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NEWSLETTER

THE JOURNAL OF THE LONDON NUMISMATIC CLUB

HONORARY EDITOR

Peter A. Clayton

EDITORIAL

This issue consists of reports of talks given to the Club, several of them direct from the script that the speaker used and kindly made available; others are compiled from the rough notes lent to the Editor by the speaker (as with Sue Tyler-Smith - errors therein are thus laid at the Editor's door - but at least there is a report), or from notes the Editor made at the meetings.

One member has responded to our previous plea for contributions, and we are grateful to Anthony Gilbert for an LNC member's view of the BANS Chester Congress, and there was quite a good LNC attendance, including old friends and members such as Donald Fell.

With this issue the Newsletter is now right up to date, reporting the last meeting of the Club. It is hoped that it can now be issued at more regular intervals, but that still depends on the supply of material, not least from Club members themselves.

Since the last issue of the Newsletter, we welcome as a new member Keith Hareson. P.A.C.

London Numismatic Club meeting, 7th December 1995

Dr John Kent made a welcome return to speak to the Club on the subject of 'Coinage and Currency from the records of post-medieval London'. Dr Kent's paper was a very full survey of references to all aspects of the coinage, taken from the detailed records that survive, be they official or allusions in contemporary plays and writings. What follows is only a selection from the vast amount of information presented, backed by superb slides of the relevant coinage.

The Tudors

The coinage of medieval England came to an end in confusion and discredit by the actions of Henry VIII, who saw in debasement a ready source of revenue. During the first 40 years of the 16th century, however, the usual periodic complaints against the state of the coinage are heard. At first clipped coin was the problem. In 1502, out of £751 received by the Treasurer of the Chamber, no less than £220 was false or defective. Three years later, clipped coin was legally defined and clipping made punishable by death. The problem was by no means confined to London,

but to clear the ground in the capital an exchange was set up in Leadenhall to change clipped pieces for the new pieces; the Carpenters' accounts show a loss of £3.7s by the change of clipped money on this occasion. However, in 1512, out of a sum of £2,293 8s 3d in pence received in a tax payment, there was less than one third on account of the defective pieces it contained. In fact, the shortage of small money remained the problem it had been throughout the Middle Ages, in spite of constant efforts to induce or compel the moneyers to coin specified amounts in twopences, pence, halfpence and farthings. The farthing was now so small as to be a positive nuisance.

Medieval England generally resisted the currency of non-English coins, particularly after the creation of own gold coinage in 1343. This exclusivity began to break down. Galley-halfpence (Venetian soldini), such as Stowe remembered in his childhood, were always unlawful, but in 1522 ducats, French crowns, florins and the gold *Carolus* of Charles V, were proclaimed legal tender and, especially under Mary, an increasing number of foreign gold pieces were allowed currency, and begin to show in the records. In 1552, for example, there was stolen in the Charterhouse churchyard a "double duckett, a French crowne and a Cruesadove". In 1554 a Spaniard was burgled; he lost 49 pistoletes, three French crowns and 36 Spanish royalles of silver, i.e. pieces of eight, then valued at 4s 10d each. Pistolets and French crowns thereafter remained regular items before the Sessions into the 17th century, occasionally supplemented by ducats and their multiples. Foreign coins were now, of course, counterfeited as well as our own. In 1559, Eloi Mestrell, a Frenchman employed at the Mint, was convicted (and later pardoned) for abetting one Philip Mestrell, presumably his relative, in the coining of false Burgundy crowns. In 1622, a blacksmith was required to give evidence in the case of a person "who is under suspicion of coyninge French money". The recently discovered die for a 16th-century French gold piece may be the work of such a forger. The offence of counterfeiting non-current coin was deemed Misprision of Treason in 1572; legally protected foreign coin had been protected by the penalties of High Treason from 1487.

The Goldsmiths' Company discussed the state of the current English gold coinage in 1574. They concluded that it consisted effectively of angels, their halves and quarters, half-sovereigns, crowns

and half-crowns. Other denominations, such as the sovereigns of 30s and 20s, ryals of 15s, old nobles of 13s 4d and their fractions existed, but "are not usually paid".

Forgery, mostly of shillings and sixpencees, was not infrequent in London in the second half of the 16th century. "Slips", as counterfeits were colloquially called, were sometimes made by delinquent moneyers. Base shillings of Edward **VI** seem to have offered particular opportunities to forgers. Later in the century we hear of the practice of altering genuine coins so as to make them pass for higher denominations. Whipping and pillorying was reckoned an appropriate penalty for erasing the rose on Elizabeth's three-farthings in order to pass it for a penny. In 1578 we hear of goldsmiths in possession of gilded silver pieces and as late as 1601 of an Edward **VI** shilling gilt which " much resembled a sovereign", presumably a demonetised profile bust shilling.

Clipping had long been treasonable, and from 1576 any other impairment of the coinage incurred the same penalties. Joan Edling of London, who was pardoned in 1546, was lucky; she had diminished 60 angels (then valued at 8s each) by fourpence the piece, and 20 half-sovereigns (here 10s), by 6d each. Thomas Green, goldsmith, was hanged and quartered for clipping gold and silver coins in 1575, and two years later, Richard Robins, alias Robinson, goldsmith of Lombard Street, suffered for the like offence. At the end of the 16th century, however, the currency as a whole does not seem to have been in a bad way; a payment of silver from the Exchequer in 1601 was found to be deficient by no more than 4%, the amount by which the weight standard was officially reduced in that very year.

The Early Stuarts

The first half of the 17th century saw very little change, other than in the steady disappearance of most foreign coin from the record. Short-lived newcomers to the scene were the latest Scots issues of James VI and I, made legal tender on his accession to the English throne. In 1605, a Clerkenwell forger of "the six pounde peece of goulde alias the crosse dagger", worth just 10s in England, was subject to the full penalties for treason. Counterfeiters and clippers were as busy as ever in London, tampering not only with the coinage of the reigning monarch, but often

with the issues of earlier reigns, especially shillings and half-shillings, i.e. sixpences of Elizabeth, which finds show to have remained dominant in circulation.

Robberies continue, and we even get a glimpse of the coin-collector. The burglary at Mr Thomas Moore's house in Whitechapel in 1657 led to the loss of a distinctly eclectic range of coins, of a massive "Turkey piece of gold" (presumably Moghul) valued at £9 10s, a medal of King Charles and Queen Mary (Henrietta Maria) and "one piece of gold called a Vespasian" at 20s properly priced as a piece of fine, or "angel" gold. In 1665, Viscount Cornbury, the Earl of Clarendon's heir, was burgled of 200 gold, silver and copper "medals" worth £80; this, too, sounds like a collection.

The discontinuance of the minute silver farthing under Edward VI left a gap that took over a century to fill successfully. In the north it was said Scots coppers were in use, while in the west country "they break the penny in two pieces". In London, private tokens were an early and unsatisfactory substitute. In 1577, the city of Bristol obtained authority to strike its own farthing tokens. These somewhat fitfully superseded the tokens issued by local tradesmen, but were massively counterfeited. Some other large towns followed Bristol's lead but London did not. Some of these tokens must have been of very little worth indeed for there is mention of one that was a mere sixth of a farthing. Sir Robert Cotton suggested that there were 3000 tradesmen in London alone manufacturing their own tokens in this period; these pieces were specifically prohibited upon the appearance of the royal tokens in 1613.

In 1635 some effort was made to produce farthings less readily faked. The type was changed from a harp to a rose, and the blanks were made with curious patches of brass set into the copper, a technique supposedly difficult to imitate. For all their faults, the farthing tokens were now an integral part of the London economy and when, in 1536, the current patentee, Lord Maltravers, was abroad for most of the year with his father, the Earl of Arundel, and the issue of farthings lapsed for a while, there was a protest. A wag posted a placard on Maltravers's house replete with black humour: "Lord have mercy on us, for this house is full of tokens", a grim allusion to the Plague. In 1643 Parliament suppressed the patent, and in 1644 the farthings themselves. the stage was set for the

next and, in many ways most remarkable, development.

The discontinuance of the rose farthings was greeted with mixed feelings in London and its environs. Rival petitions and pamphlets alternately inveighed against them or pleaded for the necessity. They did not just disappear. There were allegations of false farthings being made overseas and it was commonly accepted that farthings were a necessity for the common good.

With the execution of the king in January 1648/9, another solution seemed to present itself and the floodgates were opened for private tokens now of copper and brass rather than the earlier lead. Though markedly superior in weight and technique to the rose farthings, very few private tokens matched those of Edward Nourse of Bishopsgate Street, evidently a man of principle, who offered a "farthinge worth of copper". Many of the hundreds of retailers who had petitioned for the restoration of farthings in 1644 now ordered their own, and making the dies must have been a lucrative occupation. Moneyers at the Tower Mint made a determined and seemingly successful effort to corner the business for themselves. On 14 March 1650, they raided the premises of a Mr Reeves on Whitecross Street, and seized tools used for making copper farthings unlicensed. Obviously a man of some enterprise, he was also found in possession of dies for English halfcrowns, but escaped the usual dire consequence because the royal prerogative had legally lapsed between the abolition of the Monarchy on 7 March 1649 and the authorisation of the Commonwealth money on 17 July.

