

How did mintmaster Leinhart Pauwermann die?

Leinhart Pauwermann is one of the few Finnish medieval mintmasters known by name. His family may have come from Tallinn but this cannot be proved. We first hear about him in 1522, when he was already living in Turku, perhaps somewhere on the coast, and is called mintmaster. There are strong indications in the contemporary sources that he might have struck coins in Turku for the infamous Danish admiral and privateer Søren Norby, who governed the whole of West Finland on behalf of the Danish king from May 1522 to August 1523.¹

This was the time of the fight for Swedish independence led by Gustav Vasa. In his campaign against the Danes, Gustav borrowed money from Jacob Richerdes, a merchant and burgomaster in Tallinn. In return for his financial support *Herr* Jacob gained a minting concession in Turku from the future Swedish king. So Richerdes employed the mintmaster Leinhart, as well as two assistants, and started to strike coins – öres, örtugs and fyrks – in Turku in 1523. However, after the assistants had run away from Turku, Richerdes had to return to Tallinn in 1524, where he and Leinhart continued minting Swedish fyrks. Because of the lack of local means of payment (by that time, minting in Livonia had ceased due to the high price of silver) the coins of the foreign authority rapidly spread all over North Estonia and attracted attention of the Master of Livonian Order, Wolter von Plettenberg. He stopped the illegal activity at once and also threatened to accuse Jacob Richerdes for making false money and to punish him by boiling him to death. However, in the end it seems to have been mintmaster Pauwermann who was convicted and died soon afterwards, by 1526 at the latest. His coins were declared forbidden at the diet in Valmiera in summer 1525² and subsequently melted down.³

Additional data has recently been found in Estonian History Museum shedding some new light on the events described above. In the 1860s, a historian and teacher in Tallinn, Eduard Pabst, studied the history of the local Great merchants guild and made many excerpts from an account book of the guild from 1425–1532. Among them a paragraph describing the minting-affair in Tallinn engaged my especial attention.⁴ The original account-book is still preserved in Tallinn City Archives but the volume in question is in very bad condition, hardly legible, and has lost parts from a number of pages.⁵ Therefore

¹ Leimus, I. Über die Beziehungen zwischen Münzstätten in Tallinn (Reval) und Finnland in den 1520er Jahren. In O. Järvinen (ed.), *Scripta varia numismatica Tuukka Talvio sexagenario dedicata*. Suomen Numismaattisen Yhdistyksen julkaisu 6. Helsinki 2008, pp. 123–131.

² Leimus, I. Jacob Richerdes' myntningsaffär i Finland och i Reval. *Historisk Tidskrift för Finland* 1984:2, pp. 107–122.

³ TLA 230/1/Ad 16, fol 198, No. 3880 (Revaler Kämmereibuch 1505-1533, digital edition of Lilian Kotter in Tallinn City Archives).

⁴ EAM 86/2/28, fol 124v–125.

⁵ TLA 191/2/16, pag 254.

the corresponding excerpt by Pabst is of the great importance and is published here as follows:

Item im[me] sulwygem jar wu forstat weren muntteheren her mattys deppt holt her jakopp rygg[herd]es de muntss messter lenert paw[ermann] doe sulwest fororlowede her jakopp rygg[herd]es jegen her mattys deppt holttes wyllen dem muntte messter dat de hyr sloch nye swessche fferkens ok dubbelde wat de jnt fyne helden latte jk so farn dusse sake bogerde en gement to rychtende dar fol vm[me] geschach wulde nycht syn vnd her heysse hadde dat wort als de muntte heren aff gewessen worden vnd um de sake spreken vnd wedder in qweme[n] ut der gement sprack der sake geligk wer dar nycht gebort vnd fundet ok nycht boschrewen wu men dat rychtten sulden vnd wort myt ene forsent geschen for antwort vnd vnsse genedyge her de messter erkande en der sake noetloes rum[me] vnd wort hyr jm[me] rechte nycht gerycht-tet de muntte messter wort jn borge hande gedrunge[n] vnd reyssede aff vnd an jn geleyde jn sweden an den konynek vnd jnt lesste tusschen hyr vnd fynlant fordrank myt einem schet botte wu syck dusse sake allent h[aluen] bogaff wer to lanck to schrywende forhoeppe [dat w]ol fan anderen bet jn schry[fften tor d]echtnysse forhalt stat gesc[reven] [anno xxxv].⁶

In spite of some possible misreadings and faults in understanding the medieval Low German, the events in Tallinn can be reconstructed as follows. The mint-lords of the town at the time under discussion were Jacob Richerdes and Mattis Depholt, and the mintmaster was Leinhart Pauwermann. Against the will of his fellow mint-lord, Jacob Richerdes permitted (in fact: ordered) the mintmaster to strike new Swedish fyrks and double fyrks in Tallinn. After the manufacturing of Swedish coins was halted, the citizenship in Tallinn made an attempt to put the case on trial. At the same time they were quite cautious in order to avoid making mistakes in such a sensitive case. The law suit led by the burgomaster Heysse Pattiner was begun but then it was noted that there was no precedent and law to make a decision. So, the defendants were asked for a plea, after which the Master of Livonian Order Wolter von Plettenberg declared that they should go unpunished and were not guilty and no verdict was given. However, the mintmaster was forced to present sureties for himself and then, under the protection of the Master of the Livonian Order, travelled to the King of Sweden and back several times. On one of his trips he finally drowned somewhere between Finland and Tallinn in a poor ('shit') boat.

The year of the entry (or events) is missing but the handwriting is that of Bert-holt Bomhower, brother of the Bishop of Tartu, the alderman of the Great guild, who held the post in 1524–1527.⁷ By 1529 at the latest he had already become a member of the town council⁸ and most probably would not have had any access to the account-book of the guild after that date. This would date the entry to 1524–1529. Pabst, however, dated the entry to 1535 (the other entries on this page are written by another hand and date from the year 1532). Given the palaeographic evidence, it can not be excluded that Pabst made a mistake and the real date of the entry is not 1535 but 1525. If so it also reveals the final year of the life of Leinhard Pauwermann.

⁶ The underlined parts are missing and reconstructed according to Pabst.

⁷ Nottbeck, E. v. *Die alten Schragen der grossen Gilde zu Reval*. Reval 1885, p. 119.

⁸ Bunge, F. G. v. *Die Revaler Rathslinie nebst Geschichte der Rathsverfassung und einem Anhang über Riga und Dorpat*. Reval 1874, pp. 59, 83.