

Henry III Long Cross Pennies - An Analysis of Class 2a and the Identification of Two Previously Unidentified Sub-Groups.

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Abstract

Coins of Class 2a, are relatively scarce yet the varieties that exist suggest that there was some degree of experimentation before the more consistent forms of 2bi and 2bii were arrived at. This has made any form of analysis or breakdown into sub-groups extremely difficult. This article suggests a means of dividing class 2a into two parts and identifies two further sub-groups 2ab1 & 2ab2, which could be confused with the coins of class 2b but which may well predate the issue. The article concludes with a brief table of the details of the four types identified.

The coding of the letter shapes referred to, differ from some of those used by Churchill and Thomas, but are illustrated throughout the text and were arrived at by microscopic examination.

Basic Facts:

- The whole of Class 2 was issued between December 1247 and October 1248.
- Taking the dies recorded in the Brussels Hoard as being roughly proportionate; class 2a was probably produced over a period of no more than 10 weeks, but possibly less.
- Henry was 40 years old and in the 32nd year of his reign.

Mints:

Coins of Class 2a and 2ab exist only for the mints of London, Canterbury and Bury.

Moneyers:

London: Nicole

Canterbury: Gilbert, (IOH only known in 1b/2 and extremely rare - see The Brussels Hoard of 1908, Ch.8. p112), Nicole and Willem.

Bury: Ion

Legends

Both H and N are used to represent the letter N although unlike some of the 1b coins the N is almost always joined to the R and can appear as I-R, I\|R, I•R or I=R. The letters ER of TERCI are also always ligated.

hEI-RICVS • REX TERCI'

hEI=RICVS • REX • TERCI'

hEI•RICVS • REX TERCI'•

hEI-RICVS REX TERC'

hEI-RICVS REX TERC

hEI-RICVS REX TERCI

HEI-RICVS REX TERCI'

HEI-RICVS REX TEREI'

hEI•RICVS REX TERCI'

hEIRICVS REX TERCI'

Differences from previous research

Churchill and Thomas, in their study of the Brussels Hoard of 1908, suggested that the only true varieties of 2a are those that carry the portrait of Class 1b and that those other varieties carrying a bust with a very long face and X type 1b should be classed as 2bi. It must, however, be remembered that when Churchill and Thomas did their researches of the Brussels Hoard, they studied and identified a total of no fewer than 46,907 English long cross coins, a total which made the detailed investigation in the form undertaken in this paper impossible. However, when other key letters, details of the bust and the inner ring counts are taken into consideration, grouping starts to emerge which suggests a development of the issue and a point of transition between early obverses and those that were produced later but before the clear consistent styles of styles 2bi and 2bii.

To avoid confusion with current groupings these, hitherto unrecognised, transitional groups are referred to as Class 2ab1 and 2ab2.

Coins of Class 2a1

The first group of 2a (2a1) all share the following letters ;
Letter E type 1a or 1b; Letter S type 1a and Letter X type 1b as illustrated below.



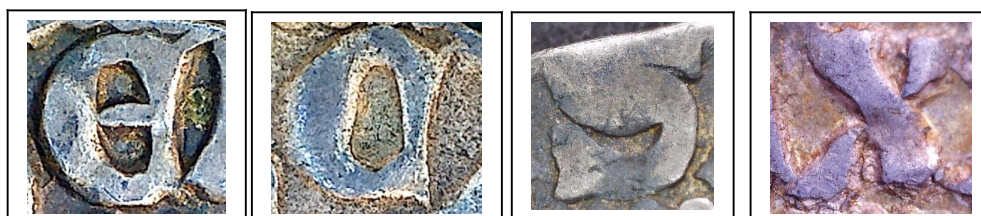
The specimens seen were all produced for London with the exception of Bury (Dies Aa Eaglen 251; C/T Bur 3). The coins considered to be 2a1 all scored between 7 and 9 using the grid featured below.



		
M2202 Nicole on London Score = 8	M1384 ION on Bury Score = 8	M766 Nicole on London Score = 9

Coins of Class 2a2

The second group, 2a2, all share the following letters;
Letters E & C type 2b, S type 1a (including the variant shown below) and X type 1b.



*Letter E&C type 2b are frequently to be found on the reverses of Class 1b/2 coins.

		
		
M3 IOH on Bury Score = 7	M1683 Nicole on London Score = 5	M898 Nicole on London Score = 6

Coins of Class 2ab1

The coins of this sub- class all exhibit the following letters:

E & C Type 1b (Rarely the letter C appears as type 1b and type 2a in the same legend however the letter E is always 1b); S is Type 3 or 4 but never Type 1a; X is always 1b.



N.B. Using only the letter X these coins could be confused with Class 2bi but the letter E Type 1b is never used in 2bi whereas it is a constant feature of these coins.

