

A SUBSIDIARY ISSUE OF ÆTHELRED II's *LONG CROSS*

By VERONICA J. SMART

A typical well-struck *Long Cross* coin of Æthelred II goes a long way towards refuting those who would see no art in the late Anglo-Saxon coinage. The cruder design of the 50 or so coins under discussion here, as one may see from the plates, stands out sharply in comparison. But one is also struck by the remarkable homogeneity of this group of coins; this is surely not the result of chance barbarisation.

The portrait first draws the attention to a coin of this group. Whereas on the more usual *Long Cross* coin it is rendered mainly in curves, the portrait on what will here be called the 'subsidiary' style is noticeably angular. The nose is a thick, straight line. The neck and shoulder are one continuous line from the ear to the edge of the coin, unlike the more naturalistic curve of the main style. With the hair or diadem, the radiating lines are all straight, and the terminal pellets very pronounced. The proportions of head to field are often distinctive in that the head is unusually large. The lettering too is distinctive; large and clumsy; it necessitates a drastic abbreviation of the ethnic, which seldom reads further than ANG on coins of this group.



Fig 1 Distribution of mints striking the 'Subsidiary Long Cross' variety

True reverses are naturally more difficult to recognise. Sometimes it is possible to see the same large lettering and short legend, but 'large' is a relative term in the absence of more certain stylistic features.

The distribution of this 'subsidiary' group of *Long Cross* coins is interesting (Fig. 1). All the instances so far recorded are from mints in the east and south-east of England. Most northerly, the Lincoln mint provides several examples; they are represented at Norwich, and in the little cluster of mints Huntingdon, Bedford and Cambridge. They are present at Colchester, and most numerous at London. South of the Thames they reappear at Canterbury, Dover, Romney and Lewes.

A problem in attribution is raised by the examples with mint-signatures of SVD and SVD. Since coins in this style are plentiful at London, and continue to occur south of the river, Southwark is a possible though not a certain location. On the other hand Sudbury lies midway between the other source-mints of Colchester and Cambridge, and if a mint was operating there in the period 997–1003, coins of this style would be expected. Prosopography helps not at all; the SVD-SVD moneyer is one Godric, perhaps the commonest of Anglo-Saxon personal names at this period, widespread over the whole country with no regional associations. Not surprisingly, the London mint has its Godric in the *Long Cross* type, and so do Cambridge, Colchester and Huntingdon, the mints circumambient to Sudbury. Both London and Colchester have coins of Godric in the 'subsidiary' style. These coins could belong equally to Southwark or Sudbury, or indeed some to each.

Having established that these 'subsidiary' coins constitute some sort of homogeneous group in style and distribution, two questions suggest themselves. Firstly, are they in fact part of the English series? And secondly, if they are, what part did they play in the Æthelræd coinage?

The answer to the first question is not so obvious as it might seem. The fact is that attention was first drawn to the peculiarities of the group during an attempt to weed out foreign imitations from the Stockholm Systematic Collection. *Long Cross* is the type amongst Æthelræd's coins most frequently imitated in Scandinavia and Ireland, and in Ireland particularly the imitators developed a style of portrait certainly not barbarous, but distinctive. There are, indeed, two coins which show the 'subsidiary' style on the obverse and are unquestionably Irish. One is in the Systematic Collection in Stockholm and bears Æthelræd's name and title. The other, in the Hermitage Museum, Leningrad, is from the same reverse die, (reading EDRIC M'O DYF) but the obverse is in the name of Sihtric, king in Dublin. It is, however, not necessary to class the 'subsidiary' group as a whole with the Irish series on account of these two coins. In the first place, it is probably significant that the only two known coins of the 'subsidiary style from the Dublin mint share the same reverse die. Amongst the group with English mint-signatures there is very little die-linking, which suggests that they are what they purport to be—the work of several mints, and not the imitations of one. Further, all those signed as from English mints are free from the traces of Irish imitation—the upright cross instead of x in REX, the intrusive I, the blundering of personal or place-name. The close-knit distribution too, hardly favours a haphazard copying of English mint-signatures. Finally, if the whole group were Irish, it would furnish the only Irish imitation ever to be found in an English hoard of the late Anglo-Saxon period; an example of this style appears in the Honey Lane Market hoard¹. The two Dublin obverses must surely be regarded as clever imitations of the 'subsidiary' style.

¹ R. H. M. Dolley, in *NC*, 1958, p. 100.

