

SHORT ARTICLES AND NOTES

THE GOLD COINAGE OF EADBALD, KING OF KENT (AD 616–40)

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MARK Blackburn has recently published a short discussion of the AVDVARLD REGES shilling type.¹ This was prompted by the discovery in 1997 of a new example of the type at Tangmere, near Chichester, in Sussex. This was acquired by the Fitzwilliam Museum, and Dr Blackburn's article compared the Tangmere coin with the well-known examples from the Crondall hoard of 1828 (now in the Ashmolean Museum) and the Pas-de-Calais (now in the collection of the American Numismatic Society in New York).² All three coins were struck from the same obverse die, but each was struck from a different reverse die. Dr Blackburn accepted the attribution of the type to Eadbald of Kent, and suggested that all three reverse inscriptions represent more or less blundered versions of a literate original which had the moneyer and mint form familiar from late Saxon coins. Both of these interpretations seem entirely reasonable, and the purpose of this note is not to challenge Dr Blackburn's views. However, in the few months since the publication of Dr Blackburn's article, two further examples of the type have come to light, and it seems appropriate to discuss all five coins together in a more accessible forum than Dr Blackburn's original publication. (Pl. 26, 1–5)

AVDVABL# REGEZ

There are three points of interest within the inscription. Firstly, the antepenultimate letter of the first word is only clearly visible on the Crondall coin, and even there the top of the letter goes off the edge of the coin. It is thus impossible to be certain whether this letter represents a B or an inverted R. The final letter of the name is a D with a line through it. The most obvious interpretation is that this represents the form *ð*, or *eth*, used in the Germanic languages to represent the sound <th>. Thus Michael Metcalf transliterates the name as Audvarlth,⁴ although Ian Stewart gives the form

One of the 'new' finds was actually the first of the five to be discovered. It was in the eighteenth-century cabinet of Dr William Hunter (although its previous provenance is unrecorded), and is now in the Hunterian collection in Glasgow. The existence of this coin seems largely to have escaped the notice of scholars, but the recent publication by Donal Bateson and Ian Campbell of a catalogue of Byzantine and early Medieval coins in the Hunterian has brought it to the public eye.³ The final example, like the Tangmere coin, is a metal detector find, discovered near Shorne in Kent in 1998. This has now been acquired by the British Museum, with the financial assistance of the British Museum Society. Like the other three coins, these two share the same obverse die, but have different reverses, giving a total of five reverse dies to one obverse. All five give distinct blundered versions of the reverse inscription, although there is some consistency between the five inscriptions, and both the Hunterian and the Pas-de-Calais coins contain a clear London mint signature.

All five coins share the same obverse. The inscription is partially off-flan in every case, but survives almost complete on the Crondall coin, as follows:

Audvarld.⁵ More recently however, Sean Miller has suggested that the stroke through the D may represent a suspension mark indicating an abbreviation of the Latin ending -us, giving a form Auduarldus or Auduabldus,⁶ and Marion Archibald has similarly suggested that it may represent an abbreviated Latin genitive ending.⁷ This would accompany the REGES, which she takes to represent Latin genitive singular *regis*, giving the overall meaning 'Of King Audvarld'. This would explain the curiosity of the form REGES in place of the more usual REX.

¹ Mark Blackburn, 'A New Coin of King Eadbald of Kent (616–40)', in *Chris Rudd*, List 34 (1998), pp. 2–4.

² C.H.V. Sutherland, 'Anglo-Saxon Gold Coinage in the Light of the Crondall Hoard', London 1948, no. 77–8, pl. IV, 22–3; D.M. Metcalf, 'Thrymsas and Sceattas in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford', London 1993–4, I, no. 50; *SCBI* 16 (Norweb Collection), no. 42.

³ J.D. Bateson and I.G. Campbell, 'Byzantine and Early Medieval Western European Coins in the Hunter Coin Cabinet,

University of Glasgow', London 1998, p. 171, pl. 28&29.

⁴ Metcalf, 'Thrymsas and Sceattas', I, p. 61.

