 reviews


Philip de Jersey’s monumental treasury is the most thorough and detailed assemblage of hoards I know of for any series of coins in the world. As a co-worker in the field, who often worked in the same office at Oxford, I am at a loss to understand how he has been able to organise such an enormous mass of material with such precision in so short a period. Two other projects that Philip has been heavily involved in supply a partial – but only a partial – answer and are integral to the structure of the book. The first is the Celtic Coin Index, which has been recording British Iron Age coins and their findspots almost continuously since 1961. In his fifteen year tenure there, up to 2007, Philip contributed a high proportion of the 60,000 or more records the CCI now contains, and with this book the raison d’être behind all those index cards is laid bare. From the outset each coin was given a simple but unique reference number, so, for example, 63.0082 is the eighty-second coin recorded in 1963. The advantages are clear from this volume where, as far as is humanly possible, every coin from every hoard is identified by its CCI number and can be traced back to its index card or online version thereof. The second plank that needed to be in place was an up-to-date, comprehensive type catalogue, and Ancient British Coins, which Philip co-authored in 2010, amply fulfilled this requirement. In the catalogue section of Coin hoards in Iron Age Britain the contents of each hoard are numbered in order under ABC type headings, followed by their CCI number (or occasionally Portable Antiquities Scheme reference) and the weight where available. The dispersal section below gives the whereabouts of every coin if it is in a museum collection, or a reference to its earliest appearance in a trade or other publication. The utility of this precise yet compressed formula to the serious researcher is impossible to exaggerate. It eliminates, at a stroke, the need for others’ work to have a voluminous appendix for hoards up to the cut-off date, around 2010, and has already begun to accelerate progress in the field.

The introductory chapters begin with a note on discovery, which shows in graphic form the enormous impact of metal detecting in recent decades (p. 5, fig. 1). The longest and most important chapter is on chronology and distribution, where the author divides hoarding into ten phases, from the second century bc to shortly after the AD 43 invasion. Seventeen detailed tables show the relative chronology of the three hundred or so finds that can be assigned to a particular phase, and an excellent series of twenty colour maps illustrate their location. They demonstrate the way in which hoarding spread out slowly at first from Kent and the lower Thames valley (pls 3–4) but was boosted in phase 5, around the mid first century bc, by the many finds of imported Gallo-Belgic E gold, which stretch from the Humber down to West Sussex (pl. 7). There are some remarkable concentrations of other types, notably the cluster of early first-century bc potin hoards along the Thames (pl. 5), the mass of early phase 6 hoards in central southern England down to the south coast (pl. 9), and the bifocal distribution of post-AD 43 finds, widely separated in Dorset and Norfolk (pls 16–17). Detailed historical interpretation is wisely eschewed, although a broad connection between finds of Gallo-Belgic E and the Gallic War is accepted (pls 14–15).

The author has excluded finds from known temple sites, in part to keep the volume to manageable proportions but also, one suspects, to be able to finish it within a single lifetime. Temples ‘are complex sites, displaying evidence of repeated episodes of deposition over relatively long periods’ (p. 2). By their nature they are of less value in establishing relationships between types than closed hoards, even when excavated under controlled conditions, but, as the author emphasizes, it is not always clear what is a hoard and what is a temple deposit. Several, perhaps many, finds included in the book may be from unrecognised temples and this leaves a grey area between included and excluded deposits. The largest group, from Wanborough, Surrey, probably contained several thousand Iron Age coins in total, the great majority of which were spirited away by illegal metal detecting in the 1980s and have been appearing in trade sources ever since (p. 55). Many types from Wanborough were either extremely rare or unknown before the site was looted, and because of this it should be possible to reconstruct its original contents in some detail in the future from CCI records and the thousand or so excavated examples already published.

Our knowledge of many hoards is, of course, woefully incomplete but for older finds the author has gone back to the original documentation in every case and uncovered a mass of hitherto unpublished material, beginning with the Iceniann silver ‘with a rude head upon the obverse and an ill formed horse on the reverse’ noted by Sir Thomas Browne in 1658 (p. 1). In the introduction to each hoard, complex and often contradictory accounts are woven into a deft narrative that combines the author’s characteristic lightness of touch with impeccable judgement. To give but one example, his account of the huge Whaddon Chase find of 1849 (no. 10), on which much of the chronology of early gold still rests, is a masterpiece of detective work that reads like a whodunit. For old hoards this eliminates at a stroke the need to constantly revisit the original antiquarian sources, many of which are not easily accessible, even if one knew where to look. Even the history of more recent hoards declared as Treasure Trove and, more recently, under the terms of the 1996 Treasure Act, is rarely straightforward. Coins from scattered hoards are often uncovered over several years, and, in some cases, a century or more apart, and to summarize...

Twenty-five essays are gathered together in this splendid memorial volume in honour of Mark Blackburn, an outstanding scholar of early medieval monetary history, whose work until his untimely death in 2011 made a profound academic impact. Mark was the direct inspiration and catalyst for many working in the field of early medieval coinage and currency, and this book is a fitting tribute to a cherished friend and colleague.

