

## CHAPTER 6

### THE FIRST PERIOD OF THE ENGLISH PENNY (c.1250-c.1350)

**D**uring a gradual process of decrease in weight over several centuries, the ‘old-Frisian’ pennies had lost so much of their original silver equivalence that, by about the middle of the 13th century they were no longer convenient as standard for the units of account in Frisia. What next? This is the subject matter of the present chapter. There was no central authority in Frisia; neither was there an urban merchant organisation, able to re-establish a trustworthy monetary system. The solution came from abroad: the import of foreign money - in fact, English pennies. The English government, by means of compulsory recoinages, had restored and preserved the silver weight of the English penny at the original c.1.3g that had been valid at the end of the 7th century. For historical reasons, this trustworthy money was present in north-western Europe in large quantities. The role it played in Frisia is the next stage in the story of the value of money there.

#### **The historical context**

About the middle of the 13th century, Frisia was a relatively prosperous country, but it had lost its traditional preponderant trade position. Cattle breeding and peatery had become the foundation of Frisian wealth. A number of small towns were emerging, serving their surrounding regions with market facilities and craft products. Even Groningen, the largest town in the Frisian area, had failed to develop into a front-ranking international trade centre.

Because of the growth of the population and the growth of arable areas by land reclamation, the initially more or less isolated nuclear districts of Frisia had swollen to the borders with the surrounding districts. This internal growth gave rise to more specialisation and more trade, but also to more internal friction. We have already seen that there had been bitter strife between villages and districts during the previous period. This continued in the period which we are now considering. The league of the Upstallisbam tried to interfere in conflicts and to formulate rules for internal relations, but it lacked the military power to enforce agreements if such was needed.

The increasing power of strategically-situated Groningen was one of the sources of conflict. The town could deliver military power to maintain peace, and it made treaties

with surrounding districts to safeguard the roads to the town, but it was not involved in the treaties of the Upstallisbam because it was not initially a party to the league. Formally it belonged to the lay territory of the Bishop of Utrecht although it resisted his political interference. When the Bishop was in conflict with the Count of Gelre, Groningen took the side of Gelre. This in turn caused conflict with the surrounding Frisian districts that were threatened by the claims of the Count of Gelre. They successfully besieged Groningen in 1338, and the peace that ensued meant that the town could finally play a role in the - still weak - league.<sup>1</sup>

Only in cases of external threat by foreign powers were the inhabitants of Frisia provoked into any kind of unity; adversaries came together to keep the invaders out. They were usually successful in this,<sup>2</sup> but there were two exceptions: the district of Wiurden, at the easternmost border of Frisia, somehow fell into the hands of the Counts of Stotel before 1270,<sup>3</sup> in which year it was inherited from that dynasty by the Counts of Oldenburg<sup>4</sup>, and a few years later, in 1289, the westernmost sealand of Frisia, West-Friesland, was at last subjected by the Count of Holland.<sup>5</sup>

So, the picture of the period under consideration does not differ very much from that of the previous one: it remained a prosperous mercantile and agricultural country, lacking a powerful central authority, divided in itself but united against foreign rulers.

### **The history of the means of payment**

During the 12th century, new silver mines were discovered in central Europe. One of the silver flows from these mines had been directed through the southern Low Countries to England in exchange for, among other commodities, wool. England's balance of trade was in surplus. However, during the 13th and early 14th centuries, enormous

<sup>1</sup> Formsma, *De middeleeuwse vrijheid*, 88.

<sup>2</sup> In 1271 against the bishop of Münster who tried to realise his feudal rights in Emsingo, that he had bought in 1252/1253 (Van Lengen, *Geschiede*, 25-31); in 1308-1311 against the prefect of the Bishop of Utrecht in Groningen (Formsma, *De middeleeuwse vrijheid*, 86); in 1324 against Bremen, in conflict with Riustringen (OUB2: 290; Formsma, *De middeleeuwse vrijheid*, 86); in 1334 against the Count of Gelre, trying to invade Mid-Frisia, and in 1345 against the Count of Holland, slain in trying to invade Mid-Frisia (Jappe Alberts, *Frysk en frij*, 157).

<sup>3</sup> Wiurden may have fallen into the hands of the Counts of Stotel when, in 1233, at its southern border, the similarly free farmers of Osterstade were subdued and castigated by the Archbishop of Bremen and his allies, following their refusal to pay tribute (Sello, *Beiträge*, 6-7).

<sup>4</sup> Rütthning, *Oldenburgische Geschichte*, 43-45.

<sup>5</sup> Kerkmeyer, *Geschiedenis*, 18-21. In 1287-1289, floods harassed the inhabitants of West Friesland and increased the distance between this province and Mid-Frisia because of the further widening of the Fli. These circumstances were welcomed by the Count of Holland, who now had an opportunity to conquer this last independent part of former West Frisia; he succeeded in 1289, but it took until 1297 for him to establish complete control over the area.

quantities of this silver returned to the European mainland for political purposes such as crusades, interference with the German crown and alliances against the French King. One of the effects of these payments was that English pennies became freely available in many parts of the continent. As a result of the English monetary policy that has already been mentioned, the English penny contained c.1.3g of silver - the same silver quantity as that of the early Anglo-Frisian pennies of the late 7th century. Because they were made of good silver (0.925 fine<sup>6</sup>), the English pennies were not melted down on the continent but used over again and again at their own face value for internal as well as international payments; they were readily accepted in a world whose own coins were more or less enfeebled. As the English so-called 'short-cross' pennies could easily be clipped, a monetary reform in England, in 1247, established a new type, the so-called 'long cross' penny, that was better protected against that vice. This type became very popular in the Low Countries and, because of this, was widely imitated on the continent. However, it is thought that no really deceptive imitations were produced in the Low Countries - with one exception: the Cunre mint.<sup>7</sup>

An abrupt change occurred in 1279, when there were new measures to improve the currency in England.<sup>8</sup> The export of English pennies was banned<sup>9</sup> and the existing coins withdrawn from circulation to be succeeded by a new type of coin, the 'Edwardian' penny, which (with fractional coins) became the only means of legal payment in England. As a result, the long-cross pennies produced on the continent could no longer be used in England. However, they retained their continental role after 1279, together with their imitations and derivations - for example, the so-called 'shield-sterlings'.<sup>10</sup> The new Edwardian pennies were also imitated by continental princes. Some were made of good weight and fineness, but others were struck with a lower silver content. These included 'crockards and pollards', and 'brown sterlings'.<sup>11</sup> The continental sterlings were produced not only for making payments in England but also for domestic use.<sup>12</sup>

Considerable quantities of English pennies also arrived in Frisia from the middle of the 13th century. This occurred when the indigenous 'old-Frisian' penny became too small to remain a convenient means of payment for substantial transactions. The English

<sup>6</sup> Brooke, *English Coins*, 107.

<sup>7</sup> Mayhew, "The circulation", 55-57. See also Chapter 10, 'The history of the measure of value'.

<sup>8</sup> Brooke, *English Coins*, 116.

<sup>9</sup> Mayhew, "The circulation", 58.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, 59.

<sup>11</sup> Spufford, *Money*, 159-162.

