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A Scottish Sovereign?

Image, Iconography and Union on Scotland's
Coins, Medals and Seals under the Reigns of
James VI and I and Charles I, 1603-1642

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Degree of Master of Research

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Abstract

The Union of the Crowns was a crucial moment towards parliamentary union and the evolution of the British state. Although much has been written on the subject of union in recent years comparatively little has focused on the topic from a cultural standpoint. The intention is to examine how the concept of *MAGNAE BRITANNIAE* - Great Britain - manifested itself through the coins, medals and seals of the Scottish and English states of the period. Looking beyond a purely economic and numismatic framework, this investigation will consider the artistic, cultural and political value of these items. It will reveal the role these extraordinary objects played in promoting union, consolidating the expression of an enduring British unionist iconography and cultural identity. This study will demonstrate the significance these objects had in shaping conceptions of a unified realm in the contemporary imagination and contribute to the understanding of Anglo-Scottish relations during a crucial period in the development of the British state.

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Author's Deceleration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Introduction

That the Two Kingdoms of Scotland and England shall upon the first day of May next ensuing the date hereof and forever after be United into One Kingdom by the Name of Great Britain And that the Ensigns Armorial of the said United Kingdom be such as Her Majesty shall appoint and the Crosses of St Andrew and St George be conjoined in such manner as Her Majesty shall think fit and used in all Flags Banners Standards and Ensigns both at Sea and Land.¹

On 1 May 1707 the Acts of Union passed by the English and Scottish Parliaments came into effect, uniting the ancient kingdoms of Scotland and England into the new Kingdom of Great Britain. The first article of the act acknowledges the need for a combined iconography that represents and gives visual expression to the new state. Much of the work in establishing the symbols of a unified British realm had already been undertaken in the preceding century. Yet, unlike a great many other aspects of unification, the image of this emergent polity has largely been neglected by historians interested in British state formation.

With the Union of the Crowns in March 1603, when James VI of Scotland succeeded to the English throne following the death of his cousin Elizabeth I, a crucial step towards what James would later refer to as a ‘perfect’ union was established.² The journey from regal to parliamentary union has received a great deal of attention in recent decades. Scholars such as William Ferguson, Brian Levack, Colin Kidd, Roger Mason, Jenny Wormald, Bruce Galloway and Keith Brown have all discussed at length both unions from political, economic,

¹ RPS, 1706/10/257. <http://www.rps.ac.uk/trans/1706/10/257> [accessed 8 Aug 2017].

² “House of Commons Journal Volume I: 02 May 1607,” in *Journal of the House of Commons: Volume I, 1547-1629*, (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1802), 366-368. British History Online [accessed August 8, 2017] <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/commons-jrnl/vol1/pp366-368>.

religious, diplomatic, legal and ecclesiastical standpoints.³ The formation of the United Kingdom has been examined from a number of perspectives except the cultural. Some areas of cultural endeavour have at least been considered before, most notably in literature by figures such as Priscilla Bawcutt and Jenny Wormald.⁴ Bruce Galloway gets particular credit for consideration of the development of the union flag.⁵ With his short passage on the role of the union flag he is only able to give us a hint as to the role newly formulated icons played in the history of the union. It is the development of such icons of union, and thus a new visual language through which an embryonic British identity could express itself, that this study intends to explore.

It has been widely assumed that a recognisably British identity and culture did not manifest itself until well into the eighteenth century. As a result the art, or culture of union and its material representation, has not received the same level of consideration as other factors in securing the centuries-long road towards union. Ferguson, for example, has asserted that ‘the concept of a British nation, much heralded at the time, was artificial and mainly illusory.’⁶ In other words Great Britain was nothing more than a convenient construct devised by the Duke of Queensberry, the Earl of Godolphin and Queen Anne. Some historians, such as Linda Colley, have tacitly accepted that a British identity was merely ‘superimposed’ upon the older existing identities of Scotland and England.⁷ This implies a sort of alien-ness to the concept of a British identity, one that was imposed upon and therefore obscures the pre-existing identities within these islands. While this view does acknowledge the initial political resistance to the

³ William Ferguson, *Scotland's Relations with England: A Survey to 1707* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1994); Keith Brown, *Kingdom or Province? Scotland and the Regal Union, 1603-1714* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1992); Brian Levack, *The Formation of the British State: England, Scotland, and the Union, 1603-1707* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987); Jenny Wormald, “Union of 1603,” in *Scots and Britons: Scottish Political Thought and the Union of 1603*, ed. Roger Mason, 17-40 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Colin Kidd, *Union and Unionisms: Political Thought in Scotland, 1500-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Bruce Galloway, *The Union of England and Scotland, 1603-1608* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1986).

⁴ Jenny Wormald, “Union of 1603,” in *Scots and Britons: Scottish Political Thought and the Union of 1603*, ed. Roger Mason, 17-40 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

⁵ Bruce Galloway, *The Union of England and Scotland, 1603-1608* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1986), 79-92.

⁶ William Ferguson, *Scotland's Relations with England: A Survey to 1707* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1994), 237.

⁷ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1832* (London: Pimlico, 1992), xxvii.

concept of Britain it fails to adequately reflect the common cultural attributes from which it is derived. The notion of imposition downplays the role of union - that is to say the simple act of combining itself.⁸ Indeed this study hopes to demonstrate that a British visual identity was carefully crafted with the melding of national iconographies following the Union of the Crowns in 1603. These developments in turn would help facilitate the expression of a British imperium, laying the foundations in the public consciousness for a shared identity. It would be a mistake then to overlook the importance of the regal union in laying many of the foundations upon which a British identity has flourished. It was the first of three unions that steadily united Great Britain and Ireland over a two hundred year period from 1603-1801. It is notable that the regal union has been the most successful in that it remains unchallenged today.

Under the regal union the image of the king was crucial in promoting further union, particularly in Scotland where he was often absent. In an age of mass illiteracy image represented the most important way to disseminate a shared and unified visual identity of the new 'British' polity. The importance of image as a means of projecting power, authority and legitimacy to rule has been well covered by scholars.⁹ Kevin Sharpe is perhaps the leading authority on the subject however. He had devoted a great deal of time and energy in studying successive rulers of the Tudor and Stuart dynasties in his authoritative trilogy on the representations of English monarchs.¹⁰ Such representations were disseminated by various means including portraiture, ceremony, music, literature, prints, coins, medals and seals. It is via smaller-scale objects

⁸ Unless otherwise stated it should be assumed that the use of the term 'union' or 'unionist' refers chiefly to a combination of elements rather than any implied political ideology.

⁹ Roy Strong, *The Tudor and Stuart Monarchy: Pageantry, Painting, Iconography* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1995-1998); David Howarth, *Images of Rule: Art and Politics in the English Renaissance, 1485-1649* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997); John Peacock, "The Visual Image of Charles I," in *The Royal Image: Representations of Charles I*, ed. Thomas Corns (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Richard Ollard, *The Image of the King: Charles I and Charles II* (London: Pimlico, 1993), Peter Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XIV* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992).

¹⁰ Kevin Sharpe, *Selling the Tudor Monarchy: Authority and Image in Sixteenth Century England* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2009); Kevin Sharpe, *Image Wars: Promoting Kings and Commonwealths in England, 1603-1660* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2010); Kevin Sharpe, *Rebranding Rule: The Restoration and Revolution Monarchy, 1660-1714* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2013); Kevin Sharpe, *Reading Authority and Representing Rule in Early Modern England* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

however, such as coins and medals, that the king's subjects would have been most exposed to his image.¹¹

There is an awareness of the need to determine, as far as possible, how such messages filter through and embed themselves in a wider cultural consciousness. This is rather difficult to quantify in precise terms but frequent daily exposure to certain images and messages is liable to make an impact over a prolonged period of time. Coins would be in a uniquely placed position in which to achieve this. With its multiple denominations in various base or precious metals these objects were capable of reaching into every stratum of society simply by virtue of its position as the national currency. As a medium the coinage presents an excellent vehicle to foster an emerging sense of shared identity and an ideal source for this study. In Scotland the coinage would have especially stood out amongst the large amount of foreign coins in circulation.¹² Though by no means the only visual way in which union was promoted, the coinage transmitted the most recognisable images of royal iconography, authority and power. On a basic level the coinage had a purely economic function by serving as the currency by which goods and services might be exchanged. In Britain two distinct but related currencies were in circulation: the Scots pound and the English pound. Following the 1603 union James fixed the exchange rate between the two currencies at 12:1 Scots to English pounds.¹³ With a fixed rate this would make transactions across the border much easier than they had been in the past. A convergence of design would also further encourage the closeness of the two currencies under the new constitutional order. It also offered the opportunity for the transmission of a single political message through a shared image of the king.

The ultimate expression of the sovereign's image and authority, in a legal sense, is the great seal of the realm. It is perhaps the most potently political device as a great seal represents the official authority of the monarch and thereby the state. As such seals are, then, the definitive visual manifestation of royal

¹¹ Jane Roberts, *The King's Head: Charles I, King and Martyr* (Royal Collection Enterprises, London 1999), 19.

¹² Ian Whyte, *Scotland before the Industrial Revolution: An Economic and Social History, c1050-1750* (London: Longman, 1995), 275.

¹³ Ian Stewart, *The Scottish Coinage* (London: Spink, 1967), 101.

authority. Seals have been used since classical times by rulers to signify their consent to public acts and are used to ratify the sovereign's declarations. A seal can also be the bearer of political ambition and intent. Elizabeth I was offended by the inclusion of her titles - Queen of England and Ireland - in the third Scottish seal of Mary, Queen of Scots from 1559.¹⁴ Mary was next in line to the English throne so Elizabeth, not yet secure on her throne, was rather sensitive to such naked ambition.

Medals were regarded as more prestigious than coins or seals, elevated to an art form in their own right. Along with miniatures they were highly prized by collectors but enjoyed a wider circulation, offering greater potential as vehicles for promoting political messages such as union or imperium.¹⁵ Interestingly there has been a renewed interest of late in what medals as visual sources can tell us about a change of regime, as power flows from one dynasty to another.¹⁶ Though produced from the Royal Mint medals, as purely commemorative items, would have had a more limited circulation than coins.¹⁷ This perhaps made them less influential as tools of propaganda amongst the wider populace but not entirely absent. They would have been distributed to the public at coronations for example and, after the Restoration at least, advertised as being available from booksellers.¹⁸

We can be confident that the educated elites would have understood the messages behind the iconography and Latin legends incorporated onto coins, medals and seals. The lower orders would not have understood them in the same way but their meaning would not have entirely escaped their comprehension. Galloway clearly demonstrates this through the contentious nature of the combination of the cross of St George with the saltire of St Andrew that were

¹⁴ Walter de Gray Birch, *Seals* (London: Methuen, 1907), 205-206.

¹⁵ Jane Roberts, *The King's Head: Charles I, King and Martyr* (Royal Collection Enterprises, London 1999), 19.

¹⁶ University of Oxford, *Isaac Newton revealed as designer of Queen Anne's 'political' coronation medal* <http://www.ox.ac.uk/news/2015-03-20-isaac-newton-revealed-designer-queen-annes-political-coronation-medal> [accessed 10 Sept 2016].

¹⁷ Jane Roberts, *The King's Head: Charles I, King and Martyr* (Royal Collection Enterprises, London 1999), 19.

¹⁸ *ibid*, 19.

ordered to be flown from the mast of naval ships.¹⁹ It is not unreasonable to assume therefore that the combination of similar national symbols elsewhere and their significance was clearly understood by the less well educated in society.

As longstanding symbols of their respective nations flags would have occupied a similar place in the visual culture as other national symbols like the thistle and the rose or the lion and the unicorn. Other signifiers such as crowns, swords, orbs and sceptres are laden with meanings connected to power, justice, religion and royal authority. These and other heraldic devices have been utilised to varying degrees on coins, medals and seals since their emergence in the twelfth century. As such they form the visual basis for any state expression of nationhood and identity and would have been familiar to wide audiences. This would only be further enhanced with the development of print culture. It is perfectly possible therefore that most people were able to comprehend the meaning of combining Scottish and English iconography to create a new British visual identity.

Coins, medals, and seals have long held a fascination because they offer a tangible link to the past. Consequently interest has been long established with studies dating from the sixteenth century. The earliest publication held in the University of Glasgow's Special Collections is a 1675 study on ancient Greek and Roman coins attributed to John Selden which is, in turn, a re-issue of Alessandro Sardi's 1579 *Liber de nummis*.²⁰ In Britain scholarly interest in the subject remained relatively constant throughout with studies initially confined to classical antiquity before broadening to include more recent items, including those of British origin.²¹

In the field of Scottish numismatics the two key texts are Edward Burns' *The Coinage of Scotland* (1887) and Ian Stewart's *The Scottish Coinage* (1967). Together these works have set the standard for the modern study of

¹⁹ Bruce Galloway, *The Union of England and Scotland, 1603-1608* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1986), 82-84.

²⁰ Neil Guthrie, "Johnson's Touch-piece and the 'Charge of Fame': Personal and Public Aspects of the Medal in Eighteenth Century Britain," in *The Politics of Samuel Johnson* ed. Jonathan Clark and Howard Erskine-Hill, 94-95 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

²¹ *ibid*, 94-95.

numismatics. Burns is unrivalled and included photographs for the first time.²² Stewart has given consideration to the various Latin inscriptions and their meanings with some bearing unionist connotations while others are derived from classical sources.²³ Edward Hawkins provides an invaluable resource on medals while Walter de Gray Birch's guides to Scottish seals are useful references.²⁴ Yet, with the possible exception of medallic studies, consideration of the political and cultural significance of these rather intimate and extraordinary objects has largely been left to historians.²⁵ With recent developments towards a more multi-dimensional understanding of history objects such as coins and medals have increasingly been incorporated into wider studies that explore themes such as image, authority, identity, kingship and dynastic struggle.²⁶ This is a recognition of their importance as valuable sources in their own right. Writing in 1892 Reginald Stuart Poole, the then Keeper of the British Museum's Department of Coins and Medals, noted that

of all antiquities coins are the smallest, yet, as a class, the most authoritative in record, and the widest in range. No history is so unbroken as that which they tell; no geography so complete; no art so continuous in sequence, nor so broad in extent; no mythology so ample and so various.²⁷

While Poole was writing primarily on the subject of ancient Greek coins his statement could just as easily be applied to the coinage of the seventeenth century as that of the fourth century BC. One could arguably extend the significance of coins as a valuable resource to objects of a similar visual character: medals and seals. Indeed, John Evelyn stressed the importance of

²² Ian Stewart, "Edward Burns," in the *British Numismatic Journal* Vol. 57 (1987), 89.

²³ Ian Stewart, *The Scottish Coinage* (London: Spink, 1967), 94-102.

²⁴ Edward Hawkins, *Medallic Illustrations of the History of Great Britain and Ireland*, ed. Augustus Franks and Herbert Gruber (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1885); Walter de Gray Birch, *History of Scottish Seals, Vol. I: The Royal Seals of Scotland* (Stirling: Eneas Mackay, 1905-1907).

²⁵ James VI's pre-union coinage and its wider political and cultural context has been addressed in Ian Stewart, "Coinage and Propaganda: An Interpretation of the coin-types of James VI," in *From the Stone Age to the Forty Five*, ed. Anne O'Connor and D.V. Clarke (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1983).

²⁶ Murray Pittock, *Material Culture and Sedition, 1688-1760: Treacherous Objects, Secret Places* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Sharpe (2009, 2010, 2013); Peacock (1999); Burke (1992).

²⁷ Reginald Stuart Poole, "The Study of Coins," in *Coins and Medals: Their Place in History and Art*, ed. Stanley Lane-Poole, 1 (London: Elliot Stock, 1892).

medals to the historical record and the often powerful relationship between art and politics is shown to be as old as antiquity.²⁸

The primary sources which have been consulted are of course be the objects themselves, principally coins, medals and seals. The principal numismatic collections held in the United Kingdom are the Hunterian at the University of Glasgow, the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh, the British Museum in London, and the Ashmolean in Oxford. These institutions hold a range of examples from the Scottish and English coinages of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries alongside medals produced during the same period. However the Hunterian is currently in the process of undergoing a significant re-organisation as it relocates its collection to the new facilities at Kelvin Hall. This meant that access was limited. In light of the excellent online records from the National Museum of Scotland and the British Museum, as well as the catalogues held in the University of Glasgow Library, it was decided that a personal inspection of the objects in question would add little to the study. Seals, being attached to a great many documents, are of a delicate nature. Reliance upon the digitised collections of the British Museum and reference books should suffice.

Based upon previous studies in numismatics a chronological approach seems sensible for this study. However before examining the unified iconographies of Scotland and England it would be useful to first establish how national symbols were deployed before being united. An examination of some examples before the crowns were united would allow for a greater appreciation of the significance of the changes that occurred in the presentation of the kingdoms and its leadership. It should also afford a sense of their contribution to conceptions of a British state with a shared cultural and political allegiance.

The remaining two chapters will then be divided by reign. Examining representations of James VI and I and Charles I should provide an insight into what kind of image of themselves and the polity they governed they wished to present to their subjects. Any fluctuations in the presentation of their image

²⁸ John Evelyn, *Numismata: A Discourse of Medals, Antient and Modern*, 69 (London, 1697).

should serve to highlight their sensitivity to political developments, such as the failure of James's union project or the increasing tensions during Charles's personal rule. Though chiefly concerned with coins, medals and seals examination of other visual mediums might also prove enlightening in further establishing their political and cultural agenda.

It is expected that this study will demonstrate that the first two Stuart kings of the seventeenth century were highly sophisticated political figures who utilised a broad range of imagery to promote their own policies and beliefs. This would involve the maintenance of the Union of the Crowns if not the complete unification of Great Britain by way of political union. Implicit in this aim is the development and dissemination of a unionist iconography, linked to the political and cultural imperatives of the monarch, in promoting a singular 'British' identity.

II

Before the Union of the Crowns from James IV to James VI, 1503-1603

It is remarkable that Scotland and England, and their respective iconographies, were ever joined together at all in regal and later in parliamentary union. Anglo-Scottish relations in the two hundred and fifty year period between the Wars of Independence and the Union of the Crowns remained hostile, punctuated by a series of regular border clashes against the backdrop of Anglo-French conflict or civil war.²⁹ Even after the events of the Scottish Reformation in 1560 and the deposition of Mary, Queen of Scots in 1567 the Union of the Crowns was not assured. As Ferguson explains, ‘conditions that shaped the relations of the two countries remained uncertain and until almost the end of Elizabeth’s long reign were capable of yielding various results.’³⁰ What holds true for the destiny of nations holds true for objects so intimately connected to the affairs of state. With such animosity it is extraordinary that the circumstances surrounding the creation of the coins, medals and seals that form the basis of this study have all been peaceful.

