VARIATION BETWEEN AETHEL- AND AEGEL- AS A NAME-ELEMENT ON COINS

The appearance of personal name forms in AEgel- in late Anglo-Saxon documents and coins has for some time been a matter of difficulty and controversy. The earlier view, in spite of the fact that this spelling occurred in pre-Conquest sources, was that it represented an OFr sound-change and that its occurrence in English was due to Norman influence. Both Forssner[1] and von Feilitzen[2] accepted that an element *AEgel-, cognate with OG Agil- (and unrelated to AEthel-) did not exist in OE, but, while Forssner considered OE names in AEgel- to be hybrids compounded with OG Agil-, von Feilitzen recognised that it must be a variant of AEthel-, but attributed its use in pre-Conquest charters to 'Romance-speaking clerks employed in the royal chancery'. He recognised, however, that this could not satisfactorily explain its appearance on late tenth-century coins, from the time of AEthelred II onwards, and that the interchangeability of AEthel- and AEgel- had been largely inferred from the prosopography of the moneyers. Since the source of the sound-change was supposed to be continental, he was obliged, on very little grounds, to suggest a foreign origin for the makers of the coin-dies, and concluded that 'the subsequent enormous popularity of AEgel- on coins may be largely a matter of fashion'. Campbell has gone so far as to call it 'an affectation'.[3]

Some thirty years after his observations in Pre-Conquest Personal Names in Domesday Book, von Feilitzen contributed a commentary on the moneyers' names to the catalogue of Sir Frank Stenton's Anglo-Saxon coin collection published in SCBI 11.[4] By then views had changed, largely as a result of Eilert Ekwall's discovery of parallel sound-changes in North Germanic languages,[5] and his suggestion on this analogy that the change [ð] to [j] could have been a native OE sound-change. More recently still, Dr Fran Colman has discussed the variation as it appears on late Old English coins.[6] She describes the sound-change as one where [ð] becomes [j] between two vowels, the second of which is followed by front l, and suggests by showing the development of pairs of words from the same root that the tendency existed in early OE and possibly even in Primitive Germanic.

Dr Colman's listing of variant forms by reign and mint shows clearly that although the AEgel- form is found as early as AEthelred II's reign it is extremely rare before the accession of Cnut, whilst AEthel- forms are similarly rare on coins of Cnut's successors. Since Cnut's reign is thus crucial for the changeover it seemed that it might prove useful to define the chronological and geographical distribution of the variant forms.

All the coins in any given coin-type of this period may be considered to have been issued within at most some six years of each other,[7] yet each type normally exhibits considerable variation in the spelling of its moneyers' names. This is because traditional spellings continue to be used alongside spellings which presumably indicate a more contemporary pronunciation. It is most unusual for the changeover from an older to a later form to be either abrupt or exclusive. In this particular case, however, the changeover is remarkable, for it is achieved not over the whole reign but within one issue, the so-called Pointed Helmet type, dating according to Dolley's scheme c. 1024-c. 1030. In the first issue of Cnut's reign, Quatrefoil, AEgel-/AEgl- forms are as rare as they had been in AEthelred II's, and AEthel- forms are almost non-existent in the last issue, Short Cross. With the exception of the name AEthelstan, for which no AEgel- forms are recorded,[8] the distribution of variants in the inter-

vening Pointed Helmet type seems to indicate that the changeover in spelling was systematic (perhaps mandatory), and was linked with a major reorganisation in the coinage which took place in the early 1020s.[9]

The design of Pointed Helmet is consciously innovatory, since it shows the king in a warrior's helmet of contemporary style, whereas previous helmeted portraits were copied from Roman coins. From the introduction of Pointed Helmet onwards there is a marked difference in the profile of weight-standard graphs; the range covered by the weights of coins within one issue becomes much narrower, and the majority conform much more closely to the presumable standard.[10] In the provision of dies to the mints, a matter of considerable interest to the Crown, there are major changes.

Cnut had taken over from AEthelred II a decentralised die-cutting organisation based on the larger boroughs, which supplied dies not only for their own mints but also for the smaller mints which came within their spheres of influence. Nine different regional styles have been studied in AEthelred II's last type but regional die-cutting workshops are discernible throughout the reign.[11] This practice may have been deliberately instituted to spread the risk of losing die-cutting facilities under Danish attack, but Dr Pauline Stafford has argued convincingly that it was more likely a concession to local interests, since the revenue from the provision of dies would have been of considerable value to a borough.[12] Whatever the origin of the system of die-provision, Cnut seems to have been willing in the first instance to continue with it,[13] probably because his acquaintance with the administration of a coinage must initially have been slight. There are signs that when a second issue was due there was a decision to make some changes. The pattern that emerges from a study of dies suggests that a new centralisation was attempted.[14] Two 'national' work-shops of uncertain location, possibly at London or Winchester, seem to have provided the dies for the Pointed Helmet issue for the whole country with the exception of some mints in the North-East and the East Midlands. York retained the privilege of using local dies throughout the issue; the East Midlands group appears to have begun the issue with its own dies but to have joined the national network quite early in its currency-period. The centre of this latter group was probably Lincoln, supplying Norwich, Stamford, and Thetford, as well as the Lincoln mint itself. Both York's and this group's early dies are characterised by the retention of the older formula of reverse legend, e.g. GODMAN MO EOF instead of the GODMAN ON LVNDE formula adopted elsewhere, and epigraphically by the continued use of the old angular Σ where the national style was to use S. The two groups are distinct from each other. York used the abbreviation M⁻O where Lincoln had simply MO, and the obverses of the Lincoln group frequently display the curious feature of replacing the R of REX with a trefoil of pellets.

