THE CROMWELL LORD GENERAL MEDAL
BY SIMON
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Foreword

This paper is the second in a series on Thomas Simon's medals of Oliver Cromwell.¹ No contemporary documents are known regarding the Lord General medal (Medallic Illustrations 388/7), neither warrants, orders, or accounts. None of these may ever have existed for the medal could have been a private commission. The first known appearance of the medal was in the eighteenth century, and all information originates from George Vertue's writings, mainly in his various notebooks. This presentation discusses and illustrates the die, the trial specimen, the restrikes with their die cracking and rusting trends, and the copies or imitations.

The medal is uniface and unsigned, and was never completed or issued. The die cracked drastically at the top, possibly initially or during the later restriking period. All existing examples are restrikes, with the exception of one original preliminary lead trial and one wax impression. The die face is round, but the design is enclosed in an oval with provision for an integral suspension loop. The restrikes may be on a full round flan the size of the die face, or on an oval flan (probably struck on a round flan and trimmed down to the oval). The round types are normally the earlier. There is an eighteenth-century copy, probably of continental origin, somewhat contemporary with the round restrikes, and this used the Simon bust puncheon. Additionally, there is another eighteenth-century copy, most likely English, which is a direct imitation of the Vertue illustration.

Origin and purpose

Cromwell became Lord or Captain-General (Commander-in-Chief of Parliament's Armies) on 26 June 1650, replacing Thomas Fairfax who was unwilling to participate in the invasion of Scotland. The Battle of Dunbar was on 3 September 1650, and Thomas Simon was in Edinburgh about January 1650/1 to sketch Cromwell for the proposed Dunbar medal. On 16 December 1653 Cromwell became Lord Protector. Although he may have technically retained the Lord General title after that date, the Protectorate title would seem to preclude the use of the other. Thus the Lord General medal must have been proposed during the period June 1650 and December 1653. The actual date within that period cannot be determined, but there are a few possibilities for narrowing the interval.

Since the medal was never finished the question arises why Simon, who would have devoted considerable effort to create the bust puncheon, did not make a new die after his initial(?) attempt failed.² Perhaps he decided the massive relief was

¹ The first was M. Lessen, 'The Cromwell Lord Protector Medal By Simon', BNJ xlviii (1977), 114.
² Of course there is no guarantee the die crack originated with Simon. It could have occurred when
impractical for a struck medal relative to the die-sinking and striking equipment he had available. More likely the medal was found to be redundant before it was completed, either because the Dunbar medal was ordered or the Protectorate was formed. The latter possibility is a weak one for it implies Cromwell was Lord General for a few years before a medal was considered, and then for no obvious event. Similarly a reward for the 3 September 1651 Battle of Worcester is a weak argument since there were still two years remaining before the Protectorate in which to make a replacement die.

The most attractive of the possibilities is that it was a 1650 production superseded by the events of Dunbar. The bust is a direct copy from one of Walker’s full-length portraits, such as that in the National Portrait Gallery, tentatively dated to 1649, or one of the numerous derivative copies. The crease in the brow, the hair locks, and the collar folds are all the same. Simon could have received a commission specifying this portrait for it seems to have been a favourite of Oliver’s. If the portrait was truly available in 1649, it is certainly reasonable to postulate a date for the medal between June 1650 and January 1650/1, a period during which Cromwell was in Scotland and not available for a live sitting. This then would be Simon’s initial Cromwell work, and does not obviate the need for a subsequent trip to Edinburgh; in fact it could support the need for a live sitting if, after his presumed problems, he felt the only practical way to cut a bust of Cromwell in steel was in profile and preferably from his own sketches. All other Cromwell portraits by Simon are left-profile and derive in some form from the Dunbar portrait.

General purpose military portrait medals or badges were usual for the leading Parliamentary generals (such as Essex, Manchester, and Fairfax) during the Civil Wars, although these were always casts. The purpose of the Lord General medal was not as a family or personal medal such as the numerous examples by the Simon brothers, which were casts from wax models, for the legend is too formal and the purpose of a die is to provide for mass production. It is not necessary to assume a reverse die was intended. A blank could have been the desired surface for personal engraving by the recipient, although there was no tradition for that.

