

Previously Unpublished *Leeuwengroten* of Brabant

by Paul A. Torongo (with Raymond van Oosterhout)
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There are 3 basic sub-types of John III (1312-1355), MONETA BRABAN *leeuwengroot* (**cat. Type III**), defined by the mark found between the two words in the obverse legend: a leaf ♣, two stars ✱, or the so-called *mark of Brabant* †. (There are a number of other variants to these basic sub-types).

Since the publication of our report on the BRABAN coins (ref. 2), two interesting, unique, and noteworthy specimens have turned up in the marketplace. Additionally, some variations of the ‘leaf’ coins have come to our attention.

• Type III-d (var.) (1 x)

Extra pellets, no pierced characters, missing apostrophe after LOT



private collection / 3.75 g.

✱ MONETA ♣ BRABAN'
O·DV X·LO T·BR AB'·I
✠ BNDICTV : SI[T : NOMES] DNI : NRI : IHV : ✠PI :

Unlike so many other *leeuwengroot* specimens (from any region including Brabant), the reverse, outer legend of this piece is in relatively pristine shape (SIT : NOME not withstanding). There is no sign of any pierced initial cross or **X** (in XPI) in the reverse, outer legend, which is unusual for a Brabant ‘leaf’ coin. There is an unusual, “extra” triple pellet mark after XPI that is not found on any other Brabant *leeuwengroot* known (or for that matter, any *leeuwengroot* from any region). Furthermore, the expected apostrophe after LOT is absent. **This is the only known example of such a coin.** It is difficult to know whether to classify this piece as a variant or as a new sub-type.

It is certainly possible that one or all of these anomalies are simply die-sinker’s errors. On the other hand, it has previously been suggested by Ghyssens (ref. 1) that the pierced cross and **X** on the Brabant coins might be mintmarks for Antwerp. Unfortunately, many of the crosses and **X**’s on the other known “leaf” coin specimens are illegible, so we cannot be sure if any unpierced characters are seen on other Brabant “leaf” coins or not (i.e. those without the extra : at the end). Was this coin struck somewhere other than Antwerp? Brussels?

There is nothing about the appearance of this piece that gives the impression of it being a medieval counterfeit; other than the legend variations, the coin looks “right” and “matches” the other known ‘leaf’ coins in general style and characteristics (i.e. letter forms, central lion, etc.)



detail



Examples of other ‘leaf’ coin reverses with clearly pierced crosses and X’s

Other ‘leaf’ coins, some of which appear to have X’s and crosses that may not be pierced:



Examples of other ‘leaf’ coin reverses, with unclear crosses and X’s – pierced?

Some X’s and crosses are clearly pierced, others are illegible, and some may not be pierced at all (?). Note how weak some of the “piercings” are, and how easily they become “mashed” and disappear from sight.



different photos of the same coin

We have no examples of ‘**star**’ coins with a pierced cross or **X**, but we only have a few examples available for study. Were these coins struck at Brussels?



*a ‘star’ coin
private collection*

All of the many known examples of ‘**mark of Brabant**’ *leeuwengroten*, with obverse borders containing 11 or 12 leaves (and a lion), have pierced **X**’s and crosses, or they are illegible.



a typical ‘mark of Brabant’ coin

• **Type III-d (var.)**

(1 x)

III-d O'•DV X•LO T'•BR AB'•I †

III-d (var.) O'•DV X•LO T'•B AB'•I †

Returning to the 'leaf' coins, it has come to our attention that although there are coins with an **R** in BRAB on the reverse (as described in our report as **cat. Type III-d**), there are others with **R** (**cat. Type III-d var.**). The **R** of BRABANT on the obverse is always **R**.



private collection / 3.72 g.
BRAB'



CdlB1993-950 / 3.75 g.
BRAB'



CdMB 083 / 3.906 g.
BRAB'



Spink 16005-1682
BRAB
(photo credit: Spink)

This is a **cat. III-d** coin with **R** in BRAB on the reverse.