To understand the typology of 17th-century tokens it is necessary to visualise the pre-1760s London street with its creaking galaxy of signs, so many of which became the devices on the tokens of the period. These issues were in no way made with royal permission - John Evelyn, the diarist noted that they were peculiarly characteristic of the Anarchy, as he termed the Commonwealth. Tokens were formally suppressed by proclamation on 16 August 1772, when the regal Britannia copper halfpence and farthings were announced. However, it was nearly two years before the tokens finally disappeared, a final mention of them being made in the *London Gazette* for 1 March 1675. Charles I, in 1684, authorised the issue of tin pieces with a central copper plug to avoid counterfeiting and confusion with silver. These appeared down until 1692. The copper coins that replaced them in and after 1694 were at first

produced in excessive quantities. The subsequent petition for restraint went to the other extreme so that before the end of the 18th century, small change was once more scarce.

Towards the Recoinage: Money in the late 17th century

In 1663 the machinery of the Tower Mint was entirely modernised, and our coinage achieved a form and style that even today it has scarcely lost. The flagship of the new money was the Guinea of 20s - the gold for it coming from that place, it quickly became attached as the name of the new pieces of Charles II. Some of them from the very start incorporated into the design an elephant or an elephant and castle, indicating the source of the metal.

The old silver coinage presented an even starker contrast with the new milled money. The problem of clipping now became acute, the principle targets for filing and clipping being King Charles I halfcrowns and shillings. With growing frequency, men were hanged and women burnt for this offence. Down to the year 1688, it was estimated that the overall loss by clipping of silver was around 8%. By the 1690s the situation was desperate. In 1690, a Mr White condemned to death for clipping, was pardoned on making to a Committee of the House of Commons a large discovery of metropolitan clippers and coiners. The provinces were far from immune to this spate of clipping, but as late as 1693 a Lancastrian bringing relatively unclipped silver to London was asked in amazement "whether we had such large money, and not diminished in our country". Despite a petition to Queen Mary (in William III's absence abroad) by the Lords of the Treasury to grant no pardon to any sentenced for clipping unless they revealed accomplices, the guilty had become too numerous for capital sentences to be any longer acceptable. By 1691, fining, pillorying and whipping were the usual penalties imposed at the Middlesex Sessions, even when files, shears and actual clippings were produced in evidence. Clipping had reduced the average weight of each coin to a little more than half the proper standard - the way was clear for the recoinage of the old silver to begin. The deficit encountered was funded by the celebrated Window Tax, for it was recognised that the poor could not bear the ensuing loss for defective coin.

Counterfeiting the current coin was a great industry in the late 17th

century. An entertaining story is told of the great judge, **Sir** Matthew Hales (1609-76), whose practice it was to accumulate and not return to circulation the many false coins he received in fees. Burglars entering his house carried off his collection of fakes rather than his other valuables, under the impression that this was his treasure.

The 18th century was essentially an age of gold coin and of coppers. After the beginning of the century, relatively little silver was coined, and it was generally scarce and increasingly worn. During the first half of the century, the gold coins in circulation included a high proportion of Portuguese pieces that entered the country in large numbers after 1710. After the middle of the century, this import of gold dwindled, and both English and Portuguese gold was subject to forgery, clipping and filing. John Clarke, a London watchmaker, was hanged in 1767 for filing guineas, but Portuguese coins lacked the same protection. The forgery of gold and silver coin continued to bring many Londoners to bad ends. Down to 1790, women might still be burnt for this offence and, although they were first strangled, this fearsome penalty is recorded to have induced particular shock, as in the fictitious history of Moll Flanders and the real case of Barbara Spencer, put to death on 5 July 1721. The last recorded sufferer was Christian Bowman, alias Murphy, executed at the Old Bailey on 18 March 1789.

During the later 18th century, the faking of Bank of England notes rose in frequency and there began a vain attempt to produce notes which could not be counterfeited - even the Bank, at times, was unable to distinguish their products from those of the forgers. Even the possession, let alone the passing, of a forged note at this period merited transportation.

So worn was the silver coinage that "plain", i.e. effaced, coin continued to be accepted as legal tender down to the issue of the new silver coinage in 1816.

The copper coinage during the 18th century was counterfeited, adulterated by tokens and plagued by forgeries and Dutch coppers. London was reputed to be the principal source of the false farthings. Contracts to rectify the matter were placed with Matthew Boulton's Soho Birmingham) factory, giving rise to the 1797 "cartwheel" twopences of two ounces, and the pennies of an ounce. Soon, with the next group of issues in 1806, they were to disappear into the melting pot, showing a

ready profit to metal dealers. A cart stopped proceeding from Saffron Hill to a coppersmith's in Upper Thames Street was found to contain almost a ton of 1797 coppers. The Royal Mint struck no copper between 1775 and 1821, when it began to issue farthings for George IV, made at least in part from "the residue of the copper now remaining in the Mint from the melting down of the old copper halfpence" struck between 1717 and 1775.

In 1836, along with sheep- or horse-stealing and the stealing of a dwelling house, capital punishment for counterfeiting coins was abolished. The last offenders to be executed were Buckle and Andrews, who made a false punch for sovereigns of George IV. The offence, of course, continued, and continues, unabated to this day.

London Numismatic Club meeting, 10th January 1996

Michael Dickinson, well known for his work in the field of tokens and his revision of Williamson as *Seventeenth Century Tokens of the British Isles and Their Values,* spoke on "Categories of 18th century tokens". He noted that much of his presentation was as a result of his continuing work on an extensive revision of the Seaby catalogue *British Tokens and Their Values, a* new edition of which will hopefully be ready in 1997.

The major question with the 18th century series, as he saw it, was the status of many individual pieces in that series. In his revision of *British Tokens* ... he hopes to be able to allocate a category classification to each type, and this will be printed alongside each entry, thus drawing attention to the raison d'être of the tokens.

With the 17th century series, apart from a few uncertain pieces, the tokens were all issued as small change by (generally) clearly identifiable issuers. However, when we turn to the 18th century, itself a misnomer since the period really extends as late as 1803, a different situation obtained. The classic reference work is Dalton and Hamer **(D&H),** which is still seen to be remarkably thorough and extremely useful with its abundance of illustrations. The work has, however, two main disadvantages: its unbending rigidity in allocating almost every piece to a particular place or county, and the inclusion of many pieces that are not really tokens at all. With the former, whereas previous authors such as Condor or Atkins had 'Not Local' sections with some 250 pieces, D&H re-allocated all of them to various counties, most becoming Middlesex

tokens. This has meant that many die-linked tokens have become separated. The second category has taken notice of many pieces, such as Kempson of Birmingham and Skidmore s London buildings, which seem to be reasonable to include, be they pennies or half-pennies, whilst the so-called pennies of the Middlesex National, Political and Social series are medals pure and simple and, as such, should be excluded.

The essential categories may be listed as:

1. Genuine Tokens. 2. Tokens struck for general circulation. 3. Tokens struck for sale to collectors. 4. Private tokens and presentation pieces.

1. Genuine tokens

Here the issuer is identifiable, by name or device, and the pieces were issued for use as money and redeemable as small change. Many of them declare their denomination, despite invariably being identifiable by their size. A sub-category, lb, that may be included are those which bear clear evidence of their issuer, were issued in fair quantities but they were, nevertheless, primarily intended as advertisements. Their similarity to the current coins and tokens qualifies them as a token coinage. Sub-category 1c would include anonymous pieces which were certainly struck for a specific trader, such as an ironmaster. A fourth category, 1x, includes tokens having the same obverse and reverse die-pairings as tokens in categories la, lb and 1c, but they have a variety of edge type. This can be extremely confusing. The great rarities are almost certainly the result of errors, whereas others are the result of commercial agreement and acceptance amongst issuers.

In this class there are also counterfeits, i.e. imitations of genuine category la tokens, mostly of the larger issuers, made to deceive the contemporary general public rather than collectors. Here, for example, obverse and reverse may be well copied but there is a variation in the issuer's initials in the cypher, or other subtle variations may be incorporated.

2. Tokens struck for general circulation

Category 2a are tokens anonymous as to their issuer, such as those which were created especially to be struck as pairs, e.g. an obverse with the Princess of Wales combining a reverse with the Prince of Wales's crest.

This category also includes imitations of the regal coinage known as

evasions. These were highly profitable as most were of light weight. Employers could buy quantities of these spurious tokens direct from the manufacturer at a discounted face value and subsequently pay their work forces with them. Category 2b represents tokens which bear the name or initials of a false issuer along with the supposed place of issue. Although restricted to three such tokens, they are all fairly common and are found showing signs of circulation.

3. Tokens struck specially for sale to collectors

With the increased variety of tokens after 1787, a demand was created by collectors and by 1795 these were being specially catered for. Such pieces were struck in limited quantities and sold above their face value. Consequently, they tend to turn up today in extremely fine condition. Many are of a medallic nature, often with political themes. Notable here are those of Skidmore, Kempson with his building series and Spence with his strong political themes. Around 30% of the tokens listed in **D&H** fall into this collectors' category.

4. Private tokens and presentation pieces

These were usually struck in very limited numbers and were not intended for sale to collectors. Often they were solely for distribution to friends, or their issuer's peers in the hope of receiving reciprocal tokens.

A further group to be considered is that of **Mules.** The muling or pairing of dies not originally intended to be used together on the same coin is a very common feature of the series. Roughly 15% of the types in the series are mules, with further varieties being created by the use of different edge readings. Examples of mules occur in all the categories outlined above.

From the foregoing it will be readily appreciated that a good argument can often be put forward for a token being in more than one category. It does present problems and, hopefully, the outcome in the final publication will not appear to be too dogmatic.

London Numismatic Club meeting, 6th February 19%

Mike Ewing, a noted collector of coronation commemoratives, spoke on "Why Approved Busts ?". **He** explained that he would examine how the Royal Mint came to make dies, tools and hobs for some portrait obverses to be used by the commercial medal makers, as happened for the planned Coronation of Edward VIII in 1937, the actual Coronation in 1937 of George VI, and for the Coronation of Elizabeth II in 1952.

