

## THE 'ENIGMATIC MARK' OF RICHARD II

THE coin shown here is a York penny of Richard II, type III. It bears on the reverse a mark after TAS which has long been known but has often been misinterpreted either through poor striking, deterioration of the dies, or through wear or clipping of the coins.



Walters, writing in 1904<sup>1</sup> described it as an escallop and said that though the mark was often indistinct and blurred he had a specimen which was perfectly struck. Unfortunately, though, he did not illustrate it.

In 1962 Mr. Frank Purvey, in his Paper on the smaller coins of the reign,<sup>2</sup> differed from Walters over the designation of scallop. Although he could find only one coin on which the mark was relatively clear<sup>3</sup> he considered it more like a trefoil. He went on to say that on some coins 'this trefoil-like form disintegrates and resembles a flaming sun', and if it was intended to be a sun he offered the suggestion that its presence on the coin might possibly be explained by the fact that late in the reign

Richard adopted this device as his personal emblem.

In 1969 Miss Archibald, in her Paper on the Attenborough Hoard,<sup>4</sup> referred to six coins with 'the enigmatic mark' after TAS. She expressed a preference for Walters's earlier suggestion that it was a scallop shell rather than the trefoil or sun suggested by Mr. Purvey. The Attenborough hoard coins were not distinct, however, and she considered that until a really well-preserved penny showing the mark turned up its interpretation must remain uncertain.

Although the penny illustrated here is not well struck, the mark is very clear and undoubtedly a scallop; therefore it is published to place it on record. Whether this was the coin which belonged to Walters cannot be determined. His 1913 Sale Catalogue<sup>5</sup> lists two specimens described 'both very well preserved and rare', and the writer has another one with the mark almost equally clear.

As to the reason for this unusual mark, one can only speculate. Although it is found on certain of Richard's gold coins, Walters could find nothing to account for its presence on a York penny and came to the conclusion it could only be the mark of some die engraver or mint official. Mr. Purvey considers that its purpose may never be known but that it is 'just one of the many things which make the medieval series so interesting'. Miss Archibald regards the mark as one 'peculiar to York and analogous to the Archbishops' personal marks which appear on the pence of this mint at later periods'. This definition is probably as near to the truth as we are likely to get.

M. DELMÉ-RADCLIFFE

### A YORK PENNY OF RICHARD II

SOME years after writing my article on the pence, halfpence, and farthings of Richard II which appeared in the *BNJ* xxxi (1962), I was re-examining the late style penny from the Clarke-Thornhill bequest in the British Museum. This coin is illustrated on Pl. VIII, 79 in the above mentioned article. From careful examination of the quatrefoil on the reverse there seemed, albeit rather shadowy, the outline of an R in the centre.

At the time I did draw the attention of Miss Marion Archibald of the Department of Coins

and Medals to this rather extraordinary phenomenon and she agreed with me that there was little doubt that there was an R in the centre of the reverse. Indeed so certain was I that several editions ago I added the description 'R in centre of quatrefoil' to the Class 4 York pennies listed in the 'Standard Catalogue'. Needless to say nobody has ever queried this statement or asked where the information came from. However, Mrs. Delmé-Radcliffe has written a small note on another aspect of the coins of Richard II and I thought it

<sup>1</sup> *NC* Series IV, vol. iv.

<sup>2</sup> *BNJ* xxxi, 1962.

<sup>3</sup> Ashmolean Museum.

<sup>4</sup> *BNJ* xxxviii, 1969.

<sup>5</sup> Sotheby, 20 May 1913, lot 211.



FIG. 1

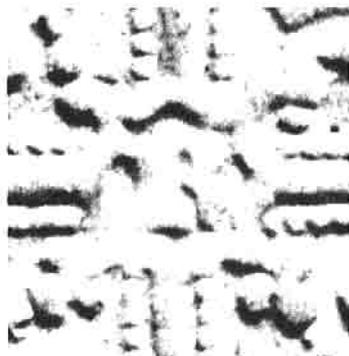


FIG. 2

only right and proper that I draw the Members' attention officially to this coin.

It is quite possible that all the Class 4 coins which are listed (Pl. VIII, 77-80) do have an  $\kappa$  in the centre but only no. 79 is in any way distinct and indeed is visible from the illustration in the *Journal* through a low-power magnifying glass.

The illustration reproduced here is enlarged ten times from the original and is, if anything, somewhat clearer than a magnifying glass examination of the coin (Fig. 1).

The only coin that has an  $\kappa$  punch the right size to go into the quatrefoil (assuming that an existing

punch was used, and not a new one), is the half noble. There is in the British Museum a cast (the coin is in the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris) which has an  $\kappa$  on the reverse which appears to be almost identical to the  $\kappa$  on the York pennies (Fig. 2). This cast has also been enlarged to the same scale as the penny.

This is the only instance that I can recall of the King's initial, for this is what it must surely be, appearing on the reverse of an English silver hammered coin.

I shall be pleased to hear from any Members who may be able to shed any further light on this.

FRANK PURVEY

#### ADDITIONS TO THE ANGLO-GALLIC GOLD SERIES

SINCE publication of my paper on the Salutes of Henry VI in the 1973 volume of the *Journal*, the following coins have been reported to me.

1. From the National Museum of Antiquites of Scotland, Edinburgh.

A specimen of Henry VI salute Paris mint 3rd issue. *Obv.* as 2nd Issue, with  $\Delta$ VE written downwards. *Rev.* with pellet under T of REGNAT.

Listed by me as 'no specimen known'.

2. From the Koninklijk Penningkabinet s'Gravenhage, Holland.

A specimen of Henry VI salute Paris mint.

*Obv.* 2nd issue, usual style.

*Rev.* 1st issue with  $\Omega$  gothic instead of the M Roman of the regular 2nd Issue.

This is a die-link of the 1st and 2nd issues, previously unknown.

3. A new mint for the gold Hardi of the Black Prince. A specimen of this coin from the mint of Poitiers has come into my hands.

This mint has not previously been recorded for the gold Hardi, though Poey d'Avant mentions a silver pattern, which he did not actually see, and of which there is now no trace.

*Obv.* ED PO GNS REGIS ANGLI AQUITA

Plain fillet on Prince's head.

*Rev.* AUXLLUM MEUM A DOMINO P

In first angle; lis.

(Note two L's and no I in AUXLLIUM.)

R. D. BERESFORD-JONES