

## VI.

### TWO NOTES ON SCOTTISH COINS. BY H. J. DAKERS, M.A., F.R.N.S., ST ALBANS.

#### 1. THE KINGHORN MINT OF ALEXANDER III.

In writing of the long-cross pennies of Henry III, which are so closely associated with the contemporary issue of Alexander III, Mr L. A. Lawrence remarks: "Another source of error is the great resemblance of some of the letters to others in the curious Gothic alphabet exhibited on the coins. An  $\mathfrak{h}$  has been mistaken for an  $\mathfrak{R}$  and both have been given the place of a  $\mathfrak{R}$ ." The same difficulty occurs at a much earlier period in connection with the **ORSNAFORDA** coins of Alfred. Both the writers on these coins in the *British Numismatic Journal*, Mr Carlyon Britton and Mr Anscombe, acknowledge the ease with which  $\mathfrak{R}$  and  $\mathfrak{R}$ , and also  $\mathfrak{R}$  and  $\mathfrak{h}$ , can be and are confused, the forms  $\mathfrak{R}$  and  $\mathfrak{R}$  especially being hardly distinguishable. The letter  $\mathfrak{R}$  on early coins is very rare, and in Anglo-Saxon appears mainly in the word  $\mathfrak{R}$ YNING (King): in the Scottish series it cannot appear on the obverse, and on the reverse the only place for it is in a mint name.

Edward Burns, in his account of the long double-cross pennies of Alexander III, describes and figures one which he reads **WILAM·OH· $\mathfrak{R}$ IHG**<sup>1</sup> (Pl. fig. 1). This coin, "unique and hitherto unpublished," he assigns to *Kinghorn*, thus adding a new mint to the coinage of Alexander III. The coin, however, is no longer unique: there are two specimens with this reading of the mint name in the collection of Mr R. Cyril Lockett.

Kinghorn, on the coast of Fife, a few miles from Burntisland, was a royal burgh from the twelfth century, and the King had a palace there which was afterwards for a time a dower-house for the Queens of

<sup>1</sup> The letter which here appears as  $\mathfrak{H}$  is the form which the letter  $\mathfrak{N}$  takes on the sterlings of Alexander III.

Scotland. It was, as is well known, while on his way from Edinburgh to join his young wife at this place that Alexander met his premature death by a fall from his horse. As a royal burgh and a royal residence, Kinghorn was most likely to have a mint, especially since there is good reason to believe that the mint-masters in many cases accompanied the king and struck where he was residing. Burns's attribution of this coin to Kinghorn has been generally accepted.

In his discussion of the mints **GLA**, **FRIS**, **DVH** and **MVH**, all of which seem to have been worked by one moneyer **WALTER**, Burns remarks: "Recently I had the opportunity of inspecting a sterling in the collection of Mr Adam Black Richardson, formerly in the Montagu collection, reading on the reverse **WÄLTĒR OH RIH** or **RVH**—the letter **R** on the name of the mint being most distinctly rendered. Unless the sinker of the dies had run short of letters, as sometimes happened, and employed an **R** for a **D** or an **M**, we must regard this piece as representing quite a new mint, possibly Renfrew, which is mentioned in Scottish records as early as the reign of David I." Burns apparently considered this coin also to be unique. This, however, is far from being the case. There is no longer any doubt as to the reading **RIH**, nor is it confined to one moneyer: of the two specimens now in my son's collection, obtained from Mr Baldwin, one is by **WÄLTĒR** (Pl. fig. 3) and the other by **WILAM** (Pl. fig. 2), who struck at Edinburgh (Pl. fig. 4) and who also struck the coin which Burns reads **RIHG** and assigns to Kinghorn, the obverse being from the same die.

Burns also presumes that the sinker of the dies was provided with a separate punch for each letter, but this does not appear to have been so at this period. In fact the multitudinous ligatures of letters which are not only joined to one another but built up with the assistance of the lines of the cross on the reverse, make it inconceivable that punches representing complete letters were provided for these coins.

