THE IDENTITY OF "THE NEW PLAKKIS LAST CUNYEIT" WITHDRAWN IN 1485

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FAMILIAR to all in any way acquainted with the character of British currency in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are the base-metal placks, generally in poor preservation through ill-striking and corrosion, which provided the basic small change in Scotland throughout their period of issue. Before 1887, when E. Burns published the first seriously scientific treatise on Scottish coins, writers such as Cardonnel, Lindsay, Wingate, and others had laboured at a considerable disadvantage: only a very small proportion of the extant specimens were ever available for study by one man, and, until R. W. Cochran-Patrick published most of the relevant material in 1876, the documentary evidence was virtually unavailable. There is, therefore, little value in stating or assessing the several attributions of the various varieties of the placks propounded by these gentlemen, beyond saying this, that none of them ever suggested that they should be appropriated to any other royal James than the last three of the five of that name, who held the Scottish throne for a century and a half of tragedy, from 1406 to 1542.

How valuable was the work of Burns himself on this subject may be judged from the fact that, in the seventy-odd years that his book has held the field as the standard and, indeed, the only modern work on Scottish coinage, his conclusions have remained unchallenged until the present day. I adopted in The Scottish Coinage, with very slight modification, the original arrangement of Burns, which has met with a time-honoured and merited acceptance. The amendments and additions that I propose to describe in this paper are principally concerned with the placks and half-placks of James III, but it will be necessary first to outline the broad divisions of all the James placks for the over-all picture.

Three quite distinct groups were defined by Burns, as follows:

1. Crosses fourchées beside the escutcheon on the obverse, and a saltire fourchée (a star on one coin not known to Burns) in the central panel of the reverse.

2. Crowns beside the escutcheon and a plain saltire on the reverse.

3. Similar to group 2 but a mullet in the central panel.

1 An essay awarded the Parkes Weber Numismatic Prize, 1956.
3 See I. H. Stewart, *The Scottish Coinage* (hereafter *T.S.C.*), p. 163, Bibliography, for particulars of these writers and their works.
5 These groups of the placks (group 1—James III; group 2—James IV; group 3—James IV) must not be confused with groups I–VI of my classification of James III's groats.
6 Biii, figs. 571-2.
7 Ibid., figs. 667, 681-26, 689-94, 697-8, 700-5.
8 Ibid., figs. 758-71.
Of these three, group 1 belongs to James III and is numerically far the smallest. It is totally unlike the other two groups in style and lettering and no mules connect it with later types. This group will be discussed in detail below, but it should be said now that it is datable to c. 1470.²

Group 2 was struck in the later years of James IV’s reign,² and is divisible into two consecutive major varieties, first with the Old English style of lettering, and then with Roman letters. There are coins³ with the one style on the obverse and the other on the reverse, closely linking the two varieties as consecutive in the same series. The Roman lettered James IV placks continued right up to the end of the reign, and again there are mules⁴ connecting them with the placks of James V, that is group 3 of our arrangement above listed, which have no numeral⁵ on the obverse and a mullet in the centre of the reverse. The significant feature of the James IV and V placks, to be remembered in connexion with the remarks that follow, is that they form an integrated and consecutive issue, totally separate from the placks of James III.

With regard to the half-placks of these issues, they are recorded by Burns for group 1 (James III),⁶ and the Old English lettered variety of group 2 (James IV).⁷ I know of no later specimens: a hoard of coins unearthed at Balligmorrie, near Girvan in Ayrshire, last year⁸ suggests that very few or none later were struck.

Two passages from the Acts of Parliament of Scotland,⁹ pertinent to the issue of placks under James III, are here quoted:

(a) 23 July 1473, “... And as tuiching the plakkis and the new pennysis the lordis thinkis that the striking of thame be cessit And thai haue the cours that thai now haue vnto the tyme that the fynance of thame be knawne ...”, &c., making provision for a full inquiry into their fineness, with the postscript that “the conyeouris to be punyst as efferis gif thare be faft fundin”.

(b) 26 May 1485, in view of the “greit quantities of fals countirfatit money plakkis strikin in cunye of lait be fals cunyeouris nocht allanerlie within this realme bot als outwith the realme sa subtellie and in sic forme of mettale that it is vnpossible to decerne and knaw the trew fra the fals That thairfor his hienes movit of piete and of his grace as said is and for saufftie of his peple eschewing of derth and mony vthir Inconuenientis hes ordanit to ceis the cours and passage of all the new plakkis last cunyeit and gar put the samyne to the fire and of the substance that may be fynit of the samin to gar make ane new penny of fyne siluir” and that the Mintmasters, Thomas Tod and Alexander Levingstoun, should receive all the called-in placks at twopence each.

