

Henry III (Posthumous) Class 7 Pennies from the London Mint – Part 4: Phelip

Robert Page

Class 7 pennies were the last of the posthumous issues of the Henry III voided long cross series before being replaced in 1279 by the non-voided long cross pennies in Edward's name. They are known for Phelip and Renaud at London, Ion (John) and Ioce (Joceus) at Bury St Edmunds, and Robert at Durham. None is known from Canterbury. In this article I concentrate on the observed variations within Phelip's coins based on a study of 39 coins and sub-divide the obverse and reverse dies into a number of groupings.

Reference should be made to my earlier articles^{1,2,3} on the coins of Renaud of London, and also to the following article: Part 5 will illustrate all the known Phelip dies that I am aware of to date, and may serve as a springboard for further research. Naturally, I would be very pleased to hear from readers who have, or are aware of, any further class 7 coins.

Historical Background

Phelip, known as Phelip De Cambio (Philip of the Exchange), was appointed to the London mint on the 18th May 1278 in place of Renaud⁴. By November of 1278 Phelip had been arrested for adding too much alloy to the silver; both he and an assayer, William Harlewyn, were subsequently drawn and hanged. Despite Phelip's short tenure at the London mint, he produced a comparatively high output of coins and his class 7 pennies are the easiest class 7 types to obtain, though certainly not common.

The background to Phelip's arrest is interesting. Mavis Mate⁵ tells us that on the 17th November 1278 all the Jews in England were unexpectedly seized and imprisoned on the charge of coin-clipping, and immediately afterwards the king ordered the arrest of all goldsmiths and others suspected of aiding Jewish coin-clippers by exchanging clipped money for good. Additionally, all mint officials were arrested.

The problems of clipping and the production of below standard coins led over a number of years to decreased confidence in the English currency, but with other pressing problems King Edward did not take action until late in 1278. Jews found guilty of coin-clipping were hanged or severely fined; some accounts report that 280 Jews were hanged in London alone; however this may have been an exaggeration and it may only have been 30-50 Jews who were hanged in the whole of England. Christians were generally treated less severely, though a few were executed, including Phelip di Cambio. He had been found guilty of adding 8½d of copper in each pound of silver pennies, when the standard was no more than 6d of copper. A recoinage was ordered in January 1279, though the new coins in the name of Edward I did not start appearing until May that year, and in fact the new coinage contained 8¾d of copper – more than the amount for which Phelip had been hanged!

¹ Robert Page, "Henry III (Posthumous), Class 7 Pennies from the London Mint", BNS Research Blog, August 2020

² Robert Page, "Henry III (Posthumous), Class 7 Pennies from the London Mint, Pt 2 – Renaud", BNS Research Blog, September 2020.

³ Robert Page, "Henry III (Posthumous) Class 7 Pennies, Part 3 – The Dies of Renaud of London", BNS Research Blog, October 2020.

⁴ R. Churchill, 'Mints & Moneyers During the Reign of Henry III', 2012.

⁵ Mavis Mate, 'Monetary Policies in England, 1272-1307', BNJ, 1972



The “Pyx Trial Piece”

In the Royal Mint Museum is a bar of silver stamped with Phelip’s dies. At one time this was thought to be a trial piece for the Pyx examination, however it is the wrong style and shape for such a trial piece, and is probably simply a bar of silver bullion, stamped with the coin dies of its owner. Phelip may have stamped his bullion with the latest dies he had to hand. The fact that this piece exists is probably because he had not had the opportunity to turn it into coin when he was arrested – and so the dies used on the silver bar may represent the latest dies in use for Phelip – which gives us a possible clue as to the chronologic sequence of some of his types. The illustration clearly shows the obverse die to be one having a colon after REX, and so the “colon coins” may be the last obverse type to be issued by Phelip.

The reverse die unfortunately does not show the detail we need to see in the 2nd and 4th quadrants to determine the full details of reverse die. What we can see does not exactly match with any of the reverse dies observed in this study, as it has a different number of pellets in each quadrant (9/9/9/9.5).

