REVIEWS


This volume is of principal interest to English readers because of the long article by Veronica Smart on ‘Moneyers of the Late Anglo-Saxon Coinage, 973–1016’ (pp. 191–276). Her material is drawn mostly from Hildebrand's Anglosachsiska Mynt, emended, brought up to date, and augmented by the work of later scholars, including Mrs. Smart herself. Her analysis is carefully conducted, and the mints themselves are arranged in six principal regional groups: Western mints, York, Five Boroughs, Southern Danelaw, London, and a Southern England group that draws together mints from the south-east and from the south-west, from Kent and Wessex. Within her regional divisions she lists the moneyers' names under their respective mints with up-to-date sensible notes on their origins and form. Great historical interest is attached to the two principal language divisions into which her material falls, Old English and Old Norse, not least because the distribution corresponds remarkably well to the language distribution of place-names in the regions. Among western mints Old English names predominate with a significant Scandinavian sprinkle at Chester; there is an overwhelming domination of Old Norse names at York; in the 'Five Boroughs' a substantial Scandinavian element (c. 40 per cent) appears at Lincoln, further south at Stamford the native English element prevails; the southern Danelaw has a scatter of Old Norse names but the major London mint is strongly Old English; the same English dominance is true of the southern mints, where indeed there are more continental German names than Old Norse. Mrs. Smart wisely makes no hard-and-fast line of division between East Norse and West Norse, though even in this subtle and intricate matter Chester appears as a possible West Norse centre of importance. Her study helps to underpin the language arguments used to suggest heavy Scandinavian settlements, another pointer to the validity of accepted conclusions concerning the strength and distribution of these settlements. On the numismatic side Mrs. Smart's work also has much to offer. Earlier hypotheses, notably those put forward by Mr. Dolley, on the existence of a managed currency, sequence of types, and regional peculiarities in style during the reign of Æthelred II, are upheld and strengthened by this detailed examination. There is a useful section on moneysers, who were regarded even in the reign of Æthelred as 'often fairly wealthy privileged citizens'. Her notes on the importance of die-links, dating, and localization of dies provide convenient guides to current thought. Mrs. Smart is to be congratulated on making an important contribution to numismatic studies which also has bearing on the central historical problems of the age.

The other articles in the volume also reach a high technical standard and represent substantial contributions to German and Scandinavian numismatic studies. Gert Hatz's study of Tieler Denare (pp. 95–191) has a direct importance in English affairs because Tiel was so active a centre for the distribution of goods between England and the Rhine (p. 104). The careful analysis of the Näs hoard (pp. 277–372), discovered in 1704, includes an account of some 393 English coins, nearly all of the reign of Æthelred II (pp. 356–68). There is valuable work on the coinage of Anund Jacob, Cnut the Great, and Harthacnut by Nils Rasmusson and by Lars Lagerquist (a note on the Trondheim hoard of 1950, a hoard which contained 363 Anglo-Saxon pennies). The presence of so much good work on the products of late Carolingian denarial economy prompts again an inevitable comparison of the English and the continental achievement. It is revealing to find Peter Berghaus in a very acute note taking the first issue of as important a town as Münster back to the reign of Otto III 983–96. No doubt a close comparison of Ottonian German minting and English will bring out many points in common, but recent work seems to throw into increasing relief the advanced nature of English techniques and general organization certainly after the reign of Edgar.

H. R. LOYN
This double fascicle of the *Sylloge* follows the acceptable form with the illustrations placed as closely as possible to the descriptions which are basic, and to some extent depend upon the accompanying plate. The book is not intended for the use of beginners; it is rather a source-book for numismatists and historians. Its authorship leaves room for no doubt of the scholarship of the work. The two collections catalogued in this volume are strikingly different from each other, the first having been formed over many years by an outstanding historian of the Saxon and Norman periods, of coins mostly in fine condition, which illustrate the history of the period. Each coin individually is a historic document, holding its own store of information, eclectically chosen by Sir Frank Stenton to form a part of this numismatic library for his own benefit and that of his students. The catalogue is preceded by an interesting biographical note about Stenton and also notes on personal names found on the coins, compiled by O. von Fellitzen.

