

# German Tournament Regulations of the 15th Century

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The 14th century witnessed the decline of the military and strategic significance of the heavily armed knight. On the battlefields of Europe one defeat had followed the next debacle: the immovable and very weighty armor had to succumb to light-armed footmen, to the English longbow, the Turkish scimitar, the Swiss halberd, and to the artillery of the numerous principalities and prosperous cities. The chivalric "pile of iron" more or less had to leave the battlefield for good; yet the knight entered the tilt-yard to stage his tournaments and jousts with more splendor and spectacle than before. And so, strangely enough, military insignificance, political futility, and the economic decline of the lower gentry led to the rise and development of *the* chivalrous showpiece as such in Germany. However, this was a rather tedious and by no means straightforward process which took its time. And there were many set-backs, too.

## *England*

First of all we do not find a set code of regulations governing tournaments in Germany at the onset of this chivalric exercise such as the *Statuta Armorum* under King Edward I from the year 1292.<sup>1</sup> Regulations observed in Germany are bits and pieces scattered everywhere. They may occur as marginal hints or glosses in the manuscripts of former German princes which are stored away in archives. Contrary to England, regulations in Germany did not obey a central code. They were in the hands of the well-off nobility, issued randomly, proclaimed in public for just one single event, and therefore rather short-lived and soon forgotten.

On the continent one could only dream of a source like a king's grant to stage tournaments in five different places, such as King Richard I's license of the year 1194:

Breve Regis ad archiep' Cantuar' missum,  
de concessione torneamentorum in Angliâ.

Sciatis nos concessisse quod torneamenta sint in Angliâ in quinque  
placis; inter Sarum & Wilton; inter Warewicke & Kenelingwrthe; inter

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1. Cf. N. Denholm-Young, "The Tournament in the Thirteenth Century," in *Studies in Medieval History Presented to Frederic Maurice Powicke*, ed. by R. W. Hunt, W. A. Pantin and R. W. Southern. Oxford 1948, pp. 240-268.

Stamford & Warineford; inter Brakeleye & Mixebr' inter Blie & Tykehill: ita quod pax terrae nostrae non infringetur.<sup>2</sup>

Towards the middle of the 14th century, however, things had changed in England. The armed knight was not needed as much as before on the battlefield, and so King Edward III issued a license for the town of Lincoln in the year 1344 to stage one tournament per year:

De licentià justas apud Lincoln', . . .  
. . . comitatûs Lincoln' petitio continebat ut, ad solatium virorum  
militarium, & usum armorum meliùs optinendum, velimus eis gratiosè  
concedere quod, singulis annis in perpetuum, . . . convenire possit  
apud Lincoln' certus numerus militum. . . . concessimus pro nobis &  
haeredibus nostris, quod certus numerus militum, ad hoc electorum,  
amicabiliter & pacificè convenire possit apud Lincoln' singulis  
annis . . .<sup>3</sup>

The reason for this gracious license was, as stated in the petition of the count of Lincoln, "for the 'solatium' [i.e., the compensation] of the military men and for the better acquaintance with the practice at arms." Apparently the tilters and jousters were, in fact, in need of practice. This may also be gathered from a safe-conduct issued in the same year for those attending the jousts at Windsor:

De protectione pro venientibus ad justas apud Wyndesore.  
. . . Sciatis quod, cum, ad recreationem & solatium hominum militarium,  
qui in armorum exercitio delectantur, habere disposuerimus  
hastiludia, & justas generales, apud castrum nostrum de Wyndesore.  
. . . suscepimus omnes & singulos, cujuscumque regionis vel loci  
fuerint, . . . illuc veniendo, ibidem morando, & exindè ad propria  
redeundo, in saluum & securum conductum nostrum, ac protectionem  
& defensionem nostras speciales: . . .<sup>4</sup>

And here again we find as the reason given that these jousts had been instituted "for the recreation and compensation of the military men who like exercises at arms."

The rise and the development of the tournament as sport and spectacle, however, was more or less foreshadowed by urgent pleas in the literature of the ensuing decades. Contemporary literature, in fact, had resorted to romantic and nostalgic reflections on the code of chivalry and the golden days of yore, thus generating a sort of revival of chivalry. Certainly not the first but definitely some of the most famous lines in this context are found in William Caxton's dedicatory epistle of his *Ordre of Chyualry* to King Richard III in the year 1484:

j wold it pleasyd oure souerayne lord that twyes or thryes in a yere or  
at the lest ones he wold do crye Iustes of pees to thende that euery  
knyght shold haue hors and harneys and also the vse and craft of a knyght and also  
to tornoye one ageynste one or ii ageynst ii. And the  
best to haue a prys a dyamond or Iewel suche as shold please the  
prynce. This shold cause gentylmen to resorte to thauncyent customes

2. Tho. Rymer, *Foedera, Conventiones, Litterae* . . . London 1816-30, I. i, 65.

3. Rymer, *Foedera*, III, i, 5.

4. Rymer, *Foedera*, II. ii, 1242.

of chyalry to grete fame and renomee. And also to be alwey redy to  
serue theyr prynce whan he shalle calle them or haue nede.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the hopes expressed that the jousts should be ready for military service when called upon by their sovereign—a more anachronism at that time—the reason for the reinstitution of jousts and tournaments and for resorting to the code of chivalry was a purely nostalgic one.