As with many aspects of Anglo-Saxon numismatics, description is easier than explanation, since the coins exist almost in a documentary vacuum. Nevertheless, even if no acceptable explanation should be forthcoming, mere description has its uses; isolated examples of the style have been remarked on for their 'unusual work'¹, and are better understood if they are shown to have a background of more numerous examples and a specific distribution.

It is tempting to find parallels with styles and varieties in other types. The one that springs most immediately to mind is Hild. var. C a in *Crux*². There is the same occurrence of a portrait of different styles from that in the main issue. In 'subsidiary' Long Cross too the flan tends to be small and though it is not consistently lighter than *Long Cross* as a whole, a frequency-table for the weights of 'subsidiary' *Long*¹ *Cross* shows a greater proportion of the weights in the lighter reaches of the table than is the case for the type as a whole. A curious facet of this is that all 'subsidiary' *Long Cross* coins weighing more than 23 grains are from the London mint. This achievement of better weight by London is exactly the same as that noted by Mr. B. H. I. H. Stewart in the 'small *Crux*' variety.

Where the exact analogy breaks down is that Hild. var. C a is known not only from mints in the 'subsidiary' *Long Cross* area, but from Bath, Exeter, and probably from Barnstaple and York.

Another analogy lies in the regional styles in the *Last Small Cross* issue of Æthelræd and Cnut's *Quatrefoil*. But it is not a close analogy since the area is much wider than that covered by any one style in the types mentioned. Also, the coins of the 'subsidiary' style are very much in a minority even at the mints where they are most plentiful. The most plausible die-cutting centre is London; it is unlikely that Lincoln should have supplied London with dies, or that Lincoln dies would have been sent south of the Thames. It is difficult to find any explanation for the regional distribution of 'subsidiary' *Long Cross* that does not include a division of territory for the supply of dies. Whatever the place filled by the issue of 'subsidiary' dies to the East, it is not impossible that some centre in the West, possibly Winchester, was fulfilling the same function for its own sphere of influence. We have so far spoken of the main issue as if it were completely homogeneous, but there is maybe a slightly variant style to be distinguished at southwestern mints, though it is less obtrusive than that under discussion here.

One explanation of the 'subsidiary' variety could be that after the initial recoinage in *Long Cross* was over, these dies were cut to supply replacements for broken dies. A shortage of silver at such a later date, caused by the drain of Danegeld from the country, might account for the smallness and lightness of the newer coins. Apart from this lowering of weight-standard there is no clue as to whether the variety appeared early or late in the type. Hoard evidence and prosopography, on present evidence, would fit either position. One could say with more confidence that this 'subsidiary' variety was taking the same place in the currency of *Long Cross* that 'small *Crux*', Hild. var. C a. took in the *Crux* issue, with this difference: that whereas the 'small *Crux*' variety was issued over the whole country, 'subsidiary' *Long Cross* reflects a regional die-distribution such as was later to show such effect in *Last Small Cross*.

There follows a list of examples of 'subsidiary' *Long Cross* coins from the Stockholm Systematic Collection. Other examples I have come across which furnish mints and moneyers not known in this collection have been added for the sake of completeness. Where obverse and

¹ See *Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, Part I*, nos. 681 and 685.

² B. H. I. H. Stewart, The Small *Crux* issue of Æthelræd II, *BNJ*, XXVIII, p. 509.

reverse legends are correctly recorded in Hildebrand, only the Hildebrand number is given. Finally, my thanks are due to the Statens Historiska Museum, Stockholm, and to the Department of Coins and Medals of the British Museum, for the photographs which make up the accompanying plates.

