

SOME SCOTTISH CEREMONIAL COINS

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INTRODUCTION

In later medieval times special coins were only rarely struck for ceremonial purposes. When pieces were required for presentation, or offering, or alms, the current coin of the day was generally used. Pictorial and commemorative medals were a creation of the Renaissance, from which time pieces with non-monetary functions became gradually dissociated from the types and forms of coinage.

Until the appearance of medals in the sixteenth century, there are very few examples in the Scottish series of coins or coin-like pieces which can make any claim to have been struck for other than normal monetary purposes. In the following pages, four items which may come into this category are discussed. One, the James IV groat, is of that species which in fabric and design conforms with the ordinary currency of its day, but it can be associated with a particular occasion of almsgiving by documentary evidence. A second, the sovereign medallion of James III, is a heavy presentation piece, unlike any existing Scottish coins of the period but with coin-like types and inscriptions.¹ Another gold *piefort*, the James IV angel, is probably not a pattern for coinage and must be presumed to have been struck for some purpose unrelated to the ordinary currency. The last piece, the angel of Charles I, is an example of the survival of an archaic type of coin for a special royal ceremony.

I have not included *piefort* striking of ordinary coins, such as the *écu* of James V.² These are probably *pièces de plaisir*, specimen striking for the king or some senior mint official, like the *pieforts* of the Paris and other mints in the later middle ages. The *piefort* groat of James V in gold has provoked some discussion³ (Pl. XXXVI, 5). Dakers, who thought the piece 'probably a cast', pointed out that the monogram of the letters GK stamped behind the head was the mark of Gilbert Kirkwood, deacon in 1623-5 at the Kirk of Dalry, Ayrshire; the same mark occurs also on the Dalry Communion Cup. Under Burns's sequence of the groats of James V, the existence of the piece was hard to explain, but now that this order has been reversed⁴ the *piefort* can be seen as a special gold striking⁵ from one of the very earliest pairs of

¹ The inscription on this piece, *Moneta Nova* . . ., shows that the Latin term did not relate solely to current coin. The distinction of meaning in English between *coins* and *medals* is a modern one. As late as 1808, Pinkerton's book on coins (principally) was entitled *An Essay on Medals*.

² E. Burns, *The Coinage of Scotland* (3 vols., Edinburgh, 1887), fig. 737. Other works cited frequently hereafter by their author's name alone are R. W. Cochran-Patrick, *Records of the Coinage of Scotland* (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1876) and I. H. Stewart, *The Scottish Coinage* (London, 1955).

³ Burns, ii, 239 and fig. 725; C. H. Dakers, *P.S.A.S.*, LXXII (1938-9), 128.

⁴ Stewart, 76 ff. Mr Stevenson has suggested to me, and it seems probable, that the groats of S. type III (S. fig. 150) and the accompanying one-third groats (S. fig. 153) have no connection with Hochstetter; their natural position is last in the series, in which case my types III and IV should be transposed.

⁵ In Mr Stevenson's opinion there is no doubt that this, like the *piefort écu*, is a struck piece, in spite of some roughness of the surface. Mr Stevenson remarks that while the reversal of Burns's order for the groats and crowns makes good sense of the gold groat it rather takes away the point of the *piefort* crown.

dies of James V's first silver coinage. Presumably it later came into Kirkwood's possession, and he impressed it with his monogram as an owner's mark. Renaissance collectors sometimes stamped their coins in this way. Coins from the Este collection, for example, can still be identified by a small countermarked eagle – the armorial device of the family – which was, like Kirkwood's mark, stamped as unobtrusively as possible, often, in fact, behind the portrait, as on the gold groat.

Also omitted are the French jettons of Mary¹; purely medallic pieces²; and patterns for ordinary coinage, such as the ducat of 1539.³ None of these are properly within the scope of the title of this paper.

In the course of research into the background of the four pieces here considered in detail, it has been necessary to investigate certain topics not strictly germane to the points of identification or circumstance at issue. Nevertheless, in a broader sense these matters relate to the general context of the pieces under discussion, and I have therefore included without apology digressions on such subjects as the nature and fate of the Amiens Cathedral Treasure, early Renaissance coin portraiture, the representation of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century ships on coins, Maundy almsgiving and the royal practice of touching for the King's Evil.

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On Pl. XXXVI are illustrated the following coins:

1. James IV Maundy groat, National Museum of Antiquities, Edinburgh.
2. James IV Maundy groat, British Museum.
3. James IV, *piedfort* angel, British Museum.
4. James VI, obverse of devotional medallion, British Museum.
5. James V, gold *piedfort* striking from groat dies, N.M.A.
6. Charles I, angel by Briot, British Museum.
7. Charles I, pierced Briot angel, Hunterian Museum, University of Glasgow.
8. Charles I, hammered angel, British Museum.
9. Charles I, Scottish Coronation medal in gold, 1633. British Museum.
10. Edge of 9.

I am indebted to the authorities of the Museums concerned for the provision of plaster casts and permission to illustrate the coins here.

¹ Burns, ii, 344 ff.

² See R. W. Cochran-Patrick, *Catalogue of the Medals of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1884), cited hereafter as Cochran-Patrick, *Medals*.

³ Burns, fig. 750.

Plate XXXV compares the portrait of James III on the Trinity Altarpiece with that on the alloyed groat of c. 1470, and a panel painting of the same king with his last type of groat. The former painting is in the possession of Her Majesty the Queen, and is reproduced here with the authority of the Lord Chamberlain; the latter is in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery and is reproduced by permission of the Trustees.

I. THE AMIENS MEDALLION OF JAMES III

The earliest Scottish ceremonial coin of which we have record unfortunately no longer exists. It was apparently struck for James III in the 1470s for presentation to the shrine of St John the Baptist at Amiens.¹ It is generally known to modern numismatists through Cochran-Patrick's reference to it in his study of Scottish medals.² This reference is derived from the older work of Pinkerton,³ who in turn borrowed his description from that of the great seventeenth-century French antiquary, Charles du Fresne, Seigneur Du Cange.⁴ Since this description appears to be the ultimate source of all later references to the piece and is contained in a rare and not easily accessible work it seems worth citing the original passage from Du Cange in full:

'Je me persuade aussi que cette grande Medaille d'or, de deux pouces & un tiers de diametre, qui est attachée au couvercle du Reliquaire, est une marque de la devotion, sinon de Iacques troisième du nom Roy d'Escosse, du moins de quelque particulier, qui en auroit fait present. Elle a d'un costé à demy-relief un Roy sans barbe avec de longs cheveux, assis en un throsne Royal, tenant d'une main une épée nue, & de l'autre un Escu des Armes d'Escosse: au rond du pavillon qui couvre le thrône est écrit en lettres Gottiques IN MI DEFFEN, & au dessus du Pavillon VILLA BERWICI. A l'entour de la Medaille est cette inscription aussi en lettres Gottiques, MONETA NOVA IACOBI TERTII DEI GRATIA REGIS SCOTLÆ. De l'autre costé est l'image de Saint André Patron du Royaume d'Escosse, debout avec sa Croix, à l'entour sont ces mots SALVVM FAC POPVLVM TVVM DOMINE. Cette pièce pese environ six ou sept pistoles, & peut avoir seruy de monnoye.'

The context of this passage is a discussion⁵ of the reverence paid to the shrine of John the Baptist at Amiens, and to its famous relic, the supposedly authentic head of the Saint. The Scottish medallion is one of several presentations of the kind. 'Les presens que les Rois et les Princes ont fait à divers temps à la Chapelle où repose cette Sainte Relique, & au reliquaire dans lequel elle est enfermée, sont aussi des arguments infallibles de leur devotion.' Charles VII of France, on the example of Theodosius the Great, invoked the saint in his afflictions, and 'fit don à l'Eglise de plusieurs ornemens de veloux parsemez de fleurs de lys d'or . . . pour action de graces de la delivrance de la Normandie'. Louis XI showed 'l'estime qu'il faisoit de ses sacrées Reliques, par le present qu'il fit de son Ruby-balay enchassé en or,

¹ I am especially indebted to Mr Thompson, who first aroused my interest in the Amiens medallion, and has most generously allowed me to use notes and references which he had assembled.

² Cochran-Patrick, *Medals*, 2.

³ Pinkerton, J., *An Essay on Medals* (3rd edn., London, 1808), vol. ii, 142 f.

⁴ *Traité Historique du Chef de St. Jean Baptiste* (Paris, 1665), 127 f.

⁵ *op. cit.*, 126 ff.

qui estoit alors de grand prix, & qui est attaché au couvercle du Reliquaire [12th January 1464]. . . . Il donna outre cela douze cens écus d'or, pour estre employez au service divin.' Other presentations included 'une image de Saint Jean Baptiste d'argent doré' given by a 'Seigneur de Coucy' and another by a Duchess of Orleans.