### Germany

It is interesting to note that 57 years after Caxton the reasons for the reinstitution of tournaments in Germany are almost along the same lines. With a sort of nostalgic verve, Hans Sachs, the popular poet of Nürnberg, dealt with Georg Ruxner's fanciful treatise on the origin of tournament<sup>6</sup> and transferred some ideas into verse, concluding his rhymed history with the following plea in the year 1541:

Gott geb ruhe und fried,  
im Römischen Reich einigkeit,  
das widerum auch mit der zeit  
durch kaiserliche Mayestat  
und Fürsten mit zeitigem Rath  
werd aufgericht der Turnier,  
das bei Fürsten und Adelszier  
Frumkeit und Tugent blue und wachs,  
Das wünscht zu Nürnberg Hanns Sachs.<sup>7</sup>

Seeing as how it was previously argued that literature was the forerunner of the revival of the tournament and its new splendor, one cannot omit Georg Ruxner's fanciful work already mentioned. In his desperate efforts to delineate tournaments on national level in Germany, he supplied a list of 36 national tournaments ranging from the year 939 to 1487. Out of these 36 tournaments he more or less "invented" 20. Only numbers 15, 16, 21, 22, 23, 25 and the last 10 are genuine and can be verified by external evidence. Ruxner, who was a herald by profession, even supplied long lists of participants at most of the other tournaments. He must have earned a fortune by entering the antecedents of families of noble descent who were only too proud to see their famous ancestors and hitherto unknown progenitors in Ruxner's book. This was the spirit of the age.

5. W. Caxton, *Book of the Ordre of Chyalry*, ed. by A. T. P. Byles. London 1926, pp. 121.

6. G. Ruxner, *Anfang, Vrsprung vnd herkomen des Thurniers inn Teutscher Nation*. Simmern 1532.

7. *Hans Sachsens sehr herrliche schöne und wahrhafte Gedicht in einem Auszug aus dem erten Buch . . .* ed. by J. H. Häslein, Nürnberg 1781, p. 12. Translation:

"God give rest and peace  
and unity to the (Holy) Roman Empire (of German Nations)  
so that again, as time may come,  
at the instigation of His Imperial Majesty  
and of the princes, after timely consultations  
the tournament be re-instituted,  
so that among the princes and the bloom of nobility  
godliness and virtue may blossom and grow,  
such is the hope of Hanns Sachs of Nürnberg."

It is of a great advantage for our purposes that R  xner is quite reliable as far as his reports on the tournaments from 1452 to 1487 are concerned. For safety's sake, however, we also consult the tournament books of Wilhelm von Raidenbuch, a manuscript of the year 1510, and of Ludwig von Eyb, another manuscript of the year 1519.<sup>8</sup> Raidenbuch and his cousin Judmann had been participants in some of the above-mentioned tournaments themselves; and Ludwig von Eyb had acted as a steward and marshal to Count Frederic of the Palatinate of the Rhine and to various dukes of Bavaria. Both of them were contemporaries and eye-witnesses who had access to material assembled by predecessors. Both of them certainly knew what they were talking about. The manuscript of Raidenbuch is still waiting to be located and published.<sup>9</sup> For the sake of accessibility we have to quote from extracts edited by Baron Ludwig von Gumpenberg, who sat down in the year 1862 to trace the ancestors of his family and their participation in tournaments.<sup>10</sup> With the help of the three of them we should be able to stay close to historical reality.

### *Tournament Associations*

The 15th century saw the struggle of the lower continental gentry for socio-economical survival, last not least by the demonstration of gallant acts, chivalrous valour and personal skill by encounters in the lists, closely followed by better-off German princes and the prosperous cities which competed to surpass the noblemen—and one another—with pomp and spectacle. On the eve of the age of chivalry, the lower German gentry and aristocracy resorted to various desperate measures to stem the rising power of principalities and municipalities: they agreed on tournament regulations which more or less excluded the cities and all those of non-aristocratic descent, and they succeeded in founding four regional tournament associations to stage their events, issue new rules, and ensure that these rules are kept by all the participants. These four associations were the associations of the Rhineland, of Swabia, of Franconia, and of Bavaria.

Though the nobility was eager to exclude the citizens from their tournaments they were bound to approach the larger cities to stage their tournaments within their city-walls. And this involved rather difficult negotiations in the run-up to every tournament.

### *Tournament Societies*

Before the four regional associations mentioned above had been founded, we can confirm the existence of smaller, local tournament societies which were formed as early as 1350. The history of such societies is by no means available, and we still lack a comprehensive history of the tournament in Germany. Even J. Fleckenstein's brilliant *Das ritterliche Turnier im Mittelalter* (G  ttingen 1985), which may justly be regarded as *the* book on the European tournament, contains only hints about such societies in a contribution by W. Meyer

8. Recently published by H. Stamm, *Das Turnierbuch des Ludwig von Eyb* (cgm 961). Stuttgart 1986.

9. The manuscript of Raidenbuch is lost for the time being. Extracts were published by L. A. von Gumpenberg: cf. note no. 10.

10. L. A. Freiherr von Gumpenberg, *Die Gumpenberger auf Turnieren* . . . W  rzburg 1862.

(“Turniergesellschaften,” pp. 500-512). In Fleckenstein there are still considerable blanks in regard to the history of the tournament in Spain and to the determination of the best participants in a tournament by the help of so-called jousting cheques. Tournament societies were alliances of a few noble families which gave protection to their members in case of feuds, also staging tournaments from time to time. In the year 1361 we find such a society in Bavaria, an alliance of the Duke of Landshut, the Count of Tyrol and a few families of the Bavarian nobility. They assisted one another in war and peace, settled disputes, staged a tournament annually on their territory, agreed to attend with their wives and daughters, and had a mass read in their chapel in remembrance of their deceased members. They elected four officers from their own ranks to ensure that these regulations were obeyed.<sup>11</sup> Their charter covered a period of ten years only, and so this tournament society was rather short-lived.

The same thing applies to two other societies: in the year 1408 the two local Bavarian societies, called “of the heart” and “of the hound,”<sup>12</sup> are reported to have staged the 25th national tournament in Regensburg. And this is the first and only mention of these two local societies which has come down to us so far.

At the 26th national tournament in Stuttgart, according to Ruxner, in the year 1436, four local Swabian tournament societies are mentioned which we also meet at a later date: the societies “of the lime-hound,” “of the falcon,” “of the ibex,” and “of the fish.”<sup>13</sup> Apparently these four societies were the sole organizers of this tournament, which was followed by the 27th national tournament in Landshut in the year 1452, staged by the Duke of Landshut himself to celebrate his marriage with Amalie of Saxony and to resist the efforts of the lower Bavarian gentry.

