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AN UNRECORDED TOWER MINT QUARTER-NOBLE OF THE TREFOIL ISSUE OF HENRY VI

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GOLD quarter-nobles of Henry VI minted at the Tower of London cover all periods from the Annulet issue through to the Leaf-Trefoil issue.¹ No later quarter-nobles (or half-nobles) of Henry VI are known;² the corresponding nobles of the Trefoil, Leaf-Pellet and Cross-Pellet issues all exist but are extremely rare. This note describes a hitherto unrecorded quarter-noble that is tentatively assigned to the Trefoil issue on the basis of similarities that it bears to some Trefoil issue nobles and groats.

The coin in question (Fig. 1) is of an appropriate weight and diameter (1.74 g; 26.9 gr; 18.4–19.4 mm), and bears characteristics common to other Henry VI quarter-nobles, with an initial mark of a large lis on both the obverse and reverse,³ together with a lis in the central compartment of the reverse; a single lis lies over the shield on the obverse suggesting that the coin was minted at the Tower of London.



Fig. 1. Quarter-noble of Henry VI

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¹ Whitton 1938–41, 59–90, 205–67.

² Stewartby 2009, 320–3.

³ For quarter-nobles of Henry VI bearing an initial mark of a small lis see Stewartby 1999.



Fig. 2. Additional trefoil on tressure (enlarged)



Fig. 3. Double saltire stops on reverse (enlarged)

The obverse legend contains a lis after **hENRIC** and all other stops are trefoils, in common with quarter-nobles attributed to the Annulet issue;⁴ however, closer inspection of the obverse shows an additional trefoil located on the tressure to the left of the lis above the shield (Fig. 2). The reverse legend differs from all other Annulet issue quarter-nobles in that all stops are double saltires (Fig. 3), as opposed to annulets or cinquefoil and annulet.

The only known quarter-nobles of Henry VI with saltires as stops are those of the Leaf-Mascle issue, which bear a mixture of mascle and double saltires on the reverse; the subsequent Leaf-Trefoil quarter-nobles have stops comprised solely of leaves and trefoils. Some of the extremely rare nobles attributed to the Trefoil issue bear double saltire stops together with an added trefoil by the shield on the obverse, with a combination of trefoil and saltire stops on the reverse.

An additional feature to be noted is the fount of the letter **A** on both the obverse and reverse of the coin, which (in the three cases that are fully legible) has a distinctive pointed lower left end to the horizontal top-bar (Fig. 4).⁵ This form of the letter **A** (referred to by Whitton as **A₂**) is believed to have been first used during the Trefoil issue, as evidenced by the lettering of some groats of this period;⁶ it can also be seen on the obverse (in **FRANCO**) of a Trefoil issue noble in the Fishpool hoard.⁷

The lack of either a mascle or a leaf on either the obverse or the reverse of the coin discussed in this note, together with the use of letter **A₂**, strongly suggests that this quarter-noble was minted later than the Leaf-Trefoil issue and, as its key features (added trefoil and trefoil and double saltire stops) most closely resemble those of some of the corresponding Trefoil issue nobles as well as many groats of the same issue (in the use of **A₂**), it has tentatively been assigned to the Trefoil issue.

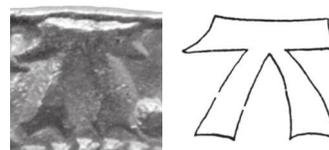


Fig. 4. Second **A** in **EXALT-ABITVR** (enlarged) and Whitton **A₂**

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⁴ The lis is a little worn and indistinct and appears to be stamped through the foot of the **D** of **DI**; it could conceivably be seen as a trefoil.

⁵ In the other two cases (both in **GRA** on the obverse and in the first **A** in **EXALT-ABITVR** on the reverse) the letter is heavily worn.

⁶ Whitton 1938–41, 221–2.

⁷ Glendining, 17 Oct. 1968, lot 68.