The relic and its history had also been referred to by a local antiquary,¹ whose account covers much the same ground as Du Cange's but in less detail. Another writer to describe the reliquary and the rich gifts associated with it was Father Louis-François Daire a century later.² 'Cette Relique est enchâssée dans un cristal magnifique taillé en forme de tête, & accompagnée de deux médailles d'or données, l'une par Jacques III, Roi d'Ecosse, l'autre par le Cardinal de Crequy.' Daire mentions also the figures of the saint given by the Seigneur of Coucy and the Duchess of Orleans. He has an engraving of the crystal reliquary, very similar to an illustration in Du Cange's work.³ Unfortunately neither shows the lid of the reliquary, or the medallions.

Modern descriptions seem to look back principally to Du Cange. Baron's great history of the Cathedral includes the following passage,⁴ after what appears to be a recapitulation of the history of the relic based on Du Cange's *Traité*: 'Le Chef de Saint Jean était dans un plat d'or massif, d'un pied de diamètre, donné par Isabelle de Bavière, femme du roi Charles VI . . . couvert d'une disque d'or massif . . . ce couvercle précieux avait été donné le 9 avril 1392 par Jean, duc de Lencestre, fils de Richard,⁵ roi d'Angleterre . . . [here Baron mentions the balas ruby]. . . . Le reliquaire fut enrichi de beaucoup d'autres bijoux, et des dons immenses, tant en orfèvrerie qu'en ornements d'église, furent faits en l'honneur de cette sainte relique.'

Durand⁶ has collated the references to the reliquary in early inventories of the Cathedral's treasure. He describes the gifts from Louis XI as 'un rubis balai d'une très grande valeur, et d'une custode à couvercle en or, enfermée dans une autre en argent doré, pour renfermer le reliquaire'. Inventories of 1535 and 1551 include entries of the reliquary in accord with Du Cange's and Daire's illustrations. But Durand then writes, 'celui de 1667 ne parle pas du chef de Saint Jean, mais dans celui de 1687, ce n'est plus qu'une custode à couvercle de cuivre doré, de même dans celui de 1700. Il est probable que la custode d'or fut sacrifiée aux besoins pressants du chapitre pendant la période troublée de la fin du XVIe siècle.'

It is not exactly clear what is meant in the various accounts by the words *reliquaire*, *custode* and *couvercle*, or into which the medallions were set. Du Cange says the James III piece was attached 'au couvercle du Reliquaire'; Daire says the relic is in a magnificent crystal, 'accompagnée' by the two medallions. Baron says it was contained in a massive gold dish (presumably representing Salome's charger), a foot in diameter, covered with a massive gold 'disque' – apparently the 'couvercle

¹ de la Morlière, A., *Les Antiquitez, histoires, et choses plus remarquables de la ville d'Amiens* (Amiens, 1642), 84 ff.

² Daire, L.-F., *Histoire de la Ville d'Amiens* (Paris, 1757), vol. 2, 118 f.

³ Du Cange, *op. cit.*, 132.

⁴ Baron, J., *Description de l'église cathédrale Notre-Dame d'Amiens* (1900), 175 f.

⁵ Presumably John of Gaunt, son of Edward III, and uncle of Richard II, who was created Duke of Lancaster in 1362 and died in 1399.

⁶ Durand, G., *Monographie de l'église Cathédrale Notre-Dame d'Amiens* (*Mem. Soc. Antiq. Picardie*, 2 vols., 1901-3) ii, 619 f.

précieux' given by John of Lancaster; the 'reliquaire' (is this the 'plat d'or' or the 'couvercle' or both?) was enriched with many jewels.

It was a normal custom in the middle ages to solder coins, medalets, jewels and ornaments on to shrines of this kind. There is a fourteenth-century shrine in the Cathedral Treasury at Aachen which is in fact adorned with *chaises d'or* and other gold coins so attached. A documentary reference to the practice is to be found in the Inventory (1295) of the shrines of SS. Laurence and Ethelbert in St Paul's Cathedral, London,¹ which refers to 'Feretrum S. Laurentii . . . cum quatuor annulis aureis affixis, et uno mabodino,² et duobus obolis de Marchia aureis,³ similiter affixis cum coestis. . . . Item feretrum S. Athelberti . . . et affiguntur in una parte x oboli de marchia,³ et duo annuli auri.' Perhaps the medallions presented by James III and the Cardinal de Crequy were similarly soldered on to the shrine of St John the Baptist at Amiens; but both sides must have been visible to allow Du Cange's description. The weight of James III's medallion is only given approximately, so it was not necessarily detachable.

Durand refers to a gold *custode* (pyx-cover), enclosed in another of silver gilt, to contain the reliquary; between 1551 and 1687 the gold and silver gilt *custodes* seem to have been replaced by one of bronze-gilt. Perhaps the medallions and jewels such as the balas ruby were set in the *plat d'or* or in the *disque*, both of which might have been parts of what was elsewhere described as the *reliquaire* as opposed to its *custode*. At any rate the medallions and jewels were apparently seen by the seventeenth-century writers who describe them.

Pinkerton writes of the medallion in his 1808 edition⁴ that 'it was lost during the revolution, as I found on enquiry at Amiens'. There is little reason to doubt the truth of this information obtained first hand soon after the event. A modern guide to the Cathedral⁵ contains a list of the principal items of the *Trésor*, including 'Le Reliquaire du chef de saint Jean-Baptiste en argent doré, orné de pierres fines, exécuté par M. Poussielgue-Rusand, orfèvre à Paris, d'après les dessins de l'ancien reliquaire détruit à la Revolution'. On a recent visit to Amiens, I was unable to see the reliquary or the old designs, but M. l'Abbé Ed. Lenne and Mgr Duhamel were kind enough to search the treasure for me and their report is as follows: 'There is no medal to be found. The Reliquary consists of the gold dish and a cover in the middle of which is inset an enamelled portrait of the head of S.J. the Baptist.'⁶ Whatever the designs of the ancient reliquary showed, they presumably did not show the medallion of James III; the enamelled portrait probably represents the former crystal illustrated by Du Cange and Daire.

The exact setting of the medallion remains a mystery. It must have survived to be seen in the seventeenth century, but was apparently melted down at the end of the eighteenth century. No drawings or replica of it survive, so that we have to rely solely on Du Cange's verbal description.

¹ Dugdale, W., *Monasticon* (1673), iii, 312.

² A gold coin of, or copied from those of, the al' Moravid dynasty in Spain.

³ More generally, Moorish gold coins.

⁴ *op. cit.*, 143n.

⁵ Boinet, A., *La Cathédrale d'Amiens* (1931 edn.), 122 f.

⁶ Letter from M. l'Abbé, Amiens, 4th October 1962.

The accompanying sketch (fig. 1) indicates what the general appearance of the medallion may have been. For the purpose of this sketch the enthroned figure is based on the general design of French gold coins of the fourteenth century, and of Burgundian and English sovereigns of the 1480s and 1490s; the sword and shield held by the king are much as on the English noble. The pavilion is adapted from that on the *pavillon d'or* of Philip de Valois. 'Au dessus du Pavillon' I have taken to mean beneath the throne and the pavilion, and inscribed the mint-name on a scroll below the King's feet, where 'LONDON' appears on the sovereign groat of Henry VII¹; this seems a more probable place than beneath the top of the pavilion, where the motto (in a different language) is inscribed. The Gothic lettering is rendered in the style which occurs on Scottish coins of the 1470s, with the saltire stops between words normal at this period.



FIG. 1. Reconstruction sketch of the Amiens medallion of James III

The figure of St Andrew on the reverse presents greater problems of interpretation. It could be in the form which had been used on Scottish crowns of Robert III, James II and James III, with St Andrew stretched on his saltire cross²; but this would surely be described as 'sur sa croix'. More probably St Andrew 'avec sa croix' means a standing figure holding his cross in front. Such a representation of the saint is found on a Scottish crown of James IV,³ and in the painting of James III and his son on the Trinity altarpiece which perhaps inspired that coin-type.⁴ St Andrew is also shown in this way on the Burgundian *andriessgulden*, one of the best known gold coins of northern Europe at the time. I have accordingly chosen a form incorporating characteristics of that on the gold coins of Philip the Good, and of the pendant figure of the saint on the gold chain shown in the picture of James III (Pl. XXXV, 4), which is related to the portrait on the last type of groat issued by this king (Pl. XXXV, 3).

There can be little doubt as to the authenticity of the piece. Hill⁵ thought it 'surprisingly large, even for an exceptional coinage of those days' and wondered whether it was not one of the series produced by a goldsmith in Prague in the early

¹ *Brit. Num. J.*, xxx (1960-1), Pl. XX, 7.

² e.g. Stewart, figs. 70-71, 89, 90.

³ Stewart, fig. 135.

⁴ *Infra*, p. 263.

