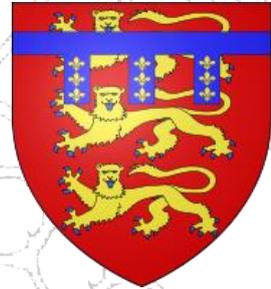


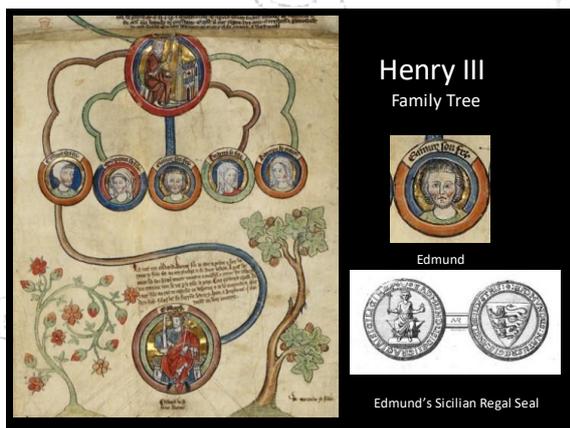
## Lancastrian Numismatic Snippets

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Most of us are familiar with the House of Lancaster and its pivotal place in the history of England. As numismatists, if we are interested in English coinage, we will know of the coins of the Lancastrian kings Henry IV, Henry V, and Henry VI. The coins struck by these kings range from the generally very rare coins of Henry IV to some of the commonest medieval coins of Henry VI. This series has been studied in depth by countless numismatists over the years. These kings were not the only members of the House of Lancaster to have prominent roles in the politics and society of medieval England. It is some of these less well-known Lancastrians and their in some cases minor, but interesting nonetheless, numismatic connections I would like to talk about.



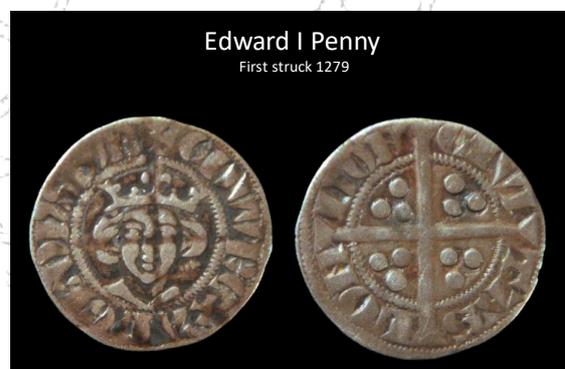
My story begins with Henry III, who had two sons, Edward, later Edward I, and Edmund who as a child had been created King of Sicily by Pope Innocent VI. This title was later rescinded when his father was unable to get financial backing from Parliament which refused to support 'The Sicilian Business'.



During the Baron's War, Edmund supported his father against the rebelling magnates led by Simon de Montfort. For this support he was created 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Lancaster, and he was also granted the title and lands of de Montfort, 6<sup>th</sup> Earl of Leicester and later those of Robert de Ferrers, 6<sup>th</sup> Earl of Derby. These honours made him one of the wealthiest men in England. Edmund went on the 9<sup>th</sup> Crusade with his brother Edward, and it is believed that he earned the nickname 'Crouchback' because he wore a crusader's cross stitched onto his cloak.

What had this to do with numismatics, you may ask? Edward I was responsible for what was one of the most famous and long-lasting changes to the coins of England during the Middle Ages - the introduction of the Edwardian Sterling Penny. This design remained the standard design of the coinage for 200 years. The production was reorganised and, except during re-coinages when some regional mints were used, the bulk of coins were struck at the Royal Mint in London and ecclesiastical mints.

As well as striking coins, the Royal Mint also struck jettons for use by the Royal Exchequer for calculating accounts on reckoning tables and chequered cloths. They were mostly the same size as the pennies, around 20 mm diameter, although there were also some 25 mm diameter struck. They varied in design, the commonest have the sterling portrait on the obverse. They were also pierced or partially pierced in the centre.





It can be assumed that the mint struck jettons for general sale, and it would appear that they were also made to order for individuals, though there is no official record of this. It is here that we encounter Edmund's contribution to our numismatic tale.

Edmund's Coat of arms was the three lions Passant Guardant, the royal arms of the Plantagenets, with a label of cadence denoting the second son of the king. This coat of arms is found on several jettons issued in this period, and in his article in BNJ 1938, L. A. Lawrence confirmed that some of the same irons and punches used to make the dies for the sterling pennies of Edward I were also used to make dies for jettons. He illustrated this with a jetton bearing a Fox Class IVa portrait and the Arms of Edmund on the reverse; Class IV was issued between 1282 and 1289 (Stewartby) and confirms Edmund 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Lancaster as the issuer of this jetton which is struck on a 25 mm flan.