Coins of Class 2ab2

The coins of this sub-class all exhibit the following letters:

E & C Type 2a (although rarely the letter C may appear in both forms in the same legend, the letter E never does); S is non-standard Type 3b but never Type 1a; X is always Type 2a.



N.B. Using only the letter X for identification, these coins could be confused with 2bii, but the letter E Type 2a is never used in Class 2bii but is a feature of these coins. The letter X is also slightly different from that of 2bii which is Type 2b*1, as illustrated below left. As can be seen the bottom left to top right curves of 2b*1 are constructed so that the top of the lower curve if followed through would align with the bottom of the upper curve. This is very much in keeping with the original style Type 1b (right); the centre of limbs being simply thickened.



Constructing a Check List

When the new legend of Class 2 was introduced, the bust and letter shapes on the obverse initially closely followed those of Class 1b, presumably because the die sinkers were familiar with them. If we take those elements that were **present only** on earlier issues **but never** on Class 2b coins the following list emerges:

1. The obverse lettering is always E & C type 1b combined with X type 1b
2. S is always type 1a;
3. Some legends have a pellet between hENRICVS and REX.
4. Some dies have an i.m. showing a 5 pointed star; this never occurs on coins after 2a.
5. The upper bust tends to be wider and overall more spade shaped on earlier coins.
6. The fringe often consists of 5 pellets or sometimes four; there are only three from Class 2b onwards.
7. The upper side curls on coins of 2a are almost always complex, that is they are extended to meet the band of the crown, whilst those on coins of 2b are almost invariably simple as illustrated below*.
8. The bust is sometimes arranged so that the inner ring of pellets passes above the side petals of the central fleur of the crown.
9. The OIRC (Obverse Inner Ring Count) can be higher than 36 (the highest number recorded on coins of 2b, which usually had a number closer to 32)
10. Although the reverses of the coins appear to have been produced independently from the obverses; RIRC (Reverse Inner Ring counts) above 36 can be found on pre-class 2b coins but never on those of Class 2b.

Using the ideas above it is easy to produce a check list for any coin of Class 2 as featured below.

Clearly those coins which have more of these attributes are likely to be of earlier construction and possibly the work of the same die sinker(s) who worked on 1b obverses. Those with the fewest attributes are most likely to be the product of new thinking, especially where the busts more closely resemble those to be found in Class 2b. The above facts provide a ten-point scale on which to score each coin. Of course, it cannot be said for example, that a coin with five-pointed star for an initial mark was produced before a coin with a six-pointed initial mark, simply that coins with high scores are those least like Class 2b; although interestingly those coins that did have a five-pointed i.m. also scored very highly in the other categories.

It is not claimed the scoring system is other than simplistic, but it does provide a clear separation point at which some coins do not score at all or have very low scores and have very little in common with the earlier higher scoring coins. All the coins viewed either scored 5 or more (Class 2a) or entered into the 0 – 3 category (Class 2ab).

What also emerges is that there were two letter combinations being worked, suggesting two different moneyers at work or possibly two distinct groups of moneyers. (See the table and illustrations below.)

**Although some (later?) coins of 2a do have simple curls (below left) the majority do not; those coins allocated to 2ab are predominantly simple as are the coins of 2b. The only exception noted is a coin of 2bi of Nicole on London which has complex curls i.e. the top of the upper curl is extended to meet the band of the crown, (below right).*

No coins of 2bii have been discovered with other than simple curls.



A check list for any Class 2 coin with examples from illustrated coins:

Coin Ref.	Mint S = simple curls = 0 C = complex curls = 1	E.C & X type 1b	S Type 1a	CVS.REX	5 pointed I.M.	OIRC > 36	RIRC > 36	Broad Spade shaped bust	Fringe of 5/4 pellets	Inner ring of pellets passes above the side petals of the fleur	TOTAL SCORE
M1384	BUR=S	1	1	1	0	1(40)	1(40)	1	1	1	8
M3	BUR=C	0	1	1	0	1(37)	1(39)	1	1	0	7
BT2483	LVH=C	1	1	0	1	1(40)	1(39)	1	1	1	9



The coin illustrated above, BT2483, is provided for those who wish to check the score shown on the chart.

Mint Marks found on the Coins of Class 2

Coins of 2a have 5 or 6 limbs. They only ever exhibit either i.m. 2.1 or 2.2.
Later sub-groups always have 6 limbs and may have i.m. 2.1vi – 3.2



Types of i.m (Left to right, top to bottom).

Nicole on Canterbury (im 2.2v)
 Ioh on Bury (im 2.1vi)
 Ion on Bury (im 2.2vi)
 Willem on Canterbury (im 2.3vi)
 Jordan on Winchester (im 2.4vi)
 Gilbert on Canterbury (im 3.1vi)
 Willem on Winchester (im 3.2vi)



*The letters v or vi indicate the number of limbs.