⁵ Hill, G. F., *Medals of the Renaissance* (Oxford 1920), 168.

seventeenth century, whose concoctions do include a number of pseudo-medallions based on the coin designs of various countries in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.¹

There is nothing, however, in the type or inscriptions which does not suit an authentic piece of the reign of James III. An enthroned figure of the king had long appeared on the obverse of the Scottish royal seal,² and an enthroned king beneath a canopy comprised the obverse type of many French gold coins from the mid-fourteenth century. The sword and shield held in the king's hands would be familiar from the English gold noble. St Andrew on his cross was the standard reverse type of the Scottish crown as struck by Robert III, James II, James III himself early in his reign, and subsequently James IV. The *Salvum Fac* motto had appeared on the reverse of the gold demies of James I and II, and on the crowns of James II and III; in the reign of James IV it was to be used on silver and billon coins as well.

In Mi Deffen is an early Scots-French form of the Scottish royal motto, 'In my defence God me defend'.³ *Villa Berwici* is one of the forms used on silver coins⁴ of the reign from the Berwick mint, which was only in Scottish hands from 1461 to 1482. The obverse inscription suggests the work of a continental designer. The formula *Moneta Nova* followed by the name and titles⁵ of the ruler, or by the name of the mint or area, was frequently used on coins of the Low Countries and the Rhineland from the later fourteenth century onwards. The word *nova* eventually became stereotyped and lost its meaning. The formula never occurs on English coins, and only in one case – that of a few dies for halfpence and farthings of David II which read *Moneta Regis David Scottorum* – is anything closely comparable found on Scottish coins.⁶ Gothic lettering is appropriate to the period; it was replaced on Scottish coins late in the reign of James IV by a Roman fount.

In spite of the term *Moneta*, it is probably wrong to look upon the piece as anything in the way of ordinary currency. The functions of current and ceremonial coins did not effectively become separated until the latter were largely taken over by medals during the Renaissance and the sixteenth century. In fifteenth-century Scotland, a medallion with coin-like types and inscriptions could presumably have been described as *moneta* as easily as a crown, a groat or a plack.

The Berwick mint struck no current gold coins for James III, and its use for the medallion, in preference to Edinburgh, suggests both the presence of the king in the town at the time when he ordered the piece to be made, and that it was required for a special purpose. Incidentally, the Berwick mint signature is a feature which

¹ Bernhart, Max, 'Judenmedaillen', *Archiv für Medaillen und Plaketten-Kunde*, Jhr. III, heft I, 115 ff.

² *B.M. Cat. of Seals*, iv, 1 ff. An elaborate Gothic throne type was used from James I onwards; a seated figure had also been used for the previous century.

³ In the form *In my Defens* it occurs above the royal arms on an altar-cloth of c. 1500 (Twining, *A History of the Crown Jewels of Europe*, Pl. 205c). ⁴ e.g. Burns fig. 561a.

⁵ One obverse die of David I reads *Rex Scocie*; some very rare sterlings of Alexander III's 1280 recoinage have *Escossie Rex*; otherwise all Scottish monarchs until the seventeenth century are described on their coins as *Rex Scotorum*, king of the people, not of the land. The use of *Scotiae* on the medallion is thus another indication of a foreign engraver.

⁶ S. fig. 43 for David II farthing; cf. also *Moneta Pauperum* on fifteenth-century copper farthings (S. figs. 100-1).

virtually establishes on its own the authentic and contemporary nature of the piece; no later fabricator is likely to have thought of putting on it a name other than Edinburgh.

That this piece was in fact a special product for a ceremonial purpose is further suggested both by its size, and by the circumstances of its history. It was a large medallion, $2\frac{1}{3}$ in. in diameter, weighing some 2 oz. Very large pieces were occasionally struck in the fifteenth century: multiples of the *dobla* in Spain,¹ French gold and silver medallions celebrating the expulsion of the English during the 1450s,² and a devotional medallion used by Edward IV of England.³

There is a tradition that James III caused the piece to be struck for presentation to the shrine at Amiens, but whether James ever took it in person is not certain. Pinkerton says that he sent it in 1478, when unable to visit the shrine himself. This is apparently correct.⁴ 'In 1475 James received a safe-conduct from Edward IV to go to Amiens to perform a pilgrimage. In 1478 another safe-conduct was granted. The pilgrimage, however, was not made, and this medal was probably sent by the king himself to testify his veneration for the head of St John the Baptist, traditionally preserved at Amiens.'⁵

We cannot tell whether the piece was struck, cast or engraved. Its description, and especially the *Moneta Nova* inscriptions, suggest something closer to a coin in appearance than to the work of a medallist or an engraver. It may well, therefore, have been a struck piece; in that case there might have been other striking made, of which there is no record.⁶

II. THE MAUNDY GROAT OF 1512

There is an unusual and extremely rare type of late groat of James IV, which clearly stands outside the regular coinage of the reign. Its obverse type is a bearded, facing portrait of the king, in armour, wearing an open crown,⁷ and surrounded by a tressure of nine arcs, pointed with small trefoils; in the first and fourth heraldic quarters of the reverse cross, which has pierced ends,⁸ is a five-pointed mullet, and

¹ Engel and Serrure, *Traité de Numismatique du Moyen Age* (Paris 1891-1905), vol. iii, 1341; a *cavalier d'or* of John II of Castile weighs 90 g. and has a diameter of 93 mm. (=20 *dobla*).

² Mazerolle, F., *Les Médailleurs Français du XVe Siècle au Milieu du XVIIe*, 1, vi-viii and II, 1 ff.; J. Babelon, *La Médaille en France* (1948) 9. The largest medallion measures 82 mm., the others from 52 mm. to 69 mm.

³ *Unum talentum auri ponderis quinque nobilium*: this piece, which no longer exists, is described in *Liber Regie Capelle*, ed. W. Ullmann, Henry Bradshaw Society, xcii (1961), 61. On one side was the *Ymago* of the Holy Trinity, on the other the Salutation. The inscription which is illustrated by the types is continuous from one face to the other: *Suscipe, Sancta Trinitas, hanc oblationem, quam offero in honore tuo/ Ac beate Marie et omnium Sanctorum tuorum*. An extant devotional medallion (Pl. XXXVI, 4) is that of James VI of Scotland (1603), of which an impression of the obverse die survives (Hawkins, E., *Medallic Illustrations of the History of Great Britain and Ireland*, ed. Grueber and Franks, (London, 1885), 17 and Pl. XIV, no. 2).

⁴ Tytler, *History of Scotland*, 1831, vol. iv, 247, says it was presented by James III to the shrine in 1477.

⁵ Hawkins, op. cit., 17.

⁶ e.g. the Lord High Treasurer's *Accounts*, 1st January 1503/4, mention 'ane chenze of gold, weyand thre unce, with Sanct Andro at it, giffin be the King to Maistres Margret, Inglis woman', and Mrs Murray has suggested the possibility that the St Andrew might have been portrayed on a medal - the coins are regularly called Scottish crowns.

⁷ Of the (Scottish) type with the central ornament a fleur-de-lys, which after the Union of the Crowns was used on all Scottish coins and is the readiest criterion for differentiating them from the otherwise similar English coins of James VI and Charles I (central ornament a cross).

⁸ A feature probably copied from groats of Henry VII, on which in the English series it first appears; it is introduced in Scotland on the light groats (S. type III) of James IV.

in the second and third a group of three pellets. The inscriptions are: obverse, crown IACOBVS: 4: DEI: GRA: REX: SCOTORV: reverse, trefoil EXVRG AT: DEV SzDISI PENT: I¹; and on the inner circle, VILL A: ED INBV RG: Iz:.

Two specimens are known, both from the same pair of dies. One is in the British Museum, from the Martin collection (Pl. XXXVI, 2). It was figured in Lindsay's *View of the Coinage of Scotland* and in *The Scottish Coinage*²; Burns, although claiming to illustrate this coin as fig. 698a in *The Coinage of Scotland*, actually pictures the other specimen which was in Wingate's collection³ at the time and later passed through the cabinets of Addington, Richardson and Murdoch, from whose sale⁴ it was acquired by the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland (Pl. XXXVI, 1).

The type is remarkable for the neat execution of the dies; and especially for the front-facing portrait – it is apparently at least an attempt at such – at a time when coin portraiture was a relative novelty outside Italy, and most examples of it were three-quarter face or full profile.