Edmund Jetton  
as identified by L.A. Lawrence



Edmund Jettons  
Standard size

Edmund Crouchback  
1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Lancaster

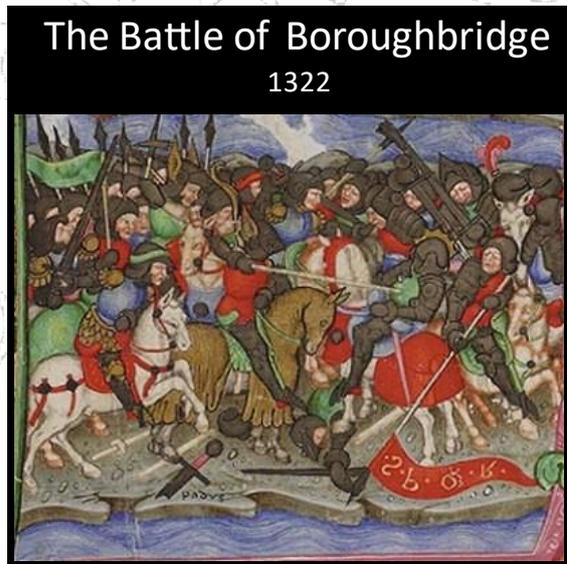
There are also sterling sized (20 mm) jettons which bear his arms on the obverse and a variety of commonly used reverse types, such as voided cross with stars and crescents and the cross moline. These may not be attributable to Edmund but may have been for his son Thomas the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Lancaster. These arms remain the arms of the Duchy of Lancaster. To my knowledge these are the

only English jettons of this period that can be attributed with certainty to an individual or family, although there are some which bear arms similar to important families.

Edmund died in 1296 during a siege of Bayonne whilst campaigning as Edward's Lieutenant in Aquitaine. He was succeeded by his eldest son Thomas 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Lancaster. Like his father Thomas was a staunch supporter of his uncle, Edward I, and served with him, especially, in the Scottish campaigns, but also in Wales and France. He was also Earl of Lincoln and Salisbury by right of his wife, thus, with five Earldoms, he was without doubt the wealthiest peer in England.

On Edward I's death Thomas supported his cousin Edward II, even defending him in the face of baronial discontent at Edward's high-handed actions and increased dependence on favourites, the prime one being Piers Gaveston. The situation worsened and eventually the magnates introduced Ordinances to curb Edward's excesses. Thomas refused to support Edward's Scottish war, which ended in the humiliating defeat at Bannockburn. As leader of the Ordinators, Thomas was held responsible by Edward for the execution of Gaveston.

These events eventually led Thomas into open rebellion against the King and finally to his defeat at the battle of Boroughbridge in 1322. He was captured and executed at the gates of his castle at Pontefract. Thomas' lands and titles were attainted and reverted to the King.

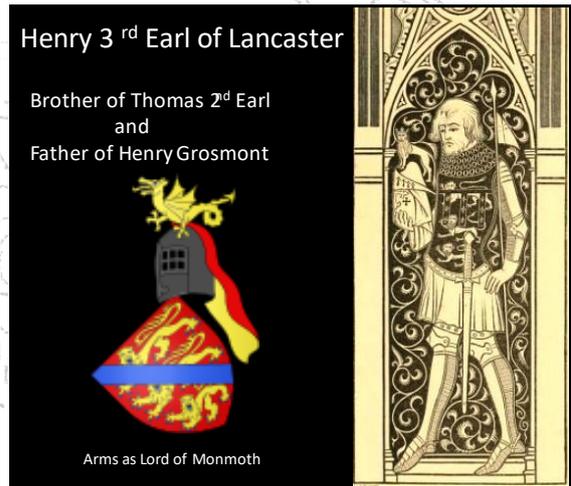


In 1831 in the river Dove close to the town of Tutbury, in the domain of the Duchy of Lancaster, not far from the site of the Battle of Boroughbridge, during work on the river bank, quantities of coins were found. It appeared that they had been in barrels and it was estimated that there may have been between 200,000 and 300,000 coins comprising mostly of Edwardian pennies along with Scottish, Irish, and continental pennies of the period. Only approximately 100,000 were recovered by the landowners, the Duchy of Lancaster.