⁵ I. Stewart, 'Anglo-Saxon gold coins', in *Scripta Nummaria Romana*, edited by R.A.G. Carson & C.M. Kraay, London 1978, pp. 143–72.

⁶ Cited in Blackburn, *Eadbald of Kent*, p. 3.

⁷ M.M. Archibald, Review of D.M. Metcalf, 'Thrymsas and Sceattas in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford', in *BNJ* 67 (1997), pp. 150–3.

The forms Auduarldus and Auduabldus are close to the forms *Adulualdi* and *Audubaldi*, given for Eadbald of Kent by Bede in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, written nearly a century after the death of Eadbald. Apart from the coins, no contemporary form of the name survives. Nevertheless, the attribution to Eadbald is now widely accepted. Dating the coins to the reign of Eadbald (616–40) is consistent with the fact that one of the coins was found in the Crondall hoard. By analogy with the fineness of Merovingian coins, Crondall is thought to date to c. 640,⁸ while from its relative fineness the 'Eadbald' coin is one of the earliest pieces in the hoard.⁹ Furthermore, not only does the name-form on the coin resemble that given for Eadbald, there is no other king

of the period who presents a viable alternative, especially since the coins may be attributed to the mint of London (see below), which effectively limits the production of the coins to kings of the East Saxons or of Kent.¹⁰ Eadbald is also known to have converted to Christianity in the course of his reign, which is consistent with the use of the overtly Christian symbol of the cross and globe on both obverse and reverse.¹¹ Thus, whilst the coins cannot be attributed to Eadbald *prima facie*, there are a number of aspects which point to this attribution, and no evidence to the contrary.

Whilst all five coins share the same obverse die, each has a different reverse, although all are apparently different versions of the same inscription.

· · · · · L N D E N V S

Pas-de-Calais

† † I P N I B A Z Z O E H V Z

Hunterian

† † I M I I B A Z Z O E H V Z

Shorne

† † I L M I B Z Z O E H V Z

Crondall

† † I P N I B A Z Z O E H V Z

Tangmere

The five coins may be divided into two groups. Those from the Pas-de-Calais and the Hunterian have the form LONDENVVS, which is taken to be a London mint signature, and both are close in style to the obverse die. However, the first part of the legend on the Hunterian reverse is clearly blundered, whereas on the Pas-de-Calais coin this part of the legend is illegible, since all but the bases of the letters are off-flan. It is thus possible that the Pas-de-Calais coin represents the original, (more or less) literate, reverse die, but it could equally well represent another blundered version of the legend. Thus while the Pas-de-Calais die may be suggested as the first in the series, it may actually come after the Hunterian die, with a literate original still to be discovered. The remaining three coins all have blundered legends throughout, although a form of the LONDENVVS legend can be recognised in all three. Similarly, the first

section of all three legends bears some resemblance to that on the Hunterian coin. Of the three, it is difficult to establish a clear sequence. Stylistically, the Shorne reverse appears closest to the obverse and to the earlier two reverses. The forms of LONDENVVS on this reverse and the Crondall coin are close, suggesting that the two should be close in the sequence. This would suggest a sequence of Shorne, Crondall, Tangmere. This would also fit with the relative crudity of some of the letter forms on the Tangmere coin. By contrast, Tangmere and Shorne are both close to the Hunterian reverse in the first part of the legend, with Tangmere arguably the closer of the two, which could suggest the sequence Tangmere, Shorne, Crondall. However, one should note that the legend on the Crondall coin is partially obliterated, and if it were not for this, it might be equally close to the Hunterian coin. Thus on balance

⁸ J.P.C. Kent, 'Problems of chronology in the seventh-century Merovingian coinage', *Cunobelin* 13 (1967), 24–30; J.P.C. Kent, 'Gold Standards of the Merovingian coinage, A.D. 580–700', in *Methods of Chemical and Metallurgical Investigation of Ancient Coinage*, edited by E.T. Hall and

D.M. Metcalf, London 1972, pp. 69–74.

⁹ Stewart, *Anglo-Saxon gold coins*, p. 147.

