The triple unites of the Oxford mint during the Civil War having been previously classified, it seems natural to make the attempt to arrange the rest of the gold coinage which was issued there between the years 1642 and 1646.

Most of the questions which were raised by a study of the larger coins appear to belong equally to a consideration of the smaller issues, and in fact it will be shown that in all probability the gold coins were dealt with as a whole, and not under their separate denominations.

As it is proposed to follow the arrangement of the gold coins with a paper on the silver, general information as to the output of the mint will be deferred to that paper, because the bulk of the output was silver, and our statistics do not give any separate figures for gold.

The gold coins remaining to be dealt with are called by numismatists the unites and half-unites. This name, like that of Magna Britannia, was invented by King James I as part of his attempt to unite the two kingdoms. But the attempt was a failure, and as far as can be discovered the name “unite” never passed into ordinary everyday speech.

The accounts of the period were kept in pounds, shillings, and pence much as they are today, and therefore they give us no hint of the names used for money. For a purpose of this kind it is necessary to read the memoirs of the period and find mention of money that is only incidental to the story.

Of this kind is the following instance taken from the Life of Sir Henry Blount, who was a royalist, and who was living in London in 1650.

In those days he dined most commonly at the Haycock’s ordinary near the Pallgrave road tavern, in the Strand, which was much frequented by parliament men and gallants. One time Colonel Betteridge being there (one of the handsomest men about the town) and bragged how much the women loved him. . . . Sir Henry Blount did lay a wager, and let them two go together . . . he only with his handsome person, and Sir Henry with a twenty shilling piece on his bald crown, that the wenches should choose Sir Henry before Betteridge. And Sir Henry won the wager.¹

This instance about four years after the closing of the Oxford mint gives us one of the names of our coin, the twenty-shilling piece. It also establishes it as a current coin, having no particular propaganda value like that attributed to the triple unite.

The name of “twenty shillings” as a round sum is as old as the reign of Henry VIII, as we can read in the letter of a Calais merchant “but I pray you seek and know where the balances in the case that

¹ Aubrey, Brief Lives, ed. 1950, p. 25.
I had at Calais be, for I saw them not a great while. I would not give them for 20 shillings and more money." [Date c. 1542.]

There was, however, another name used for the unite, and for an instance we have to go back a few years to the city of Oxford during the siege. The extract is taken from the memoirs of Lady Fanshawe, who was the young wife of a royalist. She was in lodgings at Oxford, while her husband was serving the king. The extract provides the latest reference that I have been able to find to Sir William Parkhurst, who was Master of the Mint at Oxford. Lady Fanshawe writes: “It was in May 1645, the first time I went out of my chamber after Church, where after service, Sir William Parkhurst a very honest gentleman came to me and said he had a letter from your father and fifty pieces of gold and was coming to bring them to me.”

The two names appear to have been used impartially for the coin, and there is no telling which was the earlier. In fact the coins brought to Lady Fanshawe may not all have been of Charles I’s reign, because silver found in hoards buried during the Civil War has been found to contain coins going back to Elizabeth.

Indeed the following anecdote, which is somewhat scandalous, is based on the assumption that the silver of Edward VI was still to be found in people’s pockets. Perhaps it was regarded with something of the interest with which we look at the bun pennies of Queen Victoria today.

This anecdote is taken from the newspaper printed at Oxford and is dated 29 October 1643. It is related of Lady Mildmay, the wife of Sir James Mildmay who was serving the parliament in the office of Master of the King’s Jewel House. This made him a target for royalist gibes.

This lady being at Church on a fast day, when there was a collection for the poor ministers in Ireland, saw people give money, and like a true Christian gentlewoman, threw into the bason a piece of gold of twenty shillings. But (good lady) she had so wasted her eyes that day in beholding the face of the preacher, that she took it for a shilling, and as she says meant it for no more, and therefore very ingenuously acknowledged her mistake, and sent to the collectors for her piece of gold. Which when they denying, she peremptorily told them “If they would not restore her gold, she would never give the poor anything, as long as she lived”.

The collectors knowing that was the first time of her casting in the bason, were unwilling to discourage a young beginner, and therefore restored her the very gold she asked for, instead whereof she sent them a fair Edward shilling. Whereat Sir Edward was very pleased, telling her ladyship, if he had not kept his majesty’s jewels no better than she did her gold, he had never gotten sixpence by his place.

