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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.¹ 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 ii, and an unpublished specimen formerly in the collection of the late Sir William Ridgeway) or in the Netherlands (cf.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, Révée 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

¹ 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 Eorpwald. Eorpwald 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' coin², 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 'æphil(i)æd' 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 Eorpwald.

Bruce Dickins.

² The characters are runic with the exception of a roman "o."