THE CROSS AS A MINT-MARK.

By Shirley Fox, R.B.A.

The initial or mint-mark cross on English coins from the time of Edward I. to the close of the reign of Henry VI. is so varied in form, and in many cases presents such subtle development of shape and style, that I have been tempted to sketch a series of the principal varieties to be noted during that period. My attention was particularly drawn to the subject during recent studies that my brother and I have been devoting to the pence of the first three Edwards. A close scrutiny of the crosses found on these coins has been of considerable assistance to us in our efforts to arrange the issues in their proper order. The result of our work in this direction we hope to publish in the near future, meanwhile I may say that in the present paper I purpose, in dealing with the Edward pence, to take them in the order in which we hope, later on, to show that they were issued. I shall begin my series with the cross found on what I consider to be the first coinage issued by Edward I. This is the well known type of penny reading **EDW REX**.

In the accompanying plates, the frontispiece to this paper is a drawing of the crosses to a scale sufficiently enlarged for their observation without the need of a lens; and the numbers to them correspond with those of coins bearing them as illustrated on the two following plates of coins. For the loan of several of these I am indebted to Mr. F. A. Walters, F.S.A.

No. 1 on the drawing is taken from what is probably the earliest of these coins, the rare so-called “pattern penny” reading **ED REX ANGLIE**
The Cross as a Mint-mark.

**DHS RIBN.** In form the cross is most characteristic, and its exact counterpart is not to be found on any other English coin. The central limbs are very straight and even, the angles clean and well defined, and the extremities sharp and well formed.

No. 2, taken from a scarce variety of an **edw rex** piece having English **r** in **ARCU** and **DNS**, is not unlike No. 1 in that its centre is sharp and well defined, but the ends are thicker and heavier. No. 3 is from the more common type of “**REX**” penny. It is somewhat smaller, and the projecting ends are even larger in proportion, but on careful scrutiny the rectangular formation of the central angles is still well-marked, although on a piece at all worn this may not be very apparent.

The next example, No. 4, comes from one of the coins having a bust similar to that last described, but without the full reading **rex**, this being curtailed to the one letter **R** which is, in most cases, barred across its lower limb, R. A very rare variety of this class has an annulet on the king’s breast. The crosses on these coins have much in common with Nos. 2 and 3, but are larger and less compact. No. 5 is found on the plentiful class of pennies with somewhat larger lettering, a different bust and invariably the reversed **M**. It is apt to be less neat and regular in formation, and the extremities are inclined to become unduly prolonged. A further development of this style, in which the points of the central limbs often project beyond the cross pieces, is found in No. 6. It is taken from pennies having large and straggling letters and, usually, a pellet, or pellets, on the breast, or before the legend.

The class of penny having a rose on the king’s breast provides No. 7, and shows a cross of similar formation but smaller and neater. This is in accord with the lettering and general style of these coins. So far, all the varieties noted have shown a more or less rectangular formation at the centre; in some cases better defined than in others, but never absent.

In No. 8 this characteristic will be seen to have disappeared. It more resembles the heraldic cross pattée, and is suggestive of four triangles united at a central point. The last example is found on
coins very similar to those bearing a rose on the king's breast, but without this mark.

No. 9 occurs on a rather scarce variety of Edward I., which has curiously ill-formed and broken-looking lettering. It is practically a plain cross with no special shape, and often as clumsily executed as the coins which bear it.

A cross, No. 10, much resembling this, but of more regular form, is also found on some of the larger sized varieties of pence which bear a star on the king's breast. On others the cross is distinctly pattée, as No. 11, while on the smaller sized pieces of this class attributable to A.D. 1300, we find a small and neatly made cross, No. 12, practically composed of four wedges united.

Considering the great abundance of the coins attributable to Edward II., it is remarkable how little variety is to be found in the mint-mark cross. That, viz. No. 13, on pieces presumably struck at the beginning of the reign, and reading \textit{EDWARD\textsc{r}}, scarcely differs from No. 12. On somewhat later issues the cross, although preserving the general character, is inclined to become less well formed and proportioned, one or more of the limbs being often too long as, for example, Nos. 14 and 15. Later still, the limbs of the cross are shorter in proportion to their length, No. 16, while No. 17, which is taken from a coin reading \textit{EDW\textsc{r}R} with pellet stops, is altogether later in appearance. This class is probably the last issue of Edward II.

