

# A fifth Cork groat of the readeption of Henry VI

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## Introduction

Very recently, one of us wrote about the four Irish groats then known from the second reign of Henry VI, all from Cork, in the political and numismatic context of the contemporary earldom of Desmond.<sup>1</sup> Even more recently, the other of us has acquired a fifth, and previously unrecorded, specimen of this coinage. The purpose of this note is to record and describe this addition to the corpus.

## Description



Figure 1. The fifth Cork readeption groat specimen.

The new specimen is shown in Figure 1. It is nearly full flan, and weighs 2.03g. It is from the same obverse die as the readeption specimen sold by Dix Noonan Webb (DNW, now Noonan's), also the same obverse as the one in the National Museum of Ireland (NMI), respectively Figures 6 and 7 of Mac Conamhna 2023.

The reverse die is new. The mint signature is CIVI-TAS(rosette)-CORC-AGIE, and the outer legend is POSVI(rosette)-DEV'AD-IVTORE-MMEV'. This is a correct abbreviation of the standard outer reverse inscription, although this particular rendering of it was not used on any other specimen of the extant Cork corpus covered by the recent review.<sup>2</sup> The letters I and V are from the pre-readeption Cork letter punches, and the reverse die therefore likely predates the reverse die of the NMI specimen, which uses new punches for these letters. The suggestion of Mac Conamhna 2023 that the I of ENRIC' on the obverse was punched over an initially blundered R sometime between the production of the NMI and DNW specimens, is confirmed by this new specimen; the undertype beneath the obverse I is visible plainly, Figure 2.

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<sup>1</sup> Mac Conamhna 2023.

<sup>2</sup> Mac Conamhna 2023.



Figure 2. Detail of the undertype of the obverse I of ENRIC', at upper left and bottom left of the letter.

### Discussion

The new specimen is heavier than both the DNW and NMI specimens, both of which weigh only 1.86g; but it is significantly lighter than the three specimens known from the other, earlier, obverse die used in the readeption, on which Edward's name was overpunched with Henry's. It is also materially lighter than the official weight standard, of 2.83g for a groat, that pertained in Ireland from November 1470 to 1473. It has been suggested that the Cork mint of the period began its operations in 1469<sup>3</sup> (it definitely began before the readeption, on the evidence of the regal name overpunching); and the evidence of the surviving specimens is that the earliest are the heaviest. Perhaps the silver had begun to run out in Cork, and/or corruption had become endemic to the mint, by the later months of the readeption.

With five readeption specimens now known, there is some merit in computing the Esty 2006 estimators of the number of dies used during the readeption. Specimens in the name of Edward from dies (both obverse and reverse) that were also used in the name of Henry are excluded from the analysis. Restricting to the five Henry specimens, they attest two obverse dies, with respectively two and three specimens from each; and four reverse dies, with respectively two, one, one, and one specimens from each. The Esty 95% confidence upper bound for the estimated number of obverse dies is 2.24, indicating that the corpus of obverse dies may be complete; the Esty 95% confidence interval for the estimated number of reverse dies is too broad to be useful, due to the high number of singleton dies relative to the number of specimens.

### Bibliography

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- Morrissey, J.F., 1939. *Statute Rolls of the Parliament of Ireland, 12th and 13th to the 21st and 22nd Years of the Reign of Edward IV* (Dublin).

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<sup>3</sup> Mac Conamhna 2023.