The beard is certainly a realistic feature. According to Hume Brown,⁵ James IV 'never cut his hair or his beard'. It is difficult to say to what extent the coin-portrait is representative of the king in other respects, since the scope for engraving a full-face likeness was limited by the low relief of the coin-die. Beards were often omitted from the symbolic coin-portraits of bearded medieval rulers, but were generally realistic when present.⁶ They are not necessarily accompanied by any very serious or effective attempt at a true portrayal of other facial features. The earliest coins of the young Alexander III, aged eight, when he succeeded his father Alexander II in 1249, are those with the short-cross type of reverse (replaced by a long cross in 1250⁷), on which an unbearded face appears as a deliberate change from that on the normal Alexander (II) short-cross sterlings, which usually show a beard prominently indicated by strokes or large dots on the jowl.⁸ But neither these, nor the unbearded heads of young Alexander III, really aspire to any very close sort of likeness.⁹

In the Scottish National Portrait Gallery is a painting that shows James IV beardless,¹⁰ which is possible since he was only fifteen years old at his accession. The picture is one of a series of the first five Jameses, done on panel by an unidentified artist in the sixteenth century, and probably in the earlier cases based on contemporary works now lost. There are, in fact, strong grounds for believing that the portrait of James III in the series¹¹ is based on the same contemporary original as the coin portrait on the last type of James III's groats¹² which were first issued about 1485¹³ (cf. Pl. XXXV, 3 and 4).

¹ *Exurgat Deus et dissipentur inimici eius* (Ps. 68, 1), a motto much used on Scottish coins from the gold unicorns of James III onwards.

² Lindsay, Pl. xxiii, 14; Stewart, Pl. ix, 126.

³ *Illustrations of the Coinage of Scotland* (Wingate's own collection), Pl. XXIII, 6.

⁴ Lot 151.

⁵ *History of Scotland* (1899), I, 306; James was somewhat ahead of fashion, for beards were not yet generally worn by European princes.

⁶ Except with an imitated or immobilised portrait – e.g. Henry III of England, who acceded at the age of nine.

⁷ Stewart, 16.

⁸ Stevenson, R. B. K., in *P.S.A.S.*, xciii (1959-60), 245.

⁹ *Pace Burns* (i, p. 119).

¹⁰ Reg. No. 685; *The Royal House of Stewart* (pub. Scottish National Portrait Gallery, 1958), Pl. 4.

¹¹ *ibid.*, Pl. 3; Reg. No. 684.

¹² Stewart group VI (Pl. viii, 107).

¹³ Ian Stewart, 'The Heavy Silver Coinage of James III and IV', *Brit. Num. J.*, xxvii (1954), 182 ff.

Three-quarter facing portraits on coins, as found in Germany, derive from paintings, whereas the Italian portraits, which are always in profile, derive from medallic art. The James III groat is certainly one of the earliest Renaissance portrait coins with the three-quarter facing bust.

A claim to be the first of all may be made for an earlier type of groat of the same king,¹ first struck about 1470,² on which the portrait, though rather small for precise definition, is certainly in a new realistic idiom far removed from the stylised and impersonal front-facing heads of the middle ages (Pl. XXXV, 2). It is not unlike the head of James III as depicted in a contemporary painting (Pl. XXXV, 1). The picture is on one panel of a folding altarpiece now on loan from the royal collection at Holyrood to the National Gallery of Scotland.³ It was originally painted as the altarpiece for the Collegiate Church of the Holy Trinity, Edinburgh, described in 1485 as the King's Chapel. It shows on the left panel James III of Scotland kneeling, being crowned by St Andrew, with his son, later King James IV, behind; on the right panel is his Queen, Margaret of Denmark, also kneeling and attended by a Saint (Canute of Denmark?). These are the earliest extant historical portraits relating to Scotland.⁴ In Pinkerton's words, 'Hardly can any kingdom in Europe boast of a more noble family picture of this early epoch; and it is in itself a convincing specimen of the attention of James III to the Arts.'⁵

Before he had worked out the chronology of James III's groats in detail, Burns wrote that the thistle-head and mullet groat, 'hitherto given to James V, in whose coinage it is entirely out of place, can only belong to James III, and must have been struck towards the end of his reign sometime after the painting . . .'. He thought the coin-portrait 'a wonderful reproduction of that on the picture – the set of the head, three-quarters to right – the style of crown – the royal mantle, although not executed with the same precision of detail as on the painting, which on a coin could not be expected, yet are all of the same general character'.⁶ Furthermore, the thistle-heads on the reverse of the groat were of the same form as those which decorate the tapestry behind the portrait of Queen Margaret. It would be easy to imagine that the portrait on the groat was inspired by this painting, as indeed I think one Scottish coin-type may quite possibly have been, namely the side-face figure of St Andrew holding his cross on the unique gold crown of James IV.⁷ However, the presence of Prince James is a powerful argument against a direct connection between the portraits. He was born on 17th March 1472/3, so that unless his figure has been subsequently added the painting must be dated several years after the introduction

¹ Stewart group II (fig. 103).

² Ian Stewart, 'The Attribution of the Thistle-Head and Mullet Groats', *Brit. Num. J.*, xxvii (1953), 65 ff.

³ Catalogue, pp. 106–7.

⁴ The principal literary references are: Laing, D., 'Historical Description of the Altar-piece, painted in the Reign of King James the Third of Scotland . . .', *P.S.A.S.* III (1862), 8 ff., and also Laing in *P.S.A.S.*, x (1875), 310 ff.; Destrée, J., *Hugo van der Goes* (Brussels and Paris, 1914), 89 ff.; Friedländer, M. J., *Die Altmiederländische Malerei*, iv (1926), 43 ff., and Panofsky, E., *Early Netherlandish Painting* (1953), I, 335 f. The portrait of James III is reproduced by Twining, op. cit., Pl. 205a, that of Margaret, Pl. 205b.

⁵ *History of Scotland*, I, 423.

⁶ *Catalogue of a Series of Coins and Medals Illustrative of Scottish Numismatics and History* (British Association, Glasgow, 1876), 23.

⁷ S. fig. 135. A comparable coin-type was that of the Burgundian *andriessgulden*.

of the groats. Burns must have seen this difficulty when he came to date the groats as early as *c.* 1470, for though in *The Coinage of Scotland* he again mentions the likeness of the thistle-heads on the reverse of the groats to those in the painting he does not use the similarity of the portraits to reinforce his attribution of the coins to James III.¹

There are perceptible differences in the portrayal of the king on the coins and on the altarpiece. Most obviously, the head in the painting is more nearly profile, with the nose breaking the contour of the king's left cheek, and the mantle as portrayed on the coins has generally – it varies from die to die – a distinct collar. Nevertheless, there are many points of correspondence, and it is possible that the portraits are indirectly related by derivation from a common source.

It can hardly be doubted that the groats of *c.* 1470 are meant to portray the king in a realistic way. The head on these coins is in complete contrast to anything which had been produced before in Scotland (or England). It is difficult to imagine a decision to place the king's portrait on his coinage unless some larger version, such as a painting, already existed to give rise to the idea. And even if not, it cannot have been conceived, designed and interpreted directly in the medium of a punch-made coin die: some kind of cartoon or sketch would have to have been prepared and approved before it could be translated into a suitable form for execution in miniature on metal punches.² Renaissance coin-portraits were often, if not always, based upon larger representations, and demonstrable instances are by no means confined to Scotland; there is also evidence that they often derive from the personal interest of the ruler. Ercole d'Este, Duke of Ferrara (1471-1505), was keenly interested in ancient coins, and his coin-portraits are, even more closely than those of his contemporary neighbours, executed in the classical idiom; on the reverse of one of his testoons is, apparently, a portrayal of one of the great lost (and never completed) works of art of the time, Leonardo da Vinci's equestrian statue of Francesco Sforza of Milan, the clay model for which Ercole endeavoured in 1501 to obtain after the French invasion.³ A more famous coin, the royal thaler of Maximilian I struck in 1509, was copied in detail from the painting by Bernhard Strigel of 1508.⁴

The James III groats indicate that there was a reasonably competent artist working in Scotland as early as 1470, who was capable of producing realistic portraits. He had probably done a painting of James at this time, and may also some years later have been the painter of the heads of James, his Queen and his son on the Trinity altarpiece, which on stylistic grounds is thought to be not earlier than about 1478.⁵ The three royal heads are rather wooden and lifeless in appearance by comparison with those of the standing saints: they can hardly be the work of the Flemish master who painted the rest of the panels.⁶

¹ Burns, ii, 118.

² The case is not comparable to the engraved dies (cut like gems) of distinguished Italian artists in the sixteenth century, such as Benvenuto Cellini and Leone Leoni (see Porteous, J., *Coins* (London, 1964), 90 f. and fig. 124).

³ Grierson, P., 'Ercole d'Este and Leonardo da Vinci's Equestrian Statue of Francesco Sforza' *Italian Studies*, xiv (1959), 40 ff. Porteous, op cit., also has a good illustration of the testoon (fig. 112).

⁴ Painting and thaler are illustrated together in *Der Tiroler Taler* (Innsbruck, 1963), Pl. 34.

⁵ The figure of Prince James also precludes an earlier date.

⁶ The painting is now generally attributed to Hugo van der Goes, who was active in Ghent in 1467-75, and died in Brussels in 1482.

