

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

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Introduction

This note continues the die studies of James I shillings, working backwards through the mintmarks of the second issue. Here the mintmark Mullet is presented – issued 9th May 1611 to 22nd May 1612. This note also includes many images kindly provided by Michael Thompson. Several pieces in the MT image database only include an obverse.

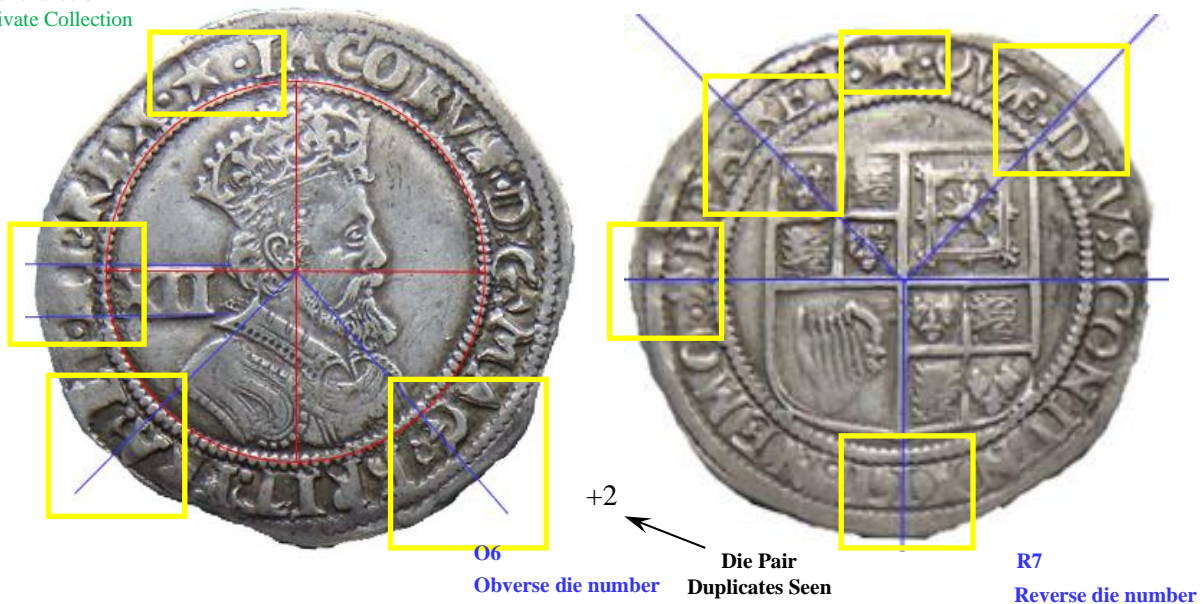
Method

The obverse image is scaled to fit a nominal inner circle (red) and the coin is rotated to make the XII horizontal and guidelines drawn above and below the XII (blue) and from the centre of the inner circle past the edge of the bust closest to the inner circle (blue). 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 (blue). The features in the yellow boxes are sufficient to identify the individual dies.

About half of the dies show an over struck mintmark (Mullet over Key or Mullet over Bell) which, combined with the orientation and relative position of nearby stops, also provides a quick die identifier. Thus, close-ups of the mintmarks are also included in the images.

Summary of Results

[P8]
Provenance 8
Private Collection



In a few cases, images of just one side of a coin have been found. These are not illustrated and where they are from a known die, this is indicated by “*1” etc to the lower left of the image. These are not counted in the totals or statistics as the information (other side) is not complete.

Six different Obverse legend readings have been found, including one with a die sinker’s error, with an extra R after HIB: **IACOBVS D G MAG BRIT FRA ET HIB R REX.**

The table below lists the legend varieties in the usual alphabetical order, the same order in which the die study is presented.

