

An Edward IV Dublin (?) penny with cinquefoils by neck

Oisín Mac Conamhna and James Mayer

One of us recently acquired the coin in Figure 1, a penny from a portrait attributed to Dublin, with unrecorded cinquefoils by neck. One of the cinquefoils, on the viewer's right, has been double-punched. There is a quatrefoil on reverse, and the mint signature is interpreted, with some uncertainty, as [CIVI-TAS-DVBL-I]N(?)IE. It is heavily clipped, or struck on a small flan, and weighs 0.37g.



Figure 1. The new specimen

Note the fish-tailed form of the shoulders, for comparison to Figure 2 (left). All instances of this portrait we have seen have been on small or heavily clipped flans; Figure 2 (left) is another example of the portrait, with mullets by neck, which weighs 0.4g. It is rare to find a legible mint signature coupled with this portrait; an exception is PAS ESS-170628, discussed in Byrne & Mac Conamhna 2021 p28, where the mint signature was interpreted as [CIVI-TA]S-DVB[L-INIE].



Figure 2, left: another example of the portrait of Figure 1, with mullets by neck. Right: a Limerick penny with rosettes by neck, PAS IOW-698C24.

The portrait appears with an unusual variety of obverse marks by neck: pellets (with a different shoulder punch, eg PAS ESS-170628, and, on one specimen, Burns 2017 p79 L-6 plate coin, a different crown also), suns (Burns 2017 p76 Du-29), mullets (Burns 2017 p75

Du-21, and Figure 2 (left)), and now cinquefoils. Suns or mullets by neck occur only in conjunction with this portrait in the entire series. Furthermore, if the attribution to Dublin of the specimen of Figure 1 is correct, it is the unique instance of cinquefoils by neck at Dublin in the series.

The similarity of the portrait to the one used for pennies at Limerick, Figure 2 (right), is undeniable. This similarity led Burns to attribute a specimen from the portrait, with illegible mint signature, to Limerick as Burns 2017 type L-6. However the fact that every specimen of the portrait with a legible mint signature that we have seen has been of Dublin, calls this attribution into question; and the political circumstances of the earldom of Desmond (Mac Conamhna 2023) make it very implausible that moneyers or dies would have been shared between the two mints. However the cinquefoils of the new specimen of Figure 1 heighten the similarity; until this coin, the only mint in Ireland from which cinquefoils or rosettes were known in the series was Limerick.

We offer two possible interpretations of the coins with this portrait. The first, which we consider more likely, is that they are a series of particularly light official Dublin issues, the work of a moneyer who chose a particularly diverse set of obverse marks, sometime during the production of the production of the light Third Cross and Pellets coinage, 1473-9.

The second possibility is that they are a series of Irish contemporary counterfeits, of decent workmanship and sufficient sophistication to copy the Dublin mint signature literately, but struck consistently underweight, even by the standards of the official issues. The Limerick mint was shut down by a final condemnatory act of the Irish parliament in early 1477, as James Fitzgerald, the eighth earl of Desmond, came of age and was appointed Constable of Limerick Castle by Edward IV (Mac Conamhna 2023). Given the similarity of the portrait with the one of Limerick, and the evidence of the use of cinquefoils on the new specimen of Figure 1, it is perhaps possible that the coins of this portrait are from a bootleg issue of an an ex-Limerick moneyer or moneyers, sometime shortly after the closure of the Limerick mint in 1476-7.

References

- Burns, J., 2017. 'Irish Hammered Pennies of Edward IV – Henry VII', fifth edition (Waynesboro).
- Byrne, G., and Mac Conamhna, O., 2021. 'The Portable Antiquities Scheme finds of Irish Coins of Edward IV – Henry VII', Numismatic Society of Ireland Occasional Papers 70-74, 1-47.
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