

TWO EARLY COINS OF RICHARD II

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THE noble and halfgroat of Richard II illustrated on plate 11 are both hitherto unpublished varieties.

1. Calais noble, Webb Ware type Ia.

In his paper on the coinage of Richard II delivered to the Society on 28 January 1992, Mr Webb Ware identified no Calais noble of his type Ia. This type, which he defined as having the same lettering as on the last nobles of Edward III, was represented by two London obverse dies identical to late Post-Treaty dies except for the king's name and for showing a small lis instead of an annulet above the sail. Richard's earliest Calais nobles, however, were from three old obverse dies of Edward III combined with reverses with the new king's initial. The noble under consideration here is also from one of these three Edwardian dies, but with the beginning of the king's name altered from *Edw* to *Ric*. In this respect it is comparable to certain London half-nobles also struck from Edwardian dies with the name altered (e.g. Schneider 119 and 123–4). Since the altered obverse dies of these halves are classified as Webb Ware type Ia, it is appropriate to use the same designation for the new Calais noble. One can only speculate as to why this die was eventually recut after it and others from the previous reign had been used extensively in their unaltered state. The die in question shows considerable signs of rust in the field on the new coin, and some rust was already beginning to show before the alteration was made (see Doubleday lot 316, which appears to be the same coin as Clarke-Thornhill lot 17).

2. London halfgroat, Potter type III

Writing in 1959 (*BNJ* XXIX, pp. 344–6), Potter recorded only eight obverse dies for halfgroats of this reign. Five of them were of his type II, of which three read *Rex Anglie* and two include the French title also, *Fr(anc)*. The halfgroat here noted is from a sixth obverse die of type II, and this appears to be the first new obverse die for either a groat or a halfgroat of Richard II discovered in over forty years since Potter's article. The new coin comes from the hoard found at Brokes Road, Reigate on 22 September 1990 (Glendining, 8 December 1992, lot 162). It is heavily clipped, but reads *Ricard Di G Re(.....)r*, with double saltire stops between words and a single (?) saltire after the final *R*. The *Anglie* dies read *Gra*, whereas the two previously known with the French title have *G* only, so although only the bottom of the last *R* is visible the Reigate coin probably read *Rex Angl & Fr*. It does not appear to have any pellets above the crown, as do three of the other type II halfgroat dies. The reverse of this coin has what appears to be the bottom of Potter's R2 (characterized by its angular tail) in *Adiutore*, and so would be described as Ib under his classification. It is very similar to (possibly the same as ?) the only Ib reverse die recorded by Potter (*BNJ* XXIX, pl. XX, no. 1), which is likewise paired with an obverse with the French title (Potter die 1, with a wedge after *Fr*). The two *Fr* dies may therefore be the earliest halfgroat obverses of the reign.