<sup>12</sup> In England, at the end of the 13th century, the light sterlings of Edwardian type were called 'crockards' or 'pollards'. Mayhew, "The circulation", 62: "It is interesting that mints of the Cunre type should choose to imitate crockards and pollards when they could produce accurate copies of English sterlings; this may be further evidence of the domestic role of crockard and pollards in the Low Countries; that they were common enough, and good enough to be worth imitating."

penny soon found its place in purses and treasuries all over the country.<sup>13</sup> Westphalian pennies - among others the pennies of Osnabrück and Münster - were also used, but mainly in East Frisia.<sup>14</sup> Their silver content was still derived from the post-Carolingian penny of Cologne: 1.3g, and was consequently equivalent to that of the English pennies, but in or before 1276 the Münster pennies were substituted by new pennies (*nye penningen*) with a lower silver weight of about 1.0g.<sup>15</sup>

The need for larger silver coins than pennies also emerged. This need began outside Frisia. Following the Italian example, larger silver coins were struck in the booming industrial areas of Flanders, Brabant, Hainaut and northern France.<sup>16</sup> Two types of these were imported and became part of the Frisian currency: the *gros Tournois* (which will be referred to in this study by the local name *tornoyse grote*)<sup>17</sup> and the ‘cavalier’.<sup>18</sup> The *tornoyse grote* was worth 3 English pennies, while the cavalier was worth 2. Other coins were also imported.

As this influx of various foreign coins inevitably caused confusion and uncertainty in Frisia, the league of the Upstallisbam tried to bring in some order. In a treaty of 1323, aimed at achieving common defence and internal peace within Frisia, one clause<sup>19</sup> was devoted to what would be legal currency within the territory of the league and what would be the legal rates of exchange for these coins.<sup>20</sup> The ‘old-Frisian’ pennies (‘*cleyne penningen*’) were not mentioned among coins to be admitted at face value. They could be accepted by weight if 17 of them, all alike, had the weight of an English penny; carrying lighter specimens was strictly prohibited.

<sup>13</sup> Berghaus, “Die Perioden des Sterlings”, 50, assumes that the long-cross pennies and the Edwardian pennies, imported into Frisia between Ems and Weser, induced the minting of sterling along the upper course of the Weser.

<sup>14</sup> Berghaus, “Die Ostfriesischen Münzfunde”, 27.

<sup>15</sup> Chapter 5, ‘The history of the measure of value’.

<sup>16</sup> Spufford, *Money*, 225-230.

<sup>17</sup> Spufford, *Money*, 405: issued from 1266-1364.

<sup>18</sup> Duplessy, “Chronologie”, 169; 193-194; issued from c.1269 to 1312. Margaret of Constantinople began the issue of double sterlings - type ‘cavalier’ in Hainaut, type ‘eagle’ in Flanders and type ‘archangel’ in Brabant; they were collectively known as *baudekins* (Spufford, *Money*, 230). Because the cavaliers prevailed in Frisia, I will use that name in this study when referring to this type of double sterling, but this does not preclude the fact that the other types were also circulating at the same face value.

<sup>19</sup> Meijering, *De willekeuren*, 58-63. For critical comment on this source see Excursus 6.1: ‘On the monetary regulation in the treaty of the Upstallisbam of 1323’.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, 157-161. Meijering has tried to verify the theory that this clause was valid for only a part of Frisia, but he concludes that there is no evidence. He also tried to verify whether the clause might refer to a valuation older than 1323, also without any definite conclusion. I agree with him that there are no sufficient reasons to doubt the time (1323) and none at all to doubt the place (all of Frisia).

The following coins are mentioned as being admissible in Frisia at the following rates in English money:<sup>21</sup>

- the *tornoyse grote* (= *gros tournois*), æ 3 new English pennies,
- the *ridder* (= cavalier, from Hainaut) and the *flyoger* (= eagle from Brabant), both æ 2 old English pennies,
- the English penny,
- the new Münster or Osnabrück penny (Westphalian penny), æ  $\frac{3}{4}$ th new English penny or  $\frac{4}{5}$ th old English penny,
- the *halling*, æ half an old English penny,
- the *lonsche* (= penny of Louvain, Brabant), æ  $\frac{1}{3}$ rd English penny,
- the pennies of Dordrecht, Holland; rate not mentioned,
- the *kopkiin* (the name of a coin found in the Rhine areas and in the Netherlands; the identification is uncertain, but it may refer to *deniers tournois*<sup>22</sup>), æ  $\frac{1}{5}$ th English penny.

Specimens of all these various types have been discovered in Frisia with the exception of the *kopkiin*, which simply may not have been identified. They were used in Drenthe<sup>23</sup> and probably also in Groningen.<sup>24</sup> As far as English pennies are concerned, this monetary regulation sometimes distinguishes ‘old’ and ‘new’ English pennies. They have a slight difference in value. The difference may refer to English coins struck before and after 1279. As we have seen, the very popular sterlings struck before 1279 (the ‘long cross type’) that circulated in great quantities on the continent were withdrawn from circulation in England to be replaced by a different type (the ‘Edwardian’). Many of the English pennies and halfpennies that have been found were imitations, struck by continental princes.

The extent to which this important decision concerning the legal means of payment in 1323 was observed, however, was another matter. Apparently social control was not sufficient. In 1338, as part of the peace treaty between combined forces from Mid-Frisia, the Ommelanden, East Frisia and Drenthe and newly-conquered Groningen (see above), most of the parties involved (namely Hunsingo, Fivelingo, Westerkwartier, Drenthe and Groningen) decided to examine the state of the currency at a yearly assem-

<sup>21</sup> Worp, *Chronicon*, 180-181. See Excursus 6.1: ‘On the monetary regulation in the treaty of the Upstallisbam of 1323’.

<sup>22</sup> *Encyclopedie*, sv. *kopken* (article from H. Enno van Gelder)

<sup>23</sup> Heeringa, *Rekeningen*, 624-626, mentions a note of the steward of the Bishop of Utrecht in his accounts of 1504-1505 concerning rents in Drenthe expressed in *copken*, which were by then old coins without known, but anyway low value.

<sup>24</sup> An income register of the chapter of the Utrecht cathedral, around 1335, has: *van Volckerdinc in Groningen: XVIII sc 1 cop.* (OGD1: 340). This last word might refer to the use of *kopkiin* in Groningen.

bly to be held in the town hall of Groningen, and to take such measures as were needed.<sup>25</sup> Whether these assemblies were actually held is unknown.

The question may arise as to whether the Frisian mints had become idle, since the currency consisted in so large a part of foreign coins, and the ‘old-Frisian’ pennies were no longer being produced; but this seems unlikely. The Frisian mints would have changed over to the production of imitations of some foreign coins (which had already been more or less a habit during previous centuries), including, of course, imitative English pennies. The existence of Frisian sterlings is borne out by the fact that accounts of the bishopric of Utrecht in 1325 and 1335 actually mention receipts in *moneta frisonica*, quoted as marks/shillings/pennies sterling.<sup>26</sup> So far, no high-grade imitative English pennies from Frisia have been identified numismatically. However, although he does not specifically mention Frisian minting, Mayhew says of continental long-cross imitations in general: “apparently struck at a respectable weight and fineness, and having the same legends as genuine English coins, they are not, even today, always recognised for what they are”.<sup>27</sup>

There is little doubt that the mint of the community of Oistringen, in Jever, produced local money in 1273-1278;<sup>28</sup> Oistringen money was mentioned in the synodal statutes of Wangerland of 1312<sup>29</sup> and in the accounts of ecclesiastical contributions from a number of parishes around Jever by the papal collector in 1317.<sup>30</sup> The Oistringen coins can be calculated to have been equivalent, in 1317, to half the value of English pennies.<sup>31</sup> Since Oistringen was in any case a participant in the treaty of 1323,<sup>32</sup> these coins must have been included among those admitted. The only coins mentioned in the treaty as being worth half an English penny were the *hallingen*, so the Oistringen pennies may have been called *hallingen*, though there is no documentary evidence for this supposition. It would seem that these pennies had their origin in the English coin system, but

<sup>25</sup> OGD1: 354.

