

RICHARD SOUTHGATE'S ANGLO-SAXON COINS

HUGH PAGAN

As explained in my previous note on this blog, a notebook kept by Rev. Rogers Ruding, the author of the *Annals of the Coinage of Britain and its Dependencies*, and now preserved among Ruding's papers in the British Library, provides details of the extensive collection of Anglo-Saxon coins put together by Rev. Richard Southgate (1729-1795), one of the Assistant Librarians of the British Museum.

Ruding's primary listing of Southgate's Anglo-Saxon coins forms part of a continuous numerical listing, in an arrangement by the reigns of the coins' issuers, of the Anglo-Saxon coins then held in the Bodleian Library, in the British Museum, by Southgate personally, and in a few other minor collections. Each entry in this list records the type of the coin in question, its inscriptions, and its weight, and in many cases there is an accompanying sketch drawing. At a later date, presumably after Southgate's death, Ruding added information on further coins owned by Southgate, but the information on these was not taken from the coins themselves but from "books" kept by Southgate for the years between 1786 and Southgate's death in 1795, and was limited to the copying by Ruding of the transcriptions made by Southgate of the coins' inscriptions.

My transcript of Ruding's primary listing, made during preparatory research for my Presidential Address to the British Numismatic Society for the year 1985, shows that at the time that Ruding made this record Southgate owned - excluding sceattas and the Northumbrian small pennies customarily described as stycas, neither of which were series covered in Ruding's notebook - at least 194 coins belonging to the Anglo-Saxon series, stretching in date from the reign of Offa to the reign of Harold II.

In her published discussion of the evidence provided by Ruding's notebook for Southgate's collection of Anglo-Saxon coins Joan Martin identified 148 of these with coins listed in Keary and Grueber's catalogue of the Anglo-Saxon coins in the British Museum, issued in two volumes in 1887 and 1893, and customarily referred to as *BMC*¹. Most of these, if not indeed all of these, will have been coins acquired by the British Museum in 1802 as part of the collection formed by Samuel Tyssen (1756-1800), who had purchased Southgate's coin collection as a whole shortly after Southgate's death. She identified 45 further coins listed in *BMC* as also being ex Southgate, on the basis that they were coins that could be equated with coins of which the inscriptions were recorded by Ruding from information in Southgate's "books".

If these 45 coins are added to the 194 coins recorded as belonging to Southgate in Ruding's primary listing, that gives a total of 239 Anglo-Saxon coins owned by Southgate for the period Offa – Harold II. This in itself would have been the third

¹ Joan Martin, 'Some remarks on eighteenth-century numismatic manuscripts and numismatists', in R.H.M. Dolley (ed), *Anglo-Saxon Coins, Studies presented to F.M. Stenton on the Occasion of his 80th Birthday, 17 May 1960*, London, 1961, 227-240 (at pp 237-40).

largest total number of Anglo-Saxon coins assembled by any coin collector up to that date, the two larger ones being the collection formed by Dr William Hunter (1718-1783), and the collection owned from the 1720s onwards by the Dukes of Devonshire but largely formed at the beginning of the eighteenth century by Sir Andrew Fountaine (1676-1753)². The actual size of Southgate's collection of Anglo-Saxon coins must in fact have been somewhat larger (although still smaller than those formed by Hunter and Fountaine), partly because it will also have included sceattas and small Northumbrian pennies, and partly because future rechecking of the coin inscriptions transcribed by Ruding from Southgate's "books" will probably show that Southgate possessed further Anglo-Saxon coins over and above the 45 additional coins which Joan Martin identified from this source as being listed in *BMC*.

Southgate's collection of Anglo-Saxon coins was also a significant one for its individual components. I have prepared a detailed draft list of the coins involved, available to interested specialists, in which I have suggested that more of the 194 coins ex Southgate recorded in Ruding's primary listing may now be in the British Museum than Joan Martin was able to establish, but the detailed arguments for associating particular Southgate coins recorded by Ruding with coins listed in *BMC* are too complex to set out here.

The nature and extent of Southgate's collection of Anglo-Saxon coins can however be appreciated from the summary below, based on the overall evidence provided by Ruding's notebook. For the period after the coinage reform of Eadgar's reign carried out c.973 the types of the coins are specified.