Looking quickly at the ending of the post of Engraver to the Royal Mint in 1849, then at the succession of larger commemorative medals produced by the Royal Mint for the two Jubilees of Queen Victoria and the Coronations of Edward VII and George V, he went on to show how the appointment of Colonel Robert Johnson as Deputy Master of the Royal Mint in 1920 was followed by a more aggressive marketing policy for obtaining medal work, justified as an attempt to improve the artistic standards of medal work in this country. Johnson was also responsible for proposing the formation of the Mint Advisory Committee, which still functions today.

We were shown, mainly from documentary sources, how during 1923 and 1924 the production in the Royal Mint of some annual 'Royal Academy Prize Medals and a series of souvenir medals for the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley, triggered a strong reaction from a small group of commercial medal makers who orchestrated and maintained a running campaign against the Royal Mint in an attempt to stop medal work completely as unfair competition with the Trade. The Press, MP's, Parliamentary Questions, protests and deputations to the Deputy Master of the Royal Mint, and to the Chancellor of the Exchequer as Master, from every Trade association with the remotest connection to the medal trade were brought to bear. The result was an agreement to restrict the Mint to producing medals only from dies actually produced at the Mint and at the request of individuals, a pricing policy that would prevent serious competition with the Trade, together with a ban on advertising in any form by the Mint.

The dispute was kept running by the small group of medal makers with continuous complaints right up to the Jubilee of George V in 1935, when the Mint was again strongly attacked, particularly over the sale of the small silver medals. Reacting to this dispute, the Royal Mint arranged to produce a standard obverse die for use by the Trade for the Coronation

of Edward VIII and, when this was cancelled by the Abdication, similar arrangements were agreed at short notice for the Coronation of George VI.

The established system was again followed for the 1953 Coronation of our present Queen, the Royal Mint again producing a series of electrotypes and dies. These special obverses for the metal trade are those that have become known as "Approved Busts", or more properly, "Approved Effigies".

London Numismatic Club meeting, 2nd April 1996

Our former Vice-President, as well as long-time Joint-Editor of the Newsletter, Sue Tyler-Smith, spoke on 'Nationalised silver, privatised copper - 2500 years of Persian coinage'

The problem with such a wide conspectus was to be able to give a broad view of the currency and, in highlighting areas of personal interest, Sue noted that she must necessarily over simplify. Her aim was to show that in Iran silver, and gold when minted, was centrally controlled and of standardised weights and designs, whilst copper was locally controlled and much more varied. This model applies both before and after the conquest of Iran by the Arabs in the 650s. Since it is inevitably clearest at times of political stability, these are the periods that will be concentrated on. Since so many Islamic coins look alike to the untrained eye, the aim was to pick out representative examples and also to concentrate more on the copper types which she found of greater interest.

The Achaemenid Persians were the first rulers of Iran to issue coins, when their empire was far larger than modern Iran, stretching from Egypt to the Indus river. The principal coin was the siglos with its uniface type of the king, apparently running, holding a bow and dagger or spear; the reverse is an incuse punch mark. They were struck for use in the western provinces of the empire, with the central area remaining non-monetised. These types even continue after the conquest by Alexander the Great in c. 330 **BC.** After Alexander's death in 323 **BC,** Iran was ruled by the Seleucids and their coinage was of the Greek style but within 80 years nomadic Parthians had taken over from the Seleucids, establishing their empire in the mid-third century **BC** under Asaces. They struck good metal silver drachms which were to remain their principle, if monotonous, denomination. The basic types were a bust of the king,

diademed or wearing the bashlik or tiara, on the obverse and on the reverse an archer seated right holding a bow within a legend arranged in a square. This was the first Iranian, as opposed to Greek, coinage struck for Iran and was to remain constant for some 500 years, 238 BC to 224 AD, and was struck at about 15 mints on the Iranian plateau.

The Parthian copper coins, of several different denominations, were much more varied in their design. The early reverses favoured horses, whilst later ones have a variety of design that included Tyche, jars, urns, griffins and a king seated on a rock, etc. There are so many designs, in fact, that it has been suggested that perhaps the principal mints, such as Susa and Ecbatana, changed their designs annually. There are no gold coins - those extant are all modern forgeries.

Early in the third century AD the Parthians were overthrown by the Sasanians who founded a dynasty that was to continue for more than 400 years, and they continued to strike as their principal denomination, the drachm. The types used are monotonous with the crowned (with many varieties of crown) bust of the king facing right and the reverse with a Zoroastrian fire altar with two attendants. The Sasanians did strike gold, mostly to the current Roman standard. These pieces seem to have been for ceremonial purposes as they are found well struck and hardly worn having seen little circulation. Curiously, Sasanian bronzes are less common than their Parthian predecessors, though again, the designs are more varied than on the silver and some have local allusions.

The conquest of the Sasanian Empire by the Arabs in the mid-seventh century at first made little difference to the coinage. Once the Arabs (Umayyads) were firmly established they reformed the coinage. On their pre-reformed coins the name of the Sasanian king is retained but there is an additional Arabic marginal legend. Later the name of the Arab governor replaced that of the 'king. Curiously, despite being Muslims, the reverse type of the Zoroastrian fire altar is continued. As well as silver a large variety of copper was struck but all types are scarce. The reformed coinage was struck on a new weight standard and with new designs which are (in the Islamic tradition) purely inscriptional. The silver dirhems retained the large thin flan and multiple surrounding circles but the weight standard was reduced to 2.7g. The obverse carries the Shahada (Attestation of Faith) - 'There is no God but God, He is alone and has no partner'. Around the edge the text reads: 'In the name of God this dirhem

was struck at [mint] in the year [date]'. The reverse is purely religious with, in the centre, 'God is One, God is Eternal. He did not beget and was not begotten. There is not to him his equal', Then, around,' Mohammed **is** the Messenger of God. He sent him with the guidance and a religion of the truth in order that he might cause it to be bright over the [already existing] religion, all of it, although polytheists dislike [it]'.

There was a total of 66 mints in Iran/Iraq producing these coins of uniform style, indicating centralised die production as under the later Sasanians. Not all the mints were operating at the same time, initially there were 12 which gradually increased to a peak, but by 131 AH only a couple were active in Iran. Almost all Umayyad Iranian copper coins are rare, and what there is is rather monotonous, with no pictorial types. Gold was not struck in Iran.

By the 730s **AD** there was dissatisfaction in Iran with the Umayyads and they were overthrown by the Abbasids who produced a very uniform gold and silver coinage at a large number of mints. The copper was essentially a municipal coinage bearing the Governor's name - at Rayy, for instance, 19 named individuals appearing on the copper coins in a period of 60 years. Unfortunately, the coins saw much circulation and are invariably difficult to read.

With the break-up **of** the Abbasid Caliphate in the 9th century **AD** Iran was fragmented and subjected to various warring factions. It was not he united until the Great Seljuks took control under Tughril Beg (103863), the founder of the dynasty. Seljuk rule coincided with the time of the silver famine which affected Europe as well as the Near and Middle East so at a time when Iran was united and one would expect a pure, unified silver coinage one finds instead a gold, bullion coinage of varying fineness. Seljuk control did not last more than 60 years and once more there followed a period of rival dynasties fighting for supremacy.

Stability returned with the Ilkhans and Hulagu (1256-65), the grandson of Genghiz Khan. It was a time of development in the arts and sciences, reflected in the elaborate calligraphy on the coinage, struck in all three metals. At one point, under Gaykhatu in 1294, an attempt was made even to introduce paper money on the Chinese model, but this led to even more mayhem and widespread collapse of trade and commerce. With the death of Abu Sa'id in 1335 the Ilkhan empire disintegrated as rival khans competed for territory. There was even a queen, Sati Beg, for

a short time until she was forced to many one of the rivals.

Iran was not united again until Timur in 1370. He initially adopted each local currency in use in various parts of his empire, but towards the end of his reign he established a uniform coinage based on the tanka of 6.2g. His empire lasted 80 years, and with only two rulers, and then fell apart for 50 years until the Safadis established themselves in 1501. They brought stability and an attractive array of good silver coins. Civic coins are the norm, not acknowledging the ruling dynasties (the last such were struck under the Ilkhanids). Generally the copper coins carry the town name and date with a geometric or pictorial design. Sun faces, often animals and many other designs occur. Possibly certain designs were favoured by certain mints, but there is a lot more work to be done in this area. It is difficult because so often the coins are worn or corroded, or struck from dies too large for the flans and thereby losing vital parts of the inscription.

It is obvious that there is a vast variety of coins and coinage to be seen in the 2500 years of Persian coinage, and it is a field that is fascinating, varied and leaves plenty of room for further study, especially the copper coinage which, by its very existence, can be a barometer of economic and social fluctuations.

A splendid collection of slides accompanied the talk, bringing many of the more difficult points about the coinage of Persia to the eye and making them more easy to appreciate.

London Numismatic Club meeting, 5th June 1996

The Club was delighted to welcome an old friend, Dr Michael Metcalf, Keeper of the Heberden Coin Room in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, and President of the Royal Numismatic Society, to speak on 'Scandinavian coinage in the ninth century AD'.