With one possible exception, the groats of James III may be claimed to be the earliest portrait issues on this side of the Alps. Their rival, which could not have been struck more than a year earlier, is the gold ducat of Duke John II of Auvergne, as Lord of Dombes (1459–88); it is in the Italian style, with a profile portrait, imitated closely from the ducat of Francesco Sforza, which was struck for the first time in 1463. Duke John's ducat, however, is certainly later: he is shown wearing the collar of the order of St Michael, founded in 1469, to which he was the first nomination.

There are no three-quarter face (or profile) portraits of James IV on his coins; the bearded-face groat is the nearest thing to a true portrait coin of his reign, earlier silver bearing at first a continuation of the late three-quarter bust of James III, followed by a return to the stylised medieval facing head. It must have been struck during the last years of the reign for it has Roman lettering which replaced the Gothic fount on late varieties of gold and billon coins, and its dies apparently share some of the punches used for those of the late unicorns and placks.¹

Hitherto the bearded portrait groat has often been regarded as a pattern; at least there have been general doubts as to when and why such a coin was suddenly struck, with no other groats issued for many years before or afterwards. It is however, possible to explain this isolated issue and to date it within a week or two, by comparing two entries in the *Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland*.² The first³ is on a loose leaf (1511/12) amongst some entries which 'appear to be a sort of account of plate':

Item, the samyn tyme⁴ for the kingis distributionis in Cena Domini, deliverit to said Maister David and cunzeit in twelf penny grotis, ane of the gret silvir stopis contenand xj pundis 1½ unce, quhilk is put in the charge afor writin.

Secondly, in the coinage returns the following paragraph⁵ occurs at the head of the account rendered on 14th August 1512:

Item idem onerat se de jc xxvij li x s prouenientibus de conetacione unius amphore argenti ponderantis undecim libras vnam vnciam cum dimedia conetati in grossis duodecim denariorum de propriis domini regis per tempus compoti.

It transpires therefore that, late in March 1512 (new style), James IV gave one of his great silver wine jugs to David Scott, Master of the mint; it was coined into groats, of the value of one shilling each, and the total sum of £127 10s. od. represents 2,550 groats. If the weight of the vessel was exactly 11 lb. 1½ oz. as recorded in both accounts, the rate of minting must have been a little over 14½ groats to the ounce of silver, not allowing for any alloy or remedy; this gives an average weight of 32.8 gr. The weights of the surviving specimens, 31.5 gr. (British Museum) and 35.7 gr. (Edinburgh) accord well with this.

¹ Placks of class IV very closely correspond with the type IV groat, particularly in the initial marks crown/trefoil and the pellet stops. Because of the greater life of unicorn dies, the type IIIb unicorns, which are the earliest to have Roman letters both sides, may not have been made until a little later than this (they have star stops, cf. class V placks).

² A preliminary account of this identification, 'The Maundy of King James IV', is published in *The Stewarts*, xi, No. 3, 138 ff.

³ Vol. iv, Appendix v, 532.

⁴ The previous entry is dated 'the xxij day of Marche'.

⁵ Cochran-Patrick I, p. 51, No. xii.

We are told that the vessel came from the king's private possessions¹ and that he had it coined for distribution at Easter. Distribution of alms by the sovereign in person on Maundy Thursday, at a ceremony of washing of the feet of the poor which took place in the Early Church in commemoration of the Last Supper, has been the custom throughout Christendom since remote times.² In Scotland, James IV's royal predecessors had given alms since St Margaret,³ wife of Malcolm III (1058-93). James III had given Scottish pence⁴; James IV's wife, Margaret Tudor, whose dowry in 1503 included £10,000 in English money, distributed 'Ingls penneis' in 1504; but James himself provided 32 bedesmen with 32 Scottish twelpenny groats, a liberal gift indeed by the standards of his time.⁵

But by 1512, when groats had not been struck for many years, James's stock of silver coin must have run out. His order for coinage in 1512 thus constitutes the earliest known evidence for Maundy Money in the technical sense of coins struck specifically for distribution as Royal alms at Easter. The term has frequently been applied to the long series of silver fourpences, threepences, twopences and pennies from Charles II's reign; but certainly until the late eighteenth century,⁶ and on occasions until much later,⁷ these coins were also struck for normal currency. Claims have been advanced for certain pennies of Charles I having been struck as Maundy during the Civil War, but there is no positive evidence for this.⁸

III. THE PIEDFORT ANGEL (1513?)

Identification of the Maundy groat of James IV raises the question of the function of the *pedfort* angel (Pl. XXXVI, 3), which has sometimes been linked with the groat as a supposed pattern for a projected new coinage.⁹

The types of the piece, on the obverse the Archangel Michael killing the Devil in the symbolic form of a dragon, and on the reverse a three-masted ship, are reproduced from those of the English angel,¹⁰ introduced by Edward IV. The inscriptions

¹ So did much or most of the gold for James IV's unicorn coinage, which was struck from melted down links of the great royal chain, *ibid.* 51 ff., Nos. XII, XIII, XVII, XVIII).

² Farquhar, H., 'Royal Charities: The Maundy', *Brit. Num. J.*, xvi (1921-2), 195 ff.; *The Royal Maundy* (Royal Almonry Office, 1952).

³ Turgot's *Life of St Margaret of Scotland*, trans. W. Forbes-Leith (1886), 61.

⁴ *Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland*, vol. 1, 71.

⁵ Farquhar, *loc. cit.*, 200 f.

⁶ Only pennies were distributed with the Maundy for a long while. The first record of the inclusion of the larger coins is in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 15th April 1731, which states that George II gave 'leather bags with one-penny, two-penny, three-penny, and four-penny pieces of silver and shillings to each, about £4 in value'. Mr H. A. Seaby thinks the larger pieces ceased to be struck except for Maundy purposes 'sometime in the reign of George III' (*The English Silver Coinage, 1649-1949*, 129).

⁷ e.g. 1838 twopences struck for use in the Colonies; the ordinary threepences of Victoria; and threepences of William IV struck for the West Indies. Also, many more Maundy coins were apparently struck, but before the reign of George VI, than were needed for the ceremony alone.

⁸ Farquhar, H., in *Brit. Num. J.*, xix (1927-8), 121 ff.

⁹ e.g. Burns, ii, 194 f.; Grueber, H. A., *Handbook of the Coins and Medals of Great Britain and Ireland in the British Museum* (1899), 179; Lindsay, *op. cit.*, 141; Wingate, *op. cit.*, 78, deemed it 'rather a medal than a coin'.

¹⁰ James may have been familiar with the English angel anyway, but especially so if much of Margaret Tudor's £10,000 dowry in 1503 came in coin (Hume Brown, *History of Scotland*, i, 315). Whereas James III and his Queen had distributed Maundy alms in Scottish pence, the 'Ingls penneis' given by Margaret in 1504 (*Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland*, i, 71, and ii, 259) may have formed part of the first instalment of the dowry, which was paid in the previous September (Farquhar, H., *Brit. Num. J.*, xvi (1921-2), 200).

are IACOBUS 4 DEI GRA REX SCOTORVM and SALVATOR IN HOC SIGNO VICISTI, in bold Roman letters, interspersed with ornamental star stops and with a thistle at the end on the reverse. The appearance of the piece, of which the only specimen is in the British Museum, was for long little known, largely because Burns, though referring to it in his text as fig. 699a, has no representation of it on his plates. Lindsay figured it by means of a line engraving,¹ but it has only recently been illustrated photographically.²

It can probably be dated with some precision. A significant epigraphical detail which characterises the last placks of James IV is the form of the letter G. The normal type of G in the Roman fount, which replaced the Gothic late in the reign,³ is rounded and curly. But on the billon placks of James V, a large square-fronted form of G occurs, and this style is found only on the very latest sub-variety of James IV's placks.⁴ The appearance of this G on the *piedfort* angel, therefore, argues for its having been produced at a very late date in the reign of James IV, who perished at Flodden on 9th September 1513.

Why James should have had a piece of this kind struck at that stage is difficult to understand. The Scottish angel does not seem to be a pattern for a new coinage, and there is no evidence that James was planning to replace the practical, handsome and established unicorn, even though it was lighter and rather less fine than the English angel. The unicorn, a coin of typically Scottish design, weighed 58.89 gr. and was 21 carats fine; the angel was $23\frac{7}{8}$ carats fine and weighed 80 gr. Three Acts of Parliament⁵ dating from late in James III's reign and the beginning of James IV's contain repeated authorisations for a new gold coinage on the English pattern – 'a fyne penny of gold be strikin to be of wecht and finace to the Rose noble'. It was to be current at 420d. (30 of the new fourteenpenny groats struck at 10 to the oz.) against 10s. of the English coin, giving a ratio between the face values of Scottish and English coin of $3\frac{1}{2}:1$. The weight of the rose noble was 120 gr. The Scottish noble never materialised; had it been struck, it would have given a gold:silver ratio of just under 11.8:1. Its fractions were ordered to be $\frac{2}{3}$ and $\frac{1}{3}$, i.e. 80 and 40 gr. and the equivalents of 20 and 10 of the new 14d. groats, whereas the English fractions were $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$, 60 and 30 gr. The $\frac{2}{3}$ Scottish piece would have been equivalent to the English angel, and Burns wondered whether the James IV *piedfort* was not a pattern for a coinage in fulfilment of the terms of the three earlier Acts.⁶ He noted however, that it was curious that the English angel types should have been adopted, since the module was that of the noble. If it was indeed a pattern

¹ op. cit., Pl. 13, No. 35.

