A NOTE ON MR. WHITTON’S PAPER

“THE COINAGES OF HENRY VIII AND EDWARD VI IN HENRY’S NAME”

TO WHICH ARE ADDED CERTAIN ADDENDA AND CORRIGENDA

By HERBERT SCHNEIDER

TOWER/SOUTHWARK LINKS OF THE HALF-SOVEREIGNS

The existence of several coins of this period, which are according to Mr. Whitton’s classification “Tower/Southwark mules” and thus a practical impossibility, seems to cast considerable doubt on the attribution of the E-group to the Suffolk Place mint. Prima facie, such mules cannot be explained along the lines of Mr. Whitton’s paper in a satisfactory manner and I feel that the collaboration between the Tower mint and Southwark requires some additional data.

When Southwark was opened in June 1545, it was an entirely new mint establishment and could hardly be expected to produce all the irons which were required for the striking of several denominations of gold and silver coins on a fairly large scale—if, indeed, Southwark had authority to use dies other than those made by the Tower mint engravers, which is by no means certain. At one time, Tower dies must have been passed on to Southwark and used there, because all the early Southwark half-sovereigns in Edward’s name, and several in Henry’s name, are found with the i.m. E punched over the i.m. Arrow. Further evidence of die links between the Tower mint and Suffolk Place is provided by a coin in the Bruun collection (lot 588) which has i.m. E on the obverse and the K mark of Knight’s establishment on the reverse. Another specimen of the K-group (PI. VIII, 8), which the late Mr. Whitton had not seen, appears to be a straightforward Tower coin, but its obverse was struck from a die without initial mark which was later used at Southwark as well. Mr. Whitton illustrated a coin from this same obverse die on plate vii, 1, of his paper with a Southwark reverse which has i.m. E over i.m. Arrow.

We have no reason to assume that the Southwark workshops produced any half-sovereign dies at all: no coin has come down to us which is sufficiently different to assured Tower specimens in design and workmanship to substantiate the existence of qualified engravers at Suffolk Place. Style and puncheons link the Southwark half-sovereigns so closely to the Tower mint that several prominent students, including Dr. Brooke, refused to separate the S and E groups from the Tower mint and to assign them to Southwark. The dies of these groups were unquestionably made at the Tower and some of them were used in the Tower establishments. However, it does not necessarily follow that they were not used later on in Southwark as well.
Let us review the evidence for and against Mr. Whitton's attribution of the S and E groups to Southwark.

**Against:** It has been argued that there is no real evidence that Southwark struck gold at all during the reign of Henry VIII.\(^1\) In these circumstances, the attribution of the S-group to Southwark must be regarded as purely conjectural and rather arbitrary. The S-group, however, is so very closely linked to the E-group and there are so many mules between them that they cannot be separated. If we condemn i.m. S for Southwark, i.m. E must inevitably follow suit.

The CIVITAS LONDON legend which appears on silver coins cannot have been used by Southwark because the Suffolk Place mint was outside the City boundary.\(^2\)

The puzzling S and E initial marks could be explained if the coins were to be assigned to Stephen Vaughan’s somewhat mysterious mint establishment at the Tower.\(^3\) Vaughan, it is sometimes argued, might well have used the first letter of his Christian name as the initial mark for his establishment. Later on—in order to separate striking periods or for other technical reasons—he adopted various E puncheons: E being the first letter of Etienne. That Vaughan’s appointment at the Tower mint was unorthodox and that he was a merchant and agent rather than a government official exercising the normal functions of an Under-Treasurer at the Tower has been established beyond doubt. Vaughan was quite a well-known personality on the Continent—his appointment as Chief of the English House at Antwerp alone would have made him a prominent figure—and it is, of course, a fact that he is frequently referred to as “Steven Vaughan” (Flemish) or “Etienne Vaughan” (French). Whether Vaughan himself ever used the French equivalent of his English Christian name is not absolutely certain. In any case I have found no confirmation of this in official records. However, it is not only possible but quite likely that he did.

I am not prepared to subscribe to such wild guesswork which goes, I think, beyond the limits of legitimate speculation. Much more harm than good has been done in numismatics, in my opinion, by attempts to find elaborate and perhaps clever and attractive explanations which make the numismatic evidence tally with preconceived assumptions. The E = Etienne theory is not very convincing, but even without a satisfactory explanation of the letters S and E as initial marks, the evidence against the attribution of these two groups to Southwark seems, at first sight, very strong indeed.

