

A Panoramic View of the World History in Coins: Notes on the NSI-NB Festive Show-and-Tell Event 2021

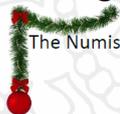
"I've seen things you people wouldn't believe... Attack ships on fire off the shoulder of Orion... I watched C-beams glitter in the dark near the Tannhäuser Gate. All those moments will be lost in time, like tears in rain..."

Replicant, "Blade Runner" (1982)

The NSI-NB festive night of 2021/22 took place on Friday 3rd December in the hybrid mode. Several members attended the event in person at the Shaw's Bridge Sport Club, whereas others, including Dublin and overseas members, joined in via Zoom, expertly hosted by Dr Ali Aravand. Despite the recency of our hybrid meetings, most members seemed to be well abreast with the digital format of the events, being particularly considerate towards the fellow members on the other side of the screen, making this hybrid habitat of our intellectual joy a norm for the current Society season and beyond.



NSI-NB SHOW-AND-TELL PRESENTATIONS 3RD DECEMBER 2021



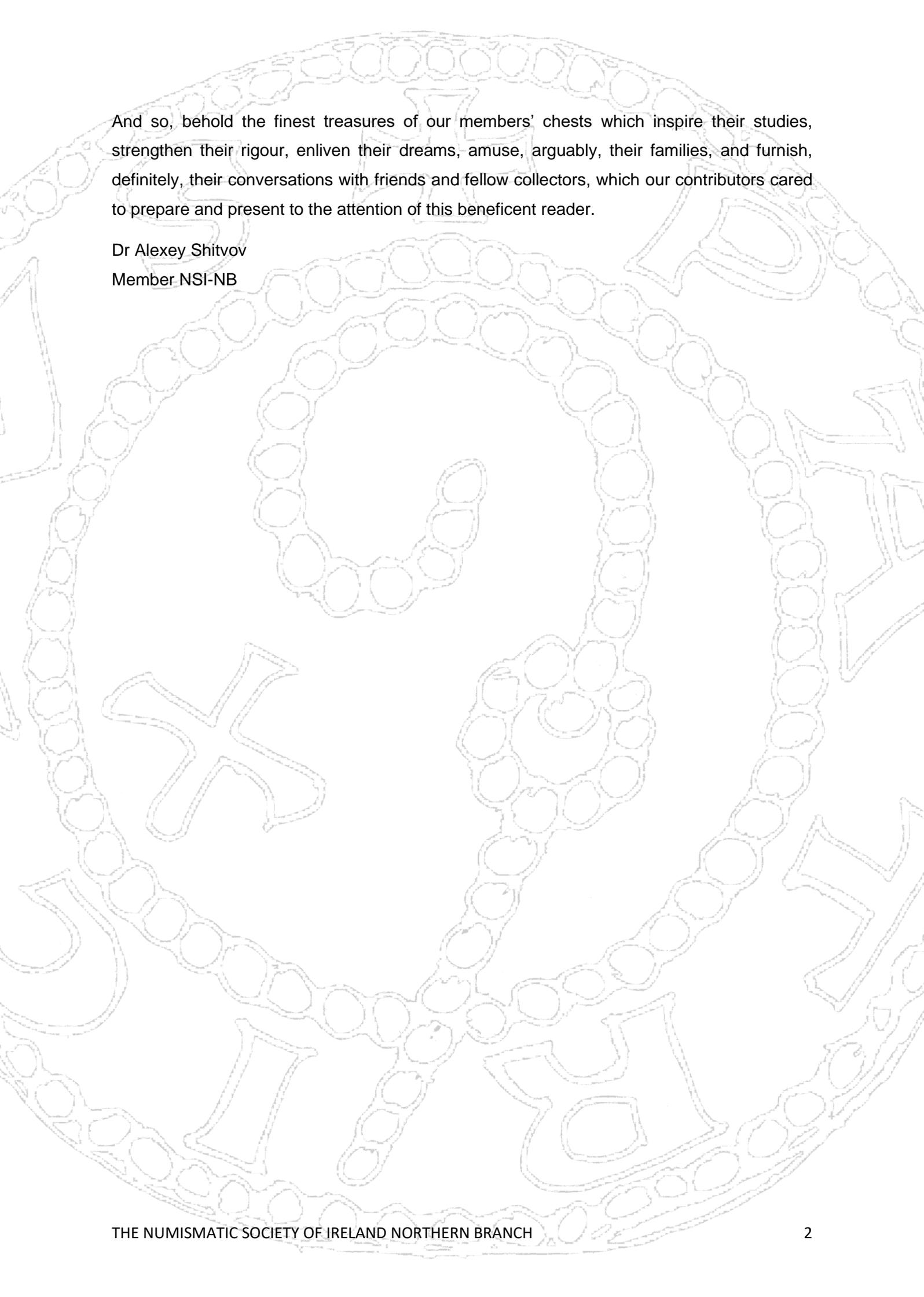
The Numismatic Society of Ireland Northern Branch
(founded 1963)



The main feature of the night was the Show-and-Tell relay of short members' talks on their favourite numismatic objects. The presented items spanned over two millennia of World coinage, from the coins of the Iberian Peninsula amalgamating elements of different

cultures, through medieval hammered coins of Ireland, Scotland, and England, up until the enigmatic gunmoney coinage of James II in Ireland, with two authority experts taking the floor in turn, physical and virtual, respectively.

Although it was not the first time for us to witness such a great diversity of members' interests and to see most intriguing examples from their collections, served alongside the "hot cereal" of research on the historical and social contexts of the past coinages, it never fails to amuse me, personally, and the rest of the group, I hope, how marvellous it is to have so much appreciation and support, as well as the technical platform, for a dedicated collector to make best experience of their hours with coins, books, and the Internet, dreaming of bringing to life some singular characters of the past, famous or obscured, whose deeds, grievances, and hopes had permanently imprinted into the rusty surface of the coins, tokens, and medals that the unsparing time brings to us in passing to give joy, and make fun of too, to our numismatic guardianship.



And so, behold the finest treasures of our members' chests which inspire their studies, strengthen their rigour, enliven their dreams, amuse, arguably, their families, and furnish, definitely, their conversations with friends and fellow collectors, which our contributors cared to prepare and present to the attention of this beneficent reader.

Dr Alexey Shitvov

Member NSI-NB

THE 'PEWTER GROAT' OF JAMES II 1689

Dr John Rainey, MBE

Member NSI-NB

During the preparation work for *IRISH GUNMONEY AND THE EMERGENCY ISSUES OF 1689 – 1691: A CORPUS AND DIE STUDY*, perhaps the most astonishing discovery involves the exceedingly rare 'Pewter Groat'. How Bente Withers managed to die link the reverse with June and July 1689 sixpence obverses is a mystery to me. Why would one even think of looking there? These pieces have long been associated with the Pewter Coinage struck nine to ten months later.

PEWTER COINAGE

Pewter is a high tin content white metal alloy. The finest pewter consists of 80% tin and 20% copper. Much of the pewter used for coinage came from eating utensils bought or confiscated from the public. The pewter used in the coins may well have been adulterated with lead.

PATTERN. This reverse design is not described in any proclamation. The II II on the reverse has been taken to signify a groat, 4 pence, but it may have some other meaning. As the obverse dies were later used for the actual issue of the first currency sixpences, it is possible that this was an unadopted design for the sixpence denomination. 21-22mm. 3.61gm.

