

Property Register, County of Leiningen; Court Records from Lautersheim (Rheinland-Pfalz);
Taxation Records, County of Leiningen; Regulations from Grünstadt (Rheinland-Pfalz) for
Payment of Agrarian Dues

In German, manuscript on paper

Germany, County of Leiningen, 1497-98, with sixteenth-century additions

65 leaves (collation: $i^8 + ii^4 + iii^8$ [6 + 2 interleaved singletons, ff. 13 and 16] + $iv^{16} + v^{13}$ [12 + 1, after fol. 48] + $vi^2 + vii^4$; an unfoliated paper slip interleaved between fols 5-6); modern foliation in pencil, top, outer corner, recto, 1-65; written in one main hand, in black ink, in a German administrative cursive, with sixteenth-century additions by several hands, and addenda in an eighteenth-century hand on ff. 42v and 61v-63r; no ruling or rubrication, four watermarks are present in the paper stock: three variants on the bull's head with eyes, nostrils, and a letter T above a shaft extending upwards from a circle on the bull's face ([i] exact match for Piccard-Online no. 73240 (attested in Schöllbromm, 1496); [ii] exact match for Piccard-Online no. 73305 (attested in the county of Eberstein, 1492); [iii] very similar, but not identical, to Piccard-Online nos. 73384/85 (both attested in Freiburg, 1498)); and a letter P, consisting in two lines with divided shaft, and a four-leaf clover above a shaft (in important respects similar, with identical measurements, but not identical to Piccard-Online no. 111127 (attested in Soest, 1501)); this final watermark, one of a group with similar features all dating to the first decade of the sixteenth century, present upon a single bifolium (ff. 27-32) that was not part of the earliest stage of this book's production, and has been subsequently interleaved to bear later additions. Unbound; the quires stitched together directly, and not tacketed onto cords for binding; tiny parchment strips to strengthen sewing, now mostly detached, cut from a re-used German charter; remnants of a brown paper strip glued along the length of the spine; paper stock now foxed and badly damaged by the effects of dirt, damp, and age; damage to the first leaf of the second quire (f. 9), the presence of a heading on f. 9r, and the absence of any heading on f. 1r, which starts in the middle of a register, indicates that the first quire has been misbound. ff. 13v, 16v, 27v, 42r and 51v are blank (with the exception of one later tally on 51v, similar to those found on f. 60v). Dimensions paper 225 x 160 mm.; written space (of original entries) variable, commonly c. 160 x 110.

An administrative book—property register, tax records, and court records—from the years 1497-98, with sixteenth-century additions, pertaining to villages near Worms in the county of Leiningen, now in the Rhineland-Palatinate. The document witnesses the degree to which the practice of written record-keeping became normative at the lowest levels in late medieval German society. It enables a view onto a world treated even now by scholarship in broad-brush terms that neglect the detailed insight into the lives of real, historically-attestable individuals.

PROVENANCE

1. The original owner of this manuscript remains unknown; possibly located in the village of Lautersheim (see II below), the contents pertain to four villages (Ebertsheim, Lautersheim, Mertesheim, Quirnheim) and one hamlet (Boßweiler), all contained within an area of about six square kilometres within the medieval county of Leiningen, now in the Rhineland-Palatinate. The compiler of this document, who may well have been a comital or local civic official, includes notes in the first person (e.g. ff. 1r-v), which indicate his residence within this area.

2. The manuscript was still in the same region in the year 1748, when it was used as the basis for a land survey that formed part of a court case, of nature unknown (see III below).

3. European Private Collection.

TEXT

I.

ff. 1-41v, 43-49v, 52-61r, Register of immovable property and dues payable, County of Leiningen;

A land register, recording properties held and dues payable by a series of named individuals, organized under headings for four, possibly five adjacent villages in the medieval county of Leiningen: Ebertsheim (f. 9r; the first quire is misbound, and a heading for Lautersheim may have been lost), Quirnheim (f. 25r), Boßweiler (f. 42r) and Mertesheim (f. 43r), about twenty kilometres west-south-west of Worms, on the north bank of the river Eis, between the towns of Eisenberg to the west, and Grünstadt to the east. The identity of the compiler is not directly revealed, with the listing of dues being an attempt to record all dues payable, not just those payable to one individual or institution; we may presume that the official responsible was in some way associated with the administration of the county of Leiningen.