### *Interval*

From 1452 to 1479 there was an interval of 27 years, as far as national tournaments are concerned. However, this interval does not apply to local or regional tournaments which were staged everywhere.

Tournaments in those days were no longer a sort of training for or a copy of an actual battle on horseback, but an idealized representation of such an encounter to the highest possible degree of perfection, where the core of the chivalrous code of honor could be exhibited by groups of those selected by descent and noble birth. And it is for this reason that the collective tournament (groups on horseback attacking one another) became predominant in Germany, whereas the joust more or less dominated the scene in England. The collective tournament was *the* demonstration of the lower gentry, while the joust was reserved for persons of rank.

### *New Start*

After the above-mentioned interval of 27 years, it was the local Franconian tournament society “of the Fürspanger” which took the initiative and prepared

11. Cf. Gumpfenberg. *Gumpfenberger*, pp. 18/19.

12. Cf. Gumpfenberg. *Gumpfenberger*, p. 21.

13. Cf. Gumpfenberg. *Gumpfenberger*, p. 22.

the 28th national tournament in Würzburg in the year 1479. It is interesting to note that this new initiative was taken by a prominent regional pressure-group, a local tournament society, which no doubt stimulated the tournament association of Franconia.

From the armorial book of Conrad von Grüneberg of the year 1483 we learn: "be it known that the honorable society of Franconia, called 'in the Fürspanger,' invented the tournament and staged the first one"<sup>14</sup> according to the new numbering, which started with the year 1479. Ruxner informs us that this society invited all those concerned to meet for consultations at their annual convention in Bamberg in 1478, i.e., one year *before* the tournament in Würzburg.<sup>15</sup> In Bamberg they collected former tournament regulations scattered all over the country, summarized them, added new ones, and came up with a new code of regulations—the "Tournament Regulations of Bamberg 1478"—which are found in various forms in many contemporary sources.<sup>16</sup> These regulations, drawn up in the year 1478, governed the first national tournament, according to the new numbering, as stated above, which was going to be staged in Würzburg in the following year. This tournament took place in the market square of Würzburg, right in front of the chapel which belonged to the Fürspangers.

#### *Procedure*

The regulations of Bamberg are listed in Ruxner's account of the tournament in Würzburg in 1479.<sup>17</sup> And this is why they have also been regarded as "Würzburg-regulations." They had, however, been drawn up earlier. In the run-up to Bamberg it was agreed in Franconia to consider as the next possible tournament-venues the towns of Bamberg, Nürnberg, Würzburg, and Schweinfurt. Four messengers ("Vorreiser") were to be nominated and sent to these towns to ask the lord mayors for a safe-conduct ("schutz, schirm und geleit"). The electoral prince ("Kurfürst") of Franconia was to patronize the event and to issue the invitations, which were sent to all those interested, asking them to come with their wives. The messengers had to keep an account of their expenditures, later to be refunded at the tournament. Officers were elected for the various functions which had to be carried out at that stage.

This done, they were all summoned to Bamberg to report which town had agreed to issue the safe-conduct. By the way, the four messengers also had to ensure that stables for the horses were at their disposal, accommodations for the participants and their retinue, and that those who did their own cooking were not cheated by the landlords.

After this the town of Würzburg won the bid, and the tournament was officially announced. Every participant had to present himself on Sunday night in Würzburg, give proof of ancestry, be grouped on Monday and enter the lists

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14. Cf. Gumpfenberger, *Gumpfenberger*, p. 27 and Stamm, *Turnierbuch*, p. 296, note 21.

15. Cf. Ruxner, *Anfang*, p. clxj<sup>f</sup>.

16. Cf. Stamm, *Turnierbuch*, p. 212.

17. Cf. Ruxner, *Anfang*, p. clxj<sup>f</sup>.

on Tuesday. They were all asked to bring their wives and daughters, old and young, and as many as possible. Tournaments in those days also were marriage-markets. The gentry desperately tried to stick together and to prevent liaisons not befitting one's rank.

### *Regulations*

In order to ensure that impoverished members of the lower gentry were also able to attend, the following restrictions had been agreed upon:

1. Nobody was allowed to wear any pieces of gold or woven velvet to adorn himself. Punishment for not complying: to be treated with contempt by the nobility, no admittance to any dance or to the victory-ceremony.
2. No precious cloth to be worn by others.
3. He who wears gold or velvet must take care that they cannot be seen or that they belong to his gambeson. Punishment: see no. 1.
4. No horse-blankets with golden embroidery may be used. Punishment: exclusion from knighthood plus all the punishments as stated under no. 1.
5. No wives, sisters, and daughters are allowed to have more than four skirts; out of these four only two should be velvet ones. Punishment for not complying: see no. 1.
6. Any other member of the female sex, not registered, to be prosecuted for such an offense according to their social status.

Another chapter dealt with the various officers to be appointed in the run-up to the tournament:

1. To elect four officers to arrange and observe the two groups of knights, separated by a cord in the tiltyard, to decide when the cord should be cut.
2. To nominate a trumpeter to signal the beginning and the end of the tournament.
3. To tell those responsible to appoint others to care for the final dance, for the serving of wine, the offering of confectionery and the carrying of the candles.
4. To ask the citizens to prepare the ballroom, to ensure that no unauthorized persons be admitted and that the room not be over-crowded.
5. To arrange that 30 citizens with long staves be in the tiltyard to protect the participants and ensure that those fallen from their horses not be trampled to death.
6. To make sure that all the participants pay their fee before leaving.

A further chapter dealt with trespasses and punishments for participants. To be punished are those:

1. Who committed perjury or gave false evidence.
2. Who deserted or did not keep their word or oath.
3. Who stole somebody's goods.
4. Who intended to seduce women or virgins by word or deed, who boasted about it, or who had actually done so by force.
5. All those who charge too much interest, make a living off of it and get rich [a blow at the Jews in those days].