Before passing on to the reign of Edward III., a few words must be said of the cross moline used on the episcopal coinage of Antony Beck, Bishop of Durham, in whose arms it formed the principal charge. Three distinct forms are found, of which by far the most usual is that shown as No. 18. It more resembles a cross recercelée than a cross moline, the ends curling sharply inwards, but not so much as to quite touch each other. No. 19 is a variety only found on the rare class of penny which has a single pellet on the king's neck, with large and sprawling lettering. The cross itself accords perfectly with this latter characteristic, being very large and ill-formed, and the curved ends lumpy and mis-shapen.
No. 20 is very curious in that it would seem as if the engraver lacked the necessary punches for producing what he wished, and had to exercise his ingenuity by using those he possessed to obtain the best result he could. For a cross moline it is of distinctly original and eccentric design, and is made by the simple process of adding two annulets to each extremity of a small plain cross. Coins bearing this curious mark are, however, seldom met with. No. 21 is the design commonly found on the small pieces issued in 1300, while No. 22 shows that upon most of the coins of Edward II. It is to be noted that in both this and the previous example, the ends of the cross turn in so much that they frequently unite.

No. 23 is taken from a Canterbury coin with the English Xi on both the obverse and reverse, pellet as stops on the obverse, and three smaller pellets among those in one quarter of the reverse. This piece is presumably the first issued by Edward III., and the cross it bears is most unusual. It consists of four more or less crescent-shaped limbs surrounding a central pellet. The York penny of the same issue also shows the central pellet, but the outer limbs are more triangular in shape, see No. 24, and the general effect is not unlike No. 25. The latter is taken from pence of the type struck at Reading, showing very florid lettering and often single annulets as stops on the obverse, which still retains the Irish title. The cross on these coins is quite different from any previously noted, the four limbs which form it being broader and shorter, and it is much later in style, and has generally a more florid appearance.

No. 26 is found on the scarce pence which bear double annulet stops in the obverse legend and read EDWARDUS REX INGLIA. The general character of No. 25 is maintained, but there is more space between the limbs, which are not so broad in proportion and have their outer edges slightly concave.

No. 27 is from a groat of the 1351–60 period, and nearly all the earliest pieces of this issue bear the same mark. It has the appearance of having been made by the simple process of removing four leaf-shaped sections from a square. A later groat of this issue provides No. 28 which, it will be seen, differs somewhat from any yet noted.
The coins issued whilst the treaty of Bretigny was in force, namely, from 1360 to 1369, bear a cross peculiar to themselves, which is shown as No. 29. Its special feature is that the outer edges of the limbs composing it are inclined to be convex. These often appear to be, more or less, detached from each other. No. 30 is another form noted during this period.

Coins of Edward III., issued subsequently to the rupture of the treaty, namely, from 1369 to 1377, do not show much variety in their form of mint-mark. That most often seen is No. 31. The exceptionally rare groats which have a chain of annulets below the bust have, in some cases, a small pellet at each corner of the cross, No. 32.

No. 33 is the cross found on most of the second Richard's coins, and is very graceful and pleasing in design. The ends are distinctly concave, and in general character it nearly approaches the Maltese. No. 34 is a more attenuated form which is sometimes seen, whilst No. 35 is taken from one of the rare groats attributable to his latest issue.

The heavy coinage of Henry IV. shows a rather thick-limbed cross pattee formed of somewhat curved lines, No. 36 being from a half groat, and No. 37 from a York penny. Another example of this piece, belonging to Mr. L. A. Lawrence, which was exhibited at a recent meeting of the Society, has a cross of very similar character, but displaying in its centre the incuse circle, so frequently found on the later issues of this monarch, No. 38. Some doubt has been expressed as to whether this curious mark really exists on the heavy coinage, but Mr. Lawrence's coin seems to be conclusive, and were it not that the coins of this class are so very rare, and mostly in poor condition, I think it quite possible that the sunk circle might be found on others.

