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WILLIBALD PIRCKHEIMER AND THE NUERNBERG CITY COUNCIL.

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WILLIBALD PIRCKHEIMER AND THE
NUERNBERG CITY COUNCIL

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

by

Jackson Joseph Spielvogel, B.A., M.A.

* * * * * * *

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1967

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INTRODUCTION

The history of German humanism in the first two decades of the sixteenth century has usually been dominated by the attempt of historians to discuss the relationship of this movement to religious reform and the beginnings of the Reformation. Yet, like their Italian counterparts, German humanists, as a result of their primary occupations as teachers and secretaries to princes and cities, were closely involved in the political and social problems of their day.

Willibald Pirckheimer (1470-1530) was such a humanist. He achieved renown because of his humanistic activities, but he also spent a considerable part of his life as a city councilor, intimately involved in the day-to-day business of governing the politically significant city of Nuremberg. Yet, most of the literature on Pirckheimer concerns primarily his work as a humanist, his religious ideas, and position in the Reformation.

This dissertation attempts to investigate the other aspect of his life through an examination of the city documents and Pirckheimer's papers, both published and unpublished. In this way, his activity for and rela-
tionship to the Nuernberg city council can be determined. It is hoped that such a study also will shed light on some of the political and social activities of the German humanists in general, thereby increasing our understanding of the many facets of humanism.
CHAPTER ONE
THE NUERNBERG CITY GOVERNMENT, THE PIROKHEIMER FAMILY, AND WILLIBALD'S EARLY DEVELOPMENT

Two of Willibald Pirckheimer's contemporaries, Martin Luther and Johannes Cochlaeus, although diametrically opposed on the burning issues over the Church, were agreed on Nuernberg's position in Germany and Europe in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Luther described Nuernberg as "the ear and eye of Germany," while Cochlaeus, in his Brevis Germanie Descriptio of 1512, said Nuernberg "appears not only as the center of Germany but of all Europe."

By the end of the fifteenth century, Nuernberg not only was highly prosperous, but it also possessed a well-developed governmental organization and a highly sophisticated social structure. This governmental organization and social structure, the role of the Pirckheimer family in this social structure, and Willibald's early development must be examined in order to understand fully the relationship of Willibald Pirckheimer to the city council. Nuernberg's government and the way in which it functioned in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth cen-
turies were recorded for posterity by the Nuernberg humanist, Christoph Scheurl, in a letter to Johann Staupitz, Luther's friend and vicar-general of the Augustinian order. As a legal consultant for the city, Scheurl was in an excellent position to not only portray the governmental structure, but also to reveal candidly the way in which the ruling class of patricians effectively controlled that structure.¹

When Willibald Pirckheimer became a city councilor in 1496, Nuernberg's government was administered by two councils, a large council of genannte and a small council (the "erber rat," as it is usually referred to in city documents). The large council of genannte consisted of an uncertain and generally fluctuating number (usually more than 200), whose membership was not determined popularly but by the small council. Those members who were genannte, Scheurl related, were persons who obtained their living "by honorable trades" and not "by despised crafts," except "some few craftsmen who have obtained a respectable position and bring more tangible good than others to the

¹"Christoph Scheurls Epistel über die Verfassung der Reichsstadt Nürnberg. 1516," Die Chroniken der deutschen Städte. Nürnberg, V (Leipzig, 1874), 751-804. Although the original was written in Latin, the German translation (which was not done by Scheurl) is valuable because it describes the offices of the council in their contemporary German names. The Latin text is in Johann Christoph von Wagenseil, De civitate Noribergensi commentatio (Altdorf, 1697), pp. 191-201.
city as a whole by their handwork. "2 The social distinctions based on occupation are readily apparent here. The power of the large council in the administration of the city was not great. Even though its seal was highly valued and it participated in the election of the small council, 3 its opinion and vote were taken only when taxes were levied, war was considered, and the "subjects" were warned of coming dangers. In summary, "their office consists mostly of being present to ratify the council's decisions and to support industriously and enforce uniformly the council's laws." 4

Of greater authority than the large council and at the head of the administrative system stood the small council of forty-two members. Eight members of the forty-two were representatives of the craft guilds, 5 who had virtually no power in the affairs of the council. They had the freedom of coming to the council and casting a vote,

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2 Scheurl, p. 787.
3 See below, p. 10.
4 Scheurl, pp. 787-788.
5 This addition had its origins in the mid-fourteenth century and was probably established as a concession to the guilds after the abortive rebellion against the patrician city council in 1348. After the failure of the craft workers, the patricians' domination of the city council was no longer challenged. See Gerhard Pfeiffer, "Nürnberg's Selbstverwaltung 1256-1956," Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte der Stadt Nürnberg, XLVII (1958), 6. (Hereinafter, this journal is cited as: MVGN.)
or of remaining home. They administered no offices and generally acquiesced in whatever the other councilmen decided.  

Of the remaining thirty-four members of the small council, all of whom were patricians, eight were members known as the alte genannte. Scheurl compared the alte genannte to veteran soldiers who have been freed of the burden of military service. They held no particular office, and consequently, could not attain the higher offices of junior and senior burgomasters, although occasionally some were made junior burgomasters. The alte genannte were not overburdened with exacting duties but, as in the case of Pirckheimer, did perform diplomatic and other tasks. They could vote or not in the council sessions, however it pleased them. Three of their number were eligible as electors for the small council.

The remaining twenty-six members of the small council were burgomasters. Of the twenty-six burgomasters,

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6 Scheurl, p. 796.

7 The alte genannte appeared in the small council in the fourteenth century, probably to act as a counterpoise for the eight craftsmen added after the abortive revolution of 1348. See Karl Hegel, "Einleitung: zur Geschichte und Verfassung der Stadt," Die Chroniken der fränkischen Städte. Nürnberg, I (Leipzig, 1862), pp. xxv-xxvi.

8 See below, p. 10. On the alte genannte, see Scheurl, p. 795.
thirteen were called schöffnen, and were responsible for the
verdicts in cases heard in civil court; the remaining
thirteen were called burgomasters. However, the twenty-
six burgomasters were also divided into thirteen senior and
thirteen junior burgomasters. The real power did not rest
there; for, from the group of thirteen senior burgomasters
were chosen seven men who comprised a select committee
known as the alte herren. From these seven were selected
three captains general (oberste hauptmänner) and from
these three, two treasurers known as losunger after the
city's chief tax, the losung. Finally, the senior losunger,
distinguished by seniority in office, was considered the
formal chief of the council and first man in the city.10

These gradations were not merely titular but were
actually gradations of powers, with power heavily concen-
trated toward the top. Pairs of the twenty-six burgomas-
ters, a senior and a junior working together in alterna-
tion, conducted business for periods of four weeks each.
The two governing burgomasters were apparently extremely

9 Ibid., pp. 786, 796. The schöffnen were originally
jurors who sat in the court of the schultheiss, who was an
imperial appointee with important functions as judge and
executive. As the power of the imperial officials declined
in the thirteenth century, the thirteen schöffnen were even-
tually joined with the original thirteen consuls to form
the small council by the beginning of the fourteenth cen-
tury. See Ernst Pitz, Die Entstehung der Ratskonsulats-
44-58.

10 Scheurl, pp. 786-787.
busy during their four-week terms, as Scheurl stated:

They sleep little, for they have to spend most of their time in their office or on the streets. They must hear complaints, settle arguments, urge debtors to pay, and make peace between litigating parties. The senior [governing] burgomaster must receive ambassadors and emissaries,...open all official letters and read them the moment they arrive, day or night, whatever the hour. He convenes the council,...informs its members of the current business, puts the question and counts the votes, orders the decisions of the council put in writing, and adjourns the session. Also when the alte herren meet separately on important matters, as they often do, he must sit with them. Only he may put questions in council and bring matters up for discussion. The junior [governing] burgomaster, while the council is in session, must openly circulate in the town hall, must receive and answer letters and petitions, and must resolve bad dissensions and quarrels.11

The governing burgomasters thus led the council and the city and represented the state to the outside world, but they did not hold the ultimate power.

