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### Local interactions in times of peace and times of crisis The common people and their participation in local governance\*\*

Lokalne interakcje w czasach pokoju i w czasach kryzysu  
Pospółstwo i jego udział w sprawowaniu władzy  
na szczeblu lokalnym

**Abstract:** The crucial question for this exploration is: how could ordinary citizens (*Gemeine*), who had no chance of becoming members of the city-council, be incorporated into a common decision-making-process in the Late Middle Ages? In the background of this specific research-question lie the fundamental criteria for the ideal of urban peace and common good (*gemein Gut*) as an ideal vision of community. The following examples are primarily from Franconia, an area which had neither a unifying territory nor a supreme ruler. Instead, it was dominated by a multitude of different secular and spiritual rulers with many castles, monasteries and towns/cities.

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The town's community was organized into neighborhoods, suburbs, quarters. Therefore, the quartermasters (*Viertelsmeister*) played an important role as speaker or representatives of the quarters or suburbs. The variety of possible duties for quartermasters were enormous. The quartermasters as representatives of the quarter communities were, for example, questioned by the council when it came to socio-politically sensitive issues. Mentioning the quartermasters and the community during the Peasants War is not coincidental but tells us a lot about the crisis of confidence of the city council by the citizens. A few hints should demonstrate the political influence of quartermasters in Franconian cities and towns as an example for future comparable research projects.

**Keywords:** medieval administration of cities/towns, city council and community, urban quarters and quartermasters, public welfare/common goods, peasants war 1525, Franconia

**Streszczenie:** Kluczowe pytanie niniejszych rozważań brzmi: w jaki sposób obywatele (*Gemeine*), którzy nie mieli szans na członkostwo w radzie miejskiej, mogli zostać włączeni do wspólnego procesu decyzyjnego w późnym średniowieczu? W tle tego konkretnego pytania badawczego leżą podstawowe kryteria ideału miejskiego pokoju i wspólnego dobra (*gemein Gut*) jako idealnej wizji wspólnoty. Poniższe przykłady pochodzą przede wszystkim z Frankonii – obszaru, który nie miał jednolitej struktury administracyjnej ani jednego władcy terytorialnego. Na tym terenie panowali różni władcy świeccy i duchowni z wieloma zamkami, klasztorami i miastami.

Spółeczność miejska była podzielona na dzielnice, przedmieścia i kwartały. Dlatego też urzędnicy kwartalni (*Viertelsmeister*) odgrywali ważną rolę jako rzecznicy lub przedstawiciele dzielnic bądź przedmieść. Mogli oni pełnić wiele różnych funkcji. Jako przedstawiciele społeczności dzielnicowych byli np. przesłuchiwanymi przez radę w sprawach społeczno-politycznych. Wzmianki dotyczące urzędników kwartalnych i gmin w czasie wojny chłopskiej nie są przypadkowe, lecz mówią wiele o kryzysie zaufania obywateli do rady miejskiej. Kilka uwag na ten temat, zamieszczonych w niniejszym artykule, pozwoliły ukazać polityczne wpływy kwatermistrzów we frankońskich miastach i miasteczkach jako przykład dla przyszłych porównywalnych projektów badawczych.

**Słowa kluczowe:** średniowieczna administracja miejska, rada miejska a pospólstwo, dzielnice i urzędnicy kwartalni, dobra publiczne, wojna chłopska 1525 r., Frankonia

## Rulers and subjects

In every medieval town a tense relationship existed between families involved in the town's politics and the general population, most of whom

would have had at best only limited access to political influence and decision-making. The latter mostly lived in the remoter areas of the town, especially in the suburbs, the former in the more attractive neighborhoods near the marketplace.

Is there a normative agreement between all inhabitants of a town with its leaders, which stabilizes peace and urban harmony? What happens if the common people suggest that the daily experienced social discrepancy is a barrier on the way to that form of peace? How strong could the influence of town rulers be in a peace-keeping process in times of crises like the Peasant War in Southern Germany in 1525? And is “community forming” defined mostly through the possessions of houses and weapons, and did seditious citizens proclaim the same rights which were reserved fundamentally for only a few people? How could the social-political situation of poorer citizens be described, who could not afford sites and weapons? And, by the way, not every inhabitant was a part of the civil community enjoying full citizen rights. An urban society is divided into different levels of access to communal politics and its decision-making.

The oligarchically dominated city council, which only a few wealthy families had access to, was confronted with the majority of inhabitants excluded from this body, the so-called “common man” (*Gemeiner Man*). The “community” is organized in its own general representation, sometimes called the “Outer” or “Great Council”, or decentralized in political networks of urban neighborhoods, especially in suburbs and quarters. The collegial co-determination made its way with the help of other consultation levels. Their influence is particularly evident in times of crisis, but not only then. This kind of political collegiality was not “invented” in the cities and towns; it had its role models in the ecclesiastical area: Pope and Cardinal College, Bishop and Canons of the Cathedral, Abbot and Convent can be addressed here only in passing.<sup>1</sup> *Quod omnes tangit debet ab omnibus approbari* (what touches everyone must be approved by everyone) – this legal

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<sup>1</sup> Th. M. Krüger, *Leitungsgewalt und Kollegialität. Vom benediktinischen Beratungsrecht zum Konstitutionalismus deutscher Domkapitel und des Kardinalkollegs (ca. 500–1500)*, “Studien zur Germania Sacra NF 2”, Berlin–Boston 2013.

principle evolved into one of the guiding principles of political participation in towns as well.

The following examples are primarily from Franconia, a region in nowadays Northern Bavaria. The history of Franconia is completely different from that of the Duchy of Bavaria. Franconia had neither a unifying territory nor a supreme ruler. Instead, it was dominated by a multitude of different secular and spiritual rulers with many castles, monasteries and cities. The number of the towns and cities in Franconia amounted to 150 around the year 1500. The main focus of this case study will be the episcopal sees of Würzburg and Eichstätt.