It is almost certain that this treasure belonged to Thomas the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Lancaster and was his War Chest to pay his rebel army and Scottish allies in his bid to take control and oust Edward II, but it was never reclaimed after his defeat. The bulk of the coins recovered from the hoard are now in the British Museum. However, in 2010 twenty-six coins given to Lord Howard, the then Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, were sold at auction. These had passed on his death to Wm. Doggart, his librarian, and thence through his family. They are the only known coins in private hands that can be positively identified as being from the hoard. They were a very representative group, including Edward I and Edward II pennies from the mints of Durham, Bury St. Edmunds, Berwick, Lincoln, Newcastle, and Kingston, as well as Dublin, Waterford, and Scottish Alexander III.

Thomas' younger brother and heir Henry had not been involved in the rebellion and had remained loyal to Edward. Henry petitioned for his inheritance to be reinstated, and in 1324 he was invested as Earl of Leicester, one of Thomas' honours. Edward continued to antagonise the magnates with his high-handed actions and once again began to depend on and reward favourites, this time Hugh Despenser, Earl of Winchester, and his son Hugh.

In 1326, on the return of Queen Isabella and Roger Mortimer, Henry joined them in their rebellion against Edward and was responsible for his capture at Neath, as he attempted to escape, and for his imprisonment at Kenilworth Castle. After Edward's abdication, he was appointed head of the Regency Council for the young king Edward III and subsequently helped in the removal of Mortimer from the Regency and his execution.



Henry 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Lancaster

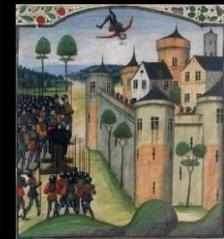
Brother of Thomas 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl  
and  
Father of Henry Grosmont



Arms as Lord of Monmoth



Henry Duke of Lancaster  
2<sup>nd</sup> Knight of the Garter  
(Bruges Garter Book)



Battle of Auberche 1345 on the same campaign Bergerac was captured

His son Henry of Grosmont was Edward III's cousin, close friend and eventually his Lieutenant in Aquitaine. He was a founder member and second knight of the Order of the Garter. When his father died in 1345, he inherited all his family's honours.

During Edward III's preparations to enforce his claim to the Throne of France, Henry stood surety for some of his loans by offering himself as a hostage. When the first campaign of the Hundred Years War began in 1345, Henry led a very successful expedition into Gascony and in a daring

assault he won a major battle at Auberche and then captured the key town of Bergerac. For this service he was granted the town of Bergerac and the right to mint coins there, a privilege which was unique. Apart from Royal mints, such rights had only been granted to Ecclesiastical houses and were controlled by the kings of England.

Henry struck a range of denominations and types of coins generally following those of Edward's other mints in design and standard. His early coins from 1347-1351 bore the title of 'Hen Comes Lanc' on the obverse and 'Dns Bergerac' on the reverse. Those struck after he became 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Lancaster in



Henry of Lancaster  
Gros a La Couronne of Bergerac

hEn(RICVS : Com)ES L'An:

DnS:BR(AGAIR)AC

As Earl of Lancaster



Henry of Lancaster  
Gros au Leopard Couchant of Bergerac

+En : DnS . BR(A)GIE

LANCAI  
. IE :DVX

As Duke of Lancaster

1351 bore the title 'En Dvx Lanc' on the obverse and 'Dns Bergerac' on the reverse. In total 21 types of coin were struck, including gros, doubles and deniers. Both Edward's and Henry's coinages mirrored the weight and standard of the French regal coinage and bore no resemblance to the English coinage in design or standard. Although there are a large number of types and varieties, all but a few are rare to extremely rare and give the appearance of being struck with minimum quality control.

Henry's daughter Blanche was married to John of Gaunt, the third surviving son of Edward III. They were 3<sup>rd</sup> cousins, and their great, great grandfather was Henry III. When Henry Grosmont died of the plague in 1361 John became *jure uxoris* Duke of Lancaster.

In 1371, after the death of his first wife Blanche and with his brother and nephew in line for the throne of England, he married Constance, the heiress to the Crown of Castile and Leon. Then in 1372 he declared himself the King of Castile *jure uxoris* Constance. He gathered an army and with help from the king of Portugal set off to claim the Kingdom of Castile. Whilst in Spain, he struck a Real as King of Castile. These are very rare coins the only one I know of was sold at auction in Barcelona in 2007. The campaign eventually came to nothing and he relinquished his claim, accepting a settlement and a marriage arrangement for his daughter Catherine to Henry Trastámara, who became Henry III King of Castile and Leon. In 1390, John was created Duke of Aquitaine, much to the annoyance of Gascon lords. He as Duke had the right to issue coins, and although he may have profited from this right, the coins were in the name of Richard II.

