

# A Previously Unknown and Unpublished *Leeuwengroot* Type

by Paul A. Torongo

© 2017

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, in the collection of the Museum Stadskasteel Zaltbommel, The Netherlands. The coin was purchased by the museum in 1993, along with some other, unrelated coins, from a dealer who offered the coins to the museum because they had all been found in the surrounding area. The coin under discussion was found by Bruchem-Kerkwijk.



diameter: 26 mm.  
weight: 2.92 g.














✕ MONETA ✕ LIRAD.  
 O'DV C' \* L O T RE AN \* I  
 [...NO...]

(?)  
(?)

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

The A in the second word looks like this: . The second letter of the second word (I?) seems to have been struck over an O: , while the final letter looks like a D with a pellet at the bottom, interfering with the letter itself: .

The mark after MONETA is a leaf, 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 LOT REAN, while the outer legend is all but illegible. The L of LOT is pelleted, and there is another pellet after the word..

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 even more puzzling: Iohanna DVCissa LOTier REAN? Iohannes DVCis LOTier REAN? Or is the pellet after LOT unnecessary, and should it be read as LOTREAN?



✠ MONETA ✚ LIRAD'

(?)





ODV C\*LO T·RE AN\*I (?)

[...NO...]

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 : NOMEN : DNI : NRI : IHS : 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 ✠ BRAB'·  
 ODV C'·LO T·BR AB·I  
 ✠ WENCESL : DEI : GRAT : LVCENB' : 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) <sup>[5]</sup>*

**.✠ MONET[Υ]Λ [✚] BRITTANOB '**  
**ODV Q̃LΘ TBR ITII**  
**✠ [BNDICTV : SIT : NO]CDE : 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. 8 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. 8). 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 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 Brabançon 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.

Was the coin struck for the lord of some small region or city somewhere in the area of the Duchy of Gelre? The Lordship of Lichtenvoorde? The city of Lochem? The Liemers region? (Zutphen quarter) Or the town of Lobith? The town of Leerdam? (at the time known as Ter Lede or Ter Leerde) (Betuwe quarter, the same quarter as Zaltbommel, where the piece was found)

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.

Either a coin struck by a minor lord in the vicinity of the Duchy of Gelre, or a medieval counterfeit of a “fantasy” type; one of these seems the most likely explanation for the origin of this coin.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would very much like to thank Lisette Le Blanc and M. J. Slosser of the Museum Stadskasteel Zaltbommel, as well as the firm of Jean Elsen et ses Fils, Aimé Haeck, Vincent Lecourt (Musée Dobrée), David Mee and Andy Singer, and of course, Stadskasteel Zaltbommel.

All photographs © 2017 Paul A. Torongo.  
June 19, 2017.

## LITERATURE

[1]

***Les Monnaies Feodales de France*** (3 volumes)

Faustin Poey d'Avant

Camille Rollin

Paris, 1858-1866 (reprint Akademische Druck, Graz, 1961)

[2]

***Catalogue général illustré monnaies Françaises provinciales***

E. Boudeau

A.G. van der Dussen

Maastricht

[3]

***De Munten van Nederland van de Vroogste Tijden tot aan de Pacificatie van Gend (1576)***

***De munten der leenen van de voormalige hertogdommen Brabant en Limburg...***

P.O. van der Chijs

F. Bohn, 1862

[4]

***Lodewijk van Nevers, Graaf van Vlaanderen.***

***Historische en numismatische studie van de muntslag in Aalst en Gent***

Jean-Claude Martiny & Paul A. Torongo

Uitgeverij Snoeck

Ghent, 2016

ISBN: 978-94-6161-333-2

[5]

***Répertoire raisonné des monnaies de la guerre de Succession de Bretagne (1341-1365)***

Gildas Salaün

pp. 122-131

Société Bretonne de Numismatique et d'Histoire

[6]

***L'imitation des types monétaires flamands : depuis Marguerite de Constantinople jusqu'à l'avènement de la Maison de Bourgogne***

Raymond Serrure

1899

Liège: G. Genard; Maastricht: A.G. Van der Dussen, 1972

[7]

***Collecting Medieval Coins: A Beginner's Guide***

Paul A. Torongo

2013

ISBN 978-1492172024

[8]

***A Preliminary Look at the Gros au Lions of Brittany***

Paul Torongo

Academia.edu

Rotterdam, 2017

[9]

***Atlas der munten van België van de Kelten tot heden***

Hugo Vanhoudt

Herent, 1996

ISBN 90-9009686

[10]

***Catalogues of The De Wit Collection of Medieval Coins***

3 volumes

G. W. De Wit

Fritz Rudolf Künker Münzenhandlung

Osnabrück, Germany

2007