

Volume 31

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**Numismatic Association
of Australia**



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Front cover: Photo of the Alexander tetradrachm, no. 68 (see article of Lloyd Taylor Fig 1 page 52)



NUMISMATIC ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC

President's Report

With COVID-19 now endemic, the Association has not been able to hold a conference because of the upsurge this year of the virus Australia-wide, but nevertheless the NAA has continued to function with an upgraded website and the publication of this double volume JNAA31, which is available for free download at the NAA website. We plan to hold a conference next year in Adelaide, 19 – 20th October 2023, hosted by the Numismatic Society of South Australia.

I am delighted to announce the award of the Ray Jewell Silver Medal to our Managing Editor, Associate Professor Gillan Davis for his services to the NAA, and his numismatic work both in Australia and overseas for which he has an international reputation. Congratulations Gil from all of us.

The NAA continues to enjoy sponsorship at a sustainable level, with Noble Numismatics (Gold), Coinworks, Downies (Silver), Coins & Collectables Victoria, Drake Sterling, Mowbray Collectables, Sterling & Currency and Vintage Coins & Banknotes (Bronze) all contributing to ensure the Association's continued success. Membership is being maintained, and with the contributions by sponsors and members, the Association can function in these difficult times.

The NAA now has a new Secretary, Bridget McClean, and a new address in Nunawading, Victoria. This is convenient as the NAA is incorporated in Victoria. Much time has been spent changing bank signatories and updating Consumer Affairs Victoria; nothing happens quickly these days!

The Numismatic Association of Australia now has a functioning PayPal account linked to president@numismatics.org.au. This is very convenient for payments coming from overseas and avoids most international bank fees. Like with banking, setting up a PayPal account is not a five-minute exercise, but well worthwhile.

I am impressed with the considerable work our Managing Editor Gil Davis has put into this volume notwithstanding his being extraordinarily busy transferring between universities and setting up new programmes at the Australian Catholic University. Also, I am grateful to Barrie Newman for his on-going work in getting the journal set up and printed, taking on the tasks of both layout and copy editor.

Council continues to meet by ZOOM, hosted by David Galt at Mowbray Collectables.

Finally, the Association cannot function without the dedication of its secretary and its treasurer (Lyn Bloom); thank you both Bridget and Lyn.

Professor Walter R. Bloom

President, NAA

www.numismatics.org.au

3rd August 2022

Editor's note

This volume has been a long time in the making. Usually, an issue is based around the NAA annual conference, but COVID-19 made that impossible. More importantly, as the peak body for numismatics in the country, we are focussed on making each volume wide ranging, interesting and impactful. So, we waited on the completion of a couple of key contributions and have brought out a combined two-year issue which I have dubbed 'the professors' volume' on account of the academic attainment of most of the authors. I trust you will agree that the results justify the decision, because here we offer a splendid collection of eleven articles on an eclectic range of topics with some of the best numismatic analysis and writing I have read. Personally, I have learnt a lot, and I expect that you will too. The collection is rounded out by an obituary by NAA stalwart Peter Lane of the late Maurice B Keain, a real character on the Australian scene.

There are two articles on Australian topics. Vincent Verheyen offers a forensic scrutiny of 'proofs' and 'specimens' from the Melbourne and Perth mints issued in just two years, 1955 and 1956 and seeks to differentiate between them. Walter Bloom provides an interesting study of Western Australian numismatic medallions and badges with an emphasis on the Castellorizian Brotherhood which represented the émigrés from that Greek island.

Lloyd Taylor gives us a Hellenistic trilogy which is a tour de force in numismatic analysis. He starts with a brief but compelling argument correcting one of Hersh's additions to Price's Alexander typology showing that it was already in the corpus. Next, he reattributes Macedonian imperial coinage attributed to Berytos to Byblos. Finally, he shows that an issue of tetradrachms struck in the name of Philip III was in fact a posthumous issue of Seleukos.