1. IACOBVS • II • DEI • GRATIA Laureate draped bust with shoulder length hair left.
(June 6d obv.12 ⇒) DNW. 4 seen



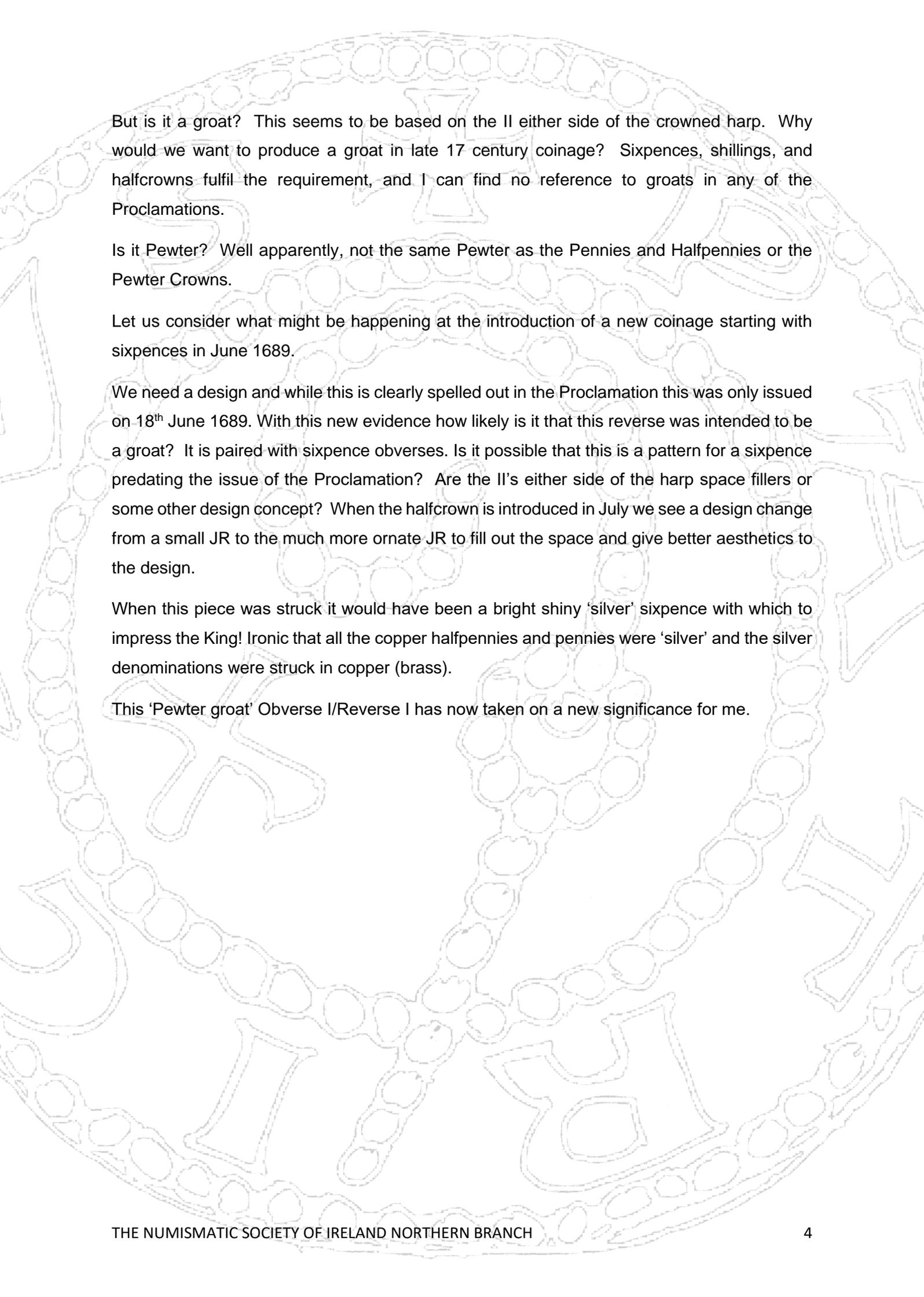
1. MAG • BR • FRA • ET • HIB • REX • 1689 • around crowned harp,
II - II at sides.
DNW. 4 seen

2. IACOBVS • II • DEI • GRAHIA Laureate draped bust with shoulder length hair left.
(July 6d obv.34 ⇒) BM. 1 seen. Black & white photo
Combinations: 1/1; 2/1.



This die linkage places these pieces at the head of the Gunmoney series. In the light of this new evidence the question must now be asked: 'What are these pieces?'

We can clearly see that they come at the beginning of the series and could conceivably predate the start of production. They are very few in numbers and there appears to be only one reverse die of this type. The Proclamation of the eighteenth day of June 1689 states 'the stamp or impression of cross-sceptres and a crown between J.R. with VI above etc.' as the design, which is the case. But it must be acknowledged that this 'groat' is similar in design to the pewter pennies and halfpennies and indeed the copper coinage which preceded the Gunmoney issue.



But is it a groat? This seems to be based on the II either side of the crowned harp. Why would we want to produce a groat in late 17 century coinage? Sixpences, shillings, and halfcrowns fulfil the requirement, and I can find no reference to groats in any of the Proclamations.

Is it Pewter? Well apparently, not the same Pewter as the Pennies and Halfpennies or the Pewter Crowns.

Let us consider what might be happening at the introduction of a new coinage starting with sixpences in June 1689.

We need a design and while this is clearly spelled out in the Proclamation this was only issued on 18th June 1689. With this new evidence how likely is it that this reverse was intended to be a groat? It is paired with sixpence obverses. Is it possible that this is a pattern for a sixpence predating the issue of the Proclamation? Are the II's either side of the harp space fillers or some other design concept? When the halfcrown is introduced in July we see a design change from a small JR to the much more ornate JR to fill out the space and give better aesthetics to the design.

When this piece was struck it would have been a bright shiny 'silver' sixpence with which to impress the King! Ironic that all the copper halfpennies and pennies were 'silver' and the silver denominations were struck in copper (brass).

This 'Pewter groat' Obverse I/Reverse I has now taken on a new significance for me.

JAMES II NOVEMBER 1689 SHILLING

Philip Timmins

Member NSI Dublin

Since I started collecting coins, I've always wished they could talk and tell us their secrets. Over the last few years, I've started to believe they can tell a very interesting story in a way.

First, the metallurgy of the coin. The elemental composition of Gunmoney is quite different than the regal coinages of the time both before and after James's campaign in Ireland. The English had adopted the North-Western European preference of high purity copper (98-99%) which came from Sweden. An option that James II did not have due to this supply coming through the Dutch republic.

But James did not have to worry about the intrinsic value of the coins. He chose a composition based on French jetons or tokens. It was a copper alloy based on a French recipe for latten.

Gunmoney		Regal coins of the period	
Copper (Cu)	86.59%	Copper (Cu)	99.51%
Zinc (Zn)	7.50%	Lead (Pb)	0.33%
Tin (Sn)	3.08%		
Lead (Pb)	2.10%		
Nickel (Ni)	0.17%		
Iron (Fe)	0.23%		
Antimony (Sb)	0.05%		

The 2% lead in Gunmoney gave much better flow characteristics than the high purity copper used on the regal coinages. The differing amount of zinc in the coins would change the appearance of the coins from dark brown (low zinc) to yellowish in colour (high zinc) of the coins. The latten recipe, plus the lead is often called Gun metal and was used to cast cannons. So, the term Gunmoney we use today for his coinage is no surprise!!

Second, the Iconography of the coin. The obverse is a standard depiction of James with his titles, but the reverse is very symbolic. First it has the inclusion of FRA in the titles. It must have been an affront to the French who were helping him, the second was the two sceptres in saltire behind or through a crown. This is believed to represent the joining of two kingdoms under one crown.

The third and most interesting is the way the coins were constructed. The edge milling applied to his coin was probably added using the parallel bar method. It must be remembered that each coin used 4 different dies: obverse; reverse; and two edge marking dies. The blanks

were rotated under pressure between a sliding and fixed die to add the appropriate pattern to the edge. There are a number of different edge patterns seen, this particular coin has an oblique edge milling. In some cases, the pitch and depth of the oblique milling can determine which Mint produced the coin. The parallel bar dies were used for a number of months giving conformity in the design over a period of time.

