

*Civic Culture and
Everyday Life in
Early Modern Germany*



Bernd Roeck

BRILL

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CIVIC CULTURE AND EVERYDAY LIFE
IN EARLY MODERN GERMANY

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BY

BERND ROECK



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Cover illustration: South German artist, Patricians' Dance (Geschlechertanz) in the Dance House on the Wine Market at Augsburg, ca. 1500. Städtische Kunstsammlungen, Maximilianmuseum, Augsburg.

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To Tassilo, Martin and Priscilla

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FOREWORD

The German edition of this book was published with the title “Lebenswelt und Kultur des Bürgertums in der frühen Neuzeit” as volume 9 of the series “Enzyklopädie Deutscher Geschichte” in 1991 R. Oldenbourg publishing house, Munich. It is linked to further volumes which deal with the history of the city, the life of the underclasses, with education, science and medicine in the early modern times.

During a meeting at the United States the former editor of the series “Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions”, Heiko A. Oberman, suggested to the author to translate the work into English. This happened more than ten years ago. Different circumstances, a stay in Italy spanning a couple of years, then the change from the University of Bonn to the University of Zurich, delayed the realisation of this project again and again. Now at last, it came to arrive at a conclusion. Willingly the author followed the proposal of the editor and publisher to add some significant sources on the cultural history of the German civic culture and some illustrations. The text from 1991 remained to be the foundation of the translation including the research report, which, according to the conception of the “Enzyklopädie Deutscher Geschichte”, constitutes about half of the book. For the English edition the concluding essay “Artworks as sources and lieux de mémoire” was newly written and a selected bibliography for further reading presents the literature published since 1991 with a focus on the most recent titles.

The author wants to thank the editor of the series “Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions”, Andrew Colin Gow (Edmonton), for his dedicated support, especially for the translation of the final essay and the review of further chapters. John Searle made the rough translation, Olga Pollack (Zurich) took care of the sources’ translations, and in her hands was also the final editing and the preparation of the index. I also would like to thank Jan Friedrich Mißfelder (Zurich), furthermore Tanja Cowall and Boris van Gool from Brill’s publishing house. The publishing house R. Oldenbourg kindly gave the permission for the translation. Thankfully I would like to commemorate my colleague Heiko A. Oberman who passed away much too early.

Zurich, July 2006

Bernd Roeck

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. *Cultural Significance of the German Citizen from Late Medieval to Early Modern Period*

The period between the late Middle Ages and the decline of feudal society was an epoch which witnessed the flowering of the urban culture. As part of a trend beginning in the Italian city states and spreading throughout Europe, this period saw an end to aristocratic and church-based monopolies in the patronage of the arts and, at the same time, the increasing significance of cities as centers of intellectual creativity and discourse. The number of teachers and students coming from cities at universities and other educational institutions rose as education became a concern of the urban elites.

A prerequisite for this development was quite clearly the economic, political and demographic rise of the cities, their continuing expansion and the growing differentiation in their specific functions. The increasing significance of the concerns of the citizens influenced the choice of objects depicted by the fine arts, the content and meaning of literature, subjects of learned discourse and the setting and character of musical and dramatic performance. Town-halls became centers of self-representation for the burghers. Until the high Middle Ages what is today commonly referred to as “art” was kept almost exclusively within the walls of a few buildings belonging to the aristocracy or religious institutions. The entire city now became a work of art, the stately palaces of the city-dwelling elite being used to house art collections and also as forums for discussions on religion, philosophy, and art. Indeed, by 1500, humanism had clearly taken on the shape of a movement dominated and guided by the cities.

It should be understood here that burghers were not only patrons, but also producers of art. They financed it, provided it with an intellectual direction, and worked it into its final form. Hence, an art market emerged in which the citizens were involved as both consumers and producers. The social type of the artist starts to take on a more concrete shape in this epoch.

Even during periods in which German cities lost importance as cultural centers—for instance, in the second half of the 16th century—their inhabitants continued to maintain their position as cultural elite. They produced outstanding contributions in their service to the early modern state. The consolidation of the German “territories”—larger and smaller political entities, more or less “sovereign” principalities and city-states, which formed the Holy Roman Empire—enabled the citizens to establish themselves as a class of administrative experts at the rising absolutist courts. So they influenced a refinement in the techniques of governance. To the same degree, artisans, musicians and writers took advantage of opportunities which offered themselves at court. They were predominantly responsible for designing palaces and royal residences, composing music to be performed there and writing books to fill the splendid baroque libraries.

The denominational divisions did not only have a laming effect on cultural developments in Germany. Through religious rivalry, ambitions were intensified at certain times: the patronage of a prince could be a “cultural challenge” for the other. This is exemplified in the magnificent architectural creations of the German baroque, the churches and palaces. These were created in the same country as the music of Johann Sebastian Bach. Nuremberg, Munich, Dresden, Mannheim, Hamburg, and Weimar, all became during certain periods cultural centers of the Empire, each city with its own unique character. Scholarly and literary circles gained in popularity. Reminiscent of humanistic sodalities, these groups sought to cultivate and purify the German language in order to refine the lifestyles of their times and to promote learned discourse.

2. *On Terminology: Bürgertum, Culture, Ways of Living, and Environment*

In this book, the culture and way of life of the *Bürgertum* will be described. Although it is not possible to go into greater detail on the precise origin and use of specific terms and their theoretical context, it is nonetheless important to make some brief remarks on the use of the most central terms.

At the center of this study are the “burghers”, the citizens, in other words, individuals who possessed the urban rights of citizenship, or who were of urban origin, who were legally privileged, and—

at least in theory—able to participate in local government. They were considered as “free” according to contemporary understanding, given that the concepts of dependency and citizenship were mutually exclusive.¹ In this book, the main focus will be on the upper and middle strata of the well-to-do urban class, their everyday life, their role as promoters of particular forms of culture, and as propertied people who invested in luxury and were able to obtain an education.²

The culture and everyday life of the urban lower classes, outsiders and those on the fringes of society will be dealt with to a far lesser extent, since they are well outwith the scope of this study.³ Historical sources pertaining to these social groups are naturally much less plentiful than those concerning the urban elites, although these groups constituted the majority of urban populations.

Likewise, relatively little is known about the living conditions of women in early modern cities. Far from having the full rights of the citizen, they belonged to the “underprivileged”. Though they unquestionably made significant contributions to early modern urban culture, it was only in the second half of the 18th century that they were able to gain a certain degree of public attention.

The *culture* of the burghers cannot obviously be portrayed here in its totality: “In its entirety, the objectivization of the intellect in works, functioning systems and advanced institutions”, to quote Thomas Nipperdey.⁴ Doing this would mean examining the philosophical and legal accomplishments of the *Bürgertum*, their religious affiliations, and numerous other themes that can only be touched upon in passing. The central concern of this account will be the everyday life of the well-off town-dwellers, the citizens, their leisure time, their attitudes to—and involvement in—the arts, humanism and the Enlightenment, and the manifestation of their existence in townscapes and houses: In other words, the “material culture” of the burghers.

¹ Manfred Riedel, Artikel „Bürger, Staatsbürger, Bürgertum,“ in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, ed. Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, Reinhart Koselleck, vol. 1 (Stuttgart: Klett, 1972), 672–725, 680.

² Lothar Gall, *Bürgertum in Deutschland* (Berlin: Siedler, 1989), 21.

³ See Bronislaw Gemerek, *Criminalité, vagabondage, paupérisme—La marginalité à l'aube des temps modernes*, in: *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 21 (1974), 337–375.

⁴ Thomas Nipperdey, „Kulturgeschichte, Sozialgeschichte, Historische Anthropologie,“ *VSWG* 55 (1968): 145–164, 150.

The term *lifestyle* is no less enigmatic than the term *culture*. According to Arno Borst, a lifestyle is a pattern of behaviour historically acquired by a community, in other words, something which is recurrent and of an everyday nature for a particular social group, based on birth or class, in a specific environment.⁵ Here we will concern ourselves with lifestyles which were influenced by the urban environment.

The term *urban environment* will be used to refer to the spheres of daily life which were shaped by specific intellectual parameters. The precondition that an “urban” or “burgher” environment can develop does not depend only on the existence of a city in a legal sense. In addition to the traditional functions of a city as a center of industry and commerce, and as a the seat of government of a territorial state or of the church,⁶ population density and distribution are decisive criteria for the development of urban lifestyles. Only in demographically dense areas can a form of “urbanized” behaviour occur.⁷ Close coexistence and cohabitation thus provided the fundamental conditions for the development of the culture of the citizens and urban existence in the early modern period.

All these various elements are forming very different types of the political, social and cultural structures which we call “towns” or “cities”. [*Translator’s note*: The German word *Stadt* cannot be translated exactly into English as “city” since it also encompasses towns.] Not all the numerous kinds of towns or cities—from the splendid city states of the south, to the emerging capitals in Western Europe, from the artificially constructed ideal cities to the imperial and the free cities in Germany or the village-like provincial towns—had to be necessarily areas which fostered urban forms of life.⁸ In principle, we may differentiate between cities that were politically and culturally dominated by a ruling-class of burghers and those that were not. Since capital cities, as royal or princely residences, were often merely annexes of the court, they tended to fall into this second cat-

⁵ Arno Borst, *Lebensformen im Mittelalter* (Berlin: Propyläen, 1973).

⁶ Klaus Gerteis, *Die deutschen Städte in der frühen Neuzeit: Zur Vorgeschichte der ‚bürgerlichen Welt‘* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1986).

⁷ Jan De Vries, *European Urbanization, 1500–1800* (London: Methuen, 1984), 21.

⁸ Heinz Stoob, „Über frühneuzeitliche Städtetypen,“ in *Forschungen zum Städtewesen in Europa*, vol. 1 (Wien: Böhlau, 1970), 246–284; Mack Walker, *German Home Towns: Community, State and General Estate, 1648–1871*, Ithaca/NY, Cornell University Press, 1971).

egory. In free cities, patricians and leading guild-members possessed high cultural status, while citizens of residential cities were very much oriented towards—and dependent on—the princely court, which secured their livelihoods.

In contrast to the countryside, each place which was more densely populated made different forms of economic activity both possible and necessary; it required particular measures to secure the supply of food and energy, as well as allowing for a relatively high level of participation in political decision-making. Towns and cities also gave birth to their own forms of social interaction and, again, *vis-à-vis* the countryside, had a more developed “infrastructure” of institutions run by religious organizations for spiritual welfare and the care of the sick and needy. Of great significance were, furthermore, the genuinely urban forms of communication. The early modern city was the most important market place for the printed word, for opinions; here books and pamphlets were produced and read, and here their production promised profit. Urban audiences attracted acrobats, actors, and musicians, the cities and towns were nodal points for migration waves. So, dense and far-reaching communication networks emerged which, in turn, inspired discourse and reasoning. However, with the press came also censorship; thus, what was considered to be the “public sphere” remained under the control of state power.

The burghers were also never alone within the walls of their city. Travellers passing through, Jews and other minorities, those without the rights of citizenship, itinerants and the stigmatized poor, these groups were always to be found among the population. Even within the community of the citizens there were many social levels and forms of differentiation. Thus, the city was a place both of encounter and confrontation between people from all walks of life to an extent not otherwise known in the early modern world. This led to efforts by one social group to separate themselves from others, above all those beneath them, to attempts to define one’s own social position through clothing and lifestyle. The state was required at the same time to formulate policies, which it did in the form of clothing decrees and other “policing” laws which sought to regulate the various ambitions of status-seekers and tried to limitate conspicuous consumption. In effect, this led to the distinctive image of early modern town life which has been reflected in numerous paintings and prints.



Fig. 1. Attributed to Heinrich Vogtherr the younger, the Perlach Square in Augsburg in Winter, circa 1541.

© Städtische Kunstsammlungen, Maximilianmuseum, Augsburg.

3. *The Citizens and Rural Society*

Town and *countryside* are terms which describe a relationship of contrasts and complex interdependence, a form of interaction, of ever-changing mutual influence and dependency, economic exchange and cultural contacts. The attitude towards rural areas represents a not insignificant—and certainly at times negative—part of the self-image and identity of the urban community. The urban burghers felt themselves to be culturally superior to the farming inhabitants of the rural world, and they regarded their way of life as being on another level. Someone who blew their nose of their hat or skirt, who did not answer a greeting, or who ate and drank without making short breaks, such a person was regarded as “farmer-like”.⁹ As Aby Warburg has shown convincingly, representations of farmers in illustrations on Burgundian tapestries of the 15th century played the same role as the satyrs would later in the Italian renaissance. The burgher Sebastian Franck described farmers as wild, treacherous, and untamed; rural inhabitants were considered to be people who “were raised in ignorance like stupid cattle”.¹⁰ The rural folk were equally unimpressed by the town dwellers.¹¹ Nevertheless, while those from the towns made fun of the farming people, they were in fact afraid of them. The Peasants’ War remained a traumatic memory for many members of the privileged classes, who continued to fear that a revolt of the common people could become a hallmark of that epoch.

It also needs to be said that, when it came to food and raw materials, there was a high degree of dependency on the rural areas—where, up until the end of the early modern period, 80% of the population lived. The reverse side of the coin was that the towns offered the products of craftsmen and opportunities for work. The centers of the European textile industry must have provided literally thousands of rural inhabitants with work.¹²

⁹ Aloys Bömer, „Anstand und Etikette nach den Theorien der Humanisten“, *Neue Jahrbücher für Pädagogik* 14 (1904): 223–242, 249–285, 330–355, 361–390.

¹⁰ For a summary see Heidi Müller, ed. *Das Bild vom Bauern: Vorstellungen und Wirklichkeit vom 16. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart* (Berlin: Museum für Deutsche Volkskunde, 1978) and Ninna Jørgensen, *Bauer, Narr und Pfaffe: Prototypische Figuren und ihre Funktion in der Reformationsliteratur* (Leiden: Brill, 1988).

¹¹ Willibald Katzinger, „Die Bürger in Stetten sein Diep, Schelm, Morder . . .“: Zu den sozialen Konflikten in den Städten Oberösterreichs unter Kaiser Maximilian I., *Historisches Jahrbuch der Stadt Linz* 83 (1985): 21–22.

¹² Hans K. Schulze, *Städtisches Um- und Hinterland in vorindustrieller Zeit* (Köln/Wien: Böhlau, 1985).

The *spread of urban-burgher cultural forms* to the countryside was also carried down such connecting economic arteries. The various questions surrounding a horizontal diffusion of culture have been researched in a variety of different ways.¹³

Principally due to the type of sources available, the issue of the distribution of certain types of furniture has been very much in the foreground. However, in the cases where the surviving sources have made meaningful results possible, it has also been examined, for example, when certain customs of eating and drinking from the towns can first be identified in the countryside. Glasses and mugs used in the consumption of beverages make it possible to draw conclusions on the increase in the consumption of tea or coffee. This phenomenon is first to be discovered among the upper echelons of rural society, then spreading “downwards”, something which can be observed during the last third of the 18th century.¹⁴ A similar process can be witnessed in the case of clocks which found their way into rural areas from the households of the citizens.

In his study on the “Integration of new furnishing and household goods in the south Münster region from the 17th to 19th century”,¹⁵ Klaus Roth notes two rules which could be applied generally for the spread of innovations. First, the readiness to innovate decreased the further away one got from the city (in this case, Münster); in Roth’s study Münster emerged as the city with the strongest level of innovation in comparison to the other towns and cities in the area examined. Second, according to Roth, a correlation can be found between the economic situation of the parishes and the respective attitudes towards innovation.¹⁶

Case studies: Wieland Held, *Zwischen Marktplatz und Anger: Stadt-Land-Beziehungen im 16. Jahrhundert in Thüringen* (Weimar: Böhlau, 1988) and Felix Escher, *Berlin und sein Umland: Zur Genese der Berliner Stadtilandschaft bis zum Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Colloquium Verlag, 1985).

¹³ See for further reading on “cultural exchange”: Peter Burke, Chivalry in the New World, in: Chivalry in the Renaissance, ed. Sydney Anglo, Woodbridge, Boydell and Brewer, 1990, 253–262.

¹⁴ Günter Wiegelmann, *Alltags- und Festspeisen: Wandel und gegenwärtige Stellung* (Marburg: Elwert, 1967), 170.

¹⁵ Klaus Roth, „Eingliederung neuen Mobiliars und Hausrats im südlichen Münsterland im 17. bis 19. Jahrhundert,“ in *Kulturelle Stadt-Land-Beziehungen in der Neuzeit*, ed. Günter Wiegelmann (Münster: Cöpppenrath, 1978), 249–295.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 275.

A methodological problem is posed by the lack of more precise studies on the furnishing of the citizens' homes.¹⁷ Günter Wiegelmann has argued that art historians have concentrated too much on the most celebrated pieces, while cultural historians have concentrated above all on the general situation in rural areas. A central problem of research is therefore the question, "which strata of the urban society acted as cultural role model for which groups of rural inhabitants".¹⁸

Regional studies have so far contributed diverging results. Karl S. Kramer has demonstrated that in Lower Franconia there were practically no differences between towns, markets and small villages, whereas in central Franconia quite clearly customs can be found in the countryside which had originated in the towns.¹⁹ On the basis of material collected in eastern Bavaria, Bedal maintains that a spread of burgher household culture to rural areas during the 16th and 17th centuries can be proved in individual cases.²⁰ Findings from northern Germany provide, however, a completely different picture. Wiegelmann attempts to explain this with the proposition that in the north—as opposed to the conditions in southern Germany—there were "no fundamental impulses towards a transformation of rural areas on the basis of urbanized, burgher culture". Indeed, rather the opposite tendencies can be identified:²¹ "As the culture of southern German villages in relation to property was already in the late Middle Ages so close to that of the *Bürgertum*, K. Bedal could only discover discouragingly slight differences in the inventory."²² And, he points out that in the area surrounding a major city such as Nuremberg one could discover an altogether different picture. This brings us to a central problem: where can the dividing line between town and country be drawn?

¹⁷ Günter Wiegelmann, *Stadt-Land-Beziehungen in der Neuzeit* (Münster: Copenrath, 1978), 23.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Karl-Sigismund Kramer, *Volksleben im Hochstift Bamberg und im Fürstentum Coburg (1500–1800): Eine Volkskunde auf Grund archivalischer Quellen* (Würzburg: Kommissionsverlag Schöningh, 1967), 293.

²⁰ Konrad Bedal, „Bäuerliche und bürgerliche Wohnkultur Nordostbayerns in Inventaren des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts,“ in *Kulturelle Stadt-Land-Beziehungen in der Neuzeit*, ed. Günter Wiegelmann (Münster: Copenrath, 1978), 206–208.

²¹ Wiegelmann, *Kulturelle Stadt-Land-Beziehungen*, 9.

²² *Ibid.*

Is it possible to use this differentiation for the purposes of analysis? Helge Gerndt argues that the term “country” does not have a specifically definable meaning: “One cannot employ the word ‘countryside’ because it is neither possible to achieve an overview of it as a whole, nor can one divide it up into representative parts. There were certainly many towns, but it is only possible to find one ‘countryside’, and that is everywhere where there are no urban areas . . . the ‘countryside’ always remains the countryside in an ideal sense.”²³

On the other hand, can one not quite simply take the world of the citizens to be “non-rural”? Yes and no. It has already been mentioned that the early modern period knew many different types of towns and cities; so, hence, there are a large number of towns outwith the entirety which we call the “country”. But, likewise, there are also areas which—without giving attention to legal criteria—socially, economically, and culturally merged into rural areas. This introduces a particularly important criterion: namely, the extent of demographic concentration.

Furthermore, on the whole, one can differentiate more easily between rural and urban areas in the early modern period than in the 19th and 20th centuries in those places where urbanization gradually caused further parts of the original areas surrounding towns to their traditional character. Still, the antithesis employed traditionally in academic studies (in general: rural traditionalism versus “urban” dynamism and rationality) have above all proved analytically helpful²⁴—quite apart from the fact that “rationality” can always only be defined from the perspective of certain cultures and historically-teleologically. With these reservations in mind one can conclude that the rather more intensive christianization, technologically more advanced and equipped with a denser, more expansive communications network, lent the world of the towns and cities more “rationality” than the “country”. In the more compact and densely populated world of the town and city, an administrative framework and systems of rules were more able to penetrate daily life than in the countryside: a state system based on a “Christian policy” could be established first

²³ Helge Gerndt, *Kultur als Forschungsfeld: Über volkskundliches Denken und Arbeiten* (München: C.H. Beck, 1981), 53.

²⁴ For an early example, see Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl, *Land und Leute* (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1867), 81–122.

and foremost there. In effect, that meant that “irrational” elements could be held back by the power of the city walls—magicians, “wise women”, or clairvoyants were whenever possible imprisoned or exiled from the urban world.²⁵

It is noticeable that in the larger German cities, fewer verdicts against witches were pronounced than in rural areas.²⁶ This fact is closely connected with the peculiarities of the city. The city generated a form of “artificial environment”: the experience of the effects of nature was much more seldom in urban areas where buildings were closely packed together. Hence, the city-dweller did not feel the consequences of a hail storm “directly”, but rather indirectly through the rise in bread prices. Inside the city-walls, he or she blamed more often the baker or wheat trader as the “guilty one”, rather than seeking the cause in the “weather sorcery” of the witches. The “natural”—rural—environment offered a larger range of phenomena, which constantly suggested metaphysical explanations, which were essential prerequisites for the belief in the world of witches and spirits than the urban environment.²⁷ The more developed the relationship between communication, technology and economics—so the hypothesis goes—the less likely it is for such “metaphysical” views to occur.

In addition, more closely interwoven church structures emerged in the towns and cities; in fact, the more concentrated means and lines of communication must have led to a more intensive “Christianization” than in the rural areas. This did not in itself prevent witch trials, however, what it did lead to was a removal of the atmosphere in which denunciation flourished, and it could be emphasized that in the cities there existed a “religious infrastructure” which provided spiritual help for many needs and “solutions” for many problems of everyday life. The significance of this atmosphere for the “popular” belief in witches and the supernatural has been shown by some of

²⁵ Bernd Roeck, *Eine Stadt in Krieg und Frieden: Studien zur Geschichte der Reichsstadt Augsburg zwischen Kalenderstreit und Parität*, 2 vols. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989).

²⁶ This hypothesis, which would seem to contradict the juridical attitudes in cities, has been documented in a study of smaller towns. See Gerhard Schormann, „Städtische Gesellschaft und Hexenprozess,“ in *Stadt im Wandel: Kunst und Kultur des Bürgertums in Norddeutschland 1150–1650*, ed. Cord Meckseper, (Stuttgart/Bad Cannstatt: Edition Cantz, 1985), 175–187.

²⁷ Roeck, *Krieg und Frieden*, 366–369.

the more recent research studies.²⁸ And, it should not be forgotten that in the towns there was a better developed system for the care of the poor and sick than in the countryside. This must have contributed to the alleviating of the harsher side of life which normally led to the search for “the guilty”, or to the use of magic to help solve the problems of the normal working day.²⁹

Even when the fragments of a magical, archaic image of the world remained static for a longer time outwith the cities, one cannot assume that a dichotomy existed between a “culture of the ordinary people” and an “elite culture”. It is well-known that even among the well-educated there existed the ability to combine in a strange way religious and confessional conviction with belief in the effects of magic and necromancy.³⁰ It is possible that the dialectic of Reformation and Counter-Reformation—in the sense that this process encouraged a critical interest in questions of belief—contributed to a gradual separation of these ways of thinking. The French historian Robert Muchembled has interpreted this development as a violent confrontation between the *elite culture* and the *popular culture*;³¹ others speak more circumspectly of a reform process in the people’s culture between 1500 and 1650.³² And, even when the accumulated power of the states is generally identified as the real opponent of the culture of the people, the role of the citizens in these secular processes requires nonetheless more precise definition. Civil servants and lawyers coming from the cities developed the norms which were increasingly supposed to regulate the daily lives of the “subjects” in ever more detailed ways; in fact, civic rationality seems in some places to have worked *against* the persecution of witches.³³ The infiltration of the rural world

²⁸ For an overview, see Gerhard Schormann, *Hexenprozesse in Deutschland*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981; Brian P. Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, London e.a., Longman Group, 1987.

²⁹ Heide Dienst, „Lebensbewältigung durch Magie“, in *Alltag im 16. Jahrhundert: Studien zu Lebensformen in mitteleuropäischen Städten*, ed. Alfred Kohler and Heinrich Lutz (München: Oldenbourg, 1987), 80–116.

³⁰ See Ernst Walter Zeeden, „Katholische Überlieferungen in den lutherischen Kirchenordnungen des 16. Jahrhunderts“, in id., *Konfessionsbildung: Studien zur Reformation, Gegenreformation und katholischen Reform*, (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1985), 179–182.

³¹ Robert Muchembled, *Culture populaire et culture des élites dans la France moderne—XV^e–XVIII^e siècles* (Paris: Flammarion, 1978).

³² Winfried Schulze, *Deutsche Geschichte im 16. Jahrhundert 1500–1618* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1987), 265.

³³ Wolfgang Behringer, *Hexenverfolgungen in Bayern: Volksmagie, Glaubenseifer und Staatsräson in der Frühen Neuzeit* (München: Oldenbourg, 1987), 251, 257; Id., „Scheiternde

with the empirical, with economics and technology, which set in at an increased rate during the 18th century, cannot be merely subsumed under the terms *Überfremdung*: alien “infiltration” or “repression”.

Not everything which was discussed and published by “enlightened”, “patriotic” or “economic” societies remained purely theoretical. The efforts to raise the social status of agriculture—reinforced during the 18th century—were often expressions of philanthropic ambitions, which at the same time brought about a new frame of mind among the burghers in regard to the farming community. And, they were also an expression of a visibly more neutral attitude towards nature, which now came to be viewed less as something which needed to be feared, but to be researched and used efficiently. This new mentality meant demystification and alienation; the ability to explain natural phenomena led to the loss of its emotional connotations. The other aspect of this process—the “return of the suppressed” in the dialectic of the Enlightenment—was that one supported opposing views in art and philosophy: artists and intellectuals, most of them of urban origin, played an important role here. The myth of Arcadia, of the “golden age”, emanated from a “civilized”—and on most occasions urban—world, no more and no less the philosophical reaction against certain enlightenment views on nature and history.

Hexenprozesse. Volksglaube und Hexenverfolgung um 1600 in München“, in *Kultur der einfachen Leute. Bayerisches Volksleben vom 16. bis zum 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Richard van Dülmen (München: C.H. Beck, 1983), S. 42–78.

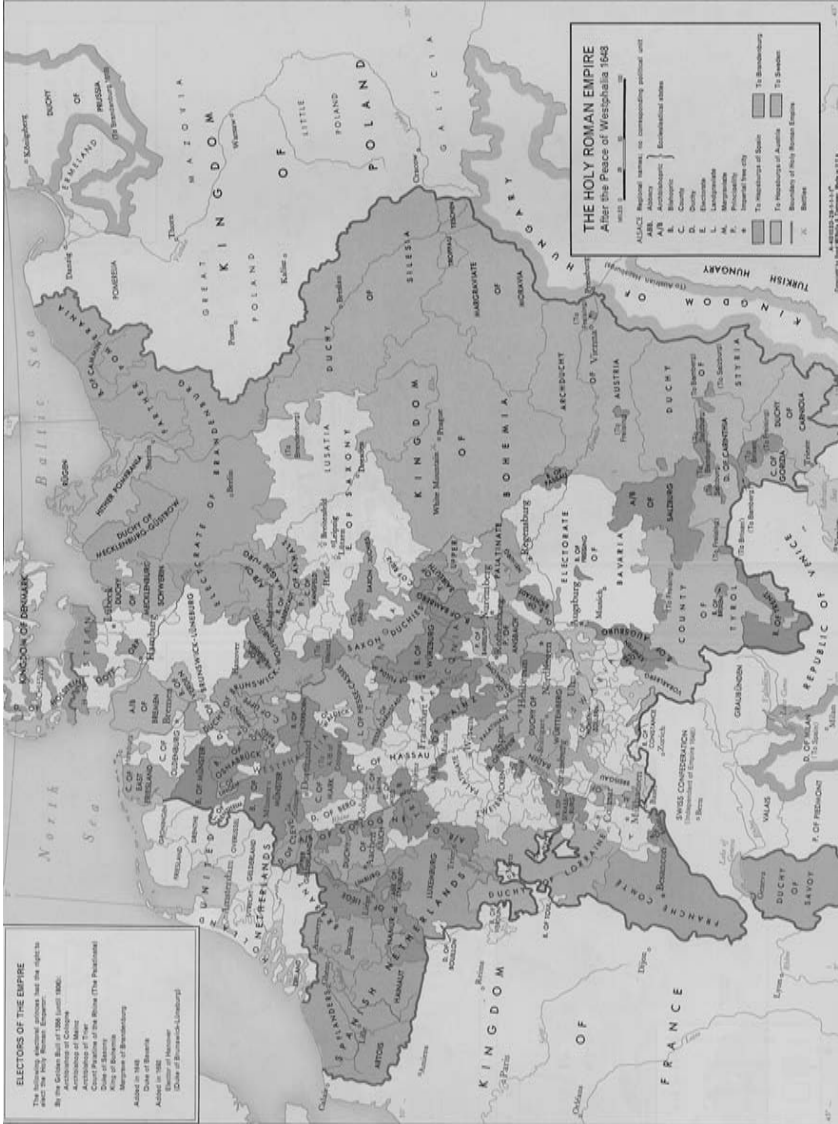


Fig. 2. The Holy Roman Empire. In: Rand McNally, *Historical Atlas of the World* (s.l., 1994), pp. 32–33.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CHARACTER OF THE EARLY MODERN CITY IN THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE

1. *Geography*

The significance of geography for a cultural history of German urban culture is hard to define with any great precision as cultural areas cannot be defined by political, national or even linguistic borders. Styles of art, intellectual movements, lifestyles and the material culture of everyday life constitute divergent and by no means congruent geographical interrelationships. Although the area we are discussing can be said to encompass the Holy Roman Empire—the „Reich“—and the German Habsburg hereditary possessions, the imprecise character of such a definition must be emphasized.¹ The borders of this heterogeneous construct changed significantly on several occasions between the 16th and 18th centuries. The Empire included territories which were ruled by foreign crowns and—what was likewise unparalleled—a broad range of cultural and artistic trends.² Its culture was more European and international than the cultural appearance of any other country, and cannot be understood outside this context.

Hence, the culture of the cities in the north and north west of the *Reich* was influenced by England and most of all by the Netherlands, especially in the 17th century, the “golden century” of Dutch culture.³ Hamburg, to take one example, appeared even to contemporary observers to have been built in the “Dutch style”, although these observers may not only have seen the “amphibian” structure of the

¹ See John Gagliardo, *Reich and nation. The Holy Roman Empire as idea and reality, 1763–1806* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Pr., 1980).

² Wolfgang Braunfels, *Kunst im Heiligen Römischen Reich Deutscher Nation*, 5 vols. (München: C.H. Beck, 1979/85); Peter Hirschfeld, *Mäzene. Die Rolle des Auftraggebers in der Kunst* (München, Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1968).

³ Ehbrecht, Wilfried and Heinz Schilling, ed. *Niederlande und Nordwestdeutschland: Studien zur Regional- und Stadtgeschichte Nordwestkontinentaleuropas im Mittelalter und in der Neuzeit, Franz Petri zum 80. Geburtstag* (Köln/Wien: Böhlau, 1983).

city, but also the cultural influence on the furniture of the burghers' homes.⁴ At the same time, trade routes and political relations contributed to common characteristics in the art of some Hanseatic cities, which were able to transcend national borders.⁵

Conversely, southern Germany stood during the course of the 16th century under the cultural influence of Italy. Humanism and the Renaissance were first received there; a Catholic and Roman orientation formed the basis for a cultural region which is still recognizable today. Even around 1600, Innsbruck was regarded as a thoroughly Italian city.⁶ Likewise, the influence of Spanish and French culture should be mentioned, which exerted their influence on the citizens through the princely courts.

Cityscapes can be defined frequently not only in legal or—as shown above—demographic or economic, but also cultural terms: architectural styles, literary and other intellectually identifiable relationships allow one to discover obvious points of commonality.⁷

Finally, a more differentiated view would require a closer examination of the cities on the Rhine and the smaller central German territories with their historically significant urban culture. Silesia and its cities, among them Breslau and Glogau, should be emphasized in particular as they produced the great figures of German Baroque poetry. That the most important representatives of this genre—Fleming, Opitz, Gryphius, Hofmannswaldau and Lohenstein—studied in Leyden in Holland only serves as another reminder that German culture possessed numerous European influences and elements.

⁴ Günther Grundmann, „Auf den Spuren der Niederländer in Hamburg,“ in *Hamburg gestern und heute: Gesammelte Vorträge und Ansprachen zur Architektur, Kunst und Kulturgeschichte der Hansestadt* (Hamburg: Christians, 1972), 99–114.

⁵ Jan Białostocki, „The Baltic Area as an Artistic Region in the Sixteenth Century,“ *Hafnia: Copenhagen Papers in the History of Art* (1976): 11–23; Johannes Schildhauer, *Die Hanse: Geschichte und Kultur* (Berlin: Kohlhammer, 1984); Maria Bogucka, *Das alte Danzig: Alltagsleben vom 15. bis 17. Jahrhundert* (München: C.H. Beck, 1987).

⁶ Jürgen Bücking, *Kultur und Gesellschaft in Tirol um 1600: Des Hippolytus Guarinonius ‚Grewel der Verwüstung Menschlichen Geschlechts‘ (1610) als kulturgeschichtliche Quelle des frühen 17. Jahrhunderts* (Lübeck: Matthiesen, 1968), 67.

⁷ For an example, see Jürgen Sydow, *Städte im deutschen Südwesten: Ihre Geschichte von der Römerzeit bis zur Gegenwart* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1987), 86.

2. *Vedute: The Ideal and the Reality of the City*

A reasonably accurate description of the general appearance of the early modern city was first possible in the 16th century.⁸ On the basis of the Dutch and Italian example, such as the Florentine Vedute “with chain” (c. 1477–81), there followed in Germany also more or less realistic representations. As early as Bernhard von Breytenbach and Hartmann Schedel there were no longer paintings of “the city as such”, rather, though stylized, their portrayals possessed individual character. Dürer’s watercolour depictions of Nuremberg represent in fact an exceptional height in realistic city panoramas. Nevertheless, idealized aspects remained conspicuous well into the 18th century. In particular, the dominance of mural crowns and tower decoration, even in the famous vedute of Frankfurt’s Matthäus Merian, is an indication of the lasting influence of old pictorial formulas.⁹ These continued the ideal of “heavenly Jerusalem”, whereas realistic city panoramas indicate a process of secularization. The metaphysical aspect of city life is exemplified in a particularly impressive fashion in Anton Woensam’s Cologne prospect of 1531. The holy patrons are assigned to each of the principal churches, high above the clouds. The citizens know that they are under their protection, in them lay the certain knowledge of the community’s legitimization through God, the identity of which is protected by the patrons. The echoes of these ideas extended into the 18th century.

Taking a bird’s-eye view (according to Jacopo de Barbari’s Venetian example), the city assured itself of its own greatness and importance. Many of the pictures of the city from the bird’s perspective, images which had been becoming more numerous since the 16th century, were city plans and technical aids for tourists or tax collectors. At the same time, they also captured the city as a work of art. It was shown in its totality, with the aim of spreading its reputation. The more prosaic “ichnographia”, or schematic plan, only replaced the labor-intensive vedute during the course of the 18th century.

⁸ Gerhard Eimer, „Die Barockstadt und ihr künstlerisches Erscheinungsbild: Zur Entstehung der frühen Modellsammlung,“ in *Europäische Städte im Zeitalter des Barock: Gestalt, Kultur, Sozialgefüge*, ed. Kersten Krüger (Köln/Wien: Böhlau, 1988), 6.

⁹ Bernd Roeck, „Gerusalemme celeste e spirito geometrico. Sull’iconografia e sulla storia delle mura cittadine: Dall’esempio di Augusta,“ in *La città e le mura*, ed. Jacques Le Goff/Cesare De Seta, Rom/Bari 1989, S. 291–320.



Fig. 3. Hartmann Schedel, View of the City of Nuremberg, 1493. © Rheinisches Bildarchiv, Cologne.

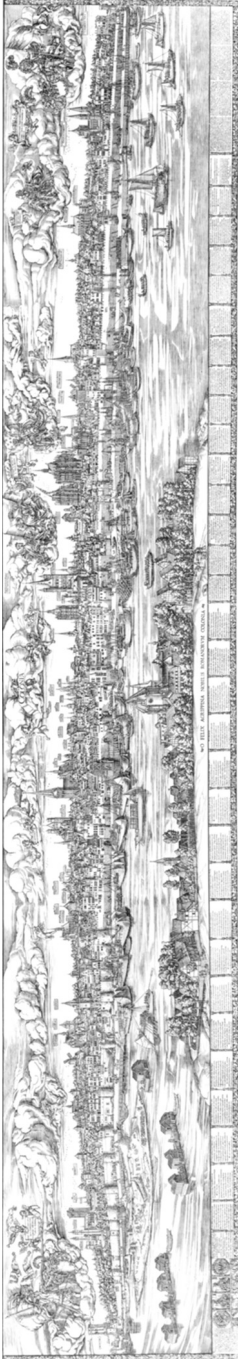


Fig. 4. Anton Woensam, Big View of Cologne, 1531. © Kölnisches Stadtmuseum, Cologne.

A decisive prerequisite for the modern city vedute was the discovery of the *historic identity* of the city through Renaissance humanism. In the historiography on the city in the modern period, a sense of the same pride in the community that typifies these splendid pictures can be identified. Aside from its characteristic buildings, it is history—certainly often enough in the form of fantastic myths, emerging from the darkness of the past—from which every city draws its individuality. This is the origin of the *ode to the city* which, following the individual precursors, became more recognizable as a literary genre around the middle of the 15th century.¹⁰ Known examples are Albrecht von Eyb's Bamberg Ode and Hans Rosenplüt's Nuremberg panegyric—the prototypes of the genre, so to speak.

3. *City Planning and Construction*

Planning cities according to aesthetic goals is a specific phenomenon of modern history. Unlike in some Italian towns, where varied methods for the essentially architectural side of urban development had been in existence since the thirteenth century, within Germany such codes remained restricted to practical questions such as hygiene or fire prevention.

To give a concrete example, in the oligarchically governed free cities, there were numerous obstructions to larger, more comprehensive building concepts, above all the right to unrestricted property and land ownership. After the Thirty Years' War, many cities anyway no longer had the resources for urbanization programs, and city planning became even more a matter of the princes. Starting at the latest at this point, the appearance of the early modern burgher city owed most to the desire of wealthy private individuals for prestige. "Conspicuous consumption" served to mark the social distance between urban elites and the common burghers. In the central "upper-class quarters" individual families acquired neighbouring properties for considerable sums of money, often after years of dispute, and

¹⁰ Otto Borst, „Kulturfunktionen der deutschen Stadt im 18. Jahrhundert,“ in *Babel oder Jerusalem? Sechs Kapitel Stadtgeschichte*, ed. Helmut Böhme/Eberhard Jäckel/Rainer Jooss (Stuttgart: Theiss, 1984), 355–392, 567–592.

built opulent houses with eaves; “pleasure gardens”, pavilions and palaces appeared in the suburbs.¹¹

In general it can be said that many German cities, including the most important *free cities*, such as Nuremberg or Cologne, retained a certain medieval character right up until the 19th century. Although there had been efforts at urbanization 300 years earlier, these had only affected individual quarters of the cities. The exception was Augsburg which, between 1590 and 1620, became the “Pompeii of the German Renaissance”, as Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl pointed out. Otherwise, the appearance of the old European cities changed so slowly as to be barely noticeable during the course of a generation. Even the population increase, experienced by almost all cities during the first half of the 17th century, usually led only to buildings being extended upwards and existing rooms being divided—in other words, the inhabitants of cities lived closer together, with less space than before. This trend can be observed when one compares the bird’s-eye view panoramas; indeed, often not even the lawns near the city walls were built on. The consequences of these demographic fluctuations for the development of the building industry have only been described in some case studies.¹²

Major buildings can provide some evidence concerning the development of the building economy, even though, it has to be said, the methodological problems are considerable: for example, it is usually the houses of the well-to-do, the wealthy upper-class, which have remained intact, hence making this group “over-represented” from the historian’s point of view. A series of sources which would allow to get a database for the analysis of the economic circumstances of the early modern building industry can only be found occasionally. It should not be a surprise, then, that the standard handbooks of economic history generally ignore the subject of “the building industry”. We are also lacking studies which are comparable to Rainer Goemmel’s

¹¹ Karl Czok, „Zu Kultur und Baukunst in Stadt und Vorstädten im 18. Jahrhundert: Dargestellt am Beispiel der Stadt Leipzig,“ in *Städtische Kultur in der Barockzeit*, ed. Wilhelm Rausch (Linz an der Donau: Österreichischer Arbeitskreis für Stadtgeschichtsforschung, 1982), 87–104.

¹² Rainer Gömmel, *Vorindustrielle Bauwirtschaft in der Reichsstadt Nürnberg und ihrem Umland (16.–18. Jahrhundert)* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1985) and Bernd Roeck, „Wirtschaftliche und soziale Voraussetzungen der Augsburger Baukunst zur Zeit des Elias Holl,“ *architectura* 14 (1984): 119–138.

remarkable analysis of the construction business in Nuremberg, or monographs which examine the problems of the real-estate market in cities.¹³

4. *The Ideal and the Planned City*

As late as the period of absolutism, according to clearly laid-out plans, fortifications were expanded to “ideal” geometrically built constructions, whose often gigantic dimensions dominated the view of the early-modern city.¹⁴ Within the cities, however, “the greatest ‘architect’ [remained] . . . fire”.¹⁵ The option for building on a *tabula rasa* was especially exploited by absolutist territorial states; thus Mannheim was re-constructed after being destroyed several times (above all in 1622 and 1689) using a quadratic scheme. The layout could have been taken from Daniel Speckle’s “Architecture of Fortresses”.¹⁶ Other examples of schematically designed groups of buildings that came close to realizing the urban dreams of the day can be found in Neubreisach, Karlsruhe, and in particular Freudenstadt. After 1599, the architect Heinrich Schickhardt based his planning on a chessboard; the housing settlement for miners, initiated by Duke Frederick of Württemberg, is said to have been the model for J.V. Andreae’s “Christianopolis”, one of the most interesting 17th century utopian treatises.¹⁷

Ideal cities—as one refers to such constructions with this rather problematic term—are considered to be symbolic embodiments of contemporary theory of the state.¹⁸ The “colonizing” of this environment imposed from above—specifically the category “city of

¹³ Goemmel, *Bauwirtschaft*; Rolf Hammel, „Häusermarkt und wirtschaftliche Wechsellen in Lübeck 1284 bis 1700,“ in *Hansische Geschichtsblätter* II 106 (1888): 41–107.

¹⁴ Henning Eichberg, „Geometrie als barocke Verhaltensnorm: Fortifikation und Exerziten,“ in *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 4 (1977): 17–50 and Eimer, *Barockstadt*.

¹⁵ Gerteis, *Städte in der frühen Neuzeit*.

¹⁶ Karl Gruber, *Die Gestalt der deutschen Stadt: Ihr Wandel aus der geistigen Ordnung der Zeiten* (München: Callwey, 1977).

¹⁷ About Freudenstadt: Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *German Renaissance Architecture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981) 265–266.

¹⁸ Hanno-Walter Kruff, *Städte in Utopia: die Idealstadt vom 15. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert zwischen Staatsutopie und Wirklichkeit* (München: C.H. Beck, 1989).

exiles¹⁹—was often only made successful through the granting of generous privileges. The spectacular case of Berlin demonstrates the dynamics of absolutist city planning: the core of what would become the old city arose out of an amalgamation of Cölln, Friedrichswerder, Dorotheenstadt, Friedrichstadt and the Hohenzollerns' residence. Of the 4,100 residential buildings in Berlin in 1711, 60% were erected after 1685.²⁰ While some contemporaries considered Berlin to be Europe's cleanest capital,²¹ less laudatory judgements can be found in other accounts. As late as 1785 there were said to be streets "where large sewers are filled to brim (. . .); even near the Royal Palace it was possible to find human and animal excrement."²²

Most houses were designed with eaves, and often enough room remained at the back for a small garden, as for instance in Johann Arnold Hering's Friedrichstadt. This made it possible to build wider streets. It conformed likewise to aesthetic principles and led to more protection against outbreaks of fire and to a better flow of traffic.

The absolutist planned city negated history in favour of power, subordinating all creative will and pragmatic solutions. Alongside and against the "planned" there now appeared the architectural phenomenon of "natural growth": these are two principal criteria for the analysis of the early modern city. In fact, the very outward appearance of the old free cities, which assured the 19th century's romantic admiration, provoked ridicule in the 18th century: their appearance was taken welcomingly as an allegory for the political world which they represented. "Nothing presents a more lively image of the depressing body politic than they", said Wilhelm Ludwig Wekhrin in 1778, speaking of the "dark, melancholic, introverted" Regensburg.²³ The site of the "eternal diet" was indeed the antithesis of the "enlightened urbanization" of cities such as Berlin or

¹⁹ Heinz Stoob, „Über frühneuzeitliche Städtetypen,“ in *Forschungen zum Städtewesen in Europa* (Köln/Wien: Böhlau, 1970).

²⁰ Albert Gut, *Das Berliner Wohnhaus des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts*, revised by Waltraud Volk (Berlin: Ernst, 1984).

²¹ Wolfgang Braunfels, *Abendländische Stadtbaukunst: Herrschaftsform und Baugestalt* (Köln: DuMont, 1991).

²² Horst Möller, *Fürstenstaat oder Bürgernation: Deutschland 1763–1815* (Berlin: Siedler, 1989), 83–84.

²³ Wilhelm Ludwig Wekhrin, *Anselmus Rabiosus Reise durch Oberdeutschland* (München: C.H. Beck, 1988), 40.

Leipzig. “They were just to my taste, these buildings, which seemed so enormous,” wrote the famous German poet Goethe about Leipzig, “[buildings] . . . which, after two streets, changed their appearance, in great courtyards, with walls reaching heavenwards, enclosing the world of the citizen, great castles, they represent almost half-cities.”²⁴ It was not by-gone days that revealed themselves to Goethe in this late Baroque business metropolis, rather an epoch, changed by trade and characterized by wealth.

5. *The Burgher's House*

Already in the 16th and 17th centuries old *house names* could be encountered in many towns which was more a reminder than anything else to what extent the house stood at the centre of the identity of its occupants and as a landmark in the geography of the town. Around the Sand Fountain in Frankfurt were scattered houses with names such as “the Red Head”, the “Old and New Augspurg”, the “Great Hunt”, the “Old Hay Seed”, the “Small Writer”, the “Old Swiss Man”, the “Sand Yard”, the “Pretty Riverbank”, and the “Red Lion”. The outer appearance of the burgher houses varied greatly according to the region and obviously changed between the late Middle Ages and the end of the 18th century.²⁵ The wealthier the owners were, the greater was their desire to flaunt their wealth, and so they were more anxious to invest in their private interiors. Changes in the culture of the house were—according to the fashion of the time—predominantly a concern of the economically powerful elite.

The German burgher house often earned the admiration of foreign visitors. Enea Silvio Piccolomini commented in 1452 that the burghers' dwellings in Nuremberg seemed to have been built for princes. In the early 16th century, Antonio de Beatis offered a general description: “The German houses are, although usually made of wood, still quite lovely and charming and not uncomfortable inside. They have richly ornamented bay windows almost everywhere, here with two

²⁴ Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Werke*, Weimarer Ausgabe, vol. 27, 49 (Dichtung und Wahrheit II/6).

²⁵ *Das Deutsche Bürgerhaus*, ed. Deutscher Architekten- und Ingenieurverband, 41 vols. (Tübingen: Wasmuth, 1959–).

sides, there with three. They are sometimes painted entirely and covered in tiles on which they have painted coats of arms or beautiful figures of saints. The doors of the houses, in particular the main portals to the street, are either covered entirely with iron, or are painted with red here or green there, or blue or yellow.”²⁶ Many cities must have been quite colorful, thanks to facade frescoes, which were quite common, using either figures or the decorative forms that were cheaper to produce. In 16th century Braunschweig, the houses around the market and the town hall were “painted by wish and order of the city council”.²⁷ Evidence such as this which has survived show that this type of facade decoration also existed in the north, although it was more widespread in the southern regions of the Empire. Michel de Montaigne wrote in this regard in his travel diary (1580/81) about the cities of southern Germany: “In all of these cities, churches and houses were often freshly painted, and at the right time, as if they were expecting our arrival, and where we stopped everything had been renewed at the places where we were three or four years ago . . .”²⁸ The best craftsmen were employed for this sort of work, men such as Jörg Breu the younger. In Italy, where this art form originated, even Giorgione and Tizian can be found among the ranks of the facade painters. Virtually none of this art has survived, so that we must primarily rely for our information on pictures and guides. Such facade decoration appears as late as the second half of the 18th century.

Concerning the type of house construction and facade design, of much greater importance than today was the question of which building materials were available in the immediate vicinity; this was an important consideration as the costs for the transportation of the material were much higher than labor costs. The richly-formed Renaissance facades, which characterized Heidelberg before its destruction in 1693, were only possible on account of the geology of the region, while half-timbered houses can be found mainly in wooded areas, particularly in the German south-west, Franconia, Hesse and

²⁶ Hans Liebmann, *Deutsches Land und Volk nach italienischen Reiseberichterstattungen der Reformationszeit* (Berlin: Ebering, 1910), 204.

²⁷ Max Buhlers, ed. *Joachim Brandis' Diarium; ergänzt aus Tilo Brandis' Annalen; 1528–1609* (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1902), 181.

²⁸ For an english edition see *The Diary of Montaigne's Journey to Italy in 1580 and 1581. Translated, with introduction and notes*, by E.J. Trechmann (London: Woolf, 1929).

Lower Saxony.²⁹ When De Beatis praised Cologne as a city with houses built “as a rule of large and good stone”, it should be remembered that the city owed this reputation to its position on the banks of a large river and the Rhine deposits of lime and tuff nearby—factors which again reduced transportation costs. Another dimension, specifically the lack of stone in the region, resulted in the brick building industry in the north German lower lying regions. In a description of Nuremberg from 1512, we read that the citizens had a quarry near the city with such soft sandstone that it easily gave way to iron while being hewed: “But in the buildings it becomes hard, when exposed to air and burned by the sun and driving wind as if by fire. For this reason, they erect beautiful walls of ashlar, which can easily be freshened up on the outer surfaces in the places where age lets it appear too ugly.”³⁰

Despite this geographical dependence on certain construction materials, and the consequences which it had for architectural styles, a hierarchy of building materials became established in some places. The representative buildings of the burgher corporations—town halls, guildhalls, dance halls—often showed themselves to be the social centers for the elites, if for no other reason than their use of marble and other valuable materials. While very often the interiors were “miniature art collections”, the diversity of decoration on the outside was used to demonstrate social status, whether it was through expensive stone sculptures, carved half-timber beams, mortared decorative gables, or frescoes. The iconography of the material and the workmanship which accompanied it emphasized the owner’s social standing, the opulent house became a “credit card for the elite”, as has been aptly remarked of palace construction in the Florentine Renaissance.³¹ And if, as Piccolomini observed—burgher homes resembled princely palaces, then this said something about the social orientation of the urban community’s leading group. The most impressive example of this phenomenon is the Fugger palace at the Augsburg

²⁹ For an overview, see Georg Ulrich Grossmann, *Der Fachwerkbau* (Köln: DuMont, 1986), 69 and Günther Binding, Udo Mainzer and Anita Wiedenau, *Kleine Kunstgeschichte des deutschen Fachwerkbaus* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1989).

³⁰ Johannes Cochlaeus, *Brevis Germanie descriptio* (1512), ed. Karl Langosch (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1976), 80.

³¹ Roberto S. Lopez, “Hard Times and Investment in Culture,” in *The Renaissance: A Symposium*, ed. Wallace Klippert Ferguson (New York: 1953), 29–54.

wine market,³² which hardly a visitor to this free city failed to visit. These upper strata, through their ostentatious lifestyle and the architecture with which they surrounded themselves, constantly helped to encourage the suspicion that they wanted to cross existing social barriers—without regard to the anti-luxury laws whose explicit goal it was to bind the outward forms of lifestyles to class structures. And, likewise also without regard to the development of a specifically civic canon of virtue which included such virtues as industry, frugality and modesty. Geiler von Kayserberg criticized the domestic luxury of his time, which contradicted such ideals, with the term “court jester’s bells” [*Narrenschelle*]: that meant for him “building ‘pleasurable houses’”. Then there are many who have their houses painted and decorated from the in- and outside with wonderful and strange figures . . . They also have their own bathrooms, ponds, lakes, fish troughs and fountains in the kitchens or in the main room”.³³ Similar houses full of *nouveau riche* splendor could be found throughout the early modern period. It appears, nonetheless, that following the Thirty Years’ War, a revealing development became apparent: namely, the differences in architectural style between rural and lower-class burghers and the wealthy city burghers. One expression of this was the increasing rejection of half-timbered constructions in favor of plaster and stucco. In contrast, the common people’s building habits remained—more so in the south of Germany than in the north—essentially “medieval”.³⁴

In the 18th century burgher houses would not at all have been inappropriate for owners from the nobility. Even buildings where manufacturing took place could sometimes appear more like absolutist palaces than places of economic activity.

Of course, the great majority of burghers lived more humbly. From the economic half-timbered constructions, which remain even today characteristic for a number of cities—such as Nördlingen, Rothenburg on the Tauber, or Dinkelsbühl—to the modest burgher townhouses or rented apartments, there was a wide range of house styles.³⁵

³² Norbert Lieb, *Die Fugger und die Kunst im Zeitalter der hohen Renaissance* (München: Schnell und Steiner, 1958).

³³ Georg Steinhausen, *Geschichte der deutschen Kultur*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Bibliographisches Institut, 1932), 349.

³⁴ Konrad Bedal, „Zeitmarken in der traditionellen Baukultur: Ein gewagter Versuch an Hand nord- und süddeutscher Beispiele,“ in *Wandel der Alltagskultur seit dem Mittelalter*, ed. Günter Wiegelmann (Münster: Cöpppenrath, 1987), 150, 155.

³⁵ Peter H. Ropertz, *Kleinbürgerlicher Wohnbau vom 14. bis 17. Jahrhundert in Deutschland und im benachbarten Ausland* (Aachen: Technische Hochschule, 1976).

6. *Cobblestones and Filth*

De Beatis, Montaigne and other travelers, whose notes and diaries have influenced our image of burgher culture in the 16th century, were wealthy people who could afford to travel in a comparatively luxurious manner. This obviously colored their perspective. When Montaigne reported after his journeys to Germany in 1580/81 that the stairs in his quarter were covered with linen cloth and—as protection against fetor—incense was burning in the rooms, then he is certainly not presenting the view of an “average citizen”.³⁶ Even cobbled streets, which the Swiss historian Jacob Burckhardt regards as an indication of a higher level of civilization in his “The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy”, is probably mentioned by most travelers because they regarded it as something exceptional.³⁷ To begin with, only a few central areas of cities were covered with pebbles or cobblestones. As late as the 18th century, what one found in most cases was quite simply earth: when it was hot, producing dust, when it rained, mud. Even the most glorious capitals must have been fairly foul-smelling places where streets and squares were “fertilized” with all sorts of refuse, with tanners’ lye, rotting pieces of meat, blood and bones from the butcheries, excrement and urine. A clear indication of the real conditions is the fact that the inhabitants of the wide streets in Frankfurt were instructed to pile up sewage and garbage in front of their houses in such a way that it did not hinder traffic. In smaller towns and on the outskirts of cities piles of dung lay steaming in front of the houses.³⁸ This refuse attracted rats and all sorts of other pests. Dogs, cats, poultry and pigs roamed the streets, even in large cities; those approaching city gates will probably have noticed the decomposing corpses of “convicted” people on decorated gallows on wheels.³⁹

³⁶ Montaigne, *Diary*.

³⁷ Liebmann, *Deutsches Land*, 204.

³⁸ Ernst Walter Zeeden, *Deutsche Kultur in der frühen Neuzeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft Athenaion, 1968), 88; Gottfried Hösel, *Unser Abfall aller Zeiten: Eine Kulturgeschichte der Städtereinigung* (München: Kommunalschriften-Verlag Jehle, 1987).

³⁹ Ernst Walter Zeeden, „Das Erscheinungsbild der frühneuzeitlichen Stadt, vornehmlich nach Reiseberichten und Autobiographien des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts“, in *Stadt und Kultur*, ed. Hans Eugen Specker (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1983), 77.

It is not very likely that the people of the early modern period had a well-developed sense of smell, certainly not with regard to particular kinds of odor.⁴⁰ The authorities fought a long, tenacious and ultimately successful battle against dirt and foul smells, for which “the dark art of paving” became an important instrument.⁴¹ What had first begun already in the 14th century in a few larger cities such as Ulm or Strasbourg, was perfected in the 18th and 19th centuries: the sealing of the ground in order to prevent what were suspected to be the health-damaging vapors from escaping.

⁴⁰ Bücking, *Kultur und Gesellschaft*.

⁴¹ Alain Corbin, *Le miasme et la jonquille: l'odorat et l'imaginaire social, XVIII.–XIX. siècles* (Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1982).

CHAPTER THREE

THE BURGHERS' LIFESTYLE

1. *The "Burgher House" and its Furnishings: Problems of Research*

Realienkunde, or the study of objects, is still a young, but nevertheless explicitly defined discipline. In Austria and Germany it is founded upon the impulses from the so-called "inventory research" and the Viennese school of art history. One example of this type of research is Alois Riegl's study of late Roman styles of ornaments, with its methodological approach of applying the stylistic categories in the art of the time to the "material culture", daily household utensils or clothing. Important inspiration has also come from the *Annales* school of history.

A center for *realia research* is the "Institute for Medieval *Realienkunde*" at Krems on the Danube, founded in 1969.¹ The focus of its research is the 15th century, yet the publications which it encourages extend into the early modern period. The concept of *realia research* does not include the intention to found a theory of history or develop some kind of new method. In practice, they are concerned with a "sober, almost pedantic investigation of objects according to which region they came from, their origin, material, function, how they can be described, and how they can be categorized for the purposes of intellectual and social history".² The relics of material culture are thus classified in terms of their relation to economic and social structures and the respective system of values and norms of that time.³

This approach is just as valid for research into the history of houses.⁴ The most important requirement here is likewise the fullest

¹ Alfred Kohler and Heinrich Lutz, ed. *Alltag im 16. Jahrhundert: Studien zu Lebensformen in mitteleuropäischen Städten* (Wien: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1987), 17.

² Dietrich W. Schwarz, *Sachgüter und Lebensformen: Einführung in die materielle Kultur des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit* (Berlin: E. Schmidt, 1970), 10.

³ Harry Kühnel, „Zum Geleit . . .“, in *Alltag und Fortschritt im Mittelalter*, ed. Heinrich Appelt (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1986), 6.

⁴ Konrad Bedal, *Historische Hausforschung: Eine Einführung in Arbeitsweise, Begriffe und Literatur* (Bad Windsheim: Fränkisches Freilandmuseum).

possible documentation or reconstruction of the contents of a house, although it should be pointed out that the analysis of pictorial and written sources, and the direct analysis of surviving building materials, is conducted parallel to the usual archeological field work.⁵

Interest in genealogy and research into family trees has for a number of years been focusing the attention of historians on the history of individual houses. This has led to the compilation of "house books", which provide mainly a chronological history of changing ownership—the "biography" of the house.⁶ The outer features—the decoration, size, the way in which the house was built—often allow conclusions as to the social status of the owner, the lifestyle of the inhabitants; on the basis of this information, it is often possible to understand rather better cultural processes. Further clues for the cultural historian can also be given by the different size and distribution of the rooms and furniture.