Henfrey considered the origin date to be late 1651–2, with the round medals being originals, and the ovals as c. 1723 ‘modern impressions’. His main argument for a post-Dunbar date was that Simon would not have been sent on a long journey to take the portrait if he already had one. But Henfrey probably was unaware that the facing portrait did not originate with Simon and might well have pre-dated Dunbar, nor did he realize the medal was never issued and all specimens with which he was familiar were restrikes.

Earliest references

So far as I can determine the earliest printed reference to the Lord General medal is in Vertue’s published book of 1753. However, he was aware of the medal and restrikes were first attempted, but it is reasonable to assume that Simon saw the first traces of the crack.


4 The Dunbar medal was ordered 10 Sept. 1650, and

5 H. W. Henfrey, Numismata Cromwelliana, 1877, pp. 9–11.

6 George Vertue, Medals, Coins Great Seals etc. of Thomas Simon, 1753 (1st edn.).
made several important notes years before, which he then neglected, for his final published statements are not fully consistent with his notes. It will be best to present the Vertue material and one other reference chronologically, and then summarize the medal’s progress during the first half of the eighteenth century, a period representing its only known history.

Vertue made his first note about the medal after he had examined the die between 1721 and 1725. He noted,

in the Hands of Mr House Jeweler in the City a Die of Oliver Cromwell's face in front done by T. Simonds. (this man was appr[entice to one that learnt of Tho. Symmonds seal graver) see Mr Murrey. 7

In the same notebook on a later page and therefore somewhat later in time, but still between 1721 and 1725, he says, after a sentence on the 1653 Naval Reward, another I saw of Olivers own head rais'd out, the full face about this size, perfectly like him, of this Dy there are few to be seen. 8

This statement implies there were products from the die in the 1721-5 period, although it is not clear what Vertue saw.

Some time at the early end of the 1739-51 period he quotes a significant newspaper article as follows:

August 1738 Morning Advertiser. About 200 medals gold silver & copper of Oliver Cromwell have been lately struck at his Majestys Mint in the Tower from a dye cut in his time—when Lieutenant General—before he was Protector. The form oval a face full right in front. The dye cracks at the top—(said to be found in Holland) (but that is false)—for it was known to be here in London—but was not p[olished?] by T. Simon and left unfinished no reverse—I heard Mr Arundell Esq Mstr of the Mint give leave to having struck off But some people must be bit with foreign dyes—one at Geneva has since been copied and passes for the work of Simon—having his mark T. S. 10

This last comment refers to the Lord General copy signed T. S. Portions of this manuscript note must be Vertue’s editorializing, but I have been unable to find the original newspaper (‘Morning Advertiser’ is apparently only a sub-title) to determine the parts that are his.

A further published note correlates with the above even though the die (note that only one die is mentioned) is not described. From the Northampton Mercury, 10 July 1738.

London July 6. A Curious Dye of Oliver Cromwell, cut in London during his Usurpation, was lately puchas’d in Flanders, and brought to the Tower, where the Hon. Richard Arundell, Esq. has given leave since a certain Number to be struck off in Gold and Silver for the Curious. 11

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7 Vertue I, Walpole Society, xviii (1930), 89, from BM. Add. MSS. 23069, written 1721-5.
8 Vertue I, ibid., p. 123.
9 Richard Arundell was Master of the Mint from May 1737 to 1745.
10 Vertue's notebook on coins and medals, 1739-51, BM. Add. MSS. 23077, p. 57. First noted and shown to me by Joan Martin. Not published by the Walpole Society.
11 NC, o.s. xi (1848-9), 103.
Finally, in his 1753 published work on Simon Vertue discusses the Lord General medal by stating,