Type		Obv. Legend	Obv. Dies	Rev. Dies
Issue	Bust			
2 nd	5 th	IACOBVS D G MAG BRI FRA ET HI REX	2	2
		IACOBVS D G MAG BRI FRA ET HIB REX	1	1½
		IACOBVS D G MAG BRI FRAN ET HIB REX	1	1½
		IACOBVS D G MAG BRIT FRA ET HI REX	17	21 ⅓ ½
		IACOBVS D G MAG BRIT FRA ET HIB REX	4	5 ⅔ ½
		IACOBVS D G MAG BRIT FRA ET HIB R REX	1	1
Totals			26	32

The Die Study

IACOBVS D G MAG BRI FRA ET HI REX

5th Bust



IACOBVS D G MAG BRI FRA ET HIB REX

5th Bust



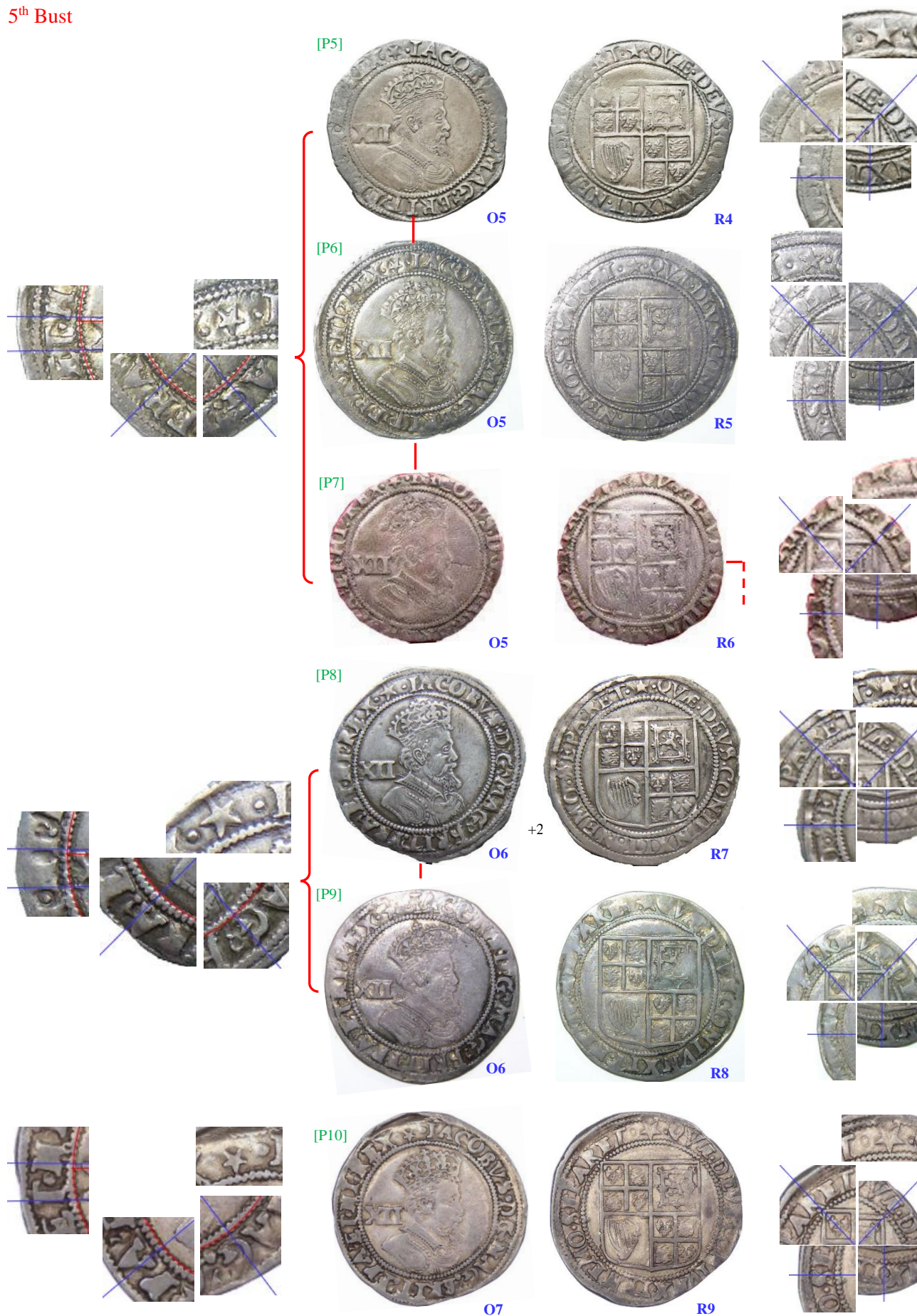
IACOBVS D G MAG BRI FRAN ET HIB REX