No. 39 is from one of those puzzling groats, of which three or four specimens exist, which bear the name RENRIC stamped into the die over that of RICTRD. These read RENRIC (over RICTRD). DEI GRAT REX ANGLIE, a reading unknown on any actual Richard groat. The cross will be seen to be quite Ricardian in character. An early type of the groat with the Roman N gives us No. 40, whilst No. 41 is from a similar piece of somewhat later style. Both are short in limb and quite
plain in design. No. 42, from the obverse of a still later groat of the same class, is very similar but smaller, while on the reverse it has a small but neatly shaped cross, No. 43, on which, again, is found the incuse circle. This mark is now found on practically all the subsequent coins of Henry IV, and on some of the earlier pieces of Henry V. The crosses which bear it are so varied in shape and yet so full of character, that it becomes almost impossible successfully to describe them in writing. Reference must, therefore, be made to the drawing, where may be noted the gradual process of evolution, whereby the early form of the cross with sunk circle on the groat with the Roman N of Henry IV. at last gives way to the pierced cross of Henry V.

No. 44 is from the rare groat bearing an unprepossessing portrait of the king with very short neck. No. 45 is from the penny with similar bust and an annulet and a pellet beside the crown. No. 46 is from the half groat of similar style, but with somewhat longer neck, the annulet or pellet being retained as on the penny last described. No. 47 is from a groat of similar character. Like that with the short neck, it bears no special marks attributable to Henry IV., but from its resemblance to the half-groat above mentioned, it probably belongs to the same issue. The penny resembling these is also known and has the same mint-mark.

No. 48 is from one of the groats, of somewhat uncertain attribution, which, although bearing a mullet on the left shoulder, otherwise resemble the latest of those assigned to Henry IV. I have seen a groat, apparently from the same die as this coin, but without the mullet, so it is possible that the mullet was a later insertion. No. 49 is from a mullet-marked groat which may be safely placed as an early issue of Henry V. It is of coarser workmanship, and the mint-mark cross, although retaining the incuse circle, approaches more closely the plain pierced cross of later coins. This latter is shown in No. 50. The ends of the cross become frankly “fish-tailed,” and the sunk circle now disappears for ever. No. 51 is from a penny, immediately preceding the annulet coinage, which bears the legend DI GRA, and on it the piercing is so large that the limbs are practically disunited. The York pence of rough work and with mullet and trefoil or lis beside
ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE MINT-MARK CROSS ON ENGLISH SILVER COINS.
Pt. II.
the crown, have a very rectilinear and plain cross, devoid of piercing, No. 52.

The last to note in this reign, No. 53, is that of the annulet coinage. It has nearly right angles at the junction of the limbs, which are slightly forked at the extremities, while the piercing is large and extends almost to the angles. Later annulet coins show a well-marked change in form, the centre of the cross being slightly enlarged and the sharp angles at the intersection of the limbs giving way to a more rounded formation, No. 54. This is very conspicuous on the extremely rare York groats. A feature in connection with the cross piercing on coins of these issues seems hitherto to have been generally overlooked. If closely examined on a fine specimen it will be seen to contain an annulet in relief closely following the outline of the hole, but upon a coin at all worn, or ill struck, this peculiarity easily escapes detection. It is not easy to render this formation on the drawing, and it must in no way be confused with the sunk circle or incuse annulet of Henry IV., from which it totally differs.

Mr. F. A. Walters, F.S.A., has suggested that the earliest coins of Henry VI. may be separated from those of his father by the shape of their mint-mark, but the process of evolution is so gradual that, although the extreme varieties are easily recognisable, it is impossible to make a practical distinction in the case of the intermediate examples.

No. 55 is from a later annulet groat and more nearly resembles the formation of No. 56, which is from a groat of the rosette coinage. The piercing now becomes smaller. Almost from the beginning of Henry VI.'s reign a plain cross, slightly nicked or forked at the ends, takes the place of the pierced cross on the half-groats, pence, and halfpence. A little later, as No. 57, it makes its appearance on the reverse of the groats.

On the reverse of half-groats is found No. 58, a neatly made, and compact little cross pattée. During the progress of the rosette-mascle coinage a more ornamental form was introduced; this has often been described as a cross fleury, though, at any rate on the earliest

1 Owing to an oversight No. 54 of the drawing is not figured in the plate of coins, where its place is taken by a second example of No. 53.
The Cross as a Mint-mark.

Specimens, as No. 59, it is a correctly drawn cross patonce. I propose to give it that name, and would associate it with the principal charge in the arms assigned by fourteenth century heralds to St. Edward, King and Confessor, arms which were held in the greatest honour in the time of Richard II., and which, differenced by a silver label, were actually impaled with his own arms by the founder of the Lancastrian dynasty before he usurped the throne as King Henry IV.

