

Editor: David Powell

A free newsletter to all who share our interest in these fascinating and often enigmatic pieces. Please send the editor at least one 300 dpi JPEG scan, or a sharply focused photo print, of any interesting leaden token or tally in your collection. Send images as email attachments to LJEditor@aol.com. See page 4 for information on back issues, etc.



The Passing of the Years

As we reach the final month of 2006 and contemplate consigning another year to the past and welcoming its replacement in, it seemed fitting to record this sequence of date-ordered lead from years long gone. They are all communion tokens, but it is hoped that by illustrating the development of style it may be helpful to those trying to place other crude leads in context. The sequence will be continued next month.

- 1692. East Kilbride, Lanarkshire
- 1699. Dunblane, Perthshire
- 1704. Carnwath, Lanarkshire
- 1707. Oxnam, Roxburghshire {1a}
- 1709. Newburn, Fifeshire {1b}
- 1713. Arngask, Perthshire {1c}
- 1714. Flisk, Fifeshire
- 1720. Balquhider, Perthshire
- 1722. Harray&Birsay, Orkney {2b}
- 1724. Etal, Northumberland {2c}
- 1725. Ballermino, Fifeshire {2a}
- 1728. Crail, Fifeshire {3a}
- 1729. Coylton, Ayrshire
- 1733. Fintry, Stirlingshire
- 1737. Terregles, Dumfrieshire
- 1739. Killin, Perthshire
- 1742. Dalrymple, Ayrshire {3b}
- 1744. Newton, Lothian {3c}
- 1746. Slamannan, Stirlingshire
- 1748. Abernethy, Perthshire
- 1752. Denny, Stirlingshire
- 1753. Dunfermline, Fifeshire {4a}
- 1755. Kilsyth, Stirlingshire
- 1755. Wooler, North'land {4c}
- 1758. South Knapdale, Argyll {4b}
- 1760. Kennoway, Fifeshire {5a}
- 1763. Wilton, Roxburghshire {5b}

Reverses:

Pieces are uniface unless indicated by a cross-reference to the row number of one of the reverse illustrations on the right. The a/b/c subscript after such references illustrates the position on that row; as the pictures are tightly packed, it is not feasible to number them individually.



*Seasonal
Greetings to all
Our Readers!*

David Powell On His Classification System

Type 28: Outer Rim Pieces



Many pieces exist which have an outer rim with various types of filler, e.g. shading, within which is subject matter covered by the other types of this classification system. These are generically called type 28 and, uniquely, have a subtype 28.nn, where “nn” indicates the type of the central material. Type 28 is particularly common on the very small ecclesiastical tokens of the mediaeval period, and very much less so on more modern leads. On tesserae it is common to find central material within a wreath, in the manner in which “Six Pence” or “One Shilling” appears on the British coinage of Victoria. Wreaths are interpreted as outer rim filler for the purpose of this classification, which renders type 28 one of the more common on Roman lead.

Not included in type 28 are pieces where an outer rim exists but is empty, or pieces where a circular line cuts across the main design at some distance from the edge but without separating it into two different sets of subject matter.



If one side of a piece is type 28, the probability that the other side is also a type 28 is high, a phenomenon

more common to this type than any other. Figs.1-6 above all exhibit type 28 characteristics on both sides, albeit in some cases faintly. The smallest of them are only 11mm across, the largest nearly 19mm, and none of them are going to be much newer than 1500. Amongst the designs are a lis {Fig.1a}, merchant mark {Fig.2a}, knife {Fig.3a}, a Lombardic “m” indicating matins {Fig 4b}, an arrangement of petals {Fig 6b} and a variety of crosses. These faces may be described as types 28.4, 28.20, 28.27, 28.2, 28.1 and 28.14 respectively, the second component being the type into which the piece would fit if there was no surround. Figs.7-9 continue the run of small 11mm pieces.

The outer-rim fillers may take various forms, closely-packed diagonal or radial lines being the most common. On the few large pieces of this type, they are more spaced. Fig.12 is a delightfully unusual and imaginative type 28.3; a cartwheel, or should it be a star, interspersed by trios rather than single pellets. It also has a very pleasant patina to boot. Figs.14,15 show rather plain sequences of evenly-spaced radial lines, whereas Fig.13 shows the same lines defining the outer rim but without a firm inner boundary. These “radial-dash” rims are quite common. What is the design within? A shield, or a sail?

The style of Fig.16 exudes Commonwealth small silver on both sides, and can be dated fairly precisely to the 1650s; it is exciting to find a piece which can be dated so narrowly, and to get a wreath, normally the province of the Romans, on a British item. Fig.10 alone can lay any claim to modernity, and indeed is quite probably 19th cent. “13” is an unusual number, and unlikely to be a value. Perhaps it was used in the same sense as a table number on a communion token, but in an agricultural or industrial setting; i.e. the holder went to table 13 on payday to receive his money. Who knows!