| BEDFORD | Ælfwi | BM ex Honey Lane Market hoard | Wt. 20.1 grains | Pl. II, 1 |
|------------|-----------|-------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| CAMBRIDGE | Edwine | Hild. 1168 | Wt. 20 gr. | Pl. II, 2 |
| | Edwine | Hild. 1171 | Wt. 21.5 gr. | Pl. II, 3 |
| | Wulfsige | Hild. 1211 | Wt. 19.2 gr. | Pl. II, 4 |
| CANTERBURY | Lifinc | Hild. 236 | Wt. 19.5 gr. | Pl. II, 5 |
| COLCHESTER | Godric | Hild. 295 | Wt. 19 gr. | Pl. II, 6 |
| DOVER | Lyfsye | Hild. 422 | Wt. 17.6 gr. | Pl. II, 7 |
| HUNTINGDON | Ælfric | Hild. 1361 | Wt. 19.5 gr. | Pl. II, 8 |
| | Ælfric | Hild. 1362 | Wt. 20 gr. | Pl. II, 9 |
| LEWES | Merewine | Hild. 1461 | Wt. 20.5 gr. | Pl. II, 10, 11 ¹ |
| LINCOLN | Ælfs(i)ge | Hild. 1619 | Wt. 22.2 gr. | Pl. II, 12 |
| | Ælfsige | Hild. 1628 | Wt. 18.5 gr. | Pl. II, 13 |
| | Ælfsige | Hild. 1629 | Wt. 18 gr. | Pl. II, 14 |
| | Ælfsige | Hild. 4057 | Wt. 18 gr. | Pl. II, 15 ² |
| | Colgrim | Hild. 1709 | Wt. 22 gr. | Pl. II, 16 |
| LONDON | Ælfwine | Hild. 2125 | Wt. 25.4 gr. | Pl. II, 17 |
| | Ælfwine | Hild. 2126 | Wt. 25.4 gr. | Pl. II, 18 ³ |
| | Ælfwine | Hild. 2127 | Wt. 19.2 gr. | Pl. II, 19 ⁴ |
| | Ælfwine | Hild. 2129 | Wt. 26.1 gr. | Pl. II, 20 |
| | Æthelmær | Hild. 2146 | Wt. 24.6 gr. | Pl. II, 21 |
| | Æthelwerd | Hild. 2162 | Wt. 22 gr. | Pl. II, 22 ⁵ |
| | Æthelwerd | Hild. 2163 | Wt. 24 gr. | Pl. II, 23 ⁶ |
| | Brunstan | Hild. 2255 | Wt. 20 gr. | Pl. II, 24 |
| | Brunstan | Hild. 2255 var. | Wt. 26.5 gr. | Pl. II, 25, 26 ⁷ |
| | Brunstan | Hild. 2258 | Wt. 27.7 gr. | Pl. III, 27 |
| | Brunstan | Hild. 2259 | Wt. 20.8 gr. | Pl. III, 28 |
| | Eadwold | Hild. 2425 | Wt. 25.5 gr. | Pl. III, 29 |
| | Edwine | Hild. 2488 | Wt. 18 gr. | Pl. III, 30 |
| | Godric | Hild. 2586 | Wt. 23.5 gr. | Pl. III, 31 |
| | Godric | Hild. 2587 | Wt. 20.8 gr. | Pl. III, 32 |
| | Godwine | Hild. 2642 | Wt. 18.5 gr. | Pl. III, 33 |
| | Heawulf | Hild. 2659 | Wt. 20 gr. | Pl. III, 34 |
| | Leofnoth | Hild. 2669 | Wt. 24.6 gr. | Pl. III, 35 |
| | Leofric | Hild. 2687 | Wt. 19.2 gr. | Pl. III, 36 |
| | Leofric | Hild. 2690 | Wt. 30.7 gr. | Pl. III, 37 ⁸ |
| | Leofwine | Hild. 2751 | Wt. 21.5 gr. | Pl. III, 38 |
| | Leofwine | Hild. 2752 | Wt. 21.5 gr. | Pl. III, 39 |
| | Leofwine | Hild. 2753 | Wt. 26.1 gr. | Pl. III, 40 |
| | Leofwine | Hild. 2754 | Wt. 23 gr. | Pl. III, 41 |
| | Leofwine | Hild. 2756 | Wt. 25 gr. | Pl. III, 42 |
| | Osulf | Hild. 2883 | Wt. 19.5 gr. | Pl. III, 43 |

¹ 2 examples, the second weighing 21.5 gr.

² Formerly attributed to Winchester; see R. H. M. Dolley in *SNC* 1959 p. 200.

³ Obverse in fact reads + ÆDELRAED REX AN.

⁴ Obverse in fact reads + ÆDLRÆD.

⁵ Obverse reads + ÆDECRCD.

⁶ Obverse reads + ÆDECRCD.

⁷ 2 examples, the second weighing 24.6 gr.

⁸ Reverse in fact reads + LEOFRIC M'O LLVND.

