

## ROSE RYALS OF JAMES I, 1605–17

LORD STEWARTBY

COINS of James I and Charles I are frequently struck from dies with altered mintmarks. This is particularly true of gold coins and the larger silver, dies for which were often only in intermittent use and, being more expensive to make, could be reused, if still serviceable, in a later period with the old mark overpunched. A series that abundantly exemplifies this process is that of the rose ryals of the second coinage of James I. The complexity of the design of these large coins would have encouraged economy in the use of existing dies. Among 59 specimens in the sample examined, only five obverse and eleven reverse dies have been noted, although they are found with eleven different mintmarks. No systematic attempt has been made to trace all examples of this coinage, but those listed include all those in the British Museum, the National Museums of Scotland, the Ashmolean, Fitzwilliam and Hunterian Museums, and major private collections such as Lingford, Lockett, Schneider, etc. I am grateful to Dr Cook, Mr Holmes, Dr Mayhew, Dr Allen and Dr Bateson for information about specimens in the public collections and to Mr. Woodhead about those in the Schneider collection. I have not in general attempted to include other examples, which have passed through the saleroom in recent years, since some of them may be the same specimens as are listed here from earlier collections. I am, however, much indebted to Mr Nigel Davies for helpful comment and in particular for drawing my attention to four coins in Spink sales which are of die-combinations not otherwise noted and which have therefore been added to the lists.

The rose ryal of James I was the Stuart equivalent of the late Tudor sovereign. It first appears in the second coinage, introduced in 1604. The king is enthroned, with orb and sceptre, and a portcullis at his feet, within a tressure of small arcs pointed with trefoils. The inscription is IACOBVS.D'.G'.MAG'.BRIT'./FRAN'.ET.HIBER'.REX. On the reverse is the shield of Great Britain upon a Tudor rose, surrounded by the same legend as on Mary's and Elizabeth's sovereigns:

A.D(omi)NO'.FACTVM.EST.ISTVD.ET.EST.MLRAB'(ile).IN.OCVLIS.N(ost)RIS.

The verdicts of the pyx trials of the period record the respective sums tested of standard gold (23 ct 3½ gr), crown gold (22 ct.) and silver<sup>1</sup>. One piece was put in the pyx for every fifteen pounds of gold coined. The sum tested in each category was an aggregate of the different coins and does not therefore indicate the volume of output of any individual denomination. Nevertheless, there is a degree of correspondence between the numbers of surviving rose ryals and the pyx records for different mintmarks. Until 1612 the standard gold denominations tested consisted of rose ryals (30s.), spur ryals (15s.) and angels (10s.), although spur ryals are not listed for mintmark grapes and the entries for key and bell record angels only. Angelets (5s.) are first mentioned for mintmark tower. There are two clear discrepancies between the existence of rose ryals and the denominations listed for the pyx. The pyx for mintmark key only mentions angels, but three rose ryals with this mark are extant. The pyx for mintmark cinquefoil, with which two rose ryals are known, refers only to the spur ryal, angel and angelet, but since the amount tested is omitted the entry may have been incomplete in other respects. Also, the spur ryal is known with mintmark book even though it is not listed in the pyx. More positively, the pyx total for standard gold with mintmark rose is much the highest, as is the number of specimens of the rose ryal with this mark. Low survival of rose ryals coincides with low pyx totals in the cases of grapes, tun and book. For other marks the correspondence is less obvious: coronet's pyx total is much greater than that for mullet, tower or trefoil, but it has fewer survivors than any of the three. Conversely, mullet has the highest

<sup>1</sup> H. Symonds, 'The Mint-Marks and Denominations of the Coinage of James I as Disclosed by the Trials of the Pyx ...', *BNJ* IX (1912), 207–27.

number of examples after rose against a low pyx total. Some of these anomalies must be the result of fluctuation in the numbers of other denominations struck (particularly angels), but others are presumably due to the accident of survival, exaggerated by the small numbers involved.

In Table 1 the denominations are listed according to their original values, but these were increased by ten per cent in 1612. As a result the amounts of gold tested from 1613 onwards are not divisible by five shillings, but must be abated by one eleventh to provide amounts equivalent to those for 1606–12, thus: tower £6, trefoil £4, tun and book each £4 5s.

TABLE 1. Pyx trials of standard gold, 1606–17.