**In favour:** We must accept that the Southwark dies were made at the Tower. As we know, this was quite a normal procedure—so normal that Mr. Whitton probably considered it blatantly obvious and did not mention it specially in his paper. In normal circumstances the provincial mints relied traditionally on Tower irons, and the making of dies for the provinces was a privilege of the Tower engravers.

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1 Mr. Whitton’s folder against p. 64 in B.N.J., vol. xxvi.
3 Ibid., p. 182.
which might have applied to Southwark as well. Actually, Southwark's position is not clearly defined. It was not a provincial mint in the accepted sense of the word; it was a new mint establishment and unorthodox methods and administration were frequently part of a deliberate policy during the period under review. Suffolk Place offered ample scope for this. We must also accept that Tower dies, made for and used by Tower establishments—and some of them even bearing specific Tower markings—were passed on to a mint outside the City boundaries which was not, so far as we know, a branch of the Tower mint. This is admittedly most unusual and, prima facie, a very fanciful assumption. However, it can be substantiated by extremely strong evidence, and it is not, after all, a completely isolated instance: under Edward III we find a half-noble struck from an obverse die which was first used in London and later on (with a flag added) in Calais.

As we have already seen, several half-sovereigns of Edward VI's early issue in Henry's name have the i.m. E over the i.m. Arrow and the rare half-sovereigns in Edward's own name of this coinage are only known so overstruck. That i.m. E does not supersed i.m. Arrow at the Tower has been conclusively established by die links. Therefore, the only plausible explanation of the overstrike is that Martin Bowes released some of his dies to another mint establishment. The two K-group coins, to which I have already referred, show that the same applied to Knight as well, but presumably on a very much smaller scale. To the best of my knowledge the evidence of the K-group half-sovereigns is confined to the two coins in question.

It could be argued, of course, that such a transfer of dies was only further evidence in support of the view that E was Vaughan's initial mark, because a release or a loan of minting equipment was quite possible between establishments operating at the Tower mint but inconceivable between the Tower and another mint outside the city and outside Tower control. However, this is inconsistent with numismatic facts. Not that a transfer of irons between the Tower establishments is in itself unthinkable. It is perfectly possible considering the haphazard methods and the confusion which existed around the middle of the sixteenth century, but we have no evidence of such a practice. However, if we assign the S and E groups to Vaughan, we must leave Southwark without an establishment mark of any kind. I submit that this is impossible for more than one reason, whereas it is perfectly possible to leave Stephen Vaughan's most doubtful establishment unidentified on the coins. As Mr. Whitton has shown, Vaughan's appointment as Under-Treasurer at the Tower was probably only nominal. Unlike the case of Southwark, there is considerable and justified doubt that Vaughan ever struck coins at all.

Mr. Whitton held the view that Southwark could only have operated without a distinguishing mark of its own if the Suffolk Place mint had been "by some more than usually irregular procedure treated not as an ordinary mint but as a branch of the Tower and
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referred as occasion arose dies bearing several different marks so that there would be no exclusive Southwark mint mark”, which he considered—rightly so, in my opinion—as “hardly likely”. However, I find it difficult to accept Mr. Whitton’s argument as such. Even if Southwark had been a branch of the Tower mint, a distinguishing mark of some description would have been a practical necessity. At the Tower itself it was found necessary to use different initial marks and establishment marks to distinguish between the coins struck by Martin Bowes and Knight; it would have been much more necessary to mark coins which were struck outside the Tower mint.

Yorke was a fully fledged Under-Treasurer and he was clearly responsible for Southwark. If he could have used Bowes’s and Knight’s dies at random without marking them for Southwark in any way, there would not only have been confusion but also considerable scope for irregularities, and the ever-suspicious Henry would have been the last person to tolerate such a state of affairs during a period when the intrinsic value of the coins was undergoing rapid and drastic changes. That the Under-Treasurers at the Tower should have been responsible for Yorke’s output of coins is unthinkable; Southwark must have had a mint mark before 1549 and the only marks which fit in with the life of Southwark are the initial marks S and E.