Given the breadth of Mark’s research interests, this volume achieves a remarkable coherence, with a clear focus on European coinage in the early Middle Ages (6th–12th centuries). It is divided into four sections:

Part 1 (‘Progress in Early Medieval Monetary History’) contains three masterly surveys: on Viking currency from England (865–954) (Gareth Williams), tenth-century English coinage (Rory Naismith), and early Norman coinage (Martin Allen). All three chapters present the latest thinking and key debates, and will serve as essential reference texts for students in their respective fields. The five papers in Part II (‘Interdisciplinary Perspectives’) stress connections between the fields of early medieval numismatics, art history, history and archaeology. Martin Biddle convincingly identifies the building depicted on the reverse of Charlemagne’s XPICITIANA RELIGIO (‘The Christian Faith’) portrait denier with the building enclosing the Tomb of Christ in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem, while Anna Gannon proposes that the image of a quadruped standing in front of a plant, as seen on some series M sceattas (dated c.720), may in fact depict the Agnes Dei twinned with the Eucharistic vine. Tuukka Talvio presents a stylistic assessment of the coinage of Edward the Confessor, although the motivation for doing so is unclear to this archaeologist reviewer. In the only non coin-based paper in the volume, Jonathan Jarrett discusses the monetary status of the bovo soldare (an ox, worth a solidus) in ninth- and tenth-century northern Spain. Following a review of the obscure historiography of this topic, Jarrett concludes that the ox in question served as a conceptual standardised unit of value. This is a welcome reminder that not all currency constituted coinage, and connects well with recent developments on the use of so-called ‘commodity-money’ within Viking-Age Scandinavia.

The papers in the third section address the extent of coin use and circulation in early medieval society. All draw heavily on data from single finds: an approach pioneered by Mark. When found in Great Britain, Byzantine coins have historically been interpreted as ‘modern losses’, but Cécile Morrison’s analysis shows that those minted between the late 5th and early 8th century likely reflect genuine contact between Anglo-Saxon England and Byzantium (as unambiguously demonstrated by a copper coin of Justinian I, which must have reached England before it found its way into an eighth- or ninth-century rubbish pit in Southampton). D.M. Metcalfe restates his maximalist position regarding the size of the English thrymsa and sceatta currency. Extrapolating from die estimates, he suggests a total output of 3 million and 60–65 million coins respectively. This is a staggering output for relatively high-value currency, and would imply a circulation at any one time of ‘300 gold coins, above ground, per village’ (p. 249). However, it is difficult to concur with his conclusion that the result was a ‘monetised economy’, for there are clear areas of low or no coin use, and even the plentiful sceattas were too valuable for small-scale exchange. Simon Coupland also judges positively the extent of coin use in the heart of the ninth-century Carolingian Empire, although unevenness in the reporting of single finds from the Continent is a complicating factor. He highlights the contemporary importance of oboles, or half-deniers: these low-value coins account for a sizeable proportion of single finds, pointing to a level of

1 Skre 2011.
coin use generally missing from Anglo-Saxon society. Andrew Woods also harnesses an, admittedly small, number of single finds to assess the degree of coin use in Viking-Age Ireland. The importance of Dublin both as a place where coin use was initiated in the early tenth century and as a conduit for coin into the interior is clearly conveyed. His finding that base bracteate coins were lost in large numbers in the town in the mid-twelfth century, despite not being hoarded, casts the end of the Hiberno-Norse coinage in new light and highlights the potentially divergent readings provided by hoard and single find data.

Two papers shift focus to Viking-Age Norway. Svein Gullbekk reports on fascinating new finds of dirhams and other silver coins from Vestfold, with particular reference to those from a new ‘town-like’ settlement emerging at Heimdalsjordet, close to the famous Gokstad ship-burial and just 15 kilometres north-east of the important trading site of Kaupang. These imports highlight the pronounced monetary use of bullion silver in the area, and show that Kaupang operated as part of a wider regional network of trading sites, operating chiefly in the ninth century. Chapters by Elina Screen and Marion Archibald likewise chart the changing function of coinage across cultural frontiers. In her analysis of piercings on Anglo-Saxon coins from conversion-period Norway (980–1050), Screen reveals a decline in the use of coins as pendant ornament over time, in line with their increasing availability and monetary role. Archibald observes that a handful of mainly Islamic Spanish gold coins from England (late 11th to mid-13th century) likely served a monetary role in high-value exchange.

The final and largest section (‘Coins and Coin Hoards in Context’) contains a number of case studies of predominately recent discoveries. The section heading is something of a misnomer, since three of the hoards discussed: from Port Glasgow (Scotland), Glenfaba (Isle of Man) and Linnakse (Estonia), in fact contain a mix of coin and bullion. Indeed, the eclectic Glenfaba hoard (deposited c.1030) is of particular importance for the study of ‘dual-economies’, in the sense of bullion and coin circulating side by side. As laid out clearly by Kristin Bornholdt Collins, the hoard demonstrates that bullion (in this case, in the form of a plaited-rod arm-ring) was maintained as currency even after the introduction of minting in Man in the 1020s, so that ‘one could think, negotiate and trade in both terms in this flexible economy’ (p. 482). Many of the coins in the Glenfaba hoard are bent and/or ‘pecked’ in order to test the pressure of Viking raids, encourages speculation (p. 438) that pecking emerged because of lack of trust in the temporarily faltering coinage – a truly intriguing suggestion.

