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After a lapse of over half a century it is refreshing to note a revival of interest in the coinages issued for the possessions of the British Commonwealth.

In the larger units of the Commonwealth, e.g. Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa, the numismatists of those countries have dealt or are dealing with their own series, but the result of their studies and researches are mostly to be found in local publications not easily accessible to the average collector.

Compact and up-to-date handbooks which review the entire field on the principle first laid down by James Atkins, Coins of the Possessions and Colonies in 1889, and followed in a more limited manner by D. F. Howorth in 1890, are long over-due.

Two new handbooks fill a definite need, not only for the numismatist but for the layman.

British Commonwealth Coinage. By HOWARD W. A. LINECAR.

Mr. Linecar covers the very wide field in the form of a world tour. Each country is dealt with separately. An excellent historical review is followed by a detailed description of the denominations issued. Extremely useful lists of the dates of issue of the several denominations are included. Twenty-six plates illustrating 227 main coin types present a clear pictorial view of the several issues by the responsible authorities, and six line maps provide the essential geographical identification.

The book is more than an introduction to British Commonwealth numismatics. It is a compact and very detailed review of a fascinating subject, with the contents based upon current standard knowledge. It places in the hands of the numismatist and layman alike a comprehensive yet easily read handbook of the very wide and varied field of Commonwealth numismatics, and is calculated to excite the interest of the reader.

Colonial and Commonwealth Coins. By L. V. W. WRIGHT.

The plan followed by Mr. Wright is designed as an introductory handbook to the long series of silver and minor coinages issued throughout the countries of the Colonies and Commonwealth. The gold coins are excluded. The object has been to illustrate each type of coin issued and to indicate the period during which such coins were struck. By this means it is easy to identify and classify the coins impressed with native inscriptions and to determine their denominations.

All the major types are illustrated in the text, although in some cases the quality of the illustrations is not too good.

The presentation is easy and simple to follow, and the book is basically a guide book. Historical information and descriptive detail are restricted to the very minimum, and the coins are left to speak for themselves.

Classification and attribution of the several coins is based upon present knowledge, but in the more obscure series some re-attribution and adjustments will follow. Fertile and very much neglected fields like the East India Company's Presidency series, the British West Indies and some of the other smaller units of the Commonwealth have never been adequately studied. This handbook reveals the deficiency of present knowledge in several series.
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This is not the place to point out omissions or question attributions in either work, but it is to be hoped that, with the information now made easily accessible, a livelier interest will be taken in a hitherto very sadly neglected field.

Unintentionally, but fortunately for the collector and numismatist, the two authors complement each other and do not clash in their treatment or presentation. Both books can be considered essential handbooks for all persons claiming an interest in the numismatics of the Greater Britain beyond the seas.

F. PRIDMORE


The large number of mints and the breakdown of royal control over their work in Saxon and Franconian times makes the study of the German coinages of the tenth and eleventh centuries a daunting task, in which a substantial advance over what was achieved by Dannenberg can be expected only from years of laborious and exacting work. The sheer volume of material makes the problems of the corresponding period in English numismatics look small. Under the general direction of Professor Havernick, the ground is being cleared by an extremely thorough and systematic re-presentation of the numismatic history of the early German kingdom, region by region. The monograph under review, which follows the lines of an earlier study of the Saxon coinage by Dr. Vera Jammer, deals with that of Lower Lorraine and Frisia. A large part of the first volume consists of a commentary, place by place, on the issues of some seventy mints. It is followed by a catalogue of 600 finds. In the same way as so many Anglo-Saxon coins come from Scandinavian finds, the bulk of them are from eastern and north-eastern Europe: for every find deposited within the region of issue, there are nearly twenty from beyond its boundaries. The problems of the Baltic trade and the ‘outflow’ of silver from the Rhinelands are briefly discussed, and an interesting attempt is made to assess the relative output, over a corresponding period, of the more active mints. Cologne was more than twice as important as any other mint; the runners-up—Tiel (cf. the modern position of Rotterdam), Deventer, Groningen, Dokkum, Leeuwarden, Utrecht, Staveren, Duisburg—are all places of the Frisian coasts or the lower Rhine, while the mints of what is today Belgium and north-eastern France were relatively unimportant.

