

## CHAPTER 11

### THE PERIOD OF THE ‘NEW-FRISIAN’ PENNY IN THE EMDEN AREA (c.1350 - c.1500)

The 6th Frisian sealand, the western part of East Frisia east of the Ems, is what I have designated ‘the Emden area’. Its money history in the late Middle Ages is the subject of this chapter. After 1464 the main part of this area - Harlingerland was not included<sup>1</sup> - was united and governed in a county called Oistvriesland. It comprised districts such as Emsingo, Brokmerland, Norderland, Aurikerland, Mormerland, Overledingerland and Lengenerland as well as a few smaller districts. As will be shown in the present chapter, the money of Jever was also introduced into the Emden area in or before 1376. After that, the systems of account of Jeverland and the Emden area gradually grew together.

Harlingerland was not joined with the county of Oistvriesland until the end of the 16th century.<sup>2</sup> So it remained an independent district in the Emden area during the period of this study. Nevertheless, the money of account of Oistvriesland is also found in Harlingerland. However, it is not clear which money of account was used in Harlingerland before 1464. A letter from the counsellors of Harlingerland to Lübeck in 1335 mentions a payment for a salvaged shipload of *novem centenaria marcarum nostri ponderis*.<sup>3</sup> About half a century later, in 1379, a letter to Bremen from the priest and *hovetlingen* in Harlingerland quotes amounts in *marcis monete Herlyngye* in connection with the embezzlement of horses.<sup>4</sup> In neither case do we know what money was being referred to - money struck in Harlingerland or money simply used there. So far, there is no numismatic evidence of minting in this East Frisian district. Its standard money might have been imported from one of the bordering Frisian areas, the most likely one being the Emden area since this was definitely the case after 1464.<sup>5</sup>

#### The historical context<sup>6</sup>

In the Emden area, as everywhere in Frisia, the late Middle Ages are characterised by the emergence of the *hovetlingen* after 1350. Among these, the dynasty of the *hovetlingen*

<sup>1</sup> In the treatise on the seven sealands it is grouped as a part of the sealand of the Emden area (RQ, 112).

<sup>2</sup> Borchling, *Die niederdeutschen Rechtsquellen*, VII.

<sup>3</sup> OFU3: 100.

<sup>4</sup> OFU2: 1694 (136a).

<sup>5</sup> Kappelhoff, *Die Münzen*, 52.

<sup>6</sup> Möhlmann, “Schets”, 5-16.

in Brokmerland, the Tom Brokes, succeeded in gaining control over a large part of the area.<sup>7</sup> In trying to expand his power, Ocko I tom Broke (1376-1391) made an agreement with the Count of Holland in 1381. Ocko accepted the Count as his lord and, in return, he received his goods and rights in fief. This was considered a betrayal of the Frisian cause and provoked war with other *hovetlingen*, resulting in his defeat in 1391. But the expansion policy of his son Keno (1391-1417) was more successful. By conquering Emden, the seat of the Abdena *hovetlingen* dynasty, in 1413, he eliminated his principal enemy. At that time Frisia west of the Ems was deeply involved in the faction conflict between the Vetkopers and the Schieringers. Keno supported the Vetkoper faction and, with their help, he succeeded in bringing Groningen and the Ommelanden under his rule.

In the middle of the conflict, in 1417, he died. His son, Ocko II tom Broke (1417-1428), did not remain long in power. In 1428 he was defeated in battle by his former guardian and general Fokko Ukena, *hovetling* in Leer. But Fokko Ukena and his allies were in their turn defeated, in 1433, by a new alliance of local chiefs, headed by Edsard Cirksena, *hovetling* in Greetsiel, and supported by the town of Hamburg. Hamburg conquered Emden in 1433 after decades of provocation by pirates harboured in the town, and occupied it until 1439. During the following decades the Cirksena dynasty came to power by election, marriage and inheritance in Norderland, Brokmerland and Aurikerland, and - after 1455 - in Reiderland, Mormerland, Overledingerland and Lengenerland. Moreover, the Cirksenas administered Emden in the name of Hamburg until 1464. The increasing power of this dynasty posed a threat to the Bishop of Münster as well as the Count of Oldenburg. To prevent a war with them, Ulrik Cirksena used diplomacy. In 1464, he succeeded in acquiring from the Emperor the hereditary title of Count over 'Norden, Emden and Emsingo in Oistvriesland'.<sup>8</sup> His rights nominally covered East Frisia between Westerems and Weser, but the Cirksenas did not exert power in the Yade area. Instead, they tried to co-operate with the Frisians there, again by diplomacy.

When the Emperor appointed the Duke of Saxony as governor over Frisia in 1498, the Count of Oistvriesland did accept this decision, though only for a few years. In 1505, friction between him and the new ruler caused him to end his loyalty, but then a new time had come for Frisia, including the Emden area. This time lies beyond the scope of this study.

<sup>7</sup> Van Lengen, *Geschichte* I, 37-47; Janse, *Grenzen*, 67-69.

<sup>8</sup> OFU1: 807.

## The history of the means of payment

The first late medieval coins struck in the Emden area were pennies struck in Emden. They are numismatically identified as imitations of the Westphalian pennies of Bishop Lewis II of Münster (1310-1357).<sup>9</sup> The Bishop of Münster had acquired the right of mintage in Emden in 1253, having purchased the rights of the count in this area from the dynasty that had previously inherited them.<sup>10</sup> It is not likely that the coins were struck by the Bishop himself; they are more likely to have been struck by the Abdenas, *hovetlingen* who, although they were simultaneously the Bishop's provosts and pre-fects in Emden, were *de facto* independent.<sup>11</sup> It appears that they had leased the Bishop's mintage rights in Emden since 1346.<sup>12</sup> Kappelhoff calls the imitative Münster coins *swaren*. In his view they are the basic units in the coin system of the Emden area,<sup>13</sup> which would have been substituted in the second half of the century by the so-called half-*witten*,<sup>14</sup> categorised in this study as 'new-Frisian' pennies. The Münster pennies proved popular and were imitated in several places in northern Germany between 1350 and 1380.<sup>15</sup> However, even the Emden imitations have hardly been discovered in the Emden area itself.<sup>16</sup> An explanation might be that the Abdenas, as collectors of the Bishop's rents and as masters of his mint, could require that the rents, quoted in Münster money, should be paid with the imitative Münster pennies struck at their mint before being transferred to the treasurer in Münster. It is doubtful whether these pennies played a major role in the home currency. The minting in Münster ended about 1390,<sup>17</sup> and the minting of the Emden imitations was consequently discontinued. Nevertheless the Abdenas tried to keep their mint going. About 1400 - according to Kappelhoff - they anonymously struck coins which were inspired by the French *blancs* in their *borg* at Faldern near Emden.<sup>18</sup> Whether these coins found a solid place in the currency in East Frisia is unknown. *Blancs* are found as late as 1422 in a charter regarding the sale of land to the monastery of Jemgum.<sup>19</sup> A *blanc* at that time was rated at approximately 1/14th of a Guelder guilder (c.1.0g of silver<sup>20</sup>).