II.

ff. 50-51v, Court Records from Lautersheim, 1498;

(1) [50] heading, "Item Im lair m cccc xcviij hait daz gericht zu luttersheyn gericht gehailtten zu luttersheyn in schnuren huße deß schultteyßen uff diß zyt uff mandag nach santh mairtthinß dag" (2) [50v] "In jair xcviij uff santh barbaren abent hait man gericht gehailtten hye zu luttersheyn" (3) [51r] "Item anno xcviij uff mandag vor santh thomans dag hait man gericht gehailtten";

A set of records of legal cases involving property disputes heard by the court in the village of Lautersheim. The first set of entries pertains to a court held by the village sheriff (*Schultbeiß*), Schnur (whose properties are listed in the main register on ff. 3v-4r), on 12 November 1498. The second set pertains to a court held "here" in Lautersheim on 3 December 1498, and the third to a court held on 18 December of that year. These entries are recorded on a bifolium that has been bound in to the property register, but using paper (watermark [iii] above, in physical description) also used in what is now the seventh quire of the register.

III.

ff. 42v, 61v-63r, 64v, Survey notes (18th c.)

On ff. 61v-63r, and in the lower margin of f. 64v, are a series of survey notes in an eighteenth-century hand, quantifying the extent of the properties listed in the fifteenth-century register. A note in the same hand on f. 42v attests that the book was brought before a court for the four villages of Ebertsheim, Lautersheim, Quirnheim and Mertesheim in the year 1748 (corrected from 1648, by the same hand).

IV.

ff. 63v-64r, Tax register for property in the county of Leiningen, 1497;

heading, "Diß huß achttung ist geschen jm xcviij jare";

A list of houses in the villages of Ebertsheim, Quirnheim, Lautersheim, Boßweiler and Mertesheim, with their owners, and their taxes payable.

V.

f. 64v, Regulations for duties payable on agrarian land, according to the law operative in Grünstadt;

heading, "Diß ist dye oirdenung vnd anderung der beden zu grinstat uff moirgen," incipit, "Item han wir dye eygen morgen vnd flecken gacht nach dem woil gelegen ist[.] Item hait eyner vergult gutter daz abloisung wer daz git hailbe bede[.] Item waiß ewig ist vnd nit abloisung daz schlet man gancz ab mit uff dye beßerung dy sail man verbeden vnd waz dan nit beßerung hait vnd in dye bede reycht das bedet man j d. adde ij. uff daz iß nit uß der bede kome sonder jn der beden blybe..."

A statement of the regulations for the payment of duties (*beden*) on fields (*moirgen*) current for the town of Grünstadt, the nearest larger settlement to the villages with which the earlier sections of this book are concerned.

This is a small-format archival document, in many respects (format, construction, state of preservation, scripts, type of content) entirely typical of its kind. The interest lies in the documentary evidence which it provides for the nature of village life around the turn of the fifteenth century: the assessment of houses in and land held around the villages for taxes and dues; the shrieval court in the larger village in the locality administering justice and settling disputes at the local level, amongst farmers and craftsmen; and the careful copying of the agrarian law pertinent in the main administrative centre of the district, for later reference and application. The document is an excellent witness of the degree to which the practice of written record-keeping following closely-applied, written regulations had become normative at the very lowest levels in late medieval German society. It enables a view onto a world obscured in earlier centuries, treated even now by scholarship in broad-brush terms that neglect the detailed insight into the lives of real, historically-attestable individuals which this manuscript makes visible.

LITERATURE

Unpublished, but for comparisons see:

Richter, Georg. *Lagerbücher- oder Urbarlehre*, Stuttgart, 1979.

Vogeler, Georg. "Spätmittelalterliche Steuerbücher deutscher Territorien," *Archiv für Diplomatik* 49 (2003), 165-295 and 50 (2004), 57-204.

Vogeler, Georg. "Financial and Tax Reports," in Albrecht Classen, ed., *Handbook of Medieval Studies. Terms—Methods—Trends*, 3 vols., Berlin and New York, 2010, esp. pp. 1775-84.

ONLINE RESOURCES

The counts and county of Leiningen (with helpful map)

[http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leiningen_\(Adelsgeschlecht\)](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leiningen_(Adelsgeschlecht))

Archives of the County of Leiningen

(Landesarchiv Speyer, Bestände C 26 – C 29)

<http://www.archivdatenbank.lha-rlp.de/>

Christian Keitel, *Steuerbücher und Steuerlisten*

(guide to taxation records in the late medieval German southwest)

<http://www.uni-tuebingen.de/ifgl/veroeff/digital/serquell/steuerbuch.htm>

R. Johanna Regnath, *Zins- und Heischbücher*

(guide to tithe records in the late medieval German southwest)

<http://www.uni-tuebingen.de/ifgl/veroeff/digital/serquell/zinsbuch.htm>

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