

# The Leeuwengroten of the Amersfoort Find (1991)

Paul Torongo & Raymond van Oosterhout  
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Hoard Deposited: after 1354  
Town of Amersfoort  
Currently in the collection of the Municipality of Amersfoort  
Amersfoort, The Netherlands  
A0000 / NUMIS 1002943  
Research viewing: 27 July, 2015

Twelve silver (or billon) coins were found together in Amersfoort, The Netherlands, in 1991, recovered from what had once been a pond used for the watering of horses. Although the coins were all discovered during excavation of the pond, they were found fairly evenly distributed throughout the site material and are not necessarily connected to one another in any way, i.e. they may not have been deposited together or by the same person(s) <sup>[5]</sup> <sup>[12]</sup>.

The 10 *leeuwengroten* were inspected, weighed and photographed by author Torongo (and his lovely wife) in July of 2015. The two smaller coins from the find were not available for viewing at the time. A complete list of the *leeuwengroten* and their weights can be found in the appendix.

The find had been previously studied and reported by Hans de Jong in 1994 <sup>[5]</sup>. De Jong reported the find as:

“six coins, leeuwengroot, issue of 1354. Holland, William V (1345-1389);  
four coins, leeuwengroot, 1337-1365, Flanders, Louis of Crécy (1322-1346) or Louis of Male (1346-1384);  
one coin, *mijt*, Flanders, Louis of Crécy (1322-1346), struck at Aalst;  
one coin, Brabantine penny (*Brabantse penning*), Brabant, John III (1312-1355)” <sup>[5]</sup>

De Jong noted that it seems odd that so many large denomination coins should have ended up in a horse pond.

**Several of the coins display characteristics that lead us to believe that they may in fact be medieval counterfeits.** This may explain how they ended up in the horse pond; perhaps they were deliberately tossed in by someone in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, either to avoid being caught with them or simply to remove the bad coins from circulation once and for all. The suspect coins seem to have gouge marks or pieces removed from the edges that may be indications that someone had tested the metal for fineness.

The original find (1991) was comprised of:

— **12 silver (or billon) coins** divided as follows:

- 1 Brabant *penny*, John III (1312-1355)
- 1 *mijt*, Louis of Nevers (1322-1346)
- 10 *leeuwengroten*, *gros au lions* or *gros compagnons*:
  - 4 Flanders : Louis II of Mâle (1346-1384)
  - 6 Holland : William V (1350-1389)

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE COINS<sup>[7]</sup>

The obverse of the *leeuwengroten* found in Amersfoort is a rampant lion left, surrounded by a clockwise legend that begins with an initial cross, followed by the word MONETA. This is followed by a leaf-mark, and then on the Amersfoort coins either FLAND' or HOLLAND'. Circling this legend is a border of 1 small lion and 11 leaves, each itself enclosed in a partial circle. Between the legend and the outer border is a ring of oblong pellets.

The reverse has an outer and an inner legend. The central type is a cross, the arms of which break into the inner legend. The legends are separated by a ring of oblong pellets, and there is another ring of oblong pellets beneath the inner legend. There are rings of pellets along the outer edges of both faces as well, but these are quite often not visible on the coins themselves.

Certain numismatists prefer to view the lion side as the reverse and the cross side as the obverse. The approximate diameter of a *leeuwengroot* is 27-28 mm.

The reverse, outer legend is the same for all 10 coins:

REV ✠ BNDICTV : SIT : NOMES : DNI : NRI : IHSV : XPI

BeNeDICTV<sup>m</sup> SIT NOMEn DomiNI NostRI IHSV CHRIsTi  
*Blessed be the Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ*

The obverse legend differs from region to region, as does the reverse, inner legend.

