

A Die Study of James I Shillings

– Second Issue, mm Key

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Introduction

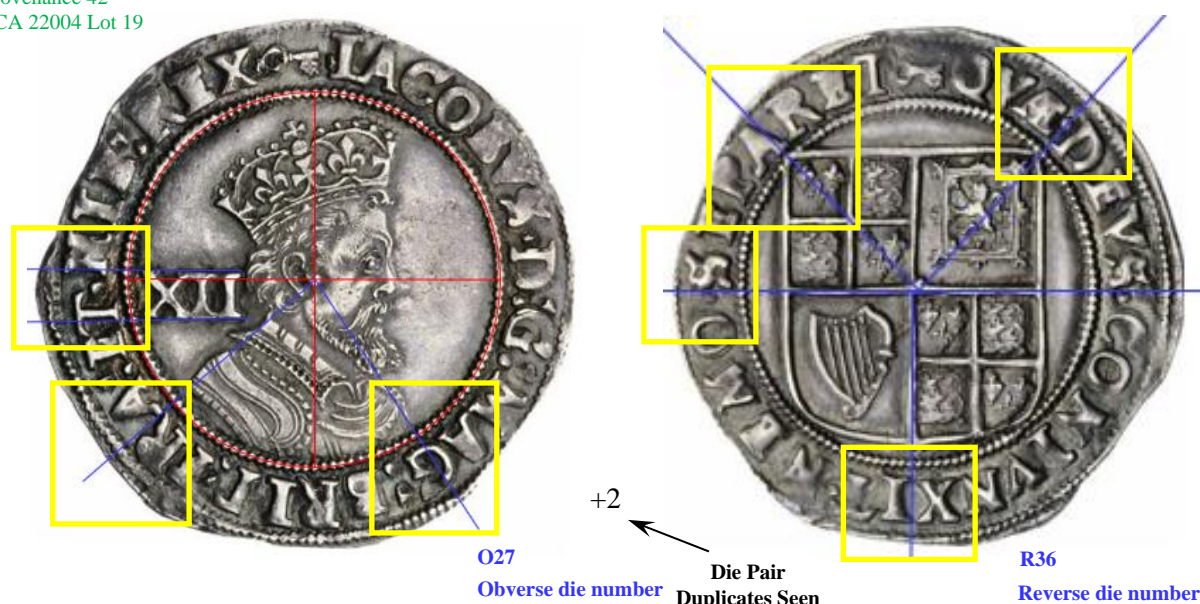
This note continues the die studies of James I shillings, working backwards through the mintmarks of the second issue. Here the mintmark Key is presented – issued between 17th May 1609 and 11th May 1610 and when £11 4s 11d of silver was in the Pyx trial. This is the beginning of the period when no crowns or half-crowns were struck.

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.