A rich collection depicting those burgher houses which have survived, or those for which only pictorial records still exist, is provided by the series "The German Burgher House",⁷ the first volume of which was published in 1959, similar in conception to the Swiss series "The Burgher House in Switzerland".⁸ In addition, numerous other works could be mentioned which deal with specific cities and regions.⁹

One important task for historians at present is the continued analysis of furniture and other items, whether decorative or functional, in the rooms. The difficulties regarding the interpretation of sources becomes all too clear when one considers furniture as a source in relation to specific personal or social value systems. Helge Gerndt differentiates between three levels of perception: one can consider a piece of furniture as an item with a specific function, which is used for a precisely defined purpose; it can be understood as a symbol which represents something specific for its respective owner; finally,

⁵ Günter P. Fehring, „Quellen, Methoden, Ziele und Problematik eines archäologisch-historischen Forschungsprojekts zur Hansestadt Lübeck“, *Lübecker Schriften zur Archäologie und Kulturgeschichte* 4 (1980): 9–15.

⁶ Jürgen Sydow, „Häuserbuchprobleme“, *Blätter für deutsche Landesgeschichte* 100 (1964): 260–267.

⁷ Günther Binding, *Das deutsche Bürgerhaus*, vol. 1 (Tübingen: Wasmuth, 1959).

⁸ *Das Bürgerhaus in der Schweiz*, ed. Schweizerischer Ingenieur- und Architektenverein (Zürich: Orell Füssli, 1910–1937).

⁹ Bibliography in Konrad Bedal, *Historische Hausforschung*, 3–6.

it can be viewed as an indication of more universal value systems.¹⁰ Gerndt explains the final category of the meta-function of furniture using the example of a chest from the 18th century with forms originating from the Renaissance.

From such examples, it is often possible to draw important conclusions for social history. The repertoire of form during the early modern period reflects the well-known art styles—late Gothic, Renaissance, Mannerism, Baroque, Rococo and Classicism—appearing mostly belatedly, so to speak, in the furnishings of the burgher (and rural population). In fact, it appears to be a general trend that furniture, designed according to the precepts of the *avante-garde*, was first acquired by the noble and burgher elites; in other words, changes in style and fashion took place first on the estates of the nobility before they reached the culture of the cities. For instance, we find that the shift from Gothic to Renaissance furniture in the rural areas of Artland and Ammerland did not occur until roughly 1600, while in southern Germany furniture in rural areas replicated as late as the 19th century the *rocaille* of the Rococo (18th century) at a time when Biedermeier was going out of fashion in the apartments of city dwellers.

The history of the change in styles from the “top down” can be seen in the transition from Rococo to Classicism in furniture style. At first, even before the mid-eighteenth century, *rocaille* was still considered as *mauvais goût* in art history. Patrons and critics such as Madame Pompadour, or the Marquis of Marigny, set the trends.¹¹ First in Paris, then in the rest of Europe, the new style became commonplace in the course of the following century. Studies of folklore and popular culture have attempted to assess the chronology and regional aspects of these processes as differentiated as possible, while also seeking to apply a degree of theoretical rigor. New waves of development and their causes have been the subject of special attention. The task here is, “in the case of those houses for which realia and furniture from times of great upheaval and significant transitions, which manifest themselves by coming from the outside into

¹⁰ Helge Gerndt, *Kultur als Forschungsfeld: Über volkskundliches Denken und Arbeiten* (München: C.H. Beck, 1981), 126–127.

¹¹ Michael Stürmer, *Handwerk und höfische Kultur: Europäische Möbelkunst im 18. Jahrhundert* (München: C.H. Beck, 1982), 287.

the region, to analyze the exogenous cultural currents, but in the same way to register the endogenous cultural process which develops within the region, and can be read on the basis of material culture."¹²

2. *Spheres of Life*

Every burgher was bound into different circles and spheres which characterized his daily life. As a patrician or merchant, he was a member of largely closed groups which encouraged social contact at exclusive places, discussed and were active in politics.¹³ He was a member of a guild which regulated his work and which, at the same time, possessed numerous cultural functions. As a Christian he perhaps participated in the religious and social life of a fraternity. The administration of the area encompassed by a town or city—parish, city quarter, neighbourhood administration, as well as the barely researched neighborhood—constituted areas of communication, mutual support, but also observation and social control.¹⁴ Relations with relatives extended beyond the narrower domestic sphere, while the network of friendships—often limited contact between people—"from whose continual repetition all the large and objective constructs, which could tell their own story, are carried."¹⁵ The reconstruction of such relationship networks belongs to those tasks which are posed by the reconstruction of historical social topography, which represents the horizontal dimension of social stratification.¹⁶

A further area of research can only be mentioned in passing: namely, the reconstruction of social topographies, or, put another way, the horizontal dimension of the division of society into social

¹² Helmut Ottenjann, „Beginn, Wandel und Ende regionaler Kulturausprägung: Zur Periodisierung der sogenannten ‚Volkskultur‘“, in *Wandel der Alltagskultur seit dem Mittelalter*, ed. Günter Wiegelmann (Münster: Coppenrath, 1987).

¹³ See Roeck, *Stadt in Krieg und Frieden*; Zeeden, *Kultur der frühen Neuzeit*.

¹⁴ Jeremy Boulton, *Neighbourhood and Society. A London Suburb in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987). Robert Jütte, „Das Stadtviertel als Problem und Gegenstand der frühneuzeitlichen Stadtgeschichtsforschung“, *Blätter für deutsche Landesgeschichte* 127 (1991), 235–269.

¹⁵ Georg Simmel, *Soziologie. Untersuchungen über die Formen der Vergesellschaftung* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot 1968), 16.

¹⁶ Bernd Roeck, *Krieg und Frieden*, 330–333.

classes.¹⁷ When the “classic” sources for such research—tax rolls—are missing, it is possible that the contents of houses can substitute for the missing source material. Relevant studies, especially those conducted by cultural historians, exist in abundance.¹⁸ Elisabeth Lichtenberger, for her part, has integrated historical, sociological, and house history methods.¹⁹

The central area of burgher life was defined by the *house and apartment*. Apart from family members, apprentices, servants, maids and other domestic servants—in so far as they were present in the household—counted as part of the general domestic order of the “whole house”, creating hierarchical relationships as well as an economic community.²⁰ Marital coexistence, patriarchal relations between parents and children, and authority over the domestic servants, these all characterized a structure which was central to old European culture. The elevated status accorded to the *head of the household* should not be exclusively understood according to biology or sentimentality; the position of the father in the family was strengthened, particularly in Protestantism, by the abolition of the priesthood as moderator between divine and worldly authority.²¹ At the same moment, the image of the mother of the house, likewise a concept of the *civic culture*, emerged: “she is industrious, and capable in all feminine tasks, true and good, if admittedly usually quite uneducated”.²²

¹⁷ Hardwig Walberg, „Zur Sozialtopographie westfälischer Städte in der frühen Neuzeit“, in *Europäische Städte im Zeitalter des Barock: Gestalt-Kultur-Sozialgefüge*, ed. Kersten Krüger (Köln/Wien: Böhlau, 1988).

¹⁸ Fred Kaspar, *Bauen und Wohnen in einer alten Hansestadt: Zur Nutzung von Wohnbauten zwischen dem 16. und 19. Jahrhundert, dargestellt am Beispiel der Stadt Lemgo* (Bonn: Rudolf Habelt, 1985).

¹⁹ Elisabeth Lichtenberger, *Die Wiener Altstadt: Von der mittelalterlichen Bürgerstadt zur City*, 2 vols. (Wien: Deuticke, 1977).

²⁰ Otto Brunner, Das „ganze Haus“ und die alteuropäische Ökonomie, in *Neue Wege der Verfassungs- und Sozialgeschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968²), 103–127.

²¹ Ingeborg Weber-Kellermann, *Die deutsche Familie. Versuch einer Sozialgeschichte* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1982⁷), 80; see also Gotthardt Frühsorge, „Die Begründung der ‚väterlichen Gesellschaft‘ in der europäischen oeconomia christiana: Zur Rolle des Vaters in der ‚Hausväterliteratur‘ des 16. bis 18. Jahrhunderts in Deutschland“, in *Das Vaterbild im Abendland I*, ed. Hubertus Tellenbach, (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1978).

²² Hermann Popp, *Das Werden der deutschen Familie* (Weimar: A. Duncker, 1914), 147–148.

3. *Household Culture: Lighting and Heating*

A historically oriented analysis of early modern living forms has as one of its main tasks the investigation of the interrelationship between the needs of house residents and the people who, and resources which, attended to those needs; likewise, it should explain this relationship and make it comprehensible.²³ What is required is a more differentiated pluralistic method which takes into account impulses from, for example, art history. In order to identify everyday objects and reconstruct interiors through the analysis of paintings, knowledge of iconography is required; this enables one to filter out the symbolic meanings of functions in relation to everyday needs.

The *interior of the early modern burgher home* reflects in some respects the patriarchal hierarchy in the family and the socio-economic unity in the house: seating and (rectangular) tables made possible the figuration of hierarchy, while the organization of the room demonstrated the crossover between living and working areas.

As late as the 16th century, *light* found its way into the apartments by no means always through the window, although bull's-eye glass was starting to become more common in the wealthier burgher homes. Openings in the walls were often simply covered with paper, linen which had been soaked in turpentine, or with parchment. The casements were at first firmly fixed so that only a small part could be opened. Already by the end of the 15th century quite large windows began to appear in the visitors' room in the house, these often being emphasized outside with a balcony. Window-size was later reduced, however, perhaps as a consequence of the 16th century "energy crisis".

The 16th century was also at the same time the great age of painted window panes, taking as its inspiration the stained-glass windows in churches. Hans Baldung Grien, and Tobias Stimmer were among the many masters who created important works of this genre. First with the secularism of the 18th century—in this respect, also the age of Enlightenment—would light begin to shine through clear window panes.

Painted glass was not economical as it muted natural light and raised what were already high costs for artificial lighting. At any

²³ Fred Kaspar, *Bauen und Wohnen*.

rate, the Tyrolean doctor Hippolytus Guarinoni found the interiors of homes at the beginning of the 17th century to be dark.²⁴ Candles and lamps filled with oil, tallow or (in coastal areas) whale oil, often smoky and foul-smelling, were the usual means of providing light. In the case of Frankfurt, one can easily recognize the shift from pine kindling to wax or tallow candles on the basis of household invoices. Johann Michael von Jungen (1546–1649) preferred to use wax candles, made by himself at home, to provide lighting for his house; he spent 0.33% of his budget on this.²⁵ Other wealthy Frankfurt residents used tallow candles. In wealthy households, decoratively finished lamps and lights soon became opulent parts of the furniture, designed to impress the visitor.

Usually only a few rooms, and very often only one, were *heated*. In many cases, homelife centred around the fireplace. To have one's "own smoke", this saying was equated with "having one's own household"; indeed, some systems of taxation were based on the number of fireplaces.

With the beginning of the early modern period, the fireplace became the object of creative energy as a further means of emphasizing one's social status. The mantelpiece was decorated with sculptures or adorned with frescoes. At the same time, an important development occurred: the open fireplace began to give way to the more luxurious stove which better conserved energy and no longer filled the room with biting smoke. During the Renaissance and Baroque periods, stoves were decorated with painted tiles or ornamented cast-iron plates, whereas the 18th century saw elegant porcelain ovens.

The upper German regions witnessed this innovation first. In Italy and France things remained very much as they had been before. Italian travelers noticed that fireplaces had become common in Cologne and in the region to the west of the city.²⁶ In the first half of the 16th century, in some northern areas, such as Münsterland, the stove could hardly be found. It grew in popularity, first gradually, and initially in the palaces of the nobility and buildings with a public purpose. Between 1550 and 1620, rooms heated by stoves

²⁴ Jürgen Bücking, *Kultur und Gesellschaft*, 158.

²⁵ *Studien zur Geschichte der Lebenshaltung in Frankfurt am Main während des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Karl Bräuer (Frankfurt am Main: Baer, 1915).

²⁶ Liebmann, *Deutsches Land*, 207.



Fig. 7. Stateroom in the House "Zum alten Seidenhof" in Zurich, circa 1610, with a Winterthur oven designed by Ludwig Pfau. © Musée Suisse, Schweizerische Nationalmuseen, Landesmuseum Zürich.

can be found in burgher houses, but they can only be regarded as the rooms most frequently used in wider sections of society after the midseventeenth century.²⁷

4. *Organization of the Rooms*

The question of the form and prerequisites for the change in styles in the wake of innovations, demands an analysis of the specific arrangement of objects in a house and the organization within the various rooms. For example, when it comes to variations between the different rooms in a house, the separation of living and working space shows highly divergent regional developments. Uwe Meiners, who has argued that different styles of living can be identified earlier in southern Germany than in the north, has posed the same question: "What value do the research results have for southern Germany itself? Did, in its basic features, a comparable living culture exist in the large cities, or did a clearly altered standard of living exist which penetrated into the lower classes?"²⁸

With these two questions, an obvious problem for historical research has been expressed: very little is known about conditions in large cities in the early modern period. Above all, in cities such as Cologne, Nuremberg or Hamburg, the processes of cultural diffusion—from the perspective of social history—needs to be observed from the top down. It is certainly not easy to identify the specific characteristics of living conditions among the lower classes. Who at this time had their possessions and finances notarized and recorded? In fact, some 100,000 sets of private papers and records are apparently in existence in the archives throughout Germany. Only a small part has been examined.²⁹ So, in this area, one can expect a wealth of new studies.

²⁷ Uwe Meiners, „Stufen des Wandels: Aspekte zur Periodisierung der bürgerlichen und bäuerlichen Kultur im Münsterland (1550–1800)“, in *Wandel und Alltagskultur seit dem Mittelalter*, ed. Günter Wiegmann (Münster: Coppenrath, 1987), 227–284, 306.

²⁸ Uwe Meiners, „Wohnkultur in süddeutschen Kleinstädten vom 17. bis zum 19. Jahrhundert: Soziale Unterschiede und Wertestrukturen“, in *Nord-Süd-Unterschiede in der städtischen und ländlichen Kultur Mitteleuropas*, ed. Günther Wiegmann (Münster: Coppenrath, 1985), 157–221.

²⁹ Hildegard Mannheims and Klaus Roth, *Nachlassverzeichnisse—Probate Inventories: Internationale Bibliographie—International Bibliography* (Münster: Coppenrath, 1984).

One kind of burgher home especially prevalent in the north of Germany was the *Dielenhaus*. The central area was the large room or hall, with a high ceiling, the *Diele*, where the family cooked, ate and slept—even wealthy merchant families. The multi-functionality of this central room remained for a long time, although the concept could be found in all manner of variations. A smaller room was added, which was heated by a stove, serving as a place to which one could retreat, almost like a studio. Wealthier citizens, in Lemgo for example, could afford a house at the back of a building whose hall could still be used in the 17th century as a sleeping area, but which was also used on occasions for celebrations.³⁰ Similar patterns of usage could be found in the south as well: through one or two small wings of a building, generally known as *Abseiten*, one could reach the house at the rear. A courtyard was thereby created, which in buildings of the upper strata became very quickly an architectural focal point, to be decorated with fountains, plants, birdhouses and other *points de vues*. Inspired by Italian examples, arcaded courtyards were especially prevalent in southern Germany and Austria.³¹ Household and storage rooms, not to mention stalls, were usually located in the house at the rear of the building.

The multifunctional *Diele* in the north corresponds roughly to the *Stube* in the south.³² The latter was a room for leisure and entertaining, for “amusement and moral instruction”, so the poet and „mastersinger“ Hans Sachs, but one might also have slept in it, or used it to take care of business matters. The interior furnishings provide evidence of these numerous functions: chests, tables, a place for washing, kitchen appliances, a bed or four-poster bed and, even in the city sometimes, a chicken pen.³³ In southern German inventories the *Stube* is often the first room mentioned, “which underscores the fact that it represented the center of the house”.³⁴

³⁰ Fred Kaspar, *Bauen und Wohnen*, 213.

³¹ Elisabeth Lichtenberger, *Wiener Altstadt*; see also her *Paläste und Bürgerhäuser in Österreich* (Wien: Notring der wissenschaftlichen Verbände Österreichs, 1970); Herbert Knittler, „Vorindustrielle bürgerliche Haustypen in den österreichischen Städten“, in *Siedlungsforschung* 5 (1987): 109–129; Günther Binding et al., *Bürgerhaus*.

³² Joachim Hähnel, *Stube: Wort- und sachgeschichtliche Beiträge zur historischen Wohnungsforschung* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1975).

³³ Roman Sandgruber, „Alltag und materielle Kultur: Städtischer Lebensstil und bürgerliche Wohnkultur am Beispiel zweier oberösterreichischer Städte des 16. Jahrhunderts“, in *Alltag*, ed. Kohler/Lutz, 23–44, 34; Konrad Bedal, „Wohnkultur“, 190.

³⁴ Konrad Bedal, „Wohnkultur“, 188.

Many examples demonstrate that this was not always true and, likewise, that it is necessary to differentiate even within smaller regions. So it is possible for Fred Kaspar to show in his important study on Lemgo³⁵ that the *Stube* played a less important role, a situation which differed from the one in the south of Germany. At the same time, the *Stube* emerges as a form of litmus paper against which certain developments can be measured. In Braunschweig, the *Stube* served quite early as a distinctly defined room to which one retreated, much more so than was the case in either Lemgo or Münster.³⁶ These conclusions are confirmed through mentioning of bench pillows and seat cushions in surviving inventories. It could be assumed from the appearance from time to time of Venetian glasses or brass light fittings that guests were also received in these rooms. That Braunschweig—just like the neighbouring, small *Residenzstadt* Wolfenbüttel—possessed a “modern” living culture in comparison to other places, can also be shown by the presence of fashionable chests of drawers as early as the 1730s, whereas these pieces of furniture hardly appeared in inventories in Münster and Osnabrück before 1770.

However, in the historical analysis of room functions, one must disregard traditional beliefs and preconceptions. The truly valuable “prestige objects” appear at times in their highest concentration in the very room which today is regarded as the most private area, namely the bedroom. Paul Geisenhammer, for example, a merchant in a small town in upper Austria, who died in 1572, had a four-poster bed, two painted and two inlaid chests, a veneered “little chest”, a *Siedeltruhe*—another kind of chest—, a table, a chair covered in red leather, and a clock case.³⁷ Similar observations can be made on the world of the aristocracy. It appeared to a visitor to the Doge’s palace in Venice as not particularly surprising that he was shown the bedroom and bed of the highest representative of the *Serenissima*.

³⁵ Fred Kaspar, *Bauen und Wohnen*.

³⁶ Ruth E. Mohrmann, „Städtische Wohnkultur in Nordwestdeutschland vom 17. bis zum 19. Jahrhundert (aufgrund von Inventaren)“, in *Nord-Süd-Unterschiede in der städtischen und ländlichen Kultur Mitteleuropas*, ed. Günter Wiegmann (Münster: Coppenrath, 1985), 89–155, 96; *Ibid.*, „Leben und Wohnen in der alten Stadt Osnabrück im hansestädtischen Vergleich“, *Hansische Geschichtsblätter* 106 (1988): 109–126.

³⁷ Roman Sandgruber, „Alltag“, 34.

The *workshop* of the craftsman was almost always to be found on the ground floor, sometimes also in a room which was half above ground, half in the cellar. In this room the products were also sold, that is if they were not sent to markets or "stores". The customer did not enter the room where the wares were stored, rather he made his purchases on the street where small extensions had sometimes been added to the buildings. A wooden or iron-reinforced shutter, which opened outwards towards the customer, served as a sales counter.³⁸ In particular in cities on the Inn and Salzach rivers, in Tyrol, and some cities in Switzerland, such as Berne, the ground floor of the houses had been built so as to create an arcade. These building improvements simplified trade and served the craftsmen as "open-air workplaces".

Leisure and work areas were not usually, at any rate explicitly, separated from each other in the early modern burgher house. As late as 1785, in a description of conditions in Stralsund, a traveler emphasized that here the "front house [was] . . . so big that it . . . [takes up] more than half the building in terms of height as well as width"; and, he added, "The merchants have their stalls here, others their wagons. Here [the people] can be found sewing, spinning, weaving; here coffee and tea are drunk; here baptisms and funerals take place"—in short, here "the majority of household tasks" were carried out.³⁹ Around 1770, the notary and proctor Cappel had collected not only silver, porcelain, pictures, gold-plated mirrors and chairs and armchairs covered in yellow velvet in one room, but he also had in the same room a bed attached to the wall and a well-equipped sleeping area. According to the interpretation of Ruth-E. Mohrmann, this allows the identification of rudiments of a previous multifunctionality.⁴⁰

³⁸ Moritz Heyne, *Fünf Bücher deutscher Hausaltertümer*, vol. 1: *Das deutsche Wohnungswesen von den ältesten geschichtlichen Zeiten bis zum 16. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1899), 307.

³⁹ After Volker Glüntzer, „Nord-Süd-Unterschiede städtischen Wohnens um 1800 im Spiegel der zeitgenössischen Literatur“, in *Nord-Süd-Unterschiede in der städtischen und ländlichen Kultur Mitteleuropas*, ed. Günther Wiegelmann (Münster: Cöpppenrath, 1985), 73–88, 80.

⁴⁰ Uwe Meiners, „Wohnkultur,“ 190.

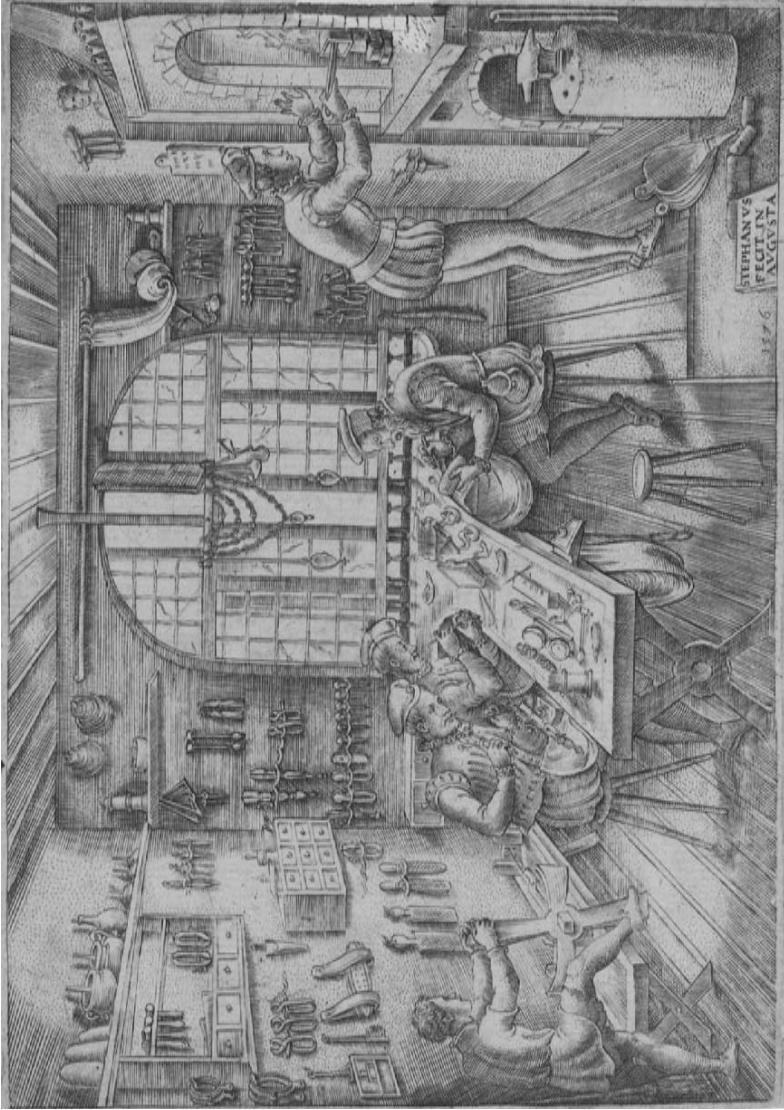


Fig. 8. Etienne Delaune, The Goldsmith's Shop, 1576. © Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Graphische Sammlung, Stuttgart.

5. *Furnishings and Living Atmosphere*

The nature and distribution of the *interior* of an apartment provide the most important clues concerning these developments. The separation of the sleeping area from the spheres where one usually lived, and the withdrawal of bedroom furniture into a “private” area, indicates a reduction in their status,⁴¹ whereas the increase in seating furniture could be taken as proof that sitting had become more individualized. In accordance with Norbert Elias’s civilization theory, this would support the idea that a sense of shame had begun to be more pronounced.⁴² Even well into the 17th century, upholstered chairs were surprisingly rare even in wealthy burgher homes; nonetheless, even in the early 16th century simple craftsmen’s households possessed as many as a dozen chairs. People sat principally on benches fixed to the wall around a table which was not usually round, thus facilitating a hierarchical seating arrangement. These benches, cupboards built into the wall, not to mention shutters and wooden paneling, all characterized many homes, especially among the upper strata of the *Bürgertum*, to the extent that the house and apartments could never have made the impression of not being furnished, although truly “mobile” furniture was comparatively sparse. Inventories mention far more tables than one would assume on the basis of the number of chairs mentioned above. Apart from the immovable table, movable table tops, positioned on top of supports or two diagonals, were in use.

In order to store clothes and appliances, chests were used and, more commonly in the homes of the wealthier parts of the urban population, cabinets. The decoration of cabinet exteriors, which—it should be noted—remained important pieces of prestige furniture for the more refined burgher families beyond the 18th century, varied in their form from region to region, offering carpenters opportunities to show their skill. There were numerous types, from the north German cupboards, with lively ornamentation, to the southern German,

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 188.

⁴² Ruth-E. Mohrmann, „Wohnen und Wohnkultur in nordwestdeutschen Städten im Spätmittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit“, in *Stadt im Wandel: Kunst und Kultur des Bürgertums in Norddeutschland 1150–1650*, 4 vols., ed. Cord Meckseper (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstadt: Cantz, 1985), vol. 1, 513–530, 515.

richly veneered, larger pieces.⁴³ Many of these impressive pieces of furniture ostentatiously decorated the entrance hall or the main room. They were also integrated into the rooms, though less frequently than they had been in the 16th century.

The bureau appeared during the 18th century as an important piece of furniture for storage, also in burgher homes. A French invention, it was at first common in the homes of the wealthy. As late as 1800, they could be found in only 10% of the households in the small Württemberg town of Nürtingen, for which documentation has survived, and even there primarily in the homes of innkeepers, tradesmen and clergymen.⁴⁴

The desk, which developed from a Spanish precursor, became a kind of fashionable furniture piece in the second half of the 16th century; produced by highly skilled craftsmen, particularly in Germany, these desks became more and more refined and were exported throughout the world. Soon thereafter the presence of desks in the households of the middle strata can be documented; however, in the 17th century their number clearly decreased. The 18th century saw the rise of luxurious and well-designed desks, which were becoming increasingly a part of the world of the courts, the nobility and burgher elites. A “cabinet maker” such as Abraham Röntgen, who delivered to all of Europe with clever marketing techniques, could count among his burgher customers the state official from Frankfurt, Johann Casper Goethe, the poet’s father; the products of this craftsmanship, which had by now reached breathtaking perfection, were hardly objects for everyday use, but “rather the playthings of class, signs of social ranking, and a way of marking the fine lines which divided the elites of the *Ancien Régime*.”⁴⁵

“Works of art” in the modern sense were rarely to be found in burgher households. This is true even for crucifixes and pictures of saints, which became more common in Catholic areas only in the

⁴³ Heinrich Kreisel and Georg Himmelheber, *Die Kunst des deutschen Möbels: Möbel und Vertäfelungen des deutschen Sprachraums von den Anfängen bis zum Jugendstil*, 3 vols. (München: C.H. Beck, 1974/83²); Georg Himmelheber, *Kabinettschränke* (München: Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, 1977); Alwin Schultz, *Das häusliche Leben der europäischen Kulturvölker vom Mittelalter bis zur zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts* (München/Berlin: R. Oldenbourg, 1903).

⁴⁴ Uwe Meiners, „Wohnkultur,“ 168–169.

⁴⁵ Stürmer, *Handwerk und höfische Kultur*, 250.

18th century. The popular image inspired by Dutch genre pictures of early modern life is not on the whole accurate. Despite the rich collections of surviving paintings, engravings and other pictorial images, the world of the burgher, not to mention that of peasants and the lower classes, was *poor in images* compared to the flood of printed, photographical and film images confronting the modern individual. This is an important, barely recognized aspect of early modern culture. It must have been all the more impressive to see great architectural works such as churches, palaces or luxurious interiors for the first time, when we remember that even wealthy households tended to have sparse furnishings.

Furniture and other objects of material culture must be seen finally as part of the total picture of the living atmosphere.⁴⁶ Not only in Renaissance palaces, but also in patricians' homes the walls, which were sometimes paneled, could be decorated with tapestries. Ceilings appeared as bombastically carved works of art, while the floors were covered in glazed and painted tiles and marble, until in the 18th century, the parquet corresponded to the veneer of the furniture. Frescoed walls were present in burgher homes during the entire early modern period, and from the 17th century onwards also ceilings, which opened up illusionary architecture and heavens full of allegorical figures. The 18th century became simultaneously the age of artistically designed, as well as simple, cheap wallpaper. It served as a muted background for the family portraits which had become increasingly prevalent since the middle of the century, and demonstrated the growing bourgeois self-confidence, acting as a reminder of the importance of the private and the familial, these portraits are also symbols of the "new inwardness".

There was a particular, fundamental event in the development of burgher living: the separation of the home into areas for living and working was an expression of a desire for *privateness*, as opposed to mere privacy, which set itself apart from the profane, necessary matters of economics. Here was a desire to create an area of one's own, outside the reach of the public sphere and all the social control which sprang from it. The resulting dissolution of the household's

⁴⁶ Mario Praz, *An illustrated history of interior decoration from Pompeii to Art Nouveau* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1964); Fernand Braudel, *Civilisation matérielle, économie et capitalisme. XV^e-XVIII^e siècle. Les structures du quotidien* (Paris: Colin, 1979).

traditional structures opened up likewise the new structures of leisure time.⁴⁷

Housing arrangements, which the day laborer and craftsmen were forced to submit to, became a luxury for the well-to-do: shop, office, “bureau” on the one hand, and home on the other, were increasingly located in separate buildings. Hence, men’s and women’s spheres began to become more clearly separated, while women were reduced to the role of lady of the “private” house and the raising of children. This can be seen well in the memoirs of Ernst Friedrich Haupt, son of a Zwickau merchant. In the world of this merchant, the private sphere had already become separate. At the same time, in this text from the end of the 18th century, a burgher value system appears which finds its fulfilment in the furnishings of the house and a specific lifestyle. For leisure hours there was a garden, complete with a pavilion where small fireworks were set off in summer—the *nouveau riche* equivalent of courtly “garden pleasures”.⁴⁸ Father Haupt is described as, “continuously busy, thinking only of achieving recognition for his work”; in this, he never had “the intelligent” around him, rather “machine-like people”, and the children hardly ever saw him; his work sphere, the unpleasant drudgery with the “machine-like people”, this was another world from that of his private life. It was something special and worth mentioning when he invited guests and allowed them into the family circle—thus Haupt reports that his father invited “business friends from outside [the town]” or his “favorite manager” to his lunch table at home. And, although his leisure time only became a real corrective to work through the enjoyment of pleasurable things, everything had to remain within the boundaries of solidity and thrift.⁴⁹

Although it seems to reflect above all an ideal image of burgher virtues, this source allows insights into the relationship between mentality, lifestyle, and the interior of the home. Economy and taste require a conservative treatment of furniture and appliances; in fact, the basic feature of early modern burgher interior design was its

⁴⁷ Cf. p. 35.

⁴⁸ Horst Möller, *Bürgerstaat oder Bürgernation: Deutschland*, 410–411.

⁴⁹ Gustav Freytag, *Bilder aus der deutschen Vergangenheit*, 3 vols. (Leipzig/Berlin: G. Hirzel/Verlagsanstalt für Literatur und Kunst Hermann Klemm, [ca. 1915], reprint München: Orbis-Verlag, 1987), vol. 3, 338–339.

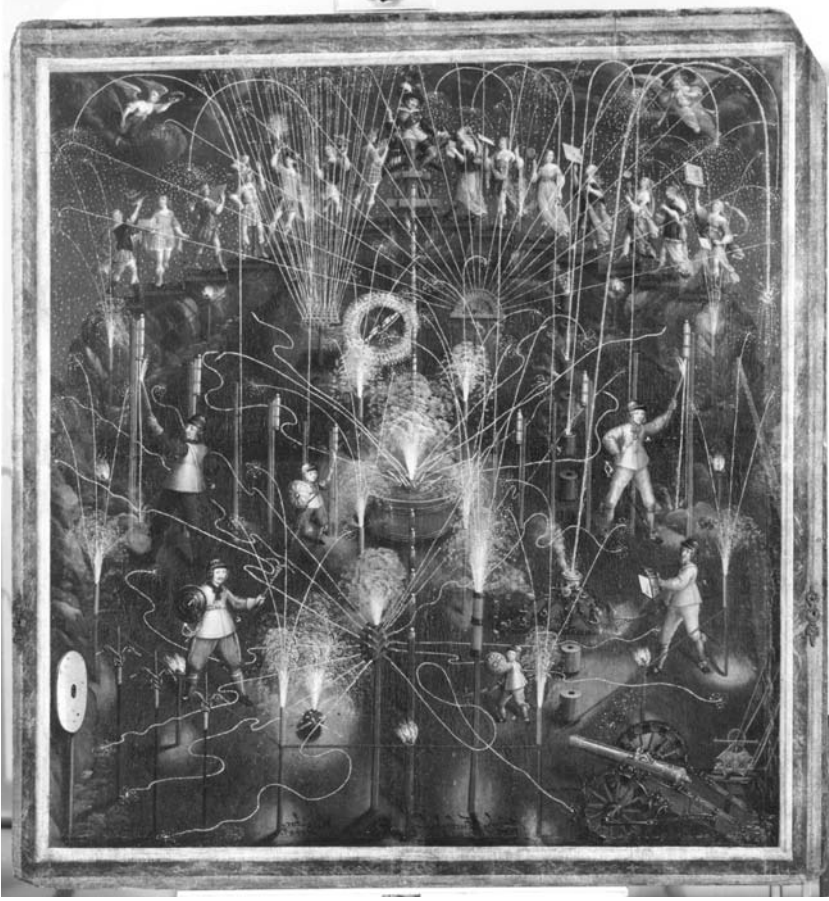


Fig. 9. Joseph Furttner, Firework in Johann Khonns' Garden at Ulm, on the 24th of August 1644, circa 1645. © Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg.

constancy. Innovations did not occur continuously, but rather in waves. They were connected to the economic circumstances of the time, and sometimes depended on a *nouveau riche* desire for prestige.

6. *Periodization*

In the foregoing discussion we have already touched on the difficulties concerning the periodization of the development of lifestyles and the division and organization of rooms in a burgher environment. The attempts to bring some order into the countless, differing research results are numerous, and there is no shortage of theories and theses. Ruth-E. Mohrmann has tried to move towards an explanation of the causes of the time delay in Westphalian cities—mentioned above—through recourse to a multilayered model.⁵⁰ According to her interpretation, an important factor lies in the fact that there are different types of courtly city [*Residenzstadt*]: in the east there was a secular nobility with an intellectually and culturally self-confident *Residenz*, in the west a clerical nobility with conservative bishoply courts.

In the case of the episcopate [*Fürstbistum*] of Münster, Uwe Meiners has attempted to divide the early modern developments into three phases. The first refers to the period between around 1550 and 1620 (the rise of the oven-heated *Stube*, the separation of small bedrooms, clocks in wealthier burgher houses, and brandy as a drink of enjoyment); the second is the period of cultural change between 1680/90 and 1720/30 (the refinement of forms of living: warm drinks, knives and forks at the table, fine clothing, fashionable accessories). The third, finally, is the epoch from 1760/70 to 1800. We see a general move away from the lifestyle of the nobility, the rejection of living within large rooms, and an increased popularity of the “private sphere” through generous furnishing of the home, family portraits, yet otherwise the continuing function of the courtly culture as something to be imitated.⁵¹ Konrad Bedal reached very similar results in his attempt at periodization on the basis of the development of house

⁵⁰ Mohrmann, *Städtische Wohnkultur*.

⁵¹ Ulrich Christian Pallach, *Materielle Kultur und Mentalität im 18. Jahrhundert: Wirtschaftliche Entwicklung und politisch-sozialer Funktionswandel des Luxus in Frankreich und im Alten Reich am Ende des Ancien Régime* (München: R. Oldenbourg, 1987).

construction.⁵² He assessed the decisive years around 1560, 1680, and 1770 to be particularly important points in time and identifies “a noticeable increase in representative elements in house construction” in the second half of the 17th century.⁵³

There are more than a few pieces of evidence which suggest that the Thirty Years War did not lead to a fundamental turning-point in terms of lifestyles and organization of rooms. The economic changes of the 16th century seem to have much more determined the radical social and political transformations of this era: the consolidation of the territorial state, the reduction of the power of the cities, with all the decisive cultural effects which this meant. “This led to the decline in the cities of the centuries old ruling class, which had consisted of rich, cosmopolitan, well-traveled and self-assured citizens. The until that point independent and self-confident cities, characterized by cooperative associations, lost to a great degree their urban style of life.”⁵⁴ It was no longer the north German coastal cities, which had for a long time served as the cultural role model for small commercial cities like Lemgo, rather—according to Kaspar—the surrounding noble estates which delivered the model for living patterns and the standard of living. In the wake of this, there followed a *regionalization* and with it a forcing back of the cultural relations within tighter limits.

A gradual transformation can first be identified in the second half of the 17th century: to describe this change Bedal uses the phrase, “dissolution of the common building culture”.⁵⁵ This means that the rural farmers’ (including the lower-class burghers) and the rich urban burghers’ building culture developed in an increasingly different fashion: “While styles remained unchanged in the rural areas—the same method of building, the same functional structures as before—in northern Germany the significance of the *Hallenhaus* remained unchanged, the construction of palaces as well as city houses took on a different direction from the traditional construction techniques.” In the building of houses, half-timbering was increasingly avoided as plaster and stucco gained an ever greater importance.⁵⁶

⁵² Konrad Bedal, „Zeitmarken,“ 150, 155.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 148.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 241.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 150.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 150–151.

And, finally, the break of 1700: the emergence of the rational “primacy of economics” in the changes in the art of construction—in short, the replacement of decorative building frameworks with cheaper prefabricated, standardized constructions. According to Bedal (who admittedly is more interested in rural conditions), this must have led at the same time to a stronger regional unification of half-timbered designs.⁵⁷

To sum up, it can be said that between the 16th and 18th centuries two trends dominated: firstly, a *differentiation* of the functions to which the available space was applied; secondly, there was an *individualization* of the living area. It also seems that the transition occurred more quickly in southern than northern Germany, at least at certain points in time, perhaps under the influence of “modern” Renaissance culture from Italy. This allows Meiners to conclude for southern Germany: “People ate (and lived) in the *Stube*, they slept in the bed-niche in the *Stube*, they cooked in the kitchen.”⁵⁸ Much depended upon whether one is referring to larger cities or small towns, or to the households of richer or poorer citizens.

7. *Economic and Social Prerequisites for Change*

These findings encourage to a critical examination of economic and social historical issues and problems. Of considerable relevance is the question as to whether the above mentioned innovation phases ran parallel to phases of economic growths (or, if evidence could be found to support this thesis): it is particularly noticeable, for instance, that the transition phase in the final third of the 17th century occurred at a juncture when the economic effects of the Thirty Years War had already been in many ways overcome. In this context, every general answer to the question posed would seem premature. Even the hypothesis of a connection between investment in art, or other luxury goods, and economic circumstances does not have to be necessarily correct. Precisely, economically difficult situations can cause investment capital to move to “secure” property, or to be spent on unproductive luxuries. In this fashion, the Venetian villa culture,

⁵⁷ Ibid., 152.

⁵⁸ Meiners, „Stufen des Wandels“.

which reached its high point in the 16th century, represented rather a shift of the investment interests of the elite than a favorable economic upturn. Luxury can be—so one could phrase it, with apologies to Max Weber—especially during moments of crisis a means of asserting oneself socially.⁵⁹ An equally interesting question is to what extent new artistic developments can be connected with “elite circulation”—in other words, when new, rising social groups acquire new symbols for their power and make corresponding demands on artists.⁶⁰ It could be asked if changes in style, for example, can be explained in this way, or whether—as Read argues—such factors were less important than normal artistic considerations, stylistic development “inside” the world of arts. Sombart showed that investment in luxury could have a stimulating effect on the establishment of organizational forms of capitalism; as the most important reasons for this, he cited the high cost of luxury goods, rapid changes in taste, the lack of developed guild systems and, finally, the existence of a market for luxury items, stemming from the demand among the nobility and burgher elite.⁶¹ Reflecting on this issue, one is forced then to ask to what an extent the model of an “economy of conspicuous consumption” is applicable. Until now, a broadly based investigation has still to be written on the impact of “luxury investment” within the context of a household budget (just as relatively little is known about the costs of art). Rolf Engelsing discovered that in Hamburg at the close of the 18th century people regarded an upper limit of around 30,000–40,000 Mark banco as the acceptable yearly budget: “A merchant from Hamburg spent 10,000 to 12,000 Mark banco on food every year, and thus exceeded the volume of the simplest burgher household by eight to ten times, and he spent only modestly.”⁶² Summing up, he notes the difficulty in pinpointing the rules by which the economy of luxury functioned: “Naturally, above all following crises and economic collapses, public criticism was voiced against the exaggerated extravagance. But it is very difficult

⁵⁹ Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft: Grundriss der verstehenden Soziologie* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1972³), 651.

⁶⁰ Herbert Edward Read, *Art and Society* (London: Faber & Faber, 1967⁴).

⁶¹ Werner Sombart, *Liebe, Luxus und Kapitalismus* (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1967).

⁶² Rolf Engelsing, „Hanseatische Lebenshaltungen und Lebenshaltungskosten im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert“, in *Zur Sozialgeschichte deutscher Mittel- und Unterschichten*, ed. Rolf Engelsing (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978).

to differentiate with any clarity between what was wasteful extravagance and what was a form of publicity or financially beneficial, what was showing off, and what was instinctive self-advertisement by a successful entrepreneur.”⁶³

Essentially, these questions always arise when one tries to analyze the relationship between economics and “squandering”. That art could become a form of credit card for the elite has already been mentioned as the motive for the patronage activity of the early Florentine capitalists. The fact that many “luxury goods” in the homes of these merchants had religious content and functions has certainly reduced the credibility of this thesis. The interrelated aspects of intellectual history and aesthetics, which has been subject to change through history, must in the case of a differentiated analysis be taken into account in the sense of the “purpose of purposelessness”.

Central to this discussion is the question of the social *role models*. Generally speaking, the upper strata of society provided models of lifestyle and consumption as far as luxury goods were concerned. One can observe this trend clearly in the upper sections of the urban society, but in fact this phenomenon is more generally applicable. Cultural and regional studies have attempted to explain the path of this cultural diffusion theoretically. In this, a notable role has been played by the analysis of fashions in clothing, this research area having been important for Hans Naumann’s theory of “sunken cultural heritage”,⁶⁴ which is as influential and widely discussed as Sigurd Erixon’s *theory of cultural fixing*. Naumann has shown that the most important pieces of traditional dress from very different German regions actually originate from the clothing fashions of the upper classes in the early modern period. The “theory of cultural fixing” proceeds from the assumption that in the case of “rapidly rising, expanding affluence”, prestige innovation occurs on a considerable scale; these developments brought about the purchase of “things”, usually stemming from a higher social strata, which was intended to make the new level of prosperity visible. In the case of a subsequent reduction of prosperity, people were most concerned with holding on to the status which they had already attained—this led to the

⁶³ Ibid., 39.

⁶⁴ Hans Naumann, *Grundzüge der deutschen Volkskunde* (Leipzig: Quelle & Mayer, 1929).

“domination of traditional processes”.⁶⁵ There are a variety of implications here, especially in an interdisciplinary context. Do the aforementioned models help explain the promotion (not the genesis) of new art styles? What makes a role model a role model (other than the fact that it comes from the *milieu* of the upper class)?

Temporarily—this seems to apply especially to the burgher culture at the close of the 18th century—cultural standards are defined *negatively*. On the one hand, there is the cultivation of an “elevated” style which is clearly separate from the existence of the lower classes; here we are dealing with a form of class-conscious living. On the other hand, the citizens set themselves apart from the luxuries and status of the nobility quite consciously. Out of the problem of the lack of means necessary to finance the conspicuous consumption of the nobility, they made a virtue. At the same time, one cannot but help notice that an economically successful class increasingly made claims for a culture of its own. The emergence of the literary critic, the creation of a firm set of burgher virtues, and the development of social principles such as order, hard-work and thrift,⁶⁶ illustrates this, as does a new attitude towards education and the arts. The increase of books in the inventories the *Bürgertum*, of works of art with increasingly more profane subjects, changes in architecture and the broader acceptance of first neo-classical and then Biedermeier objects, bring a long developmental process to a close. The Biedermeier is the last homogenous style: “. . . simple, tasteful, and long-lasting, practical and useful, comfortable, materially and functionally appropriate, inspired and imaginative in detail”.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Günter Wiegmann, „Theorien und Methoden“, in *Volkskunde: Eine Einführung*, ed. Günter Wiegmann, Matthias Zender and Gerhard Heilfurth (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1977), 39–86, 59–61.

⁶⁶ Paul Münch, ed. *Ordnung, Fleiß und Sparsamkeit: Texte und Dokumente zur Entstehung der bürgerlichen Tugenden* (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1984).

⁶⁷ Thomas Nipperdey, „Kulturgeschichte, Sozialgeschichte, Historische Anthropologie“, *VSWG* 55 (1968): 145–164.

CHAPTER FOUR

ASPECTS OF THE DAILY LIFE

1. *Organization of Time, Daily Routine*

Some entries in travel journals from the 16th century reflect still older, traditional methods of communicating time to the citizens, whereby security concerns also played a part. Montaigne described this for those Swiss towns which he had got to know on a trip to spas: “In their cities, as well as in spas, there is a security unit. Every night, two guards go on a patrol, not so much to keep watch for enemies, but rather due to a fear of fire or other disturbances. Every time when the clock strikes on the hour, one of the guards yells at the top of his voice to ask the other what time it is; then the other responds in a similarly loud voice and adds that he is keeping a good watch.”¹ Johann Oldecop reports that in Hildesheim in 1599 twelve citizens were employed to cry out at the chiming of the clock on every hour, “Dear gentlemen, I want to say to you that the clock has struck.”² Montaigne noticed the procedure when in Landsberg, a small town in Bavaria, the clock struck every quarter of an hour.³ This shows the spread of mechanical clocks even into provincial areas. From the second half of the 16th century, these instruments appeared ever more frequently as typical objects of prestige and innovation in wealthy burgher homes as well as in public places. The city officials attempted to make the “official” time ever more precise: city hall clocks began chiming every quarter of an hour. Somewhere—e.g. in Strasbourg or Augsburg—great astronomical clocks could be admired. Sometimes this provided the fascination of a rather performance, yet at the same time it was a metaphor for the social ideal of order. “A real clock in the city”, so went the poem by Johann Geyger from Nuremberg, “shows that a wise council/leads

¹ Montaigne, *Diary*, 70.

² Karl Euling, ed., *Chronik des Johan Oldecop* (Tübingen: Literarischer Verein Stuttgart, 1891).

³ Montaigne, *Diary*, 91.

a correct regiment/there is also good policy/the burghers rule with wisdom/announce the judgment according to justice".⁴

The "mass-media" city bells and clocks became symbols and means of authority, they were in good company with the rising flood of regulations in the 16th century with which the state and cities deluged the people. Thus, gradually, an urban, a burgher-based form of timing-keeping emerged, which separated the urban environment from that of the countryside. In the homes of the citizens the mechanical apparatus provided its own, rational division of time. Until that point, time had also been experienced in the upper strata of society as a cumulative entity; time was viewed in terms of one's life or the world, while "periods of time" were considered to be phases of this great continuum, and were treated in terms of their relationship to it. These approaches to time had, as such, no special meaning. Increasingly accurate clocks indicated how time began to be understood as a progression from moment to moment, as a "summation" of different phases of the present.⁵

Still, the way time was measured could in fact vary from town to town. In some places, the people counted from sundown, in others, from sunrise—which, needless to say, did not simplify travel. Even in the final third of the 17th century, Grimmelshausen could observe that the day "is begun differently by all sorts of people performing all kinds of tasks."

People habitually got up at daybreak, while the setting of the sun ended the day.⁶ Hence, in the summer, people worked every day for as much as sixteen hours, whereas in winter only a maximum of eight hours. Aegidius Albertinus—as a prophet of a canon of civic virtues—confronted this reality to the "lazy good-for-nothings . . . who never see the beloved sun as it rises throughout the whole year/. . . but lie down to sleep before sunset/sleep ten or twelve hours at a time".⁷ Joachim Heinrich Campe, the great educationalist of the enlightenment, devised the idea of a "schedule for life and business" in which an exact "program" was planned for every hour of the day.⁸

⁴ Klaus Maurice, „Stundenangaben im Gemeinwesen des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts,“ in *Welt als Uhr [Ausstellungskatalog]*, (München: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1980), 146–158.

⁵ See Gustav Bilfinger, *Die mittelalterlichen Horen und die modernen Stunden*, Stuttgart, 1982.

⁶ Zeeden, *Deutsche Kultur*, 155–156.

⁷ Münch, *Ordnung*, 127.

⁸ Münch, *Ordnung*, 265.

Within the home it was the head of the household who regulated time. In 1682, the “landlord” Wolf Helmhard von Hohberg expressed a maxim, which certainly also held true for the *Bürgerum*, when he said: “A father is like a house clock, according to which all the members of the household must organise their rising in the morning, retiring to bed, working, eating, and attending to other duties.”⁹

According to the daily routine, which was based on the available daylight, *meals* were taken at earlier times than today.¹⁰ The day usually began between four and five in the early morning with the “morning soup”, lunch taking place at around ten o’clock (“the early meal”), while the “evening meal” was taken as early as three o’clock in the afternoon, more usually though between four and six o’clock. More recent research has placed the transition from a two-meal to a three-meal system as occurring sometime around the 17th century.¹¹

This daily rhythm was of course known in many variations. According to the poet Barthold Hinrich Brockes, it was common in Hamburg in the 18th century to have two “tea-times” and, in addition, “vesper bread”.¹² The burgher Brockes’ statement illustrates a significant development: the shift in the agenda among the upper echelons of the urban people—in contrast to the daily routine of the craftsmen—“against” the daylight in the “conquest of the night”.¹³ This difference gradually increased to three or four hours. One source from around 1750 demonstrates the differences: the wife of a burgher would get up at six o’clock, breakfast was taken between seven and eight o’clock. Afterwards, her husband went to his “bureau”. The time between twelve and two was taken up with lunch and afternoon coffee; until seven o’clock in the evening the burgher was once again occupied with “office work”. The evening meal was held between eight and nine o’clock, while after that there was still a good hour set aside for smoking a pipe.¹⁴

⁹ Otto Brunner, *Adeliges Landleben und europäischer Geist: Leben und Werk Wolf Helmhards von Hohberg 1612–1688* (Salzburg: Müller, 1949), 284–285.

¹⁰ Alwin Schultz, *Das häusliche Leben der europäischen Kulturvölker vom Mittelalter bis zur zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts* (München/Berlin: Oldenbourg, 1903), 337.

¹¹ Alexander Fenton and Eszter Kisbán, ed. *Food in change: eating habits from the Middle Ages to the present day* (Edinburgh: Donald, 1986).

¹² Wolfgang Nahrstedt, *Die Entstehung der Freizeit. Dargestellt am Beispiel Hamburgs: Ein Beitrag zur Strukturgeschichte und zur strukturgeschichtlichen Grundlegung der Freizeitpädagogik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972), 115.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 132.

¹⁴ Emil Ermatinger, *Deutsche Kultur im Zeitalter der Aufklärung* (Frankfurt: Athenaeon, 1969²), 328.

2. Meals and Drinks

Well into the 19th century, when coffee became a popular drink (at the morning meal as well), “morning soup” remained nonetheless the first meal of the day—in its most common form, a gruel, consumed with water and side dishes. In the 16th century, the burghers of Tyrol ate bread with wine diluted with water, elsewhere—such as Bohemia and Silesia—beer was drunk as well.¹⁵

As a rule, the morning meal was the most important, setting aside special occasions when guests were present. It applies to all regions and all social classes that *bread* was the irreplaceable and most necessary basic food. This remained so well into the 19th century, despite the increasing spread of the potato. The proportion of the early modern household budget spent on bread and grain sank gradually—at any rate, so long as there was no famine—considerably more so when the economic situation was better, enabling people to afford more “luxurious” foods. For the majority of burgher households, it can be asserted with a great deal of certainty that the cost of bread took up the largest part of the family budget.

Meat, as another likewise expensive and basic food, appears to have been consumed more frequently at the beginning than the end of the 16th century, while the importance of the cheaper rye bread as opposed to wheat bread also increased at this time. This was reflected in demographic developments: the increase in the population led to a long-term fall in wages in real terms and, accordingly, the prices for grain and other sorts of food rose.¹⁶ After the discovery of the sea route to India, the import of spices grew rapidly. It was often necessary to use them, since it was the best method to disguise the bad taste of slightly rotten meat. No cookbook avoided recommending spices: it was not a good idea to be sparing with pepper, salt, cloves, ginger, cinamon, and so on. People did not hesitate to “enhance” wine with elder, sage, or rosemary.¹⁷ To illustrate

¹⁵ Bücking, *Kultur und Gesellschaft*, 153.

¹⁶ Wilhelm Abel, *Massenarmut und Hungerkrisen im vorindustriellen Deutschland* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977²); Dietrich Saalfeld, „Die Wandlungen der Preis- und Lohnstruktur während des 16. Jahrhunderts in Deutschland“, in *Beiträge zu Wirtschaftswachstum und Wirtschaftsstruktur im 16. und 18. Jahrhundert. Schriften des Vereins für Socialpolitik N.F.* 163 (1971), 9–28.

¹⁷ Liebmann, *Deutsches Land*.

this, for a meal given in Nuremberg in 1527, 14.21% of the expenses were for spices, whereas bread—1.89%—took up only a modest proportion of the costs. The most important financial factor in this meal was in fact fish, at 64%.¹⁸

Such a division of the costs was not typical for everyday meals, even in the homes of wealthy patricians. An elevated social status led to improvements in the quality but not the quantity of meals.

A form of “standard budget” calculated by a chronicler for the time around 1580 for what the German historian Ulf Dirlmeier calls a “middle burgher’s” household, of three people, reveals much about daily habits.¹⁹ The budget consisted of 89 florins, of which over 25 florins (28.7%) went on wine and brandy, and over 16 florins (18.2%) for meat. Such percentages are certainly not to be found in the households of the lower classes. Bread and fish, the latter presumably as food for fasting, were noted at 7 florins (7.86%). While fruit and fresh vegetables were not included in this calculation, although they certainly belonged to what burghers ate, the costs for cheese and cabbage were estimated at 2 florins each, 1 florin for milk, and 1.7 florins for salt and spices. Lard is mentioned together with wood; the chronicler estimated that the cost for these items was 10 florins. The total percentage in this burgher household budget for food amounts to more than 70%. Not so much wine, as in this household, but rather beer, water, milk and cider characterized early modern *drinking habits*. Brandy and other strong alcoholic drinks appear to have been consumed as stimulants mainly in public places, in taverns or during public feasts: by all accounts, increasingly after the first quarter of the 17th century.²⁰

Among the many changes in nutritional habits which took place was the increase in the consumption of *sugar*, which had already started in the 16th century,²¹ and continued into the 18th century.²²

¹⁸ Ulf Dirlmeier, *Untersuchungen zu Einkommensverhältnissen und Lebenshaltungskosten in oberdeutschen Städten des Spätmittelalters. Mitte 14. bis Anfang 16. Jahrhundert* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1978), 389.

¹⁹ Ulf Dirlmeier, *Untersuchungen*, 419.

²⁰ Uwe Meiners, „Stufen des Wandels,“ 284; Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *Das Paradies, der Geschmack und die Vernunft: Eine Geschichte der Genussmittel* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1995).

²¹ Günter Wiegelmann, „Zucker und Süßwaren im Zivilisationsprozess der Neuzeit“, in *Unsere tägliche Kost: Geschichte und regionale Prägung*, ed. Hans J. Teuteberg/Günter Wiegelmann (Münster: Coppenrath, 1986), 135–152.

²² Wilhelm Abel, *Stufen der Ernährung: Eine historische Skizze* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck

The decrease in the use of pepper and other spices in the 18th century could be connected to the rise in the use of new luxury items such as tea, chocolate and, above all, *coffee*.²³ The first coffee house was established in Vienna in 1683, with others in Nuremberg, Regensburg and Hamburg four years later and, in Frankfurt, in 1689. Together with tobacco—the import of which Cologne and Wuerttemberg had wanted to prevent even in the midseventeenth century—coffee accompanied the discourse of the Enlightenment. It remained for a long time an expensive and infrequently consumed drink, a status symbol for wealthy burghers and the nobility.²⁴

In the 18th century, the coffee houses could not hold their monopoly on the sale of the coveted drink. In addition, some establishments began to offer a wider range of products. One example of this development is the Frankfurt guesthouse, the “Rote Haus” (Red House) which, in 1777, as revealed in an advertisement, represented a “kind of Vauxhall”, a reference to the amusement area near London. The Frankfurt “Vauxhall” was open during the trade fair season from nine to twelve o’clock and two to six o’clock, during these times a band of musicians played without interruption. The guests entertained themselves with “commerce games”, as well as with a game of chance, which was in fact illegal. For 12 florins entrance fee, the guests could sample “refreshments” such as tea, coffee, liquors, and lemonade.²⁵

3. *Table Manners*

Considering the variation in, and quality of, the dishes, and furthermore *table manners*, from the 17th century onwards the gulf between the nobility and the upper strata of the urban population on the

& Ruprecht, 1981); Günter Wiegmann, *Alltags- und Festspeisen* (Marburg: Elwert, 1967).

²³ Günther Schiedlausky, *Tee, Kaffee, Schokolade und ihr Eintritt in die europäische Gesellschaft* (München: Prestel, 1961).

²⁴ Wiegmann, *Alltags- und Festspeisen*, 168; Hans J. Teuteberg, „Die Eingliederung des Kaffees in den täglichen Getränkekonsum“, in *Unsere tägliche Kost*, ed. Teuteberg/Wiegmann, 185–201.

²⁵ Karl Bräuer, ed. *Studien zur Geschichte der Lebenshaltung in Frankfurt am Main während des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts auf Grund des Nachlasses von Gottlieb Schnapper-Armdt*, 2 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Baer, 1915), vol. 1, 355.



Fig. 11. Heinrich Sulzer, Hans Conrad Bodmer and his Family at Table, 1643. © Musée Suisse, Schweizerische Nationalmuseum, Landesmuseum Zurich.

one hand, and the lower classes and the rural population on the other, grew noticeably wider.

Dining rooms were separated from other rooms at first in the more refined French households. Although *porcelain* occasionally found its way into burgher homes as a luxury table item, wood or pewter plates still predominated, while bread often served the same function as an eatable dish.²⁶ Even in the 17th century, it was not uncommon in quite respectable homes for guests at table not to have their own knife, glass or cup. People drank the contents of their glass in order to pass it on to their neighbour, and one's fingers were the most usual kind of cutlery. The *spoon*, with which people often ate from a common, single bowl, first came into use in the 16th century, developing in the 17th century more into the spoon as we know it today. Spoons for coffee and other functions were first known in the 18th century. The fork in its three-pronged form became more widespread from 1650 onwards, around the same time that the knife came to be rounded at the top.²⁷ The three-piece set of cutlery as we know it today could be found in the noble and upper-class burgher households, but only rarely around 1800 in the homes of wealthier peasants.