6. Who practice hold-ups, murder or who are treacherous.
7. Who destroy churches and steal church goods.
8. Who are heretics and practice heresy.
9. All adulterers who live out of wedlock.
10. All who take a wife who does not belong to a noble family.
11. All those whose parents had formerly participated in tournaments but had stayed away afterwards. However, if these people wanted to participate they should be allowed to do so under certain conditions.
12. All bastards are not admitted.
13. All those members of the nobility who live by trade or act as merchants are not admitted.
14. Nobody shall be admitted unless he can give evidence by two witnesses that he or his parents had attended tournaments during the preceding 50 years. He who cannot give evidence but who thinks that he can find witnesses to prove that his parents tourneyed in the past should be admitted to the next tournament [which probably means on the second day].
15. Who does not obey all these rules and enters the lists, shall lose his horse and outfit and never be admitted again.
16. Nobody trespassing in this way shall even try to be admitted, thus disgracing himself.
17. At the eighth hour in the morning everyone has to present his crest at the registration.
18. At the ninth hour those responsible have to present themselves at the separating cord.
19. At the tenth hour everyone had to be in the tiltyard and ready to ride.

Finally there are technical details:

a) concerning the sword:

1. No sword must be used which had not a breadth of at least three and a half or three fingers. It must be blunt at the top and along its edge so that it can neither cut or stab.
2. Swords and crests have to be presented at the registration to be inspected, accepted and registered.
3. Nobody is allowed to use an unregistered sword.
4. Nobody is allowed to use a protective device for the head of his horse made of steel.
5. No iron or steel is allowed in bridles, reins, saddles, etc. which could cut or stab and thus be dangerous.
6. No weapons are allowed other than the registered sword for the tournament. No sword for any squire.
7. The sword may only be used in the tournament as stated below.
8. When the tournament is started everybody shall draw his sword and aim at the crest of his opponent; and not at parts where he is unarmed.

b) concerning the club [which was used after the sword]:

1. Everybody to carry one club only.



2. The club to be fastened to an iron chain long enough for the club to be wielded. No nails are allowed in the club apart from one point on top of the size of a thumb.
3. After the announcement that the tournament begins no other weapons than the club must be used. No aiming at parts below the saddle where the opponent is unarmed.
4. If someone loses his protection no aiming at unprotected parts.

c) concerning the horse, the rider and the number of squires:

1. Nobody is allowed to fasten himself to his saddle; he has to sit untied.
2. A rider may use any horse, small or heavy.
3. His master at arms shall serve him as best he can, so that he is able to stay in the tournament four five hours.
4. Everybody has to carry his shield and wear his helmet uncovered.
5. Everybody must show his arms on his coat to be worn on top of his harness so that he can be identified by the heralds.
6. Every participant to have one master at arms only, who has to wear a helmet and protection for his legs. This master is only allowed a stave and a rebated knife.
7. A prince shall be allowed 4 squires, an earl or lord 3 squires, a knight 2 squires, and a nobleman 1 squire.
8. The squires may escort their masters taking hold of the bridle; they must not push away opponents by the help of their weapons.
9. Squires are not allowed to grasp the bridles of opponents' horses.
10. Nobody is allowed to hurt any squire with his sword or club, to injure him, push him down or trample on him.
11. He who trespasses against any of the regulations shall lose his horse and outfit and shall be disgraced by all the participants and by the ladies.
12. If someone loses his horse and outfit in the tiltyard it must be considered how much he should offer for ransom.
13. The procedure of preventing those from attending who had not been admitted, needs to be further discussed.
14. [If this should happen] one should say in a loud voice to watch the door and not allow anybody in.
15. Nobody is allowed to enter the joust on the following day [with sharp or rebated weapons] unless he has previously participated in the mass-tournament.

The last injunctions read:

1. All these regulations listed above have to be read aloud in public at the inspection of the crests and swords.
2. Do not forget to talk to the various houses about not to carrying on feuds during a tournament but to obey the rules as laid down.
3. Every participant had to give proof that four generations of fathers and mothers had belonged to nobility and that they had not been prosecuted.<sup>18</sup>

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18. Cf. the texts in Ruxner, *Anfang*, pp. clxj-clxiii and Gumpfenberger, *Gumpfenberger*, V, App. V. pp. 62–66.

These regulations formed the basis for the first national tournament staged at Würzburg in the year 1479. When the tilters left the tiltyard at Würzburg in a parade, the "Fürspanger," more or less *the* initiators of the new series of national tournaments, were given the honor and privilege of leaving the tiltyard as the closing unit. The following list gives the names of their members headed by their "king":<sup>19</sup>

### Die gesellschaft in der Fürspang/

Georg Dürchses Ritter/König in der gesellschaft/	
Michel Herr zu Schwarzenburg/	Dietz Dürchses Ritter/
Friderich von Seinsheim Ritter/	
Eberhard von Grünbach Ritter/	Hans von Egloffsheim Ritter/
Luz vom Kotenhan Ritter/	Hilbrandt von Thüngen/
Hartung Dürchses von Bomerfelden/	
Zwen Schenden von Seiern/	Bastian und Hans von Seckendorff/
Georg/Balthasar/und aber Hans von Seckendorff/	
Thomas/Hans und Cristoffel die Fuchß/	
Wigoles von Heßberg/	Heinz von Wendheim/
Veit von Balnrode/	Eberhard Försch zu Durnaw/
Martin von Seinsheim/	Hans Wolffstel.

#### *Towards new regulations*

The regulations drawn up at Bamberg in the year 1478 were signed by the representatives of the four associations of the Rhineland, of Swabia, of Franconia, and of Bavaria at Würzburg in the year 1479. At Würzburg they united and founded the "Association of the Knighthood of the Four Regions," a union on a national level.

Their regulations, however, had been arranged in a rather loose order. They needed amendments and additions. Furthermore, controversial points had to be smoothed over and harmonized. This must have been recognized by the representatives of the various regions, headed by their tournament societies, for they soon after decided to have further meetings for mutual consultations about new regulations. However, this was a very complicated procedure and it is rather difficult to trace their venues.