Indeed, the uniting of the crowns has its origins in dynastic unions and dynastic struggle. After defeating Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth Field Henry VII secured his claim to the English crown by unifying the warring houses of Lancaster and York through his marriage to Elizabeth of York, ending the Wars of

²⁹ Alex Woolf, Michael Brown, and Michael Lynch, “Anglo-Scottish relations,” in *The Oxford Companion to Scottish History* (Oxford University Press, 2001) <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199234820.001.0001/acref-9780199234820-e-6> [accessed 16 Feb, 2018].

³⁰ William Ferguson, *Scotland’s Relations with England: A Survey to 1707* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1994), 74.

the Roses.³¹ Following his own example Henry then sought peace through a marriage between the great warring realms of Scotland and England. Upon the conclusion of the Treaty of ‘Perpetual’ Peace in 1502 Henry’s daughter Margaret, a scion of the Lancastrian and York dynasties, was wed to James IV the following year.³² The joining of the Tudor and Stuart dynasties has become known to history, rather romantically, as ‘the thissil and the rois’ thanks to the work of the Scots poet and diplomat William Dunbar.³³ It was this dynastic union from which James VI would ultimately derive his claim to the English throne a century later. Sadly the marriage would end disastrously, along with the perpetual peace, on the fields of Flodden a decade later with the slaughter of James IV and half the Scottish nobility at the hands of soldiers belonging to his brother-in-law Henry VIII.³⁴ Defeat for his successor James V followed in 1541 at Solway Moss and he died shortly afterwards, leaving his newborn daughter Mary and the kingdom under the guardianship of the earl of Arran.³⁵ Henry VIII, hoping to imitate the success of his father, sought a marriage alliance with Scotland. A peace treaty was concluded by Henry and the pro-English regent Arran at Greenwich in 1543 that secured an Anglo-Scottish alliance. It was also agreed that Mary would marry Henry’s son and heir Prince Edward. This arrangement fell through however when the Scottish parliament rejected it in favour of renewing the auld alliance with France, initiating a major dynastic and religious conflict known as the Rough Wooing (1542-1551).³⁶ It is remarkable to think that the unification of the crowns took place within living memory of the most notable conflict between Scotland and England since the Wars of Independence. Paradoxically it

³¹ S.B. Chrimes, *Henry VII* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1972), 53.

³² Alex Woolf, Michael Brown, and Michael Lynch, “Anglo-Scottish relations,” in *The Oxford Companion to Scottish History* (Oxford University Press, 2001) <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199234820.001.0001/acref-9780199234820-e-6> [accessed 16 Feb, 2018].

³³ William Dunbar, “The Thistle and the Rose,” in the *Bannatyne Manuscript*, Volume IV (Glasgow: Hungarian Club, 1896), 988-994.

³⁴ Norman Macdougall, “James IV,” in *The Oxford Companion to Scottish History* (Oxford University Press, 2001) <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199234820.001.0001/acref-9780199234820-e-162> [accessed 16 Feb, 2018].

³⁵ Morag MacLeod, “Rough Wooing,” in *The Oxford Companion to Scottish History* (Oxford University Press, 2001) <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199234820.001.0001/acref-9780199234820-e-255> [accessed 16 Feb, 2018].

³⁶ *ibid.*

is in this conflict, and the propaganda war that accompanied it, that we can find the roots of the union.

While the actual uniting of the crowns had ultimately been a quirk of fate the concept of a united Britain had been written about for decades in both Scotland and England before 1603. Conceptions of a united Protestant and imperial British kingdom were first popularised in the mid sixteenth century but had yet to manifest themselves through coins, medals or seals in any meaningful way. This was, of course, because the attempt at uniting the two kingdoms through marriage had failed. Edward VI, who had continued the war his father started, drove Mary and Scotland into the arms of France and in the process dashed any hope of securing the Protestant faith in the northern kingdom.

As a consequence the Scottish coinage celebrates the union between Mary and Francis, the dauphin of France, in 1558 rather than that of Mary and Edward. When the dauphin became Francis II of France shortly after marrying Mary coins were minted drawing Scottish and French symbols together. The silver testoon (fig. 1) is one such example. Minted in Edinburgh in 1560 it was worth five shillings. On the obverse is a crowned shield combining the arms of France and Scotland. It is surrounded by the style of the monarchs in Latin: FRAN ET MA D G R R FRANCO SCOTOR (Francis and Mary, by the grace of God, King and Queen of the French and the Scots). The reverse contains a crowned monogram FM, standing for Francis and Mary, which is flanked by a crowned fleur-de-lis and thistle on either side. The inscription reads VICIT LEO DE TRIBV IVDA (the Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed), a reference to a biblical tribe that reached its zenith under a united monarchy. The lion, symbolising both Christ and Scotland, signifies rebirth and the dawn of a new age. This could be interpreted as a reference to the marriage as well as Scotland's triumph over England in the recent conflict. It should be noted that while both nations are equally present Francis, and by extension France, has been given precedence here. This is likely due to his status as a man but just as important perhaps is the acceptance of France as the preeminent kingdom. The united Franco-Scottish monarchy, as brief as it was, had ambitions to encompass the entire British Isles. Mary was next in line to the English throne and her third Scottish seal of 1559 (as well as the French seal of Francis II) lists amongst their titles England and Ireland.

Suffice it to say, this would have enraged the young English Protestant queen Elizabeth who did not yet feel secure on her throne in the face of hostile Catholic powers.³⁷

National iconographies achieved prominence in Scotland's southern neighbour through the coronation medal of Edward VI, the first to be produced in England (fig. 2). Struck in 1547 by Henry Basse, the chief engraver at the royal mint, it is amongst the earliest examples of an English medal where an author can be attributed.³⁸ The obverse bears a portrait of the king in armour surrounded by a Latin text which reads: EDWARDVS VI DG AND FR ET HI REX FIDEI DEFENS ET IN TERRIS ANG ET HIB ECCLE CAPVT SVPREMVVM CORONATVS EST MDXLVI XX FEBRVA ETATIS DECIMO (Edward VI, by the grace of God, King of England, France, and Ireland, defender of the faith, and the supreme head on earth of the Church of England and Ireland, crowned 20 February, 1546, at the age of ten years). On the reverse the same inscription appears but in Hebrew and Greek. A crowned Tudor rose, Irish harp, French fleur-de-lis, and a portcullis can clearly be seen superimposed over the inscription. The use of Irish and French national symbols in addition to English offers a 'unionist' iconographical template that would be followed by the boy king's successors. Although the old pretence to the French throne is maintained through the use of the fleur-de-lis there is, appropriately, no suggestion of a claim to Scotland despite having contested that kingdom's sovereignty.³⁹ This shows admirable restraint when considering that England was currently engaged in a religious and dynastic war with its northern neighbour in an effort to curtail French influence.⁴⁰ One might have expected some subtle effort here or on the coinage as part of the propaganda war being waged by Edward's Lord Protector

³⁷ Walter de Gray Birch, *History of Scottish Seals Vol. 1: The Royal Seals of Scotland* (Stirling: Eneas Mackay, 1905-1907), 70-74.

³⁸ Mark Jones, *The Art of the Medal* (London: British Museum Publications, 1979), 65.

³⁹ Henry VIII, "A Declaration, conteynynge the iust causes and consyderations, of this present warre with the Scottis, wherein alsoo appereth the trewe & right title, that the kings most royall maiesty hath to the soveraynitie of Scotlande," (1542) in *Complaynt of Scotland* ed. James Murray, 191-206 (London: Early English Texts Society, 1874).

⁴⁰ Morag MacLeod, "Rough Wooing," in *The Oxford Companion to Scottish History* (Oxford University Press, 2001) <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199234820.001.0001/acref-9780199234820-e-255> [accessed 16 Feb, 2018].

the duke of Somerset in promoting a Protestant British kingdom.⁴¹ While these first tentative steps into medal making did not herald the ‘development of an English school of medallists, the medallistic portrait gradually became more popular.’⁴² This mirrored and was indeed linked to the trend for portrait miniatures. Furthermore there exists, in England at least, a clear link between the design and creation of coins, medals and seals with wider artistic and cultural output during this time: the portrait.

Nicholas Hilliard, one of the great Elizabethan artists of his time, had direct involvement in formulating the design and execution of a number of seals and medals under both Elizabeth and James.⁴³ Alas, the relationship between Scottish artistry and the design of the objects in question is much less clear, particularly in the pre-union period. Yet in England, even as the symbolism of English nationhood was reaching its apogee, there were some early signs of a unionist iconography developing. One of Hilliard’s drawings, while potentially a design for a third great seal for Elizabeth, offers the intriguing possibility of a design for the Great Seal of Ireland.⁴⁴ Dating from 1584 it depicts the queen, enthroned, flanked on either side by two shields that contain emblems associated with the Irish nation: a harp and three crowns (fig. 3). The harp has traditionally been linked with the province of Leinster while the three crowns are usually associated with the province of Munster. While Elizabeth I held the title Queen of Ireland her government only had effective control of these areas until the conclusion of the Nine Years War brought the entire island under English control. Auerbach accepts that while it might be a design for an Irish seal it could just as easily be one for a third great seal.⁴⁵ If this was the case however one would expect the English coat of arms to feature somewhere yet they are curiously absent. Instead only the Tudor rose is depicted. It would be tempting to suggest that this may be a design for a possible joint Anglo-Irish seal were it

⁴¹ James Henrisoun, “An Exhortacion to the Scottes to conformance themselves to the honourable, Expedient & godly Union betweene the two realmes of Englande & Scotland,” (1547) in *Complaynt of Scotland* ed. James Murray, 207-236 (London: Early English Texts Society, 1874).

⁴² Mark Jones, *The Art of the Medal* (London: British Museum Publications, 1979), 65.

⁴³ *ibid*, 69.

⁴⁴ Erna Auerbach, *Nicholas Hilliard* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961), 186.

⁴⁵ *ibid*, 186.

not for the lack of the arms of England. Nonetheless it is clear even before 1603 national emblems were beginning to be used, or at least conceived of, in conjunction with each other.

Turning to the coinage of James VI, it should be noted that due to their marked differences the coinage is divided by numismatists into two main categories: pre-accession and post-accession. These are then further organised into subcategories known as coinages or issues. Holmes offers us a useful summary of these coinages.⁴⁶ They are as follows:

Pre-accession: first coinage 1567-71, second coinage 1571-80, third coinage 1580-1, fourth coinage 1582-8, fifth coinage 1588-90, sixth coinage 1591-3, seventh coinage 1594-1601, eighth coinage 1601-4. Post-accession: ninth coinage 1604-9, tenth coinage: 1609-25.⁴⁷

Although these classifications primarily came about for cataloguing purposes they also happen to reflect the significance of the union of the crowns as a political, economic and cultural event in Scottish history. The differences between each issue are usually derived from the design, monetary value or both. The pre-accession coinage contains the bulk of the designs issued during his reign in Scotland. The frequent changes were a consequence of economic instability and the resultant changes required continual re-valuation of the currency. With eight out of ten of the issues coming before 1603 it would be unwise to ignore this particularly rich period completely. The pre-accession issues are for the most part either gold or silver. Silver coins from the pre-accession period come in a greater variety.⁴⁸ It is therefore logical, considering coins would have had the widest constituency in terms of audience and usage, to examine some of these items more closely.

⁴⁶ Nicholas Holmes, SCBI 58: *Scottish coins in the National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh. Part 1, 1526-1603* (Oxford: Oxford University Press; London: Spink & Sons Ltd., 2006), 10-17.

⁴⁷ J.D. Bateson and N.J. Mayhew, SCBI 35: *Scottish Coins in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford and the Hunterian Museum, Glasgow* (London: Oxford University Press & Spink, 1987), xxi-xxii.

⁴⁸ Edward Burns, *The Coinage of Scotland*, Vol. 2 (Edinburgh: A & C Black, 1887), 348-384.

The most commonly recurring legend on the coinage pre-accession is NEMO ME IMPVNE LACESSIT (no one provokes me with impunity). It first appears in the second coinage (1578-80) on the two merks/thistle dollar (26s 8d) and appears again in the third coinage (1580-81) on the sixteen, eight, four and two shilling pieces. A crowned royal shield of arms is situated on the obverse displaying the royal title IACOBVS 6 D G R SCOTORVM (James VI, by the grace of God, King of Scots) while the reverse displays the NEMO legend with a thistle between the cypher IR. Apart from a crown added above the thistle on the third coinage both designs are iconographically identical. The last time it occurs during James's reign is in the seventh coinage (1594-1601) on the ten and five shilling pieces as well as the thirty pence piece. On this occasion the crowned royal arms is replaced with a bust of the king in armour (without a crown). The reverse side still retains the thistle but instead of one there are three growing from the same root with a crown over the central thistle (fig 4). Appearing a full decade before 1603 this could be viewed as James looking ahead to a time when he would be king not of one kingdom but three. The gold 100 shilling 'rider' piece from the same coinage certainly suggests as much with its inscription declaring SPERO MELIORA (I hope for better things) (fig. 5).

Interestingly, while the NEMO ME IMPVNE LACESSIT motto most often occurs during James's pre-accession coinage it only appears once on the coinage after 1603 under Charles I on the copper/bullion after 1642 (one of the few coins to be minted in Scotland at this time), once more accompanied by a thistle. Stewart observes that, judging from the coinage, the thistle was 'a fully established national emblem by the sixteenth century.'⁴⁹ According to legend the origin of the motto and its enduring association with the thistle was derived from invading Norwegians who, upon stepping on a prickly thistle, alerted the Scots with their cries of pain prior to their attack at the Battle of Largs in 1263.⁵⁰ Defeat for Haakon IV at Largs ended his campaign to reassert Norway's control over Scotland's western coastline. The Treaty of Perth was concluded three years later and granted Alexander III full sovereignty over the Hebrides and the Isle of

⁴⁹ Ian Stewart, "Coinage and Propaganda: An Interpretation of the coin-types of James VI," in *From the Stone Age to the Forty Five*, ed. Anne O'Connor and D.V. Clarke, 453 (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1983).

⁵⁰ A.C. Fox-Davies, *A Complete Guide to Heraldry* (London & Edinburgh: T.C. & E.C. Jack, 1909), 270.

Man, greatly enhancing Scotland's identity in the process.⁵¹ Over the centuries the thistle and its associated legend became so closely identified with Scotland that they were adopted by successive monarchs for various uses. The legend was later incorporated into the royal arms in Scotland by Charles II and was adopted as the motto of the Order of the Thistle by James VII, confirming it as the national motto of the Kingdom of Scotland. Such developments made it inseparable from associations with Scotland and the Stuart dynasty. Its popularity attests to the power and influence the coinage had in shaping national identity and consciousness. It has even been suggested that James attempted to introduce the motto into the coinage in England but was met with hostility.⁵² The Scottish connotations were apparently so strong that, even before it had been officially adopted, the motto was deemed inappropriate for use in England.

In the latter half of the sixteenth century Scotland (under the reign of James VI from 1567) and England (under the reign of Elizabeth I from 1558), were enjoying an unusually prolonged period of peace. It is curious then that during this period the Scottish mint in Edinburgh produced designs that could be interpreted as more assertive of Scottish independence, nationhood and identity. As ever the likely reasons lay in politics and Anglo-Scottish relations. With the Reformation and the subsequent abdication of Mary Scotland had entered the English orbit, aided by funds from the English treasury.⁵³

It is the gold coins, both of the pre and post accession coinages, however that tend to bear the most potent political messages. Indeed, Stewart believes that serious consideration was given to the design and accompanying inscriptions on the coinage by James or his regents and advisors during his minority. George

⁵¹ Keith Stringer, "The Emergence of a Nation-State, 1100-1300," in *Scotland: A History*, ed. Jenny Wormald, 49-50 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

⁵² William McMillan, *Scottish Symbols: Royal, National & Ecclesiastical - their history and heraldic significance* (Paisley: Alexander Gardner, 1916), 126.

⁵³ Alex Woolf, Michael Brown, and Michael Lynch, "Anglo-Scottish relations," in *The Oxford Companion to Scottish History* (Oxford University Press, 2001) <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199234820.001.0001/acref-9780199234820-e-6>.

Buchanan was one such influence.⁵⁴ One such example is the £20 piece (fig. 6) from James VI's second coinage (1571-80). The design was the largest gold coin struck before the seventeenth century with a purpose that, in the words of Stewart, 'seems to have been more medallic than monetary.'⁵⁵ The image of the young James VI presented on the gold coin is reproduced almost exactly in Theodore Beza's *Icones* (1580), complete with the king's title (fig 7). The engraving is thought to be after a lost portrait executed by the court painter Adrian Vanson which was then despatched to Geneva. Thomson speculates that if the coin and later engraving are derived from the same original portrait then it would suggest Vanson was involved in work for the coinage some years before the earliest known record of his presence in Scotland.⁵⁶ The coin takes its inspiration from Virgil's *Aeneid*, an epic poem about the mythic origins of Rome. It follows the story of Aeneas, the eponymous hero, who leads his people from ruin into a new era of peace and prosperity. The central character parallels the feats of the Emperor Augustus and the legendary tale operates as a propaganda piece to legitimise Augustus' divine authority in the new Roman order.⁵⁷ James would return to the subject of Augustus and the themes of peace and divine authority twenty years later upon his accession to the English throne with his coronation medal (this will be explored in the following chapter).

The ten year old king is depicted in his armour holding a sword in one hand and an olive branch in the other. Underneath the inscription reads 'prepared for either', meaning war or peace. The latin legend on the reverse proclaims: PARCERE SVBIECTIS & DEBELLARE SVPERBOS (to spare the humbled and subdue the proud). There are obvious parallels to be drawn here with the history of Anglo-Scottish relations and, perhaps, the beginnings of a British empire. Interestingly, an alternative translation could replace 'humbled' for 'conquered' given that 'subiectis' literally translates as 'subjects' or 'those who obey'. While this may

⁵⁴ Ian Stewart, "Coinage and Propaganda: An Interpretation of the coin-types of James VI," in *From the Stone Age to the Forty Five*, ed. Anne O'Connor and D.V. Clarke, 453-457 (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1983).

