Butler (*pincerna*), but one of these was a property on the north side of High Street that seems to have been the forge held by Robert the son of Wimund in the survey of c.1110. The royal palace had been destroyed in 1141, and the moneyers were now moving back into the area formerly occupied by moneyers’ houses and the five *monete* before the construction of the palace.  

**The Status of Moneyers**

The Winchester surveys show that the moneyers were of burgess rank, often with extensive property interests. We have seen that some London moneyers of the first half of the twelfth century were aldermen, and there is reason to believe that moneyers of other English cities might be of a similar social status. Thomas FitzUlf, a York moneyer of Eustace FitzJohn in the 1140s, can be identified with Thomas FitzUlvieth, an alderman of the Merchants’ Guild of York mentioned in the 1129/30 pipe roll, who was granted the vill of Bonwick in Holderness by William of Aumale in about 1150. The names of five out of twelve witnesses to an inquest into the rights of the archbishop of York made in the reign of William I correspond to the names of York moneyers of the coinage of William I. Similarly, Domesday Book records the names of the twelve lawmen of Lincoln in the time of Edward the Confessor, six of whom had the same names as Lincoln moneyers of the reign. Moneyers occasionally appear in witness lists of charters before the Conquest, including Hunewine (a Devon and Somerset moneyer in the reigns of Æthelred II and Cnut), who is named as a king’s thegn (*minister*), and the York moneyers Osulf Thein (in the reign of Æthelred II) and Ulfbetel Thaginc (under Edward the Confessor) apparently also had that status. Such moneyers presumably employed other men to make the coins bearing their names. The law code known as *IV Æthelred II* (*c.*995) states that moneyers shall be responsible for the production of pure money of the proper weight by their men. Moneyers must have had sufficient capital to fund their exchanging activities at recoinages and at other times. Debts owed by moneyers in the 1129/30 pipe roll include the huge sum of 278 marks (£185 6s 8d) due from the Winchester moneyer Saiet.

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15 Biddle 1976, 418.  
16 Hunter 1833, 14; Mack 1966, 81; Blackburn 1994, 185.  
18 Hunter 1833, 34; Mack 1966, 81.  
22 Kinsey 1958–9, 10, 17; Smart 1968, 212–13; Symons 2003, 171; Screen 2007, 168.  
23 Symons 2001, 170, 174; 2006, 547. Allen (1951, cv, cxxix–cxxx) notes that Wälchelinus, who struck irregular coins at Derby in the reign of Stephen, was able to pay a fine of £100. There is no evidence that the mints received financial support from the king’s treasury before 1180.  
24 Hunter 1833, 40; Andrew 1901, 462–4; Stewart 1991, 3, 5.
Ecclesiastical mints and moneyers

Nightingale has connected Deorman, the father of London moneyers, with a thegn of that name who held a manor in Hertfordshire at the time of Domesday Book (jointly with another thegn named Alwardus), suggesting that this may have been a reward for service relating to the coinage. She has also argued that other king’s thegns or ministri in Domesday Book may have done service in the mints, either as moneyers or in some supervisory role. Domesday Book records that when the king comes to Hereford the moneyers have to mint as much of the king’s silver as he wishes, and that the king has 20s. when a moneyer dies or all of his effects if he dies intestate. Metcalf has suggested that Godwinus Socche, the magister monetarius in Winton Domesday at the time of Edward the Confessor, may have had some special status as a king’s servant, and that some other Winchester moneyers may have been provided with a free tenement as part of their reward for service, while others chose to perform the role on a strictly commercial basis. In Domesday Book various moneyers are free tenants of the king, and a Wallingford moneyer has a house free for as long as he works at the mint (the houses may have been free of taxes and other obligations rather than being free of rent). All of this would seem to support Nightingale’s theory that there was a distinction between royal moneyers, who paid their profits directly to the king, and local men who farmed the minting profits as private contractors. It is, however, worth remembering that there is no documentary evidence for the direct payment of profits by a special category of royal moneyer, and that we do not know how the king’s moneyers were appointed in the Anglo-Saxon and Norman periods. The king may have asked boroughs to nominate moneyers, but it is also possible that people of sufficient resources and reputation might apply for dies.

There can be no doubt that many of the moneyers were appointed by ecclesiastical authorities. Coins were issued in the names of archbishops of Canterbury and York as early as the eighth century. The earliest documentary evidence for ecclesiastical minting rights in England is provided by Athelstan’s Grately law code of c.925–30, which stipulates that there should be two moneyers in Canterbury for the archbishop and one for the abbot of St Augustine’s Abbey, and that the bishop of Rochester should have one moneyer. There is no later evidence for the bishop of Rochester’s possession of a moneyer, but the abbot of St Augustine’s had a moneyer until 1161, and the archbishop of Canterbury’s minting rights continued in various forms until the reign of Henry VIII.
The text of the inquest into the rights of the archbishop of York, which is tentatively dated to c.1080, states that the archbishop has two moneyers, which may well have been the custom before 1066. There is no other documentary evidence for the archbishop of York’s minting rights before 1148, but Blackburn has attributed the York coinage of Bishop Henry in the reign of Stephen to Archbishop Henry Murdac (1147–53).

Domesday Book tells us that Walter, bishop of Hereford, had one of the seven Hereford moneyers in the time of King Edward (1042–66), receiving 20s when new dies were issued, and that the bishop of East Anglia (whose see moved from Thetford to Norwich in the 1090s) now had one moneyer in Norwich if he wished. In 1089–91 William II granted the city of Bath, with its customs, tolls and mint, to the bishop, and this was confirmed by Henry I. The surviving coins of the Durham mint seem to indicate that the bishop of Durham was also granted minting rights by William II, perhaps in 1087–8, although there is no documentary evidence for this.

Abbot Baldwin of Bury St Edmunds was granted a moneyer by Edward the Confessor in 1065–6, but there seems to have been an earlier grant, because the coinage of the Bury St Edmunds mint begins with the Trefoil/Quadrilateral type of c.1046–8. The grant of a moneyer was confirmed by William I between 1066 and 1070, and a writ of William II (1087–1100) amplifies the abbot’s minting rights to include the possession of exchangers (cambiatoribus) as well as a moneyer. Henry I confirmed the minting rights in 1102–7. There was a vacancy in the abbacy from 1107 to 1114, but the existence of a Bury St Edmunds cut halfpenny of Henry I type 7, dated by Blackburn to c.1111 (or c.1113 if type 8 is placed before type 7), may indicate that the mint was operated for the king’s profit during the vacancy. A writ of 1125 protected the abbot’s minting rights after Henry I’s assize of moneyers, informing the bishop of Norwich that the abbot was to have his mint and moneyer and his exchange (monetam et monetarium et cambium suum) after justice had been done upon his moneyer. Stephen (1135–54) granted a second and then a third die, but a writ of Henry II issued in 1155–8 confirmed the abbey’s possession of one moneyer, implicitly eliminating the extra moneyers granted by Stephen.

55 Blackburn 1990a, 185–6.
56 Domesday Book, I, fols. 117v, 179; Brooke 1916, I, cxxv, cxlii, clxxii; elxxvii; Blunt 1961, ii.
57 Davis et al. 1913–69, I, 85, no. 326; Brooke 1916, I, lxx–lxxi, clxii.
61 Ruding 1840, II, 218; Sharpe 2003, 259–60; Eaglen 2006, 70.
62 Davis et al. 1913–69, II, 194, no. 1410; Seaby 1988, 33; Eaglen 2006, 71, 75.