

# Earliest Coins of Norway

Parsons, H. Alexander

Numismatic Notes and Monographs  
Issue 29



American Numismatic Society  
New York

**Original Publication:**

1926

**Digital Edition:**

<http://numismatics.org/digitallibrary/ark:/53695/nnan20591>

31 August 2016

## About this Digital Edition

Since the dimensions, font, and other stylistic attributes of this document may differ from the original printed work, the page numbers may not correspond precisely to the original. As a result, when citing this resource, be sure to state that you are citing the Digital Edition, with the date of access, and URI. The Table of Contents page in this document is a programmatically-generated replacement for the printed original.

### Example

Parsons, H. Alexander, *Earliest Coins of Norway* (Digital Edition), Numismatic Notes and Monographs 29, (New York: American Numismatic Society, 1926). <http://numismatics.org/digitallibrary/ark:/53695/nnan20591> (accessed December 14, 2017).

# PUBLICATIONS

## **The American Journal of Numismatics, 1866-1920.**

Monthly, May, 1866-April, 1870.

Quarterly, July, 1870-October, 1912.

Annually, 1913-1920.

With many plates, illustrations, maps and tables. Less than a dozen complete sets of the Journal remain on hand. Prices on application. The numbers necessary to complete broken sets may in most cases be obtained. An index to the first fifty volumes has been issued as part of Volume LI. It may also be purchased separately for \$3.00. The American Numismatic Society. Catalogue of the International Exhibition of Contemporary Medals. March, 1910. New and revised edition. New York. 1911. xxxvi, 412 pages, 512 illustrations. \$10.00. The American Numismatic Society. Exhibition of United States and Colonial Coins. 1914. vii, 134 pages, 40 plates. \$1.00.

**NUMISMATIC NOTES AND MONOGRAPHS**

Numismatic Notes and Monographs is devoted to essays and treatises on subjects relating to coins, paper money, medals and decorations, and is uniform with Hispanic Notes and Monographs published by the Hispanic Society of America, and with Indian Notes and Monographs issued by the Museum of the American Indian—Heye Foundation.

Publication Committee

Agnes Baldwin Brett , *Chairman*

Henry Russell Drown

W. Gedney Beatt

Editorial Staff

Sydney Philip Noe , *Editor*

Howland Wood , *Associate Editor*

V. E. Earle , *Assistant*

COPYRIGHT 1926 BY THE AMERICAN NUMISMATIC SOCIETY  
PANDICK PRESS, INC., NEW YORK



**THE EARLIEST  
COINS OF NORWAY  
By H. ALEXANDER PARSONS**

THE AMERICAN NUMISMATIC SOCIETY  
BROADWAY AT 156th STREET  
NEW YORK  
1926



# THE EARLIEST COINS OF Norway: SOME RE- ATTRIBUTIONS AND ADDITIONS.

By H. Alexander Parsons.

The issue last year of a medal\* commemorating the arrival of the first shipload of Norse immigrants to America serves, by its design, to remind us of that earlier Norse colonization of the New World of nearly a thousand years ago. The rediscovery of America by Columbus in 1492 A. D. has, indeed, greatly obscured this earlier discovery by the Norsemen in the 10th century, generally considered to be about the year 986. This date is, however, associated only with the cruise of Biarne Heriulfson, who, however, although sighting the new country \*

For an illustration of this medal see frontispiece.

through being blown out of his course, did not land on it. The first to do this was Leif the Lucky, the son of Eric the Red of Greenland, about the year 1000. The earliest written record of this epoch-making but little-known event is in the Icelandic Codex Flateyensis, which was written between the years 1387 and 1395. That the later mediaeval navigators of the South of Europe were aware of the maritime discoveries of the Norsemen seems certain from the visit made by Columbus to Iceland, in 1477, to glean such knowledge as he thought might be useful for his purpose of finding a passage to the East Indies by way of the Western seas. The written record above referred to was simply the commitment to writing of the oral tradition. Even if Columbus did not read, or have translated to him, the record of the event in question, there were still, no doubt, many people in Iceland, at the time of his visit there, who would know the details, and recite the adventures of the Norsemen in America, or, as it was called by them, among other names, Vinland, from the grapes they found in profusion there. From this name of Vinland it may be assumed that the Norse navigators reached quite a southerly latitude, and antiquarians are generally agreed that they landed in the modern United States.

There is thus a connection between the Commonwealth of the United States and the Kingdom of Norway which is of great antiquity and interest. Although geographers and historians are mainly concerned with that inquiry, the above remarks form a fitting introduction to the subject of this treatise, for the time of the early Norse colonization of America is the very period of the introduction of an inscribed currency in the parent country of Norway, and the connection of the latter with the dominant Anglo-Saxon race in the States, rests in the fact that the earliest Norwegian inscribed currencies were modelled solely on Anglo-Saxon types of coins. It is of these initial currencies of Norway that the present article treats.