### City Council – suburbs – quartermasters

Medieval local citizenship could communicate with the town's council in a lot of different ways: it could be organized in a so-called Outer Council, which, however, could only convene with the consent of the Inner Council, so the influential minority-group made the final decision if it wanted to hear the opinion of the majority or not. Mostly this happened in times of threat and by the actual necessity to gain a majority in controversial decisions, which must be necessary during an inner or outer pressure situation, which mostly and finally had great impact on all inhabitants! The citizens might be organized according to different kinds of crafts, in guilds. These terms, which are used with tremendous variation in different regions, had many contents of meanings and in addition to the craft aspect, to varying degrees also circumscribed a political one as well as special relationships within the artisan groups. Guilds could be represented officially in the city council, partially or as a whole group. In addition, the community was organized into neighborhoods, suburbs, quarters. There, a community center (*viertelhoven*) could serve as a venue, but also as a place to accommodate fire extinguishers or weapons owned by the town. There were "public" armories in the town, spread out mostly in the quarters and centralized in these sub-centers. From these special houses, bread was also sold to the people, especially in times of famine, when the city council was urged to buy grains and sell the loaves of bread

at a moderate price, to prevent social uprisings. This was the case in the city of Würzburg in the year 1501, when there was a shortage of bread and rumors spread among the commoners.<sup>2</sup>

The heads of the quarters or suburbs were so-called quartermasters (*Viertelsmeister*), who brought specific political matters of the quarter residents before the municipal council. The events of the Peasants' War of 1525 showed their "power" in an exceptional situation when they rebelled on behalf of those who could not participate in the urban decision-making process.<sup>3</sup> The town dwellers, who were not included in the town's council and in the proportional distribution of titles (council offices), revolted in this famous uprising in spring 1525. This specific urban group, together with peasants and members of the lower nobility, sought to change their economic and political situation by understanding themselves in the Peasants' War as the "people of God", inspired by the Exodus story in the Old Testament (Ex 11–15), and demanded specific improvements to their socio-political living conditions.<sup>4</sup> Their spokesmen, the quartermasters,

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<sup>2</sup> Staatsarchiv Würzburg HV Ns. F, 857a, fol. 330r: *Mangel an Brodt, derwegen ein rumor vnter dem gemainen man zue Wurtburg entstaundt, hat man verornet dz iede wochen ein hundert malter besonder gebacken vnd zu den viertelhoven verkauft wurden*. The source is the Bishops Chronicle of Ganzhorn (early 17<sup>th</sup> century), which continued the famous Chronicle of the Bishops of Würzburg of Lorenz Fries. This event is mentioned during the time of Bishop Lorenz of Bibra. H. Flachenecker, *Eine neu entdeckte Quelle zu den Familien Fries und Ganzhorn aus dem 17. Jahrhundert. Ein Vorbericht*, "Mainfränkisches Jahrbuch für Geschichte und Kunst" 2014, vol. 66, pp. 143–148. A general presentation of the history of the city of Würzburg see *Geschichte der Stadt Würzburg im Bauernkrieg*, ed. U. Wagner, Stuttgart 2004.

<sup>3</sup> The term paraphrases, in a general and "gender-neutral" use, all "non-governance-capable social classes" ("nicht herrschaftsfähigen Gesellschaftsschichten"); W. Schulze, *Theoretische Probleme bei der Untersuchung vorrevolutionärer Gesellschaften*, in: *Theorien in der Praxis des Historikers*, "Geschichte und Gesellschaft Sonderheft 3", ed. J. Kocka, Göttingen 1977, pp. 74–75. See the famous definition of Peter Blickle: "Der gemeine Mann ist der Bauer, der Bürger der landsässigen Stadt, der von reichsstädtischen Ämtern ausgeschlossene Städter, der Bergknappe"; P. Blickle, *Die Revolution von 1525*, München 1975, p. 179; F. P. Blickle, *Der Bauernkrieg. Die Revolution des Gemeinen Mannes*, München 42012.

<sup>4</sup> M. Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution*, New York 1985; B. Heidenreich, *Handlungsmodelle rebellierender Untertanen. Die politische Kommunikation der Aufständischen während*

played a prominent role, which went beyond their daily routines as organizers of public affairs, as we shall soon see. At the same time, this conflict sharpens the view on the diversity of bourgeois perception and its interaction with the council or with the lord of the city or town.

Therefore, the quartermasters played an important role as speaker or representatives of the quarters or suburbs. The masters were elected normally by the city/town councilors, but they were not only obedient recipients of orders; they could be virtually independent political leaders of the quarter's commune, at least for a short period. With that transfer of political power, their field of activity went beyond the actual main tasks, especially the organization of the defense of a section of the town wall as well as the organization of the firefighting.<sup>5</sup>

The topic "Quarter and Quartermaster" not only covers a municipal issue of residents' participation in the organization of their neighborhood, but also touches upon the issues of urban society in general. Most quartermasters are mentioned in written documents like council acts (*Ratsbücher*), but they played an important role in the letter of justification of town clerks after the end of the Peasants War, too.

Quartermasters might be found in smaller towns also, but there are often only isolated references in the written sources. The Teutonic Order was town lord of (Wolframs-) Eschenbach [40 km south of Nürnberg], in the thirteenth century an autonomous Commandery shortly before it then merged into the Commandery of Nürnberg. This town was divided, with its approximately 900 people in 1500, in a total of seven quarters (1423 in two, from 1516 in seven quarters), with three of them outside the fortifications. Each quarter was under the jurisdiction of a quartermaster, whose main task was to organize the defense. Thus, the residents, under the supervision of the quartermasters, should have a periodical shooting practice on Sundays. Eschenbach had a 10-member council and two mayors; the

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des „Bauernkriegs“ im Jahr 1525, "Bulletin der Polnischen Historischen Mission" 2018, vol. 13, pp. 231–244.

<sup>5</sup> E. Isenmann, *Die deutsche Stadt im Spätmittelalter 1250–1500*, Stuttgart 1988; W. Bauernfeind, *Viertelsmeister*, in: *Stadtdlexikon Nürnberg*, eds. M. Diefenbacher, R. Endres, Nürnberg 1999 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. – 2000), p. 1142.

size of the place was probably too small for two councils. The councilors and mayors (known since 1398) needed the confirmation of the commander (*Komtur*) of the Teutonic Order in Nuremberg. The quartermasters had mostly direct interaction with the town's council and they were elected by its members.<sup>6</sup>

Other examples for smaller rural towns would be the Würzburgian town of Seßlach and Rodach. The latter was under control of the Wettins, a most influential dynasty of Saxonia. For Seßlach, relevant evidence could only be found for the early 18th century. In 1715, two quartermasters are named as participants of a border survey. In a second survey in the same-year, four quartermasters, including the two mentioned above, are cited as participants, too.<sup>7</sup> The armor registers of 1509 and 1555, edited for Rodach, as well as the sample list of 1588, document the quarters of the small town, each organized with a quartermaster at the top. In the case of Rodach, the central task of the quartermaster becomes clear, namely the organization of defense, armament and military campaigns.<sup>8</sup> In Ochsenfurt, a town belonging to the cathedral chapter of Würzburg, four quarters are documented in the beginning of the 16th century (Ober, Box-, Brücken-, Klingenviertel). The respective quartermasters had to collect the annual-tax of ten florins and the fire-tax of two florins. The mayor's accounts for 1527/28 show large arrears here.<sup>9</sup> In addition, the council issued grain on loan to the population in 1587, probably as a reaction of an increase in

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<sup>6</sup> F. Geidner, *Der Deutsche Orden als Stadtherr im Heiligen Römischen Reich. Das Beispiel (Wolframs-) Eschenbach*, "Alt-Gunzenhausen. Beiträge zur Geschichte der Stadt und Umgebung" 2016, vol. 71, pp. 7–44, here 20, 34 [map with the quarters]; O. Geidner, *Wolframs-Eschenbach. Die Bürger und ihre Bauten. Häusergeschichte 1423–1945*, "Quellen und Forschungen zur Fränkischen Familiengeschichte 30", Nürnberg 2015, pp. 38–40; see also idem, *Das Schützenwesen in Eschenbach bis 1806*, "Mitteilungsblatt des Heimatvereins Wolframs-Eschenbach 1989/III", pp. 9–14, here 9–10.

