

*An Addition to the Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles 35: Scottish Coins in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford and the Hunterian Museum, Glasgow*

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The Scottish holdings of the Hunterian collection were recorded in the *Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles 35: Scottish Coins in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford and the Hunterian Museum, Glasgow*.<sup>1</sup> Recently, a 60 shillings coin of James VI has come to light that was not included in the *Sylloge*. It is thought convenient to record it here in order to ensure that the whole of the Hunterian's Scottish collection, as it stood in 1987, is publicly available.



*James VI (1567-1625), 60 Shillings, 9<sup>th</sup> Coinage (1605-1609), Edinburgh Mint, The Hunterian Museum Coin Cabinet, William Hunter Collection, GLAHM: 36763*

The coin was found in a cabinet containing part of William Hunter's collection of English coins. It was labelled as an English crown with the grapes mintmark. It is, however, a Scottish 60 shillings coin bearing the thistle mintmark, the only mintmark that appears on Scottish post-Union of the Crowns Jacobean coins. The 60 shillings is from James VI's 9<sup>th</sup> Scottish coinage, which was struck from February 1605 to late 1609.<sup>2</sup> While there is no direct reference to the

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\* I'd like to thank Jesper Ericsson, the Hunterian Museum's curator of numismatics, for his advice and for providing generous access to the Hunterian's incredible numismatic collection.

<sup>1</sup> J.D. Bateson & N.J. Mayhew, *Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles 35: Scottish Coins in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford and the Hunterian Museum, Glasgow* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987)

<sup>2</sup> National Records of Scotland E102/3, fol.11r; R.W. Cochran-Patrick, *Records of the Coinage of Scotland, from the earliest period to the union, vol.1* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1876), p.215.

coin's provenance on its ticket, its presence in the Hunter cabinets strongly suggests that it formed part of William Hunter's original bequest to the museum.

Such a misidentification is not unwarranted. The Jacobean Scottish and English gold and silver coinages, struck after James VI's accession to the English throne, were extremely similar by design. This was especially true of James's 9<sup>th</sup> coinage, which depicted the same arms as that on their English counterparts. The arms shown on the English and Scottish coins placed the conjoined arms of England and France in the first and fourth quarters. James's 10<sup>th</sup> Scottish coinage placed the lion rampant in their place and relegated the arms of England and France to the second quarter.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, it was not until the publication of many of the Scottish mint records, in 1876, that it became apparent that the 9<sup>th</sup> coinage was of Scottish manufacture.<sup>4</sup> There was still confusion after this date. George Sim, the coin curator of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, when recording a hoard in the early 1880s, erroneously identified a Scottish 30 shillings coin as an English halfcrown, 'with thistle on housings'.<sup>5</sup> It is thereby likely that this coin was initially stored alongside James's English coins and was accidentally overlooked when the coins of the 9<sup>th</sup> coinage were placed with Hunter's Scottish coins, presumably sometime in the late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

This 60 shillings was double struck and there are indications of this on both sides. This is most apparent when examining the beaded border that separates the legend from the field. The beading shows evidence of doubling between 11 o'clock and 2 o'clock on the obverse and between 1 o'clock and 11 o'clock on the reverse. Numerous letters on both sides and parts of the king's equestrian portrait have also been doubled. The coin weighs 29.86 grams (460.81 grains), slightly below its officially mandated weight of 30.10 grams (464.52 grains).<sup>6</sup> It has a die axis of 250 degrees and a diameter of 43.7mm at its greatest extent.



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<sup>3</sup> Philip Skingley, *Coins of Scotland, Ireland and the Islands, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition* (London: Spink & Son, 2015), p.82.

<sup>4</sup> Cochran-Patrick, *Records of the Coinage of Scotland*, p.vi.

<sup>5</sup> George Sim, 'Notice of Recent Finds of Coins in Scotland', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland vol.18 (1883-84)*, p.379.

<sup>6</sup> Edward Burns, *The Coinage of Scotland, vol.II* (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1887), p.416.