Summary of Results

[P42]
Provenance 42
SCA 22004 Lot 19



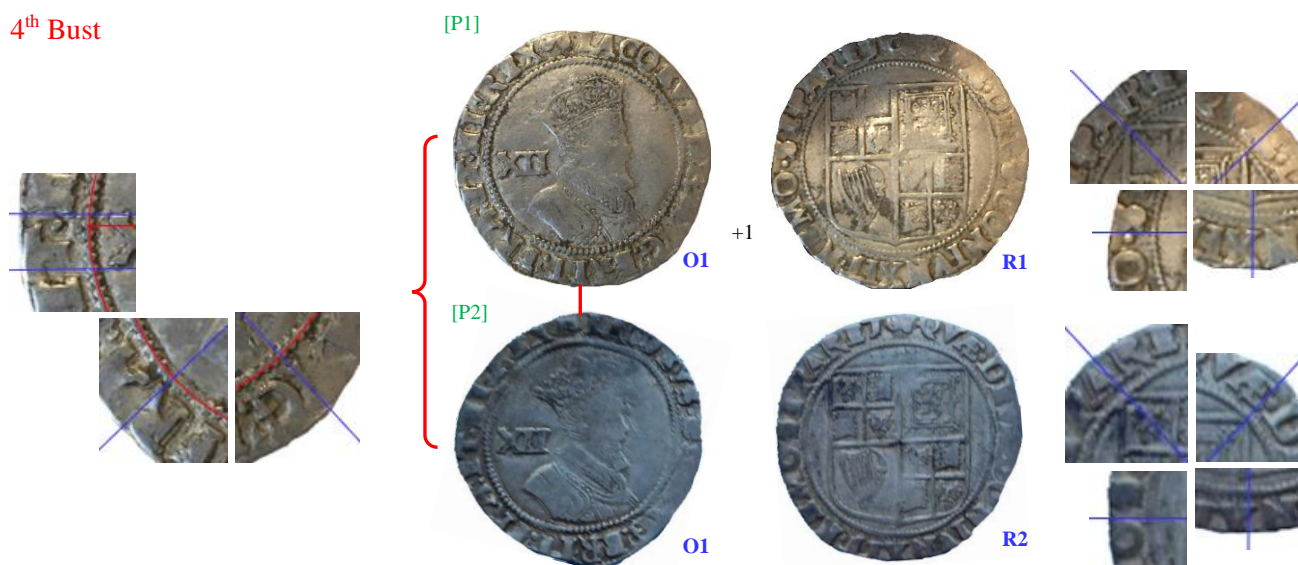
The table below lists the legend varieties in the usual alphabetical order, the same order in which the die study is presented.

Type		Obv. Legend	Obv. Dies	Rev. Dies
Issue	Bust			
2 nd	4 th	IACOBVS D G MAG BRIT FRA ET HI REX	1	2
	4 th var	IACOBVS D G MAG BRIT FRA ET HI REX	1	1 1/2
	5 th	IACOBVS D G MAG BRIT FRA ET HI REX	20	23 1/2 1/2
		IACOBVS D G MAG BRIT FRA ET HIB REX	11	13 1/2
Totals			33	41