² Stewart, Pl. X, fig. 136; and Thompson, J. D. A., 'Two Ships from Sixteenth-Century Coins', *Mariner's Mirror*, vol. 39, No. 1 (Feb. 1953), Pl. 4 (enlarged $\times 1\frac{1}{2}$).

³ In 1512, or perhaps 1511, since the Maundy groat corresponds in points of detail with very early, if not the earliest, billon placks which have Roman letters.

⁴ Stewart class Vc; Burns, fig. 703; see Burns, ii, 261. Mrs Murray (letter dated Cheltenham, 27th December 1965) has remarked that the evidence of the unicorns is less decisive as an indicator of the precise period of the use of the large square-fronted G, since it occurs on unicorn dies which may not be the last of James IV or the first of James V. However, unicorn dies were used spasmodically and do not form a continuous series like those for the billon placks.

⁵ Cochran-Patrick, i, 39, No. xv – 24th February 1483; p. 40, No. xvi – 26th May 1485; p. 46, No. 1, 17th October 1488.

⁶ Burns, ii, 194.

for a current coin, it seems more likely that it would have been the vehicle for putting converted fine English gold coins into circulation, alongside the less fine unicorns, than that it should have replaced them.¹

James IV's *piedfort* weighs 491 gr. and like the *piedfort* angel of Edward VI of England, which weighs 472 $\frac{3}{4}$ gr. and was surely meant to weigh an ounce, has been called a six-angel piece. But probably neither piece was designed to be an accurate multiple of the normal current coin; rather, like the Roman medallions of the later Empire which are often referred to as multiples of the *solidus*, but are, strictly speaking, fractions of the Roman pound, they were looked upon as related to the standard unit of weight, e.g. one twelfth of the pound troy.

It seems more likely that the angel of James IV is a ceremonial coin than a pattern for currency. After the reign of Henry VIII, the English angel was primarily used for the royal practice of touching for the King's Evil; even from the reign of Henry VII the number of surviving angels, punch-holed to take a ribbon for suspension, is sufficient to suggest that this function was already an important one. Miss Farquhar even suggested that on the angels of Henry VII the use of two mottoes was originally designed to differentiate the functions – *Jesus autem transiens per medium illorum ibat*, as on the old nobles, for ordinary currency, and *Per Crucem tuam salva nos, Christe Redemptor* on angels for touching.² She had only seen holed angels of Henry VII with the latter motto. The motto on James IV's angel, *Salvator, in hoc signo vicisti*, an oblique reference to the Vision of Constantine the Great, also invokes salvation through the cross.

James IV's angel may have been produced on the eve of his abortive invasion of England in 1513. Though the evidence is against any supposition that he might have planned an issue of angels for touching, a digression on the position of Scottish kings in relation to this ceremony may be justified in view of the discussion of Charles I's touching in Scotland in 1633 which appears below.

The precise origins of royal touching are a little obscure, but the earliest record is of Robert the Pious, King of France from 996 to 1031, and it is known that his successors, Philip I and Louis VI, touched for scrofula.³ It appears that Edward the Confessor imported the custom into England from Normandy,⁴ but no definite evidence is forthcoming before Edward I, amongst whose Household Accounts are repeated references to large numbers of persons sick and cured of the King's Evil who received one penny each. In succeeding reigns, those of Edward II, Edward III and others, there are sufficient recorded instances to suggest a continuity of the practice of touching in England from the time of Edward I and probably earlier.⁵

At this time, the penny or other coin was given to sustain the patient until his or her recovery, but by the reign of Henry VII, when the gift had greatly increased in value, the King presented a gold angel, pierced and hung by a ribbon round the

¹ It seems possible that the gold crown of James IV may have been introduced for a special purpose, such as perhaps the recoinage of French *écus*, of which 3,696 were converted by the Edinburgh mint in 1504-6 and 5,057 $\frac{1}{2}$ in 1506-7 (Cochran-Patrick, I, 52, Nos. XIV and XV). Against this, however, Mrs Murray has kindly pointed out to me that the profit accruing from the conversion of French crowns is very large and more easily explicable if they were turned into unicorns which were overvalued against other contemporary gold coins.

² Farquhar, H., *Brit. Num. J.*, XII (1916), 70 f.

³ Crawford, R., *The King's Evil*, 12 ff.

⁴ Farquhar, H., *Brit. Num. J.*, XII (1916), 43.

⁵ *ibid.*, 56.

neck: this was to be kept by the sick person as a talisman until recovery, and thereafter usually treasured and often still worn as a charm. Henry VII, who first drew up a formal healing service,¹ was probably also the originator of giving a gold piece to the scrofulous suppliants, for the familiarly pierced angels are not in evidence from earlier reigns, although Edward IV instituted the denomination in 1465.

However, there is no evidence to suggest that any sovereign, except of England or of France, claimed the power of healing the King's Evil by touch. Indeed James VI, when he became king of England, desired 'not to touch for scrofula, not wishing to arrogate vainly to himself such virtue and divinity as to be able to cure diseases by touch alone'.² 'However he will have the full ceremony, so as not to lose this prerogative, which belongs to the Kings of England as Kings of France.'³ His contemporary biographer Andrew Wilson wrote: 'He was King in understanding and was content to have his subjects ignorant in many things: as in curing the King's Evil which he knew a device to ingrandize the Vertue of Kings when miracles were in fashion, though he smiled at it in his own Reason, finding the strength of the Imagination a more powerful Agent in the Cure than the Plaisters his Chirurgions prescribed for the sore.'⁴

Touching was one of the few prerogatives of sovereignty available to royal exiles. Charles II gained much sympathy, both in exile and on return, by his energy in touching. His father is known to have ordered his mint master to strike angels in Edinburgh for touching in Scotland in 1633, of which it may be possible to identify surviving examples.⁵ The Stuart princes, James III, Charles III and Henry IX, continued the practice abroad, but through the authority they claimed not as Kings of Scotland but as Kings of England and thus of France.⁶

James IV never claimed the throne of England, and he can, therefore, be presumed never to have had the intention of striking an angel as a touch-piece.

Nor can the *piedfort* angel be reasonably considered as a commemorative medal. It does not allude directly to any event or achievement; and commemorative medals belong mostly to an earlier or to a later age. The most significant event of the time was the battle of Flodden, which was yet to come and proved to be a mortal disaster for the king.

The scriptural motto is not of any greater significance than the inscriptions of that kind which adorn most of the larger gold and silver coins of western Christendom in the later middle ages. The types are not such as would be appropriate to a devotional medallion of the same kind as those of Edward IV of England and James VI of Scotland on his accession to the English throne (Pl. XXXVI, 4).⁷

It is most probable, therefore, that the *piedfort* angel was intended, like the Amiens medallion of James III, as a presentation or offering piece, perhaps in connection with the king's plans for the English campaign. James was intending to invade England in face of the treaty of 1502, to which the Pope was a party, and

¹ *ibid.*, 77.

² *Roman Transcripts*, General Series, vol. 88, p. 9 (letter 8).

³ *Calendar of Venetian State Papers*, p. 44, June 1603, letter 69.

⁴ Quoted by Farquhar in *Brit. Num. J.*, xv (1919-20), 141.

⁵ See below, section IV.

⁶ *Brit. Num. J.*, xv (1919-20), 161 ff.; the claim to the French crown was abandoned by George III in 1801.

⁷ See above, section I, p. 261. n.3.

James's ally, the king of France, had called a council in opposition to the Pope. James was thus in need of religious backing. The allusion to Christ's victory in the reverse inscription, the wooden cross (*in hoc signo*) in place of the central mast of the ship, and the victory of the Archangel on the obverse, may have been combined to invoke moral support for the Scots and their king.

