

THE CROMWELL FUNERAL MEDAL BY SIMON

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Introduction

Thomas Simon's final medallic work depicting Oliver Cromwell was, fittingly, the struck gold funeral or death medal dated 1658 (E.Hawkins, *Medallic Illustrations* 433/82). Henfrey¹ has already presented most of the available material, and thus my ideas and conclusions follow his closely, but I believe there is value in expanding the coverage by means of this article. A discussion of the commercial Dutch copies (Hawkins, 434/84 and 435/85, the small and large round medals, from a total of seven dies) is reserved for a future paper on the various seventeenth-century Dutch Cromwell medals.

The Medal and Dies

The obverse of this small oval medal has Cromwell's laureate, armoured bust left, signed on the shoulder truncation T.SIMON, and the legend with his normal protectoral titles. On the reverse is a young olive tree, the stump of an old one, and shepherds with their flocks. The legend NON.DEFICIENT. OLIVA.SEP.3.1658 was translated by Hawkins as 'the people shall not lack an olive tree,' alluding to Richard Cromwell's succession. One of the psalms of David includes the phrase 'a godly man shall be like an olive tree'. So the olive tree in conjunction with Cromwell's name was a fitting motif for the time, if not exactly a pun.

There has never been any written implication or a tradition that the dies might have survived Simon, and there is no reason to believe that they may have survived, for there are no restrikes. One or both dies probably had engraved cuts for a suspension loop as most of the medals have a loop integral to the flan. The dies likely followed the normal pattern for a Simon oval medal, such as that for the Lord General medal, viz. steel shouldered dies having a round die face on a square shank, the design being within an oval outline on the round face.² All the medals examined have been struck from the same pair of dies.

Documentation

Cromwell died on 3 September 1658, and his state funeral was held on 23 November 1658, although the actual body was apparently interred long before then. If the medals were intended to be ready for the occasion it appears that Simon had sufficient time to prepare the dies. Who authorized and paid for the work, when the medals were struck, or to whom they were given remains unknown from any written records. The lack of documentation means that I have found nothing specific in the *Calendars*,³ *Commons Journals* (in fact the Commons Journals were not printed for the period between 6 February 1658 and 27 January 1659), or Simon's invoices. Two brief warrants by Richard Cromwell requesting payment for some of the funeral expenses do not

mention medals.⁴ The earliest illustration of the Simon medal, and also the first appearance of the smaller Dutch copy, was in the first edition of van Loon (1723). The large Dutch copy was the first of all to be illustrated, and that by Raguenet in 1691, copied by Leti in 1692, and then by Evelyn in 1697.⁵

The Funeral

The press report of the funeral⁶ does not list individuals, but does mention the important attendants: 'ten of the gentlemen of his Highness' carried the hearse with the effigies; 'six other gentlemen of his Highness' put a canopy over the hearse before it was placed on the carriage; 'a gentleman of his Highness's Bedchamber' sat at each end of the carriage; the pall extending on each side of the carriage was 'borne by persons of honor, appointed for that purpose'; a 'Knight Marshall on horseback attended by his deputy and thirteen men on horseback'; on each side of the carriage the 'banner-roles were carried by twelve persons of honor'; and the armour was 'borne by eight army officers.' Then came the numerous mourners, from ambassadors to servants, amongst whom presumably the chief was Richard. Walpole wrote that Thomas Simon was one of those who walked in the procession.⁷

In this most elaborate, expensive, and oft-postponed funeral, modelled after that of James I, there were obviously quite a number of people who could have received a medal, but whether any actually did is at present unknown.

Original Medals

From my studies and gathering of data it is evident that all genuine Simon medals are struck and, conversely, all struck medals are genuine and contemporary. If Nos. 1 and 2, in copper and lead, are categorized as die trials, it seems likely that only gold medals were issued, at a nominal weight of about ninety-five grains. There were probably no associated chains. I have never encountered a struck silver specimen, and those that have been advertised or listed from time to time have been casts. The following corpus represents all the original (struck) medals that I have been able to record, either from personal knowledge or from sale catalogue listings. The first six medals in the list are struck Simon originals, whose present locations are known. The last eight entries are gold medals, which I assume to be Simon strikings, even though they are not illustrated in the sale catalogues. I base this premise on their descriptions, prices, and references. It is unfortunate that not one of these eight can be definitely linked to Nos.3-6, although in my opinion Nos.3-6 are probably included among them. I estimate that there are only about four to six Simon gold medals now in existence, in addition to the two die trials in copper and lead. The key to the plates provides further details on the five illustrated examples. Once again it is evident that original Simon/Cromwell medals are poorly represented in the major public collections, outside the British Museum.

1. Copper, British Museum (Pl.1,4).
2. Lead, British Museum (Pl.1,5). Others reported in lead are probably casts, such as that at the University of Leyden (Henfrey noted it as a bad copy), Sotheby 25 March 1874 (lot 34) in pewter (Henfrey noted that it was corroded and rubbed), and one in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, which is poor.
3. Gold, Lessen collection (Pl.1,1), ex Morrison.