¹⁰ Sutherland, *Anglo-Saxon Gold Coinage*, pp. 44–5, 53.

¹¹ Blackburn, *Eadbald of Kent*, p. 3.

an overall sequence of Pas-de-Calais, Hunterian, Shorne, Crondall, Tangmere is perhaps to be preferred, but this is clearly open to personal interpretation.

As mentioned above, Dr Blackburn has suggested that the reverse legend may represent a combination of moneyer's name and mint name, with the

LONDENVVS element clearly representing London, and the preceding elements representing different blundered versions of a personal name. He suggested that this might be a form ending in -DVNBAL, -AVNBAL or similar.¹² Dr Bateson and Dr Campbell, however, suggest the form TIPNEAL for the Hunterian coin.¹³

TABLE 1. Weights, diameters and fineness of the five coins of the AVDVARLD REGES type, in descending weight order.

	<i>Weight (g)</i>	<i>Diameter (mm)</i>	<i>Fineness (% gold)</i>
Glasgow, Hunterian Collection	1.30	12	—
New York, Pas-de-Calais	1.29	12	64
London, Shorne	1.28	12	74
Cambridge, Tangmere	1.27	14	72
Oxford, Crondall	1.26	13	69

Weight and diameter are fairly consistent between the five coins, although there is greater variety in fineness (see Table 1). Interestingly, the coins which from their inscriptions seem to come earliest in the sequence have both the smallest diameters and the highest weights, the latter tending to confirm the sequence established by the inscriptions. However, this is not the case with the fineness. The Shorne coin, which should be relatively late in the sequence has the highest recorded percentage of gold, whilst the Pas-de-Calais example, which should be close to the head of the sequence, is of significantly poorer quality than the others. It is unfortunate that at present the fineness of the Hunterian coin, which one might expect to be closest to that of the Pas-de-Calais coin, is not yet available. It would be rash to read too much into the variation in fineness, however. At such an early stage in the English coinage one may question whether either king or moneyer was particularly concerned about the precise metal content of the coins

as long as they appeared to be of reasonably high quality gold. The variation in the coins may simply reflect variation in the quality of gold artefacts (or Merovingian coin) melted down to provide the raw material for the coins. This is consistent with a broader pattern in the fineness of Merovingian and Anglo-Saxon gold coins of Eadbald's period. Fineness ranges from ninety down to fifty per cent, but whilst an overall decline can be traced throughout the late sixth to seventh century period, this was not a smooth progression.¹⁴ Furthermore, one may note that in other types found in the Crondall hoard, a variation of ten per cent in fineness is not remarkable, and furthermore this variation does not appear to be consistent with the sequence of dies within individual types.

Despite the range of fineness to be found within a single type, it may nevertheless be instructive to compare the fineness of the Eadbald coinage with those of the other Anglo-Saxon types found in Crondall.

TABLE 2. Comparative fineness of those types from the Crondall hoard described by Metcalf as 'substantive Anglo-Saxon types', with a further subdivision (following Stewart) between the WITMEN prototype and WITMEN derivatives.¹⁵

<i>Type</i>	<i>Upper limit</i>	<i>Lower limit</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Sample</i>
Cross on Steps	78	63.4	70.7	2
Eadbald	74	64	69.75	4
'London derived'	70.9	59.0	63.6	10
WITMEN prototype	70.1	60.9	65.2	3
LONDVNIV	68.7	60.8	64.1	7
Abbo	65.5	—	65.5	1
LEMC	64.7	52.1	58.8	8
EAN	63.0	35.1	48.3	4

¹² Blackburn, *Eadbald of Kent*, p. 3.

¹³ Bateson & Campbell, *Byzantine and Early Medieval Coins*, p. 171.

¹⁴ R.F. Coleman, and A. Wilson, 'Activation analyses of Merovingian gold coins', in E.T. Hall & D.M. Metcalf (editors), as in n. 8, pp. 88-92, 100-107; W.A. Oddy, 'The Analysis of Four Hoards of Merovingian Gold Coins', in Hall

& Metcalf, (editors), pp. 111-26. I am grateful to Mike Cowell of the Department of Scientific Research at the British Museum for analysing the Shorne coin, and for helpful comments and references on the metallurgy of the period.

