

Charles I Counterfeit Shillings – Connecting the York, Oxford and one of the Tower Types

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A previous note described all of the known varieties of the shillings made at the York mint using Briot's roller presses⁽¹⁾. This was followed by a note describing several contemporary counterfeits that bear the EBOR mint name⁽²⁾. Several of the pieces showed punch links with a group of counterfeit shillings some of which bore a Declaration type reverse design similar to the official issues from Oxford and other mints during the Civil War.

The recent project at the British Museum to photograph and upload details of their Charles I coins (including counterfeits) has produced an outstanding resource for collectors and researchers⁽³⁾. Much remains to be done, but the collection of contemporary counterfeits of Charles I shillings has been completed. The numbering scheme from the previous article has been retained and extended as needed. Eight relevant pieces from the BM collection are presented below.

Counterfeits which state EBOR

York cft Type 1

Crowned bust with lace collar.
•CAROLVS•DG•MAG•
BRIT•FRA•E•REX• Lion mm.

Inverted A in CAROLVS

Oval garnished shield with lion's claws at sides EBOR in cartouche below.
Lion mm.
•CHRISTO•AVSPICE•
REGNO• Lion mm.
Retrograde N in REGNO

BM E.6931 – 3.83g



York cft Type 3

Crowned bust with lace collar. Lion mm
•CAROLVS D G•MAG•
BRIT•FR•ET•HI•REX•
Lion mm

Oval garnished shield with lion's claws at sides EBOR in cartouche below.
•CHRISTO•AV•SPICE•
REGNO Lion mm

Retrograde N in REGNO,
Retrograde EB in EBOR

BM E.6930 – 4.02g



York cft Type 5

Squat crowned bust with wavy hair and lace collar. mm?
CAROIVS D G MAG
BRIT FR ET HI REX

Oval garnished shield.
EBOR below. mm Lion.

CHRISTO•AVSPICE•
REGNO•

BM E.6928 – 4.07g



York cft Type 6

Squat crowned bust with wavy hair and lace collar. mm Oxford plume sideways to left.
CAROLVS D G MAG
B[. . .] ET HI REX

Square topped shield over cross moline EBOR above. mm not clear.

CHRI[. . .] AVS[. . .]CE
REGNO

BM 1841,0216.17 –
3.94g



Counterfeits linked to Oxford style with declaration type by bust style and common punches

Oxford cft Type 2

Crowned bust with wavy hair and lace collar. mm Oxford plume sideways to left.

CAROLVS D G MAG BRIT FR ET HI REX •

Square topped shield over cross moline
•CHRISTO•AVSPICE•
REGNO• a lion walking left.

BM. 1860,1227.6 – 4.30g

Better specimen allows reverse mm to be confirmed.

Die duplicate

BM 1842,0729.119 – 3.67g



Oxford cft Type 2



Oxford cft Type 3

Crowned bust with wavy hair and lace collar. mm not clear.

CARLVS•D•G•MA•BR•FR•ET•HI•REX

EXVRGAT•DEVS•DISSIP
ENTVR•INIMICI• around
Declaration legend, with three plumes above 1642 below.

BM. E.6932 – 3.96g



Tower issue

Tower mm tun

Crowned bust with wavy hair and lace collar. mm tun.

•CARLVS•DG•MAG BR FRAN•ETHIB•REX•







Square topped shield with cross moline
•CHRISTO•AVSPICE•
REGNO• mm tun

BM. E.6920 – 4.40g



Close inspection of the pieces in the previous note had suggested that the York type 1, 2, 3 and 4 included common punches. The pieces presented here confirm that the reverse mm of the Oxford type 2 is a crude lion walking left, as well as revealing several other common punches.

The table below illustrates the punches and the types/dies that they can be found on. These images are from specimens in the author's collection. This neatly divides all of the counterfeits presented here and previously into two groups, suggesting they were all produced in just one or two workshops.

		Feature / Punch					
		In Lace Collar 	In Lace Collar 	In Lace Collar 	Hair punch 	French Shield Lys punch has break on rhs  Three entered separately, design inverted	Oxford Plume 
Counterfeits							
York Type 1	Group 1	✓					
York Type 2		✓					
York Type 3		✓					
York Type 4		✓					
York Type 5	Group 2		✓	✓	✓	✓	
York Type 6			✓	✓	✓	✓	?
Oxford Type 1			✓	✓	✓		✓
Oxford Type 2			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Oxford Type 3							✓
Tower mm tun			✓	✓	✓	✓	

Conclusions

Eight contemporary counterfeit shillings of Charles I held by the British Museum have been presented here. These add three new types to those presented previously and provide improved images of two more.

The previous note had suggested one group displaying the mint name EBOR (York types 1, 2, 3 and 4) emanated from the same workshop due to a common punch used to make the lace collar. The pieces presented here display common punches shared by York types 5 and 6, Oxford types 1, 2, and 3 and a counterfeit Tower issue with mm tun. This suggests that all of these types were produced in the same workshop.

The diversity of genuine designs in circulation during the Civil War, including poorly struck pieces that became increasingly worn and clipped in the following decades produced many opportunities for the counterfeiters. Most of these counterfeits appear to be well made in reasonably good silver, but struck with slightly undersize dies on smaller flans. The resulting pieces typically weigh about 4g, just two thirds of the standard shilling weight. From the quality of the dies, it is likely that both groups of counterfeits were struck during or just after the Civil War and Group 1 counterfeits have been found in Civil War hoards.

References and Acknowledgements

- (1) G. Oddie. Charles I Shillings of the York Mint (i) Official Issues. BNS Blog August 21, 2020. <https://britnumsoc.blog/2020/08/21/charles-i-shillings-of-the-york-mint-i-official-issues-gary-oddie/>
- (2) G. Oddie. Charles I Shillings of the York Mint (ii) Counterfeits. BNS Blog September 18, 2020. <https://britnumsoc.blog/2020/09/18/charles-i-shillings-of-the-york-mint-ii-counterfeits-gary-oddie/>
- (3) <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection> searching for 'Charles shilling forgery' produces 42 hits.

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