4. Gold, Hunter collection, University of Glasgow, 98.04gr., from William Hunter.
5. Gold, British Museum (Pl.1,2), ex Edward Hawkins.
6. Gold, O.F.Parsons collection (Pl.1,3), ex Murdoch, etc.
7. Gold, Hans Sloane collection, reported by Vertue.
8. Gold, Richard Mead sale 18 February 1755 (lot 45), 100gr., sold to Mr Waye for £1.19s.
9. Gold, James West sale 1773 (lot 62), sold to Snelling for £15, undoubtedly ex Earl of Oxford sale March 1741 (lot 160), 99gr., sold to West for £7.
10. Gold, Thomas Thomas sale 27 February 1844 (lot 465), 96gr., sold to Cureton for £5.2s.6d; Baron Bolland sale 21 April 1841 (lot 534) £10.11s. to Thomas (Bolland lot 535 sold to Nugent for £2.13s.10d. was, 1 feel, a Dutch medal); A.Edmonds sale 25 March 1834 (lot 125) £16; M.M.Sykes sale 8 March 1824 (lot 278) £19.5s.; S.Tyssen sale 23 May 1802 (lot 2868) £15.15s. Or this Thomas pedigree might be simply the Hollis specimen, which also went to Thomas; see the next entry.
11. Gold, Thomas Thomas sale 28 February 1844 (lot 563) sold to Till for £5.2s.6d.; Thomas Hollis sale 1817 (lot 488) £20.10s. Or this Thomas pedigree might be the Bolland, etc. specimen, which also went to Hollis; see the previous entry.
12. Gold, British Museum duplicates sale, Sotheby 10 February 1876 (lot 30) with loop, sold to Rollin & Feuardent for £3.5s.; ex Edward Hawkins.
13. Gold, British Museum duplicates sale, Sotheby 9 April 1878 (lot 155), 94gr. with loop, sold to Henfrey for £4.10s., ex Bank of England collection.
14. Gold, H.Montagu sale 24 May 1897 (lot 254), perhaps the later Murdoch specimen.

Cast Copies

The various cast copies are interesting. Some have very sharp features, some are tooled concoctions, and some are poorly made. The cast criteria are not the result of laboratory testing, such as the use of x-ray diffraction, but rather by simple visual and microscopic examination, looking for such characteristics as blurred designs and letters, metal blobs, and pits. The uniface iron example (Pl.1,6) is quite sharp, and one must admit that there is no background experience for examining an iron coin or medal for its manufacturing techniques. The two signed silver casts (Pl.2,7 and 8) are direct mould copies from original specimens, but the results differ from each other. The former is a fine sharp specimen, albeit with a cracked flan, and the latter is a weak specimen. The silver copies denoted as being by 'Stuart' (Pl.2,9,10,11) are very well made, undoubtedly casts from originals, for the style and details are those of Simon's work, and then heavily tooled or chased and polished. The Simon signature has disappeared. These three are enough alike to have originated from the same hand. The two gold casts (Pl.2,12 and 13) are not sharp examples, and they are very similar to each other. They would have been direct mould copies from an original medal. Finally, there are two gold shells (Pl.2,14 and 15). The first is an obverse only, and the second is a hollow joined obverse and reverse. These must be from the same hand, but it is not known how or why they were made. Possibly they were hammered out over a cast copy for some jewellery purpose. The gold is thin, but rigid, and they do not seem to have been casts. My guess is that most of these various copies were

made in the eighteenth century, but perhaps a few were made in the nineteenth.

Conclusions

In contrast to other Cromwell material the results of physical studies of this medal are simple and non-conflicting, in that the few struck specimens are perfect impressions and must be originals; there are no strange, struck examples, which could have implied restriking, nor are there extant dies; and the casts are of no importance. Also in contrast there is as yet no trace of written material, either contemporary or later, which could shed light on the origin and official nature of the medal. The rarity of the medals precludes the possibility of a general, large distribution, and it is more probable that they were given as gifts to a few selectively honoured individuals in the funeral procession; perhaps they were even instructed to wear them at that time. Alternatively, they could have been produced as official or private treaty commemorative medals to be given to those same people sometime after November 1658.

NOTES

For help, mainly in providing medals for study, I wish to thank Dr R.E. Ockenden (also for review of this paper), O.F.Parsons, R.A.G.Carson and the staff at the British Museum, and E.D.Ainspan (for review).