The Die Study

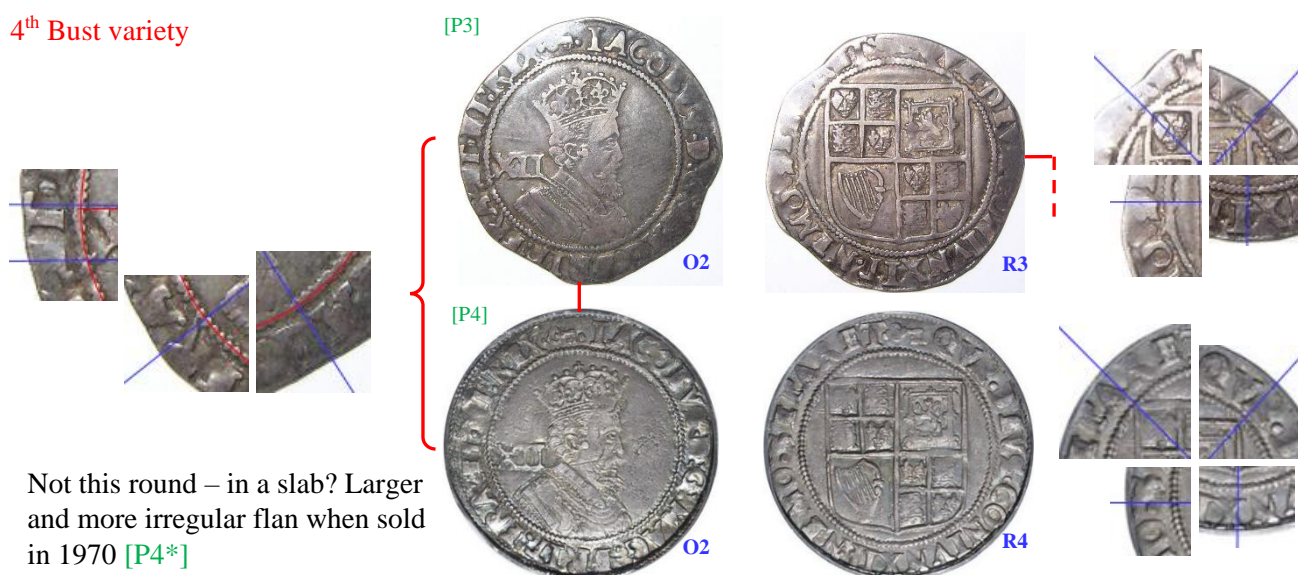
IACOBVS D G MAG BRIT FRA ET HI REX

4th Bust



IACOBVS D G MAG BRIT FRA ET HI REX

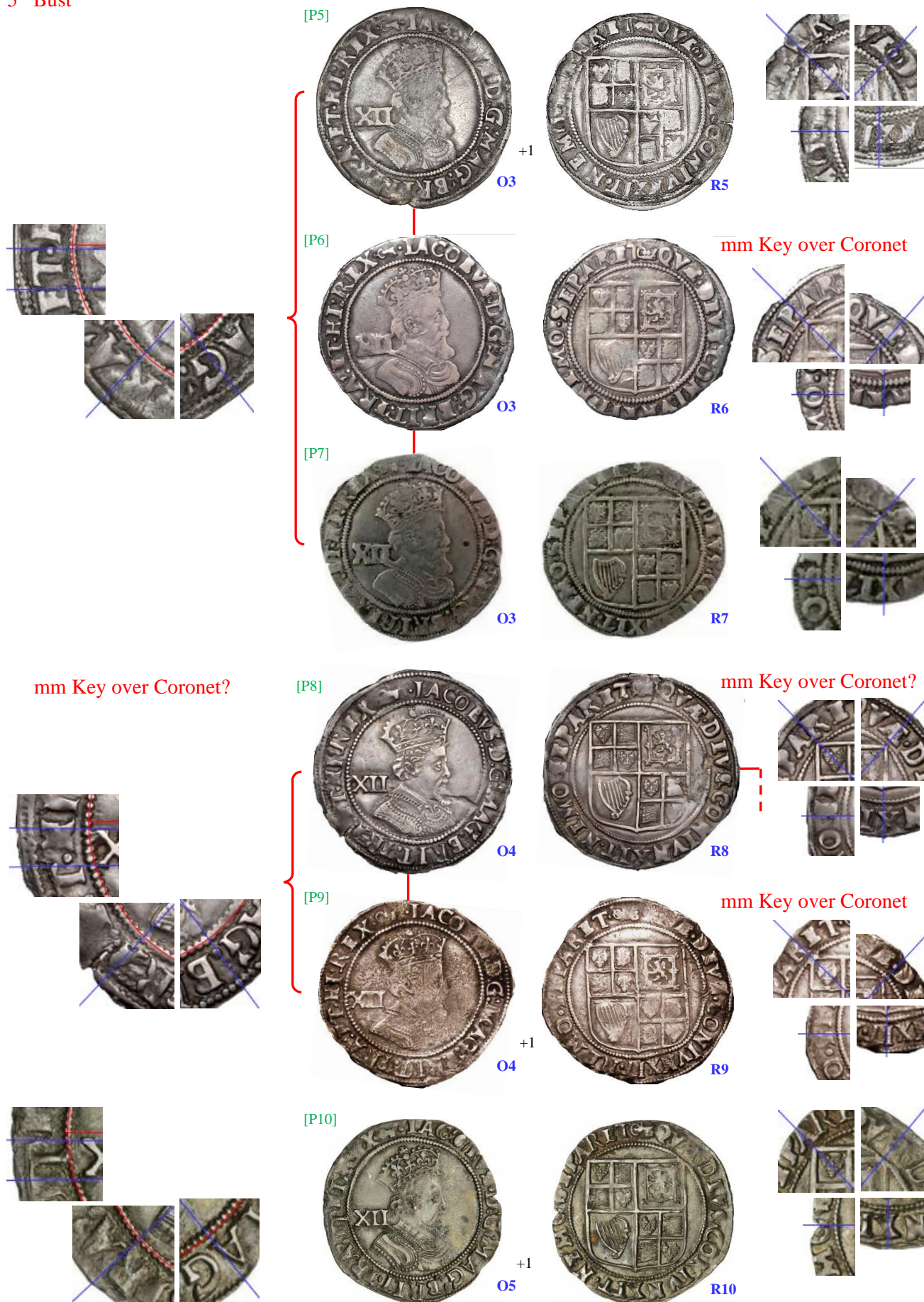
4th Bust variety



Not this round – in a slab? Larger and more irregular flan when sold in 1970 [P4*]

