

Edward I class 1a pennies with a forked crown

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Among the first issue of pennies following Edward's recoinage of 1279 is a type designated in the Spink Standard Catalogue of British coins as S1380, class1a. Although the features of this class are described, images of the type have unfortunately never been included in the catalogue.

Figure 1 shows the obverse of a class 1a coin which has a crown generally typical of all subsequent types in the Edward I/II series. This crown, of the normal, more common, type has a simple central fleur with drooping petals on either side. The n's are of Lombardic form and the A has sloping wedge tops.

Fig.1 Edward I class 1a with the more common crown. Author's collection.



What is less well known, and certainly rarely described in the literature, is an extremely rare variety of 1a with an unusual crown. Such a coin is shown in Figure 2 below. This is a class 1a coin with a crown consisting of a forked, upright central fleur with upturned side petals and bifoliate side fleurs. The obverse of the coin shows the same Lombardic n's and the characteristic letter A as the coin in Figure 1.

Fig. 2 Edward 1 class 1a with forked central fleur. Author's collection.



The 1a reverse displays the characteristic A but the N's are Roman. An additional surprise is provided by the rather flamboyant S consisting of two crescents, two wedges and a pellet centre. The first published acknowledgement of this type, as far as I know, appears in North's Sylloge 39.¹ It may well be that the reason for this is the lack of the forked crown type in the collections of the British Museum, Fitzwilliam Museum and, I suspect, others.

I have identified five examples of this 1a type with forked crown. All the coins of this true 1a are from the same obverse and reverse dies.

Corpus of the true 1a with forked crown.

- 1) J.J.North Sylloge, coin #19.
Present whereabouts unknown.
Stewartby sale Part 2, Lot 711. Spink auction, 28/06/2016.
Ex. Stewartby, Bt, 1998
J.J. North Collection. Bt. James, 1987. 1.19g.
- 2) Author's collection. Bt. Spink auction, 28/03/2019. Lot 953. 1.24g

¹ The J.J.North Collection, Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles 39, Edwardian English Silver Coins 1279-1351.

- 3) D. Greenhalgh collection. Bt Noonans auction, 18/09/2018. Lot 221. 1,35g.
Ex. Ray Inder collection.
- 4) Private collection. Bt. Spink auction, 22/09/2014. Lot 232. 1.12g
Ex. Woodhead collection. Bt. Seaby, 11/1958.
Ex. Carlyon-Britton collection. XVI, 327.
- 5) Private collection. Large fragment. Bt. EBay. 1.23g.

Figure 3 shows a class 1a coin with crown of the normal type muled with a 1c reverse. This reverse has Roman N's often reversely barred and A's with a flat top as subsequently found on later classes. The reverse lettering is also noticeably smaller than on the 1a obverse.

Fig. 3 Edward class 1a/c mule with normal crown. Author's collection.



Once again there is a corresponding type with a forked crown. Figure 4 shows an example of a forked crown obverse linked with the reverse of class 1c. In other words a 1a/c mule. Surprisingly this muled combination seems scarcer than the true 1a coin. This observation is, however, based on a limited amount of data.

Fig. 4 Edward I class 1a/c mule with forked central fleur. Author's collection.



All the three obverses known of this muled coin are from the same die as the true coin. The reverses of the three known examples are from different 1c dies.

Corpus of 1a/c mule with forked crown.

- 1) J.J.North Sylloge, coin #23.
J.J. North Collection. Bt. James, 1987. 1.22g.
Present whereabouts unknown.
- 2) Private collection. Bt. EBay. Detector find Norfolk. 1.18g
- 3) Author's collection. Bt. Spink auction, 31/03/2023. Lot 7089. 1.38g
Ex. Magnus Collection, Spink Auction, 28-29/03/2012. Lot 814.
Ex. Woodhead Collection, Bt, 12/1962.
Ex. Harkness.

It may be useful to summarise the relative rarity of the coins mentioned in this Blog using Stewartby's criteria.²

- 1) Type 1a True coin. Forked crown. Extremely rare (ER). Single figures.
This Corpus, 5.
- 2) Type 1a Mule with 1c. Forked crown. Extremely rare (ER). Single figures.
This Corpus, 3.
- 3) Type 1a True coin. Normal crown. Very rare (VR). 10-15 examples.
- 4) Type 1a Mule with 1c. Normal crown. Rare (R) less scarce than the true coin.

The author would be pleased to receive information about any other Type 1a Forked crown coins that are in readers' collections. This is particularly true for those which may be in museums or other institutions whose holdings I have been unable to access.



² Lord Stewartby. English Coins 1180-1551. Spink. Page 9.