

Ordinance for the Bakers of Regensburg (June 17, 1588)

Abstract

The guild, together with the territorial parish and the university, was one of the principal creations of medieval society. It functioned both to regulate wages, production, and sales, and to meet other needs—political, social, and religious. Guilds and other similar institutions were originally created by the practitioners of the various crafts and trades, and this Regensburg guild ordinance conveys the sense of creative freedom enjoyed by master artisans in earlier times. (Even at this time, however, that freedom was already yielding to regulation, from above, and oligarchy, from below.) The ordinance regulates the living and working conditions of apprentices in the Regensburg bakers' trade. While framed by the masters, the ordinance stipulates some mutual rights and obligations between masters and apprentices—a degree of freedom muted in the Lüneburg guild ordinance and absent from the Hessian one. Together, the three form a spectrum: the more corporate authority, the greater the attention to familiarity and common purposes; the more territorial authority, the greater the emphasis on the regulation of production. The Regensburg ordinance devotes a good deal of attention to reciprocity between masters and apprentices and to the latter's living conditions, working conditions, and social lives, including their drinking bouts. Their common life centers on their brotherhood's chest (treasury), the management of which they share with the master bakers who employ them.

Source

The *Hansegraf's* Orders Concerning what the Bakers' Apprentices must and may not do.[\[1\]](#)

[1] First the apprentices shall support their brotherhood. Each year two masters and two master-apprentices shall be assigned custody of the chest. They should have custody of four keys to the chest, so that one may not open the chest without the others.

[2] Each year these four administrators shall give in the presence of two master bakers a reckoning of their receipts and expenditures for the brotherhood.

[3] Item, not only the apprentices but also the masters' sons, who work in place of apprentices, should deposit one kreuzer per month in the chest, and these deposits shall be registered and placed in the aforesaid chest.

[4] Item, when the elected four, together with the apprentices, handle the collection chest, no apprentice shall carry a weapon, under penalty of ten Regensburg pence.

[5] Item, when the representatives are by the chest, they shall act in a disciplined manner at all times and shall behave modestly both in word and in deed, under penalty of ten Regensburg pence. If any shall behave improperly, however, he shall immediately be reported to the *Hansegraf*.

[6] And if anyone is fined on these grounds, the money shall be collected at the month's end, and the administrators and apprentices may deposit in the chest as much as they think appropriate. From this [collection] the representatives and apprentices may deposit in the chest whatever they think appropriate, and every quarter-year they shall receive a goodly sum for drinking.

[7] Item, when the apprentices leave the business with the collection chest, they shall be well behaved,

as mentioned above. At that time they shall go home to their work or be liable for a fine of ten Regensburg shillings.

[8] Item, all apprentices who come here shall have the right to work eight days. After the eighth day they may negotiate at will and ability with their masters regarding their wage. If the master's other employees, called "helpers," wish to leave their master's service, they must give four weeks' notice. And the master shall do the same. Those who are not apprentices or helpers, however, may leave with eight days' notice. And the master the same.

[9] Bakers' apprentices shall always go home at a proper time and hour and attend to their work. Those who do not shall be appropriately fined.

[10] Item, when the bakers' apprentices take their dinner, they shall go to their father rather than to other innkeepers, because he is obliged, under pain of ten Regensburg shillings, to serve apprentices whether or not they are in funds.^[2]

[11] If their own innkeeper, however, does not serve adequate food or drink, they have the right to drink at another tavern and have the right to take seats there.

[12] Item, when a baker's apprentice wants to become a master he must already have worked for two years as a helper for one or two master bakers in this city, so that he thoroughly understands the baker's and the sifter's crafts. This shall be formally tested and examined. The masters' sons, however, shall be exempt, because they have been tested by working for their fathers. Whoever does not pass the test within three months shall never be admitted to the test again.

[13] Item, every month on a Sunday, the apprentices shall assemble at the appointed hour and not earlier, because they must also attend Mass, under penalty of six Regensburg pence.

[14] And if it should happen that one or more apprentices fail to meet these requirements, this should be recorded by the guild, with the city council's consent, as is the custom in other places.

[15] Item, no apprentice or helper shall be excluded from any aspect of the baker's work, nor shall he refuse to do it. The bakers shall behave toward the apprentices and helpers in their work as is proper. The apprentices and helpers have the liberty to command the younger employees, so that the bakers may be less hindered in their work.

[16] Every baker's apprentice, whether married or single, who wishes to practice the craft as a miller, sifter, or baker at the baking houses, shall join and support the brotherhood.

[17] Item, henceforth whoever wants to work should pay his entrance into the guild, and everyone must pay four kreuzer to register.

[18] Item, when he goes to work, every baker's apprentice shall wear his jacket and not his smock, under penalty of ten kreuzer.^[3]

[19] Item, when a baker's apprentice or youth misbehaves with respect to the collections, or willfully slanders another, he shall pay the shop 34 Regensburger [pence].

[20] Whoever goes to the chest and makes his deposit and keeps his hat on rather than doffing it shall pay a fine of one kreuzer.

[21] Item, whoever does not lay down his payment with the right hand or throws the money on the table shall pay a fine of one kreuzer.

[22] Item, whoever leaves before the meeting is adjourned shall pay a penalty of fifteen Viennese [pence].

[23] Item, whoever brings complaint to a meeting around the chest, and does not stand but remains sitting, shall pay a fine of one kreuzer.

[24] Item, if one or more are fined, they shall pay their fines before the apprentices disperse, while the meeting is still going on. If that does not happen, and someone does not pay his fine, he shall be liable to pay twice the amount.

[25] Item, according to the old custom, each year two dinners shall be held at the inn, one on Pentecost and the other on Christmas. All the apprentices and younger employees and the bakers' sons shall take part. Those who do not come, whether bakers' sons or others, shall be liable to pay for half a round of drinks.

The following articles are to be incorporated into the Apprentices' Ordinance or in some new ordinance.

[1] First, from now on, anyone who secretly pays off his tailor or his innkeeper with his master's bread or flour, which has happened in the past, shall not be held for honest but rather for dishonest. No baker will further employ such a one.

[2] Second, anyone who uses a torn sack for sifting, or mixes in unsifted flour, shall pay one Thaler, half to the honorable *Hansegraf* and half to the apprentices' chest.

[3] Third, if anyone agrees to work for a baker and does not keep his promise, he shall be employed by no baker for the next three months.

[4] Similarly, a fourth point, whoever promises to work for a master or a baker and does not take his place in the shop shall be liable to pay the latter a whole week's wages.

Office of the Hansegraf, published on June 17, 1588

NOTES

[1] The *Hansegraf* was an official who oversaw a guild's internal affairs and acted as a judge in disputes—trans.

[2] The apprentices of each craft were apparently assigned for meals to a particular innkeeper (their "father"), who was probably paid by the guild to feed its apprentices, even when they were not in funds—trans.

[3] The *kreuzer* was both a silver coin and a unit of currency, valued at one-sixtieth of a florin. It was common in the southern German lands, whereas the northern lands used *groschen*—trans.

Source of original German text: "Pöckenknecht Ordnung (1588)," in Georg Fischer, *Volk und Geschichte, Studien und Quellen zur Sozialgeschichte und Historischen Volkskunde: Festgabe dem Verfasser zum 65. Geburtstag dargebracht*. Kulmbach, 1962, pp. 309–13.

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