

Henry III (Posthumous), Class 7 Pennies from the London Mint, Part Two - Moneyer Renaud

Robert Page

This is the second article on the Class 7 pennies and deals with the coins of the moneyer Renaud. Class 7 coins of London, along with the rare issues of Bury and Durham, were the last of the posthumous issues of Henry III before being replaced in 1279 by the new long cross pennies in Edward's own name. At London Class 7 is known for Renaud and Phelip, for Ion and Iocce at Bury St Edmunds, and Robert at Durham. No class 7 coins are known for Canterbury; £810 worth of silver was struck there in 1278, but that is believed to have been from existing dies of class 5h¹, not new dies of class 7.

Renaud, probably the goldsmith Reginald de Cantuaria, otherwise known as Reynold de Cantebrigg (in the patent rolls of 1264) took over the mint from Thomas Weseham in 1261² during the minting period of class 5g, and some of Renaud's coins were present in the Brussels Hoard which was sealed during 1266 or 1267. He continued in his role through to his death and classes 5h, 5i, 6 and 7 pennies were also struck under his name. Very few class 6 coins of Renaud are known to be extant today, and class 7 coins are quite rare, more so than those of his successor Phelip.

Renaud died in 1278; his will was enrolled about the 13th October 1278; however, his death was probably some months earlier as his successor Phelip took over Renaud's dies in May 1278. Renaud had been the London moneyer for a period of about twenty years. Towards the end of his tenure the monetary situation in England had deteriorated, particularly from about 1275. Coin was in short supply and clipping became an increasing problem.

Prince Edward had joined the Ninth Crusade to the Holy Land and was on his way home in 1272 when he was informed that his father had died and that he was now king. Making a slow return, he only reached England in 1274 and was crowned at Westminster Abbey. Edward's attention was soon diverted by the situation in Wales; after suppressing a minor rebellion in Wales in 1276–77, Edward responded to a second rebellion in 1282–83 with a full-scale war/conquest. Edward had financial problems from the start of his reign with insufficient revenue to meet his expenses and debts; he still owed money for his expedition to the Holy Land, and his financial challenges were not helped by a 1274 council of the Roman Catholic church in Lyon which had decreed an end to usury, and, not wishing to go against the church, Edward expelled all merchant usurers from England in November 1274.

However, a 1275 "U-turn" saw the Italian merchants allowed to return to England after payment of substantial fines. In that year Edward was also granted money by Parliament. With many distractions, he took no decisions to change the mint and coinage as it was, and he was probably not yet aware of the extent of a problem with "bad money". Coin-clipping was becoming an increasing issue, of which the king gradually became more aware, and by December 1276 he had made arrangements for the trial of some Jews and their accomplices accused of coin-clipping. The situation continued to deteriorate over the next two years and increasing numbers of both Jews and Christians were brought before the courts for clipping and other monetary offences. This came to a climax in November 1278 and perhaps Renaud had been fortunate to have passed away before this, as will be described in the next article in this series.

¹R. Thomas, "The recent finds of two late coins of London from the long cross series in the name of Henry III", BNS Research Blog article, October 2018.

² R. Churchill, 'Mints & Moneyers During the Reign of Henry III', 2012.

The date that Renaud's class 7 coins began to be struck, and how many Renaud dies may have been utilised, are described in the previous article³. Only a very few of the dies that would have been produced are represented amongst the surviving pennies of Renaud.

Over the minting span we might expect to see some variations in the coin design. Stewartby, in his 2009 book⁴, noted that "no clear sequential pattern has yet been established within class 7", and he went on to suggest that the main variations within both classes 6 and 7 were within the inscriptions.

Churchill and Thomas, in their 2012 volume on the Brussels Hoard⁵, said they were not then ready to attempt a classification, though they both noted and illustrated some of the variations in the style of both the portraits and the changes to the other design features on the obverses.

