

A Previously Unknown and Unpublished *Leeuwengroot* Type (Preliminary Report)

by Paul A. Torongo

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The Low Countries are full of undocumented *leeuwengroten*, lurking quietly in the collections of museums, municipalities and private individuals. Having examined so many *leeuwengroot* specimens, we were bound to run across an unknown type sooner or later.

In April 2017, an interesting specimen came to the author's attention, of a type not previously recorded. At this time we do not know the weight of the specimen, and we are currently working to obtain better photographs of the piece. We have no further information about the coin at this time, nor any information about its origin.





✠ MONETA [...] LIRAN (?)
 O'DV CI*O TRE A[N']*I (?)
 [...NO...]

On the obverse, the A of MONETA is either annuletted: **A** or pelleted: **A**; the same can be said of the preceding T.

The A in the second word looks like this: **A**. The second letter of the second word (I?) seems to have been struck over an O: **O**, while the final letter looks like an N (**N**) with an apostrophe at the bottom instead of the top: **N**.

The mark after MONETA is unclear, but seems to be something along these lines: **✠**.

It is not entirely clear if the outer border consists of 12 leaves or 11 leaves and a lion. In any case, the leaves are 3-lobed: **✠**.

The reverse, inner legend appears to read IO DVC LOTREAN, while the outer legend is all but illegible. There may be a pellet after LOT.

The white lines in the photographs are reflections from the plastic of the holder in which the coin is housed.

The meaning of the legends is not particularly clear. We were unable to find any medieval coins with legends anything like MONETA LIRAN / LORAN / LIRAD / LORAD. I asked a number of numismatists, and every one had the same best guess: Lorraine.



The reverse legend is reminiscent of those found on the *leeuwengroten* of Johanna of Brabant (1355-1406), which include Lothier (Lower Lorraine) (note that the border leaves on this coin are similar to those on the subject coin):



Elsen 118-745 / 3.12 g.

• ✠ MONETA ✠ FILED'
 O·DV C'·LO T·BR AB·I
 ✠ BNDICTV : SIT : NOMB : DNI : NRI : IHV : XPI

*money of Vilvorde
 Johanna, Duchess of Lothier, Brabant
 Blessed be the Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ*



Elsen 118-750 / 2.66 g.

• ✠ MONETA ✠ BRABLA.'
 ODV C'·LO T·BR AB·I
 ✠ WENCESL : DEI : GRAT : LVCEMB' : BRAB' : DVX

*money of Brabant
 Johanna, Duchess of Lothier, Brabant
 Wenceslas, by the Grace of God, Duke of Luxembourg, Brabant*

The reverse legend is also reminiscent of the that found on a *gros au lion* of Brittany:



Musée Dobrée N-3440 / 2.57 g.
© Musée Dobrée – Grand Patrimoine de Loire-Atlantique
Salain 342 (p. 128) ^[5]

**✠ MON[ET]A [✚] BRITANNIA
ODV Q̄LØ TBR ITII
✠ [BNDICTV : SIT : NO]D[EB] : DNI : N[RI] : DEI : IH[V] : XPI]**

money of Brittany

Johanna, Duchess of Lothier (?), Brittany or John, Duke of Lothier (?), Brittany

Blessed be the Name of Our Lord God, Jesus Christ

(see ref. 10 for more information on this type.)

Conclusion

Was the coin under discussion struck for **John, Duke of Lorraine** (August 26, 1346 – 23 September 1390)? He was only six months old when his father Rudolph (Raoul) was killed at the Battle of Crécy, and would have been around nine or ten when Johanna of Brabant was striking the Vilvorde *leeuwengroten* in Brabant. As a minor, John was under the regency of his mother, Mary (daughter of Guy I of Blois).

It may be relevant that he aided his uncle, Charles of Blois against John IV (of Montfort) in the War of the Breton Succession (see ref. 10). At the Battle of Auray on 29 September 1364, with the death of Charles of Blois, John IV (of Montfort) became the undisputed duke of Brittany, and John of Lorraine was taken prisoner.

Unlike the coin under discussion, John's Lorraine coins generally mention the name of the mint city, e.g. Nancy or Sierck.

The abbreviation DVC generally stands for DVCISSA (*duchess*) on medieval coins, although it occasionally means DVCIS (*duchy*), or even *duke*. The usual, Latin word for *duke* is DVX.

Was the coin under discussion struck for **Johanna, Duchess of Brabant**, in her capacity as Duchess of Lothier (Lower Lorraine)? This does not seem particularly likely, but it cannot be ruled out.

Was the coin under discussion struck for **Jeanne of Penthièvre**, wife of Charles of Blois? The idea has been raised that Jeanne of Penthièvre struck the Brittany coin shown on p. 6, but at this time it is nothing more than a theory. While we are reaching for straws, perhaps it was struck for **Jeanne of Flanders**, mother of John IV of Montfort, or even **John IV** himself.

There is no evidence to support any of these ideas at this time.

Was the coin under discussion struck for **Arnold of Oreye**, Lord of Rummen, notorious coin imitator and borderline counterfeiter? Arnold struck *leeuwengroten* and other coins types with legends that closely imitated those of Flanders and Brabant. These legends were intended to mislead the public at large into thinking that the Rummen coins were indeed struck in Flanders (or Brabant). Arnold may have even struck counterfeit Flemish or Brabant coins as well. It is conceivable that the coin under discussion was struck in Rummen, as some sort of deceptive, imitative *leeuwengroot*, in which case the legends may in fact be nonsense. This theory is purely speculative, however, and there is no actual evidence to link this coin to Rummen... or anywhere else, for that matter.

Or is the coin under discussion simply a **medieval counterfeit**, imitating a type for which there was never any official example? Many such medieval counterfeits exist; *leeuwengroot* examples include "fantasy" coins of convention between Flanders-Brabant and Flanders-Holland (or Hainaut) (see ref. 4, pp. 111-117). This would certainly explain the mediocre quality of workmanship that the coin displays.

A medieval counterfeit may be the most likely explanation for the new *leeuwengroot* type.

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Paul Torongo

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