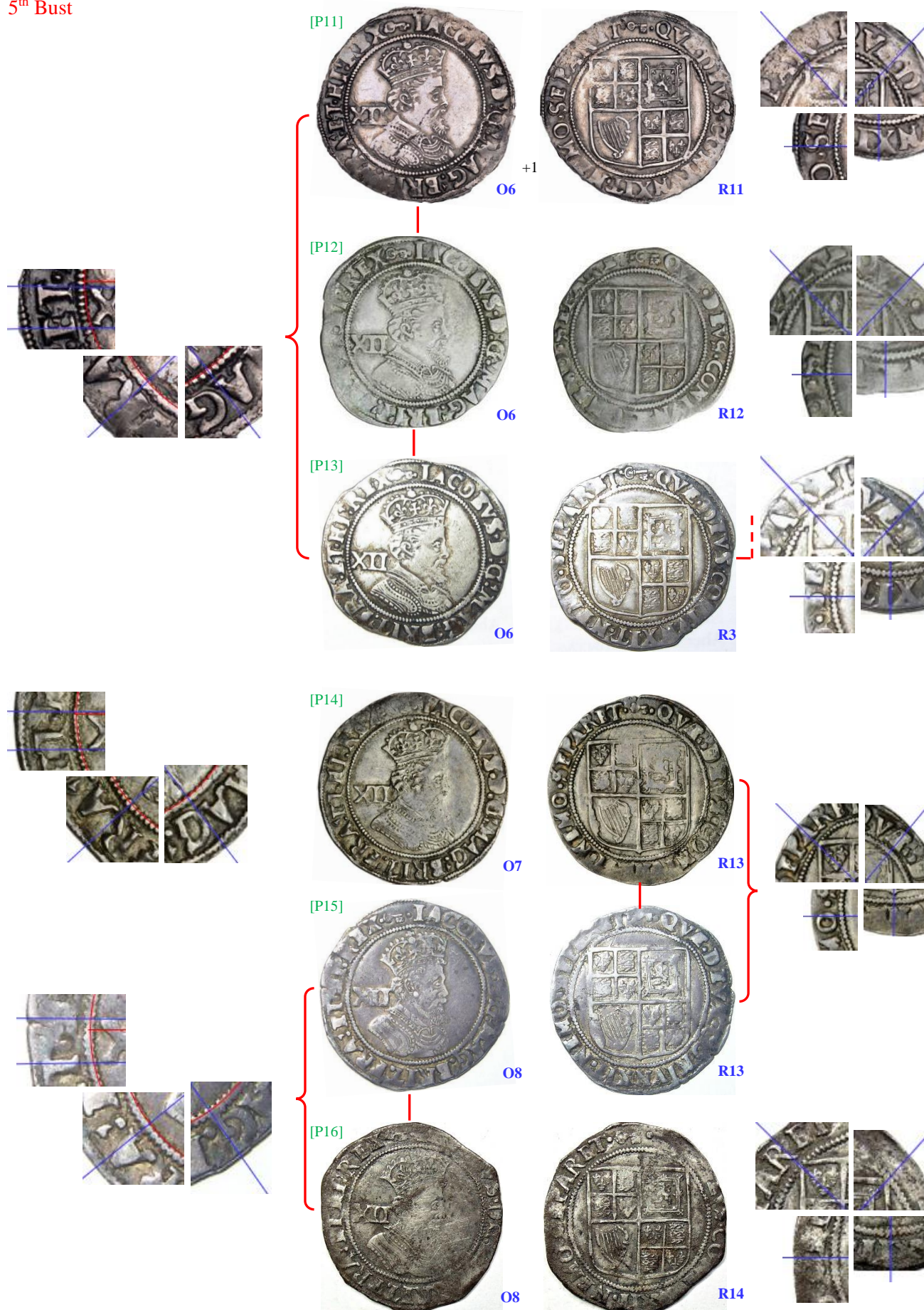
IACOBVS D G MAG BRIT FRA ET HI REX

5th Bust