The question of the first of the Rulers to issue an inscribed currency for Norway has long been the subject of difference. Mr. C. A. Holmboe, writing in 1846, attributed coins to Jarl Hakon the Bad, who was slain in 995 A. D. (see *Das älteste Munswesen Norwegens bis gegen Ende des 14 Jahrhunderts*), but Mr. C. I. Schive in *Norges Mynter i Middelalderen*, 1865, transferred the coins to Hakon Ericson, Jarl in 1015. Schive therefore commenced his series with King Olaf Trygvesson, 995 to 1000, but Mr. H. E. Hildebrand in an

\* For an illustration of this medal see frontispiece.

article entitled *Nordens äldsta mynt* 1887, was inclined to consider that the coins hitherto attributed to Olaf Trygvesson belonged to Olaf the Stout, afterwards called the Saint, 1016 to 1028 A. D. For the settlement of this question of the earliest Norwegian coinage, regard must be given to the approximate time of issue of the prototype Anglo-Saxon issue, and the historical probabilities of the case.

No one is in doubt as to the type of the first inscribed coinage of Norway. It is an imitation of the Crux Issue of Æthelred II of England, as illustrated by figure I from a coin in the writer's collection. The name "crux" is taken from the letters of that word on the angles of the cross on the reverse.

Fig. 1. Penny of the Crux Type of Æthelred II of England.

The legends read as follows:

Obv: # ÆDELRED REX #NGLOX

Rev: # STIGNBIT M<sup>o</sup> LINCO (Lincoln).

In my monograph on the "Coin Types of Æthelred II", published in the *Numismatic Chronicle* of 1910, I have shown that this type was probably issued in 990 A.D. Communication between Norway and the North of England was constant at this time, for extensive colonies of Norsemen had been founded in the North of England, as well as in the West of Scotland and in Ireland, and the Crux type of Æthelred II would have been well known in Norway for some years before the death of Hakon the Bad. On the other hand, it was displaced by several types of Anglo-Saxon coins, which were copied in Scandinavia, by the time Jarl Hakon Ericson held a nominal authority over Norway, in the absence of his father, Eric Hakonson, for a very brief period in 1015, and any coins of his would have followed, in design, these later Anglo-Saxon types. Chronologically, and on type, there are, therefore, far stronger reasons for considering that Crux type coins bearing the name of Hakon were struck by Hakon the Bad, as suggested by Holmboe, than by Hakon Ericson.

The historical incidents of the time are still more in favor of such an attribution. Hakon the Bad, with the aid of Harold II of Denmark (925-986), had won full sovereignty over the Throndelaw and regions to the North, whilst the Southern shores of Norway, from the Naze eastwards, were created into an earldom and granted to him as a vassal of the King of Denmark. Called upon by the latter to fulfil his engagements, Hakon came to the assistance of his overlord in the war with the Saxons of the German Empire. But the terms of the peace made soon after apparently included a promise by Harold of Denmark, to introduce the Christian faith among the Norwegians, and Earl Hakon was accordingly forced by King Harold to receive baptism. No sooner, however, had the former left Denmark than he repudiated both the new faith and his overlord, and ruled as an entirely independent sovereign in Norway. His position as such was assured by the decisive battle of Hjorunga Bay, fought about 986 A. D., and Sweyn Forkbeard, who had succeeded his father Harold, was induced to turn Danish energies westward toward England for a time, resulting in the great raids on that country in 991 and 994.

Holding, therefore, sovereign power over the whole of Norway as Hakon did in the last nine or ten years of his rule, it would be anomalous if he had not instituted a metallic system of exchange in his country when the other rulers of the Scandinavian North, including that of the Norse Kingdom of Dublin, took that step. A critical examination of these early coins of the North of Europe shows that the sovereigns of the various countries introduced, in the last decade of the tenth century, monetary systems all based on the Crux type

of Æthelred II of England. This was the type of coins in which the first great tribute payment of 991 A. D. was given to the invading vikings, and it would seem that, on the plunder being taken to the home countries, the idea of introducing native coinages was engendered. Thus it came about that Sweyn Forkbeard, King of Denmark, 986-1014, and Sihtric Silkbeard, King of Dublin, 989-1029, both started coinages based on this type, and the more distant Olaf Skotkonung, King of Sweden, 995-1022, followed after. There is reason to believe that other smaller chiefs did the same, e. g., the King of Man. That Hakon of Norway would not have done likewise is improbable, for as previously pointed out, the Norwegians were more closely associated with the British Islands than either Denmark or Sweden, and a century before they gave Kings, who struck coins, to Northumbria in Northern Britain. It might, indeed, very well be that Hakon was the first of the Scandinavian chiefs to issue an inscribed coinage, or at least to share that distinction with the Norse King of Dublin. Trading visits of the Norwegians to the ports of Ireland, via the Orkneys and Hebrides, were constant at this time.

