

The Curious Case of Pillam FitzErembald.

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The northern mints of Carlisle and Newcastle were run jointly by one moneyer, who farmed the mint and the silver and lead mines at Alston Moor, Northumberland. The name of the moneyer was Willelm (Pillam) FitzErembald (William, the son of Erembald), known from the coins of that time-period as “Willem” or “Pillam”. Indeed, he was the only moneyer who operated at both Carlisle and Newcastle mints during the Cross-and-Crosslets coinage period (1158-1180). These coins are also known as Tealby pennies, named after the town of Tealby by which a large hoard (nearly 6,000 coins) was found back in 1807.

It appears that Willelm was not new to the business, as his father, Ere(m)bald (further: *Erembald*), was a moneyer at Carlisle mint during the reign of Henry I – most probably from ca. 1125 – early after the opening of Carlisle mint. Furthermore, it seems very likely that the family business had even deeper roots and stems back to the man known as William FitzBaldwin, who was most probably of Flemish origin. He held lands in Carlisle before 1130 and is present in pipe rolls dated to 1130. Here is a brief investigation that I did during the last several weeks, with sources of literature available to me, in an attempt to tie these three gentlemen together.

Historically, Alston Moor has been mined for lead, silver, zinc, coal and fluorspar since the Roman times. Located just 40 miles east of Carlisle, in the 12th century this area became known for its silver mines as silver was found here in a relatively high proportions (up to 40 troy ounces per long ton or 1.2 g/kg of smelted lead). It was used to create coinage in the Royal Mint established in Carlisle for this purpose ca. 1122-23 as a result of Henry I's visit to Carlisle and building programs that turned a “proto-town” of Carlisle into a fully-fledged economic community (Mike McCarthy, *Carlisle: A Frontier and Border City*). This growth spurt resulted in an influx of immigrants, among whom were many of Flemish origin – both tradesmen as well as members of the entourages of lords who received lands in or around Carlisle. William FitzBaldwin was probably among the latter as he is known, as stated above, to hold the lands in Carlisle ~1130s. Mattison and Cherry, however, mention that arrival of Erembald to Carlisle may indicate a connection with imported mining skills that he presumably possessed [John Mattison and Peter Cherry, *The Carlisle mint coinage of Henry I, Stephen and Earl Henry*; *British Numismatic Journal*, 83 (2013) 101-11]. Given that only two moneyers are being currently recorded for the Carlisle mint during Henry I's reign – Durant and William FitzBaldwin's son –Erembald, it is plausible to postulate that even if William served as a moneyer at this mint at a later point (as will be discussed further in the text), the initial goal of his arrival to Carlisle was to “conceive” the Alston Moor mine.

Records indicate that Erembald started at the Carlisle mint ca. 1125. Durant, the moneyer recorded for Henry I BMC Type 14 (ca. 1223-25) is not present on BMC Type 15 coinage (1125-1135) and it coincides with the huge Assize of the Moneyers of 1125. The latter led to mutilation of moneyers for producing underweight and debased coinage: the right hand and both testicles of moneyers invited to Winchester for Christmas by Bishop Roger of Salisbury were chopped. Only a small fraction of moneyers continued to the new BMC type 15 coinage and Durant, independently of either being mutilated or being able to buy himself out of the problem, seemed to fall out of Henry I's favor for good. It is possible that, at this point, William FitzBaldwin recommended his son, Erembald, for the moneyer position at Carlisle mint and with whom the new BMC Type 15 coinage starts.

According to W. J. Andrew (*Num Chron*, 1901, pp. 140-2), Erembald's name is present on pipe rolls until about the middle of Stephen's reign (1135-1154). Interestingly, as a result of the 1136 Treaty of Durham, the city of Carlisle, together with the mint, went under Scottish control. So did Erembald, as a number of coins have been discovered under the name of David (David I of Scotland) with Erembald's name as the moneyer. Interestingly, a coin with Erebald as a moneyer minted presumably at Edinburgh ([+] EREBALD []) was recently featured at the [CNG auction](#). The coin is considered to be struck ca. 1136 – early 1140s.

Some recent findings also revealed to the world coins with the name HENRY (whether they were in the name of Henry I or Earl Henry – son of David I is an open question) struck at the Carlisle mint with the moneyer Willealm. It is rather hard to imagine that William FitzErembald (grandson of William FitzBaldwin) would become a moneyer in the early 1140s and Mattinson and Cherry suggest that this enigmatic “Willealm” could be William FitzBaldwin, the father of Erembald and grandfather of William FitzErembald [*British Numismatic Journal*, 83 (2013), pp. 101-11]. This is based on the pipe roll of 1130 in which William FitzBaldwin is mentioned for rendering account for 30s. for the old farm of the king's garden in Carlisle. In the same document, some William and Hildred are mentioned regarding rendering 40s. of the farm for the silver mine in Carlisle.

