

Brewing, Politics and Society in an Early Modern German Town - a case study of Görlitz in Upper Lusatia

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On the evening of 12th June 1525, cloth workers Alexander Boltze and Nickel Werder visited the public house of Johannes Hass, town clerk of Görlitz. They reassured him that they had just come for a beer and promised not to cause any trouble. At around 9 pm, there were almost one hundred guests in attendance. When, at half past midnight, Hass returned from his cellar, Alex Boltze met him with the words 'Sir, there's a fire!' whereupon all the guests left the building. Not much later, when the news of the fire had already spread throughout the town, Hass and Boltze met again, with the cloth worker worriedly enquiring 'Sir, what will happen now?' Yet, rumour had it that shortly afterwards he told other people that the fire should be left alone and that it was doing its 'proper work'.¹

The account of the Great Fire 1525 by town clerk Johannes Hass sheds much light on the history of brewing and beer-retailing in early modern Görlitz. It reveals certain peculiarities and poses a number of questions which this article intends to explore: why did a town clerk sell beer and to what extent was this unusual? Why did the cloth workers apologize for their visit and emphasize their

good intentions? Were they perhaps opponents or competitors who normally did not get along? And where exactly was this house of Johannes Hass where - before the fire broke out - so many guests enjoyed an evening drink? Before we can answer questions of 'who', 'when', 'how' and 'where', however, it is necessary to take a closer look at the location.

Early modern Görlitz - cloth trade and beer

In the Middle Ages, the Upper-Lusatian town of Görlitz - today situated on Germany's Eastern periphery close to the Polish border - was at the heart of a wider European trading network. It occupied an important place on the ancient East-West route linking Paris and Frankfurt/Main with Leipzig, Silesia and the Ukraine. With its 10,000 inhabitants, Görlitz was one of the largest towns between Erfurt (Thuringia) and Wrocław (Silesia), two of the other main stations on the so-called Via Regia. Throughout the medieval and early modern centuries, Görlitz's economy was dominated by the production and sale of cloth. A woad staple granted by the monarch forced

anybody dealing with the plant (used in dying cloth) to stop at Görlitz. From the eleventh to the seventeenth century, the King of Bohemia ruled over both Görlitz and Upper Lusatia; after 1635 it was the Elector (and later King) of Saxony. Despite this formal subordination, the town retained very considerable autonomy, not least because of the long distance from Bohemia's capital Prague. To compensate for the lack of local protection, Görlitz pursued a double strategy: internally, by adopting strong council rule; externally, by joining forces with neighbouring towns (Bautzen, Löbau, Kamenz, Zittau, Lauban) in the Lusatian League. Within the latter, Bautzen acted as the administrative capital, but Görlitz played an important role as the seat of the representative of the Bohemian king, who resided near the parish church of SS Peter and Paul.

This essay draws on a recent research project on late medieval and early modern Görlitz. Rather than on the cloth trade, it focused on the second main source of economic prosperity, namely the production of beer and its consumption in public houses.² In line with growing interest in the multifunctional role of public spaces like town halls, churches, market squares and taverns, the project examined beerhouses not just with regard to core services like food, drink and accommodation, but also wider socio-cultural functions like the dissemination of news, the agreement of contracts and the arrangement of marriages. By adopting a broad perspective,

it sought to gain a better understanding of early modern public houses as focal points for urban communication and interaction.³

From an early stage, the extensive source materials kept at the council archive (*Ratsarchiv*) revealed substantial differences between Görlitz and the major German imperial cities. Despite a substantial population and high numbers of merchants and traders, five regular inns catered for the needs of locals and strangers within the town walls in the sixteenth century. This modest figure contrasts with more than 100 breweries (then known as *Brauhöfe*) which dominated the town's hospitality structure. What, then, was the function of these breweries and how exactly should we imagine the production and retailing of beer in Görlitz?

Brewing

From the Middle Ages, Görlitz had operated a system of 'brewing rotation': Certain properties within the town walls carried a brewing license which allowed holders to brew a prescribed amount of beer at specific intervals. The sources refer to such a property as a *Brauhof* or *Bierhof* (brewery) and to their owners as *Braubürger* (brewing burghers).

The number of licensed properties in Görlitz emerges from the town's tax lists (*libri exactorum*) and further sources such as the brewing register and the

book of wills. Thanks to the fact that they paid higher taxes, some 125 licensed properties can be identified for the beginning of the fifteenth century.⁴ The early modern period brought a gradual decrease: 112 breweries existed in 1500, 107 around 1600, 100 at the beginning of the eighteenth century and 94 in the early 1800s (see Fig. 1).⁵ The volume of beer brewed on these premises must have been enormous, even accounting for the rotation system which prevented all owners brewing at the same time. Other members of the Lusatian League operated a similar regime. By the mid-sixteenth century, the neighbouring town of Zittau had 114 breweries with a comparable level of output.

As in many regions with brewing rotation, no brewing guilds or other forms of collective organization existed in Görlitz. The town council supervised the brewing process, measures, pricing and all other beer-related matters through detailed regulations. To prevent inequities, a drawing of lots determined the brewing sequence. Twice a year licensees convened at the town hall to attend this procedure and to hear the brewing regulations read out to them. The actual work on their premises was carried out by professional town brewers. The council provided the most important piece of equipment: a brewing pan, documented since at least the late fourteenth century.⁶ The capacity of this copper vessel was called 'one beer'. It formed the basis for permitted production volumes and taxation levels. At the same time, all licensed

properties were classified according to the number of pans they could brew, with the smallest known as 'three-' and the largest as 'nine-beer' properties - the latter being allowed to brew a pan of beer nine times a year. Sadly, none of the actual brewing pans has survived, making it difficult to estimate the exact quantity of 'one beer'. With reference to a drawing showing the transport of the Görlitz brewing pan⁷ and by comparison with measures of other Saxon and Upper Lusatian towns, however, an approximate impression can be gained: in Bohemia (the territory which Görlitz belonged to until 1635) and neighbouring Saxony, the respective figures vary between 22 and 114 hectolitres per brewage.⁸

From the late fourteenth century, princely privileges secured an adequate level of demand. In 1367, Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV granted Görlitz a right subsequently known as *Bierzwang*, i.e. a monopoly for local brewers over all town inns and public houses (*Kretschame*) in the villages within Görlitz' municipal jurisdiction.⁹ The only place where 'foreign' beer could be purchased and consumed was the wine cellar in the town hall. Roughly at the same time as the *Bierzwang*, Charles IV also granted the council the exclusive license for selling wine. As a result, the municipal wine cellar (which was leased out to a tenant) offered various wines as well as other beers, albeit at a much higher price than local produce. A council decree (*Willkür*) of 1565, furthermore, allowed burghers to purchase wine and foreign