¹ Bii, p. 156; T.S.C., p. 60; and a fuller discussion in my paper “The Attribution of the Thistle-Head and Mullet Groats”, B.N.J. xxvii. 71.
³ Bii, figs. 697–8.
⁴ Bii, p. 254.
⁵ For the attribution, see Bii, p. 202, and T.S.C., p. 74.
⁶ Bii, pp. 159–60.
⁷ Ibid., p. 216.
⁸ Discovery and Excavation, Scotland, 1955, p. 10.
⁹ R.C.S. i. 36 and 41 respectively.
Of these two, (a) refers, as I shall show, to the group I placks (Pl. XXIV, 2 and 3), those attributed by Burns, myself and others to James III; while (b) provides irrefragable proof of the existence of another issue of placks, hitherto unidentified, which could be described as the “new plakkis last cunyeit” as late as 1485, and thus quite ten years later than the recognized type of James III plack, which must now be discussed.

The Act of Parliament, 23 July 1473, is the first document we possess to refer to the new denomination. The ordinary type of James III placks is assuredly the subject of this Act: although this is generally accepted, it will be necessary to go rather thoroughly into the evidence which connects, and restricts, these placks to the period 1470–3, and no later. I have alluded elsewhere to the evidence of the coins themselves that dates the thistle-head and mullet (group II) groats of James III to 1470 and the years following, and the Act of Parliament, 6 May 1471, I have shown to refer to these coins (Pl. XXIV, 1).

As far as lettering alone is concerned, the placks must be c. 1470. They have the plain-topped A and T as on James III’s group I groats, the earliest form of those letters on James III’s coins. They have the intermediate form of the letter G, full and curly, in use in the 1470’s, and the loosely formed cross fourchee (Fig. 1a) beside the escutcheon and as initial mark, that is found also on the James III group I groats, but on none later. Had these placks been struck towards 1480 they would undoubtedly have displayed different features of style and lettering. The A and T would be of the later peak-topped variety, and there would have been as initial mark either a plain cross or a cross fleury. But a far more significant feature is the form of the cross-ends on the reverse. On these placks it is a large foliated excrescence enclosing a long tongue, much as on the familiar type of the thistle-head and mullet groats (Fig. 2b). This is one of the stronger of many connecting links between these two base coinages, of placks and groats, which argued for restoring the thistle-head and mullet groats to James III. (This particular criterion has never before, apparently, been used in the classification of these issues.) A floriate type of cross-end occurs solely on examples of the recognized group of James III’s placks.

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1 The problem is discussed by Burns, Bii, p. 199; and by myself, B.N.J. xxvii. 189 and 191, and T.S.C., p. 64 (but cf. also pp. 143 and 166).
2 B.N.J. xxvii. 71.
3 T.S.C., p. 142, and Pl. viii. 103.
4 R.C.S. i, p. 35; B.N.J. xxvii. 69.
5 For epigraphic illustrations, see B.N.J. xxvii. 71, and T.S.C., fig. 7 on p. 62.
6 Found on the group III groats (T.S.C., Pl. viii. 104) and on the type I riders (T.S.C., Pl. ix. 120).
7 B.N.J. xxvii. 71 enumerates them.
The Identity of "The New Plakkis Last Cunyeit" (Fig. 2b), and on the generally known type of the thistle-head and mullet groats (Fig. 2a). If the latter had been issued in the reign of James IV or James V,¹ they would have had the plainly curled cross-ends (Fig. 2d) that are invariable on the placks of James IV and V. Certain rare specimens² of the thistle-head and mullet groat (PL. XXIV, 7), however, have a type of cross-end (Fig. 2c) entirely different from that on the regular James III placks and from that on the normal group II groats (Figs. 2b and 2a). Chronologically, these group II groats with the new cross-ends present no problem: this form, with a trefoil enclosed by S-shaped curls, is well known on the reverse of the gold unicorns (PL. XXIV, 8), of which the earliest varieties³ I have indicated were struck in 1484.⁴ Clearly, then, the unicorn-style cross-ends would appear on the latest, if any, of the group II groats: the completely new type of these groats with this feature must therefore be dated towards 1480, quite possibly in that year. The relevance of this digression will, I trust, be quite apparent in the context of my later remarks.