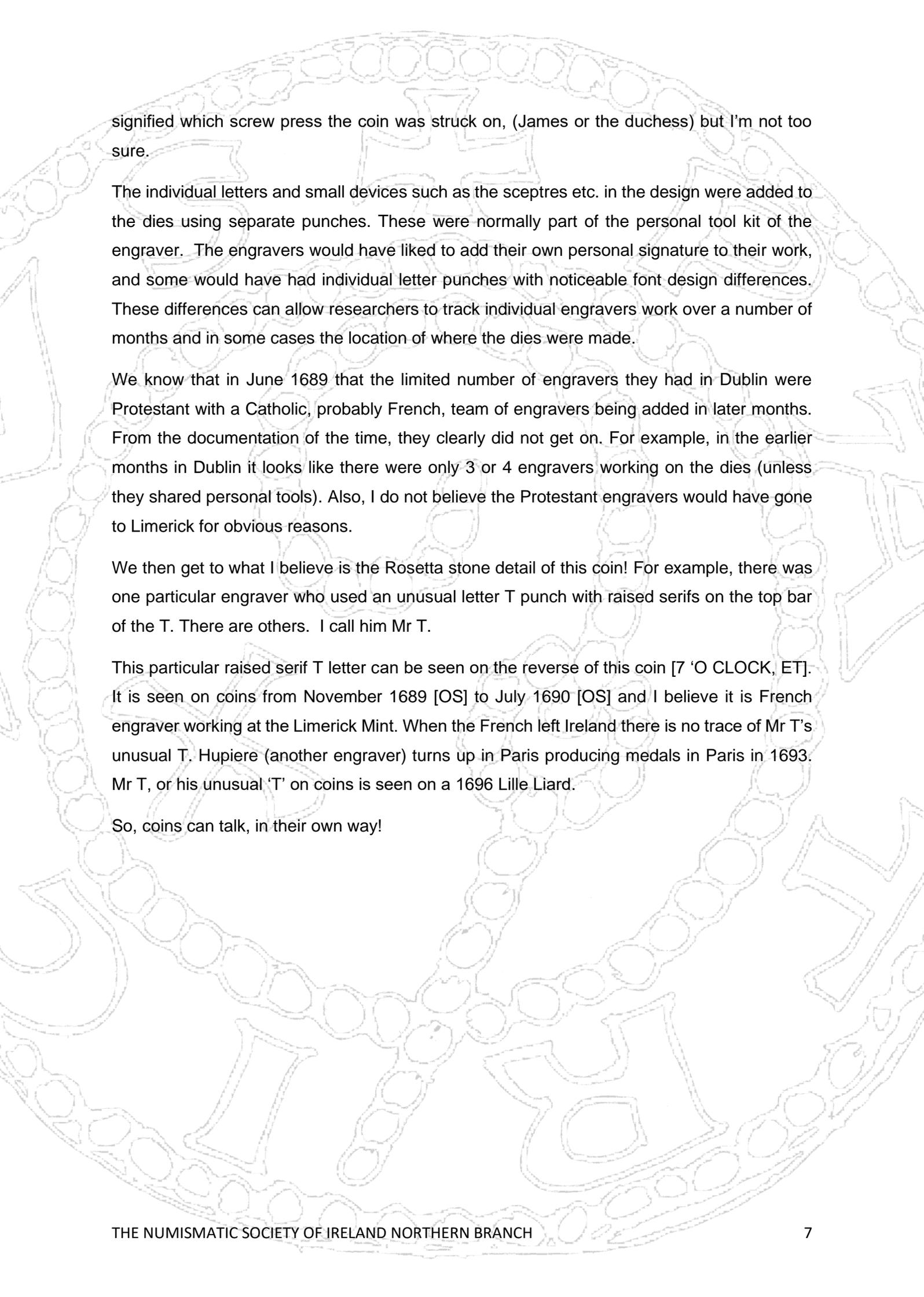


The decision by the Jacobite authorities to strike a monthly series of coins instead of a yearly set created a number of resource and material issues. We know from the contemporary documentation that skilled engravers at the Mints were in short supply. Based on the average number of different die pairs seen each month, the engravers needed to produce around two or three die pairs per day to maintain the required weekly output.

Orientation. The Gunmoney coinage is mostly seen with an orientation (die axis) of 12hr (0°), with some at 3hr (90°), 6hr (180°) and 9hr (270°). This would suggest the die block would probably have been square in shape at the bottom, with its upper end round and roughly the size of the coin to be struck. This particular coin's obv-rev orientation is 6hr (180°).

Due to the need for speed and conformity, the engraver would have used a number of different tools to complete the die (sinking) engraving. The more complex designs on the coin such as the effigy of James II and the reverse crown would have been added to the die with a hub press. The complex design punches could then be used for a number of months giving conformity in the design over a period of time. This method would also allow the engravers to make multiple dies efficiently eliminating the need to cut a whole new complex die designs each time.

The reverse crown hub punch used on this coin with a pearled top arch is seen on the large shilling from Nov. 89 (9r) to Mar. 90. Rice in 1990 said the pearled top arch on the crown



signified which screw press the coin was struck on, (James or the duchess) but I'm not too sure.

The individual letters and small devices such as the sceptres etc. in the design were added to the dies using separate punches. These were normally part of the personal tool kit of the engraver. The engravers would have liked to add their own personal signature to their work, and some would have had individual letter punches with noticeable font design differences. These differences can allow researchers to track individual engravers work over a number of months and in some cases the location of where the dies were made.

We know that in June 1689 that the limited number of engravers they had in Dublin were Protestant with a Catholic, probably French, team of engravers being added in later months. From the documentation of the time, they clearly did not get on. For example, in the earlier months in Dublin it looks like there were only 3 or 4 engravers working on the dies (unless they shared personal tools). Also, I do not believe the Protestant engravers would have gone to Limerick for obvious reasons.

We then get to what I believe is the Rosetta stone detail of this coin! For example, there was one particular engraver who used an unusual letter T punch with raised serifs on the top bar of the T. There are others. I call him Mr T.

This particular raised serif T letter can be seen on the reverse of this coin [7 'O CLOCK, ET]. It is seen on coins from November 1689 [OS] to July 1690 [OS] and I believe it is French engraver working at the Limerick Mint. When the French left Ireland there is no trace of Mr T's unusual T. Hupiere (another engraver) turns up in Paris producing medals in Paris in 1693. Mr T, or his unusual 'T' on coins is seen on a 1696 Lille Liard.

So, coins can talk, in their own way!

MEDIEVAL SCOTTISH COINS

Alan Dunlop

Member NSI-NB

The coins I am going to talk about have not been looked at for a long time. Not many Scottish coins have been seen in the NSI-NB members' presentations in recent years, so that it seemed appropriate to dust the cobwebs off the boxes and let my hammered Scots to meet the audience.

The native Scottish coins had appeared many centuries later than the Celtic coins in the south of England and a century after the first Irish coins. The emergence of the Scottish coinage is related to the Norman conquest of England and Wales, as many aristocracies took refuge in Scotland introducing new ways of administration and trade. From the beginning, the Scottish coins run parallel to the English coinage, both in weight, fineness, and design. David I (1124-1153) appeared to be the first king of Scots who minted coins. His grandson, William I, is the first character in my story.

William I 'The Lion', 1165-1214

William succeeded his older brother Malcolm IV to the throne of Scotland at twelve years of age. His Gaelic nickname was Garbh (the Rough?) and he came to be known as 'Lion' not for the valour, but for replacing the dragon on the arms of Scotland by a lion rampant. He was a contemporary of Henry II of England and spent time in Henry's court. When English princes Henry the Young and Richard, supported by the barons, raised the Great Revolt against their father in 1173, William quarrelled with Henry when he sided with the princes. Assisted by French Louis VII, he tried to invade England from the north, but was captured by English at the Battle of Alnwick, taken in chains to Newcastle, then Northampton, and then transferred to Falaise in Normandy. Henry subdued Scotland and William had to acknowledge Henry as his feudal overlord and agree to pay for the cost of the English army's occupation of Scotland by taxing the Scots at the cost of 40,000 Scottish Merks (£26,000). These conditions were acknowledged by signing the Treaty of Falaise in 1174. In 1175, William swore fealty to Henry II at York Castle. It was not until fifteen years later when the next King of England Richard I 'The Lionheart' terminated the Treaty of Falaise in 1189 at the cost of 10,000 Scottish Merks (£6,500) to fund his participation in the Third Crusade. William married Ermengarde de Beaumont, great granddaughter of Henry I, in 1186. The Scottish coins struck in his name were similar to English Short Cross pennies, although featuring stars in the quarters on the reverse. William's reign spanned those of Henry II, Richard I, and John, and he was succeeded by his son Alexander II.



Alexander III, 1249-1286

The next Scottish king on my list is Alexander III who succeeded his father Alexander II at the age of seven. He married Margaret of England, daughter of King Henry III of England and Eleanor of Provence and sister of Edward I of England, in 1251, when he was ten years old and she was eleven. The fourteen years of regency were contested by Walter Comyn, Earl Of Menteith, and Alan Durward, Justiciar of Scotia. Alexander laid claim to the Western Isles and eventually managed to gain control over them and Isle of Man and a cash payment under the Treaty of Perth of 1266. Alexander and Margaret had three children, all died young. He died in 1286 after a fall from his horse while riding during a dark stormy night to visit his wife because it was her birthday the next day, although 'he would visit not too creditably nuns, matrons or widows as the fancy seized him'. His granddaughter Margaret the Fair Maid of Norway was recognised as Heir Presumptive but died in 1290 on the journey to Scotland. The death of the Scotland's young heir created what came to be known as the Great Cause, which was the selection of new king by the council of peers of Scotland overseen by Edward I of England and Anthony Bek summoned to select the successor to the throne of Scotland amongst thirteen claimants. In 1292, this body decided in favour of John Balliol, whose claim was based on the primogeniture - inheritance through a line of firstborn sons.