Moving away from the topic of dual economies, many of the papers in this section harness relatively recent finds to shed new light on coin series. Stewart Lyon provides a short account of the most recent of four early Anglo-Saxon gold solidi, mounted as pendants, while David Symons presents a hoard of three fused Burgred Lunette pennies (deposited after 871/4), excavated from Banbury Castle, Oxfordshire. The coins add to our knowledge of Burgred’s mon eyers, although the decision not to provide information relating to the hoard’s archaeological context is frustrating. Hugh Pagan presents rediscovered archival correspondence relating to the discovery of the Port Glasgow hoard of Anglo-Saxon pennies and two, or possibly three, arm-rings of Scandinavian character. This confirms the likely date of discovery of the hoard as 1699, and helps to establish that the coin component was most likely dominated by pre-reform types of Edgar, thus confirming the conventional date of deposit of the hoard as c.970. Incidentally, this fits with the date range suggested by the non-numismatic content, including a freshly made piece of ‘ring-money’, which is not independently considered.2

Other papers in this section contribute important developments in numismatic knowledge. Megan Gooch summarises the key findings from her recent doctoral research on the Swordless St Peter Coinage of York (c.905–19). She confirms Mark Blackburn’s view that the coinage was a secular issue by the Viking Kings of York, rather than an ecclesiastical coinage as suggested by others, although the overt Christian iconography betrays ‘significant ecclesiastical involvement’ of some form (p. 470). Joe Leighton and Andrew Woods approach a group of imitations of Æthelred II’s (978–1016) Long Cross coinage from a novel perspective, using stylistic as well as weight and die axes analysis to identify a well-organised imitative coin group around the Irish Sea region.

In addition to its relevance for the development of the dual-economy, the Glenfaba, Isle of Man, hoard is important for illuminating the early stages of the Hiberno-Manx coinage, as well as providing a vivid example of the diversity of Manx coinage, and thus Irish Sea trade, in the early eleventh century, as demonstrated by Fox, Bornholdt Collins and Graham-Campbell. Finally, two chapters, by Kenneth Jonsson and Ivar Leimus, Mauri Kiidsoo and Ülle Tamla use the evidence of two recent coin hoards, from Ovilde, Gotland, and Linnakse, Estonia, as a springboard for discussing the declining numbers of English coins reaching Scandinavia and the Baltic during the late Viking Age.

Despite the rich and varied contents of the volume, it might be argued that there is too heavy a focus on coins, given that one of the hallmarks of Mark’s work was to bridge the fields of numismatics, history and, in particular, archaeology. With the exception of Graham-Campbell’s discussion of the Glenfaba arm-ring,

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2 Archibald 2011, 64.
3 Graham-Campbell 1995, 57, 95, pl. 1.a.
non-numismatic material is treated only cursorily, if at all, while the archaeological find context of coins is rarely discussed (this would have been particularly relevant for Morrisson’s article, for instance). A related complaint is that, although many of the papers connect to themes that will interest all scholars of early medieval Europe, some authors (e.g. Gannon; Talvio) seem to write only for a numismatic audience, producing chapters that are not very forgiving to the non-specialist. This is due partly to disciplinary approach, partly to language, and partly to a lack of sufficient contextualisation. Whatever the reason, I, for one, would benefit from more clearly stated motivation and more signposts in the text to the main findings (more histograms/charts, in place of tables, and more maps, would also be welcome). Indeed, some of the tables are difficult to read and where there are lots of them (e.g. in Screen’s article), there is a risk that they slow down, rather than aid, interpretation.

Notwithstanding these criticisms, this is a dynamic, rewarding and coherent volume. It is both a substantial scholarly achievement and a lucid demonstration of Mark’s remarkable academic legacy, and for this the editors ought to be congratulated.

JANE KERSHAW

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While the formal style of the Sylloge series leaves little scope for expression, even where the iconographic aspects of the subject are of such importance, the presentation of this volume is enhanced by introductory chapters which invest greater colour and texture into the distinctive early Anglo-Saxon coinage.

It was Gannon’s judicious choice to seek a contributor of the knowledge and experience of Marion Archibald to describe the formation of the collection, from the first few sceattas to pass into the national collection (from the Cotton collection) even before the establishment of the British Museum in 1753. Behind Archibald’s table of acquisitions (Fig. 1), divided into irregular periods between key events, lie stories of the vicissitudes in the Museum’s financial ability to accumulate a representative selection of available material. There are times when only donations and bequests contribute to the assemblage and others when major hoards were acquired.

