An Unpublished Variety and Moneyer for the Romney Mint

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The minting of pennies at Romney in Kent is thought to have commenced in the reign of Æthelred II with coins of the *Long Cross* type (BMC IVa).[1] The appearance of a *Small Crux* type (Hildebrand type Ca) penny with a Romney mint signature at auction indicates an earlier commencement for minting at Romney and introduces an unpublished moneyer for the mint.

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The Romney penny is struck on a smaller flan with a weight of 1.3g (20.1gr); small peckmarks are present on the obverse and reverse. The obverse legend reads **+ÆÐELRÆD REX ANGLO** (the NG ligate), with a reverse legend of **+LEOFHESE M-O RUME**. Whilst 'RUME' is a common abbreviation for the mint of Romney on later varieties of penny, the moneyer signature can be accorded to Leofhyse, a previously unpublished moneyer for this mint.

The coin exhibits many of the features of *Small Crux* pennies struck from Canterbury dies as identified by Lord Stewartby: on the obverse portrait, the king's eye is more almond-shaped than triangular and his sceptre crosses the drapery on his right shoulder, with lines in the drapery all radiating from the brooch; on the reverse, the C and R in CRUX sit diagonally at angles of 45 degrees and 135 degrees respectively in contrast to coins from London dies; the legends display 'plain, serifless' script with a full, barred A in the diagraphs (Æ) of the regnal name and the initial cross in the reverse legend has a longer lower limb in Kentish style.[2] The hair in the portrait is the only feature that does not accord with Lord Stewartby's analysis of *Small Crux* Canterbury dies - rather than being 'swept back at an angle to the rest', the front part of the King's hair appears to fall forwards from a single point at the top of the head, giving

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[1] C.f. Jeffrey J. North, *English Hammered Coinage Volume 1: Early Anglo-Saxon to Henry III c600-1272*, p. 165, Spink & Son London 1994 Reprinted 2017; Martin Allen, *Mints and Money in Medieval England*, p. 19, Cambridge University Press, 2012.
[2] B.H.I.H. Stewart [Lord Stewartby], ''The Small Crux Issue of Æthelred II'' *BNJ* Vol. 28 (1955-57), 509-17.

a distinct appearance to the portrait. A similar hairstyle can be observed on certain other *Small Crux* pennies from Kentish mints.[3]

Whilst moneyer names with the prefix 'Leof' (OE: 'beloved') frequently occur on pennies from Kent dating from this period, the form Leofhyse is rare and only appears in Hildebrand for coins of *Long Cross* and *Helmet* types at the Dover mint.[4] The *Corpus of Early Medieval Coin Finds* lists one further instance of this moneyer name on a *Pointed Helmet* type penny of Cnut from the Huntingdon mint.[5] Recognising the scarcity of this name, it is possible that the moneyer of the Romney coin is the same that minted subsequent varieties of penny at Dover. Interestingly, a moneyer named Leofwine is recorded for minting *Small Crux* pennies at Dover and a moneyer with the same name is recorded for *Long Cross* pennies at Romney. This interchange of moneyer names in successive varieties of penny in Æthelred's reign may indicate a familial or other connection among the littoral mints of southern Kent.

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[3] C.f. Beorhtmær at Rochester, *SCBI* 7 (Royal Collection, Copenhagen), 1053 https://emc.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/full-record/10071053; also Leofstan at Canterbury, https://cngcoins.com/Coin.aspx?CoinID=394035#.

[4] Bror Emil Hildebrand, *Anglosaschsika Mynt I Svenska Kongliga Myntkabinettet*, p.50, Second Edition, Stockholm 1881.

[5] *SCBI* 66 (Norwegian Collections), 2747 https://emc.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/full-record/10662747