

Henry III (Posthumous), Class 7 Pennies from the London Mint

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This is the first of three planned articles on class 7 pennies from the London mint and deals with an estimate of the number of coins and dies from the London moneyers Reginald de Cantuaria (Renaud) and Phelip de Cambio; later articles will document some observed varieties for each of these moneyers in turn. Typical coins are illustrated on page 4.

The economic background to the period is discussed in an interesting article by Mavis Mate¹; she highlights a number of economic challenges of the late 13th and early 14th centuries, including the general shortage of coins which was inadequate to serve the needs of an expanding economy and an increasing population.

Difficulties in estimating the number of coins and dies for each of the London moneyers arise because we do not have an exact record of the commencement date for class 7. It is popularly taken as around 1275 though could be a year or two earlier or later. We do know that Phelip took over the mint after the death of Renaud and that he was in place for only six months in all from May 18th 1278 to November of that year. The London mint was closed in November 1278 due to malpractices by Phelip, and the other mints followed suit shortly thereafter and were not re-opened until the production of the new coinage of Edward I from 1279. At that time the vast majority of the voided long cross pennies would have been handed in and exchanged for the new coinage. The late 1270's were a relatively peaceful time and hence the lack of hoard coins from this period.

Production data for the London mint.			
Period	Approx. Months	Total £	Average £/mo.
Nov. 1273 - June 1274	6	£10,315	£1,719
June 1274 - June 1275	12	£7,960	£663
June 1275 - Nov 1278	41	£60,663	£1,480

Surviving Bury and Durham class 7 coins are very rare, London Renaud coins are less rare, and London coins of Phelip are the most commonly seen class 7 coins

today. Note that no coin of class 7 (or class 6) is known for Canterbury. Looking through dealers lists and auction sites one can get an impression of the relative scarcity of surviving London mint coins, and the author has the impression that Phelip coins are at least two to three times more abundant than those of Renaud. At first this is rather surprising as Renaud was producing coins for much longer than Phelip, however consideration of the data as given by Stewartby² for mint production indicates a late surge in production.

Class 7 coins may have covered the period from June 1275, but they may well have been produced earlier. Regardless of where class 6 ended and class 7 commenced, we see average production of about £1,500 - £1,700 of coin in the first and third periods, but reduced production in the June 1274 to June 1275 period. Given that coin production during the majority of the last period was under Renaud, and only in the last six months under Phelip, we might expect that coins of Renaud would be much more common than those of Phelip; that this is not the case indicates that production must have been much higher during the tenure of Phelip. Renaud could have been producing class 7 coins for

¹ Mavis Mate, '[Monetary Policies in England, 1272-1307](#)', BNJ 41 (1972) pp 34-79

² Lord Stewartby, 'English Coins 1180-1551', 571 pages, 39 plates, published by Spink, London (2009)

maybe seven times as long as Phelip (At least 41 months from mid-1275, if not more) compared with six months for Phelip.

Below is shown show an estimate of how the production split between the two moneyers may have been. This simply uses the total production for the period from June 1275, the probable approximate

Production for the London moneyers assuming a mid-1275 class 7 start date, and cessation of Renaud's coins c. April 1278.			
	Renaud	Phelip	Total
Months	34	6	40
Avg £/mo	£600	£6,319	
£s Minted	£20,400	£40,263	£60,663
Ratio Phelip/Renaud		2.0	
Pennies Produced	4,896,000	9,663,120	14,559,120
Coins per day	4,721	52,804	
Number of hammer men	1.9	21.1	

introduction date for class 7, and the relative abundance of Phelip versus Renaud coins today. If we say that today's survival of Phelip and Renaud coins is proportional to the past number produced, and if we assume that Phelip coins are nowadays about twice as common as those for Renaud, then we can come to some conclusions as to the number of

coins produced by each. In fact as Renaud coins were produced earlier than those of Phelip there was a greater time period for Renaud coins to be lost, and if production rates were similar we might expect metal detector finds to be dominated by coins of Renaud, which does not seem to be the case.

This is, of course, only a crude estimation, but serves to give a rough idea of the scope of the numbers for each moneyer. The above calculation assumes that production of class 7 pennies began in mid-1275.

The monthly production value for Renaud in this first model is only slightly lower than his £663 rate for the year commencing June 1274 - this results in Phelip's coins overall being twice as common as those of Renaud. Increasing the estimate of Renaud's production rate would lower the ratio of Phelip to Renaud coins. The labourers who actually hammered the individual coins may have been able to produce up to about 2500 daily³, which suggests Renaud needed only two workmen for this task, whereas Phelip would have required ten times that number, and we thus see a major expansion of mint activity during Phelip's tenure in the post of moneyer.

Looking at the numbers in the above chart, and the resultant 2.0 ratio of Phelip to Renaud coins, some will no doubt think this ratio to be too low and that it should be closer to 3 or above. Such a scenario arises if we instead model the commencement date of Renaud's class 7 coins as being a year later, in mid-1276. The numbers are then as follows:

Production for the London moneyers assuming a mid-1276 class 7 start date, and cessation of Renaud's coins c. April 1278			
	Renaud	Phelip	Total
Months	22	6	28
Avg £/mo	£663	£6,319	
£s Minted	£14,586	£46,077	£60,663
Ratio Phelip/Renaud		3.2	
Pennies Produced	3,500,640	11,058,480	14,559,120
Coins per day	5,217	60,429	
Number of hammer men	2.1	24.2	

In this second model Renaud's production commences a year later, in mid-1276, and I have kept his monthly value of production the same as his average for the year commencing in June 1274. This gives us a ratio of over 3 for the number of coins of Phelip compared to those of Renaud. This is probably a better estimate of the ratio of

³ Dave Greenhalgh's website: <http://www.grunamoneta.co.uk/history.html>

coins existing today, and points towards the second model being closer to what actually happened, and hence indicates Renaud's class 7 production probably commenced in 1276 rather than 1275.

Having made an estimate of the number of pennies produced we may then make an estimate of the number of coin dies that would have been needed. There are a number of widely varying ranges of die wear that have been published. Here we use the figures given by Allen⁴.

Average # of coins from each die		
	<u>Obverse Dies</u>	<u>Reverse Dies</u>
Min - Max	20,000 - 50,000	10,000 - 25000
Mid-range estimate	35,000	17,500

If we simply take the mid-points then we have a rough idea of the number of dies that may have been utilised. Examples from all the production dies are unlikely to have survived. However, this exercise has demonstrated that hundreds of dies would have been produced; today perhaps only a small proportion of the dies are represented.

Estimated Number of Dies Utilised:		
(a) Renaud commences class 7 in mid-1275		
	<u>Obverse Dies</u>	<u>Reverse Dies</u>
Renaud	140	280
Phelip	276	552
(b) He commences a year later in mid-1276		
	<u>Obverse Dies</u>	<u>Reverse Dies</u>
Renaud	100	200
Phelip	316	632

This article serves to set the scene for a description of the coins of both Renaud and Phelip, and these will be described in the subsequent two articles.

To extend the study of these coins the author would appreciate receiving images of any London class 7 coins of Renaud or Phelip that readers may have in their collections. Images may be emailed to robtpage@gmail.com

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the helpful review of the draft of this article by Bob Thomas; his comments and advice have proved invaluable; however any errors which remain are mine alone.



⁴ Martin Allen, 'Mints and Money in Medieval England', Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Examples of Class 7 Pennies from the London Mint

Images courtesy of Mark Winiger (#1,2) and Bob Thomas (#3)

Class 7, Renaud, c. 1276 AD



Class 7, Phelip, 1278 AD (Two examples)