The Anglo-Norman coins in the Royal Coin Cabinet, Stockholm, form the second collection catalogued in this volume. As stated, only post-conquest coins are dealt with, indicating that these coins form no part of the large-scale transfer of specie from England to Scandinavia which was such a feature of the later Saxon period, and must therefore be the result of trade or possibly the payment of mercenaries as the author mentions in his historical introduction. While this collection is by no means lacking in coins of individual interest and importance, its true value to the historian is as an entirety where frequency as well as rarity, absence as well as presence, can be given their true assessment.

Unfortunately, as acknowledged by the author and the Sylloge Committee, the plates of this second collection are not as clear as they should be. There is too much contrast and too much reflection. This is not the fault of the photography and it must be realized that coins in a collection of this kind are often bent, broken, worn or en-crusted. Nevertheless it must be regretted that these photographs had to be made direct from the coins and not from casts as was done at Reading.

H. DE S. S.

*Coins in History.* By John Porteous. London (Weidenfeld and Nicolson) and New York (G. P. Putnam's Sons), 1969. 256 pp., 286 illustrations, and 4 maps. 5 guineas or $15.00.

John Porteous has used the same splendidly unconventional formula as he did five years ago in his smaller work *Coins.* His earlier book ran very briefly from the Greeks to the present day, whilst his present book covers European coinage, at much greater length, from the collapse of the imperial monetary system in the third century and the reforms of Diocletian at its end to the destruction of the gold standard and the Latin Monetary Union in the 1914-18 war. Within this slightly reduced span of time Mr. Porteous has concentrated his attention on the four hundred years between the 'commercial revolution' of the thirteenth century and the 'price rise' of the sixteenth. This is the heart of the book in which he seeks to demonstrate that coinage 'holds up a sort of mirror (sometimes only a dim one) to history, especially to economic and social history'. He argues that from the seventeenth century onwards other forms of money were beginning to play a more important part than coinage, and that the preceding period was the great age of coinage. As a corollary Mr. Porteous declares: 'Coin collectors tend to be interested in rare coins. This book is mostly about the common ones . . . above all those which were traded and spent again and again.' In general he keeps to this intention, only occasionally being lured away by rare crusader pieces, or coins of the Italian renaissance which were, he freely admits, more beautiful than used. The book then is not designed primarily for coin collectors, and indeed collectors will not find it immediately useful. More directly useful for them is the old-fashioned work which details the coins of individual countries in turn. This book on the contrary attempts, usually successfully, to portray the coinage of Europe as a whole, period by period, although, here and there, there is a lingering tendency to go on dealing with the coinage of one country for too long before moving on to other comparable coins issued elsewhere. This occasionally mars the usually even flow of Mr. Porteous's narrative. The most mind-
jerking example of this is the sudden leap on page 67 from the crusader states in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries to England in the ninth and tenth centuries. Nevertheless collectors ought to read this book to put their interests in perspective. It should also be seen by anyone who pretends to a serious interest in social or economic history, although many economic historians may not be entirely satisfied by Mr. Porteous's seemingly uncritical acceptance of the quantity theory of money. It should find its way into every university and public library, but the price of five guineas may well deter quite a large number of private individuals from buying it. Those who do will, however, acquire five guineas' worth of book, for it is indeed sumptuously laid out. There is no trace here of the conventional grey plates at the end made from photographs of casts crammed together to get the maximum number on the page. Instead the illustrations are photographed direct from the coins and appear where they are needed, with the text to which they refer. Usually they are in the margins of the relevant page, and the large format (10 inches by 8 inches) allows for exceptionally wide margins for this purpose, but a certain number are full-page illustrations, and these include no less than thirty-two pages in colour. The photography is splendidly executed, bringing out the tactile qualities of the pieces illustrated. Most of the illustrations are the actual size of the pieces themselves, but many are doubled in size and some are larger, for example an English penny of Stephen's reign is shown at five times its actual size. Most of the illustrations are quite naturally of coins themselves, but Mr. Porteous has gathered together an interesting selection of additional illustrative material, showing gold and silver miners at work as well as moneyers, die-engravers and dies, coining machinery and mint-buildings, money changers and bankers, merchants' handbooks and government proclamations, and even ordinary citizens paying taxes in coin and burying hoards of coin. It is a pity that the excellent maps have been put at the end of the book and not in the relevant places in the text, and strange that there are no references to them in the text at all. At the end there is a useful two-page bibliography arranged under chapter headings, but this particular reviewer would have liked at least an occasional footnote. All in all it is the best and most agreeable introduction to the coinage of medieval and modern Europe available to the general reader.

