
The various series of silver coins struck in northwestern Europe from some point in the third quarter of the seventh century to roughly the same point in the eighth century present numismatists with very considerable problems of arrangement, attribution, and dating, and this volume fills a real need in bringing together the latest research and thinking by those who are currently working on the coinage of the period in England, the Netherlands and Denmark. Not the least of the difficulties involved is that for much of the period coins struck at sites along the coast line of the European mainland circulated as freely in England as they did on the other side of the North Sea, and even the preliminary task of establishing which are 'Frisian' and which are Anglo-Saxon is only just being satisfactorily resolved. The principal credit for progress here, as for much other progress in the interpretation of the coinage, belongs to Michael Metcalf, our Society's 1984 gold medallist, and his contribution to this volume as author and editor is a vital one.

In England the earliest sceattas were struck in the south-east, and the use of them gradually spread from there into the midlands, up the east coast and into the nearer parts of Wessex. Three distinct regional groupings can readily be distinguished — an East Anglian one distinguished by runic lettering, a Northumbrian one distinguished by the appearance of a ruler's name, and a local grouping struck at the port of Hctmwic at the head of Southampton Water — but the attribution of other varieties of sceat to any particular area is hazardous. Progress in localising them largely depends on the marshalling of single find evidence, and the pages of this volume bear witness to the care (and tact in dealing with the metal detecting fraternity) with which a great mass of single find evidence is being assembled. It is proper to add that deductions drawn from single find evidence are only as good as the find evidence on which they are based, and future discoveries will no doubt have a bearing on many of the questions still in dispute; the find evidence on which Metcalf relies to direct Stuart Rigold's Series B away from Kent, and to limit London's share in the manufacture of sceattas to this Series B, the better coins of Series L and the rare Series S, does not seem entirely decisive and its interpretation could be affected by the appearance of only a handful more dots on his maps of single finds.

The volume contains twenty separate contributions by various hands and all deserve reading. There is only space within the limits of this review to single out a few for special remark. Ian Stewart's general survey of the sceatta coinage is, as one would expect, admirably clear and sensible; the contributions by Dutch and Danish scholars on sceatta finds in their respective countries draw on much material unfamiliar to British students (one looks forward with much anticipation to the publication of a hoard found in 1976 on the island of Fôr, off the coast of Schleswig-Holstein, in which English and 'Frisian' sceattas were found alongside similar Merovingian coins, as well as one of the mysterious mid-eighth century French coins carrying the name MILO); and Blackburn's note on the chronology of the sceattas includes the suggestion of a new date of deposit of c.720 for the famous Cimiez hoard from near Nice, with consequent repercussions on the dating of the English sceatta series.

James Booth's remarks on the Northumbrian sceatta series of the mid and late eighth century bring a fresh mind to bear on problems on which Stewart Lyon, Elizabeth Pirie and your reviewer have all in our time pondered, and there can be no doubt that he has put the study of the early part of the Northumbrian coinage on a sound footing. His major achievement is to offer a classification of the extensive coinage of King Eadberht (737–58), but he has also made progress with the coinages of Eadberht's successors and the pattern of Northumbrian coinage down to 790 is now apparent. After that, Booth would attribute to the six-year second reign of King Æthelred I between 790 and 796 all the silver coins in the name of a king Æthelred which in 1969 your reviewer suggested might alternatively have been struck for a king Æthelred reigning in Northumbria some thirty years later who has slipped out of all the written records. Booth ought prima facie to be right, for his Æthelred is a known historical figure, but the written sources for Northumbrian history in the ninth century are lamentably sketchy, and it is still possible to hold the view expressed in 1969 that the list of Northumbrian kings provided by written sources for the period 808–67 may not be complete. What has changed since 1969 is that we have more examples of Æthelred's coinage, and this makes it rather more possible that the silver coins of a king Æthelred found in the Hexham hoard, on any view deposited no earlier than c.845, could be the last relics of a large coinage struck in the 790s.

H.E. PAGAN

I must declare an interest, as I curate the collection published and also re-photographed the coins. My involvement went no further, however, and the text is entirely the work of Mr Seaby.