The real power of the government rested in the hands of the seven alte herren. Together with the captains general and losunger, who were chosen from their own ranks, they effectively ruled the city. These seven handled all secret affairs of state and also discussed all serious matters before they ever came before the other councilmen. Thus, "the highest authority is in them, and the others in comparison can do or know very little."12 The three

11 Ibid., pp. 790-791.
12 Ibid., pp. 794-795.
captains general, who came from their ranks, were the leaders of the city's military forces, the custodians of the keys to the imperial regalia and city gates, and were also keepers of the city's seals.\(^{13}\) The losunger exercised the highest power and dignity, for to them were entrusted the keys to the city's treasury. They were responsible for all public monies received or spent, and all documents issued from the civil court had to bear their seal. In short, "no secret in the whole government is so great that it could be kept or hidden from them."\(^{14}\)

Membership in the small council, with the exception of the eight representatives of the craft guilds, who had little power anyway, was limited by tradition to a select circle of patrician families (the Geschlechter, as Scheurl called them), forty-three in number in 1521.\(^{15}\) But the social distinctions did not stop here, for there were patricians who could rise no higher than the position of senior burgomaster. The number of families eligible for the alte herren was very small, and smaller still was the number of families to whom the positions of captains general and losunger were open. These distinctions were based, nevertheless, not on laws but were generally ob-

\(^{13}\) Ibd., p. 794.
\(^{14}\) Ibid.
\(^{15}\) See below, p. 12.
served on the basis of tradition.\textsuperscript{16}

Although the members of the small council (except the \textit{alte genannte} were formally elected, the election process itself was carefully calculated to maintain the oligarchical structure. The election of the new members took place in the springtime and was delegated to a group of five electors, two of whom were selected by the large council from the seven \textit{alte herren}, or senior burgomasters, and three of whom were chosen by the small council from three of its own number, limited to the \textit{alte genannte}. As might be expected from its composition, this electoral commission regularly re-elected those already seated in the council. In fact, Scheurl said, "It is considered a great disgrace when anyone is removed from the council against his will."\textsuperscript{17}

The newly elected council then proceeded to name the new \textit{alte genannte}, in case of vacancies by death, and to appoint people to all the municipal offices.\textsuperscript{18} The small council was also responsible for filling any vacancies within the positions of seven \textit{alte herren}, captains general, and \textit{losunger}.\textsuperscript{19}

Nuernberg's system of government, as seen, was care-

\textsuperscript{16}Scheurl, pp. 791-792.
\textsuperscript{17}Ibid., pp. 788-789.
\textsuperscript{18}Ibid., pp. 789-790.
\textsuperscript{19}Ibid., pp. 792-793.
fully arranged in such a way that power resided in the hands of a select number of aristocratic families. These were the patricians, who must now be examined in order to fully understand how Nuernberg was ruled.

The origin of the Nuernberg patriciate is still a matter of much scholarly controversy. One position maintains that the early Nuernberg patricians were drawn initially from the ministeriales, the semi-noble class of imperial officials. They accumulated their wealth originally from ground rents and then turned to trade in addition. Another position holds that the early patricians were small merchants who became patricians through accumulation of wealth in their commercial activities and then invested this wealth in landed estates. But whatever the differences, most scholars involved are able to agree on the general characteristics which the patriciate exhibited in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The position which the patriciate had in Nuernberg was primarily based on economic power, which had been translated over the centuries socially into group

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20 A good summary of the entire controversy is in Julie Meyer, "Die Entstehung des Patriziats in Nuernberg," MVGN, XXVII (1928), 1-96. For an attempt to solve the problem by a thorough examination of individual families, see Gerhard Hirschmann, "Die Familie Muffel im Mittelalter. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Nürnberger Patriziats, seiner Entstehung und seines Besitzes," MVGN, XLI (1950), 257-392.
privileges, and politically into effective domination of the city council. Whatever the origins of their wealth, at this time the patricians were engaged in trade or industry, usually on an international scale that resulted in substantial wealth.  

The distinguishing external sign of membership in the patriciate was Ratsfähigkeit, that is, that only patricians were eligible for the positions of the twenty-six burgomasters in the small council. This was not determined by law, but by custom and tradition. Thus, eligibility for high government positions was primarily through inheritance, although custom apparently was flexible enough to allow new families to be occasionally co-opted into the patriciate. But even here, the exclusiveness of the Nuernberg patriciate was demonstrated in that patricians from other cities were readily co-opted after having just settled in the city, while it might take Nuernberg families, regardless of their wealth, generations to qualify.  

This exclusiveness was perpetuated by carefully arranged marriages, which closely linked together families and

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22 Ibid., pp. 36-37.
family fortunes,\(^2^3\) and also by the final closing of the ranks which occurred in 1521. In that year, the alte herren issued a decree which listed those families who were entitled to official invitations to dances in the city hall. This decree effectively limited the membership of the patriciate to forty-three families.\(^2^4\)

When one considers the above, it is understandable that the patrician class tended to think of itself as a hereditary aristocracy. This is reflected in its attempt to attain some of the privileges of the landed nobility. By the sixteenth century, many patrician families held landed fiefs, including the right of inheritance and grants of penal jurisdiction.\(^2^5\) They also purchased landed estates and attached conditions of entail and even primogeniture to the disposition of inheritable property.\(^2^6\) They were less successful in acquiring eligibility to participate in noble tournaments as well as ecclesiastic-

\(^2^3\)See, for example, the family tree of the Tuchers in Ludwig Grote, *Die Tucher* (Munich, 1961), following p. 88, as well as that of the Pirckheimer family in Arnold Reimann, *Die Älteren Pirckheimer: Geschichte eines Nürnberger Patriziersgeschlechtes im Zeitalter des Frühhumanismus (bis 1501)* (Leipzig, 1944), following p. 260.

\(^2^4\)The decree is printed in Emil Reicke, *Geschichte der Reichsstadt Nürnberg* (Nürnberg, 1896), p. 103.

\(^2^5\)Meyer, pp. 41-42.

\(^2^6\)Ibid., pp. 54-55.
tical benefices. In both instances, however, they created substitutes. Unable to take part in the chivalric competi-
tions of the nobles, they simply established their own.
In addition, individually they engaged in military pur-
suits, including service as knights in the emperor's army.27 Instead of obtaining ecclesiastical benefices,
the city council, through its control of the city churches
and monasteries, saw to it that the children of patricians
received important church positions.28 These attempts at
acquiring the privileges of the feudal nobility in the
sixteenth century led logically to the patents of nobility
which the Nuernberg patrician families received in the
seventeenth century.

The ultimate justification and acceptance of the
patricians' domination of Nuernberg lay in their proven
capacity to govern well. When the citizens of Nuernberg
and even Europeans in general were praising Nuernberg,
they were invariably lauding the accomplishments of its
governors. Late in the sixteenth century, an English
merchant and amateur historian, William Smith, described

27Gerhard Pfeiffer, "Nürnberger Patriziat und
fränkische Reichsritterschaft," Norica. Beiträge zur Nürn-
berger Geschichte (Nuernberg, 1961), p. 40. Pirckheimer,
for example, at eighteen wished to join the army of Emperor
Maximilian against the French. See below, p. 19.

28Meyer, pp. 46-49.
it well:

This city is governed by a prudent and sage counsell, of the gentility aforesaid, named in Latin Patricii...Through whose politik & wyse goverment, the people are kept in quyetnes, dew aw & obaysance. For I think there is not a cittie in the world, where the people are more civill.29

In his autobiography, Willibald Pirckheimer related that the "illustrious and ancient" Pirckheimer family possessed not only great wealth and many honors, but was preeminent among the Nuernberg patrician families for its learning.30 Concerning the origins of his family, Pirck-


30 This autobiography, Cl. VViri, D. Billibaldi Pirckheymheri, Senatoris quondam Nurenbergensis, Vita, was found in the British Museum by Karl Rück, which he edited and published as an appendix in Willibald Pirckheimers Schweizer-krieg nach Pirckheimers Autographum im Britischen Museum (Munich, 1895), pp. 137-152. (Citation here, p. 139; hereinafter, this work is cited as Rück, Vita.) There is also an edition in Marianne Beyer-Fröhlich (ed.), Aus dem Zeitalter des Humanismus und der Reformation (Leipzig, 1931), pp. 41-56. This autobiography was the chief source for the early history of the Pirckheimer family that was contained in the first biography of Pirckheimer, namely, in the introduction to Hans III Imhoff's collection of his great grandfather's German writings, Theatrum Virtutis et Honoris; oder Tugend Büchlein (Nuernberg, 1606). Imhoff's account became the basis for all discussions of the Pirckheimer family until the work of Arnold Reimann. The first results of Reimann's extensive archival research were published in outline form in Pirckheimer-Studien I. und II. Buch (Berlin, 1900). The end result of his further research was his Die Älteren Pirckheimer, edited for publication after his death by Hans Ruprich.
heimer told nothing, and to this day, the origin of the family has remained rather obscure. It has been suggested that it stemmed either from Lauingen on the Danube in Bavarian Swabia or from Birkach by Langenzenn in central Franconia. Whatever its origins, the first written mention of the Pirckheimer family is that of Hans in 1359. The basis of the family wealth was trade, since there is evidence of Pirckheimer representatives in the Fondaco dei Tedeschi in Venice already in the fourteenth century. It was this wealth that opened the doors to membership in the small council in 1386 with the admission of Hans' son of the same name. In this way, the Pirckheimer family became one of the ruling patrician families. Due to its relatively late entry into the city council, it belonged not to the "first old families," dating from the thirteenth century, but to the "second families admitted to the oldest ones." Hans Pirckheimer served the council (with the exceptions of 1389 and 1395) till 1400, holding also the position of Viertelmeister, probably on the Weinmarkt, which Willibald later also held.

The next family member of any great importance was Hans (ca. 1415-1492), Willibald's grandfather. After pur-

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32 Ibid., pp. 29, 35-36.
33 Reicke, p. 103.
suing humanistic and juristic studies in Italy, he returned to Nuernberg and entered the city council in 1453. He served the city chiefly as a diplomat, but withdrew from the city council in 1477 over differences of opinion with some of its members. Hans and his brother Thomas were greatly interested in the new learning, and both might be placed among the ranks of the early German humanists.  