The tablecloth remained for a long time an acquisition only to be found among the upper classes, even when it served simultaneously as a handkerchief and napkin, the use of which increased in the 17th century. The battle against offensive table manners took literary form as early as the 16th century, most notably in Friedrich Dedekind's "Grobianus".²⁸ Still, one traveler in this century reported that in a bath-house his handkerchief had been cleaned for him.²⁹

²⁶ Ulrich Christian Pallach, *Materielle Kultur und Mentalität im 18. Jahrhundert. Wirtschaftliche Entwicklung und politisch-sozialer Funktionswandel des Luxus in Frankreich und im Alten Reich am Ende des Ancien Régime* (München: Oldenbourg, 1987).

²⁷ Steinhausen, *Geschichte der deutschen Kultur*, 603.

²⁸ Aloys Bömer, „Anstand und Etikette nach den Theorien der Humanisten,“ *Neue Jahrbücher für Pädagogik* 14 (1904), 223–242, 249–285, 330–355; Johanna G. Neuer, „The Grobianus Tischzucht of Wilhelm Salzmann,“ *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 62/63 (1980/81): 65–100.

²⁹ *Reisen und Gefangenschaft Hans Ulrich Krafts*. Aus der Originalhandschrift hg. v. Dr. K.D. Haszler (Stuttgart: Fues, 1861), 7.

4. *Clothing and Fashion*

The handkerchief, Hieronymus Koeler—as can be seen from its name in southern Germany, *fazolett*—found its way into Germany from “modern” Italian renaissance society. More refined forms of personal hygiene and clothing preferences would also appear to have initially made their way from there to northern Europe. The use of perfumes and make-up, which were—already forms of fashionable luxury inherited from the orient since antiquity—spread from the Italian peninsula.

Changes in fashion often appear to have been in step with the social dynamics of the time. In the early modern period, Europe was the “continent of fashion stupidities”. Apart from the nobility, it was primarily the *Bürgertum* which embraced fashion in clothing. Pictorial sources make plain that peasant clothing hardly changed over long periods of time, whereas burgher outfits could have undergone changes within even a few years.³⁰ Hieronymus Koeler, a Nuremberg merchant, and later a city judge, commented from time to time in his remarkable diary, a first class “ego document”, on his own appearance.³¹ He described his hairstyle and how he was dressed—a form of “self-reflection” which at the same time reflected the meaning of fashion for a person’s identity and social status. It is noticeable that he justified his thorough description of himself with the inherent human weakness which is associated with a person’s transitory earthly existence: “I hope that in describing my appearance and clothing, my attitude to life, and the journeys during my youth, that I can serve as a role model for my descendants and teach them the patience, honesty, and good manners which will help them so much more to developing a fear of God.” Clothing thus played a part in his “respectability” and “good manners”. Concerning his appearance as a young man, Koeler writes: “At this time in my youth I have long, golden hair, reaching down to my shoulders. I wear black, padded pants, made of camelot, which are held at my waist by a belt, a red leather school bag which I strap across my chest, brown

³⁰ Fernand Braudel, *Civilisation matérielle et capitalisme* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1979), chapter 4.

³¹ Die Familiengeschichte der Koeler. Ein Beitrag zur Autobiographie des 16. Jahrhunderts, ed. Hanna S.M. Amburger (Nürnberg: J.L. Schrag, 1931), 214–215.



Fig. 12. Andreas Musculus, *Vom Hosenteufel*, title page of the first print, Frankfurt a. d. Oder, 1555.

crocheted boots, all in the Hungarian style, a red cap which I often carry—as a memento.” During his apprenticeship, Koeler saw himself as, “a businessman’s servant during the working day. I wore my hair short and dressed in a gray wool coat without velvet and with long sleeves, reaching down to my hands. It had a long cut Green pants and high shoes. As a remembrance.” He continued: “On public holidays. A large extended beard, a dark, black wool shirt laced with velvet cord. The sleeves reaching to the hands. White pants and cutout shoes.” From these descriptions it is clear that this burgher’s son wore mostly dark clothing—bright and light colours were reserved for the burgher elite or the upper classes, due to their association with godliness. Only as he donned clothes to leave for the Turkish War (which he subsequently did not take part in) extravagant fashion was possible—“that a few were light of sky blue, others were sulfur yellow and pink.”

However, public regulations laid down for the farmers and lower classes of the city populations grey, brown or black as the colours for clothing, while light colours—in the sense of a differentiated mysticism of light—remained reserved for the social elites.³² In their numbers and variations, with peaks in the second half of the 15th and 17th centuries—clothing regulations were at one and the same time a reflection of social reality.³³ These are documents which testify to the authorities’ desire to regulate a reality which was not very clearly defined. When the attempt was made to specify the outward appearance of the burgher, this was likewise a symbol of the early modern interpretation of the world: the desire to make evident the divine order of the town, of the society, of the world. More specifically, it was a tendency which can be observed into the 18th century of approving an inner set of values through outward references. What was visibly demonstrated could also be assumed to be legitimate. The economic argument against squandering also had its religious and moral side, luxury counting as “court-like and arrogant”, which could in turn bring God’s wrath over the state and the corporation

³² Heide Nixdorff/Heidi Müller, *Weisse Westen—rote Roben: Von den Farbordnungen des Mittelalters zum individuellen Farbgeschmack* (Berlin: Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, 1983); Wolfgang Brückner, „Farbe als Zeichen“, *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 78 (1982): 14–27.

³³ Lieselotte Constanze Eisenbart, *Kleiderordnungen der deutschen Städte zwischen 1530 und 1700* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962), 14.

of citizens.³⁴ Nevertheless, economic motives seemed increasingly to take the upper hand when it came to clothing regulations, an indication of a long-term secularization process. In addition, the acceptance of the regulations was obviously limited, a supposition attested to by their frequent repetition.

The colorful picture which daily life in the city offered was hence the expression of a subtle contest for social positions. Conflicts arose frequently whenever economic and social positions were incongruent with one another, that is, when money made possible the outward assertion of a status that contradicted tradition. The “expensiveness of clothes” appeared to a critic of the early 16th century as the main reason for the impoverishment of the nobility: “they want to show off like the rich merchants in the cities, who they once bettered in honor.”³⁵ One possible consequence of the economic leadership role of the citizens at this time may have been their acceptance by the ruling class; in Bavaria in 1526 the top merchants achieved recognition as a class of their own between the common citizenry and the nobility.³⁶

An important part as a role model continued to be played by courtly society. Burgundy, Italy, Spain and finally Louis XIV’s Versailles provided the models upon which others oriented their tastes. This implies of course only general trends. Below the world of the elites, diverse and frequent changes in fashion took place at local and regional levels,³⁷ which were continually in conflict with regulations from the authorities, or with the equally insistent but futile tracts against the “trouser devil” or “fashionable clothing splendor”.

The metaphysical dimension to clothing color lost more and more importance during the modern period. Certain remnants of this idea can, however, be identified in the religious pictures of the epoch: God the Father, Christ, Maria, or other important saints appeared always in radiant red, blue or yellow garments. Yellow had already

³⁴ Eisenbart, *Kleiderordnungen*, 67.

³⁵ Johannes Janssen, *Geschichte des deutschen Volkes seit dem Ausgang des Mittelalters*, 8 vols. (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1876/94) I, 380.

³⁶ Veronika Baur, *Kleiderordnungen in Bayern vom 14. bis zum 19. Jahrhundert* (München: Stadtarchiv München, 1975), 23.

³⁷ Helmut Ottenjann, ed. *Mode—Tracht—regionale Identität. Historische Kleiderforschung heute* (Cloppenburg: Museumsdorf Cloppenburg, 1988²), 193–198.

come to symbolize “gold” in medieval heraldry, but could still also be seen as a “color of disgrace”.³⁸ The struggle for the privilege to wear glowing colors or gold-embroidered clothing can serve as a paradigm for the social-historical dimension of the history of fashion. Hence gold bonnets could be worn in the 16th century only by patricians; in the second half of the 18th century simple burgher women in some places had this privilege and, at the end of the century, even female domestic servants wore such decorative headdress. And, if around 1750 the city bailiff could still wrest the gold-colored bonnets from the heads of Munich burghers’ wives, this illustrates the resistance of the system of estates against all egalitarian tendencies.³⁹ The goal of the last of the clothing regulations, published in the early 19th century, was much less a question of class differences or economics, it was much more directed “against revolutionary thoughts, against political unruliness.”⁴⁰

5. *Hygiene*

Underclothing has enjoyed a unique historical development, and hence requires analysis using the approach of the social historian. Indeed, an examination of this subject matter can actually reveal much about attitudes towards the body at different periods and among specific classes.

In contrast to other west European countries, some standards of hygiene seem to have first established themselves in Germany rather late. Even in Germany, however, the differences between the body cultures of the different classes widened from the 16th century onwards. “Cleanliness” meant “in the bigger cities and in the social sphere of elevated burghers and the nobility . . . initially and principally the proof of exclusive style and taste: a model of social self-representation in cultural signs and symbols.”⁴¹ Put another way, expensive perfumes, elaborate underclothing were used equally for hygienic

³⁸ Brückner, *Farbe*, 19.

³⁹ Ottenjann, *Mode*, 155.

⁴⁰ Baur, *Kleiderordnungen*, 28.

⁴¹ Wolfgang Kaschuba, „Deutsche Sauberkeit“—Zivilisierung der Körper und der Köpfe“, in *Wasser und Seife, Puder und Parfüm: Geschichte der Körperhygiene seit dem Mittelalter*, ed. Georges Vigarello (Frankfurt am Main/New York: Campus, 1988), 308.

reasons and to draw a dividing line between oneself and the “dirty” lower classes. The hesitation, often ridiculed, towards washing oneself with soap and water—as opposed to powdering and perfuming, and the frequent changing of underclothing—was grounded in the contemporary medical wisdom. People feared that bathing would open the pores of the skin, through which unhealthy vapors or “feter” might find their way into the body.⁴²

In Germany, the 18th century was also a period of change in body culture. White undergarments gradually found their way into the chests of drawers of the lower echelons of the urban population. According to Francke’s pedagogical teachings, the value of gymnastics became increasingly propagated, especially outdoors. In conjunction with this physical exercise, it was recommended that water should be used for washing and hardening the body.⁴³ These conclusions were due to the latest medical thinking, scientific inquiry into the nature of odors and the resulting energetic deodorizing of public areas through street surfacing and new hygiene regulations for cemeteries. The critique of the European enlightenment led to a new attitude towards clothing and the body. The increased use of water for cleansing the body and the disappearance of make-up from the face of the burgher’s wife had the same preconditions as the replacement of Rococo layered stucco and *trompe l’œil*s with the “noble simplicity” of Classicism. This required new clothing: “One must only see the constraint in our clothing fashion”, so it was phrased in Krünitz’s *Economic Encyclopedia* of 1787, “to see how every part of our body from the head to the tip of our toes is confined and made incapable of the slightest free movement.”⁴⁴

Bathing trips⁴⁵ by burghers and the construction of new public baths, as in Bremen, Berlin, Vienna and Frankfurt, exemplified the “basic model of a new burgher health care” and leisure culture.⁴⁶ This picked up the threads of the tradition of the bath-houses, which

⁴² Vigarello, *Wasser*, 15.

⁴³ Gustav Stephan, *Die häusliche Erziehung in Deutschland während des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden: Bergmann, 1891), 36–56.

⁴⁴ Cornelia Rühlig, ed. *Stadt und Natur: Frankfurt um 1780* (Frankfurt am Main: Historisches Museum, 1982), 135.

⁴⁵ Reinhold P. Kuhnert, *Urbanität auf dem Lande. Badereisen nach Pyrmont im 18. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984).

⁴⁶ Kaschuba, *Zivilisierung*, 313.

were less concerned with cleanliness than entertainment and health, although they should not be mistaken as disguised brothels.⁴⁷ In fact, the established thinking on hygiene in the 16th century, the proliferation of syphilis and, above all, the prudery of the confessional age, all of this contributed to the decline of the bath-house.

6. *Lifestyles and the Process of Civilization*

Several of the cultural developments described here—and in other chapters in this book—seem to refer to a sequence of events that Norbert Elias analyzed and described many years ago as the “process of civilization”. In his famous work, published in 1939, he spoke of a long-term process during which behavioral norms were refined; one can observe how emotions were increasingly controlled and channelled and how these means of control were differentiated and intensified. As proof for his thesis, Elias cites the rise of sources of shame and embarrassment, and the transfer of certain types of behavior and interactions “behind the scenes” to the private sphere. The process of civilization is understood by Elias as a social *and* individual psychological phenomenon. In the second volume of his “socio-genetic and psycho-genetic study” (as it is subtitled), he is concerned with explaining how this process took place within society.

Many of the topics of cultural history and the history of everyday life of the early modern *Bürgertum* cannot be approached without dealing with Elias’ “civilization theory”. This theory offers a plausible explanation for the transformation of clothing and table customs, people’s relationship to the body and its “more humble functions”; not to mention, in addition, attitudes towards sexuality, the differentiation of interior functions of the house, the individualization of seating through chairs and stools, or other particular observations.

Elias attempts to explain the specific structure of the German burgher intellectual class during a time of political tension in the Empire, in contrast to the intellectual elite of France. In this approach, various levels of civilization are developed in a process in which the progression of emotional regulation correlates to the development of the early modern state.

⁴⁷ Zeeden, *Kultur*, 282–284.

Although Elias' work found a wider resonance not until the 1970s, his sociological model very rapidly achieved a degree of importance for the research in the field.⁴⁸ The criticism of his work by other historians focused mainly on individual aspects, though they did not seek to question the principal line of the theory. A book review in the *Historische Zeitschrift* praised Elias' "Process of Civilization" as paradigmatic for historical studies of behavior.⁴⁹

Is this positive judgment still valid? In 1988, the ethnologist Hans Peter Duerr, presented the first volume of a four-volume work which represents a frontal attack on the concept of the process of civilization.⁵⁰ The author wants to destroy a myth, as he puts it: the "distorted image of past and foreign cultures", which "can be employed haphazardly to justify colonialism, this distortion being achieved when one claims that the culturally poor must be trained in the rituals of civilization in order for them to become true human beings."⁵¹ This is a political argument: Duerr believes that the civilization theory propagated by Elias and others provides the foundation for an imperialist-colonialist ideology, which needs to be exposed for what it is. Very much in the same line was Henning Eichberg's critique of the concept of a linear and positive progressive development, which itself did not correspond with the complexity and colonializing violence of the process.⁵² The debate concerns fundamental questions of sociological and historical methodology, and more so—the concept of historical anthropology. In the final instance, the main question is what "civilized" actually means, whether there is such a thing as "civilized" or "uncivilized" peoples, and how the so-called "high cultures" can be evaluated within this context.

Duerr has examined the evidence cited by Elias to support the latter's thesis that nudity, sexuality, and bodily functions were increasingly pushed into the private sphere and that the role played by

⁴⁸ Johan Goudsbloum, „Aufnahme und Kritik der Arbeiten von Norbert Elias in England, Deutschland, den Niederlanden und Frankreich,“ in *Materialien zu Norbert Elias' Zivilisationstheorie*, ed. Peter Gleichmann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1979), 17–100.

⁴⁹ Dirk Blasius, „Review of Norbert Elias: *Die höfische Gesellschaft*“, *Historische Zeitschrift* 212 (1971): 666–668.

⁵⁰ Hans Peter Duerr, *Nacktheit und Scham: Der Mythos vom Zivilisationsprozess* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1988).

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, Foreword.

⁵² Henning Eichberg, *Leistung, Spannung, Geschwindigkeit: Sport und Tanz im gesellschaftlichen Wandel des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1978), 290–297.

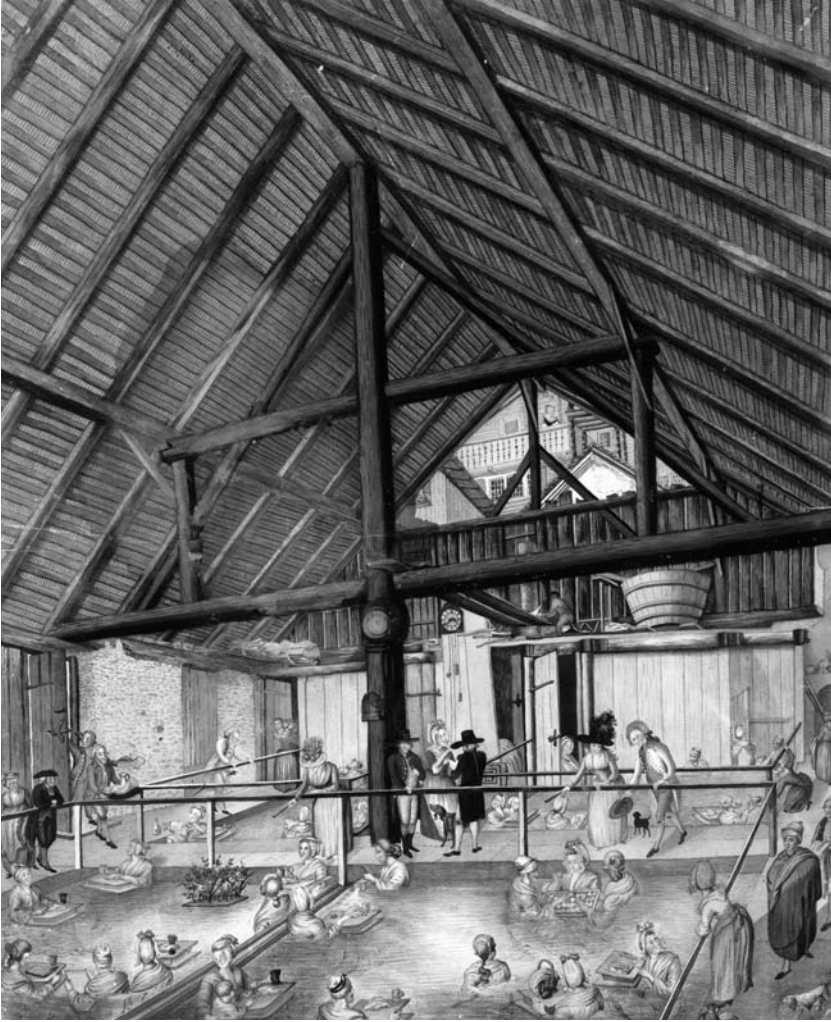


Fig. 13. Abraham Samuel Fischer, Interior View of the Bath in Leukerbad, circa 1785. © Museum für Kommunikation, Berne.

feelings of shame had increased since the Middle Ages. He has also offered a new analysis and provided additional evidence, as well as comparisons with behavioral norms of other “primitive” societies to support his findings.

To give just one example: In his book, Elias quotes a source which shows, according to him, that “it was common at least in the cities to undress at home before going to the bath house”.⁵³ The source itself notes: “I often saw a father with his naked wife and children walk over the alley to the baths wearing nothing more than an undergarment. How often did I witness the maidservants of ten, twelve, 14, 16 and 18 years of age completely nude except covered by a short piece of cloth.” Elias observes that such lack of inhibition disappeared slowly during the 16th century, more decisively in the 17th and 18th centuries, to disappear completely in the 19th.⁵⁴ In response, Duerr points out that the source—which Elias knew only from the secondary literature—came in fact from the early 17th century, a book entitled, “The gruesomeness of the destruction of human race” (1610) by Hippolythus Guarinoni.⁵⁵ This was the work of a rather peevisish Catholic, a contemporary critic, whose main concern was to label the era as one without morals. Here Duerr notes, “that one can cite from this type of contemporary observation from all periods to support the one or the other thesis, not least of all when the author has the desire to offer criticism of the period or wishes to denigrate or praise the morals of one region or another.”⁵⁶

In a similar vein, Duerr attempts to invalidate further arguments. The view that night garments became popular at the same time as the fork and handkerchief is likewise rejected, as is the notion that it was common for several people in the Middle Ages to sleep in the same bed, this only changing during the course of the early modern period as people became more sensitive towards bodily contact.⁵⁷ The widely held belief that, until the 16th century, men and women both relaxed naked in public baths—which were nothing else than brothels—is also called into question.⁵⁸ Various sources convey an

⁵³ Elias, *Zivilisation*, vol. 2, 223.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 224.

⁵⁵ Duerr, *Nacktheit*, 62; cf. Bücking, *Kultur und Gesellschaft*.

⁵⁶ Duerr, *Nacktheit*, 65.

⁵⁷ Elias, *Zivilisation*, 224; Duerr, *Nacktheit*, 177.

⁵⁸ Duerr, *Nacktheit*, 38–58.

ambivalent picture; Hans Ulrich Krafft, who lived in the 16th century, recalls how he found himself together with friends naked in a public bath with 22 mostly older women, whom he engaged in conversation. Still, as no other men came in, he became uncomfortable “sitting with so many women . . . and left the bath together with his friends.”⁵⁹

A second attack on Elias’ theoretical construct comes from the ethnological perspective: shame, and self-consciousness regarding one’s own body and the bodies of others, according to Duerr, is to be found among numerous “uncivilized” peoples.

Elias’ attention was not in fact directed towards cultures outside Europe; his book contains no clear value judgment in the sense of the superiority of “civilized” people over “wild” ones.⁶⁰ Furthermore, the investigation of the relationship of the body to its functions is only part of a longer chain of pieces of evidence which cannot be dealt with here in detail. That the transformation of table manners, the relationship of the body to its functions or, likewise, the attitude towards public “spectacles”, all need more precise analysis, which would challenge historians to the formulation of a—no doubt modified—perspective on civilization theory, is unlikely to be disputed. What we now consider as “gruesome” or “uncivilized” could be found frequently in the early modern period: unbelievably brutal executions, the abuse and killing of animals for public amusement.⁶¹ The aversion with which one would view these things can be explained through Elias’ terminology according to the present understanding of behavior as *normal*—yet, at the same time, he suggests a historical transformation of behavioral patterns. If a member of our contemporary society had the chance to travel with a time machine and to observe public life in an early modern city, sometimes he would be shocked and at least sometimes his stomach would turn.

To identify changes which actually took place, does not imply any statement about their *causes* (or about the more fundamental question: are such causal explanations at all possible for change in the Eliasian sense).⁶² The Dutch historian Johan Goudsblom has pointed

⁵⁹ Krafft, *Reisen und Gefangenschaft*, 7.

⁶⁰ Elias, *Zivilisation*, LXXX.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 281; Peter Burke, *The Historical Anthropology in Early Modern Italy: Essays on perception and communication* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

⁶² Elias, *Zivilisation*, LXIX.

out that certain rules for “civilized” behavior have their roots in considerations of hygiene, and are not the result of an endogenous dynamic in the structure of society.⁶³ This view is confirmed in a study by Georges Vigarello⁶⁴ in which it is argued plausibly that the thrifty use of water when people washed themselves was influenced by contemporary medical orthodoxy—and, hence, the new forms of body culture arose as a result of a change in those views.⁶⁵ Norbert Elias would probably respond to such theses by referring to his pattern of the civilization process. His model refers to the inner dialectic of the development: at first, according to him, feelings of shame became established, so that the attitudes and behavior of people changed until a point when this behavior was recognized to be “hygienically correct”, justified through a better understanding of the cause-and-effect chain, this behavior then being supported in the same direction.⁶⁶

Furthermore, according to Elias, the capacity for “distancing-one-self”, secured through the power of the absolutist state, was a prerequisite for scientific advancement and knowledge. According to the logic of the sociologist, the proof of certain hygienic views explains only superficially the “causes” of civilized behavior; the “real” prerequisites are to be found in the structural transformation of the late medieval state.

Duerr’s critique has until now not touched on these theoretical implications of the civilization theory; his criticism of the interpretation of certain sources is without doubt justified. On the other hand, the evidence for the development during the course of the early modern period, which could be characterized as the “civilization process”, is still overwhelming. One problem with the discussion of Elias’ theory is the use of individual sources, which has led to a kind of patchwork quilt approach. In the final instance, we are dealing with *mentalities*—in other words, it is a question of researching and describing collective attitudes, *attitudes secrètes* as Lucien Febvre, the founder of the „*Annales*“, uses the term. For this, however, it is necessary to have a substantial quantity of sources, in consecutive order, which can be compared in terms of structures over the longest

⁶³ Goudsbloum, *Aufnahme*, 216.

⁶⁴ Vigarello, *Wasser*, 118–120, 159–171.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 118.

⁶⁶ Elias, *Zivilisation*, 155.

possible period. In the same way as Michel Vovelle compared testaments over a long period of time to investigate religious attitudes and their transformation,⁶⁷ research must be conducted on a quantitative basis on the presence or absence of evidence for the process described by Elias. It would be possible to study, for instance, when and in what quantities handkerchiefs and tablecloths, or undergarments, appeared in inventories; the legal documents which are sometimes to be found covering a longer period, and which can be systematically compared, could produce key insights into attitudes towards nakedness and sexuality. An analysis of the apartment inventories has already led to evidence which would appear to support Elias' theory.⁶⁸

The quantitative evaluation of sources is far superior to the interpretation of individual passages in sources. The quotation from Guarinonius on the scantiness of certain individuals' clothing, cited above, can just as much be interpreted to support the civilization theory: can't this be taken as evidence that certain, possibly normal modes of behavior are now being contradicted on the basis of a changed sensibility towards nakedness, a changed sense of shame? Regulations from the city council in Ulm suggest conclusions in a similar vein for the period shortly before the Thirty Years' War, regulations which forbid naked bathing in the Danube and the undressing at home so that bathers could walk to the river prepared for bathing.⁶⁹

It is also important that we turn to further, related research issues which have not—until now—been taken account of in the debate on civilization theory. Elias himself appears not to have been aware of Aby Warburg's monumental theoretical concept, which in fact was concerned with very similar questions to his own. Yet, we should not exclude the possibility that Elias could have been familiar with the basic ideas of the art historian Warburg from his colleague and friend, the famous philosopher Ernst Cassirer, who was a student of the Hamburg scholar. Warburg used primarily the source material of art historians to explain—as he said—“space for thinking and prudence” [„Denkraum der Besonnenheit“] in history; the concern

⁶⁷ Michel Vovelle, *Piété baroque et déchristianisation en Provence au XVIII^e siècle: Les attitudes devant la mort d'après les clauses des testaments* (Paris: Plon, 1973).

⁶⁸ Cf. chapter 3.5: Furnishings and Living Atmosphere.

⁶⁹ Peter Thaddäus Lang, in Specker, *Stadt und Kultur*, 153.

here is with the development of a psychological mechanism which assists in coming to terms with the world through distancing oneself from it, the rise of an intellectual region of peaceful reflexion.

The results of Duerr and other critics of the civilization theory leave no doubt that, first, the periodization adopted by Elias needs to be reconsidered and, second, that it is highly questionable that this development actually ran in a linear fashion.⁷⁰

It is equally questionable whether the civilization process can be explained primarily by the structural transformation of the state. Elias' own fundamental starting point suggests a more complex model: not only the development of the state, but also individual interpretations based on views about life or the laws regulating work are factors in the changes in behavior and mentality. Is it necessary, on the other hand, considering the "moralism" in the society of the Reformation period and Counter-Reformation to construct a behavioral model based on an internal dynamic of societal configurations?

Furthermore, it is necessary to ask questions about the *social history* of the process. Wolfgang Kaschuba has looked at this issue within the context of the history of hygiene: this is, according to him, "always in the first instance dependent on other factors, a variable of general history of material and social reproduction, before it . . . [can be] refined into something approaching civilization history in the sense of an ethical-aesthetic value system and of the rise in sense of shame."⁷¹ He continues: "Without a demographic stabilization of life expectancy, without sufficient availability of food, without adequate water supplies, housing, or clothing, the basic prerequisites are missing to turn conventional standards of cleanliness or of health care into particular cultural values." One must therefore proceed on the basis of different traditions in body culture, their development according to the respective worlds or outlooks in which they existed. Standards of hygiene and other signs of "civilized behavior" also tend to be class-specific and differ regionally and nationally.⁷² Current research is still dominated by regional studies.⁷³

⁷⁰ Cf. Jean Claude Bologne, *Histoire de la pudeur* (Paris: Orban, 1986).

⁷¹ Kaschuba, *Sauberkeit*, 301.

⁷² Bologne, *Pudeur*.

⁷³ Bernhard Kirchgässner et al., ed. *Stadt und Gesundheitspflege* (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1982).

New methodological innovations have been achieved in studies which combine the approaches of demography and the history of mentalities.⁷⁴ Naturally, the early modern “civilization history” of the German town is only one aspect within the whole spectrum of such research approaches. The assumption that some developments took place in the Holy Roman Empire later than elsewhere could be based mainly on the specific situation within the German cultural landscape—the lack of a clear center,⁷⁵ which meant that the acceptance of new knowledge on medical and hygiene matters moved more slowly, and which could have helped spread new trends quicker. In addition, Germany was influenced by the deep economic and cultural effects of the Thirty Years War. What is immediately noticeable is that the “new hygiene”, which appears to have made progress in Germany in the second half of the 18th century, was transmitted through the urban elites, and not—as in France—by the salons of the nobility. Here new forms of “subjective cleanliness” obviously appeared first of all within circles of the enlightened citizens—e.g. white laundry, water. The cultural sphere in its widest sense, so it was interpreted, remained alongside the economic, the only area of emancipation of the burghers in the narrow world of the late absolutist principalities.⁷⁶

Parallel to these other developments, the cleaning of the streets and other public areas was further improved. Plastering, drainage and the removal of waste, which theoretically had been fully developed in the second half of the 18th century, were all systematized and perfected. Cleanliness became a civic virtue and a duty for the lower classes, passed down from above, the result of social control and an internalized form of burgher consciousness. Kaschuba claims that here one can recognize a disciplinary development with implications for the history of mentalities, in which the issue of “hygiene” shows itself to contain ambivalent aspects: hygiene is a field of cultural socialization. And just as much it is a central “parade ground” for the late absolutist process of state control: “The fact that both

⁷⁴ Arthur E. Imhof, ed. *Der Mensch und sein Körper: Von der Antike bis heute* (München: C.H. Beck, 1983).

⁷⁵ See Bodo- Michael Baumunk/Gerhard Brunn, eds., *Hauptstadt. Zentren, Residenzen, Metropolen in der deutschen Geschichte* (Köln, DuMont, 1989).

⁷⁶ Kaschuba, *Sauberkeit*, 311.

of these developmental phases occur so close to one another in terms of both time and content does actually lend the history of German hygiene a very particular individual accent.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Ibid., 320.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE BURGHER FAMILY

1. *Aspects of Recent Research*

The history of the *family* as the most important, structured social entity in the world of the burgher has profited from research in different areas: in addition to the traditional, often amateurish, genealogy, which aims to reconstruct the fate of individual families over generations, one should mention the discipline, as yet still relatively new in Germany, of *historical demography*. As a result of the works of Riehl and, above all, Otto Brunner, studies are now possible which can attempt to include further qualitative aspects, as well as the “intellectual history of the family” [Geistesgeschichte der Familie], or the familial ideologies of the early modern period. One methodological answer to the considerable difficulties which are still bound up with a general history of the German *Bürgertum*, the citizens,—a social class with its own highly divergent features—is “the history of the family within a broad context”. Two outstanding examples are Percy Ernst Schramm’s “Nine Generations”¹ and Lothar Gall’s monumental “*Bürgertum* in Germany”.²

Until recently, there have been only a very few studies of the demographic structure of urban populations in Germany;³ in contrast to the research on France, Britain and Italy. This has in the first instance very practical reasons: demographic histories demand

¹ Percy Ernst Schramm, *Neun Generationen: Dreihundert Jahre deutscher ‚Kulturgeschichte‘ im Lichte einer Hamburger Bürgerfamilie, 1648–1948* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963).

² Gall, *Bürgertum in Deutschland*.

³ Arthur E. Imhof, „Demographische Stadtstrukturen der frühen Neuzeit. Giessen in seiner Umgebung im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert als Fallstudie,“ *Zeitschrift für Stadtgeschichte* 2 (1975): 190–227; Etienne François, *Koblenz im 18. Jahrhundert: Zur Sozial- und Bevölkerungsstruktur einer deutschen Residenzstadt* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982); Walter G. Rödel, *Mainz und seine Bevölkerung im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert: Demographische Entwicklung, Lebensverhältnisse und soziale Strukturen einer geistlichen Residenzstadt* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1985); Zschocke Zschunke, *Konfession; Roesch, Stadt*.

considerable resources in terms of time, material and equipment.⁴ At the same time, the new insights provided by foreign researchers, such as the “*Annales*”-school and the “Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure”, were taken account of in Germany only very belatedly.⁵ Hence, many of the numerous “traditional” questions of the demographic history relevant for the world of the urban *Bürgertum* can either be only answered inadequately, or not at all: at what age did people marry, when and in what number were children born? How old were burghers’ wives at the time of their last birth? What were the physical effects of birth, and what was the attitude towards contraceptive practices? How many illegitimate children were born, and how did the illegitimacy rate develop over the centuries? Which differing demographic structures resulted from socio-historical and topographical differences?

In fact, even for the big cities, it is practically impossible to provide answers to these questions. The really relevant answers will only be provided by new research when two conditions are fulfilled: first, observations from the largest possible number of cases; and second, when an analysis is carried out for an extended period of time. It is possible, then, that interrelationships between city types and demographic structures, and the significance of factors such as social structure and urbanization could become more apparent;⁶ only then will we be in a position to establish whether important changes occurred before industrialization and, if so, in what form.

Walter G. Roedel’s study of *living conditions in Mainz* in the 17th and 18th century provides evidence of structures which can be regarded in many respects as typical for the small Catholic cities, even though a comparison of this work with other studies shows that Mainz is a particularly traditional case. The “old model” family predominated in Mainz: there was no transformation in procreative behavior, there were hardly any illegitimate births, birth patterns followed the natural rhythms determined by fertility. It would appear that the period

⁴ Arthur E. Imhof, *Einführung in die historische Demographie* (München: C.H. Beck, 1977).

⁵ Research Overview: Lawrence Stone, “Family History in the 1980s. Past Achievements and Future Trends,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* XII, 1 (1981): 51–87.

⁶ See Walker, *Home Towns*; Fred Kaspar, *Alltagswelt in Kleinstadt und Dorf. Bilder, Berichte und Zeitzeugnisse aus westfälischen Archiven, Rheda-Wiedenbrück: Göth, 1989*).



Fig. 14. Januarius Zick, The Remy Family at Bendorf near Koblenz, 1776. © Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg.

during which women could bear children was used as long as possible within families in Mainz. The average age of women for their final birth was around 39 years old, each marriage led statistically speaking to 7.84 births. The number of families with numerous children did not decrease during the 18th century. Despite the high mortality rate for infants and children, a roman pattern everywhere, families in Mainz cannot be fitted into the pattern of the particularly Protestant model of “two-children” families (parents with two surviving children).⁷

Generally speaking, the popular image of the large pre-industrial family is wrong, one can even speak of a “myth”. It is possible that well-off families would have had one, two, or even three children; and, there does seem to be a certain correlation between economic standing and the number of children a family had, although this cannot be seen as specific to burgher families.⁸

2. *The “Whole House”*

The debate over the size of households, important in terms of coming to grips with the question of when the entity of the “whole house” was transformed into the “nuclear family”, cannot be gone into in detail here. Indeed, it must be established which people can be included in the concept of “family”: did servants, apprentices and journeymen belong to a family? Are “the poor of the house”, who lived out their meagre existence in a corner somewhere, but who had no fire of their own (which would have excluded them from having their own household), to be included? As the Austrian historian Michael Mitterauer has rightly pointed out: “Historical analysis has revealed that the term ‘family’, when it is based on the criteria of relations and associated family ties, cannot come close to the actual historical reality.”⁹

Naturally, the study of the “whole house” within the spirit of Otto Brunner’s work, the so-called “extended family” or “large household family”, cannot simply be understood as generating statistical data.

⁷ Rödel, *Mainzer Bevölkerung*, 296.

⁸ Roeck, *Krieg und Frieden*, 56.

⁹ Michael Mitterauer et al., ed. *Historische Familienforschung* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1982), 18.

Thus, more recent research has concerned itself with, for instance, the significance of family ties for the solving of daily problems, or for dealing with more fundamental difficulties in life,¹⁰ while a further research area has focussed on the issue of which values were influential in the daily life of families in early modern society.

3. *Values*

With his work on the specific situation in Germany, Paul Münch is a historian who has come to the fore in the research on values.¹¹ He has been concerned with burgher virtues during the “incubation phase” of the modern period, as well as with the issue of continuities in human behavior: “This survival of old . . ., often only merely subconsciously continued traditional phenomena, the traces of which can be discovered in contemporary daily life, appears to influence fundamentally the barely researched area of individual and societal mentalities”, in other words the “‘most immobile part of the history of society’ which belongs to the foundation of the ‘longue durée’”.¹² Paul Münch’s study suggests how, between the 16th and 18th centuries, the phenomenon which emerged to be understood as burgher virtues would over a long period come to influence the image of the “foreign” and the understanding of “national character”: if the Germans were considered to be drunkards around 1600, they were characterized around 1800 with terms such as correctness, cleanliness, frugality, and as being hard-working.¹³

Important sources for role models, which influenced the daily existence in the “large family household” and, at the same time, constituted the broad values of the citizens, are the non-fiction books which were known as *Hausväterliteratur*, the “head of the household” literature.¹⁴ In these books the main topic was the life of marriage

¹⁰ Arthur E. Imhof, *Die verlorenen Welten: Alltagsbewältigung durch unsere Vorfahren—und warum wir uns heute so schwer damit tun* (München: C.H. Beck, 1984).

¹¹ Münch, *Ordnung*; Möller, *Fürstenstaat*.

¹² Münch, *Ordnung*, 15.

¹³ Paul Münch, „Grundwerte der frühneuzeitlichen Ständegesellschaft?“ in *Ständische Gesellschaft und soziale Mobilität* (München: Oldenbourg, 1988), 53–72.

¹⁴ See Gotthardt Frühsorge, Die Begründung der ‚väterlichen Gesellschaft‘ in der europäischen oeconomia christiana. Zur Rolle des Vaters in der ‚Hausväterliteratur‘ des 16. bis 18. Jahrhunderts, in: H. Tellenbach, ed., *Das Vaterbild im Abendland*, vol. I (Stuttgart, 1978), 110–123.

partners, the household and its management, the education of the children, how illnesses could be combatted and other subjects. An important task of research will be to compare the ideals of this literature, and how they developed, with the actual conditions of the time. Hence, it will be necessary to discuss the view that *emotions* only played a limited role in the life of the burgher family.¹⁵

4. *New Avenues for Research*

Lucien Febvre's suggestion that more attention should be paid to the history of feelings and sensibilities has not been, until now, taken up.¹⁶ Nonetheless, there are well-known efforts in this direction from French historians, such as Philippe Ariès' "Centuries of Childhood",¹⁷ and from the same author, together with André Béjin, a similar effort, this time on the history of sexuality¹⁸ and the history of death.¹⁹

A study which can be seen as complementary to Ariès' "Centuries of Childhood" is Peter Borscheid's "History of Age",²⁰ based mainly (although not exclusively) on material from the Holy Roman Empire. The author tries to give a more differentiated treatment of the aging process, dealing with farmers, burghers, aristocrats, the rich and the poor, and the position of widows; he is concerned with role models, which allow one to analyze "old age"—a phase of life during which older people were in many ways the pillars supporting the family unit, but who were also suffering from loneliness and until well into the 18th century had to be lived out in a home for the aged. According to Borscheid, only a very few could expect to receive assistance and, although a positive attitude to old age became increasingly noticeable

¹⁵ Rudolf Lenz, „Emotion und Affektion in der Familie der Frühen Neuzeit: Leichenpredigten als Quellen der historischen Familienforschung,“ in *Die Familie als sozialer und historischer Verband*, ed. Peter-Johannes Schuler (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1987), 121–146.

¹⁶ Lucien Febvre, „La sensibilité et l'histoire. Comment reconstituer la vie affective d'autrefois?“, *Annales d'histoire sociale* 3 (1941): 5–20.

¹⁷ Philippe Ariès, *L'Enfant et la Vie familiale sous l'Ancien Régime*, abridged Edition (Paris: Éd. du Seuil 1975).

¹⁸ Philippe Ariès and André Béjin, ed. *Sexualités occidentales* (Paris: Éd. du Seuil, 1984).

¹⁹ Philippe Ariès, *L'homme devant la mort* (Paris: Éd. du Seuil, 1977).

²⁰ Peter Borscheid, *Geschichte des Alters: Vom Spätmittelalter bis zur Gegenwart* (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1989).

during the 17th century—one of Borscheid's central theses—this attitude continued.²¹ To work oneself into the grave was the norm for the average burgher. Only within the nobility and among the urban upper classes was an existence as a rentier possible. The ideal of a quiet few years at the end of one's life remained for the vast majority nothing more than a "pipe dream".²²

Women's history—at least in terms of the early modern period in Germany—has rarely chosen the *family* as the framework for analysis. The American historian Natalie Zemon Davis has argued in a programmatic essay that research on gender should reflect central themes such as power, social structure, property, symbols and periodization.²³ Davis maintains that men as head of the family were localized in a form of one or two-dimensional coordination system: "The contribution of women to this position, if it has been taken account of at all, is normally restricted to the advantages and disadvantages which the dowry and family connections could bring. But whoever concentrates on the role of women will be more likely to ask to what extent the attributes of women could have influenced the economic and social position of the family, even in societies in which all the prestige lay with occupations carried out by men."

The questions which have been posed by women's history have now led to benefits for research on the problem of the long-term economic survival strategies of family units—a central theme in the history of the burgher family—or on the cultural and economic performance of the "housewife" in the pre-industrial era.²⁴ At the same time, studies of this type demand that idealized images have to be compared with the realities of the time. What, for example, do we know about the burgher's wife who read, about the social circumstances of women artists, especially those who were not as famous as Maria Sybilla Merian or Angelika Kauffmann? What do we know

²¹ Ibid., 262.

²² Ibid., 99.

²³ Natalie Zemon Davis, *Women's History in Transition: The European Case*, in: *Feminist Studies*, III, spring-summer 1976, 83–103.

²⁴ Cf. Kurt Wesoly, „Der weibliche Bevölkerungsanteil in spätmittelalterlichen und frühneuzeitlichen Städten und die Betätigung von Frauen im zünftigen Handwerk (insbesondere an Mittel- und Oberrhein)“, *Zeitschrift für Geschichte des Oberrheins* 128 (1980): 69–117; Margret Wensky, „Die Frau in Handel und Gewerbe vom Mittelalter bis zur frühen Neuzeit“, in *Die Frau in der deutschen Wirtschaft*, ed. Hans Pohl (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1985), 30–44.

about authoresses of chronicles or diaries in the 16th and 17th centuries? What insights have been gained so far into the economic performance of women who were part of families in the early modern period? And, what was the actual position of women in an epoch of fundamental change in family structures, the disintegration of the “whole house” which began in the second half of the 18th century?²⁵

The role of women in the salon culture at the close of the 18th century is a chapter in its own right in the history of the emancipation of women.²⁶

²⁵ Cf. Reinhard Sieder, *Sozialgeschichte der Familie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1987), particularly 125–145.

²⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 66, and Helga Brandes, „Der Wandel des Frauenbildes in den deutschen Moralischen Wochenschriften,“ in *Zwischen Aufklärung und Restauration: sozialer Wandel in der deutschen Literatur (1700–1848)*, ed. Wolfgang Frühwald/Alberto Martino (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1989), 49–64; Marion W. Gray, „Prescriptions for Female Domesticity in a Transitional Era: Germany’s ‚Hausmütterliteratur‘, 1780–1840,“ *History of European Ideas* 8 (1987): 413–426.

CHAPTER SIX

HISTORICAL MICROCOSMS: THE LIFE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

1. *Youth and Education*

At the beginning of the majority of personal histories in the early modern period stood the christening ceremony. As a rule, they had to take place *in public* and as soon as possible after the birth. Given the extremely high child mortality rate, even in burgher families, baptism meant to have the child's place in heaven secured. So it could, as one believed in Catholic areas, become an advocate for its parents.¹ The baptism had to take place a few days after birth, otherwise the parents aroused suspicion to be Anabaptists.

A sound school education was received up until the eve of the 19th century by only an incredibly small proportion of the population. From the sources emerges a picture of narrow, dark and cramped school rooms, in which the household possessions of the teacher could be found and where his cats and dogs were present as well. This outward appearance normally corresponded to the miserable educational level of the teacher.

Wealthy burghers and the nobility could afford private tutors who were also able to act as companions on study trips. In the 16th century, the 10 year old Thomas Platter was sent to a distant relative, a priest, to be taught. Hermann Weinsberg frequented parish schools in Cologne, a so-called *Winkelschule* (private school for reading and writing), and a boarding school run by the "Brothers of Common Life" at Emmerich. Another aspect of the early modern educational system was that children might take care of domestic work for their teachers in exchange for free instruction. Some might visit the *Latin school*.

The *gymnasiums* (or, secondary schools), which were founded on the initiative of princes and particularly in the cities were the educational institutions for the burgher elites. The broad influence of

¹ Imhof, *Welten*, 160–171.

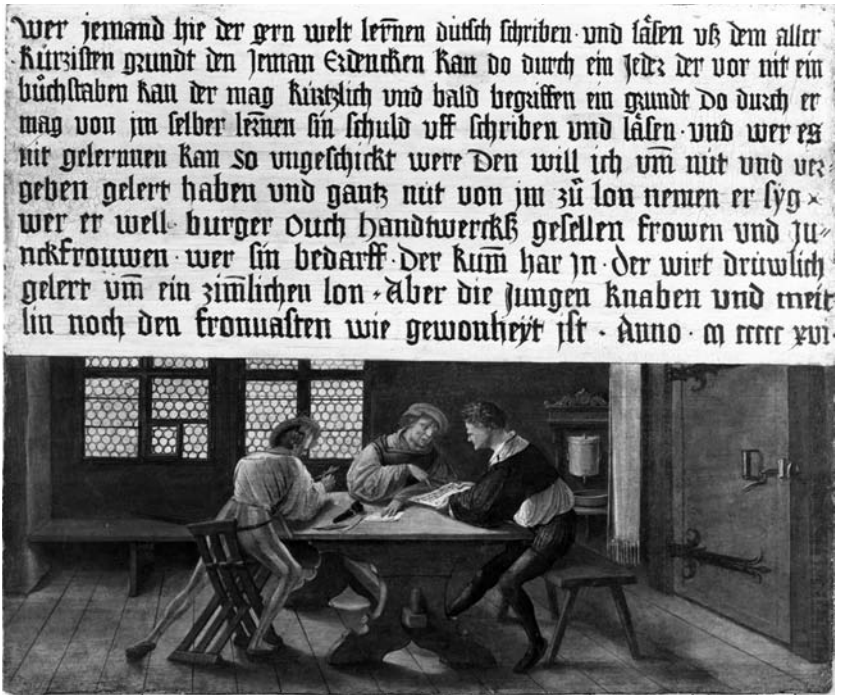


Fig. 15. Hans Holbein the younger, Sign of a Schoolmaster. A schoolmaster explains a document to two illiterate journeymen, which they shall sign, 1516. © Kunstmuseum Basel.

humanistic educational efforts can be illustrated by the following example from Strasbourg: the ten grades of the school were apparently attended in 1545 by 644 school pupils.² In addition to the obligatory Latin classes, Greek was taught and, less frequently, Hebrew. The emphasis lay on the interpretation of the classical authors within the spirit of a Christian humanism. Grammar, rhetoric and dialectic—the old trivium—were the basis of an education which was designed to prepare the student for university. It is impossible to generalize and say at what age pupils attended school, since the definition of “adult” was by no means universal. If they went to school at all, children started their education as a rule between six and eight years old, finishing between 14 and 16. That there were exceptions can be seen from the example of the humanist Glareanus, who was still going to school in Rottweil at the age of 20.³ Craftsmen’s sons probably began an apprenticeship after a short time at school. An apprenticeship generally lasted three to four years, although it could take as long as eight, depending on the kind of trade being learned, the local conditions and economic developments. It was usually obligatory for the apprentices to travel from place to place for some years.

Further prerequisites for becoming a qualified master craftsman were the possession of civic rights, considerable financial resources for examination fees and a formal exuberant meal for those master craftsmen responsible for the examination. The candidate had to have practiced his craft for a certain period of time in that location, and the guild finally had to be willing to tolerate a potential new competitor within its ranks.

In other words, the route to his profession was for the craftsman quite precisely regulated. The world of *trade*, on the other hand, offers a much less clearer picture. If we speak about “trade”, this could mean a small salesmen of cloth, or a great merchant operating worldwide. Two examples from the 16th century can be provided to illustrate how long the training period for merchants from the upper echelons of society was.⁴ The twelve year-old Ulrich Krafft from

² Anton Schindling, *Humanistische Hochschule und Freie Reichsstadt: Gymnasium und Akademie in Strassburg 1538–1621* (Wiebaden: Steiner, 1977), 32.

³ Zeeden, *Kultur*, 222.

⁴ For Hans Ulrich Krafft see Klaus Schubring, ed, H. U. Krafft—ein schwäbischer Kaufmann in türkischer Gefangenschaft. Reisen und Gefangenschaft Hans



Fig. 16. Hans Holbein major. Birth of Mary, 1493. Weingartner Altar, Cathedral of Augsburg. © Hoher Dom zu Augsburg, Diözese Augsburg.

Ulm was sent to the nearby Augsburg for three years after the completion of his schooling, later going on to Lyon having qualified as an accountant, then as a representative of his company to Florence. The 16 year old Paul Beheim from Nuremberg learned his business from an Italian merchant in Cracow.

Hieronymous Koeler, also from Nuremberg, completed his apprenticeship in a more roundabout way. He describes this period in his biography, "When, how and where I went to school to learn": My loving late parents first sent me to the Latin school, to Saint Laurent, wick was run at that time by Magister Gregorius, provost and parson, when I was eight. My schoolmaster was Magister Johann Ruess and my bachelor [an auxiliary teacher] Georg Weiss. In the year of our Lord [15]20 I went to the German school to learn reading and chancellery writing, to the venerable and artistic gentleman Johann Neudörfer. He had just opened his school and lived in the "Neue Gasse" ["New Lane"] at the Sandtbach ["sand brook"] and I was one of his first students. Item in the year of our Lord [15]23 I went to learn to reckon with ciphers to Johann Glueck in the "Hundsgassen" ("Dog's alley"); his father was a wood-carver. To remember. And so my loving late parents sent me, as said, to school to learn to be greatly god-fearing and to learn good manners."⁵

After his schooling, Koeler was put into service by the head of the court chambers, Dominicus Frieß, as an assistant, "and carried around books in his bag for two years". He then proceeded to Venice, where he learned Italian and, with the support of a relative who lived there, began to get to know the world of trading. He also travelled to Rome; in 1531 he studied in Wittenberg, where he heard Luther preaching and got to know Melanchton personally. Then followed trips to Antwerp (1533), subsequently to Lisbon and Seville; from there he took part in a trade journey of the Welser company to Venezuela. Koeler returned to Nuremberg in 1536. During the time of his apprenticeship and his travels, he had earned his money through the most diverse types of work, for instance, as a clerk or a groom.

In contrast, the apprenticeships or training for *women* were certainly much less colorful, even when one bears in mind that Koeler's

Ulrich Krafftis (Heidenheim: Heidenheimer Verlagsanstalt 1970); Paulus Behaim: Zeeden, Kultur, 121-122.

⁵ Familiengeschichte der Koeler, 213-214.



Fig. 17. Matthaeus Schwarz, Jacob Fugger in his Kontor, 1518. © Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, Braunschweig.

biography was anything but average. While Amos Comenius (1592–1670) had demanded that “the entire youth, both genders” needed to become acquainted with school, he stressed that there was no rational reason why women should be completely excluded from “academic lessons” in the German and Latin languages. However, even this, for the epoch very liberal spirit, advised that the education of women should be limited to “morality and happiness, especially in areas which would assist them in contributing to the management of the household, knowing what needs to be bought, and providing for their own needs, those of their husband and children, and supporting the interests of the family.”⁶

Even in the late 18th century (and later), the theoreticians of girls’ education directed their advice towards the role of the woman as a wife and mother, and as the “manager” of the home. Johann Bernhard Basedow (1724–1790) cited approvingly in his “Method Book for Fathers and Mothers of Families and Peoples” (published in Altona 1770) his great idol Rousseau, who expressed himself in the following manner: “The entire education of a daughter must be focussed on the masculine sex. To be useful to men, make them happy, to maintain their love and respect for them, look after them, give them advice, comfort them, make their life agreeable and sweet, these are at all times the duties of the female sex, and they have to be taught from youth onwards . . .”⁷ Basedow himself explained that girls had to learn to express themselves clearly and with propriety; to talk in a demanding or theatrical way was not necessary: “Training in writing the kind of letters which they will no doubt one day have to write (although the gift of writing letters comes from within oneself), are the only literary exercises which I would advise . . . Knowledge of history, geography, mythology, antiquity and philosophy, this is only required of girls when the mothers and governesses are used to talk to them in an learned manner. Daughters should be educated to be in a position to conduct a happy marriage. When they are of the right age, I wish that an insightful, clever and instructive

⁶ See Amos Comenius, *Pampaedia-Allerziehung*, ed. Klaus Schaller, Sankt Augustin, Academia Verlag: 1991, p. 90 and idem, *Große Didaktik. Die vollständige Kunst, alle Menschen alles zu lehren*, ed. Andreas Flitner (Stuttgart: Klett Cotta, 1992), p. 54 (chapter 9).

⁷ Johann Bernhard Basedow, *Das Methodenbuch für Väter und Mütter der Familien und Völker* (Altona/Bremen, 1770, reprint Vaduz: Topos-Verlag, 1979) 283.

morality will be taught them, through conversations and the reading of books they will be instructed in the duties and rules of virginity, engagement, marriage and the wise behavior of a mother, housewife and entertainer.”

The theory did not, though, necessarily correspond with practice: ideal images were given, one can assume however that lessons in French or other languages, in music, dance, crafts and much more—as can be read in a description of lessons at the end of the 18th century—were in the case of the upper echelons of the civic society the rule. A piece of typical everyday reality is reflected in a directory from 1639 which lists the “Bei-”, “Heck-” or “Klipp schools”—petty schools which were not organized or legitimated by the city council—in the church parish of St. Stephan. The following extract should suffice:

3. . . . the Koechensche, former Koegerin at the burgher’s pasture, is a seamstress, has her own house, and also teaches boys and girls to read and write. 4. Hermann von der Ohe’s wife can weave and sew, pretends to have the seal and letters (= the official permission) for schooling, teaches boys and girls to read and write, her husband is at sea. 5. The Sarriesche can make laces, her husband’s name was Herman Sarrie, and he lives in the New Street. . . . 8. The Vogelsangsche can sew, teaches boys and girls to read and write, in the great rose street . . . 11. Peter Rodenberg, a soldier from Bremen, in the Roeslinstreet, teaches boys and girls to write and read . . .”⁸

The theologian and pedagogue Natorp came to the following rather sober view on the education of the girls of his epoch: “When they have grasped the supposedly most important disciplines—reading, writing and the rudiments of arithmetic—and even these they are barely understood, then one presents them with one or two Bible verses of childlike dogma, a verse of comfort and one or two sheets of catechism questions and answers and turfs them out of these ABC lessons rudely and mercilessly and puts them to work at the stove, in the children’s room, in the cleaning corner, or in the fields or somewhere else . . .”⁹

⁸ Käthe Stricker, *Deutsche Frauenbildung vom 16. Jahrhundert bis Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Herbig, 1929).

⁹ Bernhard Christoph Ludwig Natorp, *Grundriss zur Organisation allgemeiner Stadtschulen* (Duisberg/Essen: 1804) 29–30.

2. *Marriage*

As a rule marriage was possible only when the economic basis for a family had been created. Certainly marriage in the early modern period was not purely an economic partnership born of necessity,¹⁰ nevertheless, a division of labor between the working father and his wife who remained at home to look after household affairs existed well into the late 18th century and even beyond.

The preparations for a burgher wedding were often precisely regulated. It began with negotiations and discussions between the friends and relatives of the bride and groom, and finally a marriage contract was drawn up. Dürer recalled: "And when I came home Hans Frey negotiated with my father and gave me his daughter, the virgin Agnes, and with her two hundred florins." It could happen that the marriage partners got to know one another for the first time at this meeting—one indication of the economic side to this step. "If I can provide for you through a marriage into money", it was suggested to a young Professor in the 18th century, "then tell me now directly."¹¹ Marriage to the widow of a master-craftsman was for some apprentices their only chance to "take over" a business; happy matches were in fact the basis for economic and social advancement for many a burgher family. One example is offered by the innkeeper's helper, Johann Christoph Bassermann. He became the publican at the "Krone" tavern in Bretten in the Palatinate in 1736 by marrying the widow of his previous boss, who was ten years older. In the same year he was able to purchase the tavern "Three Kings" in Heidelberg from his mother-in-law for a good price. He then became a burgher of the town and, as fate would have it, when his mother-in-law passed away at the end of 1737, he inherited so-to-speak his own debts to her, as well as what he had already paid.¹²

In the early modern period it remained important that the announcement of the already legally-binding engagement was made public from the pulpit, after which the church ceremony and the often ruinously expensive wedding feasts over several days put their seal on the marriage proceedings. "With my wedding, the clothes and

¹⁰ See above, p. 86.

¹¹ Freytag, *Bilder*, vol. 7, 170.

¹² Gall, *Bürgertum*, 55–56.



Fig. 18. Jonas Arnold, Wedding Procession to the Cathedral in Ulm, 1659. © Ulmer Museum, Ulm.

everything that went with it, I lost though everything which I had earned and what both dukes had given me”, wrote Bartholomäus Sastrow,¹³ adding: “I ended up in a rented house that was so cold and empty that my wife did not have a pot or a pan in which she could heat water for washing, so that she had to use the cooking pot.”

A wedding description of the Frankfurt patrician Jakob Steffan von Cronstetten with Margarethe Weiss of Limburg in 1522 reveals in detail the nature of a marriage ceremony. The wedding itself lasted over three days; 81 guests had been invited to the church ceremony which began at seven o'clock in the morning. The festivities took place in the old family hall of Limburg where a drummer and a piper provided musical entertainment. Men and women sat separately at different tables. On Monday, the following dishes were served at lunch: roast goose; old chicken and steak; young rabbit, veal, and salmon; young chicken. At dinner, fried eel and steamed chicken and rabbit were served; and in the evening, peas and fried eel, steamed young chicken and rabbit were laid on the table. On the following day, there were different fried dishes and *Griebenfladen*, a flat cake with greaves inside, and boiled barbel. Afterwards, the guests were taken to the garden to dance and take part in games. The third day was marked by no less opulent dishes.

The style of a wedding, which involved a degree of extravagance which laws tried—unsuccessfully as it turned out—to stem, experienced changes which were influenced by region and epoch.¹⁴ In the 18th century the burgher wedding lost its elegance, according to Carl Friedrich Bahrdr's, the most important thing of all “particularly for the burghers [was] the *avoidance of luxury*”.¹⁵ “Quiet”, simple weddings came into fashion,¹⁶ and in literature relations between the sexes became in a parallel fashion clearly more emotionalized.¹⁷ Well-known examples are the letters and portrayals of his life by Johann

¹³ Cf. also Ursula Brosthaus, *Bürgerleben im 16. Jahrhundert: Die Autobiographie des Stralsunder Bürgermeisters B. Sastrow als kulturgeschichtliche Quelle* (Köln/Wien: Böhlau, 1972).

¹⁴ Example: Gustaf Klemens Schmelzeisen et al. (ed.), *Polizei- und Landesordnungen*, 2 vols. (Köln: Böhlau, 1968/69) 236.

¹⁵ Carl Friedrich Bahrdr, *Handbuch der Moral für den Bürgerstand*, Tübingen 1789, quoted in Münch, *Ordnung*, 275.

¹⁶ Steinhausen, *Kultur*, 693.

