

PORTRAIT PUNCHES USED ON THE HAMMERED COINAGE OF QUEEN ELIZABETH I

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ALTHOUGH portraits of Queen Elizabeth I normally attract much attention, the portraits appearing on the coinage have been relatively little studied. Helen Farquhar discussed the portraits of the Tudor monarchs as portrayed on their coins and medals and Col Morrieson has listed some of the early busts in his description of the dresses worn by the queen.¹ Borden and Brown have described the busts used on the milled coinage and Brown has also provided a listing of most of the early hammered shilling bust punches.² Tickell has done the same for the bust punches used on the hammered sixpences but there has hitherto been no detailed study or catalogue of the other bust punches used on Elizabeth's hammered coins.³

In our forthcoming study of the hammered gold coinage of Elizabeth I, we needed a scheme for labelling the different bust punches, but finding that the punches were used interchangeably between metals and denominations we decided that it would be more useful to provide a complete catalogue of all the bust punches used on the hammered coin during the reign.

One advantage of examining all forty-nine bust punches as a group was the discovery that punches engraved at the same time share stylistic features which suggest that they were copied from the same master portrait, presumably a drawing or painting taken from life. It is known that the queen gave a sitting to Mestrelle at Richmond to make the painting that served as the model for the portrait used on the mill coin and it is likely that she granted similar sittings to Derek Anthony, the chief engraver for the hammered coin.⁴ From the punches it is possible to identify nine of these master portraits each of which may be represented by as many as nine punches usually cut within a few months of each other.

In the two years leading up to the recoinage of 1561 three master portraits appear to have been used and no less than nine shilling-size punches were cut in addition to ten for the smaller denominations. This flurry of activity stemmed from the difficulty of obtaining a likeness that satisfied the queen.⁵ Bust 1 may have been a good likeness but it was not particularly flattering and, though bust 2 was better, the queen is shown wearing a crown that is so large that it is in danger of falling off. Bust 3 is in all respects more satisfactory and was used for the major part of the large recoinage of 1561. Some punches cut during this period were being used over twenty years later even though new master portraits were prepared in 1566 (bust 4), 1573 (bust 5) and 1583 (bust 6). The differences between any of the early portraits (busts 1–6) are not large and the use of outdated punches would not have attracted any particular notice.

During the late 1580s Charles Anthony assumed the mantle of chief engraver from his father, Derek. The reintroduction of a crown gold coinage in 1593 provided him with an opportunity to prepare a new and distinctive portrait (bust 7) in which the queen's hair

¹ H. Farquhar, 'Portraiture of our Tudor monarchs on their coins and medals', *BNJ* 4 (1908), 79–143; H. W. Morrieson, 'The dress of Elizabeth as shown on her early silver coins, 1558–1561', *BNJ* 18 (1925–6), 121–3.

² D. G. Borden and I. D. Brown, 'The milled coinage of Elizabeth I', *BNJ* 53 (1983), 108–32; I. D. Brown, 'Some notes on the coinage of Elizabeth I with special reference to

her hammered silver', *BNJ* 28 (1958), 568–603.

³ I. Tickell, 'The hammered sixpences of Elizabeth I' (sic), *NCirc* 80 (1972), 3.

⁴ C. E. Challis, *The Tudor Coinage* (Manchester, 1978), p. 18; H. Symonds, 'The Mint of Queen Elizabeth and those who worked there', *NC* 76 (1916), 91.

⁵ Symonds, 'The Mint of Queen Elizabeth', p. 64.

flows profusely over an elaborately bejewelled dress. Two pattern punches (P2,P3) are known for this coinage. A slightly more restrained version of this portrait (bust 8) was introduced later the same year and a similar portrait with the queen holding an orb and sceptre (bust 9) was prepared for the silver crown and half-crown in 1601. On the smaller silver the punches prepared earlier by Derek Anthony continued to be used until the end of the reign, though after the success of busts 7 and 8 on the gold, Charles Anthony did prepare pattern shillings with similar (if more subdued) portraits (P4,P5) but these were never adopted for general use.

A portrait (P6) similar to that used on the gold in 1593 (bust 8) was cut for a unique pattern halfpenny in the British Museum. Peck associates this piece with a proposal made around 1574 by Wickliffe and Humphrey for a billon coinage.⁶ However, the style of the portrait and the abbreviation of the queen's name to ELIZAB both suggest that the obverse die of this piece was not cut until the 1590s even though the punches used on the reverse die are typical of those in use around 1572 in the Tower where Humphrey was the assay-master.⁷ This piece is probably a later concoction struck from two dies prepared at very different times.

