THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE IN A REVIEW OF A FRENCH HOARD OF ENGLISH GOLD COINS

By HERBERT SCHNEIDER

'Mon ami' said Victor Tourneur¹ to me some 20 years ago, ferociously waving his short index-finger uncomfortably close to my face. 'Mon pauvre ami! Avez-vous sérieusement l'intention d'amalgame dans le cadre de vos études l'archéologie, l'histoire et la numismatique, et de tenir compte de toutes les trouvailles et des innombrables anomalies dans la composition des trésors?'

When I confirmed that this was exactly what I intended to do, Tourneur stroked his beard and voiced the comforting assertion that I was as great an idiot as he was himself. 'For you and for me' he added 'no numismatic publication can be regarded as satisfactory unless the archaeological evidence has been fully accounted for and reviewed against the historical background. But there are not twenty people in the world who really understand and appreciate the value of this archaeological evidence for the purpose of numismatic research.' Even by Tourneur's standards, this was no doubt an understatenemt, but the fact remains that the number of archaeologically minded numismatists is regrettably small and liable to remain so for many years.

When I asked Tourneur why he did not use his privileged position to encourage the study of hoards in numismatics, he shook his head. 'The scholar who has grasped the importance of archaeological records will use them in any case and needs no push from me', he replied. 'To push others would be sheer madness. The enthusiastic coin collector who became a student of numismatics as years went by has frequently done useful work. Sometimes even valuable work which is liable to stand the test of time. But experience has shown that without the required educational background he cannot even be trusted with the interpretation of historical events. Should I invite him to run amok in the intricate labyrinth of the archaeological evidence—which is more often than not debatable—knowing that he will almost certainly go off the rails? I would do much more harm to encourage this than allow archaeology to be ignored.'

I thought of this episode so often that it remained as vividly in my mind as if it had happened only a few days ago, and meanwhile I learned how right Tourneur had been, in some respects. The archaeological records relating to numismatics are indeed an 'intricate labyrinth', and the facilities Ariadne offered to Theseus are denied to us. Dangerously incomplete—and in many cases dangerously confusing and incompetent—as the old descriptions of hoards inevitably are, the evidence must be reviewed with great circumspection. But notwithstanding Tourneur and regardless of the ever-varying margins of error which present thorny problems at times, we can no longer shirk the issue and ignore the archaeological records. What Professor Tourneur said in 1949 was no doubt largely true . . . at that time. But considerable progress has been made since and, so far as English numismatics are concerned, we are

¹ The late Professor V. Tourneur, D.Ph., formerly keeper of the Belgian National Coin Collection. Subsequently the Chief Executive of the Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique and Permanent Secretary of the Académie Royale in Brussels.
rapidly approaching the stage where most problems of identification and chronological classification are in the process of being solved. We are about to enter the rather terrifying domain of pure scientific numismatics, and the gap between the learned societies and the collector's clubs is liable to widen. I, for one, acknowledge this with regret, but the evolution is inevitable. There are obviously additions of a technical nature to be made to our present knowledge of coins, and they will be taken care of in the not too distant future. However, such additions and, for that matter, corrections will not open new horizons. We cannot turn round in circles indefinitely and apply the same criteria to the same coins again and again without losing our sense of proportion and assigning a perfectly absurd importance to features such as a missing pellet in a legend—more likely than not due to the fact that it simply was not struck up!

It is not in this manner that we can ever hope to fathom the scientific substance of coins which we have so often failed to extract from the available evidence. Quite apart from the fact that coins have their place in art, the proverbial 'heart and soul' of a coin has three dimensions: history—and here I include economics, of course—archaeology and numismatics.

Unless a student takes all three elements fully into account and merges the evidence, he cannot hope to obtain really relevant results. He cannot even obtain correct results, for if we throw light on a three-dimensional object from one angle only, its features become inevitably distorted. Distorted to the point of being misleading and, in fact, quite wrong. A paper which seems absolutely right from the point of view of pure numismatics is obviously wrong if it is inconsistent with the historical and archaeological evidence. Actually, it is positively dangerous because of its one-dimensional qualities.