¹⁷ Rudolf Lenz, „Ehstand, Wehstand, Süßbittre Standt? Betrachtungen zur Familie der Frühen Neuzeit“, in *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 68 (1968): 371–405.

Heinrich Jung-Stilling, or the correspondence between Meta Moller and her future husband, Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock.¹⁸

In marriage, the material and psychological threats of the pre-industrial world could best be met. The lot of the widow was not to be envied, the social prestige of the bachelor was minimal.¹⁹ Economic considerations, the reality of the “whole house”, and social pressure deriving from, among other things, Christian ethics often led to people marrying young. In the 18th century the marriage age for women was around 25, for men around 28,²⁰ although the variations which accompanied this average were many. The well-known phenomenon of “unequal couples”, meaning marriages in which the respective ages of husband and wife differed considerably, first tapered off significantly in the 19th century,²¹ illustrating once again the continuing relevance of economic and practical motives for the decision to marry.

3. *Death*

In cities such as Giessen, Koblenz or Mainz only little more than half of newborn children reached the age of 15.²² Death was an everyday reality which was accepted without any great fuss. “Using a handful of continually recurring causes—pox, stomach typhus, spotted fever, cholera and the plague—it struck everywhere, among every age group, every class, men and women, children and infants . . .”²³ Interestingly, when one considers the emotions which surrounded death, it appears that an old preconception—namely, that people

¹⁸ Johann Heinrich Jung-Stilling, . . . *wenn die Seele geadelt ist/aus dem Briefwechsel von Jung-Stilling*, ed. Hermann Müller (Giessen/Basel: Brunnen-Verlag, 1967); Meta Moller, *Es sind wunderliche Dinger, meine Briefe. Meta Klopstocks Briefwechsel mit Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock und mit ihren Freunden 1751–1758*, ed. Franziska and Hans Tiemann (München: C.H. Beck, 1988²).

¹⁹ Borscheid, *Alter*, 100–123.

²⁰ Rödel, *Mainz*, 264–265; François, *Koblenz*, 28.

²¹ Imhof, *Verlorene Welten*, 56–61; idem, *Unsere Lebensuhr-Phasenverschiebungen im Verlaufe der Neuzeit*, in: *Ehe, Liebe Tod*, eds. Peter Borscheid, Hans. J. Teuteberg (Münster, Coppenrath, 1983), 1984.

²² Rödel, *Mainz*, 204–205.

²³ Arthur E. Imhof, *Die gewonnenen Jahre: Von der Zunahme unserer Lebensspanne seit 300 Jahren oder von der Notwendigkeit einer neuen Einstellung zu Leben und Sterben: Ein historischer Essay* (München: C.H. Beck, 1981), 33.

were only marginally affected by the passing away of relatives and friends—is not accurate. Countless records of evidence of genuine mourning and deep sadness over the loss of family members, particularly among burghers have survived. In personal accounts from the 16th and 17th centuries, some writers express themselves in an awkward manner, in a seemingly mechanical way—which often reflects in its own way a painful coming to terms with the situation. The city judge from Nuremberg, Hieronymous Koeler the Elder, noted the death of his second wife Brigitta during childbirth: “3rd August, in the blessed year of Christ 1552, when she was 34 years old and we had been married well to another for 13 years, has she taken her leave from this world, may God be merciful to her soul and body. Amen.”²⁴ From the fact that the death of his spouse came on precisely their thirteenth wedding anniversary, Koeler developed a complex numerical speculation, writing down 13 dates from their life together, from which he attempted to make some sense. The final point allowed a comforting, “harmonious” change to be noticeable: “13. As my beloved wife was buried on a day of pentecost on the eighth day, her new born child Lucas departed and was buried with her. God help further. Amen. For 13 years was I married, and likewise here there are thirteen points.” Johann Morhard, a burgher of the imperial city of Schwäbisch Hall, could hardly conceal his suffering when he wrote about the death of his young son: “6. Novemb. 1608 on Sunday morning at two o’clock, my son passed away quietly. He is well provided . . . God’s work is without doubt good, his name be praised. He was 11 weeks and 5 days and a few hours in this world, but did not know it as anything other than a valley of tears; now he has been relieved of all his suffering. I have not prayed so seriously for those children who died in their mother’s womb, during and after the birth than for him. Now may God look after you, my darling child. I wanted to have you longer, but you were the one, who had more rights and were lent to me for a while . . .”²⁵

Koeler got married a year later for the third time, then a fourth and a fifth time. When he died in 1573 at the age of 66, his last wife Ursula survived him with eight from the total of his 17 children. His life reflected in many ways the demographic structure of

²⁴ Hannah S.M. Amburger, *Die Familiengeschichte der Koeler: Ein Beitrag zur Autobiographie des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Nürnberg: Stich, 1931), 264–266.

²⁵ Johann Morhard, *Haller Haus-Chronik* (Schwäbisch Hall: Eppinger, 1962), 86.



Fig. 19. Hans Weiditz, Funeral, 1520/30.

old Europe: several, short marriages, numerous children, from which a large number died early.

Marriage and family guaranteed a kind of “collective survival”, and quick remarriage and new children closed the gaps. “Years of mourning were quite simply not possible, at the most weeks or days of mourning.”²⁶ In most towns, varied rituals of mourning contributed to a coming to terms with the pain and a ritualization of the loss.²⁷ Regulations controlled, for example, in what clothing and how long, and to what degree, one could “wail” at the death of a relative. The *funeral sermon*, an important and frequent source for the history of mentalities from the 16th century onwards, especially in the case of Protestant cities, was an opportunity to honor the deceased for the last time.²⁸ While the dark splendour of noble obsequies was yet another manifestation of class inequality, burgher artists equally recalled all the faces of death, which itself held no respect for social rank: this is the message of the “dances macabres” of the 15th and 16th centuries. Some baroque poetry on the transitory quality of life seems to anticipate egalitarian thought. In the face of eternity, social distinctions no longer mattered. Consequently, among the civic society plain funerals began to replace the taking of a final chance to display one’s wealth. A society was founded in Ulm that required its members to forego mourning dress in favor of black crêpe.²⁹ This was not only due to economic reasons. The confrontation with death and the process of dying was transferred to a different, “inner” sphere. The plainer funerals suggest that the burghers’ self-image and value system could not be satisfied by outward appearances.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Roeck, *Krieg und Frieden*, 757–758.

²⁸ Rudolf Lenz, *Leichenpredigten als Quelle historischer Wissenschaften* (Köln/Wien: Böhlau, 1975).

²⁹ Emil Ermatinger, *Deutsche Kultur im Zeitalter des Barocks* (Frankfurt am Main: Athenaion, 1969²).

CHAPTER SEVEN

BEYOND DAILY LIFE: AMUSEMENTS, MUSIC AND DANCE, ENTERTAINMENT AND THEATER

1. *Leisure and Free-time*

When a source from 1610 reports miners and craftsmen in Schwaz in Tyrol spending up to eight hours in baths, this could indicate an overlapping of work and leisure which was characteristic of the early modern period.¹ Only on the basis of this observation can the ability of people to endure the endless work day, which revolved around the position of the sun, be explained. During the hours of daylight, they ate, spent time in the bath-house, played cards or dice;² in addition, there were more or less regular free days and events, which fulfilled the purpose of “recreation”, such as the numerous traditional festival periods and public holidays, traditional celebrations and processions such as the famous “Schembartlaufen” in Nuremberg. “Anno 1511 were three dragons, when I was four years old”, recalled the Nuremberg city judge, Hieronymus Koeler.³ The craftsmen’s processions, which were part of the yearly cycle in many cities, offered a colorful picture.

Such events, as likewise with church processions and the reception of a ruler, saved functions which were not only dedicated to entertainment.⁴ The order of the procession symbolized the prevailing social hierarchy, the appearance together as a unit strengthened the corporate identity of the guild. The “upside-down world” of the carnival became a mirror image of social reality. Processions and festivals took on subliminal functions, contributing to the stability of the social order.⁵

¹ Bücking, *Kultur und Gesellschaft*, 141.

² Nahrstedt, *Freizeit*, 130.

³ See Familiengeschichte der Koeler, 173; Zeeden, *Kultur* 336.

⁴ Klaus Tenfelde, „Adventus: Zur historischen Ikonologie des Festzugs,“ in *Historische Zeitschrift* 235 (1982): 45–84.

⁵ See Burke, *Popular Culture*, chapter 7.



Fig. 20. Anonym, The ship of fools (*Narrenschiif*) at the *Schembartlaufen* (procession on Shrove Tuesday with masks decorated with beards) in Nuremberg, 1539. © Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg.

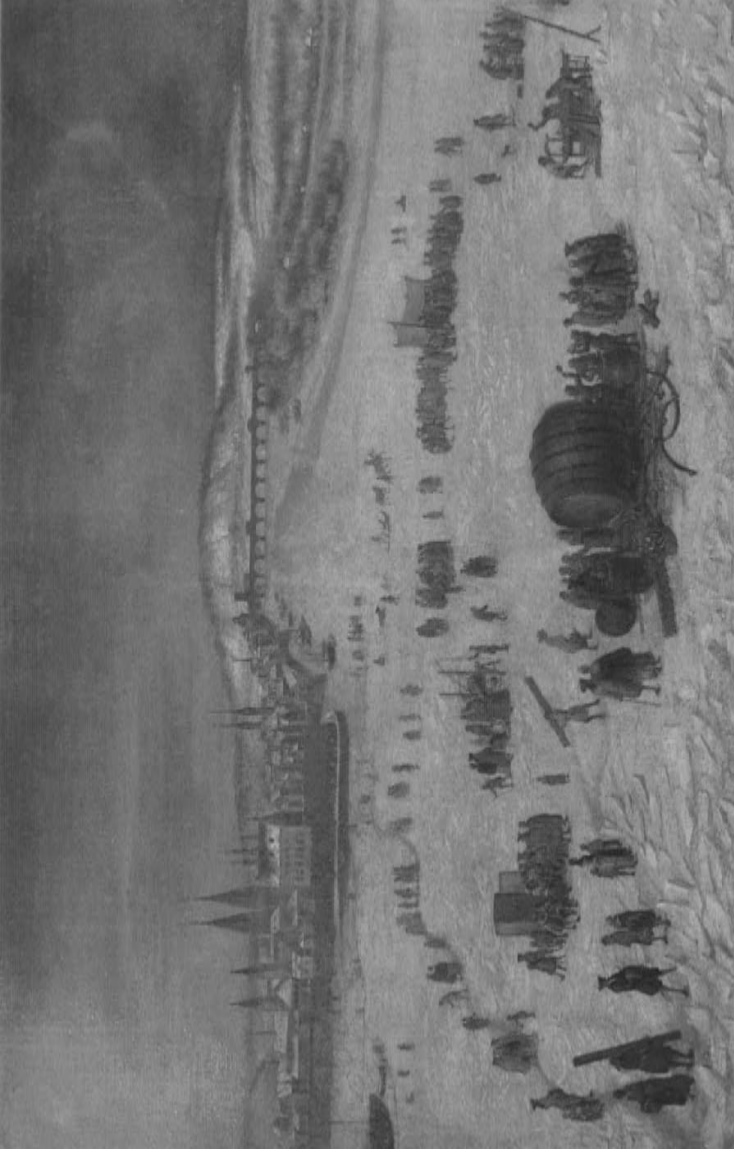


Fig. 21. Gottfried Bernhard Manskirsch, Folk Festival on the Frozen Rhein, 1767. © Mittelrhein-Museum, Koblenz.

Further sources of entertainment—especially in southern German and Swiss cities—were the shooting festivals and other sporting events. So one can read in Dionysius Dreytweins chronicle of the Reichsstadt Esslingen:

On the great shooting-match at Esslingen
Item in the year 1516 was here in Esslingen a magnificent great shooting match of princes and gentlemen, nobles and ignobles, boroughs and villages, and there was shooting with cross-bows and also with rifles, and there were fifteen hundred shots on both parts. . . . and those who hit with their bolts went out with pipes and drums; and a councillor who had a notice-board with a long stick which he had to bring in, there it was written down. This was a graceful ornament, and all the *brytscher* (surveyors) and minstrels were dressed in silk, brown and green.

Even in the 16th century some tournaments were staged.⁶

Some spectacles organized for the amusement of the citizens must—for modern sensibilities—appear to be of an unrivalled primitive nature. That one could accept them as amusing, could provide an indication of undeveloped “civilized standards”. In Hildesheim, Joachim Brandis observed in 1578 a fight between a lion and a bull, during which the former bit the latter to death;⁷ in Augsburg, blindfolded people had to kill a cock by means of flails. Finally, *executions* also belonged to public life in the early modern city, often having a sensational character and drawing thousands of spectators.⁸

Freedom not only *from* work, but *for* something else, for self-development through education or creative activity, beginning to be an expectation of the citizens once it had been influenced by the humanitarian ideas of the Enlightenment, so that leisure time was redefined according to Aristotle’s understanding of the term. In fact, the more or less institutionalized conversation circles, the musical and literary societies, provide the first hint of these transformations.⁹ Likewise, the emergence of leisure time is documented through the founding of coffee houses and salons, through concert halls and theaters, but

⁶ Dionysius Dreytweins *Esslingische Chronik* (1548–1564), ed. Adolf Diehl (Tübingen: Litterarischer Verein Stuttgart, 1901), 9–10; for an overview see Zeeden, *Kultur*, 342–343.

⁷ Max Buhlers, ed. *Joachim Brandis’ Diarium: ergänzt aus Tilo Brandis’ Annalen: 1528–1609*, (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1902).

⁸ Richard van Dülmen, *Theater des Schreckens: Gerichtspraxis und Strafrituale in der frühen Neuzeit* (München: C.H. Beck 1985).

⁹ Cf. 142.

also through the declining significance of church attendance and the later closing times of the city gates.¹⁰ An expression of these changes are the transformations in the structure of living quarters already described above: leisure time demanded rooms to retreat to, in order to read, play games or make music.

2. *Music and Dance*

Early forms of the playing of music in burgher homes had most likely always existed. Hermann Weinsberg, a Cologne councillor, writes that he had mastered the “descant” and Gregorian chant: his father had not allowed him to learn to play an instrument, perhaps because this was the occupation of the despised minstrels.¹¹ On the whole, musical instruments are extremely rare in the inventories of burgher households.

Early forms of institutionalized practice for performances can be observed in the singing practice, famous as the *Meistersang*.¹² Apparently first from Mainz, then from Strasbourg and Worms, the art of the mastersingers spread through the southern part of Germany, later reaching Silesia, Moravia and Saxony in the 16th century. The last remnants of the mastersinger culture extended into the 19th century. Craftsmen, schoolmasters, lawyers and doctors gathered in singing schools organized on similar lines to the guilds. Singing competitions and performances on festive occasions, or singing when people had met to consume alcohol, all these practices were organized according to strict rules. Nuremberg has for good reason always attracted particular attention, thanks to important representatives of urban music and literature such as Rosenplüt, Folz and Hans Sachs.¹³

¹⁰ Nahrstedt, *Freizeit*, 230 and 239.

¹¹ Sabine Žak, *Musik als ‚Ehr und Zier‘ im mittelalterlichen Reich: Studien zur Musik im höfischen Leben, Recht und Zeremoniell* (Neuss: Paffgen, 1979), 293.

¹² Bert Nagel, *Meistersang* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1971²).

¹³ Johannes Janota, „Stadt und Literatur im Spätmittelalter: Hinweise auf aktuelle Forschungsprobleme,“ in Specker, *Stadt und Kultur*, 57–69, 59–60; Horst Brunner, Hans Sachs, „Über die Schwierigkeiten literarischen Schaffens in der Reichsstadt Nürnberg,“ in *Hans Sachs und Nürnberg: Bedingungen und Probleme reichsstädtischer Literatur: Hans Sachs zum 400. Todestag am 19. Juli 1976*, ed. Horst Brunner/Gerhard Hirschmann/Fritz Schnelbögl (Nürnberg: Selbstverlag des Vereins für Geschichte, 1976), 1–13.

In many cities, such as Nuremberg (1568), Weida (1583) or Prague (1616), private music schools were founded. Music was played for dancing, music could be heard in church and in the course of processions. Yet, despite these developments, music was heard relatively rarely in the early modern city. Hence, the “sights and sounds” of the processions of the emperor or the princes on an imperial diet must have been all the more impressive.¹⁴ On these occasions instruments such as trumpets were to be heard—like impressive clothing, their sounds belonged to the nobility, while the dances and processions of the burghers usually were accompanied by whistles and drums.¹⁵

In the old European society music was at the same time a sign of *honor*. People with a bad reputation were in some places forbidden to hire musicians for a wedding.¹⁶ Musicians, who often were not badly off financially, founded guilds or guild-like corporations in some cities, such as Lübeck or Hamburg.¹⁷ In the same way as the city musicians, who were more or less tied to the city authorities, they were often enlisted for official and private events.

While the *dance* of the urban upper-classes increasingly followed the international standards set by courtly society, in other circles remnants of the traditions of cults remained.¹⁸ People danced when contracts or other legal agreements were signed. Special dancing days of the guilds led to artistic performances such as the famous “Schäffler dance” (dance of the barrelmakers) in Munich. Just as use was made of traveling musicians, so wandering dancers were hired for festive occasions and paid from the city coffers.¹⁹ The *Moriskentanz* was an exotic dance form which was also part of the acts of wandering artists.

¹⁴ Albrecht Pius Luttenberger, „Pracht und Ehre: Gesellschaftliche Repräsentation und Zeremoniell auf dem Reichstag,“ in *Alltag*, ed. Kohler/Lutz, 291–326; Rosemarie Aulinger, *Das Bild des Reichstags im 16. Jahrhundert: Beiträge zu einer typologischen Analyse schriftlicher und bildlicher Quellen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980).

¹⁵ Žak, *Musik*, 128; Heinrich W. Schwab, „Zur sozialen Stellung der Stadtmusikanten,“ in *Der Sozialstatus des Berufsmusikers vom 17. bis 19. Jahrhundert: gesammelte Beiträge*, ed. Walter Sahren (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1971), 9–25; Marianne Panzer, *Tanz und Recht* (Frankfurt am Main: Diesterweg, 1938), 52–53.

¹⁶ Žak, *Musik*, 128.

¹⁷ Dieter Krickeberg, „Zur sozialen Stellung des deutschen Spielmanns im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert, besonders im Nordwesten,“ in *Der Sozialstatus des Berufsmusikers vom 17. bis 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Walter Salmen (Kassel/Basel: Bärenreiter, 1971), 26–42, 32.

¹⁸ Wolfgang Brunner, „Städtisches Tanzen und das Tanzhaus,“ in *Alltag*, ed. Kohler/Lutz, 45–64, 55.

¹⁹ Panzer, *Tanz*, 79–82.



Fig. 22. South German artist, Patricians Dance (*Geschlechtertanz*) in the Dance House on the Wine Market to Augsburg, circa 1500. © Städtische Kunstsammlungen, Maximilianmuseum, Augsburg.

In Munich's townhall are still preserved the famous „Moriskentänzer“ by Erasmus Grasser, masterpieces of German 15th century sculpture.

The increasingly complex dances of the civic elites, which could only be learned from a teacher, developed—like clothing and music—to a means of social differentiation, and to the forming of conceptions of social order. “Uncontrolled” dancing, where one only saw “shameful swinging/throwing/turning”, was forbidden wherever possible.²⁰ Books of dance instruction such as Thoinot Arbeau's “Orchésographie” (1589) set down the rules, and dance became the object of artistic and moral reflection.²¹ The class-specific “civilization” of dance within cities was a consequence of post-Reformation morality and can, at the same time, be interpreted as an expression of the tendency to aestheticize public life. Thus, a clearly identifiable differentiation, which had been evolving since the 14th century, was continued: dance houses provided the setting for the performances. Dance houses consisting of several floors, such as those in Nördlingen, Breslau or Frankfurt/Oder, became metaphors of society: on the upper floors the cultured citizens danced, the “riff raff” on the lower floors.²² These buildings often served as burgher society's opulent place of representation: Emperor Maximilian was received twice in the Munich dance house; Charles V was welcomed in the “Gürzenich”, the dance house of Cologne.

3. Theater

Up until the end of the 18th century, *theater* was experienced most commonly through performances of traveling troupes or theater schools, although many forms of less formal theater also existed.²³ A genuine area of the urban burghers were the Shrovetide plays of the 15th and 16th centuries, improvised performances by apprentice groups in taverns, outdoors, or in private residences. The dialogues were often coarse and vulgar, with much fighting and enjoyment of

²⁰ Brunner, *Tanzen*, 56.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 64.

²² *Ibid.*, 60–61; Walter Salmen, *Musikleben im 16. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig: Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1976), 38.

²³ Hans Richard Purschke, *Puppenspiel und verwandte Künste in der Freien Reichsstadt Frankfurt am Main* (Frankfurt am Main: Puppenzentrum, 1980).

sexual innuendo and criticism of the prominent members of the city and its functionaries.²⁴

Hans Sachs, who wrote 85 Shrovetide plays, is said to have perfected this rich tradition. His plays, which were based on local traditions, also took inspiration from Johann Pauli's collection of comical tales "Schimpf und Ernst" or "Till Eulenspiegel". With over 6,000 dramatic poems, he was one of the most prolific figures in the history of German literature.²⁵ Authors of classical antiquity, the Bible, historical works, humanist writings, and even the Koran provided material. This "cobbler and poet as well" was certainly not the prototype of an educated craftsman; on the other hand, his work features urban aspects, elements of education which could only be acquired in the city he lived in. Many of his pieces were staged in Nuremberg's secularized churches, such as the chancel of the *Marthakirche*.

Confessionalization is one important feature of the theater which operated in the cities of the epoch. Not all cities allowed criticism of the church to run unchecked; even Sachs had to practice restraint, although Danzig and Königsberg, on the other hand, were less restrictive. The Berne councilor and painter, Niklas Manuel, named Deutsch, could even get away with militant anti-papal propaganda.²⁶ In the post-Reformation period, Catholic pieces were the exception, until the appearance of the Jesuites. Numerous pieces treating biblical material, on occasions in humanistic-terencian form, conveyed religious content and, often without polemic, ethical positions. Quite frequently these productions' style assembly the traditional *burgher plays*: Joachim Greff, for example, who was active in Saxony, once wrote a piece running to 7,000 lines. The bookseller from Colmar, town-hall employee and later city scribe in Burgheim (Alsace), Jörg Wickram (ca. 1505 to sometime before 1562), could be mentioned as a typical author of this specific urban theater culture. In 1551, 84 people took part in a production of his "Tobias"; it took two days to recite all 5,000 lines: a theatrical event that unfolded before the burghers and was produced by them.²⁷ At the same time, the

²⁴ Hagen Bastian, *Mummenschanz* (Frankfurt am Main: Syndikat, 1983).

²⁵ Hans Rupprich, *Die deutsche Literatur vom späten Mittelalter bis zum Barock*, 2 vols. (München: C.H. Beck, 1970/73), vol. 2, 268.

²⁶ Paul Zinsli, „Manuel und Murner: Die Begegnung zweier doppelt begabter Glaubensstreiter in der Reformationszeit,“ *Berner Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Heimatkunde* 50 (1988): 165–196.

²⁷ Matthias Spenle, *Die Lebensdarstellung im elsässischen Volksschauspiel des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts* (Strassburg/Colmar: Dissertationsdruck, 1916).

tradition of *religious drama*, especially Corpus Christi and passion plays, communal undertakings by burgher corporations often with the character of a church service continued into the Baroque period, once again especially in southern Germany.²⁸ The productions brought prestige and profit; participation in the production was sometimes a duty. The Lucerne "Passion" needed in the latest period 300 actors, around 100 acted in Frankfurt and Vienna, and in Alsfeld over 170. City dignitaries often took part, and the mayor of Bozen once made an appearance as Kaiphaz.²⁹ Small towns often organized religious dramas as well; Thomas Mallinger reported on an "anti-Jewish" play which was presented on stage in Eendingen: "April 24th, 1616. A comedy supported by the state was put on where endless numbers of innocent children were thrown into a fire by Jewish inhabitants, where they burned . . . It seems that this comedy is popular and in demand in the surrounding towns and is accompanied by instruments and singing. Thousands of people came from the neighbouring towns and villages to view the performance."³⁰

The *humanists' drama* had less effect on the urban public, but was more bound to the courts and universities. The humanists' dramas and texts did, however, influence burgher plays in many ways. In 1530 Hans Sachs wrote a comedy "Pallas and Venus", after Chelidonius, and put an interpretation of Reuchlin's "Henno" on the stage; in 1517 the Meistersinger in Mainz presented Plautus, their colleagues in Zwickau putting on a production of Terence. Above all, the pedagogical tendencies of the humanists showed themselves in *school theater*, although initially this was to be found mainly in Protestantism. These pieces corresponded to the increasing dominance of the *Bürgertum* among the audiences, an expansion beyond the intellectual aristocracy and classically educated patrons.³¹ Greff, the goldsmith Hans Ackermann from Zwickau, the energetic church critic Thomas Naogeorg from Straubing, and countless others, wrote for the school theater. Two names are particularly prominent, Johannes Sturm (1507–1589), the chancellor of the gymnasium in Strasbourg,

²⁸ Wolfgang Greisenegger, „Szenisches Spiel zu Beginn der Neuzeit,“ in *Alltag*, ed. Kohler/Lutz, 65–79.

²⁹ Greisenegger, „Szenisches Spiel,“ 73–75.

³⁰ Thomas Mallinger, Tagebücher, in: *Quellensammlung zur badischen Landesgeschichte*, ed. F.S. Mone (Karlsruhe, 1854), vol. II, 529.

³¹ Heinz Kindermann, *Theatergeschichte Europas*, vols. 2–5 (Salzburg: Müller, 1959–62), vol. 2, 247.

and Sixt Birck (1501–1554), chancellor in Basel, subsequently in Augsburg. In Strasbourg after Sturm's departure in 1581, classical and increasingly new Latin pieces were performed. Their purpose was moral instruction, although Protestant positions can only be implicitly identified. Drinking scenes or dramatically staged fight scenes provided entertainment. Often performed in the open-air, school theater became in many places a kind of "city theater".³²

A reaction came with the *Jesuit theater*, which originated in Catholic Bavarian cities and the Habsburg region.³³ Jacob Bidermann's "Cenodoxus", probably the most significant Jesuit drama, was premiered in 1602 in the biconfessional imperial city of Augsburg. The *Societas* offered dramatic performances with "sensational" effects well into the second half of the 18th century: the burghers could above all in these, and in the plays of other orders, get a certain idea of the glittering productions of Baroque courtly theater.

The Protestant school theater of the 17th century had many first rate authors (whose fame was based rather less on dramatic productions)—among many others, namely, Martin Opitz, Andreas Gryphius, Daniel Caspar von Lohenstein, Johann Christian Hallmann, Christian Weise. The Elisabeth High School in Breslau was regarded as one of the best equipped school stages of the day. Moreover, the Protestant free city of Ulm's theater, opened in 1641, built under the direction of the architect Joseph Furtttenbach (1591–1667), was a modern building, constructed according to the model of Italian stage architecture. The theater was available for school productions, *Meistersinger* performances and traveling theatrical troupes.

The burgher experience of theatrical performances from the late 16th century onwards was characterized by *wandering comedians*.³⁴ The "English comedians", later also Dutch and Italians, made for courts,

³² Hans Knudsen, *Deutsche Theatergeschichte* (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1970²), 107; Günter Skopnik, *Das Strassburger Schultheater: Sein Spielplan und seine Bühne* (Frankfurt am Main: Universität Frankfurt, 1935); Helene Levinger, *Augsburger Schultheater unter Sixt Birck: 1536–1554* (Berlin: Elsner, 1931); Konradin Zeller, *Pädagogik und Drama: Untersuchungen zur Schulkomödie Christian Weises* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1980).

³³ Jean-Marie Valentin, *Le théâtre des Jésuites dans les pays de langue allemande: Répertoire chronologique des pièces représentées et des documents conservés (1555–1773)*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1983).

³⁴ *Das Schauspiel der Wanderbühne*, ed. Willi Flemming (Leipzig: Reclam, 1931); Emil Herz, *Englische Schauspieler und englisches Schauspiel zur Zeit Shakespeares in Deutschland* (Hamburg: Voss, 1903, reprint: Nendeln: Kraus, 1977).

cities and large trade centers, places where they hoped to find large audiences. The valet Johannes Peisker reported from the commercial city Frankfurt in April 1647:

To speak about the situation regarding the fair, it has been bad because of the Frenchmen who came hither; they played various games. English comedians, who came from Munster, performed beautiful histories and masquerades, or, as it is said, danced, not to speak of the new excellent rope-dancer and jumper who had a young boy, who danced on the rope in a astonishing way and did more than hundred capers, jumping very high.

German *traveling troupes* can first be clearly identified some time after the Thirty Years' War. At the beginning they remained attached to the English example. The business man Carl Andreas Paulsen (c. 1620—after 1679) organized performances of Marlowe's "Doctor Faustus" and Pickelherings-Possen, but also introduced Molière's "L'avare" and "Malade imaginaire" into the repertoire. His son-in-law, Johannes Velten from Halle (1642–1692), produced European theater: the dramas he brought to the stage were by Skakespeare, Gryphius, Calderón and other authors.

4. 18th Century Developments: The Concert Hall and Burgher Theater with Circles and Balconies

The wandering artists were in fact responsible for some important achievements. Particularly famous is Karoline Neuber (1697–1760) and her company. She fought against the comical and for Gottsched's reform; the tradesman Konrad Ernst Ackermann (1712–1771) made theater history by erecting the first private theater in 1775 in Königsberg. He was involved in a project for the founding of a German National Theater in Hamburg in 1765. The failure of the project—Lessing was a major figure in the story of the reformatory efforts—was partly to be accounted for by the lack of influence which the theater supporters had within the important social circles of the Hanseatic city.³⁶

³⁵ Bräuer, *Studien zur Geschichte der Lebenshaltung in Frankfurt a.M.*, vol. II, 187.

³⁶ Inge Stephan et al., ed. *Hamburg im Zeitalter der Aufklärung* (Berlin: Reimer, 1989).

These attempts do represent, though, a fundamental change. Gradually, court theaters began to open their doors to burgher audiences, the educated audiences on the ground-floor deciding the success or failure of a piece, even though the maxim “a full house only with a clown” was still valid.³⁷ Impressive theater buildings increasingly replaced the sheds of the previous centuries. These temples of the muses were to be entered with awe and respect. One came into the building, such as at the opening of the first theater building in Frankfurt in 1782, where a “ground floor lit with nothing but glass balls, painted sky blue, with golden decorations finished with scarlet”.³⁸

Another innovation was the concert hall, the appearance of which was also closely connected to the culture of the urban *Bürgertum*.³⁹ The first concert halls did not emerge in those musical centers which were so much influenced by court culture, such as Mannheim or Vienna, but rather in burgher cities like Hamburg (1761) or Leipzig (1781). There had already been opera stages open for burgher audiences, in Hamburg, for instance, from 1678 to 1738. Works by Handel and Telemann were performed, in addition to pieces with local color (“Il tempio di Melpomene su le rive dell’Alstra”). In 1767, Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach arrived to take over as Telemann’s successor in Hamburg where he found that conditions were clearly better than at the court of Frederick II. This strongly indicates a structural change in the social base of the music world, just as was the case in the organization of public concerts, which began to grow in significance throughout Germany. Admittedly, Artists in the 18th century were generally forced to perform in ball houses, council halls, or open air tradition when they did not play in the salons of the nobility or burghers.⁴⁰ Johann Sebastian Bach gave weekly concerts in Zimmermann’s coffee house in Leipzig (“Kaffeehaus-Kantate”!), while Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart had to rent concert rooms in Vienna for his commercial performances. It is “impossible”, wrote

³⁷ Sybille Maurer-Schmooch, *Deutsches Theater im 18. Jahrhundert* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1982).

³⁸ Albert Richard Mohr, *Frankfurter Theater von der Wandertruppe zum Komödienhaus: Ein Beitrag zur Theatergeschichte des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt am Main: Kramer, 1967).

³⁹ Eberhard Preussner, *Die bürgerliche Musikkultur: Ein Beitrag zur deutschen Musikgeschichte des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1950²).

⁴⁰ Möller, *Fürstenstaat*, 433.

father Leopold to Nannerl in 1785, “to describe the tumult and activity. Your brother’s fortepiano has been carried out of the house to the theater or another house at least twelve times since I’ve been here.”⁴¹

⁴¹ Ernst Hintermaier, „Bürgerliche Musikkultur des 18. Jahrhunderts am Beispiel der Stadt Salzburg,“ in *Städtische Kultur in der Barockzeit*, ed. Wilhelm Rausch (Linz an der Donau: Österreichischer Arbeitskreis für Stadtgeschichtsforschung, 1982), 151–157.

CHAPTER EIGHT

BÜRGERTUM AND THE ARTS

1. *Art as History*

“Our main task should be to point to the historical content of *all* monuments”, stated Jacob Burckhardt on one occasion; and he reminded his contemporaries that as in Thucydides, for example, “a fact of the utmost importance” could lie there “to be discovered first a hundred years later”.¹ Here he addresses two still fundamental problems with which every kind of art history must come to terms: Firstly that every era has its own questions about the sources, while the value of a source depends upon the questions that one asks; that, secondly, in principle everything can serve as a source, hence also works of art, everyday objects, buildings and other things. The scope of a research field defines the variety of sources, which often goes “against the grain”, according to Heinrich Lutz.² The reconstruction of cultural developments as they emerged from the perspective of individuals, formed by daily routine, must often be interpreted from particular surviving artefacts. The “quiet pace of life” naturally enough cannot be found very often in the surviving written record in comparison to the more unusual. Moreover, everyday objects are much less likely to survive through the centuries than works of art and luxury items: how a kitchen chair in a burgher household might have looked like, is more likely to be revealed by a late Gothic altar picture than by an original which is much less likely to be found. Nonetheless, there are many more artefacts which have survived from burgher households than from farmers or the lower-classes.

Until now, historical research has only seldom used works of art or objects as source material. But concern for such sources has a longer tradition than current research attitudes would lead one to

¹ Jacob Burckhardt, *Über das Studium der Geschichte: Der Text der ‚Weltgeschichtlichen Betrachtungen auf Grund der Vorarbeiten von Ernst Ziegler*, ed. Peter Ganz (München: C.H. Beck, 1982), 84, 252.

² Kohler/Lutz, ed. *Alltag*, 11.

believe. First of all, one should consider 19th century cultural history, for instance the work of Jacob Burckhardt (1818–1897), which in his “Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy” achieved an outstanding synthesis of historical analysis with the method of art history.³ Aby Warburg, whose complex research interests go far beyond the founding of a historical methodology—iconology—was far more than just a reiteration of the great Swiss historian. Incidentally, his method of using works of art for historical analysis would be unthinkable without the foundations laid by Burckhardt.⁴ Warburg’s work has had a worldwide impact, although almost exclusively in the field of art history. His methodological premises suggest a comprehensive research program, the implications of which have been further investigated by students and associates, such as Fritz Saxl, Erwin Panofsky, Edgar Wind, Gertrud Bing and Ernst Gombrich.⁵

Representatives of the so-called “Vienna School” of art history emphasized the task of illuminating as far as possible the historical conditions and circumstances under which the works of art came to be produced. With this demand for a “historical history of art” the question arises as to what the actual purpose of research in art history is. Dagobert Frey describes it as taking the work of art as a complete entity, which cannot be analyzed only on the basis of its aesthetic qualities: “The work of art is not only an aesthetic object, it has been lent through its original purpose, its use, its integration in daily life, a certain ‘living value’.”⁶ On the basis of this definition, the duality of a work of art as a thing which combines “having been worked on with an outward effect” is expressed, as a product of an epoch and, at the same time, a part of it, which had influenced that epoch. The aesthetic dimension of a work of art is partially outwith history, yet its exterior form always points towards specific historical contexts: within this the desires of the patron, the goals and options of the artist become manifest in a changing intensity; all this

³ Wolfgang Hardtwig, *Geschichtsschreibung zwischen Alteuropa und moderner Welt. Jacob Burckhardt in seiner Zeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1974).

⁴ Ernst H. Gombrich, *Aby Warburg: An intellectual biography*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Phaidon, 1986) idem, *Symbolic Images* (Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1978); Sylvia Ferretti, Cassirer, Panofsky and Warburg. *Symbol, Art and History* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1989).

⁵ Udo Kultermann, *Geschichte der Kunstgeschichte: Der Weg einer Wissenschaft* (Frankfurt a. M./Wien/Berlin: 1981).

⁶ Dagobert Frey, *Kunstwissenschaftliche Grundfragen. Prolegomena zu einer Kunstphilosophie* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1972), 37.

is determined by purpose and often by economic conditions.⁷ For the historian, the work of art can thus be a sensitive indicator of economic, social and intellectual interrelationships.

An important area for future research should still be the *artist-patron relationship*. This may focus on individual case studies, so that within the history of the creation of the work of art, the “coming together and interaction of two individuals, who must both of course remain within their social, societal, professional and intellectual contexts” must be identified.⁸

Almost every important and path-breaking research deals with the situation and developments in Italy, concentrating on the aristocratic patrons, in particular the Medici.⁹

Princely patrons have also been in the foreground in the research on the German cultural sphere.¹⁰ A study comparable to Wackernagel’s book on the Florentine art market, the workshop and the social condition of the artists does not exist for the field of early modern German burgher culture.¹¹ However, there are works on individual patrons or families to which attention should be drawn, such as Hirschfeld’s sketch of the relationship between the Frankfurt businessman Jacob Heller and Albrecht Dürer,¹² or Norbert Lieb’s meticulous collection of documents relating to the Fugger’s patronage of the arts.¹³

⁷ Bernd Roeck, *Elias Holl: Architekt einer europäischen Stadt* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1985), 19. Richard A. Golthwaite, *The Building of Renaissance Florence. An Economic and Social History* (Baltimore/London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980).

⁸ Peter Hirschfeld, *Mäzene: Die Rolle des Auftraggebers in der Kunst* (München: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1968), 4.

⁹ André Chastel, *Art et humanisme à Florence au temps de Laurent le Magnifique* (Paris: Presses Université de France, 1959); Francis Haskell, *Patrons and Painters: A Study in the Relations between Italian Art and Society in the Age of the Baroque* (New York: Icon Ed., 1963); Martin Wackernagel, *Der Lebensraum des Künstlers in der florentinischen Renaissance: Aufgaben und Auftraggeber, Werkstatt und Kunstmarkt* (Leipzig: Seemann, 1938); Rudolf and Margot Wittkower, *Born under Saturn: The Character and Conduct of Artists: A documented History from Antiquity to the French Revolution* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1963); Francis W. Kent and Patricia Simons, ed. *Patronage, art and society in Renaissance Italy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987); Fraser-Jenkins, A.A., „Cosimo de Medici’s Patronage of Architecture and the Theory of Magnificence“, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 33 (1970), 162–170. Hannelore Glasser, *Artist’s contracts of the Early Renaissance* (New York: Garland, ²1971).

¹⁰ For an overview of literature: Hirschfeld, *Mäzene*, 16.

¹¹ Hans Huth, *Künstler und Werkstatt der Spätgotik* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 1981⁴).

¹² Hirschfeld, *Mäzene*, 130.

¹³ Norbert Lieb, *Die Fugger und die Kunst im Zeitalter der hohen Renaissance* (München: Schnell & Steiner, 1958); Norbert Lieb, *Octavian Secundus Fugger (1549–1600) und die Kunst* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1980).

The call for illuminating the *societal environment* of art has already been made in the 1940s by the Swedish art historian, Gregor Paulsson.¹⁴ In addition to the publications of Herbert Read,¹⁵ the discussions of Marxist historians can be regarded as important.¹⁶ A newer type of study applied the programmatic demands to German renaissance architecture.¹⁷

Methodologically important is still Michael Baxandall's study of German woodcut art during the transition phase between the Middle Ages and the early modern period as well as his study, *Painting and experience in 15th century Italy*.¹⁸ His approach deserved to be applied on the German situation.¹⁹ Baxandall relates the style of painting to the daily life of merchants in the Italian *Quattrocento*. More precisely put, his field of research is the social sphere of artists and patrons. He seeks to demonstrate how social realities led to the development of specific skills and habits, which can in turn be identified in the style of the artist. This premise does not only bring the author, then, to a new art historical interpretation of the pictures, but, moreover, this procedure uses the work of art as a source for the writing of social history. In this way, Baxandall sets himself apart from attempts to create a one-dimensional correlation between art and social history: "One will not approach the paintings on the philistine level of the illustrated social history, . . . nor, for that matter, through facile equations between 'burgess' or 'aristocratic' in milieu on the one side and 'realist' or 'idealizing' styles on the other."²⁰ This raises a problem which every study of art must confront: does the work of art support, as a possible additional argument, results achieved through recourse to other sources, merely illustrating already well-documented matters in a different way, or can it achieve a status as a source in its own right?

¹⁴ Gregor Paulsson, *Die soziale Dimension in der Kunst* (Bern: Francke, 1955).

¹⁵ Herbert Edward Read, *Art and Society* (London: Faber & Faber, 1967⁴); and see his *The Grass Roots of Art: Lectures on the Social Aspects of Art in the Industrial Age* (London: Faber & Faber, 1955).

¹⁶ Cf. Peter H. Feist, *Prinzipien und Methoden der marxistischen Kunstwissenschaft: Versuch eines Abrisses* (Leipzig: Seemann, 1966).

¹⁷ Hans-Joachim Kadatz, *Deutsche Renaissancebaukunst von der frühbürgerlichen Revolution bis zum Ausgang des Dreissigjährigen Krieges* (Berlin: Verlag für Bauwesen, 1983).

¹⁸ Michael Baxandall, *The Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1972).

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 152.

The latter possibility takes on a particular significance when written sources are few or are missing completely. This calls to mind the insights Percy Ernst Schramm gained from the interpretation of medieval symbols of power.

The importance of illustrated pamphlets and other graphic sources from the time of the Reformation and religious strife can only be mentioned in passing here.²¹ Likewise, the interpretation of sepulchral art played a certain role in burgher culture; here research can build on the pioneering studies of Philippe Ariès.²²

The history of mentalities and historical anthropology make the greatest use of pictorial representation.²³ Norbert Elias' civilization theory²⁴ is based ultimately on the interpretation of works of art, as is the criticism of it²⁵ and other research which is concerned with such questions.²⁶

The usefulness of architecture as a source is evident,²⁷ but has hardly been used for the history of the urban world. Some impulses have been drawn from cultural and local history, while insights in the "state thought" of burgher and free cities have been taken from the architecture of town halls and their furnishings.²⁸

²¹ See Hans-Ernst Mittig, *Dürers Bauernsäule: Ein Monument des Widerspruchs* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1984); Wolfgang Harms, „Zum Stand der Erforschung der deutschen illustrierten Flugblätter der frühen Neuzeit,“ in *Wolfenbütteler Barocknachrichten* 13 (1986): 97–104; Rainer and Trudl Wohlfeil, „Verbildlichungen ständischer Gesellschaft: Bartholomäus Bruyn d. Ä.—Petarcameister,“ in *Ständische Gesellschaft und soziale Mobilität*, ed. Winfried Schulze (München: Oldenbourg, 1988), 269–331.

²² Philippe Ariès, *L'homme devant la mort* (Paris: Seuil, 1987); and see his *Images de l'homme devant la mort* (Paris: Seuil, 1983); Rainer Wohlfeil and Trudi Wohlfeil, „Nürnberger Bildepitaphien: Versuch einer Fallstudie zur historischen Bildkunde,“ *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 12 (1985): 129–180; for methodology see Erwin Panofsky, *Tomb Sculpture: Four Lectures on its Changing Aspects from Ancient Egypt to Bernini* (New York: Abrams, 1964).

²³ Imhof, *Verlorene Welten*; Borscheid, *Geschichte des Alters*; August Nitschke, *Historische Verhaltensforschung: Analysen gesellschaftlicher Verhaltensweisen—ein Arbeitsbuch* (Stuttgart: Ulmer, 1981); and see his *Kunst und Verhalten: Analoge Konfigurationen* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1975).

²⁴ Elias, *Zivilisation*.

²⁵ Duerr, *Nacktheit*.

²⁶ Braudel, *Alltag*; Weyrauch, „Mahl-Zeiten: Beobachtungen zur sozialen Kultur des Essens in der Ständegesellschaft,“ in *Leib und Leben in der Geschichte der Neuzeit: Vorträge eines internationalen Kolloquiums, Berlin 1.–3. 12. 1981*, ed. Arthur E. Imhof (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1983), 103–118.

²⁷ *Politische Architektur in Europa vom Mittelalter bis heute. Repräsentation und Gemeinschaft*, ed. Martin Warnke (Köln: DuMont, 1984).

²⁸ Roock, *Krieg und Frieden*, 195–198, 219–222; Hans-Christoph Rublack, *Eine bürgerliche Reformation: Nördlingen* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1982), 10–14.

On the whole, the number of publications which seriously attempt to use works of art as historical sources is quite small. Research has though paid considerable attention to the negation of the work of art, especially in its extremist form, iconoclasm.

2. *The Rise of the Artist*

The social phenomenon of the *artist*—in a modern understanding of the word—does not at first appear to have been a product of urban society. The economic system of the city, with its economy of quality,²⁹ with its principles of competition and the market, despite the regulations of the guilds, guaranteed to a great extent the training of the elite among the craftsmen from whom the urban upper class, the nobility and court society ordered luxury products. This leading group of “artistic craftsmen”, in the modern sense, were at the same time in a position to loosen their social bonds. Some artists became craftsmen to courtly society, received positions as valets, or were even—men such as Hans von Aachen, Johann Lukas von Hildebrand, Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach, elevated to noble status. Their emancipation was carried out at the court, sometimes through acceptance into the ranks of the nobility.

In the cities, there were certainly also humanistic, literary circles, that created social spaces where the ties of the urban society could become looser. Here it was possible to move outwith the usual confines of the craftsman’s profession. However, in the Holy Roman Empire aesthetic culture was much less wide-spread than in Italy. So the German courts became even more attractive. This situation is illustrated by Dürer’s complaint in Venice: “Oh, how I will yearn for the sun, here I’m a gentleman, at home a scrounger.”³⁰ At the court of Frederick the Wise, Cranach received the enormous remuneration of 100 florins,³¹ Dürer spread the anecdote that the Emperor Maximilian had ordered a nobleman to hold the ladder for him.³²

²⁹ John U. Nef, *Cultural Foundations of Industrial Civilization* (Hamden/Conn.: Archon books, 1958, reprint 1974), 132.

³⁰ Albrecht Dürer, *Schriftlicher Nachlass*, 3 vols., ed. Hans Rupprich (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1965, 1966, 1969), vol. 1, 59.

³¹ Ludwig Grote, *Lucas Cranach: Der Maler der Reformation: Eine biographische Skizze* (Dresden: Naumann, 1883), 19.

³² Joachim von Sandrart, *Academy der Bau-, Bild- und Mahlerey-Künste*, ed. Arthur R. Peltzer (Nürnberg 1625, reprint München: Hirsh, 1925), 66.



Fig. 23. Albrecht Dürer, Self-Portrait, 1500. © Bayerische Staatgemäldesammlungen, Alte Pinakothek, Munich.

The special status of the artist, the later concept of “genius”, was expressed through the standards of the social order of the time. Other elements of the “legend” of the artist can be identified in Germany at the latest in the 17th century in Sandrart’s biographical descriptions, where he reports on Adam Elsheimer’s “melancholy”, an artist whom he much admired.³³ This corresponds to attempts to define some activities as “free arts”, thus removing them from the guilds’ area of influence, at the same time creating an allusion to the academic “ars liberalis”. This occurred within the field of portrait painting, also later in sculpture, which was regarded in Lübeck in the second half of the 17th century, for example, as “free art”.³⁴

Sandrart, that untiring agent of the artist’s reputation, was subsequently involved in the initiatives to found *art academies*, likewise in the efforts to open a social space for the artist beyond the limits of guilds and traditional notions of craftsmanship. The first of these academies was the one in Nuremberg, shortly after followed the Augsburg Academy.³⁵ That the model was the Florentine “Accademia del disegno” of Giorgio Vasari is patently obvious. In fact, these and other academies were to become important places for the training of artists; less the institutions themselves but rather the ideologies upon which they were founded appear to have launched the myth of the artist. The aura of the uniqueness of the artist, the divinely inspired genius, this was a myth which the *Bürgertum* would continue during the course of the nineteenth-century.

3. *Works of Art in the City*

Even when contemporary observers in the early modern city were aware of the excellent craftsmen, they saw no really inspiring artistic

³³ Rudolf and Margot Wittkower, *Born under Saturn: The character and conduct of artists: a documented history from antiquity to the French Revolution* (New York: Norton 1969); Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz, *Die Legende vom Künstler: Ein geschichtlicher Versuch* (Wien: Krystall-Verlag, 1934).

³⁴ Max Hasse, „Maler, Bildschnitzer, Vergolder in den Zünften des späten Mittelalters,“ in *Jahrbuch der Hamburger Kunstsammlungen* 21 (1976): 31–42.

³⁵ Georg Schrötter, *Die Nürnberger Malerakademie und Zeichenschule: Im Zusammenhang mit dem Kunstleben der Reichsstadt von der Mitte des 17. Jahrhunderts bis 1821 nach literarischen und archivalischen Quellen dargestellt* (Würzburg: Stürtz, 1908); Elisabeth Bäuml, *Geschichte der alten reichsstädtischen Kunstakademie von Augsburg* (Thesis University of Munich, München: 1950).

figures whose works could have demanded religious-like adoration. Nonetheless, great works of art did appear in urban surroundings, more than a few of their creators in fact taking on honorary posts in city councils and the guilds. Certainly, the truly great names—Albrecht Altdorfer in Regensburg, or Ludger tom Ring in Münster—were more the exception than the rule.³⁶ Revealing is Sandrart's complaint that Frankfurt kept no painting of its famous son Elsheimer in the city hall—"curious travelers" searched for an equivalent without success.³⁷ Sandrart's book calls to mind not only the importance of such city halls as the buildings in which burgher art was housed, it also shows the conservative attitude of German citizens towards the world of art and artists. An important, if not decisive reason for this can be found in the religious situation at that time.³⁸ The Reformation changed the pictorial themes and tasks of art, absorbed intellectual energies and so—to put it directly—hindered the development of an aesthetic culture as it had evolved in Italy. Aggressive attitudes towards images, or even outright attacks, even more the Lutheran rejection of sanctification through good works, put an end to the panel and the carved altar. It would seem, however, that a decline in commissioned work had begun earlier in some cities such as Lübeck.³⁹ Many artists saw themselves forced to look for jobs elsewhere: this meant for the talented that they sought work at the courts of the princes. A perfect example of this phenomenon is Hans Holbein the younger who left Reformation Basel to continue his career in England.

In Protestant areas the subject matter of paintings underwent changes; certain genres, such as family portraits, but above all the portrait itself, became more important. The portrait was not viewed so much as a specifically Protestant concern, but rather it "[belonged] to the traditional achievements which must have been least suspicious to Protestant reservations about art."⁴⁰ In the painting of biblical

³⁶ Bernhard Saran, „Der Maler Albrecht Altdorfer als Humanist in seiner reichsstädtischen Umwelt,“ in *Die Humanisten in ihrer politischen und sozialen Umwelt*, ed. Otto Herding/Robert Stupperich (Boppard: Bolt, 1976), 131–139.

³⁷ Sandrart, *Academy*, 163.

³⁸ For an overview see Werner Hofmann, ed. *Luther und die Folgen für die Kunst* (München: Prestel, 1984).

³⁹ Hasse, *Maler*, 39.

⁴⁰ Peter-Klaus Schuster, „Abstraktion, Agitation und Einfühlung: Formen protestantischer Kunst im 16. Jahrhundert,“ in Werner Hofmann, ed., *Luther und die Folgen für die Kunst* (München: Prestel, 1983), 115–266, 204.

scenes a “strong burgher influence” on Christian subjects was emphasized: “It can be assumed that with the ennoblement of simple surroundings to sensitive Christian images, it was intended already in the 16th century that a Protestant social ethic be made accessible, an ethic based on Luther’s conception of a profession as an inner service of worship.”⁴¹ Strangely enough, nothing comparable to Old Dutch genre painting developed in Germany.

In the early years of the Reformation, graphic art was used in the service of conflicts surrounding belief. Caricatures of the enemy mostly conditioned their nature, as Rainer Wohlfeil has rightly noted.⁴² Hence, graphic art—like other fields of art—provoked strong reactions, although the antithetic element remained in no way of general importance. Protestant artists worked for Catholic patrons and vice-versa. Hans Baldung Grien, for example, managed to maintain good relations with his patron even in the uneasy situation in his home town of Strasbourg. Like Dürer, whose attitude is though the subject of intense scholarly discussion, he stood on the side of property, respectability and order.⁴³ It is surprising, then, that a painter such as Jörg Breu the Elder, who had effectively supported himself by producing religious paintings, should have approved of the iconoclastic movement in his native Augsburg.

4. *Urban Architecture*

The consequences of the Reformation for *architecture* were far less dramatic. The burghers were able to expand further their influence on matters concerning the church, and thus to church buildings. Church interiors were adjusted to the purposes of the new cult. Distinctly “Protestant” sacred architecture of significance was not to be found in the burgher-dominated urban areas in Germany. Indeed, the age of great church architecture financed by the municipal authorities was over. The imposing *Hallenkirchen* of the south,

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 124.

⁴² Rainer Wohlfeil, *Einführung in die Geschichte der deutschen Reformation* (München: C.H. Beck, 1982), 141.

⁴³ Thomas A. Brady, „The Social Place of a German Renaissance Artist: Hans Baldung Grien (1484/85–1545) at Strasbourg,“ *Central European History* 8 (1975): 295–315, 314; Heinrich Lutz, „Albrecht Dürer in der Geschichte der Reformation,“ *Historische Zeitschrift* 206 (1968): 22–44.

such as the *St. Georg* in Nördlingen (completed 1505), marked the final point.

The efforts of the cities could be once again directed towards secular building projects, so that the period which ended with the Thirty Years' War can be considered as the final epoch of significant communal architecture. Even purely functional buildings such as granaries, warehouses, or arsenals were often built as works of art;⁴⁴ the same could be said for the buildings in which Protestant social ethics and paedagogical ambitions found its expression: poorhouses, hospitals, libraries and schools.⁴⁵ Representative meeting halls and administration buildings were constructed for the craftsmen's corporations. The Knochenhauer guild house in Hildesheim—seat of the butchers' guild—, built in 1529 in the richest half-timbered style, was considered by Violet-le-Duc to be the most beautiful wooden building in the world.

The town scales, such as those in Braunschweig (1534), Leipzig (1555–1570), or Bremen (1586/87) represented another important building responsibility for the cities, as it was the case with the city mint. In Hamburg, the Dutch architect Jan Andersen built the first stock exchange in Europe in 1558.

However, the most important architectural ambitions were reflected in *town halls*. Sometimes such ambitions were restricted to lavishly ornamented stairways (Lübeck, Nördlingen), facades, arbors, or foyers, which were built as additions to older buildings (Lübeck, Lemgo, Cologne). Forms emphasizing status, borrowed from palace or sacred architecture, in particular the towers—incorporated sometimes asymmetrically into the facades that stood in optical competition to the church steeples of the city—emphasized the authoritative function of the town hall. These buildings in princely cities remained at the same time a center of crystallization for corporative identity. Town halls also possessed in the form of the city bells important means of communication.

In the north, the “Weser Renaissance” also exercised some influence on the construction of town halls; an original, clearly accentuated architectural landscape emerged in Saxony. The type of town hall first created in Wittenberg (1523) and Saalfeld (1527) was copied

⁴⁴ Kadatz, *Renaissancebaukunst*, 96.

⁴⁵ For an overview see Hitchcock, *Renaissance Architecture*; Kadatz, *Renaissancebaukunst*.



Fig. 24. Matthaeus Merian, Market Place in Bremen. On the left the merchants' house, on the right the town-hall, and in the background the guilds' houses, 1653.



Fig. 25. Wittenberg Town-hall, Saxony-Anhalt.

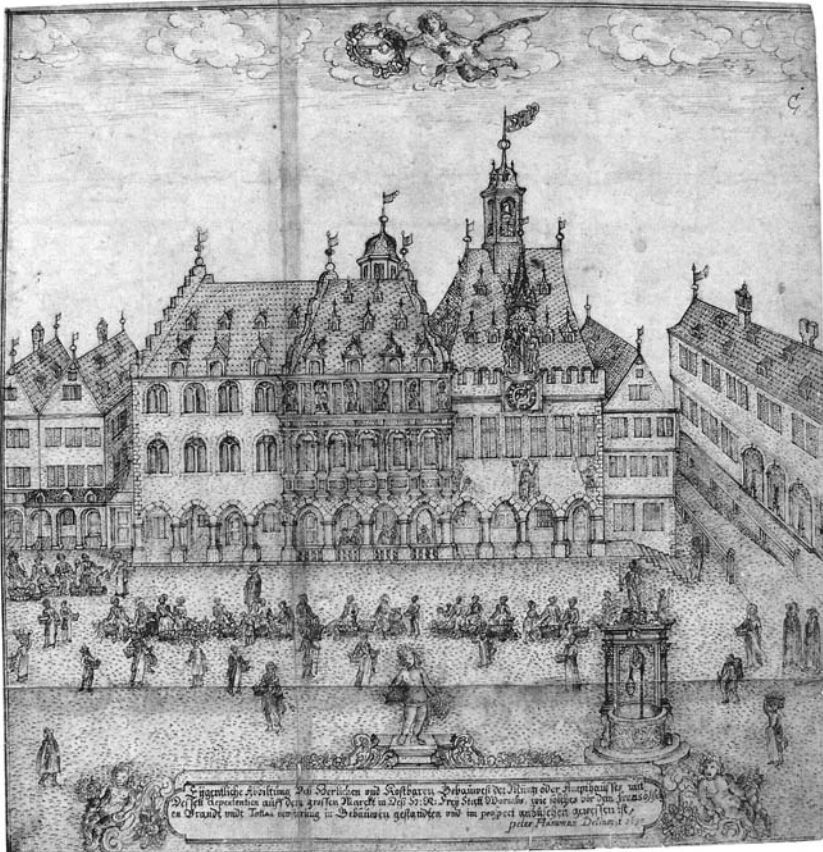


Fig. 26. Peter Hamman, The Mint at Worms. © Stadtarchiv Worms.

many times, among the examples being the town halls of Leipzig and Pirna, Dresden, Neustadt, Eilenburg, Chemnitz, Torgau and Gera. The town halls on which the greatest representative splendor in half-timbered construction developed should also be mentioned. An array of buildings which were related in terms of form began around 1484 with the town hall of Michelstadt/Odenwald.⁴⁶ Italian influence was important in the south, as can be seen in the case of Nuremberg whose town hall was renovated between 1616 and 1622, or in Augsburg (1615–1620). Around the affected, imposing fountains of Hubert Gerhard and Adriaen de Vries, a building program developed here which served the self-representation of the oligarchy and, at the same time, was intended as a way of employing building workers going through hard times.⁴⁷

5. *The Art Market and the Collecting of Art*

Following the Thirty Years' War, architectural developments in the bigger imperial cities more and more lost their momentum, if for no other reason than—at least in most places in southern and central Germany—the fact that demographic pressure on the cities had eased. Hence, the most important developments took place in the residential towns and in the monastic world, in general in religious architecture. With the reduction in the intensity of confessional conflict, there lay a further precondition for all sorts of other cultural achievements, such as in philosophy or literature. One cannot but help notice that the various city committees and the guilds lost their significance as art patrons; as a result, private patronage clearly increased.

Even in the 16th century there existed something which could be described as an art market. Its contours were, however, not nearly as well-defined as in the burgher world of the Netherlands⁴⁸ or Italy.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Günther Binding, Udo Mainzer and Anita Wiedenau, ed. *Kleine Kunstgeschichte des deutschen Fachwerkbau* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1989³), 141.

⁴⁷ Roeck, *Voraussetzungen*.