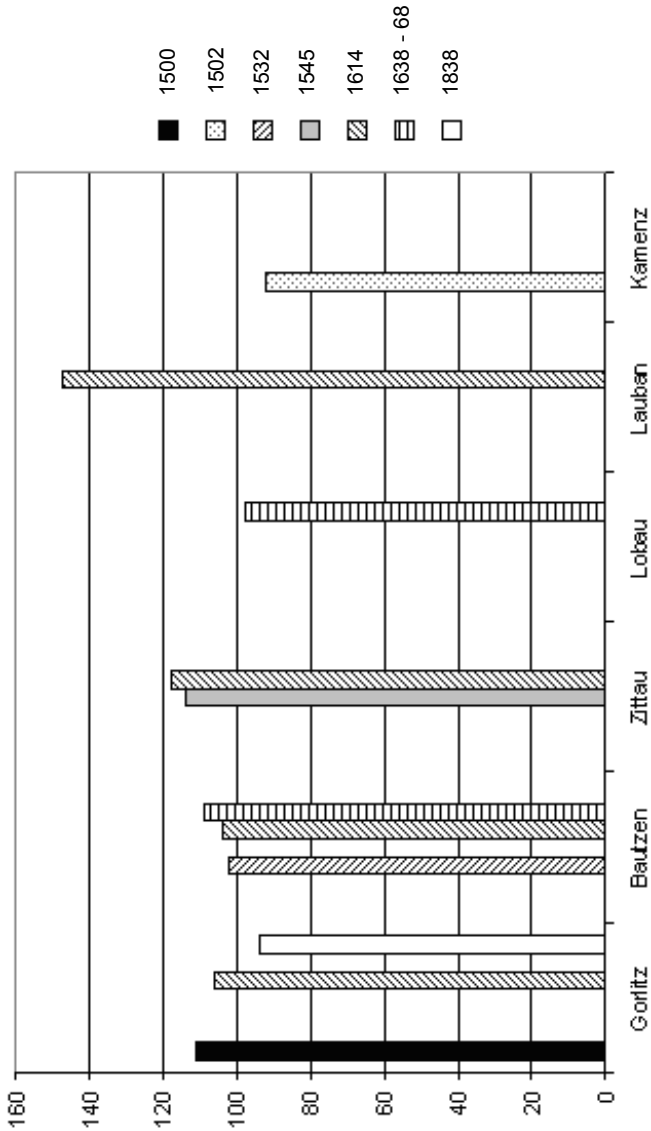


Figure 1. The number of licensed properties in the towns of the Lusatian League.

beer for domestic use on payment of a special fee (*Ungeld*).

The ban on foreign beers, which continued well into the modern period, and the restriction of wine imports caused numerous conflicts between Görlitz and other Upper Lusatian breweries looking to expand their markets. Given that the resulting confrontations have been traced elsewhere,¹⁰ the following remarks focus on the consumption of Görlitz beer within the town itself.

Just like brewing rights, the retail sale of beer also rotated. For a few weeks each year, therefore, proprietors became innkeepers and publicans. This explains why so many people drank at the house of town clerk Johannes Hass in June 1525 - it was his turn. To turn private dwellings into temporary public houses imposed considerable burdens upon their owners. To start with, they had to announce to both locals and strangers which town houses sold beer at any given time. For this purpose, Görlitz and other towns developed the custom of displaying beer signs outside the respective properties. These not only marked the brewery as a public place, they also acted as a visual reminder of the town's peculiar licensing rules. In contrast to the elaborate signs of inns in other localities, which symbolized their permanent right to offer alcohol and accommodation,¹¹ those in towns with rotation systems appear rather makeshift: a bundle of brushwood and, at night, a fire basket by the front door. Standardized signs -

wooden cones known as *Bierkegel* - only emerged at the end of the sixteenth century, when the council specified distinct colours for either mature beer (bottled for quite some time) or more recent brews (*Lager* or *Märzen* varieties). The use of beer fiddlers also helped people to find the right places.

In its regulation of opening hours, the council prohibited the sale of beer during times of divine service, both at inns and in brewery houses. On Sundays, public feasts and sermon days, guests could only 'be seated' after 12 noon. At first sight, closing times appear remarkably generous: as late as 1532, an entry in Tobias Kober's chronicle records that brewing burghers

must not during summer evenings sell beer any later than one on the main hand, and in winter no later than three at night, otherwise they will be punished.¹²

If this seems very late, it has to be taken into account that - well into the sixteenth century - Upper Lusatia and Bohemia calculated time according to the 'whole' clock (*ganze Uhr*), i.e. counting of the hours began when the sun set. This suggests limited seasonal variations. The license regulations of 1590 in Scultetus' brewing register duly confirm that, from Ash Wednesday, premises could stay open until 10 in the summer months and, from Michaelmas, until 9 pm in the winter. At the same time, hosts were not allowed to lock up as long as they had guests.¹³ Their public houses only revert-