Generally speaking, the actual promoters of such consultations seem to have been the local tournament societies, which proliferated in those days, trying to protect their own interests at such meetings. Apart from the "Fürspangers" we meet two new tournament societies in Franconia, founded immediately after the

19. Taken from Ruxner, *Anfang*, tournament at Würzburg, last paragraph.

tournament at Würzburg: the “Society in the Bear” and the “Society in the Unicorn.” One source indicated that twelve societies were known by the year 1483.<sup>20</sup>

Bavaria, however, was an exception. As mentioned earlier, in Bavaria such societies were rather short-lived. The Bavarian tournament society “in the Unicorn or Buck,” also called “Böcklerbund” (i.e., “bucks’-bond”), which had renewed its previous alliance in the year 1466 at Regensburg, was dissolved by Duke Albrecht of Bavaria in the following year. The Duke himself headed the Bavarian knighthood and apparently did not tolerate any other organization to intrude in his affairs.

The second national tournament, according to the new numbering, was organized by the knighthood of the Rhineland at Mainz in the year 1480. The illustration on the next page shows a safe-conduct issued by Diether, Archbishop of Mainz, for all those who intended to participate.<sup>21</sup> The tournament at Mainz was staged according to the “Würzburg regulations” of the year 1479, and it is stated that these regulations had been amended by several additions no doubt entered by powerful tournament societies. So far, these additions have not been traced in any source.<sup>22</sup>

Before the third national tournament was started by the Swabian association at Heidelberg in the year 1481 the earls of Westphalia (“Markgrafen”) and the knighthood of Franconia joined in an alliance. However, apart from the three extant charters<sup>23</sup> we do not learn anything about their negotiations. Under the patronage of the electoral prince (“Kurfürst”) Philipp, the tournament society “in the Donkey” staged the Heidelberg tournament on behalf of the Rhineland. After consultations with representatives of the other regions the tournament regulations of Würzburg 1479 were amended for a second time.<sup>24</sup> The most important changes are the following:

1. He who enters the tiltyard without a license shall lose his horse and outfit and never be admitted again at any time thereafter.
2. Allowing access to unlicensed participants will be regarded as an infringement of the safe-conduct and be punished accordingly.
3. Nobody shall be admitted who is a citizen residing in a town.
4. He who loses his horse in the tournament must give ransom according to his social status as it has been the custom in the days of yore.
5. He who infringed any article of the tournament regulations may have his horse seized by his opponents. He shall be fixed—together with his saddle—on top of the surrounding barriers and sit there until the tournament ends.
6. The sword must have a breadth of three to four and a half fingers.

20. Gumpfenberger, *Gumpfenberger . . .*, p. 28.

21. Taken from V. F. Gudenus, *Codex Diplomaticus Anekdotorum . . .*, Frankfurt/Leipzig 1758, vol. IV, part 1, p. 451. Safe-conduct of 28 February 1480.

22. Cf. Gumpfenberger, *Gumpfenberger . . .*, pp. 30 and 36.

23. The three charters of the year 1481 are found in *Selecta Norimbergensia . . .*, ed. by C. W. Schnitzlein. Ansbach 1768-79, (6 parts), part V, p. 303.

24. Cf. J. C. Lünig, *Das Deutsche Reichs-Archiv*. Leipzig 1711-13. *Pars specialis nebst dessen 1.23. und 4. Continuation*. Part III, Sect. VII. no. 1, p. 2.

*Salvum conductum, prater immunitatem a Vectigali,  
DIETHERVS promittit quibuscunque Principibus,<sup>1</sup>  
Comitibus, Dynastis - - -, ad Ludos Equestres  
(initium Veneris noctu post diem B. M. V. af-  
sumpta sacrum capturos) venientibus.*

1480.

[p. 792. n. 1.]

**S**ir Diether - - - Bekennen u. thun kunt offentlich mit diesem brieff gegen allermeinglich, das Wir allen und iglichen Fursten, Graven, Herrn, Freyen, Rittern, Edelknechten, und auch allen den iren, und sust allermeinlichen, in was Würden Stats oder wesen die sin, so zu dem lobelichen adelichen Thurnauw, der von Fursten, Graven, - - - mit unserm willen u. wissen alhere in unser Statt Meing, nemlich uff Freitag zu Nacht nach unser lieben Frauen tag Assumptionis nechst kompt, da zu sin, und anzu fahin gelegt worden ist, dahye in - - - Meing kommen werden, unser fry, strack, ungeverlich u. uffrichtig Geleide gegeben haben.

Geben und schriben Ine allen, u. iglichen besonder, fur sich u. die Sinen, auch alle die, die ir iglicher mit - - - bringen wurdet, - - - solich unser Geleide u. trostunge zu, dahin zu komen, da zu sin, und widder von dannen biß inn iren gewarsam, fur uns, die unsern, und alle die, der wir mechtig sint. Darzu so wollen wir allen Fursten, Graven, Herrn, Rittern u. Edelknechten die solchen Thurnauwe besuchen, u. darinn sin werden, ire provision, Bezug und anders, so sie zu irer notturfft solches Thurnauwes ungeverlich den Ryne und Meyne, zu wasser u. zu lande aber u. uff furen lassen werden, an allen unsern und unserß Stiffts Zollen, zollsty und unges hindert surgeen lassen.