5th Bust



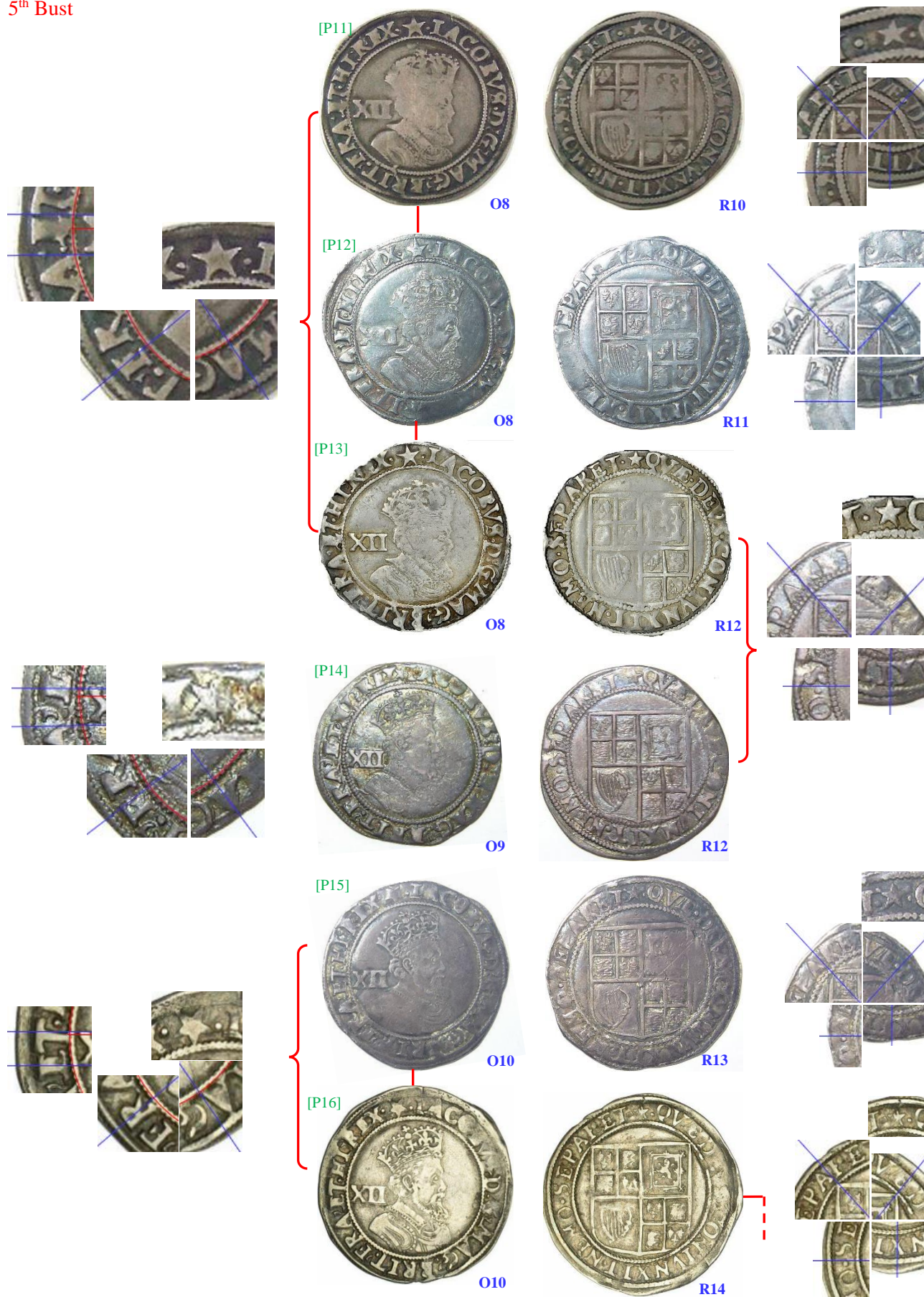
IACOBVS D G MAG BRIT FRA ET HI REX

5th Bust



IACOBVS D G MAG BRIT FRA ET HI REX - continued

5th Bust



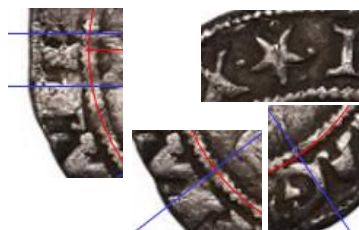
5th Bust



IACOBVS D G MAG BRIT FRA ET HI REX - continued

5th Bust

mm Mullet over Bell



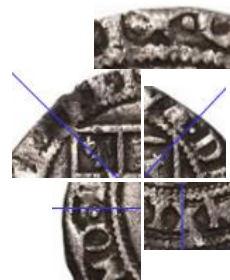
[P23]



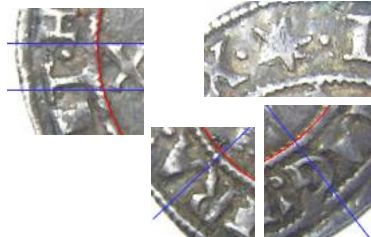
O16



R19



mm Mullet over Bell



[P24]



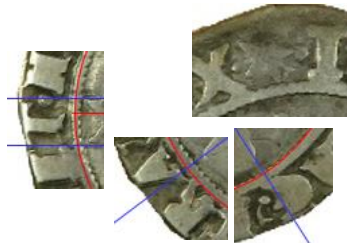
O17



R20



mm Mullet over Bell