We can glean from the information given on sources and hoards that three hoards contribute 353 sceattas to the collection (41%) – Aston Rowant (1971–74, 178 primary sceattas including 95 Series D and 25 Series E), Middle Harling (1980, 57 coins including 48 of King Beonna of East Anglia) and Woodham Walter (1994, 118 mainly secondary types). This marks the commencement of metal-detecting, when the collection more than doubled in size. A further 107 sceattas (13%) are from excavations at Barham (1980–95, 47), Burrow Hill (1971–81+, 42), Richborough (1925 and 1931, 6), Stone-by-Faversham (1971 and 1975, 2) and Whitby 1924–25, 10). An additional 52 coins are from ‘productive’ or ‘coin-rich sites’ (6%), and 21 single finds are listed (2%).

Since the Treasure Act (1996), the Museum has lost its pre-emption rights and the funds available for acquisitions have been restricted. Sadly, the national collection is now unlikely to approach the goal of completeness in a coinage where there are so many extreme rarities.1 Despite the erratic pattern of acquisition, the collection contributes to our understanding of chronology and frequency of occurrence, but gives limited expression to the remarkable diversity of this exceptional coinage. This applies to gold almost as much as to silver. The former is also far from representative. While the tremisses in the Sutton Hoo purse (discovered 1939) are at the Museum, they are Merovingian and, therefore, do not form part of this catalogue. The Crondall (Hampshire) hoard material is the highlight of the early Anglo-Saxon coinage, but is housed at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

In a crucial, if brief, chapter on Classification and Chronology, Gannon touches on some fundamental issues. She chronicles the evolution of the taxonomy through Keary (1887), Hill (1953), Rigold (1960–61) and Metcalf (1993–94) to the present-day discussions, and wisely opts for ‘the established and plainest of manners. The traditional scheme is one which is widely used and known to all numismatists’ (p. 52). In closely adhering to Metcalf’s scheme in Thrymsas and Sceattas in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, she endorses a precedent which will be followed, for the sake of consistency, by future Sylloges of important collections of similar material.

In a chapter entitled ‘Analysis of Gold Content and its Implications for the Chronology of Early Anglo-Saxon Coinage’ Duncan Hook describes the use of binocular microscopy, specific gravity measurement for binary alloys and X-ray fluorescence in analysing 73 coins. Of these, the 41 owned by the British Museum are illustrated in the plates. It would have been helpful had the other 32 been illustrated also. Gareth Williams interprets the results, abandoning Ian Stewart’s phasing of pre-Crondall, Crondall/Ultra-Crondall and post-Crondall types, as this is insufficiently diagnostic of the absolute chronology. Moreover, the mix of types,

1 Indeed, less than 40% of the main varieties illustrated in Sceatta List (Abramson 2012) are represented here.
including Merovingian tremisses, indicates an absence of control and difficulty in attributing otherwise unrecorded (or recorded but unprovenanced) specimens. He concludes that the reason for the absence from the Crondall hoard of Ultra-Crondall types cannot be ascertained.

The gold shillings of Eadbald of Kent, of York, and those inscribed 'LONDYNIV' are less helpful than the literate Merovingian coinage in understanding the gradual decline in gold content in the mid-seventh century. Anglo-Saxon gold coins are likely to have been made from recycled Merovingian gold and it is worth noting that there have been only four finds of Byzantine gold from the reign of Heraclius (610–41).

The range and mean percentage of gold of the various types are laid out in Fig. 6, under three sub-headings: gold types average 49.5 to 96.6 per cent gold, pale gold types range from 18 to 42.9 per cent, and transitional issues vary from 4.1 to 16.9 per cent. However, these results, and the implied relative chronology, are heavily caveated in the closing remarks to this analytical chapter.

In her ‘Survey of the Coinage’, Gannon gives her customary insightful perspective on both the gold and silver coinages, before describing, in detail, the ways in which this accumulation supports our growing understanding of early Anglo-Saxon currency generally. The use and re-use of gold and the increasing body of evidence for North Sea trade indicate the ‘substantial use of coin by the end of the seventh century’ (p. 85).

The chronology of the silver coinage was determined by Mark Blackburn. The reduction in precious metal content is almost imperceptible: from the early primary, retaining vestiges of gold, to the late secondary where the silver fineness can be as little as 20 per cent, and weights decline. It is the Aston Rowant hoard (deposited c.710), two-thirds Continental, that is the watershed between these two phases.

Even were this reviewer inclined to point out trivial errors, there are virtually none to be found. The image for the first York shillings (16) replicates the Two Emperors image (24) but can be found in Sutherland (1948, 75c, pl. IV, 20).

The heart of the Syllog is the set of thirty-seven plates and supporting descriptions. This is exacting work, into which Gannon has invested immense effort over a considerable period. She is to be congratulated on her dedication, precise language and comprehensive referencing. This is a work of enduring importance and we are very fortunate that such a gifted numismatist committed her time and energy to it.

TONY ABRAMSON

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2 For which Williams sees Eadwine as a likely candidate.