A few being struck, there appeared a flaw or crack in the steel Dye, for which reason it was not much used; or, as it was performed about the Time that he was Lieutenant General, and before he advanced to be Lord Protector, the Stile being already cut, could not be altered, and therefore was disused and laid by, without any Reverse made to it. This Dye, 'tis said, was conveyed into Holland, about thirty Years since, and many were struck off in Silver etc. And tho' crack'd the Medal sold for an high Price here. So great was the Profit made of it, that another was imitated after it, but in a Circle, and probably at Geneva, wherein the Head was copied so exactly, and the letters T. S. on it, that it passes for the Original, tho' it differs also in the Inscription, which is OLI.V.D.G.R.P.ANG.SCO.EI.T.HIB.PRO.

When this was done, to make a Reverse to it, they have copied from another Medal, representing a Lion Sejant, holding a Scutcheon of Arms. The first medal he illustrates as the genuine one is oval, with a wide oval border (Pl. XVIII, 19). Surprisingly, he shows an integral loop, and likely he was depicting the lead trial specimen. Perhaps this is what he saw for his second 1721–5 notation. I do not know when he wrote the published text, but within his prolific notebooks there is an entry dated May 1743, in which he gives his reasons for the forthcoming work, and implies a good many of the plates, and some text, were finished.

In summary then the die was certainly available in London in the 1721–5 period. It may well have come from Holland earlier like other Simon material, but there is nothing to firmly substantiate this. Between that time and mid-1738 it was probably dormant and unused (it makes little sense for it to have gone to Holland and then returned to London during that period). In mid-1738 the Royal Mint had the cracked die, probably borrowed from the owner (Mr. House?), and a substantial number were struck for collectors, all on round flans (though this is not stated) in gold, silver, and copper. This conforms properly to the existing specimens in the round flan series. The ‘Geneva’ copy was made before 1751, and very likely prior to 1739.

Since the medal is unrecorded before about 1721 and unpublished before Vertue’s book in 1753, there is obviously no guarantee it is Simon’s work, especially since it is unsigned. There has never been a challenge to Simon’s authorship, nor will there be in this paper. The style and quality (and even the die cracking) are all those of Simon, although the lettering has both similarities to and differences from his other work. The fact remains there is no definite proof.

The die

The original die in all its cracked and strengthened glory is still extant in the Museum of London (Pl. XV, 1), but the bust punchen is not known to exist. The die was in the possession of the Wyon firm in the nineteenth century; later it was

12 Vertue's Simon, op. cit., p. 14 and pl. xii. Both Henfrey and Medallic Illustrations based their 'c. 1723' and 'after 1720' dates, respectively, on Vertue 1753 minus thirty years.
13 The Geneva copy he illustrates is the normal MI 410/46.
14 Vertue I, op. cit., p. 7, from BM. Add. MSS. 23070, at the end. While MSS. 23070 was written 1725–31, this portion was added to the notebook later and has dates at least as late as 1743.
15 Accession number A12385. The 1× illustration is rephotographed from a London Museum print. The 2× illustration is of the centre portion of the die, negative reversed.
16 Hawkins, Franks, and Grueber, Medallic Illustrations, etc. (MI), 1885, vol. i, p. 388, and Henfrey, op. cit., p. 225.
in the Tangye collection,\textsuperscript{17} from which it was donated to the then London Museum. It is a steel shouldered die having a slightly concave round face on a square shank; the design being within an offset oval. The shank is now enclosed by two heavy strengthening frames or bands, which were added in the eighteenth or nineteenth century to permit further restriking with the badly cracked die. Fig. 1 is a sectional view of the die as it currently exists. The total height is approximately 30 mm., with the die face being about 6 mm.