Until 1966 the general view was that the Scandinavian coins of the first half of the ninth century were minted at Birka, near Stockholm, because so many had been found there in the excavations of 1871-95. Professor Brita Malmer, in her splendid monograph of 1966, *Noriska mynt fore år 1000*, swung opinion decisively away from Birka and towards the town of Hedeby, located on the southern frontier of Jutland. Her meticulous analysis rested on the hypothesis that the main series was from a single mint. Recent archaeological discoveries now encourage us

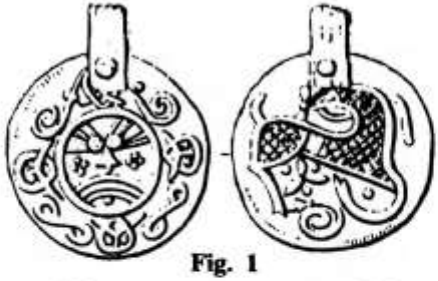


Fig. 1

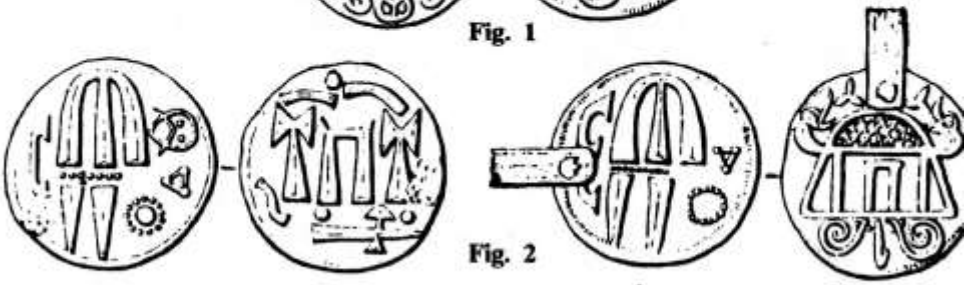


Fig. 2

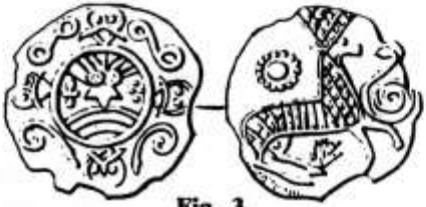


Fig. 3

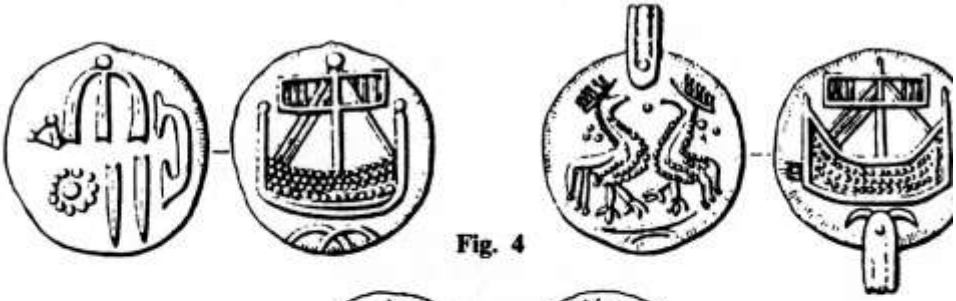


Fig. 4

Fig. 5

to reconsider that verdict. In particular, the excavations at the site of Ribe on the west coast of Jutland produced specimens of the 'Hedeby' coinage, some which are completely unidentifiable except for their 'Hedeby' fabric. Where they are identifiable, they are of the 'Woden/monster' type Malmer KG 5-6 (Fig. 1). These are simply an enlarged version of the sceatta type which dominates the find sequence at Ribe for 80 years or more (although Professor Malmer would not accept that mint attribution). What, indeed, could be more natural than that the Ribe mint should have continued to use its traditional design ? The moment of change-over from sceattas to pennies can be seen in the stratification of the Post Office site excavations at Ribe 1990-91, between Phases G and H.

At Hedeby, by contrast, in the same period all the finds are of different types, imitating or developed from Charlemagne' s pre-reform coins minted at Dorestad (Malmer KG 2-4) (Fig. 2). There is thus a clear contrast between Ribe and Hedeby in the coin finds from the first half of the ninth century. The argument is that it is difficult to imagine how this situation could have arisen if KG 5-6 as well as KG 2-4 had been minted at Hedeby. It would necessitate arguing that there were no outflows of coins from Hedeby to Ribe until the phase when KG 5-6 was in production, and that during that phase there were no stray coins losses or grave-finds at Hedeby. This is indeed highly unlikely. Indeed, the obvious conclusion must be that KG 5-6 is from Ribe until there are any cogent contrary arguments to be considered.

One such argument rests on a couple of rare coins which seem to be mules between KG 2-4 and KG 5 (in Malmer, pl. 34, nos 7 and 10). It is probable, however that for stylistic reasons they are not true mules but imitations of eclectic design (see Note below). Both have the triple triangle interlace (Fig. 3) seen elsewhere in KG 2-4 also.

Secondly, there is an argument which is not contrary but rather more cautionary. The numbers of stray finds or grave goods from Ribe and Hedeby of the two KG groups in question are very small, merely three and four respectively. From a statistical viewpoint these numbers are inconclusive. What this in effect means is if at Ribe the next 'Hedeby' coin to be excavated was of KG 3-4, the 'score' for KG 5-6 would immediately drop by 25%, from 100% to 75%. If there were to be 20 or 30 finds from each place solidly of KG 3-4 at Hedeby and similarly of KG 5-6 a t Ribe, most scholars would presumably be satisfied that the

case had been proved. Until more excavations have been made at Ribe it would be fair to say that the conclusion is, from a statistical point of view, only provisional. We are entitled to take into account, meanwhile, the continuity of the Woden/monster design among the finds at Ribe.

We are also entitled to take into account another polarisation in the find-pattern which suggests that there was, after all, a mint at Birka. KG 3-4 include coins in more than one style, notably with the ship types. Malmer A2 (Fig. 4) is strictly localised in the Stockholm area, with three finds from Helgo and two from Birka. Malmer Al (e.g. Fig. 5) is on record from Okholm (Jutland), Spangereid (Norway, four specimens), Flokerudstorp (Värmland), Johannishus (Blekinge), and Löddeköpinge (Sickle), plus specimens from Birka and one from Russia. The geographical separation of the boat types Al and A2 is thus pronounced, and it is an obvious hypothesis that Al is from Hedeby and A2 from Birka.

The only counter-argument would be that the two groups of coins were die-linked together or linked by true mules, or were stylistically by the hand of the same engraver. None of these is the case. The only obstacle is the hypothesis that all the 'Hedeby' coins of KG 2-6 are from a single mint - which is not only unsupported but which also looks increasingly to be contrary to the archaeological data.

It seems, then, that there was a relatively small mint at Birka which imitated Hedeby coins, and then developed its own distinctive design of Cockerels. Lateral reversal, as seen in Fig. 4, is often a sign of imitation. It does not fit easily with the more accomplished workmanship of the Hedeby issues as illustrated, for example, by the Hedeby harbour hoard.

The same statistical caveat would note that the numbers are too small for certainty. Perhaps new excavation material from Birka will alter the picture. Meanwhile, we should consider that within the distribution pattern for KG 2-6 as a whole, the four sites of Helgö, Birka, Söderby and Adelsö are a tight group on the periphery. The case for a mint at Birka is at least as strong as that for Ribe, and the shape of the argument is exactly the same.

Finally, another curiosity of distributional evidence should be considered, and one where the interpretation is much more speculative. Both KG 5 and KG 6 are of the Woden/monster type. The formal

difference between them is that KG 5 has a coiled snake beneath the monster, whereas KG 6 has a circle and a line attached to it. KG 6 tends to be in a looser style. It predominates on the eastern coasts of Sweden (Käppervik, Smedby, Näsby and Rommunds on Gotland), where KG 5 is absent. If that were all, one might think of an explanation (subject to the statistical adequacy of the sample) in terms of a chronologically progressive spread of KG 5-6 eastwards from Ribe. The many finds of KG **5-6** from Birka, however, wherever they can be identified (as most of them can) are of KG 5. Brita Malmer was able to list altogether 25 specimens of KG 5 (of which 17 are from Birka), and 14 of KG 6 (none of which are from Birka). It is very difficult to see how this situation can have arisen.

Future excavations at Ribe will, hopefully, show what the ratio of KG 5 to KG 6 was at that site. If it should turn out that KG 6 was virtually absent there, it may be necessary to look elsewhere, perhaps to Sjaelland. There is a saying that mints should not be multiplied *praeter necessitatem*. In reconsidering KG 2-6, we should be willing to recognise necessity.

[NOTE: A fully footnoted and rather more fully argued version of this text will be found as part of the President's Address in *Numismatic Chronicle* 1996. Readers are referred to it for all the necessary references to the literature.]

London Numismatic Club meeting, 2nd July 1996

One of our own members, Guy Turner, spoke on 'A brief history of Scottish coinage.

The Scottish coinage falls into three distinct phases: 1. Pennies of the sterling standard current with late Norman and Plantagenet England; 2. The phase of repeated debasement and recoinage at improved standards; and 3. Monetary re-integration with the English coinage under James VI until the Union of the Kingdoms in 1707 under the last reigning Stuart, Queen Anne.

Finds of ancient coins north of the Border consist of some Roman bronze, a little Hiberno-Norse associated with the Viking settlements and trade routes, plus Anglo-Saxon. In particular, there are the small silver and copper coins from the kingdom of Northumbria which once held sway as far north as Fife. Unfortunately these coins show no mint marks

and their source is therefore presumed to be the capital. Ebor (York). Saxon town names like Stirling, Roxburgh and Edinburgh carry Northumbria's mark and Edinburgh soon grew to become Scotland's major mint.