<sup>26</sup> Muller, *De registers I*, 515-521; 565-567.

<sup>27</sup> Mayhew, “The circulation”, 58. As well as sterlings struck in Germany south of the Lippe, he refers to sterlings from Cunre.

<sup>28</sup> OUB6: 16; Kappelhoff, *Die Münzen*, 47-48.

<sup>29</sup> OUB6: 25.

<sup>30</sup> Kirsch, *Die päpstlichen Kollektoren*, 93; 101.

<sup>31</sup> Besides English halfpennies, Westphalian halfpennies (*Halblinge*) have also circulated in Frisia (Berghaus, “Die ostfriesischen Münzfunde”, 49). At first sight it seems obvious that the Oistringen pennies might have been imitative Westphalian halfpennies. Yet this is unlikely, as the Westphalian halfpennies at that time must have had a lower silver equivalence – assuming that their silver equivalence was half the silver equivalence of the Münster or Osnabrück penny, mentioned in the treaty of the Upstallisbam in 1323 (see Excursus 6.1: ‘On the monetary regulation in the treaty of the Upstallisbam of 1323’). Moreover, the subsequent Oistringen pennies, struck since about 1360/1370, have a shield-sterling appearance (Kappelhoff, *Die Münzen*, 266-267), whilst the Münster halfpennies have a bishop and a saint on obverse and reverse (Ilsch, *Die mittelalterliche Münzprägung*, 76-113).

<sup>32</sup> OUB6: 36.

they reveal a new development in the Frisian money system. This is dealt with in the next chapter.

It is also possible that coins were minted in Brokmerland. A clause in the statutes of Brokmerland, which dates from the end of the 13th century,<sup>33</sup> deals with the community's moneyer (*mena mentre*)<sup>34</sup> and his smithy. This moneyer would be punished if found in the possession of false gold or if treacherously advising on deficient or false pennies. However, Kappelhoff<sup>35</sup> believes that, as no coins are known to have been struck in Brokmerland at this time, the person referred to was not a moneyer but a goldsmith, surveying the currency by testimony.<sup>36</sup> It is true that he may have been a goldsmith, but this does not exclude that, since he was referred to as the 'community's moneyer', he was also minting. If this is the case, he would obviously have been minting imitative English pennies; the statutes of Brokmerland include amounts quoted in English money.<sup>37</sup> It may simply be that English penny-coins struck in Brokmerland are not clearly identifiable.

Furthermore some privileges, granted in 1327 by the league of the Upstallisbam and the community of Fivelingo to the town of Appingedam, might concern minting.<sup>38</sup> Not only are sanctions to prevent forging coins and clipping or melting down genuine coins mentioned, but also, in the same context, the privileges to be granted to a civilian who brings melting-works into the town.<sup>39</sup> In order to operate legally, he had to give security and present a sealed letter from his home community to prove his readiness to submit to the law and judges in cases of complaint. His works would then enjoy protection by special sanctions against unjust complaints, particularly when efforts were made to enforce these complaints with weapons. These measures may have applied to an assayer, but may also imply the intention to work up bullion and strike coins since an imitative *tornoyse grote* struck in Fivelingo in the second half of the 14th century, probably in Appingedam, has been discovered.<sup>40</sup> Finally, the recent discovery in Mid-Frisia of an imitative cavalier, struck about 1350 by a goldsmith named Jacob, also confirms the continuation of minting practices by private moneyers.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Buma, *Das Brokmer Recht*, 11-13.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, 90-91 (§149).

<sup>35</sup> Kappelhoff, *Die Münzen*, 48.

<sup>36</sup> Kappelhoff seems generally to be of the opinion that no mints could exist in Frisia without chartered minting rights.

<sup>37</sup> Buma, *Das Brokmer Recht*, 22-23 (§6b).

<sup>38</sup> OGD1: 307.

<sup>39</sup> The charter, in Latin, uses the word *incendium* = fire = *brand* in Dutch; the old Dutch word *brant* had among others the meaning 'melting-works for precious metals' (Verdam, *Middelnederlandsch Handwoordenboek*, sv. *Brant*; see also sv. *Brantcamer*). The term *brantsilver* = pure silver (ditto).

<sup>40</sup> Berghaus, "Die ostfriesische Münzfunde", 49; Puister, "Groningse stedelijke munten", 8.

<sup>41</sup> Jacobi, "Een munt", 17-21. The obverse legend of the coin reads MONETA FRISIE LIBERT; the reverse outside legend has IACOBVS AVRIFAB' FECIT.



To summarise, private minting would have been continued all over Frisia in the period between the middle of the 13th and the middle of the 14th century, imitating foreign money.<sup>42</sup> The Frisian origin of imitative sterlings discovered in Denmark and northern Germany is assumed.<sup>43</sup> Mayhew, though not referring particularly to Frisia, has found that some varieties of the imitative sterlings were struck only in small quantities, indicating that they might have been struck at very irregular mints almost anywhere.<sup>44</sup> The clause in the 1338-peace treaty with Groningen, ‘to examine the state of the currency’, may refer to an attempt to supervise such irregular and occasional minting of imitative coins within Frisia. Besides, imitative 13th and 14th century sterling coins have been identified that were struck outside Frisia but close to its border - in the mints of Coevorden and Cunre, situated in Het Oversticht, lay-territory of the Bishop of Utrecht.<sup>45</sup>

At the end of the period under consideration, the Flemish *groten* also entered the currency. These were originally valued at 3 English pennies, but they rapidly became enfeebled. Their role in Frisia is dealt with in the following chapters. The same is true of the imported gold coins, the French *écus d’or*, with a gold weight originally of c.4.5g, which rapidly declined to 3.4g.<sup>46</sup> Perhaps these gold coins were imported as early as 1338, when an alliance of defence was made between the French King and the Frisian league of the Upstallisbam against the English King and his ally, the Count of Gelre.<sup>47</sup> There is no evidence of payments in gold *écus* by the French King to the Frisians, but payments of this kind to his allies in the Low Countries were not unusual.<sup>48</sup> The role of these gold coins in Frisia also marks the beginning of a new monetary period.

### **The history of the measure of value**

From the foregoing, it will be clear that the English penny, so common in the currency after the middle of the 13th century, soon became the main standard for the measure of value in Frisia. As we have seen already, it was the unit of account in the treaty of the Upstallisbam of 1323.<sup>49</sup> Was the transformation from the ‘old-Frisian’ to the English penny as standard for the unit of account in Frisia indeed a general transformation?

<sup>42</sup> Berghaus, “Die Perioden”, 40.