It is widely recognized, I think, that we cannot really understand coins at all unless we study them with the help of the proverbial 'time-and-space' glasses of history. Unfortunately, however, our historical records are often extremely incomplete and sometimes very biased so that the margin of error is considerable. So considerable and so disturbing that, in quite a few cases, the historian must rely on the archaeological evidence. This is apparently no more universally appreciated than the fact that—if this archaeological evidence be of a numismatic nature—neither the pure historian nor the pure archaeologist can be relied upon to interpret it correctly. It must be left to the numismatist to merge the three elements—the 'three dimensions', as it were—but his dependence on history and archaeology is obvious. On his own he would be quite lost and one would wish that numismatists would become fully conscious of the fact that virtually the entire evidence we possess of our hammered coinage today is of archaeological origin. Much—if not indeed most of it—has been lost by ignorance, incompetence and negligence. At times, it is simply pitiful to read in Mr. Anthony Thompson's book\(^1\) how inadequately and in what irrelevant a manner hoards were frequently recorded in the past, and not only in the far distant past, and we cannot continue to throw away the evidence of treasure trove. Dr. Tourneur feared the consequences of what might perhaps be brutally called a 'vulgarization of archaeology' within the scope of numismatic research. I am entirely prepared to admit that there is a very tangible danger we have to guard against. But the fact remains that the information contained in the hoards cannot be disregarded any longer if we want to make coins yield all their secrets.

I would like to submit to the Society a concrete case, and a very typical one. The case of a seemingly 'unimportant hoard'. The expression always irritated me beyond words, for no

\(^1\) Inventory of British Coin Hoards, A.D. 600-1500.
REVIEW OF A FRENCH HOARD OF ENGLISH GOLD COINS

The hoard is unimportant, not even if it throws up no new die variety nor an unknown combination of dies. This applies very largely to the coins under review.

Had this French hoard been published at all when it came to light in 1911, we would probably have the following record of it:

'A Pattern Angel of Henry VIII discovered in France'

'A hoard of 45 English gold coins was recently discovered in France and included a pattern angel of Henry VIII, in every respect identical with the Brice and Montagu specimen, illustrated on Plate VI of the second portion of the Montagu sale (11/16th May, 1896), lot 743'.

'The other coins of the hoard are as follows:—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nobles</th>
<th>Ryals</th>
<th>Angels</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edward III</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Henry V</td>
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<td>Henry VI</td>
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<td>Edward IV</td>
<td>10 (*)</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Henry VII</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Henry VIII</td>
<td>13 (+ 1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philip &amp; Mary</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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3 + 10 + 31 + 1

(*) Include one York and one Coventry ryal, one Flemish ryal and a forgery (Flemish?).

A numismatist studying this record today would no doubt be intrigued by the surprising composition of the hoard, but could draw no conclusions. For research purposes, the description of the coins is of no real use beyond the general information supplied. Allow me to demonstrate how much valuable research material would have been lost:

Around the end of the year 1965, Spink's bought a hoard of 45 English gold coins which came originally to light in the Maine region of France in the year 1911, and I am extremely grateful to Mr. D. G. Liddell for having left the coins with me for a little while so that they could be fully recorded and cast for illustration (Plates I-IV). The archaeological evidence is as follows:¹


¹The references used for my record of the coins are as follows:


Edward IV. 'The Coinages of Edward IV and of Henry VI (Restored)'. Part II, BNJ Vol. XXIV, 1943/4. (B & W)


For Mary, Philip and Mary, and Elizabeth I, I have used English Coins, Chapter XV, Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1932. (Brooke)

Considering the illustrations on Plates I-IV I have based my description of the coins on the standard features, legends and punctuation indicated in the above numismatic literature and confined my record predominantly to variants of the standard types.
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE IN A


(12) Edward IV. Angel. Mint mark o to left of angel's head, cross in nimbus, reads ::EDWARD and DEI, FRANC. Rev. no mint mark, reads CR/VSE and REDE'TOR. Similar to B & W: XIV, 3. Weight 76-9 grs.

(13) Edward IV. Angel. Mint mark o to right of angel's head, plain in nimbus, reads : and FRANC.:, reads CR/VSE and REDE'TOR. B & W XIV, obv. 6 with rev. 1. Weight 77-9 grs.

(14) Edward IV. Angel. Mint mark + No punctuation except FRANC. reads DI. Rev. mint mark pierced cross with pellet in lower right quarter, reads CRYCEM and REDE'MPT. B & W: XVIII b, 3. Weight 76-9 grs.


(17) Henry VII. Angel. Obv. mint mark Lis-on-Rose, reading FRANC on spear shaft and angel's head. Rev. mint mark Lis-on-Rose, no punctuation, reads CRVCE TVAM REDET. P & W: Type I. Weight 74-4 grs.