All specimens of the medal were struck from this same die, and all specimens except the trials were from the die in its present state, the trials being from this die in its earlier state. Any non-planchet flaw evident on any medal will be similarly found on the die\textsuperscript{18} although this may not be evident from the plates due to photographic lighting and reproduction.\textsuperscript{19}

\textit{The medals}

The medals will be described under distinct group or type headings. Various factors determine these groups, but the primary criteria for separating the bulk of the material are die flaws. Fig. 2 is a sketch of the major flaws on the entire round die face. It is hoped most of these are evident in the plates. The group descriptions will refer to this sketch.

\begin{itemize}
  \item $a =$ The major die break, early.
  \item $b =$ Flaw or nick from the sash, does not seem to have spread, early.
  \item $c =$ Crack a minor nick at the edge of the die very early, it did not develop as a major crack until very late.
  \item $d =$ Spots, possibly rust but more likely just pits, early.
  \item $e =$ Crack, very similar to $c$, late.
  \item $f =$ Continuation crack of $e$, very late.
  \item $g =$ Rust spots on armour, late.
  \item $h =$ Rust spots behind lower part of head, early restrikes.
  \item $i =$ Depression early, resulting in small cracks, late.
  \item $k =$ Rust spots behind upper part of head, late.
  \item $m, n =$ Rust spots, early restrikes.
\end{itemize}

The flaw at 2 o'clock is late and does not appear on any medals. It is on the round portion of the die face and hence does not show on the oval restrikes.

\textsuperscript{17} Sir Richard Tangye, \textit{The Cromwellian Collection}, 1905, p. 125.
\textsuperscript{18} Except for the unexplained crack (Pl. XVIII, 17).
\textsuperscript{19} Plate photography by the author, except where noted, who apologizes for the mixture of sizes, contrasts, lighting, and quality.
None of the medals exhibit more than the faintest beginnings of letter bifurcation, whether struck in a collar or not. This is not surprising from a die whose lettering is not at the edge, where the maximum radial flow of metal would be experienced.

**Group A.** Trial strikings are the earliest Lord General medals. These are prototypes by Simon, which show characteristics that are earlier than the extant die (and thus earlier than all subsequent restrikes), while still exhibiting characteristics that could only have come from the same die. There are two examples known, both in the British Museum. One is a fascinating massive lead strike (A1) (Pl. XV, 2),\(^{20}\) with the die face so deeply impressed in the lead that the outline of the square shank of the die is also evident (the original shank of the die before strengthening bands were added). All gross measurements and comparisons I have made on the trial piece agree with the existing die, a die which is in a later state than when it made the trial. The beginning of flaw \(c\) is present to a degree matching that of the earliest round restrikes. However, there are major differences in the design such as: the hair is much freer and less formally finished; there are no stops at the end of the legend, the left shoulder sash is different and somewhat less finished; and the lettering is cruder than that of the final version. The trial shows that the die originally had an impression for an integral loop, an arrangement that was lost on all restrikes due to the major top die break. The reverse of this medal has some marks scratched on it, which undoubtedly have no significance, but are shown next to the plate illustration. The second trial example is a badly cracked wax impression (A2) (Pl. XV, 3), ex Sloane collection, exhibiting all the same characteristics. Its survival is miraculous.

**Group B.** Round Early Restrikes are the first of the 'production' pieces, and these correlate properly with the 1738 notices. They exist in gold (B1), silver (B2), and copper (B3). Each, except the first illustrated gold specimen, will show the rust spots within the oval, but the outside rust spots and flaws may or may not be present, leading to the belief that medals without the top crack are the earliest and therefore originals. This is not true for those without obvious flaws have been expertly tooled and reworked, very likely by Royal Mint personnel at the time of striking. This was a reasonable undertaking for the purpose of these restrikes with a cracked die was to produce fine examples for collectors, not to provide die-state studies. The edge of most specimens shows distinct witness-line traces of the steel band used in conjunction with a surrounding collar during striking, and all witness lines noted appear related to each other, implying or confirming the medals were made at the same time. These witness lines are sketched on the plates next to each of the Group B round medals. The plate illustrations for the following medals should be examined with the realization that different metals of varying thickness, while struck at the same time, may produce different resultant flaw characteristics.