### County of Holland

William V, Count of Holland and Zeeland  
(1350-1389)

Duke of Bavaria from 11 October, 1347

6 *leeuwengroten*

All Grolle Type 17.2.2

MONETA HOLLANDie  
GVILELMvs, DVX, COMES

*Coin of Holland*  
*William, Duke, Count*

There were in fact a number of different types of *leeuwengroot* struck in Holland, each with different obverse and/or reverse legends. The only coins present in the Amersfoort Find are those of the MONETA HOLLAND type (obverse legend), the most common sort.

Holland *leeuwengroten* of this type have 5-lobed border leaves in the obverse, outer legend. Some of them have a colon (double-pellet) between DVX and COMES. The O's of COMES are always round on Holland *leeuwengroten*. While both 'normal' and annuleted A's appear on the Holland coins, all of the T's in MONETA present in the Amersfoort Find are 'normal'. (Either the T and/or A can be annuleted on Holland *leeuwengroten*: T A.)

Between the words MONETA and HOLLAND is a leaf, which is often mistaken for an X. The stem of this leaf mark is not always facing downwards, and sometimes there is a pellet above the leaf.: ✠ ✠ ✠.

## County of Flanders

Louis II of Mâle, Count of Flanders and Rethel  
(26 August, 1346 – 30 January 1384)

4 *leeuwengroten*

All Gaillard Type 219 / Vanhoudt Type G-2596

MONETA FLANDrie  
LVDOVICvs COMES

*Coin of Flanders*  
*Louis, Count*

There are no *leeuwengroten* of Louis I of Nevers present in the Amersfoort Find. Although the legends on the coins of Louis II of Mâle remain the same throughout their minting, the specific details of the letters and marks differ from issue to issue. The details relevant to identification of the *leeuwengroten* of Louis of Mâle are as follows: <sup>[9]</sup>

### **Obverse:**

The initial cross of the legend:

(pellets present to the left •✚ and/or •✚• to the right ✚•, or absent ✚)

The A of MONETA (crossbar present **Æ** or absent **Λ**)

The A of FLAND' (crossbar present **Æ** or absent **Λ**)

The leaf between the two words (stem pointing to A ✚, F ✚, or straight down ✚)

The L of FLAND' (pellet present **Λ** or absent **Λ**; other characteristics known as well)

The N of FLAND' (various forms of the **Ń** are also relevant.)

### **Reverse:**

The O of COMES (round **○** or long **⓪**)

The L of LVDOVIC' (pellet present **Λ** or absent **Λ**; other characteristics known as well)

The C's of LVDOVIC' and COMES ('sharp' **Ꝉ** or 'rounded' **Ꝉ** on the right side)

The N's of the outer legend (various forms of the **Ń** are also relevant.)

The form of the leaves in the obverse, outer border is another identifying characteristic. The leaves are said to have either 3 or 5 lobes to them. There are in fact several other rather subtle details regarding these leaves, but for the current discussion it will suffice to simply identify the leaves as having 3 or 5 lobes.

3 lobes: 

5 lobes: 

Conclusions as to which mintmarks correspond to which issues have been drawn based largely on Aimé Haeck's *De leeuwengroten met het kruisje van Lodewijk van Male – Een proeve van (her)classificatie* <sup>[4]</sup>. Descriptions of the characteristics of specific issues of Louis of Mâle have been taken (in part) from Torongo & van Oosterhout's *A Preliminary Look at the Leeuwengroten of Louis of Mâle (1346-1384): Issues IV and V* <sup>[9]</sup>.

## CATALOG of COINS:

All photographs © 2015 Paul Torongo  
Shown approx. 2 ½ x life-size (250%).

### County of Flanders

Louis II of Mâle, Count of Flanders and Rethel  
(26 August, 1346 – 30 January 1384)  
All Gaillard Type 219 / Vanhoudt Type G-2596  
4 coins

**Issue I:** {20 January 1346 – 24 Nov. 1346}  
3-lobed border leaves  
1 coin ?

OBV    ✠ MONET[Æ +] FLAND'  
REV    LVD OVI CꝰCO MES



**A0004**  
**NUMIS 1002947**  
2.16 g.

The hole in this coin immediately raises a red flag – is this a medieval counterfeit? Holes such as this usually indicate that someone in the Middle Ages thought so. The rough workmanship on the obverse seems to bear out this idea, as do the possible test areas on the **L** and above the **F** of **FLAND'** on the obverse.