<sup>7</sup> S. Nöth, *Die Stadtbücher von Seßlach aus den Jahren 1485 und 1550*, "CHW-Monographien 6", Lichtenfels 2005, pp. 61, 66.

<sup>8</sup> *Stadtbuch von Rodach*, "Schriften des Rodacher Rückert-Kreises 12", ed. R. Hambrecht, Rodach bei Coburg 1988, pp. 162–174.

<sup>9</sup> Stadtarchiv Ochsenfurt Bürgermeisterrechnung 1527/28 and 1538/29: *X gulden schatzung vnd II g(ulden) brandnschatzung*. For this information I must praise the efforts of city-archivist Georg Menig MA, whom I thank very much for his help!

prices. The quartermasters should organize the distribution. In the same year, the council commissioned the quartermasters to conduct a particularly strict fire protection examination of each house, as (un-known) astronomers had predicted a particularly large number of conflagrations for this year. The city book does not go into more details on which astronomical statements the council specifically referred to, but here there is a rare indication of the motivations behind council decisions.<sup>10</sup> The office book, created in 1532, contains lists of quartermasters from the 1560s and 1570s and an additional note that they had to swear the same oath of office as the tax collectors. This information points to their main task as tax officers in their respective neighborhoods. The keys (*viertl schlüssel*) given to them by mayors, when they take office, must therefore be intended for a control box in their hands.<sup>11</sup>

Quartermasters or constables of a ward could be found not only in German or Prussian lands,<sup>12</sup> but also in other regions. One example is the English city of Chester that borders Wales. First, four wards are mentioned, with boundaries established by the crossing of two main streets, which divided the city in four quarters. There was a subdivision in the 1460s and in 1507/1508 there were finally nine wards in Chester. Local governments in the wards worked for the interests of the city council, especially by controlling the crafts and supervising the urban possessions.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Stadtarchiv Ochsenfurt Recessbuch 1587 fol. 247v, 250v: *Vnnd nach dem die Astronomini dis jar vil von feur vnnd brunnst trohen [...]*.

<sup>11</sup> Stadtarchiv Ochsenfurt Amtsbuch von 1532, fol. 10r, 11v bzw. 10v: *Nota vide Steuereinnehmer eydt in dem pergamentum pflichtbuch fol. 9 so die vierttelmeister zu thun schuldig ist.*

<sup>12</sup> R. Czaja, H. Flachenecker, *Quarters and quartermasters in Franconian and Prussian towns, 14<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> century. The common people and their participation in urban governance* (published expectedly in 2022).

<sup>13</sup> Ch. P. Lewis, *Framing medieval Chester: The landscape of urban boundaries*, in: *Mapping the medieval city. Space, place and identity in Chester c. 1200–1600*, ed. C. A. M. Clarke, Cardiff 2011, pp. 42–56, see 46; *A history of the county of Chester*, vol. 5.I: *The city of Chester: General history and topography*, eds. C. P. Lewis, A. T. Thacker, Woodbridge 2003, p. 62; *ibidem*, vol. 5.II: *The city of Chester: Culture, buildings, institutions*, Woodbridge 2005, p. 15.

## Quartermasters in times of peace

Quartermasters were appointed by the city or town council, and not by the community, they represented. In a corresponding Nürnberg decree of 1302/1315, by the implementation of council orders it is required that residents have to obey the quartermasters under all circumstances, especially in times of crisis.<sup>14</sup> This act of obedience was renewed in a subsequent decree (1315/1360).<sup>15</sup> Also in Würzburg, two quartermasters were elected by the city council, for each of the eight quarters of the city, and, after that, sworn in on the following day.<sup>16</sup>

City councilors decided, depending on the specific situation in each district, whether they exchanged one or two quartermasters a year or not.<sup>17</sup> However, the list of quartermasters in Würzburg shows amazing continuity between 1454 and 1468, in other words the individual masters were officiated for several years. This also applies, albeit to a limited extent, to the period from 1504 to 1513.<sup>18</sup>

The council expressly reserved itself the right to be present in case of changes in the composition of the quartermasters' group. No information is reported about any direct political participation of the inhabitants.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *Satzungsbücher und Satzungen der Reichsstadt Nürnberg aus dem 14. Jahrhundert*, "Quellen zur Geschichte und Kultur der Stadt Nürnberg 3/1", ed. W. Schultheiß, Nürnberg 1965, p. 58: *Ez heizen auch gebieten die purger von dem rathe, daz iederman sinem viertelmaister undertan sin, ob die stat ayn noth ngeht, daz er thu, swaz er in haize.*

<sup>15</sup> Schultheiß, *Satzungsbücher*, p. 140.

<sup>16</sup> *Würzburger Ratsprotokolle 1454–1465*, "Veröffentlichungen der Gesellschaft für Fränkische Geschichte III, 11", eds. F. Fuchs, U. Wagner, Würzburg 2017, p. 29 [Ratsprotokoll 4 (1454–1462), fol. 50r (1454 Dec. 3)]: *Nota uff diesen rate hat man die neuen virteilmeister uffgenommen und sie haben alsbalde gesworn.* See also p. 134 [Ratsprotokoll 4 (1454–1462), fol. 101v (1457 März 22)].

<sup>17</sup> *Würzburger Ratsprotokolle 1454–1465*, p. 26 [Ratsprotokoll 4 (1454–1462), fol. 49r (1454 Nov. 28)].

<sup>18</sup> *Würzburger Ratsprotokolle der Riemenschneiderzeit Teil 1: 1504–1513* (Fontes Herbigolenses 10), eds. U. Schreiber, R. Schindler with the participation of H.-W. Bergerhausen, Würzburg 2020, pp. 842–843.

<sup>19</sup> *Würzburger Ratsprotokolle 1454–1465*, p. 28f [Ratsprotokoll 4 (1454–1462), fol. 49v (1454 Dec. 2)].