⁵⁵ *ibid*, 455.

⁵⁶ Duncan Thomson, *Painting in Scotland 1570-1650* (Edinburgh: Trustees of the National Galleries of Scotland, 1975), 25-31.

⁵⁷ Sabine Grebe, "Augustus' Divine Authority and Vergil's "Aeneid"," in *Vergilius*, Vol. 50 2004, 35-62.

also have accurately reflected the Scottish experience it would have done so in a much more controversial manner.

Less subtly James's coins proclaim their unique history and identity such as those seen on the gold lion noble (fig. 8). Instead of a portrait of the young king a crowned lion stands in its stead, holding the sword and sceptre of royal power and authority. The latin inscription boasts POST 5 & 10 PROA INVICTA MANENT HEC (after 105 ancestors these remain unconquered). That is to say, Scotland has remained unconquerable to all: the Romans, unlike the English, or indeed the English themselves. The reverse has four crowned IR cyphers arranged in the form of a saltire with an S in the centre. The S could stand for Scotland or it could just as easily stand for Stuart, for they were effectively one in the same. This design was also seen on the two-thirds lion noble and one-third lion noble between 1582-88.

Following nearly twenty years of various Scottish political factions competing for dominance James was able to assume full royal control of government from 1584. From 1586 James himself was in receipt of a pension from the English treasury.⁵⁸ These coins could therefore be seen as an attempt to shake off any accusations or the appearance that he was beholden to Elizabeth. Yet the first new coinage instituted with James in control of government saw limited attempts at bringing the Scottish coinage closer to its English counterpart in both design and value. In September 1588, under the fifth coinage, a new gold coin was introduced by order of the Scottish Privy Council.⁵⁹ Known as the thistle noble it both weighed the same and looked the same as the popular and well established English ryal / rose noble. These coins are notable for their prominent display of a ship on the water, often carrying the sovereign, the arms of the kingdom or both. Valued at seven pounds, six shillings and eight pence - a ratio almost 10:1 Scots to English pounds. The monetary relationship between the two currencies would eventually settle at 12:1 when James came to the English

⁵⁸ Julian Goodare, "James VI's English subsidy," in *The Reign of James VI* ed. Julian Goodare and Michael Lynch (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2008), 112.

⁵⁹ Robert William Cochran-Patrick, *Records of the Coinage of Scotland*, Vol. I (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1876), 172-173, LXXIX.

throne. There were no silver coins produced during this two year period.⁶⁰

During this time the Scottish coinage was, in the view of Stewart,

... remarkable and original...there appears... to be no parallel to their range and variety in any other state of Renaissance Europe. Of course, the publicity value of coins was not exploited in the British Isles for the first time in 1567, and it was not abandoned either with the union of 1603 or with the death of James himself in 1625.⁶¹

The coinages of Scotland and England were distinctive in terms of design and value. Each embodied a unique national character with an accompanying set of national emblems. This visual template was present in the nation's respective seals, although the English seal was utilising symbolism from beyond England. England was already a composite monarchy of sorts joined with Ireland. Arguably then it is English trends in expressing the state that would later guide James in his development of a British iconography.

Physical copies of the great seals have unfortunately degraded over time and it is increasingly difficult to make out the finer details. Fortunately illustrations found in Francis Sandford's *Genealogical History* (1677) afford us a much clearer picture of the details of the seals produced in England for Elizabeth, James and Charles. Elizabeth's second great seal, created by Nicholas Hilliard in 1584, is laid out in sumptuous detail (fig. 9). There is no part of the surface that is wasted, a testament to the abilities of Hilliard to create such a richly conceived object of state power. On the obverse the queen sits on her throne, holding the orb and sceptre of state, draped in ermine robes. She is flanked by two Tudor roses and the arms of England. Her dress dominates the composition, almost filling the entire bottom half. The queen is encircled by her royal style: ELIZABETHA DEI GRACIA ANGLIE FRANCIE ET HIBERNIE REGINA FIDEI DEFENSOR (Elizabeth, by the grace of God, Queen of England, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith). The title is repeated on the reverse where we find Elizabeth on horseback holding the orb and sceptre. Tudor roses appear a further three times although one is

⁶⁰ Nicholas Holmes, SCBI 58: *Scottish coins in the National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh. Part 1, 1526-1603* (Oxford: Oxford University Press; London: Spink & Sons Ltd., 2006), 13.

⁶¹ Ian Stewart, "Coinage and Propaganda: An Interpretation of the coin-types of James VI," in *From the Stone Age to the Forty Five*, ed. Anne O'Connor and D.V. Clarke, 460 (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1983).

crowned. A crowned French fleur-de-lis also appears, designating the long lost French territories, along with a crowned Irish harp standing for the queen's second kingdom. Despite their incorporation however this seal is overwhelmingly English in nature. The Irish and French icons are relegated to the reverse and then are almost obscured by the figure of Elizabeth and a rose.

By contrast James's great seal for Scotland features exclusively Scottish symbolism (fig. 10). The obverse shows the king mounted on a horse, wearing armour, holding a drawn sword in his right hand and the reins in his left. The horse is dressed in a cloth caparison that shows a thistle and a shield bearing the royal arms of Scotland. The king's title is inscribed in Latin: IACOBVS SEXTVS DEI GRATIA REX SCOTORVM (James VI, by the grace of God, King of Scots). On the reverse side the crowned royal arms are supported by two unicorns, one holding a saltire and the other the royal standard. The shield of the royal arms is surrounded by the collar of the Order of the Thistle. The latin inscription reads: SALVVM FAC POPVLVM TVVM DOMINE (Lord save your people). Above the shield sits a crowned lion carrying a sword and sceptre atop a crowned helmet.

In the Scottish and English seals we see a continuation of the trends found in our coins: the use of distinctive national symbols arrayed in various ways but both sharing a similar visual language and meaning. This shared language, common to similar contemporary objects in Europe, would form the visual environment in which previously separate and distinctive national symbols would begin to merge - just as they had done in Spain under the Habsburgs and France under the Bourbons. Such an outcome was not assured however, just as the uniting of the crowns or later the parliaments was not assured. However with the execution of Mary at Fotheringhay Castle in 1587 a 'decisive moment' was created 'in the dynastic history of both England and Scotland, opening the way for the succession of James VI to the English throne and the creation in 1603 of an imperial British monarchy.'⁶² In Elizabeth's final years James was in secret communication with the queen's chief minister Sir Robert Cecil to secure the succession.⁶³ Despite the keenness for closer ties that was displayed earlier in

⁶² Roger Mason, "Scotland, Elizabethan England and the Idea of Britain," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Vol. 14 (2004): 279.

⁶³ Pauline Croft, *King James*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 48-49.

the sixteenth century the English, after all the successes of Elizabeth's golden age, were not particularly interested in the prospect of union any longer. They were, in fact, rather hostile to the concept:

In 1603, English perceptions were rudely challenged, first, by the accession of a Scot to the throne of England, and, second, by the deliberate promotion of ideas of Britain that did not necessarily sit comfortably with how the English viewed themselves and their role in the world.⁶⁴

The English, having defeated the Spanish Armada, sensed they were on the cusp of a great colonial empire, free from Spanish interference. They were half right: England's dreams would be realised but under a Scot who called himself king of Great Britain. As Roger Mason has put it, 'Elizabeth's greatest contribution to the expansion of England was to die, unmarried and childless.'⁶⁵ These developments would make it possible to draw upon national emblems from both nations and attempt to forge a shared state iconography and visual culture. Given much of Anglo-Scottish history however, the melding of national icons as potent political signifiers of identity and nationhood would prove to be at times controversial.

⁶⁴ Roger Mason, "Scotland, Elizabethan England and the Idea of Britain," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Vol. 14 (2004): 280-281.

⁶⁵ *ibid*, 280.

Figure 1. Francis and Mary testoon, 1560.



Figure 2. Henry Basse, Edward VI coronation medal, 1546.



Figure 3. Nicholas Hilliard, design for the obverse for the Great Seal of Ireland, c1584.



Figure 4. Ten shilling piece, 1593.





Figure 5. Rider, 1594.



Figure 6. £20 piece, 1576.



Figure 7. James VI
frontispiece to Theodore
Beza's Icones, 1580.

Figure 8. Lion noble, 1586.



Figure 9. Illustration of Elizabeth's Second Great Seal.

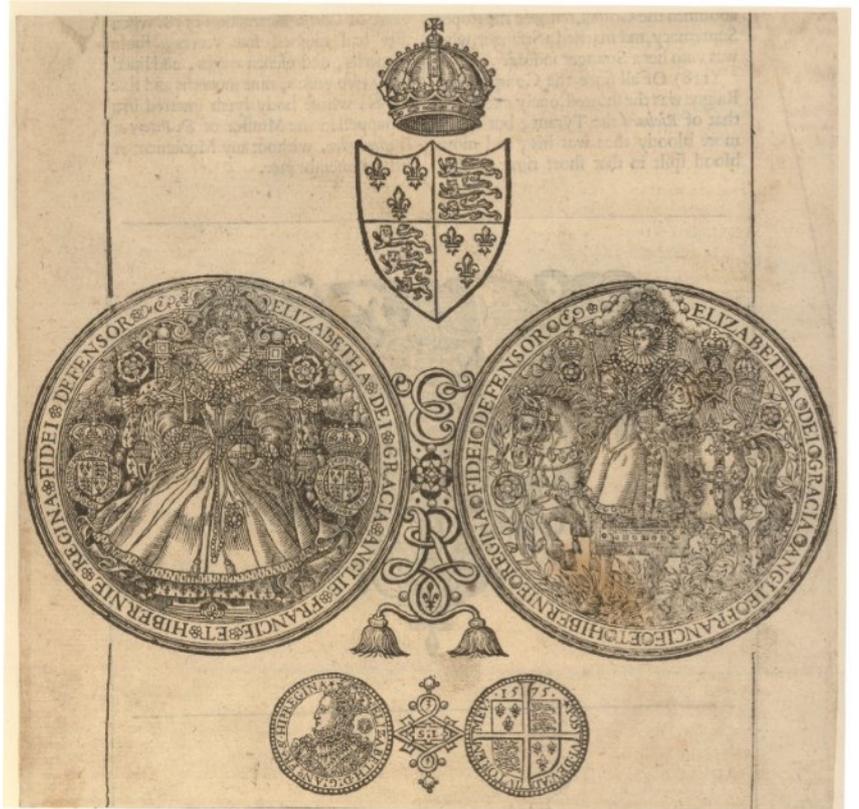


Figure 10. Great Seal of James VI of Scotland.



III

Coins, Medals and Seals after the Union of the Crowns under James VI and I, 1603-1625

And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all⁶⁶

When the crowns of England and Ireland were assumed by James VI in 1603 the implications for Scotland were immense. After centuries of attempts by their English neighbours the Scots found themselves, almost by accident, in a position where their king was now ruler of the entire British Isles. Such a position led Scots to believe that the union of the crowns marked the start of a British empire, with (perhaps somewhat optimistically) Presbyterianism as its centre.⁶⁷ Despite Scotland's newfound preeminence however this new political reality came at a price: Britain would not be governed from Edinburgh but from London. The Scots would have to come to terms with an absent court. This had a disastrous effect on what remained of the country's once flourishing cultural and artistic output - already much reduced since its pre-Reformation apex under the court patronage of James's predecessors. With changes in the religious and political landscape in the latter half of the sixteenth century, as well as worsening economic woes, Scotland was not an ideal environment for artists to prosper.⁶⁸ As Thomson writes, 'painters of any degree of sophistication were rare and inevitably foreign, and such were the rewards and such the limited demand

⁶⁶ *Holy Bible*, Book of Ezekiel, Chapter 37 Verse 22 (King James Version).

⁶⁷ Allan Macinnes, "Regal Union for Britain, 1603-38," in *The New British History: Founding a Modern State, 1603-1715*, ed. Glenn Burgess, 35 (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 1999).

⁶⁸ Kevin Sharpe, *Image Wars: Promoting Kings and Commonwealths in England, 1603-1660* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2010), 58-59.

that they were hardly likely to be of the greatest accomplishment'.⁶⁹ While the appearance of Adrian Vanson and Anne of Denmark in the 1580s and 1590s (and some renewed interest in the arts from the City of Edinburgh) offered Scotland the chance of an artistic recovery it still remained a 'backwater' in comparison to the visual arts of England or continental Europe.⁷⁰ Following 1603 an artist with any serious talent and ambition would likely have sought patronage elsewhere in the country or left entirely either for England or the European continent.

With the king's journey south the centre of political, cultural, administrative, diplomatic, economic and even ecclesiastical gravity shifted decisively towards London. James would famously boast to the English parliament of being able to govern Scotland not by his presence but by his pen, instructing his privy council in Edinburgh from Whitehall.⁷¹ There was however a certain resistance in Scotland to this centralisation of power. Karin Bowie has detailed an emerging sense of a Scottish constitutionalism under the regal union which attempted to place legal constraints upon the absent king in church and parliamentary matters.⁷² Governing three kingdoms from London - the 'imperial capital' - naturally lent itself to conceptions of an British imperial monarchy. This manifested itself, to varying degrees, in the visual language of the state and visual culture more widely.

Britain was by no means unique in dealing with the experience of composite monarchy. There were several in existence from the Habsburg territories of Spain and Austria, through the Scandinavian monarchies, to Poland and Lithuania and these examples informed Jacobean debates around Britain's own union.⁷³

⁶⁹ Duncan Thomson, *Painting in Scotland, 1570-1650* (Edinburgh: Trustees of the National Galleries of Scotland, 1975), 10.

⁷⁰ Kevin Sharpe, *Image Wars: Promoting Kings and Commonwealths in England, 1603-1660* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2010), 59.

⁷¹ Maurice Lee, "James VI's Government of Scotland after 1603," in *The Scottish Historical Review* Vol. 55, No. 159, Part 1 (Apr., 1976), 41-53.

⁷² Karin Bowie, "'A Legal Limited Monarchy': Scottish Constitutionalism in the Union of Crowns, 1603-1707," in *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, Volume 35 Issue 2, 131-154.

⁷³ Jenny Womald, "James VI, James I and the Identity of Britain," in *The British Problem, c. 1534-1707: State formation in the Atlantic Archipelago*, ed. Brendan Bradshaw and John Morrill, 150 (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996).

Yet, in contrast to these continental examples, the British polity that formed first through regal and then later parliamentary union has (with the notable exception of most of Ireland) remained largely intact. This constitutional underpinning, binding once separate kingdoms into a shared legal and cultural framework, provided a bulwark against the ebb and flow of dynastic fortunes and ambitions.

Operating from Whitehall, at the head of three kingdoms, further re-enforced James's own views on the divine nature of monarchy - already fully formed by the time he came to the English throne and shaped by his experiences as king of Scotland. The king had a reputation as a scholar and laid out his thinking on monarchy in his treatises *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies* (1598) and *Basilikon Doron* (1599). His writings were well received in England upon his accession and there was much excitement at the republishing of *Basilikon Doron* in 1603.⁷⁴ James remains unique amongst British sovereigns in having experienced 36 years of kingship prior to succeeding to the throne of England. As such James was more aware than most that he wore not one crown but three. The appreciation of governing a polity of realms that extended beyond the borders of England, while not usually shared amongst his English subjects, can be readily detected throughout contemporary objects in both countries. Keith Brown summarises James's 'vision of a new British imperium' in which he 'would preside over united royal courts, parliaments, administrations, legal systems, churches and peoples.'⁷⁵ These imperial notions manifested themselves almost immediately in the visual language of the state under the new reign.

James was crowned at Westminster in July 1603. Due to the outbreak of plague that year there were no great ceremonial processions until the opening of parliament and the king's entry into London in March the following year.⁷⁶ In order to communicate his intentions to his new subjects James, adopting the now well established English medallic tradition, had a medal struck to commemorate the event (fig 11). It did not disguise his imperial pretensions.

⁷⁴ D. H. Wilson, *King James VI and I* (London: Cape, 1956), 166.

⁷⁵ Keith Brown, *Kingdom or Province?: Scotland and the Regal Union, 1603-1715* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), 87.

⁷⁶ D.H. Wilson, *King James VI and I* (London: Cape, 1956), 165.

Cast in silver the obverse bears a bust of James, clad in armour and wearing a laurel wreath around his head in place of a crown. The king is surrounded by the latin legend IAC I BRIT CÆ AVG HÆ CÆSARVM CÆ D D (James I, Caesar Augustus of Britain, Caesar the heir of the Caesars, presents this medal).

The king is depicted having assumed the mantle of Octavian - founder of the Roman Principate, first Emperor of Rome and the adopted son of Julius Caesar. When Caesar was posthumously declared a god in 42 BC Octavian became known as the *divi filius* - son of a god. Later he was awarded the titles of Augustus and Princeps Civitatis (First Citizen) by the Senate, confirming his position at the head of the Roman state. All subsequent emperors also bore this title.⁷⁷ Since antiquity Augustus (as he has become known to history) has been regarded as the bringer of unprecedented peace, prosperity and stability to the Roman empire - ushering in a period known as the Pax Romana. James's coronation medal is the first example of an English/British monarch adopting Roman imperial iconography.⁷⁸ As such it was clearly a deliberate measure to be associated with the *divi filius*.

James seized the opportunity to promote his model of imperial kingship to his new subjects by presenting himself as the heir to the Augustan legacy. While previous English monarchs such as Edward VI had medals made to commemorate their coronation James's medal was struck specifically for distribution at his coronation. This makes it the first such example to be created in England for that purpose.⁷⁹ Of the classical rulers the image of Augustus was highly recognisable and he was identified on coins during the Renaissance by iconographers. Perhaps the earliest and most significant of those scholars to do so was Andrea Fulvio who included a coin portrait print in his 1517 *Illustrium imagines* (fig. 12). The coin depicts Augustus in profile wearing the 'radiate crown of divinity' accompanied with the label of *divus*.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ N.G.L. Hammond and H.H. Scullard (ed), entry on Augustus in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* 2nd ed (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 149-151.

⁷⁸ Edward Hawkins, *Medallic Illustrations of the History of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. I ed. Augustus Franks and Herbert Gruber (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1885), 191-192.

⁷⁹ *ibid*, 192.

⁸⁰ Nancy T. de Grummond, "Portraits of Augustus and his family in the Albacini Collection," in the *Journal of the History of Collections* 3 no. 2 (1991), 167-181.