During the 1549/50 coinage the i.m. Y appears at Southwark (as it is found on Tower coins after 1550 when Southwark was closed and Yorke transferred to the Tower mint) and there can hardly be any doubt that this is Yorke’s mark. The i.m. Y is no evidence against Mr. Whitton’s classification: one cannot argue that the S and E groups must not be assigned to Southwark simply because Yorke used, at one time, the first letter of his name as initial mark. It is an established fact that coins were struck at Suffolk Place before 1549, and we cannot possibly assume that not a single silver or gold coin struck there between 1545 and 1549 should have come down to us. We have no alternative but to accept that Yorke used identification marks other than Y before 1549. The initial mark S could well stand for Southwark, whereas the i.m. E remains a puzzle and cannot be explained unless a theory just as fanciful and unsatisfactory as the “E = Etienne” theory can be regarded as an “explanation”: that Yorke used the first letter of the Latin equivalent of his name as initial mark for his establishment. In my opinion, it is a side-issue why the letter E was adopted as an initial mark and what the E stood for. It is by no means the only mark of this period which we cannot explain.

Mr. Whitton has already dealt with the question of the CIVITAS LONDON legend. One could add here, I think, that the Tower origin of the dies from which these coins were struck further weakens the argument that the legend is inconsistent with coins struck outside the City boundaries and that they must therefore be assigned to the Tower mint. Whether Southwark was actually treated as a branch of the Tower mint or not is a question which, in my opinion, had better
be left open since reliable documentary evidence is missing. All one can say is that unorthodox methods might well have suited Henry's financial manoeuvres, and that the collaboration between the Tower and Suffolk Place must have been very close indeed. However, the numismatic evidence is not conclusive: it is perfectly possible that Southwark bought Tower dies and remained a separate mint establishment from the point of view of administration.

The existence of several active mint establishments which relied on the same engravers for their dies was presumably the reason for rather a strange practice on the part of the die cutters: unmarked dies seem to have been produced on a large scale. It would appear that it became part of a deliberate policy to make "universal dies" without initial marks or identification marks below the shield, and that the various Under-Treasurers punched their specific initial mark or establishment identification marks on the dies afterwards—and more often than not on the reverse dies only. The haphazard manner in which the dies were marked confirms this view: the initial marks are frequently out of line with the rest of the legend, and the establishment marks below the shield out of balance or off centre. Also, the "reserved space for the initial mark" is often inadequate. On some coins there is not enough space for the E (Whitton's plate vii, 1 and 2)—because the engraver had only allowed for an Arrow?—and on others (Whitton's plate vii, 6–9) there is such an abnormally large space that the E looks quite lost and was placed between diamond stops, perhaps simply to fill space. Mr. Whitton expressed the opinion that the practice of omitting the initial mark on the obverse dies of the half-sovereigns was probably deliberate, because "such dies could serve for more than one period". This is, of course, true but I doubt that it was the only and the real reason for making dies without identification marks. I am inclined to think that it was found convenient to produce unmarked dies not only because they could be used indefinitely but because they could be used universally inside and outside the Tower. It was only a question of punching an initial mark and sometimes also an establishment mark on one of the dies to identify the coins.

Mr. Whitton is no doubt right in dating back to the beginning of the K-group the system of leaving the obverse dies of the half-sovereigns unmarked. Before this an initial mark was punched on the obverse dies, but I believe that these dies were originally made without any markings and that this practice goes right back into the reign of Henry VIII, into the Annulet-with-Pellet and S-period. The strangely irregular manner in which i.m. Annulet-with-Pellet and S—and later on i.m. Arrow, for that matter—are punched on the dies substantiates this view.

The coins with i.m. E over i.m. Arrow seem to constitute an almost insuperable obstacle: if unmarked dies were made, the overstruck initial mark makes no sense. However, I believe that the release of Tower-marked dies (all of which were probably used at the Tower)
from the Tower mint establishments to Southwark was the exception rather than the rule. I think that, normally, the Tower engravers provided Southwark with dies which had not been previously used by Bowes or Knight. It would appear that the output of half-sovereigns was stepped up very rapidly at Southwark at the beginning of 1547, soon after Edward VI succeeded to the throne. The E-group half-sovereigns are at least as common as those of the Arrow group, and much more so than the K-coins. The Tower was perhaps predominantly striking other denominations of coins and Southwark concentrated mainly on half-sovereigns; we cannot be certain in the absence of detailed accounts. Considering the comparative rarity of the early Arrow half-sovereigns, however, it looks as if Southwark had been suddenly switched to the production of half-sovereigns on a large scale and that, for this reason, Martin Bowes and Knight released serviceable dies, which they had previously used, to the Suffolk Place mint so that Yorke could cope with the work.