⁴⁸ Hanns Floerke, *Der niederländische Kunsthandel im XVII. und XVIII. Jahrhundert* (Basel: 1901).

⁴⁹ Richard A. Goldthwaite, *Wealth and the demand for art in Italy: 1300–1600* (Baltimore et al.: Johns Hopkins Univ. Pr., 1993).

As can be ascertained from widely-dispersed sources,⁵⁰ copperplate engraving and other forms of graphic printing were sold on the market, as well as small carvings. It is well-known that Dürer traded in engravings, the price of which was calculated according to the format.

In general, though, works of art were created on the basis of individual commissions. It is revealing that Goethe's father still employed artists when he wanted to decorate his house with pictures. He was not a collector who placed a high value on old paintings.⁵¹ Other burghers were inspired by the example of princely private collections (or *Wunderkammern*) to begin their own *collections*.⁵² Strange natural specimens, fossils, minerals and archeological objects could be found in their cabinets, mixed with paintings, articles fashioned in gold, and other precious things. Many collections emerged in the humanist atmosphere of Basel: here there were paintings by Holbein and Altdorfer, alongside cameos, antique statues, and other rarities. The most important collector in Basel, Basilius Amerbach (1533–1591), owned, among other outstanding works, paintings by the Nuremberg “designer” Peter Flötner.⁵³ The collection of the doctor Lorenz Hoffmann from Halle was particularly famous, a printed catalogue of his collection appeared in 1625. There were also important collections in Nuremberg, held in the Imhoff Chamber of Art and the Praun Museum.⁵⁴ Sandrart praised the cabinet of Carl Welser, particularly impressing due to its printed graphics.⁵⁵

The most important point here is that works of art began to lose their practical and clearly defined function due to the development of collections. It was a pleasure to view them and interpret them, they were certainly considered to be valuable objects, but not as

⁵⁰ Hans Rott, *Quellen und Forschungen zur südwestdeutschen und schweizerischen Kunstgeschichte im XV: und XVI. Jahrhundert. I. Bodenseegebiet, II. Alt-Schwaben und die Reichsstädte, III. Der Oberrhein* (Stuttgart: Strecker & Schröder, 1933/1934/1938).

⁵¹ Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Weimarer Ausgabe, vol. 26, 39.

⁵² See Barbara Gutfleisch, Jochim Menzhausen, „How a *Kunstkammer* should be formed“. Gabriel Kaltemarcks advice to Christian I of Saxony on the formation of an art collection, 1587, in: *Journal of the History of Collections* I, 1989, 3–32; John Michael Montias, *Art Dealers in the Seventeenth-Century Netherlands*, in: *Simiolus* 18 (1988), 244–256.

⁵³ Hans C. Ackermann, „The Basle Cabinets of Art and Curiosities in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,“ in *Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century-Europe*, ed. Oliver Impey (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 62–68.

⁵⁴ G. Weber, „Das Praun'sche *Kunstkabinett*,“ *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte der Stadt Nürnberg* 70 (1983): 125–195.

⁵⁵ Sandrart, *Academy*, 315.

property which could be easily translated into capital (as was the case with silver tableware which could be melted down at any time). This attitude was countered by the uniqueness of the objects collected, by the impossibility of reproducing them a second time. A new quality emerged in works of art, gradually removing them from profane levels: it achieved the status of something created according to its own laws, as an ideal beyond the boundaries of everyday life in which one could participate through viewing it. The appreciation of art, like philosophical-aesthetic discourse, thus became the antithesis to the normal existence of earning a living, and became an activity for leisure hours.

It is not necessary to explain here in detail the way in which the role of art in courtly society was defined in a fundamentally different way from its role in the burgher house. In fact, the private sphere was defined at courts in another way, luxury was not seen as contradictory to economy, but rather as something with its own purpose, with its own specific rationality. Works of art took on a new purposeful function for the burghers, precisely because their purchase was something which had not been a part of burgher culture. The reverse side of the coin was that the acquisition of works of art remained integral to conceptions of courtly society and, hence, were seen there as objects which were necessary in a more practical sense.

Museums open to the public—this was a phenomenon which not by accident did appear first in modern, economically progressive England (1753). They were closely bound to the expansion of civic society. They demonstrated courtly society's loss of function; there the dialectic between economy and luxury emerged as having been negated. The expansion of the art market, and the enormous increase particularly in private collections experienced in the 19th century, are expressions of the same development. These collections were the consequence of changing structures in the public sphere and the birth of a new burgher identity. If museum buildings were given palace-like forms, then this can be interpreted as an expression of the conquering of that world in which the ideal and the reality of works of art had reached the highest level of synthesis since centuries.

The art collection and special, private collections stood at the beginning of this development, even if they were only accessible to restricted circles. That they at the same time bridged the transformation phase to the more specialized, academic collections can be mentioned in passing. The civic world in the German-speaking cul-

tural sphere contributed significantly to this process: it should suffice to recall the collecting of Konrad Gesner (1516–1565), or of Johann Jacob Scheuchzer (1648–1738), who was caretaker of a geological-paleontological cabinet in Zurich.

6. *The Cultural Centrality of Church and Court in the 17th and 18th Centuries*

During the whole early modern period, and increasingly since the end of the Thirty Years' War, artists tried to make their careers at court, not only for economic reasons, but also because social role models were present there as well as a certain degree of freedom which could be found nowhere else. The cultural work at court and churches also had the advantage of being unaffected by the strictures of the guilds, while writers in the service of princes and nobles had working conditions which neither the universities nor official positions could offer. Certainly, Goethe's way out of the free city of Frankfurt to Weimar was just as characteristic as Wieland's departure from Biberach, his "Abdera".

The magnetic cultural and social effect of courtly society, the general significance of the old elites of nobility and clergy came even more to the fore up until the late 18th century, when one was concerned with music, architecture and the creative arts. Especially the top composers—although the majority of them were of urban, burgher origin—became successful elsewhere. Handel went to the international metropolis London, Gluck pursued his career in Paris and Vienna, the peasant's son Haydn composed at Esterhazy Palace; Mozart traveled from court to court over half of Europe, although not Prague, but rather Vienna, was the place where he became successful. This should not be forgotten in the light of the euphoria over the discovery of the cultural function of the burgher during the 18th century, likewise the fact that architecture of European significance—from the noble palaces in Vienna to the astonishing south-German baroque churches—emerged outside the civic world. This did not alter the fact, though, that most of the architects were from this social environment: Johann Michael Fischer was a mason in Munich, Dominikus Zimmermann—the architect of the famous "Wies"-church—worked his way up to the position of Mayor in the small southern Bavarian town of Landsberg, while Balthasar Neumann

was born the son of a cloth worker in Eger. Burghers built, painted and carved for the nobility and for the churches of the German Empire. Sculptors such as Andreas Schlüter, Balthasar Permoser, Egrid Quirin Asam, the Jorhans, Ignatz Günther or Gottfried Schadow needed these patrons as much as painters and stucco plasterers. At the same time, they were only able to find an inspiring ambience in the atmosphere of courtly society, which encouraged competition and thus quality. For one of the most talented fresco painters of the late German Baroque, the academy director from Augsburg, Matthäus Günther, it was the encounter with the art of Tiepolo in Würzburg which helped him to reach another, more sophisticated style. At the Wittelsbach palaces in Munich, local artists such as Josef Effner, Ignaz Gunetzhainer, Balthasar Augustin Albrecht or Johann Baptist Zimmermann worked alongside the Frenchman Joseph Vivien, Wilhelm de Groff from Antwerp, and the Walloon François Cuvillies.

If an international background was one important precondition for this courtly and religious art, often produced by burghers, then a highly developed and specialized level of craftsmanship was the other. The stucco workers should be mentioned, while attention must also be drawn to the skilled work of the carpenters—more specifically the Roentgen manufacture in Neuwied⁵⁶—likewise, the goldsmiths: Strasbourg, Danzig, Nuremberg and Augsburg were the centers of this craftsmanship which won a European reputation.⁵⁷

Finally, the dividing line between art and craftsmanship was touched by the field of graphic art. Etchings and copper engravings were mass-produced in the 17th and—above all—in the 18th century. These were products of the cities, affordable to a large section of the population. It could be an interesting area of research, somewhere between art and economic history, to address the structure of the market of these “goods”. Devotional pictures were sold in Catholic areas, while the growing literary market provided countless engravers with jobs as book illustrators of which Daniel Chodowiecki was the most famous. A few produced independent works of art and their own pictorial creations: Hans Ulrich Frank, Johann Heinrich Schönfeld, Johann Holzer, the brilliant Johann Esaias Nilson, who was celebrated

⁵⁶ Michael Stürmer, *Handwerk und höfische Kultur: Europäische Möbelkunst im 18. Jahrhundert* (München: C.H. Beck, 1982).

⁵⁷ Helmut Selig, *Die Kunst der Augsburger Goldschmiede 1529–1868: Meister, Marken, Werke*, 3 vols. (München: C.H. Beck, 1980).

as the “German Watteau”, or Johann Elias Ridinger, the master of rather bizarre depictions of animals. Ornamental engraving subsequently achieved an important status, as well as reproductions of works of art, of paintings, and architecture. Without this achievement in visual communication provided by copper engravings, it would not be possible to explain the high quality of late German Baroque.

The greatest art of the 18th century was hence produced by burghers who came from cities; it was, though, paid for by the nobility and clergy. What significance the *general economic developments* had after the Thirty Years’ War for this dominance of the traditional leadership elites cannot be decided on the basis of current research findings with any certainty. It would seem to be the case that the agricultural prosperity of the late 17th and the 18th century benefited the land-owning nobility and many of the southern German monasteries. The “building boom” of the epoch would be difficult to explain difficulty; a study by Matthäus Pest, which still deserves reading, supports this theory.⁵⁸ However, it is not yet possible to reach a final judgement on the economic development of the cities and the economic conditions of their citizens for the whole of the 18th century.

⁵⁸ Matthäus Pest, *Die Finanzierung des süddeutschen Kirchen- und Klosterbaues in der Barockzeit: Bauwirtschaftliche und finanzielle Probleme des kirchlichen Barocks im deutschen Süden von ca. 1650 bis ca. 1780* (München: Huber in Komm., 1937).

CHAPTER NINE

BÜRGERTUM AND HUMANISM

1. *Italy and Germany*

The research to date has always seen a close affinity between the *Bürgertum* and humanism. "Humanism and the *Bürgertum* were both rooted in the concept of personality which called the individual to rise above the constraints of his origins, to become a whole person who would be valued for his services, according to his capabilities and achievements", concluded the great historian Franz Schnabel.¹ Schnabel saw in humanism a decisive factor in the "rise of the third estate", an intellectual first-note ferment in the history of the origins of the burgher society of the 19th century. This perspective conforms with the tradition begun by Burckhardt which sees one's own epoch as having its origins in the Renaissance and is connected to it in an unbroken tradition: "The humanist movement . . . grew in the midst of the feudal world and it has contributed greatly to the overcoming of this world by the rise of the *Bürgertum*."²

Thus, Schnabel draws a long line of continuity from the beginnings of humanism in Trecento Italy to the neo-humanism of the 19th century. He was naturally aware of the need to take into account the different phases, and individual, regional and national considerations in this five-hundred years long history.³ Moreover, he does not ignore the fact that many humanists were not burghers, and that the environment in which humanism developed was not at the beginning—and never exclusively—confined to the cities.

In a very particular sense this applies to Germany: in contrast to Italy, there were completely different prerequisites for the develop-

¹ Franz Schnabel, „Humanismus und bürgerliches Denken,“ in *Abhandlungen und Vorträge 1914–1965*, ed. Heinrich Lutz (Freiburg/Basel/Wien: Herder, 1970), 174–183, 175.

² *Ibid.*, 175.

³ *Ibid.*, 174.

ment of cultural forms in the cities. Most importantly, Germany lacked urbanized areas which could have come anywhere close to the great Italian municipalities and city states. In the 15th century, the elite of Florence or Venice could draw on resources which, at that point, were never available to any German city. Architecture and the arts are the best examples which illustrate the *headstart* of the Italian cities. There was no German banker who was in a position to build himself a Palazzo Pitti, or an entire church such as the Medici's Foundation Saint Lorenzo; no German city would have been able to realize a project like Florence cathedral. In Italy, Renaissance culture had a quite clear burgher character, despite the undeniable importance of the courts there; in Germany, on the other hand, it was the courts of the Emperor and princes, but above all the *antes* faculties at the universities, that were decisive for the reception of the new cultural trends. Accordingly, the rejection of late scholastic positions in the German Empire occurred with less vehemence than south of the Alps—at any rate, until the second half of the 16th century. Furthermore, a trend in natural sciences draws our attention, which was not in keeping with the canon of the *studia humanitatis* (grammar, rhetoric, poetry, history, moral philosophy). Important were ultimately national or rather patriotic tendencies and, above all, a pronouncedly paedagogic emphasis. This made German humanism a significant movement for education and educational reform.

The centers of the Empire were, hence, always natural crystallization points for humanism: the court of the Luxemburgers in Prague, then the Viennese court chancellery and the imperial city of Nuremberg where Frederick III crowned the “German arch-humanist” Konrad Celtis as a poet in a memorable ceremony (on which Friedrich von Bezold has reported).⁴ The study of the history of the Empire, and also of one's own city, increased in importance. Celtis planned a “*Germania illustrata*”, a project which was only partially realized. Italian models, such as the works of Flavio Biondo or Leonardo Bruni, improved awareness of “patriotic”-style history, for the beauty

⁴ Friedrich von Bezold, *Konrad Celtis—der deutsche Erzhumanist* (Reprint Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1959); cf. Dieter Wuttke, „Dürer und Celtis: Von der Bedeutung des Jahres 1500 für den deutschen Humanismus,“ *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 10 (1980): 73–129.

of one's own city and its significance. This type of interest in antiquity and archaeology, exemplified by the Augsburg city scribe Conrad Peutinger (1465–1547) or by Marcus Welser (1558–1614), arose for this reason.⁵

2. *Paths of Cultural Transfer*

Peutinger, Willibald Pirckheimer, and many others had studied law in Italy, thus coming into direct contact with the culture of humanism and the Renaissance.⁶ In general, *lawyers*—and among them were noticeably many city scribes—played a specific role in the history of German humanism: from Sebastian Brant (1475–1521), the city scribe of Strasbourg, originates the most well-known and certainly the most popular humanist work, the “Ship of Fools”. Composed in German rhymes, this history of the travels of all types of fools [Narren] to “Narrogonia” ends with the destruction of the ship. The text is a satire directed against foolishness and, hence, in praise of reason, reflecting the moral canon of the *Bürgertum*, according to whose precepts man should improve himself.⁷

Journeys to Italy for study purposes were undertaken by doctors such as Hartmann Schedel or Georg Agricola.⁸ Others, such as Johannes Reuchlin from Pforzheim, a Hebrew specialist of considerable rank and hero of the “obscurantists’ letters”, went to Italy as travel companions for princes and nobles. Likewise, the trips of Italians to Germany—such as that of Enea Silvio Piccolomini—contributed to making humanist thought and elements of Renaissance

⁵ Heinrich Lutz, *Conrad Peutinger: Beiträge zu einer politischen Biographie* (Augsburg: Verlag Die Brigg, 1958). A paradigmatic intellectual and an agent of “cultural transfer” was the humanist Marcus Welser of Augsburg: See Bernd Roeck, *Geschichte, Finsternis und Unkultur. Zu Leben und Werk des Marcus Welser (1558–1614)*, in: *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 72,1 (1990), 115–141.

⁶ Willehad Paul Echat Christoph von Imhoff, Willibald Pirckheimer. Dürers Freund im Spiegel seines Lebens, seiner Werke und seiner Umwelt, ²Köln: Wienand, 1982).

⁷ Barbara Könneker, *Wesen und Wandel der Narrenidee im Zeitalter des Humanismus. Brant—Murner—Erasmus* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1966); Christiane Bohnert, „Sebastian Brants ‚Narrenschiiff‘: Satire und Wirklichkeit an der Schwelle zur Neuzeit“, *Daphnis* 14 (1985): 615–645.

⁸ Paul Oskar Kristeller, „Die Verbreitung des italienischen Humanismus in Europa“, in *Humanismus und Renaissance*, ed. Eckhard Kessler, 2 vols. (München: Vittorio Klostermann, 1976), vol. 2, 85–100.

culture better known. Indeed, it was actually the routes of commerce and trade which artists and scholars followed.⁹ The first Renaissance building on German soil was commissioned and paid for by the Fuggers of Augsburg,¹⁰ and it is no accident that some of the most important masters of this emerging new style—the painters Burgkmair and Dürer, or the wood-carver from Ulm, Jörg Syrlin—came from cities which maintained close commercial ties with Italy. Later, artists would follow ever more frequently in Dürer's footsteps in order to expand their horizons by direct contact with Italy; in fact, there was probably no significant German master in the 16th and 17th centuries who did not integrate his direct experience in Italy into his work.

3. *Significance of the Urban World for the Expansion of Humanist Culture*

For those humanists who were not dignitaries, the urban world brought with it constraints and even humiliations.¹¹ At the same time, the Renaissance and humanism were in Germany no issues for the broad mass of the population, especially with respect to aestheticism and philosophy. In the specific case of Nuremberg there was talk of a "humanism of respectability" among the imperial city's upper class.¹²

Already at the close of the 15th century, an intensification of educational efforts followed, inspired by humanism, which can be clearly identified by certain factors: an increase in the number of high schools, among which the universities with a humanistic alignment were particularly successful; a general increase in schools, not only Latin schools, but also German ones.

Of fundamental importance was the invention of printing with moveable types by Johannes Gutenberg, for the burgher culture of

⁹ See Georg Kauffmann, ed., *Die Renaissance im Blick der Nationen Europas* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1991).

¹⁰ Norbert Lieb, *Die Fugger und die Kunst im Zeitalter der Spätgotik und der frühen Renaissance* (München: Schnell & Steiner, 1952).

¹¹ Wolfgang Zorn, „Die soziale Stellung der Humanisten in Nürnberg und Augsburg,“ in *Die Humanisten in ihrer politischen und sozialen Umwelt*, ed. Otto Herding/Robert Stupperich (Boppard: Boldt, 1976), 47.

¹² Bernd Hamm, „Reichsstädtischer Humanismus in Nürnberg,“ in *Reformatio et reformationes: Festschrift für Lothar Graf zu Dohna zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Andreas Mehl/Wolfgang Christian Schneider (Darmstadt: Technische Hochschule, 1989), 131–193.

the early modern period an event whose importance cannot be underestimated.¹³ Books achieved print-runs far in excess of what had until that time been known, their price went down, also in part due to the use of cheaper paper. With pamphlets and newspapers in their early form, the arrival of a true mass media was heralded, playing a decisive role in the course of the Reformation.

The humanists made increasing use of printed material, which became technically mature around 1500, although correspondence and conversations in essentially loose circles remained the principal form of communication. Printing presses often became centers of human discourse: if humanism developed clearer contours, also as an urban movement, then this was the result not least of all of the printing presses. The most famous example is Johannes Froben's printing house in Basel: there was also Erasmus of Rotterdam who joined the Amerbach circle and the printing barons in 1515; Beatus Rhenanus, editor of the collected works of the great Dutchman, author of a history of Germany and popularizer of the thought of Pico della Mirandola and other authors, was active here.

Although Pico's Platonism and the reception of classical thought, or the forms of antiquity in general, were of great significance for the humanists and artists,¹⁴ they did not consider themselves to be in contradiction with Christian thinking; their attitudes were certainly not pagan. On the contrary, just like in Italy, their goal was to interpret the ideas which had been handed down within the spirit of Christian thinking, to make them productive. Dürer's recommendation that, as the most beautiful of all humans, Jesus Christ, should be given the form of Apollo, is a symbol of this, since the authors of classical antiquity had also ascribed the greatest beauty to this "idol".¹⁵

The pictures of some painters increasingly began to show sophisticated knowledge of humanist scholarly literature, and could thus

¹³ Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early-Modern Europe*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Hans-Joachim Köhler, ed. *Flugschriften als Massenmedien der Reformationszeit: Beiträge zum Tübinger Symposium 1980*, (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1981); Rolf Engelsing, *Analphabetentum und Lektüre: Zur Sozialgeschichte des Lesens in Deutschland zwischen feudaler und industrieller Gesellschaft* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1973).

¹⁴ For further reading, see Johannes Reuchlin (1455–1522), ed. Manfred Krebs (Pforzheim: Selbstverlag der Stadt Pforzheim, 1955).

¹⁵ Hans Rupprich, ed. *Albrecht Dürer: Schriftlicher Nachlass*, 3 vols. (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 1966), vol. 2, 104.

only be “decoded” with this information.¹⁶ For many, classical antiquity seen through the eyes of the 16th century provided the aesthetic criteria according to which religious subjects were to be painted. The German burghers did not come to a close acquaintance with the culture of antiquity which was comparable to the “classical romanticism” of the Roman circles around Pomponius Letus; Celtis’ production of the fantastic *ludus Dianae*, which was not far from this spirit, took place at Emperor Maximilian’s court in Linz. The urban elites were even less interested in surrounding themselves with mythological pictures in their own homes. Whoever wanted to see pagan gods had to go to the princes’ courts.

The culture which humanism helped to form cannot simply be called secular. Such aspects were not entirely missing, however, and it is certainly correct to note—at least on the basis of secular standards—an increase in this *non-religious* spiritual interest, which, according to Paul Oskar Kristeller, “does not oppose the substance of religious teachings but instead competing with them for the attention and sympathy of the individual and the public.”¹⁷ An important factor for the prehistory and course of the Reformation appeared through this new intellectual public sphere, manifested through printed material, discussion circles, through theater performances and particularly in the cities’ schools. The humanists had developed the philological method which became the basis for a more intensive textual analysis of the Bible and other important theological works. The truth became not least of all the business of philology. German humanism had contributed even in the 15th century to church reform efforts.¹⁸ Its patriotic emphasis was often inspired by anti-Catholic affectations—so much so that the humanists admired the Rome of the Emperor, regardless of the great scepticism towards the Rome of the Popes.

¹⁶ Saran, „Der Maler Albrecht Altdorfer.“

¹⁷ Paul Oskar Kristeller, „Heiden und Christentum,“ in *Humanismus und Renaissance*, 2 vols. ed. Eckhard Kessler/Paul Oskar Kristeller (München: Vittorio Klostermann, 1976), vol. 1, 69–86.

¹⁸ Robert Stupperich, „Humanismus und Reformation in ihren gegenseitigen Beziehungen,“ in *Humanismusforschung seit 1945: Ein Bericht aus interdisziplinärer Sicht* (Boppard: Boldt, 1975), 42; Bernd Moeller, „Die deutschen Humanisten und die Anfänge der Reformation,“ *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte ZKG* 70 (1959): 46–61; Martin Greschat, ed. *Reformation und Humanismus: Robert Stupperich zum 65. Geburtstag* (Witten: Luther-Verlag, 1969).

Hardly any of the epochs' leading figures did not have a humanist education. Many humanists of the younger generation—Melanchthon, for instance—sided with Luther; some remained sceptical, kept in the background, or drew spiritual conclusions from the turmoil of the times, for example, the educated soap-producer from the imperial city of Donauwörth, Sebastian Franck (1499–1542). There were humanists who attempted to hold a *via media*, for a time Erasmus of Rotterdam;¹⁹ a minority, to whom belonged Thomas Murner from Strasbourg, for instance—a Franciscan monk, scholar and moralist—continued to support Rome.²⁰

Finally, important and perhaps decisive for the history of the Reformation was the fact that no aesthetic culture similar to the Italian example was able to develop (which, it has to be said, also had economic and social reasons). Put another way, the humanist voices criticizing the church turned all too quickly into an all encompassing debate on matters of faith before further aspects of Renaissance culture could be studied and debated: out of a humanist public discussion there emerged in the German Empire a religious debate. For this reason, the Reformation became an “urban event” as the humanists in the cities adapted the burgher lifestyle since the end of the 15th century; but, in the course of this process, German cities did not become Renaissance cities.

4. *Humanism and Education*

The traditional pedagogical aims of humanism emerged ever more clearly after the Reformation, albeit in a new confessional form, making their way into the world of the burgher.²¹ Particularly in Protestant cities, schools and universities were founded. Melanchthon's ideas played a significant part in this development. Only at the end of the 16th century with the *ratio studiorum* of the Jesuits did a Catholic equivalent appear which was likewise based on a humanistic spirit.

¹⁹ August Buck, ed. *Erasmus und Europa* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1988).

²⁰ Badische Landesbibliothek Karlsruhe, ed. *Thomas Murner: humaniste et théologien alsacien, 1475–1537* (Karlsruhe: Badische Landesbibliothek, 1987).

²¹ Günther Böhme, *Bildungsgeschichte des europäischen Humanismus* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1986); Wolfgang Reinhard, ed. *Humanismus im Bildungswesen des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts* (Weinheim: Acta Humaniora, 1984).

Anton Schindling has emphasized that the humanists envisioned a more academic attitude in the widest sense among the political elites.²² Education became a status symbol, and could be a vehicle for social advance just as it could be a social barrier. Integrated to a great extent in the hierarchical structure of a class society, education became an integral part of the burghers' identity: "With the category of the humanist education, a new literary influenced model came into the social life of the city . . . The urban population found among all its strata an important means of self-representation and a form of communication which was class-specific."²³ What is expressed here in a study on Strasbourg can in fact be applied on a general level. Characteristic for "burgher humanism"—particularly in terms of the form it took in imperial cities, beyond the communicative impetus, was the emphasis of binding the individual into the community, the constraints of the individual and his social obligations to the *bonum commune*.²⁴

The "humanist continuity" in the confessional changes of the early modern period, referred to by the Swiss historian Werner Kaegi,²⁵ became recognizable mainly in the educational ethos of humanism. Humanist thought inspired the founding of libraries and collections, research into the natural sciences, philosophy and politics.²⁶ A particular role was played here invariably by documentary publications and the preservation and dissemination of sources.²⁷ A late example of those efforts is offered by the "Stadtpfleger"—one of the political heads of the city—of Augsburg, Marcus Welser. He became known not only as an author of historical and archaeological works, but also founded his own publishing house which worked together for a time with the Venetian printing-workshop of Aldus Manutius. Both, Catholic and Protestant, authors—such as the Jesuit Jakob Pontan, or the Hellenist David Hoeschel, a Lutheran—published their work here. The falcon book of Emperor Frederick II, the first

²² *Humanistische Hochschule*.

²³ *Ibid.*, 397.

²⁴ Hamm, „Reichsstädtischer Humanismus,“ 162.

²⁵ Werner Kaegi, *Humanistische Kontinuität im konfessionellen Zeitalter: Ein Vortrag* (Basel: Helbing & Lichtenhahn, 1954).

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 48–50.

²⁷ Dieter Harlfinger and Reinhard Barm, ed. *Graecogermania: Griechischstudien deutscher Humanisten—die Editionstätigkeit der Griechen in der italienischen Renaissance (1469–1523)* (Weinheim: Acta Humaniora, 1989).

edition of the “Tabula Peutingeriana”, the medieval copy of an antique map, theological and historical works, editions of Greek authors and natural science studies, all these characterized the publishing house’s activities.

CHAPTER TEN

BURGHER CULTURE IN THE BAROQUE AND ENLIGHTENMENT: PHASES AND INSTITUTIONS

1. *The Problem of Periodization and Epochs*

Opinions differ widely as to whether the term “Baroque” actually encompasses those elements which were common to all epochs.¹ Every attempt at a periodization must take into account the differences in the development of each historical area, in addition the heterogeneity of the urban societies in the Holy Roman Empire, which in their social and legal aspects and intellectual climate cannot be reduced to a single common denominator.² Just as “the” German citizen cannot be described sweepingly as humanistic, so it is impossible to assert that it was chained to Baroque culture. Many burghers, especially the upper strata, did accept, however, the stylistic forms of the Baroque for the decoration of their houses and interiors. Among the artists of the Baroque one finds that burghers were in the overwhelming majority and, not without good reason, it has been noted that the “German literature of the 17th century—in other words, the so-called ‘Baroque literature’—contrary to accepted wisdom had its most important centers in the cities and not at the courts”.³

It is not possible to identify particular moments in time in an attempt to explain the more general problems of periodization.⁴ The occurrence at the same time of mutually opposing forces is shown particularly clearly in the southern part of the Empire in the 18th century: while intellectual history can show significant trends in enlightenment thinking, in the creative arts—well past the middle of

¹ See Klaus Garber, „Stadt-Kultur und Barock-Begriff,“ in *Europäische Städte im Zeitalter des Barock. Gestalt—Kultur—Sozialgefüge*, ed. Kersten Krüger (Köln/Wien: Böhlau, 1988), 93–119.

² Hans Tintelnot, „Zur Gewinnung unseres Barockbegriffes,“ in *Die Kunstformen des Barockzeitalters*, ed. Rudolf Stamm (Berne: Francke, 1956), 13–91.

³ Garber, „Stadt-Kultur“, 106; Erich Kleinschmidt, *Stadt und Literatur in der frühen Neuzeit* (Köln/Wien: Böhlau, 1982).

⁴ Wiegelmann, *Wandel*.

the century—"baroque" forms were dominant, mainly—but not exclusively—within the monasteries.⁵

In terms of its substance, the Enlightenment was a many-sided intellectual movement, which experienced different phases in its development.⁶ There were certain basic intellectual standpoints: the conviction that through critical application of reason, through "thinking for oneself" (Kant), it would be possible to achieve an understanding of the world and man; the optimistic view that it would be possible to conquer all technical and natural science problems by means of reason; a faith in the world-improving potential of training and education. Likewise, there was also a comprehension of the relativity of those truths which could be penetrated by thought (the ring parable in Lessing's "Nathan"!)

This made possible the growth of an ethics of tolerance, as well as the call to allow open discussion, and to make use of reason "in all of its elements" in public, as Kant had written in 1783.

Conversely, it would be inaccurate to place the many-sided German *Bürgertum* en bloc in the same category as the Enlightenment. The lower-class burgher, the guild artisans, and dignitaries in the old free cities and the great majority of the women barely participated in the Enlightenment, while many noblemen and even clergy could be found among its supporters. Characteristic are trends specific to confessions: Protestantism, especially certain forms of pietism, had an equally strong influence on the German Enlightenment, just as there was a significant Catholic Enlightenment, which has been for a long time underestimated.⁷

Important for the evolution of the German Enlightenment was a certain socio-historical process: concurrent with the rise of the territories and the increased spread of state authority through bureaucracy, the emergence of a legal system, the military and economic modernization, a new type of urban *Bürgertum* took shape which was not an estate in the traditional sense. One's membership of the estate

⁵ See for example Jürgen Sydow, *Städte im deutschen Südwesten: Ihre Geschichte von der Römerzeit bis zur Gegenwart* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1986).

⁶ Fundamental Studies: Ernst Cassirer, *Die Philosophie der Aufklärung*, ed. Gerald Hartung (Hamburg: Meiner, 1998); Horst Möller, *Vernunft und Kritik: Deutsche Aufklärung im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986), 11–40.

⁷ Carl Hinrichs, *Preussentum und Pietismus: Der Pietismus in Brandenburg-Preussen als religiös-soziale Reformbewegung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971); Notker Hammerstein, *Aufklärung und katholisches Reich* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1972).

was conditioned by education, function or profession. This “new *Bürgertum*”—to which state officials, scholars and writers belonged—took on a clearer form during the 18th century. It possessed an ambivalent physiognomy: while overlapping at times with the established estate, and constantly seeking to establish itself as a class, it was basically hostile towards the old society. Its social interests, its politico-ideological goals, its norm system, it did not conform with the views of the old, established *Bürgertum*.⁸ It was this new class, which had been for a long time closely allied with the absolutist state, which developed more than any other group a particular affinity with the ideas and culture of the Enlightenment.

2. *Institutions and Means of Discourse*

The principle of tolerance and the primacy of reason arose as a logical consequence from the experience of an epoch of religious fanaticism and confessional civil wars, although increasingly demands for emancipation from the third estate revealed themselves in the philosophy of the Enlightenment. Among the philosophical prerequisites can be counted the empiricism of Bacon, the rationalism of Descartes, and the philosophy of Spinoza, which had a remarkably strong influence on thought in the second half of the 18th century; while, for the understanding of politics in the German Enlightenment, Samuel Pufendorf’s teaching of natural law, based on Grotius, is of importance.

The “humanistic continuity” mentioned above should not be forgotten too.⁹ Many questions relevant for the Enlightenment had already been detached from religious literature by Renaissance discourse and placed within the context of worldly philosophy. Even then the issue had been the possibilities and limitations of reason, human dignity, man’s relationship to God, and his position in state and society. Most importantly, Renaissance humanism had already developed the forms of communication in which then the “dialogue-oriented thought” of the Enlightenment worked: the correspondence

⁸ Möller, *Vernunft und Kritik*, 294.

⁹ Harald Steinhagen, ed. *Zwischen Gegenreformation und Frühaufklärung: Späthumanismus, Barock* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1985), 15.

of the educated and scholarly, academies, *Sodalitäten*—in other words, places of institutionalized discourse outside the churches, universities and other traditional spaces of discourse in the life of the stratified society.¹⁰ Correspondence forged links between burghers, noblemen, clergymen, leading to a kind of network among Europe's educated elite; here meeting places emerged where social divisions could be at least partially overcome.

Important within this context were first of all the language societies of the 17th century.¹¹ On the initiative of Ludwig von Anhalt-Köthen and other princes from central Germany, the "Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft" ["Fruit-bearing Society"] was founded in 1617 near Weimar.¹² The goal of this association of noblemen, burghers, scholars and poets, which was based on the example of the Florentine "Accademia della Crusca", was to cultivate the German language and reform its literature. There was also the "Deutschgesinnete Genossenschaft" ["German-oriented Society"] in Hamburg from 1643, the "Pegnesischer Blumenorden" ["Pegnesian order of flowers"] founded in 1644 in Nuremberg by Georg Phillip Harsdoerffer and Johann Klaj, and the "Elbschwanenorden" ("Order of the Elbe-Swan") (1655/60) in Wedel. In Strasbourg one could find the "Aufrichtige Tannengesellschaft" ["Sincere Society of the Fir"] (1633) and the "Poetisches Kleeblatt" ["Poetic Clover Leaf"] (1671). Many of these associations existed for a considerable period of time and could boast of high membership numbers—the "Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft" accepted up until 1650 over 500 people. The burgher element was strongly represented, even if it is not possible to produce firm statistics. In the "Pegnesische Blumenorden", for example, there were no nobles to be found, but—on the other hand—lawyers and other academically trained persons, clergymen, teachers, even merchants.

The language societies indicate a structural change in the literary landscape. In the course of the 17th century, artistic literature in the

¹⁰ Hans Rupprich, *Humanismus und Renaissance in den deutschen Städten und an den Universitäten* (Leipzig: Reclam, 1935).

¹¹ Christoph Stoll, *Sprachgesellschaften im Deutschland des 17. Jahrhunderts* (München: List, 1973); *Sprachgesellschaften, Sozietäten, Dichtergruppen*, ed. Martin Bircher (Hamburg: Hauswedell, 1978).

¹² Klaus Conermann, ed. *Der Fruchtbringenden Gesellschaft Vorhaben* [...] 3 vols. (Weinheim: VHC, 1985).

German language made its way increasingly into the princely courts and the castles of the nobility. In conjunction with this trend, Martin Opitz—son of a butcher and councillor from Bunzlau—tried to make his poetry reform a success. His treatise “On German Poetry” (1624), in which he argued for a transfer of the humanist poetic ideal to the common language of the German people, became an influential focal point for poets and literary theorists.¹³ The efforts on behalf of the German language, as can be seen in Opitz’ reform proposals, in language societies and later also in works on grammar and increasing numbers of dictionaries, had a background rooted in contemporary history. The crisis of the Thirty Years’ War, as well as the age of the political and cultural dominance of France, sowed the seeds for a “German Empire patriotism”, which can be documented by numerous sources. The language societies also anticipated certain forms of burgher *égalité* and intellectual tolerance, although they remained islands where confessions played no role within the religiously divided Empire. Their emphasis on the national elements of language allows them to be placed in the prehistory of the Enlightenment. “The moment at which the vitalization of the mother tongue and its penetration into scholarly discourse became noticeable, shows Enlightenment goals”—otherwise a noteworthy spread of influence on a broad front would not have been achieved.¹⁴ In the final two decades of the 17th century, Leibniz energetically called for the cultivation of the German language, likewise, in 1687, a professor of public law, Christian Thomasius, held the first university lecture in German.

In fact, Leibniz stood at the center of the societies movement at the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century. The academies of the Italian Renaissance had provided an important model. Burghers had played a decisive role in the early foundings of societies in Germany. The mathematician and philosopher Joachim Jungius had founded an academic society in Rostock in 1622, the “Societas ereunetica”. The first German academy is considered to be the “Leopoldina” in Halle, founded by the doctor and city physician, Johann Lorenz Bauch from Schweinfurt, in 1652, and is still existing today. The great plans of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz for

¹³ Wilhelm Kühlmann, *Gelehrtenrepublik und Fürstenstaat: Entwicklung und Kritik des deutschen Späthumanismus in der Literatur des Barockzeitalters* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1982).

¹⁴ Möller, *Vernunft und Kritik*, 24.

academies were based on the examples of the *Académie française* and the Royal Society, although only the Berlin project (1700) enjoyed immediate success. The aim was a center of research and discourse that would unite “theoriam cum praxi”. It can be seen, then, that the concern was the direct application of the achieved knowledge for society—the intention was virtually the establishment of a “state office for science, economy and culture”.¹⁵

Leibniz himself observed that the 18th century “is a secular [century], in which one enjoys societies”. From the humble beginnings in Baroque Germany, a new wave of foundings developed among which the Göttingische Gelehrte Gesellschaft (1751), the Mannheim Academy (1757) and the Bavarian Academy of Science (1759) are the most significant.¹⁶ The social structure of academy members appears comparable to those of the language societies, including many burgher scholars who were often representatives of the “new *Bürgertum*”. The Bavarian Academy comprised public officials, in particular courtly officials, many theologians and clergy from religious orders; also doctors, and natural scientists belonged to it, as well as Catholics there were also numerous Protestants.¹⁷

The academies were not merely competitors with the universities, nor can they be seen as evidence of a “deficit” in academic institutions during the Enlightenment. Many important representatives of the German Enlightenment—Thomasius, Christian Wolff, or Kant—were active at the universities; the traditional teaching program received a new impetus in many ways through reforms within the spirit of the Enlightenment. In addition, a number of new universities were founded; the most significant were Halle (founded 1694) and Göttingen (1737).

Finally, a range of other institutions of discourse and scholarship should be mentioned at which “Enlightenment” was achieved; they were, at the same time, places of social mobility and contributed to the structuring of free time.

¹⁵ Richard van Dülmen, *Die Gesellschaft der Aufklärer: Zur bürgerlichen Emanzipation und aufklärerischen Kultur in Deutschland* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1986).

¹⁶ Ludwig Hammermayer, *Akademiebewegung und Wissenschaftsorganisation während der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts: Formen, Tendenzen, Wandel* (Berlin: Camen, 1976).

¹⁷ Ludwig Hammermayer, *Geschichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (1759–1807)*, 2 vols. (München: C.H. Beck, 1983) vol. 1, 368, vol. 2, 380.

Some societies set themselves the task of publishing their own periodicals. These were once again predominantly burgher societies, one example being the “Teutschübende Gesellschaft” [“German-exercising society”] in Hamburg around the councillor and poet Barthold Hinrich Brockes (1715–1717). From this society emerged a “Patriotic Society” in 1723, which published the moral weekly journal “The Patriot”, and which was based on a circle of members closely connected to the Senate and Hanseatic notables. The journal is said to have reached the—for that time—remarkably high circulation rate of over 5,500 copies.¹⁸ Other moral weekly publications were Johann Christoph Gottsched’s “Vernuenftige Tadlerinnen” (1725/26) and “Der Biedermann” (1727–29).

The “moral weeklies” remained an important media for the Enlightenment until around 1770. Their areas of circulation were generally the same as those which were considered Germany’s “literary landscapes” until the *Sturm und Drang* literary movement.¹⁹ Their readers could find them principally in burgher cities such as Hamburg, Zurich, Berne, or in places dominated by trade, such as Leipzig, and in university towns, while the residents of free cities such as Dresden, Berlin or Hanover only began to take an interest very gradually. Many smaller cities had their own “moral weeklies” for a time. The germanist Wolfgang Martens has emphasized that they were probably aimed at the more refined elements of the urban society; their goal was to “close the gap that has existed since the age of humanism between educated and uneducated readers, which could also be sensed in the reception of poetry. Under the auspices of reason and virtue a form of educated common language was cultivated, and, within this framework, a more or less homogenous, wide readership arose, receptive to worldly learning.”²⁰ With the increase in reading interest, there was in the 18th century correspondingly a further expansion in the production of journals and books.²¹ Estimates assume

¹⁸ Wolfgang Martens, *Die Botschaft der Tugend: Die Aufklärung im Spiegel der deutschen Moralischen Wochenschriften* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1971).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 167.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 147.

²¹ Herbert G. Göpfert, *Vom Autor zum Leser: Beiträge zur Geschichte des Buchwesens* (München: Hanser, 1977); Joachim Kirchner, *Das deutsche Zeitschriftenwesen: Seine Geschichte und seine Probleme* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1958); Helmuth Kiesel/Paul Münch, *Gesellschaft und Literatur im 18. Jahrhundert: Voraussetzungen und Entstehung des literarischen Markts in Deutschland* (München: C.H. Beck, 1977).

roughly 175,000 German language publications, two-thirds of which must have appeared after 1760.²²

Reading was cultivated in the “reading societies”.²³ Reading together at home had been a phenomenon since the 16th century, mostly foreground the Bible and works for personal edification. A large number of such associations existed in the last third of the 18th century. The first foundings took place specifically in north Germany, spreading then through the core regions where Enlightenment culture was already established: Saxony, Thuringia, the Rhineland. In southern Germany and Austria, but also in the Wuerttemberg area, comparatively few reading societies were founded. There were no restrictions which arose due to which estate belonged a member, although women and students could not join.

These very often short-lived associations ranged from membership to a journal subscription, to a social literary circle, where questions of art, philosophy and politics were discussed. There were exclusive clubs such as the “Mittwochsgesellschaft” in Berlin, or the “Montagsclub”, founded in 1749, which also met in Berlin; both clubs included early supporters of the Enlightenment, some belonged to both simultaneously. Here the following clubs can be cited—the Klopstock “Bueschirende” reading society in Hamburg (1777), the “Friday Society” in Weimar around Goethe, and the famous “Göttinger Hain” [“Göttingen grove”]. Likewise, we should not forget the “patriotic charitable associations”, which represented another type of association.²⁴ These were founded mainly between 1760 and 1790; upper-class burghers, local noblemen, clergymen, they all joined together in order to propagate technical and economic improvements, and to put theory into practice through activities in the public sphere. Such associations included the “Hamburg Society for Encouragement of the Arts and Useful Trades” (1765), or the association formed at

²² Engelsing, *Analphabetentum und Lektüre*, 53; *Ibid.*, „Die Perioden der Lesergeschichte in Deutschland,“ in *Zur Sozialgeschichte deutscher Mittel- und Unterschichten*, ed. Rolf Engelsing (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), 112–154.

²³ Marlies Prüsener, „Leseesellschaften in Deutschland: Ein Beitrag zur Lesergeschichte,“ *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens* 13 (1973): 360–594; Otto Dann, *Leseesellschaften und bürgerliche Emanzipation: Ein europäischer Vergleich* (München: C.H. Beck, 1981).

²⁴ Hans Hubrig, *Die patriotischen Gesellschaften des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Weinheim: Beltz, 1957); *Deutsche patriotische und gemeinnützige Gesellschaften*, ed. Rudolf Vierhaus (München: Kraus, 1980).

the same time by a group of young Berne patricians, the “Helvetic Society”.²⁵

Towards the end of the 18th century a well-developed salon culture also reached German cities. The salons cut across the usual social divisions. Jews were at times included as well, many joining together around Jewish women such as Rahel Levin (after her marriage, Varnhagen von Ense) and Henriette Herz. Women usually formed the centres of the salons, such as Johanna Schopenhauer in Weimar, Sophie von la Roche in Koblenz, or Caroline Schlegel in Weimar. Regular meetings offered the opportunity for intellectual discussion, dance, music, or for communal readings. These institutions do, however, have only limited relevance for the history of women’s emancipation—the hostesses acted first and foremost as “ladies of the house”. The comparatively free position of some women within these pronouncedly exclusive, intellectual circles had in the long term no influence on the situation of women generally speaking.²⁶

3. *The Enlightenment and Criticism: Tendencies towards Politicization*

In addition to France, which also possessed important examples of salon culture, England represented a country of particular importance for the German Enlightenment: Shakespeare, Fielding, Sterne and other authors influenced German literature, particularly in the second half of the 18th century. Periodicals such as “The Tatler” and “The Spectator” were important models for the “moral weeklies”, the economic societies were likewise “imported” from England, just as were—at the end of the 18th century—architecture and landscape gardening. The political conditions on the island appeared to the circles of enlightened burghers to be exemplary.²⁷

Freemasonry also came from England to Germany through the “gateway” of Hamburg where the first lodge was founded in 1737. The movement spread quickly: by 1741, Dresden, Berlin, Bayreuth, Halle, Leipzig, and other cities had lodges. The number of freemasons

²⁵ Ulrich Im Hof, „Die Helvetische Gesellschaft,“ in *Deutsche patriotische und gemeinnützige Gesellschaften*, ed. Rudolf Vierhaus (München: Kraus, 1980), 223–240.

²⁶ Horst Möller, *Fürstenstaat*.

²⁷ Michael Maurer, *Aufklärung und Anglophilie in Deutschland*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987).

in Germany in the 18th century was estimated at between approximately 15,000–20,000.²⁸ While it is not possible to make general statements on the social structure of the lodges, individual case studies have occasionally revealed structures similar to those of the literary circles: administrative and courtly bureaucrats of burgher and noble origin, officers, men of letters and publicists, wealthy merchants and, less frequently, craftsmen.²⁹ Even high nobility and reigning princes were lodge members.

Freemasonry in the 18th century underwent fundamental changes, especially in its relationship to the Enlightenment and society. Contradictory aspects, indeed basically irreconcilable positions, most notably in the discussion of Enlightenment beliefs increasingly rose to the surface. The “strict observance” used in the lodges up until the Freemasons’ Convention in Wilhelmsbad in 1782, with their complicated rituals, hierarchies, and mystical esoteric practices, stood in direct contradiction to the rationality of the Enlightenment. In the secret association “Gold- oder Rosenkreuzern”, with practices close to freemasonry and with hermetic and alchemistic elements, the anti-Enlightenment tendencies of the movement received their purest form.³⁰ Further contradictions arose from the often emphasized postulate of equality which contrasted starkly with the strict hierarchical structures within the societies, together with a clear social exclusivity.³¹ In fact, the social existence of the members of this and other secret societies conformed to the realities of estate-based society in daily life.

Specifically political and potentially revolutionary aims were followed by one secret society which showed tendencies diametrically opposite to the “Rosenkreuzer” [“Knights of the Roses”]: the Order

²⁸ Norbert Schindler, „Freimaurerkultur im 18. Jahrhundert: Zur sozialen Funktion des Geheimnisses in der entstehenden bürgerlichen Gesellschaft,“ in *Klassen und Kultur: sozialanthropologische Perspektiven in der Geschichtsschreibung*, ed. Robert M. Bergdahl (Frankfurt am Main: Syndikat, 1982), 205–262.

²⁹ See for example Richard van Dülmen, *Der Geheimbund der Illuminaten: Darstellung, Analyse, Dokumentation* (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1975); for an overview see Ludwig Hammermayer, „Illuminaten und Freimaurer zwischen Bayern und Salzburg: Bemerkungen zu Geschichte, Umfeld und Nachwirkung von Geheimgesellschaften im oberdeutschen Raum (ca. 1775–1800),“ in *Land, und Reich, Stamm und Nation: Probleme und Perspektiven bayerischer Geschichte*, ed. Andreas Kraus (München: C.H. Beck, 1984), 321–355.

³⁰ H. Möller, Die Gold- und Rosenkreuzer, in: Peter Christian Ludz, ed., *Geheime Gesellschaften*, Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1979): 153–202.

³¹ Möller, *Vernunft und Kritik*, 226–229.

of the Illuminati, founded by Professor Adam Weishaupt in Ingolstadt in 1776.³² Although founded independently from the freemasons, they focused upon the more humanitarian goals of freemasonry. In fact, their program went much further than the concepts of the freemasons. The central idea was to “replace the existing post-feudal hierarchies and social order by non-violent means, in so far as members or helpers of the Order would occupy step-by-step political, intellectual, publicistic and also key economic positions of power and rise to become the advisors and right-hand men of the princes.”³³ At the height of its expansion at the beginning of the 1780s, the Order had around 600 members who came primarily from Bavaria and parts of the Rhineland. The decline of the order began with the banning and the prosecution of the Illuminati in the Bavarian electorate (1785). Even less successful was the attempt by Carl Friedrich Bahrdt, a professor of theology who had been dismissed, to unite around 400 reading societies into a secret association which was to be structured along the lines of the freemasons; this “German Union” was intended to turn Enlightenment goals into political practice. Founded in 1786, and supported mainly by scholars and journalists, the initiative was stopped in 1789 by the arrest of Bahrdt because of a publication which had provoked the authorities.³⁴

The French Revolution discredited freemasonry and other secret societies in the eyes of large parts of the ruling classes. Repressions followed, at least in the form of observation and strict controls. Soon the thesis arose that the French Revolution had actually been generated by a conspiracy of such groups.

In this way, the reversal of a development had been reached. The moment when cadres dedicated to the changing of society were to be formed straight from the reading societies, became a symbol for the politicization of the Enlightenment. It became apparent that the alliance between absolutism and the Enlightenment which had for a time been accepted was gradually beginning to fall apart. The founding of secret societies ultimately marked the removal of a certain

³² Richard van Dülmen, *Der Geheimbund der Illuminaten*; Hammermayer, *Illuminaten und Freimaurer*.

³³ Hammermayer, *Illuminaten und Freimaurer*, 325.

³⁴ Günter Mühlpfordt, „Europarepublik im Duodezformat: Die internationale Geheimgesellschaft ‚Union‘“, in *Freimaurer und Geheimbünde im 18. Jahrhundert in Mitteleuropa*, ed. Helmut Reinalter (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1983), 319–364.

level of privacy—a public sphere which was not subject to the rules of the state, creating areas for critical and rational discussion. In general, the appearance of the associations in the 18th century began to display an increasingly political dimension: in the “new” public sphere in which the structures transcended the estate-based society, a different understanding of politics emerged at the same time. The contours of a burgher moral emerged, whose criteria no longer remained subordinated to the ideals of absolutism, but rather demanded influence as the standard of state action.³⁵ The cultural institutions of the Enlightenment supporters, which revealed itself in the form of political criticism of the state, gained a serious conflict potential when these institutions sought to expand their area of influence. In 1774, Friedrich Daniel Schubart called for “press freedom”, hence addressing a subject that would come to play a central role in all subsequent liberal and democratic movements. The state answered with censorship which was greatly intensified in Germany in the years preceding the French Revolution.³⁶

The epic events of 1789 demanded new types of political orientation, also from the burghers in the declining Holy Roman Empire. The great political trends which would later determine the history of the 19th century, nationalism, conservatism and—the product of the Enlightenment, in particular of Kant—liberalism began to take on recognizable contours.³⁷ The national question now raised its head. Although the development of statehood in the Empire had been completed in the territories—a *cultural Germany* came into being at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century. In the midst of dramatic social and political transformations, first-class works of music, literature and philosophy were produced: between Vienna and Königsberg, the personages of the southwest and the court of Weimar a cultural epoch was formed which had no parallel in previous European history.

³⁵ Reinhart Koselleck, *Kritik und Krise*, 41.

³⁶ Möller, *Vernunft und Kritik*, 281–289.

³⁷ Fritz Valjavec, *Die Entstehung der politischen Strömungen in Deutschland: 1770–1815* (Kronberg/Taunus: Athenäum-Verlag, 1978).

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE CULTURAL FUNCTION OF THE GERMAN CITY IN THE 17TH AND 18TH CENTURIES

If the Renaissance city presented itself as a well-structured work of art in the midst of disorganized, less relevant surroundings, in the final years of the old Empire the city and the countryside around it appeared to be increasingly closely connected, aesthetically speaking. In contrast to the countryside, the contours of the city began to become less pronounced. Does this new aestheticism of architectural form—which seemingly the urbanization of the surrounding countryside hinted at almost imperceptibly—signal, at the same time, a further loss of significance of the city? It was for a long time accepted wisdom of historians that the Thirty Years' War set in motion a process of loss of economic, political and cultural significance for many, if not all, cities in Germany, which lasted into the 18th century. Only recently, parallel to a return to a more positive assessment of the Holy Roman Empire, tendencies can also be registered towards a reevaluation of the imperial cities in the last century of their history.¹ Above all, a new awareness has emerged of the *cultural achievements* of the German citizens.² The historian Otto Borst has pointed to an important reason for the traditional neglect of the 18th century city (and in the second half of the 17th century: “It is debatable whether the thoroughly under-represented academic preoccupation with it, which does not come close to the level of research efforts devoted to the city of the Middle Ages or the modern period, is not likewise closely connected to politically secondary importance as the curiously ‘unpolitical’ theme, under which one has approached

¹ See for example Volker Press, „Die Reichsstadt in der altständischen Gesellschaft,“ in *Neue Studien zur frühneuzeitlichen Reichsgeschichte*, ed. Johannes Kunisch (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1987), 9–42.

² Otto Borst, „Kulturfunktion“; *Ibid.*, „Die Kulturbedeutung der oberdeutschen Reichsstadt am Ende des Alten Reiches,“ in *Babel oder Jerusalem? Sechs Kapitel Stadtgeschichte*, ed. Helmut Böhme, Eberhard Jäckel and Rainer Jooss (Stuttgart: Theiss, 1984), 201–303, 468–508.



Fig. 27. Bernardo Bellotto, called Canaletto, Dresden from the Right Bank of the Elbe above the Augustus Bridge, 1748.
© Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden.

the city of the 18th century in the last few decades.”³ Here Borst is referring to the rise of cultural and intellectual history. He continues that this is due to the fact that the city was no longer in a position to fulfill its traditional tasks: the legal functions were circumvented by the modern state, while the protective function became obsolete; the economic function was modified, if not dissolved by the new economic order which itself had led to the end of what was known as the “city system” of economics.⁴ The emphasis placed on political history has generally decreased. The often numerous records left by cities have made possible studies on subjects and issues to which international research, above and beyond mere “city history” has applied itself with particular interest: from long-term economic and social change, the history of everyday life, mentalities, to interdependent historical sub-disciplines. Examples of successful studies of this type range from Peter Zschunke’s “Confessions and Daily Life in Oppenheim” (1984) to Etienne François’ “Coblenz in the 18th Century”, as well as a study by the latter author on the biconfessional society in Augsburg.⁵

The stream of studies, replete with many facts, written from the perspective of a regional historian has never dried up completely.⁶ Important monographs have been concerned with, for instance, intellectual life in Regensburg between 1750 and 1806,⁷ with the culture and architecture of Leipzig,⁸ Dresden,⁹ Schwäbisch Gmünd,¹⁰ Hanover,¹¹ or with burghers’ daily life at an Austrian market.¹² Newer

³ Ibid., 364–5.

⁴ Ibid., 365–6.

⁵ Zschunke, *Konfession und Alltag in Oppenheim*, François, *Koblenz im 18. Jahrhundert*; Ibid., *Die unsichtbare Grenze: Protestanten und Katholiken in Augsburg 1648–1806* (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1991).

⁶ Borst, „Kulturfunktionen“, 573–4, fn. 46.

⁷ Edmund Neubauer, *Das geistig-kulturelle Leben der Reichsstadt Regensburg: 1750–1806* (München: Wölfle, 1979).

⁸ Czok, „Kultur und Baukunst“, 87–104.

⁹ Siegfried Hoyer, „Bürgerkultur einer Residenzstadt—Dresden im 18. Jahrhundert“, in *Städtische Kultur*, ed. Rausch, 105–116.

¹⁰ Klaus-Jürgen Herrmann, *Barock in Schwäbisch Gmünd: Aufsätze zur Geschichte einer Reichsstadt im 18. Jahrhundert* (Schwäbisch Gmünd: Stadtarchiv, 1981).

¹¹ Siegfried Müller, *Leben im alten Hannover: Kulturbilder einer deutschen Stadt* (Hanover: Schlüter, 1986).

¹² F.O. Roth, „Bürgerlicher Alltag im Markte Schwanberg im 18. Jahrhundert“, *Mitteilungen des steiermärkischen Landesarchivs* 35/36 (1986): 71–104.

histories of cities, which give more attention to the cultural and intellectual history of the 18th Century, are for example E. Eger (ed.), *Geschichte der Stadt Speyer*, 2 Vols. (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1983), or W. Ribbe, *Geschichte Berlins* (Munich, C.H. Beck, 1988).

We find a multifaceted picture of burgher culture in the period following the Peace of Westphalia; the cities appear as centers of education and learning;¹³ public libraries strongly influenced the cultural life of even small towns no less than theaters or the, on occasions, remarkably rich music scene.¹⁴ Borst argues that it would be easy to write a multi-volume work on the “cultural history of the collecting conducted by burghers in cities”, the botanical, entomological or paleontological cabinets which many burghers possessed.¹⁵ Finally, one should remember the rich historiography of the 18th century, which has hardly been researched within the necessary context. When one draws the threads of the individual accounts together, the contours of a cultural “style” of the enlightened burghers comes into better focus.

The rational collecting and organizing, the amateur academic occupations and reading, these phenomena would appear to conform to the principles of city planning; a new hygiene, a changed attitude towards nature and cool neoclassical furniture reflected a transformed value system. Many of these changes did not stem directly from burgher origins, and the new innovations did not always enjoy broad acceptance, especially within smaller towns. One task for future research is thus the study of the cultural diffusion, and the social structure of those levels of society which carried cultural trends, most notably in the provinces. A particular significance should be attributed to the cultural interests and achievements of the early modern civil servants, alongside clergymen and teachers an important group in the educated strata of urban society at the end of the old empire.¹⁶

¹³ Borst, „Kulturfunktionen“, 380; and see his „Kulturbedeutung“, 218.

¹⁴ Peter Karstedt, *Studien zur Soziologie der Bibliothek* (Wiesbaden: Harassowitz, 1965²); Walter Senn, ed. *Aus dem Kulturleben einer süddeutschen Kleinstadt: Musik, Schule und Theater der Stadt Hall in Tirol in der Zeit vom 15. bis zum 19. Jahrhundert* (Innsbruck: Tyrolia-Verlag, 1938).

¹⁵ Borst, „Kulturfunktionen“, 385; Czok, „Kultur und Baukunst“, 93; about Berlin see Friedrich Nicolai, *Beschreibung der königlichen Residenzstädte Berlin und Potsdam, aller daselbst befindlichen Merkwürdigkeiten und der umliegenden Gegend*, 3 vols. (Berlin 1786, reprint Berlin: Haude & Spener, 1980³).

¹⁶ Hans Hattenhauer, „Beamtentum und Literatur im Barockzeitalter. Aus dem Leben Georg Neumarks“, *Der Staat* 20 (1981): 31–53.

Another important field of research, about which all too little is known, is the area of *reading* and the history of burgher libraries. It is only rarely that one can achieve a detailed picture of book collections such as those of Würzburg administrative civil servant Adam Kahl. His library of 200 volumes contained hand-written manuscripts, a Blockbuch of 1471, the “Defensorium inviolatae virginitatis Mariae” by Johann Eysenhut, incunabula and early prints, in addition leaflets, theological works, prayer and pilgrimage books, further 50 to 60 tomes with historical, legal, poetic and theological texts. A library of this kind represented even among the higher strata an exception. The wealthy goldsmith from Augsburg David Altenstetter—who was suspected to be a follower of Caspar Schwenckfeld—possessed a pre-Reformation Bible, the sermons of Tauler, the “Nachfolge Christi”, attributed to Thomas von Kempen, and the commentary on the New Testament by Erasmus—this was the sum total of his collection.