On the other hand, the case for the attribution of the coins under discussion to Hakon Ericson, as suggested by Schive and supported by Hildebrand, is as weak on historical grounds as it is on the grounds of type and chronology. Hakon Ericson was too young at the time of his father's departure to England in 1015 to be made a sovereign earl of Norway. With his uncle, Sweyn, he was left as a sort of co-ruler; and, in any case, it is unlikely that he would have struck coins in his father's lifetime. As a matter of fact, his rule was shortlived, for, in the same year, Olaf the Stout invaded Norway and had conquered the country by the following year, 1016. In the meantime, the young Hakon Ericson had been captured, made to relinquish his claim to the sovereignty, and exiled. At a subsequent period, in 1028, Hakon was invested with the earldom of Norway by Canute, after the latter's conquest of the country, but he was then purely a vassal of Denmark with no independent rights. His second period of rule in Norway was again a very short one, for, soon after, he was recalled to England. The third decade of the eleventh century was also much too late for imitations of Æthelred's Crux type coins to be struck in Norway. It will, therefore, be seen that there is practically nothing in the history of Hakon Ericson which would justify the allocation of an independent coinage in his name of any type.

The coinage now reattributed to Hakon the Bad is illustrated by figure 2 hereunder. It is from a specimen in the collection of the University of Oslo, by kind permission of the Director there.

Fig. 2. Penny of Hakon the Bad of Norway.

The legends read as follows:

Obv: # AAC# (# = runic u) NE : I GNVNDEI:

Rev: # REFEREN\* M\*OT\*A\* ON (last two letters transposed) = Referen the moneyer of Norway.

A second example, struck, however, on a square flan, that is, untrimmed, is noted by Schive. The use, on both varieties, of the runic # = u indicates early issue. The name of the moneyer is a corruption or variation of the well known northern name of RÓ•fen; and that the die-sinker was new to his work is evident, not merely from the slight departures from the proper legend on the reverse of the coins, but also from the somewhat doubtful words, I.GNVNDEI, at the end of the obverse inscription. These have been variously interpreted to mean "*in Nomini Dei*" and "*Igimundi filius*". The former is unlikely on the coinage of a pagan King. The Swedish numismatist, who adhered to the latter interpretation, considered that the coins belonged to Hakon,

or Haquin, the Red, King of Sweden, 1067-1079. But, apart from the improbability of the reading, this attribution is altogether too late for the early Anglo-Saxon type copied, which was, it must be remembered, issued in England nearly 100 years before Haquin's time. And it is very doubtful whether the Swedish kings who immediately succeeded Anund Jacob, 1022-1050, struck inscribed coins at all. Modern numismatists more than doubt this. Had Anglo-Saxon models been followed by the Swedish Hakon they would have been those of Edward the Confessor, 1042-1065.

In my view, the letter I, which at this time stood for either I or J, is more likely to indicate the title Jarl, the northern equivalent to Earl, thus following the almost universal rule of all coins of sovereign States which give the title or titles after the sovereign's name.

The word GNVNDEI, I would tentatively suggest is a corrupted form of DRVNDEL. (last letter unfinished) for DRVNDELAW, the modern Throndeim. The letter D is, of course, the runic Th. The full reading of the inscription would, therefore, be extended to Hakon, Jarl (in) Throndelaw. The weight of the coins is of the high standard also adopted later by Olaf Skötkonung of Sweden, i. e., about 32 or 33 grains troy; and this is to be expected if issued in a district contiguous to what was then the Swedish Kingdom.

As noticed above, the important district of the Throndelaw was the part of Norway left under the sovereign authority of Hakon the Bad, even before he made good his claim to the whole of the Kingdom, and it was in this district that Norway's former capitol, Nidaros, was founded.

In 995 A. D. Hakon was dispossessed of his Kingdom by Olaf Trygveson and, as before mentioned, the early writers on Norwegian coins attributed a currency to this King, although Mr. H. E. Hildebrand, writing in 1887, in the work above mentioned, was inclined to transfer the coins so attributed to Olaf the Stout, 1016-1028. I think, however, that the original attribution is the more sound, again on the grounds of the type of the coins in question and of the historical facts of the case.

As regards the type of the coins, my remarks on the same point in relation to the issue of Hakon the Bad, apply also in this case. This type, which is the same Crux design as that of the coins of Hakon, is much too early for Olaf the Stout, whose undoubted coins are imitations of later Anglo-Saxon issues. (See figures 5, 6 and 7.)