<sup>43</sup> Sterlings discovered in or before 1850 in Haagendrup, Nordsjælland (Thomson, “Foreign sterlings”, 67-69), in 1887 in Ribnitz, Mecklenburg (Dannenberg, “Der Sterling-Fund”, 305: 310-317) and in 1967 in Kirial, Djursland (Steen Jensen, “Møntfundet fra Kirial”, 62-63; 72-76; 145-146). Attention to these coins is also paid by Berghaus, “Die Perioden”, 40; Mayhew, *Sterling-imitations*, 66-67; 136-141. However, some of these coins have been identified as struck by the mint of Cunre (see below).

<sup>44</sup> Mayhew, *Sterling imitations*, 136.

<sup>45</sup> See note above. Also: Van der Chijs, *Overijssel*, 156-166; Van der Chijs, *Friesland, Groningen en Drenthe*, 593-594.

<sup>46</sup> Spufford, *Money*, 408: issued from 1337 to 1351.

<sup>47</sup> Blok, *Oorkonden*, 319-333.

<sup>48</sup> Spufford, *Money*, 275.

<sup>49</sup> Kappelhoff, *Das friesische Geldwesen*, 66-67, supposes that the Westphalian penny was the unit of account of the treaty. He must have overlooked the fact that the compensations and fines in the treaty



The number of contemporary documents that would help us to answer that question is still small. Those that we have mostly refer to English money as unit of account with the exception of treaties with foreign lords, the bishoprics of Utrecht, Münster and Bremen, and foreign towns; obviously the amounts in these treaties are often quoted in units of account that were valid in these foreign areas. The use of the English penny as standard within Frisia during this period is therefore evident. It should be noted that, although the *tornoyse grote*, the cavalier and the *lonsche* were not English money in the full sense of the word, they were incorporated into the coin system as denominations and fractional coins and were sometimes used in the system of money of account as multiple units, valued at 3, 2 and  $\frac{1}{3}$ rd English pennies respectively.<sup>50</sup> It therefore suffices to list a few cases of the English system of account in Frisia.

The statutes of Humsterland,<sup>51</sup> to be dated between c.1220 and c.1250, refer to English money. In the treaty between Fivelingo and Groningen in 1258 the amounts are quoted in new English money.<sup>52</sup> The treaties between Emsingo and Brokmerland, dated about 1250 and in the second half of the 13th century respectively, give amounts for compensations and fines in marks sterling.<sup>53</sup> A treaty in 1276 between Mid-Frisian regional units<sup>54</sup> regarding interregional compensation tariffs and fines expresses these in English marks, a mark being reckoned at  $13\frac{1}{3}$  shillings (= 160 pennies; that is, not only the ‘old-Frisian’ but also the English style) and the weight that of a mark of Cologne;<sup>55</sup> but a few antiquated penal tariffs in the treaty are still quoted in ‘old-Frisian’ pounds. In 1278, a yearly tithe in kind from the possessions of a German abbey in Norderland is ‘from then on’ reckoned in money, namely in *solidos novorum sterlingorum*.<sup>56</sup> The earliest explicit

are quoted in marks, and that the first time an amount is mentioned the marks are explicitly defined as marks sterling (Meijering, *De willekeuren*, 72 (§2 Latin version Codex Roorda); Worp, *Chronicon*, 177 (§2 Latin version Worp).

<sup>50</sup> The amounts in the compensation register of Fivelingo, quoted in unnamed ‘light’ pennies, are consistently converted into unnamed ‘heavy’ pennies at a rate of 20 : 3 (Buma, *Das Fivelgoer Recht*, 13). Now, §374 (*ibidem*, 128-129) has a compensation of 16 ‘light’ pennies, said to be equivalent to a cavalier and a *lonsche*. Since, according to the Treaty of the Upstallisbam of 1323, a cavalier æ 2 English pennies and a *lonsche* æ  $\frac{1}{3}$  English pennies, it follows that 16 light pennies æ  $2\frac{1}{3}$  English pennies. From this expression it can be deduced that 20 light pennies æ  $20/16 \times 2\frac{1}{3}$  English pennies =  $2\frac{11}{12}$  = almost 3 English pennies. It follows that the heavy penny would have been the English penny.

<sup>51</sup> RQ, 358.

<sup>52</sup> OGD1: 158. Apparently long-cross pennies struck since 1247.

<sup>53</sup> Buma, *Die Brokmer Rechtshandschriften*, 137-139.

<sup>54</sup> Westergo, Oostergo, Bornego and Waghenbreghe (= later on the Westergo district Wymbritseradeel).

<sup>55</sup> Buma, *Westerlauwersches Recht I*, 484-485. The weight of a mark of Cologne was 233.75g, so the gross weight of an English penny should be  $233.75 : 160 = 1.46g$ . The treaty is not explicit about the fineness of the pennies, but it goes without saying that it was according to the English standard of sterling silver (0.925).

<sup>56</sup> OFU2: 1680 (33a). The designation ‘new’ is peculiar. The last major change of these pennies before 1278 was the change from the short-cross to long-cross type in 1247 (Brooke, *English Coins*, 107-109; 116-117). As these long-cross sterlings were still called ‘new’ in 1278, it follows that, after 30 years, they still had to be distinguished from the ‘old’ short-cross pennies. But the difference in silver content

example of an English mark of 12 shillings (144 pennies, the Cologne style) is found in 1288 in Drenthe, in a contract regarding the sale of a homestead.<sup>57</sup> In 1293 a bond from the inhabitants of Esens (Harlingerland) to Hamburg is expressed in sterlings,<sup>58</sup> and a treaty between Norderland and Bremen in 1310 has sterlings and Bremen money.<sup>59</sup> In a treaty in 1317 between Stavoren and Kampen, an English mark of 10 shillings (120 pennies, the Flemish style<sup>60</sup>) is used,<sup>61</sup> and in a 1318 treaty regarding peace and safety between Oostergo and Groningen, amounts in *magne marce sterlingorum* are mentioned;<sup>62</sup> these must be understood as English marks of 16 shillings (192 pennies, the Lübeck style). In the statutes of the Nyeland<sup>63</sup> (*Wilker thes nya landes*), dating from 1342,<sup>64</sup> some fines are quoted in English pennies as well as in cavaliers; again, others are still quoted in ‘old-Frisian’ pounds.

Although the Frisian documents are mostly quoted in English money, there are a few exceptions. I have already mentioned the occurrence of ‘old-Frisian’ pounds, particularly for traditional fines. This phenomenon will be dealt with in the next chapter. In Emsingo the Westphalian penny of Münster was used as legal standard for some time;<sup>65</sup> the mark was reckoned at 12 shillings.<sup>66</sup> It should be remembered that, in 1252/1253, the Bishop of Münster had acquired the seignorial rights in this area by purchase from the heirs of the Counts of Ravensberg.<sup>67</sup> But as his actual control lasted for only a few decades, the role of the Münster unit of account in Emsingo would have been only temporary and may have been mainly nominal. It almost vanished after the peace treaty between the Bishop and the community of Emsingo in 1276.<sup>68</sup> In the Yade area, amounts in money of Bremen are often found but only in treaties with the town or the bishopric

of the genuine short-cross and genuine long-cross pennies did not justify this distinction. The difference between old and new pennies must have had another cause. See the sequel.

<sup>57</sup> OGD1: 177.

<sup>58</sup> OFU3: 65.

<sup>59</sup> OFU1: 44.

<sup>60</sup> Spufford, *Handbook*, 213.