There are four articles on a Roman theme:

- Bruce Marshall moves us into the turbulent period of the late Roman Republic with a study of 'labels' on a small number of denarii which he contends fed into the contemporary political discourse.
- Graeme Stephens and John McDonald offer us something unusual and valuable. They document and analyse an unpublished hoard of fourth and fifth centuries AD Roman coins and local imitations from Sri Lanka.
- Andrew Chugg explores the veracity of commemorative medallions of Antinous, paramour of the emperor Hadrian who was deified after his death in the Nile, arguing that there are ways of distinguishing between genuine and fake examples.
- John Melville-Jones offers us a magnificent work listing the names of Roman coins as used by the Romans themselves and sometimes just by modern numismatists.

Written in John's inimitable style, this is an invaluable reference for collectors, students and scholars.

The next article by Emy Kim and Cristiana Zaccagnino takes us into the fascinating world of a numismatic collection of some 600 Greek and Roman coins housed at Queen's University in Canada that is being used in teaching and research. They show just how valuable coins can be when treated as artefacts used to inform historical and scientific understanding. This represents a welcome trend in modern scholarship to integrate numismatics into cross-disciplinary studies.

Finally, we publish a long autobiographical article by Maria Caltabiano. This is justified by the profound impact which she has made on numismatics in a lifetime as professor of numismatics at the University of Messina in Sicily. Along the way, she describes many of her projects with a particularly fascinating exposition of an example of iconic programmatic minting in late fifth century BC Kamarina in the period of the 'signing masters' – some of the most exquisite ancient coinage ever struck. Sadly, we tend not to know enough about numismatics in early Europe, and this article goes some way towards filling the gap.

I sincerely thank the many diligent anonymous reviewers who have done so much to improve the papers. Likewise, I thank the members of the editorial board who stand ready and willing to help when called upon, and John Melville-Jones who happily proofreads the articles. Above all, I pay tribute to Barrie Newman without whose tireless efforts across the years, these volumes would not see the light of day.

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Proof, specimen and selected coins from the Melbourne and Perth Mints in 1955-56

T. Vincent Verheyen

Abstract

At the start of the collector proof series in the mid-1950s, the Perth and Melbourne branch mints revived the production of specially prepared coins for sale to the public. The Mints issued these coins at a premium according to their quality and the time involved in their manufacture using the terms proof, specimen and selected coins. Premiums above face value ranged from two shillings for proof to sixpence for the others. Their differentiation based on quality has become obscured over time, with all coins now marketed as proofs. The Perth Mint used the term 'specimen' to describe their 1955-56 proof issues in Mint reports. In contrast, Melbourne used the terms 'proof' and 'specimen' to describe different strikes for their 1955 issues and differences in quality for 1956. Melbourne did strike 1955 dated proof (circa 320) and specimen coins circa 850) from separate dies. Melbourne 1955 dated coins that can be categorised as high-quality proofs, rather than specimens, were struck in similar mintages to those from Perth, making them much rarer than published catalogues suggest. Separate production of proof and specimen coins at Melbourne creates the opportunity to use die markers and population studies to differentiate between them. Responding to demand, Melbourne tripled the 1956 dated proof issue (1000 sets) and halved the specimens to 500 sets. Die marker investigation to distinguish between proof and specimen 1956 dated coins proved inconclusive. No markers were found for the 1d, 6d, and 2/-; differences in the 3d and 1/- may reflect die states than different dies. This suggests that the Melbourne specimen 1956 issues were likely inferior proofs.

Keywords

[die marker] [cameo] [Royal Mint] [blank] [strike] [quality]

Introduction

Definitions of the terms 'proof' and 'specimen', when applied to predecimal coins produced by The Royal Mint London and its Australian branches, are problematic. Much of the confusion stems from the terms being interchangeable up to the mid-20th century.¹ They indicate individually prepared coins struck from specially crafted dies and blanks.²

Proof coins

Mints produce proof coinage to represent their best quality issues. The ‘quality’ (finish on and appearance of proof strikes,) varies markedly depending on the minting technology, metallurgy, amount of skilled labor and time available. The same production standards were not necessarily adhered to between the different issues e.g. Perth Mint changes between 1957-8.^{3,4} In the 140 years between 1826 – 1965, Royal Mint proof coins (Table 1) were issued in either cameo, reverse cameo, full mirror, or completely matte finishes. Depending on the year and particular Mint, their designs are not always fully struck, and the rims are not necessarily broad and flat. These coins were struck for appreciation by the unaided eye and not microscopic examination.