Inventories of bequeathed property in Frankfurt allow further insights into the reading habits of the middle strata of burghers in the 16th and 17th centuries. The tavern waiter Hangemantel, for example, owned Luther’s translation of the Bible, works of moral elevation, a book on the Reformation in Frankfurt, also Johannes Coler’s “Oekonomik”, a type of household handbook which, in addition to practical tips for good family fathers, included astrological and medical advice. This “bestseller” of the early modern period, which was published for the first time in 1596, was also to be found in the book collection of the tavern waiter Franz Dilch, who possessed as well a religious devotional book and a volume on herbs. Even Christoph Mann, servant of a certain Dr. Ruland, had a *corpus iuris*, the work on political trade by Goldast, Fronsperger’s war book and other volumes in his possession. The imperial postmaster Johann von den Birghden owned a Merian topographical work and Münster’s cosmography (something which is not surprising in the case of a postal chief), also short stories by Boccaccio and religious texts.

Rolf Engelsing has developed several basic principles for research into this area.¹⁷ Using Bremen as a case study for the analysis of

¹⁷ Rolf Engelsing, *Analphabetentum und Lektüre*; and see his „Die Perioden der Lesergeschichte in Deutschland“ in his *Zur Sozialgeschichte deutscher Mittel- und Unterschichten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978²), 112–154.

the library of well-educated citizens, which contained into the second third of the 18th century predominantly Latin works with religious and historical contents, he describes the “reading revolution”, which was heralded by the emergence of popular, light-weight literature, thus providing likewise evidence of a change in the style of literature. If people had up to this point only a few books, among them usually the Bible—which was read again and again—according to Engelsing, in the second half of the 18th century a transition to more “wide-ranging” reading of *numerous* works took place;¹⁸ coffee houses and, above all, the many reading societies were the places where discussions were conducted on these works.¹⁹ In this way, there was an increase in works read for pleasure in the catalogues of the publishing houses, a literary market became established and the social role of the professional writer emerged.²⁰

How these processes actually unfolded in reality, how for instance the “reading revolution” manifested itself in small towns, what and how much was read there, all these questions can only be answered adequately by detailed, for example, studies. Is it case possible to draw general conclusions from Hildegard Neumann’s findings on Tübingen? Even around 1800, books with almost exclusively religious contents were to be found almost everywhere. The poems of Gellert were the only lines of poetic verse to be consumed by the lower strata of the urban society, whereas Schiller and Goethe at first appeared only in very limited print-runs around the mid-19th century.²¹

The cities were—and this was one of their most important cultural functions—communication centers, incubation areas for the mass press. In the second half of the 18th century the number of newly launched periodicals rose dramatically. Ten percent of some 2,000 publications dealt with literature—the structural transformation of free-time led to a growing demand for entertainment.²² In

¹⁸ Engelsing, „Perioden,“ 141–144.

¹⁹ For an overview see Prüsener, „Lesegesellschaften“.

²⁰ Bernhard Zimmermann, „Leseublikum, Markt und soziale Stellung des Schriftstellers in der Entstehungsphase der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft,“ in Propyläen Geschichte der Literatur, vol. 4 (Berlin: Propyläen-Verlag, 1983), 524–549.

²¹ Hildegard Neumann, *Der Bücherbesitz Tübinger Bürger zwischen 1750 und 1850. Ein Beitrag zur Bildungsgeschichte des Kleinbürgertums* (München: Selbstverl., 1978).

²² Möller, *Vernunft und Kritik*, 268–280; Martens, *Botschaft der Tugend*.

addition to the countless insignificant printed works, one can also find “Letters relating to the newest literature”, edited by Lessing with Friedrich Nicolai and Moses Mendelssohn, Wieland’s “Teutscher Merkur”, Schiller’s “Thalia”, or the “Horen”, prepared for publication by Goethe and Schiller together.

The structure of this growing literary market, the organization of the book trade in terms of regional differences for instance, remains an important research task. An important paradigmatic study, with an interdisciplinary approach, has been written by Hazel Rosenstrauch.²³

The picture of the cultural function of the German city in the 18th century is still not as clear as would be desirable, despite numerous individual studies. A number of questions still demand a more precise answer. Which books were read, particularly in the case of the smaller towns? What music and which plays were performed there? The fact that the—within a European context—“great” works of architecture, music and the creative arts were produced almost exclusively within the cultural milieu of courtly society and the nobility, further reduced the “cultural function” of the city in the late Holy Roman Empire.

²³ Hazel Rosenstrauch, „Buchhandelsmanufaktur und Aufklärung: Die Reformen des Buchhändlers und Verlegers Ph. E. Reich (1717–1787). Sozialgeschichtliche Studie zur Entwicklung des literarischen Marktes,“ *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens* XXVI, 1 (1985): 1–129.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE WAY TO ARCADIA

Is it merely by chance that the 18th century, the century of the rising and ever more self-confident *Bürgertum*, brought at the same time the literary genre of utopia to the pinnacle of its development? In 1719 the first example of the genre was published: Daniel Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe". A year later, the book could be found in German and was quickly followed by other utopian novels. The best known example is Johann Gottfried Schnabel's "Insel Felsenburg" of 1731: four shipwrecked sailors find themselves stranded on a distant island. After numerous disputes, an ideal community emerges, burgher virtues and genuine Christianity (with a Protestant bias) color human relations. Honesty, trust in God, an ethics of hard work, and the ability to achieve success, likewise economic skill—these are the qualities of the heroes of this and other tales with a background similar to Robinson Crusoe; civic qualities which proved themselves in the cultivation of nature and the foundation of rational, organized communities.

"Back to nature" in the 18th century meant the same as "back to reason", the cleansing of culture from all that was "unnatural", which was interpreted simultaneously as irrational.¹ This conception constructed utopia from a harmoniously functioning community of exotic "noble savages" or simple farmers²—ideal images, and hence contrasts to the reality of 18th century society. This constituted the political, contemporary critical character of many utopian texts—Heinse's "Ardinghello oder die glückseligen Inseln" ("Ardinghello of the blessed islands"), which appeared two years before the outbreak of the French Revolution, offers the most famous example, which was even then regarded as "dangerous".³

¹ Panajotis Kondylis, *Die Aufklärung im Rahmen des neuzeitlichen Rationalismus* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1981), 355.

² Olga von Hippel, *Die pädagogische Dorf-Utopie der Aufklärung* (Langensalza: Beltz 1939).

³ Möller, *Fürstenstaat*, 456.



Fig. 28. Johann Ehrenfried Schumann after Georg Melchior Kraus, Johann Wolfgang Goethe with a Silhouette, 1778. © Goethemuseum, Frankfurt a. M.

On the other hand, the 18th century was also familiar with the distant dream of a classless, rational and natural society; we saw these ideals in the orders and clubs of the Enlightenment. In Klopstock's "Deutscher Gelehrtenrepublik" [The German Republic of Learned Men] of 1774, the convergence of literary genres with societal reality becomes for the first time particularly easy to comprehend. The image of the ideal state which unfolds in this work by an original writer appears to be a call for the exclusive literary circles which Klopstock was to found half a decade later.

Others attempted to distance themselves physically from their burgher reality and "denaturalized" social reality; they sought to go at least part of the way to Arcadia. The history of the idyllic country trip belongs within this context, also those of the garden on the outskirts of the city, or the house in the countryside, in which many—in the humanistic tradition—find their *tusculum*. Do not the ideal landscapes of Philipp Hackert, Salomon Gessner, Ferdinand Kobell and others, which began to decorate the homes of burghers, act as a surrogate landscape, guaranteeing the appropriation of nature in order to offer opposing images to the civilized urban environment? Certainly, these landscapes are expressions of a longing which seem to have reached its destination: the light of Claude Lorraine, which shimmers through many of the landscapes of Hackert and his contemporaries, is the light of Italy.

A new opening to the art of the peninsula was created by two books in particular: Johann Joachim Winckelmann's work of 1755, "Thoughts on the imitation of Greek works in painting and the art of sculpture" and his "History of Ancient Art" of 1764: his concern was the establishment of a theoretical system for art which, though it focussed mainly upon Greek art, was constructed on the basis of an Italian perspective.⁴ Winckelmann, too, had an utopia as his starting point: the idea that there was a golden age in the early morning of humanity, where, in the paradise-like open countryside of Greece, the gods were still close to man. Under the "soft and pure sky" of the Aegean world in a natural, free society, that type of art was created in which, from the range of realities, an ideal was formed.

⁴ Cf. Norbert Miller, "Europäischer Philhellenismus zwischen Winckelmann und Byron," in *Propyläen-Geschichte der Literatur: Literatur und Gesellschaft der westlichen Welt: Aufklärung und Romantik (1700–1830)*, vol. 4. (Berlin: Propyläen-Verlag, 1983), 315–366.

Winckelmann spoke of “the impossibility of description”, of beauty which could no longer be rationally understood. This lay in that “noble simpleness and quiet greatness”, which in his eyes corresponded to the freedom and naturalness of their creator. With the end of this freedom, so began the fall of Greek culture.

More significant than the political implications of classical art theory remained, for the German reader, the fact that the apologist of classical Greece transformed the enthusiastic view of art into a kind of religion. If many Germans held the world of beauty to be their actual Fatherland, then Winckelmann had a not insignificant part in this.

The functions of the real Greece—the knowledge of which constrained neither Winckelmann nor Schiller or Hölderlin in their flights of fantasy—was taken over in a strange amalgamation process by Italy. The land “where the lemons bloom” established itself as the ideal opposing world to that of the German small states: under a southern sky one found oneself; lead—in so far as one had the means to do so—a bohemian and free life in observing and appreciating beauty, like the inhabitants of the utopian republics on the “blissful islands”.

Few (including Herder) were left untouched by Italy, hardly any saw the problems of the country, like Johann Gottfried Seume on his famous “walk to Syrakus” (1803). The tradition of the admirer extended from Heinse and Moritz up to Jacob Burckhardt, whose thought perhaps for a last time made the sublimation functions visible which Winckelmann aesthetics could assume in the sinking world of old Europe.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE INVENTION OF THE CULTURAL HISTORY OF THE GERMAN BOURGEOISIE: ARTWORKS AS SOURCES AND *LIEUX DE MÉMOIRE**

1. *Pictures of German Burgher Culture during the Early Modern Period: Some Remarks Concerning Quellenkritik*

When the German edition of this book was published in 1991 it was not yet exactly *en vogue* to take paintings, architecture, and other objects in addition to texts seriously as historical sources. The idea that one might read art works as semantic structures was unusual—at least in Germany. Today this is no longer the case. A linguistic turn in cultural studies seems to have been followed by an iconic turn, and historians are beginning to discover art works as sources. Francis Haskell described the long pre-history of this development in his inspiring book, *History and its Images*.¹ His description reaches up to the analysis of the oeuvre of the Dutch historian Johan Huizinga, for whom paintings were not only first-rate sources for the history of mentality, but also formed effective historical images as for no other of his contemporaries. Indeed, one can recognize instantly how his perceptions of the late Middle Ages in the Flemish/Burgundian cultural area were formed through the paintings of the brothers van Eyck, Rogier van der Weyden or the sculptures of Claus Sluter. This is the point of departure for his famous book, *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*.²

It may also be that the conventional image of German burgher culture might have been tacitly shaped by images. For history becomes real in our imagination, and whether we like it or not, in images as

* This chapter was written for the english edition in 2004.

¹ Francis Haskell, *History and its Images: Art and Interpretation of the Past*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993.

² *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*, trans. Rodney J. Payton and Ulrich Mammitzsch. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996 (Dutch: *Herfsttij der Middeleeuwen. Studie over levens- en gedachtenvormen der veertiende en vijftiende eeuw in Frnkrijk en de Nederlanden*. Haarlem: H.D. Tjeenk Willink, 1919).

well. But which objects of early modern times—paintings, graphics, sculptures and goods, even architecture—now convey such perceptions of past “reality”? The great cultural histories show examples, and a lot of these works are still important today because they make rich material accessible in the form of visual documents. But all this has not yet been made available systematically. The number of visual testimonies and art works in the broadest sense that allow access to “early modern burgher culture” is not as large as one might assume.

It is a remarkable finding that the German cultural sphere, in a narrow sense, did not develop any tradition of burgher genre-images that could be compared approximately in number and quality with the Netherlandish ones. One consistently reverts to Netherlandish art when the life of the burghers of the sixteenth and seventeenth century has to be illustrated—such as the enchanting interior decorations of Vermeer, Pieter de Hooch or Gabriel Metsu and other masters of the Golden Age.

An explanation why a comparable image-culture did not exist in the empire would have to deal with the factors responsible for the flourishing of the Netherlandish art market, with its very specific structures.³ One of the most important preconditions was at first sight a paradox: Calvinism was iconoclastic, but only as concerned sacred images and space. In other words, in the Netherlands the possibility of religiously motivated investments in art was limited. Even costly sepulchral art remained uncommon and was reserved for regents or naval heroes—e.g., the grave of admiral de Ruyter in the Nieuwe Kerk in Amsterdam. On the other hand, the means for cultural investment were available abundantly in the trading nation. Also, the demand for figural representations is well attested. Reliable estimates suggest that about 50,000 pictures were painted yearly in the Netherlands during the seventeenth century!⁴ Jan van Goyen alone produced 1,200 images during his lifetime . . .

Important preconditions for the encroachment of new genres can be found in these circumstances. People did not want religious pictures,

³ See Michael North, *Art and Commerce in the Dutch Golden Age*. New Haven/London 1997, and Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches. An interpretation of Dutch culture in the Golden Age*. New York: Knopf, 1987.

⁴ See A. van der Woude, “The volume and value of paintings in Holland at the time of the Dutch Republic”, in: David Freedberg/Jan de Vries, eds., *Art in History, History in Art. Studies in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Culture*. Santa Monica, Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1991, pp. 285–329.

which elsewhere (namely in Italy, which was still a cultural leader) constituted by far the largest proportion of art production. Therefore, artists were forced to find other subjects, of which allegories, landscapes and genre-images were the most important. Added to this is a factor that makes a decisive difference, and in which the difference from German conditions is to be found: the political and social conditions of the freedom-loving Dutch republic and its burgher community, which gained its independence from the Spanish monarchy in a long and bloody war. The “anti-feudal” character of Netherlandish culture, which was expressed precisely in the *bürgerlich* [‘bourgeois’] images of the genre, was also a consequence of the revolutionary form in which state-formation occurred. It was an integral component of Netherlandish identity, more than in any other European country, except possibly Switzerland, which started its path to independence much earlier.

In the German empire, the courts of the worldly and clerical rulers and the Viennese imperial court dictated cultural patterns. And here paintings of interiors, of burghers’ formal gatherings and of drinking parties, which the Dutch hung in their houses, were not to be found.

The paintings and their topics therefore can function as subtle indicators for certain aspects of cultural, political, and social relations. Their content points to cultural models; they become lifestyle elements, and they can become instruments to mark “subtle [social] differences”. It would be completely wrong to interpret them only as “copies” of reality as though they were an imperfect form of photographic reproduction of reality (even photos are never simply reproductions of reality). So, one has to pose the question: “What information can a work of art depicting the lifestyle of German burghers provide to the historian?”⁵

As regards the Netherlandish genre-paintings, a lively discussion regarding their reality content has developed. This discussion ties in with Erwin Panofsky’s decoding of the symbolic meanings of seemingly realistic illustrations and some of Eddy de Jongh’s works.⁶ Svetlana

⁵ Bernd Roeck, *Das historische Auge. Kunstwerke als Zeugen ihrer Zeit. Von der Renaissance zur Revolution*. Göttingen 2004.

⁶ Erwin Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting: its Origins and Character*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953; Eddy de Jongh, “Erotica in vogelperspectief. De dubbelzinnigheid van een reeks 17de eeuwse genrevoorstellingen”, in: *Simiolus* 3 (1968/69), pp. 22–74; idem, “Realisme en schijnrealisme in de Hollandse schilderkunst

Alpers has argued, in contrast to iconological speculations, that the pictures allow insights into the visual culture of their time.⁷ She proved this by establishing relationships to the natural sciences, to the cartography and to the optics of the seventeenth century. The ideal of the painter was to show the world as his aesthetic glance perceived it. The most recent contribution to this debate illustrates the attempt to recover traces of the “little ice age” in Dutch landscape paintings. Comparison with meteorological results demonstrates that Netherlandish painters did paint real weather conditions—and also realistic types of clouds. But in almost every instance aesthetic priorities, the demands of composition, for example, and accuracy of detail dominated—for instance, when Aert van der Neer represents a sunset over a winter landscape. On late cold winter afternoons, meteorologists agree, cumulus clouds as van Neer painted them almost never occur.⁸ So the painters of the seventeenth century displayed not merely (meteorological) reality, but also “staged skies”.

The comparison of painted clouds with real weather conditions is extremely interesting for historians who use art works as sources because it demonstrates very clearly the limits of the interpretation of images. Regarding the iconological interpretation of genre paintings, truth seems to lie somewhere in the middle. Even Svetlana Alpers does not reject completely the thesis that Netherlandish art contained encoded messages. She objects only to the extremes of this approach. It seems that art historians have the greatest success when they try to reconstruct the vocabulary and the grammar that were at the artist’s disposal when he wanted to entertain the observer with picture puzzles.

This debate shall only be mentioned here, because it is a good example of how complex the “reality” of pictures can be. No comparable discussion concerning early modern German art, and especially genre painting, has yet developed. A lot of what has been

van de zeventiende eeuw”, in: *Rembrandt en zijn tijd, catalogue of the exhibition*, Brussels, 1971, pp. 143–195; idem, “Tot lering en vermaak. Betekenissen van Hollandse genrevorstellungen uit de zeventiende eeuw”, *Catalogue of the exhibition*, Amsterdam, 1976.

⁷ Svetlana Alpers, *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983.

⁸ Franz Ossing, “Der unvollständige Himmel. Zur Wolkendarstellung der holländischen Malerei des 17. Jahrhunderts”, in: *Die ‘Kleine Eiszeit’. Holländische Landschaftsmalerei im 17. Jahrhundert*. Berlin: SMPK, Gemäldegalerie, 2001, pp. 41–53, p. 46.

discussed with reference to Dutch art could also be relevant for German conditions—although there was no German art market that could keep pace with the Dutch one as regards quantitative and especially qualitative criteria.

An exchange of letters from 1620 regarding the iconographic program of the ‘Golden Hall’ in the Augsburg *Rathaus* sheds light on the iconographic skills of German councilmen of the seventeenth century. The letters were exchanged by the buyers, the patricians of the city, and the author of the *concetto*, the Jesuit Matthäus Rader.⁹ It shows that even the elites of an important imperial city were just barely able to identify the allegories of justice and power—*iustitia* and *fortitudo*. For less current allegories they requested a decoding by the humanist scholar. This significant example shows that the abilities of burghers to decode such images often were not well developed. Many of those who ordered paintings of their interiors or their houses, or bought a still life, perhaps really did not want anything other than reproductions of their houses or of a standard still-life motif.

In looking at the representations of the burgher environment we must expect a certain degree of encoding. But we should beware of expecting seriously “intellectual” picture systems. Another point is that we usually are dealing with *forced stagings*, such as the skies over Dutch winter landscapes. We have already pointed to the identifiable differences between city images, the “ideal cities” of the pictures, and reality.¹⁰

Or, to put it more precisely, we encounter in such presentations of *reality* the *construction of an image*: for example the “beautiful” picture of the city can be read as a political allegory of well-ordered authority (in the German world there is no example as eloquent as Pietro Lorenzetti’s “Buon governo” in the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena).¹¹ Teasing out the preconditions of such constructions of reality is the goal of historical image-hermeneutics. Of course this applies generally to questions regarding the reality of images.

In one respect, early modern art works speak through reflections of past realities by using the real world of objects of their epoch,

⁹ See *Elias Holl und das Augsburger Rathaus*. Regensburg: Pustet, 1985, pp. 38–185.

¹⁰ Vgl. Roeck/Behringer, *Bild der Stadt*.

¹¹ Nicolai Rubinstein, “Political Ideas in Sieneese Art: the Frescoes of Ambrogio Lorenzetti and Taddeo di Bartolo in the Palazzo Pubblico”, in: *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, XXI (1958), pp. 179–207.

which can occur in the most different contexts and can be loaded with various meanings. The specific appearance of a river mill or a treadmill-run crane can be reconstructed through numerous city views. Representations of Saint Joseph show casually which tools a carpenter used. Saints' portraits are often excellent sources for reconstructions of everyday life in the early modern period. Occasionally we also see objects themselves, such as furniture, crockery, religious items (mainly from the sphere of the upper strata) which allow conclusions about burgher life at the beginning of the modern era. And there are buildings, and especially inventories, which give information about room use and the placement of objects.

But as a whole, the rare representations of *burgher interiors* normally show an ennobled version of the (Protestant) burgher ambience, which once was characterized as a consequence of the Reformation: orderliness, crockery shelves with plentiful silver and gold, beautiful furniture and panelling, the family members arranged as harmonic compositions—the father mostly in a position that emphasizes his importance, his glance and gesture those of a man of *gravitas*—of graveness and strictness. Before the seventeenth century, in Germany there are hardly any examples of such interior views of burgher households or workshops, arguably for the reasons mentioned above. A number of images from sixteenth-century Augsburg revealing the city's patriciate dancing in fancy colourful dresses are among the real *lieux de mémoire* of burgher culture in early modern times. Interestingly, the patricians do not wear contemporary clothing here: they are dressed in fancy clothes of a large number of different epochs. This may reflect a real costume ball; it is clear that, in each case, the elites of the city wanted to be placed in a socially legitimizing tradition. These images helped elites to emphasize the historical basis of their position: the images served the invention of tradition, not coincidentally at a time of grave crisis in urban society.¹²

2. *The Image of the Burgher: What Portraits Tell Us*

The “career” of burghers' portraits in Germany also deserves separate attention because of its importance. Such images are first-class

¹² Roeck, *Stadt in Krieg und Frieden*.

sources for the cultural history of the bourgeoisie. The portrait, which claims to depict a person the way “he/she looked”, has a long history, which dates back to antiquity. In the Middle Ages it was long considered to be idolatry to copy the external appearance of people. Extant portraits idealise (especially the series of papal portraits); they are not ‘representational.’ In the thirteenth century this first changed in sculpture; in the fourteenth century it also changed in painting. The preconditions for this development are complex; the deciding factor would seem to have been a long-term process of secularization, which meant that a new and higher importance was accorded to individuals. “Authentic” portraits could be used for purposes of politics (it is no coincidence that early examples were produced in the surroundings of the papal court at Avignon); and they become expressions of a very personal piety, as a well-known early example shows: Giotto’s image of Enrico Scrovegni in the arena-chapel of Padua.

Among the early examples of portrait art, depictions of popes and princes stand out. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, self-portraits of painters and sculptors become more frequent; in Italy one could name the self-portrait of Masaccio in the Brancacci-chapel of Santa Maria del Carmine in Florence; in Germany, the self-portraits of the sculptor Adam Kraft and Peter Vischer in Nuremberg. Among the burgher portraits of the fifteenth century, a number of Florentine marble busts stand out (for example those of Matteo Palmieri and Niccolò Strozzi); Piero della Francesca portrayed maybe himself in three of his paintings and other burghers—as in the “Madonna della Misericordia” in Sansepolcro—; but above all, one must include the famous effigies of Antonello da Messina depicting unidentified persons. Antonello’s art developed, of course, as a result of his contact with Netherlandish painting. It is here and in the paintings of the brothers van Eyck, Hans Memling, and Dieric Bouts that we find further roots of modern portraiture.

These are the major contexts in which the history of burgher portraits of the German cultural sphere belong. German portrait art actually boomed only after the late fifteenth century, in quantitative and qualitative respect: for instance the art of Albrecht Dürer and Hans Holbein’s—real—*lieux de mémoire* of German burgher culture, the paintings of Amberger, Cranach or the fascinating self-portrait of Tobias Stimmer. A long row of masterpieces leads to Anton Graff, Anton Raphael Mengs and Angelika Kauffmann in the eighteenth

century. Tischbein's representation of Goethe is an icon of that epoch's German culture. That the beginning of this tradition reached Germany through economic and cultural contacts with Italy and Flanders cannot be doubted. What value do such depictions and self-portraits have for cultural history?

Behind the interest in the appearance of the actual appearance is probably very often the conviction that the appearance of a person reveals something about his character, therefore allowing us to draw conclusions concerning the specific background of each historical event. Lavater's old ideas on physiognomy still play a subsidiary role here.¹³ One has to admit that the construction of such relationships between physiognomy and character is normally speculative, and has no logical foundation. Even so, historical narratives are full of physiognomical sketches of their main characters, which often emanate from the pictorial tradition;¹⁴ such things are admittedly easy to read, satisfy curiosity, or help to envision historical events. But usually it is not essential for historical analysis to know what kind of physiognomy the *dramatis personae* would have had. Nevertheless, portraits are first-rate sources. Their interpretation depends upon engagement with those groups of persons who can always be sure of the attention of the historical interpretation of arts: first the *artist* or the *artists*, second the *orderer* or the *orderers* (those who commissioned the paintings) or the *buyer*, and third the gradually changing *audience*. These relationships form a network in the context of which the art work can be situated. Many early modern portraits do not show the subjects as they actually looked, but as they wanted to be seen and then commissioned themselves to be painted or carved in stone; they may then reveal something about political and social strategies, and about religious attitudes. Portraits could serve to represent absent individuals and thus can also be placed in the sphere of magical fetishes,¹⁵ and might have been intended to achieve propagandistic effects. The earliest portraits from the burgher sphere may also manifest a legal function: the Arnolfini wedding by van Eyck (London, National

¹³ Johann Kaspar Lavater, *Handbüchlein zur Ausstellung*, Kunsthau Zürich, Zürich 2001.

¹⁴ See Jean Pommier, *Michelet interprète de la figure humaine*, London: 1961.

¹⁵ See Adolf Reinle, *Das stellvertretende Bildnis. Plastiken und Gemälde von der Antike bis ins 19. Jahrhundert*, Zürich/München 1984; Julius von Schlosser, *Geschichte der Porträtbilderei in Wachs*, in: *Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses* (1910), ND Berlin 1993; Roeck, *Historisches Auge*, p. 278.

Gallery) substantiates the validity of a marital engagement.¹⁶ In this way the painting becomes a document.

A further function of realistic representations leads us into the religious mentality of female and male burghers at the turning point from the Middle Ages to modern times. The majority of early portraits appear to be found in connection with religious foundations—from Dürer's "Heller Altar" in Frankfurt to Holbein's "Madonna des Bürgermeisters Meyer" (Darmstadt); one also thinks of funerary art, which often produced consistently "realistic" portraits. Sometimes they were modelled on death masks. The painters by no means produced only ideal pictures. Ghirlandaio availed himself for his painting (hanging today in the Louvre) of an old man with striking ugly growths on his nose of sketches that were evidently depictions of the man's corpse; Dürer painted his aged mother as she looked—an old, haggard and distrustful looking Nuremberg burgher's wife.

In these contexts, the portraits had the function, which every "realistic" portrait has—to maintain the memory, the *memoria*, of the pictured person. But on the other hand (and here a fundamental problem in the history of mentality is raised), the authentic image ensures the presence of the depicted, as did the lifelike wax figures of Florentine burghers that are said to have figuratively populated the churches of the town during the Renaissance.¹⁷ The realistic votive image stands in direct relation to such "fetishes" (Warburg). The question as to whether we are dealing here only with "dead" illustrations or if we can posit a kind of "real presence" leads to the exciting questions posed by historical anthropology of the early modern period.

A further (unsolved) problem of a historical image-hermeneutics is how the *autonomous* portrait relates to such religious representations. Does the image of the individual belong to the context of the same development in the history of piety that brought forth realistic pictures of founders? The *memoria* function of the portrayal demonstrates that individuality is increasingly (if not discovered) *reflected* (therein lies the real kernel of Jacob Burckhardt's famous thesis that

¹⁶ See the disputed essay by Edwin Hall: *The Arnolfini Betrothal. Medieval Marriage and the Enigma of Van Eyck's Double Portrait*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

¹⁷ See Aby Warburg, *Bildniskunst und florentinisches Bürgertum*, Leipzig: Hermann Seemann Nachf., 1902, pp. 29–32.

the Renaissance is the age of the discovery of the individual).¹⁸ And what role does the redefinition of human nature by Renaissance humanism play in these contexts?

Autonomous portraits already appeared in the burgher sphere before the Reformation, but they become really numerous only thereafter. This might follow a logic similar to that of developments in the above-mentioned Dutch art market—namely with the absence of a whole market segment, i.e., the lack of demand for saints' images and other pious representations in Protestant areas.

At the same time, however, the advance of the portrait reminds us that both the Reformation in its different varieties and Renaissance humanism, which was tightly interwoven with religious matters, have in common human attempts to position ourselves more “consciously” in the world and in relation to God. Any attempt to test this hypothesis will have to deal with sixteenth-century portraits as an important source.

At the same time the question of the prestige function of art concerning burgher self-presentation in particular (which of course does not result only from portraits) requires attention, as well as the resulting question of social identity. Some burgher portraits aspire to much “higher” standards. Hans Asper's 1549 image of Colonel Wilhelm Frölich is a head-to-toe portrait of the Swiss soldier. Such portrait types can hardly be found before the second decade of the sixteenth century and derive, when they do appear, from the world of the nobility and the court. The burgher Frölich is therefore represented by means of a pictorial formula that moves him nearer to noble status. His self-representation corresponds to a lifestyle that was also aristocratic in other ways.¹⁹ His arrogance is subdued only by a *memento mori*-text, which was added to the picture: was this an expression of post-Reformation piety and of a bad conscience at the same time? The Zurich ensign Jacob Schwytzer was portrayed by Tobias Stimmer in a quite similar fashion in 1564. These examples show what sorts of “reality” can be found in such pictures.²⁰ It is a reality

¹⁸ Bernd Roeck, “Renaissance”, in: *International Encyclopedia of the social and behavioral sciences*, Neil Smelser, ed., Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2001.

¹⁹ See Bernd Roeck, Motive bürgerlicher Kunstpatronage in der Renaissance. Beispiele aus Deutschland und Italien, in: idem, *Kunstpatronage*, pp. 35–59, here p. 55.

²⁰ See the fascinating study by Michael Baxandall: *Painting and Experience in*

of particular internal attitudes, of the wishes of those who ordered the pictures and of the interests of the buyers—this all, of course, refracted and modified by the intention and abilities of the artist. And it is equally clear that each work of art is finally incommensurable, and has a dimension that is closed to description and historical analysis. The question of how far historical knowledge of the circumstances of an art work influences the perception of this dimension is beyond the scope of this study.

3. *The German Bildungsbürgertum (the Educated Middle Classes)
and the Cultural History of Early Modern Europe:
The Image of the Nineteenth Century*

The history of early modern portraiture does not end with the early modern period. These portraits live on in the “social memory” and they change in the process. Some of Dürer’s portraits, for example, found a tremendous popularity in the common German consciousness because they were reproduced on banknotes that circulated until 2001. His self-portraits had such a fascinating effect that they were ‘attacked’ with acid by vandals. The German burgher at the putative—assumed—pinnacle of his economic and political importance, has, in the collective memory the physiognomy that Dürer gave him so long ago.

But every generation invents its history anew, imagines it in new ways. Popular perceptions of the early modern culture of the bourgeoisie and its lived environment are formed to this day largely by stereotypes and especially by images that the nineteenth century produced for its own purposes. The Wilhelmine *Gründerzeit* in Germany was the great period of the bourgeoisie, an economically prosperous stratum, which suffered under far-reaching political disability, yet still kept its cultural importance. It was after all burghers who wrote the great cultural histories between 1848 and the First World War and it was burghers in particular who could afford to buy up what would today be enormous editions of printed works. The buyers belonged to the *Bildungsbürgertum*, a very German social configuration: the notion

Fifteenth Century Italy. A Primer of the Social History of Pictorial Style, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1972.

cannot be translated and denotes the “educated middle class” between the grand bourgeoisie and the industrial working classes: people who had scientific/scholarly occupations or interests, and who had the time and the means to ‘acquire’ art, whether through observation or by purchasing it. A characteristic common trait of the Wilhelmine *Bildungsbürgertum* was an “ambivalence of thinking and acting between affirmation and opposition in the face of the political and social circumstances of the period.”²¹

This unclear, unstable identity was a precondition of the search for cultural roots. Even a glimpse at cultural history shows ambivalences: many authors such as Johannes Scherr and Gustav Freytag, the author of the “*Bilder aus der deutschen Vergangenheit*” (‘Pictures from the German Past’), sympathized with the ideas of the revolution of 1848; their cultural historical work had a clear political dimension. Their emphasis on the burghers’ cultural role was an argument in favour of the nation-state and for political representation. Their national pride was based on the literature of German classicism, on the music of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert, on German philosophy from Kant to Hegel and also on the pre-history of this inimitable epoch. They were busily discovering the artistic achievements of burghers in the early modern period, their music and literature. These were the foundations for the fragile construction that came to be known as the German “Kulturnation” (meaning simultaneously a cultured nation and national culture), an idea that took on an existence independent from the political nation—a “secret kingdom”, the “secret Germany”, that was the object of much muttering and ‘nostalgia’ in the circle around Stefan George.

But scholarly attention was not the only compliment paid to this idea. Rather, the bourgeoisie appropriated these insights into the past, as well as artefacts for use in building their own burgher *habitus*. History was, so to speak, an aspect of their current lifestyle. They read historical novels, and historical costumes were preferred disguises for carnival. If one went to the opera, Richard Wagner’s “*Meistersinger von Nürnberg*”, for example, offered colourful stereotypes of what the German middle class imagined as “burgher-culture of the sixteenth century”. Wagner himself is, by the way, the classic

²¹ See Klaus Vondung, ed., *Das wilhelminische Bildungsbürgertum. Zur Sozialgeschichte seiner Ideen*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976, p. 18.

representative of the above-mentioned ambivalent attitude: he began as a revolutionary; indeed, he even had to flee abroad after the revolution of 1848—to end as a client of the aristocracy. The “Ring of the Nibelungen” raises this to the realm of symbols: at the end of the mythical twilight of the gods, on the smouldering debris of Valhalla, human history begins with a bourgeois activity, with *work*.

In the nineteenth century, the burgher culture of the late Middle Ages and of the early modern period became available even for use in living rooms. This demonstrates with particular clarity the ambiguity of the *Bildungsbürger* mentality. A gaudy neo-Renaissance style, in oak, was all the rage. It even spilled over to tableware and started to determine the topics of pictures. In Germany, the Renaissance was identified with the bourgeoisie like no other style.²²

The term “Renaissance” was reminiscent primarily of the sixteenth century, therefore of the Reformation and for this reason of *the* hero of Protestant Germans, Luther, even though the styles that were replicated often belonged in fact to the later sixteenth century.

Thus the burgher style of the nineteenth century belonged to the context of the “national philosophy of history,” as formulated by Hegel, according to which the modern era started with the Reformation. Ranke’s presentation of the Reformation spread it to broader circles; this book, which appeared in 1847, was found in nearly every educated burgher household.

This concept fostered images of man as creator of his own world: not only the reformer, but also the iron-hard condottiere; of the ruler, the *Principe* of Machiavelli—and even Nietzsche’s *Blonde Bestie* (blonde/tawny beast), of which Cesare Borgia seems, curiously, to have been the prototype.²³ Here is where the Renaissance cult was to be found at the turn of the century.

This leads to the dark side of the German psyche if one remembers that in the later nineteenth century, not only Jacob Burckhardt’s epochal book *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien* (*The Culture of the*

²² See Anke Hufschmidt, “‘Zwischen Luxus- und Schundwaare’. Überlegungen zur bürgerlichen Wohnung in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts”, in: *Renaissance der Renaissance. Ein bürgerlicher Kunststil im 19. Jahrhundert. Aufsätze*, Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1992, pp. 95–105; 95.

²³ Walter Rehm, “Der Renaissancekult um 1900 und seine Überwindung”, in: *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 54 (1929), also in idem, *Der Dichter und die neue Einsamkeit. Aufsätze zur Literatur um 1900*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969, pp. 34–77.

Renaissance in Italy) of 1860 achieved its maximum distribution, but it was the heyday of arcane books like *Die Renaissance* by Count Gobineau or the *Grundlagen des 19. Jahrhunderts* (*Foundations of the 19th Century*) by Houston Stewart Chamberlain, the son-in-law of Richard Wagner. The national elation after the foundation of the empire intermingled with racist teachings in a baleful way, according to which the “nordic race” and especially the Germans were superior to all other “races”, in particular to the Latins and Jews. Such teachings also found an echo in the German bourgeoisie.

The *other* side of the Renaissance, accessible through the symbolic milieu of neo-Renaissance dwellings and the books that were read there, is defensive. The arrivistes of national sentiment (Aby Warburg) not only used history to legitimate further political ambitions, which resulted in fleet building, in “world politics” and finally in war, but at the same time to legitimate the position achieved in the concert of the Great Powers. But History also offered possibilities to escape from the present, which many experienced as hectic and menacing.

The furniture, the chandeliers and accessories represented solid handicrafts, the opposite of progress of “modernity”, the opposite also of factory-made and mass-produced goods (although such things were often produced in industrial fashion). These anti-modernist roots are reminiscent of the preconditions of pre-Raphaelite art and the Arts-and-Crafts movement in Victorian England. Historical domestic furnishings expressed a longing for tradition, for the “authentic”. People wanted to create spaces to which to withdraw, islands of history in a hectic present. Otto Hirth, the editor of a lavish and therefore immensely expensive book on cultural history at the turn of the century, writes in his foreword: “These pages belong to the magical circle into which we flee from the heartless machinery of the day”. With that he names a precondition of historicism (and perhaps a timeless motif of historical research). Hirth was one of the most prominent exponents of the “Kunstgewerbebewegung”, the German counterpart to the Arts-and-Crafts movement. His opus in several volumes was a work of typographic art, and merely by virtue of its form an argument against modernity and modernism.

One can add to his statement a formulation that gives an explanation for the historical conception of living styles and at the same time illuminates the reasons for historicism in general. Otto Mothes describes in his book *Unser Heim im Schmuck der Kunst* (1880) the concept behind the historicism of the gentlemen’s chamber: “There might

be someone who will prepare himself for the next city council meeting, or for the evening meeting of a public association”, he will read his favorite poets, inspect artworks which are offered for purchase, or paint—“so that, when he has cast off the serious preoccupations of his profession, to which he was forced to dedicate the day, and won back his inner balance, which those cares had disturbed, he can devote himself, in the circle of his loved ones, completely to the happiness of his home.” These are sentences that illustrate the success of the deeply bourgeois notion “*Feierabend*” (leisure-time) in the nineteenth century, though its beginnings were to be found in the sixteenth century.²⁴

The great cultural histories of the period before the First World War belong to these contexts. They are the scholarly equivalents of the historical novels and the neo-Renaissance. From all of this symbolic worlds were constructed: imaginary places, runways, as it were, for fantasy to take flight.

4. *The Lieux de mémoire*

An especially impressive example of the transformations of a German myth with roots in the Middle Ages and early modern period is the story of Dr. Faust, beginning with the *Historia von D. Johann Fausten, dem weit beschreyten Zauberer und Schwarzkünstler* (*History of Dr. Johann Faust, the famous magician and necromancer*). This book, printed anonymously in 1587, was an amalgam of medieval versions. “Faust is the epitome of a German myth.”²⁵ Starting in the sixteenth century, Faust enjoyed a vast popularity. Marlowe’s *Faust* play, often staged in translation in the old German Empire, marked the beginning of the vogue; Goethe’s *Faust*, the climax. Faust’s early modern origin shows through clearly in all versions: he is the rebel who revolts against God and the world, like Luther, his mythical brother.

Again it was the nineteenth century that formed the main features of this ambivalent character into a *topos*, that gave him a visual form: Faust is the intellectual, the challenger of nature; he is the

²⁴ Gottfried Korff, “Feierabend”, in: Etienne François/Hagen Schulze, *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte*, 3 vols., Munich: C.H. Beck, 2001, vol. III, pp. 169–186.

²⁵ Gert Mattenklott, *Faust*, ebd., vol. III, pp. 603–619, p. 604.

German who searches out the farthest, uttermost, deepest secrets of the universe, even at the price of his own destruction. He becomes the German Prometheus and at the same time a prototype of the German scholar in his magnitude and banality, his brilliance and abjection: Einstein and Dr. Mengele, Faust is both in one person.

At the same time, in Goethe's version he serves as witness of the process whereby German culture became bourgeois, and thus "human in his contradictions", a man torn between the two souls that he claims inhabit him, both burgher and scientist.²⁶ This made him a figure with whom the German *Bildungsbürgertum* identified and explains the oddity that a scientist of all people could become a national hero. His creator also came from the world of the burghers, and it was above all bourgeois theater audiences who consumed the Faust plays.

Faust and the "faustic" as a German feature emerge in such different contexts as Oswald Spengler's *Untergang des Abendlandes* or Hanns Eisler's *Faustus*, the "national opera" of the German Democratic Republic. Of course the National Socialists made extensive use of the Faust figure. With them the contemplative scholar, who in Goethe's play has only the "word" at his disposal, but not the ability to act, becomes a hero full of will power and courage. Even his failure turns out to be grandiose.

The Germans' Faust is still for many today the Faust depicted by Otto Schwerdtgeburth's 1864 painting of the character on his "Oster-spaziergang" (Easter walk). But mainly it is the Faust who was created by Gustav Gründgens in his famous film (perhaps even more than Goethe's Faust).

Perceptions of early modern burgher culture were also formed via the originals in museums, but even more so through period-piece historical paintings and countless reproductions, which reach us through books, magazines, films and television daily. The great cultural histories with their opulent illustrations contributed greatly to establishing the *lieux de mémoire* of German burgher culture, and historicizing representations of the nineteenth century had a significant stake in this. One has the impression that it was the nineteenth century which established the "valid" "images" of German burgher

²⁶ Idem, pp. 607, 618.

culture. They became part of the national, the collective memory, which uses precisely these pictures and buildings, memorials and literature as a legitimating backdrop.²⁷ The mighty town halls of the German south, monuments like the “Roland” in Bremen, whole city-ensembles like the little “medieval” ideal towns Rothenburg or Dinkelsbühl, pictures and the memorabilia in museums, but also literary *topoi* together form an ‘irisating’ or kaleidoscopic ensemble. It consists of imaginary plans of the past, phantasmagoria set with fragments of “concrete” history, which ground national—and probably also still social—identity.²⁸

The topic of “house-music” (domestic musical performances), a symbol of German inner-worldly burgher culture, provides a good example. There is no picture that symbolizes this better than Toby Edward Rosenthal’s 1870 painting depicting the composer Johann Sebastian Bach at the spinet, one of his sons with a violin and the rest of the multitudinous family singing. A contemporary image does not exist. But the picture, although far away from any “reality”, is an emblem of an important topos of early modern German culture. It is appropriate that the “house-music” part of the “beginning of leisure time” took shape in the circle around the famous composer. He wrote for his family among other things a little “organ-book”, exercises for the piano, and primarily the “little note-book for Anna Magdalena Bach”.

Or consider Christmas, in Germany still the most important celebration—the family gathers around the Christmas tree, candles shine, colourful balls shimmer and everyone sings—which took on its ideal-typical formulation through pictures only in the nineteenth century, although its origins date back until the year 813, when the 25th of December was declared the birthday of Christ. Until the nineteenth century, Christmas was one of many feasts, with a Christmas market and amusements for the young people.²⁹ It was also an artist of

²⁷ See Pierre Nora, *Les lieux de mémoire*, 3 vols., Paris, Gallimard, 1984–1992; *Rethinking France*. Translated by Mary Trouille under the direction of David P. Jordan. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001.

²⁸ Cf. Ernest Renan, “Was ist eine Nation?”, in: Michael Jeismann and Henning Ritter, eds., *Grenzfälle. Über alten und neuen Nationalismus*, Leipzig: Reclam, 1993, p. 308.

²⁹ See Joseph Perry, “Mastering the (Christmas) Past: Manhood, Memory, and the German ‘War Christmas’”: in: *Themata. Historical Research and Review* 2 (1995), pp. 57–76; Ingeborg Weber-Kellermann, *Das Weihnachtsfest. Eine Kultur- und Sozialgeschichte*

the nineteenth century—Gustav König—who depicted Luther surrounded by his family, under a decorated Christmas tree, the children playing; Melanchthon is there as a guest and shows the son how to aim a crossbow.

This leads to a third *lieu de mémoire* of German burgher culture, namely the Lutheran parsonage. It is the mythic matrix of many first-rank cultural achievements, of the culture of the word—which has been contrasted to the “sensual” culture of the Catholic Germany, the buildings of the great baroque architects, the painting of Southern Germany, the music of Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert.

The parsonage is an intellectual space from which important ‘sons’ of the “people of the poets and thinkers” have emerged right up to the present: Andreas Gryphius for example, Lessing and Lichtenberg, Wieland, Claudius or Jean Paul, Schelling or Dilthey. “Without the parsonage or at least without a Lutheran background the greatest—a Leibniz, a Bach, a Goethe—are not comprehensible”³⁰—according to Robert Minder. One could add other names like Hölderlin, Hegel or Nietzsche: the parsonage is a cultural “biotope” that reaches from old Europe into the modern world and was romantically transfigured beginning in the nineteenth century.

“Everything imaginable has been linked with the Lutheran parsonage” wrote Oliver Jantz. “The life style and the family culture of the German bourgeoisie, German literature and philosophy from the Enlightenment to romanticism, the specific closeness of poetry and philosophy in Germany from Lessing to Nietzsche, the pronounced tendency of German poets and thinkers to search for God in science, art and nature, their emphasis on theory and their tendency toward system and absolutes, but also their inwardness, strengthened by pietism, the addiction of the Germans to absolutes [. . .], their lack of pragmatism, but also their constant reading and piety about education, their tendency to exaggerate the religious and

der Weihnachtszeit, Luzern and Frankfurt: Bucher, 1978; Doris Foitzik, *Rote Sterne, braune Runen. Politische Weihnachten zwischen 1870 und 1970*, Münster and New York: Waxmann, 1997; Werner Abresch, *Fest-Beleuchtung. Der Deutschen liebste Feier: Weihnachten*. Kleve, 1990.

³⁰ Robert Minder, *Das evangelische Pfarrhaus in der deutschen Literatur*, in: idem, *Acht Essays zur Literatur*, Frankfurt a.M. 1969, S. 72. Also see Martin Greiffenhagen, ed., *Das evangelische Pfarrhaus. Eine Kultur- und Sozialgeschichte*, Stuttgart, 1984.

absolute importance of work and profession, state and nation".³¹

The parsonage appears in literature and in illustrations of the nineteenth century as a utopian symbol of an ancient world. It is an independent economic entity, a bourgeois enclave in the countryside, the opposite pole of the modern, industrial world, of mass society. It illustrates the German unity of bourgeois family life—the opposite of the celibate existence of Catholic priests—, Protestant education and national spirit. This was still the dominant image during the Wilhelmine era; under National Socialism, the Protestant pastor's house was an expression of a folkish-mythical substrate of the Germans, the bastion of folkish identity, imagined as having grown out of the blood and the soil.³² And in the eyes of the Nazis it was the site of biological reproduction and the transmitter of valuable hereditary material. The German historian Günter Franz, a pre-eminent National Socialist, was still banging on about this in 1957.³³

It is disputed whether the parsonage was also a social location where German vices like blind faith in established authority and anti-democratic thinking were practiced with the idea of the pastor as the *pater familias* par excellence, enthroned like God at the head of the family table.³⁴ At this level of generalities the thesis is certainly wrong. In the GDR, parsonage and church were areas of relative freedom, and the impulses that would topple the dictatorship of the SED emerged from here, among other places. But there is just as little doubt that the basic reality that the Reformation could not have survived except in league with the German princely state became a deep historical experience which produced a basic respect on the part of Protestant Germans for the state and the establishment. The conspirators of the 20th of July (1944) spent many nights discussing the right of resistance rather than practicing the handling of bombs and explosives, which would have been more practical.

³¹ Oliver Jantz, Das evangelische Pfarrhaus, in: *Erinnerungsorte*, vol. III, pp. 221–238, 221–222.

³² *Ibid.*, 231.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

³⁴ *Ibid.*; Gerhard Schmidtchen, "Terroristische Karrieren. Soziologische Analyse anhand von Fahndungsunterlagen und Prozeßakten", in: Hernert Jäger, Gerhard Schmidtchen and Lieselotte Süllwold, eds., *Lebenslaufanalysen*, Opladen: Bundesministerium des Inneren, 1981, pp. 14–79, esp. 31f.

5. *Was There an Early Modern German National Culture?*

The question of what forms the memory-landscape of Germans became more complex after the reunification of both German states—because two completely different cultures of memory (Etienne François/Hagen Schulze) collided.

They both have their “romantic” points of reference—the Lutheran pastor’s house is not only an institution of the German southwest, but also especially of the east—“Weimar” is a national place, and so is the Wartburg, which at the same time counts among the mythical *lieux de mémoire* of Lutheranism. The ruin of the Hambach castle is another one, a remembrance of the revolutionary bourgeoisie in the run-up to the revolution of 1848, like the ambivalent construction of the German *Reichstag* at the point where east meets west—for some a place of remembrance of the first German democracy, for others a building symbolic of fascism.³⁵

There are also problematic memories to be preserved: of anti-Semitism, which was quite at home among the bourgeoisie, and is still a highly touchy topic today, as the debate about Goldhagen’s thesis shows. Enmity against Jews and generally against foreigners also left its marks in the culture of the German bourgeoisie. Since the late Middle Ages the Jews had been murdered and expelled, the gypsies excluded, minorities distrusted and suppressed,³⁶ and negative cultural codes arose which contributed to the formation of a particularist German identity. Elimination, destruction—as it were the creation of empty spaces—also belongs to any picture of the German past.

A kernel of truth in Goldhagen’s thesis could be that German identity was from the beginning an extremely precarious construction and needed negative foils more than other nations. Until 1806, Germans lived in an empire which was eternal, holy and universal, at least in theory (in the eighteenth century Voltaire jeered that the Holy Roman [German] Empire was neither holy, Roman nor an empire). As a matter of fact, until the time of Voltaire, the Germans felt themselves to be primarily Saxons, Prussians, Bavarians or burghers of their imperial city. The idea of a German nation had existed for

³⁵ See Bernd Roeck, “Reichstag”, in: *Erinnerungsorte*, vol. I, pp. 138–155.

³⁶ See Bernd Roeck, *Außenseiter, Randgruppen, Minderheiten. Fremde im Deutschland der Frühen Neuzeit*. Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993.

some time already, but it was found mainly among the intellectual elites and from the beginning needed opposition. The Germany of the humanists stood against the cultural dominance of Italy, the German Reformers against the universal claims of Rome; imperial patriotism which sprouted in the seventeenth century was conditioned by the dramatic experience of the Thirty Years' War,³⁷ which, looking back, appears as a kind of founding catastrophe of (modern) German history.

It is no coincidence that the literary societies that spanned all classes and at which we have glanced above began in the final stage of that dreadful war. They aimed to cleanse the German language and therefore also to create a German national culture. This went against "Überfremdung" (excessive foreign influence), against the products of French culture and lifestyle, which swamped the empire (or rather: its economic and cultural elites) in the age of Louis XIV. The "honest, original German" with his frugal way of life was opposed to the Frenchman. This German self-image retained its importance until the First World War, as the honest German was set against the sly, dallying "Welschen" (Italians and Frenchmen). Nineteenth-century Germans thought they could locate the origins of these differences as early as the age of the Crusades. For the French, WWI was a battle of "civilization against barbarism", while for the Germans it was the defence of their proper and reasonable rights, because their people, according to their opinion, had been damaged by a jealous neighbour. The perception that the Germans and their culture stood "against" something and drew their right to exist from this antithesis reached absurd dimensions in the age of the National Socialists. German troopers held the line at the Urals to defend civilization against the Bolsheviks, Jews and "Russian sub-humans".

The question as to the existence of a German national culture that does not define its identity by means of separation and in negativity should be answered with a definition of what exactly it means to be "German", because a clear definition of the German nation does not exist before 1871 (and thereafter ideas about the German borders unfortunately changed). The simplest answer was the claim

³⁷ Adam Wandruszka, *Reichspatriotismus und Reichspolitik zur Zeit des Prager Friedens von 1635*. Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1955.

that German culture is universal, as it were, or not of this world—the empire of the Germans appeared therefore to be a spiritual empire, which could not be compassed by restrictive earthly borders.

Greek art seemed to the avant-garde of the classicistic aesthetic to have such a great affinity to the spirit of German humanism during the closing eighteenth and the nineteenth century that sometimes the Greeks seemed to be the real Germans. With the construction of the spiritual empire of German culture, the music of Austrians like Haydn or Schubert and, for example, the art of southern Italy under the Staufen and even the painting of Rembrandt could be appropriated and naturalized.³⁸

As a dialectical counter-movement to this universalism, there were attempts to determine what was truly “German” in style, in artworks and literature, although nobody could actually ignore that the culture of the German-speaking area—like any other “national culture” too—can be understood as a result of manifold transfer processes. A truly universal spirit like Goethe tried in 1772 in his famous youthful work “Erwin von Steinbach” to celebrate the cathedral in Strasbourg (then Straßburg) as a high point of “German architecture”.³⁹ Goethe wanted to find some measure of justice for the German people, which was “called barbaric by the whole world”: he is writing against those who would have dismissed Erwin’s work as “Gothic”—Gothic was in Goethe’s time a bad word—rather than tell the whole world: this is German architecture, our architecture.

Now Steinbach is a mythical figure, who probably never lived, and the cathedral in Strasbourg bears no testimony to German burgher culture, but rather to the French Gothic cathedral style, as does the Cologne cathedral, which in the nineteenth century possessed the rank of a national monument. As these matters became clear to art historians the search seemed to be more difficult, but all the more urgent. So the German Renaissance was invented—which we already have met in the burgher households of the late

³⁸ See Augustinus P. Dierick, “Julius Langbehn’s ‘Rembrandt als Erzieher’: Politics and Cultural Esthetics”, in: *Mosaic* 21 (1988), pp. 25–35; Doris Mendlewitsch, *Volk und Heil. Vordenker des Nationalsozialismus im 19. Jahrhundert*. Rheda-Wiedenbrück: Daedalus 1988; Hildegard Chatellier, “Julius Langbehn—un réactionnaire à la mode en 1890”, in: *Revue d’Allemagne* 14 (1982), pp. 55–70.

³⁹ See Hans Belting, *Die deutschen und ihre Kunst. Ein schwieriges Erbe*, Munich: C.H. Beck, 1992, p. 15.

nineteenth century. And on the eve of the First World War a style which was named “deutsche Sondergotik” (German ‘special’ Gothic) was discovered.⁴⁰ This began a tradition in which the art historian Wilhelm Pinder published a whole series of voluminous books on German art since the high Middle Ages—including a volume on the ‘burgher age’, starting in the middle of the fifteenth century. The same Pinder in 1933 professed, along with other German scholars, an ardent commitment to Adolf Hitler and to the National Socialist state.

Anyone who tries to write a history of “German culture” should know what a bizarre tradition he or she is entering. Trying to grasp a national culture before the genesis of a national state is in fact a paradox. A recent, very short history of “German literature” is restricted, quite logically, to a presentation of literature since the time of Goethe. An alternative seems to me to consist of taking as the decisive moment in the development of a notably and properly “German” culture its variety, determined by political fragmentation—and thus to declare as secondary the problem of whether or not this all is “German”. Wolfgang Braunfels’ *Kunst im Heiligen Römischen Reich* in several volumes represents a pragmatic, sympathetic answer to an ideologically loaded question. Early modern German burgher culture also was marked by this variety, as well as by the competition of towns and territories in the imperial system, which was to a considerable extent carried out in the field of culture.

The geographical location of Germany in the heart of Europe played a great role in this: for this reason, Germany’s culture also integrated influences of the most varied kind—stimuli that came from France, the Netherlands or from Spain; the theater of Marlowe and Shakespeare took root in Germany in the seventeenth century and affected German literature. And, of course, the art of Italy, including music, had a formative influence.⁴¹ The paintings of Dürer, the sonnets of the baroque poets, the music of Mozart or the architecture

⁴⁰ Kurt Gerstenberg, *Deutsche Sondergotik. Eine Untersuchung über das Wesen der deutschen Baukunst im späten Mittelalter*, Munich: Delphin Verlag, 1913.

⁴¹ Bernd Roeck, “Venice and Germany: Commercial Contacts and Intellectual Inspirations”, in: und Bernard Aikema and Beverly Louise Brown, eds., *Renaissance Venice and the North. Crosscurrents in the Time of Bellini, Dürer and Titian*. Milan: Bompiani, 1999, pp. 45–55.

of Balthasar Neumann—all this and much else owes a debt to cultural exchange.

But these are questions that go far beyond the topic of this book. Describing the history of the complicated interplay, of the mutual influences and transformations of European cultures is a challenge for further research.⁴²

⁴² See Peter Burke, *Kultureller Austausch*, Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2000, pp. 9–40.

SOURCES

SOURCE ONE

DÜRER

From the letters and the art-theory of the painter Albrecht Dürer

Albrecht Dürer, 1471–1528, is widely regarded as the most important German painter of the Renaissance. He bequeathed, besides his paintings and an extensive artistic oeuvre, theoretical writings and a remarkable correspondence. In 1494–1495 and 1505–1506 he travelled to Venice (and to some other Italian cities) in search of inspiration for his own art in what was then the cultural centre of Europe. His travels and especially his woodcuts and engravings made him the most important agent of the cultural transfer between the North and the South.

To his contemporaries in Germany, Dürer was a craftsman, not an artist in the modern sense. One of his letters from Venice shows that Italians, in this respect very modern, appreciated him for both his humanistic learning and his painting.

Source: Albrecht Dürer. *Schriftlicher Nachlass*. Hans Rupprich (ed.). Berlin 1966.

Translation: Olga E. Pollack, Dr. Andrew C. Gow. (vol. I: pp. 43–44, 59; vol. II: p. 100)

Dürer to Willibald Pirckheimer in Nürnberg (vol. I). Venice, 7th of February 1506.

Dürer on the Italians

And if someone were quite ignorant, he would think that they are the most respectable people on earth. I have to laugh at them myself whenever they speak to me. They know that one knows them to be quite wicked, but they do not inquire into what one knows. I have many good friends among the Italians who warn me not to eat and drink with their painters. And many of them are quite hostile to me and take down my works in the churches wherever they can get their hands on them. Or they complain and say that it is not antique art and hence not good. However, Giovanni Bellini praised me very much in front of the noblemen. He wanted to have something from me and he himself came to me and asked me to make something for him and

he would pay well for it. And all the people told me that he is a pious person, so at once I was fond of him. He is very old and is still the best in painting. And the picture I liked so much eleven years ago, I do not fancy anymore. And if I had not seen it myself, I would not have believed anyone else. Also I want to let you know that there are much better painters here as Master Jacob back home. But Anthoni Kolb swears that there is no better painter on earth than Jacob. The others mock him and say: if he were as good as that, he would stay here, etc. And only today I started to sketch my plate. My hands were so chapped that I could not work, so I had someone else do the engraving.

Dürer to Willibald Pirckheimer in Nürnberg (vol. I). Venice, 13th of October 1506.

I had to give the master one ducat; no-one could make me give more. I would have liked to have lost all that I had won, and yet at the end I could not do it. Ferber's messenger will send leaded glass. I can not find out if anything new has been printed in Greek. I will send you a sample of your paper. I thought that Kepler (the book-binder Sebald Kepler) had more. However, I could not get the feathers you wanted to have. So I bought white feathers. If I should get the green ones, I will buy those and bring them with me.