The allusion to ancient imperial and divine authority serves to further illustrate James's own belief in divine-right monarchy. It also hints at his divinely-ordained mission to unite the kingdoms. Inheriting the English throne, thereby uniting the crowns, was providential and, drawing on examples in nature and history, evidence of God's will that the kingdoms should be joined together as one. This view was eloquently made when James addressed the English parliament for the first time in March 1604. In a further allusion to Augustus the speech was preoccupied with the theme of peace - what James referred to as 'peace within' and 'outward peace'.⁸¹ Internal peace was concerned with his dream of union and greater harmony between his kingdoms and peoples while external peace was concerned with his other major policy objective: securing an end to hostilities with Spain (which would be resolved later that same year with the Treaty of London). In light of this speech it is obvious that James recognised the importance of representing his image and, crucially, its usefulness as a valuable opportunity to promote his policy agenda.⁸² While his union ambitions are hinted at on the obverse of the medal with the reference to 'Caesar Augustus of Britain' the desire for peace and thus safety and security is addressed on the reverse. It depicts a crowned, perhaps Scottish, lion rampant holding a beacon and wheat-sheaf with the legend ECCE PHAOS POPVLIQ SALVS (behold the beacon and safety of the people). The medal presents a reassuring image by inferring that James the lion is ever vigilant of threats posed to the security of his realms and peoples. The potential threats to the people likely refers to Spain or other foreign powers though it could also be interpreted as an acknowledgement that he would not impose further unity against the wishes of his new subjects.

James certainly had an uneasy relationship with his English subjects. His reactions to them during his progress south and his royal entry into London are well documented. They record him being 'at first baffled by the enormous crowds that flocked to him and then increasingly irritated at their presence and

⁸¹ "House of Commons Journal Volume 1: 22 March 1604," in *Journal of the House of Commons: Volume 1, 1547-1629*, (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1802), 142-149. British History Online, accessed August 14, 2017, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/commons-jrnl/vol1/pp142-149>.

⁸² Kevin Sharpe, *Image Wars: Promoting Kings and Commonwealths in England, 1603-1660* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2010), 84.

their expectation that he charm them.’⁸³ With such reactions it is understandable why there were no further royal pageants during his reign.

Anglo-Scottish relations were difficult at the best of times. While the transition of power from Elizabeth to James had been peaceful the English were not particularly thrilled at the prospect of being ruled by a Scottish king. Populist ‘Scotophobics’ railed against Scots in the House of Commons and Scots were in danger of being attacked in London. In Edinburgh the Scottish privy council was forced to outlaw oral and written polemics against Englishmen.⁸⁴ Such mutual hostility was unsurprising considering the frequent conflicts and tensions that had erupted between the two kingdoms during the sixteenth century, claiming the lives of at least two Scottish monarchs and a significant proportion of the Scots nobility in the process. The most recent episode involved James’s own mother, Mary, who had been executed after she was implicated in a plot to usurp Elizabeth and restore Catholicism to England.

Presenting such an powerful and recognisable image was undoubtedly an effort to further legitimise his claim to the English throne in the eyes of the people. This was all the more vital given his refusal to meet and charm the adoring London crowds as Elizabeth had done. Keith Brown observes that the king ‘was not a popular ruler’ and ‘made no effort to court popular approval.’⁸⁵ While James’s unpopularity in England is not in doubt the assertion that he made no attempt to court favour may not be entirely accurate if one considers the design of his coronation medal.

There was a high demand for the king’s image amongst his new subjects and this was met largely through prints. Yet James showed little interest in or understanding of the potential of the medium, perhaps because Scotland had no printmaking tradition of its own.⁸⁶ His predecessor, the image-conscious

⁸³ Jeffrey Steven Doty, *Popularity and Publicity in Early Modern England* (Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 2008), 146. <http://ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/docview/304631482?accountid=14540> [accessed 16 February, 2018].

⁸⁴ Keith Brown, *Kingdom or Province?: Scotland and the Regal Union, 1603-1715* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), 88.

⁸⁵ *ibid*, 86.

⁸⁶ Antony Griffiths, *The Print in Stuart Britain* (British Museum Press, London 1998), 39.

Elizabeth, had at one time attempted to control representations of her in print but the industry was left largely unregulated.⁸⁷ James was content to leave it as such. The king's apparent disinterest in the importance of this growing industry for the royal image meant that it was left to printmakers themselves to introduce the king to his new subjects on a wide scale. Consequently the prints produced reflect how the public tended to view their new king, rather than how the king wished to be viewed. Portraits of the entire family were particularly popular with engravings produced by Renold Elstrack for major publishers Sudbury & Humble.⁸⁸

Several prints that appeared following the accession also emphasised union and the legitimacy of James's rule. In 1603 John Speed published *The most happy Unions contracted betwixt the Princes of the Blood Royall of theis towe Famous Kingdomes of England & Scotland* (fig. 13). This print fulfilled the demand to explain how James, the first Stuart to sit on the English throne, was related to the Tudors and thus a legitimate heir to Elizabeth.⁸⁹ It depicts the family tree illustrating the various marriage unions between the royal houses of England and Scotland, notably the marriage of James IV and Margaret Tudor. The print is decorated with national icons, flags and various coats of arms of royal and noble houses. While the print did not explicitly unify any national iconographies it visualised the extent to which the royal families had intermingled, resulting in a British royal family. The English and Scottish coat of arms were displayed prominently in German etchings of the coronation scene inside Westminster Abbey (fig 14). While the coronation ceremony itself presented him as the king of England to his subjects the 'supporting propaganda was heavily British in tone.'⁹⁰ The tone was arguably set by James himself. Unfortunately, along with James's refusal to entertain the London crowds, the promotion of union and unionist iconography must have contributed to his unpopularity.

⁸⁷ *ibid*, 19.

⁸⁸ *ibid*, 39.

⁸⁹ *ibid*, 45.

⁹⁰ Keith Brown, "The Vanishing Emperor: British Kingship and its Decline, 1603-1707," in *Scots and Britons: Scottish Political Thought and the Union of 1603*, ed. Roger Mason, 65 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

It is to James's credit that he was able to deploy an effective evenhandedness in his approach to governing the sometimes competing interests and attitudes of three kingdoms and their subjects. This approach was also evident in his approach to the union question and its visual manifestation on his coins, medals and seals. Jenny Wormald has argued that even while James went about promoting a generalised British identity through various means it was not entirely clear that he knew exactly what this new British identity entailed. She suggests that James's ambiguity was a deliberate tactic, aimed at managing the political opposition to the concept of a British realm while keeping the idea of Britain alive.⁹¹ It is certainly clear, from examples in his first coinage in England, that James had yet to refine his use of unionist imagery. The overriding iconographical theme during his first year in England was clear however and that was an imperial one. Roman imperial and religious themes were particularly strong in his early medals.⁹² Indeed, James had even briefly considered adopting the style Emperor of Great Britain.⁹³

Beyond the appearance of the new royal arms on the coinage these imperial, indeed British, themes did not manifest themselves elsewhere immediately. Instead they would gradually emerge over time as part of a sustained effort to promote union. As Galloway explains:

James sought to advance his project by further unification in the public symbolism of England and Scotland. This reflected continued emphasis in Court culture on Union, the revival of Britain and the personal mission of the king.⁹⁴

In the year following James's accession England saw a few important developments with regards to the creation of a unionist iconography across

⁹¹ Jenny Wormald, "James VI, James I and the Identity of Britain," in *The British Problem, c. 1534-1707: State formation in the Atlantic Archipelago*, ed. Brendan Bradshaw and John Morrill, 148-171 (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996).

⁹² Kevin Sharpe, *Image Wars: Promoting Kings and Commonwealths in England, 1603-1660* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2010), 80-81.

⁹³ J.G.A Pocock, "Two kingdoms and three histories?," in *Scots and Britons: Scottish Political Thought and the Union of 1603*, ed. Roger Mason, 307-308 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

⁹⁴ Bruce Galloway, *The Union of England and Scotland, 1603-1608* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1986), 82.

Britain. In addition to his coronation medal the change in regime required the creation of two, possibly three, great seals for use in the three kingdoms. The coinage in both countries would also require a change, although for different reasons. Galloway regards the union of the national flags as the ‘most important and controversial’ of the measures that James undertook in the early years of his reign in England. Perhaps the most significant and visible change to the iconography was the devising of a new design for the royal coat of arms for the House of Stuart. As Sharpe has commented, this was of great importance because the coat of arms represented and promoted the union to his subjects.⁹⁵ Not only would the arms feature in engravings, books, and acts of parliament, to name a few examples, they would also feature prominently on the great seals of both realms and on the coinage. These visual modes of promotion were essential given that the king did not often appear in public.

Heraldry stands at the centre of state expression. It is the most ancient form of national visual expression, stretching back to a time before concepts of nationality existed. It is also in itself an art form with its own unique technical language and style.⁹⁶ In England under Elizabeth, and all English monarchs since Edward III, the traditional three lions passant had been quartered with the French fleur-de-lis to reflect the claim to the French throne. In Scotland the royal arms had remained the red lion rampant since its adoption by William the Lion in the twelfth century. In Ireland the harp was used as the national symbol when the kingdom was established in 1541 by Henry VIII, although only officially adopted under James VI and I.⁹⁷ Now the arms of all three kingdoms were incorporated into a new ‘British’ arrangement by James VI and I for the first time. Furthermore, the heraldic beasts who often appear alongside to ‘support’ the shield would also be altered. In Scotland a lion replaced one of the unicorns to stand for England while in England the red dragon of Cadwallader, introduced

⁹⁵ Kevin Sharpe, *Image Wars: Promoting Kings and Commonwealths in England, 1603-1660* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2010), 79-80.

⁹⁶ For the sake of clarity the correct heraldic terminology will be limited. See *Boutell's Heraldry*, rev ed. J.P. Brooke-Little (London and New York: Frederick Warne, 1983) for a useful guide on the precise language and detail of various official arrangements for the coat of arms of Great Britain and Ireland.

⁹⁷ Charles Boutell, *Boutell's Heraldry*, rev ed. J.P. Brooke-Little (London and New York: Frederick Warne, 1983), 213.

by the Tudors to reflect their Welsh origins, would be supplanted by a unicorn for Scotland.

This new 'British' arrangement was far from universal however and two versions were in use: one in England and another in Scotland. The reason for this difference largely arises out of the difficult issue of precedence: which arms should appear first in this new British realm? The issue of precedence could prove be a contentious one when it came to combining the national symbols of Scotland and England. When proposals were brought forward for a new union flag that combined the crosses of St George and St Andrew there was difficulty reaching an agreement on a suitable design that did not lend dominance to one over the other.⁹⁸ The dual arrangement rather neatly side stepped that difficult question. The variant used in Scotland awarded precedence to the Scottish, rather than English arms, in the first quarter of the shield. The reverse was applied to the arms used in England, placing the English arms in the first quarter. While it is likely this arrangement was settled upon out of political sensitivity the approach was far from consistent. When Edward III combined the English arms with those of France it was the French fleur-de-lis that took precedence. This may have been because the French kingdom possessed a more ancient pedigree, having been established following the division of the Carolingian empire in 843 - a century before the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms coalesced into a united England. Yet the arrangement withstood the test of time, perhaps speaking to continued Anglo-French rivalries and the numerous conflicts between the two powers. The fleur-de-lis was eventually dropped from the coat of arms in 1801 when, upon passage of the Anglo-Irish union, George III took the opportunity to abandon the claim to reflect realities following the French Revolution.⁹⁹

Another important aspect to heraldry, particularly of a royal nature, is the crown. The crown itself is an important symbol of power and authority and appears on all manner of items, including coins. It is a specific crown, referred

⁹⁸ Bruce Galloway, *The Union of England and Scotland, 1603-1608* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1986), 82.

⁹⁹ Charles Boutell, *Boutell's Heraldry*, rev ed. J.P. Brooke-Little (London and New York: Frederick Warne, 1983), 205-222.

to as an imperial crown, with a specific legal meaning. Each crown, and therefore each kingdom, has its own design but they follow similar patterns. James and his successor would be depicted on their coins wearing different crowns, depending on whether they were minted in Scotland or England. While the crown in use in Scotland during James's time is the same one used today the one most familiar to the English public in the seventeenth century was the Tudor crown. What makes it distinct, and therefore an imperial crown, from earlier medieval crowns is the arches that form a closed crown instead of the older tradition of an open crown. James III and Henry VII were the first Scottish and English monarchs respectively to be depicted on coins wearing the closed crown.¹⁰⁰ The Tudor crown has been compared to the crown of the Holy Roman Emperor.¹⁰¹ This is significant because an imperial monarchy was invested with legal as well as territorial authority. The concept of a kingdom being an 'empire' to the sixteenth century mind was linked to conceptions of sovereignty. This theory manifested itself notably in England as a legal basis for the break with Rome. The Act in Restraint of Appeals (1533) claimed that as the English crown was imperial in nature England was an empire, i.e. a sovereign nation, and consequently the pope had no authority over the king.¹⁰² Some sixty years previously the Scottish parliament, influenced by French legal thinking, declared that James III had 'full jurisdiction and free empire' over his kingdom.¹⁰³ His Stuart successor, James VI and I, had obtained imperium over three kingdoms. This mere fact lent his position an air of imperial authority which would reach its highest form of expression in Britain under Charles I with assistance from artists such as van Dyck. Interestingly, in one coin issued in 1637 Charles was depicted on both sides wearing his respective crown.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ Brian Levack, "Law, sovereignty and the union," in *Scots and Britons: Scottish Political Thought and the Union of 1603*, ed. Roger Mason, 225 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

¹⁰¹ Andrew Belsey and Catherine Belsey, "Icons of Divinity: Portraits of Elizabeth I," in *Renaissance Bodies: The Human Figure in English Culture, 1540-1660* ed. Lucy Gent and Nigel Llewellyn, 14 (London: Reaktion, 1990).

¹⁰² Brian Levack, "Law, sovereignty and the union," in *Scots and Britons: Scottish Political Thought and the Union of 1603*, ed. Roger Mason, 224 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

¹⁰³ Roger Mason, "Renaissance and Reformation: The Sixteenth Century," in *Scotland: A History*, ed. Jenny Wormald, 94 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

¹⁰⁴ Keith Brown, "The Vanishing Emperor: British Kingship and its Decline, 1603-1707," in *Scots and Britons: Scottish Political Thought and the Union of 1603*, ed. Roger Mason, 79 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

One of the most important uses of the royal arms, certainly from a legal point of view, would be as part of the great seal of the realm. Without the royal seal the authorisation of documents, orders, proclamations and so forth that formed the daily business of government could not occur. Charles Anthony was thus ordered to engrave a new great seal for England.¹⁰⁵ An illustration found in Francis Sandford's *Genealogical History* (1677) depicts the English seal that must have been in use before James changed the royal style by proclamation (fig 15). Using Elizabeth's seal as a baseline we can see that greater prominence has been given to the national symbols of Scotland, Ireland and France alongside England's to create a more thoroughly unionist design. James sits enthroned in his parliamentary robes holding the sword and sceptre of state. On either side the new British Stuart arms appear crowned and encircled with the motto of the Order of the Garter. The king wears the collar of the order and the garter just below his knee. The king is flanked by a lion and a unicorn, the heraldic beasts of England and Scotland respectively. The regal title IACOBVS DEI GRATIA ANGLIE SCOTTIE FRANCIE ET HIBERNIE REX FIDEI DEFENSOR runs along the edge of the seal. On the reverse the king is in armour on horseback holding a shield that displays the the new royal arms. The arms are repeated on the horse's mantle. In contrast to Elizabeth's seal the rose, harp and fleur-de-lis all appear once - though the rose is shown larger. Curiously, there is no thistle present. If the seal was re-designed at a later date it would likely only be to take account for the change to the king's royal style in 1604.

Meanwhile, in Scotland a new seal was also required so as to acknowledge the new 'British' king (fig 16). On the obverse side the king is depicted, mounted on a horse, wearing armour and a crown. He holds a sword above his head with one hand and the reins in the other. Behind is a fleur-de-lis and a portcullis. DEVS IVDICVM TVVM REGI DA (Lord grant judgement to your king). The reverse shows a crowned shield with the royal arms (giving due precedence to the Scottish arms in the first quarter) and supported by a unicorn and a lion who are holding the flags of St Andrew and St George respectively. The shield is surrounded by the collars of the Order of the Thistle and the Order of the Garter. IACOBVS DEI

¹⁰⁵ Helen Farquhar, "Portraiture of our Stewart Monarchs on their Coins and Medals," in the *British Numismatic Journal*, Vol 5 (1908): 148.

GRATIA MAGNI BRITANIE FRANCIE ET HIBERNI REX (James, by the grace of God, King of Great Britain, France and Ireland). The use of the 'magnae britanniae' style instead of the traditional 'scotorum, angliae...' etc stands in contrast to the English seal of the same period. While no date is attributed to the creation of his Scottish seal we can assume that since the seal is an important legal device and James had not yet changed his official style to king of Great Britain it is likely that this seal was adopted after 1604. James will have most likely continued to use his old Scottish seal for the moment rather than go to the expense of making a new one to take account of his new English and Irish titles.

In England the switch to the new coinage was almost immediate. Running from May 1603 through to October 1604 James's first English coinage served as an 'interim continuation of Elizabeth's final coinage' before a more permanent one could be created.¹⁰⁶ This Elizabethan continuation meant that the coins bore James's English and Scottish titles separately thus bestowing a degree of continuity and legitimacy upon the Scottish king in his new realm. As such we shall not dwell on the particulars of James's first coinage except to note that even without the British title these early coins were still able to carry an effective unionist message beyond displaying the new coat of arms. This can be discerned most prominently in the gold crown, half-crown, and the silver halfgroat denominations which display the latin legend TVEATVR VNITA DEVS ('may God protect the things that are united', i.e. the kingdoms) and ROSA SINE SPINA (a rose without thorns) respectively. It is therefore important not to underestimate the extent to which even in their 'prototype' stage coins promoted union in England. This suggests James had a clear intention from the outset to promote union and, crucially, to devise new ways of promoting union.

While James was now king of three nations the promotion of an imperial image, while limited, does suggest a clear intent to adopt a visual approach to pursue his wish for further unity. For the rest of the decade James made it his mission to unite Scotland and England, famously referred to as his union project. Yet within a year the realistic prospect of a united British realm had disintegrated. Brown explains:

¹⁰⁶ C.H.V. Sutherland, *English Coinage, 600-1900* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1973), 158-159.

