

An unrecorded sterling of Henry IV of Luxembourg 1288-1309

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This continental sterling imitation penny was found by one of the authors of this note (**DN**) whilst metal detecting on a farm in the Vale of Glamorgan, Wales in 2024. Other imitation pennies from the 13th/14th century had been found on the farm and nearby locations, together with other British hammered coins from all medieval periods.



Obverse legend reads:

✠:h:COMES:LVCEB'

Reverse legend reads: **BAS/Ton/IEEn/SIS**

Research by the finder had narrowed the coin down to its being a crockard of the 1290's issued by Henri IV of Luxembourg. It was clear from the reverse of the coin that it had been produced from a remote mint set up in or near the town of Bastogne nearly 70km from the Luxembourg capital. The finder submitted the coin to the Finds Liaison Officer at the Welsh National Museum who recorded the coin on the PAS as a "find of note, designated county/local importance". The PAS reference number is NMGW-272FB2 – Medieval. The coin is currently in the possession of the finder and the farmer has been informed.

The coin first came to the attention of the joint author (**DM**) through a Facebook message from DN requesting some help in pinning down the details of the coin, particularly the reverse reading. For those of us who are interested in, or collectors of, these continental sterlings of the late 13th and early 14th centuries the go-to reference work is the late Nicholas Mayhew's *Sterling Imitations of the Edwardian Type*, published by the RNS 1983. This is the only substantial volume written in English which refers to continental scholars of the series and includes descriptions and illustrations of coins in European collections and museums. Mayhew lists six substantial types for Henri IV of Luxembourg dated roughly between 1296 and 1300. From the number of examples that he discovered it is clear that coins of Henri IV are rare.

On the obverse of most of the types Henri uses the title of Count (COMES) of Luxemburg (LVCEB). The distinguishing features of this particular obverse are the triple pellet stops after the h and S and the comma after the B. Apart from one debased example at the end of the series the silver content of Henri's coins is generally around 90%. The example here is clearly of good silver. The weight of the coin is 0.93g and its die axis 180 degrees. It is a well struck example grading as VF with a flat spot around 9 o'clock on the obverse and a small chip on the edge of the flan.

It is the reverse of the coin that confirms that it is unrecorded either in Mayhew or any other source known to the author. All Mayhew's types have a reverse of the form MOn/eTAB/ASTO/nien or with the slightly different final quarter reading 'nie'. This translates as The Money of Bastogne. The reverse reading on this coin stands out as a bold statement of the issuing mint "Bastogne". The IEN/SIS ending in the third and first heraldic quarters on the reverse is an adjectival suffix found on many continental sterlings which could be translated as "originating in" or, more colloquially "coming from". The full reading of BASTONIENSIS makes this coin the only example of which the author is aware. More importantly Mayhew was also unaware of this type.

There are many instances where one could point to examples of recent finds of continental sterlings which could be said to be unrecorded. Usually the variations on existing Mayhew types are minor, perhaps a slight difference in a letter shape or a piece of punctuation, for example. This coin is a major variation viz. a completely new reverse reading. The closest one could get to a published Mayhew type would be a description of this coin as M109 obverse coupled with an unknown reverse. This, however, tends to underplay the

importance of this new find. The authors of this article are keenly awaiting the discovery of another example.