The historical probabilities of an issue of money by Olaf Trygveson based on the Crux type of England are very great. Olaf first appeared on the pages of Anglo-Saxon history in 991 A. D. when, in continuation of a long viking cruise commenced in the previous year, he sailed to England from Flanders and became one of the leaders of the viking host which, in that year, attacked Ipswich and defeated and slew Brihtnoth, the ealdorman of Essex, at Maldon. Their further progress was stopped by the first great tribute payment in 991 A. D. In 992, the vikings met with a reverse in the South of England, and, in the sources, we then read of them storming Bamborough and ravaging Northumbria. At this point, Olaf Trygveson appears to have separated from the main body of the host and to have continued his course round Britain, for, in the Saga of Olaf Trygveson (one of the historical Sagas), it is stated that, after the plunder of Northumberland, Olaf went round Scotland by the Hebrides, where he fought several battles, then southwards to Man, "where he also fought", then to Ulster, continuing round "Bretland", i. e., the land of the Britons, or Wales, which was laid waste. From thence the cruise was continued southwards to "Valland", i. e., the west coast of France, and, finally, as recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, under annal 994, Olaf and Sweyn (of Denmark) came to London with 94 ships. The city was besieged by them, but resisted the attack, whereupon the vikings ravaged the country far and wide until again bought off with a money payment. Olaf's cruise came to an end

in 994 A. D.; and in the following year he sailed to Norway and made himself King there by his conquest of Hakon the Bad. He was, of course, not without legitimate claim to the Kingship of Norway, for he was the great grandson of Harold Fairhair, the first King of all Norway.

In the last year of his presence in England Olaf had become a Christian, and at Andover, in Hampshire, where his admission to the Church was celebrated, he promised never to come again to England "with unpeace", and he kept his word.

There is no question that Olaf, as an important leader of the Viking host, had a large share of the money tributes paid to the Northmen in the years 991 and 994. During these years the Crux type of Æthelred II was in circulation, and, on his return to Scandinavia, Olaf must have had considerable quantities of these coins in his treasure chest. In addition, the type was already known in Norway.

So far as I am aware, no coin of Olaf Trygvesson is now extant—the one illustrated as No. 5, Plate 1, in Schive, in the work before cited, having been lost. The inscriptions on it are shown in that work as follows:

Obv: # ONL#AF REX NOR:

Rev: # GODPINE M<sup>o</sup> NO:

It cannot be doubted that the abbreviated word, NO, on the reverse, after the usual M<sup>o</sup>, for monetarius, as well as the word NOR on the obverse, after the title REX, is intended for Normanorum = Norway. The Norwegians of that period had not gathered, to any extent, into townships in the civic sense and, indeed, it was Olaf Trygvesson who founded Norway's former capital, Nidaros, now Thronheim. Even if the coins of Olaf were struck at Nidaros after its foundation, the omission of the town name on the coins simply follows a usual practice, as exemplified on the earlier pennies of Anglo-Saxon Britain. When those really concerned knew where the coins were struck, or if there was only one minting centre, there was no necessity to place the name of the mint town on the coins.

The moneyer's name, Godwine, on the reverse, is decidedly Anglo-Saxon, and it thus affords striking corroboration of the records, which state that Olaf, when he landed in Norway, from England, was accompanied by priests and all other necessities of Christian worship. As it was from the trained ranks of the priesthood that the best die-sinkers were recruited, there is little doubt that the Godwine of the coins was one of the clerical followers in Olaf's service, and that he did all the work of designing and striking the coins. Judged by extant illustrations of the one formerly in evidence, the coins were superior in workmanship to those of the issues of Hakon the Bad, and unlike them, also, the legends are strictly accurate indicating the work of a trained craftsman.

The inscribing, on both sides of the coins, of the name of the country of origin was not, at the time, peculiar to Norway. In the neighbouring Kingdom of Denmark the same practice was adopted by the contemporary King Sweyn Forkbeard. The custom of the two countries was, therefore, as might be expected, the same.

Olaf Trygvesson met his death, in the year 1000, in the great sea-fight at Swald, a river mouth on the Pomeranian coast, to the west of the island of Rügen, where he was ambushed by a confederation of Danes, under Sweyn Forkbeard, and Swedes, under Olaf Skötkonung. The former, of course, continued his country's ancient feud, whilst the latter entered the struggle because of an insult offered to his mother, Sigrid the Haughty, by Olaf Trygvesson.

The victors had agreed to divide Norway between them. The southern shores of Norway, from the Naze eastwards, fell to Sweyn, that is to say, the part of Norway which the Danish Kings always claimed. The Swedish King obtained seven shires in the Throndelaw, whilst the coastlands from the Naze northwards were given to Eric Hakonson, with the title of Jarl or Earl. Eric had, on the conquest of his father by Olaf Trygvesson in 995 A. D., fled to the court of Sweyn Forkbeard, and had been given the latter's protection and his daughter Gytha in marriage. As weyn's son-in-law, Eric had assisted in the fight at Swald against his hereditary enemy, Olaf Trygvesson. The circumstances of this partial restoration to the domains of his father Hakon, point, however, to his complete dependence on the Danish King, and there is nothing in his later history to show that he obtained sovereign power in Norway. In fact, the incidents of his life indicate that he was throughout purely a vassal of Denmark. It is unlikely, therefore, that a separate coinage for Norway was struck whilst he was earl, although a coinage was formerly attributed to him, a specimen of which, from the collection formed by the writer, is illustrated as figure 3.

