
The subject of this book is a rather poorly understood period in our economic (and incidentally numismatic) history. Earlier writers, as the author points out, suffered under misapprehension and only partial information. Mr. Kelly, an archivist of the Bank of England who, while not primarily a numismatist, is well qualified as a historian for his task, leads us along an intricate path through the tangled history of the Bank's emergency silver token issues of the 'Napoleonic' period, 1797-1816. His text is liberally supplied with facts and figures, as well as references, many quoted in extenso. For the sake of narrative continuity, however, he has done well to relegate much of this material, interesting and highly significant in itself, to his two main appendices.

The tale he has to tell is a complex one, the evidence often confused, conflicting, or non-existent. It is perhaps almost as significant for what did not occur as for the events which were public knowledge. In private decisions are made and unmade; the price of silver rises and falls. The Mint's continued lethargy and inability to undertake virtually any coinage at all is well brought out. In fairness this was not entirely their own fault, but due to Government neglect at a time, like our own, of continual financial crisis. It led to contracts with Boulton & Watt of Soho, until ultimately the Mint was stimulated sufficiently to produce, from 1811 onwards, the 3s. and 1s. 6d. bank tokens, ironically enough using Boulton's machinery supplied to the new Mint on Tower Hill. He concludes with the steps leading up to the great recoinage of 1816-17.

Numismatists must, however, guard against expecting too much of the author's primarily archival material. The coins themselves are rather little examined: it is left to us to see what can be added to the story by a proper study of extant specimens. For instance, he is not helpful in distinguishing the later concoctions of Taylor and others, as outside his scope, but the first part of Appendix A sounds a warning of their existence. It is deeply to be regretted that the late C. Wilson Peck's expert disentanglement of late Soho and other restrikes should not have tended to the silver series. Here is a field where a proper study of the Bank's collection could be of enormous value.

There are a few niggling defects. Among the misapprehensions he corrects is that concerning the genesis of the relatively large silver issues of 1757-8 and 1787, yet (p. 40), apparently quoting contemporary minutes, he says that in 1798 'there had been no material coinage of silver since 1717'. Why pick that year? Is this a misprint? There are a number of others, indicating carelessness in proofreading, e.g. PLUS USTRA at foot of p. 18. The segments mentioned on p. 24 were presumably not countermarked, though he implies they were—I know of no examples. And much as I admire C. S. Forester's fictitious hero, I feel the appearance of Cdr. H. Hornblower (p. 64), even in brackets, an intrusion into a book of this sort!

At £8 this is an expensive book for its length—overlavishly, indeed wastefully, produced (inside) in Spink's usual style. Of fourteen 'prelims' five are totally blank and three more almost so, and there are other blank pages throughout the book. The paper is of a very costly quality. In the plates a good deal of space is also wasted: they are collotype, but the standard reached by this process in former times is not achieved, and more care could have been taken with the photography. Photographing toned silver coins is not easy, but the author seems not to have allowed himself to be advised by those most experienced in numismatic illustration. In view of the amount of space they are allowed, others of the illustrations could with advantage have been enlarged, to show such things as undertypes clearly. My main complaint about them, however, is that there are no cross-references between the text and plates.

Let there be no doubt, however, that this is an important contribution to modern numismatic history. It is a pity so few private collectors will be able to afford it.

D. L. F. S.


Kolbjørn Skaare's doctoral thesis, which is generously published in English, is the first of a projected series of dissertations on the currency history of medieval Norway. It is a comprehensive and meticulous study exhibiting the hard
work and objectivity which is typical of the best
Scandinavian scholarship. This book covers
Norway's numismatic history down to 1066—
the death of Harald Hardråde at Stamfordbridge
—but it has two aspects for which it will be
known henceforth as the standard reference.
Firstly it contains a general survey of the Nor-
wegian hoard evidence from the Iron Age to the
eleventh century, and secondly it is a compre-
prehensive study of the earliest Norwegian coinage.