The British numismatist will find matter for reflection in the techniques which have been adopted in this monograph, and in the larger plan to which it belongs. Probably he will begin by viewing with scant favour the use of line-drawings and not photographs. A good line-drawing, however, is usually the clearest form of illustration of an eleventh-century German type, and it is worth remembering that the purpose of collotype plates is to make possible the identification of particular dies and the study of their similarities, linkage and sequence, and that although work of this kind must be in the forefront in the study of a coinage over which there was close central control and where the mints were permanently in operation, it is not necessarily so with the issues of the smaller mints of the ‘regional Pfennig’. Secondly, he will note that, for a period of two centuries, and for the coinage of one region only within the German kingdom, no fewer than 600 finds can be listed. This list is, in principle, a quite different kind of inventory from one which seeks to gather together all the finds from a specified region, and the best name for it in English is a check-list; a check-list may be thought of as part of the spade-work for a numismatic history, whereas a regional find-register is part of the spade-work for a
monetary history—not that either can be written in isolation, of course. The difficulties of interpreting the hoards are very much increased when their contents are not so much currency as bullion and when they cannot be directly related to the use of coinage in the area of its official circulation; the independent and really close dating of each coin, without which its historical interpretation must remain speculative, but in light of which unexpected aspects of monetary affairs are so often to be discovered, presents an Herculean labour. This monograph will, it may be hoped, provide a starting-point and a stimulus to further work, not least to a very detailed re-examination of the small number of local hoards.

D. M. Metcalf


It has been the privilege of few to review a British Museum Catalogue and fewer still have been fortunate enough to consider a volume, such as this, from the pen of a distinguished numismatist who is not a member of the staff of the Coin Room. After working for five years the author was invited to adapt his work so that it could be published as one of the series of British Museum Catalogues describing the English coins in the National Collection, an inspired and happy arrangement which reflects much credit on the author, on the Keeper of Coins and Medals, Dr. J. Walker, and his Assistant on the Medieval side, Mr. R. H. M. Dolley, who had the vision to suggest this excellent though unusual course.

The catalogue which is now in our hands is an outstanding contribution to our numismatic literature. The title is a little misleading, unnecessarily so, for of the coins listed and given a B.M.C. number only 69 per cent. are in the British Museum cabinets, but the additional material adds great strength, the desirability of which must be obvious to all. The minor issues under consideration, in general terms the series of English Coppers, have hitherto been neglected, for various reasons, by students and collectors with a few notable exceptions, but this catalogue will not only restore the balance but will be a revelation to all who study it.

Working from a model manuscript the Oxford University Press has produced a splendid volume. The type is clear and the arrangement could scarcely be improved upon. One notable feature is that special stops and symbols on the coins have been produced exactly from specially prepared type. The large pages have good margins and the book opens out flat, making it pleasant and convenient to use. It will be hoped that, departing as it does from earlier volumes, the format will be standard for other British Museum Catalogues of the late English series.

The 666 quarto pages (compare this with the 173 octavo pages of the previous standard work by H. Montagu published in 1893) are divided thus:

| General Introduction | 20 pages | (i–xx) |
| Historical Introduction | 8 „ | (1–8) |
| Catalogue of Coins | 519 „ | (9–527) |
| Appendixes | 94 „ | (528–621) |
| Indexes | 25 „ | (622–46) |

To which are added 50 collotype plates of an excellence seldom seen.

The General Introduction is a clear statement of method and acknowledgement which, while explaining the technique employed, at the same time acknowledges the great help and co-operation afforded not only by the British Museum personnel but also by other keepers of museum collections and private collectors both here and overseas. The whereabouts of all coins in the catalogue are clearly identified by
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a code conveniently tabulated, an essential feature of a corpus of this kind incor-
porting as it does all the specimens lacking in the National Collection.