<sup>61</sup> Chbk1, 157.

<sup>62</sup> OGD1: 258.

<sup>63</sup> The Nyeland is a polder near Leeuwarden.

<sup>64</sup> Blom, “De dorpsgemeenschap”, 437. The document is dated at 1242, but as cavaliers did not yet exist at that time the dating must be erroneous and should probably be 1342. The dating is widely discussed. See: Colmjon, *Register*, 14-15; Van Buijtenen, *De Leppa*, 12 f; Jappe Alberts, “Frysk en frij”, 156; Algra, “De Nijlanseed”, 1 note 2; Algra, *De datearring*, 13, note 85.

<sup>65</sup> For instance, OFU1: 26 (treaty between Emsingo, Norderland and Bremen, 1255); OFU2: 28 (treaty between Emsingo and Norderland, 1264); OFU1: 30 (reconciliation treaty between the Bishop of Münster and Emsingo, Brokmerland, Reiderland and Oldambt, 1276); OFU1: 31 (treaty between Emsingo, Brokmerland and the Bishop of Münster, 1276).

<sup>66</sup> OFU2: 28.

<sup>67</sup> Van Lengen, *Geschiede*, 25-31.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibidem*, 30.

of Bremen; hence, it seems that Bremen money was not money of account in Frisia.<sup>69</sup> Finally a few documents at the end of the period have amounts expressed in Florentine guilders.<sup>70</sup>

So, generally speaking, the English penny was the standard for the unit of account in almost the whole of Frisia from about 1250 to about 1350. How did the silver equivalence of this unit develop?

The sterling struck in England had a rather stable silver content in this period. There was a slight lowering of it in 1279, when export was prohibited and a new type of penny coin, the Edwardian, was issued.<sup>71</sup> From then onwards the English penny remained practically stable until 1344-1351, when the silver content was finally lowered to c.1.1g;<sup>72</sup> but this is English history. Sterlings were also imitated on the continent, as we have seen in the previous section. Two mainstreams of continental sterlings sprang from the genuine English penny: the high-grade and the low-grade continental sterlings. Whether they were genuine, or high-grade or low-grade imitations, they followed their own course. This is reflected in the history of the silver equivalence of the money of account in Frisia. It is true that these distinctions do not often appear very clearly in the documents; if the money is qualified as 'English' or as 'sterling' it is difficult to discern whether the genuine sterling, the high-grade continental sterling or the low-grade continental sterling was the standard for the unit of account unless further qualification is explicitly given. This qualification must be derived as far as possible from the context. In this study I shall use the term 'genuine English penny' or 'genuine sterling' when the English penny from England is meant, the term 'imitative English penny' or 'imitative sterling' when the high-grade continental sterlings are referred to and 'low-grade sterlings' or 'brown sterlings' for the continental imitations of low alloy.

<sup>69</sup> OUB2: 87 (Hovendorpe and Alleswarden in Stadland, 1244); OFU1: 1679 (29a) (Jever, 1273/1275); OUB2: 180 (Land Wiurden, 1285); OFU1: 43 (Harlingerland, 1310); OFU1: 44 (Norderland, 1310); OUB2: 261 (parishes of Blexen, Waddens and Ubbahusen, 1312); OFU1: 46 (Norderland, 1313); COLM-JON: 166 (Frisian parts of the bishopric of Bremen, 1314); OUB2: 270 (Riustringen, 1315); OUB2: 340 (Riustringen, 1337); OUB7: 185 (Land Wursten?, 1349). In cases where wergeld is mentioned it amounts mostly to 20 marks Bremen silver and fineness (*viginti marcis Bremensis ponderis et argenti*, 1310, OFU1: 44); this can be calculated at  $20 \times 234\text{g} \times 0.7 = 3,276\text{g}$  of silver, which is equivalent to a doubled wergeld in Frisia).

<sup>70</sup> OUB6: 35 (Wiurden, 1324; copy); OUB6: 47 (Gokarka, 1340).

<sup>71</sup> Brooke, *English Coins*, 107: long-cross pennies since 1247 had a weight of  $22\frac{1}{2}$  grains (= 1.4625g) and a fineness of 11 oz 2 dwt (= 0.925), hence silver content  $0.925 \times 1.4625\text{g} = \text{c.}1.35\text{g}$ ; *ibidem*, 116: Edward pennies since 1279 had a weight of  $22\frac{1}{4}$  grains (= 1.44625g), fineness apparently unchanged, hence silver content  $0.925 \times 1.44625\text{g} = \text{c.}1.34\text{g}$ .

<sup>72</sup> *Ibidem*, 126. Penny of 18 grs of standard silver, hence weight  $18 \times 0.065\text{g} = 1.17\text{g}$ , fineness 0.925, silver equivalence  $1.17\text{g} \times 0.925 = 1.08\text{g}$ .

In the previous chapter we have seen in the Fivelingo wergeld tradition how the transition from the ‘old-Frisian’ to the English system of account was made.<sup>73</sup> At the 8th stage of the tradition (about 1270?) the wergeld was still quoted in ‘old-Frisian’ money even though it was in its final phase. The ‘old-Frisian’ penny had so little value by then that it was calculated by the score. A score of ‘old-Frisian’ marks was called ‘a highest mark’. The wergeld at that time was 20 highest marks. Apparently this was already the dawn of a new money of account, for these 20 highest marks were described as equivalent to 16 English marks. Doubtless this referred to the (doubled) wergeld of 16 marks English that had already been mentioned in other places in Frisia.<sup>74</sup> By the last stage in the Fivelingo wergeld tradition, the 9th stage, the ‘old-Frisian’ money had vanished. It had been substituted by English money. However, the 20 highest marks wergeld were substituted not by 16 marks English but by 20 marks English.

It can be shown that the wergeld amounts of 16 English marks were quoted in marks of 160 pennies (English style),<sup>75</sup> whereas the wergelds of 20 highest marks<sup>76</sup> or 20 English marks were quoted in marks of 144 pennies (Cologne style).<sup>77</sup> Curiously, this difference in style also reflects a difference in standard; this becomes apparent when we compare wergeld amounts because, if the wergeld hypothesis holds, these amounts are equivalent. This implies that a highest penny would be equivalent to an English penny of the 9th stage and at the same time to  $\frac{8}{9}$  English penny of the 8th stage.<sup>78</sup> In other words the English penny would have lost silver equivalence between the 8th and the 9th stage of the tradition: from c.1.3g silver equivalence in the 8th stage<sup>79</sup> to c.1.2g in the 9th stage.<sup>80</sup> This, however, is not confirmed numismatically as regards the genuine English penny.

<sup>73</sup> Excursus 5.3: ‘On the analysis of the Fivelingo wergeld tradition’.

<sup>74</sup> In Mid-Frisia amounts of  $8\frac{1}{4}$  marks or  $16\frac{1}{2}$  marks are found. See Appendix I.

<sup>75</sup> Buma, *Westerlauwersches Recht I*, 484-485: A Mid-Frisian treaty on interregional compensation tariffs. The copy of the treaty has a wergeld of 17 marks, which should probably be read as  $16\frac{1}{2}$  marks; see Excursus 5.3: ‘On the analysis of the Fivelingo wergeld tradition’, sub (b). The treaty has in §6: ‘These marks are to be paid with 4 pennies + 13 shillings English, provided they weigh a mark of Cologne; if they are not at the right weight they are to be supplemented to full weight’. (13 shillings + 4 pennies =  $13 \times 12 + 4 = 160$  pennies. The gross weight of the pennies had to be 233.75g : 160 = 1.46g); this is in accordance with their official weight (Brooke, *English Coins*, 107, namely 22.5 grains (= 1.46g).