In the oath book drawn up by the then council clerk in 1513, the previous official oaths are collected. This also included the oaths of the quartermaster, the quarter clerk and the quarter servant. The texts are based on the oath formulas known as early as 1443, which have hardly changed in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The quartermaster must appear before the city council at the regular meetings and give the council members account and advices during some deliberations. He is not allowed to issue any official commandments in his neighborhood without the prior consent of the council. He undertakes to fulfill all orders of the bishop and the chapter of the cathedral, which are directed to him through the city council. The quartermaster should be responsible for all questions on incomes and expenses for the quarter's interests. The oath leaves the quartermaster with no scope for his own suggestions and so he resembles the extended arm of the city lords and the council.<sup>20</sup> The normative requirements would, however, be suspended by the times of crisis in 1525, due to current political necessities. The quarter clerk also had to show obedience to the city council and could not pursue his own interests in his written minutes. This also applied to the quarter servant; he was supposed to pass on the orders of the district master to the residents, be it for security services or other tasks.<sup>21</sup> If a foreigner were to settle in the district, the quarter servant must report this to the tax authorities so that the city would not lose any tax levies.<sup>22</sup> The quarter servants were sworn in, at least at the beginning of the 16th century, not before the city council, but before a committee of two mayors. That also applied to the quarter writers.<sup>23</sup>

While in Würzburg not only the suburbs were formed into quarters, but also the core city, this seems to have been different than in another episcopal city in Franconia, in Eichstätt. Here the quartermasters are only mentioned for the suburbs (Osten, Westen, Spital, Buchtal) and for their observation. For each quarter, the council appointed one civil servant, who was

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<sup>20</sup> *Würzburger Ratsprotokolle 1504–1513*, p. 684.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 685.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 685–686.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, here the notes about “Geschäftsführung der Bürgermeister 1504–1509”, pp. 628, 630 für die Jahre 1505, 647 für 1508.

interestingly also addressed as “suburb mayor” (*burgermaister*).<sup>24</sup> Each quartermaster was assigned with four persons (*Vierer*), who were involved in the execution of the main tasks, guard organization on the city wall and fire prevention (quarterly ordered by the Council)<sup>25</sup> plus construction supervision.<sup>26</sup> All these obligations had to be done, according to the council minutes, for the common benefit (*gemainen nutz*).<sup>27</sup> These quartermasters could be members of the Inner or Outer Council, as a 1529 fireplace-survey demonstrates.<sup>28</sup>

Quartermasters and quarter servants were mostly busy organizing the security service in their day-to-day tasks, as a source from Würzburg shows. The mayor’s management notes show that problems with security tasks are extremely frequent. The quarter servants acted as *Wachgebieter*, that is, they had to control the observation of the daily watch-orders by the residents.<sup>29</sup>

If it would be necessary for special agreements in detail, for example if a citizen was sick or a widow was poor and could not pay the weekly security service fee (*zu wachen unnd wuchengelt*), then the quartermaster negotiated with those affected. He acted as a mediator, but the mayors’ records reveal nothing about how successful he was.<sup>30</sup> The quartermasters shared the surveillance of the security service with members of the city council.<sup>31</sup>

A special responsibility for the quartermasters in Eichstätt took place during a bishop’s election process. Before the chosen one entered officially the city for the first time as a bishop, the gates of the city were closed and the city towers were kept occupied by full-armed citizens. The quartermasters protected the gates, under the leadership of a member of the Outer Council, with a group of men.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Stadtarchiv Eichstätt SA 4, fol. 37r.

<sup>25</sup> Stadtarchiv Eichstätt SA 9, fol. 11v, 20v, 165v.

<sup>26</sup> Stadtarchiv Eichstätt SA 4, fol. 28v.

<sup>27</sup> Stadtarchiv Eichstätt SA 9, fol. 11v.

<sup>28</sup> H. Flachenecker, *Eine Geistliche Stadt – Eichstätt vom 13. bis zum 16. Jahrhundert*, “Eichstätter Beiträge 5”, Regensburg 1988, pp. 226–227.

<sup>29</sup> *Würzburger Ratsprotokolle 1504–1513*, pp. 635, 637, 644, 648.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 640, 645, 649, 651, 653 [see the source notation].

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 27.

<sup>32</sup> H. Flachenecker, *Geistliche Stadt...*, p. 84.

At the end of each year, all 16 quartermasters in Würzburg had to give an account.<sup>33</sup> But there was not only supervision; the city council strengthened the quartermasters against disobedient city dwellers and threatened the latter with expulsion from the city.<sup>34</sup> Also, if the quartermasters could not agree with the tax collectors (*Sechser*) about the tax collection and administration, the council mediated.<sup>35</sup> In a further dispute between residents and the quartermasters, the council, after a long argument, decided that now its members had the right to settle disputes, as it had been authorized to do so by the community.<sup>36</sup> In October 1509, the tax collectors of the Dieterich-quarter sued their quartermaster because he had not given them any detailed information about the quarter-taxes. The latter consisted mainly of the regular receipt of the weekly fee for security service, as mentioned above. The money was kept in an iron box and secured with two locks – like in our previous example in Ochsenfurt. The quartermaster and the tax collectors each had a key to it.<sup>37</sup> In addition, the accused quartermaster carried out renovation-work on the quarter house without asking the tax collectors for permission. The city council postponed the decision.<sup>38</sup> Construction work on the center-house of the quarter had already started two years earlier with the approval of the city council.<sup>39</sup> At that time, several renovations were carried out at other quarter-centers (*Viertelshäuser*): In December 1507, the construction work of a baker with his own oven was discussed at the neighboring house of the quarter center in Pleichach-quarter.<sup>40</sup> Four years later, the council minutes report from the Pleichach neighborhood that it did not have a (sufficient?) quarter-house; the council

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<sup>33</sup> *Würzburger Ratsprotokolle 1454–1465*, p. 34 [Ratsprotokoll 4 (1454–1462), fol. 52v (1454 Dec. 30)].

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 66 [Ratsprotokoll 4 (1454–1462), fol. 65r (1455 Sept. 22)].

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 90 [Ratsprotokoll 4 (1454–1462), fol. 77v (1456 Febr. 12)].

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 125–127 [Ratsprotokoll 4 (1454–1462), fol. 97r–98r (1457 Jan. 24, 27 bzw. 28)].

<sup>37</sup> *Würzburger Ratsprotokolle 1504–1513*, p. 314.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 382.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 253 [1507 July 1].