With the rarity of these Renaud coins one might consider there to be little point in seeking to sub-divide them. When one reflects on the fact that known changes to date are often variations in the lettering style or punctuation, which may simply be down to the style of individual die makers, there is no clear justification at this time for introducing varieties of the class 7 Renaud pennies on this basis alone. Likewise, minor variations in the style of the king's bust may not be significant enough to warrant a sub-division of these coins. However, I have noted variations in the design of both the crown and the sceptre which may be deliberate and not necessarily due to die cutter whim. It may be that these crown and sceptre variations, which I believe have not been previously published, could prove useful in any later classification of class 7 pennies. To take this any further I would need to locate more images of these coins, and to include the coins of Phelip and those from Bury and Durham.



Before addressing crown and sceptre variations it is useful to describe briefly some of the lettering and punctuation differences observed on the coins of Renaud. The bust shape shown above is typical for many class 7 coins, though we do see variations in the form of the beard pellets, particularly so with the coins of Phelip. It is in the lettering that we see much variation – either in the styles of the letters, ligation or punctuation. On the obverse shown here we see the legend which reads hENRICVS REX III' – the N is of Lombardic style in this example, and we see no punctuation other than the final apostrophe after "III". The RH neck line is a little to the right of where we might expect to see it, and variation in neck width can be characterised by the number of full pellets ("FP") observed between the two neck lines – in this case 10 FP. Finally, note the shape of the top of the sceptre – I will expand on this later in the article.

³ Robert Page, "Henry III (Posthumous), Class 7 Pennies from the London Mint", BNS Research Blog, Sept. 2020

⁴ Lord Stewartby, 'English Coins 1180-1551', 571 pages, 39 plates, published by Spink, London (2009)

⁵ Ron Churchill & Bob Thomas, 'The Brussels Hoard of 1908. The Long Cross Coinage of Henry III', 2012

On the reverse the legend reads REN/AUD/ONL/VND. The first quadrant lettering is difficult to see in this example, but I am confident it reads R followed by an “E” ligated with a Roman style “N”. The second quadrant interestingly shows an “A” ligated with a Lombardic “U”, in the third quadrant the “N” and “L” are ligated; note the tall upright tail on the “L” (C&T type L2), and finally the use of a “V” for a “U”, and “N” and “D” are ligated.

Also, on the reverse, note the number of pellets in the inner circle (“RIC”) of each quadrant. The RIC reading on this coin is 9.5/9/9.5/10. The use of RIC value observations can be useful when comparing two coins to see if they are from the same reverse die. The number of pellets between the king’s necklines can also be used for die comparisons. The number of pellets is otherwise of little significance.

In the following pages four obverses of Renaud coins are shown, with the above coin shown again as the third illustration.

On the obverse of three of the four coins we see the use of a “V” for a “U” – something which is normal in the Henry III long cross series, however one coin shows a Lombardic U. The three “V” coins are devoid of punctuation in the legend; the “U” coin shows a colon both before and after “REX”. The N in the legend can be either Lombardic or Roman; both appear to be equally common.

Some examples of Class 7 obverses from London, moneyer Renaud...



MW2318

- No punctuation after “X”
- Pellets below the sceptre side ornaments.
- A Lombardic “n”
- No ligation in the legend.
- Pellets between crown fleur and side ornaments.



MW2248

- No punctuation after “X”
- Unusual sceptre design.
- “E” ligated with a roman “N”
- Pellets between crown fleur and side ornaments.



MW2103

- No punctuation after X.
- A Lombardic “n”
- No ligation in the legend.



MW1636

- Although in poor condition this is an important specimen...
- Note the colons located before and after “REX”.
- A Lombardic “U” (type U2) rather than a “V”. Unusual style of letter R.

Obverse punctuation is sometimes seen either after “REX”, or before and after “REX”. This illustration shows two colons in the legend. The use of colons is also seen on some coins of Phelip.



In Churchill and Thomas’s book on the Brussels Hoard⁶ 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. 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, but only occasionally occurs on the obverse.