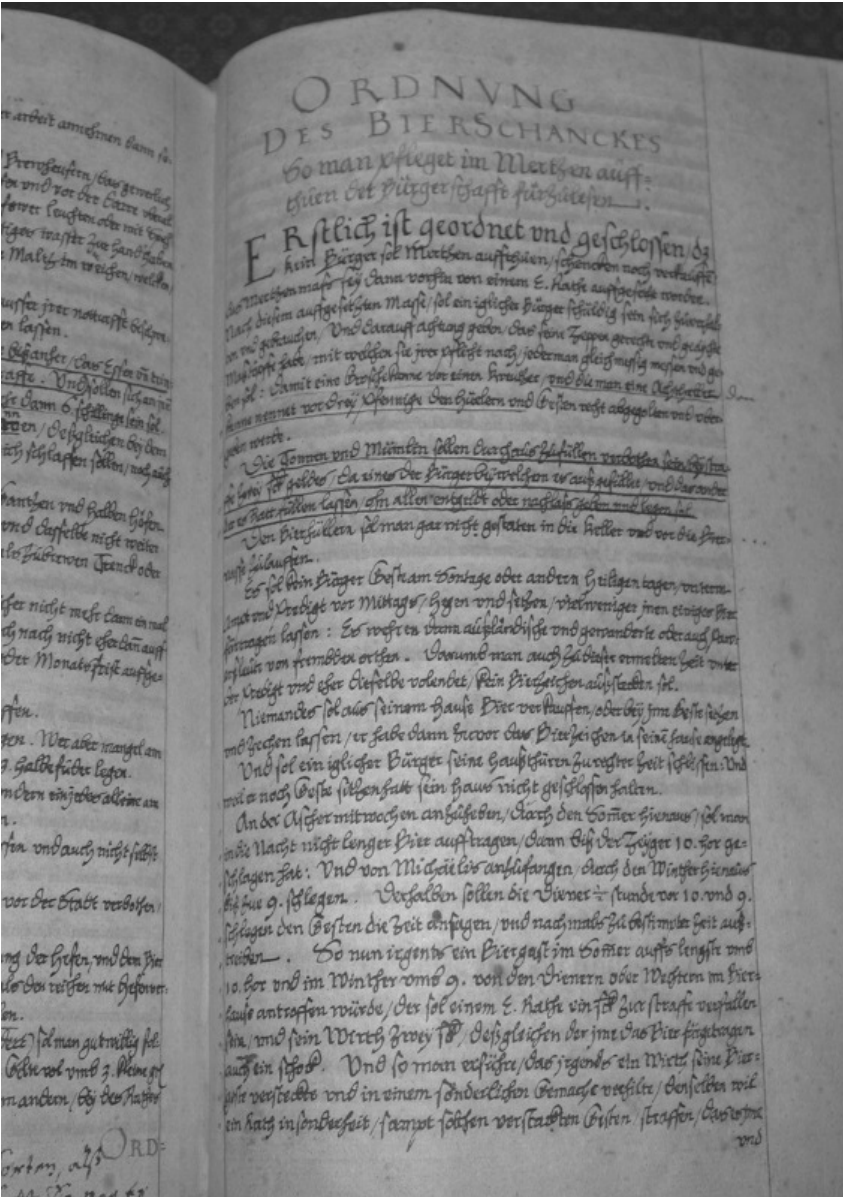


Figure 2. License regulations in the brewing register of Bartholomäus Scultetus.

ed to family dwellings (and thus private spaces) after the last patron had left.

This brings us to the issue of early modern differentiations between 'public' and 'private.' According to B. Ann Tlusty, even a regular inn occupied a 'hybrid position ... as a simultaneously private and public household'.¹⁴ The differentiation becomes yet more complicated when looking at premises only temporarily used as public houses. Evidence from buildings and documentary sources like wills points to an internal differentiation of space. The large ground floor halls of the breweries were certainly used as drinking lounges, sometimes also the often spacious rooms on the first floor, while those at the top tended to remain 'private'. Rotation systems as at Görlitz created particularly complex relationships between the public and private sphere, not only because of the fact that some parts of breweries were seen as more 'public' than others, but also because of the temporary nature of victualling services during a mere two to four weeks each year.

While operating as public houses, breweries focused on the sale of drink. The council had restricted the serving of food, which remained a prerogative of regular inns. The latter were thus more multifunctional than the breweries, where owners were (at least in theory) not permitted to offer accommodation or hot meals (even though nobles and indeed the Bohemian king occasionally stayed in the licensed properties of distinguished councillors). In line with their accommodation privi-

leges, three of the inns within the town walls were situated in close proximity to the main gates: the White Horse close to the Reichenbach gate in the west; the Blue Lion and the Golden Star somewhat further into town on the Obermarkt, while the Golden Tree and the Brown Stag were right in the centre on the Untermarkt. All inns lay on principal access roads or squares frequented by merchants and strangers and all had brewery licences, although it cannot be established with certainty at which point they evolved from mere beerhouses into fully-fledged inns. In the case of the two breweries at Untermarkt 4 (Golden Tree) and Untermarkt 26 (Brown Stag) the term *gasthoff* [inn] already appears in the late sixteenth century.¹⁵ There may have been a connection to an event known in Upper Lusatian history as the *Pönfall* [punishment]. During the Schmalkaldic War, the Habsburg-Bohemian ruler, Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand I, requested military support from the Upper-Lusatian towns. Troops were duly levied, but disbanded again in April 1547, shortly before the decisive battle of Mühlberg. The Emperor's punishment comprised not only the temporary loss of municipal privileges, fiefs and rural manors (as well as a massive fine), but also the permanent imposition of an annual beer duty. Many scholars see the establishment of inns as the burghers' attempt to recoup some of the high costs associated with the repurchase of manors and the new tax.¹⁶ Subsequent lists of burghers also include a number of newly-settled publicans - an

occupation which, due to the town's rotation system, had not existed before.

Politics

Who were these brewing burghers who turned their dwellings into public houses for several weeks each year? At the beginning of this essay, we have already encountered Johannes Hass, who became town clerk in 1509 and a member of the council in 1519. Hass acquired a reputation as a staunch defender of

council rule and Catholic doctrines. He did not reach the mayoralty until 1536, but already played a major role within the council by 1525, the year of the town fire.¹⁷ Was he a typical representative of the Görlitz licensees? Were most of his fellow brewers council members and high-ranking officials? One source at the Görlitz council archives is of particular help in answering these questions: the brewing register kept by the Görlitz humanist, town clerk and mayor Bartholomäus Scultetus between 1571 and 1613.

