

AEDRIC OR AEL(F)RIC : A CANTERBURY MONEYSER FOR EDWARD THE CONFESSOR'S FACING BUST/SMALL CROSS TYPE

In the 1998 auction sale catalogue offering Dr. Robin Eaglen's fine specialist collection of coins of Edward the Confessor (Baldwin Auctions 18, 12-13 October 1998), lot 1374 was described thus :

Facing Bust type, Aedric¹, AEDRIC ON CANTV, rev small wedge projecting from right limb of cross, 18.3 [gr], 1.19 [g] (BMC 96). *Flat at bottom, but very fine, the moneyer, known only for this type, extremely rare and believed only the second known specimen.*

Here is an image taken from the Baldwin catalogue :



In the recent sale by auction of the 2019 Braintree hoard, comprising coins of the later types of Edward the Confessor and of Harold II (Noonans, 21 February 2024), lot 1004, a coin of Edward the Confessor's *Facing Bust/Small Cross* type, a die-duplicate of the Eaglen coin, was described thus, the cataloguer this time reading the moneyer's name as AELRIC and thus identifying him as Aelfric rather than as Aedric :

Penny. **Canterbury**. Aelfric, EADPARD RE, rev. +AELRIC ON CANTV, 1.09g/12h (B[rain]t[ree] 4, *this coin*; Freeman -; B[aldwin] A[uctions] 18, 1374, same dies). *A little crimped, otherwise very fine, very rare*

¹ The letters AE are, in all instances recorded here, represented as ligate, both in the name forms and in the transcriptions of coin inscriptions given by the respective cataloguers, and on the coins themselves.

Here is an image of the coin concerned :



For completeness, the remaining known coin of this type and with this reverse inscription, *BMC* 96, ex Chancton hoard, was described by Herbert Grueber in the second volume of his and Charles Keary's catalogue of the Anglo-Saxon coins in the British Museum², as follows :

96 EADPARD REX +AEDRIC ON CANTV Wt. 14.8 [gr]. Aedric.

The British Museum coin is not a good specimen, but it can be seen from the image of it reproduced below³ both why the moneyer's name was read as AEDRIC by Grueber, and why the intended name may not have been Aedric at all.



² C.F.Keary & H.A.Grueber, *A Catalogue of English Coins in the British Museum. Anglo-Saxon Series*, vol.II, 1893, 347.

³ Kindly supplied to the present writer by Dr Barrie Cook.

First for a bit of background. Leaving Aedric on one side, Jonsson and Van der Meer, following Freeman, record the following other moneyers for Canterbury during *Facing Bust/Small Cross* : Aelfweard, Aelfwine, Eadweard, Gyldewine, Leofstan, Leofwine, Manna and Sigeraed. Although it will be seen that Aelfric does not feature among them, Jonsson and Van der Meer were able to record Aelfric as a moneyer in the preceding *Hammer Cross* type, along with Aelfraed, Aelfweard, Eadweard, Gyldewine, Leofstan, Leofwine, and Sigeraed (the last known only from a *Pointed Helmet/Hammer Cross* mule).

If the die-engraver's intention in providing a moneyer's name spelled as AEDRIC might have been to record that the moneyer had the personal name Eadric, it is relevant here that Eadric does not feature as a Canterbury moneyer either in *Hammer Cross* or in any type at all for Edward the Confessor other than, on the possible evidence of the coins listed above, *Facing Bust/Small Cross*. Nor indeed does AEDRIC seem to be recorded as an alternative spelling of the personal name Eadric on any other coins of the later Anglo-Saxon period.

It seems in any case probable from a comparison of the images of the reverses of these three coins that the intention of the die-engraver who was responsible for the reverse die or reverse dies involved was to engrave on it or them the name AELRIC, not the name AEDRIC⁴. If he failed to engrave the letter L with sufficient clarity, this will have been by human error on his part.

As Michael Dolley once put it, adapting the Latin wording of Occam's razor, *monetarii non sunt multiplicandi praeter necessitatem*, or, in English translation, 'moneyers should not be multiplied beyond necessity'. We should therefore add Aelfric to the list of Canterbury moneyers for *Facing Bust/Small Cross*, and delete Aedric.



⁴ The reverse die of *BMC 96* appears to differ in minor respects from the reverse die of the other two coins, but this may be due to the fact that *BMC 96* is a later striking from the same reverse die.