Hans' son, Johann (ca. 1440-1501), the father of Willibald, followed family tradition and went to Italy to study. In 1465 he received at Padua his doctorate in both laws. Since he was disqualified for membership in the city council because he held a doctor's degree, he entered the service of the Bishop of Eichstätt as a legal counselor. After 1475 he was in the service of Duke Albrecht of Bavaria and Duke Sigismund of Tyrol. After his wife's death in 1488, he returned to Nuernberg, where he dedicated himself to the management of the family estate and served the city council as a legal adviser. He was very active in

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35 This provision disqualifying a patrician's son holding a doctor's degree from council membership is mentioned by Scheurl, p. 792. Although Scheurl doesn't mention the reasons for this, it has been conjectured (Meyer, pp. 57-58) that it arose from the fear that the hereditary nature of the patriciate's power might be challenged by a new "aristocracy of officialdom" based on the acquisition of knowledge.
the humanistic circles of Nuernberg and was one of the leading organizers of the "poet's school."36

His family was a great source of pride to Willibald.37 But it has greater significance than simply being a source of pride, for Willibald was greatly indebted to his forbears. There is no doubt that his ancestors' humanistic proclivities gave direction to his own humanistic studies. But more important is that his career in city government paralleled, to a remarkable extent, that of his grandfather. Willibald was greatly influenced by his ancestors' service to the "Republic," and his father reinforced that ideal by urging him, at a crucial point in his life, to follow the family tradition and enter the city council.

Willibald Pirckheimer was born on December 5, 1470, in Eichstätt, where his father was serving as a legal adviser to the bishop. His early development was almost entirely outside Nuernberg and he received his first educa-

36 Reimann, pp. 120-159. On the "poet's school," see below, chapter 4.

37 Not only in his autobiography, but in his dedication to his sister Charitas of his translation of one of Plutarch's writings, he gives ample evidence of this pride. See Emil Reicke (ed.), Willibald Pirckheimers Briefwechsel, II (Munich, 1956), ep. 243, p. 232. (Hereinafter cited as Br., with the volume, letter, and page numbers following.)
When he was old enough to ride a horse his father took him along on his diplomatic missions on behalf of Duke Albrecht of Bavaria and Duke Sigismund of Tyrol. In this way, Willibald was able to see first hand outside of Bavaria, the Tyrol, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Italy. All the while, his father continued to instruct him in literature as well as music and musical instruments.

At the age of sixteen, he was sent to the court of his godfather, Wilhelm II von Reichenau, Bishop of Eichstätt. There he was trained in the courtly and military practices of his age. In his autobiography, Pirckheimer recounted without hesitation that he soon excelled in all things. He learned to handle all kinds of arms so well that he was skilled in both the infantry and cavalry. He surpassed all his comrades in wrestling, throwing, and running; indeed, he was such a good jumper that he could easily spring over the highest horses. In numerous small expeditions for the bishop, he learned to overcome dangers and proved himself to be a versatile and disciplined warrior.

Pirckheimer became so engrossed in this training that he wanted to pursue a military career by joining

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38 The primary source for Pirckheimer's early development, which is largely followed here, is his autobiography, Rück, Vita, pp. 139-143. In this work, Pirckheimer speaks of himself in the third person.
Emperor Maximilian's expedition against France in the Netherlands. But his father, with arguments for the utility of learning, persuaded him not to follow a military career but to proceed to Italy to study law. He, therefore, following family tradition, went to the University of Padua, where he studied law from 1488 to 1491. But he also concentrated on the studia humanitatis, "...to which his nature was more inclined." Under the instruction of a Greek named Creticus (Laurentius Camerar), he also accomplished the mastery of Greek. But his father objected that, although the humanistic studies might be an ornament to man, law was more useful. Consequently, Pirckheimer transferred in 1491 to Pavia for four years to continue the study of law.

Pavia was the university of Duke Ludovico (il Moro) Sforza of Milan, with whose court Willibald's father had had good connections. In fact, Johann had already introduced his son into the society there on his diplomatic missions. Pirckheimer pursued the study of law there, but also became deeply involved with members of the Sforza court. He formed a friendship with Giovanni Galeazzo di San Severino, son-in-law of the Duke and patron of Leonardo da Vinci. It appears that Pirckheimer was much

39 See below, p. 36, for his further involvement with Pirckheimer.
more at home with the Italians than with his fellow Germans at Pavia, for his knowledge of the humanities and his musical skill endeared him to the Italians. His continuing interest in political and military affairs is evinced in a letter written on November 23, 1494, to his father, giving him a picture of the intrigues of Ludovico Sforza and the progress of King Charles VIII of France in Italy. In the summer of the following year, 1495, his father, who had become increasingly burdened with the administration of the family estate since the death of his father in 1492, now called him back to Nuernberg.

Even though he returned to Nuernberg, Pirckheimer intended to return to Pavia to obtain his doctor's degree and then enter the service of Emperor Maximilian. Again, his father intervened and pointed out the many disadvantages of an imperial career. Since he could expect an ample family inheritance, his father urged that,

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41 Emil Reicke estimated Pirckheimer's wealth at his death to be over 18,000 gulden. Since he and his father were no longer active as men of trade, his wealth was based on investments of various kinds. For example, as owner of sixty houses in Nuernberg, he received yearly over 500 gulden rent. Since Christoph Scheurl, a legal adviser to the city council, received 200 gulden yearly as a salary and considered this to be excellent, one can see that Pirckheimer was indeed a rich man. See Emil Reicke, Willibald Pirckheimer, Leben, Familie und Persönlichkeit (Jena, 1930), p. 7.
following the customary way, he should marry and become a member of the ruling city council. His marriage, then, to Crescentia Rieter, of a patrician family, on October 3, 1495, was an act of submission to his father's will. This marriage made possible his election to the city council the following spring. On April 6, 1496, he began his city career as a junior burgomaster of the small council.

Biographers of Pirckheimer have always rightfully emphasized the impact of his Italian experience upon his later scholarly, religious, and ideological attitudes, as well as upon his personal attitude and form of life. But it is also important to notice the impact of his diplomatic and military training with his father and at the court of the Bishop of Eichstätt upon his later life. Only his father's strenuous efforts kept him from pursuing an independent career along these lines. It is thus particularly fitting to observe that it is precisely in these areas in which he distinguished himself in his service for Nuernberg.

42 Marriage (or widowerhood) was a prerequisite for entrance into the city council. Pirckheimer was not altogether happy with his family-arranged marriage to a Nuernberg patrician's daughter, primarily because of his romantic attachment to an Italian girl, Bernardina, while he was at Pavia. She wrote a letter to him, dated September 14, 1495, in which she expressed her love for him. See Br. I, ep. 4, pp. 26-27.

43 Staatsarchiv, Nuernberg. Ratsverlässe, No. 330, fol. 1r. Aemterbüchlein, No. 19.
CHAPTER TWO

THE GERMAN XENOPHON: MILITARY SERVICE FOR NUERNBERG

Willibald Pirckheimer's early background and training had prepared him well for a career in the Nuernberg city council. His knowledge of Roman law and his oratorical abilities induced the city council to use him initially as a diplomat. In his autobiography, Pirckheimer stated:

...he began to handle his civic duties with such diligence and dexterity that in the first year [1499] he was sent as a legate by Nuernberg to various princes, which was an honor previously accorded to no one.¹

But Pirckheimer's first major commission came primarily as a result of his training in the military arts at the court of the Bishop of Eichstätt. This occurred in 1499, when the city council appointed him as a military leader.

In that year war broke out between the Habsburg Emperor Maximilian and the Swiss Confederation, primarily over disputed territories. Maximilian's attempts to enroll the imperial estates in his war against the Swiss were largely ineffective. He thus had to rely primarily on his

¹Rück, Vita, p. 143.

