TWO ‘CROS Raguel Pennies’ Found in Gdańsk and the Problem of Their Function on the Continent

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To Professor Philip Grierson
on his ninetieth birthday

The only Scottish coins that had previously been found in the territory of the former Polish-Lithuanian state (nowadays: Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Byelorussia and the Ukraine) are Charles I turners, which constantly appear in hoards and stray finds from the middle of the seventeenth century.1 Older coins have only recently been recorded in Gdańsk, which was the biggest port city on the Baltic Sea during the fifteenth- to seventeenth-century period. Scottish copper coins minted under James III, called Crux Pellit pennies (formerly known as Crosraguel pennies) were found there twice in the 1990s. The first one was excavated in 1990 with other coins as a stray find in the mud at the bottom of the old port’s dock, at the outlet of the Radunia Canal to Motława River.2 The second one was found in 1996 in Stare Miasto district during archaeological research near the former ‘Monopol’ hotel, located between Podwale Grodzkie (former German name: Stadtgraben) and Korzenna Street (Pfeffer-Stadt).3 So far these are the only medieval Scottish coins to have been found in Poland.

The first of the two James III coins (Fig. 1) was bought for the numismatic collection in the Royal Castle of Warsaw at an auction in 1991. The obverse contains a regal orb, the curve of the central band projecting downwards, the arched band to the right, IAGOBVS:DEI:GRA:REX: between two circles of pellets. Rev.: the Latin cross in a quatrefoil, \\GRVX-POLIT\ between two circles of pellets. It is corroded, 1.07 g, 19.6 mm.4 The inventory number is ZKW.N.6261.

Fig. 1. Scotland, James III, copper penny (so-called ‘Crosraguel penny’) from the collection of the Royal Castle in Warsaw (X2). Photo Włodzimierz Krzemiński.

3 For more details see B. Paszkiewicz, ‘Monety z badań archeologicznych średniowiecznego i nowożytnego Gdańska’, Pomorania Antiqua [forthcoming].
The second one (Fig. 2), along with the rest of the materials from the archaeological research, is kept in the Archaeological Museum in Gdańsk. The obverse was struck several times: the regal orb, the curve of the central band points downwards, the arched band to the left, \( \text{\textit{WAGOBVS-DEOB}} \) between two circles of pellets. The reverse was also struck several times: the Latin Cross in a quatrefoil, \( \text{\textit{GRVXRXV-PETIT-OS\|\|}} \) between two circles of pellets. 2.04 g, 19.4 mm. The inventory number is MAG/N.2484.

**Fig. 2.** ‘Crosraguel penny’ from the collection of the Archaeological Museum in Gdańsk.

Although the reverse inscription \textit{Crux pellit omne crimen} is undoubtedly a quotation from Prudentius’ hymn sung at Vespers,\(^5\) the interpretation of \textit{Iacobus Dei gratia rex} on the obverse, and consequently the attribution of the coin, has still not been confirmed to the satisfaction of every scholar. In nineteenth-century Scottish literature, such coins were presumed to be Scottish. Joachim Lelewel, unaware of this, attributed a specimen he knew to King Jaime I of Sicily (1285–95), later ruler of Aragon.\(^6\) However, A. Duchalais pointed out that the coin’s design was later, and he suggested that it should be transferred to Jacques de Bourbon, the prince of Naples in 1415–16.\(^7\) The situation was further complicated by Christian Jürgensen Thomsen’s collection, in which a similar specimen was published, which, however, had the name \textit{KAROLVS} instead of \textit{JACOBVS}.\(^8\) This \textit{Karolus} was identified as Charles III of Durazzo, king of Naples (1381–6, as Charles II of Hungary, 1385–6).

The James coins were reattributed to Scotland by Sir George Macdonald through his extensive study devoted to the hoard found in the ruins of Crosraguel Abbey in Ayrshire.\(^9\) This included fifty-one \textit{Crux Pellit} coins, and he pointed out that Crosraguel Abbey was generously endowed with Royal privileges, and that the design on the coins related directly to its name (Crosraguel = Cross Regal); he put forward the theory that they had been minted there during James III’s reign. From that time on, the \textit{Crux Pellit} coins have often been referred to as Crosraguel pennies. Macdonald also divided them into three distinct types, depending on the shape of the central band encircling the globe.

