

A new Crockard type for John of Avesnes

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It is now almost forty years since Mayhew¹ published his masterly study of the coinage issued in Northern Europe in the late 13th and early 14th centuries imitating the English sterling. This was the first major publication on the subject written in English and Mayhew acknowledged the work which had been done previously by many continental students of the series. It is inevitable that minor variations in Mayhew's original classification, unrepresented in the trays of the many museums and private collections which he studied, should have been noted since 1983. What is much less common is the emergence of a completely new type. The authors feel that had Mayhew seen the subject of this note he might have considered the features of the coin to be sufficiently different from his recorded examples to warrant a separate entry in his catalogue.

The coin in question was issued by John of Avesnes struck in the last decade of the 13th century. The chaplet of roses on the head of the bust identifies the coin as a so-called crockard. Circulating widely in England, alongside the bare-headed pollards, these sterling imitations are no strangers to detectorists and are commonly found in hoards of this period.

Figure 1 below shows a coin which is in the possession of one of the authors (GS) and appears on his website.²



Fig 1. John of Avesnes crockard. Author's (GS) collection.

On the website the coin, #0245, is illustrated and described as M30var, a variation of M30, using Mayhew's classification. This correctly places it as a coin issued by John, Count of Hainault, struck in Valenciennes at a date no later than 1291. GS was fully aware of some differences between his coin and the type M30 but the coin was not in sufficiently high grade to be certain of some of the detailed features of the obverse and reverse legends.

¹ N.J. Mayhew, *Sterling Imitations of Edwardian Type*, Royal Numismatic Society, Special Publication 14, 1983.

² Glenn Schaap. Website: www.sterlingimitations.com

A second coin has more recently come into the hands of one of us (DM) which is of higher grade and has led to the authors coming to the conclusion that the coin might be considered as a completely new type, not simply a variation of an existing one. The coin is illustrated in Figure 2.



Fig 2. John of Avesnes crockard. Author's (DM) collection.

The obverse legend reads: ~~JOHN COMES HAINOIE~~ John, Count (of) Hainault.

The reverse legend reads: **VAL EHC hEH EHS'** Valenciennes.

The coins illustrated in Figures 1 and 2 have the same obverse die but have different reverse dies with the same letter forms and punches but having a slightly different spacing.

What is initially striking, and unusual in the Valenciennes series of coins, is the double saltire punctuation at the end of the obverse legend to the left of the initial cross. M30 does not have such a feature. C's, one on the obverse and one on the reverse, are open, i.e. consist of a semi-circular punch with a small triangular punch at the top and bottom. M30 has C's which are closed at the front with a continuous bar. There is no pellet stop after the L in the VAL quarter of the reverse. M30 does have a pellet stop.

Taken together these are major features which the authors suggest makes the type worthy of its designation as a new class. It would be difficult to propose any change to Mayhew's catalogue other than shifting Mayhew's subsequent 376 type numbers forward by one. We would be rather hesitant, indeed presumptive, to suggest such a thing! We would be interested to hear of any other examples of this coin which are in other collections.