• **Type III-e (var.)** (Outer Border of 12♣ / 1♣ with R in BRAB)

Missing apostrophe after BRABAN



Henzen 5530821-24 / 3.04 g.

[♣] MONETA [†] BRABAN
 O·DV X·LO T·BR AB·I
 *BNDICTV : SIT : NOCDE : DNI : NRI : IHV : *PI

There is no sign of an apostrophe after BRABAN on the obverse, unlike every other known BRABAN coin. This is the only known example of such a coin. The missing apostrophe may well be a die-sinker's error, as opposed to some kind of intentional minting mark (or lack thereof), but we cannot be certain either way.

‘Star’ and ‘Leaf’ Coins

Based upon or recent study of the Malines Hoard (1857; ref. 4), we have come to believe that the BRABAN ‘leaf’ coins actually pre-date the ‘star’ coins:

| <u>Cat.</u> | <u>legend</u> | <u>mark</u> | <u>notes</u> |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| October 1338 – October 1341 (?) | | | |
| III-b | O×DV X×LO T•B R AB×I | ✦ | leaf (3 x’s) |
| III-c | O×DV X•LO T•B R AB×I | ✦ | leaf (2 x’s) |
| III-d | O•DV X•LO T•B R AB×I | ✦ | leaf (1 x) |
| III-d var. | O•DV X•LO T•B R AB×I | ✦ | leaf (1 x) XPI : |
| III-d var. | O•DV X•LO T•B R AB×I | ✦ | leaf (1 x) |
| October 1343 – early 1344 (?) | | | |
| III-a | O•DV X★LO T•B R AB•I | ★ | stars |
| c. January 1346 - ? (?) | | | |
| III-e | 12♣ / 1♠ B R AB | ✦ | { ‘mark of Brabant’ & |
| III-f | 12♣ / 1♠ B R AB | ✦ | { 13-item border |
| III-g | 11♣ / 1♠ B R AB | ✦ | “common type” |

The correct, chronological order of the sub-types of the ‘leaf’ and ‘mark of Brabant’ coins is unknown.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LITERATURE

[1]

Le monnayage d'argent en Flandre, Hainaut et Brabant au début de la guerre de cent ans

Joseph Ghyssens

in ***RBN*** (CXX), 1974

pp. 109 - 191

Plates II – VI

[2]

A Preliminary Overview of the Leeuwengroten of Brabant Part One: Brussels

Paul A. Torongo & Raymond van Oosterhout

Rotterdam, 2018

Academia.edu

[3]

A Preliminary Overview of the Leeuwengroten of Brabant Part II: MONETA BRABAN

Paul A. Torongo with Raymond van Oosterhout

Rotterdam, 2019

Academia. Edu

[4]

The Malines Coin Hoard (1847)

Paul A. Torongo (with Raymond van Oosterhout)

Rotterdam, 2020

Academia.edu

Additional Musings on the *Leeuwengroot* Final Triple Pellet Mark

by Paul A. Torongo
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We recently published a paper entitled *Previously Unpublished Leeuwengroten of Brabant* (ref. 7), which featured an unusual Brabant *leeuwengroot* with a ⚔ mark after the final word in the reverse, outer legend (pp. 1-2):

“• Type III-d (var.) (1 x)

Extra pellets, no pierced characters, missing apostrophe after LOT



private collection / 3.75 g.

✠ MONETA ✠ BRABAN'
O'DV X·LO T·BR AB'·I
✠ BNDICTV : SI[T : NOME:] DNI : NRI : IHV : ✠PI :

Unlike so many other *leeuwengroot* specimens (from any region including Brabant), the reverse, outer legend of this piece is in relatively pristine shape (SIT : NOME not withstanding). There is no sign of any pierced initial cross or X (in XPI) in the reverse, outer legend, which is unusual for a Brabant ‘leaf’ coin. There is an unusual, “extra” triple pellet mark after XPI that is not found on any other Brabant *leeuwengroot* known (or for that matter, any *leeuwengroot* from any region). Furthermore, the expected

apostrophe after LOT is absent. **This is the only known example of such a coin.** It is difficult to know whether to classify this piece as a variant or as a new sub-type.

