

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

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Introduction

Previous die studies have covered the third issue shillings and mintmarks Spur Rowel and Plain Cross of the second issue. This note tackles another of the rarer mintmarks, the Book, sometimes called Book on Lectern.

Method

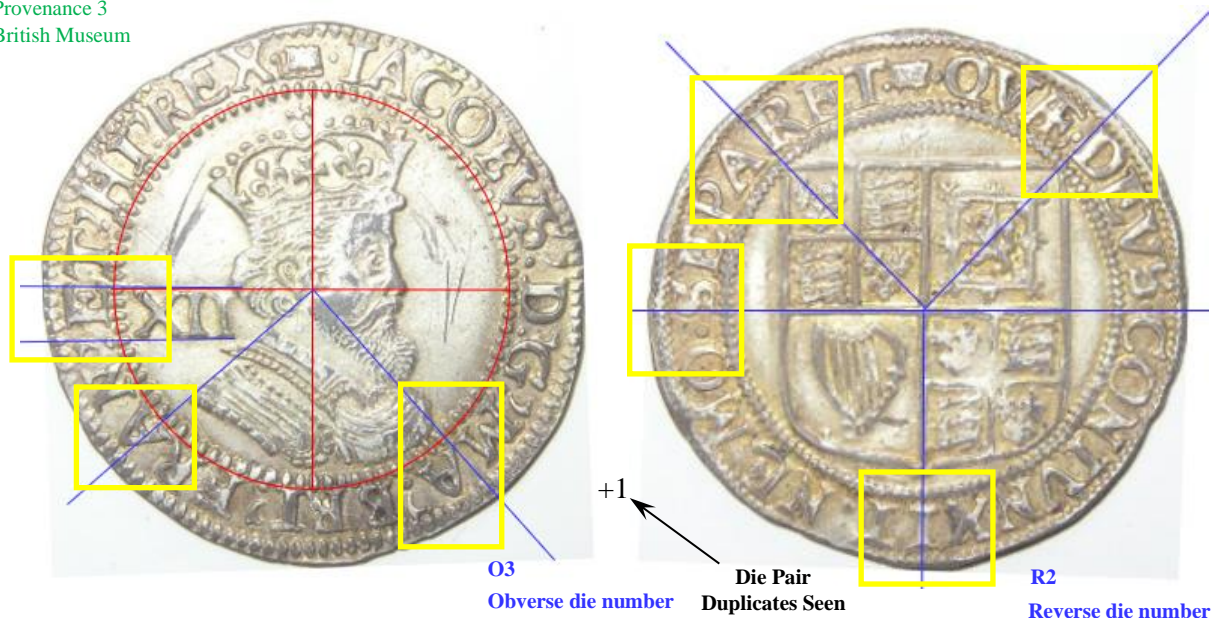
As previously, the coin is rotated to make the XII horizontal and guidelines drawn above and below the XII and from the centre of the inner circle past the edge of the bust closest to the inner circle. On the reverse the centre of the shield is used as the origin and guidelines drawn through the top left and top right corners of the shield. The features in the yellow boxes are sufficient to identify the individual dies.

Summary of Results

[P3]

Provenance 3

British Museum



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

Type		Obv. Legend	Obv. Dies	Rev. Dies
Issue	Bust			
2 nd	5 th	IACOBVS D G MA BRI FR ET HI REX	2	1 1/2
	6 th	IACOBVS D G MA BRI FRAN ET HI REX	1	1/2

Totals

3

2

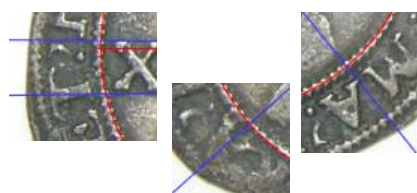
Struck between 15th November 1616 and 15th May 1618, the silver at the trial of the pyx was just 9s2d, which would account for the rarity of this mintmark. Yet three obverse and two reverse dies have been found. Even if all of the silver from this period had been coined into shillings (ignoring the 6d, 2d and 1d), just one pair of dies would have been sufficient.

The Die Study

IACOBVS D G MA BRI FRA ET HI REX

5th Bust

Book over tun Obv?



[P1]

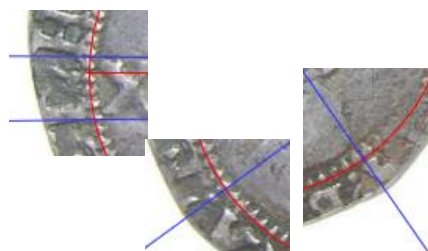


O1



R1

No Stop before mm



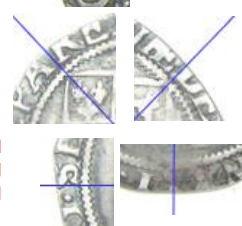
[P2]



O2

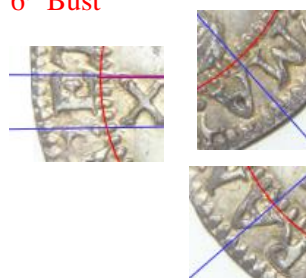


R2



IACOBVS D G MA BRI FRAN ET HI REX

6th Bust



[P3]



+1

O3



R2



Sources of Images and Acknowledgements

The following are thanked for the use of their images:

[P1] Private Collection

[P2] Private Collection

[P3] British Museum

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

Discussion and Conclusions

O3/R2 is possibly a finework piece or a pattern for the third issue 6th bust issues, and a die pair duplicate in the Hunterian Museum is on a much rounder flan. The finework reverse die **R2** as appears reused on a normal circulating piece with obverse **O2**.

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, based on some other criterion, or just the whim of the engravers.

With so few surviving coins in the sample, applying the usual statistical methods is at best questionable, but for completeness the table below summarises the results.

		Obverse	Reverse
Sample size	n	4	4
Number of dies	d	3	2
Singletons	d ₁	2	1
2 examples	d ₂	1	
3 examples	d ₃		1
4 examples	d ₄		
5 examples	d ₅		
6 examples	d ₆		
Coverage	C _{est}	0.5	0.75
Estimated dies	d ₋	8	2
	d _{est}	8	3
	d ₊	40	10

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