<i>Mintmark</i>	<i>Trial date</i>	<i>Standard gold tested</i>	<i>Denominations</i>	<i>Rose rvals Listed</i>
Rose	10.7.06	£23 10s.	30s., 15s., 10s.	17
Escallop	30.6.07	£15 5s.	30s., 15s., 10s.	9
Grapes	11.11.07	£4	30s., 10s.	3
Coronet	17.5.09	£12 5s.	30s., 15s., 10s.	4
Key	11.5.10	£2	10s.	3
Bell	9.5.11	£1 10s.	10s.	0
Mullet	22.5.12	£5 15s.	30s., 15s., 10s.	8
Tower	28.4.13	£6 12s.	30s., 15s., 10s., 5s.	6
Trefoil	20.10.13	£4 8s.	30s., 15s., 10s., 5s.	5
Cinquefoil	17.5.15	—	15s., 10s., 5s.	2
Tun	15.11.16	£4 13s. 6d.	30s., 10s., 5s.	1
Book	23.8.17	£4 13s. 6d.	30s., 10s., 5s.	1

### Obverse dies

All obverse dies except the last (E), which reads **BRI**, have the same inscription, with **BRIT**. Apart from the mintmark, the most useful features for identifying dies are the sceptre and the tressure of small arcs in relation to elements of the design, especially the tops of the pillars and the portcullis below the king's feet. Most of the specimens noted are either from die A, with four different marks, or die C, with five marks. Die D has only been noted in two combinations, and die E in one.

- A. Marks rose, escallop, grapes and tun. Sceptre points to right foot of X. A small spot by top of right chain of portcullis; left chain close to cusp.
- B. Marks rose, escallop and grapes. Sceptre points to stop after **REX**. Left chain of portcullis closer to cusp than right chain.
- C. Marks coronet, mullet, tower, trefoil and cinquefoil. Sceptre to left foot of X. Left and right chains of portcullis close to cusps.
- D. Mark key (over coronet). Sceptre to middle of X. Right chain closer to cusp than left chain.
- E. Mark book only. **BRI**. Coarse work. Portcullis tilted. Large 'teeth' in beaded circle.

### Reverse dies

All reverse dies except j (**OCV**) read **OCVLIS**. The simplest means of identifying dies is the relationship of the sepals of the rose to the letters of the inscription. Because of their greater number, reverse dies were less frequently altered than obverses. The fact that two dies (b and m) are noted here each from a single example is a reminder that other reverse dies, as yet unrecorded, may have been used.

- a. Mark rose only. Sepals point to **S** of first **EST** and to stop after **ET**.
- b. Mark rose only. Sepals to **E** of first **EST** and to **T** of **ET**.
- c. Mark rose only. Sepals to **E** of first **EST** and to stop after **ET**.
- d. Marks rose and escallop. Sepals to **E** of first **EST** and to **E** of **ET**. Low stop after **NRIS**.
- e. Marks escallop and grapes. Sepal points between **E** and **T** of **ET**; last sepal points to **S** of **OCVLIS**. Mark to right of Scottish arms.

- g. Mark coronet only. Sepals to second upright of **M** in **FACTVM** and to upright of **E** in **ET**.  
 f. Mark mullet only. Sepals to **E** of first **EST** and to middle of **E** in **ET**. Flaw lines on die from edge of shield.  
 h. Mark key (over coronet). Sepals to stop after **FACTVM** and to right side of **E** in **ET**.  
 m. Mark key (over coronet). Sepals to **M** of **FACTVM** and **B** of **MIRAB**.  
 j. Marks tower, trefoil and cinquefoil. **OCV**.  
 k. Marks tun (over another mark?) and book. Sepal to **D** of **ISTVD**. Cramped inscription (e.g. at **NRIS**).

## Die-Combinations

There follow a table and a list of the combinations of obverse and reverse dies (and their mintmarks), with the number of examples noted here of each. There could be some duplication in the entries but, if so, probably very little. Out of 59 coins listed, two obverse dies, **A** (24 coins) and **C** (25) account for nearly five times as many coins as the other three obverses, **B** (6), **D** (3) and **E** (1). Die **A** was the dominant obverse in 1605-7 (rose to grapes) and was still available to be revived at a very late stage in the series with mintmark tun (1615/16). The only intrusion into **A**'s use for the first three marks was by **B**. The other prolific obverse die, **C**, assumed the leading role from **A** with the advent of mintmark coronet and, in a manner not dissimilar to that of **A**, its currency of up to eight years (1607-15) was interrupted only by one short-lived die (**D** with mintmark key). Of the eleven reverse dies noted, **j** (13 coins), **e** (10) and **c** (9) score highest; of these, **c** is one of four with mintmark rose, **e** is found with both escallop and grapes (accounting for all the known specimens with the latter mark), while **j** is the sole die of all recorded coins with mintmarks tower, trefoil and cinquefoil. The other eight reverse dies are listed from only 27 coins. Apart from the fact that mintmark key is not recorded in the pyx, the three coins from dies **D/h** and **D/m** are of interest in that the key appears to be punched over coronet on both sides, but no example is known from any of the three dies with the original mark. Reverse **f**, with mullet over coronet, is also a die unrecorded in its unaltered state. When coronet was replaced, it was the other obverse die, **C**, already used with coronet, which was altered to mullet, and in due course **C** was again altered, successively, to tower, trefoil and cinquefoil, while **D** is not seen again. The last two dies, **E** and **k**, are of coarser work than their predecessors, and are probably by a different engraver. There is no obvious explanation for the extreme disparities in the output of different obverse and reverse dies other than the physical condition of the implements (not necessarily the die-face), which in some cases may have suffered damage at an early stage sufficient to prevent their continued use.