3 MEC, I, 184–9. For refinements to this see Abramson, 2012, 250–1.

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THE present volume is a sequel to Dr Screen’s excellent previous volume devoted to coins and coin fragments in Norwegian institutional collections struck for Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Viking rulers up to the end of the reign of Aethelred II, published as volume 65 in the SCBI series in 2013. This reviewer is on record as describing the first volume as ‘a volume of the highest standard which is exemplary in the way that both text and catalogue are organised’, and the second volume, completing Dr Screen’s massive cataloguing undertaking, is in every way as good.

The great majority of the 2,386 coins that are here illustrated and described belong to the reign of Cnut (1016–35). Of these, 781 are of Quatrefoil type, 710 of Pointed Helmet type, and just 66 are of Short Cross type, with 9 further small fragments that may be either of Cnut or of Aethelred II. These are followed in the volume by 36 coins of Harold I, of which 13 are of Jewel Cross type, and 23 of Fleur-de-Lis type, and by 29 coins of Harthacnut, of which 2 are of Jewel Cross type and 27 are of Arm and Sceptrum type.

The declining totals of coins for types from Cnut’s Short Cross type onwards reflects a sharp fall-off in the quantity of Anglo-Saxon coins which found their way into Norwegian coin hoards after c.1030, and although the totals for the first five types of the reign of Edward the Confessor might seem at first sight to show conflicting trends, this has to do with the particular content of hoards from Broholm, not far from Oslo, and from Foldoy, in Rogaland on Norway’s south-western coast, both probably deposited a little after 1050. For Edward the Confessor, the respective totals for each of his first five types are PACX, 25 coins, Radiate Small Cross, 52 coins, Trefoil Quadrilateral, 26 coins, Small Flan, 9 coins, and Expanding Cross, 44 coins, with one additional coin that is a Trefoil Quadrilateral/Expanding Cross mule (no. 3669, Lincoln, moneyer Godric), seemingly until now unpublished.

Both the Broholm and the Foldoy hoards have an Anglo-Saxon coin content that ends with Expanding Cross. In Broholm the coins in question number only three, two of the heavy series and one of the light series, but the coins of this type listed in the present volume...
from the Foldoy hoard number as many as 35 or 36, 8 being of the heavy series, of which 7 are of York and 1 is of Derby, and 27 or 28 being of the light series, of which 12 are of Lincoln, 4 or 5 are of London, and the remainder are of Canterbury, Ipswich, Norwich, Oxford, Wallingford (?), Wilton, Winchester (2 coins), Worcester and York (3 coins). As readers of this journal may be aware, the respective order of the heavy series and the light series remains a matter for debate, and the evidence of the coins from Foldoy may yet have a bearing on it.

By comparison, the representation in this volume of coins struck in the later part of Edward the Confessor’s reign, in the reign of Harold II, and in the reigns of rulers from William I to Stephen, is thin indeed. There are only 31 coins of this period in total, and of these at least 15 were acquired by Norwegian collectors or by Norwegian museums from British sources, so the number of coins listed in this volume that are likely to have circulated within Norway in the later eleventh century and in the first half of the twelfth century is on any view minute. In this respect, as scholars have pointed out in the past, the position in Norway is very different from that in the Eastern Baltic, where there seems to have been a continuing incoming drift of Anglo-Saxon and Norman currency until well into the twelfth century.

The remaining British coins in the volume comprise 9 coins of the Cross and Crosslets type of Henry II, 35 coins of Short Cross type struck for Plantagenet kings between 1180 and 1247, and 66 coins of Long Cross type struck for Henry III between 1247 and 1272, with a couple of contemporary imitations and 6 coins struck for twelfth- and thirteenth-century members of the Scottish royal house.

The balance of the volume is made up by a further 359 coins, of which all but 5 fall into categories described in headline terms as Hiberno-Scandinavian and Anglo-Scandinavian, the remaining coins being two examples of the Hiberno-Manx series (neither found in Norway, and one in fact deriving from Christopher Blunt’s collection), two ‘Irish Sea’ imitations of Cnut’s Quatrefoil type, and one Anglo-Irish penny of King John.

All this represents a very substantial addition to our collective knowledge of the coinages involved, particularly so far as the coinage of Cnut is concerned, and Dr Screen deserves our warmest congratulations.

HUGH PAGAN

BIBLIOGRAPHY


September 2012 saw the launch of the long awaited Brussels Hoard volume by Ron Churchill and Bob Thomas.¹ Launched at the same time, but perhaps somewhat overshadowed, was Mr Churchill’s own volume, Mints & Moneyers During the Reign of Henry III. Probably the best way to think of it is as the ideal companion volume to the Brussels Hoard account, particularly if your interest extends beyond the coins themselves.

The origins of this fascinating work are in what began as a collection of private research papers, accumulated over a good many years and never intended for publication. Indeed, having finally taken the decision to turn his research into a formal publication, on more than one occasion Mr Churchill had contemplated not proceeding with the project, in the belief that what he had to offer was not of sufficient academic merit. It is therefore a matter of great relief and satisfaction that he has allowed himself to be persuaded otherwise.

