

## THE LATE COINAGE OF KING EADMUND OF EAST ANGLIA

by Steve Green

We have no contemporary literary sources of Eadmund's life and death. The Anglo Saxon Chronicle's entry for 866 when the Grand Army first arrived in East Anglia and 869 when Eadmund was defeated and killed were written at least 10 -20 years afterwards. Abbo of Fleury wrote *The Passio Sancti Eadmundi* in the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century and these two documents and Eadmund's coins provide virtually all the information we have of his reign.

H.E. Pagan reviewed the coinage of the East Anglian Kingdom 825 - 870 in *BNJ* 52 (1982) pp. 41-83. I have been lucky enough to obtain three coins of Eadmund (855 – 869) which were not available for his survey. I believe they throw new light on Eadmund's late coinage and illustrate a kingdom in turmoil.

Typically the early Alpha / Cross Pattee coins of Eadmund are in a literate style, their weight range is generally 1.25 to 1.35 grams and they are struck on a round flan whose diameter is at least 20 mm. Pagan notes (pp. 52) that Eadmund's early coins were struck with unusual competence and the crude styles, small flans and light weight of these three coins mark them out as later issues.



Figure 1

1. Alpha / Plain Cross with pellets of the moneyer Eadwald
2. Alpha / Plain Cross without pellets, wedges or crescents of the moneyer Sigired
3. Alpha / Cross Pattée with pellets of the moneyer Sigired



Figure 2

All three coins are from the author's collection and photographed by him.

The first two coins in particular are of such crude style that one could speculate that they were produced after the arrival of the Great Army when administration and skills must have deteriorated. If the early East Anglian issues were struck at Ipswich then it is plausible that these two coins were struck after the arrival of the invaders at a temporary mint by unskilled moneyers.

The first coin illustrated is by the moneyer Eadwald. It is fairly brittle possibly indicating a lower silver content. It has suffered edge loss but retains intact legends: +EA•DMVND REX around an Alpha with macron but no pellets to either side within a large solid ring; +EADPHN MohET (the P is retrograde) around a plain cross with large pellets in each quarter set within a large solid ring. The initial cross on both obverse and reverse legends are also plain.

This coin's weight is 0.99 grams and its diameter is 17-19 mm. The die has been crudely cut with some letters retrograde. It has the same legends as the Assheton coin (Pagan – Eadwald XII; Naismith E66.1w) but it does not appear to be the same coin. This particular coin was until recently part of the Nicholas Rhodes collection, he purchased it in 1950.

The second coin is by the moneyer Sigere struck slightly off centre but with all legends intact: +EADMVMD REX (the first D is retrograde) around an Alpha with macron and large pellets to either side within a small solid ring; +SIGERED MON (retrograde) around a plain cross with no pellets or wedges in each quarter set within a small solid ring. The initial cross on both obverse and reverse legends are also plain.

This coin's weight is 1.03 grams and its diameter 19 mm and also has the coppery appearance of a debased coin. The die has been very crudely cut with retrograde reverse legend and the same letters cut in very different styles (the Ms and Ds in particular). This coin was not available at the time of Pagan's survey of the coinage but was included by Naismith in *Coinage of South Eastern England* Volume 2 E67.21. It first appeared in Patrick Finn's FPL 4 (1995).

The third coin is by the moneyer Sigere. It has very minor edge loss with all legends intact and legible: +EADMVND REX• with no macron but pellets to either side within a large solid ring; +SIFERED MON around a cross pattée with large pellets in each quarter set within a large solid ring. The initial cross on both obverse and reverse legends are also both cross pattée.

This coin's weight is 0.98 grams and its diameter is 18 mm. It is in the classic literate style of Eadmund's coinage but on a small flan and of light weight. This particular coin was not included in either Pagan or Naismith's survey of Eadmund's coinage, but it is similar but of much lighter weight than a number of other coins surveyed (cf. Pagan – Sigere VII; cf. Naismith E67.1). This coin was recently purchased from the collection of the late Roy Inder. It has the same reverse legend as the Bank of England (1877) 84 example.

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