This cross, which but for the appearance of the cross voided, No. 61, on a single rare issue, holds its own on the obverse of the groats until the end of the reign, rapidly degenerates in form to No. 60, and on the latest coinages, as No. 62, is scarcely distinguishable from a cross crosslet. It evicted the nicked cross from the reverse of the groats at some time during the issue of the trefoil coinages, and is the only mark found on the smaller pieces, except on certain scarce trefoil halfpence, and on some of the late half-groats, on which the nicked cross makes a brief reappearance. Finally, it survives on the first issue of Edward IV., which differs only from the latest of his predecessors by the change of name. A small and neat cross pattée, No. 66, soon takes its place, and then begins the series of varied mint-marks, such as rose, sun, crown, etc., which continue down to the time of the Commonwealth. Interspersed among these are found a few varieties of the cross in Edward’s reign which are worth noting. First the cross fitchee, No. 67, which is found both plain and pierced. Later, a variety, No. 68, in which the lower pointed limb is cut off, and this mark was continued on the light groats issued during the brief restoration of Henry VI. in 1470. On these the tapering of the lower limb is not always apparent, but it piercing would sometimes seem to be absent, but it is possible that this was accidental (compare Nos. 63, 64 and 65). A true cross pattée, quite devoid of piercing, is also sometimes seen on these coins, as No. 63A.1 On a later groat of Edward IV. is seen a rather slight cross with a pellet in each angle, No. 69, and this is followed by a pierced cross, No. 70, rather of the style of some found on Henry V.’s coins, but with the addition of a

1 This is 65A on the plate of coins.
Conclusions.

pellet in one angle only. This example ends my list. I trust it may not be found devoid of interest.

While in no way claiming to bring forward new material or impart unpublished information, I hope to have shown that the mint-mark cross on Plantagenet coins is deserving of closer scrutiny and more careful study than it generally receives. It is really curious to note the many varieties to be found of the simple cross pattée. Those of the first two Edwards seem never quite to resemble those of Edward III., which latter, considered by themselves, offer a most interesting study in evolution. I do not wish to suggest that the many variations of form to be noted were in any way intentional on the part of the engraver or meant to distinguish coins of different issues, but there appears always to have existed in mediæval times a tradition of custom and fashion in the making of dies which strongly influenced the craftsmen of the day. Not only in the form of the mint-mark cross, but also in the various component parts which assembled together constitute a complete die, do we see the gradual process of change and development going on.

We find for instance at certain periods a very definite and clearly marked fashion in hair, both in the principal curls and in the manner of indicating the hair upon the forehead. This is sometimes rendered by a series of tiny lozenges placed close together, sometimes by a similar row consisting of pellets, which in turn give place to a chain of squares or rectangles, while later on these revert to the pellet form and their number is reduced to three or even two. As with the hair so it is with the king’s crown, of which the pearls are at one time represented perfectly round, while on subsequent issues we find them of well defined spear-head formation. The central fleur de-lys is found sometimes large and sometimes small, and those at the extremities also vary considerably. On almost all coins of Edward I. three members are represented, while on those of Edward II. and subsequently more than two are never seen. Similar custom affects the lettering. At times the open \( \varepsilon \) and barred \( \text{A} \) are invariable, while later on the closed \( \varepsilon \) and unbared \( \text{A} \) are always found. These matters I hope to deal with
more fully in a subsequent paper, but I refer to them now as bearing on the question of evolution. When we see this process going on so consistently in connection with every component part of the design for a coin, it is the more easy to realise that the variations which occur in the shape and character of the mint-mark cross may well have very definite and instructive meaning. That it was ever the intention of the mint authorities to recognise particular issues by the appearance of the coins is most improbable, and this question seems definitely negatived by the great frequency of mules at all periods. But that the engravers, when preparing dies for important new issues, always worked on very definite and distinctive lines, is without question. And it is these very mules, combined with careful study of the details of the various dies which they unite, which so often enable us to determine the correct order of various issues.
CHARLES II. FROM AN ORIGINAL COLOURED CHALK DRAWING BY SIR PETER LEly
IN THE COLLECTION OF MR. W. SHARP OGDEN.

See p. 247.