1. H.W.Henfrey, *Numismata Cromwelliana* (1877), pp.167-69.
2. M.Lessen, 'The Cromwell Lord General Medal by Simon', *BNJ* 49 (1979), 91.
3. In *Calendar of State Papers Domestic 1658-60*, 265, for 25 January 1659 there is an entry from the Council proceedings for £171.17s. paid to Thos.Simons for medals. This could have been a special payment for a specific work such as the funeral medal or just a periodic payment to his account but, if the latter, it does not seem to have been recorded as one of the credits to his major invoice (PRO, Mint 3/16), which has no relation to the funeral medal. So it could in fact be something very separate and distinct, and there is no other medallic work of Simon in that era except the funeral medal to which it could apply. Henfrey, p.219, noted two other general payments to Simon in the Pells Issue Book, No.93, of £200 on 7 December 1658, and £78.5s.8d. on 5 February 1659.
4. Christie's 4 November 1981 (lot 37) for a £1,500 payment of 5 November 1658, and R.Tangye, *The Cromwellian Collection* (1905), p.14 for the same £1,500 of 30 September 1658, this latter document in the Museum of London.
5. G.Van Loon, *Beschryuing der Nederlandsche Historipenningen* (1723), II, 435, for all three medals; F.Raguenet, *Historie d'Olivier Cromwel* (1691); G.Leti, *Vita di Oliviero Cromvele* (1692) and *La Vie d'Olivier Cromwel* (1694); J.Evelyn, *A Discourse of Medals* (1697).
6. *Mercurius Politicus*, 18-25 November, as published in *Cromwelliana* (1810), p.180, or Henfrey, gives much of the same information.

7. H. Walpole, *Anecdotes of Painting in England (and incidental notes on other arts collected by the late Mr George Vertue)*, fourth edition (1786), II, 286.

KEY TO PLATES

(Photography by the author unless otherwise noted. Scales are not precise).

1. (1x and 2x) Struck original, gold, with loop, 96.2gr., sg 18.9 (approximately), 21.5 x 19.7mm. Lessen collection; *NCirc* 1970, 156; Alfred Morrison, Christie's 23 July 1965 (lot 5) £75.
2. (2x) Struck original, gold, with loop and ring, 99.8gr., sg 18.9 (approximately). British Museum, ex Edward Hawkins (one of two he donated).
3. (2x) Struck original, gold, with loop, 94.8gr., sg 19.12 (approximately). O.F. Parsons collection, bought Baldwin 5 June 1947; Philip Spence sale, Sotheby 1 April 1947 (lot 350) £22. to Baldwin; Gentleman sale, Sotheby 5 June 1907 (lot 137) £9. to Weight; Murdoch sale, Sotheby 2 June 1904 (lot 154) £18.18s.
4. (2x) Struck original, copper, 45.22gr. British Museum.
5. (2x) Struck original, lead, 49.23gr. British Museum, ex Edward Hawkins.
6. (2x) Cast uniface copy, iron, 26.8gr., sg 7.4. Lessen collection; R.E. Ockenden collection; O. and R.C. Warner collections; Montagu sale, Sotheby 24 May 1897 (lot 257, part) £1.1s.
7. (2x) Cast copy, silver, 49.8gr., 21.4 x 19.9mm. Lessen collection; R.E. Ockenden collection; O. and R.C. Warner collections, bought Baldwin 1949.
8. (2x) Cast copy, silver, 50.6gr., 21.4 x 19.5mm. Lessen collection; R.E. Ockenden collection; O. and R.C. Warner collections, bought Baldwin.
9. (2x) Cast and chased 'Stuart' copy, silver, unsigned, 40.2gr., 21.1 x 19.2mm. Lessen collection; R.E. Ockenden collection; O. and R.C. Warner collections, bought Baldwin 1949.
10. (1x) Cast and chased 'Stuart' copy, silver, unsigned, *NCirc* 1978, 8427, misnumbered on the plate; Stucker sale, Bourgey 21 November 1977 (lot 70, part). Photo courtesy Spink & Son.
11. (1x) Cast and chased 'Stuart' copy, silver, unsigned. Photo courtesy Cyril Humphris.
12. (1x) Cast copy, gold, with loop and ring. *SCMB* 1962, M426. £10.10s. but not mentioned as a cast.
13. (2x) Cast copy, gold, with loop, 92.6gr., 21.5 x 19.6mm. Lessen collection; R.E. Ockenden collection; O. and R.C. Warner collections, bought Baldwin.
14. (2x) Copy, gold obverse shell (Hawkins, 434/83). 8.02gr. British Museum, ex Edward Hawkins.
15. (2x) Copy, gold, joined obverse and reverse shells (Hawkins, 434/83 var.), with loop, 49.7gr., 22.5 x 20.7mm. Lessen collection; R.E. Ockenden collection, bought Spink 1947; *NCirc* 1919, 72239, again February 1905 and October 1902, each time at £10.

PLATE 1



1 Gold (2x)

2 Gold (2x)

3 Gold (2x)



4 Copper (2x)



5 Lead (2x)



6 Iron (?) Cast (2x)

Original Struck Funeral Medals

PLATE 2



10 Silver Cast Chased (1x)



11 Silver Cast Chased (1x)

7 Silver Cast (2x)

8 Silver Cast (2x)

9 Silver Cast Chased (2x)



12 Gold Cast (1x)



13 Gold Cast (2x)



14 Gold Obverse Shell (2x)



15 Gold Shells Joined (2x)



Funeral Medal Copies, Mainly Casts