A Die Study of James I Shillings – Second Issue, mm Plain Cross

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Introduction

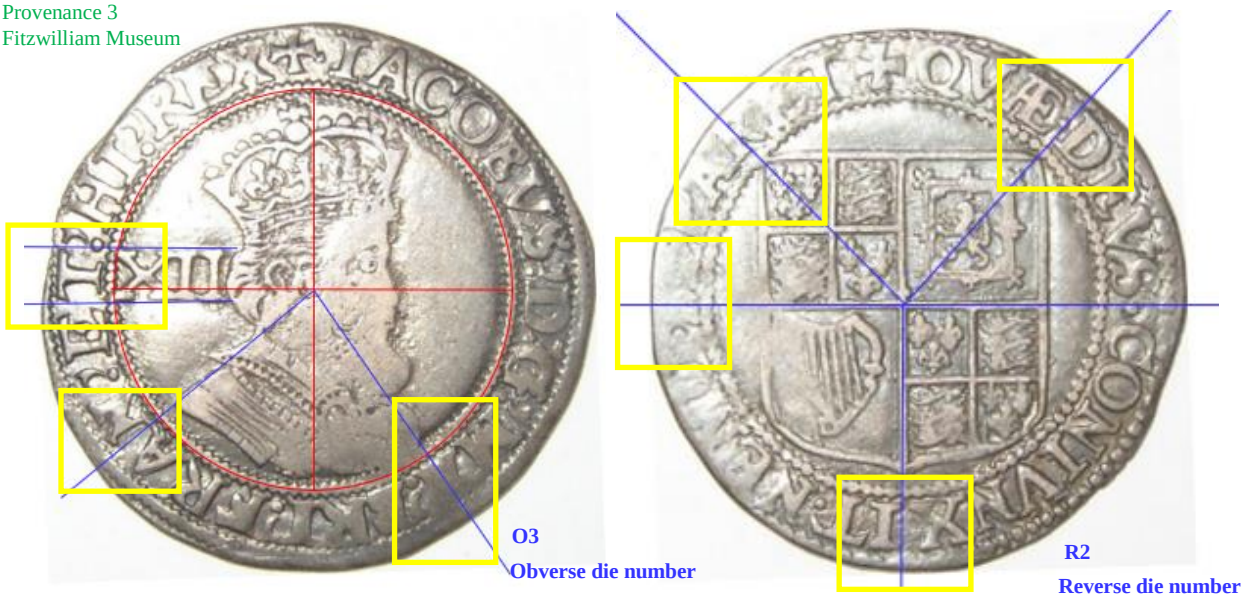
This note continues the die studies of James I shillings, tackling some of the easier (rarer) mintmarks of the second issue first.

Method

As previously, the coin is rotated to make the XII horizontal and guidelines drawn above and below the XII and from the centre of the inner circle past the edge of the bust closest to the inner circle. On the reverse the centre of the shield is used as the origin and guidelines drawn through the top left and top right corners of the shield.

Summary of Results

[P3]
Provenance 3
Fitzwilliam Museum



O3
Obverse die number

R2
Reverse die number

This is one of the rarer mintmarks and just six specimens have been found.

Type		Obv. Legend	Obv. Dies	Rev. Dies
Issue	Bust			
2nd	5th	IACOBVS D G MAG BRIT FRAN ET HIB REX	2	1 1/2
	5th	IACOBVS D G MA BRI FRA ET HI REX	1	1/2
		Totals	3	2

Struck between May 15th 1618 and 9th June 1619, the silver at the trial of the pyx was just 9s1d, which would account for the rarity of this mintmark. Yet three obverse and two reverse dies have been found. Even if all of the silver from this period had been coined into shillings (ignoring the 6d, 2d, 1d and ½d), just one pair of dies would have been sufficient.

The Die Study

IACOBVS D G MAG BRIT FRAN ET HIB REX

IACOBVS D G MA BRI FRA ET HI REX

Sources of Images and Acknowledgements

The following are thanked for the use of their images:

[P1] Private Collection [P2] Private Collection [P3] Fitzwilliam Museum

Thanks also to David Holt and Nigel Prevost for useful contributions regarding provenances. Also to Tom Hockenhull and the team at the BM and Martin Allen and Richard Kelleher at the Fitzwilliam Museum for allowing pictures to be taken of their pieces.

Discussion and Conclusions

That there are three obverse, and two reverse dies is adding further weight to the idea that dies were not used to exhaustion but replaced much earlier. With so few surviving coins in the sample the statistical methods become questionable, but for completeness, the table below shows the usual analysis.

The lower estimate for the numbers of obverse and reverse dies are nonsensical (less than the dies already observed) and are coloured red. As always, more specimens and die duplicates etc will help the analysis, but the numbers suggest the dies already found are probably the complete set.

		Obverse	Reverse
Sample size	n	6	6
Number of dies	d	3	2
Singletons	d_1	1	0
2 examples	d_2	1	1
3 examples	d_3	1	
4 examples	d_4		1
5 examples	d_5		
6 examples	d_6		
Coverage	C_{est}	0.833	1
Estimated dies	d_-	2	1
	d_{est}	4	2
	d_+	10	4

Table 1. Die statistics of the James I shillings, second issue, mintmark Cross.