<sup>9</sup> Kappelhoff, *Die Münzen*, 85.

<sup>10</sup> OFU1: 25.

<sup>11</sup> Van Lengen, *Geschichte*, 198 ff.

<sup>12</sup> Kappelhoff, *Die Münzen*, 32; 52; 85-88.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, 78.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, 87.

<sup>15</sup> Berghaus, "Abriß", 813-815.

<sup>16</sup> Kappelhoff, *Die Münzen*, 266.

<sup>17</sup> Ilisch, *Die mittelalterliche Münzprägung*, 121.

<sup>18</sup> Kappelhoff, *Die Münzen*, 103-104. Kappelhoff rejects the opinion of Van Lengen, *Geschichte*, 215, who assigns these *blancs* of Faldern to Wiard of Uphusen, and dates them at around 1440. Kappelhoff dates them on numismatic grounds at around 1400 and assigns them to the Abdenas of Emden, who had a *borg* in nearby Faldern.

<sup>19</sup> OFU1: 313.

<sup>20</sup> Ditto: *den gulden tho reken vor 14 blancken*. In the same year 1422 a (light) guilder in Groningen was equivalent to 10 old *vleemse groten* (GAG KFH: 152 r17), i.e. 10 x c.1.37g = c.13.7g of silver; hence 1 *blanc*  $\approx$  1/14 x c.13.7g = c.1.0g of silver.

By far the largest part of the hoards discovered in the Emden area, buried in the second half of the 14th century, consists of *tornoyse groten*.<sup>21</sup> Their use as means of payment is confirmed in one of the scarce documents of this period.<sup>22</sup> Initially these coins were a denomination of 3 pennies in the sterling-based system of money of account (see Chapter 6), and their circulation might reflect this origin. However, since the silver content of the original French specimens, as well as the Frisian imitations, was severely debased after 1329 - as we have seen in Chapter 7 - they must have lost their place in the sterling currency system. They may instead have found a place in the 'new-Frisian' currency system as a sixpence denomination, gaining ground steadily as the sterling coins gradually disappeared from circulation.

We have already met the 'new-Frisian' currency as Oistringen money in the Yade area; see Chapter 10. About 1360/1370 a similar currency system emerged in Groningen; see Chapter 12. Hence, the minting of the Abdenas had to meet competition not only from the Jever mint but also from the Groningen mint. Obviously their antagonists, the expansionist *hovetlingen* in Brokmerland - the Tom Brokes - seized the opportunity. The Tom Brokes began minting in the Emden area alongside the Abdenas. However, in their own district of Brokmerland, they turned to the Frisian indigenous coins. Whether they did so before Ocko I succeeded his father in 1376 we do not know.<sup>23</sup> The coins were shaped like the Oistringen penny and its denominations at that time, with an initial silver equivalence of c.0.4g.<sup>24</sup> It was not only these 'new-Frisian' Brokmer pennies and denominations that were issued by the Tom Brokes; it is possible that they also issued *groten*, though no specimens of so-called Ocko-*groten* have been identified so far.<sup>25</sup> It

<sup>21</sup> Berghaus, "Die ostfriesische Münzfunde", 49-51; Kennepohl, "Beiträge", 22.

<sup>22</sup> OFU1: 113 (1370, theft including 12 marks *tornoyse groten* from monastery Langen).

<sup>23</sup> Kappelhoff, *Die Münzen*, 98-99, believes that the King (Wenceslaus) might have granted the mintage right to Ocko I tom Broke when he was appointed *capitaneus generalis* over almost the whole of East Frisia, but there is no evidence. Mintage rights in Frisia were not a usual or necessary condition for operating a mint, as we have seen in previous centuries, but Kappelhoff not only assumes, that Ocko acquired the mintage right in East Frisia; he also suggests that consequently the mintage right of the Abdenas in Emden were revoked, on the grounds that coins from Emden are lacking during Ocko's rule. I think it is very unlikely that the rights of mintage in Emden, legally founded centuries before, would have been withdrawn without leaving traces. Obviously the minting of Münster pennies in Emden stopped because it had ended in Münster itself, but in its place, the minting of *blancs* was undertaken. Hence I disagree with Kappelhoff's claim that the Abdenas carried on the minting of *blancs* by stealth while the ruling Tom Broke, Keno, was held captive in Bremen. Their mintage rights were not disturbed. As I see it, they had to change from the ousted imitative Münster penny to the *blancs* because, from a business point of view, they had no choice.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, 100: According to a material analysis the silver content of one single so-called *witte* of Ocko I tom Broke, calculated on the basis of the average gross weight of 1.03g for the type, was c.0.77g. This gross weight matches the assumed oldest type of Brokmer *witten* (*ibidem*, 267, no. 12). Hence a half-*witte*  $\approx \frac{1}{2} \times 0.77g = 0.38g$  silver.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, 107-108. An Ocko-*grote* in the Ommelanden is mentioned in the synodal statutes of Loppersum of 1424 (RQ, 315). Loppersum, like Emden, belonged to the bishopric of Münster. Although the

seems that in the 1380s, Ocko I also seized the mint in Oistringen (see Chapter 10) for coins have been discovered that were struck in Jever and which bear the arms of the Tom Brokes.<sup>26</sup> The change in the currency of the Emden area would not have occurred all at once; we must assume that the ‘new-Frisian’ money infiltrated the currency from c.1360 onwards. The Brokmer penny of Ocko I was mentioned in 1376, as we have seen. In 1413 Emden was conquered by the son of Ocko I, Keno tom Broke.<sup>27</sup> By then the Abdena family had had to flee, and the Emden mint might have been closed for some time.

However, the power of the Tom Brokes was also broken in 1428. The period of changing rule in East Frisia that followed is reflected in the minting. First, the *hovetling* in Leer, Fokko Ukena, struck so-called *witten* and *groten* in his home district of Mormerland and possibly also in Emsingo (Jennelt?).<sup>28</sup> His son, *hovetling* in Norderland, coined imitations of various types of guilders.<sup>29</sup> The Abdenas, allied to Fokko Ukena, returned to power in 1427 and resumed minting in Emden of so-called *witten*, of *groten* and, after c.1430, of *kromsterten*.<sup>30</sup> When, in 1433, Fokko Ukena and his allies were in their turn defeated by a new alliance of *hovetlingen*, led by Cirksenas and supported by the town of Hamburg, that town took over the local minting in conquered Emden. In the decades which followed, the Cirksenas came to power in almost all of the Emden area. They continued the minting in Norderland for some time. They administered Emden in the name of Hamburg until 1464 and also continued the minting there.