As mentioned in the beginning, William FitzErembald farmed the argentiferous North Pennine mines. These mines at Alston Moor were the only silver mines within the Angevin Empire of Henry II, so it has been suggested that Henry II attached special importance to them. Located between Carlisle and Newcastle, these mines most probably stimulated reopening of the Newcastle mint in or shortly after 1158. Perhaps, given the proximity of Newcastle to the mines and the Carlisle mint, William FitzErembald became the moneyer at the Newcastle mint as well. That said, the Newcastle mint was, for the first time, established during the reign of King Stephen and, according to J.J. North, there is only one moneyer known for the rare Stephen penny that was struck in Newcastle. The name of this moneyer was ... Willem. Once again, it is hard to imagine William FitzErembald becoming a moneyer as early as 1136 or early 1140s (as the only Newcastle pennies of Stephen's

reign belong to the BMC Type 1 and were struck ca. 1136-1145) and, very possibly, this mysterious Willem could be William FitzBaldwin.

Pipe rolls tell us that William FitzErembald successfully ran his business during the early tenure at the Carlisle mines, being able to pay the annual farm which, in 1158, was 100 marks (£66 13s 4d). However, the farm gradually increased and by 1166 reached 500 marks (£333 6s 8d). Being unable to pay this money, William fell into debt and eventually owed over £2,100.

Some suggest that William could not have been minting after 1173 as he was hopelessly in debt, but there seems to be no substantial evidence for this. It seems unlikely that Henry II would have allowed the valuable silver mines at Alston Moor – the only silver mines within his entire Angevin empire – to remain inactive for years. Another explanation to it could be a certain personal attachment of Henry II who, in 1149, was knighted in... Carlisle. It also has to be noted that William still held the tenure of the mines up until early 1180, and during that time continued to be burdened with the farm of both the mint and the mines. For instance, evidence exists that William was still making some payments at least in 1175-76. Interestingly, the new moneyer who assumed the Carlisle mint in ~1180 and whose name is present on the Carlisle short-cross pennies – Alain (who has been identified as *Alanus Monetarius de Carleolio* – Alan, the Moneyer of Carlisle), was making annual payments for running the Carlisle mine of ... £50 – almost seven-fold less than William FitzErembald in 1166! What caused such a tremendous decrease in farm is unknown; possibly the understanding that the farm was going way beyond the profits struck Henry II mind. The other explanation could be that the payments were now made not to the king, but to someone known as Hugh of le Puiset, the Bishop of Durham (M. Allen, *The Carlisle and Durham Mints in the Short Cross Period*). That said, it appears that the payments to the Bishop of Durham started only in 1190 and could not explain this “discount” for farming the Carlisle mine that Alain most certainly enjoyed during the 1180-90 period.

During the Cross-and-Crosslets coinage, William often used the obverse dies indiscriminately at either Carlisle or Newcastle mints. The most peculiar feature of the coins produced at these mints by William is that they are round, contrary to most of the coins of this issue that bear either rectangular or square (less frequently), or irregular (more frequently) shapes. The Carlisle and Newcastle coins were also relatively well-struck compared, once again, to the coins of other mints at that time. It is clear that William FitzErembald was staying behind this, possibly keeping in mind what had happened to Durant – his father’s predecessor at the Carlisle mint – and other not very meticulous moneyers during the assize of 1125. Some theories exist as to how this nearly perfect (once again – for that time) level of coin production was achieved at these mints. Derek Allen suggested that it is possibly due to some technological advances that the quality of Carlisle and Newcastle mints coins owe to. However, Martin Allen in his work (*Mints and Money in Medieval England*, Cambridge

University Press, 2021, p. 107) suggests that is possibly the use of the so called “pastry-cutter” punches defined this distinctively round shape of the Cross-and-Crosslets coinage not seen at other mints across the country. A glimpse on coins from Carlisle and Newcastle provides, in my opinion, a good level of support for this hypothesis – well-defined flan inverts on one side of each coin and lack of them on the other side suggest that a “pastry-cutter” punch was used during the process of minting.

Despite some beliefs that the Carlisle mint played a key role in English coinage of the 12th century, this hypothesis has been recently challenged. For instance, for BMC Type 14 coinage of Henry I, the proportion of coins, found in hoards, that were struck in Carlisle was less than 2% and for Type 15 was less than 2.5% (Martin Allen, *Mints and Money in Norman England*). Indeed, the notion that the northern Pennine mines were the principal source of silver for English coinage was recently completely ruled out [Martin Allen, *Silver Production and the Money Supply on England and Wales, 1086 - ca. 1500*; *Economic History Review*, 64, 1 (2011), pp. 114-31]. That said, Carlisle, after Canterbury and Ipswich, was one of the most dominant mints during the issue of Classes C and D of Cross-and-Crosslets pennies (1163-70), while Newcastle became the most dominant mint during the Class E coinage (1170-74) (Richard Kelleher, *Kings and Coins in Medieval England – Henry II Cross-and-Crosslets Coinage (1158-80)*; *Treasurehunting.co.uk*, February 2014).

If all of the above discussed is true, we are facing indeed a remarkable case of a three generations-long business that lasted for over 50 years (from ~1123 to 1180) at the Carlisle mint and even spilled over to the neighboring Newcastle mint (ca. 1158 – 1180). The business that started with **William FitzBaldwin**, a Flemish noble who commenced the Alston Moor mine at Carlisle (and later possibly even served as a moneyer himself for a short time); his son **Ere(m)bald** who replaced an unlucky Durant for the last ten years of Henry I coinage, and continued for the time that the Carlisle mint was functional during Stephen’s reign and, later, under David I of Scotland; and grandson **William FitzErembald**, whose perfectionistic approach to striking coins attracts many numismatists to Cross-and-Crosslets or, as we often call them nowadays, Tealby pennies.