R.B.K. Stevenson demonstrated that Crosraguel Abbey could not have issued the coins, as it did not have minting rights, but he noted that James Kennedy, bishop of St Andrews, had received that prerogative from King James II, and that coins from that bishopric had not been identified so far.\(^10\) His reattribution was followed in later publications\(^11\) until Joan E.L. Murray asserted that the \textit{Crux Pellit} coins formed part of the royal coinage of James III, most probably struck after 1475.\(^12\) An anonymous chronicler wrote in 1482, \textit{Thar was ane gret hungyr and deid in Scotland, for the boll of meil was four punds; for thar was blak cunye in the realm, strikkin and ordinyt be King James}

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TWO ‘CROSRAUGUEL PENNIES’ FOUND IN GDANSK

the Thred, half-pennys and three-penny pennys, innumerable, of coppir. And thai yeid twa yer and mair. And als was gret wer betwix Scotland and Ingland, and gret distructioni throw the weris was of corne and catell. And thai twa things causyt baith hungar and derth, and mony pur folk deit of hungar. The three-penny pennys mentioned are probably Crux Pellits. This theory is supported both by the substantial number of these coins which have now been found, and by the large number of dies represented.

The Crux Pellit coins are notable for their frequent occurrence as single finds and very infrequent appearances in hoards. Apart from the Crosraguel Abbey hoard, which seems to have some of the characteristics of a scrap-bronze store, two specimens were recorded in the inventory of the 259-coin hoard from Innerwick, a fact that surprised the scholars working on the documentation of the find so much that they were inclined to assume that the coins just happened to be in the same place as the hoard. Other distinctive features of the Crux Pellit coins are their presence on the Continent and their Continental imitations. Many other Scottish coins appear as Continental finds and they have many imitations, but they are never the ‘black’ coins.

The problem of the Crux Pellit coins with the name Charles has been studied by Joan E.L. Murray and Claire Van Nerom. They stated that Crux Pellit coins appeared not only as single finds in Scotland, but also in Flanders (Oostduinkerke, Koksijde, De Panne, Adinkerke, Damme, Deinze), and that the provenance of the eleven specimens without any find record, now in the Royal Cabinet of Medals in Brussels, may be similar. Among the pieces in the Belgian collection, seventeen specimens relate to the ones found in Scotland, whereas thirteen belong to a variety not found in British collections. Among the latter, five have the name Charles instead of James. The types recently found in Belgium, both Carolus and Jacobus, belong to type III according to Macdonald, bearing a rosette at the intersection of the bands which encircle the globe. However, they are made in a way which suggests that the die-sinker did not know what they represented. The outline of the globe was identified in the bead-moulded circle, and the cross above it became the initial mark of the legend and is separated from the globe and often misplaced. Such an ignorance of the meaning of the iconographic motif is characteristic of imitations. Thus, there are both original Scottish coins with the name James appearing in Scotland and Flanders, as well as the imitations with the name James or Charles, found in Flanders. Some Crux Pellit coins have also appeared in France (the finds in Therouanne in Artois certainly belong to the Flanders series, but in the South-West of France others have also been found). However, the lack of photographic documentation prevented the scholars from establishing to which type they belonged. To sum up, the Scottish origin of the Crosraguel pennies cannot be doubted, but the variations found exclusively on the Continent are non-Scottish imitations. According to Mrs Murray, the designs, which are unusual for Britain, relate to the doctrine rex imperator in regno suo, passed by the Scottish Parliament in 1469 (obverse), and to the French double tournois (reverse). If the imitations appear not only in Flanders but also in remote regions of France, they could be a product of a regular mint belonging to one of the Burgundian dynasty’s states (‘éventuellement attribuable aux Etats bourguignons’). This perspective is further enriched by another imitation of a Crux Pellit coin mentioned by the same authors, which is most probably a diner or a token of Hug Roger III (1451–1502) from the Aragon county Pallars in the Pyrenees. It is a coin which repeats the reverse motif on both sides; in the inscription, it introduces its own legend Comes Pallarensius (also repeated on both sides). Thus, the imitation is more distant, but the relationship with the Scottish coin is beyond doubt.