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patrimonial lands and the Swabian League. In addition, he looked for support from other imperial cities such as Nuernberg, which was not then a member of the League. Nuernberg was not anxious to enter the war, being especially fearful of the consequences for her merchants. The city, therefore, attempted to play a mediating role, but was largely unsuccessful. Maximilian valued highly the help of this most powerful south German imperial city, especially because of the example that it would set for others. The Nuernberg city council, under great pressure, submitted on April 13, 1499, and agreed to send help to Maximilian against the Swiss. Willibald Pirckheimer was named leader of the Nuernberg contingent, which consisted of 300

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2Staatsarchiv, Nuernberg. Briefbuch, No. 45, fol. 3v, 6. One of the primary sources for this Swiss War is Pirckheimer's own history of it, Bellum Suitense sive Helvetiwm, first published in a collection of Pirckheimer's works edited by Konrad Rittershausen and Melchior Goldast, Opera politica, historica, philologica et epistolica (Frankfort, 1610), pp. 63-92 (Hereinafter cited as Goldast, ed., Opera). There is a critical edition in Karl Rück (ed.), Wilibald Pirckheimers Schweizerkrieg.... There is also a German translation in Ernst Münch, Wilibald Pirckheimers Schweizerkrieg und Ehrenhandel mit seinen Feinden zu Nürnberg (Basel, 1826), pp. 72-206. Pirckheimer's work, although of value, is not very accurate in numbers. Dates are missing, and there is no precision in locations. For a critical analysis, though weak in interpretation, of Pirckheimer's work as an historian, see Otto Markwart, Willibald Pirckheimer als Geschichtsschreiber (Zürich, 1886). On Nuernberg's role in the Swiss War, see Emil Reicke, "Willibald Pirckheimer und die Reichsstadt Nürnberg im Schwabenkrieg," Jahrbuch für Schweizerische Geschichte, XLV (1920), 133-189. For a general picture of the war, see Heinrich Ulmann, Kaiser Maximilian I (Stuttgart, 1884-1891), I, 649-803.
infantry, 32 cavalry, and 6 wagons of supplies.\textsuperscript{3} Pirckheimer indicated in his autobiography that he had neither thought about this position nor sought after it, but had consented to the command willingly, despite the attempt of his friends to dissuade him from accepting it.\textsuperscript{4} Considering his earlier desire to pursue a military career, the possibility of military command probably occupied much of Pirckheimer's thinking before the appointment actually came.

Pirckheimer's mission was conceived by the city council to be diplomatic as much as it was military. This is evident from the instructions he received from the city council before departing for battle. According to these, he was supposed to protect carefully the interests of the city once he had joined forces with the emperor. If, for example, the emperor should request Nuernberg to send

\textsuperscript{3}Ratsverlässe, No. 370, fol. 10r. The decision of the city council to aid Maximilian was repeated on April 20, although this time it mentioned a combined total of 300 men, infantry and cavalry. Pirckheimer, in his Bellum Suitense, mentioned 400 infantry, a wing of 60 cavalry, and 8 wagons. See Goldast, ed., Opera, p. 81. Pirckheimer's raising of the numbers was probably deliberate to make his position more impressive. A Hans von Weichsdorf was also made a leader of that contingent. Ratsverlässe, No. 370, fol. 19r; Ratsbuch, No. 7, fol. 5v. Hans von Weichsdorf had previously served the city council and was probably added because of his extensive military experience. Pirckheimer, nevertheless, remained the chief commander. Ratsverlässe, No. 370, fol. 28v.

\textsuperscript{4}Rück, \textit{Vita}, p. 143.
additional troops, Pirckheimer was to remind him of Nuernberg's current struggles with two of its perennial enemies, the Margrave of Brandenburg-Ansbach and Cunz Schott, the Burggraf of Rothenberg. The city council concluded its instructions by reminding Pirckheimer of the necessity of keeping the city council constantly well-informed.\(^5\)

When Pirckheimer marched out of the city on May 1 with his Nuernberg contingent, he perhaps envisioned an active military campaign. In his autobiography he boasted that he had especially excelled in two engagements of the war, the battle for the Engadin valley and the siege of Lauffenburg.\(^6\) In reality, these were the only two serious encounters in which he was militarily involved.

Although Pirckheimer made no significant military contribution, the course of events demonstrated that the city council had been wise in choosing him to defend diplomatically the interests of the city. This was evident before Pirckheimer ever arrived at the battle area. In a letter to the city council, sent from Ulm on May 8, Pirckheimer related the difficulties he had had with the city councilors of the small towns, Giengen and Nördlingen. These councilors complained that Nuernberg had remained

\(^5\)Ratsverlasse, No. 370, fol. 24v.
\(^6\)Rück, \textit{Vita}, p. 144.
out of the war for such a long time while their cities were suffering great losses of men and money. Pirckheimer was able to satisfy them and prevent any further dangerous hostility toward Nuernberg.7

Pirckheimer was most effective in defending the interests of the Nuernbergers before the emperor. When the Nuernberg troops arrived around May 15 in Tettnang (near Friedrichshafen), they were inspected by Maximilian. The emperor, according to Pirckheimer in the Bellum Sultense, was satisfied with the contingent, although he looked with disfavor upon the city because of the small number of troops it had actually sent. Pirckheimer apparently was able to appease the emperor by arguing that the Nuernbergers had not begun the war and had entered it only out of obedience to the emperor. The emperor expressed his satisfaction and exclaimed that he would rather have these "veterans" than twice as many raw recruits.8

One of Pirckheimer's constant problems was defending Nuernberg before the emperor against the accusations of her many enemies. These included various imperial knights, the Margrave of Brandenburg-Ansbach, and delegates of the princely estates. In Lindau, towards the end of

7Br. I, ep. 7, p. 76.
8Goldast, ed., Opera, p. 81.
June, Pirckheimer, in the presence of the emperor and his accusers, successfully defended his troops against charges of cowardice.⁹ In the latter part of July, in Freiburg, some Franconian imperial knights charged that the Nuernberg troops, because of their secret sympathies with the enemy, had not sufficiently supported the knights in a battle near Schaffhausen. The emperor on this occasion made no decision, but only promised an investigation. Maximilian's smile when making this announcement indicated, at least to Pirckheimer, that the emperor was in sympathy with the Nuernbergers.¹⁰

Regardless of the problems incurred by the war, Nuernberg's city council was more interested in its neighborly affairs with Cunz Schott and Margrave Frederick. In April, Schott had kidnapped a city councilor and cut off his right hand. Margrave Frederick and his son George were opposing Nuernberg's attempt to erect some towers in the vicinity of the city for defense purposes. The city council wanted the emperor to outlaw Schott and permit Nuernberg to erect the towers. Pirckheimer was given the diplomatic mission of justifying the city council in these

⁹Ibid., p. 88.
¹⁰Ibid., p. 89.
two matters before the emperor. This initially was to be accomplished with the aid of Johann Wettmann, a city secretary, who was at the imperial court in the business of the city. Both Pirckheimer and Wettmann were to attend a diet set up by Maximilian at Constance on July 4 to consider the imperial outlawry of Cunz Schott. Two other city councilors, Anton Tetzel and Wolf Haller, were sent to aid Pirckheimer diplomatically with the emperor. These men gradually came to have more to do with the case than Pirckheimer. This was not due to any displeasure on the part of the city council with Pirckheimer's diplomatic efforts, but because of the emperor's use of Pirckheimer militarily. In fact, on two occasions the city council expressed its satisfaction and gratitude for Pirckheimer's diligence in handling the affairs of Cunz Schott and the margrave.

11 Ratsverlässe, No. 371, fol. 16v; Briefbuch, No. 45, fol. 39, 50. Some Briefbuch entries have been printed in Pirckheimer's Briefwechsel. In such cases, they will hereinafter be cited following the manuscript citation.

12 Briefbuch, No. 45, fol. 52, 57.

13 Ibid., No. 45, fol. 58; Br. I, ep. 19, p. 94.

14 Briefbuch, No. 45, fol. 69, 71v, 86v-87r, 94v, 106v, 109v-110, 111v-112r, 114, 116v-117r.

15 Ibid., No. 45, fol. 53v, 62v; Br. I, ep. 17, pp. 91-92, ep. 21, pp. 96-97.
It is also important to consider Pirckheimer's relationship with the city council in so far as his actual military duties were concerned. Although this relationship is well documented on the city council's side, only three of Pirckheimer's letters from this war have survived. The city council readily acceded to Pirckheimer's urgent requests for money. On June 12 it informed Pirckheimer that it was sending the 2000 gulden he had requested. Again, on June 25, after praising Pirckheimer's handling of the Cunz Schott affair with the emperor, the city council reported that it was immediately forwarding the additional 2000 gulden he had requested.

The only real complaint that the city council had with Pirckheimer was that he was not writing frequently enough. In a letter to Johann Wettmann, the council requested that if Wettmann saw Pirckheimer he should point out that the councilors had wondered why he wrote so little concerning his activities. Four days later, the city council directed Pirckheimer to report to it all matters of interest, regardless of the cost. Pirckheimer apparently reacted violently to these reproaches for

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16 Briefbuch, No. 45, fol. 50.
17 Ibid., No. 45, fol. 53v; Br. I, ep. 17, pp. 91-92.
18 Briefbuch, No. 45, fol. 48v.
19 Ibid., No. 45, fol. 50r.
ligence, for in a letter of July 1 the city council denied that it had reproached him for not writing more often and assured him of how pleased it was with the industry and diligence he had exhibited in his position. 20

Occasionally, the city council demonstrated great concern for Pirckheimer's well-being on the battlefield. When he was in an exposed position in Pfunds, the council expressed its great sympathy for the difficult position he was in. 21 The city council's concern was especially evident near the end of the war. In the middle of September, Pirckheimer and the Nuernberg contingent were commanded to occupy Lauffenburg, one of the four forest cities. While there, the siege of the city by the Swiss with recently acquired French cannon was expected on a day-to-day basis. The city council, which had told Pirckheimer already on September 7 to return home as quickly as possible with his troops because of Nuernberg's fear of the margrave, 22 now redoubled her efforts for a peaceful settlement of the war. A letter was sent to Balthasar Wolff von Wolfsthal, Maximilian's chancellor, requesting his aid in getting Maximilian to allow the Nuernberg forces to return home.