Inner Ring Counts (Obverse IRC and Reverse IRC)

The **Obverse Inner Ring Count** for all coins without sceptres, (i.e. up to and including class 3), is calculated by counting the pellets of the inner ring clockwise starting on the right immediately below the end ornament of the crown and ending immediately below the end ornament of the crown on the left.

The obverse inner ring counts of early coins of 2a are usually in the range of 37 – 40 with a mean of 38; those of 1b/2 are usually in the range 30-36 with a mean of 32. Thus any obverse identified as 2a but with a reverse ring count below 37 could be a reverse die from the 1b/2 period.

The **Reverse Inner Ring Count** is the total of the pellets in each of the four quadrants, including any small or part pellets. The coins of Class 2a are usually paired with reverses that have a higher number of pellets in the inner ring of each quadrant than the reverses issued before 1b/2 or those from 2bi onwards.

Those reverses with an RIRC of 35 or above, (counts around 40 are not exceptional), are highly likely to belong to Class 2a with the higher counts probably being the earlier dies. (See “Reverses” below.)

Class	OIRC	Mean	RIRC	Mean
1b	30 - 35	33	31 - 40	34
1b/2a	30 - 36	32	35 - 43	36
2a1	37 - 39	38	40 - 42	40
2a2	32 - 40	38	38 - 41	38
2ab1	29 - 34	33	27 - 36	31
2ab2	32 - 39	33	29 - 35	32
2b1	26 - 36	32	28 - 36	32
2b2	26 - 36	30	27 - 34	31

Reverses of 2a coins.

The coins of the early groups are at least scarce and it is impossible to state with absolute certainty that the following descriptions are always the case but of all the coins seen to date the following seems to apply;

The inner ring of pellets has 9 - 11 pellets per quadrant.

The total pellet count for these reverses averages approximately 38, varying between 36 and 43 whereas later coins (2b) average totals nearer to 31 with a range between 26 and 35.

Because of the higher number of pellets used on Class 2a coins it seems likely that some may be linked to the reverses that appear on coins of 1b/2, some of which also have a high density. The reverse pellet count is a very quick way of comparing reverse dies for likely contenders¹.

The variation in use of the letter E on the reverses of the coins appears to be fairly evenly divided between Types 1b and 2a for London, Canterbury and Bury. Some coins feature a mixture of letter styles particularly for the letter C where a straight closure bar was sometimes overstruck with a curving version OR a straight closure bar was used with additions to the end to make it appear more like Type 1b.



The letter style featured on the reverses of coins of London and Canterbury shown above suggest that they were created by the same die sinker (M942 and M448).

Conclusions

There are two different letter sets and styles used on the coins of 2a. They could represent early and late work or they could be indicative of the work of two different die sinkers. At the moment, although the bust shapes tend to indicate that the former is likely, absolute proof is missing.

There are also two other groups that are by bust shape nearer to 2b but have features that which prevent them being included in either. As Bob Thomas has pointed out on several occasions it is unlikely that the die sinkers considered that these minor changes were significant. However, just like handwriting, they have left an identifiable trail of individual stylisation.

¹ Churchill and Thomas, The Brussels Hoard of 1908, pages 87- 88, report a reverse die link L110 with an earlier coin of 1b/2 – L 83 for London and, pages 115 -116 & C31&C32 - two coins with die links to 1b/2 - C18 & C22 – for Canterbury

Too often I have seen mislabelled coins being sold as belonging to a class to which they do not belong because of subjective opinion. This article is based on empirical data drawn from the observation of a large number of coins over a long period of time and I hope provides a basis for identification and further investigation and discussion.

What an obverse must have to be included in the correct class.

Type	Bust	Letter E	Letter X	Letter S	Obverse i.m.
2a1		1b	1b	1a	Type 2
2a2		2	1b	1a	Type 2
2ab1	Thin	1b	1b	Not 1a	
2ab2	Thin	2	2	Not 1a	
2b1	Thin	2	1b	4	
2bii	Thin	1b	2	4	

Detailed articles on 2bi and 2bii and their possible subdivisions will likely follow.

My thanks to Bob Thomas who has read through the script and has made some helpful suggestions regarding the wording etc. He has also commented that, as was said in the preamble to the Brussels report Chapter 4, the aim of the work he and Ron Churchill did was to keep things simple and to limit the number of changes and new and/or additional classes and sub classes. He also made reference to 'The alternative classification' mentioned at the end of Chapter 3 on pp 30-32 which some readers might find of interest.

Thanks also to Rob Page for editing the text; the rest is down to me. I would, of course, be delighted to hear from anyone in terms of questions, contrary opinion or additional information.

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