

## HARRY MANVILLE AND *BNJ* AND *NC* OFFPRINTS

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When Harry Manville was compiling the third volume of his *Encyclopaedia of British Numismatics*, which was to be published in 2005 under the title *Numismatic Guide to British and Irish Printed Books 1600-2004*, he co-opted Robert Thompson and myself to read his draft text in instalments as he wrote it, and, as he recorded in his introduction to that volume, “Robert Thompson and Hugh Pagan have read through everything and each made so many corrections and suggestions that without their generous contributions this volume would be sadly less complete”.

As we were dealing with Harry’s text in chronological instalments, it was only when Harry’s text reached the 1830s that we realised that in addition to printed books proper Harry was intending to list offprints of published articles relevant to the study of the British coinage that had been published in numismatic and other periodicals. This was a little surprising, for Harry had already dealt with such articles exhaustively in the earlier volumes of his *Encyclopaedia* which had been specifically devoted to periodicals, but Robert and I were not initially at all bothered by this, since he was only listing offprints of which he had personally located copies, and the number of such for the nineteenth century and for the early twentieth century was not particularly large.

As however our reading of the sections of Harry’s text dealing with numismatic publications of the twentieth century progressed, both Robert and I came to feel that entries in it relating to offprints were beginning to take on a dominant role within the entries for each calendar year and that this somewhat obscured what was actually happening at the time in terms of publications in book or pamphlet form. To take an example at random, the publications that Harry listed for the year 1936 number ten (his numbers 932-941), but of these only two were independent publications – H.W.Dickinson’s book on Matthew Boulton, and a pamphlet on the early history of the Birmingham Assay Office – and all the rest were offprints, including three from *NC* and two from *BNJ*.

So it was that once Harry’s draft text got close to the middle of the twentieth century, Robert and I conveyed to him our collective view that from this point in time onwards so many of the articles published in *BNJ* or in *NC* were likely to exist in accessible offprint form that it would be overkill to list all of them in his volume, and readers of Harry’s published volume will find in its introduction a resulting statement that “in the long post-1950 section, offprints from the *British Numismatic Journal* and those pertinent to British numismatics from the *Numismatic Chronicle* have been ignored, unless a study originally spread over single issues has been republished as a single title”.

In retrospect, Harry's willingness to concede on this point ought to have surprised us, for although he was always very ready to emend his text when errors or omissions were notified to him, he was generally not so easily to be persuaded on issues relating to the inclusion of categories of books, or indeed of individual titles, when he had previously decided that they should go in the volume. It is thus that, despite my best representations to him, there is an entry in it (no.97) for Nicola Francesco Haym's *Del Tesoro Britannico*, 1719-20, which despite its title has no content whatever relating to the coinages of the British Isles.

I have however now realised that in relation to offprints Robert and I, unknowingly, were probably pushing at a half-open door as far as Harry's policy in regard to the inclusion or exclusion of offprints from *BNJ* or from *NC* was concerned. Harry's stated criterion for the inclusion in the volume of articles relevant to the British coinage published before 1950, was that "if a pre-1950 article exists as a reprint or offprint in a printed wrapper, or if there were changes or additions such as a printed title-page, and I have seen or am aware that a copy exists, it has been included. Offprints merely reproduced as 'tearsheets' without changes have been omitted".

What Harry precisely meant by the last sentence is a little obscure, but there is an obviously a clear distinction to be drawn between offprints which are bound up from the original printed sheets of the published article without the slightest alteration, and offprints which are "reprints" with new self-contained pagination. A typical "reprint" offprint might thus be paginated 1-8, while the article as originally published in the periodical involved might have been paginated 253-260.