<sup>76</sup> 1 highest mark was defined as 12 pounds Groningen money, a pound Groningen money apparently figuring as a highest shilling. Excursus 5.3: ‘On the Fivelingo wergeld tradition’.

<sup>77</sup> Example: OGD2: 1230 (275). Statutes of the Winsum water board c.1323: ‘.. so the wergeld will be eighty marks English, the mark to be paid with 12 shillings.’ (wergeld 8 times normal wergeld, see Appendix I).

<sup>78</sup>  $20 \times 144$  highest pennies  $\approx 16 \times 160$  English pennies  $\rightarrow$  1 highest penny  $\approx (16 \times 160) : (20 \times 144) = \frac{8}{9}$  English penny.

<sup>79</sup> Brooke, *English Coins*, 116: weight  $22\frac{1}{2}$  grs =  $22\frac{1}{2} \times 0.065\text{g} = 1.46\text{g}$ ; fineness 0.925. This weight and fineness equals the weight and fineness of the English penny mentioned in the Mid-Frisian treaty on compensation tariffs of 1276; see footnote above. Hence an English penny  $\approx$  c.1.46g  $\times$  0.925 = c.1.35g of silver was referred to.

<sup>80</sup>  $\frac{8}{9} \times$  c.1.35g = c.1.20g.

The silver equivalence of the genuine English penny was almost stable between c.1160 and c.1350, the decline in 1279 having been hardly noticeable. Provided the wergeld hypothesis holds, the only alternative is that these English pennies of account were not of the same kind. Presumably, the first kind (c.1.3g of silver) was based on the genuine English penny while the other kind (c.1.2g of silver) was based on an imitative English penny. In any case, pennies of the last kind meet the silver equivalence of the 'old-Frisian' 'highest penny', and both kinds, the genuine and the imitative sterling, entered the arena of the Frisian money of account, as the Fivelingo wergeld tradition reveals. In Fivelingo, c.1280 (?), the imitative kind apparently prevailed, but in Mid-Frisia the genuine kind was used at the same time (1276). However, if two kinds of English pennies were current in Frisia during the same period with a noticeable difference in value (11-12%), they must have been distinguishable. Numismatists agree that a large proportion of the English pennies discovered in our corner of the continent were probably imitative, but it is hardly possible to distinguish these from the genuine pennies.<sup>81</sup> As the numismatist Berghaus puts it, the Frisian origin of these imitations can only be assumed.<sup>82</sup> Hence, to understand what happened, we must make a conjecture. I propose the following course of events.

The evolution has a Westphalian origin. In the first half of the 13th century, English 'short-cross' pennies came into use in the Westphalian currency alongside and equivalent to the respectable penny of Cologne.<sup>83</sup> The mark of Cologne had counted 144 pennies for a long time; hence, in Westphalia, a mark could also count 144 sterlings. Moreover, sterlings were imitated in Westphalia on the same basis as the genuine English pennies. As Westphalia had intensive commercial relations with Frisia, imitative sterling coins may have infiltrated the Frisian currency, and calculations with marks of 144 sterlings may have superseded the old Frisian system of account. This infiltration would have met a need because, as we have seen in the previous chapter, the 'old-Frisian' penny was almost obsolete in the first half of the 13th century. Then, after 1240, the production of imitative short-cross sterlings was ousted in Westphalia by the production of indigenous Westphalian types of penny. Consequently, when in 1247 a new type of English penny, the long-cross type, replaced the short-cross type in England, this type was hardly imitated in the northern part of Westphalia,<sup>84</sup> bordering on Frisia. Especially in those places in Frisia where trade with Westphalia was significant - Jever, Emden, Groningen - the demand for the widely accepted sterlings was still growing. This may have induced the production of imitative, apparently slightly less valued, long-cross sterlings within Frisia, but as they had the same appearance as the genuine English penny, they could not be distinguished provided they were of good weight. For

<sup>81</sup> Mayhew, *The circulation*, 58.

<sup>82</sup> Berghaus, *Die Perioden*, 40.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibidem*, 37.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibidem*, 40-41; 50.

this reason the genuine long-cross pennies would have been valued at the same rate as the imitative ones in Frisia. These imitative Frisian sterling pennies may, in their turn, sometimes have been used in Westphalia. As amounts in the charters from areas previously accustomed to the penny of Cologne were, from c.1250 onwards, more often specifically quoted in sterling money, Berghaus has suggested<sup>85</sup> that the long-cross sterling, unlike the short-cross type, was no longer equivalent to the penny of Cologne.

To continue my conjecture, the people in the above mentioned Frisian areas would have found the imitative sterling a convenient standard for a new system of money of account, convenient for calculating larger amounts - pennies, shillings and marks ('new') English.<sup>86</sup> Presumably, 'new' coincided with 'long cross'. This system probably emerged alongside the extant 'old-Frisian' money of account system. If the wergeld hypothesis holds, the emergence of this type of sterling as unit of account is found in the Yade area,<sup>87</sup> the Emden area,<sup>88</sup> Groningen<sup>89</sup> and - perhaps - Drenthe,<sup>90</sup> but whereas in the Emden area and in Groningen the imitative sterling finally ousted the 'old-Frisian' penny as standard, I doubt that this also occurred in the Yade area. English money of account is hardly found there, so it seems that the indigenous money system continued to prevail for a few decades. It ended in a singular development - to be dealt with in Chapter 10. In Mid-Frisia and the Ommelanden the 'old-Frisian' system was also continued for a few decades, alongside the English money system based on the genuine English penny as a standard for larger amounts. By the time the 'old-Frisian' penny had decreased to the value of 1/20th of an imitative sterling - in the 1280s (?) - the habit of calculating 'old-Frisian' money in 'highest pennies' (scores of pennies) was developing, perhaps particularly in the Ommelanden.<sup>91</sup> The presence of a coin in the currency that would be equivalent to a score of 'old-Frisian' pennies was obviously attractive as a new standard for the unit of account. The imitative sterling, known from the above-mentioned bordering areas in Frisia, would do. If the wergeld hypothesis holds, this changeover from the genuine English penny to the imitative penny was not noticeable in Mid-Frisia. In this part of Frisia the 'old-Frisian' penny was finally ousted as standard, to be substituted by the genuine English penny.

<sup>85</sup> Berghaus, "Die Perioden", 39-40; do., *Westfälische Münzgeschichte*, 12.

<sup>86</sup> Spufford, *Money*, 412.

<sup>87</sup> Buma, *Das Rüstringer Recht*, 80-81 (§12). The wergeld amount is 20 marks, like 20 marks English elsewhere in Frisia, but as the denotation 'English' is lacking, it cannot be ruled out that marks of Bremen ingots with a fineness of 0.7, thus  $20 \times 234\text{g} \times 0.7 = 3,276\text{g}$  of silver, were in view.

<sup>88</sup> Buma, *Die Brokmer Rechtshandschriften*, 139-142 (c.1250); 137-139 (second half 13th century). See Appendix I.