What this volume does very successfully indeed is to bridge the gap between numismatics and local history, in the broadest sense. As such, it represents an extremely valuable resource both for the numismatist with an interest in the thirteenth century as well as for the local historian, both of whom may well identify completely new avenues of research to pursue.

As we might expect, the volume is well illustrated, with a somewhat eclectic but fascinating range of maps and images, assiduously gathered over many years. In the best traditions of the gentleman amateur’s research, included is an illustration of the London moneyer Henry Frowick’s cess pit. Arguably not a critical piece of information, but it is just one example of the way in which Mr Churchill manages to weave together the numismatic and human historical aspects of his subject. Other seemingly minor vignettes serve to bring us close to our subject, none more so than the account of a Sunday meeting which included some of the moneyers, at an identifiable spot in the Canterbury Cathedral precinct, allowing us, should we so wish, to stand at the very place where they stood some 750 years ago. There is also the matter of the scandal of December 1261 involving the murder of William of Gloucester. At one time, it was thought that this William was one of the Canterbury moneymen; however, current opinion, based on recent research, is that he was in fact a prominent member of an important Southampton family of merchants. The author also reminds us of Matthew Paris’ observations on scholars and the Oxford riots of 1258, all serving to provide a suitable background and context.

Using, in many cases, original documents, Mr Churchill has gone to some lengths in his reconstruction of the family trees of some of the moneymen and mint officials: an important piece of numismatic research, given that the occupation tended to run in families. If nothing else, this will make the work of future researchers much easier. Any researcher who has at any time worked with original medieval documents will understand the true magnitude of Mr Churchill’s achievement in this respect.

One of the more interesting exercises that can be undertaken by a student of the Long Cross series is the determination of a time line of moneymen against ‘type’.

¹ Churchill and Thomas 2012.
For this to be feasible, we do of course need to know the names of the moneyers and have a reasonably secure chronology of types or classes as well as the dates of appointment and the surrender of dies when an appointment ended. In the case of the London mint, this is relatively straightforward. Where Canterbury is concerned, the problems increase by an order of magnitude. The main problem is that we have to try to distinguish between no less than five moneyers sharing the name Robert and a further five by the name of William. Whilst we can be reasonably satisfied that we can identify at least some of them, it is the others that create the problems. It is therefore difficult to overstate the importance of any new information that may help us in this respect. Mr Churchill presents a compelling argument for the identification of one of the uncertain Williams as one William the Brewer. His proposal is based on the evidence of a document of 1261 naming him among other known moneyers, supported by a further document dating to 1271–72, which together strongly suggest that William the Brewer was indeed a ‘royal’ moneyer.

One of the long standing problems within the Long Cross series is the place of coins of classes 5d and 5e within the series. Stylistically very different to the preceding class 5c and subsequent class 5f, the question of their origin or indeed veracity remains a seemingly intractable problem. It is this writer’s belief that the matter will ultimately be resolved and that the most likely source of the breakthrough will be the written record and research such as this.

The volume follows a traditional format, opening with an account of the background to the introduction of the Long Cross series, including the ‘new’ Churchill/Thomas classification, together with a useful summary of the chronology of the classes. The fact that the content predominantly relates to the moneyers and mints of the Long Cross period is not altogether surprising, given Mr Churchill’s authorship, jointly with Mr Thomas, of the Brussels Hoard volume. This particular volume however, being a work devoted to the mints and moneyers during the reign of Henry III, also features a comprehensive account (Chapter 7) of the Short Cross moneyers from the earlier years of the reign.

The second and third chapters are devoted to the London and Canterbury mints, with subsequent chapters detailing the ecclesiastical mints and the provincial mints, the latter separated into the first and second stage of the recoinage. The account of the Canterbury mint includes a discussion of the very rare Long Cross 1b ‘mule’ of IOH. There is no extant record of a John as a Long Cross moneyer, which makes this a very interesting coin indeed. There are currently four known specimens, all from the same dies, as well as a further possible cut half. An account of the Irish issues constitutes Chapter 8, with Appendix A devoted to statistical analysis and Appendix B to a brief summary of Long Cross hoards.

The author is to be commended for having produced a scholarly and fascinating volume which will not be out of place on any historian’s or numismatist’s bookshelf. Publication of this volume is however not the end of the matter. On the contrary, Mr Churchill continues to unearth new information on a regular basis, leading to the conclusion that an updated volume is becoming both necessary and desirable, hopefully at some stage in the near future.

MIKE SHOTT

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MOST medalists of the past are shadowy figures. Their lives and works have had to be reconstructed, as William Eisler did in his excellent account of the Dassier family of Geneva, from the evidence of their coins and medals, from stray mentions in mint and other institutional records, from their drawings for medals and very occasionally from surviving correspondence – almost all of it either addressed to or from patrons, and official in nature. At least for fourteen years of his life, Leonard Wyon, best known as the designer of the ‘Bun Penny’, is an exception.