¹⁵ Metcalf, *Thrymsas and Sceattas*, p. 36 & pl. 1-3; Stewart, *Anglo-Saxon gold coins*, pp. 169-70.

Type	Upper limit	Lower limit	Mean	Sample
WITMEN derived	62.4	42.5	52.3	18
Cross/Cross	60.7	48.7	55.9	5
Bust/Cross	62.1	60.1	61.1	2
Licinius	58.8	51.1	55.1	9
Bust/LOND	57.5	—	57.1	1

Whether one looks at the upper limit, the lower limit or the mean, the coinage of Eadbald is close to the top of the table, with the only issue of comparable fineness being the Anglo-Merovingian 'Cross on Steps' type. Despite the *caveat* expressed earlier, this does suggest that these two types may well be earlier than the majority of coins in the Crondall hoard. This would be consistent with the opinion expressed earlier that the Crondall example of the Eadbald type comes towards the end of the type stylistically, as well as having the lowest weight of the five known examples, and the fact that the Eadbald coin is one of the finest pieces in the Crondall hoard. This would suggest that the coinage of Eadbald is so slightly represented in Crondall because the hoard was deposited at a period when the coinage in the name of Eadbald was falling out of use. Given Eadbald's regnal dates of AD616–40, this would be consistent with the dating of the deposition of Crondall to the early 640s. It also tends to confirm that the coinage of Eadbald is one of the earliest, if not the earliest, of the substantive Anglo-Saxon coinages.¹⁶

The new finds also shed a very different light on the comparative rarity of the type. Most of the types found in Crondall have yet to be discovered separately. Thus, whilst more examples are known in total of both the LVNDINIV (7) and Licinius (10) types than of the Eadbald type, the Eadbald type is known from five separate finds (all but one provenanced) including Crondall, the LVNDINIV type is known only from Crondall, and the Licinius type only from Crondall and one other find. Furthermore, each of these types is known from one obverse die and three reverses, compared to one obverse and five reverses for the Eadbald type. Both features suggest that the coinage in the name of Eadbald may have been more substantial than either of the others. This does not mean that it was such a substantial coinage as the WITMEN group (including derivatives), with twenty-

nine known examples,¹⁷ of which only twenty-one came from Crondall, with only three others provenanced, giving a total of four to nine separate finds. The type has a total of eleven obverses and twelve reverses, suggesting a much more substantial coinage. Similarly the so-called 'London-derived' group (the London derivation is highly questionable) is known from thirteen examples, including nine from Crondall and another three with provenances, giving a total of four to five separate finds. This type has a total of four obverse and nine reverses, again indicating a more substantial issue.

Nevertheless, the existence of five reverse dies for the Eadbald type, with five separate finds, suggests a coinage of some size. One may reasonably question whether an issue made for purely donative purposes would be likely to require so many reverses. Whilst on the current evidence it appears to be a less substantial coinage than either the WITMEN or 'London derivative' types, it also appears to be earlier, and furthermore to be very close to the beginning of the Anglo-Saxon series. Thus the fact that slightly later issues appear to be more substantial may reflect the spread and development of a monetary economy in southern England. In that case, the gold coinage of Eadbald may plausibly be interpreted as the small-scale beginning of a monetary economy, rather than simply a symbolic issue for the purposes of royal status or religious donation.

KEY TO PLATE 26

- 1 Pas-de-Calais
- 2 Hunterian
- 3 Shorne
- 4 Crondall
- 5 Tangmere

¹⁶ Discussion of the unique (and early) LEVDARDVS EP and EVSEBII MONITA coins, and of the broader category of so-called 'Anglo-Merovingian' coinage, falls outside the scope of this paper. A more substantial discussion of early Anglo-Saxon gold is planned for the near future.

¹⁷ Metcalf, *Thrymsas and Sceattas*, p. 58, lists 28 examples. A further example, without provenance, but from the same dies as Sutherland pl. IV. 13, was shown at the British Museum in 1990.