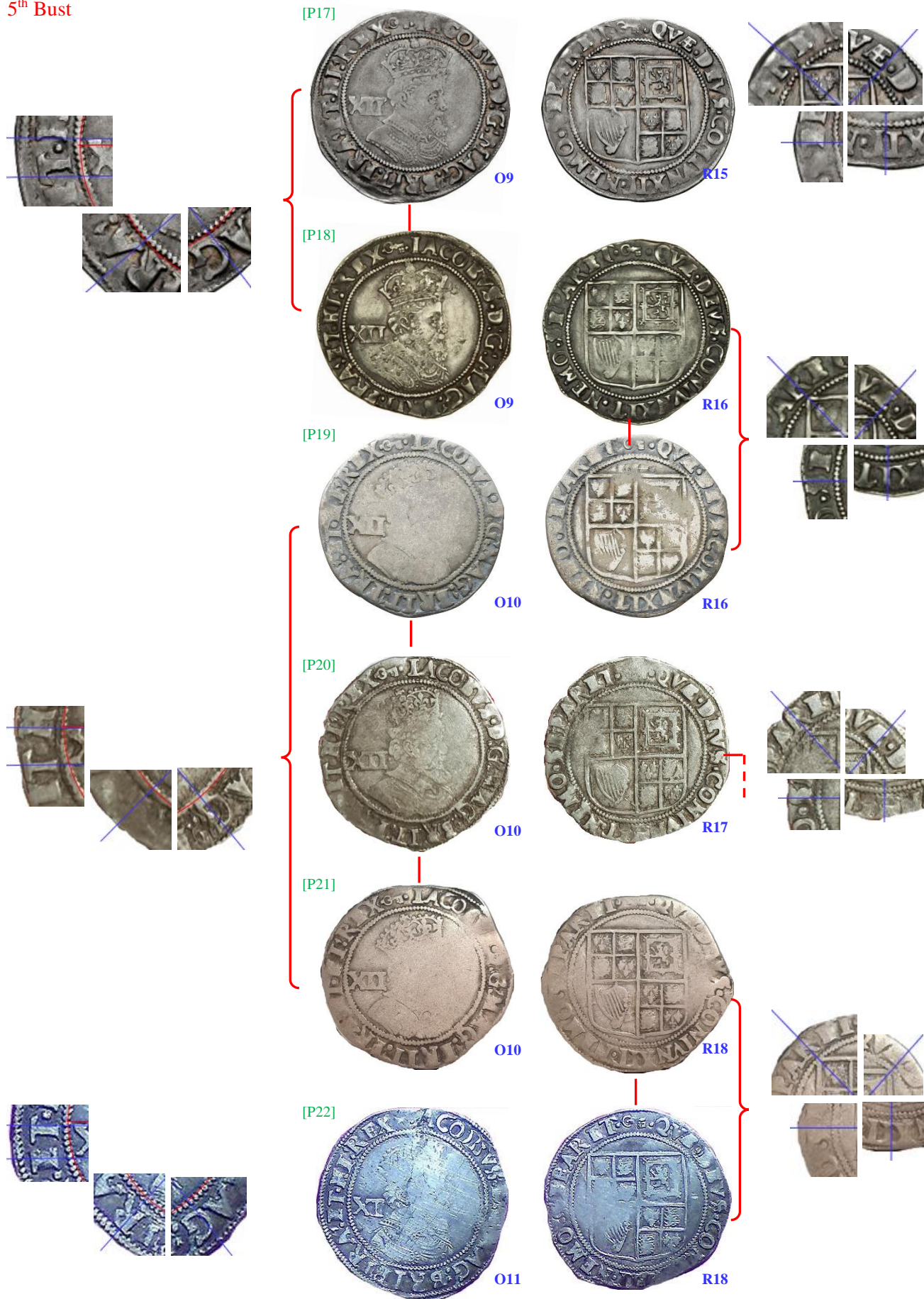
IACOBVS D G MAG BRIT FRA ET HI REX - continued