Table 1 Royal Mint Proof Coinage finishes

Finish	Proof/Specimen Examples
Cameo (Acid etched relief with mirror fields)	1826, 1831, 1839, 1853, 1887, 1893 London*
Reverse Cameo (sandblasted fields with mirror relief (effigy and design))	1957-1963 Perth
Matte (acid-etched or sandblasted dies)	1902 London
Full Mirror (polished dies) and blanks	1937, 1938, 1939, 1955-63 Melbourne

*later London proof years 1911, 1927, 1937, 1950-51, 1953 reveal varying degrees of cameo contrast due to die wear and infill.

The branch Mints did not prepare proof coins for collectors after the start of World War II, given the pressure of work to issue regular coinage and change to quaternary alloy.^{2,5} Both Perth and Melbourne Mints started cautiously in 1955-6 with the meagre production of just over 300 proof coins of each denomination (Table 2). Market demand was uncertain,¹ and the Mints did not know if the steep 2/- premium on each coin would be too much of an impost.⁶ I expect Melbourne thought they could better cater for collectors by offering a cheaper option by providing specimen quality coins for 6d premium. Both proof and specimen struck coins were available individually; however, nearly all purchasers required complete sets. The specimen coins did not sell well, and Melbourne dramatically reduced their mintage in 1956 (Table 2).

Specimen coins

By the 1950s, the word specimen coin had taken on a new meaning in the Royal Mint and described an inferior quality to a proof. Specimen coins are struck from (preferably fresh) regular dies and taken from normal production runs before they have excessive contact with other coins.² As specimen coins were struck from different dies, the opportunity arises to use die markers to distinguish them from proof. However, it

would be impossible to determine specimen coins from gem business strikes struck in the same run.

The rest of Melbourne's 1955 dated premium collector coins,⁷ between 733-1105 pieces depending on which denomination, were called specimen coins (Table 2). These were carefully prepared when the Mint was undertaking production runs. The Mint responded to the rapid sell-out of the 1955 proofs and lack of demand for their selected coins by striking 1000 proof sets in 1956⁷ and reducing specimen coins to a nominal 500 each.

Selected coins

The Perth Mint used selected as their term to describe inferior coins issued at a 6d premium to collectors. Paul Holland published a seminal paper in this journal on the Perth proof coinage in which he concluded that the Perth Mint did not discard 1957-1963 dated proofs that did not pass quality checks; they were sold as selected coins.³ This difference in approach between the sister branches may be explained by the difficulties the Perth Mint experienced in striking quality proof coins.³ I expect sourcing premium coins from regular production was also problematic. These difficulties, coupled with a supply of rejected proof struck bronze, became the drivers for Perth to issue imperfect proofs as selected coins. Thus, collectors would receive a superior coin, and the Mint was spared the trouble of choosing additional coinage. Given the same dies were used with these selected coins, it would be impossible to distinguish them from mishandled original proof strikes.

In contrast to Perth, the Melbourne Mint Specimen register entries for 1955 dated coins confirm that specimen coinage was available in late 1955,⁷ several months before the proof strikes were entered in February 1956. This interval between register entries is evidence that the Melbourne Mint did not pass off inferior proof strikes as selected coins. Typically, proofs were struck at the end of the year's production runs, concurring with the registry entries.