<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 280.

decided to continue deliberating.<sup>41</sup> The quarter-house in the Sanderau had to be rebuilt in 1508; it required a new ceiling over the cellar and the installation of better windows facing the street.<sup>42</sup> At the same time, the Gänheim-quarter was also looking for a suitable quarter-house. The discussion was about the purchase of a manor whose financing, in the opinion of the council, did not yet appear secure.<sup>43</sup>

Finally, the tasks of the quartermasters went far beyond guard duty and fire protection. This result could be approved in Würzburg, as in Eichstätt or in the small town of Beilngries, where the bishop of Eichstätt was also the lord.<sup>44</sup> Quartermasters, together with the mayors, were able to settle legal disputes between city dwellers in arbitration proceedings.<sup>45</sup>

They were also involved in distributing almsgiving to legitimate poor (*haußarme leute*), as determined by the quartermasters at their own discretion.<sup>46</sup> In another case in 1507, the quartermaster of the Sanderau-quarter suggested that a poor female fellow citizen should be admitted to the infirmary of the hospital of the Holy Spirit; the council agreed to this request.<sup>47</sup> However, consent was not always given. When the quartermaster of Sanderau advocated a man for admission in 1504, the majority of the council members refused.<sup>48</sup>

Quartermasters were a significant part of the tax inspectorate of a town or a city: the municipal tax inspectors also had to file their accounts before the quartermasters.<sup>49</sup> The latter also had to justify their tax revenues before the city council; presumably, these were the weekly payments for

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<sup>41</sup> Ibidem, p. 496.

<sup>42</sup> Ibidem, p. 281 [1508 Jan. 4].

<sup>43</sup> Ibidem, p. 496 [1511 Aug. 14].

<sup>44</sup> M. Schattenhofer, *Beilngries. Chronik zur Neunhundertjahrfeier der Marktverleihung*, Kallmünz 1953, p. 43.

<sup>45</sup> *Würzburger Ratsprotokolle 1454–1465*, pp. 14, 46 [Ratsprotokoll 4 (1454–1462), fol. 44r (1454 Sept. 29), fol. 57r (1455 April 21)].

<sup>46</sup> Ibidem, p. 16 [Ratsprotokoll 4 (1454–1462), fol. 44r (1454 Oct. 7)].

<sup>47</sup> *Würzburger Ratsprotokolle 1504–1513*, p. 382.

<sup>48</sup> Ibidem, p. 71.

<sup>49</sup> *Würzburger Ratsprotokolle 1454–1465*, p. 21 [Ratsprotokoll 4 (1454–1462), fol. 47r (1454 Nov. 15)].

the security services.<sup>50</sup> This area of local duties touches the question of mostly small loans from Christian moneylenders. The amount of these credits is given differently, between about 7 and 20 fl.<sup>51</sup> The minutes of the council do not give any sums or any hints on Jewish money lending. Small loans were widespread in urban economics in the late Middle Ages and were mostly passed on by Christian lenders in the form of borrowed money. Pledges, as here in this Würzburg stipulation, were not always necessary. At the same time, an entry in the council minutes reflects a current problem that many people with low incomes were managing money that could exceed the value of their own property several times over. This source also shows that “economic questions of faith”<sup>52</sup> must not be reduced to Jewish-Christian dualism, which seems to be overemphasized in the research discussions up to now. On the contrary, as the minutes of the Augsburg city court show,<sup>53</sup> debts were widespread among all sections of the population. Therefore, the Würzburg Quartermasters were involved in special everyday operations. Their duties demonstrate the efforts of many city and town councils in gaining control over money lending and debt factoring.<sup>54</sup>

Quartermasters were authorized to seize indebted people in their neighborhood and to keep their pledges for two weeks. If the debtor could no longer repay them, the masters were able to sell them to third parties, in

<sup>50</sup> *Würzburger Ratsprotokolle 1504–1513*, p. 45.

<sup>51</sup> G. Fouquet, S. Rabeler, *Einleitung*, in: *Ökonomische Glaubensfragen. Strukturen und Praktiken jüdischen und christlichen Kredits im Spätmittelalter*, “VSWG – Beiheft 242”, eds. G. Fouquet, S. Rabeler, Stuttgart 2018, pp. 9–20, see 17–18.

<sup>52</sup> This is the title of the anthology edited by Gerhard Fouquet and Sven Rabeler (see previous note). For small loans from Basel sources, see Gabriela Signori, ‘Gelihen Geltz’. Christliche Geldleihe aus dem Blickwinkel spätmittelalterlicher Gerichtsbücher, *ibidem* pp. 21–42.

<sup>53</sup> M. Weber, *Schuldenmachen. Eine soziale Praxis in Augsburg (1480 bis 1532)*, Münster 2021.

<sup>54</sup> P. Schuster, *Soziale und kulturelle Aspekte des Schuldenmachens im ausgehenden Mittelalter*, in: *Prekäre Ökonomien. Schulden in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, ed. G. Signori, Konstanz–München 2014, pp. 17–34, here 29–30.

order to settle the current debts.<sup>55</sup> They were also involved in increased fire protection and gate surveillance at trade fairs (*Kiliani, Mitfasten*).<sup>56</sup>

The variety of possible duties was enormous. Quartermaster were in charge for reparation of roads inside and outside the city/town.<sup>57</sup> This included also the protection of vineyards and fields to discourage predators.<sup>58</sup> So, the general protection of the surrounding rural areas of the city (*Landwehr*) also fell within the job description of a quartermaster.<sup>59</sup> They were also responsible for public buildings in their district.<sup>60</sup> The purchase of foreign wine was permitted for the residents of the district, but this was not allowed to be served between September and February, to which the district masters had to pay attention.<sup>61</sup> They were also in demand for the establishment of municipal grain stores. The Würzburg council intended to buy crops in Würzburg, Ochsenfurt and Schweinfurt, but without causing any great fuss so as not to worry the population.<sup>62</sup>

The quartermasters, as representatives of the quarter communities, were always consulted by the council, when it came to socio-politically sensitive issues. When the bishop, cathedral chapter and council wanted to take action against secret wine bars, which did not want to pay any excise tax on the drinks on offer, the quartermasters participated in the decision. Quarter clerks and quarter servants had to move from house to house to inform the residents of these unpopular measures.<sup>63</sup> This area of their duties included placing additional guards at the city gates when the bishop asked

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<sup>55</sup> *Würzburger Ratsprotokolle 1454–1465*, p. 52 [Ratsprotokoll 4 (1454–1462), fol. 59v (1455 June 10)].

<sup>56</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 54 [Ratsprotokoll 4 (1454–1462), fol. 60r (1455 June 23)]; *Würzburger Ratsprotokolle 1504–1513*, p. 50 (1504 Juli 4), 121 (1505 Febr. 27).

<sup>57</sup> *Würzburger Ratsprotokolle 1454–1465*, pp. 83, 86 [Ratsprotokoll 4 (1454–1462), fol. 73v (1455 Dec. 16), fol. 75v (1456 Jan. 15)].

<sup>58</sup> *Würzburger Ratsprotokolle 1504–1513*, p. 63 (1504 Aug. 13) and p. 82 (1504 Sept. 26).

<sup>59</sup> *Würzburger Ratsprotokolle 1454–1465*, p. 85 [Ratsprotokoll 4 (1454–1462), fol. 75r (1456 Jan. 8)].

<sup>60</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>61</sup> *Würzburger Ratsprotokolle 1504–1513*, p. 70 (1504 Sept. 10).

<sup>62</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 53 (1504 July 23).