An alternative interpretation has been put forward by Mr Thompson,¹ who has suggested that there may be a play in the types on St Michael and the *Great Michael*, the largest ship then existing, and the pride of the Scottish Navy. Ordnance apart, she cost £30,000; after the disaster of Flodden she was sold to the French for 40,000 francs.² Mr Thompson writes of the ship as depicted on the reverse of James's angel: 'Although this vessel is unrealistic, a close examination reveals some interesting features. She is obviously a carvel-built carrack of late fifteenth-century type with high bow and sterncastles. The castles each have a row of typically sixteenth-century "horseshoe" gun-ports and on the forecastle there is a row of shields (or possibly guns) below these. All three masts have fighting tops, that at the main being full of javelins. The rudder is indicated, while a slight projection from the bow suggests a figurehead. . . . It would be wrong to assume that the vessel on the angel is intended to represent the *Great Michael*, but there are undoubtedly points of resemblance between it and the modern model of that ship made from contemporary evidence.³ . . . The *Great Michael* would of course be appropriate to a coin which bears the Archangel's effigy on the obverse.'

Either of these interpretations is possible, and Mr Thompson's more satisfactorily accounts for the otherwise somewhat surprising use by James of the standard type of the contemporary English gold coinage. Nevertheless, there may have been no such particular motives for this particular piece of type-copying: medieval coinage is full of examples of indiscriminate and often inappropriate imitation of types by allies and enemies alike.

It remains probable, however, simply on the grounds of the date and nature of the piece, that it was struck in the context of James IV's preparations for the invasion of England though if it could be as early as 1512 it could relate to negotiations with France early in that year. Its exact function, and the occasion for which it was made, must remain a problem which we do not possess the evidence to solve. With some certainty, however, we can say that it was not a pattern for ordinary coinage.

IV. A SCOTTISH TOUCH-PIECE OF 1633

Charles I's Scottish Coronation took place on 18th June 1633, and a few days later he performed a Touching ceremony at Holyrood. The latter is described by the contemporary historian, Lord Lyon Sir James Balfour of Denmylne and Kinnaid (1600-1657), in the following words⁴:

¹ *Mariner's Mirror*, vol. 39, 57.

³ Illustrated by F. C. Bowen, *From Carrack to Clipper*, Pl. 5.

⁴ *Historical Works* (London, 1825) ('published from the original manuscripts preserved in the Library of the Faculty of Advocates'), vol. II, 201. The passage is reproduced almost word for word, with acknowledgment to Balfour, by W. Guthrie, *A General History of Scotland* (London, 1767-8), vol. IX, 213. For a discussion, see Farquhar, H., 'Royal Charities, Part I', *Brit. Num. J.*, XII (1916), 113.

² Hume Brown, I, 344 f.

'The 24 of Junij, be St. Jhone Baptists day, his Maiesty went to his chapel royall in stait, and ther made a soleme offertorey, and therafter tuoched aboute 100 persons that wer troubled with the Kings eivell, putting about eurey one of ther neckes a pice of gold, (coyned for the purpos) hung at a whyte silk riband.'

It has recently been suggested by Mr Stevenson¹ that the actual type of gold coin struck for Charles I's visit to Edinburgh can be identified as the machine-struck angel (Pl. XXXVI, 6 and 7) bearing the initial B for Nicholas Briot, who was much concerned with the affairs of the Scottish mint at the time (1631-3).² This identification has subsequently been challenged by Mr Schneider in a study of the gold coinage of Charles I struck at the Tower of London.³ Since Mr Stevenson's original suggestion did not amount to an argument of his case, a rather fuller discussion of the problem may be appropriate.

Briot worked at the Tower mint on his special private coinages for two periods of some twelve months each, from November 1631 and July 1638. His coins of the earlier period are marked with a flower and of the later with an anchor, which was the current mintmark on the hammered coinage at that time. Briot's flower has been thought to be his version of the mintmark rose used on Tower hammered coins, but it does not coincide exactly in date with these, and is more probably a private mark.⁴

Of Briot's private Tower coinage of 1631-2 in gold, there exist unites with the initial B and an anemone or daisy, and half unites (double crowns) with the same marks; the gold crown has just the B, with no flower, and some half unites also (die-linked to the flower-marked coins) have only the initial.

At this period, Briot was not concerned with the Scottish silver and gold coinage, but was occupied in an extended dispute with the officials of the Scottish mint over his proposals for and execution of the current copper coinage in Edinburgh.⁵ On 6th April 1633 the king instructed Briot, who was temporarily in London, to make medals for his Scottish coronation and to prepare to transport his tools and presses to Edinburgh.

On 31st May the Privy Council authorised Briot to strike 100 medals in gold and 2,000 in silver (Pl. XXXVI, 9). Mr Stevenson has written that he 'will have acted on the royal instruction given early in April';⁶ he may have prepared the design and cut some dies in advance, but it is unlikely that he would have anticipated the authority to strike the medals. There is certainly no question of the medals having been struck before Briot went to Scotland, for some very rare *piedfort* gold medals⁷

¹ Stevenson, R. B. K., 'The "Stirling" Turners of Charles I', *Brit. Num. J.*, xxix (1959), 128 ff. (cited as Stevenson); much of what follows is summarised from this paper (esp. pp. 132-3) which contains a full and well documented account of Briot's activities in Scotland.

² Brooke, G. C., *English Coins* (3rd (Whitton) edn., 1950), 204, overlooked Briot's activities in Scotland at this period. My own reference is inadequate (Stewart, 110).

³ Schneider, H., 'The Tower Gold of Charles I: Part IV, The Angels', *Brit. Num. J.*, xxx (1962), 316 ff.

⁴ Brooke, *op. cit.*, 203 f.; corrected by Schneider, *B.N.J.*, xxviii, 334.

⁵ Stevenson, 131 f.

⁶ Stevenson, 133.

⁷ Hawkins, E., *Medallic Illustrations of the History of Great Britain and Ireland, to the death of George II* (2 vols. ed. A. W. Franks and H. A. Grueber, London, 1885 and 3 vols. of plates 1904-11), 259, no. 59; the British Museum gold *piedfort* is illustrated on Pl. XXII, no. 1. Silver *piedfort* specimens also exist, some of which have the edge inscribed incongruously as on the gold. See also Cochran-Patrick, *Medals*, 18 ff.

have an inscription on the edge to say that they were struck in Edinburgh from Scottish gold — EX. AVRO. VT. IN. SCOTIA. REPERITVR. BRIOT. FECIT. EDINBVRGI. 1633 (Pl. XXXVI, 10).

There were a number of dies cut for the medals, some being used for strikings in both gold and silver.¹ Judging from the considerable number of surviving specimens, at least the full number of 2,000 silver medals ordered seem to have been struck and distributed. Balfour says that at the Coronation procession 'the pices of gold and silver coyned for that purpois wes flunge all the way as he went, by the Bishope of Murray, almoner for the tyme, among the people'.²

On 10th May Briot had further been instructed by the king to strike a number of angels 'for those whome we ar to touth who have the King's evill, with the lyk Impression and fyness as they ar which we vse for that purpois in our kingdome of England', for which he was to prepare engines and irons.³

Of Briot's angel, which Mr Stevenson proposes to associate with this occasion, two specimens are known. One (Pl. XXXVI, 6) in the British Museum,⁴ unpierced, weighs 64.9 gr., which is very close to the theoretical weight of Charles I's angel.⁵ The other, little known until published by Mr Schneider,⁶ is in the Hunterian Museum, Glasgow (Pl. XXXVI, 7); it has a hole rather smaller than that normal in Charles I angel touch-pieces.⁷ Both specimens are from the same pair of dies.

In general type, Briot's angel follows the traditional design, though it differs as much in treatment as do his current coins from their counterparts in the normal hammered series (Pl. XXXVI, 8). Artistically, its composition is more satisfactory; but in detail, the reverse is open to criticism. It is a happy trick to relieve the cramped treatment of the ship by extending it to the edge of the coin, and confining the legend to three-quarters of the circumference. But it is not nearly so accurate as the ship on the hammer-struck Tower angels.⁸ The hull is a mere sketch, without a proper quarter-deck or forecastle; the rigging is a hopeless muddle, lifts, braces, martnets, fore-backstay and forestay all being led in the wrong directions. 'Considering Briot's talent and his eye for detail,' writes Mr Thompson, 'this is a poor effort.' Briot was obviously a better artist than nautical draughtsman.

At first sight it would be natural to associate the only known type of Briot's angel with the king's visit to Scotland in 1633. Mr Schneider's objections, however, carry with them the authority of his intimate knowledge of the gold coinage of Charles I, and of his expert judgment. As expressed in his publication of the angel coinage, and in private correspondence,⁹ they can be summarised under the following heads:

Design. This is 'totally different' from the English. The type of Charles I's

¹ Easily observed variant details are: *Rex/R*; with or without diamond below date; large or small letters on reverse; position of cross on crown in relation to inscription; form of thistle; no initial after date; etc.

² *Historical Works*, iv, 403.

³ Stevenson, 133, where full references are given.

⁴ Brooke, *op. cit.*, Pl. xlv, 6; *Brit. Num. J.*, xii (1916), 135.

⁵ 64 $\frac{8}{16}$ gr. — 89 being struck from the pound troy.