Meanwhile, the application of our newly discovered criterion of the cross-ends to the different classes of coins concerned reveals a most

¹ B.N.J. xxvii. 67 for a discussion of the James V idea. What is apparently an attribution to James IV was made, implicitly, by the late Mr. H. J. Dakers, in a paper on "Initial Letters in the Field on Scottish Coins", B.N.J. xxi. 71. He illustrates a thistle-head and mullet groat with a T behind the bust, reluctantly admitting "As this can only represent the initial of Thomas Tod, and Cochran-Patrick gives his tenure at the mint as from 1476 to 1487, I at first regarded the T on this coin as providing some support for Burns's arrangement: but I find that there are records from the Lord High Treasurer's accounts under James IV, which Cochran-Patrick has perhaps overlooked or disregarded"—here he quotes three several entries naming Sir Thomas Tod, dated Febr., July and Aug. 1496; and continues: "It appears, therefore, that the letter T might still appear on a coin issued under James IV, though its presence on a groat of the first issue of James V, to which the Thistle and Mullet groat is often assigned, still seems difficult to explain." Comment is better forborne.

² Not until recently identified (T.S.C., Appendix IV, p. 166—the only published notice of their existence); an example is, however, depicted by Wingate in his Illustrations of the Coinage of Scotland, Pl. xxiv. 10. The type will be more fully described by me in a paper on "Unpublished Scottish Coins: II", in a forthcoming volume of the Numismatic Chronicle.

³ Bii, p. 152.

⁴ "The Heavy Silver Coinage of James III and IV", B.N.J. xxvii. 182.
extraordinary and unexpected situation regarding the half-placks of James III and IV. These were of such exceptional rarity until the discovery of the Perth hoard\(^1\) that Burns illustrates only five specimens altogether. Under James IV are placed two coins (Figs. 682c and 691) which, on examination, will be seen to have the James IV-V type of cross-ends (Fig. 2d) and are definitely attributed correctly. These two coins I have associated respectively with the placks described as of class \(I_{IIa}\) and of class \(I_{IIc}\) in *The Scottish Coinage* (pp. 145-6). Comparison of the whole and half denominations will show that the particular styles of ornament, pellet stops, and the mm. cross of pellets on class \(I_{IIa}\), and lis stops and a mm. cross pattée on class \(I_{IIc}\), are common to both. Now the obverse type of these two half-placks is that of Fig. 3\(b\), with the escutcheon contained in a tressure of three arcs enclosing the top and sides, and a trace of a fourth arc merged with the bottom of the shield. The same form of obverse is used on all the placks of James IV (Pl. XXIV, 12) and V. On the other hand, every example of the recognized type of James III plack (Pl. XXIV, 4) that I have been able to examine has an entirely different style of tressure, three large arcs completely surrounding the shield, as depicted in Fig. 3\(a\). Disregarding, therefore, the superficial criteria of the crosses or crowns beside the shield (for some of the half-placks have neither, or fleur-de-lis in this position) and the saltire on the reverse, whether it be plain or *fourchée*, we may still affirm that every plack and half-plack has, on both sides, indisputable characteristics, not only of lettering and ornamentation, but of design, which immediately identify the reign to which it belongs: for, on the obverse, the disposition of the arcs of the tressure has been shown to be fundamentally different on the placks of James IV and V and on those of James III, and, on the reverse, we have noted that the type of cross-end varied from issue to issue, and that the coins of the three metals—unicorns, groats, and placks—conformed in this respect.

What, then, of the supposed James III half-placks with a tressure of four arcs, a description of which was given by Burns,\(^2\) and, I regret, perpetuated by myself?\(^3\) An examination of the three "James III" half-placks figured by Burns produces startling results—no two, even, are of the same issue. The first (B, Fig. 573) has the obverse type as in Fig. 3\(a\), crosses *fourchées* beside the shield, a saltire *fourchée* on the

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reverse, and a modified form, to suit the smaller scale, of the cross-
ends of the 1470 issue placks (Fig. 2b). This coin, then, has all the
features of the two recognized James III placks (B, Figs. 571-2), so
that there is no question as to its correct appropriation to the 1470
issue of James III. All the half-placks found in the Perth hoard,
which contained none of James IV’s billon issues, are, naturally, of
this type.