On Burns's Kinghorn coin the letter which he, no doubt rightly, reads as **Ī** is by no means distinct and might, I think, quite as easily be read as **R**. It is strange that he did not see the close resemblance between the legend on this coin and that on the coin which he is inclined to assign to Renfrew: three-letter abbreviations of mint names are very much more usual than four-letter ones and, granting that **R** and **Ī** are hardly distinguishable from one another, the shorter form **ĪIH** would naturally be more common than the longer **ĪIHG**, as indeed it is; and Kinghorn, as a royal burgh and king's residence, if it was a mint at all, was likely to be a mint with a considerable output, though not of course comparable in this respect to the chief commercial centres. It

would be surprising if the coin attributed by Burns to Kinghorn were indeed the only specimen from that mint to come down to us; but, if we add the **ŘIH** coins to Kinghorn, we have about as many surviving specimens as we can expect from one of the minor mints of Alexander III. In this connection we may compare the Glasgow mint, of which coins, though not common, are not very rare: on these the mint name appears as **G** or **GLĀ**: I know of one or two specimens only which read **GLĀS**.

Burns had access to a large number of coins and in general made the fullest use of his opportunities, but hoards discovered since his time have added much to the available material, especially the great Brussels hoard of long-cross coins of Alexander III. If Burns had seen the **ŘIH** coin of the moneyer **WILĀM**, he could hardly have missed the connection of these pieces with Kinghorn.

It is worth adding that Burns figures (fig. 126) and describes a Roxburgh sterling which he reads **ĀDĀ MOH ROH ĘSB**: the third letter of the mint name, both on Burns's coin and on another specimen, has more the appearance of an **R** than of **H**. I suspect that in this case also the letter should be read as **Ř**: The town when it is represented by more than two letters on the coins of William the Lion is generally **ROCI**, **ROCIĘ**, **ROCIĘBV**: in two instances where the **CI** does not appear the third letter is read by Burns as **H**, in two others as **R**: these coins are figured as Nos. 68, 68A, 67B, 69, and unless the legends on the coins themselves are more distinct than the illustrations suggest, I think it will be agreed that they furnish little evidence one way or the other as to the third letter of the name, which, whether it is capable of being read **H** or **R**, may still better be taken as intended for **Ř**. On Berwick sterlings Burns's reading **BERWIH** (fig. 89) may possibly furnish another instance of the same confusion.

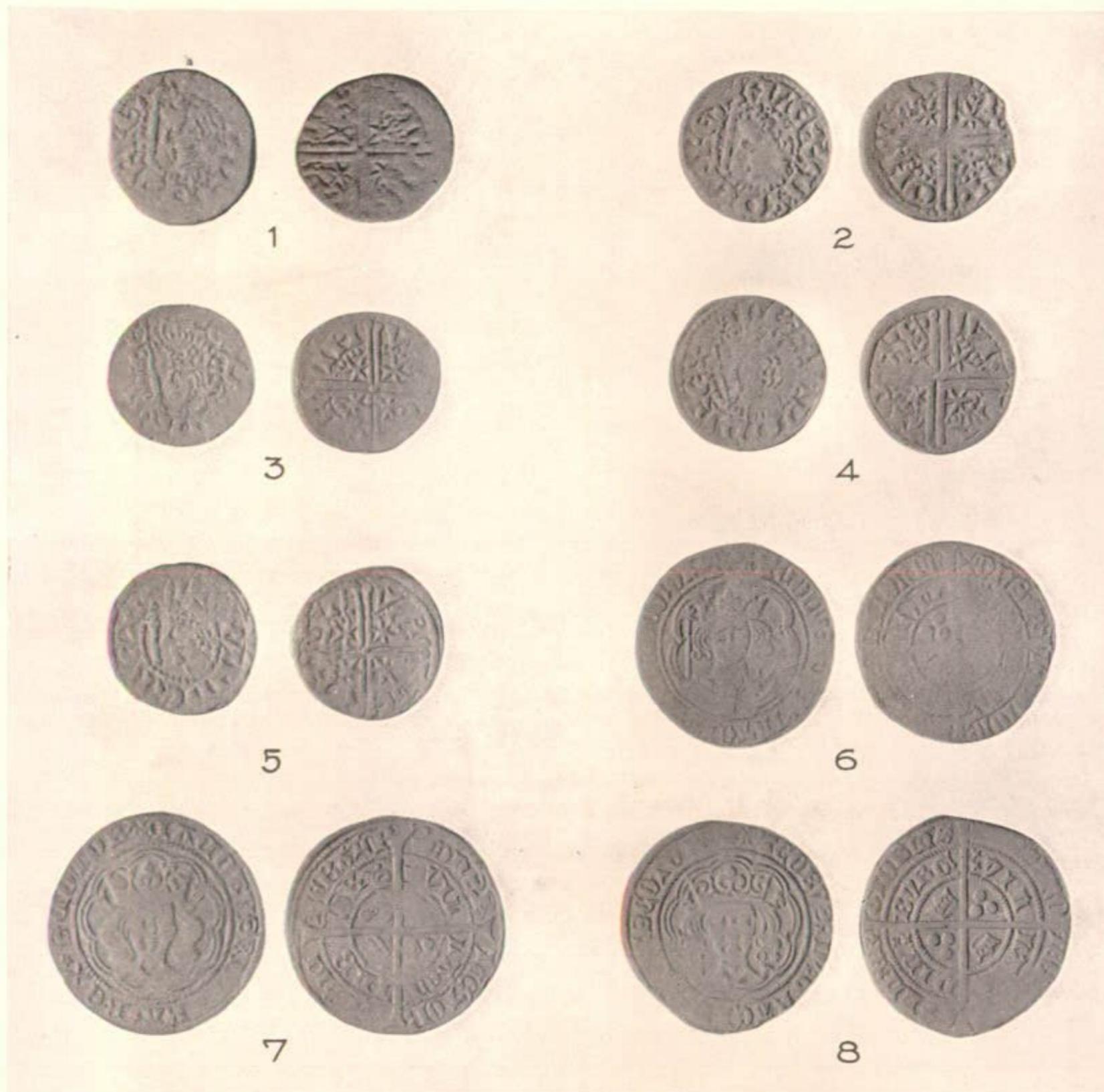
## 2. **TRĀCIĀ** FOR **GRĀCIĀ** ON GROATS OF JAMES I.