Steffen Baumgartner has sent me a letter asking me to buy him fifty carniol beads for a rosary. I have already ordered them, but they are expensive. I could not get more of them and will send them with the next messenger. I would like to know from you when I should come, so my masters can act accordingly. I will have finished my work here in ten days. After that I will ride to Bologna to take some lessons in the art of perspective, which someone has promised to teach me. Eight or ten days later I will leave and ride to Venice. Afterwards I will come with the next stage. O, how I will shiver in the sun. Here I am a lord, at home a scrounger, etc.

Vol. II

About Beauty

It is fitting for a painter, when he has the skill to make a picture, to make it as beautiful as he can. But what beauty is, I do not know. However, I will say, what it means to me: to that which has been considered beautiful by most people—to that we should aspire.

Any lack in a thing is a defect. Hence: too much and too little spoil every thing.

SOURCE TWO

COCHLAEUS

Nuremberg in the descriptions of Johannes Cochlaeus

Johannes Cochlaeus (Johannes Dobeneck), 1479–1552, was a humanist and Catholic theologian who became well known especially as an opponent of Martin Luther. His “Brevis Germaniae Descriptio” was first published 1512 as an appendix to an edition of the “Cosmographia” of Pomponius Mela; it is considered “the first geographical school textbook on Germany” (Karl Langosch). In eight chapters Cochlaeus presents a detailed view of German history, its regions, and cities. The following excerpt is taken from the fourth chapter, which is probably the most famous in this little book: it is a very clear description of the imperial city of Nuremberg, more precisely a hymn to a city that was, with Cologne and Augsburg, one of the three largest German cities in the 16th century.

Source: Cochlaeus, Johannes. *Brevis Germaniae Descriptio* (1512). Mit der Deutschlandkarte des Erhard Etzlaub von 1501. Karl Langosch (ed.). Darmstadt 1969.

Translation: Olga E. Pollack, Dr. Andrew C. Gow.

4th Chapter

Nuremberg, the centre of Germany

6. [. . .] The town is situated on barren soil. Therefore the people cannot live exclusively from the farmland, which is partly covered with forests, partly with gravel and barren sand; for the town consumes over 1000 “Scheffel”¹ of grain each week; and 100 fat cattle besides other meat from small animals, venison and poultry are not quite enough.

[. . .]

7. It has magnificent walls. Indeed, as regards its fortifications and buildings, public authorities and population it is second to no other town, for it is superbly fortified by a threefold wall and a moat.

¹ A measure of capacity, circa 215 litres.

On the inner wall are 200 towers, built with cut masonry stones; also on the outer wall are nearly as many lower ones; however, they all are equipped with cannons, projectiles and other engines of war.

The moat stretches across a breadth of twenty ells and is almost as deep. It is not filled with water, but covered with a green lawn, where deer graze; a little stream flows through it. Besides there are former moats and traces of old walls, still visible in the inner town, but they are displaced by new buildings from day to day.

8. It is well fortified with a castle. Moreover they have a fortification inside their walls, which excels in position, by strength and age. [. . .]

9. It is secured fully by gates. Besides, they have six large and two small gates. All the large ones are fortified with high towers and very strong parapets and have a curved path to the town, which has been built with special diligence so that the inner gate, if the outer one should be captured, can still be defended from the outer walls with stones and missiles as also from the tower by a portcullis with sharp points on its lower edge, by which any enemies who should pass beneath it would be crushed.

11. It is very clean on account of an aqueduct. Moreover, they have an aqueduct, which has been directed into various streets and is suited for washing away the dirt, and quite useful to butchers, dyers and tanners. Furthermore, they have 120 public wells and 23 channels or pipes.

16. The town hall. If you visit the town hall you would think that they don't worry about buildings and weapons, so large and so various are the duties of the administration. So they have fourteen offices, which differ according to the variety of their duties; here the councillors, there the tax collectors, elsewhere the lawyers, the "Fünferherren",² the "Rugherren",³ the jury, clerks, etc.

17. The market of the merchants. If you go down to the market place you will see merchants, who are very attractive, tall, and well dressed; as well as a pyramidal fountain, covered with a great deal of gold and decorated with many skilfully sculpted statues, which provides water abundantly in 16 pipes for all sorts of uses. Additionally, there is a clock, as rare as the fountain, which Georg Reuss recently casts with great skill and decorated with many figures cast in bronze, which merit admiration because of their harmony and varied design.

18. The "Hallerwiese" [The Hallers' Meadow]. Further, if you go out through the little door you reach the "Hallerwiese", which is not less

² Persons responsible for police duties.

³ Councilmen responsible for trade policy regarding inhabitants of Nuremberg.

charming than the Tempe Valley⁴ of the Thessalians, five hundred feet long, shaded by a fourfold row of trees and watered by four fountains, from each of which cold water continually spouts out of four pipes. The breadth of the terrain is rather limited: on the one side runs the Pegnitz, but on the other are vineyards and orchards, where lovely bird-songs resound. On festive days youths, as well as people of every age, swarm to this place, where they play at different kinds of games and gymnastics, refreshing and reviving their strength for the next day's work.

20. The three classes of people. The population is so large that in fact it falls into three classes, the patricians, the merchants and the common people. However, only the patricians are able to govern the community by such a firm general consensus that no rebellion has broken out in eighty years. [. . .]

23. The "Rugherren". They have "Rugherren" responsible for decency, speech and clothing, as well as many spies, who denounce violators of the regulations, so that the people are kept to a high standard of morality, and so that they don't place themselves above the proper measure with pompous clothes and with lack of restraint in manners and speech. They also establish justice outside the city walls, and they do this so conscientiously that they pay high salaries to a large armed force which polices the woods and public roads to prevent robbery.

25. The hospitals. There are two hospitals, of which one has so many clergymen, choirboys, students and paupers that there is not one more excellent or even comparable in Germany. There are also two houses for twelve brothers, for men, I mean, who are worn out by age and poverty. One of these houses was built recently by a citizen at a cost of 15,000 gold guilders and endowed with incomes for maintenance. There are also hostels for pilgrims.

26. Alms. Alms flow abundantly, and every year in Holy Week, over 700 lepers assemble from far away, and are fed bodily and spiritually once in public at the cemetery of St. Sebald, where the patricians and their wives serve them at table. Afterwards they are sent off with presents, namely each one with a shirt and a linen robe, also with a headband and provisions for the road. However, on the All Souls' Day the throng of beggars is so large that sometimes more than 4000 of them camp outside the walls and in the town all cemeteries are full of them; many burghers donate over 40 or 50 gold guilders.

27. Pious foundations. Furthermore there are many pious foundations: some to support citizens who have been weakened by misfortune, a

⁴ Tempe Valley: One of the most beautiful valleys in Greece.

long imprisonment or sickness, but there are also others for maidens, to provide them with a proper dowry, and there are foundations for burghers' sons who are chosen for academic study.

Let these things suffice, then, as a short sketch of Nurembergers' moral qualities!

SOURCE THREE

SACHS

The “Nightingale of Wittenberg”

The most famous representative of the culture of the Meistersinger (master singers) is Hans Sachs, 1494–1576, from Nuremberg, the hero of Richard Wagner’s “Meistersinger von Nürnberg”. The learned shoemaker wrote about 200 dramas, 1800 poems and no fewer than 4275 “Meisterlieder”. His writings reflect the way of life of urban craft guilds and Protestant convictions regarding behaviour in the here-and-now; but one should not overlook the humanistic, scholarly references. The following very well-known verses from the poem “Die wittenbergisch Nachtigall” (1523) are an allegory on Luther, an early declaration of support for the reformer.

Source: *Hans Sachs und die Meistersinger in ihrer Zeit*. Eine Ausstellung des Germanischen Nationalmuseums im Neuen Rathaus in Bayreuth. Johannes Karl Wilhelm Willers (ed.). Nuremberg 1981.

Translation: Olga E. Pollack, Dr. Andrew C. Gow.

Hans Sachs and the Meistersinger
“Awake! The daylight is near.
I hear a beautiful nightingale
Singing in the green grove.
Her voice rises over mountains and valleys.
The night sinks down in the West,
The day breaks in the East.
The crimson sunrise
Shines through the dim clouds,
And the bright sunlight breaks through.
It pushes aside the light of the moon.
That has become pale and dark,
And with its false glitter,
Has blinded the whole flock of sheep,
So they have turned their eyes away . . .”

SOURCE FOUR

PLATTER

The Memoir of Felix Platter

The physician Felix Platter of Basel (1536–1614) bequeathed an autobiography—perhaps one should rather call it a chronicle of his life—which counts among the most vivid sources in the field of cultural history of the 16th century. He describes in it the *rites de passage* that shaped the life of an early modern European: baptisms, weddings, and funerals. In one passage, the report on his youth allows us to imagine how, already in earliest childhood, an imaginary world of ghosts, spectres and witches was planted in the minds of the people. Here we notice the prerequisites in the world of mentality for the witch-panics of the following era. A further passage gives us some insight into the tremendous effort and expense that went into an early modern wedding. The third passage shows a macabre spectacle which sometimes could be seen in public during the 16th and 17th centuries: a show trial against the corpse of a “heretic”.

Source: Valentin Lötscher (ed.), *Felix Platter Tagebuch (Lebensbeschreibung), 1536–1567*. Basel 1976.

Translation: Olga E. Pollack, Dr. Andrew Colin Gow, Dr. Peter Bietenholz.

1540–1541, puerilities. House “zum Rotenfluh”

I loved to listen to all kinds of stories, and specially, how the youth does, to tales and fairy stories. At that time the old women spoke often about ghosts. I listened wholeheartedly to them, but thereby became nervous and fearful so that I could not stay alone nowhere, and specially I could not sleep alone at night. Sometimes, at night, I was so afraid that I screamed because all kinds of stories of Üllengry, a ghost, who bites off people’s heads and also other foolish things came to my mind. Therefore I did not want to stay alone at night. I lay in my father’s bed, wailing that the black cow from the old people’s home, which I saw each time it was driven past our house, wanted to devour me.

22. November 1557, wedding at the minster

As the wedding people gathered at our place, we went in a procession to the house of my father-in-law. And D. Oswald Ber walked next to me. He, although he was quite old, was dressed in red too with a low-necked, silken doublet made of atlas and a gown of camel hair. I also carried one and a velvet beret with a braid made of flowers and pearls which one had put on my head in front of the bride's house. So we marched at nine o' clock to the cathedral. The bride followed us, in a "leibfarbene Schaubē"⁷ (flesh-coloured gown). She was lead by Mr. Henric Petri because Mr. Hans, who had promised it a long time ago (to do it), excused himself for the sake of illness. But then he came to the wedding after all where he even danced. After the sermon we were given together (were married). I gave her a ring, purchased for eight crowns, and so we moved up to the "Gejegt",⁸ where a libation was served to us. I led the bride inside, who got many presents in the upper parlour.

Fifteen tables were set up and all of them were well occupied with more than 150 persons without those who served us and of whom a good amount joined us for dessert. One has to remark specially that in the year, in which I am writing this, anno 1612, I would not know who is still alive except us both, the bridegroom and the bride, and Romanus Winman, who was the sexton (probably of the cathedral) at that time, and the damsels Michol von Pfirdt and Madlen Hug, who are very old now, and then, for the first time, wore the ribbons.⁹ The men sat in the hall, downstairs, towards the garden, in which the warmth of the parlour aside, called "Druckstube",¹⁰ came in through the big, open standing gate. The other men sat in the centre house, in the long parlour which one could enter coming over the staircase¹¹ from the "Gejegt". The women sat in the "Druckstube", the virgins in the upper parlour "zum Gejegt", and some women, who had no place there, also downstairs.¹² Next to me sat the mayor, Mr. Theodor Brandt.

März-Mai 1559, Joris-scandal. "Kohlenberggericht"

And after, on the 13th the Saturday before Pentecost, one sat in the courtyard, beneath the Richthaus (courthouse), in malefitz-judgement

⁷ Coat for the people of the higher bourgeoisie; the coat for the women reached mostly to the floor.

⁸ Family Platter's house.

⁹ "Bendel aufsatzen" (wear the ribbons). Supposedly the text is about hair-bands, a kind of an initiation for young girls. The „Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens“ (concise dictionary of German superstition) mentions the "Bendeltanz" (dance with hair-bands) as a Swabian wedding custom.

¹⁰ Probably from the time Felix' father ran his own printing office.

¹¹ Lexer, 'Schnecklein'.

¹² By the men.

on the body of Görg David, who, anyhow, was not there himself, but only a chest with his books and his image set up on a pole. The judgment was given to burn this all. One gave his things over to the executioner, who took them outside as one would do with a culprit. And when one reached the “Barfüßerplatz”, one brought his exhumed body in a “Totenbaum”¹³ from St. Leonhard. These things were brought in front of the stone gate to the ordinary Richtplatz.¹⁴ There was a stake, on which the executioner placed the “Totenbaum”. He smashed it to pieces so that everyone could see the corpse, which was covered with a robe of camel hair. He (Görg David) wore a velvet “Spitzhaube” (dunce’s cap) fitted out with red scarlet. He set him up. He was still quiet unscathed and still recognizable, the eyes were cavernous and closed. One laid the books next to him and erected his portrait on the pole, on the pyre, lit the fire and burned everything to ashes. A huge crowd and I with Sebastiano Castellone were watching the scene.

¹³ Coffin.

¹⁴ Place of execution.

SOURCE FIVE

GROBIANUS

A document of the civilisation process

Friedrich Dedekinds “Grobianus ‘De morum simplicitate libri duo’” was first published in 1549. The author, son of a butcher, and later a priest in Neustadt am Rügenberge and Lüneburg, gives a strong satire on the “uncivilised” behaviour that gave its name to his whole epoch: in German this era used to be called the “grobianic age”. The success of the work, which was published in several editions, is probably also due to the author’s success in striking exactly the right humorous note for the tastes of early modern readers, though in many respects it relies on late medieval traditions. As such the author holds up a parodic caricature to his readers and educates them about what it is to “be civilized”. The text does not indicate that there was a “decline in the moral standards” in the 16th century, but rather that a critical discourse on “correct behaviour” had begun to develop.

The following excerpt is taken from an English translation from 1605. It extensively follows the text of the revised work from 1554 (*The Schoole of Slovenie or Cato turnd wrong side outward* (. . .), by R.F. Gent. / London. / Printed by Valentin Simmes dwelling on Adling / hil neere Bainards castle at the signe of / the white Swanne. / 1605).

Source: Ernst Rühl, *Grobianus in England*, Berlin (Mayer & Müller) 1904.

What manners and gestures the guest ought to observe in eating.
Chapter II.

As soone as ere thou spi’st some dishes on the table stand,
Be sure that thou before the rest thrust m thy gredle hand.
Snatch that you like, I told you so before, you know it well,
It is but labour lost that I againe the same should tell.
That which I once have told to you, you never should refuse,
But in each place and companie you boldly must it use.
And whatsoever meate your hoste unto the boorde doth send,

Although you cannot choose but very much the taste commend,
 Yet finde therein something or other that mislikes your minde,
 And though it can deserve no blame, be sure some fault to finde:
 This is too salt, and this too fresh, and this is too much rost,
 This is too sowre, and this too sweete, your cooke's too blame, mine
 host.

And speake so lowde that all may heare thee which are then in place,
 For by this meanes thou maist in jeast the carefull cooke disgrace.
 And by this tricke thou wilt deserve a civill yonkers name,
 And happy is he nowadayes which can attaine such fame.
 When ev'ry man is at his meate, and no mans tongue dooth walke,
 Be sure that thou with pleasant jeasts doost hold them all in talke.
 It is not good for him which would be praise of all men, long
 To sit amongst his friends at meate, not using of his tong.
 When thou arte set, devoure as much as thou with health canst eate,
 Thou therefore wert to dinner bid to helpe away his meate.
 Thrust in as much into thy throate as thou canst snatch or catch,
 And with the gobbets which thou eatst, thy jawes and belly stretch.
 If with thy meate thou burne thy mouth, then cloake it craftely,
 That others mayaswell as thou partake that miserie.
 To throw thy meate from out thy mouth into the dish againe
 I dare not bid thee, for it is too clownish and too plaine.
 But lest thou shouldst be burnt againe, thou shalt a medicine know,
 Thy burning meate with cooling breath thou stowly oughtst to blow:
 In little blasts against this heate no comfort can be found,
 Then puffe thy cheekes with winde, as if a trumpet thou wouldst sound,
 From whence, as if the boystrous windes were from their prison freed,
 Set fourth great blasts against thy meate to helpe thee at thy neede.
 With rumbling noyse let store of cooling blasts breake forth their fill,
 In like sort as do flames of fire from 'AETnaes' burning hill.
 If to thy neighbours face thou turne, I will thee much commend,
 And store of breath and pottage to his cheekes be sure to send.
 If thus thou doost, all will applaude thee and thy trickes allow,
 And often will desire to learne this pretty jeast of you.
 It is a praise to have a loving dogge on you to waite,
 Wherefore, if you are bid to supper, get a puppie strait:
 Let him in any case hard by thee on a cushion sit,
 And give him out of every dish such meate as thou thinkst fit.
 To thrust him downe from off his seate what guest dares be so bolde?
 This dog (sir) hath a maister heere that will his deedes upholde.
 When you are almost wearie, and desire your teeth to rest,
 Then, that your puppie make you merrie, it is surely best.
 And let your dog lick e o're your lippes, with fawning tongue put out,
 And eke your hands, with which more meate to reach you are about.
 Or catch the fleas which hurt your dogge, by all the trickes you can,
 And killing them upon your trencher, proove your selfe a man.
 Whenas you eate, stretch wide your iaws, and thrust great gobets down,

Even as the cheekes are stretcht with wind of some song-tuning clowne.
 It is not meete that in the dish you should leave anie meate:
 That which your hoste dooth set upon the boord, he would have eat.
 Tis better farre to stand in feare of breaking of a gut,
 Than leave one bit of that which is upon the Table put.
 If thou some little bit thats somewhat tougher than the rest,
 Because thy throate wants liquor, canst not very well digest,
 Then take some drinke, and keepe it in your mouths most hollow part,
 T'will make your meate from out your mouth into your gut depart.
 Out of your mouth into the cup some little crummes to send,
 Though some will say tis clownish, yet it cannot much offend.
 I pray, whie is it hurtfull thus to mingle meate with drinke?
 If they be mingled thorowly, they nourish more, I thinke.
 That meate and drinke should thus be ioynd Nature her selfe hath
 saide,
 For in this world one thing doth still desire anothers aide.
 The bones and scraps, and such things as thou scornst thy selfe to
 eate,
 Throw down amongst the dogs, how can they live without some meate?
 Each dog regarding his owne dinner, none will quiet be.
 For want of victualls you a pleasant battell there shall see.
 Perchance, insteede of dogs, thei'le snap the strangers as they sit,
 In such an hurlie burlie this cannot be much unfit.
 Then laugh alowd, whenas thou doost under the Table see
 Such warres and iarres which had their first originall from thee.

Of devouring, laughing, vomiting, and other civilities at the Table.
 Chapter V

There are moe precepts that might prove thee clownish trickes to have
 At supper, and that thou ne're knewst such manner as are grave;
 But by that meanes my labour and my care would be too great,
 If in this place I all the sundry duties should repeate.
 Although I had the skill which 'Ovid' had in making verse,
 Yet could I not, as it deserves, each sundrie thing reherse.
 But yet, although thou of thy selfe arte better learned than I,
 To teach thee some few needefull things I will presume to try.
 That small time which thou spendst with me, thinke it not spent in
 vaine,
 For in that little time perhaps, thou maist great profite gaine.
 Both yong and old, both men and boyes, behaviour learne of me,
 Since that the sliding time for no mans cause prolonged will be,
 To throwe downe pots upon the table filld unto the brimme,
 So that each thing upon the same in 'Bacchus' iuice may swimme,
 Long custome and continuance, at length, to passe hath brought,
 That in these daies of ours it must no fault at all be thought.
 Oft times, when yong men would be counted pleasant, I have seene

At that same instant, when their harts full light with wine have beene,
 That they with good bread would their unprovided fellowes hit,
 And eke with meate, which they into their hands could closely get.
 They doe reioyce their youthfull hearts with such bad kindes of play,
 Whereby they may the lingring times the sooner drive away.
 If oft have seene such men as were in yeeres and counsel old,
 Which thought no shame to patronize such faults to be so bold:
 What shall the yonger men commit, whenas they daily see
 Such filthy faults by old men in their feasts maintaind to bee.
 I dare not be so bold as unto olde men rules to give,
 Because their age doth priviledge them as they list to live.
 But yoong men, if they will attend, may quickly learne of mee,
 What manners seemely at their feasts and what unseemely bee.
 The bread (as each man knowes) dooth use to have a double crust,
 The one whereof in purenesse needes excell the tother must.
 The bottome crust is burnt, and full of ashes and of durt,
 'there can no good be found in such unsav'rie crust, but hurt.
 Wherefore observe the counsell which thou shalt receive of me,
 With good advise, and men will thinke thee wondrous wise to bee.
 From off the whole loafe for thy use that crust be sure to cut,
 On which there are no burnt spots by the scortching oven put.
 For by this crust your body from much loosenesse keepe you may,
 And if the laske doe trouble you, this will it quickly stay.
 But if the crust without the crumme you dare not cut for shame,
 Although I thinke your shamefastnesse will never get you fame,
 And you had rather in that place more mannerly to be,
 Then have a care that crust and crumme be tooke alike of thee.
 Although if in my perfect paths thou take delight to treade,
 And hearken to my verse, which thee to honesty shall leade:
 Not cutting any off, without respect thou all shalt eate,
 Both good and bad, both foule and cleane, both crum and crust is
 meate.
 The greedy panch is also filld with ashes, coles, or durt,
 Wherefore to cut these from thy bread it is both losse and hurt.
 It is a wondrous gift of God to men that mortall are,
 If that which they with paines have got, with paines they eke can
 spare.
 Or if thou likst not this, because thou knowst that at this time
 Thou at anothers table and anothers cost doost dine:
 Then care not, for tis easie at anothers boord to live,
 In this case thou most freely without any losse maist give.
 If any durt sticke on the bread, which may offend thy teeth,
 Or any tastelesse bit, which not unto thy tongue agreeth:
 Cut off a thicke peece, crust and crumme, which thou away maist
 throw,
 Or on the barking hungry dogs in friendly sort bestow,
 Or chop away that dirty crust which on the loafe did lie.

Its pretty sport to see the chippings what a way thei'le flie.
 Perchance theile fall into their eies which at the table sit;
 This cunning tricke agrees unto their humours very fit
 In divers places divers meates with Almond syrrope swimme,
 Others are filld with taste-delighting sugar to the brimme.
 Next, melted butter is a sawce fitting a daintie messe,
 And also grapes which have great weight indured in the presse.
 Or, some such sawce to grace the cates as fine as heart can wish
 Do commonly, wheres'e're you dine, swimme round about the dish.
 I spyng these, upon my trencher foorthwith did them sweepe,
 This was an order which my mother alwayes bade me keepe.
 And having got them, strait into my belly did them send;
 Yet (as I can remember) they did never me offend.
 If that you thinke these manners will not to you hurtfull be,
 My counsell is that you in this example take by me.
 It sometimes fals out unawares, as you your vittailles eate,
 Into your throate there slips a bone together with your meate:
 Which either makes your loosened teeth to smite against your gumme,
 Or stops the way by which your meate into your throate should come.
 What meanst thou man? Why dost not thou prevent this hurt no
 more?
 Why seekest thou no meanes thy halfe lost life for to restore?
 Take counsell of thy hands, and holding ope thy mouth with one,
 With tother pull from out thy jawes that hurtfull sticking bone.
 Or having pulld thy teeth out, lay them on a trencher by,
 And then the bone will fall from forth thy jawes immediately.
 Though others like it not, in no case thou must it refuse,
 Such modesty as hurtfull is, no wise man ought to use.
 And when with store of meate your stomacke is refreshd at last,
 Strait catch the full filld pots within thy greedy hands with haste.
 Then having set the pot before you, ope it presently,
 And lest my counsell should be vaine, Ile give my reason why:
 Those vapors which are in the cup may thus exhaled be,
 Which else perhaps might have bene hurtfull to thy braine and thee.
 Then, with the cup in this sort open, thou a while maist sit,
 And talke an houre or two, this practise cannot be unfit.
 Thus, listning to thy talke, of liquour none perhaps will thinke,
 And then as much as thou thinkst good, thou all alone maist drinke.
 At length beginne with pleasant lookes thy pleasant jokes to tell,
 And bragge that thou in hearts-ease doost all men alive excell.
 The merry minde by store of laughter will it selfe bewray;
 The world affords no better thing then merry life this day,
 Wherefore besure that thou of laughter doost at all times thinke,
 Whatse're you do, whether you worke, play, sit, stand, eate, or drinke.
 You so should sometimes laugh, that meate which in your mouth doth
 lie,
 Might sodainely from out the same into the platter flie.

And let it flie, I count better that it should doe so,
 Then that it stop that aire which should into the winde-pipe goe
 There can be found no perfecter and straigter way to death
 Then for to stop your throat with meat which strait wil stop your
 breath.

But now the time drawes nie, wherein the servant haste must make,
 That he the cloth and all things else may from the table take.
 If then all hunger is not from thy stomacke put away,
 Make speedy haste, it is not good to make the least delay.
 Into thy stomacke, while thou maist, thrust store of meate and drinke,
 Time staies for no man, then of time tis good in time to thinke.
 Both eate and drinke so much, that thou both drunke and filld maist
 bee,

Till when, nor rest nor quiet must be looked for of thee.
 And if of hickets or of sobs thou use to utter store,
 They both are signes which future vomites use to goe before.
 Let not the newnesse of the thing seeme beastly in thine eies,
 But boldly make all those which hinder thy proceedings rise,
 And casting that which with thy queasy stomacke not agreeth,
 Returne unto the table, having slightly washt thy teeth.
 And being set, take care againe to fill thy belly strait,
 And in the rowme of all that's gone, thrust in another baite.
 Nature her selfe which made all things, cannot indure that wrong,
 That any thing thats under heaven, should thus be empty long.
 But if thou hast not time to rise, thou hast such wondrous haste,
 Under the table thrust thy head, and there beginne to cast.
 Heere let thy stomacke cast up all which in the same doth sticke,
 Which will be welcome to the dogs, they will it kindly licke.
 In briefe, upon the table thou maist boldely cast thy fill,
 If any thing is in thy stomacke that dooth make thee ill.
 Nay, if into the very dish thou shouldst thy vomit cast,
 There's none so hard, but yet I thinke hee'd pardon thee at last.
 Nor is it like that vomites should unto them filthy seeme
 Which doe all drunken gluttony as vertuous deedes esteeme.
 Yea, some there are (I know them well) which will no stranger love,
 Unlesse that he be drunke indeede by certaine signes he prove.
 Wherefore all drunkards will commend thee, if, as thou doost suppe,
 To proove thee drunken all thy supper thou wilt vomite up;
 Thou shalt both please the guests, and him which hath invited thee,
 And thou the onely credite of that pleasant feast wilt bee.
 For by thy vomiting thou shalt perceive it was good wine
 Which by thine hoste was giv'n to thee, and to those friends of thine.
 The guests next morning shall have something to their friends to tell,
 And thou from all that drunken crew shalt beare away the bell.

SOURCE SIX

MONTAIGNE

Montaigne's Tagebuch einer Badereise (Diary of a Journey to Spas)

Michel Eyquem Seigneur de Montaigne (1533–1592), the author of the “Essais”, a central work of late humanist philosophy, undertook a journey in 1580/1581 through France, Germany and Switzerland to Italy. The aim of this undertaking was to experience bath cures; medicinal baths were his main stopping places, and notes on the effects of cures and observations of the own body make up a large part of the text. Of special interest are the reflections Montaigne made on the countries and people. He was an exact observer and an excellent writer. There is no other source from the 16th century that gives a similar colourful picture of the everyday life and the culture of the upper strata in the mixed confessional imperial city of Augsburg (Bavaria). This French tourist was especially impressed by the palace of the Fuggers in the centre of the city, whose splendour was a mark of the most important European business concern at the beginning of the 16th century.

Source: Michel de Montaigne, *The Journal of Montaigne's Travels in Italy by way of Switzerland and Germany in 1580 and 1581*. Translated and edited with an introduction and notes by W.G. Waters. Vol. I. New York 1903. (pp. 133, 134, 136, 139)

We left the town after dinner, and after going four leagues over a lengthy plain of pasture, very level, like the plain of La Beausse, we arrived at Augsburg. This is reckoned the fairest town of Germany, as Strasbourg is the strongest. The first sight we got of their household arrangements was a strange one, but it assuredly bore witness to their cleanliness. This was when we found the steps of the staircase of our lodging covered with pieces of linen cloth, upon which we were required to walk in order that we might not soil the steps, seeing that they had just washed and polished them, as their want to do every Saturday. We saw no trace of cobweb or of mud in our lodging: in certain of the rooms were curtains which any one may at will draw over the windows. It is rare to find tables in the chambers, save those

which are attached to the foot of the bed, and these are made to go with hinges so they can be raised or lowered at pleasure.

The footboards of the beds are elevated two or three feet above the frame, and are often as high as the bolsters, beautifully carved in pinewood, but the pine they use is inferior to our walnut. They make use of pewter plates polished bright, but they put inside these other plates of wood, and on the walls, beside the beds, they often hang up linen cloths and curtains in order that the walls may not be sullied by the spitting of the guests. The Germans set great store on coats-of-arms, and in every apartment may be found a great number of these which the gentlefolk of the country on their travels have left behind; the glass in the windows, moreover, is often garnished with the same. The routine of table service varies greatly. Here they gave us first crayfish of a wonderful size, but in other places this dish has always come last. In many of the large inns they bring everything in covered dishes. The reason why their window glass is so brilliant is that they have no set window-frames like ours, but casements which open at will and which they clean often.

On the following morning, which was Sunday, M. de Montaigne went to see several churches. He went to some which were Catholic, and everywhere he found the service very well done. Six of the churches are Lutheran and are served by sixteen ministers, two of these churches being taken from the Catholics, and four built by the Lutherans themselves. One of the last-named he visited in the morning, and found it like the great hall of college, with neither images nor organs nor cross, but with the walls covered with inscriptions in German taken from the Bible.

We did not see a single handsome woman. The women wear a vast variety of attire, and in the case of the men it is a hard matter to say who is noble and who is not, forasmuch as all sorts of men wear bonnets of velvet and carry swords by the side. We had our lodgings at the sign of the "Linde", called after a tree of the country, which stands adjoining the palace of the Foulcres (Fugger).

This house of the Foulcres is roofed with copper: as a rule the houses are much finer, larger, and higher than in any French town, and the streets much wider. M. de Montaigne estimated the population of Augsburg to equal that of Orléans. After dinner we went to see a show of fencing in the public hall, where there was a vast crowd. We had to pay for entrance as to a puppet show, and for our seats in addition. They showed us some play with the poignard, with the two-handed sword, with the quarter-staff, and with the hander. Afterwards we saw them shooting for a prize with bow and cross-bow, on a ground far finer than that of Schaffhausen.

Marriages of Catholics with Lutherans are common, and the one most keenly set on marriage commonly conforms to the faith of the other. There are thousands of marriages of this sort. Our host was a Catholic and his wife a Lutheran. Here they clean the glasses with a

hairbrush fixed to the end of a stick. According to report, excellent houses may be bought for forty or fifty crowns apiece.

This family is a very numerous one; they are all very rich, and hold the highest position in this city. We visited two apartments in their house, one high, of grand measurement, and paved with marble, and the other low-ceilinged, enriched with medals, both ancient and modern, and having a small room at the end. These are the most sumptuous rooms I ever beheld. At the gathering after the wedding we saw some dancing, and they danced nothing but *Alemandes*. They constantly stop dancing and lead the ladies back to their seats, which are ranged in double rows against the walls and covered with red cloth; but the gentlemen do not sit there with them. After a slight pause they take their dames out again, kissing their hands, which salutation the ladies accept without returning it; and then, having placed the arm under the ladies' armpits, they embrace them, and the ladies put their right hands on the gentlemen's shoulders. They dance and chat together with heads bare and in sober attire.

SOURCE SEVEN

MAGDALENE AND BALTHASAR PAUMGARTNER

From the Correspondence between Magdalena and Balthasar Paumgartner

The correspondence between Balthasar Paumgartner (1551–1600) of Nuremberg and his wife Magdalena (1555–1642) provides insight into the life of a trader in the late 16th century far from home. Magdalena takes care of homely things, she “reigns” and organises while he does his business in Italy, far away from Nuremberg, in Lucca for example, or in Florence. The letters show a by no means unemotional relationship between the sexes. They wait with yearning for news, letters between Nuremberg and Italy take weeks. The reader gains an impression of life in the “risk-society” of early modern Europe, hears of plague and death, of everyday struggles, but also of events like weddings, which in those days were negotiated by discussions among relatives and friends.

Source: Magdalena and Balthasar Paumgartner. *An Intimate Portrait of Life in 16th-Century Europe*. Revealed in the Letters of a Nuremberg Husband and Wife and Illuminated by Steven Ozment. New York 1986.

Intimacy

Balthasar to Magdalena, 15 December 1582, in Lucca

My honest, good, true, friendly, dearest, closest bride:

I have at 12:00 this night received with great longing your letter of November 11. As I had carefully considered and calculated the mail delivery with which your reply to my letter must come, I waited with longing for a letter last Sunday; anticipating it, I did not leave the house the entire day. But how just it would have been to me, had you not written as soon as you did!

The news that all are well is received most happily. I and all my associates here are also, praise God, still well. May it be God's will to keep us in his grace and help us soon to come happily together again in our little garden of joy.

I am truly happy to hear that you have already visited my old Aunt

Scheurl several times and that she was so friendly to you, which I never doubted she would be. Please continue to visit her when there is opportunity, and cultivate her counsel in various matters. I know she enjoys such attention and that she is especially well pleased when someone places their trust in her and takes her advice. She also wants us to think well of her and, when possible, to turn to her as to a friend. Although she is of little benefit to us, she is also the kind of person who will never do us any harm. But you already know well how to stroke the tail of the fox, of that I have no doubt.

Dearest one, with this letter you will have discovered the reason and therein also my excuse, for being so slow and rather irregular in my writing. As far as I can tell from your present letter, you have not yet received such clarification from me. Matters were such that had I managed now and then to write to you while I was on the road, I would have brought you little joy and much worry. For as long as I am traveling and wagering on good fortune and not yet home, I have no assurance whatsoever that the strong prohibitions against travelers issued because of plague will allow me to enter the towns through which I must pass and make my way back to you. I do not want to add to your worries with news of such difficulties.

But if you have often asked why and have been surprised that you have received no letter from me, the same has certainly also been true for me here. Every Sunday, when the mail usually arrives, there has been no end to the question in my mind why you have not written to me, and I have also pondered why you will not write to me until you have first received a letter from me. So let this anger between us end!

Most dearest love, I will await your answer to this letter here. Thereafter, you need not write to me again in Lucca, for around the end of January I will have to travel on business to other places and towns en route to Modena and Reggio, and for this reason your letters may no longer find me here. Too much is presently unsettled in our business to know for sure if I will depart so soon. I desire to go, but all too often and far too long I am prevented by many things beyond my control. If I could now complete one most important matter in which our firm has not a little invested, how quickly I would turn the other matters over to my brother and the staff here and be on my way! I am trusting and hoping in Almighty God that next January nothing will prevent my planned departure.

Meanwhile there is plenty for me to do here. Over the holiday I am going to Florence, which is forty miles away, but I will be returning here in three or four days. Meanwhile, trust that on my return from Florence my health may, praise God, be good and that I will have recovered from my wearisome journey, for I will return here beaten and exhausted. Take care not to let yourself be tormented by many vain worries over things which in the end you can do nothing about. You may be sure that as soon as my affairs here are settled, I

will not tarry here one hour, but (God willing) may hope to be with you there even sooner than you and I now think. May dear God grant that hope soon and happily!

I am certainly distressed to hear about the long, grievous pestilence you are having. Others there have written to me that it has abated somewhat and that cold weather is on the doorstep.⁵ I hope to almighty God that it has not posed any further danger. Here we have had almost beautiful bright weather for five weeks. Many others would not say so, as at this time of the year it customarily mostly rains (presently the rain is steady) and many are surprised by the beautiful weather.

I had learned already before your letter from cousin Andreas Imhoff in Venice of the blessed departure from life of the good and pious Sebastian Imhoff in Lyon. Wilhelm Kress, who was with him in Lyon, suffered not a little with him. May the Almighty be to him as to all of us gracious and merciful and grant him after this life eternal life! Amen.

I had also learned before your letter that old Matthew Fetzer is a bridegroom. However, his bride, and the Rosina whom Dr. Wolff is marrying, are unknown to me.

Wilhelm Kress, whom I have put up here in good quarters, and brother Jörg both again send their sincere greetings and thank you kindly for thinking of them.

When you see Frau Lochner, indicate to her that I will do my best to get the crimson satin lining and the bicolored double taffeta. I had already ordered the lining before I got your letter.

Otherwise, apart from my work, I lead a truly boring life without any diversions whatsoever, save for a two-week visit here of players who performed every evening for four hours after sunset into the night. Among them was a woman who could (as one is accustomed to say) "speak and ride." I wish to God you could have seen her, for you would certainly have marveled. I passed some time watching the plays, but such things come to an end. After the Christmas holidays other players will come, but they are no match for the plays you have in St. Martha's and the Dominican cloister there. But I cannot sufficiently describe how eloquent and skillful the women in such plays here are, especially the one who was just here. If you have not seen it for yourself, you cannot believe it. Without doubt, they have studied many storybooks and must be well taught.

Among other things in your letter, you announce that I should not again wait so long to write to you: "who knows [you say] but that I may find you more than once among the bad women who hold sway there!" By saying such a thing you have disturbed me not a little and

⁵ Cold weather was welcomed in times of pestilence because it inhibited spread of the disease.

raised all kinds of strange thoughts in my mind. If dear God cannot immediately reconcile us, I still trust he will spare us this time and help guide us joyfully back together again in our little chamber or flower garden. We are all in his hands, and if I do not place my entire hope in him, I must constantly worry that misfortune will befall me. I am hoping for the best from him and you should, too, in the end letting him rule.

Dearest and closest, I don't know what more to write you at this time. Only that I thank you most sincerely for the little flower you have sent me from our garden. I am carefully preserving it for your sake. May I kindly ask you to give my sincere greetings and best wishes to your brother Paul, your sister, and to Katherina Imhoff and Magdalena Held. And for you, dearest Magdale, many hundred thousand friendly and sincere greetings! I commend you in trust to the grace of the loving God.

Your true, loving bridegroom, Balthasar Paumgartner the Younger

Equality

Magdalena to Balthasar, 21 January 1585, in Nuremberg

Honest, kind, dearest Paumgartner:

I wish you a happy, joyous new year and everything in it that is useful and good to you in soul and in body from Almighty God, and as much for us all. Amen.

Kind, dear Paumgartner, if it is true, as Veit [Pfaud] tells me, that you will be arriving safe and sound in Leipzig, I count it a triumph in the management of your affairs. For it is today, as I write, just five weeks since you left. May Almighty God help bring us back together in love and joy! I thank the Lord God that your son and the members of the household are still in good health. May God continue to grant it!

Dear Paumgartner, I have received your letter from Braunschweig with heartfelt joy; I hope that with God's help you are now completely done there. I asked Veit [as to your whereabouts] and he proposed that I could write to you in Leipzig, if I wanted. Because of the new joy [in your family] I could not let pass the opportunity to write and wish you luck with a new brother-in-law. Just yesterday I dined with old Aunt Scheurl, her two sons, and their wives. Conrad Bair's son [Stephan] dined for the first time with your sister [Helena]. While you have been away, she has changed her status. I fear you will also miss their engagement party on the Friday before Candlemas [February 2].

You, dear Paumgartner, however, have a little reprimand awaiting you from old Scheurl, who is indignant that you did not properly inform her of these proceedings. Before you left, the marriage plans had almost been completed by Hieronymus Paumgartner and your father. Your father thought that since he had written to you about them, you had announced the marriage to Aunt Scheurl and Helena.

The marriage would still be completely undisclosed to them had not Stephan Bair, innocently and in good spirits, asked Helena, your sister, if what had been arranged between them also pleased her as it did him. She was shocked; she had known nothing. He had also just sent her a little chain as a New Year's gift. When Helena got home she told Aunt Scheurl, to whom it was even more unknown. She quickly got up and set forth with Helena to your father, and there received her first proper account of the matter. He was puzzled why, after his letter to you, you had not announced the marriage to them. The matter has now been quickly resolved. Her (Aunt Scheurl's) two sons have just been to Schlackenwalde. They arrived here yesterday, just at the right time to keep the new bridegroom company. I must always write you something!

Dear Paumgartner, today they buried Sigmund Oertel, who has died.

I do not know anything else to write you at this time, dearest treasure. May God help bring us together soon, so that we may talk face to face for as long as we want. Presently I am busy making the bridegroom's crown for Helena[']s wedding]. Aunt Scheurl is hosting the engagement party and also paying for it, but she will not pay for the wedding. One will not, however, want for anything; she is also giving her [Helena] 1,000 gulden.

No more at this time except to commend you to the Lord God. A hundred thousand friendly and sincere greetings from me! May the loving God keep you. And make the best, my dearest treasure, of my bad writing; I have written very hurriedly.

Magdalena Balthasar Paumgartner

Stroking the tail of the fox

Magdalena to Balthasar, 18 April 1594, in Nuremberg

Honest, kind, dear Paumgartner:

Your letter from Augsburg has come. I will hope in Almighty God that when this letter reaches [Lucca], you will also, with God's help, already have arrived there. May he again grant you his divine grace!

I am happy to learn that the horses [you are planning to buy] have been well cared for up to now.

I paid the tailor already after your departure, but he tells me there is no woolen material left over.

When [our servant] Hans arrives, I will send him also to the count, as you instruct.

I have given your brother Jörg the money that belongs to Bartel Albrecht to deliver to him. Brother-in-law Jörg tells me that someone has already written to you about your estimated payments in Frankfurt.

I will not neglect to admonish the peasants [in Wöhrd], and I will see that brother-in-law Paul does so in Engelthal.

The wine, or rather new wine, came the Sunday after your depar-

ture. Brother-in-law Jörg has calculated the cost at 23 gulden per large measure, no less. I have sent one to [your] father, to Wilhelm Imhoff, and to Wilhelm Kress. Since [Paul] Behaim did not want one, Kress asked me to let him have it. So I have laid aside only one for ourselves. One for [Wolf] Rehlein; the Pfauds one. When I get the bill for the excise tax, which Jörg calculated for me on each measure, I will send each one a bill for his share.

Otherwise the matter is settled. I did, however, have a fight with the wine controller. When I sent him the money, 34 gulden, he sent it back to me, tore up the original bill, and said he had to make a new one because an additional barrel bought at the market must be added. I twice sent word to him that I knew of no such purchase and that you bought no wine whatsoever at the market, otherwise one would know about it. Finally, brother-in-law Jörg went there, returned, and asked if perhaps Hans had taken a barrel on your behalf, and it then dawned on me for the first time that the barrel we had drunk so quickly you had gotten with Hans. So I had to send him $40\frac{3}{4}$ gulden. He informed me that it had been a good nine weeks since he had given you the bill for that barrel. I am puzzled why you have been so slow to pay it.

Kind, dear treasure, I have nothing more to write at this time, except that the delivery of invitations⁶ [to brother Paul's wedding] has gone well, four happy tables [of guests have promised to come]. May God grant that the wedding also goes well.

Friendly and warm greetings to you, dearest treasure; may God keep you in his grace.

Magdalena Balthasar Paumgartner

⁶ Heimladung. William Smith describes this custom: "Six days before the marriage, they write up the names of all those which they will have bidden to the wedding and deliver the same to one, whose office is to bid to weddings and burials (whereof there is about 12 in all). This man goes in stately manner with another, noting all them that promise to come, till he has his just number, for above 60 may not come to supper (which is 5 tables and 12 at every table)."

SOURCE EIGHT

WEINSBERG

Memorabilities of Cologne from the 16th Century

Hermann von Weinsberg (1518–1597) is one of the few Catholic chroniclers in our collection; an important reason why there are only so few Catholic chronicles and autobiographic texts from the early modern Empire is that the Reformation had triumphed in most of the cities. And by far most of the authors came from the bourgeoisie. Weinsberg had studied law and lived in Cologne as a city councillor; two advantageous marriages with wealthy women ensured him a living without financial worries. On over 7,000 folio-pages he offers notes on festivities and everyday occurrences, on leisure and work, gender relations, belief in ghosts and much more—including the history of his native town. It is an illustrated broadsheet on ‘*la vie quotidienne d’autrefois*’ (Hans-Jürgen Bachorski), not very well structured, but expressive. The following excerpts describe the customs on Peter Vinkel Day, Weinsberg’s housing and living conditions, the establishment of a lottery as a typical means to spite the inconstancies of Lady Luck and to reduce the risks of life. His remarks about witch persecutions in the diocese of Trier are remarkable because they show that in the 16th century, one could already find sceptical attitudes towards witch mania.

Source: *Das Buch Weinsberg*. Kölner Denkwürdigkeiten aus dem 16. Jahrhundert. Vol. 1–5. Josef Stein (ed.). Bonn 1926. (pp. vol. III: 46, 193, vol. IV: 68–69, 97)

Translation: Olga E. Pollack and Dr. Andrew C. Gow.

Vol. III

[139] Customs of St. Peter’s Day.

This day is celebrated more in Cologne than anywhere else. In the whole town they have for many years past set off great explosions and made great fires, which once was forbidden. Then the young people dance around a wreath and they sing songs. The old ones sit in front of or in their houses and drink and eat a bit. And this lasts nearly

the whole night. Some say that this took place on the first day of August during the Roman Empire to honour the emperor Augustus. Some claim that it is to honour St. Peter, the head of the apostles and the patron of the town and the monastery of Cologne. However, as it has to do with dancing, singing, jumping, eating and drinking, the young folks think well of it and would not like to give up this custom.

[413] One looks from one door to the other. How I keep the records in the almanac and the memorial books. About the design of the almanac.

The people are partial. Some stick to one side, some with the other, and as each one would like to hear, say and believe is the way they retell it. I think of the histories and the historians that they necessarily err and make mistakes, especially when the event happened a long time ago or is obscure, or is written from inside in a partisan fashion, or the writers themselves favour one party. I am used to following: as soon as I hear something, I write it briefly in my almanac so I can remember it. I leave it there for a month or longer, sometimes for even a year. Afterwards, when I have some leisure, I think about it in detail. In the meantime I look at everything and I understand the truth better, even if I cannot find out about everything, because I don't always meet those who really know it. Then when I have time and leisure and feel like it, I copy it from the almanac, expand my notes and write it into this memorial book of old times as I did before in the previous memorial book. Although there are some things missing in my book, I am convinced that there are not too many [. . .]. I have bound an almanac yearly, which is a little book, and between each page, which is defined for one month, I have put a clean page, on which I can write on both sides. And when I want to make a note of something, I set down merely the number of the month, the number of the day of the month and then the business in question and story in brief, two or three lines, so that I can remember it, and later expand it and write it into this book. But when I write it in this book, I also do that quickly, and I seldom reread it, or never again, for which reason it is often incorrect and uncorrected [. . .]

Vol. IV

[129] Rumour of magicians in the monastery of Trier. There is no agreement on it. In Cologne one doesn't get judged for sorcery . . . It is a great sin to accuse someone falsely. It is very difficult to judge from hearsay.

On the 30th of June 1589 many were convinced that witches or magic-users (*zeuberschen*, 'sorcerers') had caused the storm the previous night, for the rumour was widespread and strong that my lord of Schonenberg, Elector of Trier (Treves), had arrested in and around Trier many witches and magic-users, men and women, clerics and laymen, and had burned and drowned them. Many of them had claimed

it was a free and natural art in which scholars and prelates were experienced, perhaps thinking of necromancy, the black art and such like, even though these are all forbidden. Magic is simply beyond my understanding. I cannot make any firm judgement about it. I also hear that people are not in agreement about it. Many don't believe in it at all, holding it for fantasy, dreams, foolishness, fiction, deception. Many learned and unlearned people believe in it, refer to the Holy Scriptures and have written books about it and published (printed) them, and are quite convinced of it. Only God will know best. There is no quicker way to get rid of old women and hated people than in this fashion.

[81] A lottery established.

On the 4th of June, in the year of 1590 a "Glückshafen" (harbour of luck) or a lottery was proclaimed at the "Heumarkt" (hay-market) by the bench of the jury. This was arranged by some foreigners with a lot of small-wares or goods, as for example golden cups, bowls, beakers, guns, "Federspisse" (feather pillows), magnifying glasses, and also horses and all kinds of furs. The council appointed two gentlemen to supervise everything and nobody was allowed to pay more than 8 "Albus" for a ticket, but he was allowed to buy as many as he wanted. There was such throng of farm labourers, maids, sons, daughters, common folk, children and such a big a crowd that it was unheard-of and amazing. [. . .]

Vol. V

About the lodging

Now I have my lodging at Kronenberg at the „Hohepforte“ in Cologne. At the back it adjoins the house of Weinsberg so that I can go in and out and use this house partly. This house at Kronenberg is not big, but has a quite roomy cellar and has a "Vorhaus" (front part) along the whole length of the house. My brother and my sister walk through it whenever they want to. At the street there is a chamber with a fireplace and a kitchen at the back, through which one can go. Next to it there is a little parlour where I sit during the winter. Above, on the first floor is my room; in the middle is a hall, where I can walk around alone. It is fitted nicely with beautiful windows; there is a bed, a table and a wardrobe where my clothes are. One can go up from the hall to another chamber with a bed. From this chamber, which is my "Kourkamer".¹⁶ I can look over the „Hohepforte“ and the „Pannensmit“, over the huge market up to St. Jakob and St. Georg. Behind the hall are two further chambers. One, which is my writing room and my study, faces Buchel (place). The other is private and quiet. That is my bedroom in which I sleep with the youngsters, each alone, and it has a stove. Upstairs on the second floor there are more beds and above that the wood-cutters.

¹⁶ Not clear, presumably living room/relaxing room.

About table and food.

In the house Weinsberg my brother and I have a common table. In summer in the chamber or in the summer rooms, in winter in the big parlour downstairs or in the room upstairs; just as it happens. All the hereinafter mentioned, not including the two maids, sit at this table, ten people. My brother and his wife do the shopping; every day they prepare dried meat, fresh meat, butter and cheese. Sometimes there is a roast, on Fridays herring or stockfish, sometimes also fresh ('green') fish. It is always written down what we eat and once a year an account is rendered and the costs are divided amongst each person. And so the food is paid before or after. If somebody wants something special he pays for it separately. As concerns each person's clothes, living costs, expenses and business costs, these do not belong to the costs in question. We have good conversations, news and pleasure at the table. My brother is a trader; he taps wine from the barrel and goes about his business.

About eating and drinking.

I have two meals a day, lunch at eleven o' clock and supper at seven in the evening, spending no more than an hour at table, unless we have a party or good friends are with us, for whose sake I have to stay longer. In the morning and afternoon I eat nothing or very seldom. Midday and in the evening I drink about half a glass of beer. And later two, three or four little glasses or small jugs of wine. I don't tend to eat expensive food or sweets. In fact I do eat them, but I don't ask for them, yet sometimes I like to have an exotic dish. Fruits, apples, pears, cherries, plums and nuts don't much agree with me [. . .]

SOURCE NINE

CORYATE

Thomas Coryate's 'Crudities'

In 1611 the travelogue of the Englishman Thomas Coryate from Odcombe in Somerset (1577–1617) was published under the title ‘Crudities’. It is a description of a trip that he had taken three years previously through France, Italy, the Swiss Confederation—which, at that time, formally still belonged to the Holy Roman Empire—and Germany. The author, according to Dr. Samuel Johnson, an odd man, as well as a scholar and an aesthete, observed the world of the early 17th century with an attentive eye for curious details; the perspective of this son of a minister was decidedly Protestant. His interest for historical monuments is unmistakable.

The following excerpts take us first to Zurich where he writes about fashion (he is especially astonished by the round breeches with codpieces which emphasize the manliness of their wearers in a provocative manner); he visits the ‘theatre of horrors’, a place of execution, and then he tells about the spas in Baden, at that time one of the most attractive ‘health resorts’ in Switzerland and a place of entertainment. In Frankfurt he visits the book fair which was already famous at that time.

Source: Thomas Coryate. *Coryats Crudities*. 1611. With an Introduction by William M. Schutte. London 1978. (pp. 385, 386–388, 466, 467–468, 468–469, 561–562, 564, 565–566, 567)

My observations of Zurich, in Latine Tigurum the Metropolitan Citie of Switzerland.

[. . .] The Tigurines are able to furnish fortie thousand armed men in their whole territory, but the Citie it selfe armeth two thousand onely and no more.

Thus much of the Armory.

[. . .]

There are two prisons in the City, whereof one standeth in the water, being built in the manner of a Tower, unto the which none can come

but by water: herein capitall offenders and debtors are kept. The other is one of those fixe Towers in the westerne wall of the City already mentioned, unto which they are committed that have done some small and veniall crime.

There is one very delectable greene in an eminent and high part of the City, where there grow many goodly trees that doe make a pleasant groue. Here stand many stony tables of a convenient bignesse with benches about them for their archers to sit at their refection after they have exercised themselves with shooting, which is an exercise much used amongst them. Neare unto this place dwelt one of their Consuls when I was in Zurich. For they have two Consuls in the City, which doe not change every yeare as the Romans did, but when they are once elected into the *Consulat*, they keepe that consular dignity while they live, except upon some iust desert they are degraded.

Their *Lictores* or Serieants doe weare party-coloured cloakes, which are of a blew and white colour according to the armes of the City.

Their houses both publike and private are very faire. Their private houses of a goodly heighth, many of them foure stories high. Their matter of building is partly free stone, and partly timber. For they have no bricke at all.

The habits of the Citizens doe in some things differ from the attyre of any nation that ever I saw before. For all the men doe weare round breeches with codpeeces. So that you shall not finde one man in all Zurich from a boy of ten yeares, but he weareth a codpeece. Also all their men doe weare flat caps and ruffe bandes. For I could not see one man or boy in the whole City weare a falling band. Many of their women, especially maides doe use a very strange and phantasticall fashion with their haire that I never saw before, but the like I observed afterward in many other places of Switzerland, especially in Basil. For they plait it in two very long locks that hang downe over their shoulders halfe a yard long. And many of them doe twist it together with prety silke ribbands or fillets of sundry colours.

The beds of the Innes of this City and of all the other Helvetian and German Cities are very strange, such as I never saw before. The like being in the private houses of every particular Citizen as I heard. For every man hath a light downe or very soft feather bedde laid upon him which keepeth him very warme, and is nothing offensive for the burden. For it is exceeding light, and serveth for the covered of the bedde. In the refectory of that Inne where I lay which was at the signe of the two Storckes, there is a stove, such a one as I have before mentioned in my Observations of Padua, which is so common a thing in all the houses of Switzerland and Germany (as I have before said) that no house is without it. I found them first in Rhetia, even in the City of Curia.

[. . .] Also the City is served with such passing store of provision of all sorts whatsoever, that a man may live as cheape here as in any City of Switzerland or Germanie. For I observed at my Inne, which

was at the signe of the two Storkes, more variety of good dishes then I did in any Inne in my whole iourney out of England, our ordinary being fixe battes, that is, fifteen pence English. Every bat countervailing two pence halfe peny of our English money.

About an English mile directly beyond the Citie Westward, I sawe a place where malefactors are punished. Which is a certaine greene place, made in the forme of a pit, neere unto the which there standeth a little Chappell, wherein some Clergie man doeth minister ghostly counsell unto the offendour before he goeth to execution. In that Chappell I sawe wheelles. If they should happen to tremble so much that they cannot stand upright (as sometimes offendours doe) they are punished in the Chappell. As about some fourteene yeeres before I was at Zurich, three Noble Tigurines were beheaded in that Chappell, because they were so inclined to trembling that they could not stand upright. The punishments that are inflicted upon offendours are divers, in number five, whereof the first is beheading, which punishment they onely doe sustaine that are incestuous men and high-way robbers. The second is the Gallowes, upon those are executed that commit Burghlarie or burne houses. The third is the water which incestuous women doe suffer, being drowned therein. The fourth is the fire, wherewith Wiches, Sorcerers, and Heretickes are punished; and after their bodies are burnt, their ashes are cast into the River Sylla aforesaid. The fifth and last punishment is wheeling, which is onely for murderers. [. . .]

My Observations of Baden.

This Citie is called the lower Baden in respect of the higher Baden of Switzerland that I have already described both which are about 140 miles distant asunder. It is but little, being seated on the side of a hill, well walled, and hath no more then two Churches, whereof one is within the walles, adjoining to their Market place, being dedicated to Saint Peter and Paul, and was built by their first Marquesse, as a learned man of the Citie told me. The other standeth without the walles. [. . .]

[. . .] There is one thing that maketh this citie very famous, namely the Bathes, which are of great antiquity. For authors doe write that they were found out in the time of *Marcus Antonius* surnamed *Philosophus* the seventeenth Emperor of Rome, about the yeare of our Lord 160 who was so delighted with the bathes of this place that he built the citie for their sakes. Truly they are very admirable for two respects. First for the heate. Secondly for the multitude. As for the heate it is so extreme that I beleeve they are the hottest of all Christendome, especially at their fountaines, whereof I my selfe had some experience. For I did put my hand to one of the Springs, which was so hot, that I could hardly endure to handle the water, being of that force that it would scald my fingers very grievously if I had suffered it to runne upon them till I had but told twenty. Yea the heate is so vehement, that it is reported it will seeth egges, and make them as ready to be

eaten as if they were boyled in water over the fire. Also if one should cast any kinde of bird or pigge into the water at the original spring, where it is much hotter then in the bathes themselves that are derived from the same, it will scalde off the feathers from the one, and the haire from the other. Likewise the multitude of them is marvailous, which I will report, though many incredulous persons will (I beleeve) applie the old proverbe unto me, that travellers may lie by authority. The number of them I heard doth amount to three hundred severall bathes at the least. Which I did much the more wonder at because when I was at the bathes of Hinderhove by the Helvetical Baden, I saw so great a company there, even sixty (which I esteemed a marvailous number in comparison of the fewnesse of our English bathes at the City of Bathe in my country of Somerseshire, where wee have no more then five) that I thought there were not *so* many particular bathes so neere together in any one towne of Europe. [. . .]

That Inne wherein I lay, wich was at the signe of the golden Lyon, contained more bathes then all these foresaid threescore of Hinderhove. For in the same Inne were no lesse the threescore & five severall Bathes, as a learned man told me that laie in a house adioyning to my Inne. All these bathes are devided asunder by a great many rommes of the house, and covered over head; the space that is limited for each bath being square and very narrow, so that in one and the selfe same roome I observed foure or five distinct bathes. All these bathes are of an equall heate, none hotter or colder then an other. [. . .] The water of the bathes is mingled with matter of three severall kindes, brimstone, salt, and alume, as *Munster* writeth: unto whome I am beholding for this short ensuing discourse of the vertue of these bathes, as I was before in the description of the bathes of Hinderhove. Those that have tried them have found the vertue of them to be very soveraigne for the curing of divers diseases, as the asthma, which is an infirmity that proceedeth from the difficulty of the breath, the moistnesse of the eyes, the crampe, the coldnesse of the stomacke, the paine of the liver and spleene proceeding from cold; also it helpeth the dropsie, the griping of the bowels, the stone, the sterility of women: It appeaseth the paine of a womans wombe, keepeth off the white menstruous matter, asswageth the swelling of the thighes, cureth the itch and blisters or whelkes rifying in any part of the body; and to be short, it is said to be of greater efficacie for curing of the gowte then any other bathes whatsoever either of Germany or any other country of Christendome.