SA3/5 Alexander III Penny



2nd Coinage 25 points on Reverse

S5056-58

John Balliol, 1292-1296

John Balliol was selected over Bruce and crowned by Bek at Scone on 30th November 1292 – St. Andrew’s Day. He was known derisively as ‘Toom Tabard’ (meaning "empty coat" – coat of arms). Edward manipulated John and undermined him at every opportunity. He treated Scotland as a vassal state, using the power of his army. Eventually, the Scots rebelled and set up a panel of Guardians and signed the Auld Alliance with France in 1295. In response, Edward invaded and defeated the Scots at Dunbar in 1296. After his defeat, John abdicated and the Arms of Scotland were formally torn from his surcoat, thus his nickname. He was imprisoned in the Tower of London and, eventually, allowed to retire to his estates in France in obscurity. The Crown of Scotland and the Seal of Scotland were taken from him. He was survived by his son Edward. Over the next few years, Scots raised rebellions against Edward I of England, particularly, in 1297 under William Wallace and Andrew Moray. The rebels would invoke the name of King John, on the grounds that his abdication had been under duress and therefore invalid.

SJB/1 John Baliol

Penny



2nd issue (Smooth)

20 Points on Reverse



S5071

SJB/1 John Baliol

Penny St. Andrews



1st Issue (Rough)

21 Points on Reverse



S5067

David II, 1329-1371

The last Scottish king in my talk is David II, who was the son of Robert the Bruce and Elizabeth de Burgh. Became king aged three, and at four was married to Joan of England, daughter of Edward II and Isabella of France. During David's minority Scotland was ruled by a series of Regents. In 1332, Edward Balliol attempted to seize the throne with the backing of Edward III but fled after defeat at battle of Annan. Following the English victory at the Battle of Halidon Hill in July 1333, David and his wife were sent to France for safety and protection of Philip VI of France. In 1346, under the terms of the Auld Alliance, David invaded England in the interests of the French, but after initial success he was wounded, and his army was soundly defeated at the Battle of Neville's Cross in 1346. David was captured and taken prisoner in the Tower of London. He was held for 11 years in England because Scotland could not raise the ransom. Eventually, the Scotland's nobility agreed to pay a 100,000 marks of ransom, at the rate of 10,000 marks a year, which was ratified by the Scottish Parliament at Scone in November 1357. Although David spent long periods in exile or captivity, he managed to ensure the survival of his kingdom and left the Scottish monarchy in a strong position. He was the last male of the House of Bruce succeeded by his nephew, Robert II of the House of Stewart. Coin-wise, David was responsible for issuing Scotland's first Groat. His pennies were similar to their English counterparts.



THE WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN

Randal Scott

Member NSI-NB

Before Roman expansion and conquest of the Mediterranean area Greek and Phoenician traders had established trading posts and cities all around the Mediterranean shore. These colonies stretched back to the 7th century BC, or even earlier in some cases. The coins described below are from a few of these cities in the Western Med.

GAUL

Massalia (Marseilles) was founded by Greek Phokaians about 600 BC and remained “Greek” until all Gaul was conquered by Caesar between 58 and 50 BC.



Map of South Gaul and a coin from Massalia



Greek Coinages, Gaul, **MASSALIA**, Tetrobol, c. 240-218/5, wretched head of Artemis right, wearing triple-pendant ear-ring and necklace, rev. lion walking right, MASSA above. (DNW).

SPAIN

Phoenician colonies were established in Spain possibly as far back as the 9th century BC. However, these were taken over by Carthaginians around 500 BC. Carthage was a colony from the Phoenician city of Tyre, established around 700 BC and gradually became independent of its mother city, dominating trade in the western Mediterranean. Carthage and Rome fought 3 wars from 264 BC to the final destruction of Carthage by Rome in 146 BC.



Map of Spain and coins from Sexi and Ebusus

IBERIA, Sexi. Late 3rd century BC. Æ Double (28mm, 22.09 g, 3h). Head of Melkart right; club over far shoulder / Two tunnies left. Phoenician legend between. Green and red-brown surfaces. VF. (CNG)

Ebusus was a Phoenician colony dating perhaps from the late 8th century BC.



ISLANDS off IBERIA, Ebusus. 2nd century BC. Æ Quarter Unit (13.5mm, 2.06 g, 11h). Bes standing facing, holding mace and serpent; Phoenician *gimel* to left / Bes standing facing, holding mace and serpent; Phoenician *gimel* to left. Rough brown surfaces. VF. (CNG).

HENRY VIII (1509-47) HALFGROATS

Desmond Rainey

Member NSI-NB

Tonight, I have chosen to show three halfgroats of Henry VIII, who reigned from 1509 to 1547. He was the second of the Tudor monarchs, son of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York, and father of Edward VI, Mary I, and Elizabeth I.

Henry VIII is one of our better-known monarchs. Most people would recognise his portrait, although the image they know is that of his later years when he had become rather corpulent. I once read a book entitled "How fat was Henry VIII"? That title alone probably helped to sell many copies. It helped sell mine.

People will also readily tell you that Henry had six wives and he had their heads chopped off. Not correct. The six wives is right, but only two were executed – Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard. Two actually outlived him – his last wife Catherine Parr, and his fourth wife Anne of Cleves, the "Flanders Mare", whom he divorced a few months after their marriage in 1540. He also divorced his first wife Katherine of Aragon, while wife number 3 (Jane Seymour) died after giving birth to the future Edward VI.

Perhaps these facts do not give a properly balanced picture of Henry the man. At six feet two inches, in his youth he was a superb athlete, extremely fond of hunting and tennis. He was also highly intelligent, speaking French, Latin and Spanish, and he was a lavish patron of the arts. He himself was an accomplished player of several musical instruments, and he not only played but composed as well. Greensleeves has been attributed to him, although it is unlikely that he wrote it. He also wrote books, including one in which he denounced Martin Luther and for which the Pope gave him the title "Defender of the Faith", which made its way onto our coinage, although that didn't happen until the reign of George I in 1714.

But Henry fell out with the Pope. He wanted to divorce Katherine of Aragon because she had failed to produce a male heir, and the Pope wouldn't play ball. After all, he didn't want to admit that the Papacy had made a mistake in granting a dispensation for the marriage in the first place (Katherine had previously been married to Henry's deceased brother Arthur).

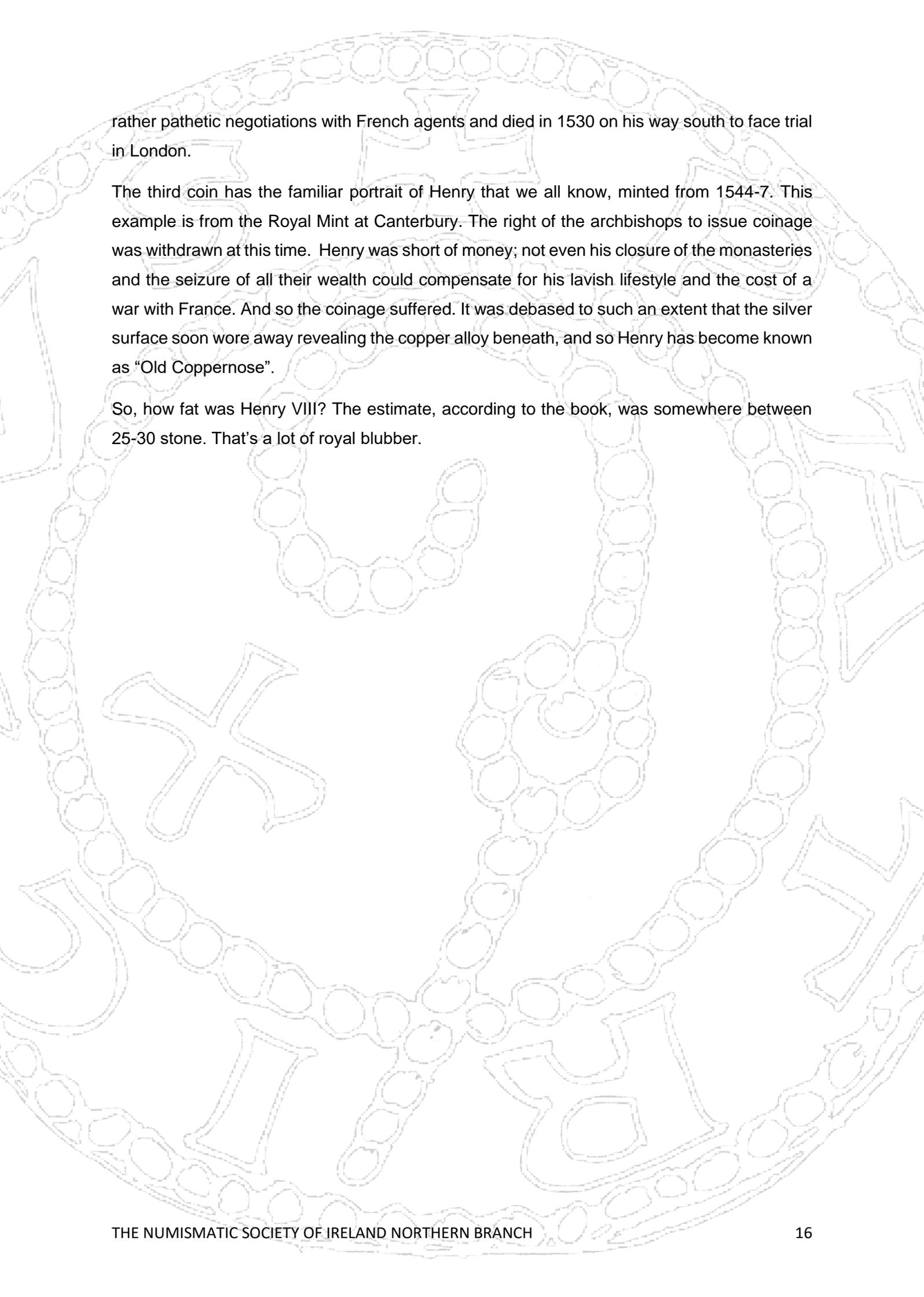
Failure to secure the divorce led to the fall of Thomas Wolsey, Henry's Lord Chancellor, who was also Archbishop of York. In the end Henry took matters into his own hands and brought England out of the Roman Catholic fold, declaring himself Head of the Church of England, although he never became a Protestant. But he was now free to remarry after Thomas Cranmer, the Archbishop of Canterbury, pronounced annulment of his marriage to Katherine

