REVIEWS


The appearance of this important work will be a matter of great satisfaction and interest to all concerned with English numismatics. The earliest issues of this country following the Dark Ages have not hitherto received the careful study they deserved, largely because the most important material, the Crondall hoard, was not readily available for prolonged study. With the acquisition of the hoard by the Ashmolean Museum, by which it was acquired in memory of the late Sir Arthur Evans, a detailed examination became possible and Dr. Sutherland now publishes the results of his researches. These enable a substantial number of types to be added to those previously regarded as originating in this country.

The coins are divided by the author into the following main groups:

1. Anglo-Merovingian types.
2. Issues inspired by Roman prototypes.
3. Coins struck at London and derivative issues.
4. The ‘Witmen’ Group (? Kentish) and derivative issues.
5. The York group.
6. Regal coinages.
7. Miscellaneous issues.

Virtually every known specimen of the coinage is listed and described in admirable detail. Weight, die-relationship, and size are given, and care has been taken to trace pedigrees wherever possible. The five plates illustrate every specimen that it was possible to locate. It will be seen, therefore, that the book constitutes a corpus of the early Anglo-Saxon gold coinage, and the background against which these issues must be viewed is set out in introductory chapters dealing with the sub-Roman coinage of the Dark Ages and the coinage of Merovingian Gaul. The gradual resumption of trade with the Continent is then discussed and illustrated by two maps.

The dating of this series is a matter that presents considerable problems. The numismatic material is in itself limited, and of the 128 Anglo-Saxon coins illustrated, no fewer than 73 came from the Crondall hoard. The remainder, where provenance can be established, were isolated finds. We are thus largely dependent on a single hoard with no means of producing comparative evidence. Dr. Sutherland follows Sir Arthur Evans and others in regarding the "medalet" of Bishop Leudardus as the earliest coin in the series and in dating it to the last quarter of the sixth century. The well-known piece reading DOROVERNS CIVITAS also seems to be of early date. At the other end of the scale can safely be put the "two-emperor" type and
the Peada coins, both of which are found in gold and silver and so should have first been issued in the years immediately preceding the introduction of the sceat, for which a date c. A.D. 675 is now generally accepted. It is the intervening period that presents the problem. Dr. Sutherland dates the deposit of the Crondall hoard to c. A.D. 660-70, and, for reasons that he explains, attributes many of the coins in it to a period from twenty to fifty years earlier. There is some difficulty in reconciling these two dates. My own view is that the bulk of the Saxon coins found at Crondall were of recent striking at the time of the deposit, and I base this view on the two following considerations to which it seems impossible not to attach importance:

1. The coins were nearly all in the finest condition, suggesting recent issue.
2. The unusual number of die-links shown in the diagrams set out on pp. 60 ff. lend support to this view.

The following table sets out the more significant examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>No. in hoard</th>
<th>No. die-linked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Lemc&quot; and cognates (nos. 5-9)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5 and 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Cross&quot; types (nos. 15-16)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licinius type (nos. 28-30)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London type (nos. 45-7)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London derivatives (nos. 48-56)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3 and 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Witmen&quot; type (nos. 57-71)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3, 8, and 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Ean&quot; type</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among the Merovingian coins the following die-links are found:

Mint of Wiccus                        | 7            | 2 and 4

The inference seems inescapable that all these coins that are so strongly die-linked can only recently have left their places of issue. It is important also to note the last die-links, those of Wiccus, suggesting as it does that the owner of the treasure had recently been in Gaul.