Both names are used here for our coin, and if gold and silver were kept in the same purse it was easy to get them mixed up. Only by the colour of the metal or the figures for twelve and twenty could the gold piece be distinguished from the shilling. In the year 1644 a mistake of this kind seems to have occurred at the Oxford mint, for a gold

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2 Memoir of my husband, Sir R. Fanshawe. By Lady Fanshawe. Printed from the original manuscript, 1906.
3 Mercurius Aulicus, 29 October 1644.
The Oxford Mint, 1642–6

A piece was struck from a shilling die. I am informed that mistakes of a similar kind occurred at the Tower mint during the reign of Charles I.

It is natural to ask what quantity of gold pieces were struck at the Oxford mint, but no figure can be given. All the evidence as to quantity issued refers to both gold and silver added together, the bulk of course being silver.

An examination of the dies, however, indicates that preparations were made for a large issue, because in the year 1643, which was the peak year, there were cut five obverses and ten reverses. Moreover many of the reverses were simply recuttings of the same stock design, from which it follows that they were probably made to replace dies that had been worn out.

The rarity of the surviving gold pieces need not point to a small issue, because no doubt most of the gold was called in and reminted after the defeat of the king’s party.

There being no documentary evidence available, it now remains to make a careful examination of the gold coins themselves and note any answers they may give, in particular to three questions. Were the coins treated as a whole or by denominations? Were the alterations of style due to visitors from outside Oxford? and, What influence had Briot on the design?

**The Units (Plates XXXIII and XXXIV)**

The mint was removed from Shrewsbury to Oxford on 3 January 1642/3, and there is no doubt from our information with regard to triple unites that gold coins were being struck by the end of the month. The year ended on 25 March, and in this short period five reverses were prepared, and four obverses.

The general design of the four obverses is taken not from the Oxford triple unite, as we might expect, but from the Shrewsbury triple unite. From this we can conclude that they were in use even sooner than those of the triple unite, and indeed some authorities have suggested that they were prepared at Shrewsbury. As the tools were brought from Shrewsbury to Oxford, it is not possible to prove this: all that can be done is to class them as Oxford coins because they bear the Oxford plume which has bands and not the Shrewsbury plume which is without bands.

All the images of the king used on these obverses are, however, adaptations of that used on the triple unite of Oxford and of Shrewsbury. They are always much too large for the smaller flan of the unite, and show pretty clearly that there was great haste and no time to cut a die of the right proportions, and so design the coin properly.

It is not easy to distinguish the varieties of the puncheons used for the king’s image, because these were made in four separate and apparently interchangeable pieces. The workers at Shrewsbury had evidently found themselves unable to make a single large puncheon for the image of the king, and therefore they used one puncheon for the head and collar, a second for the body, a third for the laurel, and a
fourth for the sword. This makes a number of combinations possible, for there are certainly two heads and three swords.

There is no documentary evidence to determine which of the four obverses of 1642 was the first issued. They are numbered I to IV in the plates and I, II, and III can be easily distinguished by the differences in the readings, but number IV repeats the reading of number I, and is distinguished only by its having the XX mark of value higher up in the field.

The image on number III does coincide with that used on some of the Oxford triple unites, and it has been suggested that this is therefore the first obverse. But it seems probable that the unites were being struck before the triple unites; they were a commoner coin, and this obverse III occurs with a reverse which is undoubtedly later than the others, as well as with an early one. Considering that the duration of the use of the obverses was less than three months, it seems unlikely that the order of issue can be discovered.

On all these obverses the image of the king has a hunched appearance, it is too large for the field and the sword in his right hand is a clumsy weapon. The design is obviously a makeshift and in want of improvement.

The five reverses numbered 1 to 5 were used during the months January, February, and March 1642/3. Four of them have the declaration in two lines, a design which follows that of the Shrewsbury triple unite, but which makes the lettering very crowded on the smaller flan of the unite. The fifth has an improved design, the declaration being written on a three-line scroll, which fits the field. This design can be placed last because it corresponds to the first reverse of the following year, 1643/4.

The design of numbers 1 to 4 is exactly the same, and the only way of distinguishing them is by noting how far round the flan of the coin the legend begins. Only the fourth reverse can be placed: by examining the lettering of this it can be seen that there is a peculiar curly G used, which does not occur on the first three but which occurs on number five. Apparently there were two stocks of type which differed slightly, and as the first alphabet wore out it was replaced with letters from the second.

We are now in a position to draw a general picture of the situation at the mint at the end of 1642/3. The Shrewsbury triple unite having been rejected as a pattern for triple unites had been handed over as a pattern for the unites instead. It was used for them, while a new design was being made for the larger coin. It meant adapting the larger design to the smaller coin, and the die-engravers did their best, but in the haste to produce a coinage they could not reduce the king's image, and they had to make use of the crowded two-line reverse, the result being a very ill-balanced coin.

