

# A New Variety of Light Coinage Henry IV Halfpenny

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At the time of publication of their definitive ‘small change’ guide dedicated to the halfpence and farthings of Henry IV, V and VI, Paul and Bente Withers<sup>1</sup> were aware of only around a dozen ‘light coinage’ halfpence attributed to Henry IV (p. 22), which were produced from c. 1412 onwards and struck solely at London (p. 19). Although metal-detected stray finds have increased the number known in recent years, these undeniably remain rare coins. Withers divides them into four types, three of which are differentiated from each other by the position of annulets on their obverse faces:

- Type 1: New narrow face with narrow crown, prominent eyes
- Type 2: Crown and face as type 1; an annulet either side of neck
- Type 3: Crown and face as type 1; an annulet either side of hair
- Type 4: Crown and face as type 1; an annulet either side of crown

A metal-detected coin found near Cambridge recently posted for identification on a British hammered coin forum was recognised by the author as being a new variety of Withers type 3, and is as such the subject of this note (Fig. 1).

In addition to the ‘standard’ type 3, Withers lists one variety (designated 3a) differentiated by stop-forms and contraction marks:

Standard type 3 obverse legend: +**hENRIC**’ **x** **REX** **x** **ANGL**’ (single saltire stops, contractions)

Variety 3a obverse legend: +**hENRIC** <sup>x</sup> **REX** <sup>x</sup> **ANGL** (double saltire stops, no contractions)

The recent find from Cambridge, however, differs from both of these. The obverse can be read virtually entirely, although clipping makes it difficult to ascertain the presence of any contractions. The author suggests this new variety be provisionally designated ‘3b’:



Fig. 1: The coin discovered near Cambridge, assigned to provisional variety 3b. Diameter: c. 13mm, weight: c. 0.35g (c. 5.4 grains). Image courtesy K Mills.

Provisional variety 3b obverse legend: +**hENRIC** **x** **REX** **ANG** (single saltire stop, no contractions)

Interestingly, the annulets on provisional variety 3b can be observed to sit slightly higher than they do on the ‘standard’ type 3 (compare Withers p.23). Despite this, they still remain below the base of the crown-line.

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<sup>1</sup> Withers, P and Withers B, 2009. Small Change III: Halfpennies and Farthings, Henry IV, V and VI. Llanfyllin: Galata Print Limited