I see the various stages of collaboration between the Tower and Southwark as follows:

1. **Henry VIII. Period II (b). Annulet-with-Pellet—S**

   Southwark was opened and relied on Tower dies, and it was found convenient to make all the half-sovereign dies without initial or identification marks so that the dies could be used universally inside and outside the Tower. Such Tower-made dies were either issued or sold to Southwark as occasion arose. The Tower mint marked the dies on obverse and reverse with an Annulet-with-Pellet whereas Southwark punched the letter S as initial mark on their dies.

2. **Edward VI. Period Arrow-Lis—E**

   The same system of producing unmarked dies continued. However, neither the Tower nor Southwark punched initial or establishment marks on all their dies, as a rule. To identify the coins as products of Tower establishments or Southwark it was found entirely sufficient to mark either of the dies, and the reverse die only was usually marked.

   In conclusion, let us consider the almost unparalleled confusion which existed at the Tower and at Suffolk Place during the coinage of Edward VI in Henry's name: at the beginning, half-sovereigns in Edward's name were issued more or less side by side by both mints. Southwark used Tower dies and changed them by punching E over Arrow. At times Southwark even used dies with Tower markings in addition to unmarked Tower dies which had previously been used by a Tower establishment. If there was anything deliberate and systematic, it was the lack of order and coordination.

   It is against this chaotic background that the late Mr. Whitton has made a really remarkable and, in my opinion, eminently successful attempt at classification which has brought us within an inch of a completely coherent and acceptable picture of this exceedingly
intricate period where grouping, identification, and attribution are inevitably rather more conjectural than usual and where results must largely be obtained by deduction. I am only inclined to think that Mr. Whitton’s orderly mind has perhaps fitted the Tower and the Southwark half-sovereigns into a rather too rigid frame and too watertight compartments and that, so far as the Tower/Southwark links are concerned, “the inch” should be added. Mr. Whitton uses the term “Tower-Southwark Mules”, and I find this somewhat misleading and confusing. Since it is obvious that one side of the coin was not struck at the Tower and the other side at Southwark, I think that coins struck from dies which were, at different times, used in both places ought to be assigned to Southwark or to the Tower according to the die evidence.

ADDENDA AND CORRIGENDA
TO MR. C. A. WHITTON’S PAPER IN B.N.J., VOL. XXVI (1949–51)

Gold Coins

Part I (1949)

B.N.J., p. 86. (Reprint, p. 31):

The first line should read: crosses read ANGL and have the Τ monogram for Ζ (pl. vi, 6). Pl. vi, 7, should be deleted.

B.N.J., p. 86. (Reprint, p. 31.) Third paragraph:

I.m. K. A half-sovereign with the D G legend is known (PI. VIII, 8). It reads: HENRIC 8 D G AGL FRA Z HIB REX. No i.m. on obverse, large lettering, sleeve stops. Reverse: i.m. K. IHS AVTEM TRANSIENS PER MEDI ILLO BAT K below shield. Small lettering, lozenge stops. The obverse of this coin was struck from the same die as the half-sovereign illustrated by Mr. Whitton in B.N.J. xxvi, pt. i, pl. vii, 1, as a Southwark specimen.¹

B.N.J., p. 87. (Reprint, p. 32.) Lists:

Half-sovereigns, Tower, Henry VIII, II (b). I.m. Annulet-with-Pellet. A specimen is known with an obverse of variant 2, and a reverse of variant 3. It has trefoil stops on both sides and the unusual legends: HENRIC 8 DI GRA AG FRANCIE Z HIBERN REX (small lettering), and IHS AVTE TRANS PERMEDI ILLOR IBA (large Roman letters). Spink’s Numismatic Circular, Oct. 1951, no. 48670, where it was erroneously stated that the coins read AGL.

Part II (1950)


Crown of the Double Rose. I.m. Arrow. A new combination of initials on a Crown of the Double Rose with i.m. Arrow on both sides was exhibited to the Society in January 1952, and illustrated in B.N.J. xxvii, pt. i (1953), on pl. viii, 5. It has H–L on obverse (rose-side) and H–R on reverse (shield-side), and reads: HENRIC VIII RVTLANS ROSA SIE SPINA, and DEI G R AGLIE Z FRANC DNS HIBERIE. The coin was previously recorded by Spink & Son in their Numismatic Circular, May 1951, no. 42466, and listed again in July 1951, under no. 46447. In this latter record a printing error occurred: this should read H–R (not H–K) on reverse. Another new variety of the Crown of the Double Rose was exhibited to the Society in October 1953. (PI. VIII, 7.) It has i.m. Arrow on both sides and the initials H–R on the rose-side and H–K on the shield-side, and reads: HENRIC VIII RVTLANS ROSA

¹ See p. 195 on the subject of Tower/Southwark collaboration.
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SIE SP!A, and DEI G R AGLIE Z FRANC DNS HIBER. The stops are saltires on both sides. The H–R initials on the obverse as well as the letter links make it doubtful whether the H–K stands for Henry and Katherine of Aragon or Henry and Katherine Howard. Mr. Whitton's classification of the Crowns of the Double Rose is not, perhaps, as final as the rest of his paper, and I hope to be able to place a short paper on the subject before the Society in the near future.