On the second of the illustrated half-placks (B, Fig. 573a), the
obverse type is that of James IV-V (Fig. 3b), there are small fleurs-
de-lis beside the shield, the saltire on the reverse is plain, and the cross-
ends, though rubbed and defective, are plainly of the type I have
drawn as Fig. 2d, the regular type on James IV-V placks. This type
of half-plack is, therefore, quite out of place under James III, and must
be transferred to James IV. I have compared the actual coin in ques-
tion (Pl. XXIV, 11) (B, Fig. 573a) with the placks and half-placks of
James IV, and it corresponds in every way with the placks and half-
placks that I have classed as IIc.1 The only difference is in the small
lis beside the shield (hitherto mistaken for crosses), which are more
distinctly preserved on another coin (Pl. XXIV, 10) from almost identical
dies.2 These two half-placks with the lis by the shield thus constitute
a new minor variety of James IV, though they fall under the same
general heading, class IIc. The initial cross is not, as Burns supposed
from the very rubbed specimen, a cross fourchee (Fig. 1a) as on
James III’s placks, but a cross potent (Fig. 1b), the common mark on
the James IV placks of the time. On a very small scale, these crosses
may easily be confused, especially with poor examples.

Quite the most interesting, however, of the three ‘James III” half-
placks depicted on Burns’s Plate XLIV is the third and remaining
example, Fig. 537b (Pl. XXIV, 6). Let us apply to it the methods of
classification which we have evolved above. The obverse type is that
of the regular James III placks, with a complete trefoil pressure en-
closing the shield (Fig. 3a); there are no ornaments beside the shield.
The reverse type corresponds neither with the 1470 issue of James III
placks (Pl. XXIV, 2, 3) with their elaborate cross-ends (Fig. 2b), nor with
the James IV-V placks (Pl. XXIV, 12), which have the plainly curled
cross-ends (Fig. 2d): it displays, rather, the peculiar form (Fig. 2c)
that I have described above as being found on an extremely rare
variety of the thistle-head and mullet groat (Pl. XXIV, 7), and, more
commonly, on the new gold denomination of the 1484 recoinage, the
unicorn (Pl. XXIV, 8). It would appear, therefore, abundantly likely
that this half-plack, with its distinctive James III obverse and its curious
form of reverse cross-ends, was issued in James III’s reign, but, by
virtue of its essential differences of type and ornamentation from the
1470 issue of James III’s placks, must be held to constitute an entirely
separate issue. On the basis of one coin, and that a half denomina-
tion, this would perhaps be inconclusive, but the half-plack does not

1 T.S.C., p. 145, and Pl. ix. 130.
2 Incorrectly attributed to James III, T.S.C., Pl. viii. 109.
happen to be the only survivor of our postulated new issue. A considerable search revealed the companion plack (Pl. XXIV, 5) in the cabinet of the late Mr. H. Alexander Parsons,\(^1\) described on his ticket as a half-plack of James III. Though of much smaller module than the 1470 issue placks, it is clearly the double of the new issue half-plack, and, in fact, weighs \(29\frac{1}{2}\) gr. (it is slightly chipped) against the \(16\frac{1}{2}\) gr. of the half-plack.

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It cannot be coincidental that we have a clear reference\(^2\) to placks under James III, c. 1480 at the earliest, and an issue of placks and half-placks, hitherto unidentified, which bears no resemblance to the recognized issue of c. 1470. If it could be proved merely that the new plack issue of James III was later than the c. 1470 issue—and that is clearly demonstrated by the form of cross-end and the peak-topped A—there would be little reason for disputing that the newly identified coins represent those mentioned in the Act of 1485, and were thus struck shortly before that date.

In fact, the plack and half-plack of the new type abound in the characteristics of the accepted issues of James III, c. 1480. I have alluded to the cross-ends well known on the unicorns from 1484, and to the peak-topped form of the letter A: this A (Fig. 4a) is actually from a broken punch with the left end of the top bar missing. This same broken A (Cf. Pl. XXIV, no. 5 with no. 7) is found on the variety of the group II groats, described above, with the cross-ends as in Fig. 2c. Nearly all the letters on these thistle-head and mullet groats are stamped in the die from the same puncheons used for the new plack issue; specially notable are the L (Fig. 4b) with its peaked bottom, the thick, stubby I (Fig. 4c) and the open C (Fig. 4d). I have not noticed this open C or the broken A on any other coins of the time, but the L and I are found on many. First, the L: on almost every example of the group II groats (these, it will be remembered, are, on the whole, slightly later than the 1470 issue placks), on all the group III groats, dated about 1475–82,\(^3\) but not on the group IV groats, dated 1482–4.\(^4\) The I, however, is found on a few group II groats, but especially on the later group III groats (cf. B, Figs. 591–2), and on the group IV groats. Furthermore, this I, which appears on this plack and half-plack in the central panel of the reverse, also appears on a group IV half-groat, again in the centre of the reverse (B, Fig. 608): they must surely belong to the same issue. The crown above the escutcheon on the half-plack is from the same punch as the crown on the group III