Gold coins were a substantial part of the currency in the Emden area. Old French *écus* and various kinds of florins have been discovered in hoards.<sup>31</sup> They are also mentioned in documents after 1370,<sup>32</sup> as are *rins*guilders after 1400.<sup>33</sup> The light guilders - presum-

Ommelanden used the old English money of account (see Chapter 9: ‘The history of the measure of value’), the financial relationship with the bishopric usually used Münster money of account, as we have seen. In this case - regarding tithes - the statutes state that (in 1424) a Münster penny was held to be equivalent to an Ocko *grote* (or to a lamb!). Minting in Münster was resumed in 1424, the same year that the statutes of Loppersum were established, but the statutes were established during Lent whereas the minting in Münster was resumed at the end of the year at the earliest (Ilisch, *Die mittelalterliche Münzprägung*, 121). Hence the new Münster pennies from 1424 onwards cannot have been the ones referred to in the statutes. The quotation, then, concerns the antique Münster pennies struck in or before 1390, but as the tithe may date from any time before, we do not know their silver equivalence.

<sup>26</sup> Kappelhoff, *Die Münzen*, 98-99.

<sup>27</sup> Emmius/Reeken, *Friesische Geschichte II*, 259.

<sup>28</sup> Kappelhoff, *Die Münzen*, 110-113: among others MONETA DE MOER (Mormerland, MONETA GENELDI (Jennelt?).

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*, 113.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*, 110.

<sup>31</sup> Kennepohl, “Beiträge”, 22; Berghaus, “Die ostfriesische Münzfunde”, 53-57.

<sup>32</sup> OFU1: 113 (1370, monastery Langen).

<sup>33</sup> OFU1: 177 (1400, Grimersum).

ably from Arnhem - are found after 1408<sup>34</sup> (explicitly after 1421<sup>35</sup>), and sometimes, after 1433, the *postulatus* guilders of Utrecht are also mentioned.<sup>36</sup> In addition, though less frequently, other kinds of guilders imported from abroad have been recorded. Gold guilders were also minted in the Emden area. This started in Norden, during the rule of Fokko Ukena (1427-1433), with a gold content c.4% higher than that of the *rins*guilder,<sup>37</sup> but it was a short-lived experiment. It was continued after 1435 in Emden, by then administered by the Cirksenas for Hamburg - which itself had the right to mint gold coins. Although the Emden guilders appeared to be imitations of the *rins*guilders, their gold content was 9% lower than that of the *rins*guilder.<sup>38</sup>

At last, in 1464, the Cirksenas became Counts of Oistvriesland, as we have seen. From then onwards they ruled the minting. Therefore, instead of 'currency in the Emden area', I now refer to their money as 'Oistvriesian currency'. This political change had no immediate, far-reaching monetary consequences.<sup>39</sup> The existent minting was continued. A new type of coin is known to date from the time of the first Count, Ulrik Cirksena (1454-1466); this is the Emden *grote*.<sup>40</sup> It was modelled after the Groningen *vlieger*, a Frisian competitor of the Burgundian *stuver*.<sup>41</sup>

After 1477 the Oistvriesian coins depreciated quickly because they had to keep up with the coins from neighbouring Groningen, which - in its turn - had to meet the enhanced competition with the worsening coinage in Burgundy (during the so-called *guerre monétaire* between the mints of Burgundy and these bordering countries<sup>42</sup>). When, after some efforts, this depreciation process was at last halted in Burgundy, in 1491, a reform of the currency was needed and was made. The 1491 monetary resolution by the Count of Oistvriesland was the first of its kind in Frisia. It is discussed below. Under its terms the monetary standards in Oistvriesland and in Groningen were apparently adjusted to one another. In the same year the mint in Jever followed their example, and in 1502 even Oldenburg joined.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>34</sup> OFU1: 214 (1408, Aurik).

<sup>35</sup> OFU3: 322 (1421, in Harlingerland).

<sup>36</sup> OFU1: 415 (1433, Larrelt); OFU3: 469 (1450, Middelsum).

<sup>37</sup> Kappelhoff, *Die Münzen*, 113, assumes that the coins were struck from seized gold rather than in regular mint operation.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*, 114-116 (fineness 0.722 versus 0.792).

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*, 118-133.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*, 122. Kappelhoff identifies these coins unjustly as old *vleemsen*, mentioned once in the statutes of Emden that were issued by the count in 1465.

<sup>41</sup> See Chapter 12. Spufford, *Monetary Problems*, 125: In 1474 the Duke of Burgundy banned, among others, the new pieces being issued in 'Oostfrize'. Spufford ascribes these pieces to Leeuwarden, Bolsward, Sneek and Groningen, but they might actually include the coins of Oistvriesland.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibidem*, 74-129.

<sup>43</sup> Kappelhoff, *Die Münzen*, 129: The monetary co-ordination between Oldenburg and Groningen was formalised by a treaty in 1503.



The minting of gold guilders in Emden continued after the Cirksenas had become Counts of Oistvriesland. From 1486 onwards, Emden guilders are mentioned; they were officially equivalent to *rins*guilders.<sup>44</sup> Their gold content seems to have been somewhat less than the genuine (*overlandsche*) *rins*guilder;<sup>45</sup> the Hanseatic towns that assembled in Lübeck in 1487 complained about the bad guilder (*quaden gulden*) minted by the Countess of Oistvriesland.<sup>46</sup> In the 1502 monetary treaty between Oldenburg and Groningen, the ‘Frisian guilder’ was valued at 11% below the *rins*guilder,<sup>47</sup> and in the monetary regulation by the Count of Oistvriesland,<sup>48</sup> in 1507,<sup>49</sup> old Emden and old Groningen guilders were valued at 16% below the *rins*guilder and the new Emden and Groningen guilders.

### The history of the measure of value

In the 13th century and the first half of the 14th century, the English penny was standard for the unit of account in the Emden area as in the other sealands. After the middle of the 14th century the English penny gradually disappeared from the currency in many parts of Frisia, and the Emden area would have been no different. The use of sterlings as money of account in the revenue register of the chapter of the cathedral of Münster, concerning property in Filsum and Hesele at the beginning of the 15th century, seems to have been one of the last examples.<sup>50</sup> The question of how the unit of account developed in the second half of the 14th century, however, is not easily answered.