There is no sign of a pellet left of the cross, while the hole has obliterated the area to the right. The border leaves appear to have only 3 lobes. If this piece is a genuine, Flemish coin, then it must have been struck during Issue I.

**Issue II** : {24 Nov. 1346 – 27 May 1351}

5-lobed border leaves

1 coin, Type 6B ?

OBV    ✠ • MON[ET]A + F]LAVND'  
REV    LVD OVI CꝰCO MBS



**A0006**

**NUMIS 1002949**

1.62 g.

The round **O** in **COMES** on the reverse is clear. The fabric of the coin seems slightly unusual, especially in light of the suspect nature of the other coins present in the find. The stem of the leaf after **MONETA** is so unclear as to be useless (Haeck Type 6B has a straight stem, the most common type seen today). The missing areas along the edges, especially the one with its point between the **ON** of **MONETA** and **CO** of **COMES** may indicate metal removed for testing. The authors are not completely convinced that this is a genuine, Flemish issue.

**Issue III** : { 28 May, 1351 – 1 January, 1352  
 15 January, 1352 – 5 September, 1353 }  
 5-lobed border leaves  
 1 coin ?

**OBV**    • ✠ • **MONETA** † **FLAND'**  
**REV**    **LVD OVI** † **MES**

Coin A-005 is suspect as well. The leaf-stem is clearly curving toward the **F** of **FLAND** and a large pellet left of the initial cross is clear, but on the right it is less certain. The letters are poorly engraved and the **T** and **A** of **MONETA** are run together, which is not common for a Flemish *leeuwengroot*. One would almost say that the **L** of **FLAND'** is pelleted. The central lion is sloppy, while the leaf-mark is unusual and not at all typical of an Issue III coin. The obverse, outer border is also noteworthy.

If there is no pellet right of the cross and/or no crossbar in **FLAND'**, then this piece does not conform to the characteristics of any known type, Issue III or otherwise. Given the attributes of the other coins in the Amersfoort Find, the rough edges may indicate metal removed to test the fineness. The poor workmanship and general appearance of the coin lead us to believe that A-008 is most likely a medieval counterfeit.

(See the Conclusion p. 18 for an important note about Issue III.)



**A0005**  
**NUMIS 1002948**  
 2.10 g.



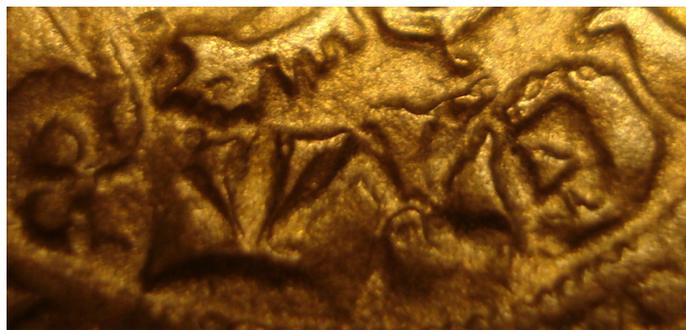
*Different photographs of the same coin (A0005).  
Pellet right of the cross?*



*The A of FLAND, which “should” have a crossbar*



*Highly unusual leaf-mark*



*Sloppy lettering*

**Issue V** : {20 December, 1354 – 18 September, 1359}  
Illegible and/or Type 12  
1 coin ?

OBV    • ✠ MONETA + FLAND'  
REV    II VD OV [I C✠] CO MES



**A0003**  
**NUMIS 1002946**  
3.15 g.

This coin does not look particularly suspect. The weight seems correct, it is well-engraved and the die is well-sunk. There are no apparent gouge marks, and the coin does not appear to have been clipped. It appears to be a genuine, Flemish, Issue V, Type 12 coin, probably belonging to the 'refined' style sub-group (based on the leaf-mark after MONETA, as well as 'wedge' L's and 'sharp' C's)<sup>[9]</sup>.