Photograph courtesy of the Royal Mint Museum.

The Coins of Phelip

Stewartby, in his 2009 book⁶, noted that “no clear sequential pattern has yet been established within class 7”, and he went on to note that the main variation within both classes 6 and 7 is seen within the inscriptions. However, it was demonstrated in part two of this series that three basic types could be defined for Renaud based on variations other than in the inscriptions. Renaud Type 7a being very rare with only two specimens known at this time, and appears somewhat transitional between class 6 and 7, Renaud Type 7b being identified by a compound sceptre head, and type 7c with a normal sceptre head is the least scarce type and which continues into the coins of Phelip. It was possibly only the latter type that Stewartby was familiar with when he made his comment.

Since writing part 2, it has become apparent that the 7b/7c nomenclature is not the most useful, as coins with a double-headed sceptre are now known to occur not only for Renaud but also exist for Phelip. These compound sceptre head coins may have been issued late in Renaud’s tenure and continued on into that of Phelip. Consequently, a revised nomenclature is presented later in this article. Any coin with a double-headed sceptre, whether of Renaud or Phelip, is rare.

A difference observed on the reverse between the coins of Phelip and Renaud is in the spelling of the mint name; the second half of the reverse legend of Renaud coins is normally ONL/VND whereas Phelip coins utilise a Lombardic U: ONL/UND. (If any readers have coins that do not fit this pattern please use the blog comment facility to let me know).

⁶ Lord Stewartby, 2009, “English Coins: 1180-1551”

The first article I wrote on class 7 highlighted the much greater abundance today of specimens of the London pennies of Phelip compared with those of Renaud. It has been possible to locate images of over 40 Phelip coins of which about 39 are coins of good enough quality, and with good enough photography, to be able to reliably see all the necessary degree of detail. Of these coins, six are museum pieces, three from my own collection, and the remainder belong to other collectors.

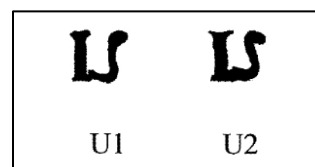
For the half dozen or so simple sceptre head type coins of Renaud that I examined there were just too few to be able to sub-divide further, though I did observe some variations in the styles of the letters, ligation or punctuation. the "N" in the king's name could be Roman ("N") or Lombardic ("n"), punctuation before or after REX could be absent, or a colon, and in the king's name, although usually a Roman "V", there can also be a Lombardic "U". Other variations also occur, such as neck width for example. With the more abundant coins of Phelip it has been possible to provide some sub-division.

An early work on the voided long cross pennies of Henry III and Edward I is that of L.A. Lawrence⁷ who provided the following breakdown of class 7 coins for London:

<i>Class VII.</i>	
hENRICVS REX III'	REN/AVD/ONL/VND
hENRICVS REX III	PhE/LIP/ONL/UND
hENRICVS REX III'	PhE/LIP./ONL/UND
hENRICVS REX III'	PhE/LIP:/ONL/UND
hENRICVS REX:III'	PhE/LIP./ONL/UND
hERICVS REX III'	PhE/LIP/ONL/UND

Lawrence shows one type for Renaud, and five for Phelip. The Phelip coins being differentiated by punctuation differences after "REX" and "III" on the obverse, and by the punctuation after "LIP" on the reverse.

In Churchill and Thomas's book on the Brussels Hoard⁸ they pointed out that the Lombardic form of the letter "U" is only seen on class 7 coins and occurs in two forms, which they illustrated as shown.



To see the difference one needs a coin unclipped in the area of the "U", and currently it does not appear



a particularly useful attribute in differentiating dies, given that many coins are not in good enough condition to observe the upper part of the letter. The Lombardic U is seen on the reverse of all class 7 Phelip coins that I have examined, and sometimes occurs on the obverse. Perhaps detailed study of the letter U may be worthwhile if further specimens become available, especially as there is at least one other style of letter U as seen in the diagram at left.