There are only a few documents concerning money of account in the Emden area during that period. Most of them refer simply to ‘marks’, or ‘current marks’, or *bone monete*.<sup>51</sup> In a 1367 treaty between Emsingo and Norderland on the one hand and Bremen on the other, amounts in sterling are mentioned alongside Bremen money.<sup>52</sup> Amounts in the registers of revenues from properties in Mormerland to the bishopric of Münster are also expressed in sterling money,<sup>53</sup> but transactions with the bishopric<sup>54</sup> and between

<sup>44</sup> OFU2: 1168.

<sup>45</sup> Kappelhoff, *Die Münzen*, 126.

<sup>46</sup> OFU3: 623.

<sup>47</sup> OLA STADT OLDENBURG: BEST. 20. URKUNDEN: ORTE OLDENBURG 1502.

<sup>48</sup> Kappelhoff, *Die Münzen*, 239-240.

<sup>49</sup> Kappelhoff dates the regulation after Emmius in 1506, but a contemporary source has 1507: GAG: RF ms. in folio 21, 301v.

<sup>50</sup> OFU3: 190.

<sup>51</sup> OFU1: 92 (1360, benefaction to monastery Langen) and OFU1: 142 (1381, conveyance of land to the same monastery). In these last cases the amounts were quoted in *schilden* reckoned at 5 shillings *bone monete* and in marks *bone monete*, respectively. This might have been Münster money, but it might have been sterling as well.

<sup>52</sup> OFU1: 107.

<sup>53</sup> OFU3: 171 (14th century, after 1336); OFU3: 190 (beginning 15th century).

<sup>54</sup> OFU3: 140, 141 (1387, debenture from the Bishop of Münster to the *hovetling* of Brokmerland); OFU1: 193 (1404, tributes to the bishopric).

monasteries<sup>55</sup> are made in Münster money. Since imitative Münster pennies were struck by the Abdenas in Emden during the second half of the 14th century, it has been suggested that Münster money had become the unit of account in the area,<sup>56</sup> but there is no confirmation. Münster pennies could have been used to represent sterlings as standard for the unit of account since initially the silver content of the Emden variant of the Münster penny seems to have been very close to that of the Frisian sterling. About 1330 this still had a silver equivalence of c.1.0g, as we have seen.<sup>57</sup> The average gross weight of the genuine Münster pennies between 1330 and 1380 is known - it declined from 1.1g to 0.9g - but their fineness, and hence their silver equivalence, is not.<sup>58</sup> It is more likely that the use of Münster money of account in the Emden area was restricted to the world of the clergy.

A few documents after 1360 have amounts quoted in marks 'usual money'.<sup>59</sup> At that time, not only Oistringens pennies would have been circulating occasionally in the Emden area; so also would the probably equivalent Groningen *payement*; see chapter 12. The use of the expression *usualis monete* (the term for local money in the Ommelanden as we have seen) in a few post 1360 documents suggests that 'new-Frisian' pennies were also in use in the Emden area. That was before Ocko I tom Broke, whose Brokmer pennies with the shape of the Jever coins have been discovered, came to power. It seems that as early as 1376, the year he succeeded his father as *hovetling* over Brokmerland, this 'new' Brokmer money had come into use; in December of that year a chapel in Dykhusen (in Emsingo<sup>60</sup>) was conveyed to the Augustinian nuns of Reide for an amount in *novem marcis currentis monete*,<sup>61</sup> and one of the persons proposing this transaction was Ocko I tom Broke. It is tempting to interpret these 'new marks', used by Ocko himself, as marks of his own Brokmer money.<sup>62</sup> The silver content of a single

<sup>55</sup> OFU1: 84 (1358, mortgage from monastery Ulgersweer to monastery Langen, amount in *schilden*, reckoned at 5  $\frac{1}{2}$  shillings of Münster money or equivalent payment each).

<sup>56</sup> Kappelhoff, *Die Münzen*, 78.

<sup>57</sup> Chapter 6, 'The history of the measure of value'.

<sup>58</sup> Ilisch, *Die mittelalterliche Münzprägung*, 10-11.

<sup>59</sup> OFU1: 91 (1360, education payment from a civilian in Emden to the monastery of Langen; curiously, among the witnesses were members of the Abdena family); OFU1: 106 (1368, purchase of land by this monastery).

<sup>60</sup> Van Lengen, *Geschichte*, 37-38: Dykhusen is situated in Emsingo. The parish of Dykhusen belonged to the mansion of Visquard. Some rights in this mansion were inherited by Ocko I of Brokmerland.

<sup>61</sup> OFU2: 1692.

<sup>62</sup> The use of Brokmer pennies in December 1376 seems early if Ocko I started minting these. When his father died, apparently suddenly in 1376, Ocko was in Italy at the court of Queen Joan I of Naples. According to tradition (Emmius/Reeken, *Friesische Geschichte*, 213) he was one of her many lovers, and he did not return immediately. When he was at home, other affairs than starting his own minting must have required his attention. Also according to tradition, the Queen of Naples would have struck coins named after him ('Boyocken pennies'; Hahn, *Eggerik Beninga I*, 232). Obviously this is very unlikely, but as Ocko is known as a frivolous man, the story may mockingly refer to his interest in coins bearing his name.



Brokmer penny from 1376 or a little after has tentatively been calculated at somewhat below 0.4g.<sup>63</sup> Taking the uncertainties surrounding this figure into account, it matches the figure of the ‘new-Frisian’ money (‘usual money’) of a few years before (1371) already found in the Ommelanden.<sup>64</sup> In the town of Emden itself, the ‘new-Frisian’ penny was probably already the penny of account before 1413, when the town was conquered by the Tom Brokes and the Brokmer penny presumably became legalised as standard; in 1409 Hisko Abdena, *hovetling* and also prefect and provost of Emden, promised the Bishop of Münster the payment of a yearly tax of 1 *korte grote* for each house in Emden.<sup>65</sup> The *korte grote* did not belong to the Westphalian but to the ‘new-Frisian’ system of money of account. Kappelhoff assumed the *korte grote* to be a unit equivalent to 2 *witten*, hence to 4 so-called half-*witten*<sup>66</sup> (‘new-Frisian’ pennies). This would reflect a position similar to that of the *korte grote* in Groningen before 1394. There, in c.1360, 1 old *korte grote* was equivalent to 4 pennies in Groningen *payement*. But we do not know what coin is being referred to as ‘*korte grote*’.<sup>67</sup> After 1394 the *korte grote* in Groningen was the shilling of the Groningen system of account and an alternative name for the old *vleemse grote*; it had a legal silver equivalence of c.1.4g. However, it is unlikely that it had also by then become a shilling in the system of account in the Emden area, where the depreciation of the money in the last decades of the 14th century was probably less than in Groningen; see next chapter. The place of the *korte grote* in the ‘new-Frisian’ system of money of account in the Emden area has not yet been determined, but Kappelhoff’s assumption that it was valued at 4 pennies (so-called half-*witten*) seems acceptable.