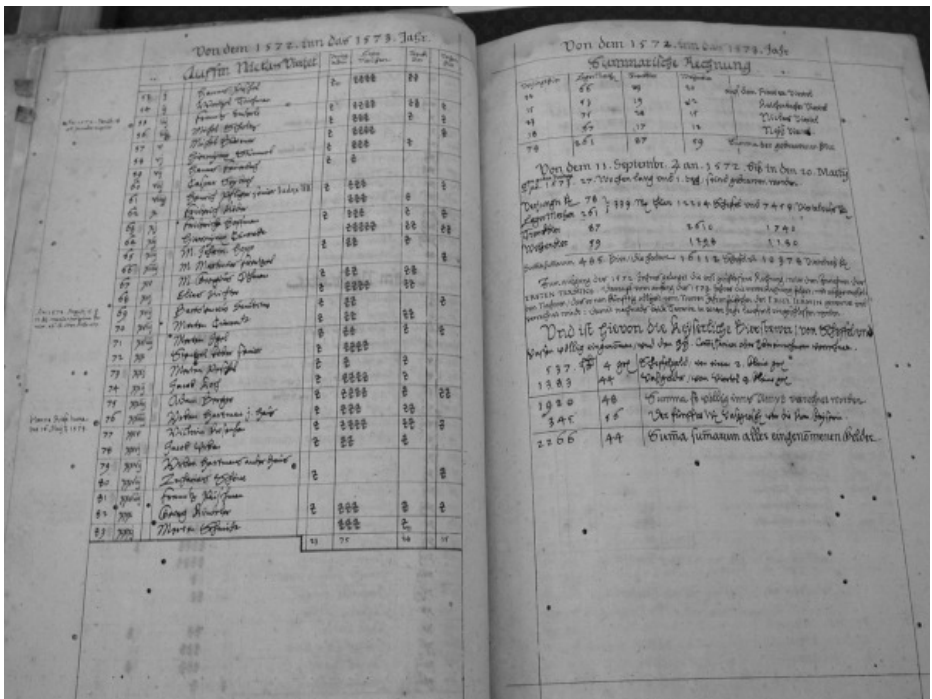
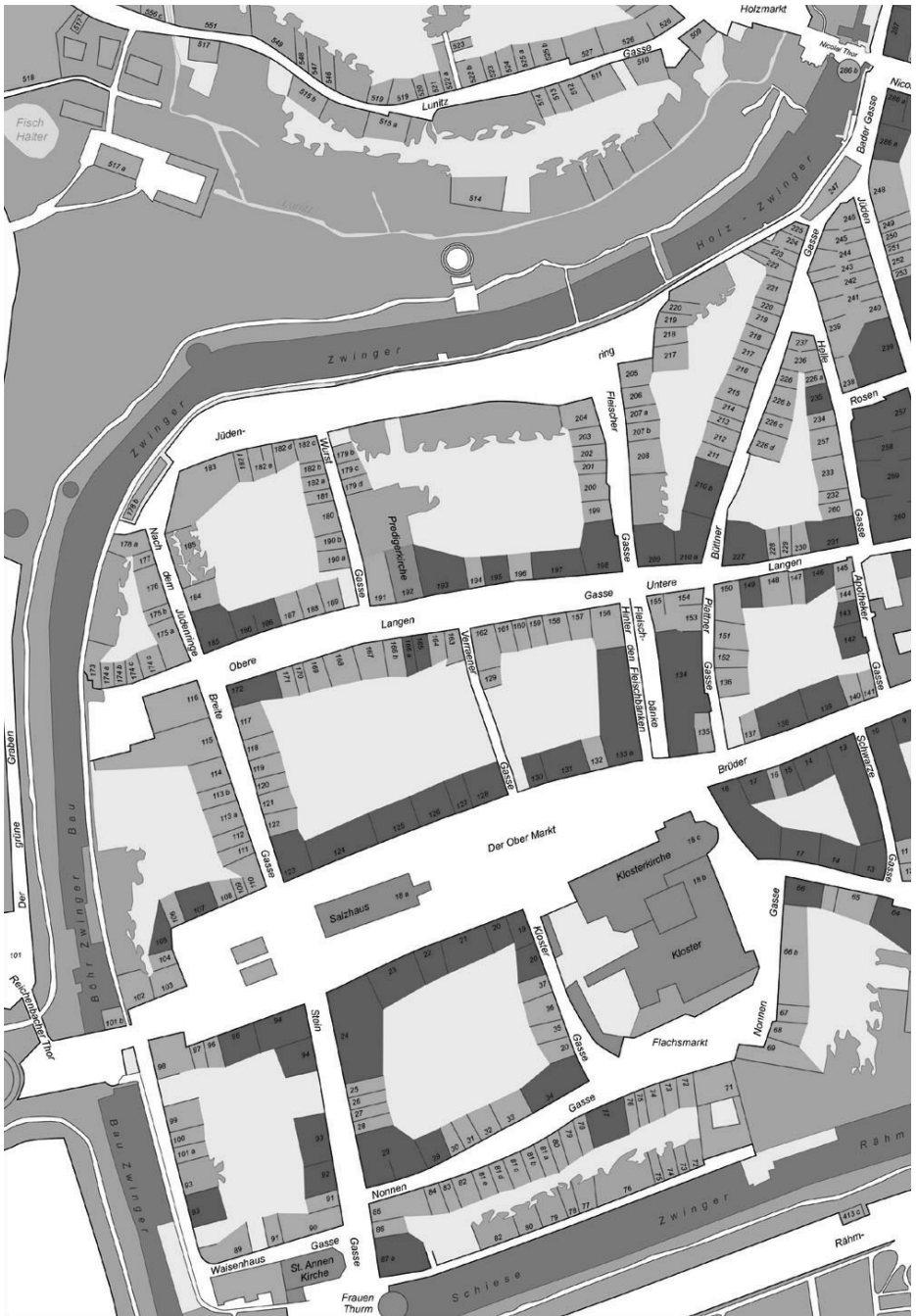


Figure 3: The brewing register of Bartholomäus Scultetus.