[P25]



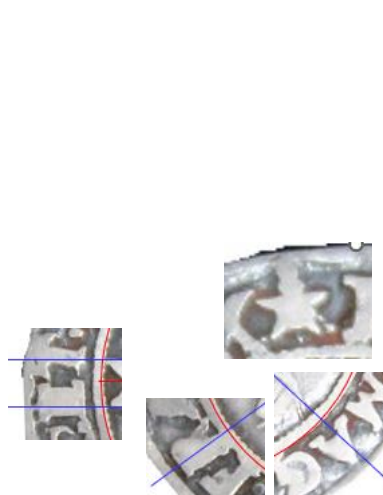
O18



R21



mm Mullet over Bell



[P26]



O19



R22



[P27]



O19



R23



[P28]



O19



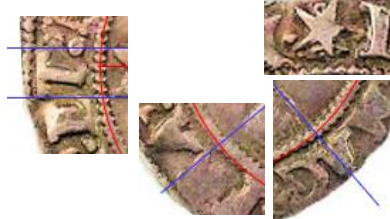
R24



IACOBVS D G MAG BRIT FRA ET HI REX - continued

5th Bust

mm Mullet over Bell



[P29]

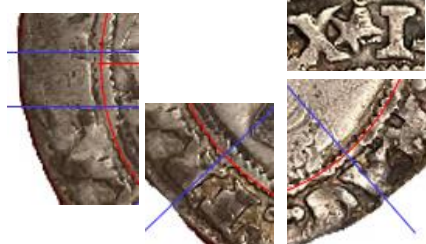


O20

Double struck



mm Mullet over Bell



[P30]



R21

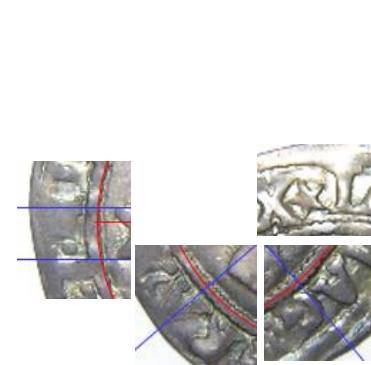
mm Mullet over Bell



R26

IACOBVS D G MAG BRIT FRA ET HIB REX

5th Bust



[P31]