The next piece of information regarding value of the money of account dates from a period after the rule of the Tom Brokes. From a sales contract of land in 1429, we know that 6 shillings of Ocko were equivalent to 1 guilder.<sup>68</sup> From the rates of a guilder in Groningen in the same year, it follows that 1 Ocko shilling must have been equivalent to 2 *butkens*; that is, c.1.9g of silver.<sup>69</sup> This is interesting because, in Groningen, that was also the silver equivalence of the *butdrager*, the coin which, after 1427/1434, came to represent the revalued shilling in Groningen *payement*. There can be little doubt that

<sup>63</sup> If an initial Brokmer *witte* contained c.0.77g silver (see ‘The history of the means of payment’), a Brokmer penny (the so-called half *witte*) would contain c.0.38g.

<sup>64</sup> Chapter 9, ‘The history of the measure of value’.

<sup>65</sup> OFU1: 219.

<sup>66</sup> Kappelhoff, *Die Münzen*, 78.

<sup>67</sup> Chapter 12, ‘The history of the measure of value’.

<sup>68</sup> OFU1: 379 (1429, Nesse).

<sup>69</sup> This might refer to either of two kinds of guilder: the Rhineguilder and the Arnhem guilder. Usually, if it is a Rhineguilder, this is made explicit in the quotation. In 1429, an (Arnhem) guilder was valued in Groningen at 12 *butkens* (see Appendix II). In 1428/1429 a *butken* was valued at c.0.95g of silver (see Chapter 12, ‘The history of the measure of value’). So an Ocko shilling  $\text{æ} (12 : 6) = 2 \text{ butkens} \text{ æ} 2 \times \text{c.0.95g} = \text{c.1.9g}$  of silver.

the Yade area *payement*, the Emden area *payement* and the Groningen *payement* were almost equivalent at that time. As the Ocko shilling had a silver equivalence of about 1.9g it follows that a penny must have had a silver equivalence of c.1.9g : 12 = c.0.16g. As the previous piece of information we had concerning the possible silver content of a penny in the Emden area was as far back as about 1380 - c.0.4g - the silver equivalence of the unit of account must have been reduced by over c.0.2g in half a century. Unfortunately, the Ocko shilling has not yet been identified numismatically. It may have been the name of a coin but, as there is no evidence, we can consider it only as a multiple unit: a shilling = 12 pennies of Ocko; that is, Brokmer pennies.

After the rule of the Tom Brokes until 1427, and the rule of Fokko Ukena until 1433, came the period of the Cirksenas, which was to last until the 18th century. The existing money of account system in the Emden area remained, only to be adapted to circumstances. In the 1430s a new coin, originating in Flanders, became a popular component of the currency of the Emden area: the *kromstert*. From later sources<sup>70</sup> it appears to have been valued at 4 *witten* = 8 pennies. If this valuation was the original conventional one - which would not have been unusual - this would imply 8/12th of an Ocko shilling or  $8/12 \times c.1.9g = c.1.3g$  silver equivalence in the 1430s. The silver content of the last *kromstert* issued in Flanders in 1432 was c.1.5g.<sup>71</sup> Therefore the imitation in the Emden area must have had a somewhat lower silver content. The *kromstert* would soon have become a dominating element in the system of account since it had already been incorporated as a multiple unit in 1438, as appears from the evolution of the *arens*guilder.<sup>72</sup>

A new multiple unit had come into existence, based on the *kromstert*: this was the Arnhem guilder, known as the *arens*guilder. This unit originated from a gold coin, the light guilder struck in Arnhem. Initially this guilder had an exchange rate of about 15 *kromsterten*.<sup>73</sup> As this rate was convenient, it soon became a convention: an '*arens*guilder' was reckoned at 15 *kromsterten* - *viftein krumstert vor ene arensch gulden, gewoeneheit van oldes in der kopenschup* (= 'fifteen *kromsterten* to one *arens*guilder as usual of old in trade').<sup>74</sup> It follows that this guilder had become a 'present silver money based multiple unit of account'. Since a guilder in Groningen was valued at 13.7g of silver in 1450, it follows that at that time a *stadkromstert* had a silver equivalence of

<sup>70</sup> Kappelhoff, *Die Münzen*, 237-239: monetary regulation of Oistvriesland in 1491. See the sequel.

<sup>71</sup> Van der Wee, *Vlaams-brabantse muntstatistieken*, 59.

<sup>72</sup> See Appendix II. First mention as multiple unit of account found in Ness, a guilder being equivalent to 15 *kromsterten* (OFU1: 502).

<sup>73</sup> See Appendix II: Nesse, 1438; Larrelt 1449; Uttum, 1450, Loqwerd, 1458.

<sup>74</sup> Kappelhoff, *Die Münzen*, 238 (money regulation of the Count of Oistvriesland between 1490 and 1492). We find clear examples of what I have called a 'present silver money based multiple unit of account' (Chapter 7, 'The history of the measure of value'); for instance: *acht Arensgulden sylvergheldes, ghemuntet voer data s bryeves* (OFU2: 1283 (1491, Walsum)).

13.7g : 15 = c.0.9g.<sup>75</sup> Assuming that market forces kept the silver equivalence of similar coins on both sides of the Ems in balance, this silver equivalence would also have been valid in the Emden area. This is also roughly in accordance with the silver equivalence of a *kromstert* at c.0.96g, derived from the rate of a *rinsguilder* in Harlingerland in 1450.<sup>76</sup> It seems that the *kromstert* became the standard for the system of money of account in the Emden area, worth 8 pennies. Consequently the *kromstert* became the coin on which the Emden mark was based. At the outset, the mark, being equivalent to 12 Ocko shillings, had a rate of 18 *kromsterten*. After the emergence of the *kromstert* as the standard coin, the mark remained equivalent to 18 *kromsterten*. This is confirmed by information concerning the last decades of the century.<sup>77</sup> It follows that about 1450 the unit of account, the penny, was valued at nearly 0.12g of silver.<sup>78</sup>

Whether the Ocko shilling was still in use at that time we do not know, but in the second half of the 15th century the Emden *grote* (see above) was apparently used as shilling coin, since a mark was then valued at 12 *groten*.<sup>79</sup> It was struck after the model of the Groningen *stadvlieger* with a silver equivalence of c.1.4g.<sup>80</sup> The Groningen model was struck from 1454, but the first mention of the Emden *grote* is found in 1481, in the statutes of the bargemen's guild in Emden.<sup>81</sup> Hitherto 15 *kromsterten* had been reckoned at 1 guilder; now an *arens*guilder was also valued at 10 Emden *groten*.

