

Prince Louis Penny of London – Josh Catermole

Something special to show today, and one which led to many hours of research and correspondence with experts on this topic.



Obverse: heNRICVS ReX



Reverse: RAVF ON LVNDE

Kingdom of England, House of Capet, Louis "the Lion" (future Louis VIII of France), Penny, London Mint, Moneyer: Rauf, 1216-1217.

To lay a bit of historical context, Louis is a figure who most have never heard of, though he nearly ended up as undisputed King of England. During the First Baron's War, the unpopular King John was pitched against the Barons who resented his actions as King and took over much of the country. In opposition to John, the Barons looked elsewhere to find a King who would be more pliable to their desires, and looked across the Channel to France, where Prince Louis, son of Philip II "Augustus" of France (and a descendant of Henry II of England), resided, and accepted the Baron's offer to invade England and take the throne. The invasion force of Prince Louis landed in eastern Kent on the 21 May 1216, and advanced unopposed to London, where on the 2 June Louis was proclaimed King in Old St Paul's Cathedral. Though he was not crowned, many prominent nobles, and even King Alexander II of Scotland, came to pay him homage. On 14 June, Louis captured Winchester, and soon after controlled over half the Kingdom of England.

However, just as Louis looked set to consolidate his power, King John died in October 1216, and the Barons loyal to John rallied around his 9 year old son Henry, who they proclaimed King as Henry III. Many of the Barons on Louis' side, and many others in power, saw Henry III as a more pliable King than Louis, and the French Prince gradually lost support. The Battle of Lincoln in May 1217, the naval defeat off Sandwich in August 1217 and the refusal of Louis' father King Philip to send reinforcements saw Louis forced to the negotiating table, and in September 1217 Louis renounced his claim, and left London to go back to France, where he eventually became King there in 1223. Henry III was now undisputed King of England.

The rare silver Penny in this post was minted in London during Louis' occupation. It is otherwise classified as a Class 6c2 Short Cross Penny with ornamental lettering. The Short Cross Penny expert Glenn Gittos, who has studied Class 6 for 40 years, believes that these

Pennies with the ornamental lettering from London, Canterbury and Bury St Edmunds were minted during the occupation, and other classifications point to this, or at the very least were minted concurrently with Louis' reign. Though the ornamental lettering itself cannot be attested to a decision made by Louis' regime, who would otherwise have left the coinage pretty much alone as it was good in quality and the system in place efficient, Louis was technically still the issuing authority of these coins.

Hope you enjoy this post and find the information useful and informative. 😊