Coin DNW-551 shows U1 on the obverse and what I call U3 on the reverse. U3 has a prominent bulge on the 2nd upright. Regardless of the style of U, if present, on the obverse, it has been observed that the style on the reverse is often U3, thereby suggesting there is evidence that the letters on the obverse and reverse were cut by different people.

⁷ L. A. Lawrence, 'The Long Cross coinage of Henry III and Edward I', 9 (1912), 145-79; 10 (1913), 69-93; 11 (1915), 101-19

⁸ BNS Special publication #9, The Brussels Hoard of 1908. The Long Cross Coinage of Henry III, by Ron Churchill and Bob Thomas, 2012.

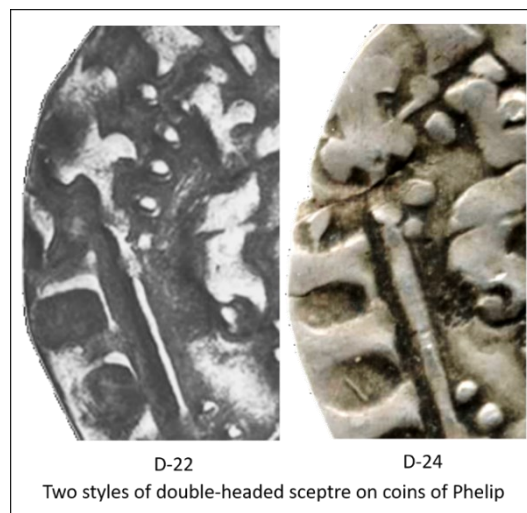
The Phelip coin images examined in this study have shown seven different obverse types, and six different reverse types, and these are described and illustrated below.

The Phelip Obverse Types

(a) Double-Sceptre Head Coins

With the recognition that compound sceptre head coins exist for Phelip as well as for Renaud, the sceptre head becomes a primary determinant of coin type. The three known Phelip specimens are from two different dies. These double sceptre head coins, whether of Renaud or Phelip, are now referred to as Type 7c.

A sceptre is a ceremonial staff; with its jewels and ornamentation it is a symbol of power. In England, from a very early period, two sceptres have been concurrently used, and from the time of Richard I, they have been distinguished as being tipped with a cross and a dove respectively. In France, one of the two royal sceptres was tipped with a fleur de lys, and the other had an open hand of benediction on the top. The style of the sceptre seen on the English Plantaganet and some earlier coins is thus of French style, having a fleur de lys at the top.



With four of thirteen class 7 Renaud coins studied being of the double sceptre head type, and three of the thirty-nine Phelip coins, one could conclude that this unusual design was in use for a period of two to three months during Renaud's tenure, and perhaps only for the first few weeks of Phelip's tenure. This is based on the fraction of such coins observed and the likely minting duration of the coins of Renaud and Phelip; this having been discussed in an earlier article¹.

The rare class 7 coins with a double-sceptre head, issued in the first half of 1288, pose a question as to their reason for existence. One possible answer may be that the design was intended to signify the successful English suppression of yet another revolt by the Welsh. Fighting between the Welsh and English had been ongoing since the time of the Norman invasion, and most of Wales had been subdued by 1283, but in 1287 Rhys ap Maredudd of Dryslwyn, a prince of Deheubarth incensed at his treatment by Edward I, lead attacks on English holdings in the south taking back the royal centre at Dinefwr. Due to the absence of King Edward, who was in south-west France, responsibility for suppressing the rebellion was left to his cousin, Edmund, earl of Cornwall, acting as regent of the realm. By January 1288 Rhys ap Maredudd had lost all his holdings and had fled into hiding, but remained a guerilla leader until his capture and execution in 1292. Was it perhaps the English success over this Welsh rebel in early 1288 that is signified by the additional fleur on the King's sceptre?