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|----------------|----------|------------|--------------|-------------|
| | Osulf | Hild. 2884 | Wt. 24.6 gr. | Pl. III, 44 |
| | Toca | Hild. 2946 | Wt. 21.5 gr. | Pl. III, 45 |
| | Wulfstan | Hild. 2989 | Wt. 21.5 gr. | Pl. III, 46 |
| | Wulfwine | Hild. 3005 | Wt. 20.8 gr. | Pl. III, 47 |
| | Wulfwine | Hild. 3006 | Wt. 25.5 gr. | Pl. III, 48 |
| NORWICH | Leofmar | Hild. 3148 | Wt. 19.5 gr. | Pl. III, 49 |
| ROMNEY | Leofwine | Hild. 3316 | Wt. 21 gr. | Pl. III, 50 |
| SOUTHWARK | Godric | Hild. 3609 | Wt. 19.5 gr. | Pl. III, 51 |
| (OR ? SUDBURY) | Godric | Hild. 3610 | Wt. 18 gr. | Pl. III, 52 |



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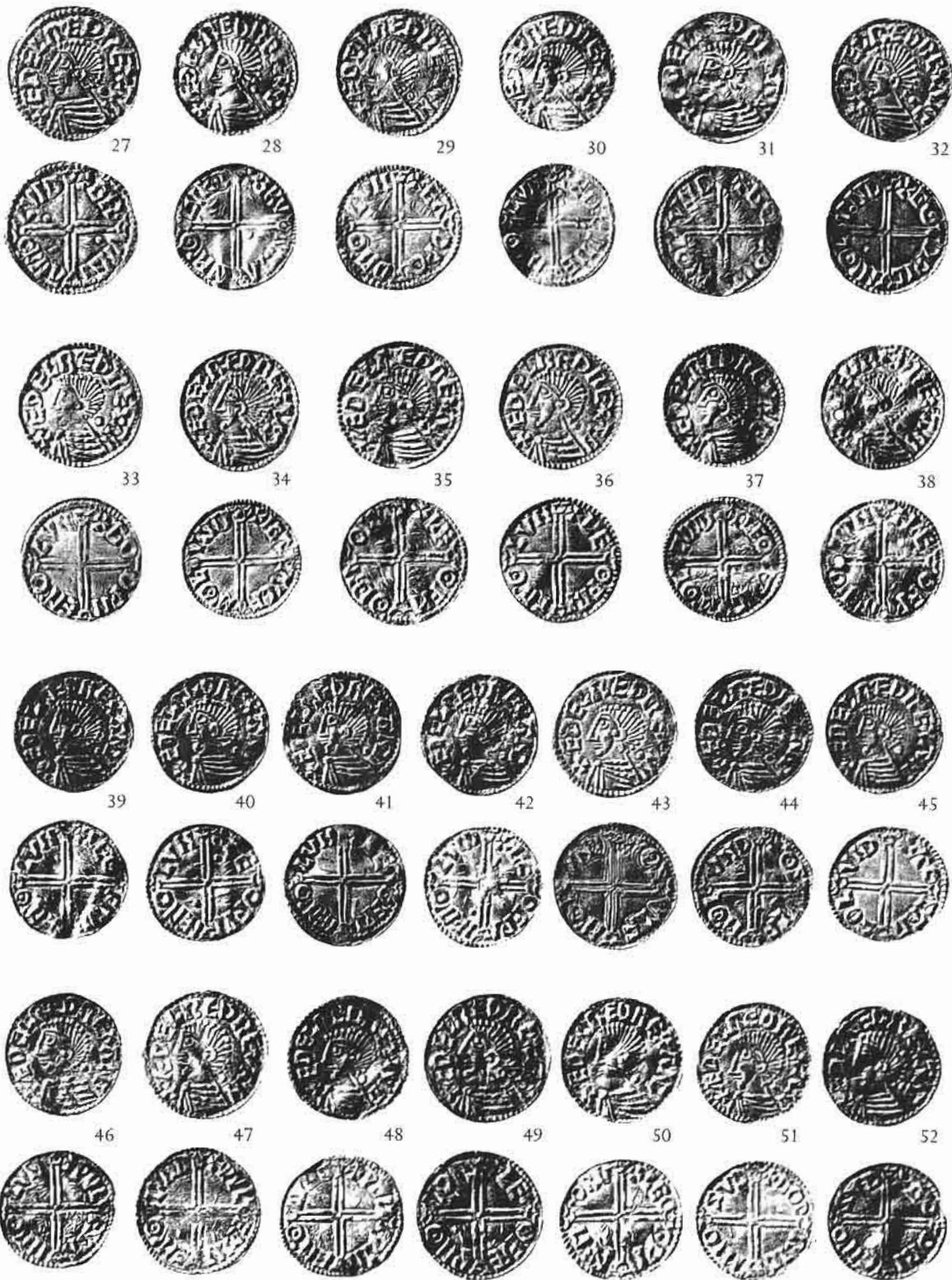


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A SUBSIDIARY ISSUE OF ÆTHELRÆD II'S LONG CROSS TYPE. II