7. The crests and swords must be handed over to be marked at the registration. No admittance with weapons not marked.

8. The number of squires was reduced; a prince was allowed only three squires, an earl or lord two, and a knight or nobleman just one.<sup>25</sup>

In the account of the tournament at Heidelberg there is a list of various tournament societies and their members. Among others we find a "Society in the Hound and Garland," a "Society in the Lime-hound" of Swabia as well as a "Society in the Wolf" and another "Society in the Wind" of the Rhineland.<sup>26</sup> By the year 1481, we find the following tournament societies arranged and grouped under the four regions they came from:

25. Cf. Ruxner, *Anfang*, tournament at Heidelberg.

26. Cf. Ruxner, *Anfang*, tournament at Heidelberg.

*Rhineland:*

Society to the Swan  
Society to the Lion  
Society in the Wind / the Running Dog  
Society of the Wolf  
Society in the Donkey (later divided into Upper and Lower Donkey)  
Society in the Ibex

*Swabia:*

Society in the Ibex (perhaps identical with the one listed above)  
Society to the Falcon and Fish, in 1484 united with the  
Society to St. George's Shield  
Society in the Lime-hound, united with the  
Society in the Garland  
Society in the Crown

*Franconia:*

Society in the Bear, united with the  
Society in the Fürspang  
Society in the Unicorn  
Society in the Griffin

*Bavaria:*

Society in the Bear (perhaps identical with the one listed above)  
Society in the Horse  
Society in the Peacock.<sup>27</sup>

One may imagine what a mix-up there must have been from one year to the next as far as tournament regulations are concerned. As Gumpfenberg has argued, the tournament societies were quite powerful on their own territory. They even elected their own "kings."<sup>28</sup> Every society tried to change the regulations of admittance to serve its own interests in order to appear in the tiltyard with as many members as possible. And it is for this reason that these societies were rather negligent and not at all rigorous when the question of admittance and non-admittance of their own retinue was at stake. This situation illustrated the urgent need to come to a mutual agreement, and for this reason a number of consultations took place among the German knighthood from the beginning of the year 1482 onwards.

*The Meeting at Heilbronn in Spring 1482*

As far as we know, there was a meeting at Heilbronn early in the year 1482, which was attended by representatives of the regions of Franconia, Swabia and

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27. This list was taken from W. Meyer, "Turniergesellschaften," in *Das ritterliche Turnier im Mittelalter*, ed. by J. Fleckenstein. Göttingen 1985, p. 507. Translation J. K. Rühl.

28. Gumpfenberg, *Gumpfenberger*, pp. 36/37.

the Rhineland. The following resolutions had been agreed upon at Heilbronn by the above-mentioned three regions in the year 1482:

1. He who takes residence in a town for good shall not be admitted.<sup>29</sup>
2. No safe-conduct for trespassers of the regulations.
3. No agreement on whether participants from other regions than just the four mentioned, such as Meissen or Saxony, should be admitted.
4. No agreement on whether participants of non-noble birth on the part of their mothers only should be admitted.
5. According to the Swabians it should be left at the discretion of the four regions whether they admit an honest pious man of noble birth who can give proof that eight generations had been of noble birth. The other two regions insist on a committee to decide.
6. Postponement of the question regarding whether certain (influential?) citizens should be admitted under various conditions.

After these items there is a long report concerning for which reasons participants should be allowed to punish opponents who did not obey the regulations. The three regions did not come to an agreement. Despite these agreements there are a few additions explaining for what kind of trespasses an opponent should be punished in the tiltyard:

1. For kidnapping women.
2. For abusing priests.
3. For being bastards (reiterated).
4. For opposing or fighting against noblemen.

The report concludes with the demand that everyone should inform the members of his region of these decisions taken at Heilbronn so that they could meet again at Nürnberg in May 1482, where the representatives were summoned to appear with authorized versions of their regions (see below).

### *The Meeting at Konstanz in Spring 1482*

In the meantime, two local tournament societies of Swabia, the "Society to the Fish" and the "Society to the Falcon," had met for consultations of their own on Laetare Monday (i.e., Monday after Mid-Lent Sunday) at Konstanz that year. We only list a selection:

1. National tournaments should be staged at an interval of two years.
2. Noblemen not belonging to any of the four regions should be allowed to participate.
3. Noblemen born to noble mothers should be admitted.
4. At the next tournament<sup>30</sup> the emblems of the fish and falcon should be worn according to the statutes.
5. There are detailed rules about how many officers should be elected for the

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29. Most of the sources only exist in copies listed as appendixes in Gumpfenberger, who never gives the sources of any of his appendixes. And is it therefore that we have to quote from him. Here: Gumpfenberger, *Gumpfenberger*, App. VIII, pp. 75-80.

30. Cf. Gumpfenberger, *Gumpfenberger*, App. X, pp. 81/82.

various functions and what the *quorum* of the various social strata should be like, i.e., the numbers of each group.

6. These items had to be discussed at home, and those present were asked to come back to Konstanz and report on the reaction, so that these societies could turn up at Nürnberg with a version agreed to by as many as possible.

### *The First Meeting at Landshut in Spring 1482*

The knighthood of Bavaria, too, had invited its members to meet at Landshut in the year 1482 for the discussion and presentation of its ideas at the forthcoming meeting at Nürnberg. We have no details of their consultations apart from the fact that the members of Bavaria had been summoned to prepare a statement.<sup>31</sup>

### *The Meeting at Nürnberg in May 1482*

As no one from Bavaria had turned up at Heilbronn early in 1482, the meeting at Nürnberg on 16 May 1482 was more or less arranged for the Bavarians. At Nürnberg the representatives of Bavaria, Franconia and Swabia presented their statements as had been agreed upon at Heilbronn earlier that year. However, at Nürnberg the representatives of the Rhineland were missing this time. Despite their absence the following regulations were discussed and partly agreed upon. Again we only list a selection:

1. It was reiterated that a nobleman residing in a city or town should not be admitted.
2. Children of someone who married a noble lady who has four noble ancestors should be admitted.
3. No safe-conduct for someone who protects a competitor who had not been admitted.
4. If a competitor is punished erroneously in the tiltyard the offender has to excuse himself afterwards.
5. He who kidnaps a virginal nun from the shelter of her nunnery, a wife, daughter or girlfriend and lives together with her—though he is married to a godly wife—should not be admitted.
6. All members of the knighthood who earn their living by acting as merchants (in a town) should be punished in the tiltyard.
7. All those who do not act according to the code of honor should be punished [in the tiltyard].<sup>32</sup>