20Ibid., No. 45, fol. 62v; Br. I, ep. 21, pp. 96-97.
21Ibid.
because of the danger of war with the margrave. The council also pointed out its concern for its troops, indicating its doubt that Pirckheimer and his contingent could successfully undergo a siege at Lauffenburg. The council was successful and reported to Pirckheimer on September 19 that he could now return home. The war itself came to an end on September 22, and by the early part of October Pirckheimer was back in Nuernberg.

According to Pirckheimer, when he returned home he was praised by the city council and rewarded with a golden plate "...on account of his strenuously energetic work." In addition, Maximilian sent a letter honoring Pirckheimer "with great praise." This praise was well deserved. It is true that militarily he had not accomplished much. In this respect, the appellation that he had earned in this war, the "German Xenophon," has an ironic ring in that Pirckheimer had led his troops up the Alps and down again with few results. But if he were unsuccessful militarily, the same must be said for the imperial forces in general. Pirckheimer at least perceived the reasons for the failure of the imperial side in the lack of discipline of the imperial forces.

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23 Briefbuch, No. 45, fol. 125.

24 Ibid., No. 45, fol. 130-131r; Br. I, ep. 37, pp. 117-119.

25 Rück, Vita, p. 144.
troops and absence of any meaningful strategy for the war. Although unsuccessful militarily, he had achieved diplomatically only what Nuernberg had intended anyway, and his successes with the emperor redounded to the benefit of Nuernberg's continuing good relations with him. That Pirckheimer was not merely boasting in his autobiography when he told of his praise and reward by the city council was evident from his being appointed a governing junior burgomaster for the term beginning October 17.

Three years after the Swiss War, in 1502, Willibald Pirckheimer was again in a situation to serve his city militarily. The occasion was the battle in the Nuernberg forest on June 19, 1502, with Margrave Casimir, the eldest son of Margrave Frederick IV of Brandenburg-Ansbach. The battle was part of a constant struggle that had its origins in Nuernberg's problems with her local burgraves. These had sold their castle in Nuernberg and many of their prerogatives to the city early in the fifteenth century. This process was completed by Burggraf Frederick VI after he became the first Margrave of Brandenburg of the house of Hohenzollern. Although the Hohenzollerms had sold their castle and prerogatives, they could at any time harass Nuernberg from their possessions in Ansbach, Kulmbach, Bayreuth, Schwabach, and Erlangen. The primary cause of strife between Nuernberg and the margraves in the fifteenth
and sixteenth centuries was the question of authority in the territory surrounding Nuernberg. Although the actual conflicts usually involved petty points of contention, Nuernberg, like other German free imperial cities, realized the danger involved in the attempts of the princes to create territorial states. Nuernberg had demonstrated this awareness when she had engaged in the first Margrave's war in 1449-1451 over the city's rights to the Pillenreuth fishponds.26

The city council probably had that war in mind when it sent out a strong contingent of about 2000 men on June 18 to provide a defense for the church festival at Affalterbach. This was a small hamlet east of Nuernberg, over which Nuernberg claimed complete authority. The margrave disputed Nuernberg's right of authority and had mobilized his forces on the eve of the festival, thus causing the city council to send its forces. However, Margrave Casimir outwitted the city council and instead of marching to Affalterbach sent his forces on the morning of June 19.

26 On this conflict between Nuernberg and the margraves, see especially Christian Meyer, Geschichte der Burggrafschaft Nuernberg und der späten Markgrafschaften Ansbach und Bayreuth (Tübingen, 1908).
through the Nuernberg forest to the city. 27

A contingent of 700 men under the command of Ulman Stromer, a city councilor, was sent out against the margrave's forces. 28 The city council had mistakenly surmised that the bulk of the margrave's forces was on the way to Affalterbach. In addition, Stromer was deceived by the enemy's apparent retreat, was drawn into the forest and then suddenly attacked by the much larger forces of the margrave. The result was a rout and precipitous flight back to the safety of the city. Pirckheimer, who was at odds with Stromer anyway, probably exaggerated when he stated that it was Stromer himself who "...began the most disgraceful flight and was saved by an obliging horse."

In the meantime the contingent that had been sent to Affalterbach was returning to Nuernberg. Instead of helping to reverse the situation, it panicked and was thrown into the general collapse and rush to the city. At

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27 On the events leading up to this conflict, see Karl Thiermann, "Zur Vorgeschichte der Schlacht in Nürnberger Walde, 1502," MVGN, XXVII (1928), 313-320. The best discussion of the battle itself is in Emil Reicke, "Die Schlacht im Nürnberger Walde am Tage der Affalterbacher Kirchweih (19 Juni 1502)," Fränkischer Kurier, Unterhaltungsblatt, 1902, Nos. 200, 204, 206.

28 One of the best sources for the battle, which is mostly followed here, is Pirckheimer's letter to his friend, Anton Kress, written on August 15, 1502, Br. I, ep. 55, pp. 180-182.
this point, Willibald Pirckheimer's military efforts came into play. Before the beginning of the battle, he had been appointed commander of a second contingent of 800 men, which was to act as a second line of defense. These troops had been stationed outside the Frauentor. Although this contingent never entered the actual battle, its presence undoubtedly contributed to holding back the forces of the margrave, who might have used this opportunity to enter the city itself.

Pirckheimer, thinking he had conducted himself admirably, then returned to the city. He was immediately confronted with the accusation that he and Gian Galeazzo de San Severino, an Italian friend from his Pavia student days, who was then his house guest and had seen the battle, had given the signal for flight. The charges were patently absurd, but the city council found it advisable anyway, because of the aroused populace, to "suggest" that Gian Galeazzo leave the city at once, a suggestion which he immediately accepted. Pirckheimer, because of "...the fury of the angry populace," did not leave his house for two days. The city council apparently was not of the same opinion as the populace, for, according to Pirckheimer, it offered to punish those who had brought such accusations against him. Pirckheimer refused, realizing as the

29 Ratsverlässe, No. 412, fol. 14v.
council probably did, that it would have been difficult to prove anything.

Pirckheimer's role in the battle in the Nuernberg forest only confirmed what he had demonstrated in the Swiss War, that, his boasting in his autobiography to the contrary, he was not a particularly distinguished military leader. However, he had also shown in the Swiss War that he was a capable diplomat and it is in this capacity that he primarily served his city for the next two decades.
CHAPTER THREE
DIPLOMATIC SERVICE FOR NUERNBERG

In addition to his problems with the aroused populace in Nuernberg after the battle in the Nuernberg forest, Willibald Pirckheimer also had his troubles with the city council before that battle. At Easter, 1502, he had withdrawn from the city council, primarily because of the hostility of the first losunger, Paul Volckamer.\(^1\) When he re-entered the city council in 1505, he no longer held the position of a junior burgomaster, but the less burdensome one of alte genannte. In this position he was sent on various diplomatic missions, which became the primary way he now served his city until his final withdrawal from the council in 1523.

On May 9, shortly after his re-election to the council, Pirckheimer and Anton Tetzel, one of the seven alte herren and captains general, left Nuernberg for Cologne, where they were to represent the city's interests at an imperial diet assembled by Emperor Maximilian. This diet was called to end the Bavarian War of Succession, which

\(^1\) See below, chapter 5, for a detailed account of Pirckheimer's withdrawal.
had broken out in 1504 after the death of Duke George of Bavaria-Landshut. In his will, Duke George had bequeathed his possessions to his son-in-law, Count Palatine Ruprecht. When the Bavarian Dukes Albert and Wolfgang, with the support of Maximilian, challenged Ruprecht's claim, war broke out. Nuernberg gladly joined the war against Ruprecht since Maximilian assured to the city all of the conquests it might make. Nuernberg acquired the towns of Lauf, Altdorf, and Hersbruck, and the castles Reicheneck and Stierberg, as well as other less significant possessions.² Pirckheimer and Tetzel were then dispatched to the diet at Cologne to see that Nuernberg maintained its claims upon these new possessions. This mission was regarded as an extremely important one, since the city feared the loss of its conquests despite the assurances of Maximilian.³ Considering this, the city council's appointment of Pirckheimer to accompany Tetzel, who was already a frequently used representative of the city, indicated its very high regard for Pirckheimer's diplomatic abilities. Both delegates, upon the request of the emperor, were granted full

²On the Bavarian War of Succession and Nuernberg's participation, see Ulmann, II, 178-254, and Reicke, Geschichte..., pp. 508-522. The city council also commissioned an official description of the war and Nuernberg's participation. See Staatsarchiv, Nuernberg. Amts- und Standbuch, No. 142.