<sup>89</sup> OGD1: 126. Treaty between Groningen and Fivelingo in 1258. As the transition to the slightly less valued sterling as unit of account in Fivelingo must have taken place somewhat later (according to the Fivelingo wergeld tradition; see Excursus 5.3), we must assume that the amounts in this treaty - quoted in new English money - refer to money of account valid in Groningen.

<sup>90</sup> OGD1: 177 (1288).

<sup>91</sup> Excursus 5.3: 'On the analysis of the Fivelingo wergeld tradition'.



This conjectural history of the measure of value in Frisia in the second half of the 13th century assumes the existence of two English money standards of account in Frisia. The 1323-treaty of the Upstallisbam also implies a small difference between two kinds of English penny.<sup>92</sup> The ‘old’ English pennies (*antiquae Engelsche*) are valued at 15/16th (0.9375%) of the ‘new’ English pennies struck in England (*sterlingen novis de Anglia*). In 1323, the new English pennies from England must have been of the Edwardian type, struck since 1279, with a silver content of c.1.3g.<sup>93</sup> This corresponds roughly to a silver equivalence of c.1.2g for the long-cross sterlings struck until 1279<sup>94</sup> which, while they were certainly ‘new’ between 1247 and 1279 in relation to the ‘short-cross’ type, might quite properly have been called ‘old’ in 1323 in relation to the Edwardian type. Nevertheless the rate for the old English pennies seems higher than we would expect if the Frisian imitative sterlings had indeed been the ones referred to. Since their first production in the 1250s they must have lost silver content. Some time later, in 1325 and 1335, amounts in Frisian sterlings are mentioned in Utrecht, as we have seen.<sup>95</sup> These sterlings were exchanged at a lower rate comparable with a silver equivalence of c.1.0g to 1.1g.<sup>96</sup> However, we must assume that the rates in the treaty are conventional rates, roughly-expressed, in rounded figures and only approximating to the commercial exchange rates. The treaty did not aim to prescribe rates for trade; the rates were only given to be used in cases of dispute. The assumed Frisian imitative sterlings were probably produced to serve the home currency rather than for international payments. They were not intended to fool foreign merchants, and therefore they should not be confused with the sterlings of lower silver content, like the ‘deceptive’ imitative sterlings struck in the Cunre mint<sup>97</sup> just outside the Frisian border. My supposition implies

(a) that the English penny of account of c.1.3g silver equivalence was in principle based on genuine sterling as standard, struck in and imported from England; that is, the short-cross type before 1279 and the Edwardian type after 1279,

<sup>92</sup> Excursus 6.1: ‘On the monetary regulation in the treaty of the Upstallisbam of 1323’.

<sup>93</sup> See previous section.

<sup>94</sup> The silver content of an Edwardian penny was 1.34g and that of a long- cross penny was 1.35g. But if some loss, because of wear, is taken into account for the last category, the value at 15/16 x 1.34g= 1.26g is conceivable.

<sup>95</sup> Muller, *Registers*, 151-521.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibidem*, 565-567: In 1325 were 31 m. 5 s. and 7½ d. Frisian sterlings equivalent to £78 18 s. in Utrecht money, without deduction of exchange premium. As 1 good *gros tournois* æ 16d. Utrecht money (*Ibidem*, 3; 27), it follows that 1 Frisian sterling æ 0.26 *gros tournois* æ 1.04g of silver. *Ibidem*, 515-521: In 1335 were 176m. 8s. Frisian sterling æ £29 8s *gros tournois*, without deduction of exchange premium, so 1 Frisian sterling æ 0.28 *gros tournois* æ 1.1g of silver.

<sup>97</sup> Mayhew, “The circulation”, 57: The only deceptive long-cross sterlings struck in the Low Countries are from the Cunre mint. The minting in Cunre is supposed to have started c.1270 (Grolle, *De Heren*, 5). The first mention of the light sterlings - Frisian sterlings? - was much earlier: in 1258 (OGD1: 126; see above). It is even argued, that the sterlings of Cunre were imitations of Frisian sterlings (Grolle, *De Heren*, 5).



(b) that the English penny of account of c.1.2g silver equivalence was in principle based on the imitative sterling as standard, struck within Frisia after 1247; that is, the long-cross type. As these coins had the same appearance as the genuine English long-cross sterlings, and hence probably had also the same gross weight (1.46g), the lower silver equivalence must be ascribed to a slightly lower fineness.<sup>98</sup>

If this supposition is correct, we must imagine how this would have been effected in the Frisian system of account. Two simultaneous systems of account based on two such closely related coins would have caused confusion. Either one or the other would have been valid at a given place and time. I have the impression that about the middle of the 13th century the genuine English penny was the standard in Mid-Frisia, the Ommelanden<sup>99</sup> and possibly Brokmerland,<sup>100</sup> whereas the imitative English penny dominated in the Yade area (c.1270),<sup>101</sup> the Emden area (c.1250),<sup>102</sup> and Groningen (1258)<sup>103</sup> and its vicinities. It seems, however, that in the last quarter of the 13th century - possibly after the export prohibition of English pennies in 1279 - the genuine English penny lost its hold in the Ommelanden in favour of the imitative penny.<sup>104</sup> This shift may be reflected in the 8th and 9th stages of the Fivelingo wergeld tradition (see above).

There was only a tiny difference in value between the genuine and the imitative sterling in Frisia, but there was a large difference between money of account based on imitative sterlings and brown sterlings respectively. The brown sterlings may have been easily recognised in daily trade. In the documents, however, they are not always as clearly identified as might be expected. Clear examples are found occasionally in Groningen and often in Drenthe and its vicinities, where amounts have been quoted in 'brown English' (Groningen, 1311),<sup>105</sup> *sterlingorum leviorum* (Groningen and Drenthe,

<sup>98</sup> It requires substantial metric research into the long-cross pennies discovered in Frisia to test this supposition. The fineness of the genuine English penny was 0.925; the fineness of the Frisian imitative sterling would theoretically have been 0.822 or c.13/16. (This follows, if the wergeld hypothesis holds, from 16 marks genuine English pennies æ 20 marks imitative Frisian pennies, *i.e.* 16 x 160 x 1.46 x 0.925 æ 20 x 144 x 1.46 x f; hence f = 0.822. See Excursus 5.3: 'On the analysis of the Fivelingo wergeld tradition').

<sup>99</sup> Excursus 5.3: 'On the analysis of the Fivelingo wergeld tradition', stage 8 sub (a) to (d).

<sup>100</sup> Buma, *Das Brokmer Recht*; English money 22-23 (§6b); wergeld 8 marks; see Appendix I.

<sup>101</sup> Buma, *Das Rüstringer Recht*, 80-81 (§12). The marks used in the old statutes of Rüstringen have not been identified with certainty as marks sterling. It is known that the Jever mint was active from 1273 onwards (Kappelhoff, *Münzen*, 47-48). At that time sterling pennies were probably the most attractive coins to replace the worn 'old-Frisian' pennies.

<sup>102</sup> Buma, *Die Brokmer Rechtshandschriften*, 139-142.

<sup>103</sup> The first time an English mark of the 'light' type is mentioned is in a treaty between Groningen and Fivelingo in 1258 (OGD1: 126).