## County of Holland

William V, Count of Holland and Zeeland  
(1350-1389)

All Grolle Type 17.2.2

6 coins



A0012

NUMIS 1002955

2.02 g.

OBV ✠ MONETA ✠ HOLLAND'  
REV GVIL IELM DVX'D OMES

Once again, a piece with a hole that may indicate that someone in the Middle Ages felt that this coin was a counterfeit. The poorly-engraved letters and the 3-lobed leaves in the obverse, outer border are also indications that the coin is probably a contemporary counterfeit, as is the unusual feature on the right side of the reverse (double strike?).

We would expect to see a double-pellet (colon) on the reverse after DVX; this area of the coin is well-struck and clear, but no sign of the lower pellet is visible. The border leaves are of this type: ✠



**A0011**  
**NUMIS 1002954**  
 2.34 g.

OBV    ✠ • MONETA [✠] HOLLAND'  
 REV    GVIL LELM DVX:DOMES

At first glance this coin seems to be an authentic Holland *leeuwengroot*, which it may well be. However, it does have a number of slightly unusual characteristics, such as the border leaves with large, lower *axils* (the leaves look like stars) or the large, awkwardly-placed **D** in the reverse, inner legend (possibly just a re-cut letter). It is possible that we are being overly suspicious because of the other suspect coins from the Amersfoort Find. However, there may be evidence of metal having been removed from the reverse of coin A-002 for testing (e.g. above the second **L** of the inner legend).



*A0011 border leaves  
 star-like*



*A0010 border leaf  
 leaf-like*





**A0010**  
**NUMIS 1002953**  
3.27 g.

**OBV**    • ✠ MONETA ✠ [✠] HOLAND'  
**REV**    GVIL LBLM DVX: C OMES

There is nothing about this coin that raises any suspicions about its authenticity. The lettering style, weight and other general characteristics are similar to known specimens of Holland *leeuwengroten*. The leaf-mark after MONETA is illegible, but the double pellet after DVX is clear. Note as well the annulet A in MONETA.



**A0009**  
**NUMIS 1002952**  
 1.39 g.

**OBV**    • ✠ • **MONETA [✠] HOLAND'**  
**REV**    **GVIL IELM DVX:DOMES**

This coin seems rather light in weight. The pellet left of the initial cross is really quite far below the line of text. Several of the letters seem rather thin, e.g. the **G** of **GVILLELM** or the **AND** of **HOLAND'**. It may be a medieval counterfeit, it may not.

There may be a test gouge running from the **O** of **HOLAND'** to the lion's foot, and another possible area of testing nestled in the **N** of **HOLAND'**.



*A0009 low left pellet*



*Ń of **HOLAND***



*gouge under **O***



**A0008**  
**NUMIS 1002951**  
 2.36 g.

**OBV**    • ✠ • **MONETA** [✱] **HOLLAND'**  
**REV**    **GVIL IELM DVX**[:]**DOMES**

If this is a counterfeit, it is a fairly good one, and the weight is reasonable for a genuine issue, if on the light side. But the finer details (very subjective) make us wonder if it is not indeed a medieval fake. The general “look” of the central lion and the letters of the legends does not seem to match the known specimens of Holland *leeuwengroot*. The mark after **MONETA** seems to be a thin **X**. Once again, the pellet left of the initial cross is quite far below the letters, becoming the central lion’s nose and making it look like a bear. The unusual disfigurements on the reverse do not inspire confidence in this piece’s authenticity; they may indicate metal having been removed for testing.

On the other hand, it is always possible that we are simply seeing the hand of a less-competent engraver on this piece.





A0007  
NUMIS 1002950  
2.75 g.