Pl. XVI, 4. Gold, 422.3 gr., Lessen collection, witness line, top flaw tooled out, top portion\(^{21}\) of medal polished, letters re-cut, flaws \(m, b, c\) (early), \(d, g\). There is no evidence of rust \(h\) and \(k\), which

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\(^{20}\) Accession number M7325. Negative by Ray Gardner. The \(2 x\) illustration is of the centre portion.

\(^{21}\) When the top flaw was tooled away the surrounding area from approximately 10 o'clock to 2 o'clock was polished, thus removing flaw \(n\) rust.
may have been polished out, although this does not seem to be the case, and the inner field is not normally re-worked on these medals. The flan is relatively thin, and an incuse image of the top flaw is very obvious on the reverse.

Pl. XVI, 5. Gold, 407-8 gr., Hird collection (Glendining photograph). I have not examined this except from the photograph, but the characteristics seem similar to the above. The incuse flaw image on the reverse is illustrated, and there may be some bending associated with it.

Pl. XVI, 6. Copper, 336-0 gr., Lessen collection, witness line, not retouched, with flaws a, m, b, c (early), d, g, h, k. A virtually identical specimen is in the Ashmolean Museum (from the M. H. Grant collection 1953) on which I did not discern a witness line that I would have expected.

Pl. XVI, 7. Copper, 406-9 gr., Lessen collection, witness line, top flaw tooled out, letters recut, entire surrounding area polished leaving only the flaws within the oval b, g, h, k; incuse image of top flaw is visible on the reverse.

Pl. XVI, 8. Copper, 300-5 gr., Lessen collection, witness line, top flaw tooled out, top portion of medal polished and letters recut; flaws m, b, c (early), d, g, h, k.

Pl. XVII, 9. Silver, 508-2 gr., Lessen collection, witness line, not retouched, with flaws a, m, b, c (early), d, g, h, k.

Pl. XVII, 10. Silver, British Museum M7323, reverse only illustrated. This medal is fully tooled and polished as copper specimen 7. The reverse is very interesting in that it shows overstriking (in this case with an effectively blank die or flat surface) with the unexplained underletters T G still visible. I am unable to explain the centre boss with radiating crack, and I neglected to examine this medal for a witness line. If the understrike can be identified it may prove useful for dating purposes.

The British Museum also possess a thin-flan silver medal and thick-flan copper medal, each with the full top flaw and the expected witness line.

All Group B medals were produced at the same time yet, because of various degrees of rework applied to some examples, they can appear to range from very early clean originals to very late heavily flawed restrikes. Undoubtedly the major top die crack deteriorated somewhat during this small restrike period, and it is possible the strengthening frames were added then.

The gold specimens are rare, but it is difficult to differentiate those found due to a lack of catalogue illustrations and pedigrees. I have recorded the following:

Lessen collection, ex Ockenden, Warner, Baldwin 1938, Sotheby, 20 Dec. 1938 (34); 422-3 gr., sg 19-44. (Pl. XVI, 4)


Thomas collection 1844 (464) 'exquisite specimen highly preserved' sold to Curt. (612 gr.)

Bieber collection 1889 (684), ex Bale, Sanders, J. Hamilton 1882 (86), top flaw.

Lord St. Oswald collection, Christies, 13 Oct. 1964 (177), heavy top flaw.

NCirc. Dec. 1930 (3065), Dec. 1919 (76520), June 1919 (72233), Hilton-Price, 1910 (1911), ex Montagu, 1897 (204) illustrated; full top flaw and rust spots within the oval, i.e. not retouched.

NCirc. July 1915 (32468) illustrated, top flaw not as full as the Montagu.

NCirc. May 1926 (52980), heavy flaw.

NCirc. May 1926 (52981), top flaw not as full.

Hollis specimen, NCirc. Dec. 1919 (76521) illustrated, NCirc. May 1919 (72234), Sotheby, 9 Aug. 1918 (91), the Revd. Canon Marsden, Sotheby, 19 Jan. 1869 (358), Hollis collection, Sotheby, 1817 (485) sold to Young. The top flaw is tooled out, and the arms and initials of Thomas Hollis are engraved on the reverse. Hollis (1720–74) was a very interesting individual, considered a republican, who sponsored numerous numismatic medallic works.  