Henry I of England died in 1135 and David (1124-53), taking advantage of the civil war now raging in England between Stephen and Matilda, rapidly annexed Northumberland and Cumbria, together with the working mint of Carlisle and its moneyer, Erebald, who found it expedient to provide rough-struck pennies that can be considered to be the first truly Scottish coins. Mints were soon operating in Berwick and other major towns.

Forty years later, David's grandson William the Lion introduced the lion as the emblem of Scotland, and also the Crescent and Pellet coinage, which was used to buy his freedom from homage to Richard the Lionheart of England for 10,000 Merks, just over one and a half million pennies. Short cross pennies were struck for the next 50 years by William and Alexander II. They are relatively common coins and can be distinguished from their English counterparts by there being stars of 5, 6 or 7 points in the reverse quarters and the king is seen in profile either to right or left.

Alexander III (1249-86) introduced two major recoinages: the voided long cross *in* 1250 to deter clipping, and round halfpence and farthing 30 years later. The pennies have varying combinations of mullets and stars on the reverse. This coinage was continued up until the 1350s by John Balliol, Robert the Bruce and David II, when the larger sized groat was introduced. As larger coins these had space to now include the mint and Royal motto. Privy marks also appear. Gold coins were tried for the first time, a half merk or 80-pence piece similar to the English Ship Noble. It did not take long for the economical Scots to realise that the coin could be made slightly smaller and yet pass at the same value. However, this was soon noticed in England and an Act was passed in 1374 that valued the Scottish groat at only three English pence (instead of four) - thus ended 200 years of parity.

Robert III acceded in 1390 and minted smaller gold coins known as Lions (5s), plus silver groats with a facing bust and pellets on the reverse which made the coins look superficially English. However, they were

lighter and the English therefore issued a further Act valuing Scots coins at 2:1, and shortly thereafter banning them altogether. Thus ended the first phase of Scottish coinage.

The second phase begins around 1400 with the succession of five Jameses. James I issued small groats of 6d with fleur de lys in the reverse quarters, and also nine shilling gold coins called Demies. James II issued larger groats, replacing the lys with crowns in the reverse quarters. James III's issues showed Renaissance influences with galloping knights (Riders) and Unicorns on the gold coins. His silver groats of 1471 carried a realistic profile and thistles in two reverse quarters and saw the introduction of the arched crown on his main issue. The first British official billon coinage, four-penny placks, also appeared. The ecclesiastical 'black money' of the period was attributed to the Bishop of St Andrews.

The silver coins of James IV(1488-1531) are perhaps difficult to find and the groats were now valued at 14 pence, the large production of billon placks and pennies being probably due to the silver bullion shortage of the time. Under James V (contemporary with Henry VII and VIII), the groats were 18d and of similar style to the English issues. James V struck the first dated Scottish coin (1539) and also the gold ducat or Bonnet piece. Another innovation was a rather nice billon coin, the Bawbee, with a fat thistle motif.

Mary's reign (1542-67) was turbulent (she became Queen at seven days old !), and French coinage, introduced with French troops by her mother, Mary of Guise, soon became a major element of the base billon pennies, placks and bad bawbees that comprised the Scottish currency. Upon her betrothal to Francis I of France, coins were issued with their initials entwined; they were none as 'nonsunts' from their legend: Iam *non sunt due sed una taro* = 'We are no more two but one body'. These coins are popular with French numismatists since Francis I struck no local coins in France. The influx of American silver relieved the earlier metal famine and larger silver coins were struck, at first testoons of four then of five shillings, culminating in the large ryals of thirty shillings of Mary and Henry Darnley in 1565/7. Amusingly, the reverse has a tortoise climbing a palm tree which, under James VI, was changed to a large sword.

Under James VI (1567-1625) Scotland enjoyed its most vigorous

period of change with a hundred years ahead of swapping between shillings (based **on** 12 pennies) and merks (based upon multiples of 20). There were eight different recoinages under James **VI,** some of the pieces being very rare. There was also a lot of countermarking and revaluing of earlier good silver by up **to** 20%. Amongst the more impressive pieces one may note the 40/-s boy-king in armour holding a sword (1582); the balance half and quarter merk (1591-3); and the ornately jacketed king on the obverses of the seventh coinage with a three-headed thistle reverse. The last truly Scottish coinage was the gold Sword and Sceptre £12 Scots/£1 sterling where the king wears the Scottish crown.

After his accession to the English throne (as James **I,** 1603), the king established a currency of similar weight and fineness in both kingdoms with a ratio of 12:1 between Scottish and English denominations. Obvious differences between the coins are the central lys in the crown instead of St George's cross; the thistle on the horse's saddle on the larger silver coins, and after 1610 the Scottish lion replaces the English leopards on the reverse. **In** Scotland, the popular copper two-penny coin 1/6th of an English penny) was retained.

Charles **I's** coinage initially carried on his father's issues and he also reintroduced merks of 20, 40 and 80 penny denominations in response to popular demand. Nicholas Briot became Master of the Scottish mint in August 1635 and introduced the mill and screw press which greatly improved the mint's products. After the outbreak of the English Civil War, Scottish coinage was debased again and there were only sporadic issues of copper twopences (called turners or bodies). The mint was then closed until 1664 when Charles **II** struck good milled merks, followed in 1676 by dollars and copper bawbees.

James VII **(II** of England) struck 40 and 10 shilling coins, and these were continued by William and Mary, adding 60, 20 and 5 shillings. After Mary's death gold £6 and £12 pieces were struck from Darien Company gold dust imported from Africa. Before the Act of Union Queen Anne struck only 5 and 10 shilling pieces, after which Scottish coinage was melted down and a great conversion took place with its attendant problems. Edinburgh used the 'E' mintmark under the Queen's bust and by 1709 the shilling and halfcrown dies had worn out and new ones were engraved locally, there being a difference in the Queen's hair.

[A last allusion to Scottish coinage can be seen in the 'Scottish' lion

seated facing on the reverse of shillings of George VI - a tribute to his consort's ancestry as Elizabeth of Glamis, now, of course, HM The Queen Mother. Ed.]

London Numismatic Club meeting, 7th August 1996

This was the occasion of a Members' Own evening (and of a London Underground Railways strike), so the numbers present, The President plus twelve members, was an extremely good attendance. Those who made it to the Institute of Archaeology were not to be disappointed as David Sealy, the Club's Programme Organiser, had once more cajoled, coerced (or otherwise managed) to produce an interesting group of short talks.

Michael Anderson, our Past-President, began by saying how he had found the link between historical personages and coins always a fascinating area to pursue. He had taken an interest in the coins of the Lebanon, and thereby Salome - known best in the popular mind for her Dance of the Seven Veils, that culminated in John the Baptist losing his head. Strauss's opera *Salome* had been produced in 1905 and was itself taken from Oscar Wilde's French version of the story of 1893. The cinema world had taken an interest, not least in "Salome's Last Dance" of 1988. Some would ascribe Salome's request for the head of John the Baptist as the revenge of a woman whose advances had been spurned. The subject had certainly been a favourite with artists as far back as the fifteenth century. Yet, the story only appeared in the Gospels in Matthew and Mark, the greater detail actually being given by Josephus, the Jewish historian who went over to the Roman side. According to the Gospels, Salome was not married, yet we are told elsewhere that she had three sons. Indeed, the lady was several times married and her convoluted family relationships were most expertly revealed by Michael in great detail, leaving most of the audience not only somewhat confused but also marvelling at his retentive memory, all being presented without a note to hand.

Salome, a lady whose family connections Michael suggested would have given the Jerusalem Social Services a headache, eventually achieved her heart's desire to be a queen when her husband, Aristobulus became king of Chalcis (c. AD 53-92). A bronze coin shows her diademed and

draped bust as the reverse type to her husband's obverse portrait. It is not known when Salome died, but she was probably still alive in AD 93 after Josephus had published his historical account.

Niall Fairhead produced two exhibits. One was a very fine example of a Chinese Warring States period (481-221 BC) sword that he had purchased in Shansi Province whilst on a business trip to China. His business partner, Steve, with him at the time, who took an interest in Chinese calligraphy, swiftly noted that there was a small group of characters high on the blade. After much study, and explaining that the script of the Warring States period had its own difficulties, he triumphantly produced a translation. The inscription identified the sword as Government Property and not to be removed !

Niall's second exhibit was what at first sight appeared to be an inconsequential piece of terracotta brick. He had purchased it in a market in Hong Kong for the equivalent of £5 because it had impressions of Han Dynasty (200 BC - AD 200) coins on it. The impressions were, however, in relief not, as might be expected, incuse. The explanation seems to be that this was a terracotta die for producing a mould for casting the typical and common uniface Han coins. Apparently a bronze die would be centrally made and then circulated to the appropriate places. This single die was used to make multiple impressions in a terracotta brick, thus producing some 30 to 40 impressions. However, to cast from this would produce coins with elevated (relief) lettering. Therefore, this fired relief impression brick must then have been impressed into the clay to make incuse impressions from which the coins could be cast in "tree" form, i.e. with connecting rivulets so that they could be broken off and finished round when taken from the mould. What Niall had found was this intermediate stage in the coin manufacturing, the relief or ex-cuse forma that was used to make the final moulds for the Han Chinese cash.

John Roberts-Lewis reviewed numismatic references found in Victorian Post Office Notices and Circulars issued between 1840 and 1901. These cover coins and banknotes, but only coin references were considered.

