

WALTER JONATHAN ANDREW AND HIS RESIGNATION FROM THE NUMISMATIC SOCIETY OF LONDON

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In the narrative history of the British Numismatic Society which I contributed to volume 73 of the *British Numismatic Journal*, the volume issued to mark the Society's centenary¹, I recorded in a footnote that in compiling my remarks I had not been able to consult copies of two very rare pamphlets written by Walter Jonathan Andrew (1859-1934). These had been written by him as successive responses to the highly critical review contributed to the *Numismatic Chronicle* for 1902 by C.G.Crump and Charles Johnson² of Andrew's lengthy paper on the coinage of Henry I which had formed the entirety of the substantive text of the *Numismatic Chronicle* for the previous year, 1901³.

It was the publication of this review which was to give real momentum to the succession of events which led to the decision on 18 June 1903 that steps should be taken to found the British Numismatic Society as a rival organisation to the old-established Numismatic Society of London. I need not go over these events generally, for their overall chronology is set out clearly in *BNJ* 73, but W.J.Andrew's two pamphlets, not seen by me at the time that I was preparing my text, but seen by me soon afterwards⁴, too late to alter what was to appear in *BNJ* 73, made it clear to me that I needed to make one significant factual correction to what I had stated there. As it happened, I was scheduled to address our centenary meeting at the British Museum on 5 July 2003, and on that day, in describing the events that led to our Society's foundation, I took the opportunity to set the record straight in that respect.

As however there is no record in permanent form of the speeches delivered at our centenary meeting, my earlier narrative in *BNJ* 73 has remained uncorrected in print, and it is now long past time that this should be done.

Students of the coinage of the Norman period in general and of the coinage of Henry I in particular will be aware that the problem with the writings on these topics by

¹ H.Pagan, 'The British Numismatic Society : a History', *BNJ* 73, 1-43.

² C.G.Crump and C.Johnson, 'Notes on 'A Numismatic History of the Reign of Henry I' by W.J.Andrew', *NC* 4th Series, II, 1902, 372-7.

³ W.J.Andrew, 'A Numismatic History of the Reign of Henry I', *NC* 4th Series, I, 1901.

⁴ The rarity of the two pamphlets concerned was such that copies of them were not held at the time in the joint BNS/RNS Library, but I was very conscious that I ought to read the pamphlets concerned, and, having become aware that our American member, Prof. Peter Gaspar, possessed copies of both of them, I emailed him at some point while composing my text for *BNJ* 73 to ask if he would be kind enough to let me have photocopies of them. I had good reason to suppose that he would respond positively, for we were on good terms and he was consistently helpful in such matters, but weeks passed without a response, and by the time I came to the conclusion that I would not get a reply it was too late to seek for copies elsewhere. When the requested photocopies finally arrived, they came with a rueful accompanying apology, in which Gaspar explained to me that my email had somehow found its way into the junk on his computer, and that it was only once a year that he went through his junk emails to see if any were worth replying to !

W.J. Andrew is that Andrew, a solicitor in practice at Whaley Bridge, on the Derbyshire fringes of Manchester, was not a trained historian, and that he lacked proper understanding of many details in the surviving contemporary documentary evidence for the period. This was to have the result that Crump and Johnson, each of them members of the staff of the Public Record Office, contributed to *NC* what I have described as “a relatively brief but undeniably brutal” review of Andrew’s major paper on the coinage of Henry I mentioned above, and that was certainly to be a key element in the chain of events that led to the foundation of our Society.

What however Andrew’s pamphlets make clear is that it was not the review of his paper by Crump and Johnson but an earlier review of it by an anonymous writer in the monthly periodical *The Reliquary*⁵, unnoticed by me when preparing my text for *BNJ* 73, that provided the spark that set off what was to follow.

In the first of his two pamphlets, dated February 1903 at its end, and entitled *Notes on “A Numismatic History of the Reign of Henry I.” Reply to Messrs. C.G. Crump and C. Johnson, “Numismatic Chronicle.” Fourth Series, Vol. II., Pages 372-377*, Andrew offers his response to a number of specific criticisms made in these reviews, and here criticisms made by the reviewer in *The Reliquary*, although rebuffed by Andrew just as forcibly as those made by Crump and Johnson, play a relatively minor role. It is nonetheless apparent that the reviewer for *The Reliquary* - described pejoratively by Andrew as “the third tailor of Tooley Street”, Crump and Johnson being the other two, in reference to a well-known anecdote by the statesman George Canning telling of a petition from three tailors in Tooley Street, Southwark, who claimed in it, absurdly as it seemed to Canning, that they represented “We, The People of England” - had touched a nerve in Andrew, and the second of Andrew’s pamphlets makes explicit the significance of the review in *The Reliquary* in the chronology of this controversy.