See Memoirs of Thomas Hollis, edited by Francis Blackburne, 1780. Hollis had dealings with Kirk, Stuart, and Yeo.
Some of the listed specimens must be repeats of the others, and I estimate there are about six gold specimens, each of which is round, of the 1738 Group B, and with the top flaw either showing or tooled out.

Group C. Early Oval Restrike is known to me from a single copper specimen (Pl. XVII, 11) in the Ashmolean collection and mentioned in their 1833 catalogue, MS. Cat. 404 and 1836 catalogue 171/7. Since an oval medal would probably have been made by trimming a round one, obviously any round medal could become oval. However, since this one appears to be one of a kind it will have its own grouping. The top flaw has been tooled out, the letters are not recut, and the flaws are a (remains of), b, g, h, k, which would place it in the same era as Group B. It may carry a portion of flaw e, which would place it later, but I believe the mark at e may be a coincidental cut or scratch.

Group D. Late Round Restrike is also known to me from a single copper example (Pl. XVII, 12) in the Ashmolean, which is listed in the Bodleian eighteenth-century Med. 88, Vaux, v, 205.88, Arch. Bold. Fol. 27. There is no edge witness line, the top flaw has been tooled out and the letters partially recut. It exhibits flaws b, c, d, e (trace), f (trace), g, h, k, n, m. Because of the c, e, f flaws it must be considerably later than the Group B strikings, although still in the eighteenth century because of its pedigree.

Group E. Late Oval Restrikes are known in silver and are apparently the final productions from the die. They are reasonably common. While it is not yet possible to date them I would estimate very late eighteenth century to mid-nineteenth century; if the latter, then possibly they were produced by the Wyon firm. They are characterized by having a thick or very thick flan (a necessity with a seriously damaged die), and the latest die flaws within the oval. The top flaw may be visible or have been tooled out. The die was exercised to its limit when they were made. The two illustrated examples are quite representative.

Pl. XVII, 13. Silver, 443.7 gr., Lessen collection, very thick flan, not retouched, with flaws a, b, c, e, f, g, h, i, k.

Pl. XVII, 14. Silver, 310.4 gr., Lessen collection, thick flan, top flaw tooled out, letters recut, flaws b, c, e, f, g, h, i, k. This is flawed more severely than the previous medal, possibly because of the thinner flan, but it is of the same vintage.

Group F. Other Metal Types are difficult to define due to the nature of their composition. I know of three different examples, viz. a lead oval with extended border (F1); an oval in white metal (F2); and a round specimen (but not the full diameter of the die face) in pewter or tin (F3). Very likely these three are casts, in which case they are inconsequential, but this is very difficult to determine with lead or near-lead materials. If struck they would fall into the Group B vintage based on their flaws.

Pl. XVIII, 15. Lead oval, 190.6 gr., Lessen collection, top flaw tooled out, letters not recut, flaws a, b, d, g, h, k, and the reverse shows the incuse image of the top flaw a.

Pl. XVIII, 16. White metal oval, 134.6 gr., Lessen collection, top flaw tooled out, letters not recut, flaws a, b, g (trace), k (only one spot).

Pl. XVIII, 17. Pewter-appearing metal, round, top flaw tooled out, letters not recut, flaws a, b, d, f, g, h, k. The centre crack is not in the flan and is unexplained unless it is a casting flaw. This is in the Ashmolean from the eighteenth-century Knight collection.
Copy 1 is the ‘Dassier or Geneva’ medal (MI 410/46). Since these were known to Vertue seemingly as early as 1739, they may pre-date the Group B restrikes. The Geneva/Dassier tradition is strong enough to accept at least a continental origin for them. They exist in silver (1a) (Pl. XVIII, 18, 286-1 gr., Lessen collection), and copper (1b), and there is a lead specimen, likely cast, in the Ashmolean Museum. From microscopic examination, measurements, and photographic overlays, though on a somewhat crude scale, there can be no question the obverse die was sunk using Simon’s bust puncheon, a situation that presents problems. There are added rivets on the armour and some fringe modifications. This medal does not necessarily owe its prototype to Simon’s Lord General for the puncheon could have been available independently of the die and prior to its discovery, and of course the legends and reverse are unrelated to the Lord General medal. The reverse is a reasonably good imitation of the Lord Protector reverse. Jean Dassier (1676–1763) came to England in 1728 and remained for a few years according to Forrer.23 The medals are probably from a single pair of dies although I have examined too few to make a firm determination. The initials T. S. are under the bust.