O22

+1



R6



[P32]



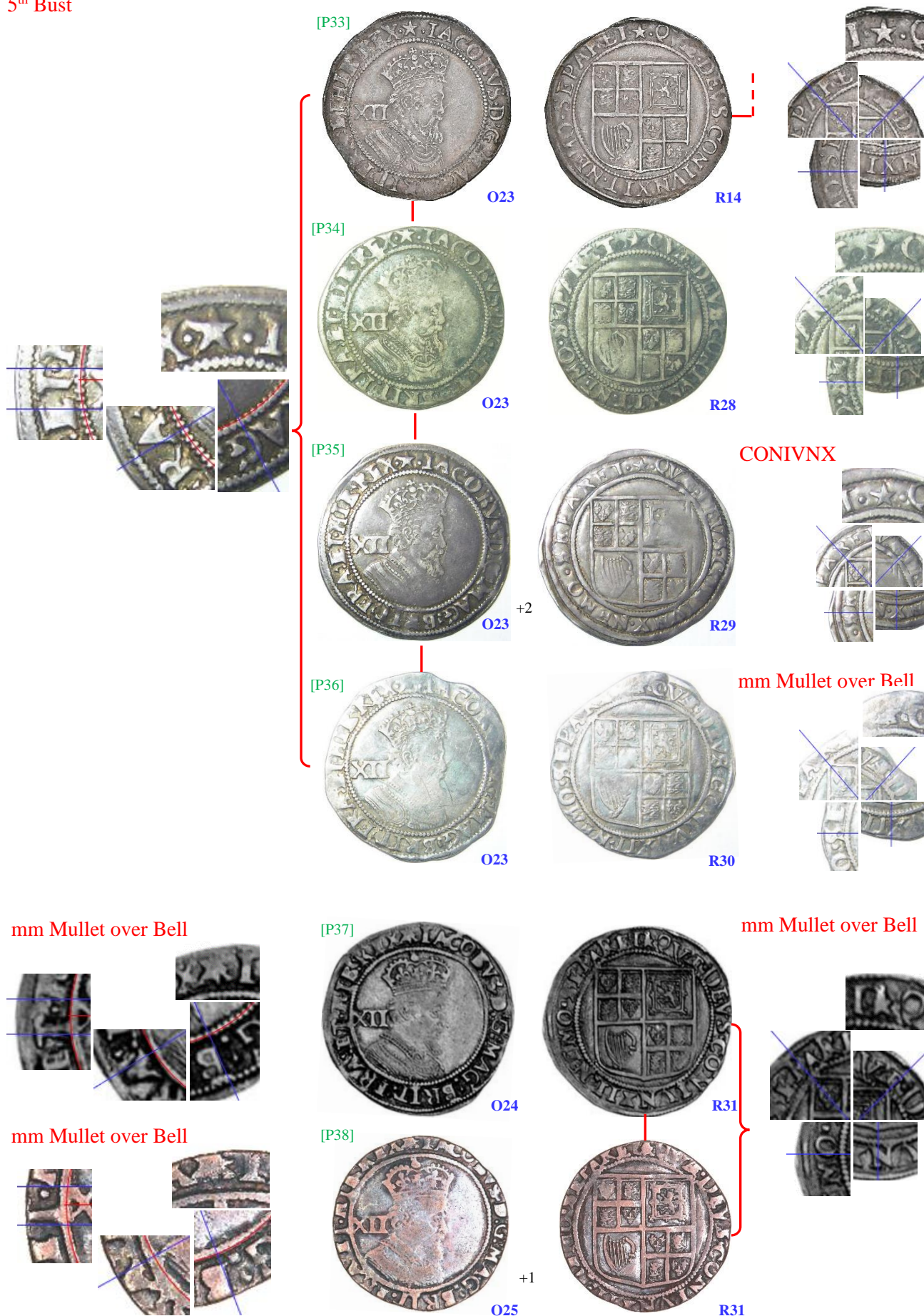
O22



R27

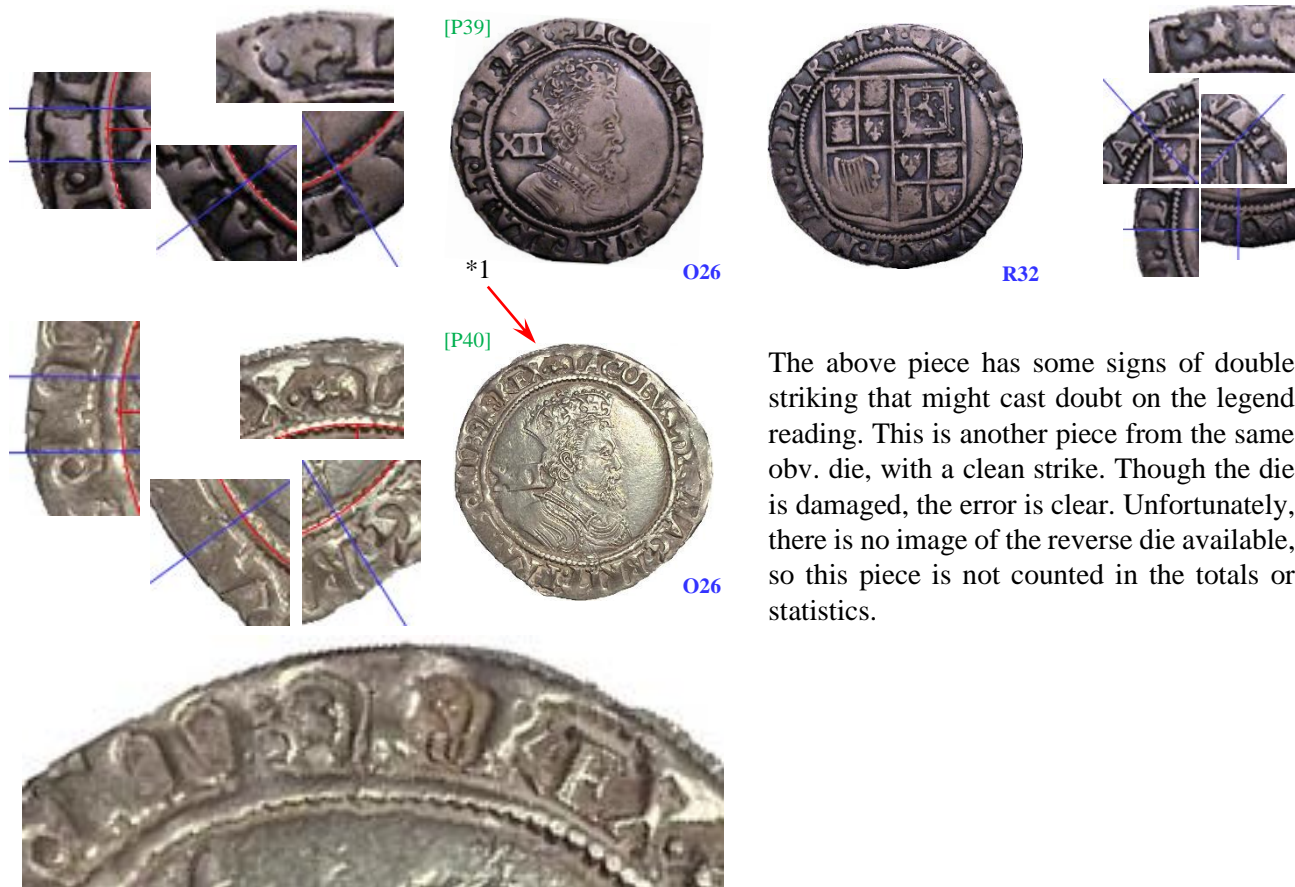


5th Bust



IACOBVS D G MAG BRIT FRA ET HIB R REX

5th Bust



The above piece has some signs of double striking that might cast doubt on the legend reading. This is another piece from the same obv. die, with a clean strike. Though the die is damaged, the error is clear. Unfortunately, there is no image of the reverse die available, so this piece is not counted in the totals or statistics.