<sup>104</sup> See Appendix I. Yet the use of the genuine penny was not wholly abolished, as appears from a private contract between parties in Fivelingo and the Count of Bentheim in 1323 regarding, among other things, a yearly rent of *quatuor solidorum legalium sterlingorum* (OGD1: 281).

<sup>105</sup> OGD1: 235 (arbitration contract by the Bishop of Utrecht to settle a dispute between his prefect in Groningen and inhabitants of the town).

1328),<sup>106</sup> *nigrorum sterlingorum* (Drenthe, 1325),<sup>107</sup> *denariis nigris* (do.),<sup>108</sup> and brown sterlings (Drenthe, 1327),<sup>109</sup> and perhaps also in *lovensis monete* (Drenthe and Haskerland, 1304),<sup>110</sup> Brabant (sterlings) (Drenthe, 1326)<sup>111</sup> and *brabantinorum denariorum* (Drenthe, 1330).<sup>112</sup> There are unfortunately no reliable data on the silver equivalence of these brown sterlings.

The devaluation of the genuine English penny in 1344-1351, and the import and imitation of larger silver and of gold coins from Flanders and France, marked a change in the story of the Frisian money of account. New standards were emerging.

The foregoing is summarised in the following survey:

<sup>106</sup> MGron: 39 (arbitration contract to settle a dispute between the Bishop of Utrecht and representatives of Groningen and Drenthe).

<sup>107</sup> OGD1: 286 (promise to pay a debt by inhabitants of Norg, Drenthe).

<sup>108</sup> OGD1: 290 (advance money given by Bishop of Utrecht to official investigators of dispute in Drenthe). Brown sterlings or black *deniers* of France?

<sup>109</sup> OGD1: 311 (arbitration contract to settle a dispute between a monastery and locals in Drenthe).

<sup>110</sup> OGD1: 224 (sale of a lot in Groningen).

<sup>111</sup> OGD1: 296 (security promised to Bishop of Utrecht by a few inhabitants of Drenthe).

<sup>112</sup> OGD1: 326 (payment to the agent of the Bishop in Twenthe, Salland and Drenthe).

## Survey of the evolution of the Frisian money of account system

c.1250-c.1350

Period	Standard coin	Equivalence	Unit of acc./multiple units
c.1250/ c.1290	'old-Frisian' penny	c.0.12g/0.04g of silver <sup>113</sup>	1 d. = 1 standard 1 sh = 12 d. 1 mk = 160 d. 1 pound = 240 d. 1 highest d.=20 stdrd 1 highest sh =12 hgh d. 1 highest mk =144 hgh d.
c.1250/ c.1344	genuine Eng- lish penny	c.1.3g of silver	1 d. = 1 standard 1 sh = 12 d. 1 mk = 160 d.
c.1250/ c.1350	Frisian imita- tive sterling	c.1.2g/c.1.0g of silver	1 d. = 1 standard 1 sh = 12 d. 1 mk = 144 d.
c.1280?/ c.1350	brown sterling	?g of silver	1 d. = 1 standard 1 sh = 12 d. 1 mk = 144 d. (?)

### **Economic analysis**

From the survey above, the following changes in the history of the system of money of account in Frisia between c.1250 and c.1350 must be explained:

- The gradual replacement of the 'old-Frisian' penny by the English penny as standard for the Frisian system of money of account in the second half of the 13th century.
- The emergence of a Frisian imitative sterling as standard of the system of account alongside the genuine English penny based system of account.
- The decline of the silver equivalence of the Frisian sterling in the period under consideration.
- The emergence of the low-grade or brown sterling as standard of the system of account in the town of Groningen, Drenthe, and its vicinity.

The gradual replacement of the 'old-Frisian' penny by the English penny as standard for the Frisian system of money of account in the second half of the 13th century was a

<sup>113</sup> OGD1: 177; in 1288, 1 Groningen penny æ (1: 3  $\frac{1}{3}$  sterlings æ 0.04g of silver).

major change in the evolution of the system; but, although the standard changed, the preference for a current coin still in production remained. The explanation is obvious. The worn 'old-Frisian' system was inconvenient in communication and of doubtful value in long-term contracts. At the same time, a new potential standard for a system of account was becoming widely used in the first half of the 13th century, not only in Frisia but also among its trading partners. The English penny was convenient in communication and, moreover, it had a trustworthy reputation. The English Kings did not take substantial profits from their mints, but neither did they subsidise the recoinage. The costs of the regular recoinage had to be borne by their national users. Moreover, they apparently had sufficient monetary authority, since the measures taken to expel old, illegal coins from the currency - to keep the silver equivalence of the unit of account at the level of the new, legal coins for long periods - were rather successful.<sup>114</sup> Notwithstanding the superiority of the English money at that time, social inertia was strong in some places in Frisia, and altogether it would have taken a generation at least for the old system to vanish.

The assumed emergence of a Frisian imitative sterling as standard of the system of account alongside the genuine English penny based system of account also seems obvious, since the supply of imitative English pennies by way of import was already diminishing by the first half of the 13th century whereas demand was growing, presenting a clear challenge for enterprising moneyers in Frisia to start producing imitative sterlings themselves. The imitations are supposed to have had a somewhat lower silver equivalence (c.1.2g) than the genuine English penny (c.1.3g). This might have been due to the fact that the Frisian sterling imitations were intended to substitute the previous Westphalian sterling imitations that might already have experienced a declining silver equivalence.

If my conjecture, given in the previous section, is true, the decline in the silver equivalence of the Frisian imitative sterling during this period varied from region to region.

1. In the extreme east, where its earliest introduction occurred, the sterling coin was initially used as a shilling 'old-Frisian', as we shall see. Although the 'old-Frisian' standard was no longer very convenient, social inertia prevented its abolition for some time. Hence the shilling coin had to follow the decrease of the standard; otherwise it would have been ousted by Gresham's law. This ended in a derivative type of money to be dealt with in the next chapter.

2. Further to the west, it was not its use as a shilling coin but its capability as a separate measure of value that apparently dominated. Here, the imitative Frisian sterlings seized the opportunity of founding a new system of account alongside and in competition with the worn 'old-Frisian' system. The imitative Frisian sterling won the game and became the standard of a new system of account at about the time when it was equivalent to a

<sup>114</sup> Spufford, *Money*, 317-318.

score or an ounce of ‘old-Frisian’ pennies. The silver equivalence of the unit of account of this system remained based on the silver content of this Frisian sterling. As a market controlled currency it would have experienced normal decrease.

3. Finally, in the west of Frisia, the still-dominant genuine English penny replaced the ‘old-Frisian’ system. We can only guess as to whether the preference for the genuine penny was based on its assumed superior trustworthiness. Its convenience as a measure of value would certainly have diminished after the export of English coins was prohibited in 1279, and, consequently, the genuine English pennies could only be supplied illegally.<sup>115</sup> So, in the west the silver equivalence of the unit of account followed the standard determined by the interplay of English governmental interference with the currency and the forces of the exchange market.

The emergence of the low-grade or brown sterling as standard of the system of account in Groningen, Drenthe and its vicinities cannot be clearly explained. There are two possibilities. The first is that the currency in this area was imported from the south. The second is that the various mentions of this type of money of account did not refer to brown sterling coins imported from abroad but were names given to the sterling derivations from Groningen and East Frisia, to be dealt with in the following chapters.

<sup>115</sup> A coin still being produced, but not current (see Chapter 2, section ‘Entrepreneurial creativity’).