On groats of James I the word **GRĀCIĀ** appears as **TRĀCIĀ** (Pl. fig. 6), and this occurs not on a few coins but on the large majority of those listed by Burns. I venture to suggest an explanation of what seems at first sight a very unlikely mistake. A coin of Alexander III with reverse **WĀLBĘR OH GLĀ** (Pl. fig. 5) gives, I think, the key to the puzzle.

The half-uncial **Ě** (=T) which appears on this coin belongs to the writing of the eighth and ninth centuries but survived sporadically as, for example, on this coin and as the initial mark on the Touraine groats

of Henry VIII. The **G** of the same script resembled a flat-topped 3 (3), but sometimes appears reversed as on the stycas of the moneyer **LEOFDEȜN**. It will be noted that on the Glasgow coin the same letter (6) is used for the **T** in **WALTER** and for the **G** in **GLA**. Moreover, in the reign of James II the half-uncial 6 is used for **G** as in **EDINBVR6** (Pl. fig. 7), **STERLIN6** except in one instance described by Burns (No. 41A), but not figured, which reads **PER6H**: on the Stirling groat 6 also appears for **G** in **GRACIA** but not in this case for **T** since the plain **T** appears on the same side of the coin in **SCIOTTORVM**. The use of the form 6 for **G** survives on the placks and half-placks of James III of the first variety<sup>1</sup> (Burns, figs. 571-573). The confusion of the two letters is evident, but in what way it led to the form **TRACIA** is not so clear, unless we conjecture that in the instructions given to the die-sinker the **G** was erroneously represented by the half-uncial 6, and that the die-sinker, supposing it to be intended for a **T**, substituted what was then the more usual form of the letter. It is curious that the substitution of **T** for **G** in **GRACIA** does not occur at all on the gold coins of James I. It appears only on one of the pennies known to Burns and on two of the very few halfpennies which he attributes to James I.

<sup>1</sup> The form 6 for **T** also appears on the legend on the Royal Seals of Alexander III and of John Baliol. On the first seal of Robert Bruce the two forms appear together; on one side **SCIOT6ORVM**, on the other **SCI6TORVM**; on his second seal **T** only is used (see *History of Scottish Seals*, W. de G. Birch).



- |  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. Alexander III, sterling, Kinghorn, B, fig. 108, | WILAM · OH · RING.         |
| 2. " " "   | WILAM · OH · RIH.          |
| 3. " " "   | WÄLTÆR OH RIH (B, p. 147). |
| 4. " " Edinburgh,                                  | WILÄM OH · Æ.              |
| 5. " " Glasgow,                                    | WÄLBÆR OH ÆLA              |
| 6. James I, groat, Edinburgh,                      | TRÄCIIÄ.                   |
| 7. James II, " "                                   | BVR Æ.                     |
| 8. " " "   | BVR α.                     |

H. J. DAKERS.

PLATE VI.

[To face p. 414.]