

A 17th Century Token Die Engraver's Conundrum - Jo. Broxup of Manchester

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Introduction

In April 2023 the token shown below appeared for auction at Noonans with the following description.⁽¹⁾ "LANCASHIRE, Manchester, Jo Broxup, Farthing, QVICVNQVE VOET, 0.96g/6h (N -; D -). Excavated, obverse fair, reverse fine, extremely rare, perhaps unpublished."

Obv. **IO • BROXVP • MANCH** : mm mullet
around shield of arms

Rev. **QVICVNQVE • VOET** mm mullet
Around **I•B** mullet above and below

Details. Noonans 26 April 2023, Lot 505.



Nothing too unusual: an unrecorded Lancashire 17thC token, an abbreviated issuer's first name and a less common abbreviated issuing place name. The legend on the reverse is a bit unusual, though throughout the seventeenth century token series there is a sprinkling of Latin mottoes.

The token reappeared on eBay earlier this year.⁽²⁾ Thanks to Tim Scotney, the Manchester attribution is confirmed with the IGI recording baptisms for three children of a John Broxupp, a son Seth in 1655, and daughters Katherine in 1658 and Jane in 1661.

Modernising the spelling and searching Google for the motto QVICVNQVE VOET gives an unexpected "did you mean" QVICVNQVE VULT (which might Latinise to QVICVNQVE VVLT) roughly translating as "whatever he wants". A closer look at the images reveals this is a possibility, but not conclusively. What is needed is another specimen, hopefully better preserved.

Another Specimen

A few months after the appearance of the first specimen of Jo Broxup's token, the piece shown below was found. Both this piece and the first are detector finds from unconnected persons from widely different locations in East Anglia.

Obv. **IO • BROXVP • MANCH** : mm mullet
around the Drapers' Arms

Rev. **QVICVNQVE • VULT** mm mullet
Around **I•B** mullet above and below

Details. [Nigel Clark].



Though only marginally better, the arms on the obverse are now clear and more importantly, the reverse legend is clearly visible and confirmed to be: **QVICVNQVE VULT**. Again, modernising the spelling to **QVICVNQVE VULT** this can be translated as "whoever wishes/wants" or "whosoever wishes/wants". This probably refers to the use of the tokens, and this token can be used by whoever wants it as small change. However there may be a more subtle religious meaning. This phrase is the first two words of the Athanasian Creed which states that "Whosoever wishes to be saved must, above all, keep the catholic faith."

Discussion - Token and Coin Legends – V for U

The standout feature of the reverse legend is the appearance of an upper case U in VULT. Inspecting the Williamson indexes,⁽³⁾ with the exception of those tokens where the legend is in a script form, this is the only occurrence of an upper or lower case U in the whole seventeenth century token series.

Looking through the Standard Catalogue of British Coins⁽⁴⁾ all coin legends prior to the reign of George II have the letter U rendered as an upper case V. During this reign there was a short period where an upper case U appears in GEORGIUS.

Denomination	V	U	V	U
5 Guineas	1729-1753			
2 Guineas	... 1739	1739, 1740	1748 ...	
1 Guinea	... 1738	1739, 1740, 1741, 1743, 1745	1746 ...	
½ Guinea	... 1739	1740, 1743, 1745	1746 ...	
Crown	... 1741	1743	1746 ...	1818 ...
Halfcrown	... 1741	1743, 1745	1746 ...	1816 ...
Shilling	... 1741	1743, 1745	1746 ...	1816 ...
Sixpence	... 1741	1743, 1745	1746 ...	1816 ...
4d, 3d, 2d, 1d	1729-1760			1817 ...
Halfpenny	... 1739	1740, 1742, 1744, 1745	1746 ...	1799 ...
Farthing	... 1730	1741, 1744	1746 ...	1799 ...

For the gold 2, 1 and ½ Guineas the introduction of the U coincides with the introduction of the intermediate head and for the silver 5/-, 2/6, 1/- and 6d and copper ½ d and ¼ d the U appears with the introduction of the old head. In all cases this is a short-lived departure from the classical V for U.

There is just one exception, and that is the 1746 farthing where the die sinker accidentally entered a U and then corrected the error with a more deeply entered V. No pieces have been seen from an unaltered die.

Obv. **GEORGIUS • II • REX** with **V** over **U**
 around laureate and cuirassed bust left
 Rev. **BRITANNIA**
 around Britannia left with **1746** in exergue
 Details. Noonans 17 June 2010, Lot 821.



The V continued to be used across the denominations listed above until the recoinage of 1816-17 for the silver.⁽⁵⁾ The Bank of England issues of 1804-1811 (Dollar, 3/-, and 1/6) all have GEORGIUS. The cartwheel pennies and twopences of 1797 are also GEORGIUS. For the copper halfpennies and farthings the V would be replaced with a U in 1799.

For the later series of tokens, 18th century copper (post 1787)⁽⁶⁾, 19th century silver (1804, 1811-1813)⁽⁷⁾ and 19th century copper (1811-1820)⁽⁸⁾, the legends are almost all in English and the letter U is rendered as such.

The V would reappear on the coins of Edward VII - George VI as part of the Latinised name and for the most recent coins of Charles III, a hybrid English/Latin legend allows the king's name to be rendered as CHARLES rather than CAROLVS.

The token issued by Jo Broxup in Manchester is the only known seventeenth century token where the letter U is rendered as such in a block capitals legend, rather than the Latinised V. The die sinker clearly had to choose between VULT which requires using a non-Latin U in a Latin Motto and VVLT which looks odd and doesn't read easily.

References and Acknowledgements

- (1) Noonans, 26 April 2023, Lot 505. Ex Quentin Archer.
- (2) eBay item #386259408177 ended 8 January 2024.
- (3) G.C. Williamson. *Trade tokens issued in the seventeenth century*. London, 1889-91, Seaby reprint, 1967.
- (4) G. Edmund (Ed.). *Standard Catalogue of British Coins – Coins of England and the United Kingdom – Pre-Decimal Issues*. 58th edition, Spink, 2023.
- (5) M. Bull. *English Silver Coinage since 1649*. 6th Edition, Spink, 2015.
- (6) R. Dalton and S.H. Hamer. *The Provincial Token Coinage of the 18th Century Illustrated. 1910 – 1918*. Seaby reprint, 1967.
- (7) R. Dalton. *The Silver Token Coinage, 1811-12*. 1922, 1968 Seaby reprint.
- (8) P. and B.R. Withers. *British Copper Tokens 1811 – 1820*. Galata, 1999.

Thanks to Tim Scotney for finding John Broxupp in the Mormon IGI.