### *The Suggestions of the Rhineland for Nürnberg, May 1482*

According to the agreement of Heilbronn (Spring 1482), the Rhineland had sent its suggestions to Nürnberg by letter. However, it was not represented by a member of its region. Their emendations concerned the duties of the captain and the knights carrying the banners. They did not agree with the direction that the crest should be taken off at the registration. There should be more equality

31. Cf. Gumpfenberger, *Gumpfenberger*, App. X, p. 87.

32. Cf. Gumpfenberger, *Gumpfenberger*, App. X, p. 86.

concerning the question of admittance, “for everybody hopes that a good man of his own retinue should (also) be admitted.”<sup>33</sup> In general, the Rhineland is against the admission of participants not belonging to either of the four regions. If a competitor wants to punish an opponent in the tiltyard he should give him a chance to defend himself *before* the attack. It might be advisable to punish him at the next tournament, which meant on the following day. There is no need to issue regulations concerning the admission of foreigners. If admitted, they should stick to the rules. They had been admitted in the past and they would no doubt be admitted to the next tournament, as well.<sup>34</sup>

These suggestions were discussed at Nürnberg by the representatives of the other three regions. At the end of their consultations a letter was sent to the Rhineland, informing its members of the decisions taken at Nürnberg.<sup>35</sup> However, as the three had not been able to reach *final* decisions—because of the absence of the Rhineland—all were asked to come to another meeting to be held at Rothenburg (ob der Tauber) on 25 August 1482. Every region was asked to send four or at least two authorized representatives to Rothenburg. Should the four regions not be able to agree on a mutual version, the version agreed to by only three of them was to be accepted and passed. For the furtherance of the “honor of the tournament” the Rhineland was asked to graciously accept the resolutions of Nürnberg and not to forget to send authorized representatives to Rothenburg in order “to bring the whole affair to a satisfactory conclusion.”<sup>36</sup>

#### *The Suggestions of a Swabian Society for Nürnberg, May 1482*

Apparently the local Swabian tournament society “in the Crown” had sent in a version of its own or had at least made its statement on various points. From the source<sup>37</sup> we learn that they had discussed the rather tricky question of what should be done if someone who wanted to punish someone else in the tiltyard found himself on the *same* side with him. Some members of this society were of the opinion that he should at least aim at him once or twice by crossing over, while others suggested that he should leave him alone.

#### *The Second Meeting at Landshut in July 1482*

Right after Nürnberg (May 1482) the two representatives of Bavaria sent a letter to their members reporting that they had been in Nürnberg (as agreed upon at Landshut at the first meeting there). They wanted to inform their members of the Nürnberg results and for this reason they told them to meet at Landshut for a second time on 13 July 1482. The object was to have further consultations and to come to a regional agreement. The members were asked to send this invitation to all members of the knighthood of “Upper and Lower Bavaria,”<sup>38</sup> and to remind them that nobody should stay at home. For the

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33. Cf. Gumpfenberg, *Gumpfenberger*, App. X, pp. 88/89.

34. Cf. Gumpfenberg, *Gumpfenberger*, App. X, p. 90.

35. Cf. Gumpfenberg, *Gumpfenberger*, App. X, p. 91.

36. Cf. Gumpfenberg, *Gumpfenberger*, App. X, p. 91.

37. Cf. Gumpfenberg, *Gumpfenberger*, App. X, p. 93.

38. Cf. Gumpfenberg, *Gumpfenberger*, App. X, p. 87.



representatives were very much concerned that “we Bavarians get nothing but scorn and derision”<sup>39</sup> for not coming.

### *The Meeting at Rothenburg in August 1482*

We do not know whether this meeting, agreed upon at Nürnberg on 16 May 1482, actually took place. If it did the results cannot have been very spectacular, for as late as Epiphany 1484—at the fourth national tournament staged by the Swabian association at Stuttgart—everyone still adhered to the so-called Heidelberg regulations of the year 1479.<sup>40</sup>

### *Activities of the Bavarians*

After the associations of Franconia, the Rhineland and Swabia had staged a national tournament, the association of Bavaria could not stand back any longer. As early as 1483, Georg von Frauenberg, tournament captain of Bavaria, had organized a regional Bavarian tournament on 5 October at Ingolstadt.<sup>41</sup> What the Bavarians wanted, however, was to stage the next, the fifth national tournament.

### *The Third Meeting at Landshut in April 1484*

As we learn from Gumpfenberg,<sup>42</sup> Georg von Frauenberg, at the instigation of Georg, Duke of Upper and Lower Bavaria, wrote to his fellow Bavarians before Epiphany 1484, that they should all meet at Landshut on 25 April 1484 for special consultations. Every family belonging to the knighthood of Bavaria was to send at least one representative so that they could mutually agree on the venue for the fifth national tournament. Otherwise, the Bavarians would earn nothing but derision from the other three associations. Frauenberg earnestly reminded them not to disregard the Duke’s urgent plea. At Landshut they all agreed to stage the fifth national tournament at Ingolstadt on 30 May 1484, which had to be postponed later to 29 August 1484.<sup>43</sup>

### *The Meeting at Ingolstadt in August 1484*

Just before the fifth national tournament at Ingolstadt, which was no doubt a success for Bavaria and cannot be dealt with here, representatives of all four regional associations met and agreed upon new and very detailed regulations which are found in Gumpfenberg.<sup>44</sup> They regulated the conduct of the competitors by listing fines for trespasses, nominated officers for the organization of the various dances, appointed others to care for wine and confectionery, to blow the horn, to collect fees, and to carry sword and banner. We find the names of

39. Cf. Gumpfenberg, *Gumpfenberger*, App. X. p. 88.

40. Cf. Gumpfenberg, *Gumpfenberger*, App. X. p. 37 and Ruxner, *Anfang*, tournament at Stuttgart 1484.

41. Cf. *Stambuch des blühenden und abgestorbenen Adels in Deutschland*, ed. by O. T. von Hefner and several German noblemen. Regensburg 1860-1866. 4 vols. In Preface of “Stambuch” of Wiguleus Hund(t), vol. 1.