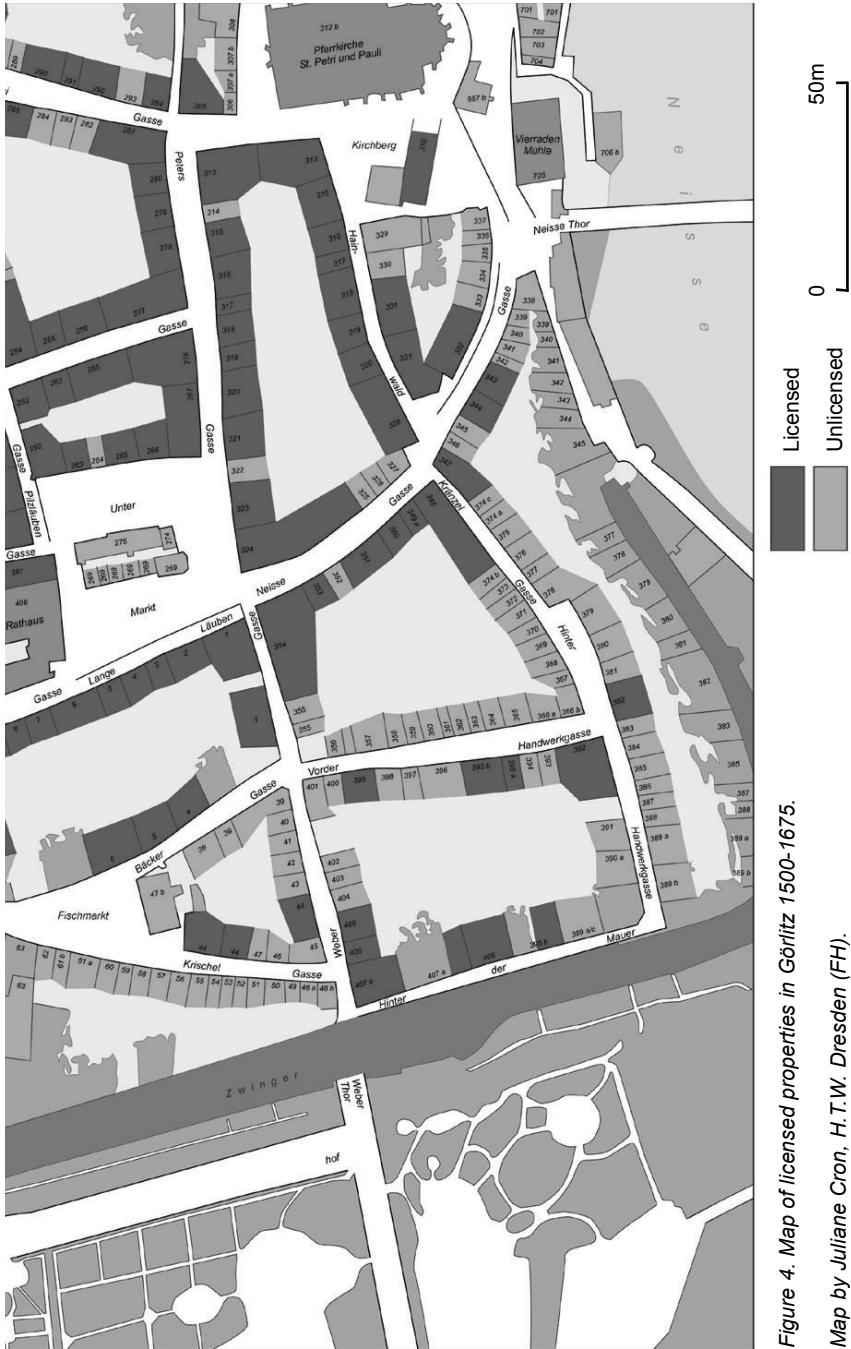


Figure 4. Map of licensed properties in Görlitz 1500-1675.
 Map by Juliane Cron, H. T. W. Dresden (FH).

This brewing register documents all 107 breweries over forty-five years, providing information on their owners, the amount of beer brewed on the premises and occasionally property sales as well. The exact locations, however, have to be retrieved from other sources. Further details on licensed premises and their owners emerge from municipal tax books (*libri exactorum*), where higher assessments are a tell-tale sign of brewery-status, and the collections of wills. The latter include last testaments from brewing burghers as well as incidental references to licensed properties and their owners. Complemented by supplementary material like Christian Knauthes' topography, a comprehensive catalogue of 122 licensed properties could be compiled for the period between 1500 and 1675.¹⁸ A disproportionate number clustered around the Untermarkt (and the neighbouring lanes Neißgasse, Petersgasse, Brüdergasse) and the Obermarkt.

In whose hands were these privileged properties? And did their owners form a homogeneous group within the town's society? The area around Untermarkt and Petersgasse may serve as a case study of the connections between brewing privileges and social status. It is noteworthy that the most lucrative tenements are all to be found in the vicinity of the town hall and St. Peter's church.

The sixteenth-century estate of town clerk (and later mayor) Johannes Hass was located at no. 11, Petersgasse (mort-

gage reference 316 on both maps). He possessed a full-scale, nine-beer property which upon his death passed to his son Valentin Hass (council member 1548-63, twice mayor), then to mayor Melchior Steinberg (councillor 1592-1614, municipal judge 1598-99) and subsequently to the twice-elected mayor David Tuchscherer (councillor 1601-24). A neighbouring licensed property was no. 14, Peterstraße (mortgage reference 319), which in the mid-sixteenth century belonged to Urban Meltzer (councillor 1535-47) and in the first year of the brewing register (1571/72) to councillor Elias Meltzer (who, as Scultetus duly recorded, was about to be elected mayor for 1572/73). Meltzer retained 14, Petersgasse for several years, until in 1594/95 one 'Elias Meltzerin' appears as the new owner. This was Ursula Meltzer, widow of the former mayor, who had inherited the property upon his death in 1594. As specified in her own will, the 'house or licensed property at Petersgasse between Dr. David Tuchscher and Peter Rücker' then went to Georg Heinze for 1,700 thalers.¹⁹ The latter, whom Scultetus lists as owner from 1611/12, was Ursula Meltzer's brother-in-law (councillor 1606-23, lay judge from 1614 and, finally, municipal judge from 1618).

A comparable sequence of municipal office-holders can also be found among the owners of the licensed property at no. 1, Untermarkt (mortgage reference 1). For roughly two centuries, it belonged to the Emerich family, whose most influ-

ential members were Georg Emerich (councillor 1470-1507, five times mayor), his son Hans Emerich the Older (councillor 1532-37), son-in-law Franz Lindner (municipal judge 1533-48, councillor 1548-64, three times mayor) and grandson Hans Emerich (councillor 1613-22, twice mayor). In fact, during the time-frame of this study (1500-1675), the majority of the licensed properties on and around Untermarkt were in the possession of councillors, lay judges, municipal judges and mayors. The latter typically resided in Petersgasse, the direct route from the town hall via the Untermarkt to St Peter's church.

Certain names appear time and again among licensees, notably the Emerich, Meltzer or Frenzel families who were mainly engaged in the cloth trade. At the same time, proprietors are particularly conspicuous in the lists of councillors and electoral records. By contrast, hardly any master craftsmen, cloth workers, tanners, butchers or bakers secured seats on the council. Ownership of a licensed property was effectively a requirement for election to high office. Richard Jecht, an authority on the history of Görlitz, regards the right to brew as the main distinction between 'actual burghers' and mere craftsmen.²⁰ Perhaps since the town's foundation and certainly since they acquired a monopoly over the cloth trades, the Görlitz merchants had reserved the brewing right for themselves. This privilege, in turn, formed the prerequisite for any burgher who wanted to become a council member.

The council consisted of eleven councillors and seven lay judges who were annually chosen by cooptation from among the town's licensees. The most influential members were the *Älteste Herren* [Senior Lords] who appointed the principal officeholders, determined the *Geschoss* [property tax] and, since the late 1300s, chose the master craftsmen of the guilds. Around the same time, guild 'representatives' start to crop up among council members, although it is likely that these were loyal supporters of their electors rather than lobbyists for their crafts.²¹

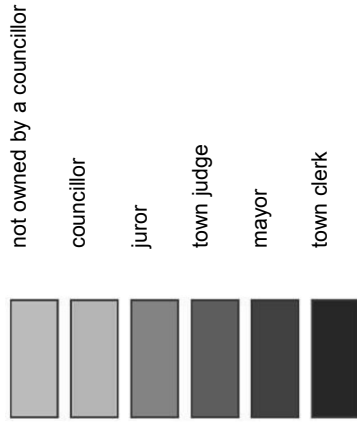
There is no written basis, in the form of a royal privilege or any other document, for the council's highly oligarchic constitution and the key significance of brewing rights. Rather, it looks as if a local custom, linking brewing privileges with eligibility to the council, consolidated during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This development triggered frequent demands by the craftsmen for the 'ius braxandi'. Since the late 1300s, they had often revolted against their exclusion from political participation. To some extent, Emperor and King of Bohemia Charles IV settled the first major uprising of 1369 in their favour: the craftsmen were allowed to brew for their personal needs, yet prohibited from selling their produce. Other basic demands, such as greater access to municipal resources and participation in the council, remained unfulfilled. Not surprisingly, even more severe disturbances erupted in 1405. A delegation of cloth workers intended to bring their





Figure 5. Map of licensed premises around the Untermarkt 1500-1675.

