

Some Interesting Continental *Esterlins* From the Collection of Peter Woodhead

Paul A. Torongo © 2017

In the summer of 2009, I had the privilege of being invited to visit my good friend, the late Peter Woodhead in Cirencester, England. While I was there, he gave me a small, metal box full of medieval coins, and told me I could take whatever I wanted from the contents. The box contained various *deniers*, *denaros* and *sterlings* from France, England, Italy, Spain and other unknown mints.

The coins included a number of interesting, continental *esterlins*, coins posing as English sterling pennies, struck at unknown mint places, which I present here.





Item 1 / 1.23 g.

EDW R ANGL DNS hYB
CIVI TÆS LON LON

Torongo 2.3 (this specimen) ^[2] (p. 34)
 Mayhew Type 54 ^[1] (p. 136)

This coin, copying a *sterling* of the London mint, is easily recognizable as an imitation by the erroneous reverse legend LONLON and the rather bizarre portrait of the king on the obverse. Interestingly, I ran across a die-linked example of this type in a private collection in The Netherlands (Torongo 2.4 ^[2]).



Item 2 / 1.36 g.

EDW R ANGL DNS hYB
CIVI TÆS LON DON

Mayhew 374 ^[1] (pp. 136-137)

This coin, copying a *sterling* of the London mint, is easily recognizable as an imitation by the non-official obverse legend with an extra E. The type is described by Mayhew on pp. 136-137 of his *Sterling Imitations...* book (ref 1), n° 374.



Item 3 / 1.29 g.

**EDW R ÆNGL DNS hYB
CIVI TÆS CÆH TOR**

I had long had my doubts as to the authenticity of this coin, based simply on its appearance. Something about it did not seem “the same” as the true, English *sterlings*. I sent photographs of the coin to Nicholas Mayhew, who confirmed its identity as a continental *esterlin*, copying a *sterling* of the Canterbury mint ^[3].



Item 4 / 1.26 g.

**EDW R ÆNGL DNS hYB
CIVI TÆS LON DON**

Mayhew Type 54 ? ^[1] (p. 136)

I have long had my doubts as to the authenticity of this coin, based simply on its appearance. Like the Canterbury coin shown above, something about it does not seem “the same” as official English *sterlings*. I did not, however, ask Nicholas Mayhew about it, which I now regret. **It may well be a genuine *sterling* from the mint at London.** But the fact that it came out of the same little box at Peter Woodhead’s house as the other *esterlins* makes me wonder if he had not been collecting such imitations together in said box. I suspect this coin is a continental imitation, but I am not certain.



Item 5

**[✠ LVDVICVS•ROM•IMPR•]
[MON ETÆ AQVE NSIS]**

Louis of Bavaria (1314-1347): Holy Roman Empire

Mayhew 337 ^[1] (p. 127)

According to Mayhew:

“This is a scare variety¹¹ of 336 with a pellet at the end of the obverse legend.”

¹¹ Only one example 1.35 g. (Menadier 83b) in the Manderfeld hoard.”

“337a Oxford 1.44

337b Photo by Vanderpijpen 1.35 Manderfeld”

Regarding Mayhew’s Hoard n° 194, the Manderfeld Hoard (p. 196):

“194. Manderfeld (arr. Verviers, province de Liège), 1^{er} juin 1977”

Peter Woodhead remarked that this coin looked like “it had been chewed by a horse”. A close inspection reveals it to be an *esterlin* of Louis of Bavaria, Holy Roman Emperor, with an eagle in the first quadrant. (I sold this coin to a collector and I do not know the weight of the piece.)

I have seen other *esterlins* in similar condition, that look as if someone had defaced them. (Note the eyes on Item 4 above.) I sometimes wonder if someone in the Middle Ages was defacing *esterlins* to mark them as such, as an indication that the coins were not genuine *sterlings*.

CONCLUSION:

Since this paper is simply a presentation of some interesting coins, there is no real conclusion to be drawn, other than reiterating my theory that Peter Woodhead may have been collecting *esterlins* and/or suspect coins together in a little, metal box. A counterfeit Italian *grosso* and a *denier* of Richard III the Lionheart from Poitou suspected of being counterfeit were also in the box, which only adds weight to my theory (although I should point out that there were several genuine coins in the box as well).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

I wish to thank the late Peter Woodhead, for the coins he gave me, as well as for all of his help, and of course, for his friendship.

LITERATURE:

[1]

Sterling Imitations of Edwardian Type

Nicholas J. Mayhew

(Royal Numismatic Society Special Publication No. 14.)

R.N.S.

London, 1983

ISBN 0 901405 20 5

[2]

Collecting Medieval Coins: A Beginner's Guide

Paul A. Torongo

2013

ISBN 149 201 2022

ISBN 978-1492172024

[3]

Private correspondence

Paul A. Torongo – Nicholas J. Mayhew