

Henry III Long Cross Pennies – The Sub-division of Class 1a

Robert Page, April 2018

In this brief note I draw attention to two types of Class 1a, and I propose that Class 1a be subdivided into Sub-classes 1a¹ and 1a². Class 1a coins are rare and there may be only 35-45 full pennies in existence, though an increasing number of cut halves are appearing due to the activities of metal detectorists. A very fine example of a class 1a coin is shown below:



Coin Ref # LNNN1004

A Class 1a¹ coin image ex the Jim Sazama collection. DNW auction Sept 2014, Lot# 2307

The coin shows the presence of a caul (“hairnet”) above the crown-band, which is the case with most Class 1a coins that I have observed, and I refer to this type as sub-class 1a¹. The less commonly seen type, 1a², has no caul above the crown-band:



Coin ref # LNNN1050

A Class 1a² penny in the author's collection, ex Lord Stewartby, ex H G C Day, collection purchased by Baldwin c.1935.

It is quite feasible that the very first dies of Class 1a were made by the most skilled craftsman in the workshop.

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As it was a completely new design it more than possible that the dies and/or a striking therefrom would have been shown to the king and his brother, Richard of Cornwall.



Once the decision to go ahead had been taken, there would have been a need for speed of production and so multiple dies might well have been in production at the same time. Naturally, the very first dies would be likely to be of the highest quality, and we may expect that standards may have slipped a little under the pressure of production. The caul does not appear on Class 1b coins, and so it is perhaps logical to assume that the caul was deliberately dropped at some stage during the production of Class 1a. I have observed more than one obverse die of 1a², and hence the lack of a caul is more than just a die sinker error. From the coins I have observed, type 1a² is less common than 1a¹, and hence the decision to drop the caul probably took place relatively late in the Class 1a production period.

Images of Class 1a coins are illustrated on the website, www.henry3.com, and these are summarised below, with clickable links:

Coins Illustrated on the Henry3.com website:				
	<u>1a¹ - With Caul</u>	<u>1a² - w/out Caul</u>	<u>Unclear</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>1a Pennies</u>	12	3	0	15
<u>1a Cut Halves</u>	0	4	2 (Crown off flan)	6
<u>1a/1b Mules</u>	5	2	1	8

There are 29 Class 1a obverses illustrated on the [henry3.com website](http://henry3.com), of which 26 clearly show the presence or absence of a caul. 20% of the Class 1a full pennies are without caul, i.e. sub-class 1a², however when we look at the four cut halves they are all sub-class 1a². The sample is too small to be statistically significant, but it will be interesting to see if further samples support a preliminary conclusion that Class 1a cut halfpenny production was late in the 1a production phase.

The 1a/1b mules are seen with and without caul; the caul type predominates. The data may be suggesting that 1a¹ and 1a² coins were produced in parallel for a time. Again, the sample is small, and it will be interesting to see what further examples can reveal.

I continue to seek out additional Class 1a and 1a/1b mule images, and I would welcome feedback from anyone who can assist.