Fig. 3. Penny formerly attributed to Eric Hakonson of Norway.

It reads as follows:

Obv: X.HEINRIC#S : CM (= Comes = earl)

Rev: X.HROSA ME FEC retrograde = Hrosa made me.

Hildebrand, however, in the work before cited, considered that this attribution was inaccurate, and his opinion is certainly supported not only by the history of Eric Hakonson but also by the style of the coins, by the Earl's name on the obverse, and the form of the lettering generally. In fact, it is fairly clearly demonstrated by Dannenberg in *Die Deutschen Münzen der Sächsischen and Fränkischen Kaiserzeit* that these coins belong to Henry the Good, Count of Stade, 976-1016, a town near the estuary of the Elbe.

As before mentioned, when Norway was partitioned in 1000, Sweyn Forkbeard of Denmark obtained the coastlands of Norway immediately to the North of his own lands of East and West Denmark, but there is no evidence that he struck coins for his Norwegian provinces. On the death of Sweyn, in 1014, there ensued a time, however, when a Danish coinage for Norway was not only possible, but probable. From the obscurities of the records it seems that Canute, who had been nominated as the successor to Sweyn's pretensions in England, secured also some sovereignty in Southern Norway, i. e., the Danish share of that country. When Canute was forced to fly from England in 1014, he retired to Denmark and there preferred a request to Harold, his brother, to share with him the Danish throne, carrying with it the sovereignty of South Norway. But although Harold strenuously opposed the proposition to share his Kingdom so far as Denmark was concerned, he appears to have made no objection to Canute ruling in South Norway. That Canute had authority there at this time is supported by a few coins, inscribed with his name, and, on the reverse, his territory of Norway. Although these are attributed by Hildebrand in his catalogue of Anglo-Saxon coins in the Royal Cabinet at Stockholm to England, they are, by inscription and in the peculiar name of the moneyer, Scandinavian. This will be seen on comparison of figure 4, from a specimen in my own collection, with figure 5, which is an undoubted penny of Olaf the Stout of Norway.

Fig. 4. Penny of Canute for Norway formerly attributed to England.

The inscriptions are as follows:

Obv: # CNVT REX #NGLOR

Rev: # ASÐRIÐ MO : NOR

If these coins are Anglo-Saxon, some should have been found in England. This, however, is not the case; nor are they represented in the British Museum Catalogue of Anglo-Saxon coins, Vol. II, 1893. All the known specimens are from Scandinavian hoards. Secondly, the work and inscriptions are so like the undoubted Norwegian coin represented by figure 5 that no numismatist will hesitate to ascribe the two emissions to the same hand. Finally, Asthrith is a name known only on these two issues of coins, the one of Canute and the other of Olaf. It is an old Norse name made up of the well known masculine prototheme As—, and the equally common feminine deutertheme—thrith. The two, in conjunction, like many analogous cases, e. g., Ead— and —mund, equals Eadmund, were given to men.

Following the custom of the previous coins of Norway (figure 2), and the earliest coins of Denmark, and having regard to the identical reverse of the penny of Olaf the Stout (figure 5), the abbreviation, NOR, on the reverse of these pennies of Canute, figure 4, stands, not for Norwich in England, as Hildebrand thought, but for Normorum; and Asthrith was, therefore, a moneyer of Norway. Further, it was a frequent practice for Canute when he became King of Denmark, to place on his Danish coins the name of the most important part of his dominions, viz., England (Anglorum), and his pretensions to that title at the time of issue of the Norwegian coins under notice would cause him to be all the more likely to have authorized its use on any money he may have struck for Norway. An analogous illustration is to be noticed in Canute's use of his Anglian title on his Danish coins, -issued when he succeeded his brother to that Kingdom. An example is given as No. 24. Plate II, in Hauberg's *Myntforhold og Udmyntninger i Danmark indtil 1146*. The inscriptions are there shown as follows:

Obv: CNVT REX #NG = Canute, King of England.

Rev: OSGVT MN ON DAN = Osgut, the moneyer of Denmark.

The evidence of this Danish money with the Anglian title on the obverse, thus supports the present attribution of the Norwegian coins of Canute with similar characteristics, now under notice. Concerning this point, it should be mentioned that some coins of Magnus the Good, struck for use in Denmark, have on the reverse the Norwegian title. (See Number 28, Plate I, in Schive, and Number 38, Plate III in Hauberg, in the work previously quoted.)