This obviously was not satisfactory, and probably led to the introduction of workmen from London. At any rate at the end of March there is not only a modification but a complete redesigning of the
reverse. In the place of the two lines, there is not even a copy of the triple unite, but a completely new three-line long wavy scroll. This scroll design was applied to all three denominations, triple unites, unites, and half-unites.

Now it seems reasonable to suppose that a designer who was resident in Oxford would have taken each denomination in turn and improved it step by step, while it is characteristic of a visitor from outside that the whole coinage should be reviewed at once, and drastic alterations made to all three values at the same time. The evidence therefore seems in favour of my original contention that a team was sent down from London to put the Oxford coinage in order.

Such a visit must have taken place about the middle of March, but the head of the team must have gone back within a week, because while the reverses of the gold coins were all altered for the late issues of 1642/3, the obverses which were just as unsatisfactory were left completely unaltered to do duty for the beginning of the new year which began on 25 March. The arrangement of a new obverse depended of course on the cutting of a new image for the king, and it is likely that owing to lack of tools this work could be done only after a visit to the Tower mint, where there would be facilities for making the large puncheons required.

The year 1643 was for this coinage a full twelve months, and the bulk of the gold unites must have been issued during it, as there is a large number of varieties.

There are five obverses which are numbered V to IX and their order of issue is established. Number V simply follows the design of the previous obverse, but is distinguished by the word HIBER instead of HIB or HI in the legend. The image of the king is made of the same four puncheons, and the sword has been shortened. In spite of all the work on the reverses of the coinage nothing has been done for the obverse, just as nothing has been done for the obverse of the 1643 triple unite.

The lettering of this first obverse shows several points of interest. It includes a broken C, a flat-topped A which is called the Briot A, and a peculiar R, all of which link it to the dies of 1642. But, of greater importance for our purpose, all these particular links occur only on one other obverse of 1643, which is accordingly placed as number VI.

This next obverse is easily distinguished by its having a much larger XX mark of value than any of the others, and by the way in which the king's crown breaks through the top of the circle.

This second obverse is a great improvement on the previous one, and is generally considered to be the most beautiful obverse produced, corresponding in this to the scarf bust on the triple unites. Its most notable feature is the large XX for twenty shillings, which is a mark that certainly connects the design with Briot, as the Tower unite with the prostrate anchor mint mark, which was designed by Briot, also bears the large XX mark of value.
However, the new obverse was replaced very soon; for some reason it did not last. That which replaces it (number VII) shows different lettering, and the broken A and peculiar R have both been replaced. The design of the king’s image is quite different: instead of the crown breaking through the circle, the king’s hand and arm come right down to the bottom of the coin. This design corresponds to none of the triple unites, but it was reproduced on the half-unite.

The most interesting thing about this obverse is that the idea of bringing the hand and arm to the edge of the coin was taken from the Scottish half-unite designed by Briot in 1637. The portrait of the king is different, the execution is much clumsier, but the basic idea is the same and gives us another connecting link with Briot.

Although this design was retained on the half-unite for the rest of 1643 and for 1644, it was replaced on the larger unite. Apparently this was for aesthetic reasons, as it was used on the smaller coins of the Scottish issue, but never for the unite itself. This question of scale is one of the most delicate and searching tests of a designer’s ability.

The next obverse, number VIII, was a completely new design. It was better than the previous one, and an enlargement of it was used for the triple unite, where it was equally successful. But we note an instance of artistic tact; it was never used for the half-unite, where it would have been crushed in. The king’s image is a good portrait, it fits neatly into the circle, and makes a balanced pyramid, the sword is well managed and there is a bold legend. The plumes appear on the obverse as well as on the reverse of the coin and there is a sufficiently distinct mark of value. This design was also very successful technically, for the die lasted as obverse without recutting for seven out of the ten reverses used in 1643.

It was only at the very end of the year that this obverse had to be replaced by number IX. It was used with the last reverse of 1643 and also with the first reverse of 1644. The design follows that of the previous obverse but it is reduced in size because the coin has a smaller module. The same reduction in module takes place in the triple unites and half-unites as well as in the unites. A different fount of lettering now appears on the coin, the pointed A is replaced by an A of the flat-topped variety, and the type generally is thicker and rather squat; it also has a peculiar R, and the stops used are lozenges instead of pellets.

The reverses of the 1643 unites are the most complicated part of the series. There are ten of them, and only a detailed examination of the letter punches makes it possible to place them in any sort of order. Unlike the triple unites of this year they reveal no trace of any system of secret marking, and therefore no systematic tabulation can be made, but the evidence of each reverse has to be given separate examination to find the clues which indicate its relationship to the others in the series.