\(^1\) At the sale, Glendining, 1954, of whose second collection it formed part of lot 726.
\(^2\) Act of Parliament, 26 May 1485, quoted above.
\(^3\) T.S.C., p. 62.
\(^4\) Ibid., p. 63.
half-groat (B, Fig. 594), and on many of the billon pence of the corresponding issues. Another link is in the form of the trefoils, and this is also the only point of difference, in lettering or ornamentation, between the new issue of placks and the new variety of group II groats. The latter have a plain trefoil (Fig. 5a), as on the group III groats, whereas the plack and half-plack have the trefoil with an incipient stalk, somewhat in the style of a minute fleur-de-lis (Fig. 5b), the form used on the gold riders of types I and II, which are the companion gold coinage of the groats of groups III and IV.

Connected by so many small details of ornamentation, lettering, and design to the groats of groups III and IV, and about equally to each, our new plack and half-plack must be dated at about the time of the replacement of group III by group IV, that is c. 1480-2. This, of course, is an independent conclusion, from the separate internal evidence of the coins: that it is commutual with the deductions from the documentary reference is to have been expected.

In discussing this issue, Burns1 "assumed that it was the debased character of the 'new plakkis last cunyeit' that brought them into disrepute and led to their being so extensively counterfeited", the reason, as stated in the Act, for their being called in at twopence each in 1485. But this is not the only interpretation that could be placed upon the wording of the Act, for they were specifically to be "put... to the fire and of the substance that may be fynit of the samyn... ane new penny of fyne siluir" was to be struck. If they had been so exceedingly debased as Burns supposed, it would have required a huge quantity to provide even a handful of the new heavy groats. The particular plack and half-plack, which I now wish to associate with the Act of 1485, are of greatly superior quality to the first-issue placks, from which they stand out immediately in this respect, and also in module and finish. A curious feature, again illustrative of the relationship between the placks of James III and the group II (thistle-head and mullet) groats, is that the 1470 issue placks are struck on large, thin flans of notably base metal, while the new plack and half-plack are on small, neat, thicker flans of nobler metal: and this contrast is exactly reproduced in the group II groats, of which the normal specimens are large, base, and ill-struck, and the late variety, with unicorn-style cross-ends, is much finer, neater, and smaller (cf. Pl. XXIV, 1 and 2 with 7 and 5).

At this point a few specific remarks on chronology. The thistle-head and mullet (group II) groats of James III2 present a large variety...
of different dies, with features connecting them with the coinage of 1470 to 1480. In 1471 they were called "new alayt grot(s)", so 1470 must be an approximate date for their introduction. The new variety of these groats, with the cross-ends as in Fig. 2c, has been dated, with the second-issue placks, to about 1480–2. Probably the group II groats were thus in issue continuously from 1470 to 1482, and I believe that further study will enable a comparatively detailed sequence to be delineated. The first-plack issue of James III also started about 1470, and may have ceased altogether in 1473, when, by the Act of Parliament quoted, a thorough inquiry was ordered into their fineness. The issue of placks may have been in abeyance from the time of this inquiry, 1473, until the second issue, 1480–2, of which the finer standard of billon could be the direct outcome of the findings of the inquiry. In this context, it may be permissible to advance a theory about what types of coins the several moneys of the time were responsible for individually. The first recorded account of Alexander Levingstoun and Thomas Tod runs from 12 March 1473 to 27 July 1476, includes no revenue from the coinage of placks, and implies that these were out of issue following the inquiry. It is tempting to see in this the dismissal of the previous moneys of Alexander Tod and William Goldsmyth, "punyst" because there was "fait fundin". This would explain why the group III groats, ordered in 1475 to be of "the samyn prent" as the earlier silver groats, group I, are so obviously a different coinage from Tod and Goldsmyth's six-pointed mullet (group I) groats, and yet as far as type is concerned they do preserve "the samyn prent". This accords well with their being the work of the two pairs of moneys. The theme cannot be developed here, but I believe the group II (thistle-head and mullet) groats are divisible by style and workmanship into three distinct series: those akin to the first-issue placks and group I groats, the joint issues of Tod and Goldsmyth from 1470–3, those of small, neat style, one of which has the letter T behind the bust, being the work of Tod from 1473 to about 1482; and, thirdly, a parallel series of the same period, which from its very different style must be presumed to be Levingstoun's. The second-issue placks which have been identified in this paper conform to what I would class as the Thomas Tod workmanship of about 1480–2. Further study will, I hope, enable the above remarks to be substantiated.