With the additional evidence now brought forward, there is no good reason for sharing Schive's doubt of the place where the coins of Olaf the Stout (figure 5), were struck, viz., their natural place, in Norway, and not the unlikely town of Norwich in England. Although I can trace no elaboration of his views, Mr. W. Carew Hazlitt, in his "Coinage of the European Continent", also gives coins of Canute reading *Cnut Rex Anglor* to Norway.

The probable explanation is that, at the time of Canute's succession to the English throne, on the death of Sweyn, a small issue of coins of similar type to the Norwegian pieces under notice was made, and when Canute was forced to fly from England the die-sinker responsible for the issue fled with his master and engraved similar coins in Norway both for Canute and, later, for Olaf the Stout.

But Canute's coinage for Norway was undoubtedly shortlived. As previously mentioned, Olaf the Stout succeeded in his attempt on the Norwegian patrimony of his forefathers and became King of Norway in 1016, and he not only conquered the North but also the South of Norway. The decisive battle of the Nesses, March 25th, 1016, in which Olaf defeated the last of the forces adhering to the cause of Eric Hakonson, was fought off the coast of South Norway which had formerly been the Danish share of Norwegian territory. In this important district Canute's die-sinker and moneyer, Asthrith, probably worked; and after the battle referred to above he must have entered the service of Olaf, to whom the advantages of a coinage, not only for commerce but as an expression of sovereign authority, were well known. This change of service is not surprising, for skilled workmen of this sort were scarce in the North. The resultant coinage is illustrated by figure 5, from a cast kindly provided by the Keeper of Coins in the Swedish Royal Cabinet, Stockholm.

Fig. 5. Penny of Olaf the Stout of Norway.

The inscriptions are as follows:

Obv: VNL#F I#EX #NOR

Rev: # #•SDRI•Ð •MO NOR

The coins are, as previously mentioned, of the same design and reverse inscription as the Norwegian coins of Canute, figure 4, and no doubt their issue followed the latter as quickly as it was possible to make new dies. Had a long interval elapsed, the two emissions would not have had such strikingly similar features.

The title given on the obverse of the coins of Olaf is peculiar. As the engraver, judged by the coins of Canute of similar type, was quite capable of making a die correct as to the title of the king, it is remarkable to find what, at first sight, appears to be a corruption in this particular on the coins struck for Olaf the Stout, and I venture to suggest that the variation was, after all, intentional and not the result of carelessness. The two native princes of Norway prior to Olaf, viz., Eric Hakonson and Hakon Ericson, held only to title of Jarl. The die-sinker of Olaf's coins might, therefore, reasonably have been a little in doubt as to the correct title of Olaf, especially in the early years. He, therefore, punched in the dies letters combining the two, I standing for Jarl as in the case of Hakon the Bad, figure 2, and EX for REX. That it was the intention to separate the two is evident, from the + between I and EX. A similar instance of the dual title of Earl and King is in evidence on the Scandinavian coinage of Sihtric of Northumbria, issued over a century before. The combination of A and NOR in the territorial title is suggestive also of a doubt as to the extent of Olaf's dominions.

Olaf is worthy of particular mention, not only in connection with these coins of similar character to those of Canute, but also for his close connection with England prior to his conquest of Norway. He appears to have entered the English service in 1012, and, with another famous viking, Thurkil the Tall, was largely instrumental in repelling the Danish attack on London under Sweyn Forkbeard in 1013. When the Anglo-Saxons finally submitted to Sweyn later in the same year, Olaf entered the service of Richard, Duke of Normandy, to whom he was of material assistance. Whilst in Normandy he met the fugitive King Æthelred II of England and accompanied him to England on his return there in 1014, following the sudden death of the Danish King Sweyn. There is no doubt that he contributed largely to the recon- quest by Æthelred of his kingdom, followed by the withdrawal to Denmark of Canute, Sweyn's son and successor. In the following year, 1015, Olaf made his descent on Norway, doubtless long projected, at the time when Jarl Eric Hakonson, as the vassal of Denmark, left his earldom to aid Canute in the reconquest of England. As



previously mentioned Olaf was successful in his enterprise and became King of the whole of Norway in 1016.

The weight of Olaf's coins of the issue shown in figure 5 is about 18 or 19 grains troy, as in the case of the similar pieces of Canute, and they were probably struck in South Norway for trading purposes in the adjoining territory of Denmark. South Norway was, of course, the land formerly governed by the Danes, whose early money for their own country appears to have been much lighter than the coins of Olaf Skötkonung of Sweden and Hakon the Bad of Norway. The pennies of these two latter princes are nearly double the weight of those of the Southern Kingdom of Denmark, generally scaling to 32 or 33 grains troy.

A coin of Olaf the Stout of this weight, and therefore probably minted in North Norway for trade with Sweden, is described hereunder for the first time. It is illustrated as figure 6 and is in the possession of the writer.