(18) Henry VII. Angel of design 3. Obv. mint mark Escallop. No rosettes by nimbus, lettering R2(a), single rosette stops, reads FRANC. Rev. mint mark Escallop lettering R2(b), single rosette stops, reads CRVCE TVA and XPE R. P & W: Type III, Group III. Weight 76-4 grs.


(20) Henry VII. Angel. Obv. mint mark Pansy (petals not touching centre, saltire before mint mark). Saltire stops, reads ANGLI FRANC. Lettering R2(a). Rev. mint mark Pansy, reads CRVCE TVA XPE REDE, saltire stops, lettering R2(b). P & W: Type IIIc, but this has crosslet at spear shaft. Weight 77-1 grs.


(22) Henry VII. Angel. Obv. mint mark Anchor (of late IIIc design of greats with hollow centre), single rosette stops, reads ANGL (?) FR. Lettering R2(b). Rev. mint mark Pansy (probably of 5 petals not touching centre), reads CRVCE TVA XPE REDE', single saltire stops, normal E2 lettering. P & W: Type IIIc. Weight 77-1 grs.


(24) Henry VII. Angel. Obv. mint mark Anchor (of late IIIc design of greats with hollow centre), single rosette stops, reads ANGL (?) FR. Lettering R2(b). Rev. mint mark Anchor (reversed), single saltire stops, normal E2 lettering. P & W: Type IIIc. Weight 77-1 grs.


(32) Henry VIII. Angel, first coinage 1509/26. Mint mark Castle both sides. Units between king's numerals undotted, pellets between digits, reads FRFX and REDX. Saltire before mint mark on obv. (This may be Castle between saltires with the second saltire not struck up). Rev. mint mark Castle undecorated. Single and double saltires mixed on both sides. Whitton: (ii) Castle, probably 2. Weight 77-3 grs.


(34) Henry VIII. Angel, first coinage 1509/26. Mint mark Portcullis (unadorned) with chains on both sides. Units of king's numerals undotted, reads FRFX and REDX. Rev. reads REDX, single saltire stops, broken letter E. Whitton: (iii) Portcullis, standard type. Weight 78-7 grs.

(35) Henry VIII. Angel, first coinage 1509/26. Mint mark Portcullis (unadorned) with chains on both sides. Units of king's numerals undotted, reads FRFX and REDX. Rev. reads REDX, single saltire stops both sides. Whitton: (iii) Portcullis, standard type. Weight 77-2 grs.

(36) Henry VIII. Angel, base coinage 1544/47. Mint mark Lis both sides. Reads REDX, single saltire stops both sides, annulet to left on angel's head and on ship. Whitton: Base Coinage, i.m. Lis. Weight 77-2 grs.

(37) Henry VIII. Angel, base coinage 1544/47. Mint mark Lis both sides. Standard legends, saltire stops both sides, annulet to left of angel's head, no annulet on ship. Whitton: Base Coinage, i.m. Lis, 2. Weight 78-4 grs.

(38) Henry VIII. Angel, As (37) in every respect but not from the same pair of dies. Weight 77-0 grs.


(40) Philip and Mary. Angel, 1557/8. Mint mark Lis both sides, normal legend ending REGIAT, single pellet stops except after D. Rev. legend ends MIRAB and has single pellet stops. Weight 79-9 grs.

(41) Philip and Mary. Angel, 1557/8. Mint mark Lis both sides. Obv. from the same die as (40). Rev. legend ends MIRAB and has single pellet stops except after ISTVD. Weight 79-8 grs.

(42) Elizabeth I. Angel, 1558/61. Mint mark Lis both sides. Obv. reads FRA and REG, single pellet stops except for D'. Rev. reads A, DNO, FACTVM EST, EST, MIRAB, Wire-lined inner circle both sides. Weight 82-6 grs.