Since a fairly accurate scheme of dating has been offered for the James III placks and half-placks, and associated coinages, it may be with the unicorn-style cross-ends, renders it highly probable that the group II groats were in issue for perhaps twelve years, concurrently with the fine silver twelve-penny groat, of which the "new alayt groat", after its reduction from 7d. to 6d. in 1471, was practically, if not theoretically, the half. Actual half-groats of James III's light coinage are very rare indeed.

1 R.C.S. i, p. 45, no. xxiv.
2 T.S.C., p. 58.
3 The normal type (Biii, figs. 577–83).
4 The illustrated groat of the "new type", Pl. XXIV, 7, is of the same style as the T groat, and is thus, presumably, Tod's issue.
well to say that the other coins particularly discussed in this paper, the half-placks of James IV, can be dated for the first time with some accuracy. In an unpublished essay on "The First British Maundy Money, A.D. 1511" I have adduced evidence for placing class IIa of the placks and half-placks in 1505; class IIc probably belongs to 1506. In the list of coins appended, a notice will be found of a class I half-plack, with the numeral QR; this hitherto unnoticed coin must be dated, with the QRA plack, soon before 1505.

I had hoped to append to this paper a comprehensive list of the placks and half-placks of James III, and of the half-placks of James IV. Unfortunately, the Perth hoard, which contained 436 placks and 63 half-placks of James III, is not at present available for study, though Mr. Robert B. K. Stevenson, Keeper of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, has kindly sent me particulars of the 11 placks and 10 half-placks from that hoard which were acquired for the Museum. Mr. Robert Kerr, of The Royal Scottish Museum, has been good enough to send me his note of the Balligmorrie hoard, which he has published in the Numismatic Chronicle; amongst a total of 578 billon coins, primarily James IV-V placks and James IV pence, there was one James IV half-plack only, a fair representation of the rarity of the coin.

Apart from the large numbers of both found at Perth, the placks and half-placks of James III are really extremely uncommon. Only a very few private collections contain half-placks: there must be scarcely two dozen beyond the 63 from Perth. The placks, too, are very rare, and even with the 436 Perth examples probably number fewer than 500 in all. For this reason it is impossible to attempt a list of all varieties without the Perth contingent; but it is thought that a list of all the specimens available might prove useful, since this includes several otherwise unrecorded, notably the picked varieties in the National Museum from the Perth hoard. I am indebted to Mr. Stevenson, who sent me details of these, also for a cast of the James III plack with a star in the centre panel of the reverse. This coin cannot be looked upon as a different type, indicating another issue, although it is certainly a curious variety: it has the regular three-arc tressure, crosses fourchees, floriate cross-ends, and early fount of lettering described above as typical of the 1470 issue of placks.

Many points have been raised in this essay, which it may be of value to summarize. The general types of the placks of James III, IV, and V have been described, and two relevant passages instanced from the Acts of Parliament of James III. Reasons were advanced for dating the first issue early in James III’s reign, about 1470, in which context the various types of cross-ends were distinguished. From this feature it was mentioned that there was a new type of the group II groat of James III struck about 1480; and that a certain type of the half-plack of James IV had evidently, up to now, been misattributed

1 N.C. 1955, p. 245.
2 N.C. 1921, Pl. viii. 6.
to the 1470 issue of James III. The disposition of the tressure round the escutcheon on the obverse was described as a new criterion for differentiating the placks and half-placks of James III from those of James IV–V. Moreover, a plack and half-plack, of a new type, were dated on grounds of lettering, type, and ornamentation to about 1480–2, and identified as the issue withdrawn from circulation in 1485. It was then suggested, apropos the dates assignable to the various series of coins discussed in the paper, that it should be possible to separate the coins of the several moneyers of the time, and it was hinted in what way this might be attempted. By comparison with the thistle-head and mullet groats it was submitted that the second issue of James III placks, identified now for the first time, were the work of Thomas Tod soon after 1480. Finally, the great scarcity of the coins under discussion was explained. A description of types and summary of varieties is appended.