The second pamphlet, entitled *The Numismatic Society of London. Why Messrs. Crump & Johnson’s Paper was Published in the “Numismatic Chronicle” (Fourth Series, Vol. II, Pages 372-377)*, is dated June 1903 at its end, and was evidently issued for use as a weapon by Andrew in what was by then a very acrimonious dispute between Andrew and his friends and supporters on one side, and Herbert Appold Grueber (1846-1927), of the Department of the Coins and Medals at the British Museum⁶, and the Council of the Numismatic Society of London on the other side.

In the pamphlet Andrew states that Grueber had asked him, at some unspecified date but evidently in the opening months of 1902, to send a copy of his paper on Henry I to *The Reliquary* for review. This resulted in an initial dismissive review of it in the issue of *The Reliquary* for April 1902, apparently published without attracting protest from Andrew⁷. More importantly, a second, and rather more damning, review was to

⁵ As will emerge, there were two reviews of Andrew’s article in *The Reliquary*, but it is the second one only that is significant in this context.

⁶ Grueber carried responsibility within the Department of Coins and Medals for its holdings of the post-Roman coinages of the British Isles. He was also one of the editors of the *Numismatic Chronicle* and joint Honorary Secretary of the Numismatic Society of London.

⁷ Andrew seems to have assumed that this review was written by the same individual who wrote the review that appeared in the October 1902 issue of *The Reliquary*, but that may not have been the case.

follow in the issue for October 1902 of the same periodical, and although this, like the earlier review, was anonymous, Andrew received on this occasion what he described as “direct information” that the source for this review had been a member of the staff of the Department of Coins and Medals of the British Museum.

Grueber having denied personal authorship of the review, Andrew asserted in his pamphlet that the review must have been written by one of Grueber’s “colleagues at the British Museum , and one of his and my colleagues on the Council [of the Numismatic Society of London]”. Elsewhere in the pamphlet Andrew uses wording indicating that on the information available to him the reviewer was “a brother official of the Society” with Grueber. This makes it explicit that Andrew had decided in his own mind, rightly or wrongly, that the British Museum colleague of Grueber responsible for the review will have been one or other of Edward James Rapson (1861-1937), the Department’s expert on the coinages of the Middle East and Far East, who was at the time Grueber’s colleague as joint Honorary Secretary of the Numismatic Society of London, and George Francis Hill (1867-1948), whose areas of expertise within the Department were in the Greek series and in medals of the Renaissance period, and who was at the time Foreign Secretary of the Numismatic Society of London, but who was to become much better known later on as Sir George Hill, the British Museum’s Director and Principal Librarian between 1931 and 1936⁸.

After fruitless enquiries made with Grueber as to the genesis and authorship of the review in question, Andrew felt impelled to offer his resignation from the Numismatic Society of London in a letter of which the text is printed verbatim in his second pamphlet, reading as follows :

14th October, 1902.

My dear Grueber,

I have thought the matter well over, and as I can get no explanation of the statement made to me that I have only my own friends to thank for the review in the *Reliquary*, and that those friends are my colleagues on the Council, it leaves me no alternative but to send in my resignation to the Society.

Yours sincerely,

W.J.Andrew

The nature of “the statement made to me” is somewhat cryptically expressed in the letter, but it appears from the paragraph in Andrew’s pamphlet that precedes his transcription of this letter that the statement that had been made to Andrew was to the effect that Andrew “had only my own friends in the coin department of the British

⁸ Of Grueber’s other British Museum colleagues, Warwick William Wroth (1858-1911) can be ruled out because he was neither an officer nor an ordinary member of the Council of the Numismatic Society of London in these years. Barclay Vincent Head (1844-1914), the then Keeper of the Department of Coins and Medals, can also be ruled out because although he was a Vice-President of the Numismatic Society of London for the year 1900-1, he was not on the Society’s Council in any capacity for the year 1901-2 (and it is in any case most unlikely that he would have been the reviewer).

Museum to thank for the review”⁹. It is easy to see why a belief by Andrew that some one in the British Museum’s Department of Coins and Medals had been responsible for anonymously rubbishing his article in *NC* should have provoked Andrew into resignation from the Numismatic Society of London.

Much was still to happen between mid October 1902 and the date in mid June 1903 when Andrew and his close confederates Philip William Poole Carlyon-Britton (1863-1938) and Laurie Asher Lawrence (1857-1949) decided to found the British Numismatic Society, and Andrew’s resignation from the Numismatic Society of London was only the first in a succession of flash points that were to lead to this result. It was however wrong of me to identify, as I did in *BNJ* 73, this resignation as brought about by the printing in *NC* of the review of Andrew’s Henry I paper by Crump and Johnson, and I use this opportunity to correct my error¹⁰.

⁹ Andrew does not indicate who had made this statement to him, but the probability is that he is referring here to the “direct information”, mentioned above, that he had received about the authorship of the review.

¹⁰ In my remarks in *BNJ* 73 I also stated, incorrectly, that Andrew’s resignation was tendered in November 1902, whereas his pamphlet shows that his resignation had in fact been tendered as early as the middle of October.