³Briefbuch, No. 54, fol. 365r.
power to act on behalf of the city.\textsuperscript{4}

The two Nuernberg emissaries were completely successful in their mission to Cologne, although it is impossible from the correspondence of the city council to ascertain exactly how great a role Pirckheimer played at the diet.\textsuperscript{5} With good cause, the city council repeatedly expressed its pleasure over the "diligence" of its two delegates.\textsuperscript{6} Although Tetzel was occasionally entrusted with special commissions by the city council and alte herren,\textsuperscript{7} it was probably due to Tetzel's higher position in the city government.

One of the characteristics of Pirckheimer's later diplomatic activity, a sincere and diligent preoccupation with the political problems involved in his missions, was already demonstrated at Cologne. This is seen in part in a short work written in Latin by him at that city. It contains the written acknowledgment made by the emperor of Nuernberg's rights to her conquests in the Bavarian War of Succession. The work is not the official treaty and

\textsuperscript{4}Ratsverlässe, No. 450, fol. 4v; Briefbuch, No. 54, fol. 340v.

\textsuperscript{5}See Briefbuch, Nos. 54, 55, passim.

\textsuperscript{6}For example, see Briefbuch, No. 54, fol. 451v.

\textsuperscript{7}\textit{Ibid.}, No. 54, 427r, 452; No. 55, 6v-7r.
Pirckheimer's purpose in writing it had remained unknown. 8

Nuernberg's conquests in the Bavarian War of Succession acknowledged by the emperor at Cologne, now gave her possession of a territory that outstripped the other German imperial cities. Although this placed her at the peak of her power, it also brought struggles with her neighbors. These struggles were especially acute because of the weakness of the central monarchical power. Nuernberg was thus preoccupied during the next decade with three chief enemies, the elector of the Palatinate, the margraves of Brandenburg, and the robber barons, many of whom were members of the surrounding Franconian knighthood. In his diplomatic missions, Pirckheimer was closely involved in the problems related to these enemies.

Elector Philip of the Palatinate was not content to accept Maximilian's confirmation of the possessions Nuernberg had acquired in the Upper Palatinate during the Bavarian War of Succession. The result was that war almost broke out anew. The Swabian League, of which Nuernberg was a member, agreed in February, 1506, to assist the city with a small defensive force and a larger force in case of

8 Rück, Schweizerkrieg..., p. 6. The writing is entitled "Maximilianum cum senatu Norib. Pactum de damnis et expensis in bello Bavarico factis Augustae die septimo Julii 1504."
the outbreak of war. Since the league was slow in fulfilling its commitment, Pirckheimer was sent to a session of the league at Ulm in April, 1506, to request its doing so. Apparently he was successful, for the combined forces of the league and Nuernberg occupied two of Nuernberg's possessions that were especially threatened. Then, since Elector Philip took no military action to oppose this move, the threat of war greatly diminished.

If Philip was not willing to use force, he was determined to continue the struggle diplomatically. His complaints against the Nuernbergerers were presented at a session of the Swabian League in April, 1507, at Augsburg, where Pirckheimer, who was one of the five Nuernberg delegates, particularly distinguished himself. His performance there is recorded in the city council's official description of its problems with the Palatinate. After listing the officials in attendance, Lazarus Spengler, the city secretary, continued:

...the delegates of the Palatinate, through their speaker, the steward [Balthasar Imhof, steward at Neuburg], set forth in one entire day, before and after dinner, forty-eight accusations against the honorable city council [of Nuernberg]. Willibald

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10Briefbuch, No. 56, fol. 197v.
Pirkheimer, as the city council's speaker, at once comprehended and memorized all of these accusations, and on the next day not only answered these forty-eight points, but also presented twenty accusations against the Palatinate and its officials, all in a day, over which those present were visibly astonished....

This feat of memory was one of those abilities of which Pirkheimer was particularly proud. In his autobiography he recounted that he earned "the greatest admiration" of others by responding to sixty or more complaints of his adversaries while proposing his own accusations without ever making a mistake of memory. His friend Albrecht Dürer also harassed him about his constant boasting over his excellent memory and oratorical abilities. But Pirkheimer's performance had more value than simply being a source of pride, for it obviously made "a strong impression," as the Nuernberg delegates reported to the

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11 "...haben die pfaltzgravischen geschickten durch iren Rednner den rendtmeister einen gantzen tag, vor und nach essens, in der zall 48 stuck clagweis wider einem Erbern Rathe dargethun. Dieselben clagstuck hat Herr Wilbolt Pirkamer als einer erbern Rats redner zu stund alle gefast und memorirt und anders tag nit allein solche 48 stuck verantwurt sonnder auch bis in 20 clagstuck wider die Pfalz und derselben amptleut alles auff einen tag gerett und dargebracht, des geleichvoll die verhüer ein mercklich verwundern gehabt haben,..." Amts- und Standbuch, No. 142, fol. 166r.

12 Rück, Vita, p. 146.

13 See, for example, Br. I, ep. 122, p. 415.
city council. Indeed, in accordance with one of Nuernberg's complaints, the league decided that the affair with Elector Philip properly belonged not before the league, but before the emperor, as had been stipulated in his decree after the diet at Cologne in 1505.

After his performance at Augsburg, Pirckheimer had little to do about the problems with the elector of the Palatinate. Although these problems continued, they were not a major source of concern to Nuernberg. In 1521 an agreement was finally made with the heirs of Elector Philip in which they renounced their claims to most of the possessions Nuernberg had acquired in the Bavarian War of Succession.

In that war, Nuernberg had been allied with her traditional enemy, the Margrave of Brandenburg. The alliance, however, was only temporary and the struggle between them was again resumed, involving their usual points of contention. In 1506, at a meeting of the Swabian League in Augsburg, Margrave Frederick renewed the charges he had made against the city in 1499. He demanded that Nuernberg tear down the additional fortifications it had

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14 Ibid., ep. 167, p. 532.
15 Klüpfel, II, 6.
16 On the underlying cause of discord and their previous altercations, see above, pp. 33-36.
prepared during the Bavarian War of Succession; to do the same with the columns with the divided bodies of executed criminals affixed to them, which the city council used as signs of her jurisdiction in capital offenses (Fraiss) outside the city; and finally that Nuernberg should not be allowed to injure him in his right of escort (Geleit) up to the gates of Nuernberg. If the city did not comply with these demands, the margrave wanted the assistance of the Swabian League against Nuernberg.\footnote{Klüpfel, II, 551.} The margrave's purpose was quite clear. Since he could not eliminate Nuernberg in his desire to solidify his territorial state, he would restrict her power as much as possible.

These complaints were discussed at a session of the Swabian League in Donauwörth in September, 1506, to which Pirckheimer and two other delegates were assigned. Pirckheimer alone presented the speeches in defense of Nuernberg's position for which he prepared extensive notes.\footnote{Stadtbibliothek, Nuernberg. Pirckheimerpapiere, No. 241.} But Pirckheimer's eloquence and preparation did not prevail, for the league decided to settle the issues at a meeting set for January, 1507. This was contrary to Nuernberg's attempt to have Duke Albert of Bavaria make a final deci-
sion in the struggle.\textsuperscript{19}

The city council was now determined to present its case in the best possible light at Augsburg. For this reason Lazarus Spengler prepared a writing in December, 1506, which presented a good exposition of Nuernberg's case against the margrave.\textsuperscript{20} Pirckheimer was also involved in the work's composition. The marginal notes, which largely set forth legal support for the argument, are in his handwriting. But, again, good preparation and the delegation of Pirckheimer and four other capable Nuernberg delegates did not prevail over the commanding support Margrave Frederick had built up in the Swabian League. Thus, the league in all three points of contention ruled against Nuernberg, stating in its decree that the city must destroy its new fortifications; that the columns, used as signs of its jurisdiction in capital offenses, had to come down; and, finally, that the margrave was confirmed in his right of escort.\textsuperscript{21}

The struggle with the margrave continued, but no longer with the same intensity as before. For the next

\textsuperscript{19}Briefbuch, No. 57, fol. 138v; No. 58, fol. 25v.

\textsuperscript{20}"Fertigung zu dem angesatzten pundstag Trium Regum gein Augsburg in der marggräfischen sach." Staatsarchiv, Nuernberg. S.I L. 205, No. 15.

\textsuperscript{21}See Klüpfel, I, 555.
several years Pirckheimer was more preoccupied with internal affairs than diplomatic missions.\textsuperscript{22} When he returned to active diplomatic service his primary connection with the problem of the margrave involved his negotiations with the Bishop of Bamberg over the bishop's attempts to act as a mediator between Nuernberg and Margrave Frederick.\textsuperscript{23} These efforts were successful and the two contending parties managed to temporarily settle their problems. In the meantime, Nuernberg was faced with a problem that ultimately represented a greater danger than her previous problems, that of the robber barons. Because of Pirckheimer's own deeply-felt personal commitment, it was also a problem in which he was most active diplomatically.

Beginning late in the fifteenth century, Nuernberg was intensely involved in a serious struggle with the Franconian nobility. In general, the knights in Germany had fared badly in face of the growth of centralized territorial states. The result was a resort to violence and the seemingly never-ending feuds and warfare carried on by the knights against the princes and cities in violation of the perpetual public peace (\textit{ewiger Landfrieden}) of

\textsuperscript{22}See the table of Pirckheimer's missions, pp. 48-51. Pirckheimer also commented on this in his autobiography, \textit{Rück, Vita}, p. 146.