Meanwhile, alongside the mark and the *arens*guilder, yet another new unit emerged. The apparently convenient rate of 24 *groten* to the *rins*guilder became a conventional multiple unit of account. So, this new multiple unit was equivalent to 2 marks. Because *rins*guilders were quoted in the documents as money of account - valued at the amount of a silver based denominator - and as real gold coins, the first were sometimes quali-

<sup>75</sup> GAG PK: 517 r131: 1 guilder æ 1 lot of fine silver = 13.7g of silver (see Excursus 12.2: 'On the meaning of a lot of silver in Groningen'. In Groningen a guilder had become a multiple unit equivalent to 15 *stadkromsterten*, i.e. *kromsterten* struck by the town (see in 1439: GAG PK: 256 r84). It may be concluded that 1 *stadkromstert* æ 1/15 x 13.7g = 0.91g of silver. In Groningen too the *kromstert* was reckoned at 8 pennies *payment* (1454: RAG OCG: 9). See also Appendix II.

<sup>76</sup> OFU1: 632 (1450, Dornum): 1 *rins*guilder reckoned at 32 *kromsterten*; 1 *rins*guilder æ c.30.7g of silver (Jesse, *Der wendische Münzverein*, 217), hence 1 *kromstert* 1/32 x 30.7g = 0.96g. The *rins*guilder referred to, however, might have been the somewhat lighter imitation of Emden (see 'The history of the means of payment').

<sup>77</sup> From the money ordinance of the Count of Oistvriesland in 1491 (see the sequel) it appears that between Easter 1483 and the end of 1491 the proportion between the number of *kromsterten* for the *arn*seguilder and for the Emden mark was systematically 1 : 1.2, in other words 15 : 18. It follows that the Emden mark was, in all likelihood, also a multiple unit of 18 *kromsterten* before 1483; that is, 1 mark æ 18 *kromsterten* = 18 x 8 pennies.

<sup>78</sup> c.0.92g : 8 = c.0.115g.

<sup>79</sup> OFU3: 631 (1488, Emden).

<sup>80</sup> Chapter 12, 'The history of the measure of value'. Kappelhoff, *Die Münzen*, 119 has confused the Emden *grote* (c.1.4g silver equivalence) with the old *vleemse* (c.1.2g silver equivalence or less).

<sup>81</sup> OFU3: 596.

fied as *coepmans rins*- (or gold) guilders<sup>82</sup> and the last as *enckelde rins* (or gold-) guilders.<sup>83</sup> Also many quotations in gold-based guilders of account are found. In commercial transactions this gold-based system of account, based mainly on the genuine (*overlandsche*) *ringsgulder*, would have been in use alongside the dominant silver based system.

Furthermore this theme was repeated. The silver equivalence of the Emden shilling (Emden *grote*) was already lower than the Ocko shilling, as we have seen. Also, like that of its model in Groningen after 1472, this silver equivalence was declining. Between 1483 and 1491 the silver coins depreciated drastically all over western Europe (during the so-called *guerre monétaire*; see previous section) including of course the Emden area. The depreciation of 50% during those 8 years is shown in table D below. In this period the decrease of silver equivalence of the *groten* was anticipated in some long-term contracts quoted in *arens*guilders. The *arens*gulder, which was in fact a multiple unit of 10 *groten*, was rated at 11<sup>84</sup> or 11  $\frac{1}{2}$ <sup>85</sup> *groten*, apparently because the *groten* were expected to have a lower value in the future than they had at the time of making the contract.

At the end of 1491, the Count of Oistvriesland tried to restore the value of the currency and the system of money of account by decree. Old coins were withdrawn; new coins were introduced and valued in terms of foreign money, and a system for determining how old debts quoted in the withdrawn money should be paid in the new money was established.<sup>86</sup> Before this monetary regulation, 1 Emden mark was represented by 12 Emden *groten*. Under the new regulation, the *stuver* was granted the same place in the new coin system as the Emden *grote* had occupied in the old one. Consequently, after 1491 a mark was represented by 12 *stivers*. The new *kromstert* became the standard coin as the old *kromstert* had been. The new *stuver* was valued at 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  *kromsterten*. The aim was that this new *stuver* should be equivalent to a new Groningen *stuver* with a

<sup>82</sup> OFU2: 1256 (1489, Emden). Also with this multiple unit we find clear cases of ‘present silver money based guilders of account’, for example: *vijff Arensgulden gerekent voer enen enckelen golden gulden, ende tyen Emden groten, gemuntet voer data des bryves, gerekent voer enen Arensgulden*. A very clear case is found in OFU2: 1272 (1490, Westerhusen, ... *die dertyen syn geweest sylverghelt, vijff Arensgulden gerekent voer enen enckelen golden gulden, ende tyen Emden groten, gemuntet voer data des bryves, gerekent voer enen Arensgulden, ende die seven ende veertich hebben geweest enckele golden Rynsche gulden ...* Clear examples of ‘future silver money based guilders’ are found less often: in OFU1: 268 we have *tyen dusent Rynsche gulden off payment aen gelde, dat daer goet voer is* (1419, monastery Langen).

<sup>83</sup> OFU1: 702 (1456, Emden), OFU2: 1384 (1494, Twyxlum). At the end of the century a significant difference had emerged between the *coepmans ringsgulder* and the *enckelde ringsgulder*: the first was by then 36 *kromsterten*, and the last was up to 75 *kromsterten* in 1490 and even to 82  $\frac{1}{2}$  *kromsterten* in 1491 (Kappelhoff, *Die Münzen*, 122).

<sup>84</sup> OFU2: 1138, 1139 (1484, Groothusen).

<sup>85</sup> OFU2: 1156 (1485, Emden).

<sup>86</sup> Kappelhoff, *Die Münzen*, 237-239; see also 124.

silver equivalence of approximately 1.3g.<sup>87</sup> It follows that the *kromstert* had a silver equivalence of c.0.86g. This result can be checked against another rate given in the decree: 24 *stuvers* were equivalent to 1 *rinsguilder*.<sup>88</sup> Apparently this referred to a genuine (Emden) *rinsguilder* because dealing in *rinsguldern* at a higher rate than the Emden guilder was prohibited, regardless of where they might have been minted.<sup>89</sup> The values of the old and the new multiple units of account are shown in the reconstructed figures in table D.