<sup>63</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 12, 20–21 (1504 April 10).

for greater control to prevent beggars and vagrants from entering the city.<sup>64</sup> The city also had to remain closed to foreign mercenaries.<sup>65</sup>

The quartermasters were in high demand when it came to the organization of a campaign (*Reis*) for their lord, the bishop, to which the residents of the district were obliged to make a military contribution. In April 1456, a total of 350 men from all eight quarters had to be selected, who were to be equipped with crossbows and rifles.<sup>66</sup> In August 1456, the inhabitants had to be armed again.<sup>67</sup> In both cases, they had to assist the bishop in his regional campaigns against his enemies.

This also applied to the year 1504, when King Maximilian I requested a troop contingent from the Würzburg bishop. The latter notified the council and the quartermasters that the municipal contribution should consist of 50 armed men. This personal and economic burden, in turn, was distributed among the neighborhoods.<sup>68</sup> At the same time there was a feud between the bishop and the noble family Stuetzel. The eight quarters were asked to equip a total of 300 men.<sup>69</sup> The quartermasters found out that they did not have enough rifles available for the required armed men.<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, the supply of food as well as the pay for the campaign had to be negotiated between the council and the quartermasters. The other armament (especially harness) was also checked; the result is not mentioned in the city council minutes.<sup>71</sup>

Council and quartermaster worked together when it came to matters that required a strong joint action against the bishop and his chapter of the cathedral, that is against the city lords, because the chapter had political influence on the city (stipulations – *Wahlkapitulationen*).

<sup>64</sup> Ibidem, p. 41 (1504 June 15).

<sup>65</sup> Ibidem, p. 120 (1505 Febr. 15).

<sup>66</sup> *Würzburger Ratsprotokolle 1454–1465*, p. 99–100 [Ratsprotokoll 4 (1454–1462), fol. 82v + 83r (1456 April 28)].

<sup>67</sup> Ibidem, p. 107 [Ratsprotokoll 4 (1454–1462), fol. 88r (1456 Aug. 24)]: [...] *wider den von Wirtenberg*.

<sup>68</sup> *Würzburger Ratsprotokolle 1504–1513*, pp. 70–73 (1504 Sept. 12 and 19).

<sup>69</sup> Ibidem, p. 86 (1504 Nov. 4).

<sup>70</sup> Ibidem, p. 92 (1504 Nov. 15).

<sup>71</sup> Ibidem, p. 107 (1504 Dec. 19).

For unknown reasons, councilors and quartermasters allied against the episcopal representative in town or rather his executive official (*Schultheiß*) at the end of October 1455. At the same time, the quartermasters acted as a political lobby group for the community.<sup>72</sup> In large events affecting all the inhabitants, quartermasters and the community (*eyn groß menyge der gemeyn*) appeared in front of the city council, for instance when a letter concerning all inhabitants arrived from the Holy See.<sup>73</sup>

In August 1457, a decision was taken to comply with episcopal demands for an excise tax (*Tacz*) for four years; the council did not decide alone but its members consulted the commoners. Ordered by neighborhoods, 99 named individuals appeared in the council acts in order to safeguard this ruling.<sup>74</sup> The citizens, who were affected directly by this decision, voted for it, at least indirectly, and gave the councilors permission to negotiate with the bishop. Only then could the council notify the bishop of the citizens' decision.<sup>75</sup>

In general, tax collection in the city quarters seems to have been an important task of the quartermasters. For their efforts, the quartermasters were paid by the city council. Instead of many smaller allowances, they should now receive a single sum of money every year for their duties.<sup>76</sup> In Eichstätt each quartermaster received half a pile of pine wood for the fire inspection.<sup>77</sup>

The Würzburg quartermasters did not necessarily belong to low income families who were not represented in the council. Such results could also be observed in Eichstätt. In some cases, the opposite is true. Erhart Lorenz, for example, was quartermaster in the district of Gänheim from 1457 to at

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<sup>72</sup> *Würzburger Ratsprotokolle 1454–1465*, p. 73 [Ratsprotokoll 4 (1454–1462), fol. 68v (1455 Oct. 28 and 29)].

<sup>73</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 101 [Ratsprotokoll 4 (1454–1462), fol. 84r (1456 June 3)]. Judicial appeal of the city to the Holy See in a dispute against the knight Werner von Elben.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 147–152 [Ratsprotokoll 4 (1454–1462), fol. 109r–110r (1457 Aug. 3 and 6)]: [...] *sey es der tacz nicht, so mueß man sunst in eyn hilf geben*.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 154 [Ratsprotokoll 4 (1454–1462), fol. 111r (1457 Aug. 25)].

<sup>76</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 114 [Ratsprotokoll 4 (1454–1462), fol. 92r (1456 Nov. 15)]: [...] *keyn neue jar, keyn opfergelt und keyn zwyfach presenczie*.

<sup>77</sup> Stadtarchiv Eichstätt SA 9, fol. 165v.

least 1463. Previously, he held the same office in the district of Bastheim. The position of quartermaster seems to have enabled him to join the city council; he was a council member from 1466 to 1483, and mayor in the 1470s (1472, 1476, 1479).<sup>78</sup>

Quartermasters and parts of the community routinely appeared before the city council, even though the council's minutes do not always make it clear what concerns were on the agenda.<sup>79</sup> Council minutes consist mostly of brief summaries of decisions made in the inner council. Mostly we are not informed of the reasons for a specific ruling; it is more a kind of a result protocol. If city statutes had existed, they would have offered precise normative specifications.

Quartermasters acted with the backing of their neighborhoods. Even though in many individual cases the precise causes of these actions remain largely obscure, they show the quartermasters' ability to influence urban policy. In times of crisis, they could turn to violent opposition and pose an imminent threat to the council. The following description of the events during the Peasants' War will show how justified the concerns of the Würzburg's city council could be.

One last note: When in 1476 a poor shepherd and drummer – called The Whistler – initiated a social-religious movement in the village of Niklashausen (west of Würzburg), that ran counter to the holders of authority,<sup>80</sup> a huge number of people joined him. The social order seemed to be fragmenting, so the princes and town councils in the region reacted. It was no coincidence that the Würzburg councilors asked the quartermasters and reckoning masters to inform them about the current mood in the community.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> See *Würzburger Ratsprotokolle 1454–1465*, p. 165 Anm. 716.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 157 [Ratsprotokoll 4 (1454–1462), fol. 112r (1457 Sept. 23)].

<sup>80</sup> K. Arnold, *Niklashausen 1476. Quellen und Untersuchungen zur sozialreligiösen Bewegung des Hans Behem und zur Agrarstruktur eines spätmittelalterlichen Dorfes*, "Saecula Spiritualia 3", Baden-Baden 1980.

<sup>81</sup> Stadtarchiv Würzburg, Ratsprotokolle 5 (1462–1482), fol. 298v–299v.