The Irish section of the coin cabinet in the Ulster Museum is very largely the creation of three men: the Carlyon-Brittons, father and son, and W.A. Seaby, this being particularly so of the Hiberno-Norse pieces. The present scale of the collection at Belfast, now amounting to 450 coins, is recent, but there are many long and significant pedigrees. Numbers were illustrated by Roth, and derive from seminal volumes does not adequately reflect the work of Symonds and accompanied by some explanatory remarks (p. xxii). In passing we may note a wide variety of other sources. Phases VI and VII do not have dies replicated elsewhere, types should major hoards appear) and the probable standards of the Tower coinage, as well as a useful summary of the Pyx trials for the reign, based on the work of Symonds and accompanied by some explanatory remarks (p. xxii). In passing we may note make it easy to forget that it depends on stylistic judgement and usually hoard evidence does not provide more than a general framework. Given a lack of written evidence the problem is akin to those commonly faced by archaeologists. Recent work by Dolley and Blackburn, in particular, has perhaps confirmed that the process of transmission and imitation is not conveniently linear and that although we may be confident of the links between Phase I and its prototypes, this may not be a satisfactory analogy for later phases. The severity of imitation, pace Roth, seems to be less rather than more. One may begin to wonder, for example, whether literacy of legend, per se, is an adequate sole criterion for close dating. One direction which might be followed is scientific analysis of the fabric of the coins, and recently a small start has been made on this, greatly aided by the information contained in this Sylloge volume, using coins from Oxford and Belfast. These remarks are not of course criticism of this book, which will remain the standard reference for a considerable time, and it is perhaps a measure of its excellence that such doubts are raised at all.

The production is up to the usual high standard of the Oxford University Press. I cannot comment on the photographs, other than to hope that most are legible. The price has been kept to moderate levels partly through a subvention from the Trustees of the Ulster Museum, and many must share my sense of satisfaction that the volume is a monument to two men who revolutionised the study of Irish coinage in all its aspects, one sadly gone, but happily the other still productive in formal retirement.

ROBERT HESLIP


This new addition to the SCBI is only the third such volume to deal primarily with material later than the twelfth century, and as such represents a major extension of the series. It is also a tour-de-force of energy and enthusiasm on the part of its authors in recording a major private collection prior to dispersal and making it available through prompt publication. In addition, the opportunity has been taken to provide introductory essays, by John Kent on the Tower coinage, George Boon on the provincial and Royalist issues, and a note by Peter Preston-Morley on the patterns.

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that dates are given 'new style' in which case the trial of privy-mark crown should be given as 14 February 1637. On the weight of unites (p. xxiv) the shortfall, which would have placed many out of remedy, may be a result of the culling of heavier examples soon after issue. A short section on technique concentrates exclusively on the mechanical methods which were coming into use at the time, but it should be borne in mind that much coinage was still produced by the traditional 'hammer' technique. Walzenprägung (misprinted on p.xxvii) was of course another technique familiar to Nicholas Briot, who used it for the production of the 'Stirling' turners in Scotland during the 1630s.

Boon's essay gives us the first modern summary of the whole range of provincial and Civil War coinages, building on his own Cardiganshire Silver and the Aberystwyth Mint (1981) and extending his scope to the northern, south-western and untested mints, with brief mentions of irregular and siege coinages. By reducing discussion to essentials, he casts a new and clear light on many aspects of Royalist minting, and provides a firm framework for the cataloguing of these issues in this Syllotre and future publications. Here the reviewer can perhaps comment usefully on the York issues (pp. xxxviii–xxxix). A warrant for the establishment of this mint was issued in mid-July 1642, but it appears that there were no substantial issues before the beginning of 1643. A study of the dies and their combinations confirms the use of a rotary press. The attribution of base coins to York, however, is questionable. Some recent analyses suggest a consistently high metallic standard, but it should be borne in mind that much coinage was still produced by the traditional 'hammer' technique. Walzenprägung (misprinted on p.xxvii) was of course another technique familiar to Nicholas Briot, who used it for the production of the 'Stirling' turners in Scotland during the 1630s.

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Elsewhere, Chirk Castle appears on the map of Wartime Mints (p. xxx) as an 'unattested Mint', but no other mention of it is made in this section. For Boon's earlier arguments tentatively assigning the CH half-crowns to Chirk, see Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies of the University of Wales (1981), 374–5. One uncertain half-crown (No. 1212) should perhaps now be brought into consideration as yet another Royalist issue: the type is crude in design, but of good silver (the British Museum example has a fineness of 90 per cent), and as the authors point out was probably struck using a rocker press. If so, a western or Welsh marches source may be indicated, since the reverse design copies the form of declaration used on the half-crowns struck at Bristol.

The 130 excellent plates of the catalogue section will long provide the standard visual reference to the coinage of this reign. Brooker collected die-varieties, and the collection includes a number of hitherto-unpublished dies from royalist mints. The authors have made a point of noting die-links, adding a helpful commentary in the form of footnotes. At times, however, a certain lack of co-ordination between cataloguers and essayists has led to some duplication of information, which was perhaps avoidable. None the less a major benefit of this comprehensive approach is that the whole work is accompanied by detailed sales and provenance references and an extensive bibliography which the reviewer has already found extremely useful.