We have included two of the three-quarter facing pattern portraits of 1601 (P7,P8) for completeness. These pieces are included in Peck's catalogue as numbers 3-5 and 7-9.⁸ More problematical is the extremely rare pattern (P9), which Hawkins described as a milled half-crown.⁹ The portrait in particular is in very high relief, quite atypical of the period, leading to the conclusion that it may be a later concoction. With the lys mark, the French title reading FRAN and the Z for ET in the legend it is probably a copy of an early hammered shilling and not related to the mill series which had developed a different style by the time the lys mark was in use on mill pieces. Unfortunately, the bust on both known specimens is heavily worn (or rubbed) and tantalisingly the finer details are no longer visible.

Although the mill coinage is not part of this study, it is instructive to compare the portrait evolution in the hammered and mill series. Borden and Brown identify seven different portraits used on the mill coins between 1560 and 1572.¹⁰ The earliest, a pattern (BB 13) dating from the end of 1560, is similar in style to the contemporary hammered bust 3 and a pattern hammered shilling of privy mark martlet struck with bust punch 3B but without the usual inner circles (illustrated by Borden and Brown as BB12) is often confused with the mill coins. The first regular bust appearing on the mill coins (BB 14) is remarkably similar to the hammered bust 3C but within a matter of months Mestrelle's portraits became both more elaborate and varied than those of Derek Anthony. In 1564 Mestrelle introduced a portrait in which the queen's left ear is visible beneath her hair, a feature that Anthony introduced in his 1566 portrait (bust 4).

It is also interesting to compare the coinage portraits with the painted portraits of Elizabeth that have been studied by Strong.¹¹ The early coin portraits were taken from life and are among the few extant portraits of the queen that date from the first decade of her reign. There is no reason to doubt that they are a true, even if flattering, likeness. But the later coinage portraits (busts 7-9), in common with the later painted portraits, show no signs of the queen's ageing features. They have become icons of the cult of the eternally youthful virgin queen. The move from likeness to icon is reflected in the move from

⁶ C. W. Peck, *English Copper, Tin and Bronze Coins in the British Museum 1558-1958* (London 1964), but Challis in *The Tudor Coinage*, p. 206 note 23, points out that this piece is too heavy for the proposed halfpenny. This does not rule out the possibility that the reverse die was prepared in the Tower in support of Wickliffe and Humphrey's proposal.

⁷ J. Craig, *The Mint* (Cambridge, 1953), p. 120.

⁸ Peck, *English Copper, Tin and Bronze Coins*.

⁹ E. Hawkins, *The Silver Coins of England* (London, 1848), p. 153.

¹⁰ Borden and Brown, 'The milled coinage of Elizabeth I', 108-32.

¹¹ R. Strong, *Gloriana. The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I* (New York, 1987).

simplicity to complexity – the exaggeratedly ornate clothing (symbolising majesty), the profusely free flowing hair (symbolising virginity) and the orb and sceptre (symbolising authority).

Each of the forty-nine bust punches is described in Table 2 and illustrated. Table 1 gives a list of the privy marks used during the reign and their dates. The nine different portraits are identified by the numbers 1 to 9 and different punches corresponding to the same portrait are identified by a letter. For each punch the following information is supplied:

1. a concordance of alternative published bust numbers (B=Brown, T=Tickell);
2. the dimensions of the bust measured from the cross of the crown to the front of the truncation, and from the front to the back of the truncation;
3. a description of the characteristic features of the punch;
4. a list of the denominations and privy marks on which it was used; and
5. other comments.

Table 1

Abbreviations used for privy marks (Dates given in new style)

LS	Lys	1558–1560	Bust 1–3 Derek Anthony
CC	Cross Crosslet	1560–1561	(–1565 on AV)
MR	Martlet	1560–1561	(AR only)
BA	Broad Arrowhead (Pheon)	1561–1565	(AR only)
RS	Rose	1565–1566	(Sovereign pattern)
PT	Portcullis	1566–1567	
LN	Lion	1567	Bust 4
CN	Crown (Coronet)	1567–1570	
CA	Castle	1570–1572	
ER	Ermine	1572–1573	Bust 5
AC	Acorn	1573–1574	
EG	Eglantine	1574–1578	
CR	(Greek) Cross	1578–1580	
LC	Long (Latin) Cross	1580–1582	
SW	Sword	1582–1583	
BL	Bell	1583	
A	A	1583–1585	Bust 6
SC	(E) scallop	1585–1587	Charles Anthony
CS	Crescent	1587–1590	
HA	Hand	1590–1592	
TN	Tun	1592–1594	Bust 7 (Half-sovereign pattern)
WK	Woolsack	1594–1596	Bust 8
KY	Key	1596–1599	(shilling patterns)
AN	Anchor	1599–1600	
0	Cypher	1600–1601	
1	One	1601–1602	Bust 9
2	Two	1602–1603	
Irish Marks			
RS	Rose	1558	
HP	Harp	1561	