B.N.J., p. 180. (Reprint, p. 44.) Lists:
Second Coinage (1526–44), Crown of the Double Rose.
The obverse legend reads: HENRIC VIII RVTILANS ROSA SI(N)E SPINA (SPIA, SPII, SP). A specimen with the SP legend occurred in the Lawrence sale with i.m. Arrow on both sides and initials H–R on rose-side and H–1 on shield-side.
The reverse legend reads: DEI G R AGLIE (AGL) FRANC(E) DNS HIBERNIE (HIBERNI, HIBERIE, HIBER). For HIBER legend see above.

B.N.J., p. 180 (Reprint, p. 44.) Lists:
Crown of the Double Rose, (iv) i.m. Arrow; variants. Add:

Obv. H–1 rev. H–R (see above),

BASE COINAGE (1544–51)
Obverse legend, read: HENRIC 8 (RVTILANS, RVTILA) ROS(A) SIN(E) SPINA (SPINE, SPI), seldom in full. The legend varieties were recorded at A. H. Baldwin & Sons, and from coins in the collection of the late Dr. Ernest Carter. An exception is a Crown of the Double Rose with i.m. Annulet-with-Pellet which reads: Obv. DEI GRA AGL FRA Z HIB REX, and rev. DEI GRA AGL FRANC Z HIB REX. It has sleeve stops on the obverse and trefoil stops on the reverse. (Spink's Numismatic Circular, August–September 1950, no. 28644.)

Crowns, Tower, Henry VIII, i.m. Annulet-with-Pellet: add as variant 4: Lombardic H on rose-side, Roman H on shield-side, reading RVTILA. (Dr. E. Carter's collection.)

B.N.J., p. 181. (Reprint, p. 45):
Half-crowns, Base Coinage (1544–51). Reverse legend reads: HENRIC 8 D G AGL(FR) Z HI(B) REX. These legend varieties were recorded at the Raynes and the Ryan sales and they occur in Dr. E. Carter's collection.

Half-crowns, Tower, Edward VI., First Coinage (1547–51) in Henry's name. i.m. Arrow. Variant 1. E–R in field both sides. Add: This has an annulet at the inner circle of the reverse at 4 o'clock (cf. Mr. Whitton's plate x, 18).

B.N.J., p. 182. (Reprint, p. 46):
Half-crowns, Tower, Edward VI. First Coinage (1547–51) in Henry's name. i.m. Arrow, variant 2. i.m. Arrow inverted. Add: The mark is found muled with the normal i.m. Arrow both ways. (Dr. E. Carter's collection.)

B.N.J., p. 183. (Reprint, p. 47.) Angels:
I.m. Castle, variant 4. This should read: Castle flanked by towers between saltires ("Castle with H", pl. xi, 4, obv.).

B.N.J., p. 187. (Reprint, p. 51.) Lists:
Angel. (ii) i.m. Castle, variant 4. This should read: i.m. Castle with Towers between saltires ("Castle with H", pl. xi, 4, obv.).
Angel. (iii) i.m. Portcullis, variant 2. This is also known with i.m. Portcullis without chains on obverse, saltire beside it. The reverse of the coin has the normal i.m. Portcullis with chains. (Dr. E. Carter's collection.)
Angelet. (i) i.m. Castle, variant 2. This is also known with saltire after the i.m. on the reverse. (A. H. Baldwin & Sons.)
B.N.J., p. 188. (Reprint, p. 52.) Base Coinage (1544-47):

Angel. I.m. Lis. Add as variant 3: No annulet by head or on side of ship. (Spink's Numismatic Circular, April 1953, no. 16875.)

Half-Angel. I.m. Lis. A specimen with trefoil stops on the obverse is known. (Ryan sale, first part, lot no. 200, which was misdescribed in the catalogue. Illustrated on pl. vii of the Ryan sale catalogue, first part.)

Part III (1951)

I know of no corrections or additions so far as the gold coins are concerned.