\textsuperscript{23}For example, see Briefbuch, No. 69, fol. 126v, 177v.
## TABLE
THE DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS OF WILLIBALD PIROKHEIMER

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
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*aSources: Staatsarchiv, Nürnberg. Jahresregister, Rechnungsbelege, Ratsverlässe, Briefbücher.*

*bA blank space indicates that Pirkheimer was the only delegate on the mission.*

*cThe numbers enclosed in parentheses indicate an estimate based on the expenses of the mission.*

*dFor the Swiss War. See chapter 2.*

*eReichstag*
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1495. The Imperial Supreme Court (Reichskammergericht) proved ineffective against this warfare and even the Swabian League, which offered some hope, wasn't very successful.

Nuernberg was especially alarmed, for the attacks which made the roads unsafe for her merchants threatened her very economic existence. This fear had caused Nuernberg to enter the Swabian League in 1500, to obtain special imperial privileges for the preservation of the Landfrieden, and to support at high costs a significant number of cavalrymen to guard the roads leading to Nuernberg. Even these measures were not enough, for her situation was complicated by the hostility of the Margraves of Brandenburg-Ansbach, who often included the Franconian knights in their plans against Nuernberg. Götz von Berlichingen, for example, who became Nuernberg's chief enemy among the knights, was in the army of Margrave Casimir in the battle in the Nuernberg forest in 1502.24

Pirokheimer shared intensely in the attitudes of his fellow citizens towards these nobles who had become robber barons. In his history of the Swiss War, he de-
scribed his impressions of them in 1499:

Indeed these nobles were not as courageous in resisting the enemy as they were fitted for practicing brigandage and the plundering of travellers. For, considering it to be a great sign of fortitude and nobility, they, like thieves, strenuously worked at that profit gained by many by plundering, and lived from others' miseries.25

By the time Pirckheimer returned to active diplomatic work, this attitude had been intensified by the constant feuds that preoccupied Nuernberg, especially those with Götz von Berlichingen and his companions. Indeed, a surprise attack of Götz, Hans von Selbitz, Leonhard Pirckamer, and others upon a group of Nuernberg merchants returning from Leipzig was the city council's primary motivation in sending a delegation to a diet at Trier in June, 1512. In fact, for the next three years, Nuernberg's foreign policy and its relations to the emperor and German estates were governed by one aim, to free itself of the problem of the robber barons.26

Willibald Pirckheimer, Conrad Imhoff, and Leonhard Groland were the members of the delegation sent to Trier. Pirckheimer was given the additional responsibility of acting as the representative of the cities (with George


Langenmantel of Augsburg) for the Swabian League, a position which reflects the city council's high regard for his diplomatic abilities.²⁷ The council's correspondence with its delegates indicates its preoccupation with obtaining action against the Franconian knights. The delegates were instructed to work diligently to obtain assistance for the serious execution of the Landfrieden of 1495.²⁸ But Nuernberg was evidently in a rather uncomfortable position. While it instructed its delegates that the imperial ban of Gütz von Berlichingen should be their chief concern, it also cautioned them against their pressing forward this declaration of outlawry.²⁹ The council apparently feared that if it acted as the instigator of the outlawry it would have to fear all the more the revenge of the Franconian knights.

Additional responsibilities were given to Pirckheimer at Trier when Imhoff and Groland went to Antwerp in the retinue of Maximilian. Pirckheimer was now Nuernberg's sole representative, which did not diminish the flood of special instructions from the city council. Pirckheimer conducted himself well, for the city council, in its

²⁷ Ratsverlasse, No. 546, fol. 20r; Ratsbuch, No. 10, fol. 15r.
²⁸ Briefbuch, No. 68, fol. 233r.
²⁹ Ibid., No. 68, fol. 228, 248r.
session on July 7, singled him out for a special letter of thanks for his "faithful diligence" in executing the council's wishes.\(^{30}\)

In the middle of July, 1512, the diet was transferred from Trier to Cologne. Emperor Maximilian had meanwhile issued the declaration of outlawry against Götz von Berlichingen, Hans von Selbitz, and Leonhard Pirkamer. When Imhoff and Groland now returned to Cologne, they and Pirkheimer deemed it unnecessary to proceed further against the knights in view of the emperor's action. But the city council thought otherwise and instructed Pirkheimer, "...as the one who has handled these cases before," to present Nuernberg's complaints and request for outlawry against two additional knights, Hans Thomas von Absberg and Hans von Geislingen.\(^{31}\) This wish, however, was not satisfied.

The declaration of imperial outlawry was one matter; its execution, another. And in regard to this no firm decisions were made at Cologne. The city council was very disturbed over this, and in its last letter to its delegates at Cologne, instructed them to declare before the

\(^{30}\)Ratsverlässe, No. 546, fol. 1r.

\(^{31}\)Briefbuch, No. 69, fol. 26v. On October 3, 1511, Absberg had captured two Nuernberg patricians' sons and had sold them to Hans von Geislingen. See Kamann, p. 110.
assembly that if no help were forthcoming from the empire, it would have to rely upon its own force to correct the situation.\textsuperscript{32}

Emperor Maximilian now attempted to effect a reconciliation of the Franconian knighthood with the princes and free imperial cities. He called for an assembly of these groups at Schweinfurt, in November, 1512, where he hoped to encourage the knights to follow the imperial Landfrieden and to especially settle Nuernberg's feud with Götz von Berlichingen.\textsuperscript{33} At Schweinfurt, Maximilian's representatives emphasized the emperor's determination to uphold the perpetual Landfrieden and stressed that the common good demanded the unity of the imperial knights with the princes. The knights agreed, but claimed that they were powerless over the problems in Franconia. They charged that the princes and the cities' mercenaries, especially Nuernberg's, were responsible for the suppression of their rights.

Pirkheimer responded to these accusations with such vehemence that there was danger of an open clash between

\textsuperscript{32}Briefbuch, No. 69, fol. 112r.

\textsuperscript{33}The proceedings at Schweinfurt are described in detail in an official work commissioned by the city council over its feud with Götz von Berlichingen. This work, which I was not able to examine, is in the Bavarian Hauptstaatsarchiv in Munich. Kamann, pp. 37-39, gives a good account of the proceedings which is followed here.
him and the assembled knights. He admitted that Nuernberg's mercenaries often proceeded ruthlessly and despotically but alleged that the knights provoked them to perform such acts. Besides, the raw behavior of the city's mercenaries was to be expected, since they either came from the ranks of the knights or had been trained in their midst. Pirckheimer then catalogued the evil deeds of the knights against Nuernberg. They had burdened the city for decades with unjust feuds; they had attacked peaceful merchants, murdered them or dragged them into captivity to gain large ransoms; and they had committed cruel acts, such as Götz von Berlichingen's severing the ears of a messenger and Cunz Schott's cutting off the hand of a city councilor.

Pirckheimer's oratory at Schweinfurt had no beneficial results, since a reconciliation of the knights with Nuernberg and the princes was as unthinkable now as it had been before. It was left to the Swabian League, which had been extended for twelve years after its expiration in 1512, to proceed against the Franconian knights. Pirckheimer was one of Nuernberg's delegates to different meetings of the Swabian League, such as those at Nördlingen and Ulm in 1513, where Nuernberg successfully pressured the league into arming for expeditions against the
knights, especially Götz von Berlichingen. But Maximilian, hoping to avoid bloodshed, now intervened. Further sessions were held which resulted in a settlement in which Würzburg and others, because they had sheltered the knights, were required to pay a sum of 14,000 gulden for the damages from various feuds. The legal end of the feud between Götz and Nuernberg followed at a session of the Swabian League on June 3, 1514.

In this entire business with the Franconian nobility, Pirckheimer proved to be a true son of Nuernberg, reflecting and incorporating the city's hatred of the knights in his diplomatic activity. The contempt he felt for the nobility in 1499 had been greatly intensified by these experiences. The city council was well aware of the diplomatic service Pirckheimer had performed concerning the Franconian nobility. Not only did it express its appreciation in its correspondence, but also honored him in 1513 with a gift of a gilded cup worth 100 gulden for his "great effort" in the city's affairs.