13 Macdonald, as in n. 9, 273.
16 J.E.L. Murray and C. Van Nerom, ‘Monnaies “Au globe et à la croix” appartenant à des collections belges’, RBN 129 (1983), 91–118. I would genuinely like to thank Miss Marion M. Archibald and Rt. Hon. Lord Stewartby for pointing this publication out to me.
17 H.A. Seaby and M. Bussell, British Copper Coins and Their Values (2nd edn, London, 1963), No. Sc7; mention also a variation with inscription Crux... on both sides.
The article by Murray and Van Nerom has significantly cleared up the problem with the identification of the *Crux Pellit* coins, although without answering a few important questions. For example, the authors’ interpretation of the meaning of the designs on this coin is not satisfactory. Such a poor coin as the James III copper issue could not have served as inspiring propaganda for the ruler. The devotional motif on the reverse reflects the value of the coin far better. In the fifteenth century, the shortage of precious metal in a coin was frequently compensated for with an abundant expression of piety. The Danish copper sterlings of Eric of Pomerania are a good example, struck from 1422 with the invocation *In nomine Domini*.19 The origin of the Latin Cross in a quatrefoil is different from the one offered by the authors, and the reverse of the French *double tournois* is not similar to that of the *Crux Pellit* coins at all. However, significant similarity can be seen with the reverse of French *Salut d’or* coins (1421–33), where the Latin cross is placed inside a polylobe (a trellure of ten arches connected by lilies).20 The objective of this reference might have been to make the Scottish penny appear more reliable. *Saluts* must have been still widely known at the end of the fifteenth century since they were recorded by a Scottish merchant, Andrew Halyburton, in 1495 and later.21 The regal orb on the obverse was probably intended to win more confidence in the coin – perhaps by association with the German goldgulden? However, it is worth admitting here that the way in which the regal orb is presented on Scottish coins differs considerably from that on the German ones. Probably, it was an original motif then, which through the emblem of royal sovereignty was intended to make sure that the coin’s legal value significantly exceeded its intrinsic value. In summary, both sides of the coin, by calling up heavenly and earthly authority, were intended to convince people of its value.

There is also another fact that raises even more doubt; the coins imitated in foreign countries were mainly those of good quality, or at least these which were in wide circulation in those countries. Crosraguel pennies were poor coins and were devalued very soon. What is more, they only circulated in Scotland and not for long. This begs the question why they should be imitated on the Continent.

We still do not know which Charles’s name appears on the imitative coins. Murray and Van Nerom thought that it was a fictitious character, or Charles VIII, King of France (1483–98). Sir Ian Stewart indicated that because the chronology of the Scottish originals was not certain, Charles VIII Knutsson, King of Sweden (1448–70, with interruptions) might be involved. However, because the coin suits neither the Swedish coinage, nor the French, ‘the name Karolus was used to obscure its origin, rather than to identify it’. Apart from the places mentioned above, the Scottish *Crux Pellit* coins have also been found in the Netherlands.22 Therefore, it appears reasonable to agree with the conclusion of the present Lord Stewartby, mentioning here that the name Charles could have functioned in the same way as the emperors’ coats of arms and crowns on the Nuremberg counters, and could have related to the royal aspirations of Charles the Bold, or even to his great grandson (born in 1500 and ruled from 1506). As opposed to the French and Swedish Charleses, they both ruled Flanders, where the imitations probably have been made, or at least used.

All this leads to the conclusion that the imitations of the Scottish *Crux Pellit* coins were not monetary coins, but items with a different purpose, perhaps the same as the Nuremberg counters (for reckoning on an abacus), or as jettons for games. The descriptions of the archaeological context of their findings support this conclusion; in Damme and Deinze they were found at the bottom of harbours, and although they were found near a church in Koksjde, they were still in the same context as three contemporary Nuremberg counters and two French ones.23 Presumably, the

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23 Murray and Van Nerom, as in n. 16, 99, 101.
original Scottish coins were also used as counters on the Continent. Otherwise there would be no reason why the citizens of Flanders or France should be interested in these valueless coins at all. The conversion might have been facilitated by (or even triggered by) the devotional motif on the reverse. A devotion is constantly present on the contemporary counters, and legends such as Ave Maria gratia plena. Dieu nous doin pois, or later Gottes Wort bleibt ewiglich frequently appear on them.24 What is more, the design of the Scottish coin’s obverse, the regal orb, is one of the most frequent motifs put on counters, especially Nuremberg ones, where it had been taken from German goldguldeners. That the latter element was not universally familiar is, however, clear from the fact that the maker of the Karolus imitation did not even understand the meaning of the representation.