OBV • ✠ • MONETA ✠ HOLLAND'  
REV GVIL IELM DVX[:]D OMES

Despite the somewhat messy lettering on the reverse, this coin seems to be a genuine Holland *leeuwengroot*. Compare the difference in letter style to that of the previous example (A-0008). On the other hand, there may be signs of metal testing, i.e. the crack through *HOLLAND* on the obverse or the possibly clipped off edge area above *SIT* on the reverse.

Once again, there is an annulet *A* in *MONETA*. There appears to be a double-pellet after *DVX* on the reverse, but it is not certain

## CONCLUSION

The coins of the Amersfoort Find (1991) are divided as follows:

	<b>12</b>				<b>Total coins in Hoard</b>
		<b>6</b>			<b>Holland</b> : William V (1350-1389)
			6		<i>leeuwengroten</i>
		<b>1</b>			<b>Brabant</b> : John III (1312-1355)
			1		<i>penny</i>
		<b>1</b>			<b>Flanders</b> : Louis I of Nevers (1322-1346)
			1		<i>mijt</i>
		<b>4</b>			<b>Flanders</b> : Louis II of Mâle (1346-1384)
			4		<i>leeuwengroten</i>
				1 ?	<b>Issue I</b> (medieval counterfeit?)
				1 ?	<b>Issue II</b> (medieval counterfeit?)
				1 ?	<b>Issue III, Type 9</b> (medieval counterfeit?)
				1	<b>Issue V, Type 12</b>
<b>?</b>					<b>Total coins in Hoard (original)</b>
	<b>12</b>				<b>Total coins present (in 1991)</b>
		<b>10</b>			<b>Total <i>leeuwengroten</i> present (1991)</b>

The group of fourteenth century coins discovered in Amersfoort in 1991 is perhaps better referred to as a *find* than a *hoard*, since they were most likely deposited by different people at different times (although nothing is certain). Although the coins of the Amersfoort Find are themselves very interesting and useful for study, the small number of pieces, their suspect minting origins and the likelihood of deposit at different times by different people makes the Amersfoort Find of little use for study as a “hoard”.

There is a reasonable mix of the local and most prevalent currencies of the time, 6 large coins from Holland and 4 from Flanders, respectively, as well as 1 smaller coin from Brabant and another from Flanders.

3 of the *leeuwengroten* present appear to be medieval counterfeits, while 3 others appear to be genuine issues; the remaining 4 coins could be either. Although the presence of counterfeit and suspect coins, as well as the context of the deposit in a horse pond, cast a shadow of doubt on the “genuine” coins, we have done our utmost to remain objective and not presume that all 10 *leeuwengroten* are medieval forgeries. With the coins in our hands in 2015, there was a general feeling that some, if not most of the coins were indeed medieval counterfeits.

Medieval counterfeit coins are an interesting peek into yet another aspect of life in the Middle Ages. The *gros compaignon* is one of the most counterfeited coins of the time (perhaps second only to the English *sterling* or *penny*), and numerous examples are known today. Some of them were struck in base metal, others in poor silver or billon. Many of them display a

relatively high degree of workmanship, while others do not. The base metal counterfeits may have once been plated in tin, zinc or even silver.



*medieval counterfeit **leuwengroot** in base metal (2x and actual size)  
private collection, 1.97 g.*



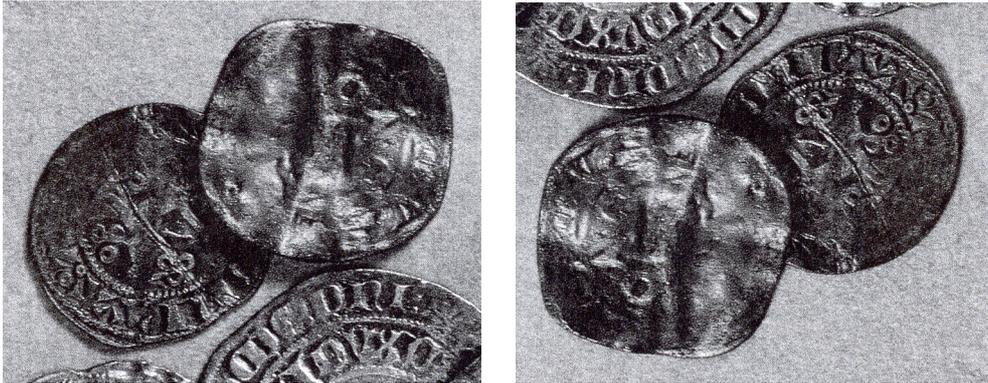
*medieval counterfeit **leuwengroot** in base metal  
private collection, 3.03 g.*