Private collections are by their very nature subject to dispersal and regrouping, and there is a risk of duplication in future Syllotre volumes. However, the difficulty experienced by the authors in tracing coins sold as recently as 1978 makes the point that coins disappear from view all too easily, so that if the opportunity to record such a collection arises, it should be taken. The authors and their co-workers are to be congratulated for seizing their chance and providing us with what will form the standard reference work on the coinage of Charles I for some time to come.

EDWARD BESLY


This is a posthumous publication, as the author died two years before the work appeared in print. Antony Gunstone of the Lincolnshire Museum then prepared the manuscript for publication. He points out in the editor's instructions that the text of the introduction and the catalogue itself appear exactly as written by the author. The editor's contribution lies in the standardisation of the catalogue references, the rearrangement of the bibliography and the selection of the plates. Unfortunately Mr Gunstone himself died last year at a comparatively early age.

Any worthwhile and rounded study of seventeenth-century tokens requires both a detailed study of the tokens themselves and an investigation into the lives and social background of the tradesmen and women who issued them. The value of the book lies almost entirely in the biographical detail of the issuers, based on local records with particular reference to hearth tax returns, wills and parish registers. The author's main objective, clearly stated in the introduction, of producing an accurate list of the tokens relating to Lincolnshire is nullified by his failure to describe the tokens in detail. Although the author has proved himself to be a painstaking local historian, he was no numismatist. It is clear that he has little interest in the manufacture of the pieces, the style of lettering, stops and devices and too frequently relies on the descriptions of others. Die varieties are very cursorily dealt with and little attempt has been made to put a group of tokens of one issuer into chronological sequence. Samuel Aistrup, for instance, a Lincoln
There were a photographic illustration of each piece there might be some excuse for the lack of detail in the catalogue. The plates of line-drawings, interesting as they are, only serve to highlight the omission. Gunstone selected the plates from a number of early local histories, such as Notitiae Ludae or Notices of Louth, (1834). He was able to locate no less than seven sources for the plates. Few counties had their tokens illustrated so diversely in the early and mid nineteenth centuries.

The author has made an extremely useful contribution to our knowledge of the issuers. There are very few instances where the attributions of the tokens are open to question. This is, in itself, a tribute to Townsend's persistent and methodical research work. Of the 228 issuers mentioned in the book, he has found references to 129 of them in the parish registers, 102 in hearth tax records and discovered the wills of 83 of them. It is apparent that he was not able to gain access to the registers of all the parishes in the survey. One hopes that further study will remedy this deficiency. Much of what Townsend has discovered needs to be put into the context of a numismatic study, embracing manufacture, dating style and die varieties on the lines of Preston-Morley and Pegg's 'Revised Study of the Seventeenth Century Tokens of Nottinghamshire' (1981).

Fortunately, a companion volume is to appear in the next year or two, which will explore the numismatic significance of the tokens and provide a photographic illustration of the entire series. Together they will become the authoritative work on Lincolnshire seventeenth-century tokens for many years.

GEORGE BERRY


The tavern checks of yet another county have now been subjected to a listing by the indefatigable Dr Todd who, once again, has drawn on the assistance of a large number of collaborators in order to make this first publication on the Staffordshire series as complete as possible.

This new work is basically in two parts. First, we are offered a check-list of tokens, listed alphabetically by tavern under towns, together with a source note. This reveals the greatest preponderance of issues in Tipton, Wednesbury, West Bromwich, and Wolverhampton itself, with surprisingly few from the Potter township such as Hanley, Newcastle-under-Lyme, or Stoke-on-Trent. The greater part of the text is devoted to a comprehensive catalogue of the Wolverhampton issues, again listed alphabetically by tavern, together with brief details taken from trade directories. Illustrations, a mixture of photographs and rubbings, are provided of the majority, and these serve their purpose well enough.

A seven-page Appendix gives a very absorbing insight into the relationship between checks published by Neumann in 1865, and those in the Freudenthal collection sold to the British Museum in May 1870. For those studying tavern tokens, the chronological inferences to be drawn from these two events will help to determine a terminus post quern for many pieces, especially if trade directories can furnish no answers. The author additionally speculates that Freudenthal had some arrangement with the check makers which enabled him to obtain their products at the time of issue.

In his first words of introduction, Dr Todd cautions the reader to the effect that this title should only be considered a forerunner to something better. Let us hope that those with Staffordshire tavern tokens not known to Dr Todd can obtain a copy (the reviewer is led to understand that very few have been printed), so that new specimens can be properly recorded, and a catalogue on the lines of the author's Welsh volume be the end result.

P.J. PRESTON-MORLEY