⁶ *Brit. Num. J.*, xxx (1961), Pl. XVII.

⁷ Schneider, 304 f.

⁸ For comment on nautical design I am much indebted to Mr Thompson (letter dated Oxford, 7th May 1962).

⁹ Letters from Luxembourg, 27th April 1962, Antwerp, 24th May 1962, and Zurich, 26th May 1965.

normal angels is a natural development from that introduced for the later issues of Henry VII. Briot's is an interpretation in the style and taste of the earlier seventeenth century; it is in the French idiom, and, though less forceful than the original, it is 'an excellent artistic achievement'. Is this a hurriedly prepared design, of 'like impression' to the English? The model of the ship is a complete change, and 'the elaborate rigging is a real *tour de force*'.

Details. (i) Why is the lion of Scotland not in the first quarter of the royal arms? (ii) The lettering is indistinguishable from that used for Briot's private mill coinage at the Tower in 1631-2. (iii) Negatively (to counter Dr Kent's point¹), the mark B without flower is no disqualification for English origin, as indicated by the existence, noted above, of crowns and double crowns of undoubted Tower production with the initial only.

Function. There is no reason to dispute Miss Farquhar's belief that the Briot angel was a pattern.² Brooke inexplicably treated it as a current coin,³ but it is 'clearly a pattern' struck in preparation for the private mill coinage of 1631-2.⁴ That one of the specimens is holed is no special obstacle to this view. After 1642 anything available was used as a makeshift touch-piece. There is even a pattern double-crown which is pierced apparently for this purpose.⁵

Time. Though Briot almost certainly made punches for Tower hammered angels, he would not have anticipated the need for this coin in Scotland and so presumably would not have taken them with him. He was busy with routine work on the Scottish copper coinage and the coronation medals; and he probably left before the touching ceremony. Would he therefore have had time to innovate a 'strikingly different' angel design, and cut the dies with such 'painstaking care down to the last detail'?

Striking. The coin is 'suspiciously well struck'. Briot's work on the copper coinage had been criticised on technical grounds; and Briot's earliest main issue for Scotland, in 1636, was not very well produced.

Balfour. No special significance need be assigned to Balfour's remark about a piece of gold coined for the purpose: he does not refer to an angel of gold, and the remark was not made in a numismatic context. We have no reason to assume that he knew of Charles I's order to Briot to strike angels at Edinburgh. He may have known that coins used for touching were normally 'coined for the purpose'; he may also have known that a white silk ribbon was normally used. (This particular detail, in fact, does not happily accord with the small piercing in the Hunterian angel, which would have been better suited to a thin thread: however, this is a trivial point.)

Assumptions. To substantiate the identification, it is necessary to assume (a) that

¹ Quoted by Stevenson, 133.

² *Brit. Num. J.*, XII (1916), 135.

³ *op. cit.*, 212.

⁴ Without pressing the point, Mr Schneider mentions that Briot on one occasion exhibited his new 'ten shilling piece' at a banquet at the Tower and remarks that 'in contemporary literature the angel was sometimes referred to as "the ten shilling piece" whereas the portrait coin of the same value was usually called a double crown'.

⁵ Illustrated by Farquhar, *Brit. Num. J.*, XIII (1917), 99; see also Schneider in *Brit. Num. J.*, XXIX (1958), 105.

the order to coin angels was carried out; (b) that such a tiny issue has left survivors; and (c) that the coins under discussion are such survivors.

Mr Schneider's arguments may be answered point by point.

As regards the design, it is a matter of subjective judgment whether Briot's design conforms with the king's request for an angel of 'lyk Impression' to the English. It can certainly be argued that the phrase merely means 'of the same type'. No one would have expected Briot to copy the hammered angel in every detail. To the modern numismatist there are obvious differences, but these are differences of treatment only; the main elements of the design are preserved, and the general appearance is much the same.

The lion of Scotland might certainly have been in the first and fourth quarters of the arms displayed on the sail; but the earliest Scottish coins of James VI after the Union of the Crowns in 1603 displayed the English version of the royal arms (though this was soon corrected). Inconsistency also occurs, throughout the coinages of Charles I and Charles II for Scotland, in the usage of the formulae *Scotiae*, *Angliae* and *Magnae Britanniae* in the royal titles.¹ However, since Charles touched as King of England, the retention of the English arms could have been deliberate.

That the lettering on Briot's angel is apparently from punches used for his English coins, could be explained as a result of Briot having included these in his equipment to be taken to Scotland, as ordered by the king; it does not necessarily mean that the angel was struck at the Tower. In fact, some of the letter punches used for the dies of Briot's Scottish Coronation medals are not perceptibly different from those used for the angel. Furthermore, the lettering on the medals is of at least three sizes, medium for the obverse inscription, usually large for the circumscription on the reverse, and very small for the date of the event in the exergue, so that Briot must have taken several sets of letter punches with him.

The Coronation medals serve to dispel doubts on two other points: namely that the angel, if a Scottish piece, is technically better produced than Briot's other early products for Scotland would have led one to expect; and that the novelty and quality of the design do not suggest hurried work at a busy period. The medals are beautifully produced, and over two thousand of these were ordered to be struck; they are of entirely novel design, neatly executed, and interpreted in slightly different ways in points of detail on separate dies.

Though Balfour's testimony is incidental, and the issue must be decided on other grounds, the detail of his account of the Touching ceremony has an authentic tone; and somehow the effect of putting the words 'coyned for the purposis' in parentheses gives them an emphasis inappropriate to a casual embroidery of the narrative. Perhaps Balfour was not a numismatist,² but the frontispiece to the 1825 edition of his works shows a portrait of him with a book, a seal, coins and compasses, as evidence presumably of his literary, antiquarian, numismatic and mathematical

¹ Stewart, 109, for Briot's practice.

² His authority on an exact numismatic point (that bawbees were introduced by James V) is quoted by Burns, ii, 262.

interests. And he was certainly right that at the Coronation 'pieces of gold and silver coyned for that purpos' were distributed to the crowd. As Lord Lyon King of Arms, he was responsible for the details of ceremonial administration of Charles I's visit to Scotland. He would certainly have known of the instructions to Briot both for the Coronation medals and for touchpieces. His narrative of the Coronation and of the Touching ceremony sounds like the account of an eye-witness, which he was.

No doubt Briot's angel could be considered as a pattern or trial-piece in the absence of other evidence, though this also involves a number of assumptions – that Briot would have essayed a design, and the striking of it, for a type of coin which was never to be a part of his private Tower coinage; that two specimens of it survived, though the issue would probably have been tinier than that of the Scottish touchpieces; and that one of these patterns ended up (accidentally) with a hole in it, presumably for a Touching ceremony. Further, it implies negative assumptions with regard to the Scottish Touching ceremony: either that this issue has left no survivors, whereas a striking of patterns by Briot has left two, or that the issue never took place, in which case Charles I must unexpectedly have come by other angels in Scotland which were not to hand previously. It seems to me more satisfactory to accept Mr Stevenson's identification.

Postscript

At Abbotsford there is a portrait of James IV, young and beardless, wearing a chain round his neck with, as a pendant, a saint spearing a dragon. Some personal interest of the king in St. Michael may account both for this and for the adoption of the type of the *piedfort* angel.

In Professor Gordon Donaldson's *Scottish Kings*, London 1967, the figures of James III and his Queen on the Trinity altarpiece are illustrated as figs. 13 and 14; James IV's personal interest in the coinage is illustrated by some verses of Dunbar, quoted on p. 125, where "cunyouris" figure in a list of artists and craftsmen with whom the king liked to surround himself; and a woodcut of 1580 (fig. 34), showing a half-length figure of James VI with sword and laurel branch, bears a close resemblance to the portrait on the gold twenty pound pieces of 1575–6 (Stewart, fig. 186), another example of the affinity between numismatic and graphic art.



1



2



3



4

Portraits of James III: 1, Head from the Trinity College altarpiece. 2-3, Enlargement of the obverses of an alloyed groat, Stewart Group II c. 1470-80, and a silver groat, Stewart Group VI 1485-8. 4, Portrait in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery
 (1 and 4 National Galleries of Scotland, 2-3 National Museum of Antiquities. No. 1 is reproduced by gracious permission of Her Majesty the Queen.)



1-2, Maundy groat, James IV, 1512. 3, Gold *piedfort* angel, James IV, c. 1513. 4, Devotional medal or bezant, James I and VI, c. 1603. 5, *Piedfort* striking in gold from dies for James V groat, c. 1526. 6-7, Briot's angel, Charles I, 1633. 8, Normal angel, Charles I. 9-10, Scottish Coronation gold medal by Briot, Charles I, 1633, and inscription on its edge.

(1 and 5 *National Museum*; 2-4, 6, 8-10 *British Museum*; 7 *Hunterian Museum*)