There is thus little point in attempting to date the Amersfoort Find. At this point, given the current state of knowledge, the coins of Holland cannot be used to date the “hoard”. Haeck assigned a date of “< 1354,”<sup>[4]</sup> which corresponds to the beginning of Flemish Issue V as well as the Holland issue to which the MONETA HOLAND coins are generally ascribed.

### The Two Smaller Coins

We have given little consideration to the *mijt* of Louis of Crécy (1322-1346) and the Brabantine penny of John III (1312-1355) that were also present in the find (weights unknown). Through an oversight, these coins were not available to the authors for viewing in July, 2015.

There is no evidence that these two coins have anything to do with the *leeuwengroten* present, or for that matter, that any of the coins (including the *leeuwengroten*) have anything to do with one another at all. In any case, a potential deposit date of 1355 or later would not be affected by the presence of the two smaller coins.



*“penny of John III of Brabant and mijt of Louis I of Flanders”  
from the Amersfoort Find<sup>[5]</sup>  
photograph © Hans de Jong / Archeologie Centrum Amersfoort*

From this photograph it is not possible to accurately describe or identify the two smaller coins.

Brabant Penny            **A-0001 / NUMIS 1002944**

Flanders Mijt            **A-0002 / NUMIS 1002945**



*The Amersfoort Find (1991)*<sup>[5]</sup>  
*including the Brabantine **penning** and the Flemish **mijt***

© Hans de Jong / Archeologie Centrum Amersfoort

### **Louis of Mâle leuwendroot Issue III**

In our recent paper *The Coins of the Delft Hoard Part One (2004)*<sup>[8]</sup>, we described an apparent pause in minting of the *leuwendroot* in 1352, based upon the idea that the 14<sup>th</sup> century Flemish records for Issue III had been written using the Easter Method of date reckoning.

Alas, it appears that we are guilty of projecting modern logic onto medieval bookkeeping practices, and in fact, **there was no gap in the minting of the Flemish *leuwendroot* in 1352.**

While everything we said about Issue III was logical, and would have been correct if the Easter Method had been used, it has been brought to our attention that for Issue III, the New Year's Method (i.e. the modern style) had been used, with the year beginning on January 1 as it does today<sup>[13]</sup>.

This makes the annoying 1352 minting pause disappear. (The authors are most grateful to T. Goddeeris for his assistance in this matter.)

When compared to the New Year's Method:

Dates from **1 January to Easter** fall in a different year when using the Easter Method.

Dates from **[the day after] Easter to December 31**  
fall in the same year when using the Easter Method.

For example, September 15 is the same day of the same year in both Easter and New Year's reckoning, while January 15 will fall in two different years when using the New Year's and Easter Methods, creating a discrepancy that must be adjusted accordingly for our modern calendar.

Easter Method: *written* Jan. 15, 1352 = Jan. 15, **1353** for us

New Year's Method: *written* Jan. 15, 1352 = Jan. 15, 1352 for us

Easter or New Year's Method: *written* Sep. 15, 1352 = Sep. 15, 1352 for us

**No indication is given in the medieval records themselves as to which date reckoning system was used for any given *comte*.**

For certain issues, it is impossible to determine which reckoning method was used. This is because all the dates noted in these *comtes* come out the same using either the Easter or New Year's Methods (because no dates were mentioned in said *comtes* between December 31 and Easter).

