

A New Bust Variety for 1676 Charles II Shillings

Gary Oddie

The new edition of English Silver Coinage by Maurice Bull has added a second bust variety to the milled shillings of Charles II, when compared to the previous edition.^(1,2) When recently asked to identify the shilling shown in figure 1, my first reaction was 1676 shilling, “2nd bust variety A”, unrecorded in Bull for this date.



Fig. 1. 1676 shilling, with long straight lower tie, shallow angle between upper tie and back of hair.



Fig. 2. 1676/5 shilling, 2nd bust, with curved and kinked lower tie, large angle between upper tie and hair.
[Private collection]

Looking more closely at Bull’s illustrations, the bust given for the “2nd bust variety A” on p72 is different to the bust illustrated on p75.



Fig 3. Illustrations from Bull of 2nd bust variety A.⁽¹⁾ The first from page 72 and the second from page 75. Note the shape of the ties, the different tops to the wreath and the shape of the back of the hair and the angle it makes with the upper tie.

In an attempt to untangle this, a quick search was made of the usual sources for shillings dated 1674, to identify the bust varieties. Three distinct busts have been found, all differing in the shape of the ties to the wreath as shown below.



Fig. 4. 1674 shilling, 2nd bust, with curved and kinked lower tie. [Private collection]



Fig. 5. 1674/3 shilling. Lower tie nearly straight, upper tie has nick in end. Large angle between upper tie and back of hair. This is the bust illustrated in Bull as 2nd bust variety A, p.75. [DNW 20 Feb 2019 lot 310]



Fig. 6. 1674 shilling, long straight lower tie, shallow angle between upper tie and back of hair. Plume on reverse only. This is the bust illustrated as 2nd bust variety A, in Bull p.72. [Private collection]

Conclusions

The shillings of Charles I dated 1674 show three distinct varieties of the second bust, distinguished by the shape of the ties.

- (i) Normal second bust, with curved and kinked lower tie, large angle between upper tie and hair.
- (ii) Variety with lower tie nearly straight, upper tie has nick in end. Large angle between upper tie and back of hair.
- (iii) Variety with long straight lower tie, shallow angle between upper tie and back of hair.

This latter variety has now also been found on shillings dated 1676.

References and Acknowledgements

- (1) M. Bull. *English Silver Coinage since 1649 – 6th Fully Revised Edition*. Spink, 2015.
- (2) P.A. Rayner. *English Silver Coinage since 1649*. Seaby, 5th Edition, 1992. It is interesting to see the varieties appear as the editions progress

And a belated thankyou to Richard Shelton whose enquiry prompted this note.