(44) Continental imitation of a London ryal of Edward IV, struck on a flan of normal size. Obv. reads E: (reversed) D: (reverse double trefoil) WARD: (reverse double trefoil) D: GRA: (reverse double trefoil) REX: (reverse double trefoil) ANG(?) Z: FRANC: ; //, ENS: I: B:. Very crude workmanship, rather pale and inferior gold. Rev. mint mark ? (a round object). Reads IHS(double trefoil)AVTEM(double trefoil)TRANSIENS(double trefoil)PER:, MEDIVM:, ILOVVM: TR(double trefoil). Large fleurs in spandrels. The use of double trefoil stops on both sides is noteworthy. The mint mark might have been a small, thick Sun, worn flat. Weight 108-1 grs.
Continental imitation of an angel of Henry VIII, 2nd coinage of 1526/34. Mint mark Lis both sides. 
Obv. reads HENRIC A VI. B. D. G. X. AGI. X. FRAC. X. +. 
Rev. PER. CRUX. TVA. SALVA. NOS. X. RED. 
Weight 76.2 grs. (Cf. Lockett, Part III (Continental), Glendining's Feb. 29/March 1st 1956, Lot 261, 
which weighed 75.8 grs.

Unfortunately, we know virtually nothing about the background of this hoard. The year 
1911 was mentioned in connection with the original discovery of the coins, and this is probably 
reliable. They came to light in a religious establishment not very far from Angers, and this 
means frequently the proverbial 'iron curtain' so far as information is concerned, although 
there are no legal problems. For French numismatics were spared totally illogical treasure 
trove regulations comparable to our own, and the French government has no claim whatever. 

It is of course irritating to think that valuable information which is—or was—perhaps 
available remained undisclosed. But a parcel of coins dug up in a field tells as a rule no story 
conveniently prepared for the numismatist. Would it be therefore better to say that we are 
worth off than usual with the Angers hoard so far as research work is concerned? Yes, I 
think we are. For in the case of 'a parcel of coins in a field' we are not facing imponderabilia 
we have to take into account when reviewing this particular hoard.

The formidable range from Edward III to Elizabeth I would be exceptional and surprising 
for any hoard of any size, but the gaps are intriguing. No gold of Richard II and Henry IV. 
No angel of Henry VI nor of Richard III. One could hardly expect a coin of Edward V, 
but the reign of Edward VI is not represented either. The absence of rare denominations is 
conspicuous, and one wonders whether the hoard has not been previously 'picked' by a dealer 
or a collector. The 'pattern angel' of Henry VIII (no. 45) may have been missed among so 
many others, and the interesting Type VIII(B) London ryal of Edward IV is bound to have 
passed unnoticed prior to the publication of Blunt's and Whitton's paper. 1 If the eyes of 
the hoard were taken out, it is more surprising that two angels of Philip and Mary in remark-
ably fine condition should have been left, for their rarity is universally known, but we cannot 
take it for granted that a previous buyer was shown the entire hoard. We cannot even be 
certain that Spink's bought all the remaining coins, for the religious establishment may 
well dispose of them only in accordance with its financial needs.

For the matter of that it seems rather improbable that the original deposit consisted 
exclusively of English gold coins. The evidence of Continental coins would probably have 
given us valuable information.

Even incomplete as the hoard may well be, it is still of considerable importance for numis-
matic research. Had Mr. Liddell not been aware of this and the coins been individually 
dispersed by Spink's, the 'pattern angel' of Henry VIII—which is obviously a Continental 
imitation—which almost alone would have attracted attention. For even the intriguing London ryal 
of Edward IV (B & W Type VIII(B)) is no really revolutionary discovery. It is very closely 
related to a similar and equally unorthodox specimen I recorded at Baldwin's several years 
ago, and the two Continental imitations of English rose-ryals would have had no significance 
as such. Not as isolated specimens. Forming part of a hoard deposited around 1560 or very 
soon afterwards 2 they have not only an interesting but a rather surprising story to tell.

1 BNJ XXV p. 4. 
2 On account of my previous comments and suggestions that the hoard may well be incomplete, 
the reader may be surprised that I am allowing 
only a small margin so far as the date of deposit 
is concerned. However, the evidence of the coins 
seems to be conclusive. The angel of Mary shows 
hardly any traces of circulation, both angels of 
Philip and Mary are unworn and the angel of 
Elizabeth I is in mint state. The margin of error 
appears to be very small indeed and I doubt if it 
exceeds five years.
The imitation ryal recorded as item 43 in my list was struck on a flan of about normal English size, but this can hardly be regarded as an early feature a priori. For the coin weighs only 92.6 grains so that the diameter of the flan—small for a Continental imitation—is not surprising. Actually, this is the lightest of some hundred foreign rose-ryal forgeries I have seen. The style of the coin is not crude, but it is by no means a very close and careful copy of the genuine coin. At first sight it seems to belong to the end rather than the beginning of what may perhaps be described as the ‘ryal imitation period’ on the European Continent. Had it been shown to me as an individual specimen, I must admit that I would have given it to the very end of the 16th century, struck after Gorinchem closed down in the year 1587. The archaeological evidence makes this attribution impossible, and it is of considerable interest to know that such inferior Continental copies of the London ryal of Edward IV circulated in France not only some 25 years before Gorinchem even began to strike these coins but presumably quite a few years earlier. For the rose-noble in question is by no means unworn.