The first category was about coin validity with details of the 1849 Florin when it was introduced as a new value. The change of design to the Jubilee shilling of 1889 needed assurance that it was genuine. When Australian sovereigns and half-sovereigns minted between 1855 and 1870

were made legal tender in Great Britain, a notice was necessary, especially since the word AUSTRALIA was prominent in the design. Validity of worn but not defaced British silver coins was also notified. The remainder of the category concerned the withdrawal from circulation of old copper coins in 1870; of foreign bronze coins in 1877, and of gold coins received after 1889, if minted prior to Victoria's reign (pre-1837).

The second category concerned light and counterfeit gold and other counterfeits. Light gold coin, described originally as forgeries of George IV sovereigns, were actually produced by removing metal from the edge of genuine coins and remilling them. The result was 10% underweight and with a characteristic thin rim. Other issues were mentioned and the problem of lightweight persisted, with circulars being issued on a number of occasions. The use of platinum to produce gold-plated forgeries was an unusual occurrence. A sovereign and half-sovereign balance of a widely sold type was displayed.

Two gangs passing counterfeits were described, one using forged five-shilling pieces, the other, headed by a real "Fagin", used boys to pass the forgeries. Base metal forgeries of a Jubilee five-shillings piece and a Young Head sixpence were exhibited.

The final Post Office Circular concerned the confusion between newly minted Old Head farthings and half sovereigns.

David Rogers spoke on 'Matters of Numismatic Weight and Movement', and produced a remarkable selection of exhibits in support of his talk. David said that while coins were made of metal that was intrinsically valuable, any loss of metal represented a real loss of value. It was necessary to weigh coins in bulk or individually to check that they had at least 90 % of the expected metal, as any English medieval silver coin ceased to be legally acceptable if it had lost 12 *1/2%* or more. Coins that failed this test were treated as bullion and that meant a loss of about 12% as soon as the coin fell below this limit. The Mint might weigh coins by the Tower pound, 243 or more pennies, to see if the average weight of the day's output was within 5% and acceptable, but the rules allowed 5% of the individual coins to be as much as 12 1/2% above or below average. The public were not expected to weigh such large amounts and documents of 1292 mention the use of a weight for five shillings or 60 pennies, and individual coins were only to be checked if a deficiency was found. Paul and Bente Withers's book, *British Coin-Weights* [1993]

Tumbrel case with acorn finial and hinged balance arm.

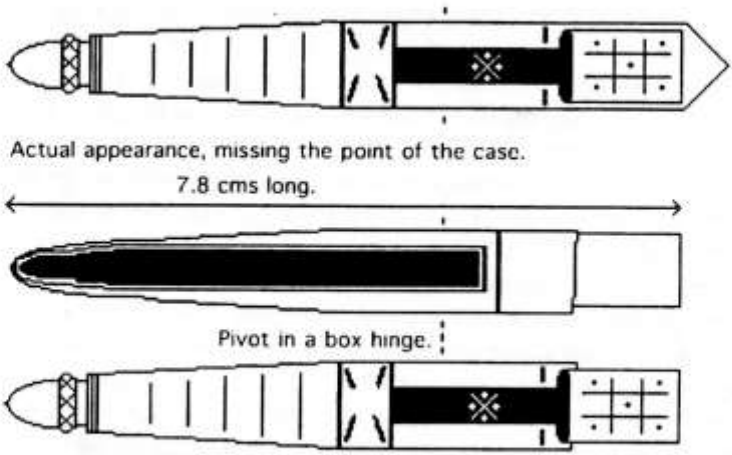


Figure 1. South Yorkshire find, 1991.

Sketches of two balance arms from tumbrels.

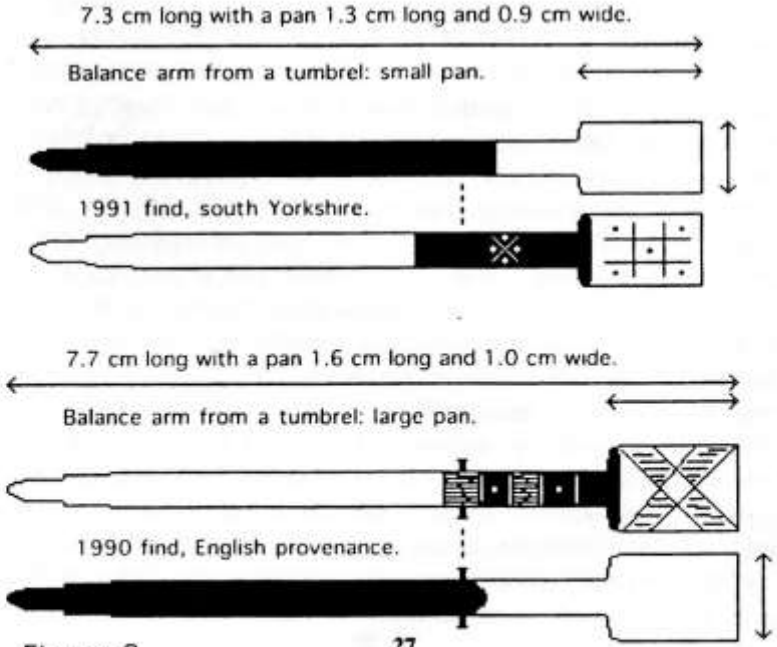
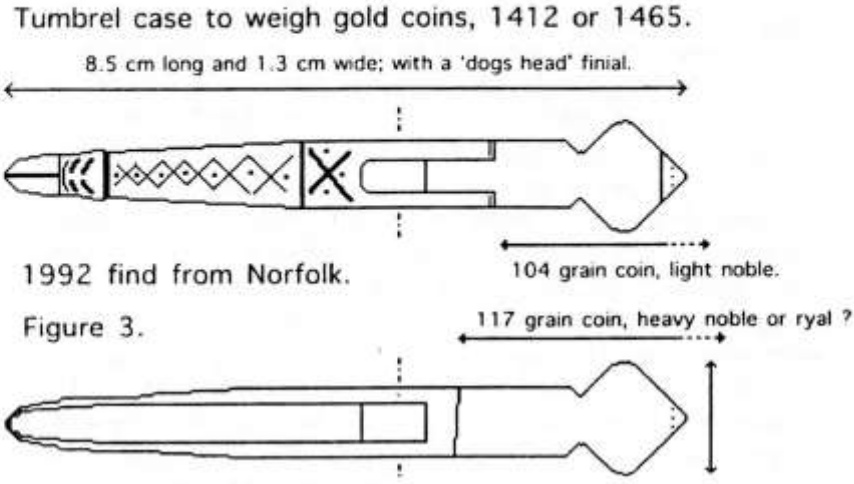


Figure 2.

illustrated on page 6 a weight for five shillings and a tumbrel or penny-poise for checking the individual coins before 130. A new weight has now been found that is for 12 pennies and has the obverse design of a groat of Edward **I.** The weight is 5% below the theoretical weight of three groats (3 x 91 grains), and this may be a weight to check coins in bulk and test that they were within acceptable limits before resorting to the tumbrel to weigh each penny. The shilling weight could also be used to test 48 light farthings, 24 halfpennies of a mixture of pennies and fractional coins, but a separate weight was required for the 1279-80 heavy farthings because these were 6.6 grains of debased silver instead of the 5.5 grains used for the later light farthings. Both the new shilling and the heavy farthing weights were exhibited, and a new tumbrel. Since tumbrels work by measuring the moment (weight times distance from the pivot giving a turning moment), the title of the talk was thus explained.

The tumbrel was a balance made with an asymmetric shape like the steelyard. The word has been used for medieval examples of coin scales around 1300, but there are British examples as early as 1150 and as late as 1500. The tumbrel is usually small, less than 9cm or 3.5 inches long, hinged like a pair of scissors and designed to fit into a pocket or medieval purse. The example illustrated (Fig. 1) is fairly typical and must have been made before 1344 as it balances with the 22 grain English pennies. It was found in 1991 in South Yorkshire near the Lincolnshire border. When the acorn finial is held high, the box hinge only allows the balance arm to swing to 90 degrees and the decorated surface **of** the pan rests horizontally. This **is** the usual position, as shown in a stained glass window of c. 1270 in Le Mans cathedral. There the tumbrel is shown with a spike fixed into a table. A full weight 22.5 grain penny is too heavy for the counterpoise balance arm and the coin falls off the pan as the arm overbalances. This tumbrel (Fig. I) might have been made at any time when 22.5 or 22.2 grain pennies were current, i.e. about 1066 to 1344. The later period, about 1180 or 1200, is more likely from the style of the metalwork, although this not necessarily a major criteria since the style of tumbrels altered very little before 1500. What may be more significant is the size of the balance pan, which is shorter and a smaller pan is a severe test of the diameter of a penny. This would have been particularly useful when the broad flan esterling copies of the English penny were imported in large quantities after 1290. Only the balance arm



1992 find from Norfolk.

Figure 3.

with a large pan will accept these broader coins - the smaller pan will not allow them to balance, and so the tumbrel rejects some of the worst esterlings.

The difference in pan size is illustrated in Figs 2 and 3. Fig 2 is from the same tumbrel shown in Fig, 1, but Fig. 3 is an earlier find with a larger pan. Both balance the 22 grain standard penny, but the larger pan fails to reject some light-weight broad flan esterlings. This suggests that the smaller pan was probably made after 1290, when the imported esterlings became a major problem, and the larger pan probably pre-dates 1290. The earliest dated English tumbrel, a bone fragment, was found in excavations at Castle Acre, Norfolk, and probably pre-dates 1150.