**Table D Silver equivalencies of multiple units of account in Oistvriesland between 1482 and 1492**

| period               | (in g) <sup>90</sup> |                     |                  |            |       |
|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|------------|-------|
|                      | <i>kromstert</i>     | <i>grote/stuver</i> | <i>arens-gld</i> | Emden mark | penny |
| before Easter 1483:  | 0.69                 | 1.03                | 10.32 (12)       | 12.38 (.)  | 0.086 |
| Easter 1483 - 1486:  | 0.57                 | 0.86                | 8.60 (10)        | 10.32 (12) | 0.072 |
| 1486 - Easter 1488:  | 0.52                 | 0.77                | 7.74 (9)         | 9.46 (11)  | 0.066 |
| E.1488 - Pntcst'91:  | 0.43                 | 0.65                | 6.45 (7.5)       | 7.74 (9)   | 0.054 |
| Pntcst'91 - end'91 : | 0.34                 | 0.52                | 5.16 (6)         | 6.45 (7.5) | 0.045 |
| end'91 :             | 0.86                 | 1.29                | 12.90 (15)       | 15.48 (.)  | 0.108 |

The low rate of the *kromstert* in 1482 is confirmed in a document of that year, giving a silver equivalence of c.0.66g.<sup>91</sup> Similarly, the declining rate of the *grote* from 0.65g to 0.52g is confirmed in a document of 1490: 1 *grote* æ 0.61g of silver.<sup>92</sup>

<sup>87</sup> Chapter 12, 'The history of the means of payment'; my calculation differs from that of Van Gelder, "Laat-middeleeuwse munten", 33.

<sup>88</sup> In Lübeck the silver equivalence of the *rinsguilder* at the end of 1491 was c.30.5g (Jesse, *Der wendische Münzverein*, 219). Since the decree specifies that 24 *stuvers* æ 1 *rinsguilder*, it must have been supposed that 1 *stuver* æ c.30.5g : 24 = c.1.3g of silver. Consequently a new *kromstert* æ  $\frac{2}{3}$  x 1.29g = 0.86g; see previous footnote.

<sup>89</sup> Kappelhoff, *Die Münzen*, 238:.... *Item noch gebeden wy ernstlich unde strengelichen allen inwohners dußes landes (ofte) copmann van binnen ofte van bueten, alle Rinsche golden gulden, de tho der werde, waer de ovk gemuntet sint, uthgeven noch upboeren, hemelick noch openbaer, hogher dan 35 (36?) unser nye Krumsterten, by ener poena van tein golden Rinschen Gulden und verluet des geldes ahn beiden zyden. .... [i.e. Also we seriously and severely order all inhabitants of this country (or) domestic or foreign merchant, that all Rhinish gold guilders be valued, no matter where they are minted, in payment nor in receipt, secretly nor publicly, at more than 35 (36?) of our new *kromsterten*, on penalty of ten gold *rinsguldern* and seizure of the money from both parties.]*

<sup>90</sup> The reconstruction is based on the calculated silver equivalence of the new *kromstert* - 0.86g, see above - and on the amounts of new *kromsterten* equivalent to the old *arnseguldern* or Emden marks respectively - i.e. the amounts between the brackets - as mentioned in the ordinance of 1491.

<sup>91</sup> OFU2: 1091 (1482, Dornum): 1 *rinsguilder* æ 46 *kromsterten*. Jesse, *Der wendische Münzverein*, 219: 1 *rinsguilder* æ 30.5g of silver. Hence 1 *kromstert* æ c.30.5g : 46 = c.0.66g.

According to the decree, a new *kromstert* represented 4 *witten*. This is the first time a *witte* is mentioned in the Emden area system of money of account. It follows that the *stuver* - the shilling in the system - counted 6 *witten*. As a shilling represents 12 pennies, this implies that a penny was equivalent to  $\frac{1}{2}$  *witte*. It is possible that this had been the place of the *witte* in the Emden area money of account system for a long time. If so, this would confirm that the penny of the Emden area system of account originated in the so-called half-*witten*, the ‘new-Frisian’ pennies that had been introduced in the second half of the previous century in Brokmerland, shaped like the Oistringenn penny from Jever.

Soon after the monetary regulation of 1491, the silver content of the coins declined again. In 1497, 1501 and 1505, a genuine *rinsguilder* was valued at 38<sup>93</sup>, 39 and 40 new *kromsterten* respectively.<sup>94</sup> This was not due to the *rinsguilder*, which had a stable silver equivalence until 1501 (c.30.5g) and an even lower one in 1506 (c.27.1g).<sup>95</sup>

The link between the Oistvriesian and the Groningen money systems was broken in 1498 when Groningen had to devalue its money drastically for fiscal reasons as a consequence of the new political situation.<sup>96</sup> In that year the Duke of Saxony had become *gubernator* and *potestas* all over Frisia. As we have seen, he was initially accepted by the Count of Oistvriesland but resisted by Groningen. Trying to subdue Groningen, the Saxon ruler laid siege to the town in 1505, though without success. At that time the Count of Oistvriesland had broken with the new *gubernator*. He sided with the town, and Groningen accepted him as its lord. During his rule over Groningen, he tried to establish a new money system for Groningen as well as Oistvriesland, adjusted to the money system of the Burgundian Netherlands.<sup>97</sup> This, of course, was the beginning of a new era which lies beyond the scope of this study.

<sup>92</sup> OFU2: 1272 (1490, Westerhusen):... *vijff Arensgulden gerekent voer enen enckelen golden gulden, ende tyen Emden groten, gemuntet voer data des bryves, gerekent voer enen Arensgulden...* (Jesse, *Der wendische Münzverein*, 219: 1 *rinsguilder* æ c.30.5g of silver. Hence 1 Emden *grote* æ  $1/10 \times \frac{1}{5} \times$  c.30.5g = c.0.61g.

<sup>93</sup> OFU2: 1571 (1497, treaty between Count of Oistvriesland and Bishop of Münster).

<sup>94</sup> Kappelhoff, *Die Münzen*, 132.

<sup>95</sup> Jesse, *Der wendische Münzverein*, 219.

<sup>96</sup> Chapter 12, ‘The context’ and ‘The history of the measure of value’.

<sup>97</sup> Van Gelder, “Laat-middeleeuwse munten”, 39.