Map by Juliane Cron, H.T.W. Dresden (FH).



demands before the Bohemian ruler, but the council beat them to it and obtained a letter by King Wenceslaus which demanded their obedience and effectively revoked the brewing privilege granted to them only a few years earlier.

But, returning to a passage from the report of the fire of 1525 cited above, why did cloth worker Alexander Boltze emphasize the fact that he would be on his best behaviour in the town clerk's public house? Was it to allay fears about pub brawls commonly associated with drinking and gambling? In this instance, it is more likely that Boltze hinted at continuing tensions between craftsmen and the town elite. The blossoming of the cloth trade and the upheavals of the Reformation had triggered renewed calls for a guild revolution in the first quarter of the sixteenth century. Several rallies of townspeople had already been held when the fire of 1525 put a temporary stop to the preparations. It took two further years until the cloth workers, led by the very Alexander Boltze, dared to rise. Apart from a bigger say in government and the right to convene, one key target was again to obtain brewing rights for all householders. Yet given the links between beer licenses and council membership, the ruling elite of brewing burghers defended their privileges vehemently. The council rejected the rebels' demands with reference to royal documents, but over the next days the cloth workers kept up the pressure, especially after some of their leading figures had been arrested or forced to escape. As

soon as the council learnt about seditious meetings, it acted vigorously: nine conspirators were executed, another three incarcerated or exiled.²² None of their demands were met - the cloth workers remained excluded from the brewing privilege.

What were town clerk Hass' intentions when he alleged that cloth worker Boltze had talked about the fire doing 'its proper work'? Did such blazes not threaten the livelihood of the poorer classes themselves? The phrase alerts us once more to the conflict between the council, represented by Hass, and the cloth workers, led by Alexander Boltze. In the light of the topographical distribution of licensed properties outlined above, Boltze's purported statement may well be interpreted as a threat against the brewing burghers. During the fire of 1525, large parts of the Neiße quarter (Untermarkt, Petersgasse, Neißgasse) and the Frauen quarter (Untermarkt, Obermarkt, Brüdergasse) fell prey to the flames. A total of 180 buildings, among them thirty-four breweries, were destroyed. St. Peter's church and the town hall could only be saved with an enormous collective effort. Both of these civic buildings symbolized aspects of the conflict, in the case of St. Peter's not least the council's initial reluctance to allow Luther's new teachings into town. Richard Jecht interpreted Hass' account as an indication of the cloth workers' hesitation (to say the least) to fight the fire - something that verges on intellectual arson (even though the fire actually started in an oven house).²³ Given the

tensions between authorities and craftsmen, the latter's reluctance to offer assistance could be conceived as an attempt to cause the brewing burghers actual harm.

Society

The recurring demands of the craftsmen underline the fusion of economic and political power in the hands of the brewing burghers. Through the combination of personal prosperity and eligibility for civic office (as councillor, lay judge or mayor), the latter fulfilled two key criteria for an urban 'elite'; a third - social esteem - was also very much in evidence, not least because of the high concentration of licensed premises in the prestigious area around the Untermarkt in the town centre.²⁴ The common practice of 'upgrading' to a more desirable property upon election to high office provides further evidence for the link between brewing rights and social status.

One telling example is Franz Lindner, an immigrant from Freiberg (Saxony) who gained admission to the council as a lay judge in 1548. Previously, i.e. during his time as junior town clerk, town clerk and - from 1533 - royal municipal judge, he had probably lived in the household of his father-in-law Hans Emerich at Untermarkt 1 (a property he inherited after Emerich's death). However, upon his election to the position of lay judge in 1548, Lindener wanted to substantiate his enhanced status with a licensed

property of his own. In an exceptional move, the council allowed him to establish a new brewery on the Federmarkt.²⁵

A similar case is that of Melchior Steinberg whose council career began in 1592, shortly after he had purchased a five-beer property at no. 32, Langengasse, for the relatively modest sum of 1,025 marks.²⁶ By 1594 he served as a lay judge and decided to pay Gregor Frenzel 2,000 marks for the more prestigious nine-beer property at no. 11, Petersgasse, formerly in the possession of ex-mayors Johannes and Valentin Hass.²⁷ While there was no automatic link from this property to the town's highest offices, Steiner, too, was to serve as municipal judge (1596-99) and eventually as mayor on less than than four occasions.

Lindner's family connections and Steinberg's financial investment suggest that the most desirable breweries were not just economic assets, but also symbols of high social status. This position, however, did not remain unchallenged and had to be constantly reasserted. How could it be secured on a long-term basis? As recent studies of premodern towns have shown, important clues on elite strategies can be gained from wills.²⁸ Bequests of family property simultaneously involved a transfer of values, virtues and power, certainly in the case study of Görlitz, where licensed premises represented economic resources as well as markers of social distinction. The outstanding position of

Will book	Total no. of wills	Wills relating to breweries and inns	Percentage
1581-1595	387	10	2.6
1596-1606	121	16	13.2
1607-1619	305	26	8.5
1619-1631	228	10	4.4
1631-1665	172	25	14.5
1665-1699	168	29	17.2
1700-1718	145	22	5.2
1581-1718	1,526	138	9.04

Figure 6: Surviving wills by brewing burghers in the will books from 1581 to 1718.

the town's brewery burghers emerges both from the value of inherited properties and the possessions listed in their inventories. Patterns of pious and charitable bequests shed further light on this group.

Although entry in the official town register was a prerequisite for a will's validity, only 138 brewing burghers feature among the testators recorded between 1581 and 1718. Given that there are no gaps in the records, it appears that written wills must have been the exception. The default option was to accept the intestate succession specified in the municipal statutes, which favoured the claims of natural children, parents and siblings (while providing for the widow either until she remarried or died). Testators appear to have made addition-

al arrangements only when they feared potential inheritance disputes, for example in situations involving children from several marriages (where estates were often divided) or sizeable bequests for religious or charitable purposes. Such assignments of property were as legally binding as actual purchases even though no money changed hands. At the same time, the transaction served to assess the value of both property and movables and is often referred to in the books by the term *kaufweise*.