If it is accepted that the times of issue and of the deposit of the hoard must be approximately the same, one has to consider whether to bring back the date of the deposit or to bring forward the date of issue. And here we are on much less sure ground. The dating of the Merovingian series, on which much turns, is almost as nebulous as the dating of our own thrymsas. French authorities have expressed the view that a coin of Marsal in the hoard and two coins of Metz can hardly have been struck prior to A.D. 650. This view is based on the decadence of their style. Among the Anglo-Saxon coins the coins of London offer important evidence. Dr. Sutherland points out the Christian, and possibly ecclesiastical, character of these pieces and notes that the wave of pagan reaction following Ethelbert’s death in A.D. 616 makes it highly unlikely that they could have been struck between that date and A.D. 675, when Eorconwald was appointed bishop. A date as late as A.D. 675 is for a variety of reasons impracti-
cable, and Dr. Sutherland therefore attributes the coins to a period prior to A.D. 616, say, 40–50 years before the deposit of the hoard.

Another coin that may well be of early date is the remarkable piece probably reading *Audvarld Reges* which has been attributed with seeming probability to Eadbald, King of Kent A.D. 616–40.

A logical date for the deposit, on the evidence of the Anglo-Saxon coins alone, would therefore seem to be c. A.D. 620 and the Abbo coin rather supports this. The difficulty lies with the Merovingian issues, and it seems desirable that the authorities on this series should carefully consider their opinion to see if a somewhat earlier date might not be applicable than the one originally suggested by them.

It has been thought necessary to dwell at some length on the question of dating, which is clearly a controversial matter and one on which a variety of views is likely to be held. Whatever may be the correct solution of this difficult aspect of the subject, numismatists and historians at home and abroad must be deeply indebted to Dr. Sutherland for making available to them in so scholarly a manner the material that must form the basis of any consideration of the question. His book will undoubtedly prove the standard work on the subject, and makes a worthy addition to the excellent series recently inaugurated by the Ashmolean Museum. It is, moreover, a volume which every student will wish to have readily available at home.

C. E. B.

Dr. Sutherland has kindly supplied the following note in answer to the remarks made above:

Quite plainly, the chief difficulty lies in the admittedly vague or indefinite chronology of the Merovingian series: arguments drawn from this material can be no more than suggestive, though they must probably sound a note of caution against an unduly early date for the English gold.

Apart from this, it seems likely that this English gold was not subject to the same conditions of circulation and currency as have generally been the case with silver and copper. It was (as all evidence suggests) either rare in original volume—and thus unsuitable for general circulation—or so seldom circulated as to be restricted now to a single hoard plus a number of isolated examples (from which it might also be argued that it found its way easily into the melting-pot, either in the earlier part of the seventh century or later).

Thus, if it was not so much a hand-to-hand currency as a form of easily portable and easily stored "high-value" treasure (comparable to the gold Anglo-Saxon pieces of later date upon which attention has recently been directed), it would not be surprising if, handled and stored in bulk rather than piece by piece in daily life, it tends to show both a fine average level of preservation and also a high proportion of die-links. Arguments from die-links can, in any case, be over-emphasized: very few series of ancient coins fail to show die-relation-
ship, of one sort or another, upon patient examination; and, of course, an original production of coins from dies aa, ab, ac, ad will still reflect those relationships, or many stages of them, among the relics of that original issue still surviving 10, 20, or 100 years later.

But I hope that the system of dating proposed in my monograph will be understood to be no more than an effort to suggest some closer definition in a group of material which, through lack of historical as also of comparative archaeological evidence, is essentially very difficult and very uncertain. It will be something if the terminal dates are agreed: in this connexion, the existence of a "Valentinian I" type in gold, which merges into electrum and silver, suggests with some strength that the gold series may have continued well past the middle of the seventh century.

Guide to the Greek, Roman, English and Chinese Coins—Heberden Coin Room, Ashmolean Museum. By Dr. J. G. Milne, Dr. C. H. V. Sutherland, and Mr. A. Thompson, under the general editorship of Mr. D. B. Harden. Price 2s. 6d.

The preface and introduction, taken together, provide a useful note on the principal coin collections at Oxford; their provenance, and how these collections, a number of which belong to individual colleges as well as to the University, were ultimately brought together in the Heberden Coin Room at the Ashmolean Museum.