42. Cf. Gumpfenberg, *Gumpfenberger*, App. XII, p. 97.

43. Cf. Gumpfenberg, *Gumpfenberger*, p. 33.

44. Cf. Gumpfenberg, *Gumpfenberger*, App. XII, pp. 97-112.

the competitors who had been grouped on the right and the left hand side of the mass-tournament, of all the accompanying wives and ladies, of the gentlewomen presenting the prizes, and of those not admitted to the tournament. At the end we even find a list of fees collected and detailed entries of expenditures.

### *The Cancelled Meeting at Heilbronn in May 1485*

Before the representatives of the four regions dispersed at the fifth national tournament at Ingolstadt, they decided to meet again at Heilbronn on 8 May 1485. To speed up their consultations, they had even agreed upon a sort of agenda for the May meeting at Heilbronn:

1. To reconsider the previous regulation admitting only those whose parents had participated in tournaments during the preceding 50 years.
2. To reconsider the requirement of presenting three noble ancestors.
3. To summon the best Bavarian tilters to participate.
4. To admit the knighthood from Austria under certain conditions.
5. To limit the number of local tournament societies.
6. To reconsider previous regulations concerning the admission of participants.
7. To limit the wearing of gold and pearls.<sup>45</sup>

It was also laid down that—in case of absences—regulations agreed upon by only three regional associations should be passed and become valid for all four.<sup>46</sup>

However, these resolutions more or less failed. The Bavarian Judmann informs us that he had been sent to attend the May meeting at Heilbronn by his captain Georg von Frauenberg, only to find that the associations of Bavaria *and* of Swabia were underrepresented. Therefore the associations of the Rhineland and of Franconia did not want to discuss the agenda.

### *The Proposed Meeting at Heilbronn in August 1485*

From Heilbronn Judmann rode straight on to the sixth national tournament, staged by “Markgraf” Albrecht von Brandenburg at Ansbach on Ascension Day 1485. At Ansbach the four associations apparently were so busy with the tournament itself that they all agreed to meet again at Heilbronn on 31 August 1485. Judmann urgently reminds the knighthood of Bavaria to come to Heilbronn in August so that the absence of the Bavarian delegation does not impede the negotiations again as had happened at Heilbronn in May 1485, where “no one apart from myself had appeared”<sup>47</sup> to represent Bavaria. 31 August 1485 had been agreed upon at the suggestion of the Bavarians, so would they please not let him down.

### *The Meeting at München in July 1485*

Judmann did not take any risks and even told the knighthood of Bavaria to meet for earlier consultations at München on 12 July 1485 where it had already

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45. Cf. Gumpfenberg, *Gumpfenberger*, App. XII, pp. 110/111.

46. Gumpfenberg, *Gumpfenberger*, App. XII, p. 112.

47. Gumpfenberg, *Gumpfenberger*, App. XII, p. 124.

been summoned by Duke Albrecht for that time. Unfortunately, we have no details about the Bavarian negotiations at München on 12 July 1485.

*The Meeting at Bamberg in July 1485*

Apparently such consultations before the actual meeting were quite common and very useful in those days to commit everyone to a joint policy and talk about mutual strategies. Regarding the association of Franconia, we are informed that it met at Bamberg on 27 July 1485 for the same purpose. At Bamberg they drew up several articles concerning proof of ancestry and laid down regulations for marriages of equal birth.<sup>48</sup>

We can only assume that the associations of the Rhineland and of Swabia had also met previously somewhere on their own territory. Up to now, however, no traces of such meetings have been found. Regional historians and specialists on the late Middle Ages should be able to dig up the sources.

*The Tournament Regulations of Heilbronn of August 1485*

After all these meetings and conventions, after many consultations impeded by the absence of one of the four regional associations, the representatives of all four associations finally came together at Heilbronn on Wednesday, 31 August 1485 to pass the famous "Tournament Regulations of Heilbronn 1485."

To list all of them here, item by item, would take too much space. After all, they are more or less similar to previous regulations if we disregard a few minor changes. However, we must admit that today there is still no English translation available. Four different copies were made and sealed, one for each region, whose representatives' names are found at the beginning and at the end of the text, i.e., the representatives of Bavaria stand in first position in the Bavarian copy and *vice versa*. Raidenbucher once possessed the original copy for Bavaria. However, as stated in note no. 9, Raidenbucher's manuscript is now lost. The original copy for Swabia is still preserved in the "Königliches Reichs-Archiv, München," and the text is printed in the tournament-book of Ludwig von Eyb.<sup>49</sup> The original in München still has the twelve seals of the representatives fixed to it. The text of the copy for the Rhineland is printed by Ruxner,<sup>50</sup> but the copy and the text for Franconia have not been located up to now.

The Regulations of Heilbronn were publicly proclaimed and came into force at the seventh national tournament at Bamberg on Epiphany 1486, where Raidenbucher himself was one of the participants.

Unfortunately, there were only two more national tournaments to follow: the eighth at Regensburg on Candlemas 1487, where the Rhineland had not turned up, and the ninth at Worms in the week after Bartholomew the same year.

48. Gumpfenberg, *Gumpfenberger*, p. 38 with reference to "Jungens, Miscellaneen, Ansbach 1740, I, 389" which I have not been able to trace bibliographically.

49. Cf. Stamm, *Das Turnierbuch*, pp. 201-211.

50. Cf. Ruxner, *Anfang*, tournament at Bamberg 1486.

Because of the plague, the tournament at Worms had to be suspended prematurely, which more or less dealt a deathblow to German tournaments on the national level and ended all the previous efforts of the lower gentry to save *the* chivalrous showpiece as such from oblivion. It was the dawn of a new age: in Spain Christopher Columbus was campaigning for his idea of America, and the discovery of the New World was only five years in the future.