## Quartermasters in times of crisis

The contents of the chronicles about the Peasant War's events depend entirely on the writers' intentions: In the Würzburg case there is, on one side, the archivist of the bishop, Lorenz Fries, and, on the other, the town's clerk, Martin Cronthal.<sup>82</sup> Both offer a different analysis of the circumstances (the point of view of the bishop versus that of the city council), but on one thing they agree: aversion to the common men (*Gemeine Mann*) and the influence of their spokesmen, the quartermasters! Thus, it is a wonderful fluke to be able to look at a conflict from both sides. Cronthal paid for his comments with the loss of his previous position, while Fries continued to make a career in the episcopal council.

It would not be appropriate to describe extensively the events of the Peasant War in Franconia at this point.<sup>83</sup> What is important for our context is the fact that the peasant troops marched in Würzburg in May/June 1525 to besiege the last remaining castle in episcopal hands, the fortress Marienberg, and, as they hoped, to take it. The council of the city was in a predicament between the demanded obedience and the de facto decrease of its influence on many residents. Both sides wanted to send their troops into the city: at first the bishop threatened to accommodate his knights with their horses and weapons in the city, and some days later the peasants. In any case, many foreigners came to town destabilizing social peace.<sup>84</sup>

It was a time of powerful speakers, agitators and rumors. Loyalty was not worth much; the existing statutes were accorded only highly limited

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<sup>82</sup> H. Flachenecker, *Lorenz Fries als Historiograph*, in: *Lorenz Fries und sein Werk. Bilanz und Einordnung*, "Veröffentlichungen des Stadtarchivs Würzburg 19", eds. F. Fuchs, S. Petersen, U. Wagner, W. Ziegler, Würzburg 2014, pp. 1–27; M. Cronthal, *Die Stadt Würzburg im Bauernkriege*, ed. M. Wieland, Würzburg 1887; U. Wagner, *Die Stadt Würzburg im Bauernkrieg*, in: *Geschichte der Stadt Würzburg im Bauernkrieg*, ed. U. Wagner, Stuttgart 2004, pp. 40–46.

<sup>83</sup> R. Endres, *Der Bauernkrieg in Franken*, "Blätter für deutsche Landesgeschichte" 1973, vol. 109, pp. 31–68; *Bauernkrieg in Franken*, "Publikationen aus dem Kolleg »Mittelalter und Frühe Neuzeit« 2", eds. F. Fuchs, U. Wagner, Würzburg 2016.

<sup>84</sup> H.-Ch. Rublack, *Die Stadt Würzburg im Bauernkrieg*, "Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte" 1976, vol. 67, pp. 76–100.

respect, and the council members threatened to slip from the magistrates' power.

In the eyes of the episcopal writer Lorenz Fries, the peasant and bourgeois rebels were persons without loyalty and without faith. Ultimately, they completely rejected the authorities appointed by God. One of the storytellers and boasting men was Hans Bermeter in Würzburg. Although he was known to have no possessions and was a proven thief, he suddenly had money to sustain a support group. He was suspected by some to be a spy.<sup>85</sup> Anyway, Bermeter became the leader of a small group of like-minded people who raided clergymen in Würzburg. The citizen's council could not prevent this; its opportunities for peacekeeping dwindled daily. Instead, Bermeter acted on a surge of general hate against priests and monks, who had exploited the poor (*armen gemainen man*) for a long time. The latent support of the poorer citizens for a revolt became even stronger with the suggestion that the peasants who called themselves positively "Christian brothers" (*christliche brudere*) – which led Fries to make a vicious commentary – would be soon in the city.

Bermeter fueled the general grudge, and the daily mood of the population was increasingly stoked with false letters and rumors. He allegedly forged letters in such a way that they looked to outsiders as if they were approved from city mayors, council, quartermasters and commoners (*burgermaister, rathe, viertailmaistere und gemainde*).<sup>86</sup> These were the actual representatives of the city dwellers; the council no longer enjoyed sole authority. But the reputation of all of them was at risk in these troubled times.

Mentioning the quartermasters and the community is not coincidental but tells us a lot about the crisis of confidence of the city council. When the bishop, after long consultations with his councilors, decided to defend not only the Marienberg on April 10, he also stationed his knights with their squires and horses in the city to expel "bad boys" like Bermeter. He requested the citizens' squad to fight the peasants, enacted a new fire protection

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<sup>85</sup> L. Fries, *Die Geschichte des Bauern-Krieges in Ostfranken*, eds. A. Schäffler, Th. Henner, Würzburg 1883, vol. 1, p. 62: [...] *kame er bey vilen in merklichen verdacht, als sollte er etlicher stette haimlicher diener sein.*

<sup>86</sup> L. Fries, *Bauernkrieg*, p. 63.

order for the city, and ensured the flour and grain supply for the population. The bishop not only sent his decision to the city council, but also proclaimed it in each of the eight quarters of Würzburg.

The episcopal councilors visited each quarter individually, followed by the mayor and council, and explained the bishop's will. The decision had been made, and this was obvious to the city councilors – no longer the exclusive jurisdiction of their council, but now the quarter's population had a decisive right to articulate their points of view.

This kind of procedure could be a manifestation of a formal legal process which takes the complaints of the community at least partially serious.<sup>87</sup> The quarters could voice their opinions, perhaps after a long intern discussion, but were rejected by the town-lord. This decision opened – in the eyes of neighborhoods, who opposed the bishop – a legal way to legitimize their violent actions: The bishop did not take the complaints seriously enough. This would result in a legitimate right to resistance.

The bishop's approach achieved the opposite of what he had intended. Instead of calming the tensions in the city, the agitations became even greater. Again, it was the rumors that consciously or unconsciously created new myths, and which directed the public opinion of the majority of the residents. It must have been the peasant-friendly party, especially the vineyard workers, the *hackers*, who accused the bishop of having secretly brought weapons and troops into the city already. Fries cites, as his source, the famous woodcarver Tilmann Riemenschneider, who dismissed the accusation and named Hans Bermeter as the source. In hindsight, Fries is sure that one of these two instigated the population, but interestingly he hides the cause of his accusation.<sup>88</sup>

On April 12, a total of nine letters reached the bishop, one of the city-council and eight of the quarters. Fries probably kept all of them in the bishop's archive and used them for his argumentation. The council's opin-

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<sup>87</sup> B. Heidenreich, *Handlungsmodelle*, passim. In Details see idem, *Ein Ereignis ohne Namen? Zu den Vorstellungen des Bauernkriegs von 1525 in den Schriften der Aufständischen und in der zeitgenössischen Geschichtsschreibung*, "Quellen und Forschungen zur Agrargeschichte 59", Berlin–Boston 2019.