Content of Southgate Collection of Anglo-Saxon Coins

Kings of Mercia : Offa 7; Coenwulf 3; Burgred 7

Kings of Kent : Eadbearht Praen 1; Cuthred 1; Anonymous Regal Issue 1; Baldred 1

Archbishops of Canterbury : Wulfred 1; Ceolnoth 1

Kings of East Anglia : Eadwald 1; Aethelstan 1; Aethelweard 2; Eadmund 4

Kings of Wessex : Ecgberht 1; Aethelbearht 2; Aethelred I 1; Aelfred 4; Edward the Elder 4

Viking East Anglia : St Eadmund Memorial Coinage 1

Viking Kingdom of York : St Peter coinage 1; Anlaf Sihtricsson 2; Eric Bloodaxe 1

Kingdom of England (to c.973) : Aethelstan 10; Eadmund 3 (of which one imitative); Eadred 9; Eadwig 2; Eadgar 8

Eadgar : *Reform Small Cross* 2

² For the history of the Fountaine/Devonshire collection see now A.Burnett, *The Hidden Treasures of this Happy Island, A History of Numismatics in Britain from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment*, London, 2020, vol.II, 1023-8 (Devonshire) and 1083-1103 (Fountaine).

Edward the Martyr : *Reform Small Cross* 4

Aethelred II : *Reform Small Cross* 1; *First Hand* 7; *Second Hand* 1; *Crux* 2; *Long Cross* 7; *Last Small Cross* 2

Cnut : *Quatrefoil* 39 (of which 1 imitative); *Pointed Helmet* 10 (of which 1 imitative); *Short Cross* 5

Harold I : *Jewel Cross* 2; *Fleur de Lis* 2

Harthacnut : *Arm and Sceptre* (in name of Cnut) 1

Edward the Confessor : *Pax* 2; *Radiate/Small Cross* 3; *Trefoil Quadrilateral* 18 (of which one doubtfully belonging to Southgate); *Small Flan* 1; *Expanding Cross* 8; *Pointed Helmet* 4; *Sovereign/Eagles* 7 (of which one doubtfully belonging to Southgate); *Hammer Cross* 5; *Facing Head/Small Cross* 6; *Pyramids* 3

Harold II : *Pax* 9

Readers will note the disproportionately large number of coins of Cnut's *Quatrefoil* type, a substantial proportion of which are likely to have derived from a significant hoard of coins of this type found somewhere in the West Midlands in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, divinely the hoard of undescribed content found at Kingsholm, Gloucester, shortly before c.1785³. Similarly, Southgate's possession of a parcel from an as yet unidentified hoard of coins of Edward the Confessor is hinted at by the presence in his collection of 17 or 18 coins of Edward the Confessor's *Trefoil Quadrilateral* type, the third coin type of Edward's reign, presumptively struck in the late 1040s.

The remaining part of my present note focuses on some individual coins of interest that belonged, or may have belonged, to Southgate. All, except for the first coin listed below, are evidenced in Ruding's notebook as belonging to Southgate, either in Ruding's primary listing or via the transcriptions of inscriptions on coins in Southgate's possession taken from Southgate's "books". The benefit of establishing whether or not coins now in the British Museum's possession once belonged to Southgate is that, where a Southgate provenance is established, it takes the history of the coins concerned back to before 1795, and may well enable future scholars to make progress with reconstituting the hoards from which the great majority of them will have derived.

It will be helpful for an understanding of what follows to record that the engraved plates of Anglo-Saxon coins that were used to illustrate the first edition, 1817, of Ruding's *Annals*, had originally been prepared at some date in or before the summer of 1802 for a projected book on the Anglo-Saxon coinage by the then youthful scholar Taylor Combe (1774-1826). This was just before the Anglo-Saxon coins in Samuel Tyssen's collection, including those that had previously belonged to Southgate, had been incorporated into the British Museum collection, and Ruding's explanatory key

³ R.H.M.Dolley and D.M.Metcalf, 'Cnut's Quatrefoil type in English cabinets of the eighteenth century', *BNJ* xxix, 1958, 69-81.

to the plates identifies as “British Museum” those coins illustrated on the plates which were already in the British Museum by mid 1802, and identifies as “Tyssen” the coins illustrated on the plates which at that date were still part of the Tyssen collection. This means that any coins illustrated in Ruding’s *Annals* that had previously belonged to Southgate will feature among the coins described as “Tyssen” rather than among those described as “British Museum”.