It could be argued that the basic design of the portraits in the first three coins illustrated above are enough on their own to provide three potential sub classes with special note being made of the way in which the crowns and the more realistic fleurs and half fleurs together with the narrowing bands are moving towards the crown styles of the coins in the name of Edward I.

However, aside from the bust, lettering and punctuation variations, it is also the detail on the crown and the sceptre that could be of particular interest from a possible future classification point of view. Illustrations of such variations observed from the limited number of available coins are shown on the next page.

⁶ Ron Churchill & Bob Thomas, ‘The Brussels Hoard of 1908. The Long Cross Coinage of Henry III’, 2012 – Essential reading for anyone interested in the voided long cross pennies of Henry III.

Some Renaud crowns have a pellet on the LH side of the crown's central fleur, some have such pellets on both the left and right. Most have no pellets to the side of the fleur. These are illustrated below.



Also of potential significance are the variations seen in the form of the sceptre. Some class 7 Renaud sceptres are simple, whilst others are seen to be more complex:



(a) A simple sceptre on a cl. VII of Renaud of London. (Coin: MW-1646)



(b) An unusual sceptre seen on a cl. VII Renaud of London coin. Underneath the normal sceptre head are two curved side "wings" with pellets beneath. (MW-2248)



(c) Another example of an unusual sceptre on a cl. VII Renaud coin – this one also shows the two "wings" but with pellets attached to the ends. (BM-403.7)



(d) On this example we see the side "wings" but no pellets associated with them. (Coin DM, ex Elmore-Jones Collection).



Enlargements of Sceptre Heads in the Previous Diagram

The design of the sceptre is quite variable; in addition to the three compound types shown above, two further examples are shown on the right. The left-hand example shows no additional “wings” present, but the two pellets are still there.

The right-hand example appears to show a sceptre shaft of two twisted strands of metal, each terminating in a side “wing”. However, this twisted appearance may have resulted from a damaged iron or even from a couple of small pellets being stamped over the sceptre arm.



Approximately half of the obverses of coins I have examined have the compound sceptre, and the coins with pellets on one or both sides of the central fleur have, so far, only been observed, on coins with the compound sceptre. The "N" in the king's name can be Roman or Lombardic and there is no correlation with sceptre type. Likewise the U in the king's name can be present as a Lombardic "U" or a "V", but on the coins I have examined the "V" is prevalent. Most of the examined coins have no punctuation associated with "REX", however I have seen colons before and/or after "REX" on a small number of coins, both with compound or simple sceptres. On the reverses I have only observed a Lombardic U in the 2nd quadrant and a "V" in the fourth quadrant. The coins with obverses having a compound sceptre and pellets near the central fleur tend to have lower pellet counts in the reverse inner circle ("RIC"): 7 or 8 pellets per quadrant compared to usually 9 or 10 pellets per quadrant on other coins. Some of the above variation is undoubtedly not deliberate, and simply due to die-cutter whim or tool availability.

As has been made clear, it is too early to propose any sub-classes of class 7, especially based on the very scarce coins of Renaud. Any future classification will need to take into account all moneys and all mints, and should ideally take into account bust variations as well as a number of other features, including the sceptre variations presented in this article. A significant challenge to a class 7 sub-division is that by far the most abundant coins for study are those of Phelip whose issues from May to November 1278 cover only a quarter or less of the period when class 7 was issued.

A future class 7 classification may show the coin type below as the chronologically earliest type of class 7 penny; it was first published by Bob Thomas in *The Essex Numismatic Society Journal*, Caesaromagus, Edition 125 and subsequently in a 2018 BNS Research Blog article.

This dark penny, now in the ownership of Bob Thomas, is a 2017 metal detecting find from Essex. He has proposed including it in class 7, though the coin also shows some characteristics of class 6, and if genuine it is a significant addition to our knowledge. The reverse is double-struck though the Renaud legend can be



discerned. The coin weighs 1.25 grams, a little light when compared to the official weight of about 1.42 gm., and the dark colouring could be a sign of debasement, possibly indicating a contemporary forgery; however it is considered to be genuine. Much Essex soil is notoriousy acidic and could account for the darkness – such an appearance is common with Essex based detector finds.