The first reverse of the year, which is number 6, bears the declaration on a three-line scroll which is copied from number 5 with virtually no change except the alteration of 1642 to 1643. It uses the
same type including the peculiar curly g which occurs on the late reverses of 1642.

This reverse, number 6, occurs with obverses V and VII, a fact accounted for by there being two officinae, as the evidence of the triple unites shows. We also know that supplies of silver were irregular and so no doubt were supplies of gold, and therefore it is probable that the metals were worked as they came to hand and not in any regular system. Hence we do not expect to find the dies always used in the same pairs.

From now on it is necessary to observe that separate sets of type are frequently used for the legend running round the coin and for the declaration in the middle of it, and that consequently remarks made about one set of letters do not always apply to the other. For while the legend of the next reverse, number 7, corresponds to number 6 in lettering, having the Briot A, the broken C, and peculiar R, the declaration is different. It is of a scroll pattern but the scroll is much bolder and more wavy. For this declaration a new alphabet is used without the curly g of the previous reverses. This reverse is used with obverse VI.

The next reverse is number 8. The legend still uses the alphabet of the previous coin but the broken letters C and R have been replaced by new ones, while the Briot A remains. The scroll is wavy and similar to the previous one, but larger lettering is used on it, which necessitates the use of a wider scroll, and this fills up the field of the coin and makes it uncomfortably crowded in places. It is used with obverse VII.

These three reverses and the three obverses form an early group on their own, which comes to an abrupt end. There is no apparent link between them and the large group which follows: it is as though a fresh start had to be made.

We are left therefore with obverse VIII which must come next, but without any apparent means of determining which of the following reverses goes with it.

Of the following group of reverses there is one only which has a completely different scroll design; it has the scroll made in three parts instead of being continuous. This gives a reason for placing it at either the beginning or the end of the series. A careful examination of the lettering of this reverse, number 9, reveals that the lettering used in the legend is unique in its correspondence with that used in the legend of obverse VIII: the peculiar wavy x, the short i and the e without any turning up of the lower limb are to be noted. It is to be assumed that, with the termination of the early series, these two dies were made as a pair: they were certainly first used together.

Having found the first of the series, we can now place the last die, which is used with the last obverse. And there remains the group of five reverses which are all used with obverse VIII, and are all very like one another. They are all simple repetitions of the continuous-scroll design, and seem to have been made one after another by an engraver to replace the previous model as it wore out, and the copies
were therefore as close as possible. They correspond in design to the large group of triple-unite reverses which were being made during the same year and in similar conditions, and like them show no system of secret marks. The only method of dealing with them is by close examination of the letter punches. Such an examination shows that the same set of letters was used for the legend of all five reverses, and another set for the five declarations.

These letters have unfortunately no link with the reverses which precede and follow the group, but a careful examination does reveal the replacement of worn letters and enables certain dies to be linked together. The principal letters to be studied are G, N, R, and C.

An examination of the style, stops, and general lettering of the reverses enables us to divide them into two pairs and an odd one, that is to say 10 and 11 are closely linked and so are 12 and 13, whereas 14 having the small C in INIMIC1 and a peculiar G and R is probably the beginning or the end of the series.

Two of the Cs in reverse 14 appear to be Cs, and there is no large C in the legend: this is most likely to occur when the alphabet was running out, and therefore this is placed as the last of the five.

If attention is now concentrated on the letter G we find that numbers 11 and 12 are linked and linked also to number 13, while numbers 10 and 14 have each a G which is peculiar to themselves. If 14 is the last die, then it would seem that number 10 should be placed first, leaving 11, 12, and 13 in the middle places. Of these number 11 is already linked by its general style to 10 and therefore will be placed second. Numbers 12 and 13 then take third and fourth places: neither appears to have a link which determines its place next to 14.

These reverses are all very much alike and are used with the same one obverse, and therefore their order is not perhaps a matter of great importance, but their correspondence to the similar group of triple unites makes them worth study.

The final reverse of 1643 is number 15: it is used with obverse IX, and is easily placed because obverse IX continued in use in 1644. This reverse shows a complete revision of the design: there is a new alphabet of lettering larger than the old, the scroll is based on a different sort of curve, and for the first time dotted lines are used for the edges of the scroll and of the field, which correspond to the dotted lines used on number IX obverse.