Offa, Light Coinage, Canterbury, non-portrait type, Ealhmund, *BMC* 32 (= *SCBI* 67, 74), ill. Ruding, *Annals*, pl. V, 27 (as British Museum). This is assigned a Southgate provenance by Joan Martin, who records that Southgate purchased it at the Gostling sale, 1777, and that it was found at Winchester, but my transcript of Ruding’s notebook shows that it was marked there as **M** (British Museum) and not as **S** (Southgate). Its presence in the British Museum collection before the British Museum acquired Samuel Tyssen’s collection, by then incorporating Southgate’s collection, is confirmed by the fact that it is described in the key to the plates in Ruding’s *Annals* as belonging to the British Museum rather than to Tyssen. Reference to a priced and named copy of the auction catalogue of the collection of Rev. William Gostling, Langford, 17 June 1777, shows that Southgate is indeed named as the purchaser of lot 18, “King Offa, an unpublished Saxon coin, found at Winchester”, but the catalogue does not describe the coin’s type or name its moneyer, so the Gostling-Southgate coin could well have been one of the coins of Offa of quite different types and moneyers that are recorded as belonging to Southgate in Ruding’s notebook. A Gostling-Southgate provenance and Winchester find spot for *SCBI* 67, 74 has in the circumstances to be doubtful.

Anonymous Regal Coinage (c.822-c.823), Canterbury, Bust/**DOROVERNIA CIVITAS**, Swefheard, *SCBI* 67, 702, ill. Ruding, *Annals*, pl. 13, 1, as Tyssen. Listed in Ruding’s notebook as belonging to Southgate, but omitted from Joan Martin’s listing because not listed in *BMC*. It seems to have been accidentally omitted from *BMC*, for it was in the British Museum collection by the early 1920s when it was published by George Brooke as *BMA* 185⁴, and if it had been a post-*BMC* acquisition it should have had a recorded provenance, which it does not.

Archbishop Wulfred, Canterbury, Bust/Monogram, Saeberht, *BMC* 26 (= *SCBI* 67, 758). Identified by Joan Martin as ex Southgate. In *SCBI* 67 this coin’s provenance is given as “found at London Bridge, March 1824”, citing *Archaeologia* 25, 1832, 600, but there is no indication at the *Archaeologia* reference cited that the coin of this type and moneyer referred to there was acquired for the British Museum.

Edward the Elder, “Rose” type (Winchester style), Wulfheard. *BMC* 113. Assigned “before 1782” provenance, i.e. in the British Museum collection by 1782, by Joan Martin, but the Southgate specimen of this type and moneyer, ill. Ruding, *Annals*, p. 16, 6, as Tyssen, will have passed to the British Museum as part of Tyssen’s collection, and it seems likely that this Southgate-Tyssen coin, for which the weight recorded in Ruding’s notebook is 24 ½ gr (1.59g), should be equated with *BMC* 113, 24.6 gr. (likewise 1.59g).

⁴ G.C. Brooke, ‘Anglo-Saxon Acquisitions of the British Museum II’, *NC*, Fifth Series, vol. 3, 1923, 243-59 (at p. 248).

Eadgar, *Reform Small Cross*, Northampton, Leofsige (reads **LEOFSII M-O HAMTO**). Southgate's specimen of this type, minting place and moneyer, if correctly recorded by Ruding, had a different reverse inscription from the two comparable coins listed in *BMC*, one of which, ex Sir Robert Cotton (died 1631), had already been in the British Museum's possession long before 1795. Southgate's coin may have been disposed of as a duplicate.

Aethelred II, *First Hand*, Maldon, Eadweald (reads **EADPOLD**). Not listed in *BMC*, and so not included in Joan Martin's listing of coins ex Southgate. No coin of Maldon of *First Hand* type by any moneyer is listed in *BMC*, so if the present coin reached the British Museum via Tyssen, it will presumably have gone missing before the preparation of *BMC*.