in 1533, and he and Anne Boleyn were wed, probably in secret a few months before this announcement.



The coins show the three busts used on Henry's coins. Rather surprisingly, the king's own bust did not appear until 1526, seventeen years after he became king. The coin on the left is of the first bust, which is in fact that of his father Henry VII. On the reverse you can see the initials WA on either side of the shield. These stand for William Warham, who was Archbishop of Canterbury from 1503 until his death in 1532. Halfgroats were issued at the ecclesiastical mints of Canterbury and York by the Archbishops. Warham was unhappy about royal moves to curb the independence of the English church but did nothing to help Katherine during the divorce proceedings and stopped short of defying the King on the issue, agreeing to the submission of the clergy.

There wasn't much love lost between William Warham and Thomas Wolsey, because Henry had deprived Warham of his post as Lord Chancellor and given it to Wolsey. Which brings us to the middle coin which has the second bust of Henry, with his own young portrait. This lasted from 1526 until 1544. In this case the coin was issued by Thomas Wolsey at York, and this is denoted by the letters TW on the reverse, as well as Wolsey's cardinal's hat below the shield. Wolsey was a naughty boy, however. He also minted groats, although this was not permitted, and was another reason for his fall from grace. He was arrested on treason charges following



rather pathetic negotiations with French agents and died in 1530 on his way south to face trial in London.

The third coin has the familiar portrait of Henry that we all know, minted from 1544-7. This example is from the Royal Mint at Canterbury. The right of the archbishops to issue coinage was withdrawn at this time. Henry was short of money; not even his closure of the monasteries and the seizure of all their wealth could compensate for his lavish lifestyle and the cost of a war with France. And so the coinage suffered. It was debased to such an extent that the silver surface soon wore away revealing the copper alloy beneath, and so Henry has become known as “Old Coppernose”.

So, how fat was Henry VIII? The estimate, according to the book, was somewhere between 25-30 stone. That’s a lot of royal blubber.

EDWARD VI – IRISH SHILLING – COUNTERMARK SEATED GREY HOUND

Elizabeth McKeown

Member NSI-NB

Edward VI reigned from 1547 to 1553. He was the only son of Henry VIII. His mother was Jane Seymour, Henry's third wife, who unfortunately died in childbirth.

Edward was not of robust health and became King on his father's death in 1547. During the latter years of his father's reign the coinage was significantly debased from "1543 when the silver content was 0,758 to 1547 when the silver content was reduced to 0.250."



Ireland, Henry VIII (1509-47), base silver, Sixpenny Groat, posthumous issue (1547-50), crowned bust of King looking three quarter right, beaded circles and legend surrounding, HENRIC 8. D; G; AGL; FRA. Z; HIB; REX, rev. long cross fourchée over quartered shield of arms, beaded circles and legend surrounding, initial mark P, weight 2.61g. The Latin legends translate as on obverse "Henry the Eighth, by the grace of God, King of England, France and Ireland" and on the reverse "City of Dublin."

This continued in the opening years of Edward's reign to 1550 with Henry VIII portrait still on the coinage known as the posthumous old head coinage. These were minted at the Dublin mint which was opened in 1547. During this period there was a marginal improvement of the silver content.



Edward VI (1547-53), coinage of 1552, shilling, mm. harp, young crowned bust, rev. arms in oval garnished shield, legend ends MDLII, wt. 5.01gms. (S.6494; DF.213)

The only Irish coin minted with Edward's portrait was a 1552, shilling, mm. harp, young crowned bust, rev. arms in oval garnished shield, legend ends MDLII. (S.6494; DF.213).



British Coins: First issue (1 January 1558/9 to 30 November 1560)

Elizabeth I (1558-1603), First issue, IRELAND, Edward VI, shilling, mdlii, mm. harp, obv. countermarked with greyhound [to revalue it at Twopence-Farthing], (N 1990; S 2547).

Coin worn but the date and mint-marks clear, countermark fine and clear Extremely rare, especially on an Irish undertype. Provenance: Bt Spink October 1984. The late owner's ticket makes it clear that the late Chris Comber and Michael Sharp, and Barrie Cook at the British Museum, were all confident of the coin and countermark's authenticity

Based on an article in O'Brien Rare Coin Review: *Edward VI's regency council went ahead with an issue for Ireland, with a distinctive 'Harp' mintmark.*

- *These shillings were struck as a result of an indenture dated 27 June 1552 when Martin Pirry was under-treasurer at Dublin.*

The indenture states that the shillings were to be struck at 3 oz. fine and 72s. per lb.

- *The engraver at Dublin was Henry Coldwell, a London goldsmith.*

The dies which he produced are all dated 1552

- *All are marked mint mark 'harp' obverse and reverse Under-treasurer, Martin Pirry, struck £32,400 of 3 oz. coins in Dublin in 1552*

These 'harp' mint mark shillings have an average of 70 grains, i.e. they are underweight.

All of these Dublin mint shillings are very rare.

- *Many have a 'countermark' of a 'seated greyhound'*

- *This 'countermark' denotes that the coin was devalued to 2¼d. in 1561*

- *a devaluation of more than 81%*

- *a financial disaster for anyone that held a significant number of them*

- *Seated Greyhound 'Countermark' on Edward VI Irish Shilling (1560)*

The 'countermark' was taken as a re-valuation to Twopence-Farthing (2¼d)

They are sometimes referred to as an 'Irish Testoon'

MEDIEVAL RUSSIAN BESTIARY - KITOVRAS

Dr Alexey Shitvov

Member NSI-NB

Fantastic beasts and mythical creatures have been a product of imagination perhaps from the earliest times of evolution of human intelligence. They were at the core of cosmogonic myths of all ancient societies. Egyptians, Phoenicians, Greeks, and Romans invented pantheons of mythical creatures representing counternatural hybrids of different animals and humans. The triumph of the Christian doctrine was supposed to end the pagan imagery and superstitions, but all of a sudden, those ancient monsters repopulated the walls of new churches, hiding in the ornaments of ritual utensils and holy texts of the finest manuscripts. Their existence was now backed by the church itself.

In his literal exegesis on the Old Testament, one of the earliest Christian theologians, St. Augustine of Hippo, deduced the reason for existence of monstrous beings. The outer borders of the Christian world were populated by *lusus naturae*, some human-animal hybrids combined and deformed in all imaginary ways. They, although being descendants of Adam, like ordinary humans, had committed new fall from grace and therefore lost the gift of conscious speech and were condemned to barking and making animal noises, living in earth holes, in forests, and on high mountains. Their image was the reminder for the faithful ones of the ultimate punishment for sin, yet, counterintuitively, laymen fell sympathetic towards the poor creatures of the unconscious world.