It is certainly possible that one or all of these anomalies are simply die-sinker's errors. On the other hand, it has previously been suggested by Ghyssens (ref. 1) that the pierced cross and X on the Brabant coins might be mintmarks for Antwerp. Unfortunately, many of the crosses and X's on the other known "leaf" coin specimens are illegible, so we cannot be sure if any unpierced characters are seen on other Brabant "leaf" coins or not (i.e. those without the extra : at the end). Was this coin struck somewhere other than Antwerp? Brussels?

There is nothing about the appearance of this piece that gives the impression of it being a medieval counterfeit; other than the legend variations, the coin looks "right" and "matches" the other known 'leaf' coins in general style and characteristics (i.e. letter forms, central lion, etc.)" ^[7]

Note the text in red. Consider then, the following (corrected) text from our *A Preliminary Look at the Leeuwengroten of Louis of Male : Issues I, II, III and IV* (ref. 6, pp. 39-40):

"A Deceptive Imitation

Deceptive Imitation (a term borrowed from Susan Tyler-Smith) refers to medieval counterfeit coins (i.e. coins not officially issued by the mint) that look so much like the official issues that it is all but impossible to tell them from the real coins. Many such deceptive imitations of the French *gros tournois* are known to exist (see ref. 5).

Although it is likely that deceptive imitations of the *gros au lion* must have once existed as well, it is all but impossible to separate them from the real thing. That is, unless the counterfeiters make too many errors.

Here we have a rare example of a deceptive imitation of a Flemish *leeuwengroot* from Issue II:



CGB / 3.29 g.

✠ MONETA ' FLAN'D'
 LVD OVI C^o MES
 ✠ BNDICTV : SIT : [NO] H^e : DNI : NRHHV : XPI :



The characteristics of this coin do not match any other known specimen.

- If there is a pellet right of the initial cross, it is not visible in the photograph.
 - The **M** of MONETA is unusual.
 - The central lion looks unusual.
 - There is no crossbar in FLAND, which is unusual for Issue II.
 - The leaf (?) between words is odd: **†** .
 - The reverse **B** and **P** are downright strange: **IB IP** .
 - The **M** of COMES appears to be **II**.
 - There is no **:** after **QRI**.
 - There is an odd line between **Q** and RI.
 - The use of a Roman **M** in NOME is never seen on official, Flemish issues.
- [– There is **:** after **XPI**.]

The lack of a crossbar in FLAND may (or may not) support the notion of the same on official Flemish coins. Was this coin a copy of an actual Flemish issue with FLAND instead of FLAND?”^[7]

We are usually quite good at spotting the various characteristics on *leeuwengroten* (if we do say so ourselves). But, much to our dismay, we did miss that final triple pellet in the reverse, outer legend (not listed in our original report).

Thus: Other than the BRABAN ‘leaf’ coin discussed above and in ref. 7, the only other *leeuwengroot* known to us with XPI **: in the outer legend is a coin that is almost certainly not a genuine, Flemish issue, but rather a deceptive imitation (counterfeit).**

LITERATURE

[1-4]

[5]

Recognizing deceptive imitations

Susan Tyler-Smith

pp. 119-144

in ***The Gros Tournois: Proceedings of the 14th Oxford Symposium on Coinage and Monetary History***

Nicholas J. Mayhew, ed.

R.N.S., Oxford, 1997

(Royal Numismatic Society Special Publication No. 31.)

ISBN 0 90140 543 4 (RNS) / 1 85444 084 5 (Ashmolean Museum)

[6]

A Preliminary Look at the Leeuwengroten of Louis of Mâle : Issues I, II, III and IV

Paul A. Torongo with Raymond van Oosterhout

Rotterdam, 2016

Academia.edu

[7]

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