The case for it being a genuine English coin has since been re-inforced by a coin I located in the Portable Antiquities Scheme database. It is a 2018 metal detecting find from Shropshire where the the distance between the two finds is significant. Also important is the full weight of 1.44 gm of the Shropshire coin. This second coin appears to be an obverse die duplicate of Bob Thomas's coin; the double strike on the first coin makes it uncertain whether the reverse is also a die duplicate but this is



Image courtesy of the Portable Antiquities Scheme, record WREX-FC89EB.

probably the case. On both coins the hair style, which stops at nose level, is much shorter than coins of class 6, which is one of the main reasons Bob Thomas has decided to treat it as very early class 7. We thus have two coins that together are candidates for the earliest class 7 pennies, at least for Renaud.

Phelip De Cambio (Philip of the Mint), was appointed to the London mint on the 18th May 1278 following the death of Renaud. This means that the style of Renaud coins may in due course give some clue as to the earliest types for Phelip, and conversely the style of Phelip's coins may help us to identify the latest style of coins for Renaud.

In summary, I have noted three distinct obverse types for Renaud, which could be incorporated into any future class 7 sub-division. These types are:

- **Type A:** Simple sceptre, coins of transitional class 6/7 character. The only two known examples are illustrated above, and are probably from the same obverse and reverse dies.
- Type B: (**now Type C**) Compound (double-headed) sceptre, with or without one or more pellets either side of the crown's central fleur. Occasionally with a colon before and/or after REX. Reverse RIC count typically 7-8 on coins with pellets, and 9-10 on coins without the crown pellets.
- Type C (**now Type B**): Simple sceptre. Occasionally with a colon before and/or after REX. One specimen has been observed with a pellet and a colon after REX. Normally with a "V" for a "U" on the obverse, but rarely with a Lombardic "U". Reverse RIC count typically 9-10.

The above grouping is recognised as a tentative scheme at this time, and access to further coin specimens should allow refinement in due course. The variations observed on the Renaud coins will need to be incorporated into an overall classification scheme for class 7 one day, which should also take into account variations in bust style.

Examination of just a limited number of Renaud specimens has shown quite a lot of design variation, not only in the lettering and punctuation, but more especially in the design of the crown and the sceptre, as well as some variation noted in bust styles. This variability illustrates the need for further dedicated study of the Renaud coins, but that would also require many more coin images for examination, as the limited number of examples available to the author are insufficient to propose any subdivision or chronologic sequence of the Renaud coins with any great confidence at this time, other than to suggest that the "Bob Thomas type" came first, and coins with crown pellets or unusual sceptre designs may be earlier than the ones without, as these features have not been observed by the author on the subsequent coins of Phelip. Phelip's coins will be addressed in a following article on class 7.

Finally, I would like to appeal to readers who may have examples of any class 7 coins in their collections from any of the mints and moneyers to kindly consider letting me have images for study; images may be emailed to robtpage@gmail.com

Acknowledgements

As with the first article in this series, I would again like to acknowledge the helpful review and suggestions by Bob Thomas. His work with the late Ron Churchill on the Brussels Hoard has established him as a leading expert on the long cross coins of Henry III, and so his detailed review of this manuscript is much appreciated. The 2012 volumes on the Brussels Hoard by Ron Churchill and Bob Thomas, and the companion volume on Mints and Moneyers by Ron Churchill remain standard reference works and are highly recommended as essential reading to anyone interested in this series.

The very recent death of Ron Churchill on Sept. 7th is a great loss to those of us interested in Henry III long cross coins and their moneyers; my sympathy goes to all his family.

I would also like to acknowledge providers of images for my study; some of their coins are illustrated in this article. Thanks in particular go to Mark Winiger, Bob Thomas and Denis Martin, also some images were sourced from the British Museum, CNG and DNW.