If item 43 of my list shows already quite clearly that we must revise our ideas on the subject of style and dates of Continental copies of Edward IV’s London ryals, item 44 is almost unbelievable. It belongs to the worst type of Continental forgeries struck in inferior and very pale gold. Its style is atrocious and I know of only two other specimens of comparably crude but different workmanship. The coin has obviously circulated for years, and one wonders how it could ever have been accepted by anyone at any time.

However, I shall not dwell on the unsolved problems of foreign copies of Edward IV’s ryals, although they are a fascinating subject which should receive more attention. Any forgery on a gigantic scale becomes history, and this applies unquestionably to the Continental imitations. It is evident that a great deal of very difficult research work has to be done before we can establish some sort of order and coherence in this intricate series. The purpose of this paper is solely to demonstrate how a particularly poor Continental imitation of a ryal of Edward IV which would have been rather disdainfully classified as one of the shocking early 17th century forgeries becomes all of a sudden of considerable interest because of the irrefutable archaeological evidence of its early date.

It is with the same surprise—and the same concern about the shortcomings of our present knowledge of the Continental copies of English coins—that I comment on item No. 45 of my list. The ‘old school’ of numismatists had erroneously described this as a ‘pattern angel of Henry VIII’. Actually, the coin has been a great problem at any time and ranks very high among the most puzzling examples of a Continental imitation of an English gold coin. It may well prove to be also one of the most important should we ever be able to fathom its historical background. One regrets to admit that the chances are more than slender and our only hope rests with the discovery of relevant documentary evidence on the other side of the Channel. I think in France rather than in the Low Countries which are otherwise the most fertile field for forgeries of English coins.

Let us define in greater detail what the archaeological evidence of the Angers Hoard adds to our regrettably small knowledge of the ‘pattern angel of Henry VIII’.

It goes without saying that this is a forgery of Henry VIII’s second coinage angels, considering privy mark Lis and the HENRIC VIII legend. But the legend is wrong, the lettering quite impossible and the style of the coin totally un-English. Dr. Brooke ignored the coin in his record of patterns when he compiled the notes for English Coins, and I believe I am right in saying that, long before Brooke, Lawrence had condemned the ‘pattern angel’ as
a forgery. One regrets that neither Brooke nor Whitton commented on the coin but it seems probable that neither of them could make constructive suggestions. Nor can I. As will be seen I can only add to the mystery and the confusion.

Considering that the design of Henry VIII's angels of the second coinage differs not even in minor details from that of the previous issue, no pattern was required—if indeed patterns were struck at all prior to the reign of Edward VI which seems rather doubtful. It would hardly be fair to say that Brice and Montagu should have known this, for the issue of patterns and the coinage of Henry VIII had not been studied in greater detail than Kenyon's record before the beginning of this century. Brice commented on the unusual design and dress of the archangel and referred to the angel as 'a curious coin' and 'of better workmanship'. But what made him—what made Montagu, for that matter—think of a pattern?

I believe the answer is quite simple. Brice was impressed by the superior minting of the coin and the neat and painstaking manner in which the dies were cut. The striking is a little weak in places but the general aspect of the coin is attractive. Compared to the genuine angels of Henry VIII the workmanship seems perhaps at first sight 'superior', but there is really no comparison. The 'pattern angel' is not a hammered coin, and this has now become a very thorny problem.

Until now, I did not find it particularly disturbing that this 'curious' angel is machine-made because I took it for granted that it was late-Elizabethan if not an early 17th century imitation, but the archaeological evidence disproves this opinion conclusively.

It would perhaps be useful to draw up a questionnaire for the historian and the numismatist in order to define exactly where we stand—regardless of the fact that most questions are unanswerable for the time being.