A third find (Fig. 3) shows that some later tumbrels were more complicated. This fragment is a complete tumbrel case but unfortunately the balance arm that would have weighed a *penny* is missing. This would have been the 15 or 12 grain penny, putting the date therefore at 1412 or 1464. The case has two ledges against which the coins could be aligned and a groove opposite an anthropomorphic 'dog-headed' finial which was clearly intended to test the thickness of the coins. It is less obvious, however, which coins were to be weighed on opposite sides. The pieces that responded were not the 90 to 72 grain groats of Edward I and II but

the gold coins weighing 120 and 108 grains. Of the two periods when these standards were used, the earlier date on c. 1350 is to be preferred on style since the later date of c. 1412 is considered too late for the finial.

A new, 1996, find of a much larger object, possibly from East Anglia, is of tumbrel shape but with two clearly defined pans on one side where the larger pan seems suitable for an ounce. There is no obvious coin (other than the 1551 crown) large enough for the arms. The smaller arm appears to test a quarter-ounce of post-1485 type. Once the rusted and broken pivot has been replaced and the balance tested it could well turn out to be the first recorded tumbrel for testing market weights as all others seem to have been used to weigh coins.

Kevin Wicker, chose not to speak but put out an exhibit of the coins of Phoenicia and a print out of some of his research into the area. He exhibited 18 Phoenician small bronze coins from mints that included Aradus, Berytus, Tyre and Sidon and, far to the West, the colony of Carthage. The area of Phoenicia consisted of a row of cities along the eastern seaboard of the Mediterranean, extending slightly to the north and the south of modern Lebanon. As such, the area was prey to numerous conquerors before as well as, and even more so, after the introduction of coinage there in the late fifth century BC.

Two points of numismatic interest were that a) no less than four scripts occur in the Phoenician series: Greek Latin, Semitic and Phoenician; and b) many of the coins are dated within various local eras. Common features of the main Phoenician (autonomous) series are the head of Tyche, the City goddess with turreted crown, or Zeus on the obverse, and a galley, or part thereof, on the reverse. The idiosyncratic script is another useful factor in identification. Mint marks also appear on the Tyrian Ptolemaic series and on various of the Greek Imperial / Roman Provincial issues. The series is one that has a great deal to offer the more one investigates it.

THE BANS ANNUAL CONFERENCE AT CHESTER 1996 A personal experience, view and comment by Anthony Gilbert

This year's Congress was held at the Chester College of Higher Education from 19th to 21st April. Chester was originally the Roman legionary fortress of Deva; last year, 1995, the Congress was held in Caerleon and

in 1999 it will be in York - thus the BANS Congress, within the space of four years, will have been held at three of the sites of Britain's Roman legionary fortresses.

In keeping with recent years, I had decided to take a mini-holiday built around the Congress and went by train to Chester, booking B&B on the Thursday before the Congress started, choosing what turned out to be a comfortable small hotel near the Congress venue. Walking from the hotel on the northern perimeter of the city, reminded me that Chester was no exception to other old British towns that have had to come to terms with the motor car and sweeping ring roads and cavernous underpasses to negotiate them. Crossing the Shropshire Union Canal in Upper Northgate Street and looking a long way down to the water from the bridge, the canal's muddy proximity to the grimy city walls presented a medieval vista from battlements into a moat. The walls at Chester, medieval on Roman foundations, are a remarkable circuit. Chester is particularly noted for its black and white painted half-timbered buildings, originally on streets of 13th and 14th century date but heavily restored in the 19th century. These are known as 'The Rows", and are now mainly shopping galleries with upper terraces that seemed to me rather empty - certainly access to them via sets of spaced out and steep steps were a definite problem to the elderly or ageing tourists. I chanced upon an antiques fair in the ancient Guildhall where, amongst a goodish selection of dealers in all that an antique fair suggests, I found an 18th century token in VF condition for £8.

A walk around the City walls presented an agreeable elevated view of the city. Roman in foundation, the walls were extended by Alfred the Great's daughter, Aethelflaeda. Reading the notices on the towers and gates English history from 1066 and the Norman Conquest, through the Wars of the Roses and the Civil Wars all passed by. I admired the view of the castle, the Roman amphitheatre, the cathedral dedicated to St Werburgha (a tenth-century Mercian princess) and Roodee, which is the modern racecourse built on the site of the silted-up Roman harbour. Friday was a day devoted to a short train ride to the sea at Prestatyn, ready for the start of the Congress that evening.

The Congress opened with a Civic Reception at the Town Hall with speeches from the Mayor and the BANS President, Dr Keith Sugden. Whilst liquid refreshment was plentiful, many noted that some

crisps and associated nibbles would have been welcome. Civic receptions, we have found at BANS Congress, can vary enormously in their level of hospitality and lavishness - notable recent ones being at Glasgow (1990) and Greenwich (1991). After the reception, delegates spread out in convivial groups to find their evening meal amongst the many different places on offer.

Saturday morning the Congress began in earnest with Dr Simon Bean delivering the Vauxhall Lecture on 'Celtic coinage: The Atrebates and the Regni'. To the average numismatist, Celtic coinage is mildly baffling, but the speaker's measured approach to his subject and logical explanation was welcoming and appreciated by his audience. Next to speak was Dr Sandy Campbell of the Grosvenor Museum who gave the Howard Linecar Memorial Lecture on 'The coinage of Chester - an overall view'. He presented some interesting and contentious evidence for the coins of Edward the Elder, and also for pieces struck from silver plate during the English Civil War period, which questioned the listings in the established catalogues. Peter Boughton, also of the Grosvenor Museum, spoke on 'A pair of silver die matrices for the County Palatine'. [These the Museum had failed to secure at auction but, at this moment, they have become available again and the Museum is hopeful) of acquiring these important items. Ed.] After lunch, Peter Ellis gave a talk on 'The Mint at Chester Castle 1696-8', demonstrating that the striking of coinage at Chester during this short period was probably motivated more by politics than logistical need.

Saturday afternoon was free to explore the City but a private viewing of the Willoughby Gardener coin collection had been arranged at the Grosvenor Museum. Most delegates availed themselves of this exceptional opportunity and everyone was most impressed by the presentation of the coins in a private room and the helpful attitude of the museum staff present. On the lower floors were to be found the remarkable series of Roman tombstones from the fortress that makes the Grosvenor Museum collection one of the major groups of such memorials in the country. Other attractions were the Cheshire Military Museum nearby (well worth a visit, it has the valiant Captain Oates's medals), the Heritage Centre, and there were several bookshops, in one of which I secured an interesting small 18th century volume on medals (at a discount after a little 'negotiation'). The manageress told me that there had been

others enquiring after numismatic books - the Essex Numismatic Society contingent I guessed, and later confirmed. The Cathedral, with its Red Sandstone walls looked decidedly sooty but is of historical interest with its shrine to St Werburgha and 14th-century carved choir stalls. It was here that Handel gave the first public performance of 'The Messiah' in 1742.

The bonus of the afternoon lay in the main hall of the Town Hall where the Northwest Federation of Metal Detecting Clubs was holding a public exhibition. BANS was represented at the prize-giving where our President, Keith Sugden, had been asked to nominate the 'Best Individual Coin' and 'Best Individual Artefact' on display. The enthusiasm during the prize-giving was very infectious and we were all much impressed by the effort that the metal detectorists had obviously put into their presentation and display stands and cabinets. Although very much object-oriented, there were still plenty of coins, medals, tokens, etc to see.

Back at College to prepare for the evening met the frequent problem in these educational establishments of showers that have a will of their own with the option of freeze or scald ! After the BANS sherry reception the Bank of Scotland Lecture was given by Dr Donal Bateson of the Hunterian Museum, Glasgow, on 'The Scottish Mint Scandal of 1682'. We learnt of the Earl of Lauderdale and embezzlement and other serious goings on before the Act of Union. This was followed by the Congress Dinner and by Keith Sugden putting all in a good mood with his management-style quips and speech. The College bar called for relaxation; always a good time and place to meet fellow collectors from other clubs and societies, to make the odd purchase, ask opinions, discuss club problems, promote ideas and perhaps even gather a few speakers for your own Club's future programme.

On Sunday morning Ken Wiggins of the Oriental Numismatic Society kicked off with 'Coinages of the Indian States - 18th to 20th centuries' - ambitious indeed to cover 200 years in an hour, but I found the talk well-presented and informative, despite the high level of concentration that was called for. Thomas Curtis of Baldwin's spoke next, prefacing his talk on 'Byzantine coins and the icon of Christ' with a taped musical introduction of Byzantine chant - a pleasing touch. For me, a thematic approach such as this is most enjoyable and the speaker, in his unhurried and precise style, explained that the interest in this series lay in

the designs and the meanings behind them, rather than in the dates and the small variations and design changes. Finally the Wilfred Cook Lecture was delivered by Miles Broughton on 'Spanish coinage through the ages'. Taking it from Greek colonial through Visigothic and modern, this talk gave us a broad sweep and overview of the series.

Seventy people attended this Congress and it provided overall the expected balance of talks - national, society and area speakers on general, specialised and regional themes. For this we have to thank the organiser Jonathan Morris for putting it all together (virtually single-handed). He did an outstanding job in attracting such a level of sponsorship for the week-end, from the British Numismatic Trade Association (who have supported BANS for many years), the Bank of Scotland, Vauxhall Motors Ltd (providers of a courtesy car and lecture), the Merseyside Numismatic Society (1947-95, and now changing its name), A.H. Baldwin's of London, and the Collector's Gallery of Shrewsbury for their kind donations. The level of sponsorship was innovative for these events, and just shows what can be achieved with some imagination, flair, enterprise and, not least, a bit of luck.