I wish to make acknowledgement for their very ready co-operation: to Mr. R. B. K. Stevenson, for his information regarding the Perth hoard coins, and for the cast illustrated as no. 3 on Pl. XXIV; to Mr. Robert Kerr, for particulars of the Balligmorrie find; to Mr. J. D. A. Thompson (with whom I shall be publishing the find), for enabling me to examine personally the coins, of which two James III placks (nos. 19 and 20) are noted in the list, found by Mr. E. M. Jope at Glenluce Sands,¹ Wigtownshire; to Mr. David McFarlan, for notification of, and permission to illustrate, his half-placks of James III, and of James IV, class I;² and to the British Museum for the excellent plaster casts.

ILLUSTRATIONS (PLATE XXIV)

1. James III, group II groat, normal variety.
2. James III, first-issue plack (no. 11).
3. Ditto (no. 18).
4. James III, first-issue half-plack (no. 5).
7. James III, group II groat, late variety.
9. James IV, half-plack, class I.
10. James IV, half-plack, class IIc (no. 4).
11. Ditto (no. 5).
12. James IV, plack, class IIc.

LIST OF COINS

References to individual specimens are:

N.M.A. National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland.
C. Coats collection in N.M.A.
B.H. Balligmorrie Hoard.

¹ This hoard, in that it contains thistle-head and mullet groats with no later coins than first-issue billon pence of James IV, provides positive evidence for the reattribution of the former to James III, as argued in B.N.J. xxvii. 65.
² This interesting coin will be fully treated by me in “Unpublished Scottish Coins: II”, N.C. 1956.
The Identity of "The New Plakkis Last Cunyeit"

G.H. Glenluce Sands Hoard.
P.H. Perth Hoard.
B.M. British Museum.
D.Mcf. Mr. David McFarlan.
H.A.P. H. A. Parsons collection.
R. Richardson, A. B., Catalogue of the Scottish Coins in N.M.A.
B.H.I.H.S. Author’s collection.
C.A.W. C. A. Whitton collection.

Placks and half-placks of James III

First Issue (c. 1470–3).

**Plack**: Obv. Escutcheon, in three-arc tressure, surmounted by small crown; crosses *fourchees* beside; trefoils in spandrels.

Rev. Saltire *fourchee* (on no. 17 a star) in centre panel of floriated cross. *fourchee*; in each angle a crown.

Inscriptions as, or variant of:

- **+I7TCIOBVS 'D6I**
- **6R7T 1**
- **R6X**
- **SaOTTORVflt/+ VIII^II^DE^0DIR£BVR6FL** (variously divided between the four quarters of the legendary circle).

Examples:
1. B, fig. 571 (C.)
2. R., p. 375, no. 179 (N.M.A.)
3. As 2, but *VII*: (N.M.A., from P.H.)
4. As 2, but M for (N.M.A., from P.H.)
5. As 1, but *RGrh*: (N.M.A., from P.H.)
6. B, fig. 572, no. 2 (C.)
7. As 6, but *REX* (N.M.A., from P.H.)
8. R., p. 375, no. *179 = B. fig. 572, no. 2a (N.M.A., ex J.H.P.)
9. T.S.C., Pl. viii. 108; as 8, but *L7D:* (B.M.)
10. Obv. as 6, but M for (N.M.A., from P.H.)
11. Obv. as 9, but *SOOTTORV*; rev. as 9, but *VR6H* (B.H.I.H.S.)
12. Same obv. die; rev. as 11, but *VR6H* (B.H.I.H.S., ex. C.A.W.)
13. Obv. as 6, but *6R7T*R0X*SGOTTORV*;; rev. as 10, but *EDINB/VR6H* (N.M.A., from P.H.)
15. Obv. as 14, but M*; rev. as 14, but *DINB/VR6H* (N.M.A., from P.H.)
17. As 16, but *SOOTTORV* (badly struck). (N.M.A., from P.H.)
18. N.C., 1921, Pl. viii. 6. Five-pointed star in centre of rev. (N.M.A., from P.H.)
19. Obv. as 17, but DEI *M6R*; rev. as 10. (G.H.)