Fig. 6. Penny of Olaf the Stout of Norway.

The legends read as follows:

Obv: OL#F (retrograde) RE# D...TI.# (= ðRVNTI = Throndelaw)

Rev: DROPA ON # N...D (N...D retrograde) F = Drowa of Nidaros fecit.

The name Drowa, of which the W is, as was usual at this time, given as the runic P, is shown as a moneyer of the period in Searle's *Onomasticon Anglo-Saxonicum*. The use of the D for ð (the runic th) was common in the Anglo-Saxon coins of the same era.

The necessity for placing, on the coin, the name of the local district and of the mint name, is evident from our previous consideration of the coinage of Olaf for South Norway, and, as the two issues of coins are of the same type, they were probably struck at approximately the same time, the one for South Norway and the other for North Norway. I consider that both were issued early in the reign of Olaf. This is evident not only from the almost exact similarity of figure 5 with figure 4, but because figure 6 is of the heavy weight of the early Swedish money. This was reduced by Anund Jacob, who succeeded his father Olaf Skötkonung, on the Swedish throne, in 1022; and it is probable that money for North Norway would, for economic reasons, have followed suit.

Five other coins are attributed by Schive to Olaf the Stout, but of two only is there sufficient evidence of a clear attribution to Norway, and of one of these there is grave doubt whether it was issued as a coin at all. As regards the three others, their confused and uncertain inscriptions, and the character of their workmanship as a whole, render their attribution to Norway more than doubtful. Until coins with the same art feeling, but with intelligible legends are discovered for comparison, I consider they should not be attributed specially to Norway.

Fig. 7. Penny of Olaf the Stout of Norway.

An illustration of the first of the two pieces of which there is little doubt of the attribution to Norway, is given as figure 7, from a cast kindly furnished by the Keeper of the Royal Cabinet of Coins in Stockholm.

The legends read as follows:

Obv: # ONL#F R# NORMANORV<sup>•</sup> = Olaf King of Norway

Rev: # DOMINADS....CF.... = Dominadus me fecit.

While the inscription on the obverse reads with absolute clarity, the lettering on the end of the reverse legend is unfortunately obscure; but having regard to the undoubted use of the expression *me fecit* on the coins of Olaf's son, not to mention its probable use on the coins of Olaf previously considered (figure 6), I think that the obscure part of the lettering on the coin under notice (figure 7), indicates the same words. The object in front of the King's bust is undoubtedly intended to represent a sceptre.

The weight of the coin is about 47 grains troy, but it will be observed that the piece was circulated from the mint in an untrimmed condition. Allowing for the large margins which should have been sheared off, the weight of this piece would probably have been worked down to the standard of that of the penny of Olaf the Stout previously considered, viz., about 32 grains troy. (See figure 6.)

The designs, although having many points in common with the preceding issue, differ from it in some details. On the reverse, the three crescents at the points of the double cross are omitted, and on the obverse the King's headdress is reminiscent of the Anglo-Saxon pointedhelmet type of Canute the Great on which appeared a sceptre also.

The last piece which comes under the present review is illustrated by figure 8, from a cast of the coin also in the Royal Cabinet at Stockholm.

Fig. 8. Commemorative issue of Olaf the Stout of Norway.

The inscriptions are as follows:

Obv: # ANGNVS DEI #NO

Rev: # BEORN ON (retrograde).

The peculiar designs of the Lamb of God on the obverse and of the Dove of Peace on the reverse (the nimbus shows that it is not the pagan Danish raven), and the unusual inscriptions of this piece stamp it as altogether peculiar, and, in my view, it was not struck primarily as money but as a commemorative issue. Its period would be fairly early in the reign of Olaf the Saint, for the prototype is to be found in a commemorative issue of similar design made by Æthelred II in Anglo-Saxon Britain, about 1014. That it was not ordinary currency is certain from the absence of the King's bust on the obverse, a universal feature on the coins of Norway of the time, as of those of Britain. And on this Norwegian issue is the further and remarkable feature of the omission of the King's name.

From the account before given of his activities in Britain, it will be seen that Olaf was, prior to becoming King of Norway, one of the staunchest allies of Æthelred II against the Danes, and he contributed largely

towards Æthelred's restoration to his throne. He would undoubtedly be aware of the Agnus Dei pieces of Anglo-Saxon Britain, commemorative of God's Providence in restoring Æthelred II again to the English throne, in which Olaf took a leading part, and the probabilities are strong that some of the pieces which, no doubt, also partly served as currency, were in Olaf's treasure chest when he crossed to Norway in 1015. Prior to this enterprise he had become a Christian, having been baptized by Archbishop Robert in Rouen Cathedral in 1013-1014, whilst in the service of the Duke of Normandy, and I suggest that, as in the case of the somewhat similar pieces of Æthelred II, a feasible explanation of these interesting memorials, of which figure 8 is an example, is that they were commemorative of Olaf's restoration to the throne of his forefathers, and the defeat, by God's Providence, of his enemies. Alternatively, they might have been struck to commemorate the proselytizing of Norway, for which work Olaf is today mainly celebrated. An explanation such as one of these is necessary to account for the unusual characteristics of the pieces under notice.

