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*Leeds Studies in English*  
School of English  
University of Leeds  
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## THE 'EPA' COINS.

The earliest coins that can be ascribed with certainty to an English king are of the *sceatt*-type and bear his superscription in the runic character.<sup>1</sup> It is generally agreed that the 'æpil(i)ræd' coins are to be ascribed to Aethelred of Mercia (675-704), but the ascription of the 'pada' coins is disputed. Most numismatists would give them to Peada, brother of Aethelred, but Professor H. M. Chadwick (*Studies in Anglo-Saxon Institutions*, p. 3) suggests that they should rather be ascribed to Penda. The probability of Professor Chadwick's view has been definitely heightened by Dom Patrick Nolan's derivation of OE. *pending*, in use as early as the Laws (688-c. 694) of Ini, from *Penda*; Dom Patrick (*A Monetary History of Ancient Ireland*, I, 58) compares *oiffing*, 'penny,' presumably an OE. loan-word in Irish and a similar formation from *Offa*.

I submit that the 'epa' coins carry the history a stage further back than Penda even. Those specimens of which I have been able to trace the provenance were found either in the neighbourhood of Cambridge (cf. Sir John Evans, *Numismatic Chronicle*, 3rd Series, XIV, pp. 18-28 and pl. ii, and an unpublished specimen formerly in the collection of the late Sir William Ridgeway) or in the Netherlands (cf. J. Dirks, *Révue belge de numismatique*, 1870, pl. E). Sir John Evans suggested that they belong to East Anglia rather than to Mercia, and I think it is possible to identify the king for whom they were struck. The use of shortened (hypocoristic) forms of OE. names is well recognised: *Saberht* of Essex was also known as *Saba* (Bede, *E.H.* II, 5), *Heaburg* or *Eadburg* as *Bugge* (*M.G.H. Epp.* III, 261), and an O.H.G. *Erpo* is cited in the second edition of Förstemann's *Altdeutsches Namenbuch*, I, 486. In runic writing double consonants are frequently written single, and

<sup>1</sup> A general reference may be given to the British Museum Catalogue of Anglo-Saxon Coins.

*Eppa* (with assimilation of *rp* to *pp*) is precisely the hypocoristic form we should expect from *Eorþwald*. *Eorþwald* was king of East Anglia from 617 to 628, in succession to his father *Raedwald* who comes fourth in the list of *Bretwaldas*.

A similar hypocoristic form is to be found on the 'beonna' coin<sup>2</sup>, which is usually given to *Beorna*, also of East Anglia, recorded by *Florence of Worcester* under 758. Last year, however, *Sir Charles Oman* (*The Coinage of England*, p. 16) ascribed it to *Beornward of Mercia* (757) since "the reverse of the coin has a decidedly Mercian aspect, and we know of no early East Anglian coins which might induce us to allot it to the rather hypothetical *Beorna* from the point of view of type resemblance." If the 'epa' coins, which correspond to certain of the 'pada' and 'æpil(i)ræd' types, be East Anglian, *Sir Charles'* argument loses some of its force; but in either case 'beonna' is a hypocoristic form of a *Beorn-* name and may be used to support the identification of 'epa' and *Eorþwald*.

BRUCE DICKINS.

<sup>2</sup> The characters are runic with the exception of a roman "o."