(b) Single Sceptre-Head Coins

The main features used to sub-divide the normal simple sceptre head coins are (i) the type of punctuation, if any, after "REX", and (ii) whether the king's name is spelt with a Lombardic "U" or a Roman "V".

The punctuation variations observed are: no punctuation, a colon after REX, or a single pellet after REX. Examination of the available specimens reveals that in terms of relative scarcity of surviving specimens the colon types are the most abundant, then types with no punctuation, and finally types with a single pellet.

Lawrence recorded a further type with no apostrophe after the “III” – but I have yet to see a convincing example of such a type.

Bust and crown variations are generally quite subtle, including some variation in the neatness of the beard. I have not observed any significant variations worth using as a further basis for sub-division. All variation in bust and crown style is likely to have been die cutter “whim” rather than any deliberate change of style. In fact, the punctuation variations are also likely to be down to such die-cutter style, and also it may be that one die cutter typically used a “U” whilst another one used a “V”, with perhaps no chronologic sequence to the use of the two letter styles.

The punctuation and U/V variation allow the definition of six possible combinations; these are shown in a following illustration of obverse types. If Lawrence’s type with no apostrophe exists then that would be an additional obverse variety.



Particularly worth noting is one obverse type having a colon after REX and a “V” in hENRICVS. Coins of this die show a double neckline on the right-hand side as shown on the right. They also show the fingers of the king’s right hand breaking into the inner circle of pellets. An easily recognised type, and the one which is the most abundant type in the coins studied (11 of 39 specimens).

The Phelip Reverse Types

Punctuation variations allow sub-division into a number of reverse types as follows:

A	PHILIP/ON/UND	No punctuation, ligations in 3rd and 4th quadrants
B	PHILIP/ONL/UND	Lombardic n in 3rd quadrant.
C	PHILIP:/ONL/UND:	Colons in 2q & 4q, ligations in 3q & 4q.
D	PHILIP:/ON/UND	Colon in 2nd q., ligations in 3rd and 4th quadrants
E	PHILIP:/ONL/UND	Colon in 2nd q., ligation in 3rd quadrant only, Lombardic "n" in 4th q.
F	PHILIP./ONL/UND	Pellet stop in 2nd q., ligations in 3rd and 4th quadrants

Three of these were not recorded by Lawrence. The above spelling variation types are each represented by a number of different dies, whose recognition can be assisted through the counting of the number of the pellets in each quadrant on the reverse inner circle, however once identical pellet counts have been observed on two coins they still need detailed examination to confirm whether identical or not – the technique is described in a BNS blog article by Ian Heavisides⁹.

On the following two pages are to be found illustrations of the obverse and reverse types. These will help explain the nomenclature of the different dies, which will be illustrated in the following article¹⁰.



⁹ Identifying Die Duplicates – Ian Heavisides, BNS Research Blog article, Oct. 2020.

¹⁰ Robert Page, “Henry III (Posthumous) Class 7 Pennies - Part 5, Phelip of London – Die Illustrations”, BNS Research Blog

Phelip Obverse Types – Single Sceptre Head Coins

- Based on Punctuation after "REX" in the legend, and "U" or "V"

Lombardic "U"

Roman "V"

Single Pellet after REX

7d



MW-2676

7g



IH-80

No Punctuation after REX

7e



DNW-551

7h



MW-3096

7f



BM 1930,0208.1

Colon after REX

7i



Sp-1019

Phelip Reverse Legend Types

A



No punctuation in legend. (Coin: MW-3096)

D



Colon at end of 2q, Roman "N" in 4th q.
(Coin: Triton V – 2453)

B



Lombardic "n" in 3rd q.
(Coin: RT-2267-8)

E



Colon at end 2q. Lombardic "n" in
4th q.(Coin: HHC-2)

C



Two Colons in legend – at end of 2q & 4q.
Roman "N" in 4th q. (Coin: LNPP6a)

F



Pellet stop at end 2nd quadrant.
(Coin: RP-3159)