PETER SPUFFORD

Seventeenth Century Tradesmen's Tokens. By J. L. WETTON. Number five of the Minerva Numismatic Handbooks, published by Corbit & Hunter. 20s.

Mr. Wetton has produced a most interesting introduction to this series. The illustrations are of high quality. There is no doubt that this series has been unjustly neglected in the past. Too many people think that, however interesting the seventeenth-century tokens are to the local historian, they are of little numismatic interest. Mr. Wetton puts the tokens into their proper perspective. He is very honest, and tells us that he does not guarantee the accuracy of his opinions, and that some of these, particularly regarding the numbers of tokens issued, involve guesswork. However, regarding this part of the work, I think that his ideas are very feasible.

It is very likely that Ramage was engaged on the tokens, and there is little doubt that this also applies to other coin engravers from the Mint. The ornaments on so many of the tokens resemble initial marks.

It would be interesting to know why 1666 is so common a date in the tokens. One would think that, as regards London and Middlesex at least, this would be a rare date, because of the Plague and the Great Fire. Are we faced with a 'fixed date' as with the contemporary silver coins of New England?

There are a number of points that Mr. Wetton raises, which many numismatists would regard as controversial and, in some cases, incorrect. The 'cutting of the larger coins into halves and quarters' mentioned on page 9 is misleading. When coins were cut, the silver penny was the only coin, and the cutting ceased when larger and smaller coins were issued in the thirteenth century. The statement (page 14) that the missing segment from the sides of tokens is always straight sided is wrong: it is often crescent shaped. The theory of the author, that on the vast majority of tokens which show three initials, one over two, the bottom two are of the issuer and his wife, seems too bold. Has Mr. Wetton enough definite evidence? The suggestions about the issuers of the tokens in Wells are not put forward as the author's opinions, and I think that they are so fanciful that few numismatists would take them seriously.

A point that Mr. Wetton does not raise is that of the great scarcity of the tokens in Northumberland and Westmorland. It seems that base Scottish coins circulated in these counties.
Much more research is needed on this series, and the author has indicated several directions for this. I feel sure that his handbook will stimulate interest into this most interesting and important series of tokens.

The bibliography is very helpful. Two additions that I would make would be the work published by Longmans on the tokens issued by booksellers, and the papers in the *Pharmaceutical Journal* on the tokens issued by apothecaries.

W. S.

### OTHER LIBRARY ACCESSIONS, AND PERIODICAL LITERATURE

#### General


### Celtic


### Europe


### British Isles


### Ireland


REVIEWS

*The Irish mints of Edward I in the light of the coin-hoards from Ireland and Great Britain.

**Tokens**


**Medals**

*A catalogue of campaign and independence medals issued during the twentieth century to the British Army. N. W. POULsom. Corbitt & Hunter, 1969. 127 pp. (Minerva numismatic handbooks, No. 4.)*


* Works asterisked have been added to the library by donation or purchase. The librarian acknowledges with gratitude those donations also which cannot be recorded here.*