<sup>88</sup> L. Fries, *Bauernkrieg*, p. 68.

ion was ultimately supported by five of the eight quarters without major changes (Dietrich, Cress, Pleichach, Sanderau and Main). The Bastheim quarter also agreed with the council but acted very cautiously because of the small proportion of citizens and the majority of clergymen in this area. The rebellious forces were concentrated on the quarters of Gänheim and Stift Haug, the former situated on the Main river and the other on the outskirts, but neither quarter had a common border. In Gänheim the commoners demanded the re-admission of Protestant preachers, as well as in Haug. The bishop argued against all the points the quarters suggested but gave in to some extent but partly insisted on his point of view. He warned the representatives of the citizens not to be seduced by the new ideas, because the peasants would fail with their demands at the end. Fries then criticized mayors, quartermasters and vaguely “others” (*und anderen*) that they had hypocritically promised obedience to the bishop, as they intended almost the opposite in their real actions.<sup>89</sup> Quartermasters and quarter dwellers were at the height of their right to co-determination, but they would soon lose it with the defeat of the peasants one month later.

### Moderate process – Eichstätt and its citizens

In the Eichstätt council acts (*Ratsacta*) a report about the Peasants War (*Paurn Rays*) has been preserved, which – much like a wood cut – ties together the events in Southern Germany with those in Eichstätt itself.<sup>90</sup> The text seems to be a self-justification of the council towards the bishop, the author is unknown. It can be assumed that the writer was the town clerk. Again, it is the community (*Gemain*), which teamed up with almost all the crafting guilds of the city that acted. It had four speakers, but they are not addressed as quartermasters.<sup>91</sup> Rather, they are likely to have acted as the spokesmen of

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<sup>89</sup> Ibidem, p. 84.

<sup>90</sup> Stadtarchiv Eichstätt SA 9, fol. 121r (A) – 136r. To the Peasants War in Eichstätt see J. Seger, *Der Bauernkrieg im Hochstift Eichstätt*, Regensburg 1997.

<sup>91</sup> Stadtarchiv Eichstätt SA 9, fol. 123r: [...] *hat ein ersamer rat ir viern, nemlich Hannsen Heulen, Wilbolten Meßschuster, Wolf Schmid ein tuchmacher vnnnd Philippen Kurshner als denjhenen so aus einer gemain verordnet worden sein* [...].

the crafts. The latter were accepted as representatives of the community by the council, and together with them they wanted or needed to settle the disputes with the bishop. Ostensibly, the perception of fishing rights in the Altmühl river was a controversial point of discussion between the bishop and the community. The four representatives wanted to call the whole community together, in order to discuss a way forward, but this was not considered good by the city council (*ersamen rat nit fur gut*). The latter wanted to accept only representatives of the crafts and finally prevailed, but each craft should take place with two speakers instead of one, as originally desired by the council. As in Würzburg the Inner and Outer Council of Eichstätt could no longer act alone, but the Inner Council still had the authority to force the community representatives onto a moderate course. Thus, the council acted in common with the citizens (*mit ettlichen aus der gemein*) including in the upcoming problems with the abbey of St. Walburg. Again, it was a local matter, concerning the pollution of a small creek by the monastery.

Not only the council members, but also the community members behaved in a restrained way towards the uprising peasants who had gathered at Thalmässing and who asked the Eichstätt citizens to join them. In a letter to the citizens (*gemaine burgerschafft vnnd inwoner zu Eystet*), the peasants proclaimed that they had acted according to divine justice (*gotliche gerechtigkeit zu handhaben*).<sup>92</sup> The council and the community unanimously agreed not to respond to this letter. However, both institutions were not sure whether some city dwellers might perhaps finally support the demands of the peasants. Therefore, the citizens set up a kind of home guard of initially 80 men who should protect the city and possibly defend it. However, more and more relatives left the home guard, so that, after only a few weeks, only a handful were ready to serve. The background remains unclear: Was it a certain fatigue and carelessness or an expression of resistance to the policy of the council and community representatives? The report succinctly says, that there was nobody who used inflammatory slogans anymore: [...] *vnnd ist also ein gemein durch diese ordnung gestilt worden das sich keiner mer gräblich oder vffrurisch hat hören lassen*.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Stadtarchiv Eichstätt SA 9, fol. 128v.

<sup>93</sup> Stadtarchiv Eichstätt SA 9, fol. 131v.

After the defeat of the insurgents, the arbitral tribunal also ran smoothly: The bearer of the peasants' letter was expelled from the city, two followers of the peasants who were not citizens, however, were executed in Eichstätt.<sup>94</sup> The pacification policy of the city council and the community was ultimately successful. This was only possible because the city was ultimately not involved in the direct acts of war.

The involvement of the quartermasters as mouthpiece of the community could also be found in Rothenburg, a last example. The cities chronicler Thomas Zweifel reported it. The strong position of the quartermasters revealed itself in the political demands, for example, of the red and white tanners: instead of the outer council, quartermasters should communicate the neighborhood's demands before the Cities inner council.<sup>95</sup> The merchants, painters, goldsmiths and others demanded something similar.<sup>96</sup> For any concern, the quartermasters should act as mediators to the inner council.<sup>97</sup> The quartermasters negotiated as agents of the quarter-communities with the uprising peasants. The latter addressed their letters to the mayors, the inner council and the quartermaster as equal partners for their demands.<sup>98</sup> The quartermasters had, as they mention in a letter of April 21, no oath of allegiance to the peasants and were therefore committed to nothing.<sup>99</sup>

These few hints should demonstrate the political influence of quartermasters in Franconian cities and towns. They represented the inhabitants of the neighborhoods at a lower administrative level and carried out many,

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<sup>94</sup> Stadtarchiv Eichstätt SA 9, fol. 133v.

<sup>95</sup> The *Chronicle of Zweifel* about the history of Rothenburg in the Peasants War is edited by Franz Ludwig Baumann, *Quellen zur Geschichte des Bauernkriegs aus Rothenburg an der Tauber*, Tübingen 1878, here p. 128: *Zum ailften den ewssern rat hinweg zu tun und viertailmaister darfur zu machen und selbigen mit ainem rat von wegen ainder gemain, nemlich zwen in aim viertail.*

<sup>96</sup> *Chronik Zweifels*, p. 137: [...] *und ainen yegklichen bey seinem handwerk und handel durch geordnete viertailmaister uffsehen haben, was dann ainem jeden not wurt sein.*

<sup>97</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 224, 286.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 403, 445.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 601: *Haben die viertelmaister geantwort: Sy haben den bwrn nichts geret, noch zugesagt, sein in auch weder gelopt, noch geschworen, in etwas zu leyhen, raichen oder schicken.*

popular and unpopular, decisions of the city council. They could also bring up concerns and topics in the city council which were important for the residents, and thus influence the city's decisions. Quartermasters were able to contribute much to stabilizing peace and urban harmony in the neighborhoods, but also could powerfully articulate their dissatisfaction and therefore call for resistance.