In around half of all cases, testators transferred breweries to their widows, clearly to keep it within the family and to prevent a division of their estate, a not unlikely scenario under the statutory inheritance laws. Once the widow accepted the will and took over the

brewery, she usually had to settle the claims of any other heirs, i.e. her children or children from a former marriage, to a share of the estate. Customarily, one half was payable in cash and the rest - to prevent immediate financial ruin - in fixed instalments out of the brewery's profit over a number of years. Securing the property in this way also meant securing the eligibility to the council for the testator's descendants and the social status of the family within the town. The second most popular form of testamentary instruction made one of the children the principal beneficiary. Again, mothers and siblings had to be compensated in the same fashion.

The potential risk of failing to leave a will is exemplified by the case of brewery burgher Thomas Kober, publican of the Golden Tree. Upon his death, as specified in the municipal statutes, an inventory was compiled in preparation for the traditional division of the estate. The legacy consisted of the inn, the Haus am Ring on the Untermarkt, three fields and a stone shed. Since Kober had failed to identify an heir, his daughter and two grandsons divided the fields among themselves, whereas the house was sold for 2,100 marks and the profit split among them.²⁹ Given the high prestige of breweries and their associated privileges, such sales were very uncommon and usually the result of economic difficulties.

Apart from securing the economic standing of widows and children, wills also provided for charitable causes. The

homogeneity of the urban elite emerges both from the choice of executors and guardians, drawn exclusively from among other brewing burghers and council members, as well as the donations themselves. After the Reformation, the latter increasingly focused on education and poor relief. Numerous testators bequeathed large sums for destitute students. Ursula Meltzer, for example, widow of the former mayor Elias Meltzer, doubled his scholarship for poor students from 200 to 400 thalers, payable out of the interest yielded by her estate.³⁰ By comparison, the average bequest of twenty-five marks to the municipal hospitals seems more than modest and the same holds for the relatively few documented donations to the parish church of SS Peter and Paul, usually for emergency repairs or new altars.

The wills of the Görlitz brewing burghers - their property, income, household goods and financial bequests - testify to the economic success of an urban elite. The transfer of these economic resources into a consistently high status was achieved through means like personal networks and marriage alliances, while scholarships and poor relief reveal an awareness of their social responsibilities. The cultural practice of charitable bequests cemented the prominent position of brewing burghers within the town's society.

Johannes Hass, himself a brewing burgher, town clerk and mayor, explained the wealth and socio-political standing

of the main families in a concise and perceptive manner: 'The nourishment of burghers and the foundation of cities depends on malting, brewing and retailing in the same manner as nobles rely upon their knighthood'³¹ - yet in Görlitz, this *bürgerliche Nahrung* was restricted to the brewing burghers and council members, i.e. the urban elite.

References

* For great assistance in translating this article I wish to thank Kathrin Muysers.

1. 'Vnd also denselbigen tag [12. Juni 1525] ist Alex Poltze vnd Nickel Werder furher getreten vnd komenn jn mein hause vnd gebeten, jch woldes jnen nicht fur vbel haben, das sie zu mir mit den kompen zum bier kwemenn, sie wolden fromme geste sein. Jr ist vchst jn hundert gewest, vmmb XXI hor, sein aldo gesessen einsteils bisz nachm zuschlieszen. Aber eine halbe stunde noch XXIV hor, bin jch aussm kellir gegangen, ist mir Alex Boltze entkegenkommen und gesaget, her jsz ist feuer do, domit sein alle geste auffgestanden. [...] ist mir Alex Boltze zuhanden gestoßen vnd gesaget, her wie wils nhu werden. Abir esz wurde jme nochgesaget, er solde geredt haben, man solde das feuer gehn lassen, jsz were vff dem rechten wege.' Hass, J. (1870) 'Magister Johannes Hass, Bürgermeister zu Görlitz, Görlitzer Rathsannalen', *Scriptores Rerum Lusaticarum*, N. F. 4 (1870), p.23.

2. The project formed part of a wider comparative study of the towns of Cologne, Dresden, Lyon and Görlitz under the auspices

of SFB [Special Research Area] 537, Project S: 'Institutionelle Ordnungsarrangements öffentlicher Räume in der Frühen Neuzeit [Institutional Arrangements of Public Spaces in the Early Modern Period]', directed by Prof. Dr. Gerd Schwerhoff at the Technische Universität, Dresden.

3. Rau, S. and Schwerhoff, G. (2004) 'Einleitung', in idem (eds.), *Zwischen Gotteshaus und Taverne. Öffentliche Räume in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*. Cologne: Böhlau, pp.11-52. For a broader perspective cf. Tlusty, B. Ann (2001) *Bacchus and Civic Order. The Culture of Drink in Early Modern Germany*, Charlottesville/ Virginia: University Press of Virginia; Kümin, B. and Tlusty B. Ann (eds.) (2002), *The World of the Tavern. Public Houses in Early Modern Europe*, Aldershot: Ashgate; Hirschfelder, Gunther (2003-2004) *Alkoholkonsum am Beginn des Industriezeitalters (1700-1850)*, Cologne: Böhlau; Rau, S. (2004) 'Das Wirtshaus. Zur Konstitution eines öffentlichen Raumes in der Frühen Neuzeit', in C. Emmelius et al. (eds.), *Offen und verborgen. Vorstellungen und Praktiken des Öffentlichen und Privaten in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, Göttingen: Wallstein, pp.211-227.

4. The tax (*Geschoss*) was imposed twice a year: the winter tax (in January) and the summer tax on Saint John the Baptist's day (June 24).

5. Jecht, R. (1927-1934) *Geschichte der Stadt Görlitz, 1. Band, 2. Halbband: Topographie der Stadt Görlitz*. Görlitz: Hofmann & Reiber; Ratsarchiv Görlitz [=RAG], Scultetus' brewing register; RAG Aktenrepertorium II, fol. 282v, Nr. 2, 8, 12, 70.

6. In 1385, the town accounts mention a fee for lending out and transporting the standard-

ised, council-owned brewing pan: Anon. (1905-1910) 'Die ältesten Görlitzer Ratsrechnungen bis 1419', *Codex Diplomaticus Lusatiae Superioris* N. F. 3, 104.

7. Jecht (1927-1934), p.502.

8. Verdenhalven, F. (1998) *Alte Maß- und Währungssysteme aus dem deutschen Sprachgebiet*. Neustadt a. d. A.: Degener, Dreiss, 21; Lauterbach, W.; Löwe, D. (1997) 'Braunahrung gehörte zur Stadtnahrung. Das Brauwesen Freibergs im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert', *Mitteilungen des Freiburger Altertumsvereins* 79, p.100.