Needless to say, such radical theological tractates, by a dialectic logic, provided a source of numerous heresies too, alongside inspiration for new discoveries. Since the 12th century, many European monarchs had been searching for the lost kingdom of Prester John, once revealed by the patriarch to Byzantine Emperor Manuel, – the land of plenty inhabited by unknown peoples and bizarre creatures. In the Age of Discovery, such prominent explorers as Prince Henry the Navigator, Vasco de Gama, and Christopher Columbus carried the message to the peoples of this forbidden land. In the meantime, in the lands of the 15th century Muscovia and Great Novgorod, the legends of the promised land were projected on to the vast territories of Siberia and beyond. Merchants of Novgorod furnished imaginary descriptions of European cartographers of the mythical lands beyond the Lukomor mountains on the Upper Ob River inhabited by cynocephali, of the great river Takhnin encompassing the Earth disk, where strange hybrids of human and fish were riding the waves. This kingdom of wild creatures was ruled by a wise centaur, whose name was Kitovras.

Images of centaurs are found on the exteriors of Russian ancient churches of the 12th century. They are portrayed as warriors, philosophers, and stone builders, and their iconography was

possibly inspired by the Byzantine arts. According to the medieval Russian apocrypha, the sacred books outside the mainstream of the religious texts, centaurs were amongst the people subdued by Alexander the Great and summoned to join his forces. Although most centaurs remained unnamed, one of them, Kitovras, was concocted a biography. The earliest named depiction of Kitovras is found on a seal of the doors of the cathedral of St. Sophia of Novgorod, dated 1335-1336, which were moved to Moscow by Ivan the Terrible after the bloody annexation of Novgorod in the 16th century. The writing on the seal cites Kitovras throwing his brother Solomon to the promised land for the word. The manuscripts of a scribe of Kirilo-Belozersky monastery Efrosin, dated to the second half of the 15th century, present the story of Solomon and Kitovras, along with the image of the latter as a winged centaur wearing a crown, possibly indicating his royal descent, drawing the sword from the scabbard.

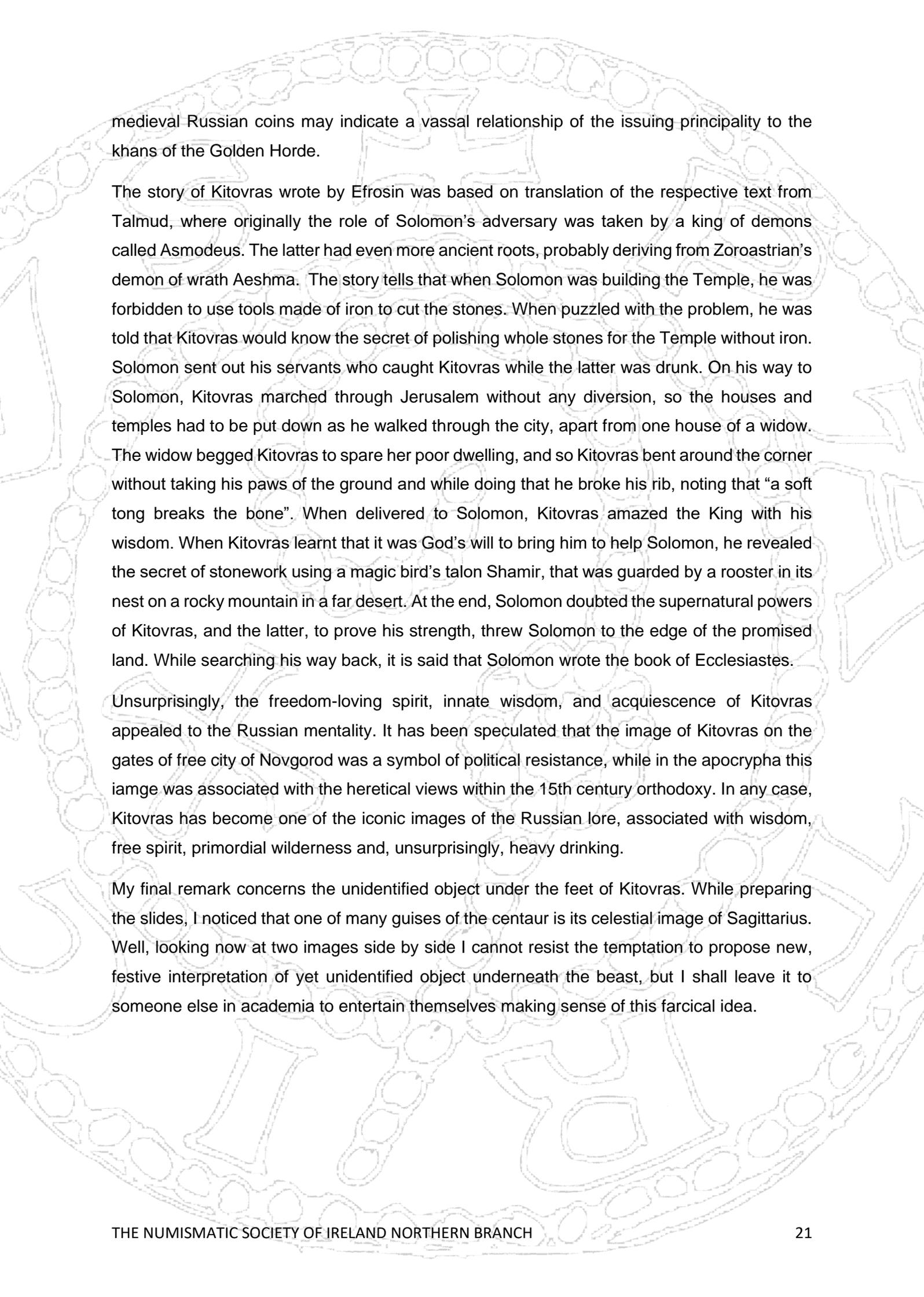


GRAND PRINCIPALITY OF NIZHEGOROD-SUZDAL, under Muscovian Governorship, AR Denga, 0.8g., struck in the name of Grand Prince, 1390s. HP2-4295



The images of what is believed to be Kitovras are found on coins of several Russian principalities struck in the first half of the 15th century. The coin shown on this slide is from the Grand Principality of Suzdal and Nizhny Novgorod and dated by the 1390s. The coin was struck by the Grand Prince of Moscow Vasily Dmitrievich, who in 1392 traded the seat of Nizhny Novgorod from the Khan of the Golden Horde and expelled the native ruling family from the capital to a lesser city, thus creating a precedent of annexing, by purchase or trade, a principality ruled by a local dynasty.

On the obverse, the coin depicts the image of a winged centaur walking to left and holding a sword in the left hand and a shield in his right hand. However, the usual hoofs, of a horse or a cow, are replaced with the paws of a wild beast. The meaning of the three pellets neatly arranged above the left shoulder of the centaur and an unidentified object under it's feet is uncertain. The Russian legend surrounding the image states that the coin was struck to the Grand Prince. The reverse of the coin bears a skilful imitation of a Kalimah, one of the six sacred formulas in Islam. It is believed that the appearance of imitative Arabic inscriptions on