Copy 2. Imitation of Vertue (not in MI), is known from a single silver specimen (Pl. XVIII, 20), NCirc. June 1978 (8411), ex Stucker collection, Bourgey, Paris, 21 Nov. 1977 (part of lot 60). In cataloguing for the NCirc. D. Fearon wisely noted that the bust is by the same hand as the imitation ‘Hitherto Hath The Lord’ medal (MI 392/15), which is somewhat related to the Dunbar series. The medal seems to be copied from Vertue’s Plate xii, B illustration (Pl. XVIII, 19). It is probably by (James?) Stuart (mid-eighteenth-century medallist) or John Kirk (1724–76), though these two names tend to be a catch-all for unattributed eighteenth-century English work. The origin of Vertue’s illustration is a Group A trial and not a round restrike, for it has certain affinities to the trial, not the least of which is the integral loop, a feature he would not have included arbitrarily. However, the imitation is not so close to the trial as is Vertue’s illustration (for example, the orientation of the legend), yet it is conceivable ‘Stuart’ also copied the trial piece directly.

Copy 3. Bust (MI 388/8), is a unique pewter cast oval in the British Museum of a bust very similar to the Lord General medal, but it is not of the same dimensions (Pl. XVIII, 21). I have no explanation for this piece.

Discussion

When attempting to correlate the Simon and Dassier medals with the die and missing bust puncheon, a serious paradox arises concerning the production sequence and Simon’s techniques. It is hoped at this point there is no major challenge to my contention that the Museum of London die is the same one used for all uniface Lord General medals (Groups A–F), albeit in two states, preliminary and final. The question then is how did one puncheon form two states of the same Simon die in addition to the later Dassier die (Copy 1), since I claim the Dassier bust was by Simon, without reservations? Numerous communications on this matter have been held with Dr. Gaspar and Mr. Dyer, but no concurrence has been reached, and they are not
responsible for these theories. There is no completely satisfactory solution to the problem, but the following discussion will elaborate some of the possibilities, each of which assumes a puncheon was used.

1. If Dassier used the final state of Simon's puncheon, which matches the final state of the Simon die, how did this final state evolve from that of the trial group strikings? The conclusions for this possibility require that the final bust in the Simon die match the final puncheon, and negates the possibility that the bust was reworked by Simon in the die itself after the trial was made, otherwise the puncheon would have remained in its earlier state for Dassier.

To account for this situation Simon's procedures could have been as follows: he carved a bust puncheon in steel (preliminary state); hardened the puncheon and used this to sink the steel die; punched or engraved the lettering (preliminary state), but did not harden the die; and struck a lead trial (Al), which would have required considerable pressure, but not enough to harm the die. He was not satisfied with the results and reworked or repunched the letters (final state) in the die, but he did not rework the bust hair and sash in the die as expected. Instead he softened the bust puncheon, a seemingly dangerous undertaking; reworked it; rehardened it; used it to resink the existing die (final state); and hardened the die, but never used it so far as any known specimens are concerned.

Admittedly this is a cumbersome sequence. However, a careful study of the existing material, which may not be fully evident from the plates, leads to this interpretation, one I am forced to accept at the moment although alternates will be given. Before the era of matrices, the puncheons were often the most important of the tools when it was anticipated that multiple dies might be needed. This could have been a legitimate reason for Simon to modify the puncheon instead of the die. Of course his normal technique was to use puncheons, regardless of any other considerations. The most disturbing of the above assumptions is the resinking of the die, moreso than the softening of the puncheon.