TABLE 2. Rose ryal die-combinations.

<i>Reverse Dies</i>	<i>Obverse Dies</i>					<i>Number of specimens noted</i>
	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>E</i>	
a	Rose					3
b	Rose					1
c	Rose					9
d	Rose					3
		Rose				1
	Escallop					1
		Escallop				1
e	Escallop					4
		Escallop				3
	Grapes					2
		Grapes				1
g			Coronet			4
h				Key		2
m				Key		1
f			Mullet			8
j			Tower			6
			Trefoil			5
			Cinquefoil			2
k	Tun					1
					Book	1
Totals	24	6	25	3	1	59

*Mm. rose, 1605–6.*

- A/a BM 1 (Brooke, *English Coins*, pl. XLIII, 6 = Grueber, *Handbook*, 538); Schneider 6 (ex Carter); Bridgewater 72.  
 A/b Parsons 63.  
 A/c Lingford 880; Ryan 359 ex Montagu ex Addington etc.; Drabble 165; BM 2 (ex Clarke-Thornhill); Ashmolean (Knight); Ashmolean (Christ Church); Fitzwilliam (Henderson 1933); Fitzwilliam (Young 1936); Hunterian (Coats 1171).  
 A/d Lockett 2071 ex Evans; Vaughan Morgan 63; NMS (ex Lindsay Carnegie).  
 B/d Spink sale 32 (30 Nov.–1 Dec. 1983), lot 320.

*Mm. escallop, 1606–7.*

- A/d Escallop over rose both sides. Cunningham 371.  
 A/e Escallop over rose on obv.; rev. unaltered. Lockett 2072; Lockett 3312 (ex Richardson ex Shepherd etc.); Talbot Ready 620; BM 4.  
 B/d Escallop over rose both sides. Ashmolean (Bodley).  
 B/e Escallop over escallop over rose on obv.; rev. unaltered. BM 3 (North, *EHG*, 75); Spink sale 22 (15–16 June 1982), lot 991; Spink sale 38 (10–11 Oct. 1984), lot 17.

*Mm. grapes, 1607.*

- A/e Grapes over escallop over rose on obv.; grapes over escallop on rev. Schneider 7 (ex Lockett 4108); BM 5.  
 B/e Grapes over escallop over rose on obv.; grapes over escallop on rev. Spink sale 4 (22 Feb. 1979), lot 788 (catalogued as mm. escallop).

*Mm. coronet, 1607–9.*

- C/g Unaltered dies. Schneider 8 (Glendining 14.4.1961); BM 6; Fitzwilliam; Hunterian (Hunter).

*Mm. key, 1609–10.*

- D/h Key over coronet both sides. Lockett 3313; BM 7.  
 D/m Key over coronet both sides. Lingford 885.

*Mm. bell, 1610–11: none struck.**Mm. mullet, 1611–12.*

- C/f Mullet over coronet both sides. Lockett 2073; Lingford 886; Schneider 9; BM 8; BM 9; Ashmolean (Gambier-Parry); Fitzwilliam (Smart 1930); Fitzwilliam (St John's).

*Mm. tower, 1612–13.*

- C/j Tower over mullet over coronet on obv.; rev. unaltered. Lockett 4400; Lingford 887; Schneider 10; BM10; BM 11; Fitzwilliam (Young).

*Mm. trefoil, 1613.*

- C/j Trefoil over tower over mullet over coronet on obv.; rev. trefoil over tower. Lockett 2074; Lingford 888; BM 12; BM 13; Fitzwilliam (Young).

*Mm. cinquefoil, 1613–15.*

- C/j Cinquefoil over trefoil over tower over mullet over coronet on obv.; cinquefoil over trefoil over tower on rev. Lockett 2075; Ryan 363.

*Mm. tun, 1615–16.*

- A/k Tun over grapes over escallop over rose on obv.; rev. unaltered? BM 14.

*Mm. book, 1616–17.*

- E/k Unaltered obv. (?); book over tun on rev. Lingford 889.