On balance, it may be asserted that the reason for the imitation of the James III pennies was that they had become common as tokens or counters on the Continent.

However, the finds from Gdańsk were not imitations, but original Scottish coins of type I, according to Macdonald. The first Crosgauel penny was found in the port’s canal. Between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Radunia Canal followed a different course, and at the site where the coin was found, there had once been a lateral channel of the Motława river at the entrance to the Gdańsk Port (see Fig. 3). As far as the literature is concerned, it is the very first find of a Crosgauel penny to the East of the Netherlands. Among the twenty-nine coin-shaped objects at the bottom of the canal, there were five coins that were never allowed to circulate in the city, and four counters. The second Crosgauel penny was found near the present railway station, in an area that has been reshaped many times; until the nineteenth century there were huge fortifications of seventeenth-century date. Before that, until 1635, there had been the foreground of the Corpus Christi Gate, built after 1433.25 In the archaeological excavation, among the twelve coin-shaped objects, there were six coins that were not allowed circulation in Gdańsk, and one counter. They can be interpreted as items that had simply been dumped into the moat.

Trade between Gdańsk and Scotland became livelier from 1420 onwards. The material which Poland mainly imported was, of course, Scottish wool, and the exported articles were timber, cinder, tar, flour, malt, and even ready-made ships.26 However, all this is not enough to explain these finds, because the trading was more intense between Gdańsk and Flanders or England, and there are no any coins from these countries in the city. In Scotland itself, more valuable coins than Crux Pellit pennies were struck, but there are none of these in Gdańsk. In the last quarter of the fifteenth century, all over Prussia, there appeared complaints about the wandering Scottish merchants; ... manchfledige handelunge geschen ist uf vil tageferten der Schotten und partirers halben, die das landt mit irem gesfelschen gütte, cromerey, vorkorzet gewichte und kleynen mose durchczien ...27 With a short break between 1501 and 1502, Gdańsk’s authorities supported them and gave them civic rights.28 In the Eastern suburb of the city, called Dlugie Ogrody (Langgarten), the Scottish Dam (Szkocka Grobla, Schottischer Damm) was built. Included in many complaints about the Scottish hucksters, they were accused of ‘spoiling’ the trading, i.e. cheap competition, but nobody accused them of spreading bad money. Apparently, the appearance of the Scottish pennies does not have anything to do with them.

I have not managed to find any traces of the Scottish money in Gdańsk in the written sources, but there is such evidence from Wrocław. In 1515, the Council of the Royal City of Wrocław announced that, viel fremde Münze genommen und ausgegeben ist worden, darunter dann viel falsche Münze, als schottisch und ander böse schwarzte Münze erfinden wird, dem Armut und gemeinen Nutz zu grossen Abbruch und Schaden.29 We do not know what kind of Scottish coins

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26 Biskup, as in n. 25, pp. 408, 524.
29 S.B. Klose, Darstellung der inneren Verhältnisse der Stadt Breslau vom Jahre 1458 bis zum Jahre 1526, edited by G.A. Stenzel (Breslau, 1847), Scriptores rerum Slavonicarum, Bd. III, p. 75.
Fig. 3. Gdańsk, c. 1520 (reconstruction by J. Stankiewicz, 1982) and the sites where the Crosraguel pennies were found. 1 the site in the port's canal where coin no. 1 was found; 2 the site before the Corpus Christi Gate where coin no. 2 was found; 3 the ground of the ruined Teutonic Knights' castle (Das Alte Schloss, Zameczysko); 4. The English Dam (Englischer Damm, Angielska Grobla); 5. The Scottish Dam (Schottischer Damm, Szkocka Grobla). Parts of the Gdańsk City complex: A - The Right Town (Rechtsstadt, Prawe Miasto), B - The Old Town (Altstadt, Stare Miasto), C - The Suburb (Die Vorstadt, Stare Przedmiescie), D - Granary Island (Speicher-Insel, Wyspa Śpichrzów).
the Council meant, as none have yet been found in Wroclaw, and the epithet böse schwarze Münze might have applied to many coinages (in fact, no other Scottish 'black coin' but the Crux Pellit has been found on the Continent; but given how difficult it is to identify this coin as Scottish, and did the Wroclaw City Council have such a deep numismatic knowledge?). If both Crosraguel pennies in Gdańsk were thrown away before the entrance to the city, they must have been treated in the same way as in Wroclaw — as base black coins, which could not be brought into the city.