I saw one thing in this cite that I did not in any other place of Germany. For that morning that I went therhence, I saw a muster of a band of gallant soldiers in the Market place.

Thus much of Baden in the Marquisate, commonly called lower Baden.

My Observations of Franckford.

[. . .] The Citie was first called *Helenopolis* from Queene *Helena* an English woman borne, and the mother of *Constantine* the Great. But

in processe of time the denomination was changed from *Helenopolis* to the present name *Francofurtum*, which is derived from *Franclus* the name of a Prince who was the sonne of *Marcomirus* King of the country of Franconia, wherein (as I have already said) Franckford standeth. [. . .]

There are two things which make this citie famous over all Europe. The one the election of the King of the Romanes, the other the two noble fayres kept heere twice a yeare, which are called the Martes of Franckford. [. . .]

This Autumnall Mart it was my chance to see. Where I met my thrice-honourable countryman the Earle of Essex, after he had travelled in divers places of France, Switzerland, and some parts of high Germany. The riches I observed at this Mart were most infinite, especially in one place called "Under Den Roemer", where the Goldsmithes kept their shoppes, which made the most glorious shew that ever I saw in my life, especially some of the Citie of Norimberg. This place is divided into divers other roomes that have a great many partitions assigned unto Mercers and such like artificers, for the exposing of their wares. The wealth that I sawe here was incredible, so great, that it was unpossible for a man to conceive it in his minde that hath not first seene it with his bodily eies. The goodliest shew of ware that I sawe in all Franckford saving that of the Goldsmithes, was made by an Englishman one *Thomas Sackfield* a Dorsetshire man, once a seruant of my father, who went out of England but in a meane estate, but after hee had spent a few yeares at the Duke of Brunswicks Court, hee so enriched himselfe of late, that his glittering shewe of ware in Franckford did farre excell all the Dutchmen, French, Italians, or whomsoever else. This place is much frequented during the whole time of the Mart with many eminent and princely persons. There I saw the Earle of Sconenberg one of the most potent Earles of all Germany. [. . .]

After this I went to the Bookesellers streete where I saw such infinite abundance of bookes, that I greatly admired it. For this street farre excelleth *Paules-Churchyard* in London, *Saint Iames* streete in Paris, the *Merceria* of Venice, and all whatsoever else that I sawe in my travels. In so much that it seemeth to be a very epitome of all the principall Libraries of Europe. Neither is that streete famous for selling bookes onely, and that of all manner of artes and disciplines whatsoever, but also for printing of them. For this city hath so flourished within these fewe yeares in the art of printing, that it is not inferiour in that respect to any city in Christendome, no not to Basil itselfe which I have before so much commended for the excellency of that art. Likewise I visited divers Cloysters full of wares and notable commodities, especially the Cloyster of *Saint Bartholomewes* Church; where amongst other things I saw a world of excellent pictures, inventions of singular curiosity, whereof most were religious, and such as tended to mortification. Moreover I saw their Exchange neere to the place before mentioned called "Under Den Roemer". This is nothing like to ours in London, the

Rialto of Venice, or that which I saw afterward at Middelborough in Zealand. For it is nothing but a part of the streete, under the open ayre. Here I observed a frequent concourse of wealthy Merchants from all the famousest regions of Christendome. I noted a thing in this fayre that I never did before in any place. Every man selleth his ware in his owne house, except forreners and those that hire shoppes in the Burse. So that there is no common place either in the streetes or in any open yard or field (as I observed at the Fayre of Bergamo in Italie and in all other places) but only within the compasse of their owne private houses. Which maketh the Fayre seeme but little, though indeed it be very great. [. . .]

Thus much of Franckford.

Having spent two whole daies in Franckford, Wednesday and Thursday, I departed therehence the sixteenth day of September being Friday, about ten of the clocke in the morning, and travelled by land to Mentz whither I came by sixe of the clocke in the afternoone. This iourney was sixteene miles. I remained that night in Mentz. And whereas I meant to have gone the next morning to Ingelheim Court sixteen miles from Mentz to have seene the place where the Emperour *Charles* the Great was borne, and that magnificent Palace which he built there, wherein he sometimes kept his Imperiall Court, and which is yet shewed to this day; certayne Gentlemen of Colen craved my company in a boate downe the Rhene towards Colen. Whereupon I committed myselfe to the water the same morning being Saturday and the seventeenth of September, about eight of the clocke, and came to the City of Bopprad, which is thirty miles beyond it, about eight of the clocke in the evening.

SOURCE TEN

JACOB WAGNER
REGINBALD MOEHNER

The Imperial City of Augsburg during the Thirty Year's War

The Thirty Year's War (1618–1648) made a deep caesura in German bourgeois culture. The following text, an excerpt from the diaries of the merchant Jacob Wagner and the monk Reginbald Moehner, gives an impression of the drama of contemporary events. Augsburg, which was occupied by the Swedes, was besieged and starved out by a joint Imperial-Bavarian army after the battle of Nördlingen (5th and 6th of September 1634), which ended with the crushing defeat of the Protestants. Moehner's report is among those sources that lend credence to the idea that cannibalism sometimes occurred in such situations.

Source: Bernd Roeck. *Eine Stadt in Krieg und Frieden: Studien zur Geschichte der Reichsstadt Augsburg zwischen Kälenderstreit und Parität*. Göttingen 1989. (pp. 17, 18)

Translation: Olga E. Pollack and Dr. Andrew C. Gow.

During this terrible cold the ring of besieging forces drew even closer so that neither persons nor letters nor other things could either enter or leave [the town]. The famine gets worse by the day—by the hour—such that people soak, cut up, boil and eat the skin of oxen, cows and other animals. Several hundreds of skins have been eaten that way. Dogs and cats have been shot and beaten to death by the soldiers. Now there are almost none of those animals seen in the town.

It is also not excluded that dead bodies have been attacked. There have been a number of strange people who stayed around the town walls and in deserted houses. They did strange things. In the country it happened that they took human bodies and ate them in public, so great is the misery and need.

The Shrove Tuesday celebrations in Augsburg were pitiful like never before. Instead of wearing costumes, the poor people moved in groups of between 20 and 30 persons from house to house, looking like shrivelled, dry wood without colour, like human figures devoid of anima-

tion. With pitiful cries and lament they begged for a crumb of bread. One after the other died of hunger; they fell down everywhere, languished, and miserably gave up the ghost, for by this time, hardly even a piece of bread could be found in the town stores [the tithe barn] and there was such dearth that the noblest men had to content themselves with porridge without lard.

SOURCE ELEVEN

HOLL

The "house chronicle" of the architect Elias Holl

The "*Stattwerckhmeister*" (work master of the town) Elias Holl (1573–1646) of Augsburg is among the most important German architects of the 17th century. He was a representative of a monumental, classical variant of the late German Renaissance; he built most of his over one hundred buildings in his native town, which by his work acquired the title of the "Pompeii of the German Renaissance" (Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl). His main accomplishment is the city hall of Augsburg, the biggest city hall of central Europe. The master builder erected it in only five years, between 1615 and 1620.

Holl bequeathed a kind of autobiography, a mixture of family chronicle, collection of anecdotes, and list of works. His description of the costly engineering works, which were necessary for building the new city tower of Augsburg, the "Perlach"-tower, reminds us that the fame of the architect in the 17th century was less based on his qualities as an inventor of aesthetical attractive shapes and more on his ability to deal with mechanical problems, the mastery of technical skills in the broadest sense.

Source: Elias Holl. *Hauschronik*. Transkription nach dem Original der Staats- und Stadtbibliothek Augsburg, 4 Cod. Augsburg 1982, by Benedikt Mauer.

Translation: Olga E. Pollack and Dr. Andrew C. Gow.

[. . .] so we pulled up the bells, on a Monday, on the first of May, in the late afternoon around four o'clock, as a wedding of a noble family (patricians) took place in the guild hall [Bürgerstuben]. The windows were all open so that the wedding party could see over to us. Both municipal administrators [Stadtpfleger] were also present, several Fuggers and privy councillors and the councillors responsible for construction [Bauherren]. I attached the bells myself to the tackle, quickly and carefully arranged the workers on all scaffolds, so that nothing was lacking, and we pulled them up in the name of God, and all the gentlemen watched us from the guild hall, and also the square below us was full

of people. Everything went well so that the bells reached the top of the tower within one hour. I was right at the top and I wound them up one-handed with the afore-mentioned winch. After that I had to go to my masters in the hall to show them how the tackle and everything else was made, as well as how much the bells weighed and more besides.

Meanwhile the gentlemen, and especially my lords Fugger, brought me one drink after the other and spoke to me in a friendly way. So I was an hour with them, said goodbye and went home happy. On the 29th of July the brickwork of the tower with the main cornice was totally finished. [. . .]

[. . .] On the 17th of August I attached the cap of the spire to the Perlach-tower myself. In fact, it was the old cap, which had been on it before, but it had been renewed and gilded, it is two feet broad. This happened in the evening around four o' clock. I put my son Elias, who just had turned four, on this cap and shut it over him. He sat there for quite a time without fear. After that, as I had fixed the cap properly, I also placed him on top of the cap and let him sit there for a while. He was not afraid at all and said to me: "Look, Daddy, how many boys are down there in the lane"! Meanwhile his mother stood there in the spire by the bells and was not happy at all; she cried a great deal and feared that something might happen to the child. The boy was nearly an hour with me on the highest scaffold. I sent him home to his grandfather, so that he could tell him what he had seen and where he had been. On the 20th of August I also put up the banners or the statue which is called Cicere. Then my lords, the councillors responsible for the building [Bauherren], came up into the new tower. I had wine with me, poured a glass and drank to Councillor Imhof [Im Hoff] while I was standing on the cap of the spire. That was the highest drink I ever had. Then the same evening, I saw to it that three scaffolds below the cap were taken down.

[. . .]

SOURCE TWELVE

SANDRART

Joachim von Sandrart's "Teutsche Akademie" (German Academy)

Joachim von Sandrart, born in Frankfurt a. M. (1606–1688), was the son of a Huguenot trader who fled to the empire from Valenciennes. He worked as a painter and copper engraver in Prague and in various German cities. From 1629–1635, he stayed in Italy, and after that he worked in Amsterdam (1637–1645). In 1653 he was accorded the status of a nobleman.

Sandrart was a mediocre painter; his fame as an artist was based on the “Teutsche Academie der Edlen Bau-, Bild- und Mahlerey-Künste”, a collection of biographical sketches of famous artists with explanations of their works. The author became the agent of their fame, like a century before him Vasari in Italy: his narrations lift the artists high above the artisanal guild environment in which most of them had their start. He also made a practical contribution to the emancipation of artists by founding academies in Augsburg and Nuremberg.

The following excerpt of his work, which was published in two volumes in 1675 and 1679, deals with Albrecht Dürer and shows very clearly Sandrart’s goal of attaining for the celebrated painter an even loftier status.

Source: Sandrart, Joachim von. *Joachim von Sandrarts Academie der Bau-, Bild- und Mahlerey-Künste von 1675*. *Leben der berühmten Maler, Bildhauer und Baumeister*. Arthur Rudolf Peltzer (ed.). Munich 1925. (pp. 19–20, 64, 66, 71)

Translation: Olga E. Pollack and Dr. Andrew C. Gow.

We leave to others the effort to bring this noble art from Africa and Egypt, also Assyria and Babylon (where the great Semiramis has let the walls been painted with beautiful hunting scenes), further through Greece to Italy, and from there to upper and lower Germany. We only state here that our South Germany in fact could recently boast the excellent Albrecht Dürer and his successors, but later, because of

the dreadful wars, was deprived, as of nearly all others, also of this jewel. Adam Elsheimer, who was born in Frankfurt, wanted to grab the gown of this fleeing goddess [Fortuna], wanted to stop her and hold her up; but he was soon torn away by death; and the dexterity as the love for this art were betrayed and wiped out here. Queen Germania saw her palaces and churches, adorned with magnificent paintings, burning in the blaze from time to time; and her eyes were so shadowed by smoke and weeping so much that she had no more desire or strength left to take care of this art, which now seemed to want to go to sleep in a long and eternal night. So it sank into oblivion and those who made their profession with it fell into poverty and contempt. Therefore they dropped their palettes and instead of a paintbrush had to take up the soldier's spear or the beggar's staff. And noble persons felt ashamed to send their children to learn from such despised people.

From all appearances one has to believe that Albert spent a lot of time with these studies in his youth and knew a lot of sciences, as Geometry, arithmetic, architecture, perspective and a lot of other arts, because this is proved by the books he bequeathed, in which one can sense great reason, art and diligence. In the work of Daedalus on analogy and proportion all forms of the human body are pictured and interpreted in written form. No less admirable is his book, made according to the custom of the period, in which are presented rationally in brief lessons perspective, architecture and military affairs.

By this means he not only won prestige among the common people, but also among the scholars and the grandest princes. Carl Vermander tells of Maximilian, the Roman emperor, the grandfather of Charles V, that when Albert wanted to paint a mural on a wall for him, and when he was on a scaffold, he couldn't reach the spot. The emperor commanded a nobleman who was present to hold the ladder for the artist and to let him climb up so that he could finish his painting. However, when the nobleman wanted to refuse this request modestly and humbly with the remark that it would be detrimental to his status and unpleasant if he should become the ladder-holder of a painter, the emperor answered him: Albert is even better than a nobleman because of the excellence of his art, for I can turn a peasant into a nobleman, but I can't turn a nobleman into an artist, for which reason I have granted to Alberto the coat of arms of the painters, so that they bear three silver or white shields in an azure field.

And Charles V has also held him in exactly the same high esteem.

Now after Albrecht Dürer was raised with his siblings in fear of God, and also learned to write and read at school, he was urged by his father to learn the craft of a goldsmith, where he stayed until he was sixteen. He started well with drawing, engraving, sketching and got so far, that he sketched the seven stages of the suffering of Christ, which delighted his father very much. The father would have loved to see

him stay with it, but he didn't want to, instead, in short, he wanted to become a painter. At last the father allowed this and for him to go to Colmar to Martin Schön, with whom he had done business, so that he could learn the art of painting, and was about to send him and have him apprenticed, but in the midst of all this, Martin Schön died. After that the father applied somewhere else and apprenticed his son Albrecht to Michael Wolgemut, who lived beneath the castle, in the year 1486, beginning on St. Andrew's Day [30 November], for three years, to learn the art of painting. During this apprenticeship he did not miss anything, was always diligent and studious, drove himself on, improved himself and observed nature accurately. After finishing three years, namely in the year 1490, he left after Easter und travelled through Germany and the Netherlands.

In Venice he painted some beautiful pictures too. Thus he wandered for four years and was away for that long, and then he returned back to his parents in Nuremberg. In the year 1494, on Wednesday before the day of St. Margaret, he married Agnes, the daughter of Hans Frey, with a dowry of 200 guilders. They had no children; she was a nagging "Zifer",¹⁵ a quarrelsome, stingy shrew, with whom he had little happiness and few good days; and with such a bad marriage, one must be very much surprised that Dürer remained consistently passionate in his work. This can be seen detailed and with astonishment in his printed books on geometry, perspective, fortification, and also four volumes on the proportion of the human body, just as in the arch of honour, which he designed in honour of the emperor Maximilian I in the form of drawings on wooden tablets, later engraving them for printing.

He received yearly 100 guilders' payment; his paintings and his work on various sketches and designs were separately paid. The king of England as well as other rulers whom he portrayed paid him honestly. Besides his art he had the gift of eloquent friendliness so that everybody enjoyed dealing with him. Due to his art he was also chosen as an honorary member of the greater council. He lived here in Nuremberg, where one walks through the *Zißelgasse* up to the *Tiergärtner Tor*, in the topmost corner house, on the left, where he also died blessedly in God in glory and honour when he was 57 years old, in the year 1528, during the Holy Week, on the 8th of April.

¹⁵ Analogously "old bag".

SOURCE THIRTEEN

FLORINUS

The House-Rules

“Hausväterliteratur” (literature for fathers of the house) was in the early modern times a very popular genre. Its authors make recommendations on economic method, organisation of the household, and they formulate propositions regarding the ethical aspects of living together in household and family. They propagate bourgeois virtues like order, diligence and thrift (Paul Münch). Work and thrifty house-keeping are accorded the status of ‘divine service’ in these mainly Protestant writings.

The central units of early modern life appear without exception as hierarchically structured, fitted into the larger order of things of which God is the pinnacle. Women are, in the main, assigned a subordinate position in the house. The author of the following text naturally sees the father of the house as the ruler of the house and family, but he also reacts critically to misogynistic opinions that women are, by creation, not equal to men.

Source: Franciscus Philippus Florinus. *Oeconomus prudens et legalis oder allgemeiner kluger und verständiger Hausvater*. Joh. Chr. Donauern (ed.). Nuremberg 1705. (p. 4, § 10, p. 4, § 11, p. 5, § 11, p. 9, § 6, p. 55, S. 132, § 2 & § 4, p. 133, § 6)

Translation: Olga E. Pollack and Dr. Andrew C. Gow.

But a Christian and prudent father has always God’s orders and his profession as a housefather as his main aim in mind in everything he does. And he remembers everywhere that he wants to lead the household faithfully in God’s honour and in obedience to his will, for He is the highest housefather, who appointed him to his status. And all his work, efforts and diligence are exercised in this spirit precisely on account of having been called to them by the heavenly father.

For in this fashion all work is made into a holy office—no matter how lowly and abject this work might be in itself.

For whosoever imagines God, GOD as the highest common paterfamilias and liege lord, who calls his people to be administrators and

vassals in their households, and thus demands accounting of all income and expenses, he will learn to run his household carefully and loyally, so that he will, when the time comes, be able to be answerable for his accounts before his Principal.

Each housefather shall be found always and everywhere to be alert, cautious, home-conscious, thrifty, humble, lively, diligent, and in many cases discreet in his running of the house, and he shall be able to acquire each and every thing he might need at the right time.

Indeed it is so certain that the female gender in no way should be excluded from mankind—they have ability, intelligence and memory—that we merely laugh at those cynics (who were after all born of women themselves) who don't want to regard them as humans and think that they are no better than unreasoning beasts.

General House-Rules

The first rule: The house shall be kept in proper order. The housefather shall believe that aside from godly blessings there is nothing that can make his household brighter, more gracious and more blissful than proper order. Order is like a house clock and everyone must act in accordance with it concerning going to bed, getting up, eating, drinking, working and other business. What can be done under the roof by night and during a storm shall neither be done during clear, beautiful weather nor outside in the fields. In a household a daily division of the ordinary chores should be known, as if posted on a board for everybody to see, of how one should spend the day hour by hour, so that one knows what to do and that the work can be done more easily than if everything happens in confusion and disorder. The tasks for the next day should be told to the servants the evening before, such that everyone is assigned to his work separately, so that nobody can count on the other and thus allow the work to be done carelessly or even left undone.

The third rule: Thrift shall be regarded as the main art concerning housekeeping and shall be esteemed as real, inalienable capital.

The fifth rule: Assiduous activity shall be regarded as adequate and necessary in all one's tasks and business. Idleness is inherently a dishonourable and dismal vice.

SOURCE FOURTEEN

RIESBECK

From the "Letters of a travelling Frenchman"

Johann Kaspar Riesbeck (1754–1786), the son of a weaver and manufacturer of handkerchiefs, was the anonymous author of the "Letters of a travelling Frenchmen through Germany to his brother in Paris" (Zurich, 1739). The author not only provides us with exact descriptions of towns and landscapes, which were complemented by statistics, but also criticised in a satirical and ironical way the conditions of his time. In the following we offer his judgements of the German bourgeoisie and passages that allow indirect insights into the ideals of enlightened city planning and—with some irony—into the culture of cities (e.g. Stuttgart, Munich, Cologne, Salzburg etc.).

Source: Riesbeck, Johann Kaspar. *Briefe eines reisenden Franzosen über Deutschland an seinen Bruder zu Paris*. Wolfgang Gerlach (ed.). Stuttgart 1967. (pp. 110, 111, 196–197, 234, 235, 302–303)

Translation: Olga E. Pollack and Dr. Andrew C. Gow.

If you go during the day to a coffee house, of which there are about seventy here, or to a beerhouse, which are the cleanest and most splendid among the public houses—I saw one wallpapered with red damask, with gilded frames, clocks and mirrors and with marble tables—you will see their eternal eating, drinking and playing. You are sure that nobody will pry into your affairs you or become bothersome with questions. No one speaks there, except with his acquaintance, and normally only to the ear. One should think that it should be here like in Venice, where everyone in the public houses imagines himself to be a spy.

If a foreigner has the luck to be invited to certain grand houses, as it may well have happened to the Englishman Moore, he will in fact find that in some cases he is in better society than the best Paris and London have to offer.

Berlin is an extremely beautiful and impressive city. One can always place her among the most beautiful cities in Europe. It is not built according to uniform principles of the sort that eventually make the sight of most newly built rectilinear cities *ennuyant*. The architecture,

the arrangement, the shape of the public squares and their plantings of trees, which one also finds on a number of main streets—in short, everything quite diverse and entertaining.

I have, for a few days, been criss-crossing the town, as I like to do. It is as big as Paris and Vienna. It is almost is one and a half hours from side to side and a good hour from top to bottom. Even within in this vast circumference there are a lot of gardens and on one side even fields are enclosed. There are not many more than 6.000 houses, whereas Paris has nearly 30.000. The drabness of many areas contrasts to the splendence of the buildings in a strange way.

The contrast of this pomp is even more outstanding in view of the state of the townfolk. You stand full of admiration in front of a building built in the ionic style, nicely plastered, with a splendid facade and looking like the residence of a *Fermiergénéral* [tax farmer] or at least the one of a *duc*. Suddenly a window opens on a lower floor, and there a shoemaker sets a newly resoled boot in front of your nose on the window sill to let the polish dry.

On my German journeys I found it very natural to hear the people speaking very often of the current war.

Among hundred of Germans you hardly find one who takes our side. The people of Mecklenburg in particular favour the British people to the point of blind devotion. I have, at little social parties in many places, found the goddess with the two trumpets [Fama] spreading reports favourable to British. They find something great in the doings and the character of the British, whom they venerate and admire, as though they were idols—all at our expense. Also, with the exception of our conduct of war, the Germans have an utterly unfair opinion of us. They believe that our government is the quintessence of despotism and consider us a malicious and deceitful nation, though we regard “bonhomie” and frankness as our main national virtues, which many other foreigners have also confirmed.

The first sight of the inside of the imperial and Hanseatic city Hamburg is quite disgusting and repulsive. Most of the streets are narrow, airless and black, and the common people who swarm through them are coarse, wild and generally not very clean. However, as soon as one is acquainted with some of the better houses, one gets a better impression of the city. In the houses of the richer merchants calm, cleanliness, and splendour, even to the point of wastefulness, are the rule. The people from Hamburg are the first Protestants I have seen who have remained German-Catholic as concerns eating and drinking. Their food is better even than in Vienna, Graz, Prague and Munich; and perhaps no where else in the world do people attach so much importance to sensuous taste as here.

All examples of middle-class life are more strongly delineated here than in any other country.

This dour and ponderous nation distinguishes itself, above all other Europeans, through both religious and political enthusiasms. In different

parts of town one catches sight of 'columns of infamy,' on which the heads of mayors and councilmen are skewered on iron spits, victims of the political frenzy of the local citizens.

Republican pride lends even the most ordinary incidents a certain complexion of particular interest to friends of humanity, even if only as a source of laughter, as Democritus allowed the acts of his fellow citizens of Abdera to be the occasion of pleasant vibration of the lobes of his lungs.

The religious enthusiasm of this little London trumps all the characteristics one knows of this kind. Here they do not content themselves with single saints, but set them up in whole armies.

SOURCE FIFTEEN

WEKHRLIN

An Enlightened Glance at Old Cities:
Wilhelm Ludwig Wekhrlin's Anselmus Rabiosus

During the enlightened 18th century, knowledge of the historical preconditions of confessional parity was no longer especially vivid. The system of parity was confirmed by the Peace of Westphalia as a constitutional peculiarity in Augsburg and in some other cities of the Holy Roman Empire. Only those aware of the sacrifices that peace had cost and the hardships caused by confessional hostilities (see source 14) would be in a position to understand the complex net of legal rules which made the coexistence of different confessions possible. This net did not by any means prevent petty disagreements, but it did prevent large-scale, bloody confrontations. Of course, parity was not the result of tolerance—in this, Wekhrlin is quite right—but rather of the force of circumstance and stark necessity.

Wilhelm Ludwig Wekhrlin (1739–1792) published his *Anselmus Rabiosus* in 1778. This enlightened and critical “political travelogue” appeared like a comet in the heavens, according to one contemporary. Particularly cutting was Wekhrlin’s opinion of Regensburg, the city which accommodated the “Immerwährende Reichstag” (eternal Diet).

Source: Wekhrlin, Wilhelm Ludwig. *Anselmus Rabiosus' Reise durch Oberdeutschland*. Jean Mondot (ed.). Munich 1988. (pp. 40, 45, 47)

Translation: Olga E. Pollack and Dr. Andrew C. Gow.

Regensburg

Regensburg is a dark, melancholic and introverted town. The courts of the envoys who form the German imperial Diet provide insufficient light to allow one to make one’s way from one street to another. Nothing represents the lethargic imperial political order more clearly than those courts. It is an imperial city. Its symbol is: a fallow buck. Every imperial city keeps its own kind of live animals, which serve as its symbol. Its symbol is a fallow buck. These animals wander around in the town moat and serve the magistrate to pass the time. They are as sacred as the swans of Apollo.

Augsburg

Troja fuit! one sighs when one is in Augsburg. This town is not itself anymore, although it once held a high rank among the commercial towns of Europe. It resembles a starving body fighting with itself from inside. It is menaced from outside by a powerful neighbour and from inside by a famine. The buildings are beautiful. Some of them would show to advantage in Rome and Genoa, but they are empty and deserted.

The town owes most of its reputation to the *Fuggers*, who were the most famous weavers in Europe. It still keeps this character. As soon as you enter the town you can feel the weaver's loom [. . .]

Augsburg is an imperial city—and this is not one of the smallest of its unhappy destinies. It makes it subject to the will of its neighbour. The prince elector of Bavaria, who could deny the town air and water, reigns over the town without restrictions. He considers the town as his bank account from which he can withdraw money whenever he wishes to do so.

It is at Augsburg where that one can see the full dimensions of that dragon, religious parity. Since the Peace of Augsburg both, the Catholic and Protestant religion, enjoy equal powers and privileges. This situation, which is one of the crucial aspects of the town's constitution, is called parity. This would be a praiseworthy aspect if it were a product of virtue, if it was born out of the principles of tolerance and charity—these principles of our century which are so sacred and beautiful. But this parity is nothing but a tool of politics. It possesses absolutely nothing of its name's virtue.

The parity of Augsburg does not stop with the equality of religious parties, church customs and of church services. It affects all civil institutions: the employees in the civil service and in the military, the economy of the republic and the equality of votes in the senate. All in all it is a tool, which all religious parties use in order to either stop or promote their political moves.

This parity is so far away from its true character, tolerance that each one of the two religious parties would be ready to jump at the other's throat, were the magistrate not constantly vigilant. Truly, in such an unfortunate situation, the borders should always be guarded carefully.

SOURCE SIXTEEN

LESSING

*Enlightenment and tolerance: The “Ringparabel” (parable of the ring) in
Lessing’s Nathan the Wise*

One of the greatest achievements of the enlightenment is perhaps that its proponents were able to reach a tolerant attitude in religious matters. The high point of this development is marked by the play “Nathan the Wise” by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–1781).

“Nathan the Wise”, Lessing’s last great work, arose from his confrontation with Protestant ‘scholastic’ (official) theology. As early as 1779, in the year of publication, the “dramatic poem” went through several editions and was soon translated into other languages. The topic of the play, set during the Crusades, is the coexistence of Jews, Christians, and Moslems. The ‘ring parable’, which has its roots in Boccaccio’s *Decameron*, is the heart of the play. Lessing presents the three great religions as gifts of the Father, that is, of God: their “truth” is not based on dogmas, but is ensured by the historical origin of the rings. Religion must prove its value in practical life: the owner of the ring should be “pleasing” before God and humans. The value of religions lies alone in that which they can do for the well-being, peace and education of humankind (Conrad Wiedemann).

“Not truth, of which every person is or imagines himself to be in possession, but the honest effort he has expended to attain truth is what constitutes the worth of a human being,” said Lessing in 1778. “If God held closed in his right hand all truth, and in his left hand the eternally fresh desire for truth, but with the proviso, that I would always and eternally be in error [while searching], and told me to choose between them, I would fall in humility upon his left hand and say ‘Father, give me this! Pure truth is yours alone.’”

Source: Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Nathan the Wise*. Translated by Bayard Quincy Morgan. In: *Gotthold Ephraim Lessing: Nathan the Wise, Minna von Barnhelm, and Other Plays and Writings*. Edited by Peter Demetz. Foreword by Hannah Arendt. New York 1998. (pp. 231–235)

In Jerusalem, during the Crusades, Saladin (who is a Muslim) asks Nathan (a Jew) which is the true faith: Islam, Judaism, or Christianity. Nathan replies by telling him the story of the three rings:

NATHAN

In days of yore, there dwelt in eastern lands
A man who had a ring of priceless worth
Received from hands beloved. The stone it held,
An opal, shed a hundred colors fair,
And had the magic power that he who wore it,
Trusting its strength, was loved of God and men.
No wonder therefore that this eastern man
Would never cease to wear it; and took pains
To keep it in his household for all time.
He left the ring to that one of his sons
He loved the best; providing that in turn
That son bequeath to his most favourite son
The ring; and thus, regardless of his birth,
The dearest son, by virtue of the ring,
Should be the head, the prince of all his house.
You follow, Sultan?

SALADIN

Perfectly. Continue!

NATHAN

At last this ring, passed on from son to son,
Descended to a father of three sons;
All three of whom were duly dutiful,
All three of whom in consequence he needs
Must love alike. But yet from time to time,
Now this, now that one, now the third—as each
Might be with him alone, the other two
Not sharing then his overflowing heart
Seemed worthiest of the ring; and so to each
He promised it, in pious frailty.
This lasted while it might.—Then came the time
For dying, and the loving father finds
Himself embarrassed. It's a grief to him
To wound two of his sons, who have relied
Upon his word.—What's to be done?—He sends
In secret to a jeweller, of whom
He orders two more rings, in pattern like
His own, and bids him spare nor cost nor toil
To make them in all points identical.
The jeweller succeeds. And when he brings
The rings to him, the sire himself cannot
Distinguish them from the original.

In glee and joy he calls his sons to him,
 Each by himself, confers on him his blessing
 His ring as well—and dies.—You hear me, Sultan?

SALADIN

(who, taken aback, has turned away)

I hear,

I hear you!—Finish your fable
 Without delay.—I'm waiting!

NATHAN

I am done

For what ensues is wholly obvious.

Scarce is the father dead when all three sons
 Appear, each with his ring, and each would be
 The reigning prince. They seek the facts, they quarrel,
 Accuse. In vain; the genuine ring was not
 Demonstrable;—(He pauses for a reply)
 Almost as little as
 Today the genuine faith.

SALADIN

You mean this as
 The answer to my question?

NATHAN

What I mean

Is merely an excuse, if I decline
 Precisely to distinguish those three rings
 Which with intent the father ordered made
 That sharpest eye might not distinguish them.

SALADIN

The rings!—Don't trifle with me!—I should think
 That those religions which I named you
 Might be distinguished readily enough.
 Down to their clothing; down to food and drink!

NATHAN

In all respects except their basic grounds.
 Are they not grounded all in history,
 Or writ or handed down?—But history
 Must be accepted wholly upon faith
 Not so?—Well then, whose faith are we least like
 To doubt? Our people's, surely? Those whose blood
 We share? The ones who from our childhood gave
 Us proofs of love? Who never duped us, but
 When it was for our good to be deceived?
 How can I trust my fathers less than you
 Trust yours? Or turn about.—Can I demand

That to your forebears you should give the lie
That mine be not gainsaid? Or turn about.
The same holds true of Christians. Am I right?

SALADIN

(aside) By Allah, yes! The man is right.
I must

NATHAN

Let's come back to our rings once more.
As we have said: the sons preferred complaint;
And each swore to the judge, he had received
The ring directly from his father's hand.
As was the truth!—And long before had had
His father's promise, one day to enjoy
The privilege of the ring.—No less than truth!
His father, each asserted, could not have
Been false to him; of such a loving father:
He must accuse his brothers—howsoever
Inclined in other things to think the best
Of them—of some false play; and he the traitors
Would promptly ferret out; would take revenge.

SALADIN

And then, the judge?—I am all ears to hear
What you will have the judge decide. Speak on!

NATHAN

Thus said the judge: unless you swiftly bring
Your father here to me, I'll bid you leave
My judgement seat. Think you that I am here
For solving riddles? Would you wait, perhaps,
Until the genuine ring should rise and speak?
But stop! I hear the genuine ring enjoys
The magic power to make its wearer loved,
Beloved of God and men. That must decide!
For spurious rings can surely not do that!
Whom then do you love most? Quick, speak!
You're mute? The rings' effect is only backward,
Not outward? Each one loves himself the most?
O then you are, all three, deceived deceivers!
Your rings are false, all three. The genuine ring
No doubt got lost. To hide the grievous loss,
To make it good, the father caused three rings
To serve for one.

SALADIN

O splendid, splendid!

NATHAN

So,

The judge went on, if you'll not have my counsel,
Instead of verdict, go! My counsel is:
Accept the matter wholly as it stands.
If each one from his father has his ring,
Then let each one believe his ring to be
The true one.—Possibly the father wished
To tolerate no longer in his house
The tyranny of just one ring!—And know:
That you, all three, he loved; and loved alike;
Since two of you he'd not humiliate
To favor one.—Well then! Let each aspire
To emulate his father's unbeguiled,
Unprejudiced affection! Let each strive
To match the rest in bringing to the fore
The magic opal of his ring!
Assist that power with all humility,
With benefaction, hearty peacefulness,
And with profound submission to God's will!
And when the magic powers of the stones
Reveal themselves in children's children's children:
I bid you, in a thousand thousand years,
To stand again before this seat. For then
A wiser man than I will sit as judge
Upon this bench, and speak. Depart!—So said
The modest judge.

SALADIN

God! God!

SOURCE SEVENTEEN

KANT

An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?

The most famous definition of the notion “enlightenment” is that of the philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), of Königsberg in Prussia. On the eve of the French Revolution, in 1783, Kant gave the answer, presented below in excerpts, to this question, which the theologian Johann Friedrich Zöllner had posed in the “Berliner Monatsschrift”. Kant emphasises man’s this-worldly situation and the concrete possibilities which arise within it. Enlightenment is for him an intellectual responsibility, especially liberation from the restrictions which religion imposes on thinking. For Kant, the freedom of a *public* use of reason is still limited to scholars. His writing is nonetheless a plea for the autonomous strength of reason and for free discourse.

Source: Immanuel Kant. *Was ist Aufklärung? Königsberg in Preussen, den 30. Sept. 1784.*

Translation: Immanuel Kant. *An Answer to the Question: “What is Enlightenment?” Königsberg in Prussia, 30th September, 1784.* In: *Practical Philosophy*. The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant. Translated and edited by Mary J. Gregor. Cambridge University Press. 1996.

Enlightenment is the human being’s emergence from his self-incurred minority.¹

Minority is inability to make use of one’s own understanding without direction from another. This minority is self-incurred when its cause lies not in lack of understanding but in lack of resolution and courage to use it without direction from another. Sapere aude!² Have courage to make use of your own understanding! is thus the motto of enlightenment.

It is because of laziness and cowardice that so great a part of humankind, after nature has long since emancipated them from other people’s

¹ Unmündigkeit

² Horace Epodes 1.2, 40. Literally, “dare to be wise.”

direction (*naturaliter maiorenes*), nevertheless gladly remains minors for life, and that it becomes so easy for others to set themselves up as their guardians. It is so comfortable to be a minor! If I have a book that understands for me, a spiritual advisor who has a conscience for me, a doctor who decides upon a regimen for me, and so forth, I need not trouble myself at all. I need not think, if only I can pay; others will readily undertake the irksome business for me. That by far the greatest part of humankind (including the entire fair sex) should hold the step toward majority to be not only troublesome but also highly dangerous will soon be seen to by those guardians who have kindly taken it upon themselves to supervise them; after they have made their domesticated animals dumb and carefully prevented these placid creatures from daring to take a single step without the walking cart³ in which they have confined them, they then show them the danger that threatens them if they try to walk alone. Now this danger is not in fact so great, for by a few falls they would eventually learn to walk; but an example of this kind makes them timid and usually frightens them away from any further attempt.

Thus it is difficult for any single individual to extricate himself from the minority that has become almost nature to him. He has even grown fond of it and is really unable for the time being to make use of his own understanding, because he was never allowed to make the attempt. Precepts and formulas, those mechanical instruments of a rational use, or rather misuse, of his natural endowments, are the ball and chain of an everlasting minority. And anyone who did throw them off would still make only an uncertain leap over even the narrowest ditch, since he would not be accustomed to free movement of this kind. Hence there are only a few who have succeeded, by their own cultivation of their spirit, in extricating themselves from minority and yet walking confidently.

But that a public should enlighten itself is more possible; indeed this is almost inevitable, if only it is left its freedom. For there will always be a few independent thinkers, even among the established guardians of the great masses, who, after having themselves cast off the yoke of minority, will disseminate the spirit of a rational valuing of one's own worth and of the calling of each individual to think for himself. What should be noted here is that the public, which was previously put under this yoke by the guardians, may subsequently itself compel them to remain under it, if the public is suitably stirred up by some of its guardians who are themselves incapable of any enlightenment; so harmful is it to implant prejudices, because they finally take their revenge on the very people who, or whose predecessors, were their authors. Thus a public can achieve enlightenment only slowly. A revolution

³ A Gängelwagen was a device used by parents and nurses to provide support for young children while they were learning to walk.

may well bring about a falling off of personal despotism and of avaricious or tyrannical oppression, but never a true reform in one's way of thinking; instead new prejudices will serve just as well as old ones to harness the great unthinking masses.

For this enlightenment, however, nothing is required but freedom, and indeed the least harmful of anything that could even be called freedom: namely, freedom to make public use of one's reason in all matters. But I hear from all sides the cry: Do not argue! The officer says: Do not argue but drill! The tax official: Do not argue but pay! The clergyman: Do not argue but believe! (Only one ruler in the world says: Argue as much as you will and about whatever you will, but obey!) Everywhere there are restrictions on freedom. But what sort of restriction hinders enlightenment, and what sort does not hinder but instead promotes it?²—I reply: The public use of one's reason must always be free, and it alone can bring about enlightenment among human beings; the private use of one's reason may, however, often be very narrowly restricted without this particularly hindering the progress of enlightenment. But by the public use of one's own reason I understand that use which someone makes of it as a scholar before the entire public of the world of readers. What I call the private use of reason is that which one may make of it in a certain civil post or office with which he is entrusted. Now, for many affairs conducted in the interest of a commonwealth a certain mechanism is necessary, by means of which some members of the commonwealth must behave merely passively, so as to be directed by the government, through an artful⁴ unanimity, to public ends (or at least prevented from destroying such ends). Here it is, certainly, impermissible to argue; instead, one must obey. But insofar as this part of the machine also regards himself as a member of a whole commonwealth, even of the society of citizens of the world, and so in his capacity of a scholar who by his writings addresses a public in the proper sense of the word, he can certainly argue without thereby harming the affairs assigned to him in part as a passive member. Thus it would be ruinous if an officer, receiving an order from his superiors, wanted while on duty to engage openly in subtle reasoning about its appropriateness⁵ or utility; he must obey. But he cannot fairly⁶ be prevented, as a scholar, from making remarks about errors in the military service and from putting these before his public for appraisal. A citizen cannot refuse to pay the taxes imposed upon him; an impertinent censure of such levies when he is to pay them may even be punished as a scandal (which could occasion general insubordination). But the same citizen does not act against the duty of a citizen when, as a scholar, he publicly expresses his

⁴ künstliche

⁵ Zweckmässigkeit

⁶ billigermassen

thoughts about the inappropriateness or even injustice of such decrees. So too, a clergyman is bound to deliver his discourse to the pupils in his catechism class and to his congregation in accordance with the creed of the church he serves, for he was employed by it on that condition. But as a scholar he has complete freedom and is even called upon to communicate to the public all his carefully examined and well-intentioned thoughts about what is erroneous in that creed and his suggestions for a better arrangement of the religious and ecclesiastical body. And there is nothing in this that could be laid as a burden on his conscience. For what he teaches in consequence of his office as carrying out the business of the church, he represents as something with respect to which he does not have free power to teach as he thinks best, but which he is appointed to deliver as prescribed and in the name of another. He will say: Our church teaches this or that; here are the arguments it uses. He then extracts all practical uses for his congregation from precepts to which he would not himself subscribe with full conviction but which he can nevertheless undertake to deliver because it is still not altogether impossible that truth may lie concealed in them, and in any case there is at least nothing contradictory to inner religion present in them. For if he believed he had found the latter in them, he could not in conscience hold his office; he would have to resign from it. Thus the use that an appointed teacher makes of his reason before his congregation is merely a private use; for a congregation, however large a gathering it may be, is still only a domestic gathering; and with respect to it he, as a priest, is not and cannot be free, since he is carrying out another's commission. On the other hand as a scholar, who by his writings speaks to the public in the strict sense, that is, the world—hence a clergyman in the public use of his reason—he enjoys an unrestricted freedom to make use of his own reason and to speak in his own person. For that the guardians of the people (in spiritual matters) should themselves be minors is an absurdity that amounts to the perpetuation of absurdities.

But should not a society of clergymen, such as an ecclesiastical synod or a venerable classis (as it calls itself among the Dutch), be authorized to bind itself by oath to a certain unalterable creed, in order to carry on an unceasing guardianship over each of its members and by means of them over the people, and even to perpetuate this? I say that this is quite impossible. Such a contract, concluded to keep all further enlightenment away from the human race forever, is absolutely null and void, even if it were ratified by the supreme power, by imperial diets and by the most solemn peace treaties. One age cannot bind itself and conspire to put the following one into such a condition that it would be impossible for it to enlarge its cognitions (especially in such urgent matters) and to purify them of errors, and generally to make further progress in enlightenment. This would be a crime against human nature, whose original vocation lies precisely in such progress; and succeeding generations are therefore perfectly authorized to reject such

decisions as unauthorized and made sacrilegiously. The touchstone of whatever can be decided upon as law for a people lies in the question: whether a people could impose such a law upon itself. Now this might indeed be possible for a determinate short time, in expectation as it were of a better one, in order to introduce a certain order; during that time each citizen, particularly a clergyman, would be left free, in his capacity as a scholar, to make his remarks publicly, that is, through writings, about defects in the present institution; meanwhile, the order introduced would last until public insight into the nature of these things had become so widespread and confirmed that by the union of their voices (even if not all of them) it could submit a proposal to the crown, to take under its protection those congregations that have, perhaps in accordance with their concepts of better insight, agreed to an altered religious institution, but without hindering those that wanted to acquiesce in the old one. But it is absolutely impermissible to agree, even for a single lifetime, to a permanent religious constitution not to be doubted publicly by anyone and thereby, as it were, to nullify a period of time in the progress of humanity toward improvement and make it fruitless and hence detrimental to posterity. One can indeed, for his own person and even then only for some time, postpone enlightenment in what it is incumbent upon him to know; but to renounce enlightenment, whether for his own person or even more so for posterity, is to violate the sacred right of humanity and trample it underfoot. But what a people may never decide upon for itself, a monarch may still less decide upon for a people; for his legislative authority rests precisely on this that he unites in his will the collective will of the people. As long as he sees to it that any true or supposed improvement is consistent with civil order, he can for the rest leave it to his subjects to do what they find it necessary to do for the sake of their salvation; that is no concern of his, but it is indeed his concern to prevent any one of them from forcibly hindering others from working to the best of their ability to determine and promote their salvation. It even infringes upon his majesty if he meddles in these affairs by honouring with governmental inspection the writings in which his subjects attempt to clarify their insight, as well as if he does this from his own supreme insight. In which case he exposes himself to the reproach *Caesar non est super grammaticos*,⁷ but much more so if he demeans his supreme authority so far as to support the spiritual despotism of a few tyrants within his state against the rest of his subjects.

If it is now asked whether we at present live in an enlightened age, the answer is: No, but we do live in an age of enlightenment. As matters now stand, a good deal more is required for people on the whole

⁷ Caesar is not above the grammarians.

to be in the position, or even able to be put into the position, of using their own understanding confidently and well in religious matters, without another's guidance. But we do have distinct intimations that the field is now being opened for them to work freely in this direction and that the hindrances to universal enlightenment or to humankind's emergence from its self-incurred minority are gradually becoming fewer. In this regard this age is the age of enlightenment or the century of Frederick.

A prince who does not find it beneath himself to say that he considers it his duty not to prescribe anything to human beings in religious matters but to leave them complete freedom, who thus even declines the arrogant name of tolerance, is himself enlightened and deserves to be praised by a grateful world and by posterity as the one who first released the human race from minority, at least from the side of government, and left each free to make use of his own reason in all matters of conscience. Under him, venerable clergymen, notwithstanding their official duties, may in their capacity as scholars freely and publicly lay before the world for examination their judgments and insights deviating here and there from the creed adopted, and still more may any other who is not restricted by any official duties. This spirit of freedom is also spreading abroad, even where it has to struggle with external obstacles of a government which misunderstands itself. For it shines as an example to such a government that in freedom there is not the least cause for anxiety about public concord and the unity of the commonwealth. People gradually work their way out of barbarism of their own accord if only one does not intentionally contrive to keep them in it.

I have put the main point of enlightenment, of people's emergence from their self-incurred minority, chiefly in matters of religion because our rulers have no interest in playing guardian over their subjects with respect to the arts and sciences and also because that minority, being the most harmful, is also the most disgraceful of all. But the frame of mind of a head of state who favours the first goes still further and sees that even with respect to his legislation there is no danger in allowing his subjects to make public use of their own reason and to publish to the world their thoughts about a better way of formulating it, even with candid criticism of that already given; we have a shining example of this, in which no monarch has yet surpassed the one whom we honour.

But only one who, himself enlightened, is not afraid of phantoms, but at the same time has a well-disciplined and numerous army ready to guarantee public peace, can say what a free state⁸ may not dare to say: Argue as much as you will and about what you will; only obey! Here a strange, unexpected course is revealed in human affairs, as

⁸ Freistaat

happens elsewhere too if it is considered in the large, where almost everything is paradoxical. A greater degree of civil freedom seems advantageous to a people's freedom of spirit and nevertheless puts up insurmountable barriers to it; a lesser degree of the former, on the other hand, provides a space for the latter to expand to its full capacity. Thus when nature has unwrapped, from under this hard shell, the seed for which she cares most tenderly, namely the propensity and calling to think freely, the latter gradually works back upon the mentality⁹ of the people (which thereby gradually becomes capable of freedom in acting) and eventually even upon the principles of government, which finds it profitable to itself to treat the human being, who is now more than a machine,¹⁰ in keeping with his dignity.

Königsberg in Prussia, 30th September, 1784

⁹ Sinnesart

¹⁰ der nun mehr als Maschine ist

SOURCE EIGHTEEN

ALLGEMEINES LANDRECHT

Legal Rules for Relations between Parents and Children

Typical of the Age of Enlightenment was a concern to regulate relations between people to the minutest degree possible, as witnessed by the contemporary flood of legal works and police statutes. The following excerpt from the „Allgemeines Landrecht für die preußischen Staaten“ of 1794 points at the attempt to regulate relations between parents and children and family order by means of detailed rules, and to prescribe the essentials of upbringing and behaviour.

Source: Jürgen Schlumbohm (ed.). *Kinderstuben: Wie Kinder zu Bauern, Bürgern, Aristokraten wurden, 1700–1850*. Munich 1983.

Translation: Olga E. Pollack and Dr. Andrew C. Gow.

Laws regulate the relations between parents and children (1794)
Second clause

Regarding the rights and duties of parents and children, conceived in a legal marriage, as long as the latter are under their father's authority.

General rights of marital children.

§. 58. Children of a legal marriage bear the name of the father.

§. 59. They enjoy the rights of his family and of his status insofar as the latter are in the line of descent by birth

...

General duties of the same.

§. 61. Children owe both parents respect and obedience.

§. 62. But mainly they are subject to their father's authority.

§. 63. They are obliged to support their parents in misfortune and need and especially to assume their care and maintenance when their parents are sick.

Rights and duties of parents:

1) Concerning subsistence

§. 64. Both parents must jointly assure the care and education of the children befitting their rank.

§. 65. However, it is mainly the father who must bear the expenses for the subsistence of the children.

§. 66. The mother herself must provide bodily care and attendance, as long as the children need it, or this has to happen under her surveillance.

§. 67. A healthy mother is obliged to breastfeed her child herself.

§. 68. But how long she has to breastfeed her child depends on the determination of the father.

§. 69. However, he must respect the opinion of a specialist if the health of the mother or of the child would suffer under his command.

§. 70. The father cannot deprive the mother of her surveillance and care against her will before the child finishes its fourth year.

§. 71. (This occurs) only if the mother lacks the strength or the will to fulfil her duty.

...

2) Concerning education and teaching.

§. 74. Directing the child's education is mainly the task of the father.

§. 75. He must primarily make sure that the child receives the necessary instruction concerning religion and beneficial knowledge according to his status and the circumstances.

...

3) Rights of parental discipline/education

§. 86. Parents are allowed to use any manner of force not harmful to their children's health to ensure their [proper] education.

...

5) Rights and duties of the parents concerning the choice of the children's way of life.

§. 109. The determination of the sons' future way of life depends firstly on the discretion of the father.

§. 110. However, he must be especially considerate of the affinity, abilities and bodily circumstances of the son.

§. 111. Until he finishes his fourteenth year, the son must submit absolutely to the directions of the father.

§. 112. If after that time the son continues to be completely against the way of life chosen by his father, the guardianship court must verify the reasons on both sides by consulting one or two close relatives, who live in the same place, and the son's teachers.

...

7) Duty of the children concerning domestic services.

§. 121. The children owe to give their parents a helping hand in domestic chores and in their trade, according to their strength.

§. 122. However, these services must not deprive the children of the time needed for their schooling and education.

8) To what extent children can earn money or can enter into contracts or obligations, or cause their parents to enter into obligations.

§. 123. What the children earn on such occasions, they earn for their parents.

...

SOURCE NINETEEN

GOETHE

From Goethes "Poetry and Truth": Frankfurt in the 18th century

The memoirs of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832), which were published between 1811 and 1814 (further parts were finished only in 1830), offer precisely the thing expressed by the title “Poetry and Truth”, later to become a well-known and much-quoted tag phrase. One cannot understand everything the writer relates as a historically exact description, though this is less the case for the countless observations and cultural historical sketches which the author scattered throughout his text. No other author of this epoch provides as colourful and at the same time considers an image of bourgeois life on the cusp of the Ancient Regime giving way to modernity.

Goethe leads us in the following through the house of his family in Frankfurt at the “Hirschengraben,” in which some of the furniture and decoration already demonstrate the longing of the German bourgeoisie for Italy and the Italian life style. He takes us to a theatre and shows us some demonstrative practices of criminal justice in Frankfurt. His description of the “Judengasse” (Jews’ lane) is not only a document for cultural history. One can, indeed, perceive in it current anti-Jewish prejudice, but they are somewhat mitigated by Goethe’s positive evaluation of certain things he observed among Frankfurt’s Jews. A further excerpt describes leisure areas outside the town which, in the 18th century, ended abruptly in the rural world.

Source: Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *From my Life. Poetry and Truth.* Part One to Three. Translated by Robert R. Heitner. New York 1987.

Book One, Part One

[. . .] We children, that is, my younger sister and I, liked the spacious ground-floor entrance hall best, for next to the door there was a large wooden latticework frame that allowed access to the street and the open air. Many houses were equipped with “birdcages” of this kind, which were given the name “Geräms”. The women would sit in

them to sew or knit, or the cook to sort her salad greens. The women of the neighbourhood would carry on conversations from them, and in the warm season these frames gave the street a southern look. [. . .]

[. . .]

Inside the house, my attention was primarily attracted to a series of scenes of Rome which my father had used to decorate a corridor. They had been engraved by some skilled predecessors of Piranesi who understood architecture and perspective and employed their engraving tools precisely and creditably. Daily I looked at the Piazza del Popolo, the Coliseum, St. Peter's Square, St. Peter's Basilica from within and without, the Castel Sant Angelo, and much besides. These images made a deep impression on me, and our usually laconic father was sometimes good enough to favour us with a commentary on them. He had a marked partiality for the Italian language and everything pertaining to Italy. Occasionally he would also show us the little collection of marble and natural history specimens he had brought back from there. A great deal of this time was spent on the travel account he had written in Italian, the copying and editing of which he was doing himself, slowly and painstakingly, notebook after notebook. [. . .]

Book Three, Part One

[. . .]

The curtain did not fall between the acts, and I shall mention another strange custom, one I could not but find very shocking, since to me, as a good German boy, it conflicted intolerably with the idea of art. That is to say, the theatre was considered a most sacred place, and anyone causing a disturbance there would have to be reprimanded immediately and most severely for having committed *lèse-majesté* against the audience. Accordingly, two grenadiers, with their rifles held next to them, were stationed in public view at either side of the rear curtain, and in every comedy they were witness to what was happening in the bosom of the family. Since, as I have said, the curtain was not lowered between the acts, one beheld two other soldiers relieving them when the intermission music began, stiffly marching out from the wings to stand in front of the first ones, who then withdrew in the same measured fashion. While such an arrangement would be well qualified, at any time, to destroy the last vestige of a theatrical illusion, what could be more shocking than that this was happening at a time when, in accordance with Diderot's principles and examples, the most natural naturalness was required on stage, and the real goal of art was declared to be a perfect illusion! [. . .]

Book Four, Part One

[. . .]

An old relic that had seemed remarkable to me from childhood was a traitor's skull still stuck up on the bridge tower, the only one of the original three or four, as indicated by the empty iron pikes, to have

resisted the inclemencies of time and weather since 1616. The tower was right there in front of one on every trip back from Sachsenhausen to Frankfurt, and the skull caught one's eye. Even as a boy I liked to hear the story of those rebels, Fettmilch and his henchmen: how they were unhappy with the town government, became insurgents, began a mutiny, sacked the Jewish quarter, and caused dreadful melees, but were eventually captured and sentenced to death by imperial commissioners. [. . .]

Book Four, Part One

[. . .]

Among the uncanny things that oppressed me as a boy, and even as a youth, were especially the conditions in the Jewish quarter, actually called Jews' Lane since it consisted of little more than a single street, which in early times had apparently been crammed like a kennel between the town wall and the moat. Its narrowness, filth, the swarms of people, the disagreeable sound of their accent—all of it together made the most unpleasant impression, even if one only looked in at the gate while passing by. It was a long time before I ventured to go in alone and, once I had escaped the importunities of all those people persistently demanding or offering something to haggle over, I was not eager to return. Moreover, the old tales about Jews' horrific abuse of Christian children, tales we had seen horribly illustrated in Gottfried's *Chronicle*, hung like a cloud over my young mind. And although in more recent times one had a better opinion of them, an extraordinary witness was borne against them nevertheless in the great scandalous and shame-inducing picture that was still to be seen fairly well on a wall of the arch under the bridge tower; for it had not been painted by some mischievous private person, but by official order.

Nevertheless, they were God's chosen people and, however this may have come about, walking reminders of the most ancient times. Moreover, they were also human beings, industrious and eager to please, and even their obstinacy in clinging to their old customs commanded respect. Besides, the girls were pretty and did not seem to be offended if a Christian boy who encountered them in Fisherman's Field on a Sabbath paid some friendly attention to them. Therefore I was extremely eager to learn about their ceremonies. I had no rest until I had made frequent visits to their school [synagogue], had attended a circumcision and a wedding, and gotten myself an idea of the Feast of Tabernacles. I was well received everywhere, well entertained, and invited to return, for influential persons either took me there or recommended me.

[. . .]

[. . .]

As his residence was near the Eschenheim Gate, after visiting him I would usually find my way out of town to see the parcels of land my father owned beyond the gates. One was a large orchard which also served as a meadow. My father carefully oversaw the replanting

of trees there, and any other measures necessary for the preservation of the property, although he leased it out. He was more occupied by a very well-maintained vineyard outside the Friedberg Gate, where, between the rows of vines, rows of asparagus were most carefully planted and tended. In the good season hardly a day passed that my father did not go there, and usually we were permitted to accompany him, such that we always had something to eat and enjoy, from the first fruits of spring to the last ones of autumn. Then we also learned how to go about gardening tasks, which eventually became quite familiar and easy after having been repeated annually. When the many fruits of spring and autumn were gone, however, we still had the grape harvest left, and it was the merriest and most welcome thing of all. Indeed, there is no question about it: just as the wine itself lends a freer character to the towns and regions where it is grown and drunk, so these days of the grape harvest, which both end the summer and begin the winter, produce a mood of incredible jollity. The merriment and jubilation extend over an entire region. By day, cheerful shouting and shooting are heard on every side, and by night the flares and rockets seen on all sides are an announcement that people are still up and about everywhere, trying to make the celebration last as long as possible. Our subsequent efforts at the winepress and during the fermentation in the cellar gave us happy employment at home too, and so we usually embarked on winter without being aware of it. [. . .]

SOURCE TWENTY

STAËL

Germaine de Staël, On Germany

“De l’Allemagne”, by the noblewoman Germaine de Staël (1766–1817), was first published in 1813, after a first edition of 1810 was destroyed by Napoleon’s censors. In 85 chapters the author offers many insights into the intellectual life of her neighbour country—which she used in many respects as a pointed contrast to France under Napoleon.

The author’s opinion of Germany shaped that of French readers for a long time. In addition, she condensed aspects of German culture into stereotypes that still have some currency (although they are not based exclusively on Madame de Staël’s book). The following short excerpt is intended to make this clear.

Source: Staël (-Holstein), Anne Louise Germaine de. *Deutschland und Frankreich*. In: *De l’Allemagne*. Albert Erich Brinckmann (ed.). Hamburg 1947.

Translation: Olga E. Pollack and Dr. Andrew. C. Gow.

About Germany and German customs

In literature and in politics the Germans have too much respect for foreign ideas and not enough national self-confidence. Self-deprecation and admiration of others are good features in an individual, but in a nation, love of one’s own country must be firmly self-centred. The self-confidence of the British people is the foundation of their political existence; the good impression the French have of themselves has made a big contribution to their rise in Europe; the noble pride of the Spaniards once made them the masters of a great part of the world.

The Germans, however, are Saxons, Prussians, Bavarians, Austrians; and the Germanic character of the nation, in which their strength should lie, is fragmented like the land, over which many different masters rule.

Characteristic traits of the German nation are pleasure in working and contemplation.

It is less their esprit and more their imagination that characterises the Germans.

Truly, in Germany one is in need of a centre and definition of this exceptional ability of thinking, which reaches great heights only to get lost in vagueness, which plumbs the depths but then sinks into them, which becomes entangled while it is disentangling, and which has a lack of certain deficiencies that would actually help to firm up its qualities.

The Germans need strictly regulated procedures for their actions just as much as they demand freedom in the realm of ideas; the French, in contrast, act with a kind of artistic freedom, but their ideas are bound nearly slavishly by their origin and the force of custom. Germans, who are against any kind of coercive rules concerning the fine arts, wish that everything regarding their lifestyle be determined in advance. They cannot deal properly with other people and are the more content the less they are expected to reach their own decisions on such points.

Intellectually distinguished Germans argue passionately with each other on speculative questions and do not tolerate any constraint, but they are only too happy to leave the realities of life to earthly powers.

The Germans like obscure expressions. Often they transform brightness into darkness instead of following an obvious path way. They dislike common ideas, but if they have to deal with them they enwrap them with an abstract metaphysics that lets such ideas appear as new until, at the end, one finds, however, again one's old acquaintances. If a German book does not offer strong and new ideas it is quickly put aside.

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