REVIEWS


VERONICA Smart’s Cumulative Index volume to the first twenty volumes of the SCBI series is no mere index but a genuine work of scholarship, and as such it deserves a warm welcome from us. Its gestation has been long and there seems to have been a delay of two years between the completion of the manuscript and publication, as well as a similar delay between publication and the despatch of a review copy, so any comment on it now must have a somewhat historical flavour.

Nevertheless any numismatist with a serious interest in Anglo-Saxon or Norman coinage would be well advised to procure a copy, for apart from performing the normal functions of an index it attempts the heroic task of relating the forms in which moneyers’ names are found on the coins to the ‘correct’ form of their names in Old English, Old Norse, Continental Germanic or other contemporary language. Thus, coins by moneyers whose names appear on the coins variously as Berhtred, Biorhtred, Brihtred and Byrhtræd, are grouped together under the common heading Beorhtraed, while another whole tribe of moneyers with names like Brihtric and Byrhtric are listed under Beorhtric. It may seem to some obvious enough that Brihtric and Byrhtric are different forms of the same name, but there are many instances where the link is not obvious — who but a philologist would have spotted the name Eoforheard? — and Mrs Smart’s readers will be grateful for her guidance on these matters, although occasionally the philologist in her seems to have got the upper hand over what numismatists might regard as common sense; it is odd, for example, that she should hesitate about the reality of the name Hwaetnoth and should think that a die-cutter who produced a moneyer’s name spelled XLBERTEE was aiming at a name of which the correct form is Engelbert.

It is also worth noting that the volume does contain various significant corrigenda to vols 1–20, partly in footnotes and so readily discernable, but occasionally buried in the text (e.g. the comments on coins of Æthelred II attributable either to Wareham or to Warwick, on p. 108).

H. E. PAGAN


A NEW edition of this deservedly popular book is much to be welcomed. The author has striven to be as comprehensive as possible in including new varieties, and he has taken advice from the best qualified scholars in summarizing the current classification of the various series. Among the merits of the work are the very clear drawings of busts, styles of lettering, etc., and the listing of the moneyers known in each type. The plates are made from clear photographs and thriftily offer the maximum number of coins that can be accommodated on the page (but why not with the same numbering as used in the text?). The historical comments are often redolent of an earlier generation. All in all, Mr North is a numismatist’s numismatist, and he does the job he sets out to do — namely, haute vulgarisation — thoroughly and well.

In publishing terms there should be a large and continuing market for a book of this kind. It will never, of course, sell as many copies as Seaby’s Standard Catalogue, for it is far more detailed and covers less ground. One would hope, nevertheless, that it will be possible to continue revising and reprinting it, and that the right balance can be struck between the interests of scholars, the author, the publisher, and purchasers. The author is a middleman, and it is essential that he should receive scholarly support and help. The publisher can serve the general interest by keeping the print run of each edition as small as is commercially acceptable. Here is a case, if ever one saw one, for keeping the text stored in computer memory form, and being able to revise without extensive resetting.

D. M. METCALF


THIS elegant volume could be described as a Danish equivalent to the Commentationes de Nummis Saecuorium IX–XI — a collection of essays on current problems in the evaluation of the Viking-age coin finds from the Northern Lands. There are five contributions, all concerned to a greater or less extent with the imitation of foreign coin types in Scandinavian workshops. Four of the five deal with imitation of Anglo-Saxon prototypes, while one, by Brita Malmer, discusses imitations of Byzantine miliareia. (If there are northern imitations of German coins, which after all made up a very large part of the currency, their study is still in the womb of time — but see the Cologne imitation on p. 113.)

Die-linkage is an essential technique in the exploration of coins whose types and legends are misleading. Two substantial and finished mono-
graphs, by Mark Blackburn and by C. J. Becker, are outstandingly successful in creating new facts for the historian, by putting together die-chains involving tens or even hundreds of coins. Blackburn identifies a possibly Danish series of Long Cross imitations, while Professor Becker demonstrates by die-linkage that coinages ostensibly earlier in date must all be assigned to the mint of Lund in the years c.1040–c.1046.

Michael Dolley’s paper on the Helmet type of Æthelred II will be essential reading for English as well as for Scandinavian students, and his shorter contribution jointly with Kenneth Jonsson neatly demolishes an instance where the imitation apparently antedates its prototype — a pretext for a stimulating tour de force.

D. M. METCALF


This volume is a welcome addition to the illustrated listings of public house checks which have appeared recently. The Devon series exhibits several unusual features. The issuers showed a particular affinity for small sized flans — usually 18–19 mm diameter — and they bought their checks mostly from local manufacturers — Vile at Newton Abbott, Walker at Barnstaple and Helmore and Seage at Exeter. A third feature is the frequent use of denominations higher than the usual values of 1¾d and 3d. At Tiverton, the Barley Mow issued no less than nine values between one penny and one shilling.

Each of the nearly 350 checks is discussed in detail and where possible the issuer has been dated from directory entries. But the organisation of this volume is complicated and is difficult to use for reference. The issues of Exeter and ten adjacent villages as far away as Exmouth, are treated for no apparent reason in a separate section from the rest of Devon and the sections are given duplicate numbering systems.

The illustrations are welcome but it is unfortunate that the already small flans have been further reduced by four millimeters in the printing process. Also, they were issued without captions.

What is clear from this volume is the need for a common format for these county studies. This work has been produced to a generous format — treble spaced lines across a full page — which gives a fat, two-hundred page volume which is cumbersome to use. A double column format based on the new BNJ style could have reduced the size by two thirds at no more cost and without loss of clarity.

ANTONY GUNSTONE