Table 2

Bust punches used on the hammered coin of Elizabeth I ordered according to bust type (see **plates 26–8**)

BUST 1 Thick vertical nose descending from a high forehead. Jutting chin. Crown arch dips beneath the cross.

- 1A (=B1) 21 × 14mm Plain dress between beaded straps, nose in line with shoulder.
1558–61 Shilling (LS,CC), Irish shilling (RS). Deterioration of the bust punch is shown by the number of jewels on each side of the crown arch. The new die had 7 jewels on each arch but some of these were damaged in use as indicated: 7/7 (1558–Dec 1560), 4. 2/7 (Dec 1560), 4.2/2.4 (Jan 1561)
- 1B (=B2) 21 × 15.5mm Plain dress between beaded straps. Head thrust further forward.
1559–61 Half-pound (LS), shilling (LS, MR), Irish shilling (RS).
- 1C 21 × 16.5mm Light decorations between beaded straps, hair at shoulder more profuse than 1A and 1B.
1560 Shilling (LS)
- 1D (=B3) 21 × 14mm Row of incuse dots on dress between plain straps.
1560 Shilling (LS)
- 1E 13.5 × 10mm Incuse dots on dress between plain straps. This extremely rare punch was used on only one die of each denomination. Neither shows either the beaded or wire line inner circle.
1558–9 Crown (LS), groat (LS).
- 1F (=T2) 14.5 × 10mm Plain dress between plain straps.
1558–66 Crown (CC,RS,PT), sixpence (BA,RS,PT), groat (LS,CC,MR), Irish groat (RS).
- 1G 13 × 8.5mm Plain dress between plain straps.
1559–66 Half-crown (LS,CC,RS,PT), groat (LS), half-groat (LS,CC,MR,PT), Irish groat (HP).
- 1H 8.5 × 6mm Line on dress between plain straps.
1558–61 Penny (LS,CC,MR).

BUST 2 1560 Smaller head than other shilling punches but otherwise similar to bust 3. Diagonal lines on dress between plain straps.

- 2A (=B5) 19.5 × 13.5mm
1560 Shilling (LS).
- 2B (=B4) 19 × 12.5mm
1560 Shilling (LS).

BUST 3 (Recoinage bust) 1560 More flattering portrait than bust 1. Straps plain with various decorations between.

- 3A (=B7) 20 × 14mm Small delicate scroll decoration between straps.
1560–61 Shilling (CC).
- 3B (=B8) 20 × 15mm Elaborate decoration between straps.
1560–88 Shilling (CC,MR,BL,A,SC,CS).
This bust was used only during the early months of the recoinage and was dropped in favour of 3C. It was later revived when the shilling was reintroduced in 1583. It also appears on a pattern without inner circles (MR) that is contemporary with and similar to the earliest mill coins.
- 3C (=B6) 20 × 14mm Incuse dots on dress between straps. Criss-cross pattern at truncation and queen's left shoulder.
1561–65 Half-pound (CC,RS,PT), shilling (CC,MR), Irish shilling (HP, April 1561).
The principal recoinage bust. Deterioration of the punch is shown by the gradual removal of the six jewels on each arch of the crown: 6/6 (Jan 1561), 5./6 (Feb), 5././5 (Mar), 5././2.2 (Apr), 5././2.1. (May 1561–65).
- 3D (=T1) 17 × 12.5mm Prominent horizontal bar across the base of the bodice. Hair brushed back.
1561 Sixpence (BA).
- 3E (=T3) 17 × 12.5mm Incuse diagonal lines on dress between straps.
1563–6 Half-pound (LN), sixpence (BA).