The treatment of the unites for 1643 shows general correspondence to that given to the triple unites. There is first the same carry-over of the design from 1642; this lasts a short time and is followed by a period of experimental designs, some very beautiful, altering both obverse and reverse. Eventually for both denominations an obverse is designed which lasts for the rest of the year, while there is in both cases a period in which a series of reverses is produced which are copied as closely as can be from one another. But finally at the end of the year the design is changed again, and a completely new one is introduced; in the case of the triple unite the same obverse carries on, but
in the case of the unite it was scrapped and a new one was made, probably because it had worn out.

To sum up, the coinage of 1643 gives us the following picture of activity. There is a short period when the designs for the previous year were used; this is followed by a period when new designs both for obverse and reverse were produced both numerous and differing considerably, a period of experiment and activity. All these designs were rejected. Then a final design was produced which lasted for a long time, as we know from the number of times that the reverse was recut, and only at the end of the year were a new obverse and reverse made of different design.

This picture is remarkably similar to that of the development of the triple unite (and the half-unite) during the same year.

In the year 1644 there was a considerable reduction in the output of gold and consequently there are fewer types to be considered. Indeed by the end of this year the issue of both triple unites and half-unites had ceased and the unites remained the only gold denomination.

The unites for 1644 were struck from two obverses and three reverses. The first obverse is number IX which had already been in use at the end of 1643. The bust of the king follows the usual type but there are diamond or lozenge stops, much favoured by Briot, and the whole coin is of neater workmanship and smaller module. It is used with the first two reverses, numbers 16 and 17, the latter of which was struck from a shilling die.

In the second obverse, number X, the bust of the king is remodelled, and his head is reduced in size so that there is more room for his shoulder and arm. This may be an improvement from the point of naturalism, but the balance of the coin is affected adversely by the alteration. The stopping returns from diamond to pellet. This obverse occurs with reverse 18.

While reverse 16 follows the general design of reverse 15, the last of 1643, there are considerable differences in detail. Diamond or lozenge stops are introduced in both legend and declaration. Smaller plumes are used above the declaration and smaller figures for the date below it, and the letters OX are introduced below the date. The abbreviations in the declaration are altered, PRO for PROT and LIB for LIBER, while the dotted lines of the 1643 reverse give way to plain lines in 1644.

The next reverse of 1644 is number 17. It raises a number of problems, as it is peculiar in character. The reverse has been struck from an ordinary shilling die, not one of the numerous proof shillings of that year. There are only two specimens known: both are in beautiful condition and the question arises why these coins were struck, as they do not show signs of having been in circulation.

There is absolutely no direct evidence to help towards a solution of the problem and it remains a matter for speculation, but there are certain likely alternatives.

In the first place, the year 1644 was a year during which a great deal
of experimental work was done on the shilling. A very large number of shilling reverses were cut: Morrieson's list gives twelve, and several of these were patterns. It seems therefore a possibility that these coins were struck as patterns for the shilling, before the obverse die had been cut, as the unite obverse has been used. I cannot help feeling, however, that this explanation is far-fetched, especially since at this date it is unknown for patterns to have been struck "out of metal". And it seems unlikely that they could have been struck for presentation as medals when there was the triple unite already there to serve such a purpose.

On the other hand, the gold unites of the Oxford mint had been extensively issued for about two years and were becoming well known, and it seems unlikely and imprudent for a deliberate attempt to be made to circulate a coin which had the wrong reverse and might cause considerable confusion. However, errors of this description did occur at the mint at the Tower during the reign of Charles I, and are explained by numismatists on the ground that not much attention was paid to the reverse when the coins circulated. It is quite plain, however, from our story quoted earlier that a mistake of a unite for a shilling was by no means unlikely to occur, even when they were correctly struck.

Personally I am inclined to favour the explanation that they were struck in error, or owing to a shortage of the requisite die, at some time when there was confusion at the mint in Oxford. There were, no doubt, such times in 1644 when dies might get mislaid, especially if, as we have assumed in a former paper, the workman kept his reverse die and handed the obverse in as a check to the Master, which was the usual practice.

The special occasion when there must have been great confusion at the mint was in October 1644, when the great fire occurred at Oxford. I have already referred to this fire in my previous paper, and pointed out that previous numismatic writers on the subject have dated it in the wrong year, namely 1643. The fire raged close to the mint and, although it did not destroy it, other buildings were destroyed near by. It seems more than likely therefore that the lighter tools and dies had to be removed to a place of greater safety, probably in a hurry, and it seems certain that the work of the mint was interrupted.

On the basis of this theory I have dated the reverse to October 1644, or half-way through the year. It seems to fall into place, giving the series, pre-fire obverse and reverse, shilling reverse used with old obverse, and new obverse and reverse used in the later part of the year.