9. 'Nullus tabernarius debet ad villas et alia loca districtus Gorl.[icensis] de aliis civitatibus et locis vicinis cerevisiam propinandam adducere [No publican can import beer from other places into the town and villages of the district of Görlitz]': *Regesta Imperii*, Abt. VIII, p.370. The original document has not survived in RAG [the council archive].

10. Lindenau, K. (2007) 'Meltzen, breuen und schencken sein burgerlich narung. Das Görlitzer Brau- und Gastgewerbe in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit', in J. Bahlcke (ed.), *Die Oberlausitz im frühneuzeitlichen Mitteleuropa: Beziehungen - Strukturen - Prozesse*. Forschungen und Quellen zur sächsischen Geschichte. Stuttgart: Steiner, pp.458-478. For research on brewing in neighbouring Saxony and Bohemia cf. Starke, H. (2001) 'Zur Geschichte des sächsischen Brauwesens', *Mitteilungen des Freiburger Altertumsvereins* 87, pp.134-154; Bunke, W. (1935) *Das Brauwesen der Stadt Schweidnitz* Darstellungen und Quellen zur Schlesischen Geschichte 35, Breslau: Trewendt & Granier; Wolf, K.-H. (1995) 'Das Brauen im 16. Jahrhundert im Raum Görlitz und Breslau', in:

Großmann, U. (ed.), *Hausbau in Görlitz, in der Lausitz und in Böhmen* Jahrbuch für Hausforschung 43, Marburg: Jonas, pp.171-8.

11. On the link between inn signs and official 'presence symbols' cf. Kümin, B. (2004) 'Wirtshaus und Gemeinde. Politisches Profil einer kommunalen Grundinstitution im alten Europa', in Rau and Schwerhoff (eds), *Zwischen Gotteshaus und Taverne*, pp.78-84.

12. 'im Sommer auff den abent lenger nicht Biehr geben [sollen] als vmb 1 am gantzen seiger, vnd zu winter zeitten vmb 3 uhr in der nacht, vnd die drüber begriffen, würden gestrafft.' Wrocław University Library, Manuscript Reading Room, *Chronik des Tobias Kober bis 1597*, f. 38r.

13. Jancke, C.O. (1871) 'Die Raths-Ordnung in Görlitz vom Jahre 1489, wie sie Bartholomeus Scultetus in seinem Registro Consulum, ex manu propria Frawenburgii eingetragen', *Neues Lausitzisches Magazin* 48, 229: 'Dieweil man Biergeste hat, sullen die hewser nicht geschlossen werden.'

14. Tlusty, B.A. (2004) "'Privat" oder "öffentlich"? Das Wirtshaus in der deutschen Stadt des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts', in Rau and Schwerhoff (eds.), *Zwischen Gotteshaus und Taverne*, 73. Krug-Richter, B. (2004) 'Das Privathaus als Wirtshaus. Zur Öffentlichkeit des Hauses in Regionen mit Reihebraurecht, in: Rau, S. and Schwerhoff, G. (eds.), *Zwischen Gotteshaus und Taverne*, pp.99-117.

15. RAG, will book 1581-1595, f. 200v-204r; will book 1607-1619, f. 48v-56r.

16. Lemper, E.-H. (1995) 'Vom Brauhof zum Gasthof', in U. Großmann (ed.), *Hausbau in Görlitz, in der Lausitz und in Böhmen. Gaststätten und Kneipen*. Jahrbuch für Hausforschung 43. Marburg: Jonas, 165.

17. For biographical information on Johannes Hass see Czok, K. (2000) 'Chronistik und innerstädtische Bewegungen im 16. Jahrhundert. Zu den Görlitzer Ratsannalen des Johannes Hass', in: P. Johaneck (ed.), *Städtische Geschichtsschreibung im Spätmittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit*. Cologne: Böhlau, pp.291-300.

18. Lindenau, K. (2007) *Brauen und herrschen. Die Görlitzer Braubürger als städtische Elite in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, Leipzig: Universitätsverlag (with an appendix listing all licensed properties).

19. RAG, will book 1607-1619, f. 131r-147r, last will 25 February 1602, inventory 29 December 1611.

20. Jecht, R. (1926) *Geschichte der Stadt Görlitz, 1. Band, 1. Halbband: Allgemeine Geschichte der Stadt Görlitz im Mittelalter*. Görlitz: Hofmann & Reiber, p.77.

21. Behrisch, L. (2000) 'Die Görlitzer Ratskür im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert', *Neues Lausitzisches Magazin* N. F. 3, pp.49-64.

22. Wenzel, P. (1999) 'Der Aufstandsversuch der Görlitzer Tuchmacher 1527', *Görlitzer Magazin* 13, pp.16-25.

23. Johannes Hass relates how a journeyman whom he had asked for help told him: 'eya jr hern, werdet jr nhu vnser hulffe bedorfen' [well, lords, do you now require our help?]. Later Hass added the following: 'Vnd das musz jch auch sagen, als vbel sich der gemeine man erstlich zur wehre geschickt, also menlich haben sie sich hirnoch beweist

do sie die gewalt des feuers gesehn,[...], ... mit dem entschuldigen, das ein itzlicher jm ersten erschrecken zu dem seinen geeilet, vnd dem feuer seinen willen vnd gewalt gelassen.' [as badly the commoners initially contributed to the defence, as valiantly did they act once they realized the force of the fire, ... seeking to excuse (their behaviour), that they all rushed to their own houses, leaving the fire to have its will and violent course]. Hass (1870), pp.24-25.

24. For a recent definition of criteria for 'elite' status see Jeske, R., Maentel, T. and Schulz, A. (1993) 'Einleitung', in L. Gall (ed.), *Stadt und Bürgertum im Übergang von der traditionellen zur modernen Gesellschaft*. Munich: Oldenbourg, pp.245-247.

25. Lindener obtained Görlitz citizenship on 27 February 1535 (free of charge, due to his municipal post) and the license to brew ten 'beers' in 1548 (in return for a payment of 300 marks): RAG, liber actorum 1548ff, fol. 25v-27r.

26. RAG, Scultetus' brewing register, f. 60r.

27. Ibid., f. 69r.

28. Grassmann, A. (2002) 'Sozialer Aufstieg um 1500 in Lübeck', in G. Schulz (ed.), *Sozialer Aufstieg. Funktionseliten im Spätmittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit*. Büdinger Forschungen zur Sozialgeschichte 2000 und 2001 / Deutsche Führungsschichten in der Neuzeit 25. Munich: Oldenbourg, pp.97-111.

29. RAG, will book 1581-1595, f. 202r.

30. RAG, will book 1607-1619, f. 131r-142r.

31. Hass (1870), p.237.