Table 2 Mintages for the various types of premium collector coins struck by the Branch Mints

Coin Date Denomination	Melbourne Branch Mint*			Perth Branch Mint [#]		
	Proof	Specimen	Total	Proof / Specimen	Specimen/ Selected**	Total
1955						
1/2d	n/a	n/a	n/a	301	32	333
1d	319	1105	1424	301	30	331
3d	311	733	1044	n/a	n/a	n/a
6d	329	880	1209	n/a	n/a	n/a

1/-	350	851	1201	n/a	n/a	n/a
1956						
1d	1008	508	1516	417	36	453
3d	1007	508; 504*	1515	n/a	n/a	n/a
6d	1000	506	1506	n/a	n/a	n/a
1/-	1000	507	1507	n/a	n/a	n/a
2/-	1000	500	1500	n/a	n/a	n/a

- *504 coins sold from 508 struck; all other numbers are indicated as sold in the Melbourne Specimen Coins Register⁷
- # transcribed³ and sourced from Annual reports of the Deputy Master and Comptroller of the Royal Mint London 1955-57
- **note that several of these coins are listed in the 1957 RM Perth report as “selected”.
- the Perth Mint used the term specimen coins in its 1956-57 RM reports and these coins are accepted as being the same as record proofs sent to various museums.³

Discussion

Differences in quality of the Melbourne 1955-56 proof and specimen coins in terms of their finish and appearance are not readily apparent to the naked eye. This close similarity has led to them all being classified as proofs by the numismatic market.⁸ The rims are generally higher and cleaner on proof coins, and the mirror finish in the fields is slightly better due to extra polishing of the blanks and dies. Surprisingly except for the 6d and less so the 1d, the strike quality of both types is comparable. Die markers for the proof and specimen coins are listed in Table 3 and illustrated in Appendix -1. During the examination of between 14 and 20 ‘proof’ coins of each denomination, only one separate pair of dies has been discovered for each proof and specimen coin type.

Despite careful examination of approximately 15 Melbourne ‘proof’ sets dated 1956, no difference in the dies for their 1d, 6d and 2/- coins have been observed. The 3d and 1/- denominations reveal slight die differences, but these require more study to ensure they are not simply differences due to die age and wear. The identification of 1956 dated proof and specimen coins is problematic. Given this die equivalence, the Royal Melbourne Mint likely adopted the practice of its Perth sibling and issued inferior proofs as specimens.

The die markers for the Perth Mint 1955-56 proof and selected strikes are identical and published.^{3,9} Each issue, i.e. 1955 1/2d, 1d and 1956 1d, is found with one of two obverse dies but only one reverse die resulting in a complete set requiring six coins.

The Perth Mint transferred their proof 1955-6 penny dies to the coining department to strike circulation coinage.³ The fate of the Melbourne Mint proof dies is unknown; further examination of die destruction and press records may shed light on whether they were also used for regular strikes. In addition, Melbourne specimen dies will have struck further circulation coinage given their specimen coins were prepared during coin production.

Conclusions

While both Mints used the term proof to describe their best quality coins, confusion arises as Perth also used the term specimen to distinguish these in their official reports. Melbourne and Perth used the words specimen quite differently, with Melbourne using it to describe lower-quality pieces that are almost indistinguishable from proofs. Perth used the term selected to represent lower-quality proof pieces. Microscopic examination of a large number of these special 1955-56 dated coins struck for collectors by the Royal Mint Melbourne reveals numismatically interesting die markers. These markers have enabled the discrimination of proof and specimen strikes for 1955; however, this approach failed with 1956 dated coins suggesting the same dies may have been used for both types.

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Author

Dr T. Vincent Verheyen leads the Carbon Technology Research group at Federation University Australia. His numismatic interests are focused on the Royal Mint predecimal issues specially struck for collectors.

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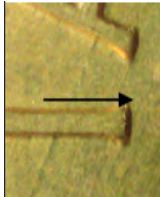
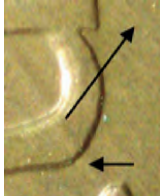

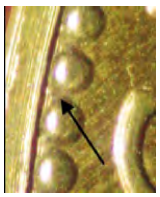
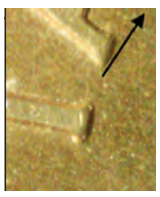
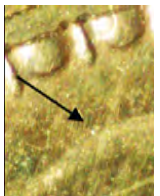
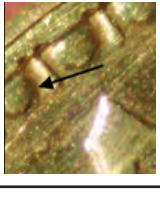