The scenario appears to be one of an innovatory, modernising organisation in the South increasingly taking over the provision of dies for the whole country but temporarily permitting local interests to retain in York and Lincoln die-cutting centres where old-fashioned usages persisted. It is in this context that the AEthel- to AEgel- changeover on the coins appears.

Apart from a small group of Northumbrian coins of the ninth century (probably an irregular issue) which give the king's name as AEILRED,[15] the first appearance of the name-element in a form other than AEÐEL-, AEÐE- is on a coin of the London mint c. 990 reading AEGELÞINE.[16] AEGELRIC appears on coins of Bath and Shaftesbury in AEthelred's last type c. 1009-1016 but only on one die for each mint.[17]

For Shaftesbury the form AEÐELRIC is also found in the same type.

Similarly in Cnut's first type, AEGEL- forms are very rare. AEGELÞINE and AEGLÞINE appear on a small group of Severn-style dies cut for the Bristol mint,[18] and AEGLGET, AEGLIGT on two London-style dies for Bedford.[19] The confusion of the second form suggests that the g of the second element -geat may have influenced the form by anticipation. In spite of the proximity of the three West Country mints which introduce AEgel- spellings, it is difficult to find any connection in die-cutting provision between the AEthelred and Cnut coins, since Bath and Shaftesbury seem to have been provided with their dies in Quatrefoil from Exeter and Winchester rather than from the Severn area.

Thus the coins show that the AEgel- spelling was known in England as early as the 990s and was used, though only very rarely, in the next three decades. In the 1020s, with the introduction of Pointed Helmet and its attendant innovations, the picture is completely changed. AEgel- spellings become the rule, the exceptions following almost exactly the lines of demarcation between the majority 'national' school and the remnants of local die-cutting. At York where the local die-cutting workshop provided dies throughout the issue, AEÐEL- forms persist and AEGEL- first appears in Short Cross with the absorption of York into the national network. At Lincoln where local die-cutting was surrendered during the currency of the issue the picture is not so clear, but there is good reason to associate AEÐEL- forms with early local die-cutting.

Six Pointed Helmet dies are known for Lincoln of a moneyer AEthelmær.[20] Of these, two read AEGEL- and as might be expected these conform to the 'national' style. Of the remaining four reading AEÐEL-, three also have the MO formula, which we saw was a characteristic of the Lincoln school, and one of these is coupled with the . : EX version of the royal title. The obverses of the others, though reading REX, nevertheless have a very similar form of lettering which suggests the same workshop. There remains one anomalous Lincoln die on which AEÐELMAER appears with the ON formula, and which is found coupled with a 'national' obverse. This die must belong to the later phase of the issue.

Although the Lincoln workshop provided other East Midlands mints with dies in the early phase of the Pointed Helmet issue, there are none with moneyers' names relevant to this discussion, except for two curiosities. One is a piece in the National Museum Copenhagen, described as 'an electrotype, in which case from an unknown coin, or perhaps a base striking from official dies'.[21] Thus, though the metal is suspect, the dies are to be accepted as authentic. The legend is AEÐLMAER ON SVÐBV and the mint must be Sudbury in Suffolk. Although the ON formula is used, the obverse has the . : EX feature associated with the East Midlands group. Norwich and Thetford received dies from that centre and there is no difficulty in including Sudbury in its sphere of influence.

The other case concerns a penny of Bath, a mint which one might have assumed to be well outside the orbit of the East Midlands centre. This coin, however, not only reads AEÐELRIC MO BAÐVM but also has the . : EX obverse.[22] It cannot be explained as forgery or imitation, as no imitator would have been aware that AEÐEL-, MO and . : EX were features that went together, and the classical and complete form of the mint-signature rules out any attribution to another mint. Why the Bath moneyer should have obtained this die from the East Midlands centre is an enigma, but that is clearly the workshop in which it was made.