5th Bust



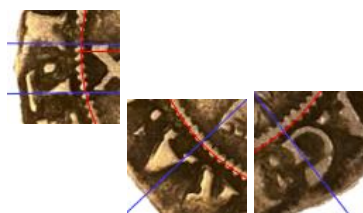
IACOBVS D G MAG BRIT FRA ET HI REX - continued

5th Bust



IACOBVS D G MAG BRIT FRA ET HI REX - continued

5th Bust



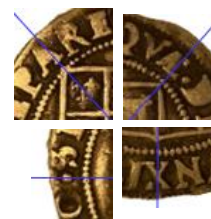
[P23]



O12



R19



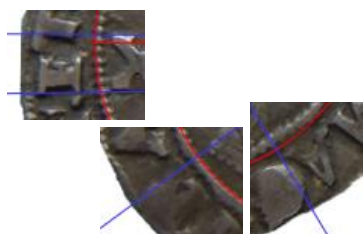
[P24]



O13



R20



[P25]

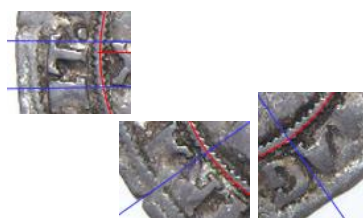


O14



R21

mm Key over Coronet



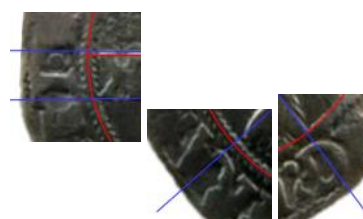
[P26]



O15



R22



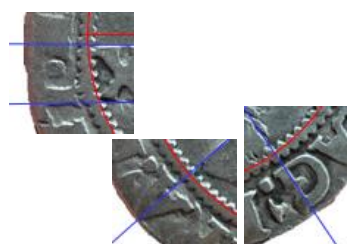
[P27]



O16



R23



[P28]



O17



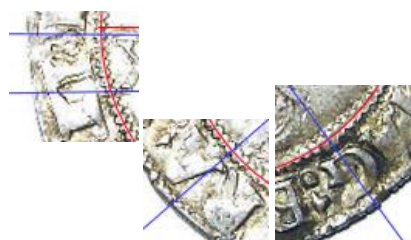
R24

mm Key over Coronet



IACOBVS D G MAG BRIT FRA ET HI REX - continued

5th Bust



[P29]

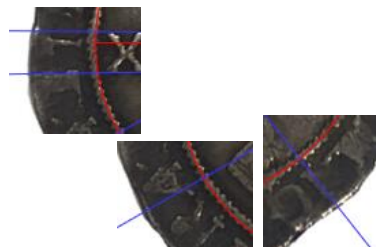
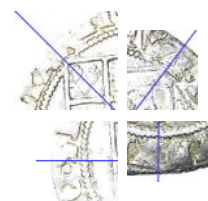


O18

Double struck



R25



[P30]



O19



R26



mm Key over Coronet



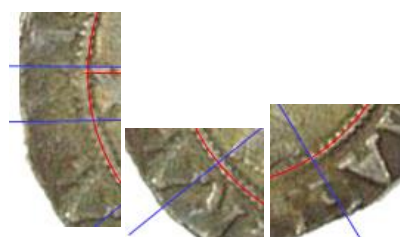
[P31]



O20



R17



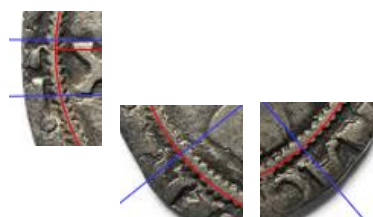
[P32]



O21



R27



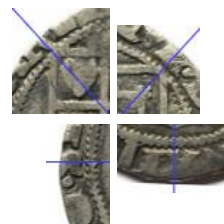
[P33]