James moved too far too fast... the slick presentation of unionist ideas in the London entry of July 1604, the officially backed flurry of supportive pamphlets, and the careful preparation of crown ministers in both kingdoms collided with deep national prejudice and innate conservatism in both countries.¹⁰⁷

Galloway has cautioned against the assumption that there was a 'headlong rush towards union in 1603-4' on James's part. Instead he limited himself to those 'areas where he could use prerogative powers, without prejudicing wider discussions in parliament.'¹⁰⁸ This assertion certainly bears out when looking at the coins, medals and seals created in this period, all of which fall under the purview of the royal prerogative. It must, however, not be assumed that just because there was no overt political push for union in the immediate aftermath of the king's accession that there was no political movement at all. The most important contributions at this early stage in James's union project were visual in nature.

James had announced his political intentions concerning union in a speech to the English Parliament in March 1604. The speech would be recalled in the coinage later that year. In the speech James drew a direct English historical parallel to the joining of the Scottish and English crowns: the end of the War of the Roses. He compares his joining of the kingdoms to the joining of the Houses of Lancaster and York under Henry VII of England and his marriage to Elizabeth of York:

Although outward peace be a great blessing, yet it is as far inferior to peace within, as civil wars are more cruel and unnatural than wars abroad. Therefore the second great blessing that God hath with my person send unto you, is peace within, and that in a double form. First, by my decent lineally out of the loins of Henry VII, is reunited and confirmed in me the union of the two princely Roses of the two Houses of Lancaster and York, whereof that king of happy memory was the first uniter, as he was also the first ground later of the other peace. The lamentable and miserable events by the civil and bloody dissention betwix the two houses was so great and so late, as it need not be renewed unto your

¹⁰⁷ Keith Brown, *Kingdom or Province?: Scotland and the Regal Union, 1603-1715* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), 87.

¹⁰⁸ Bruce Galloway, *The Union of England and Scotland, 1603-1608* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1986), 15-16.

memories: which, as it was first settled and united in him, so it is now reunited and confirmed in me... but the union of those two princely houses in nothing comparable to the union of two ancient and famous kingdoms, which is the other inward peace annexed to my person.¹⁰⁹

During the first decade of his new reign it was James's wish to unite the two nations just as York and Lancaster had been united or, it should be noted, those of his own immediate Stuart and Tudor forebears. That the king made an effort to draw such parallels should be regarded as a political attempt to court favour with his new English subjects. He was able to show an understanding and sensitivity to English history while at the same time demonstrate that it is possible to make two halves whole once again despite any bitterness of feeling.

In April 1604 James had requested that the Commons grant him the title King of Great Britain, France and Ireland but this was denied.¹¹⁰ In October however James ended up taking matters into his own hands and assumed the title himself by proclamation rather than by statute. This new style was employed in both Scotland and England and was even used by the Scottish parliament.¹¹¹ Sir Francis Bacon had advised the king that the new royal style could 'be used in letters, treaties, proclamations, dedications and coinage, though not in 'any legal proceeding, instrument or assurance.'¹¹² This insistence meant that the English parliament would continue using the old style in its proceedings.

Despite the refusal of the Commons to legally adopt James's preferred title its creation was a crucial development. For the rest of the reign the new royal style would be present on most items bearing his iconography, particularly those more likely to be seen by his subjects and foreign dignitaries such as coins, proclamations and diplomatic correspondence. With the introduction of the new coinages in Scotland and England we would also start to see a broad uniformity across both kingdoms with regards to a unionist iconographical style. At the centre of these developments lay politics as James initiated his bid for greater union.

¹⁰⁹ James VI and I, *The Kings Maiesties Speech* (London: Robert Barker, 1604).

¹¹⁰ D. H. Wilson, *King James VI and I* (London: Cape, 1956), 251-253.

¹¹¹ *ibid*, 251-253.

¹¹² *ibid*, 251-253.

While the Commons had declined to legally alter the style of the king they had reluctantly voted to proceed on James's request to appoint commissioners to explore union.¹¹³ Joined by commissioners from Scotland they first met in London on 15 October to discuss the thorny issue of a possible union of parliaments and agreement was reached on a common 'British' citizenship and free trade between the kingdoms. Members of the king's parliaments were not as keen on the prospect of further unification as the king was however and, with each fearing a loss of influence at the expense of the other, killed off any chance of progress.¹¹⁴

James was well aware of the usefulness of images and knew that words, however eloquently put, would not be enough to sell union to his people. Galloway has discussed the emphasis that was placed on improving the image of the union project by 'gestures of symbolic and future unity' amidst political and diplomatic pressures.¹¹⁵ These gestures took the form of two proclamations issued in the autumn of 1604 on the royal style and the coinage. Some considerable thought on the part of James VI and I and Sir Robert Cecil appears to have gone into the coinage, particularly the choice of inscriptions and the kind of unionist message that was to be disseminated. That these two particular issues were linked in the mind of the king and his councillors demonstrates the importance placed on the unionist image that was being crafted. As Sharpe explains, James commissioned medals 'throughout his reign to commemorate - or perhaps even promote - policies which he felt the need to sell.'¹¹⁶

To commemorate the meeting of the commissioners a medal was struck (fig 17). Made of bronze the obverse depicts a portrait bust of James that shares some features with his coronation medal, notably his armour with falling collar and scarf. In this instance the laurel wreath has been replaced with a fashionable hat

¹¹³ *ibid*, 252.

¹¹⁴ Keith Brown, *Kingdom or Province?: Scotland and the Regal Union, 1603-1715* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), 87.

¹¹⁵ Bruce Galloway, *The Union of England and Scotland, 1603-1608* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1986), 58-62.

¹¹⁶ Kevin Sharpe, *Image Wars: Promoting Kings and Commonwealths in England, 1603-1660* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2010), 81.

fastened up on one side by a rich jewel and feathers. The image of the king is surrounded by his new style in Latin: IAC D G MAG BRIT FR ET HIB R (James, by the grace of God, King of Great Britain, France and Ireland). On the reverse two sceptres are displayed passing through a crown with the legend FIRMANTVR BIN SVB VNO 15 O 604. (The two are established under one, 15 Oct. 1604). A chain of roses and thistles encloses the device on both sides. Although dated 15 October it must have been issued between 20 October and December when the commissioners on the union were dissolved.¹¹⁷ This example might potentially be viewed as an intermediate stage in the evolution of the king's depiction, standing between the earlier coronation medal and a number of later portraits attributed to John de Critz the Elder.

John de Critz served as Serjeant-Painter to the King from 1605. James was reluctant to sit for court painters however so many portraits from the de Critz workshop essentially adopt the same pose, thought to be derived from a full length original similar to the one in the Prado (fig 18).¹¹⁸ The king stands before the viewer rather informally, with his right hand on his hip, without any obvious trappings of regal power. In addition to the collar of the Order of the Garter James is shown wearing 'a greate and riche jewell of gould, called the MIRROR OF GREATE BRITTAINE,' on his hat.¹¹⁹ In 1604 the brooch was fashioned out of jewels James had inherited from Mary and Elizabeth.¹²⁰ As its name suggests it was designed to commemorate the union of the crowns and promote the unity of the kingdoms. It also had added resonance for James who was reportedly 'fond of large jemstones, which he viewed as symbols of the divine right of monarchy.'¹²¹ Its use in the painting suggests James liked to wear it as a hat badge, as was the fashion of the day. As the fashion changed from Jacobean 'encrusted vulgarity'

¹¹⁷ Edward Hawkins, *Medallic Illustrations of the History of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. I ed. Augustus Franks and Herbert Gruber (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1885), 194-195.

¹¹⁸ Karen Hearn, *Dynasties: Painting in Tudor and Jacobean England, 1530-1630* (London: Tate Publishing, 1995), 184.

¹¹⁹ John Nichols, *The Progresses, Processions and Magnificent Festivities of James I*, Vol. II (London: J Nichols, 1828), 46-47.

¹²⁰ Roy Strong, "Three Royal Jewels: The Three Brothers, the Mirror of Great Britain and the Feather," in *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 108, No. 760 (Jul., 1966), 351.

¹²¹ Anna Reynolds, *In Fine Style: The Art of Tudor and Stuart Fashion* (London: Royal Collection Trust, 2013), 116-117.

to Caroline ‘subtle elegancies’ the jewel was sold in a bid to shore up the royal finances.¹²²

The sheer number of replications of this full length picture in various sizes testify to the high demand for the king’s image at home and abroad.¹²³ Several are known to depict James wearing the Mirror of Great Britain.¹²⁴ One such portrait, located in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery (fig 19), was completed in 1604 - the same year the jewel was made and the medal struck. Although not confirmed given it’s similarities it is not unreasonable to believe the picture to be one of the many versions produced from the de Critz workshop based upon the full-length official portrait type.¹²⁵ A further picture was completed in 1610 and now rests in the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich (fig 20). In three-quarters length format it features two prominent unionist signifiers: the Mirror of Great Britain and, unusually for the de Critz pictures, the English arrangement of the new British coat of arms. According to Sharpe the de Critz composition and inclusion of the Mirror of Great Britain ‘suggests the royal agenda’ by identifying the king with the bid towards further union. The numerous portraits produced to this composition only served to advertise the union project that was such a priority in the first years of his English reign. That such imagery was still included in portraits produced from the de Critz workshop after James’s attempts at closer union had failed attests to his strength of feeling on the matter. James would continue to promote his policy objectives through portraiture. The 1618 and 1620 royal portraits by Paul von Somer sought to promote the desirability of a marriage to the Spanish as the king sought to solidify the increasingly difficult peace with the Habsburgs.¹²⁶

¹²² Roy Strong, “Three Royal Jewels: The Three Brothers, the Mirror of Great Britain and the Feather,” in *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 108, No. 760 (Jul., 1966), 352.

¹²³ Karen Hearn, *Dynasties: Painting in Tudor and Jacobean England, 1530-1630* (London: Tate Publishing, 1995), 184-185.

¹²⁴ Roy Strong, “Three Royal Jewels: The Three Brothers, the Mirror of Great Britain and the Feather,” in *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 108, No. 760 (Jul., 1966), 351.

¹²⁵ While not mentioned explicitly by Hearn (*Dynasties*, 184) as being derived from the official portrait it cannot be discounted.

¹²⁶ Kevin Sharpe, *Image Wars: Promoting Kings and Commonwealths in England, 1603-1660* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2010), 61-64.

On 20 October 1604, a few days after the meeting of the commissioners, James - somewhat presumptuously - proclaimed himself King of Great Britain. Bacon was particularly vocal against the change in style of the monarch from 'King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland' to 'King of Great Britain, France and Ireland'.¹²⁷ The principal concern was that the name of England and thus the English identity and image, having so recently reached its apogee under Elizabeth I, would be erased or subsumed wholly into this new Great Britain, disappearing without a trace. As Sharpe neatly surmises, 'where Henry and Elizabeth had so successfully embodied the growing sense of nation, James sought to dissolve England into a larger union of Britain.'¹²⁸ It was feared that far from the greater drawing the lesser, as Henry VII had reportedly told his concerned councillors on the matter of the marriage between James IV and Margaret Tudor, the precise opposite was occurring. Yet an examination of the coins, medals, and seals from this period makes clear that the English fear of being dissolved was misplaced. James was at great pains to carefully balance and incorporate iconography from all nations, even the heretofore forgotten Kingdom of Ireland, into the new British visual language of the state. Far from England being subsumed it was given precedence in the new royal coat of arms, even in Scotland as the ninth coinage demonstrates.

Perhaps the most important way the concept of a united British realm manifested itself was through the coinage. To Scots deprived of a resident king and court the alterations to the coinage were certainly the most visible presence of this new imperial monarchy in Scotland. The Proclamation of the new Coinage in Scotland, dated 15 Nov 1604 and issued from Whitehall, is explicit about the importance James placed on the coinage in furthering his ambition for further union between Scotland and England. It reads almost as a microcosm of the intended union itself, effectively creating a currency union by way of uniformity as the first step towards full political union:

Our Sovereign Lord understanding that ther is nothing mor honourable convenient sure and profitable for his (hail?) subjects of his kingdome of

¹²⁷ Bruce Galloway, *The Union of England and Scotland, 1603-1608* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1986), 28-29.

¹²⁸ Kevin Sharpe, *Image Wars: Promoting Kings and Commonwealths in England, 1603-1660* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2010), 7.

Scotland and England, nor ane just lawful speedy and perpetuall union of both the saids Realmes... Having Ordained The Gold and Silver moneyes of Scotland to have also free and readie course in England... knowing that it is mor expedient that all the saids Coynes be reduced to ane perfect and constant Conformitie in all respects... Therefor His Highness with advyce of his estates presently conveened, hes resolved that the reducing of the Gold and Silver of both the saids Kingdomes to ane certaine equalitie is not only necessar preparation for the union of the saids Kingdomes, bot ane essentiall part of the samen... To the intent that no manner of difference of Inequalitie, either outward or Inward may heirafter be found in betwixt the saids moneyes...¹²⁹

Out of the new coins that had been issued the most interesting examples are now known as the double and Britain crowns. The mere fact that one of these coins is now referred to as the Britain crown provides a clue as to the intentions behind the original design, much in the same way that the English gold unite does which was traditionally called the gold sovereign before it was renamed, by royal proclamation, the unite.¹³⁰ Valued at £1 (£12 Scots) this was James's highest denomination gold coin and therefore the flagship design that encapsulates the king's chief political aim during this period (fig 21). On the obverse we have a bust of James in armour wearing Scottish crown holding orb and sceptre accompanied by the new style IACOBVS D G MAG BRIT FRAN & HIB REX (James, by the grace of God, King of Great Britain, France and Ireland). The reverse displays a crowned shield of the royal arms dividing IR with English arms in 1st and 4th quarters. The coin boldly proclaims FACIAM EOS IN GENTEM UNAM (I will make them one nation, Ezekiel 37:22), thereby asserting James's belief that his political ambitions to forge a united British realm - and the monarchy itself - were divinely sanctioned.

Looking at the Double and Britain Crowns from the ninth and second coinages in Scotland and England respectively, it is obvious just how similar the two coinages became. This is unionist iconography at its height. Everything is present: the new British title of the new king, the new British royal standard, the legend or motto and a similar portrait bust. There is only one real significant difference between the designs of the ninth and second coinage beyond numismatic

¹²⁹ Robert William Cochran-Patrick, *Records of the Coinage of Scotland*, Vol. I (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1876), 210 CIX.

¹³⁰ John Peacock, "The Visual Image of Charles I," in *The Royal Image: Representations of Charles I*, ed. Thomas Corns, 182 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

technicalities such as the mintmarks: the crown is either Scottish (fig 22) or English. Until 1604 these two currencies had been rather separate and unique from each other. That they became virtually identical in design and remained so throughout the rest of James's reign and beyond demonstrates a concerted effort to promote and encourage unity. Unity was sought not only in the political, economic and financial realms but in the visual realm too. By adopting similar iconographic forms the English and Scottish states had begun to express themselves in almost identical ways.

On the obverse a bust of James in armour wearing the Scottish crown, encircled by the royal style IA D G MAG BRIT FRAN ET HIB REX (James, by the grace of God, King of Great Britain, France and Ireland). The reverse bears the standard crowned shield of the royal arms dividing IR with, significantly, the English arms taking precedence in the 1st and 4th quarters. The unusual step of placing the English arrangement of the royal arms on the Scottish coinage demonstrates just how far James was willing to go to promote unity to his people. The surrounding legend incorporates a fascinating claim to the Tudor inheritance before his Scottish subjects: HHENRICVS ROSAS REGINA IACOBVS (Henry [united] the roses, James the kingdoms). This is a Scoto-British king calling upon English history, taking ownership of it before recasting it through a Scottish lens. Beyond the Double and Britain crowns the union message was unambiguous across the coinage in both Scotland and England, from the largest denomination to the smallest. The unit piece boldly proclaims that 'I will make them one nation'. The thistle, half crown, one and two shilling pieces ask that 'God guard these united kingdoms'. The sixty, thirty, twelve and six shilling pieces compel us to accept that 'what God has joined together let no man separate'. These texts, accompanied as they were by images of roses, thistles, lions, crowns, harps, shields and portraits of the king constituted a clear political campaign. One that was beginning to get underway when the ninth coinage in Scotland and the second in England was distributed for circulation.

While they lacked the reach of coins words, written or spoken, had a significant role in the promotion and communication of the union project. Having been met with resistance to his plans James needed all the help he could get in keeping the idea alive as his dream steadily faded. In 1607 the king, aware of the

political opposition he faced, even apologised to the English parliament for assuming that they would accept political union so readily.¹³¹ That same year Scottish nobles and councillors had petitioned the king against further union, having become concerned with talk of a 'perfect union'.¹³² James's efforts were not enough to secure parliamentary union but it did foster a growing sense of union and the intertwining of the kingdoms. The Scottish theologian and one-time principal of the University of Glasgow Andrew Melville penned a poem recalling James's 1604 speech to his English parliament on the subject of union:

You alone who is honoured, join three lions to one lion,
just as one rose has been joined to a rose by an ancestor on both sides:
if it is a great thing to have joined together the twin roses,
it is the greatest thing to join the triplet lions together to one.¹³³

The three lions is a reference to the English royal arms while the one lion stands for Scotland's red lion rampant. It has been suggested that the rose joined to another by an ancestor refers to James IV's marriage to Margaret Tudor, from which James's claim descended. However, the poem is probably referring to the Houses of Lancaster and York - the twin roses - as they were in James's 1604 speech. James claiming the Tudor inheritance for himself was a popular rhetorical device that was deployed across various platforms. It can be seen in his speeches as well as in coins like the Britain and double crowns. Here it is manifested in poetry. While James certainly had a talent for turning a phrase we should not forget that behind the soaring rhetoric lay a fundamental belief that the events that brought him to the English throne were ordained by God himself. In James's view the unification of the crowns was but the latest in a series of events that served to bring the peoples of these islands together. Union, then, was divine providence and James believed himself to be the embodiment of God's will. These events only served to give further weight to his thoughts on monarchy and the divine right of kings. The king utilised every tool at his

¹³¹ Pauline Croft, *King James* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 67.

¹³² Keith Brown, *Kingdom or Province?: Scotland and the Regal Union, 1603-1715* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), 87.