Now, what is all this description of a pleasant numismatic weekend leading up to - should there be any changes ? The Chester Congress was fine, the weather pleasant and there were, as often, a few niggles beyond organisational control. Personally, I think that the BANS Congress should be looking more towards using hotels than educational establishments. Obviously costs would increase but not necessarily by that much, as demonstrated by the Wessex Society-hosted 1992 Congress in the 3-star East Anglia Hotel in Bournemouth. The Token Congress regularly uses hotels: this year it is at Northampton at an inclusive cost of £100, and no subsidies or sponsorships. For the numbers the Congress attracts, and carefully choosing the right time of year, say early to mid-October when the weather is often better than our current March/April timing, would allow a good deal to be struck. We would not then be always ridden by academic term requirements. At both Cardiff and Birmingham exceptional discounts were obtained by the Token Congress. Admittedly most hotels do not have the lecture theatre facilities of colleges, but we have had to make do with large rooms in colleges in the past. Most hotels of any size who would welcome our numbers nowadays invariably have some sort of conference facility available.

Let us remember that the average age at a BANS Congress is getting higher, not lower - reasonable standards are required and most members are prepared to pay that little bit extra for them. Not least, this type of improvement would almost certainly mean that more delegates would be accompanied by their spouses, making a small holiday of the event. Immediately there will be a cry of what about the youngsters ? What youngsters is my reply - the BANS has funds to assist genuine young numismatists to attend such gatherings, and they cannot give the money away because there are very few younger/junior members in any of the affiliated societies. Not least, the Congress is using College facilities out of term time and therefore there is an obviously lower level of service and response, such as heating being turned off (do you remember the cold snap at Bath in 1988 when it actually snowed, and the recent course at Oxford, wearing pullovers and anoraks to lectures ?).

The BANS has much to offer, and I realise that the idea of hosting a Congress can be daunting to a society, but Chester was virtually a one-man band, and at Bexley where I was personally involved a few years ago the organisation was amongst just a small group who got on with it. A lot does depend on the local involvement, although there is always advice and help available when asked for from the BANS officers at the centre. So, where do we go from here ? I have outlined some of my thoughts, often an amalgam of discussion with other members at the Congresses. We like the basic set-up, but if BANS is to survive in a hobby where the participants average age is continually rising and there is little input at the lower age level, something has to be done. The next three Congresses are to be held at Bury St Edmunds, Bath and York. So, am I overstating my case ? Is the tourniquet of implied pricing levels a fiction ? Are the colleges indeed a preferred option ? What are your thoughts, as members of the London Numismatic Club, on the matter - after all, we are always well represented at the Congresses year after year. The pages of our Newsletter are open for discussion and suggestions.

AUCTION REPORTS

93rd Club Auction, 8th May 1995

Twenty-four people, the best attendance at any Club auction for some years, were present to bid on the 117 lots (less one withdrawn on the

night) from eight Club vendors. The lots had been catalogued by David Sealy. Two new enterprising members had entered 15 lots without reserves, and they were both rewarded with a 100% sale rate. However, overall there was a depressingly high rate of 42 unsold lots (almost 33 %) The reserves placed by some vendors on their lots left little room for manoeuvre by potential bidders, whilst reserves on modern specimens and proof sets continue to be high with little regard for their original inflated sale price as against their current poor marketability.

Nevertheless, a strong three dealer presence ensured that some good prices were reached for the unusual pieces: £32 (and top price of the auction) was bid for a cast pewter medallet; £28 for a Charles II merk of 1670, and £21 for a brass disc that was probably a theatre pass.

The total realised was £449.00, with the Club receiving 10% of that in commission. **Anthony Gilbert**

BOOK REVIEWS **by Peter Clayton**

British Iron Age Coins in the British Museum, by Richard Hobbs. British Museum Press, London, 1996. 246pp, 137 pls. Hardback, £40.

Interest in ancient British coins goes back to the antiquary William Camden in the sixteenth century when such pieces were regarded rather as a curiosity. There were some later scholars such as William Stukeley who published *Twenty-three Plates of the coins of the ancient British kings in* 1776, and John Akerman also published on the series in 1846. The first serious student of the series is generally acknowledged to be John Evans (later Sir John) with his volume on *The Coins of the Ancient Britons in* 1864 (and a supplement in 1890). Then there is a gap of some fifty years until 1944 when the late Derek Allen began to publish on the coins. A man of many and diverse talents (he also produced the BM catalogue of Tealby coins, as well as in later life being Secretary of the British Academy), he devoted his analytical mind to sorting out the series, separating the British Celtic from the Continental, and became the founding father of serious study of the British Iron Age coins. All who write in this area readily acknowledge the debt they owe to his pioneering work. Richard Hobbs, the present author and a special assistant in the Department of Coins and Medals at the British Museum, has taken on and

completed a task that Allen had been working on over thirty years ago (as the reviewer recalls when discussing it with him).

The Iron Age coin collection in the British Museum is unrivalled, and amounts to 4581 pieces, as listed here, with others at present in the course of cataloguing and fresh additions being continually made, often as the result of Treasure Trove inquests. The importance of Sir John Evans's work and collection, bequeathed to the Museum by his famous son Sir Arthur Evans in 1919, is shown by the fact that it represents some 16% of the present holdings. The largest group, or source, is from the more recent (1985-86) Wanborough hoard of 20%. The rise of the hobby of metal detecting since the 1980s has led to many more finds and new types being recognised. The responsible reporting of these has made great advances possible in plotting tribal areas on distribution maps, and the Celtic Coin Index at Oxford (founded by Derek Allen and Sheppard Frere) continues to grow apace.

In this catalogue Richard Hobbs has rendered a great service to Celtic coin studies. Here, for the first time, is a detailed listing of the national collection; an authoritative base that will act as a useful adjunct to earlier wider studies such as Van Arsdell's *Celtic Coinage in Britain* (1989). Despite the fact that there was much of a controversial nature that is still not accepted in the latter publication, it was nevertheless the only conspectus available since Commander Mack's *Coinage of Ancient Britain* (3rd ed., 1975). With Hobbs's work the door has been opened to far greater study in this field of numismatics by providing an essential base tool. Evidence of the interest now being focused on the series can be seen in the several Ph.D.s submitted in recent years on specific aspects of the coinage or tribes, and the number of theses which are presently being pursued.

The catalogue is exactly what it says it is, a precise listing of the coins with every piece illustrated in the plates (as well as seven plates of good line drawings of symbols). The introductory text is a concise presentation of the sources of the collection and the study of British Iron Age coins, followed by discussion of the types by area. The main catalogue falls into nine divisions, beginning with Early Uninscribed and Potin, followed by the coins divided into their geographic regions. A map of the principal hoard and find spots is quite revealing in its distribution and there is an index of sites collated with the catalogue numbers.

The essential and first approach to this catalogue will be via the plates and then referring back to the catalogue entries. Background details about the issues or issuers in the case of the dynastic series will not he found here, and obviously have no place in a catalogue of this nature. Those pursuing individual information will then have to follow the references back to Mack or Van Arsdell (mentioned above) to round out the picture.

This catalogue of the British Iron Age coins is an exemplary production and it is good to see that there are so many young scholars in this field now taking up the cloak of Derek Allen and building on his foundations - he and Sir John Evans can be proud of their successors.

The Sicilian Hoard, by David Weimer. Colossus Press, New Jersey, 1996. 310pp. Hardback, £17 (at Seaby Coins); paperback, £7.99 (at the British Museum).

It has been said that amongst the murder and detective story genre of writing there are but five or six basic plots - the thousands of such novels that are published all work the same plots in different ways. True as that may be, isolate it a little more and try and find such a novel that also includes coins, ancient numismatics. There you have it - a different animal indeed. Imaginative and creative as some of the genre may be, it needs that addition of personal impetus, knowledge and involvement to make the story credible and to carry the reader along with it. This is what David Weimer has in no small part. **His** hero, classics college professor Michael Gardner, reflects in his make-up many of the author's interests and commitments: principally amateur numismatist with a love for the beauty of Greek coins, sabre fencer, pianist and sailor. Gardner and his college student son Philip, are on a European vacation when fate and numismatics overtake them. Beautiful coins become tangled up with the disastrous Athenian Expedition against Syracuse where so many of the defeated Athenians ended their days, 7000 prisoners in torment in the deep quarries (which you can still visit and see where later generations used the caverns for rope making). A single, superb silver decadrachm of Syracuse, the racing quadriga obverse and Arethusa head reverse, is found but it carries the signature on the quadriga ground line of a

previously unknown engraver, *Chol.*, and a tiny skull, another personal addition to the design. As the plot unfolds, it is realised to be only one of a hoard of unparalleled quality and quantity - paired decadrachms and tetradrachms ! True bits of numismatics creep in, this Sicilian hoard knocks six bells out of the infamous Turkish decadrachm hoard of recent years. The action hots up, murders begin to escalate; everyone, including the Mafia, wants to lay hands on the hoard as it makes its clandestine way up to Rome from Sicily. The college professor also finds more worldly interests in the aristocratic Italian Gilberto's wife, Adriana, and she responds to him, despising her husband's vanity and Renaissance posing.

The plot zips along, even if it was an ordinary mystery story, but add the detailed numismatic interest, the twists and turns, the secret hope of all Greek coin enthusiasts to one day light upon one of those truly magnificent Syracusan pieces that you can only lust after in the great coin auctions, and you have a detective story that has more than the usual line of interest, many a neat twist and turn and, not to be divulged by the reviewer, a surprising climax. Go out and buy it, read it, enjoy it and, above all, don't lend it to any numismatic friends because you won't get it back.