(1) Who coined this forgery, or caused it to be minted? When and where?
(2) In contradistinction to nobles and ryals, forgeries of English angels with English legends and bearing English arms were not produced on the Continent. Why should the 'pattern angel' of Henry VIII be the exception to the rule?
(3) Why was a press—presumably an early type of screw-press—used to mint an imitation of a hammered coin? What was the purpose of striking what must have been a very small number of forgeries of an angel of Henry VIII, liable to attract attention because of their different workmanship?
(4) The dies of the coin were visibly cut by a competent and experienced engraver. Why the fanciful dress of the archangel, the unorthodox legend and totally different letter punches, considering that the die-sinker was obviously capable of making a convincing copy of the true English coin?
(5) Bearing in mind the technical qualities of the coin, would it be justifiable to assume that it has no special significance? In other words that it is the individual effort of a goldsmith and was struck in a dark corner of an obscure workshop?

One could obviously go into further details but I think these five points cover the ground.

1 Gold Coins of England, 1884.
2 It is interesting to compare the coin from the French hoard with the only other known specimen which came down to us from Brice-Montagu—Leslie Ellis to Lockett and which was coined from the same pair of dies. But it is rather embarrassing to refer to the illustration in the sale catalogue of Montagu, Second Portion (11th-16th May 1896) Lot 743 which is vastly superior to the one of the Lockett sale catalogue mentioned above in the general list of the French hoard.
The archaeological evidence supplies information, but this information is as unexpected as it is disturbing. For it raises chronological problems which are positively hair-raising, but it also shows quite clearly that we shall never obtain satisfactory research results unless we look well beyond the purely technical features of coins and merge numismatics with history and archaeology.

In this particular case the numismatist can pronounce the ‘pattern angel’ a forgery. Here he is competent and the historian as well as the archaeologist have to accept his views. However, he cannot possibly be satisfied with this, for prima facie the coin does not seem to qualify as a commonplace forgery, and he can neither date it nor can he suggest who struck it, where or why. He can only submit the question to the historian who, in the absence of conveniently available records, must inevitably turn to the archaeologist for an approximate date before he can set to work. The archaeologist can supply the answer: not before 1558 considering the composition of the hoard, and not much later on account of the condition of the coins. That the archaeological verdict is of the greatest importance goes without saying, for it indicates to the historian the time limits for his research in a fairly accurate manner. The numismatist, however, can only marvel: a machine-made forgery as early as about 1560? This is almost unbelievable, for it would be contemporary with Eloi Mestrelle’s very first experiments with mill coins at the Tower. Could it be one of Mestrelle’s forgeries?

Unfortunately, we know nothing about them but the idea can hardly be advanced. There is absolutely no reason to assume that Mestrelle struck forgeries before 1572 nor is it likely that he owned in his personal capacity the equipment required to strike the coin in question. Apart from that, he is liable to have known the angel series of Henry VIII far too well to have produced so unconvincing a copy, and it seems rather improbable that he should have tried his hand at coins other than those he had struck at the Tower.

Tournai? I would not even have thought of Tournai had it not been mentioned on three different occasions when I discussed the coin with other numismatists. For the Tournai mint establishment must be ruled out.

Henry VIII captured the city in the year 1513, but it remained in English hands for only a few years. Actually, the London Treaty of October 4th, 1517 provided already for a return of Tournai to François I but the French took possession of it only on February 5th 1519 and lost it to the emperor Charles V in November 1521.

The ‘pattern angel’ of Henry VIII bears the privy mark Lis which was not used before 1526. Apart from the absence of evidence that Tournai was authorized to coin gold during the English occupation of the city, the coin must be disqualified as a genuine Tournai production on chronological grounds. Also, it is unbelievable that machine-made coins were minted in that part of Europe before 1520, particularly at Tournai where the minting establishment was so badly staffed and equipped that Henry VIII had to have the dies for his Tournai groats cut in London. The coins themselves might have been struck at the Tower, although Henry stayed at Tournai for a little while and ‘La Tour Henri VIII’ can still be visited there.

Even 1560 or thereabouts is rather early for a screw-press or rocker-press imitation to have been coined in the Low Countries. Prima facie, the archaeological evidence points towards France.