¹³³ Andrew Melville, *Ad regem ex occasione orationis ad regni ordines de unione regnorum ab eo habita prid. cal. April 1607*, ('To the king on the occasion of the speech to the estates of the kingdom on the union of the kingdoms, delivered by him on the first of April 1607'), ed. and trans. David McOmish and Steven J. Reid: www.dps.gla.ac.uk/delitiaie/display/?pid=d2_MeIA_043 [date accessed: 26/05/2016].

disposal to promote further unity. The politicking all came to naught however as national hostilities proved to be too difficult to overcome in such a short period of time. By 1608 James's dream of creating a united realm was dead. In reality the project had died within a year of James coming to the throne but his 'personal interest' in union had meant that it had remained on the political agenda.¹³⁴ The idea of a united British realm was afforded an unprecedented profile in the public sphere and laid the groundwork in establishing a shared identity. The creation of the union flag in 1606 and the effective use of the new royal style on coins, while not explicitly endorsed by the English parliament, marked 'a subtle form of propaganda that gradually familiarised his subjects with the concept.'¹³⁵ Parliamentary union would eventually be achieved a century later under his successor Queen Anne, the last Stuart to occupy the throne.

Perhaps, in an admission of defeat, in late 1609 the 'Lordis of the Secrite Counsell' - presumably the Scottish Privy Council - ordered that the coinage be altered so that the shield of arms on the coins be 'in the same verie forme as the grite seale of this kingdome'.¹³⁶ While the differences between the English and Scottish arms had remained in the form of the seal for the past decade the Scottish Mint had been using the 'English' version. Whether this was intentional on part of the king so as to promote a more unified visual iconography to his people is unclear. However the timing of the alteration, given that the change in the design of the coinage in Scotland was ordered shortly after the demise of James's union project, is curious, especially when one considers that no other changes were made to the coinage in Scotland until his death in 1625. The change would also bring the heraldry on the coinage in line with that which had been in use on the Great Seal of Scotland since James had become king of England and Ireland in 1603. Medals were the least affected but nonetheless took account of the new constitutional realities. The disparity between the self-image he presented to his subjects, via the coinage, and the legal reality as

¹³⁴ Keith Brown, *Kingdom or Province?: Scotland and the Regal Union, 1603-1715* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), 87.

¹³⁵ Pauline Croft, *King James* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 67.

¹³⁶ Ian Stewart, *The Scottish Coinage* (London: Spink, 1967), 103.

represented by his seals is telling. James was well aware of the importance and power of images to communicate ideas and forge new identities.

Finally, it should be noted that while the coinage in Scotland after 1609 remained unchanged there was a change in England when the third and final coinage of James's reign was instituted from 1619. The gold 'laurel' coin took the novel step, as far as the coinage was concerned, of introducing a new depiction of James (fig 23). Following on from his earlier coronation medal the king is presented as a Roman emperor, highly likely to be Augustus himself. Also present is the MAG BRIT title, Stuart heraldry and the line from Ezekiel about making 'them' one nation.¹³⁷ This was James manifest as the head of a great imperial Stuart kingdom.

Following the use of imperial iconography on the coronation medal it is curious that such depictions of the king on the coinage appeared so late in his reign. One might have expected it in the immediate aftermath of 1603 to help bolster the king's quest in uniting the kingdoms. While James could get away with portraying himself in such terms on a unique object that would have a limited number struck and distributed the coinage, with its much greater circulation, was a different matter. With the resistance that James encountered with issues relating to union, such as the change of his title, he may have considered that coming down from Edinburgh and presenting himself so quickly in such direct terms to an English audience would have been unwisely provocative. Now that the prospect of parliamentary union was dead it was safer, politically speaking, to adopt the imperial mantle. Perhaps it was the final effort of a monarch who was unable to realise his aim of a united British kingdom.

In the decade immediately following the uniting of the crowns coins, medals and seals had become important tools of expression for James's union project. As a remote sovereign eager to promote his political agenda he turned to the visual methods at his disposal to sell his concept of a united British kingdom. The harmonisation of the Scottish and English coinage in particular was viewed by the king as an essential first step in his plans for parliamentary union. Combining

¹³⁷ *Holy Bible*, Book of Ezekiel, Chapter 37 Verse 22 (King James Version).

the national iconographies of the three kingdoms established a new 'British' iconographical language for the state(s) reflective of the new composite imperial monarchy. As efforts to achieve a united kingdom proved controversial changes were from time to time made to these objects, such as in the royal style, that acknowledged the existence of the three kingdoms as separate states rather than one or two.

With James's efforts were thwarted by his politicians in both Scotland and England the dream of closer union lived on in these objects and would largely remain unaltered by his successors. It was not an entire failure, at least in one important respect then. James's efforts at promoting union have left behind a rich body of unionist iconographical work that laid the essential foundations for the eventual emergence of a British state and its public image. The concept of a Great Britain would find itself imagined not only on coins, medals and seals but through art, prints, cartography, heraldry, pageantry, poetry, politics, literature and architecture throughout the seventeenth century.

Figure 11. James I coronation medal, 1603.



Figure 12. Illustration of Augustus from Andrea Fulvio's *Illustrium imagines*, 1517.

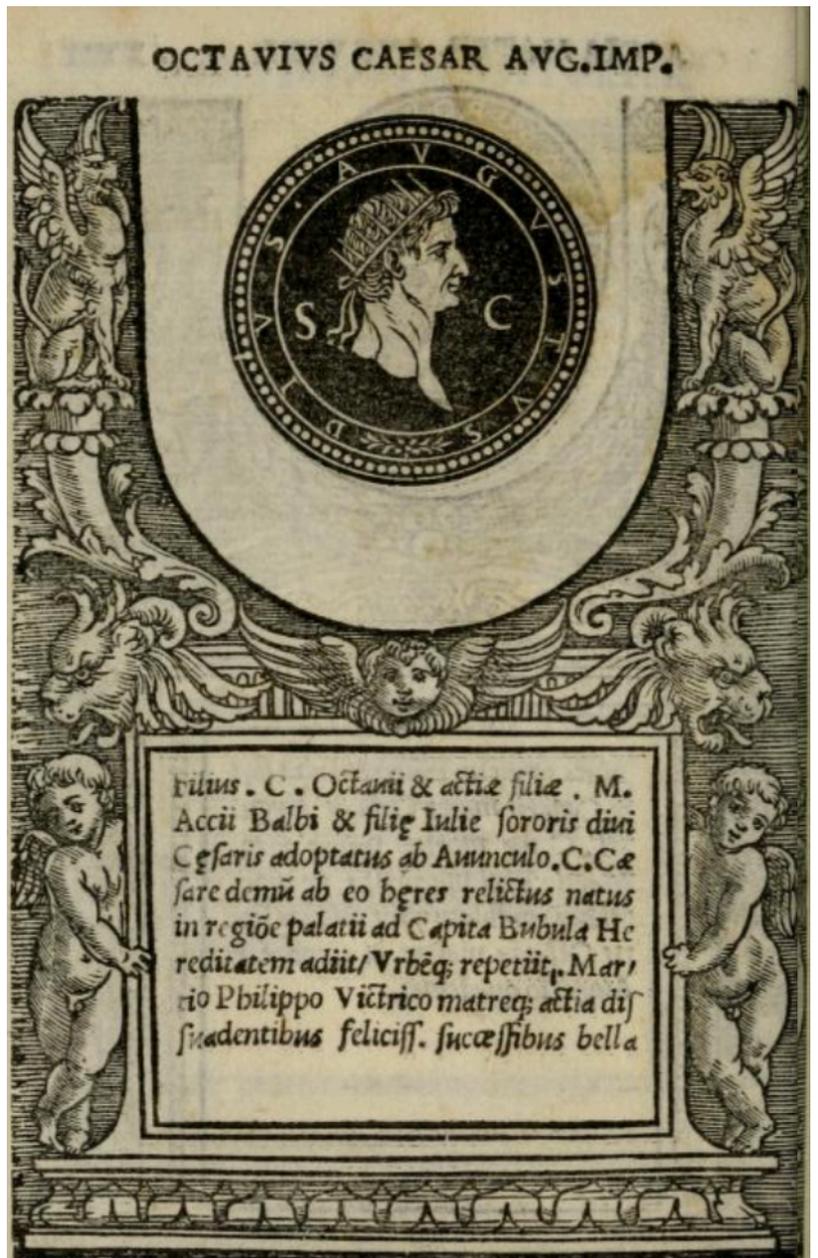




Figure 13.
Renold Elstrack,
The most happy
Unions..., 1603.

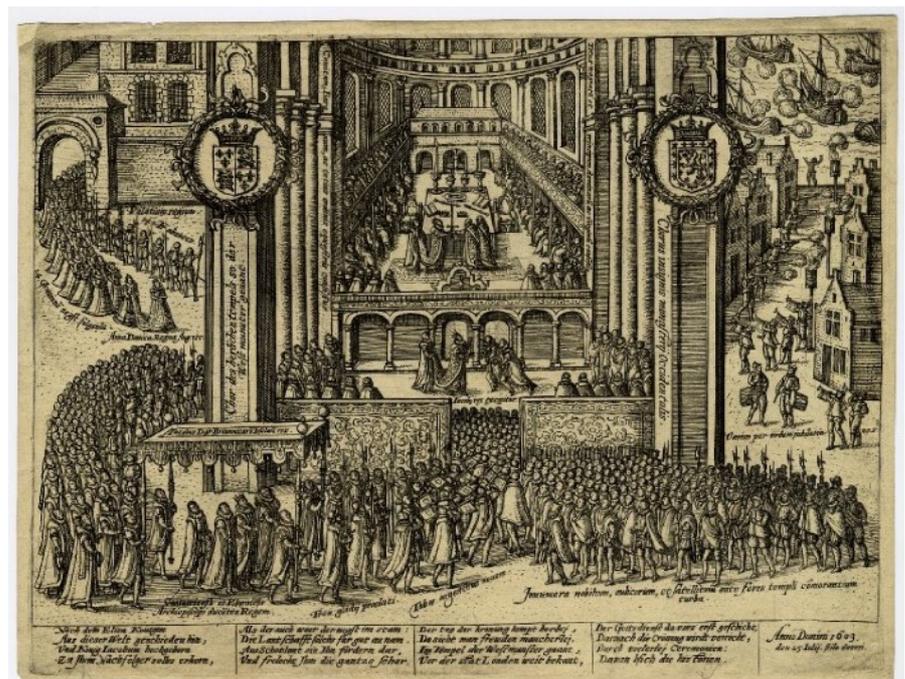


Figure 14.
Abraham
Hogenberg, the
coronation of
James I, 1603.



Figure 15. Great Seal for James I of England and Ireland.



Figure 16. Great Seal for James VI of Scotland.

Figure 17. Medal to commemorate union commissioners, 1604.



Figure 18. John de Critz, James I of England, c.1605.



Figure 19. John de Critz, James VI and I, 1604.



Figure 20. John de Critz, James I, c.1610.



Figure 21. Unite, 1604-1619.



Figure 22. Double crown, 1604-1609.



Figure 23. Laurel, 1619-1625.

IV

Coins, Medals and Seals after the Union of the Crowns and under Charles I, 1625-1642

With the death of James VI and I in March 1625 and the accession of Charles I a new coinage was required. Yet aside from the change of royal name the new king opted to keep the design of the coinage the same in Scotland. Even the royal portrait remained relatively unaltered. The Scottish unite (£12 Scots / £1 English) still proclaimed 'I will make them one nation' while the double crown (£6 Scots / 10s English) continued to invoke the Tudor and Stuart legacy with 'Henry united the roses, James the kingdoms'. Silver coins such as the sixty, thirty, twelve and two shilling pieces also continued much the same with their unionist inscriptions and iconographies unchanged. These Jacobean designs remained in circulation right up until 1637. The same would not be true of the coinage in England however. While the Scottish unites retained their inscriptions their English counterparts were modified. Instead of the stridently unionist inscription from Ezekiel that was adopted by his father Charles decided to moderate the message in England with a new legend, FLORENT CONCORDIA REGNA (May the kingdoms flourish in harmony).¹³⁸

This decision to maintain the coinage as it was in Scotland may of course have been a cost saving exercise. However it could also be considered as an important signal of continuity during what was an uncertain time politically. Within a matter of months the 'vital' links between Edinburgh and London were severed when the second marquess of Hamilton died, followed shortly by James

¹³⁸ John Peacock, "The Visual Image of Charles I," in *The Royal Image: Representations of Charles I*, ed. Thomas Corns, 183 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

himself.¹³⁹ If the transition from one monarch to the next is fraught at the best of times then it is doubly so when the transfer of power has to be managed from outside your realm. Charles was the first Scottish king since James I to have succeeded to the throne from outside the kingdom. Born at Dunfermline Palace Charles was only three years old when he moved to London following his father's assumption of the English crown. As a result he was raised in England and as such was in his manner English. Although he had strong links to his homeland, its people, and its culture he was a virtual stranger to Scotland - standing in marked contrast to his father.¹⁴⁰ The new king would not return to visit the land of his birth until his Scottish coronation in 1633, eight years after he had come to the throne of Scotland. This disconnection would have had implications for his mindset, putting him at a distinct disadvantage in his dealings with Scotland and forcing him to rely on the advice of the third marquess (later duke) of Hamilton when assessing the political mood. It produced an Anglo-centric perspective that manifested itself in the promotion of the new king's image as well as in his political dealings.

The decision to alter the legend on the unite only in England seems to hint at this disconnection and may betray a certain degree of political sensitivity to the English mood. As a born Scotsman it is possible that Charles did not want to give the impression of seeking to reopen the union question to his English subjects. Despite its moderation however there remained a clear continuation of his father's policy on the visual promotion of the union of the crowns. Charles would still employ the royal style King of Great Britain in both Scotland and England, at least for the time being. The union's visual representation reached unprecedented heights under Charles's reign, particularly in the work of artists such as Peter Paul Rubens and Anthony van Dyck. Yet the political edge to union was tempered in both England and Scotland as tensions rose during his reign. This might suggest a degree of political sensitivity to Charles's own political image, and therefore his political dealings, that sits contrary to his traditional reputation as an ineffectual politician.

¹³⁹ Kevin Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1992), 776.

¹⁴⁰ *ibid*, 774-775.

It is impossible to discuss the coins, medals and seals of Charles I without mentioning the man that had a hand in the creation of all three object types: Nicholas Briot. As a Frenchman he had spent his early years in the service of the duke of Lorraine and the French king Louis XIII as the chief engraver at the Monnaie de Paris. He ran into some difficulty with the authorities however and fled to London in 1625 to work in the Royal Mint at the Tower of London.¹⁴¹ He was soon engaged by the king in the design of the new great seals for England and Scotland. A royal warrant dated 6 September 1626 commanded Briot to 'make the Great Seal of England according to a model presented by him to the king' which was in use from 1627-1640. The following year £60 worth of silver was provided for Briot to design the Great Seal of Scotland.¹⁴² The first indications of Charles's own take on the union then would be found in these seals as well as on the English coronation medal, produced during the same period.

Unlike his Scottish coronation medal, which will be examined more closely later, there is not a great deal to identify as unionist (fig 24). It is unremarkable in that sense, although it is a wonderfully executed piece of medallic work with fine details still visible. On the obverse of the medal the king is depicted crowned, wearing a ruff and ermine robes with the collar and badge of the Order of the Garter. Just below the king's bust are the initials N.B. for Nicholas Briot. The only acknowledgment that the king reigns in a further two kingdoms is the accompanying legend detailing the royal style: CAROLVS I DG MAG BRITAN FRAN ET HIB REX (Charles I, by the grace of God, King of Great Britain, France and Ireland). On the reverse there is an arm extending from the clouds, holding a sword with the legend DONEC PAX REDDITA TERRIS (Until peace is restored to the earth). This is a clear reference to the thirty years war that currently raged across Europe and into which Charles had recently entered England and Scotland. In the exergue - the space beneath the arm - we have a further inscription giving us a date of the king's first coronation: CORON.2.FEBRU.1626. The absence of any overt unionist iconography in the form of roses, thistles, harps, lions or unicorns is rather

¹⁴¹ C. E. Challis, "Briot, Nicholas (1579-1646)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3444>, accessed 16 Aug 2017].

¹⁴² Helen Farquhar, "Portraiture of our Stewart Monarchs on their Coins and Medals," in the *British Numismatic Journal*, Vol 5 (1908): 175.

startling when they achieved such prominence in the previous reign. While their omission may be indicative of the fact that the prospect was simply not on the agenda it is worth remembering that James's own 1603 coronation medal also lacked many of these symbols despite union being very much to the forefront of the king's mind at the time. The choice to continue with his father's old royal style does suggest that Charles also saw himself very much as an imperial ruler - a notion that would find expression throughout his reign.

