

A New Obverse Variety of Henry V Halfpenny for Withers Type 9

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Paul and Bente Withers' excellent 'small change' guide¹ to the halfpennies and farthings of Henry IV-VI divides halfpennies ascribed to Henry V into a total of twelve types. In their description of type 9 (p. 28), they list the standard issue as well as one variety (9a). These are differentiated by their distinct obverse legends, which along with the standard obverse and reverse descriptions are detailed below:

Type 9 obverse description: crowned bust facing within inner pelleted border, whole annulet either side of crown, pellet to left in field above crown

Type 9 reverse description: long cross quartering coin, three pellets in each angle within inner pelleted border

Reading of obverse legend for standard type 9: +hENRIC' x REX x ANGL (double saltire stops, contraction mark before the first)

Reading of obverse legend for variety 9a: +hENRC x REX x ANGLIE x F (single saltire stops)

However, at the Bloomsbury Coin Fair of April 2019 the author acquired the following coin (Fig. 1), which was sold as a standard Henry V Withers type 9 halfpenny struck at London. This coin appears to add a second hitherto unpublished variety in addition to the 'standard' type 9 and variety 9a listed in Withers. As with the latter two, this variety is also differentiated by its obverse legend (see below) with its overall appearance corresponding with the type 9 description outlined above. As such, the author suggests it be provisionally designated as '9b' in line with the Withers typology:

Reading of obverse legend for provisional variety 9b: +hENRIC' x REX x ANGLIE (single saltire stops, contraction mark before the first)



Fig. 1: The coin acquired at the Bloomsbury Coin Fair, provisionally ascribed to variety 9b. Diameter: c. 13mm, weight: 0.47g (c. 7.25 grains). Images courtesy T Read.

¹ Withers, P and Withers, B, R. 2009. *Small Change III: Halfpennies and Farthings, Henry IV, V and VI*. Llanfyllin: Galata Print Limited

Searching of the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) database to see if any other examples of this variety were extant² resulted in the discovery of a metal-detected find from Brailes CP, Warwickshire – logged under record ID WAW-A6CAB9 (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2: Metal detected coin of the same variety from Brailes, Warwickshire. Diameter: 13.45mm, weight: 0.48g (7.4 grains). Image courtesy PAS/Birmingham Museums Trust.

While in somewhat worn condition, the surviving obverse legend can be clearly read as: +hEN[.....]NGLIE – which enables it to be classified as the second known example of provisional variety 9b. Closer examination of the latter's image leads the author to suggest that both this coin and the example purchased at Bloomsbury were struck from the same obverse die.

² Without allowing for identification errors or data-cleaning, on first sight just four coins out of the 221 halfpennies of Henry V recorded via the PAS are ascribable to Withers type 9 (c. 1.8%).