- 3F 13 × 9.5mm
1560–7 Half-crown (CC,RS), threepence (BA,RS,PT.), half-groat (CC).
- 3G 11 × 7.5mm Hair swept back, light incuse lines on bodice.
1561–82 Threehalfpence (all marks from BA to SW).
- 3H 10 × 7mm Incuse dots on dress between straps, break in crown punch.
1560–1 Penny (CC,MR).
- 3I 9.5 × 6mm High ruff at chin throwing head forward.
1561–72 Penny (CC,RS,PT,LN,CN,CA), threepence (BA,CN,ER).
- BUST 4 (High Crown) 1566** Crown arch rises to a point under the cross. Ear is showing. Queen's features similar to bust 1. Straps plain with incuse dots between. (N.B. The ear first appears on the mill coinage in 1564).
- 4A 19.5 × 13.5mm
1567–73 Half-pound (LN,CN,CA).
- 4B (=T4) 16 × 10.5mm
1566–73 Sixpence (LN,CN,CA,ER).
- 4C 14 × 9.5mm
1566–72 Crown (LN,CN,CA).
- 4D 13.5 × 9mm Pointed chin
1566–83 Half-crown (PT,LN,CN,CA), threepence (LN,CN,CA,ER,AC,EG,CR,LC,SW), half-groat (PT,LN,CN,CA).
- BUST 5 (Flat arched crown) 1573** Plain straps on bodice.
- 5A (=T5) 16.5 × 11.5mm Alternating incuse diagonal lines between straps.
1573–89 Sixpence (ER,AC,EG,CR,LC,SW,BL,A,SC,CS).
- 5B 10 × 6.5mm Plain dress between straps, waves of hair over ear at crown.
1573–1603 Penny (all marks from AC to 2), threepence (ER,AC,EG,CR,LC,SW).
- BUST 6 1583** Similar to bust 5, ear not always visible.
- 6A 21 × 14.5mm Ear concealed by hair.
1585–8 Shilling (SC,CS).
- 6B 21 × 13.5mm Incuse diagonal lines on dress between straps.
1586–1603 Shilling (SC,CS,HA,TN,WK,KY,AN,O,1,2).
- 6C (=T6) 18 × 12mm
1589–1603 Sixpence (CS,HA,TN,WK,KY,AN,O,1,2).
- 6D 12 × 8.5mm Incuse dots between straps, very youthful face.
1583–6 Half-groat (BL,A,SC).
- 6E 11 × 8.5mm
1585–99 Half-groat (SC,CS,HA,TN,WK,KY).
- 6F 11 × 8.5mm Herring bone pattern on bodice, nose very pronounced.
1599–1603 Half-groat (AN,O,1,2).
- BUST 7 (High hair) 1593** Elaborate bust in which the hair flows from the top of the ruff at the queen's left shoulder.
- 7A 30 × 23.5mm
1593–4 Pound (TN).
- 7B 23.5 × 21mm
1593 Half-pound (TN).
- 7C 17 × 14mm
1593–9 Crown (TN,WK,KY).
- 7D 12.5 × 10.5mm
1593–1603 Half-crown (TN,WK,KY,AN,0,1,2).
- BUST 8 (Low hair) 1593** Similar to bust 7 but the queen's hair flows from the base of the ruff by her left shoulder.
- 8A 30 × 24.5mm
1594–1603 Pound (WK,KY,AN,0,1,2).
- 8B 23.5 × 20mm
1593–1603 Half-pound (TN,WK,KY,AN,0,1,2).
- 8C 17.5 × 12.5mm
1600–3 Crown (0,1,2).

BUST 9 (Orb and Sceptre) 1601.

9A 34 × 27.5mm
1601–3 Silver crown (1,2).

9B 26 × 20mm
1601–3 Silver half-crown (1,2).

BUSTS PUNCHES USED ON PATTERNS

P1 1565 AV pound (RS).

P2 1593 AV half-pound (TN). An early trial for bust 7

P3 1593 AV half-pound (TN). A trial for bust 7

P4 1597 AR shilling (KY). A trial for bust 7 in the silver series. Tall narrow crown with flowing hair.

P5 1597 AR shilling (KY). As P4 but with a more squat crown.

P6 c1597 AR or billon halfpenny (Mullet).

P7 1601 AV/AR/AE Medalet or groat or twopence (6 petalled flower).

P8 1601 AR/AE/Pewter penny (6 petalled flower).

P9 1560? piedfort shilling (so-called milled half-crown) (LS).



1A



1B



1C



1D



1E



1F



1G



1H



2A



2B



3A



3B



3C



3D



3E



3F



3G



3H



3I



4A



4B



4C



4D



5A

BROWN AND COMBER: PORTRAIT PUNCHES (1)





P1



P2



P3



P4



P5



P6



P7



P8



P9

BROWN AND COMBER : PORTRAIT PUNCHES (3)