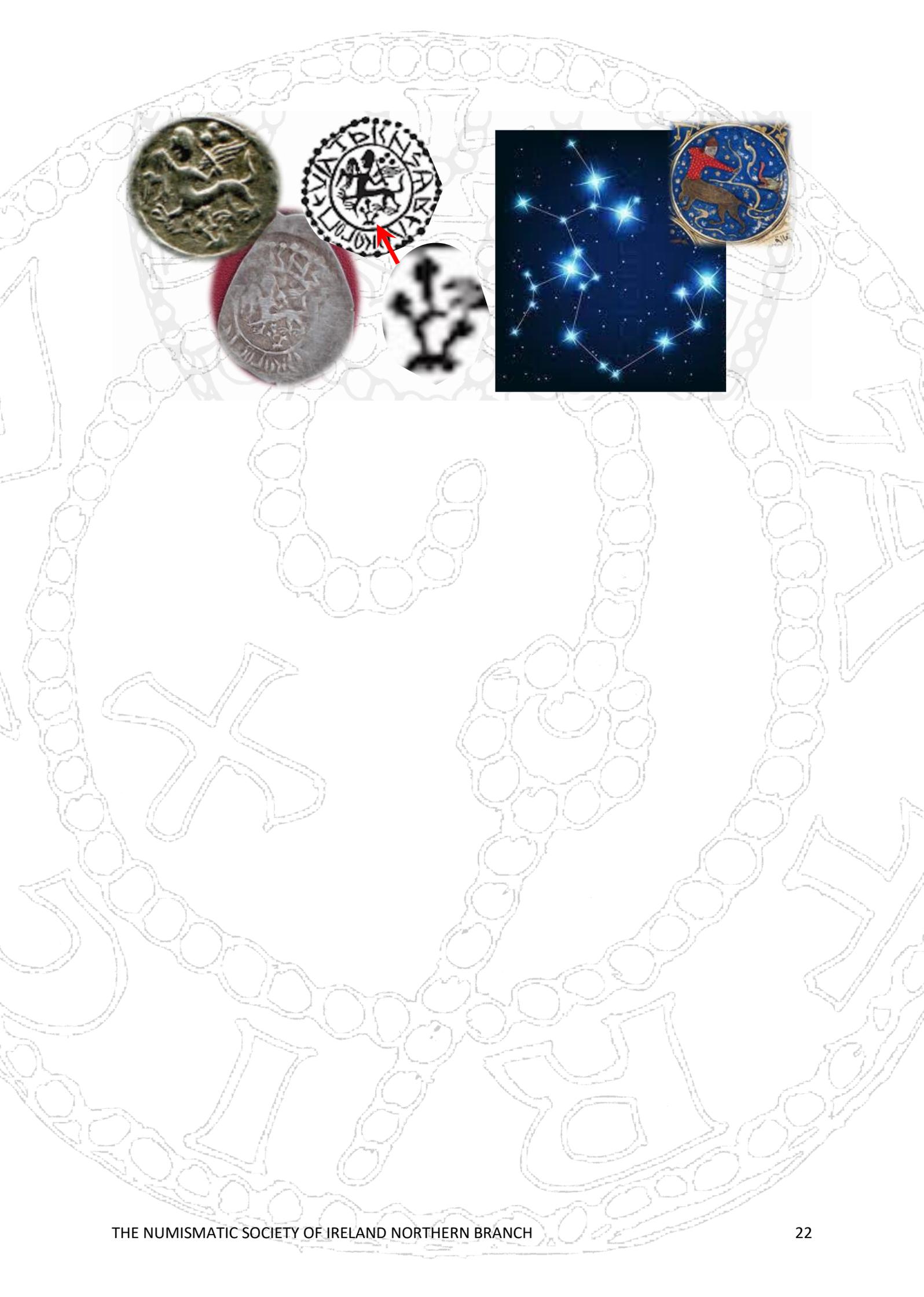


medieval Russian coins may indicate a vassal relationship of the issuing principality to the khans of the Golden Horde.

The story of Kitovras wrote by Efrosin was based on translation of the respective text from Talmud, where originally the role of Solomon's adversary was taken by a king of demons called Asmodeus. The latter had even more ancient roots, probably deriving from Zoroastrian's demon of wrath Aeshma. The story tells that when Solomon was building the Temple, he was forbidden to use tools made of iron to cut the stones. When puzzled with the problem, he was told that Kitovras would know the secret of polishing whole stones for the Temple without iron. Solomon sent out his servants who caught Kitovras while the latter was drunk. On his way to Solomon, Kitovras marched through Jerusalem without any diversion, so the houses and temples had to be put down as he walked through the city, apart from one house of a widow. The widow begged Kitovras to spare her poor dwelling, and so Kitovras bent around the corner without taking his paws of the ground and while doing that he broke his rib, noting that "a soft tong breaks the bone". When delivered to Solomon, Kitovras amazed the King with his wisdom. When Kitovras learnt that it was God's will to bring him to help Solomon, he revealed the secret of stonework using a magic bird's talon Shamir, that was guarded by a rooster in its nest on a rocky mountain in a far desert. At the end, Solomon doubted the supernatural powers of Kitovras, and the latter, to prove his strength, threw Solomon to the edge of the promised land. While searching his way back, it is said that Solomon wrote the book of Ecclesiastes.

Unsurprisingly, the freedom-loving spirit, innate wisdom, and acquiescence of Kitovras appealed to the Russian mentality. It has been speculated that the image of Kitovras on the gates of free city of Novgorod was a symbol of political resistance, while in the apocrypha this image was associated with the heretical views within the 15th century orthodoxy. In any case, Kitovras has become one of the iconic images of the Russian lore, associated with wisdom, free spirit, primordial wilderness and, unsurprisingly, heavy drinking.

My final remark concerns the unidentified object under the feet of Kitovras. While preparing the slides, I noticed that one of many guises of the centaur is its celestial image of Sagittarius. Well, looking now at two images side by side I cannot resist the temptation to propose new, festive interpretation of yet unidentified object underneath the beast, but I shall leave it to someone else in academia to entertain themselves making sense of this farcical idea.



HIBERNO-NORSE PENNY OF THE LATE PHASE V PERIOD

David Collins

Member NSI-NB

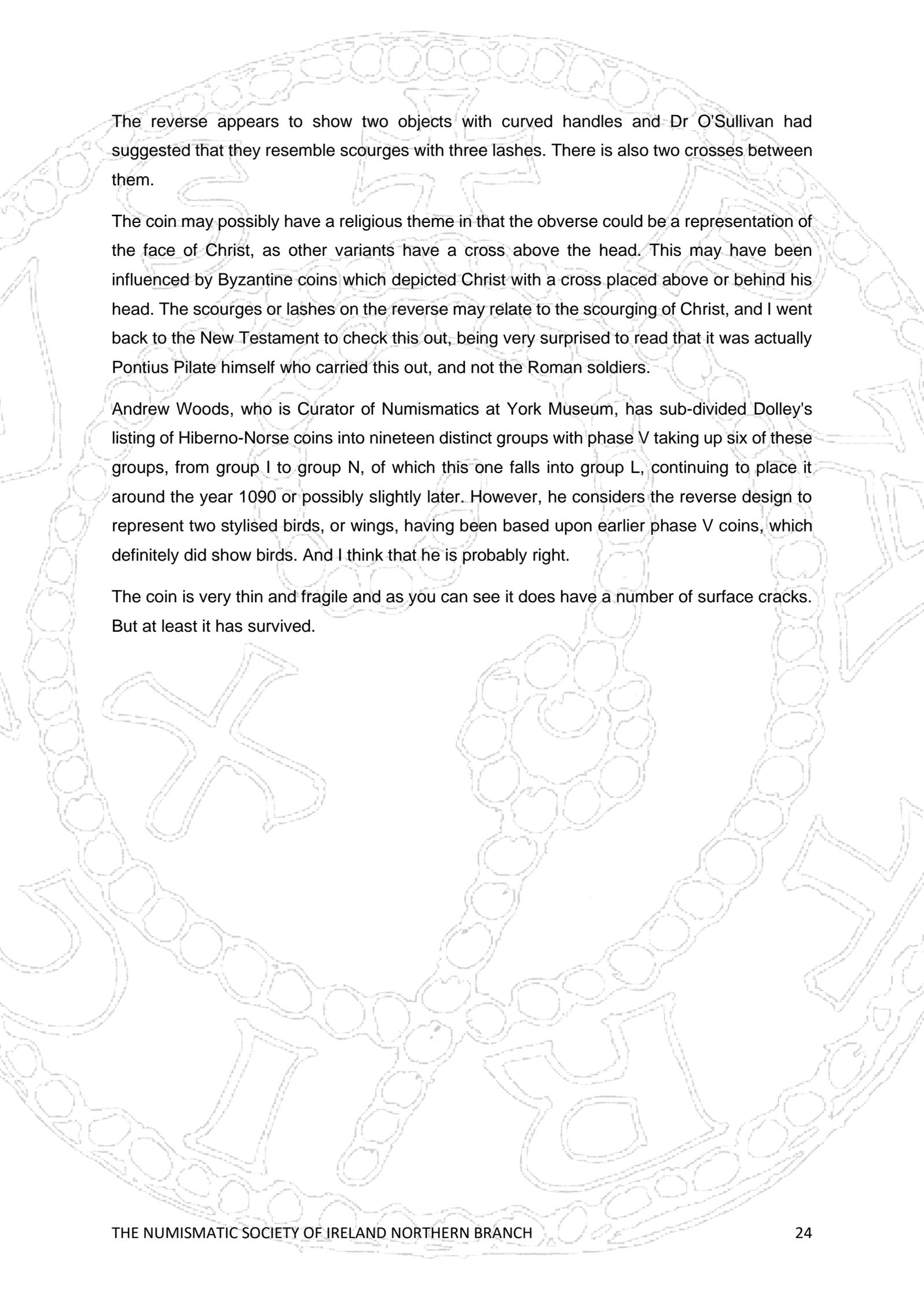
This coin falls into the Hiberno-Norse phase V period which covers most of the second half of the eleventh century. A best estimate would place it quite late in this phase at around the year 1090. The phase V coins are very varied and wide ranging, with some, like the earlier phases, being imitations of late Anglo-Saxon coins. Some also reflect imitations of coins from the early Norman period of William I and William II of England. All continued to be minted in Dublin, however, they were now being produced by local Irish kings and some of the later varieties, such as this one, have a distinctive Irish flavour and do not reflect any external influence. All of the coins are very crude, and all have blundered or meaningless legends, and as you can see with this one the legends are simply a continuous progression of stokes, on both sides.

