

A true type Ia Edward I penny of Berwick with a double initial cross

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In August 2018 this research blog published an article by the present author which described an unusual Edward I mule penny of the Berwick mint, namely a type Ia obverse, which had a double initial cross, coupled with a type IIa reverse. The classification used here is that developed by Blunt¹ in the 1930's. The corresponding Withers² types would be 1a and 2 respectively. The coin which was discussed in the previous article is shown in Fig. 1 below.



Fig. 1 Type Ia obverse with double initial cross and type IIa reverse

The obverse shows the double initial cross at 12 o'clock but is otherwise a normal example of type Ia. The type IIa reverse is of rudimentary style and has B's and R's consisting of lines and pellets. The reverse also has the closed Lombardic E's which have a curved back and a closing bar typical of type II. In a BNJ article of over forty years ago Christopher J Wood published a die analysis of the early pence of the Berwick mint under Edward I³ which covers types Ia and b, IIa, b and c and IIIa. Wood had noted the existence of a Ia/IIa mule with a double initial cross but the whereabouts of the coin he had examined was not indicated. In a kind response to the first article Nick Holmes suggested that a coin in the National Museum of Scotland with the same obverse die, ex. Loch Doon hoard, could have been the one examined by Wood.

¹C.E.Blunt, NC 1931 28-52. The mint of Berwick-on-Tweed under Edward I, II and III

² P and BR Withers, The Pennies of Edward I and II, Galata, 2006.

³ C.J.Wood, BNJ 1977 Vol. XLVII, 141-44, Preliminary results of a die analysis of approximately one hundred early Edward I pence of the mint of Berwick-on-Tweed.

Wood's article makes no mention of a true type Ia with the double initial cross obverse linked with a Ia reverse so one can reasonably assume that he had never seen one. In fact no mention of a true coin with a double cross has been seen in any literature available to the author.

Of course the existence, or otherwise, of what may have been considered as rare or even unique coins has now been thrown into focus by the proliferation of detecting finds and subsequent social media discussion. It is a very recent discovery, noticed and identified by the author on Facebook, that has prompted the writing of this note. The coin in question is shown in Fig. 2



Fig. 2 The new discovery of a true type Ia with a double initial cross

The obverse is almost certainly from the same die as the coin illustrated in Fig. 1 and, fortunately, the complete form of the double cross is clearly seen. The reverse reads VILL/ABE/REV/VICI and, as expected from a type I coin, has the E's in Roman form. The reverse die in Fig. 2 is competently made, clearly different from the type IIa reverse die in Fig. 1 which is crude in comparison.

As it stands this newly discovered coin represents the only example known to the author of a true type Ia with the double initial cross die. One is always hesitant to use the word "unique" but at least to my knowledge it is so. Maybe someone out there knows better. If so I would be pleased to hear from them via this blog.

I would like to acknowledge the help of the detectorists and photographers who have enabled me to produce this note. They know who they are so I hope they will consider this to be suitable thanks.