It is important to the understanding of English Coppers to trace the early history
of small change, and in his Historical Introduction the author has drawn information
from all sources known to him and interpreted them in a way that brings many new
ideas to the reader. The story is of endless pleas and petitions to the Crown and
Government without any real attempt being made to alleviate hardship. This then
bridges the long period before the first small change, other than silver, was made
available to traders and their buying public. A succinct summary of this historical
evidence is given on p. 7.

The catalogue itself is a masterpiece of precise tabulating, the sheer logic of which
will only be really appreciated with time. It reflects eleven years of specialized con-
centration which few will grasp at the first reading. Each reign has its own historical
background followed by a chronological list of the known coins. Each trial,
pattern, restrike, and current coin is numbered in sequence throughout the work.
It is, however, important to note that minor die varieties are grouped under the
same number, though even then the author has recorded the number of such
differing dies that he has observed.

There is a complete reappraisal of the copper farthing tokens of James I and
Charles I. The previous publications by Ruding, Vaux, Weightman, Rogers, and
others have been collated with discrimination. Addition to our knowledge is made
difficult by the absence of new documentary evidence. The author has been able to
clear up two outstanding problems satisfactorily. The small-size Harington tokens
are shown to be farthings, not half-farthings, and the CARA group are shown to be
forgeries, though the door is left open for further study. Forgeries generally, which
are all too prevalent, have been expertly sifted from the genuine pieces, many for the
first time.

The controversial reign of Queen Anne, with its puzzling trial pieces and patterns,
is treated in great detail. Due regard is taken of all published information, but the
arrangement is mainly the result of the author's fundamental work in which the
coins themselves have been made to tell their own story. The complex problem of
the pieces struck from rusty dies and restruck specimens is answered and dies are
identified and listed in a most convincing way. Patterns of spots on coins from the
pittings in dies from which rust has been cleaned are used here, as in the reign of
George III, for precise identifications and as an aid to chronology.

Perhaps the most important part of the book is the long section on the reign of
George III. Like the issues of Anne, the coppers of this reign have never before been
properly understood and no truer statement has been made than the author's
contention that even the most knowledgeable collectors and dealers have in the past
often been able to hazard no more than a guess as to the true origin of many of the
patterns, restrikes, and concoctions. It will no longer be necessary to speculate as
precise identification is now possible. More than a hundred years have passed
since many of these pieces were struck and it was only great patience and tenacity
that produced the coherent and logical results that the author has achieved. Once
again the coins themselves have been made to reveal their secrets and no specimen
has been neglected in the search for the truth. The history of the Soho mint under
Matthew Boulton makes fascinating reading, and mysteries of the subsequent use
of dies are ably explained and clarified.

At this period and elsewhere the author has realized that there will be difficulty in
interpreting some of his ideas and so where necessary he gives an Identification Key
which used properly by the reader will prove invaluable and save much searching
and disappointment. Following the line of action indicated by these keys we are
helped in our understanding of the author's interpretation of many features which have not before been used in identifying dies.

The Appendixes supply much additional historical information and other details. The provenance and pedigree of most of the specimens listed is given which will please the research student. Weights, official and actual, are tabulated for every issue with a column of weight ranges giving the results of weighing patiently many thousands of pieces.

The collotype plates are of a high standard and incorporate many novel features. The casts used for the illustrated coins were prepared to exacting specifications and enlarged portions of coins were reproduced from direct photographs taken with great skill by the author. The standard the author set himself for these plates was that they should measure up to plates produced at the turn of the century by an autotype process, and it will be seen how closely this has been achieved. The lines connecting associated dies, confusing at first glance, will prove invaluable in use.

It will be clear by now that to your reviewer this book is of considerable merit. It is the result of a policy of perfection, written by a man whose whole training demanded perfection at every stage. It is a challenge to all numismatists. A challenge because considerable effort will have to be made by anyone wishing to use it properly. It will deter many who are not prepared to make this effort.

It is not just a book for students of English coins. All who are interested in numismatics, whatever the series or period, will gain much by reading and using it intelligently. Moreover, it will help all those concerned with examining coins and presenting the evidence gained from detailed research so that it may be useful as a permanent record.

Albert Baldwin