While the coinage was James's principal instrument of choice in propagating his vision for union, kingship and his image more generally the medal was favoured by Charles. In John Evelyn's *Numismata: A Discourse of Medals, Antient and Modern* (1697) the importance of medals to the historical record is emphasised, just as Reginald Lane Poole would with regards to coins two centuries later. Evelyn notes that Charles I was the first British monarch who 'consistently issued medals on significant occasions throughout his reign.'¹⁴³ Furthermore in making comparisons with medallic portraits and ancient sculpture he makes a link between art and politics. To the Romans collections of portrait sculpture of important figures from the past held a political significance in Roman society. Evelyn remarks that the influence of these public sculptures was such that the portraits themselves became transformed so that 'Art became a piece of State'.¹⁴⁴ Peacock suggests that the relationship between art and politics, or in this instance medallic art and the Caroline state, was not lost on Charles.¹⁴⁵

Charles I understood how useful such objects were in propagating his image, having taken an early and clearly unambiguous interest in coins and medals by obtaining treatises on numismatics while he was Prince of Wales. The king displayed his collection of coins and medals in the New Cabinet Room at Whitehall alongside his pictures. John Peacock, writing on the visual image of Charles I, explains that the monarch's famed artistic, cultural and collecting interests can be seen in his coinage. His interest in these items as

¹⁴³ John Peacock, "The Visual Image of Charles I," in *The Royal Image: Representations of Charles I*, ed. Thomas Corns, 187 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

¹⁴⁴ John Evelyn, *Numismata: A Discourse of Medals, Antient and Modern* (London: 1697), 69

¹⁴⁵ John Peacock, "The Visual Image of Charles I," in *The Royal Image: Representations of Charles I*, ed. Thomas Corns, 188 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

aesthetic and historical objects took a practical turn when he became king; and the cultural policy which informed the royal collection as a whole, and stimulated his patronage of the most advanced artists - such as Rubens, van Dyck and Inigo Jones - to formulate his image, represent his regime, and celebrate the Stuart dynasty, can be discerned in the design and production of the Caroline coinage.¹⁴⁶

Turning to an illustration in Francis Sandford's *Genealogical History* for the first great seal of England (fig 25). Dated 1627 it corresponds to the seal Nicholas Briot was asked to design. On the obverse we see the king enthroned, holding the sceptre and orb. He is wearing the crown while dressed in his ruff and ermine robes decorated with the collar of the Order of the Garter. Above him are the royal coat of arms that were devised by the king's father. In addition Charles is flanked on his right by a lion flying the cross of St George and to his left by a unicorn carrying the cross of St Andrew. These animals stand as national symbols of England and Scotland and also serve as supporters in the heraldic sense to the royal arms as well as to the king. The inscription reads CAROLS DEI GRATIA ANGLIÆ SCOTIÆ FRANCIÆ ET HIBERNIÆ REX FIDEI DEFENSOR (Charles, by the grace of God, King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith). The reverse depicts the king in full armour on horseback holding his sword aloft as if about to mount a charge. His shield displays the royal coat of arms. The king and his horse are accompanied by a greyhound, a heraldic beast last used by Henry VII who had adopted it from the House of York. The scene overlooks London. The legend is the same as is found on the obverse. The only overt unionist elements here are to be found in the use of the lion and unicorn and the use of the royal arms. These are unremarkable however and follow a pattern similar to that which was set down by his father. It is notable however for a clear toning down of the use of some of the national iconography. Just as in the design of the coronation medal there are no roses, harps or fleur-de-lis to be found. The number of times the royal arms appears is reduced too. Instead on the obverse each nation's respective flags are depicted, perhaps a reflection of a greater civic role and growing sense of a national identity independent of the monarch. The clearest indication of a reduced emphasis on the union is the return to the old royal style Angliæ, Scotiæ etc.

¹⁴⁶ *ibid*, 180.

Charles's first great seal for Scotland (fig 26) is arguably more unionist in its iconography than its English counterpart. It is essentially a continuation of the design of his father's seal, with appropriate changes to the royal name. The obverse displays the national signifiers of Scotland (thistle), England (rose) and France (fleur-de-lis). Ireland is neglected once more. The reverse retains the arrangements laid down during the previous reign including, notably, the style king of Great Britain. This is in contrast to Charles's English seal which eschews the title adopted by James in favour of listing the kingdoms separately. The king would periodically switch between the two forms for the rest of his reign in both Scotland and England. While Charles opted to retain the style king of Great Britain on his coins, at least for the time being, he did not choose to do so on the second great seal of Scotland.¹⁴⁷ This would continue with the Scottish coronation medal. The reasons for doing so would be, as ever, political.

From France Briot had brought with him the latest technical knowledge and machinery. Up until then coins in England had been hammered. Now, with Briot's mill and screw machine, the Royal Mint was afforded a degree of automation since each coin would no longer have to have its design pressed / hammered into the metal by hand.¹⁴⁸ This new approach in the minting process also enabled the production of much finer and detailed pieces, something that the king was particularly interested in. As in all things Charles wanted the best. Continental painters such as Mytens, Rubens and van Dyck had found his favour due to their superior abilities that far outstripped anything British artists were capable of during this period. It was only natural that the king, who took a great interest in his image, would seek to find the best to produce his likeness on the coins.¹⁴⁹ Briot's new methods however met with resistance, particularly in Scotland. By 1632 he had managed to re-coin all the existing denominations using his new

¹⁴⁷ Walter de Gray Birch, *Seals* (London: Methuen, 1907), 207.

¹⁴⁸ C. E. Challis, 'Briot, Nicholas (1579-1646)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3444> [accessed 31 Aug 2017].

¹⁴⁹ John Peacock, "The Visual Image of Charles I," in *The Royal Image: Representations of Charles I*, ed. Thomas Corns, 180 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

machine. Yet it was not until 1637 that such automated practices were introduced in Scotland after Briot was made Master of the Scottish Mint.¹⁵⁰

While one master of his craft was busy distributing the highly politicised image of the king another was tasked to celebrate the achievements of his predecessor. Sir Peter Paul Rubens was commissioned by Charles to decorate the ceiling of the Banqueting House to celebrate the life and achievements of his father who remains one of the most significant monarchs in British history. Built by Inigo Jones for James VI and I the building was used to host various state events throughout the seventeenth century. It was therefore at the very heart of the ceremony of state. Charles took a great interest in its decoration and what to do with the ceiling, the choice of subjects and use of iconography was much discussed by the king and the Flemish artist.¹⁵¹ The ceiling is composed of nine panels in total with the centre three being the largest and most important of the group. The centre three are individually entitled as follows: *The Apotheosis of James I*, *The Peaceful Reign of James I showing the Benefits of his Government* and *The Union of the Crowns of England and Scotland*. Martin stresses that the choice of costume for James across all three canvases was significant. Charles opted to have James depicted in his parliamentary attire, acting in his constitutional role as King in Parliament.¹⁵² Somewhat ironically considering Charles had dissolved parliament and assumed absolute power in 1629. All the works were painted in the two year period between 1632 and 1634.

The canvas depicting the union of the crowns is worthy of discussion here (fig 27). James is presented to the viewer in profile, lending a classical and even imperial dignity to the deceased monarch that recalls depictions of Roman emperors on antique coins.¹⁵³ The king's pose would have also reminded viewers of the portrait of the king on his coins and medals which often depict the

¹⁵⁰ C. E. Challis, 'Briot, Nicholas (1579-1646)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3444> [accessed 31 Aug 2017].

¹⁵¹ Jennifer Scott, *The Royal Portrait: Image and Impact* (London: Royal Collection Publications, 2010), 73.

¹⁵² Gregory Martin, *Rubens: the ceiling decoration of the Banqueting Hall, Vol 1* (London: Harvey Miller, 2005), 68.

¹⁵³ John Peacock, "The Visual Image of Charles I," in *The Royal Image: Representations of Charles I*, ed. Thomas Corns, 180 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

monarch in profile. The imperial connotations are even more striking when once remembers some of the early coins produced after the beginning of his reign in England. The work bears further iconographical similarities to the coins, medals and seals of the age:

James I, crowned and in State robes, holding the orb in his left hand, leans forward as if in judgement from his throne, with a gesture as of acceptance towards a naked child, symbolising the newly-born union between his northern and southern kingdoms. The child is supported on either side by the figures of England and Scotland, while above his head Britannia in the guise of Minerva holds his joined crowns of the two nations united under the Stuart dynasty, and aloft, against an architectural background, winged cherubs bear the jointed arms of the united kingdoms.¹⁵⁴

This work is significant and worth mentioning for several reasons. The most obvious is that the subject of the union of the crowns is dealt with directly by one of the greatest masters of the age. It is rife with symbolism both classical and modern. Another point of interest is the use of the royal coat of arms, notably in their English arrangement. In addition James is depicted wearing the robes of the Order of the Garter. The use of parliamentary attire cleverly acknowledges and honours the English constitutional structures and accompanying history. It perhaps also offers a hint that Scottish parliamentary traditions will eventually fall by the way side. There is no doubt that Charles has a greater affection for these English traditions rather than those of his, and his father's, homeland. The naked child was first thought to be that of a newborn Charles I but it is now believed that the child represents the newly born united kingdom, united under the House of Stuart.¹⁵⁵ Rubens invites the viewer to make comparisons with other royal portraits that celebrate union, albeit the union of the royal houses of Lancaster and York. 'The celebration of James I's triumph in uniting two discordant nations echoes Henry VII's peacemaking union of the houses of York and Lancaster, as celebrated in *The Family of Henry VII with St George and the Dragon* and Holbein's *Whitehall Mural*.'¹⁵⁶ This is perhaps a

¹⁵⁴ Royal Collection Trust, *The Union of the Crowns of England and Scotland* <https://www.royalcollection.org.uk/collection/408417> [accessed 20 Sept 2016].

¹⁵⁵ Francis Haskell, *The King's Pictures: The Formation and Dispersal of the Collections of Charles I and his Courtiers* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013), 89.

¹⁵⁶ Jennifer Scott, *The Royal Portrait: Image and Impact* (London: Royal Collection Publications, 2010), 74.

deliberate attempt on the part of Rubens as well as Charles to recall James's speeches to the English parliament some thirty years previously. The former was likely intended as an altarpiece for Henry VII's chapel at Richmond Palace following the destruction of Sheen Palace by fire in 1497.¹⁵⁷ The latter was located in the privy chamber at Whitehall. It is likely that Charles, Rubens and even Briot would have been aware of these works.

The time of its creation is also particularly relevant. At this time Charles had union matters firmly on his mind. Charles' relationship with Scotland from the outset of his reign was a contentious one. Between his accession and his coronation in Scotland Charles had enacted several hasty and ill-thought out reforms in administrative and ecclesiastical affairs that damaged his standing.¹⁵⁸ An attempt to create a British fishing industry in the years directly before his coronation also received a backlash when the Scots became protective of their privileges.¹⁵⁹ This only served to remind Charles of the gulf that existed between Scotland and England despite the union that joined them in his and his father's person for the past thirty years.¹⁶⁰ The king would soon depart London for Edinburgh where he would be crowned King of Scots. It would be the first time he had visited the land of his birth since his father took the family south upon inheriting the English throne.

While Rubens was working on the Whitehall ceiling in London, with its celebration of union, Briot had been tasked with creating a medal for the king's Scottish coronation in Edinburgh (fig 28). In April 1633 he took his equipment to the Scottish capital in preparation to produce gold and silver medals. Coronation medals would also be created for the coronation of Charles II at Scone in 1651. The practice was imported from England, which was in turn imported from the French, German and Italian traditions that stretch back into the days of Roman antiquity. Given Scotland's historic and often close cultural links with the continent, particularly France, it is curious that a medallion tradition was not

¹⁵⁷ *ibid*, 15.

¹⁵⁸ Kevin Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1992), 775-778.

¹⁵⁹ *ibid*, 775-778.

¹⁶⁰ *ibid*, 775-778.

established until after the regal union with England. That it was introduced at all was perhaps due in large part to Charles's personal interest in numismatics. Despite owing this (admittedly short-lived) medalllic tradition to the union that bound Scotland and England together under one monarch the medal's design would not be as bold as the Whitehall ceiling on the same subject. Instead the design strikes a delicate balance while retaining a distinctly Scottish character. Though not explicitly unionist it nonetheless still utilises some English symbolism to acknowledge the regal union. The inscription along the edge of the medal boasts EX AVRO VT IN SCOTIA REPERITVR BRIOT FECIT EDINBVRGI 1633 (Briot executed this at Edinburgh in 1633 from gold as it is found in Scotland). According to Hawkins the gold was mined from Clydesdale.¹⁶¹ Yet in other ways it strikes a balance between Scottish and British, 'unionist' and 'nationalist'.

On the obverse we can see a bust of Charles I wearing the Scottish crown with a falling lace collar, ermine robes, the collar of the Order of the Garter and what appears to be the collar of the Order of the Thistle.¹⁶² The use of the thistle collar is particularly curious when one considers that the order would not be established until 1687, fifty-four years later. James VII claimed he was reviving an old order and there is some evidence to suggest this was indeed the case.¹⁶³ If so then this medal is likely to be one of the few examples that depict the monarch wearing both Scottish and English chains either before or after the founding of the modern Order of the Thistle. It is a subtle but significant inclusion that acknowledges Charles's role as the head of two nations. From the choice of royal style the emphasis is most definitely two nations: CAROLVS D G SCOTIÆ ANGLIÆ FR ET HIB R (Charles, by the grace of God, King of Scotland, England, France and Ireland). According to Birch this change corresponds with the creation of Charles's second Great Seal for Scotland which was altered around 1630-32 to 'accord with the national taste.'¹⁶⁴ Since the king's official style in Scotland was until recently King of Great Britain it is likely that the decision to

¹⁶¹ Edward Hawkins, *Medalllic Illustrations of the History of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. 1 ed. Augustus Franks and Herbert Gruber, 265 (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1885).

¹⁶² *ibid*, 265.

¹⁶³ Katie Stevenson, "The Unicorn, St Andrew and the Thistle: Was There an Order of Chivalry in Late Medieval Scotland?" *The Scottish Historical Review* Vol 83, No. 215, Part 1 (Apr 2004).

¹⁶⁴ Walter de Gray Birch, *History of Scottish Seals Vol. 1: The Royal Seals of Scotland* (Stirling: Eneas Mackay, 1905-1907), 82.

revert back to the earlier format was politically motivated. A medal issued in England to celebrate the king's return to London presents a stark contrast to the medal recently issued in Scotland by declaring CAROLVS AVGVSTISS ET INVICTISS MAG BRIT FRAN MONARCHA (the most august and invincible Charles, Monarch of Great Britain, France and Ireland). Nonetheless the Scottish coronation medal demonstrates 'medallic representation of Stuart British imperium' at its height.¹⁶⁵

The reverse of the coronation medal is rather unusual but intriguing: it is dominated by a thistle that grows out of a tree. The tree has been interpreted as a rose tree, probably due to the latin inscription HINC NOSTRÆ CREVERE ROSÆ (hence have our roses grown).¹⁶⁶ However it appears to resemble a great tree, perhaps an oak, rather than a rose tree or bush. Regardless of the kind of tree it might be its use has dynastic connotations, representing the House of Stuart with its deep roots in Scottish as well as British history. The combination of the tree with a thistle underscores this interconnection, signifying that one grows from the other and that the two are impossible to separate from one another. The medal must have garnered a wide audience and was easily distributed amongst the inhabitants of Edinburgh. The Lord Lyon Sir James Balfour of Denmylne observed that during the coronation procession through the city the Bishop of Moray threw gold and silver medals into the crowd.¹⁶⁷ They contained a clear message to Charles's Scottish subjects that although the prospect of a political union was off the table, acknowledged by the change in royal style, the regal union would continue to endure under the House of Stuart.

Charles' conciliatory approach to the iconography of the medal was a wise decision. Sharpe paints a mixed picture of his time in Scotland. While there were great numbers of the public who flocked to see him the visit was not without political controversy. The coronation service itself was conducted according to Anglican rites which only served to anger the Presbyterian kirk establishment. The conducting of parliamentary business was not without controversy too, as

¹⁶⁵ Kevin Sharpe, *Image Wars: Promoting Kings and Commonwealths in England, 1603-1660* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2010), 218.

¹⁶⁶ Edward Hawkins, *Medallic Illustrations of the History of Great Britain and Ireland, Vol. I* ed. Augustus Franks and Herbert Gruber, 265 (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1885).

¹⁶⁷ Ian Stewart, *The Scottish Coinage* (London: Spink, 1967), 204.

royal powers to dictate clerical dress were pushed through.¹⁶⁸ Briot's execution of the medal and the political messages therein must have particularly pleased the king for he appears to have become rather attached to it following the coronation. It is recorded that he liked to carry it around in his pocket before it was placed into a display cabinet at Whitehall.¹⁶⁹ For a time at least this work of medallion art did really become a piece of state, a part of the royal person.

The royal person of course found its ultimate expression in the works of Sir Anthony van Dyck. Many of the themes detected in the coinage, medals and seals may also be found in these portraits, in addition to some shared iconographical features. One of the most commanding images of Charles I that exists is his equestrian portrait with the Seigneur de Saint Antoine (fig 29). It also happens to have been painted in 1633 - the same year that Charles was crowned King of Scots at St Giles Cathedral in Edinburgh. The picture is laden with imperial connotations derived from classical antiquity. It depicts the king holding a baton while riding through a triumphal arch on a white horse, wearing a suit of armour with a lace collar and the sash of the Order of the Garter. A large crowned shield bearing the royal coat of arms sits propped up against the column, serving as a reminder to the viewer of the three kingdoms over which Charles holds dominion. He is accompanied by his devoted equerry St Antoine, a master in the art of horsemanship. The arch, with its classical connotations of triumph, presents the king as a virtuous British imperator who has mastered his horse and by implication has achieved authority over the natural world - essential qualities for a prince considered to be divinely appointed.¹⁷⁰

The painting is regarded as the quintessential imperial image of Charles I and it is evident in the manner it was displayed that the king recognised the power it had on the viewer and sought to enhance it. Located in the Gallery at St James's Palace it hung alongside Titian's series of portraits depicting the twelve emperors from Caesar to Domitian and a number of smaller imperial equestrian

¹⁶⁸ Kevin Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1992), 778-783.

¹⁶⁹ Edward Hawkins, *Medallic Illustrations of the History of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. I ed. Augustus Franks and Herbert Gruber, 265-266 (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1885).

¹⁷⁰ Kevin Shape, "The Royal Image and the Caroline Court," in *Van Dyck & Britain*, ed Karen Hearn, 18 (London: Tate Publishing, 2009).

pictures by Giulio Romano. In situating the van Dyck portrait at the head of the gallery the king was deliberately placing himself as the 'heir to the imperial tradition' of Rome so celebrated by some of the greatest artists of the age.¹⁷¹ It owes as much to classical portraits of Roman emperors to be found on antique coins or medals as it does to more recent works by Titian and Rubens, both of whom were favoured by Charles. The basis of the portrait itself would likely have been various equestrian designs formulated by Rubens, chief amongst them being the 1603 portrait of the Duke of Lerma (fig 30). While Millar notes that van Dyck would not have seen the picture first hand it may have inspired Charles, who saw it during his visit to Spain in 1623 while Prince of Wales, to commission an equestrian portrait after it.¹⁷²

Another equestrian portrait worth noting for its political themes is Charles I at the Hunt (fig 31), now in the Louvre. It was completed in 1635 and was possibly given as a gift to one the French relatives of Queen Henrietta Maria as it does not appear in the inventories conducted following the king's execution in 1649.¹⁷³ In a departure from the earlier portrait Charles is depicted, rather informally, at rest taking a break from the hunt. With the absence of any regalia the composition serves to highlight the king's natural authority. Dressed in his hunting clothes the king, having surveyed the landscape before him, turns to the viewer and holds his gaze. Behind his courtier soothes the king's horse as it bows its head in deference to the monarch, thus demonstrating the power Charles also holds over the natural world.¹⁷⁴ Depicted as a man and lacking any formal symbol of his power Charles stands as the natural embodiment of authority. This, Sharpe observes, is a demonstration of 'the monarch's two bodies, personal and political, made one, the personification of power in paint.'¹⁷⁵ Sharpe references the king's two bodies, a medieval political concept that was modified and incorporated into English law as a legal fiction in the sixteenth century. It

¹⁷¹ Sir Oliver Millar, *Van Dyck in England* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1982), 51-52.