This brings us to reverse 18, the third of 1644. It was made as a pair with the second obverse, with which it always occurs. Both dies show a return from diamond to pellet stops. And similarly there is a return to the 1643 abbreviations of PROT and PAR in the declaration. The smaller figures are retained for the date, however, and so the letters ox occur underneath it.
From this classification of the coins it seems that for the first half of the year the coinage followed the lines of 1643 and that it was not until after the fire at Oxford that a visit was made to the mint. When this visit was made, however, there was a new pair of dies cut. There is the question of course of whether a visit had to be made early in 1644 as well as late in 1643 for the remodelling of the lozenge stops reverse. As the half-unite reverse was remodelled with its obverse, there was probably a visit early in the year as well.

There was, no doubt, a further reduction in the output of gold in the year 1645 owing to the decline in the royalist position. Nevertheless there are three obverse designs for this year, which are most easily distinguished by the abbreviations used for Britannia and Hibernia. The general design of the king’s image is similar, but there are small differences in the position of the hands and the sword.

Obverse number XI has the same bust as the previous obverse of 1644, but the legend reads BR IT and H I. It is found with reverse 19.

Obverse number XII is very similar, but the legend reads BR I FRAN H IB, and the hand of the king breaks the inner circle. It is found with reverse 20.

Obverse number XIII has a legend reading BR IT and H IB and a rosette, Briot’s mark. The king’s crown breaks the circle as well as his hand, and the sword is not perpendicular. It is found with reverse 20.

The two reverses, 19 and 20, are completely different in design. It seems as though during 1645, probably during the first half of the year, an opportunity was taken to remodel the reverse of the unite. The design which had carried three plumes above the declaration ever since the beginning of 1643 was now abandoned and a new design, with only a single plume and a rearrangement of the scroll, was substituted for it. This design was an improvement on the other which had always overcrowded the field of the reverse, and it also shows an improvement in execution over the early reverse of 1645.

Reverse number 19 copies the design of 1644. It has the three plumes and a rather wavy scroll and the lettering is somewhat clumsy. The large numerals are used, like those of 1643, and in consequence the letters OX have had to be left out under the date. It is used with obverse XII.

Reverse number 20 has only a single plume above the declaration, and it is so placed as to divide the legend, coming between INIMICI and EXURGAT; this gives a new balance to the design. The scroll is shortened in consequence and the lettering tends to get crowded. Smaller numerals are used for the date, and so the letters OX can be replaced under it. This design was an improvement on the old one and was retained for 1646.

No doubt owing to the declining fortunes of the royalist cause, the output of the mint was much reduced in 1646. For this year there is only a single obverse and a single reverse. On obverse XIV the rosette mint-mark disappears, the legend is BRI and HIB. The image of the king remains the same, but the left arm as well as the right now
breaks through the circle, the sword is upright once more, and the crown does not break the circle.

The reverse, number 21, follows pretty closely that of 1645, number 20, the plume is rather better placed, the date 1646 is again in small numerals with OX underneath.

This ends the series of unites issued at Oxford, as the city fell into the hands of Parliament in 1646.

**Half-unites (Plate XXXIV)**

The series of half-unites is struck from much fewer dies, as the issue of half-unites seems to have been smaller, but as far as they go the alterations in the design correspond fairly closely to the unites and triple unites.

In the year 1642 the Oxford half-unites were struck from two obverses and three reverses.

Obverse I was modelled on the design for the sixpence. The only notable difference is that it has an X behind the king’s head for ten shillings. The crown breaks through the circle. It is used with reverses 1 and 2.

Obverse II is similar except that the crown is kept within the circle. It is found with reverse 3.

Reverse 1 has a mint-mark of two pellets, the declaration is in three straight lines, and it is in fact the reverse used for the sixpence struck in 1642. It does not seem to be particularly uncommon, and therefore was apparently an ordinary half-unite and not a freak coin. At this early date it may well be that it was found imperative to use a silver die for the gold.

Reverse 2 is very similar to the first, and it also was used as the reverse die of a 1642 sixpence. It is to be distinguished only by having seven pellets at the beginning of the legend instead of two. It is found with obverse I, like its predecessor.

Reverse 3 is altered to follow the transitional type which we have already noted in the unite and triple unite. Instead of three lines we have a wavy scroll with the declaration written on it. The lettering of the declaration is the same as that used on the unites, and there is a great improvement in the design and in the neatness of execution.

For the year 1643 there are only two obverses and two reverses. The output must have been smaller than that of the unites.

The first obverse, number II, is the same die as that used in 1642, corresponding in this way with the practice of the other gold coins. It is found with reverse 4.