2. If Simon had done all engraving and re-engraving in the steel die itself, and then used his final die state to raise the bust puncheon, then the final and sole state of the puncheon would have been available to Dassier, eliminating our problem. Unfortunately this presumes Simon, who was known for his use of puncheons, was familiar with and used matrix techniques, but there is no evidence for the latter supposition in any of his work.

3. Similarly, if Simon never created a bust puncheon (or it had disappeared), and Dassier had possession of the Simon die, then Dassier could have used the die as a matrix to raise a bust puncheon for his own use. It is difficult to conceive of a medallist going through such an operation to partially copy a medal; surely the Simon die would have been used directly if he had had it.

4. Other explanations involving two puncheons or two dies by Simon are untenable. An independent identical bust by Dassier, either in the form of a puncheon or by direct engraving in the die, is perhaps in the realm of possibility, although doubtfully so. Even if duplication was realistic, again it is difficult to comprehend such an

24 The plate enlargements are not equal from illustration to illustration, so comparison measurements are not possible from them.
enormous effort being expended on a relatively minor commercial medal, especially since the reverse, while quite a good copy of Simon's work, is not an apparent attempt at exact replication. If Dassier was producing a concoction of a Cromwell medal by Simon and had a puncheon at hand, he would have used it (assuming he understood it was by Simon and of Cromwell), otherwise he likely would have cut an obverse die of less elaboration. In fact, perhaps a good reason for making such a copy in the first place was because a major component (puncheon) happened to have been available at the time.

5. A final consideration might be given to a hot-stamping procedure whereby a hard specimen of a restrike medal could have been used as a master puncheon to sink a die into hot, softened steel. I do not know if such forgery methods were known in this period, but it is not a likely method to have been used for the Dassier copy, and it is not certain that restrikes pre-dated the Dassier (an original Simon medal, even if one had existed then, would have been too rare to use as a tool because of its inevitable destruction in punching).

Conclusions and summary

Perhaps in 1650, and prior to the Dunbar medal, Simon made a bust puncheon, prepared a preliminary obverse die for a Lord General medal, and struck at least one trial impression. He then reworked the same puncheon and die, but left the final work unfinished and unused at that stage. No original medals from the final die state are known, and the medal was not issued in Cromwell's time. The reason the project was never completed could have been due to die failure, or a cancellation of the requirement for the medal, or both.

In the first half of the eighteenth century a continental copy was produced, possibly by Dassier, the die of which was formed from Simon's bust puncheon.

In 1738 Simon's die was available in rusted and cracked(?) condition. This was used by the Royal Mint for a commercial venture, and approximately two hundred round gold, silver, and copper specimens were struck, most or all with the use of a collar enclosing a spring-steel band. All of these restrikes, which were the first production batch of the Lord General medal, exhibited the major top die crack and other flaws, but many were tooled and reworked to hide the flaws. There is no evidence the die was used between the 1650s and 1738.

At some later date, but likely in the eighteenth century, strengthening frames were added to the shank of the badly cracked die to permit further striking. This die is still in existence. A number of oval medals were the resultant product, and these show a great deal of further die deterioration.

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**ADDENDUM**

The Museum of London die was in the Major Finlay sale, Sotheby, 9 Apr. 1900 (300), bought by Spink for £3. 3s., and this is apparently when Tangye obtained it.
LESSEN: CROMWELL
PLATE XVIII VOL. XLIX

10 Group B2 (1.5x)

9 Group B2 (2x)

11 Group C (2x)

12 Group D (2x)

14 Group E (2x)

13 Group E (2x)

LESSEN: CROMWELL
PLATE XVIII VOL. XLIX

15 Group F1 (2x)

16 Group F2 (1.5x)

17 Group F3 (1.5x)

18 Copy 1a

19 Vertue (1x)

20 Copy 2 (1x)

21 Copy 3 (1x)

LESSEN: CROMWELL