Wyon’s diary enables him to be viewed in the round and from the inside, as a family man and man of his time, and not only as a professional medalist and coin, banknote and stamp engraver. Further details about his professional life and activities are to be found in his day-book. Both volumes are now in the British Library.

Leonard was not a great diarist. There is little of the verve, loquaciousness and frankness of a Pepys or of Wyon’s contemporary, Sir Frederic Madden of the British Museum, the father of the numismatist of the same name, whose unpublished diary is in the Bodleian Library. Everything is understated and discreet. Family events and social contacts are dutifully recorded. He mentions repeated and sometimes lengthy sittings with Queen Victoria and other leaders of society without, however, divulging a word of what they, presumably, told him. On the other hand, he regularly notes the hysterical fits that afflicted his wife, ‘dear May’. At times, as the editor notes, the tone almost resembles that of another, albeit fictional, contemporary, Charles Pooter.

Yet Philip Attwood achieves a triumph with this apparently unpromising material. In his extended, excellently researched and well organized introduction, he uses the diary as a means of placing Leonard in the context of his time. Chapter by chapter he discusses the family background – tracing the Wyons from the first medalists in the family who worked in Cologne from the late 1730s to the myriad cousins who were engaged in the same business, but in England, during the period covered by the diary. The scene set, Attwood then discusses Leonard’s early life and his family, with the recurrent births, sicknesses and deaths. He perceptively suggests that May’s attacks of hysteria could have been an expression of the frustration felt by her, like many capable Victorian women, at her severely circumscribed existence.
Leonard was relatively wealthy, and for most of his life lived in a large house, which has since been demolished, in Hamilton Terrace in what was then the semi-rural surroundings of St John's Wood. Attwood accordingly devotes a whole chapter to a discussion of his wealth and status, including his children's education, the number of servants he kept and the holidays he went on – particularly in Switzerland. It comes as no surprise to learn that, when there, Leonard Wyon was guided entirely by the forthright opinions of John Murray expressed in his Handbook to Switzerland.

Sermons, and Leonard's opinions on them, are to be found on almost every page of the diary, and Attwood wisely devotes another chapter to Wyon's Evangelical faith and sense of morality. It found expression in acts of charity as well as in an unquestioning acceptance of God's will, that must have sustained him in face of the premature deaths of some of his children. At the same time Wyon had firm views of what did and did not constitute a good sermon in much the same way that his counterparts today would assess the quality of their favourite television programmes. The diary also enables Philip Attwood to give an account of Leonard's views on literature and the arts and a mention of his collection of coins and medals.

However, as Attwood emphasizes, 'one of great values of the diary is the light it throws on Leonard's working practices'. The chapter 'Leonard Wyon at work' contains an account of the influences on Wyon (particularly his father William and examples by other medalists in his collection), his working methods and his relationship with the Royal Mint.

Attwood accepts that, while Leonard may have been the most skilled medalist in his family after his father, William, he was essentially a talented artisan rather than an artist. His lack of imagination and limited abilities led to a certain lifelessness in much of his work – and indeed later in his career, he increasingly worked from designs created by others. Nevertheless he was a conscientious and hard working man with high ethical and professional standards. His diary and day-book give a probably unique insight into the daily work of a nineteenth century medalist. Denied the chance of succeeding his father William as Chief Engraver to the Mint, by the reforms that followed his death in 1851, Leonard had to fend for himself. Unlike his father, who could delegate such things to subordinates in the Mint, Leonard had to learn the art of hardening dies and punches – and the diary records repeated failures in that regard. While he was able to use the facilities of the Mint when working on official commissions, he usually had to collaborate with John Pinches and others for all his other work. The diary conveys the daily grind of preparing different medals, coins, banknotes and stamps simultaneously. Attwood notes that May was actively involved in preparing punches and dies – very much the exception to stereotypes of the role of Victorian women.

The text of the diary naturally occupies the core of the book, but it is followed by 122 pages of appendices. These are largely derived from the day-book, and give detailed information about all aspects of the production of each of the coins, official medals, private British medals, private foreign and colonial medals, banknotes, postage stamps, and punches that Leonard Wyon produced during the years covered by the diary.

Philip Attwood's text is based on extensive research, wide reading (historical, literary and technical), and access to letters which are, presumably, still in the hands of Leonard's descendants as well as an early travel diary of Leonard's sister now owned by the Department of Coins and Medals at the British Museum. Quite apart from the numismatic information, Attwood sets Leonard Wyon in the context of his time with great perception and skill. The text is well illustrated and the book is excellently produced and a pleasure to handle. A genealogical table would have helped to illustrate the complexities of the Wyon dynasty and it would have been good to have found out more about Leonard's life and work after the diary period, and to have more information about what happened to his family. These are, however, quibbles when set against the great achievement that the book represents. The editor's labours over several decades have produced a triumph that is strongly recommended to anyone with an interest in medals – or upper middle-class life in Victorian England.