O22

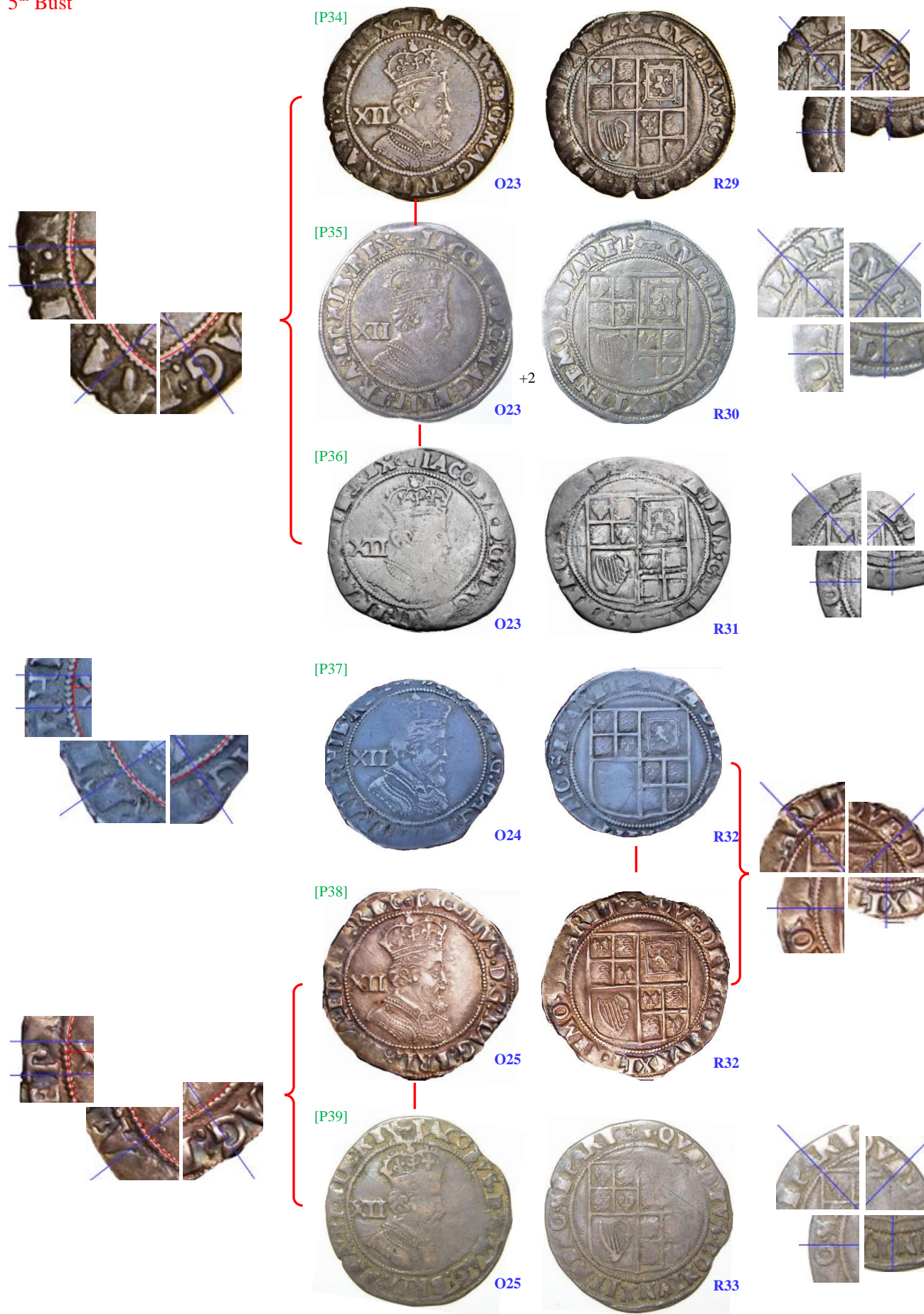


R28



IACOBVS D G MAG BRIT FRA ET HIB REX

5th Bust



IACOBVS D G MAG BRIT FRA ET HIB REX - continued

5th Bust

C of IACOBVS over N



5th Bust



The following are thanked for the use of their images:

[P1]	www	[P17]	CNG 23 Oct 2020 477 Lot 867	[P34]	SCA 26-27 Sep 2016 lot 2098
[P2]	Private Collection	[P18]	Baldwins Shop	[P35]	Private Collection
[P3]	Private Collection	[P19]	Ashmolean Museum	[P36]	CNG 7 Jul 2021 495 Lot 729
[P4]	Heritage 23 Sep 2005 Lot 13196	[P20]	www	[P37]	Worthpoint
[P4a]	Christies 1 Jan 1970 Lot 2136	[P21]	www	[P38]	LCA 1 Jun 2014 Lot 1297
[P5]	www	[P22]	Worthpoint	[P39]	British Museum
[P6]	Davissons E-Auction 4 Lot 58	[P23]	eBay	[P40]	Private Collection
[P7]	Live Auctioneers	[P24]	Private Collection	[P41]	British Museum
[P8]	Noonans 18 Mar 2015 lot 259	[P25]	Private Collection	[P42]	SCA 22004 Lot 19
[P9]	LCA 07 Jun 2015 lot 1762	[P26]	British Museum	[P43]	Worthpoint
[P10]	SCA 21007 Lot 108	[P27]	Worthpoint	[P44]	Private Collection
[P11]	Noonans 4 Dec 2013 lot 2496	[P28]	eBay	[P45]	British Museum
[P12]	SCA17011 28Mar2017 lot 1789	[P29]	Private Collection	[P46]	Bonhams 17 Oct 2006 lot 1192
[P13]	Private Collection	[P30]	eBay	[P47]	Private Collection
[P14]	Spink Auction 21006 lot 147	[P31]	Baldwins 14 Feb 2009 Lot 76	[P48]	eBay
[P15]	Private Collection	[P32]	Live Auctioneers		
[P16]	eBay	[P33]	Private Collection		

Also thanks to Tom Hockenhull and the team at the British Museum for allowing pictures to be taken of their pieces, and Martin Allen and Richard Kelleher at the Fitzwilliam for the same and Julian Baker at the Ashmolean Museum. Thanks also to Noonans, Classical Numismatic Group (CNG), Baldwins, Spink, Davissons, London Coin Auctions (LCA), Bonhams, Heritage and the other vendors listed above who have been found whilst trawling the internet for images.

Discussion and Conclusions

On 11th May 1610 there was £11 4s 11d of silver at the Pyx trial, comprising 1/- 6d, 2d, 1d and ½d. The period covered since the trial for the mm Coronet issue (17th May 1609) is just a few days under 12 months. In terms of rarity this might be considered normal, neither common nor rare and 56 specimens have been found.

A new bust was recently reported, markedly different from the usual 4th and 5th busts.⁽¹⁾ It is closer in shape and size to the 4th bust and so is catalogued here as a 4th bust variety (**O2** [P3]). A further specimen from the same obv. die has been found **O2** [P4].

There are several minor varieties of the 5th bust. Variations include the shape of the crown, the number of pearls on the upper arches, the position of the arches relative to the monde (central sphere under the cross) and the shape of the cross itself. These will be reviewed when all of the mintmarks bearing the 5th bust have been completed.

A few dies show clearly overstruck mint marks (**O20**, **R6**, **R9**, **R21**, and **R41**), others are less obvious (**O4** and **R8**), and some are very indistinct mintmarks (**R34** and **R35**).

As a general impression, some of the dies continued to be used when they were in a very corroded state – compare the two specimens of **O25** [P38 is in a much earlier state than P39]

With just 56 specimens struck from 33 obverse and 41 reverse dies, the sample is still not ideal. The table below presents the usual statistical analysis for shillings with mintmark Key.

		Obverse	Reverse
Sample size	n	56	56
Number of dies	d	33	41
Singletons	d ₁	20	27
2 examples	d ₂	7	13
3 examples	d ₃	3	1
4 examples	d ₄	2	
5 examples	d ₅	1	
6 examples	d ₆		
Coverage	C _{est}	0.64	0.52
Estimated dies	d ₋	45	64
	d _{est}	67	105
	d ₊	100	174

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

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.

References

- (1) G. Oddie. A New Bust Type for James I Shillings. *BNS Blog* 16 October 2021. <https://britnumsoc.files.wordpress.com/2021/10/james-i-oddie-blog-002.pdf>