The second obverse, number III, is of a new design. It has an elaborate and beautifully executed image of the king, which comes right down to the lower edge of the coin. This design is an adaptation of the half-unite struck in Scotland in 1637 and designed by Briot. It is true that it corresponds to obverse VII of the 1643 unite. But unlike the unite it was retained, not merely for the rest of the year, but
for the new die cut for 1644. In this it shows again the taste of Briot, who never put the bust reaching the lower edge on the Scottish unite. It is used with reverse number 5 only.

Reverse number 4 reproduces the scroll design of 1642 with a change of date, in the same way as do the corresponding reverses of the unite and triple unite.

Reverse number 5 is of smaller module, as is obverse III which is used with it. This makes it necessary to lay the scroll closer in the field, which tends to crowd it, but otherwise the same design was used, and was retained for the rest of the year.

In the year 1644 the half-unites were struck from only one obverse and one reverse. These dies follow the same general design as that used in 1643, but they were completely recut, and several major alterations were made. They are of smaller module, just as the triple unites are; they are of finer workmanship, in fact it is noticeably fine and neat, and there is a change in stops which corresponds with the other gold coinage of the year.

Obverse IV has the image of the king extending to the lower edge of the coin, the lettering is smaller and neater than that previously used, and the abbreviation MAG for MAGNA is used instead of simply M.

Reverse 6 has smaller lettering corresponding to the obverse, it has a less wavy scroll and smaller plumes, the lettering is fitted neatly, and the abbreviation PRO is used instead of PROT. The figures are smaller in the date, and in consequence the letters OX can be placed underneath. The mint-mark is a diamond and four pellets, a mark which is also used on the triple unite of corresponding date, number S. 10 in my paper on the triple unites.

There are no further half-unites known, and it is therefore to be assumed that the issue terminated in 1644 since, as far as can be judged, it was never as useful a coin as the unite. It only remains therefore to summarize the information which has been deduced from this examination of the gold coins.

First of all it is sufficiently obvious that the gold coinage was treated as a whole. When one value was redesigned corresponding alterations were made in the other values, which came in for equal attention.

In the second place it is clear that the alteration was not a continuous process, nor did it depend on waiting until a particular die was worn out, but it was due to a series of visits, which can be given approximate dates.

The first visit was in March and April 1642/3, the old year, our dating March and April 1643. At this time the Shrewsbury reverses were scrapped, and the flowing scroll design was introduced. The next was in the following May, when the scarf bust for triple unites, and the "Scottish" bust for the unites and half-unites, were introduced. It is to be noted that both these designs are connected with Briot, the unite being from his Scottish issue, and the scarf bust being an enlargement of the figure on horseback in his Tower half-crown of mint-mark
The Oxford Mint, 1642–6

triangle 1640. The third visit must have been a little later, when the final bust for the unites and triple unites was made. It is not possible to tell how long the scarf and “Scottish” busts were current.

At the end of 1643 there was undoubtedly a fourth visit, when Briot’s daisy stop was introduced on the reverse of the triple unites, and at the same time the dotted-line reverse of the unites was introduced. In both cases this followed a long period of non-interference, when the same design was repeated with almost mechanical regularity.

Shortly after this there is either another visit, or the maturing of the work done on the previous visit, for all three values were completely remodelled for 1644.

There is the possibility of a fifth visit about half-way through 1644, when a new obverse bust for the unites was introduced, and a new obverse and reverse for the triple unites. And there is the probability of a visit in 1645, when the reverse of the unite was given a completely new and original design.

Unfortunately there is no documentary evidence which confirms the dates of these visits, but the claims of Briot’s widow at the time of the Restoration definitely assert that Briot made such visits to various mints.

The question arises of course as to whether the silver coinage was remodelled at the same time. It is a question that can be answered only after the silver coinage has been thoroughly examined. But it seems likely that the two metals would be taken in hand together, although it is probable that the actual minting of both metals was alternate and somewhat spasmodic, owing to the irregularity of the supply of both gold and silver. I do not think that there were separate workshops at Oxford for the separate metals, but that the dies were drawn as it was deemed expedient to coin one or other metal. It would be of service, however, if we could find someone to make a search into what was the practice at the Tower at this time, for Oxford imitated regular practice as far as it could.

With regard to the alteration of the silver, however, it may be noted that Col. Morrieson’s paper divides the silver for 1643 into three periods, which appear to correspond with the three main alterations in the gold coinage of this year. This classification completely breaks down when he treats the shillings, but I have reason to suppose that this was due to the fact of one class of shilling being unknown at the time when he wrote his paper.