These then are the broad lines of the distribution of AEthel-/AEgel- forms on Cnut's coinage: AEthel- is found in the first issue, Quatrefoil, almost exclusively, survives in the second type, Pointed Helmet, only in two northern centres as long as local die-cutting is permitted there, and disappears almost completely elsewhere and thereafter in favour of AEgel-. Anomalies to this rule are very rare. [23]

It seems then that as part of a reorganisation in the coinage c. 1023 a deliberate decision was taken to use the spelling AEgel- systematically in the 'national' die-cutting centre(s). It cannot be the fad of one die-cutter, since many hands must have been employed in so large an enterprise, though it need be no more than the preferred spelling of a scribe who transmitted the lists of moneyers and mints to be supplied with dies. It may however be something more: an attempt to regularise spelling in conformity with a general change in pronunciation. Forms in AEL- exist on coins which antedate the general adoption of the AEgel- form. In many cases it is impossible to determine whether AEL- stands for AEthel- or AElf-, [24] but there are some mints where AEL- and AEÐEL- appear with the same deuterotheme and without the presence of parallel AElf- names. At Ipswich one finds AELBRHT alongside AEÐELBERHT in Quatrefoil; [25] Ilchester has AELMAER in the same type; [26] and other examples can be provided from Shaftesbury, Southwark, and Winchester.

It would appear, then, that the early occurrence and subsequent popularity of AEgel- forms on coins, which has frequently been cited without any attempt at closer definition, is something rather different from simple evidence for a phonetic change in Old English. For that we have probably to look at those AEl- forms which pre-date the use of AEgel- spellings. Though the variation certainly has a significant geographical distribution, the explanation lies in administration rather than in dialect. The abruptness and arbitrariness of the change in orthography marks it out sharply from the usual process of slow replacement and frequent regression by which the representation of chronological sound-change normally takes place. To this extent, whilst accepting the origin of the usage in the native OE sound-change cited by Ekwall and von Feilitzen and defined by Colman, one must concede the justice of von Feilitzen's earlier comment that 'the enormous popularity of AEgel- on coins may be largely a matter of fashion' and even Campbell's charge of 'affectation'. [27]

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NOTES

1. T. Forssner, Continental Germanic Personal Names in England in Old and Early Middle English Times (Uppsala, 1916), 11.

2. O. von Feilitzen, The Pre-Conquest Personal Names of Domesday Book (Uppsala, 1937), 104.

3. A. Campbell, Old English Grammar (Oxford, 1959), p.195, 484 n.

4. O. von Feilitzen in Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles (hereafter abbreviated as SCBI) 11a, University of Reading Collection (Oxford, 1969), 9; see also V. J. Smart, SCBI 19 (1973), 115.

5. E. Ekwall, Early London Personal Names (Lund, 1947), 197.

6. F. Colman, 'The Name-element AEðel- and related problems', Notes and Queries N.S. 28 (1981), 295-301.

7. M. Dolley and D. M. Metcalf, 'The reform of the English coinage under Eadgar', Anglo-Saxon Coins: studies presented to Sir Frank Stenton, ed. M. Dolley (London, 1961), 136-68.

8. Cf., however, Aelstan, recorded in a 13th c. Bury deed, and Aylstan in a 14th c. Norfolk subsidy roll, Bo Seltén, The Anglo-Saxon Heritage in Middle English Personal Names, East Anglia 1100-1399, II (Lund, 1979), 33. The regular reduction of AEthelstan on AS coins is to AEthestan, AEstan.

9. The absolute chronology of Cnut's coinage is problematical since it is not known how closely the first issue coincides with Cnut's accession. The relative chronology is (1) Quatrefoil, (2) Pointed Helmet, (3) Short Cross. The Short Cross issue may have been of shorter duration, ended by Cnut's death, but if the issues are of roughly equal duration Pointed Helmet was probably introduced c. 1023-4.

10. V. J. Butler [Smart], 'The metrology of the late Anglo-Saxon penny; the reigns of AEthelred and Cnut', Anglo-Saxon Coins (ut supra), 195-214.

11. M. Dolley and T. Talvio, 'The regional pattern of die-cutting in First Hand', British Numismatic Journal XLVII (1977), 53-65; V. J. Smart, 'A subsidiary issue of AEthelred II's Long Cross', ibid. XXXIV (1965), 37-41; M. Dolley, Some Reflections of Hildebrand Type A of AEthelred II, Antikvariskt Arkiv 9 (Stockholm, 1958).

12. P. Stafford, 'Historical implications of the regional production of dies under AEthelred II', British Numismatic Journal XLVIII (1978), 35-51.

13. The only examination of regional die-cutting in Quatrefoil so far published is M. Dolley, 'Regional distribution of dies in the West Country 1017-23', Numismatic Circular LXIII (1956), 321-5 and 373-7. I am indebted to C. S. S. Lyon for information and the loan of photographs relating to regional die-cutting in Quatrefoil.