The work was, there is little doubt, carried out by one of the clerical assistants in the service of Olaf, amongst whom, according to Adam of Bremen, were men who were famous for learning and virtue.

It is a matter of common historical knowledge that Olaf the Stout was forced to flee from his country in 1028, through the pressure of Danish intrigue, and his return in 1030 culminated in his death at the battle of Sticklestead, fought in the same year. It was after this event that Olaf was designated as the Saint, the appellation by which he is now chiefly known.

For some years subsequent to the death of Olaf the Saint, Norway came entirely under the dominance of ; and when Magnus the Good, Olaf's son, at last came into his own, in 1035, he appears to have had no leisure for seeing to the special issue of coins for Norway. In fact, he was continually at war with Harthacnut of Denmark. It was only on his accession to the Danish throne, on the death of Harthacnut, in 1042, that a coinage was issued in his name and then only for Denmark, although on a few rare specimens of these Danish coins there appears the Norwegian title instead of the usual Danish one, in the same way as the Anglian title sometimes appears on Canute's coins for Denmark and Norway.

The next coinage for Norway was that struck by Harold Sigurdson, but it follows native instead of Anglo-Saxon models, and it thus commences a fresh period of Norwegian monetary history which is beyond the scope of the present treatise.

# Numismatic Notes and Monographs

1. Sydney P. Noe. Coin Hoards. 1921. 47 pages. 6 plates. 50c.
4. Howland Wood. The Mexican Revolutionary Coinage 1913-1916. 1921. 44 pages. 26 plates. \$2.00.
6. Agnes Baldwin. Five Roman Gold Medallions, 1921. 103 pages. 8 plates, \$1.50.
7. Sydney P. Noe. Medallic Work of A. A. Weinman. 1921. 31 pages. 17 plates. \$1.00.
8. Gilbert S. Perez. The Mint of the Philippine Islands. 1921. 8 pages. 4 plates. 50c.
9. David Eugene Smith, LL.D. Computing Jetons. 1921. 70 pages. 25 plates. \$1.50.
10. Edward T. Newell. The First Seleucid Coinage of Tyre. 1921. 40 pages. 8 plates. \$1.00.
11. Harrold E. Gillingham. French Orders and Decorations. 1922. 110 pages. 35 plates. \$2.00.
12. Howland Wood. Gold Dollars of 1858. 1922. 7 pages. 2 plates. 50c.
13. R. B. Whitehead. Pre-Mohammedan Coinage of N. W. India. 1922. 56 pages. 15 plates. \$2.00.
14. George F. Hill. Attambelos I of Characene. 1922. 12 pages. 3 plates. \$1.00.
15. M. P. Vlasto. Taras Oikistes (A Contribution to Tarentine Numismatics). 1922. 234 pages. 13 plates. \$3.50
16. Howland Wood. Commemorative Coinage of United States. 1922. 63 pages. 7 plates. \$1.50.
17. Agnes Baldwin. Six Roman Bronze Medallions. 1923. 39 pages. 6 plates. \$1.50.
18. Howland Wood. Tegucigalpa Coinage of 1823. 1923. 16 pages. 2 plates. 50c.
19. Edward T. Newell. Alexander Hoards— II. Demanhur Hoard. 1923. 162 pages. 8 plates. \$2.50.
20. Harrold E. Gillingham. Italian Orders of Chivalry and Medals of Honor. 1923. 146 pages. 34 plates. \$2.00.
21. Edward T. Newell. Alexander Hoards— III. Andritsaena. 1924. 39 pages. 6 plates. \$1.00.
22. C. T. Seltman. A Hoard from Side. 1924. 20 pages. 3 plates. \$1.00.
23. R. B. Seager. A Cretan Coin Hoard. 1924. 55 pages. 12 plates. \$2.00.
24. Samuel R. Milbank. The Coinage of Aegina. 1925. 66 pages. 5 plates. \$2.00.
25. Sydney P. Noe. A Bibliography of Greek Coin Hoards. 1925. 275 pages. \$2.56.
26. Edward T. Newell. Mithradates of Parthia and Hyspaosines of Characene. 1925. 18 pages. 2 plates. 50c.
27. Sydney P. Noe. The Mende (Kaliandra) Hoard. 1926. 73 pages. 10 plates. \$2.00.
28. Agnes Baldwin. Four Medallions from the Arras Hoard. 1926. 36 pages. 4 plates. \$1.50.