¹⁷² *ibid*, 52.

¹⁷³ Jane Roberts, *The King's Head: Charles I: King and Martyr* (London: Royal Collection Enterprises, 1999), 13-15; Musée du Louvre, Charles I at the Hunt, <http://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/charles-i-hunt> [accessed 11 Aug 2017].

¹⁷⁴ Kevin Shape, "The Royal Image and the Caroline Court," in *Van Dyck & Britain*, ed Karen Hearn, 18 (London: Tate Publishing, 2009).

¹⁷⁵ *ibid*, 19.

defined the two capacities of the monarch. The body natural, meaning the physical body of flesh and blood, and the body politic, defined as a mystical capacity with divine and thus immortal characteristics from which the king drew his authority as head of the government and nation. During the Elizabethan and early Stuart periods this concept formed a significant part of English legal and political thought. It effectively underpinned the scope of regal power, implying that actions undertaken by the king in his political capacity could not be undermined by the physical limitations of his body.¹⁷⁶ In referencing the concept of the two bodies in this picture Charles is able to assert his natural, God-given authority - a belief in the divine right of kings that was also shared by his father. Charles also subtly asserts his imperium over Great Britain with an inscription in the bottom right-hand corner that previously was only seen on his coins, medals, seals: CAROLVS I REX MAGNAE BRITANNIAE.

Another work of van Dyck's that bears some passing similarity to medallic portraiture is of the king in profile or three positions (fig 32). This portrait was executed so that the celebrated Italian sculptor Gian Lorenzo Bernini could work from it at his studio in Rome and fashion a bust of the king.¹⁷⁷ While the genesis of the portrait is clearly rooted in a practical purpose it is nonetheless curious that a complete work was created. There was no real need for van Dyck to have gone any further than producing a straightforward sketch for Bernini such as the one produced by Kneller for Rysbrack.¹⁷⁸ Whatever his motivations for completing the composition it is certainly reminiscent of the Scottish coronation medal.

The attempt to introduce the Book of Common Prayer in Scotland by Charles and the Archbishop of Canterbury William Laud in 1637 was met by riots in St Giles Cathedral. Four years previously the king, attending his Scottish coronation, had been crowned in the cathedral with full Anglican rites. By 1638, with the formation of the National Covenant in opposition to Charles's liturgical and ecclesiastical policy, Scotland began the slide into civil war. During this period of

¹⁷⁶ Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 3-10.

¹⁷⁷ Sir Oliver Millar, *Van Dyck in England* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1982), 65.

¹⁷⁸ *ibid*, 65.

great tension Charles, true to his instincts, had a visual response through the medium of portraiture. A further equestrian portrait was produced by van Dyck with Charles once again clad in armour (fig 33). Taking his cue from Titian's Charles V at Mühlberg (fig 34), which Charles would have encountered in Madrid, van Dyck has seated the king atop a vast steed and placed him against a 'tranquil sky and peaceful landscape pacified by beneficent rule.'¹⁷⁹ This equestrian portrait recalls images of the king that were readily found on the silver shillings as well as on the great seals. The inscription CAROLVS REX MAGNAE BRITANNIAE located on a plaque placed in the tree behind the king also provides a visual link to more common reproductions of the king's image and seemingly preferred royal style.

In addition to paintings attention once again returned to the coinage. In 1637 Nicholas Briot fashioned a new Scottish coinage with his latest technical methods. This marked the beginning of the third coinage of Charles's reign, as it became known, and ran between 1637 and 1642. It has been further divided into five issues. The first issue was the responsibility of Briot before giving way to the new Master of the Mint Sir John Falconer in 1638.¹⁸⁰ The designs from issue to issue remained unaltered which was in keeping with the limited variety of images and inscriptions seen throughout the coinage in comparison to the previous reign.¹⁸¹ This suggests that James was rather successful at formulating a British unionist and imperial iconography. Charles just refined its execution by commissioning masters like Briot. One such example is the thirty shilling piece (fig 35). It features an equestrian portrait of the king on the obverse and bears his MAGN BRITAN style. On the reverse there is the now familiar royal arms accompanied by the legend QVAE DEVS CONIVNXIT NEMO SEPARET (what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder, Matthew 19:6), no doubt in reference to the personal union. A rather robust message that would have held particular resonance with the ongoing political tensions in Scotland.

¹⁷⁹ Kevin Shape, "The Royal Image and the Caroline Court," in *Van Dyck & Britain*, ed Karen Hearn, 18 (London: Tate Publishing, 2009).

¹⁸⁰ J. K. R. Murray, "The Scottish Gold and Silver Coinages of Charles I," in *The British Numismatic Journal*, Vol 39 (1970), 111-144.

¹⁸¹ Kevin Sharpe, *Image Wars: Promoting Kings and Commonwealths in England, 1603-1660* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2010), 221.

Interestingly this robustness disappears on the lower denominations. While the gold coins and silver shilling pieces retain the familiar imperial style the SCOT ENG FR ET HIB format has been deployed on the more common silver forty pence piece (fig 36). It is not particularly remarkable or unionist in its iconography, instead opting for the more reassuring iconography of the thistle. It does however suggest the beginnings of a convergence with Charles's seals and medals which had dropped the British title, acknowledging the worsening political climate. If so then the king did not get the chance to complete the process throughout the coinage before the civil war.

In contrast there was seemingly a sense of triumphalism in England with regards to the ongoing conflict in Scotland and the state of the union. Following a truce negotiated at Berwick in June 1639 with the Covenanters the English government in London issued medals as part of its effort to portray the temporary pacification as a victory for the king.¹⁸² Devised by a student of Briot, Thomas Simon, the medal's design lends itself to an air of celebration (fig 37). Charles is shown on horseback wearing armour and trampling over the instruments of war while the reverse depicts a thistle and a rose, bound together by a divine hand emerging from the clouds. The inscriptions are unionist in nature, utilising the MAG BRIT style and QVOS DEVS, a reference to the marriage service which demands that what God has joined together let no man put asunder.¹⁸³ Peace has been secured and, by asserting military might, the sacred union between England and Scotland has been preserved. The political messages contained therein are manifold, as Sharpe elaborates:

... as well as claiming a triumph of peace, Charles reasserted his divine rule over an empire of the kingdom of Great Britain united by God, and so cast the Covenanters and their supporters as sinners as well as traitors.¹⁸⁴

In 1640 a new great seal for England was created (fig 38). The design is broadly similar to the first with additions of the falcons alongside the lion and union on the obverse and a rose and the Stuart coat of arms on the reverse. After 1642

¹⁸² *ibid*, 220.

¹⁸³ *ibid*, 220.

¹⁸⁴ *ibid*, 220.

the only coins minted in Scotland were copper turners struck in 1642, 1644, 1648, 1650.¹⁸⁵ Amongst these was the first instance of the NEMO legend occurring since the crowns were united forty years previously. This is perhaps another indication of a 'return to the roots' approach to the Scottish coinage on the part of Charles. Conversely, in England Charles decided to emphasise the unity of Scotland and England by continuing with the British style.

War engulfed the entire three kingdoms, culminating in the beheading of Charles I in 1649 and the establishment of a British republic under Oliver Cromwell that would incorporate Scotland and Ireland into full parliamentary union with England for the first time in 1653. Alongside the battle for power over the government a battle for the image of the state, its authority and thus legitimacy, was also raging. The ultimate symbol of legal authority in the state, that of the great seal, was a subject of dispute as both parliamentarians and royalists claimed to possess the only legitimate seal.¹⁸⁶ During this time prints became important carriers of political propaganda as both sides attempted to win the battle for public support through words and images.¹⁸⁷ Medals too formed part of the arsenal deployed by each side in the propaganda war, celebrating triumphs or the misfortunes of the enemy.¹⁸⁸ Parliamentarians and Royalists issued their own coinage from their own mints. Following his departure from London in 1642 Charles was forced to set up new mints in Shrewsbury, Oxford, Bristol, Exeter and York where Nicholas Briot was dispatched with his equipment.¹⁸⁹ The value of controlling mints, beyond the economic necessities, and continue to project the image and authority of the king or parliament to a wide audience was recognised.

That images became such crucial weapons in the War of the Three Kingdoms can in part be attributed to the importance the king attached to the representation of his image and rule. Charles was a highly political and visually sensitive

¹⁸⁵ Spink, *Coins of Scotland and Ireland and the Islands* (London: Spink, 2003), 78.

¹⁸⁶ Kevin Sharpe, *Image Wars: Promoting Kings and Commonwealths in England, 1603-1660* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2010), 355-356.

¹⁸⁷ *ibid*, 351-355.

¹⁸⁸ *ibid*, 357-361.

¹⁸⁹ *ibid*, 361-362.

monarch. This unmatched level of political image-making is identifiable across a range of mediums: coins, medals, seals, portraiture and prints. Further informed by classical modes of representation, epitomised by equestrian depictions of Roman emperors and renewed by Renaissance princes and their court artists, Charles I was able to present himself to his subjects in unprecedented ways. By hiring masters of their respective crafts like van Dyck or Briot Charles was able to build on the unionist iconographical language established by his father. He elevated politics into a higher art form and sometimes, it could be argued, deploy them to greater effect. As was the nature of the time there were greater political pressures upon the king than ever before and alterations back and forth between royal styles on his coins, medals and seals reflect that reality.

Yet despite this tumultuous period the unionist approach to expressing the state, and the nation, remained largely intact. The parliamentarians even appropriated regal forms of state expression so to gain a 'cultural authority'.¹⁹⁰ This continued under the Commonwealth, albeit with symbols that were less connected with that of the monarchy. These islands having been united for the first time under parliamentary union combining national icons on coins, medals, seals and prints was more important than ever before.

These mediums remained important tools in disseminating royal policy and propaganda following the Restoration in 1660. The emphasis on union seems to have diminished however. The royal style returned, for the most part, back to its SCOTLAND format and this change was reflected on the coins and medals issued. In contrast to his father Charles II reverted to the old royal style on his English coronation medal which was struck for distribution amongst spectators at the ceremony.¹⁹¹ The coinage incorporated national icons in a symmetrical manner in their design that emphasised the three kingdoms working in harmony rather than any explicit suggestion of unification. This was perhaps a conscious effort by the new regime, keen to be viewed as a liberator, to set itself apart from the now failed Cromwellian settlement of forced union. However Charles II was frequently depicted on his coins wearing a laurel wreath, as his grandfather

¹⁹⁰ *ibid*, 348-349.

¹⁹¹ Edward Hawkins, *Medallic Illustrations of the History of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. I ed. Augustus Franks and Herbert Gruber, 473 (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1885).

James VI and I had done, underlining his leadership of a British imperial polity. The Stuart dynasty would continue using these imperial and unionist modes of representation for the remainder of the seventeenth century, including those who were displaced from the throne following the events of 1688-89 and their Jacobite adherents.



Figure 24. Charles I English coronation medal, 1626.



Figure 25. Great Seal for Charles I of England.



Figure 26. First Great Seal for Charles I of Scotland, c.1625-1630.

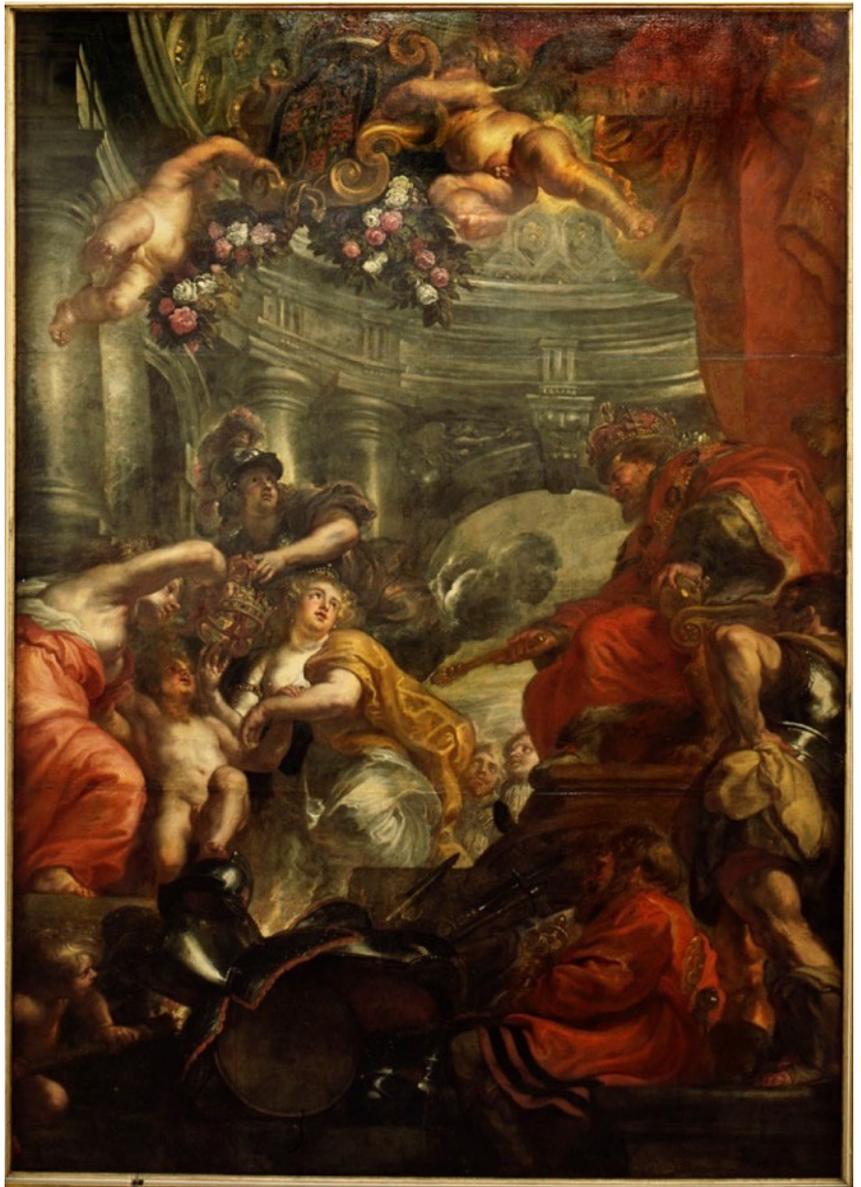


Figure 27. Rubens, The Union of the Crowns of England and Scotland, c. 1632-4.



Figure 28. Charles I Scottish coronation medal, 1633.



Figure 29. van Dyck. Charles I with M. de St Antonie, 1633.

Figure 30. Rubens. Equestrian Portrait of the Duke of Lerma, 1603.



Figure 31. van Dyck. Charles I at the Hunt, 1635.



Figure 32. van Dyck.
Charles I, 1635-36.



Figure 33. van Dyck.
Equestrian Portrait of
Charles I, 1637-38.





Figure 34. Titian,
Charles V at Mühlberg,
1548



Figure 35. Thirty
shilling piece,
1637-38.



Figure 36. Forty pence
piece, 1637.

V

Conclusions

National icons are intrinsically political. We are currently living in an age where previously settled notions of identity and nationhood are being challenged once more. The topic of union has been the subject of intense debate over recent years in both Scotland and England. At the heart of discussions about Scotland's place in the United Kingdom and the United Kingdom's place in Europe is the issue of identity. The evolutionary formation of the British state is a complex one and the role of culture and image cannot be neglected. Indeed, national identity is shaped and in turn finds expression by numerous cultural manifestations.¹⁹²

Since the consolidation of heraldic traditions in the twelfth century royal or otherwise noble dynastic iconographies would only combine through inheritance, marriage or conquest. With the gradual emergence of these heraldic devices as symbols of national iconography they took on new meaning. The examples found in the chapter dealing with the period before the union of 1603 have shown that the use of national iconography was widespread. Moreover, it has shown that differing national iconographies were even used in conjunction, though they were not always combined. The Francis and Mary festoon is a prime example of how, facilitated by a marriage union, distinct iconographies can be melded for political effect. This is of course nothing new: heraldic devices have long been combined through marriage or inheritance. However it is perhaps amongst one of the first examples where such use of national iconography promoted an image of the state in such a widespread manner. Connections with differing visual mediums were also detected, notably the young James VI's portrait on the 1576 £20 piece, possibly derived from a lost Vanson portrait and later found in print

¹⁹² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2006), 9-47.

form in Geneva - demonstrating the extraordinary reach of the young king's image.

James's image was only further enhanced when he came to the English throne in 1603. With his coronation medal he wasted no time in establishing a new, British imperial and divine image based on the classical template of Augustus. Though constrained in his efforts to achieve political union by the English parliament James nonetheless found creative ways in promoting the unity of the kingdoms through speech and image. Taken together they comprised a sustained propaganda campaign during the first few years of his reign in England. In particular he recognised the power of the coinage as a means to promote his union agenda to his subjects, as the 1604 Proclamation of the new Coinage in Scotland demonstrates. The promotion of the king's political agenda was not limited to the coinage however but was to be found in painted portraiture. Whatever the medium James always sought to emphasise his divine authority over the three kingdoms. Yet James was politically astute enough to know when the battle was lost, though eventually he won the war. By marshalling the national iconography of Scotland and England and by altering the royal style to include Great Britain James was able to give visual expression to the concept of a united British realm to his subjects. This would normalise it and eventually help make it a reality. These subtle efforts would find greater expression in the following reign.

Although the uniting of England and Scotland was no longer a political possibility Charles I largely continued to adhere to the visual template of union established by his father. There would however be fluctuations in the form of the royal style chosen to be deployed, often due to political considerations. Regardless the representation of British Stuart imperium and divine authority would reach its apex under Charles, through the works of masters such as Anthony van Dyck and Nicholas Briot. As the slide to civil war occurred image, and the legitimacy it can confer, became important weapons in the propaganda arsenal. After centuries of Anglo-Scottish conflict the creation of a shared British iconography imagined a new nation not yet born. Dissemination of the image of a British monarch, supported by the combination of national iconographies, through coins, medals, portraiture and prints created a visual culture of union in the early seventeenth

century. This was so successful that it provided the template from which subsequent successors operated, including the republican Commonwealth. Consequently by 1707 the visual identity of a united British realm was already well established.

VI

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