This book bears the first fruits of that labour in
a summary catalogue of 187 finds deposited
before c. 1100 and twelve maps showing their
geographical distribution. After considering the
reliability of the different categories of find,
Skaare looks at the occurrence of Roman,
Merovingian, Kufic, German, and Anglo-Saxon
coins. He concludes that Roman denarii may have
reached Norway by the second century but that
initially coins were only used as jewellery. Kufic
coins started to reach Scandinavia during the
eighth century, and following the sack of Lindis-
farne in 793 Anglo-Saxon and Frankish coins
came to Norway in small quantities. Finds from
Kaupang market-place indicate that coins were
used for trade by weight from the ninth century.
The period c. 890–950 saw the importation of
Kufic dirhems in fair numbers. These were super-
seded by German coins, and from c. 975 onwards
by Anglo-Saxon pennies, with a notable increase
in the 990s. In the mid eleventh century Nor-
wegian production increased and foreign coin
was not imported in quantity after c. 1060.

The backbone of the second part of Skaare's
work is a corpus of every known Norwegian coin
issued between c. 995 and 1065. Every specimen
is illustrated, the dies have been identified, and
for every die the legend has been skilfully drawn.
To aid this analysis there is a summary listing
of all foreign hoards containing Norwegian coins
prior to c. 1100. The earliest coins are imitations
of the Crux type bearing the obverse legend
+ONLAF REX NOR; they are attributed to Olaf
Tryggvason and dated to c. 995–8. Only four
specimens are known, all from one pair of dies.

The next coins attributed to Norway, again
from a single pair of dies, are imitative of
Æthelred's Longcross type (obv. +ONLAF IXEX
A NOR; rev. +ASDRED MO NOR). Skaare gives
them to Olaf Haraldsson (1015–30). These pieces
are closely associated with a chain of die-links,
considered by Lyon and others to be Scandi-
navian, incorporating some twenty dies of
Longcross, Helmet, Small Cross, and Quatrefoil
types in the name of Cnut and Æthelred. There
are strong stylistic resemblances between some of
the Longcross obverses and that of the 'Unlaf'
coins, and one reverse with the same 'Asdreið Mo
Nor' legend, although not from the same die,
appears, as Brita Malmer has pointed out, to
have been made from the same letter punches.

Notwithstanding this similarity Dr. Malmer, in
the 1972 Dorothea Coke Memorial Lecture
delivered at University College London, has
suggested that the coins in the die-chain 'emanate
from some peripheral area of the British Isles,
in association or in competition with neighbour-
ing official English coinage'. This is not the place
to examine her careful arguments, but the re-
viewer is unable to accept that conclusion. The
difficulty, however, is that Skaare attributes the
'Unlaf' coins without reservation to Norway, and
yet is understandably hesitant to include any of
the coins with blundered legends in his series.
Prima facie the 'Unlaf' and the die-link coins
derive from the same mint, and it may be that
when Dr. Malmer has completed her work on the
'Scandinavian' imitations some amendment to
Skaare's corpus will be necessary.

The detailed analysis of the Triquetra coinage
issued by Harald Hardráda (1047–66) is one of
the major achievements of this thesis. He studies
and tabulates every objectively measurable feature of the coins, including a metal-content
analysis by neutron activation of 173 of the
257 specimens recorded.

There are ten plates of foreign coins found in
Norway, two of which are devoted to Anglo-
Saxon pieces. Special mention should be made of
an Eadgar Reform type illustrated on Pl. VII, 2
legend +LYFING MO MEALDN; the arguments for
its attribution to Maldon are strong. Pl. VII, 18, an Aegus Dei of
Derby, is a die duplicate of the B.M. coin; Pl.
VIII, 1 and 2 are both of Gloucester, not Lewes.
Pl. VIII, 4 is a very unusual Cnut Quatrefoil
of Stamford (Eadwine) with annulets in the reverse
quarters—this is not from the same dies as Hild.
3245, indeed there is no coin with such a reverse
in the Stockholm Systematic Collection. Pl.
VIII, 20 is a mule, the 'wrong way round', of
Edward the Confessor's Hammer Cross/Sove-
reign-Eagles types. A piece regrettably not
illustrated is tantalisingly described on p. 62 as
a unique transitional type of Æthelred II with a
pointed helmet.

M. A. S. B.