Talking Tesserae:

Having just finished describing type 28 as it appears on the late mediaeval and early modern pieces, it seems fitting here to show some Roman examples, nearly all with wreath of course, as illustrated by Ficorini:



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Baltic Bale Seals {continued from last month}

To resume where we left off last month, let's try and read some at least a little of what is on the three pieces shown. I'm not a natural linguist, but for most of what you need, knowing the letters of the Cyrillic alphabet will be adequate. If you don't, they are on the Internet. I'm a bit hazy on them myself, but it won't stop me having a go. If you still can't fathom it, I am delighted to say that John Sullivan is hoping to publish a book on the things sometime next year. Assuming that LTT is still going, I'll let you know when it's out.



Figs.1a,2a: LD at the top, as per last month; standard form; not sure of the meaning. Probably the rank of an official, e.g. quality control officer. Next two lines, a name, presumed to be his; I'll guess at something like S.Sinyamov and C.Bargov respectively. As I understand it, P is an R, C is an S, H is an N, backwards R is a "ya" sound. The reference number at the bottom commences with something alphabetic, usually H or Ho {N or No}, presumably meaning "number", and is followed by one; e.g. H14 in Fig 2a. It can be possible if looking hurriedly to confuse this with the date; e.g. H66 on Fig.1a could be misread as 1766 if one was not careful. The meaning of the number is uncertain; perhaps a location, or the serial number of the sealing tongs.

Figs.1b,2b: Top lines both NP, which I take to indicate the port Narva. Next line, or sometimes two, a code usually consisting typically of a couple of initials followed by a number, frequently 12, with another letter at the end; perhaps the identity of the producer, and/or the type of cloth? Finally, the date.

Fig.3 is of a different format. I understand without knowing the fine detail that there are several different series, each with distinct date ranges and formats, commencing from about 1741 and running on into the 1840s; also, that there is an uneven date distribution over that period, in consequence of the various economic {and no doubt military} events of the time. I for one look forward to the appearance of John's book, and if anyone would like to contribute to the debate, even if be the evidence of a solitary piece, they will be very welcome.

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Postscript: Fig 4 is a type of piece commonly seen. On the basis that its range of codes are not dissimilar to one of those described above, does anybody know if these pieces are related, or where they come from?

Fig.5 also contains Cyrillic text, but is altogether of more modern style. John informs me that it is early 20th cent.



Picture Gallery and Readers' Correspondence



My thanks to Tony Holmes for producing the pieces shown in Figs.1-8 from a bag of assorted junk of uncertain but probably South-Eastern origin. Fig.1 is an attractive pair of birds, one facing each direction; on most type 18s we only get one bird. Being quite darkish, it might be London. Fig.2 is one of the pascal lambs more often associated with mediaeval pewter, and the first time I have seen it on lead. Fig.3a is one of those pieces which goes into type 22 by virtue of showing what might be windmill sails; however, note the initial C on one of them, which again we have not seen before. The reverse is a most elaborate and attractive geometric, which although dominantly curved rather than linear can comfortably fall within type 12. Fig.4 is a lion rampant, and is also certainly from the Elizabethan period; probably from London, although the metal is rather light. Fig.5 is destined for type 13, frameworks, by virtue of the ladders at the bottom; the top half is indeterminate, but could it just be the head of a counting house clerk or schoolmaster along the lines of those pieces I was discussing on the back page of LTT_18 {Sept 2006}? Fig.6 is a standard type 2, with a bit of elaboration; is that a hint of a numeral, perhaps the beginning of a date, below? Fig.7 is either a horseshoe or a plain C; from the style I favour the former, which would make it a type 27 rather than a type 2. Blacksmiths' tokens? The list of possible uses expands. Finally, Fig.8, the best specimen I have seen of a type which has turned up before, from a Roman site at Colchester. Perhaps this is from the same source? It has two definite ridges in the design, although one is obscured by the line of the rectangle; the level rises suddenly on one side of it, and equally falls away at the other.



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The previous owner of the Thomas Small/1778/Peace and Plenty piece discussed in my type 29 article on page 2 of LTT_18 {Sept 2006} has asked me to say that, although he is Scottish and I have always thought that the piece might be, he did in fact obtain it from an Essex dealer in 1987; indeed, he says that if he had been sure that it was Scottish he would not have let me have it! There is a large series of lead tokens for Edinburgh traders in Dalton and Hamer's standard work on 18th century tokens, and I guess I let this influence my thinking. Possibly it still is Scottish, but the issue is open to doubt.

Finally, some interesting lead from, guess, Bulgaria! Just to remind you that we don't have a monopoly of the stuff. Fig.11 could just about be a British type 31, and Fig.10 at a push a rather unfamiliar type 28, but the "window" design of Fig.9, measuring 39x25mm, is highly individual.



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