

## A CHESTER MINT MARK CORRECTED

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In the troubled times of Charles I's reign the city of Chester suffered a prolonged siege at the hands of the Parliamentarians, and on 31 January 1645 the defenders ordered that old plate to the value of £100 was to be made into coin to pay for the defence of the city and other outstanding debts. It would appear that the rare Chester half-crowns bearing the three garb mint mark resulted from this warrant, and the choice of this mint mark obviously derived from the old city arms which were three garbs (sometimes called gerbs) surmounted by a sword of state in pale. The coat of arms which had been used for many years is shown in Fig.1, which is taken from a map of the city made about 1600. The citizens of Chester were proud of their sword, for one was said to have been given to them by Richard II in 1394 and the existing one was carried before Henry VII when he visited the city a hundred years later. Until now no mention has been made of the sword when the mint mark is described. This may not have been noticed because the coins are usually struck on somewhat irregular flans, the edge of which often cuts across the mark, and they are seldom well struck up at this place. When a specimen occurs without these defects, the sword can be seen and Fig.2 shows this quite clearly. In the last quarter of the seventeenth century a system of hall marking was introduced for silver made in Chester and examples of these hall marks are shown (by courtesy of Mrs G.E.P.How) in Fig.3. The mark on the left is the beribboned sword, which is also the city's crest, the mark in the centre is the town mark, and the mark on the right is the date letter for 1686-90.

Now attention has been drawn to the sword it is hoped that the mint mark will be correctly described in future.



Fig.1



Fig.2 Enlarged

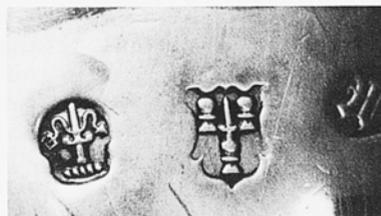


Fig.3 Enlarged