The next question is who made the visits, and all the evidence seems to be in favour of Briot. We have Briot’s Scottish bust on the half-unite, Briot’s horseman on the scarf bust of the triple unite, Briot’s lettering quite frequently, and his daisy stops and his diamond stops on the reverses of triple unites and unites. There is even the use of the large xx on the 1643 obverse, which is taken from a Tower design of Briot.

It is true that Briot’s pupil Rawlins has been suggested for some of the work on the gold, but gifted as he was he was a very young man
at this time, and unlikely to have the necessary experience and authority to make changes in the coinage. Moreover we have two undoubted pieces of Rawlins's work in the silver, a pound piece and a half-crown. And the execution of both of these shows a refinement and elaboration which is not suitable to the striking of coinage, but rather to the more limited issue of medals. While the designs of the gold pieces are always practical, such refinement seems to have been deliberately avoided by Briot, who had behind him years of experience at both London and Edinburgh.

### TABLE OF UNITES AND HALF-UNITES

**ISSUED AT OXFORD 1642-6**

#### UNITES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Obverse</th>
<th>Legend</th>
<th>XX</th>
<th>Circle broken by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1642</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>pellet</td>
<td>BRIT FRAN HI</td>
<td>at shoulder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>pellet</td>
<td>BR FR HI</td>
<td>at collar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>2 pellets</td>
<td>BRIT FR HIB</td>
<td>at neck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>BRIT FRAN HI</td>
<td>at collar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1643</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>BR FR HIBER</td>
<td>at shoulder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI.</td>
<td>pellet</td>
<td>BRIT. FR. HI</td>
<td>large XX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII.</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>BR FR HI</td>
<td>at hair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII.</td>
<td>plume</td>
<td>BR FR HIBER</td>
<td>at hair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1643/4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX.</td>
<td>plume</td>
<td>BR FR HI</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1644</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X.</td>
<td>plume pellet</td>
<td>BRI FR HIB</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1644/5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI.</td>
<td>plume pellet</td>
<td>BRIT FR HI</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1645</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII.</td>
<td>plume pellet</td>
<td>BRI FRAN HIB</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIII.</td>
<td>rosette</td>
<td>BRIT FRAN HIB</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1646</td>
<td>pellet</td>
<td>BRI FRAN HIB</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### REVERSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Declaration</th>
<th>Letters in declaration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ANG</td>
<td>ANG plain G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. lower line</td>
<td>ANG plain G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. RELIG</td>
<td>ANG plain G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. middle line</td>
<td>ANG G curly type</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Legend letters**

- 5. Briot A broken C
- 6. Briot A broken C

---
The Oxford Mint, 1642-6

Legend letters

1643
7. Briot A broken C
8. Briot A whole C
9. Normal A C
10. "
11. "
12. "
13. small ci INIMICI
14. dotted lines

1644
16. diamond stops
17. diamond stops
18. pellet stops

1645
19. pellet stops
20. single plume

1646
21. single plume

HALF-UNITES

OBVERSES

1642
I. pellet
crown breaks circle
II. plume
circle unbroken

1643
II. pellet
circle unbroken
III. none
bust breaks circle

1644
IV. none
bust breaks circle

REVERSES

1642
1. two pellets
2. seven pellets
3. none

1643
4. none
5. pellet

1644
6. four pellets and diamond

Legend letters

Declaration

Letters in declaration

1643
LEG
LEG:
LEG
LEG
LEG
LEG
LEG

1644
OX
OX: LEG
OX: LEG:
OX: LEG

1645
LEG:
OX: LEG
OX: LEG

1646
OX: LEG
OX: LEG

Legend

Bust

1642
MAG. BR
MAG. BR

1643
MAG. BR
M. BR

1644
MAG. BR

Declaration

1642
3-line
3-line
continuous scroll

1643
continuous scroll
continuous scroll

1644
continuous scroll
continuous scroll

Steps

1642
ANG
colon

1643
ANG
colon

1644
ANG
colon

B 7054

R F

HALF-UNITES

OBVERSES

1642
I. pellet
crown breaks circle
II. plume
circle unbroken

1643
II. pellet
circle unbroken
III. none
bust breaks circle

1644
IV. none
bust breaks circle

REVERSES

1642
1. two pellets
2. seven pellets
3. none

1643
4. none
5. pellet

1644
6. four pellets and diamond

Legend

Bust

1642
MAG. BR
MAG. BR

1643
MAG. BR
M. BR

1644
MAG. BR

Declaration

1642
3-line
3-line
continuous scroll

1643
continuous scroll
continuous scroll

1644
continuous scroll
continuous scroll

Steps

1642
ANG
colon

1643
ANG
colon

1644
ANG
colon

B 7054

R F