Michael Dolley had suggested that the obverse was based upon a coin of William II, but I have looked at this and frankly it has very little resemblance. So, I think that it is fair to say that it has no known English prototype.

The obverse shows a teardrop shaped face with a pointed chin and a forked beard. The eyes are represented by pellets with curves as eyebrows. The nose is a short vertical line which meets the eyebrows, although this is difficult to make out. It does actually look a bit like an imp! According to Dr. William O'Sullivan there is a similar face on some Danish bracteate coins which were struck between the years 940 to 960.



Hiberno-Norse Penny, Late Phase V period (c. 1090)



The reverse appears to show two objects with curved handles and Dr O'Sullivan had suggested that they resemble scourges with three lashes. There is also two crosses between them.

The coin may possibly have a religious theme in that the obverse could be a representation of the face of Christ, as other variants have a cross above the head. This may have been influenced by Byzantine coins which depicted Christ with a cross placed above or behind his head. The scourges or lashes on the reverse may relate to the scourging of Christ, and I went back to the New Testament to check this out, being very surprised to read that it was actually Pontius Pilate himself who carried this out, and not the Roman soldiers.

Andrew Woods, who is Curator of Numismatics at York Museum, has sub-divided Dolley's listing of Hiberno-Norse coins into nineteen distinct groups with phase V taking up six of these groups, from group I to group N, of which this one falls into group L, continuing to place it around the year 1090 or possibly slightly later. However, he considers the reverse design to represent two stylised birds, or wings, having been based upon earlier phase V coins, which definitely did show birds. And I think that he is probably right.

The coin is very thin and fragile and as you can see it does have a number of surface cracks. But at least it has survived.

KINGDOM OF PERSIS – FRATARAKA OBORZOS (VAHBARZ)

Dr Ali Aravand
Member NSI-NB



Figure 1: King of Persis – “*Frataraka*” Oborzos (Vahbarz) Tetradrachm,
minted in Istakhr (Persepolis) – ca 270 BC

Following the conquest of the Achaemenid Empire (also known as the First Persian Empire) in 331 BC by Alexander of Macedon, and his death in 323 BC, vast parts of the occupied Persian territory came under the control of the Seleucids, after Seleucus (Nicator) and his successors. During their rule, the Seleucids, inevitably, retained the Satrapy system of the Achaemenid Empire for governing the states to keep the political integrity of the occupied lands. That included the Satrapy of Persis (*Parsa*, in old Persian, and Fars province in modern Iran), the homeland of the former Persian monarchs, and the main capital of the Persian Empire. Since the early years of the Seleucid period, Persis emerged as a semi-independent state, with their distinctive coinage. The first few rulers of the Persis region are known to bear the title of “*Frataraka*”, which is an old Persian epithet, seemingly equivalent of governor at a sub-Satrap level. This term has been exclusively mentioned on the tetradrachms of the first few Persis rulers as “*Prtrk’ zy alhaya*” in Aramaic (written in exergue on the reverse of the coin in Fig. 1), meaning “*Frataraka of the Gods*”. The silver tetradrachm which is the focus of this presentation belongs to *Frataraka Oborzos (Vahbarz)* who is believed to have been in power during the first half of the third century BCE. This coin depicts Vahbarz in a traditional Persian headgear on the obverse. Similar to other *Frataraka* coins, the reverse bears some well-known elements of the Achaemenid iconography which are still found on the remaining rock reliefs and tombs of the Achaemenid kings (Fig. 2). On this tetradrachm, the Frataraka is shown with astonishing details to be standing with his hands raised in adoration, facing the Fire-temple of Ahura-Mazda, reflecting Zoroastrian rituals (Fig. 1).

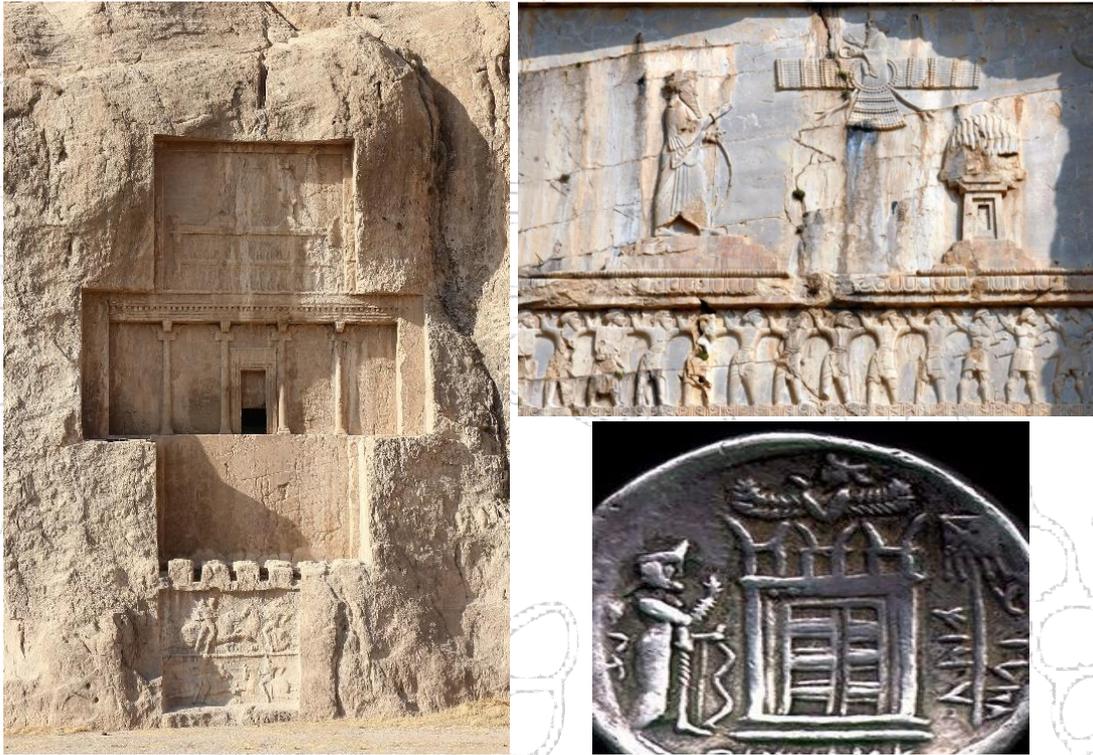


Figure 2: Achaemenid motifs used by Achaemenid Emperors (this example is tomb of Darius I, the Great) are found on the reverse of the Persis coins.

Some researchers argue that the building depicted on the reverse of the Frataraka coins, including that of Vahbarz, is *Ka'ba of Zoroaster* which remains in the Province of Pars in Iran, near Persepolis (Fig. 3).

The Persian headgear of the king, also referred to as *Kyrbasia*, was used by the high-rank officers and noble members of the Achaemenid court as part of their traditional Persian outfit. An interesting example is the so-called “Sarcophagus of Alexander the Great” which is kept in the Archaeological Museum of Istanbul in Turkey (Fig. 4). The Sarcophagus exhibits scenes from one of the wars between Alexander and the Persians during the conquest of Persia, where Persian officers wearing *Kyrbasia* are observed while in battle with Greek soldiers.



Figure 3: Ka'ba of Zoroaster, Persepolis, Fars (Pars) province, Iran

Despite the fact that the Persis *Frataraka* rulers were considered representatives of the Seleucids in the region, the exact nature of their relationship remains highly controversial. Numismatic evidence, in particular a different type of Vahbarz's tetradrachm where the ruler is shown

slaying a Greek captive, points at oppositions during this period. The use of the title *Fratataka* and striking tetradrachms was suddenly ceased after the fifth Frataraka, most probably, following a major conflict with the Seleucids resulting in a military intervention. Coinage of Persis continues with smaller denominations where the title *Fratataka* is replaced by “*mlka*” (pronounced *Shāh*, or king), reflecting transformation in the political role of the Persis rulers. Persis kings continued minting silver coins during almost the entire reign of the Parthians, with occasional suspensions. The local Persis dynasty eventually overthrew Parthians, with the last Persis ruler, Ardashir, now becoming the first *King of the Kings* (*Shāhān Shāh*) of the Sassanians who ruled for another nearly 5 centuries.



Figure 4: Persians in war with Alexander of Macedon. “Alexander Sarcophagus”, Istanbul, Turkey