Cnut, *Quatrefoil*, uncertain minting place (**SV ?**), Aelfhelm. Not listed in *BMC*, and so not included in Joan Martin's listing of coins ex Southgate. Richard Ambrose has kindly suggested to me that the minting place is Shrewsbury, for which the moneyer Aelfhelm is well recorded in the type, although with the longer mint signature **SRO**⁵. As with the preceding coin, it is likely that if it reached the British Museum via Tyssen it will subsequently have gone missing.

Cnut, *Pointed Helmet*, uncertain minting place, Oga (sic). Not listed in *BMC*, and so not included in Joan Martin's listing of coins ex Southgate. The coin is a puzzle, but it is possible that its inscription was either not correctly recorded by Ruding or not correctly copied by me when I made my transcription from Ruding's notebook in 1985.

Edward the Confessor, *Trefoil/Quadrilateral*, various minting places and moneyers.

As noted above, Southgate possessed a meaningfully larger number of coins of this type than of any other type of Edward the Confessor. The coins in question are : Chester, Aelfsige, 2 specimens, of which one is likely to be *BMC* 632; Colchester, Aelfwine, *BMC* 138; Dover, Eadsige, not listed in *BMC* (*BMC* 172, a comparable coin, is ex the Cuff sale, 1854), and presumably disposed of as a duplicate; Hereford, Aethelric, *BMC* 543; Hertford, Godman, *BMC* 533; Huntingdon, Aelfwine, *BMC* 559; Lincoln, Asfrith, *BMC* 687; Lincoln, Ulfr, *BMC* 688; London, Aelfwine, *BMC* 869; Nottingham, Blacman, *BMC* 1200; Stamford, Leofwine, *BMC* 1226; Taunton, Boiga, *BMC* 1262; Thetford, Leofraed, *BMC* 1529; York, Authunn, *BMC* 293; York, Hrafn, *BMC* 286; York, Ioketill, *BMC* 285. To these Joan Martin added a coin of this type of Colchester, Brunhyse, *BMC* 137, but this had previously been identified by Michael Dolley and herself as having been an acquisition by the British Museum in 1820 from the stock of the deceased London coin dealer Richard Miles, and it is difficult to see how a coin that had belonged to Southgate could have migrated to Miles's stock⁶. In any case, *BMC* 137 is described in *BMC* as "twice pierced", and it seems improbable that this is a coin that would have been acquired by Southgate, who seems to have avoided coins that were in poor condition or were fragmentary.

⁵ Note in this context *SCBI* 15, 3371, a coin of this type and moneyer where the mint signature might be **SRO** but which is difficult to read.

⁶ R.H.M.Dolley and J.S.Strudwick [afterwards Martin], 'The provenances of the Anglo-Saxon coins recorded in the two volumes of the British Museum Catalogue', *BNJ* 28, 1955, 26-59 (at p.55).

The geographical spread of the minting places of the coins concerned is a wide one, and that makes it difficult to suggest a likely find location for a potential hoard from which some, most or (less probably) all of these coins might have derived.

Edward the Confessor, *Sovereign/Eagles*, Horndon, Dudinc, *BMC* 554. Ruding listed this unique coin in his notebook as belonging to Southgate, but Joan Martin, strangely, did not include it in her listing of coins ex Southgate. The most likely explanation for Joan Martin's failure to identify it as ex Southgate is that the coin had already been recorded by Michael Dolley and herself as deriving from the St.Mary Hill, London, hoard, found in 1774⁷, and it did not seem to her necessary to record exactly how the coin reached the British Museum.

Edward the Confessor, *Sovereign/Eagles*, Salisbury, Godric, *BMC* 1188. Identified by Joan Martin as ex Southgate, but this, like *BMC* 137 (above), had previously been identified by Michael Dolley and herself as having been an acquisition by the British Museum in 1820 from the stock of the deceased London coin dealer Richard Miles, and it seems similarly improbable that this is a coin that had previously belonged to Southgate.



⁷ Dolley and Strudwick, op.cit., 55.