Sources of Images and Acknowledgements

The following are thanked for the use of their images:

[P1]	Private Collection	[P15]	Private Collection	[P29]	www Live Auctioneers
[P2]	British Museum	[P16]	SCA 4 May 2022 Lot 85	[P30]	www
[P3]	British Museum	[P17]	Goldberg 3 Feb 2016 Lot 3994	[P31]	British Museum
[P4]	British Museum	[P18]	Private Collection	[P32]	British Museum
[P5]	Ashmolean Museum	[P19]	Heritage 12 Mar 2015 Lot 62133	[P33]	Heritage 30 Jan 2022 Lot 97085
[P6]	Private Collection	[P20]	Private Collection	[P34]	Fitzwilliam Museum
[P7]	www eBay worthpoint	[P21]	CNG Auction 196 Lot 495	[P35]	Private Collection
[P8]	Private Collection	[P22]	www eBay worthpoint	[P36]	Private Collection
[P9]	British Museum	[P23]	Timeline 24 May 2022 Lot 8843	[P37]	www
[P10]	Baldwins online shop	[P24]	Private Collection	[P38]	Victoria Museum Australia
[P11]	www Live Auctioneers	[P25]	eBay	[P39]	www
[P12]	Private Collection	[P26]	British Museum	[P40]	www
[P13]	eBay John Newman	[P27]	www Live Auctioneers	[P41]	www Facebook
[P14]	British Museum	[P28]	Wignall Ltd		

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Discussion and Conclusions

On 22nd May 1612 the value of silver in the Pyx box was £9 11s 4d comprising 1/- 6d, 2d, 1d and ½d. The period covered since the trial for the mm Bell issue (9 May 1611) is just over 12 months. In terms of rarity this might be considered normal, neither common nor rare and 49 specimens have been found.

With just 49 specimens struck from 26 obverse and 32 reverse dies, the sample is still not ideal. The table below presents the usual statistical analysis for shillings with mintmark Mullet.

		Obverse	Reverse
Sample size	n	49	49
Number of dies	d	26	32
Singletons	d ₁	15	21
2 examples	d ₂	4	6
3 examples	d ₃	4	4
4 examples	d ₄	2	1
5 examples	d ₅		
6 examples	d ₆	1	
Coverage	C _{est}	0.69	0.57
Estimated dies	d _l	33	47
	d _{est}	48	74
	d ₊	71	121

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

As with some of the studies of the later mintmarks already published, the coverage could be better. Doubling the sample size would certainly narrow down the range of estimated dies.

Postscript – another counterfeit

Whilst working through the image archive of MT, GO found the following piece. At a first glance it is very convincing as a James I shilling with mintmark Mullet. However, on closer inspection, whilst very good, nearly every detail isn't quite right. It has been numbered to place it in the previous article on James I contemporary counterfeit shillings.⁽¹⁾

Second Coinage

mm Mullet, 5th bust?

Obv. IACOBVS D G MAG BRIT FRA ET HI REX
Rev. QVAE DEVS CONIVNXIT NEMO SEPARAT
Details. Possibly base silver. [P41]

Whilst the legends are correct, all of the individual letters look hand engraved and are irregular in form, including the XII. The lower edge of the shoulder looks like an irregular lace edge rather than the smooth edge of armour/clothing. On the reverse, the Scottish lion is very primitively engraved.



Reference

- (1) Contemporary Counterfeit Shillings of James I, 1603-1625, Circulating to 1696-7. BNS Blog 3rd July 2023. <https://britnumsoc.files.wordpress.com/2023/07/375-james-i-cft-blog-oddie-001.pdf>