PETER BARBER


Artur Immanuel Loewental was born in Vienna in 1879 and died in Lincoln in 1964. In the intervening years he lived and worked in Cairo (for health reasons), Berlin during World War I, London and Lincoln. In addition to his medallic work he was a sculptor and engraver of hard gemstones. He was also a collector and, surprisingly, on his escape from Nazi Berlin in 1934 he was able to bring with him a large collection of Chinese glass and pottery.

This book, as the author states at the outset, is a record of Loewental's life and work after his arrival in England, and is in two distinct parts. The first contains a number of detailed chapters of a historical and autobiographical nature, and the second is a catalogue of all the examples of the medals that he has been able to trace that survive outside Germany and Austria. The extensive Acknowledgements indicate the large amount of research that the author has undertaken to produce this work. He also had the benefit of family input from the artist's grand-niece. In this book Mr Turner has succeeded very well in bringing to our attention a medallist and sculptor who has remained relatively obscure, despite some quite well known individual works.

Loewental has an impressive body of work to his credit, so one might question why he has not been more generally known. Other foreign medallists working in Britain, from the Rottiers, the Dassiers and Pistrucci to Alphonse Legros and Edouard Lanteri in later years have had that recognition. In his foreword Philip Attwood (Keeper of Coins and Medals, British Museum, and President of the British Art Medal Society) points out the beneficial effect on British medallic art of the influx of continental European medallists since the sixteenth century.
There could be a number of reasons for this lack of recognition, not least because by choice and due to the requirements of the work that he was able to find during World War II Loewental lived and worked in Lincoln for most of his life and not in the mainstream of London artistic life. Or it could be because his medallic work was simply realistic portraiture, with no gesture to the pictorial or the fashionable influences of the Art Nouveau or Art Deco. Another factor might be that many of his portrait works are uniface, with a lack of an attractive reverse design that might appeal to those not so interested in the main subject.

Many of Loewental's medals were uniface family portraits, intended for personal appreciation, produced in very small numbers and not widely distributed. It is likely that many others were produced speculatively and not as commissions; some recur in sales lists year after year. Many are apparently unsigned, and other examples of his work could be languishing unrecognised in drawers or collections. His World War I works in Berlin are perhaps more well known and recognisable.

The book is produced in A4 size, with soft covers, and printed on good quality glossy paper. The larger size suits the format, which includes many tables in the text and an extensive illustrated catalogue. The catalogue is well illustrated with reduced size black and white photographs for most, but not all entries. It is disappointing that, probably for good reasons of cost control, none of the pictures are in colour except for the bronze self-portrait for his seventieth birthday, reproduced full size on the back cover. This gives the only clue as to the sort of patination that Loewental may have favoured.

The catalogue extends to about fifty pages and 267 entries. It is not a complete listing, concentrating on examples to be found in collections outside Germany and Austria. But here we have the benefit of guidance not usually found in a catalogue; the author's research as to the actual collection(s) where each medal is to be found. And while many are still in private hands there are plenty in institutional or public collections where they are available for those interested to view them. The author has adopted a sequential numbering for the listings, which are in date order as far as can be established, although many of Loewental's portraits are undated. In addition to finished medals, wax models, plaster casts and trial casts are listed and described. The entries include descriptions of the obverse, and the reverse where there is one, the size, where exhibited and where now kept. In most cases a monotone photograph for each entry is placed on the outer edge of the page. These are mostly good quality, but some of those illustrating plaster models are a little indistinct. All the illustrations are reproduced to a common size of about 45 mm, as the originals vary considerably in size and quality, and have been obtained from a variety of sources. In general the pieces are circular in shape, although in his earlier life before his move to England in 1934 Loewental did produce some rectangular plaques in the manner of the French and Belgian portraits.

There is an Index of people portrayed, running to 128 in number. The range of sitters is extensive, although it is likely that at least in the early years he may have had to work from photographs of many of his more famous subjects. His period in Berlin during World War I was quite prolific, with portraits of military and naval commanders, members of Prussian and other German royal households, academics and industrialists. In 1930 he received a commission from the German state to sculpt a bust of Professor Albert Einstein, who was fifty years of age. They remained friends and it was possibly Einstein's subsequent hasty departure from Germany in 1933, together with the ever-increasing restrictions imposed on himself as a Jew, that prompted Loewental to leave for England in 1934. In 1948 Loewental produced a large uniface medal to celebrate Einstein's seventieth birthday the following year. He was commissioned to produce a Victory medal in 1945 bearing the portrait of Winston Churchill, struck by Pinches. In 1965 Pinches again used the obverse and reverse designs for a medal marking Churchill's death. This is the last catalogue entry, the first being a uniface medal of Mark Twain, both produced full size on the back cover. This gives the only clue as to the sort of patination that Loewental may have favoured.

The author, John T. Turner, is interested in local history and numismatics, and he has a large collection of Lincolnshire checks and passes, and medallions. His particular interest in Artur Immanuel Loewental was inspired by the chance gift of a medal by Loewental depicting a local solicitor. We must thank the generous donor for starting Mr Turner on some thirteen years of research, piecing together the documentary and published references that have survived two world wars, while tracking down surviving examples of his medallic output, all brought together here in this book.

ELDON ALLISON