

Henry III Long Class Pennies – A Very Rare Class 5d1/5c3 Mule – The Missing Link?

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Despite the fact that Henry III pennies are quite abundant, and have been well studied over many years, just now and again a rare variety turns up. This brief article documents one such example.

Both London and Canterbury produced coins in class 5c3 with a 5d reverse and later in 5d2 and 5d3 but only Canterbury seems to have produced the very crude style known as 5d1, perhaps because the mint needed dies in a hurry before the usual skilled die cutter could be engaged.

Until now there seems to have been reverses of 5d(1?) paired with the obverses of 5c3 but no evidence of 5d1 being paired with a 5c3 reverse which would have brought more certainty that dies of 5d1 are genuine.

Recently the following coin was advertised on Ebay...



A 5d1 style obverse.



Paired with a 5c style reverse.

Although 5d1 obverses appear amateurish to the point where they could easily be confused with contemporary forgeries, the pairing of the professionally cut obverses of 5c3 with 5d reverses gives credulity to the coins of 5d1 being the work of someone in training, perhaps someone who cut the reverses but hadn't reached the proficiency level to cut the actual bust. The fact that the 5d reverses for Canterbury all had KAN in place of the normal spelling CAN, often with retrograde lettering suggests a low level of ability initially.

If we accept that the die sinker gradually improved, by comparing the two busts on the next page which appear to have been struck from the same obverse die, it becomes clear that typical features of early 5d1 obverses are: A true fleur ending to the sceptre, a reversed letter N, R with hooked tail, X type 4a (see below), a simple crown band with pelleted ends and a fleur composed of pellets on raised side stalks.



The subject coin



A class 5d1 penny

These letters are important in establishing the likelihood that the coins are genuine. Letter X Type 4a was not used on any coin prior to Class 5d1. This being the case it is unlikely that these dies represent a copy of an earlier coin. Equally the die cutters ability to cut a true fleur shaped end to the sceptre begs the question, "If these are copies of later coins why not reproduce a true fleur for the crown?" Surely this crown fleur is closer to the pellet types of 5c3.



"R" with hooked tail



Another example



X type "X4"

Observations on the Reverse

However, when the reverses are compared (see the next page) it can be seen that the die of Walter does not have the reversed N found on that of Nichole (right) but that both dies have a high inner ring count (11 in the first quarter). This high count excludes reverses of Classes 5c1 and 5c2 but is reasonably common to Class 5c3 and later.



Reverse of the subject coin, Walter



NICHOLE ON KAN

The letter A

When compared with other coins the letter A is much closer to that to be found in Class 5c than the types displayed on later coins. The letters displayed below are in order (top to bottom/ left to right) Class 5c, 5d, 5f and 5g. They are not the only types but are typical and show that, after the more extreme form of 5d the left foot of the letter became more rounded or even had a pellet end.





A Remaining Question

Given the high number of specimens known for 5c3/5d (113 recorded in the Brussels Hoard) which seem to indicate production using the earlier bust of 5c3 for some time before the 5d1 bust was produced; why does this coin exist when the reverses of 5c3 seem to have been worked out?

Looking at the reverse again may provide the answer. It would appear that half of the reverse die was worn. The Brussels Hoard shows only one reverse and 24 specimens for Walter on Kan for 5c3/5d and then only 2 specimens for 5d1 with a similar reverse. Could it be that the 5d KAN reverse became worn out or critically damaged forcing the use of the older 5c3 reverse die even though it was worn?

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