The following reappraisal of the reckoning methods used for 14<sup>th</sup> century *comtes* in Flanders should help illustrate how we were led astray for Issue III: <sup>[13]</sup>

<b>Issue I</b>	Easter Method (?)
<b>Issue II</b>	New Year's Method
<b>Issue III</b>	New Year's Method
<b>Issue IV</b>	method inconclusive
<b>Issue V</b>	Easter Method
<b>Issue VI</b>	method inconclusive ?
<b>Issue VII</b>	method inconclusive ?
<b>Issue VIII</b>	Easter Method

The *comte* for Issue I (ARA 793a) is in fact inconclusive, but based on the events that occurred in Flanders in 1345, we believe that the Easter Method was probably used (meaning the issue started in January 1346 and not 1345, which is what is literally written in the *comte*.)

## NOTES

As mentioned, conclusions as to which mintmarks correspond to which issues for Flemish coins have been largely based on Haeck's *De leeuwengroten met het kruisje van Lodewijk van Male*<sup>[3]</sup>. Descriptions of the characteristics of specific issues of Louis of Mâle have been taken (in part) from Torongo & van Oosterhout's *A Preliminary Look at the Leeuwengroten of Louis of Mâle (1346-1384): Issues IV and V*<sup>[9]</sup>.

The authors wish to express their deepest thanks to Theodoor Goddeeris, Timo d'Hollosy, Hans de Jong, Henk Petri, Mirjam Torongo, and the Archeologie Centrum Amersfoort for their kind assistance, as well as the anonymous collectors who provided us with photographs of their coins.

All photographs © 2015 Paul Torongo or Raymond van Oosterhout, unless otherwise indicated.

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Dilbeek, 2012

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***Munten***

Hans De Jong

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Theodoor Goddeeris – Paul Torongo

**APPENDIX:**  
**The Weights of the *Leeuwengroten* of the Amersfoort Find (1991)**

(The weights given have a margin of error of +/- .01 grams.)

- <sup>1</sup> = probable genuine issue  
<sup>2</sup> = possible medieval counterfeit  
<sup>3</sup> = probable medieval counterfeit

**By number:**

GRAMS	NUM.	REALM	ISSUE	NUMIS
-	A0000	-	-	1002943
?	A0001	Brabant	penny	1002944
?	A0002	Flanders	mijt	1002945
3.15	A0003 <sup>1</sup>	Flanders	V	1002946
2.16	A0004 <sup>3</sup>	Flanders	I ??	1002947
2.10	A0005 <sup>3</sup>	Flanders	III ??	1002948
1.62	A0006 <sup>2</sup>	Flanders	II ?	1002949
2.75	A0007 <sup>1</sup>	Holland	-	1002950
2.36	A0008 <sup>2</sup>	Holland	-	1002951
1.39	A0009 <sup>2</sup>	Holland	-	1002952
3.27	A0010 <sup>1</sup>	Holland	-	1002953
2.34	A0011 <sup>2</sup>	Holland	-	1002954
2.02	A0012 <sup>3</sup>	Holland	-	1002955

*Leeuwengroten* by weight:

GRAMS	NUM.	REALM	ISSUE	NUMIS
3.27	A0010 <sup>1</sup>	Holland	-	1002953
3.15	A0003 <sup>1</sup>	Flanders	V	1002946
2.75	A0007 <sup>1</sup>	Holland	-	1002950
2.36	A0008 <sup>2</sup>	Holland	-	1002951
2.34	A0011 <sup>2</sup>	Holland	-	1002954
2.16	A0004 <sup>3</sup>	Flanders	I ??	1002947
2.10	A0005 <sup>3</sup>	Flanders	III ??	1002948
2.02	A0012 <sup>3</sup>	Holland	-	1002955
1.62	A0006 <sup>2</sup>	Flanders	II ?	1002949
1.39	A0009 <sup>2</sup>	Holland	-	1002952