I seem to have neglected the most interesting but also the most disturbing anomaly of the hoard: the weight of the coins.
Since I am pleading the case for the archaeological evidence to be considered in numismatic research, it is perhaps allowed to repeat a previous statement in different words: as an individual item a late-medieval or Tudor coin 3% or 4% below weight is not alarming. Not even if it is unclipped and could not have lost much more than a grain or so in circulation. But if we are faced with a hoard of coins where weight-deficiencies are not isolated exceptions but the rule, and where they exceed 10% not in one but in several cases, the anomaly becomes a serious matter. Particularly serious if we consider that two unquestionably genuine ryals of Edward IV (items 4 and 10 recorded in the general list of coins) are suspiciously close to the weight of the Burgundian nobles of Flanders.

What can we conclude from this and are we to assume that 'light coins' were struck in England for export purposes to meet trade requirements on the Continent? Without a single shred of evidence to this effect such a contention seems fantastic. If we bear in mind that item 4 of the Angers hoard weighing 105.4 grs. was struck from the same obverse die as Lockett 4018 which weighs almost exactly 119 grs. it becomes obvious that we can draw no logical conclusion at all at this stage and that the problem must be investigated on both sides of the Channel without preconceived ideas.

It goes without saying that we must expect discrepancies in the weight of coins and individual specimens were inevitably above or below the official weight. Generally speaking those above weight were frequently clipped or went into the melting pot for obvious reasons. Those below weight survived, and in the ryal series of Edward IV specimens of 120 grs. are exceedingly rare. However, deficiencies in weight were, as a rule, insignificant. The unclipped and virtually unworn specimen weighs usually about 118-119 grs. and coins below 117 grs. are exceptional. If we find them at all, they are almost invariably late and belong to B & W, Type VIII/X. I will perhaps shock the reader by making a reservation, but it must be made: this applies only to England, the evidence of the dealers' trade, the sale rooms, the major private collections and museum trays. It does not apply to the numismatic evidence on the Continent. I do not think it is an overstatement to say that, in the case of Edward IV's ryals, the Continental evidence is almost as important as that of the British Isles, for no English gold coin has ever known an even vaguely comparable popularity in Europe before or since, except for the modern sovereign. The Continent is—and will remain—a formidable source of information so far as rose-ryals are concerned.

Very few students of English numismatics—if any—can claim to be handicapped by their foreign residence to quite the same extent as I am. In some cases, the problems I have to face cannot be solved. So far as the ryal series of Edward IV are concerned, however, my Continental experience of numismatics has tangible advantages. Edward's rose-ryal became the European trade coin par excellence, and I have seen specimens in the most unexpected places, predominantly in northern Europe. Many of them were Continental imitations, of course, and in this respect the evidence of foreign sale rooms is most misleading. The leading coin dealers at Amsterdam almost alone can usually be relied upon to differentiate between genuine coins and Low Countries copies of Edward IV's ryals; otherwise an impressive number of rose-ryals are wrongly catalogued. However, many genuine specimens have gone through my hands here, there and everywhere, and their weight was almost invariably around 116 grs. as against an average weight of 118.9 grs. for comparable specimens in England. Although we must obviously cater for the fact that coins were struck to an average, weight discrepancies should be below rather than above 2% for full specimens if we consider the evidence of other English coins of this period.
We can, I think, accept as a plausible explanation for the light average weight of Edward IV's ryals on the Continent that English merchants picked out specimens well below 120 grs. for trade purposes on the other side of the Channel. Although 116 grs. or thereabouts is outside the official tolerance of the pyx trials, a coin of that weight presents no great problem. It obviously happened in the process of minting, and the fact that a comparatively much greater number of these 'light coins' came down to us on the Continent than in England is interesting. It is perhaps significant, but not disturbing. But assured English ryals of Edward IV weighing 105 or 106 grs. and Tudor angels of roughly 70 grs. or even below simply leave us guessing. There is no rational explanation, and, at this stage, I am not prepared to comment on them. Not, at any rate, beyond the final conclusion:

Any single coin has its story to tell and constitutes valuable material for the student of numismatics so far as the use of dies and punches is concerned. But the study of technical features is only a means to an end, not an end in itself, and no more the ultimate objective of scientific numismatic research than a preliminary sketch of an artist in the domain of figurative painting. Between the first sketch and the finished picture lies a long distance and a hard struggle between the painter and his subject, just as the numismatist has to cover a great deal of frequently difficult ground between his first record of a coin and his final assessment of it. Coins must be brought back to life, and they will remain dead pieces of metal unless our technical research evidence is fully reviewed against the archaeological records and the historical background of the period. This has not recently become—it has always been—a conditio sine qua non.
THE COINS OF THE ANGERS HOARD (IV)