Survey of the evolution of the money of account system in the Emden area  
(c.1350-c.1500)

| Period            | Standard coin          | Equivalence                 | Unit of acc./multiple units  |
|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| c.1350?-<br>1376? | ?                      | ? /c.0.4g<br>of silver      | 1 d. = ?<br>1 sh = 12 d.<br>1 mk = 12 sh   |
| 1376?<br>c.1430   | Brokmer<br>penny       | c.0.4g/c.0.16g<br>of silver | 1 d. = 1 standard<br>1 sh = 12 d. (Ocko sh)<br>1 mk = 12 sh  |
| c.1430-<br>1491   | imit. <i>kromstert</i> | c.1.3g/c.0.34g<br>of silver | 1 d. = 1/8th standard<br>1 sh = 12 d. (= 1 <i>Emden grote</i> )<br>1 <i>arens</i> gld = 120 d.<br>(= 15 <i>kromstert</i> )<br>1 mk = 12 sh (= 12 <i>Emden groten</i> )<br>1 <i>coepmans</i> gld = 2 mk<br>(=24 <i>Emden groten</i> ) |
| 1491-<br>c.1500   | imit. <i>kromstert</i> | c.0.86g/c.0.8g<br>of silver | ditto ( <i>Emden groten</i><br>now <i>stuver</i> )   |

### Economic analysis

From the above survey, the following changes in the history of the system of money of account in the Emden area between c.1350 and c.1500 must be explained:

- The emergence of the Brokmer penny, assumed standard of the unit of account.
- The decrease of the silver equivalence of the Brokmer penny between 1376? and c.1430.
- The emergence of the *kromstert* as standard for the money of account.
- The emergence of the *arens*guilder and the *coepmans* guilder as multiple units of account.
- The decrease of the silver equivalence of the *kromstert* between c.1430 and 1491.
- The restoration and subsequent decrease of the silver equivalence of the *kromstert* after 1491.

As in the Yade area, the emergence of the ‘new-Frisian’ system of money of account in the Emden area is not documented, but whereas the spontaneous emergence of the Oistringem penny was conceivable it is not so easy in the case of the Emden area. Here, for about a century, the sterling had been the standard for the unit of account. However, as we have seen, it was becoming less current as a means of payment. As this affected its convenience for communication in trade, its use as a measure of value diminished.

Before it could be replaced, however, another type of coin must have become conventional, ready for use as an alternative. As elsewhere in Frisia - and in the whole of western Europe - the need for a smaller unit of account for everyday affairs, to be used alongside the old English money system, would have been the critical force behind the emergence of the 'new-Frisian' money of account; see Chapter 7. It might appear that, after the middle of the 14th century, the Brokmer money of account was forcibly introduced into the Emden area by the *hovetling* of Brokmerland, but I do not think this gives the true picture. Although there is no evidence, it seems much more likely that this local money, or 'usual money', had been infiltrating the system from the Yade area or Groningen. If so, it was already in use in the 1360s, before Ocko I tom Broke started striking his Brokmer pennies in 1376 at the earliest.

The decrease of the silver equivalence of the Brokmer penny as unit of account, which lasted until c.1430, exceeds the normal decrease to some extent. We have no information regarding this process. The difference is too small for us to assume that there was a specific cause, but it might have been exacerbated by the dearth of precious metals in western Europe.

After the defeat of the Tom Brokes, the social need for renewal would have been felt. By about 1430, the 'new-Frisian' penny had become too worn to remain as standard. The emergence of the *kromstert*, an imitative version of which was in production in Emden, can be understood from two aspects of public opinion. It had a more trustworthy future than the old worn Brokmer penny to rely upon, and, as a current coin, it was widely understood in the surrounding countries. The system of money of account in the Emden area had already converged with the evolution in the Yade area since the rule of the Tom Brokes. Moreover, from about 1430, the systems of account in these areas appear to have grown closer to the money of account in Groningen; see Chapter 12. This remained so until the end of the century. This convergence should not be ascribed to political intervention. It is true that Fokko Ukena, the successor of the Tom Brokes, ruled a large part of the area, but his rule was resisted by the town of Groningen. The integration is much more likely to have been caused by the social response to the various alternatives. The more widely a unit of account is used, the better it facilitates communication in trade, and the more it is preferred. If the systems were not initially just copies of the Yade system, they at least had a common link, and they must have grown together easily by mutual use of apparently popular elements. In other words, although it was the Groningen system that was finally adopted east of the Ems, mutual influences are likely.

This would also explain the almost simultaneous emergence of the *arens*guilder of 15 *kromsterten* (in fact a minor mark of 120 pennies), the coming into being of the *Emden grote* in the 1460s (related to the Groningen *stadvlieger* and worth  $1\frac{1}{2}$  *kromsterten*) and

the existence of the *coepmansgulder* of 24 *Emden groten* that is found some time later. These multiple units had comparable places in both the Emden and the Groningen systems of money of account,<sup>98</sup> apparently facilitating mutual communication (calculations) in trade.

As a standard, the *kromstert* may have fulfilled the aim of wide communication in trade, but it proved not to have the facility for reducing uncertainty as to future pricing. The decrease in its silver content before 1492 far exceeded the normal decrease. Data for a well-founded analysis are lacking. Although the currency in the Emden area was the object of governmental interference by the Count of Oistvriesland after 1464, his monetary policy would mainly have depended on market forces and hence on influences from abroad. It seems to me that a market controlled currency in fact prevailed. This was the period of the general 'monetary war' that was mentioned in Chapter 7. There was the ruthless competition among mints in western Europe, mainly because of the dearth of silver in the first half of the century and driven by fiscal motives in some countries in the second. The debasement of the currency to serve the fiscal needs of the princes of Burgundy - the leading monetary state on the continent - and the consequent debasements of neighbouring countries were of particular importance.<sup>99</sup> The Flemish *grote*, the standard for the unit of account in Burgundy, lost  $\frac{2}{3}$ rd of its initial silver content: from 0.8g in 1434 to 0.25g in 1487.<sup>100</sup> It seems likely that the decrease in the money standard of the Emden area was ultimately caused by this monetary development in western Europe. If the Emden mint was not directly involved in this monetary war, Groningen money might have formed the link. The Emden *kromstert* was probably exchangeable at par for the Groningen *kromstert*, and the latter coin, valued in Groningen at half a *stadvlieger* or 'black' *stuver*, was in its turn involved in the misery of Burgundian and Western European competition.

The restoration and subsequent decline of the silver equivalence of the standard of account in 1491/1492 was also almost certainly inspired by the fate of the currency in Burgundy and elsewhere in western Europe in relation to the Groningen monetary policy.

<sup>98</sup> As far as Groningen is concerned, this is its commercial system of account; this differed from the legal system of account (see Chapter 12).

<sup>99</sup> Spufford, *Money*, 343-363; Spufford, *Monetary Problems*, 74-129; Van Gelder, "Laat-middeleeuwse munten", 21-46.

<sup>100</sup> Van der Wee, *Vlaams-Brabantse muntstatistieken*, 69.