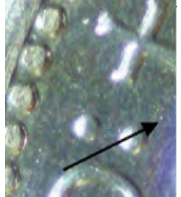

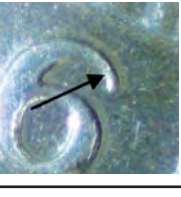
Table 3 1955 Melbourne Mint Die Markers for Proof and Specimen Coins

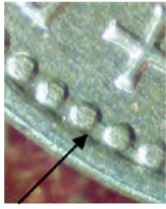


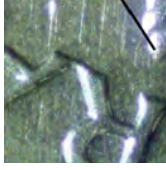
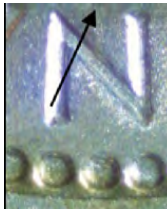
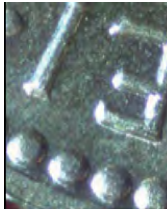
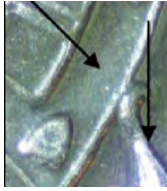

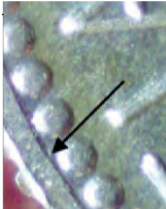
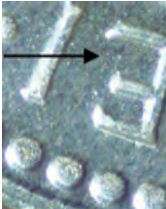
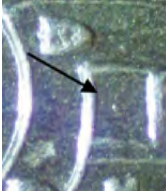
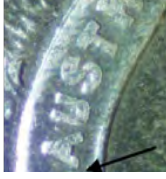
Denomination	Proof Strike	Specimen Strike
1d	General Observations: the proof rims are devoid of concentric lathe lines while the specimen has multiple concentric lathe lines Proofs have icy smooth fields and typically deeper orange colour, while specimen has good mirrors but the fields are not as smooth as proof	
	Obverse:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rim has full raised “wire” edge • rim beads well formed weakest 10:00 to 12:00] • small raised dot in field just below RHS of I in gratIa • small raised dot in field just above LHS of G in Gratia lining up between beads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal wire out from lathe lines • Rim beads generally weak particularly inner edge indent out on rim from G in reGina • Line through top of beads above REGina • Raised small dot below RHS of A in gratiA also raised pair of small lines to upper left of this dot
	Reverse:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • partial wire on rim between 12:00 to 9:00 • rim decoration of darts and denticles well formed denticles (particularly inner curved edge) and sharp darts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • negligible wire on outer edge of rim • Strike quality to denticles and darts is inferior 	

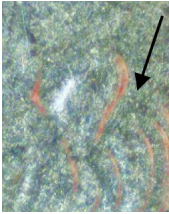


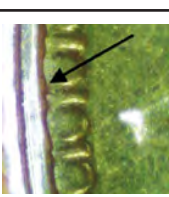
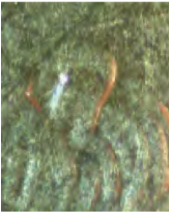



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • small raised dot in front of roo's chest centered close under forearm • Small raised dots one just beside left arm of U and a pair under its right arm aUstralia 	
3d	General Observations – these are very difficult to tell apart from denticles and bead definition and need microscopic examination	
	Obverse	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No lathe lines on rim between outer wire and inner edge • F in F:d has a bar along its top RHS stroke • Tiny raised dots to bottom right (just above hair) of second colon in f:d:+ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Microscopic lathe lines on rim between outer wire and inner edge • Line joining rim beads adjacent +Eliz • Multiple lines between beads adjacent elizabeTH these lead to intrusions from wire edge on rim i.e. minor rim cud out from right edge of T and leading vertical of H • Central rim bead out from E in dEi –multiple lines back to inner rim. • Bead out from . in dei. Single thick line with wire intrusion
	Reverse	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trace of lathe line 3-5 o'clock • Raised metal on left side of AU letters and top of curved base stroke in 9 • Raised dot below K in designers initial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feint shallow part wire 12 to 5 O'clock • Mark under vertical line of E in three • Striations below sTRALIA heading towards R.H. corner of ribbon

