

Readers' Correspondence {continued}

Alex Kussendrager has responded to my article in LTT_134 with two further examples of water tokens from the Netherlands.



In Haarlem, tokens were in use as part of the system which allowed the brewers to collect water from the Brouwerskolk {water from the dunes}, which provided a much purer supply than the city water of Haarlem. They appear with the numbers 2, 3 and 4 on the reverse {Fig.3}.

In Amsterdam in 1828 bronze tokens were issued by the Company of Purified Water {Fig.4}, part of the so-called 'Versch Water Societeit' (Fresh Water Society). One may notice that they are very much modelled on the Paris design of twenty years earlier, discussed in LTT_134, and that their issuer was, similarly, concerned with providing improved water quality. It is hard to believe other than the earlier French initiative inspired the later Dutch one.

⇒ Obverse: Monogram 'C.F.', description "Onderneming van Gezuiverd Water" / 1828

⇒ Reverse: 'Amsterdam / EENE DRAGT {one carry} ; image of two water buckets.

The diameter of the Amsterdam pieces is 22mm, but I have magnified them as per those in LTT_134.

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Also from Alex, a small piece c.1500 from Oud Rilland {Zeeland}, although he says that similar have been found in England. This one is only 10mm, for which reason I have magnified it 2:1. Other examples have been seen around 22mm, but as to the function of a piece so small as this he is mystified. The size and style both suggest c.1500.



Pellet and radial-dash outer surrounds are par for the course at this time. I think that there is something in the middle on each side but I am not too sure. The best I can make out is what looks to be a mediaeval barred "A" on the left of one side which, if so, may be followed by another letter to the right. Anyone got a better specimen?

There is a little damage to one side, the nature of which suggests an original neat round hole for possible use as a pendant; however, this is hardly the size of piece which one would select for use either as an ornament or badge. If the hole were for stringing multiple pieces one would probably want it a bit nearer the centre, to lessen the risk of breakage, and if it were an invalidation mark the damage would presumably had to have occurred at the time of piercing as an obsolete piece would have been unlikely to have been subjected to significant further stress. So, what does that leave? a piece of local small change with its unstated value known only to the people of the time?

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6 On the left, a rather formalised cross and wedges with notably thick lines and outer rim, kindly sent in by reader Duncan Cooke. There is nothing remarkable about it at all, other than it was discovered in a field just outside Arbroath. Lead pieces in Scotland are usually communion tokens, not agricultural, so interesting to see that the latter at least exist. Readers up there, please let us know if you find any more! This one is 22mm and, I will guess, probably 18th cent.