As it happens, offprints from volumes of *BNJ* were issued in repaginated form up to and including offprints from vol.XXIII (1938-40), while they were bound up from unaltered printed sheets from vol.XXIV (1941-4) onwards. *BNJ* offprints were certainly issued for very much longer in printed wrappers which carry the title of the article concerned on the upper cover, but the real bibliographical watershed where offprints are concerned can be seen to have been the one between vols.XXIII and XXIV, i.e. in the early 1940s. Harry probably did not know precisely where the watershed lay, for no offprints from vol.XXIV seem to have been known to him, but it is likely that he was broadly aware that there was a moment of transition between these two types of offprint at some point in the first half of the 1940s.

So far as *NC* is concerned, the moment of transition from offprints in repaginated form to offprints bound up from unaltered printed sheets falls between *NC* Sixth Series, vol.VIII, 1948, from which I possess a repaginated offprint of an article on sceattas by Philip Hill, and *NC* Sixth Series, vol.IX, 1949, from which I possess an offprint of Robert Carson's major article on "The Mint of Thetford" which is bound up from unaltered printed sheets. As with *BNJ*, offprints were issued for very much longer in printed wrappers carrying the title of the article concerned on the upper cover, but the bibliographical watershed where *NC* is concerned can now be seen to have been crossed in the late 1940s, and I now rather suspect that that this was something of which Harry was consciously or unconsciously aware when he submitted so readily to the suggestion from Robert and I that offprints of post-1950 articles in *BNJ* and *NC* should be excluded.

I hope that these remarks will serve as an explanation to readers of Harry's volume as to why the absence of many post-1950 offprints from its pages may have had more of a rationale than seems at first sight apparent. They also point to the greater bibliographic desirability of offprints from each of these periodicals that are repaginated, and that are thus distinct in this respect from the form in which individual articles were originally published.

The general history of offprints has, as far as I am aware, not as yet been examined by bibliographical scholarship, still less by those specifically interested in numismatics or in similar disciplines. Offprints certainly have their own very obvious utility, for those who possess offprints of articles relating to their specialist interests do not need to clutter their book shelves with periodical volumes in which only one article may be of interest to them. Offprints may also bring together under one cover articles which in their original form were issued, inconveniently for posterity, in separate instalments of the same periodical. Thus, Edward Hawkins's very important original publication of the Cuerdale hoard, originally printed in two successive quarterly instalments of the *Numismatic Chronicle* for 1842-3, respectively paginated 1-48 and 53-104, is more easily read and more easily cited in its repaginated offprint form, in which the page numbering is consecutive from 1 to 100, eliminating the gap in the original pagination.

Another interesting issue is the number of offprints of any given article that may originally have been printed<sup>1</sup>. It is difficult to find evidence for this in the numismatic field, but I do possess an offprint of an article by the French scholar Félicien de Saulcy from the volume for 1838 of the *Revue Numismatique*, in which there is a printed statement that this is one of twenty-five copies of the offprint produced, and this, as well as evidencing the fact that offprints were available from the very outset of the publication of the *Revue Numismatique*, indicates that printings of twenty-five copies of each article might well have been customary. Twenty-five copies of each offprint was also, if I recollect correctly, for long the standard total provided to contributors to *BNJ* and to *NC*, and maybe for other periodicals as well, and this places in amusing relief the discovery by Richard Haworth of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, communicated by him to Michael Dolley in a letter dated 1 May 1975, also now in my possession, that 'by some amazing chance ... we have here 370 odd copies (yes ! three hundred and seventy)' of the offprint of Dolley's article, 'New Light on the 1837 Viking-Age Coin-Hoard from Ballitore', published in the RSAI's *Journal* for 1962. These had clearly been run off inadvertently, and Haworth was seeking many years later to dispose of them partly to Dolley and partly otherwise.



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<sup>1</sup> It has at all times been possible for authors to have additional copies of offprints printed at their own expense, over and above whatever the quota might have been of offprints made available to an author without charge, but it is likely that only a small number of authors will have gone to the expense of having extra copies printed, and I am not aware having seen large numbers of copies in the numismatic book trade of any particular nineteenth-century or twentieth-century offprint relating to the post-Roman coinages of Britain.