6d	<p>General – Proof reverse denticles near rim are better struck as are beads on obverse. Line between bead and rim directly adjacent I in gratIa for both versions</p>	
Obverse		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dot below N in regiNa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dot in bottom section of E in dEi 	
Reverse		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raised metal edge to side of arm, back and tail of roo • Raised dot in shield near right (lower) paw • Well struck AUSTRalia in scroll 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symmetrical edges on roo's right paw, leg and tail • Raised dot in top right corner of inner shield • Weakly struck AUSTRalia in scroll 	
1/-	<p>General – this die paring though more common in my survey has the dot below ear and as it was also used in 1956 it has been designated the proof. Beads and denticles are not perfect on either version</p> <p>Various raised lines thru the obverse beads (above GRATIA and ZABETH) are identical between both versions</p>	
Obverse		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal lathe lines on rim next to partial wire • Rim adjacent GRATia has many raised intrusions from the wire edge back into the broad flat rim. • Small dot below ear - between lobe and hair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wire on outer edge of rim has band of concentric lathe lines next to it, e.g. adjacent REGINA. • No raised intrusions on rim • Note dot below ear 	
Reverse		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rim has strong outer wire and many concentric lathe lines. • Multiple lathe lines on rim adjacent AL of austrALia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rims reveal weak partial wire and fewer lathe lines • Small blob on base of 2nd denticle clockwise from left side of S of Shilling • No lathe lines on rim adjacent AL of austrALia 	

APPENDIX-1 OUTLINE OF THE DIE MARKERS FOR 1955 MELBOURNE PROOF AND SPECIMEN COINS

Die Pair Number of coins surveyed	Obverse die key features photomicrograph	Obverse die Description	Reverse die key features photomicrograph	Reverse die Description
Proof 1d 6	 	<p>Smooth surface on rims below wire edge</p> <p>Dot below right side of I between grat/A</p> <p>Blunt rim beads i.e. reGIna</p>	 	<p>Raised dots beside and below U in Australia</p> <p>Weak denticles</p> <p>Dot in field in front of roo's chest/ upper arm</p>
Specimen 1d 10	 	<p>rims displaying concentric lathe lines,</p> <p>Raised dot below A in grat/A</p> <p>Line above sharp beads reGIna</p>	 	<p>rims displaying concentric lathe lines,</p> <p>Raised dot outside roo's tail</p> <p>Strong denticles</p>
Proof 3d 5	 	<p>Flat rims prominent wire.</p> <p>Lines through the F of F:D</p> <p>Raised dots below right of the base of colon in d :+</p>	 	<p>Thin rims partial wire,</p> <p>Raised metal edge on left side of AU on base stroke of 9.</p> <p>Raised dot below K of designers initial</p>

<p>Specimen 3d 8</p>			<p>Flat rims prominent wire. Line joining beads above + Eliz Multiple lines between beads above elizabeTh</p>			<p>Thin uneven width rims partial wire. Many raised lines (striations) between wheat ears and below stRALiA</p>
<p>Proof 6d 10</p>			<p>Smooth rims and strong beads. Lump below N in regiNa</p>			<p>smooth rims Strong lettering in scroll Small raised Dot in shield near roo's paw Raised metal edge to side of arm, back and tail of roo</p>
<p>Specimen 6d 17</p>			<p>textured rims and weak beads. Dot in bottom section of E in dEi</p>			<p>rough rims partial wire. Dot in right quadrant of shield Dot before A, weak auSTRALiA in scroll</p>

<p>Proof 1/- 8</p>			<p>Minimal lathe lines on rim Very small raised dot below ear. This dot is also found on 1956 obverse proofs Dots below and inside A in reginA</p>			<p>Un-ground, strong wire and many concentric lathe lines on rims. Multiple lathe lines on rim adjacent AL of austrALia</p>
<p>Specimen 1/- 6</p>			<p>Concentric lathe lines on rim adjacent to regINA, elizaBETH II</p>			<p>weak wire and less lathe lines Small blob on base of 2nd denticle clockwise from left side of S of Shilling Small, raised lines between right star and denticles</p>

Note none of the rims on the 1955 Melbourne collector coins were ground flat so all display at least a partial thin raised 'wire' on the outer edge of their rims. This results from misalignment between the dies and collar pushing up metal during striking. The die markers shown here are best observed with a 20X lense or a microscope.

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