**Half-plack**: Types as *plack*; similar inscriptions, but fewer or no stops.

Examples:
1. B, fig. 573, no. 1 (C.)
2. As 1, but *EDIN*: (N.M.A., from P.H.)
3. Obv. + *I7C0BVS*DEI;:GRH;:REX* *SOOTTORV*; rev. + *VII:/L7D;:EDINB/VR6H* (N.M.A., from P.H.)
4. As 3, but ERH* (N.M.A., from P.H.)
5. As 4, but *RV* (B.H.I.H.S.)
6. As 3, but *L7*: (N.M.A., from P.H.)
7. As 4, but + *VII:/L7E:(DINB/VR6H* (N.M.A., from P.H.)
SECOND ISSUE (c. 1480–2)

General types as first issue, but no crosses by escutcheon, no trefoils in spandrels, and capital I for saltire in centre of reverse. Unicorn-style cross-ends. Plack has crown of five fleurs-de-lis on obverse.

Examples:

Plack
\[+\text{I\&COBVS}+\text{D\&I}+\text{GR\&I}+\text{RE\&X}+\text{SG\&T\&O\&R\&V}\] (slightly double-struck, \textit{GRRA}).

\[+\text{V\&I\&I}+\text{L\&I\&D\&E}+\text{ED\&IN}+\text{B\&V\&R}.
\]

Only one specimen recorded. (B.H.I.H.S., ex H.A.P.)

Half-plack
\[+\text{I\&CO}+\text{B\&VS}+\text{D\&I}+\text{GR\&I}+\text{RE\&X}+\text{SG\&T\&O\&R\&V}\]

\[+\text{V\&I\&I}+\text{L\&I\&D\&E}+\text{ED\&IN}+\text{B\&V\&R}.
\]

Only one specimen recorded (B.H.I.H.S., ex C.H.D.). This coin is erroneously stated by Burns (vol. ii, p. 160) to have been in the S.S.A. collection. It was never, however, in that cabinet: Richardson makes no mention of it in his Catalogue, and H. J. Dakers, into whose collection it passed, exhibited it before the British Numismatic Society on 23 March 1932, with the note that “This was regarded by Burns as unique and supposed by him to be in the collection of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. On inquiry this proves to be incorrect, as the Society has no record of it.” (\textit{B.N.J.} xxii. 180.) The piece is illustrated by Lindsay (First Supplement, Pl. iii. 9), Burns (fig. 573b) and Cochran-Patrick (Pl. iv. 1).

\textit{Half-placks of James IV}

Types generally as James III, first issue, but tressure in quatrefoil form; crowns, or nothing, or fleurs-de-lis by shield, and plain-style cross-ends.

Class I. Obv. \[+\text{I\&COBVS}+\text{D\&I}+\text{GR\&I}+\text{RE\&X}+\text{SG\&T\&O\&R\&V}+\text{QR}.
\]

Crown above, and at each side of, shield.

Rev. \[+\text{V\&I\&I}+\text{L\&I\&D\&E}+\text{ED\&IN}+\text{B\&V\&R}\&I.
\]

Plain saltire in centre of cross. (D. McF.)

This otherwise unrecorded coin will be published by me more fully in a forthcoming paper on “Unpublished Scottish Coins: II” in the \textit{N.C.}, 1956.

Class IIa. Mm. cross of pellets. Pellet stops.

Example: B, fig. 682c = R., p. 386, no. 230 (N.M.A., ex J.H.P.)

Class IIc. Mm. Cross pattee. Lis stops.

Examples:
1. B, fig. 691. Nothing by shield. (C.)
2. Similar, but \[\text{V\&I\&I}+\text{L\&I\&T}+\text{lis}+\text{ED\&IN}+\text{B\&V\&R}+\text{lis}+\text{J.H.P.},\text{ see Bii, p. 216}.
\]
3. As 1, but \[\text{V\&I\&I}+\text{L\&I\&T}+\text{lis}+\text{DE}\&/\text{N\&A},\text{ from B.H.}\]
4. T.S.C., Pl. vii. 199. (B.H.I.H.S.)
5. B, fig. 573a. (C.)

N.B. Nos. 4 and 5 have been previously regarded as James III; they have fleurs-de-lis beside the shield.