14. M. Dolley and J. Ingold, 'The engraving of dies for the English coinage c. 1025', Commentationes de Nummis Saeculorum IX-XI in Suecia Repertis I (Stockholm, 1961), 187-213.

15. E.g. SCBI 4, no.184. The king in question is AEthelred II of Northumbria.

16. B. E. Hildebrand, Anglosachsiska Mynt funna i Sveriges jord (Stockholm, 1881), no. 2024.

17. Ibid. nos. 37, 3220.

18. Ibid. nos. 69-72.

19. Ibid. no. 54; SCBI 13, no. 55.

20. H. R. Mossop, The Lincoln Mint (Newcastle 1970), pl. XLII.

21. SCBI 15, no. 4416.

22. SCBI 25, no. 750.

23. AEÐELRIC at Winchester and AEÐELMAER at Lincoln in Short Cross, B.E. Hildebrand, op.cit. no. 3698 and SCBI 14, no. 1535. After Cnut's death the standardisation in spelling this element breaks down; AEÐEL- remains rare but AEL- forms are frequent. Under Edward the Confessor AEL- and AEGEL-

appear side-by-side but in the middle types of the reign (BEH types E and F
c. 1050-56) forms predominate in which the vocalic glide is represented by I
instead of G; see SCBI 28, Index of Personal Names, s. AEthel-.

24.   There is a general tendency in late OE for f to disappear when it occurs
       between consonants; see O. von Feilitzen, The Pre-Conquest Personal Names
       of Domesday Book (ut supra), 92.

25.   B. E. Hildebrand, op. cit. no. 925-6.

26.   Ibid. nos. 892, 894; SCBI 13, no. 951.

27.   A slightly different local development appears in names at western mints such
       as Chester, Gloucester, and Hereford where forms in AELE-, ELE- are
       found, earliest at Chester c. 980.

       The material in this paper was originally part of the introduction to my
thesis Moneyers of the Late Anglo-Saxon Coinage 1016-1042 (Nottingham, 1981).
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who have read the paper in its various stages and have made comments on the
material and suggestions for its presentation here.

COAL-MINING NAMES IN THE NORTH-EAST OF ENGLAND

When an eighteenth or early nineteenth century colliery viewer (the overseer of
one or more collieries) wished to know the problems and potentialities of a proposed
'new winning' there was little he could do other than 'set away an exploring drift',
that is, get his hewers to drive an exploratory tunnel into the coal to find out what lay
beyond the face. This article will be like a viewer's preliminary exploring drift into
the thick seam of mining nomenclature in the North-East of England.

The sources I have investigated are:

1) a slim file of papers called Post Dissolution Loose Documents Box 10 (Dean
and Chapter Archives, Prior's Kitchen, Durham Cathedral). This is the sole source
of names before 1700.

2) The Catalogue of Plans of Abandoned Coal Mines (published by the National
Coal Board, Durham Division, 1958) which is regularly updated. This is a very
useful source of pit-names, but unfortunately the only dates one can be sure of
finding are the years when the pits ceased working. Information as to when the
workings were started is never given; so the period during which the names were in
active use cannot be discovered from this source.

3) The Library of the North-East Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineering
in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. It would take years to explore the vast quantities of maps,
plans, view books, diaries and legal documents in this collection, but my own limited
search suggests that almost everything discoverable about the names connected with
coal-mining in the North-East is to be found there.

4) The Northumberland County Record Office, Gosforth.

5) Newcastle-upon-Tyne City Library.

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The first main distinction to be made is between the use of the words 'colliery'
and 'pit' and thus of the names they generate. 'Colliery' carried a range of meanings
in the eighteenth century from 'the right to work coal', through 'coal-working'
(potential or actual) to the physical workings themselves consisting of pits, shafts,
drifts, engines, etc. This is perhaps best illustrated by quotation:

'I desire to treat for the Colliery of Heaton'
(William Coatsworth writing to the Mayor of Newcastle, January 18th 1717);[1]

'An Acco^t of what pitts may be sunk annually in Heaton Colliery from 25th March
1726';[2]

'A PLAN being a Side Plan of the Present Wining of the South End of Heaton
Colliery . . . Knab & Thistle Pits'
(Amos Barnes's View Book 1736).[3]

As the right to work coal was normally governed by the lease by a landowner of a
defined area of land, a colliery-name almost invariably consists of a pre-existing
place-name plus 'Colliery'. The names are often those of parishes (Heaton,
Kimblesworth, Lanchester), townships (Coundon Grange, Heworth), or minor surface
names (Prior Close 1627, Tanfield Moor Edge [almost invariably abbreviated to TME]
18th). Only occasionally are they named after their owners (The Deane and Chapters
Colliery 1692-8). A colliery-name is thus a name given to all the workings on and