The book is divided into sections, and while serving its main function as a guide, includes a number of pertinent observations and statements which for sheer clarity and conciseness are a pleasure to read.

The English series is chiefly represented by the Wake, Barton, and A. T. Carter Collections, belonging to Christ Church.

The Roman series, selected from coins of the Evans Bequest, is arranged to illustrate "three periods of stress and development in the history of the Roman Empire", viz. (1) The Civil Wars of A.D. 68; (2) Schism and rebellion in the third century; (3) The Constantinian Dynasty and the collapse in the West.

The Greek series, also from the Evans Collection, illustrates the Greek coins of Italy, Sicily, the Balkans, the Adriatic coast, the Black Sea, and Crete. Another selection from the Oman Collection showing groups of autonomous issues and the fine series of Macedonian and Seleucid portraits is also described.

Chinese coins—the Laird Gift—are arranged "to illustrate on broad lines the history of Chinese coinage over a period of more than 2,000 years". One other section deserving special mention is that on the Crondall Hoard. This is ably summarized in the light of Dr. Sutherland's recent work.

Complete with ten excellent plates and a short bibliography, this book contains, in its fifty pages, much that should interest most collectors.

C. W. P.
Reviews


The title of this book might suggest that it was not likely to be of special interest to numismatists interested only in the English series. But, though its main purpose is to vindicate the claim that Greek coins have been found in various parts of this country, it has an important chapter that should be read by all on the different types of finds and the need to recognize the type when attempting to interpret their significance. The views expressed in this chapter alone would justify the modest price at which the book is published.


The second number of this publication appeared in the summer of 1948, a year after the first. It is a new journal, but as none of the German numismatic periodicals appear to have attempted a revival, its significance and, one might say, responsibility is considerable. In any case, it would appear creditable—almost astounding—that a journal of a hundred pages of well-spaced letterpress and five half-tone plates should be produced in Germany at all. It represents the triumph of a few self-reliant enthusiasts over their unencouraging circumstances, a condition which alone might guarantee its quality. As such, it is at once the organ of an active and growing local society, energetically organized by Dr. Hävernik of the Civic Museum, and already signalized by two "Congresses", and the vehicle for such conscientious and original numismatic thought as has appeared in Germany since the war, some of the articles emerging from the series of papers delivered at these "Congresses". The editor is conscious of the relatively good fortune of his city in having preserved its public collection and numismatic library intact, whereas elsewhere these have been lost and the conjurations of numismatists "discouraged".

The methods of such scholars as survived this purging discipline represent the best and hardiest strain in the often minute and tendencious German tradition; but their wider outlook is more important than their methods. To quote a review of a similar work in Austria, the implicit purpose of nearly all the contributors is "to set numismatics free from its isolation to function as an auxiliary to other sciences". These papers are not addressed to "MM. les amateurs", nor even, for the most part, to those interested in the minutiae of coins for their own sake, but to historians and economists, to whom collecting is a mere "parergon", and, under present conditions, almost
impossible. The usual display of learning, with the towering bibliographies of German practice, here becomes a most catholic learning—documents in both ancient and medieval contexts are quoted in extenso (the acknowledged master of source-studies, Dr. Jesse, is among the contributors), while distribution-maps represent the objectivity and succinctness of the new approach. Finally several reviews and summaries betoken a lively awareness of advances in all countries during the years when scholarship has had to move with more than its accustomed patience.

S. E. R.

Primitve Money in its Ethnological, Historical and Economic Aspects,

This useful and exhaustive work, ranging over the whole world and every epoch, will help the numismatist to understand how and why his coins came into existence, and what happens when there are none. The author approaches his subject from two angles; he deals first with the ethnological aspect of it, then with the historical. Later he discusses the evolution and philosophy of primitive money. Much of the book is more directly concerned with economics than numismatics, but the serious student will be grateful for any and all illumination on this difficult topic.

C. A. W.