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34 See Briefbuch, No. 71, fol. 52v, 58v, 93v-94r; Klüpfel, II, 70-71, 74-75.
35 Kamann, pp. 69-70.
36 See, for example, Pirckheimer to Adelmann, Br. II, ep. 350, pp. 517-518.
37 Amts- und Standbuch, No. 321 (Schenkbuch von 1340 bis 1656), fol. 284r.
In September of the following year, 1514, Pirckheimer and Leonhard Groland were sent to the imperial court at Innsbruck. The primary purpose of this mission was to participate in negotiations regarding the strife between the Bavarian Dukes Wilhelm and Ludwig. Nuernberg had been drawn into the struggle through the request of Wilhelm, although the city council had its own disagreements with Duke Wilhelm that it wanted to settle. The council also had two other problems to resolve before the emperor and his advisors. One concerned the complaints of the relatives of the nuns in the convent at Engelthal, which the city council had attempted to reform after gaining possession of it in 1504. Pirckheimer had previously been involved with the problem during a mission to Linz. The other problem pertained to the city councilor, George Holzschuher, who had appealed to the emperor for re-instatement after he had not been re-elected to the city council at Easter, 1514. Because Pirckheimer was a bitter enemy of Holzschuher, the council was certain of getting an impassioned defense of its position. The mission

38 Briefbuch, No. 73, fol. 5v.

39 See Briefbuch, No. 72, fol. 65-67; Br. II, ep. 205, pp. 358-360. In the Pirckheimerpapiere, No. 181, there is a letter in Pirckheimer's handwriting written in the style of the Letters of Obscure Men. It concerns the indecency of the abbess of the Engelthal nunnery.
to Innsbruck had good results. The problems between the two Bavarian dukes were settled, the emperor promised an investigation into the Engelthal business, and Holzschuher was not reinstated to the city council.

The missions of Pirckheimer to imperial diets, sessions of the Swabian League, and the imperial court included him in the more important political problems that Nuernberg faced. However, the correspondence books of the city council indicate that the city was also occupied with minor diplomatic imbroglios that consumed much time and effort. In regard to these, Pirckheimer was employed primarily in ecclesiastical problems. He was commissioned already as a young city councilor in ecclesiastical affairs pertaining to the Bishop of Eichstätt. It was in negotiations with the Bishop of Bamberg, however, that Pirckheimer's services were most used. His transactions of 1512-1513 especially provide a good example of his efforts in these affairs.

These transactions were only part of a continuing struggle between the city council and the Bishop of Bamberg over the control of the Nuernberg religious establishment. Nuernberg's ties to the Bishop of Bamberg, its ec-

40 See, for example, Ratsverlösse, No. 350, fol. 17r (Nov. 4, 1497), which contains notice of a mission to Eichstätt, and Ratsverlösse, No. 361, fol. 15r (August 25, 1498), where he is asked for legal advice concerning the bishop.
clesiastical overlord, had never been particularly strong. The city council's constant encroachment upon the bishop's rights for the sake of gaining autonomy in matters of church administration added to the tension between the two. In 1474, Nuernberg had received the right of presentation for its two parish churches, St. Sebald and St. Lorenz, during the "papal months" (every other month, beginning with January). Three years later, the pope raised the offices of parish priests to those of provosts, which gave them certain rights of jurisdiction over the lesser clerics that had previously belonged to the bishop. This meant that the city council's presentation rights had even greater value. The council then sought to acquire these presentation rights for the remaining six months ("episcopal months"). When the provost of St. Sebald died in April, 1512, the city council, following the request of Emperor Maximilian, appointed in his place Melchior Pfintzing, an imperial secretary. This encroachment upon the bishop's right of presentation in an "episcopal month" now caused another conflict.\(^4\)

Pirckheimer was introduced into the controversy while he was attending the imperial diet at Cologne in

\(^4\) For a good discussion of the background to this problem, see Adolf Engelhardt, "Der Kirchenpatronat zu Nürnberg," Zeitschrift für bayerische Kirchengeschichte, VII (1932), 6-18.
July, 1512. The city council informed him then of Melchior Pfintzing's proposal to settle the dispute. According to this, Nuernberg was to pay an indemnity to the Bishop and Cathedral Chapter of Bamberg for the right of nominating both provosts in all twelve months. The bishop would be bound to confirm the nominations. Since the council was favorable to this proposal, Pirckheimer and probably Gro­land were instructed to authorize Pfintzing to proceed on this basis with the bishop. 42 This proposal became the foundation for the ultimate settlement, but the negotia­tions continued another year over the details, especially monetary ones.

In November, 1512, Pirckheimer and Groland travelled to Bamberg to continue the negotiations. Pirckheimer evidently functioned as the sole negotiator. In response to a letter from Pirckheimer, the council indicated its readiness to accept the solution he had worked out, namely, that in return for the presentation rights the provosts would pay an annual sum of 100 gulden to the bishop and Cathedral Chapter. Pirckheimer could convert part of this into a single payment if he wished, but one "as small as possible." 43 However, no final agreement seems to have been

42 Briefbuch, No. 69, fol. 30r.
43 Briefbuch, No. 69, fol. 209; Br. II, ep. 231, p. 206.
arranged at this time, since Melchior Pfintzing wrote to Pirckheimer in January, 1513, requesting him to do his best in this affair. Pfintzing appears also to have become annoyed with the city council over the delay. The council tried to placate him in a letter on January 26, indicating that it was doing as much as possible. It had scheduled a session with Hans von Schwarzenberg, the steward of the Bishop of Bamberg, but Willibald Pirckheimer, "...whom we want present there as a knowledgeable and intelligent person in such cases," was ill and could not go. Pirckheimer did make additional trips to Bamberg in February and March. The trip in March was decisive, as the city council stated in a letter on March 12 to the bishop that it was prepared to accept the list of arrangements that Pirckheimer had concluded with the bishop. Additional difficulties ensued over the formal composition of the agreement. These were overcome and the agreement finally concluded on September 12, 1513. In addition to the provosts' annual payment of 100 gulden, the city council agreed to pay an indemnity of 1000 gulden. The city council, due in large part to Pirckheimer's efforts, now

45 Briefbuch, No. 70, fol. 39r.
46 Ibid., No. 70, fol. 93
47 For the complete terms, see Engelhardt, p. 69.
had important controls over the appointment of clerics that proved especially valuable in the time of the Reformation.

Willibald Pirckheimer's last diplomatic trip for Nuernberg occurred in 1519. The number of missions he had undertaken after his journey to Innsbruck in 1514 had greatly diminished. The primary reason was his failing health, especially his trouble with the gout, which was already preventing him from being as active as he might have wished. The purpose of the deputation to Zürich in 1519 was to secure an alliance with the Swiss Confederation because war again threatened to erupt with the Margrave of Brandenburg. The journey was successful, judging from a congratulatory letter by Pirckheimer's friend, Lorenz Behaim. In addition, the city council, in its session on

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48 See the table of Pirckheimer's missions, pp. 50-51.

49 This is illustrated in the correspondence of the city council where the council explains its inability to send Pirckheimer on missions because of his physical condition. See Briefbuch, No. 76, fol. 1r (August 13, 1516) and No. 80, fol. 71v-72r (July 2, 1519).

50 There is little in the Nuernberg documents on the mission. The purpose of the trip is related in a Swiss source quoted in Markwart, p. 18.

51 Pirckheimerpapiere, No. 375.50. Behaim also rejoiced over Pirckheimer's safe return "cum tuo Alberto." Albrecht Dürer accompanied Pirckheimer and Tucher on the trip in a private capacity.
June 24, 1519, decided to give an "honorable acknowledge-
ment" to Pirckheimer and Martin Tucher for their negotia-
tions with the Swiss Confederation.52

The journey to Switzerland was Pirckheimer's last in an official capacity. It did not mean, however, an end to his diplomatic activities for Nuernberg. Pirckheimer was called upon throughout his career as a city councilor to perform tasks related to the city's diplomacy. For him, this service consisted principally of two activities, the composing of official writings and the giving of advice on matters of foreign policy.

Most of Pirckheimer's official compositions were written in Latin. Because of his education and humanistic activities, he was one of the most qualified men in the city for this activity. Also, the majority of Pirckheimer's compositions for the city concerned ecclesiastical matters which interested him, such as the issues arising over the religious orders. In 1506 the city council became alarmed over the efforts of Pope Julius II to unite the different branches of the Franciscan order. This motivated the city council to direct letters, probably composed by Pirckheimer,53 to Pope Julius II, the Roman Curia, and the

52Ratsverlässe, No. 638, fol. 1r.

53The Ratsverlässe give no definite evidence of this. But his other Latin writings and later efforts over the Augustinians point to Pirckheimer's authorship.
Cardinal protector of the Franciscans, Domenico Grimani. These letters explained that the city council had introduced in the fifteenth century the reforms of the Observantines into the orders of the Franciscans and Poor Clares. It now wanted this direction confirmed at the next general Chapter in Rome. The council expressed its fear of the Conventuals and argued that there would be only unrest if the Observantines' reforms were not kept. ⁵⁴

Pirckheimer was later more directly involved in the problems of the Augustinian Hermits. At the end of 1510, he personally wrote to Johann von Staupitz, the vicar-general of the Reformed Congregation (Observantines) of the Augustinians. In this letter, Pirckheimer argued that Staupitz's efforts to unite the strict (Observantines) and relaxed (Conventuals) branches of the order would be of no use to it and only damage the Observantines. ⁵⁵

Pirckheimer was reflecting the attitude of the city council, which was concerned because the Augustinian monastery in Nuernberg belonged to the Observantines. When Staupitz planned to come to Nuernberg in 1511 to try and win over the Nuernberg Augustinians to his plan of union, Pirck-

heimer was one of the councilors assigned to mediate between him and the local group to settle their differences. The city council's own protests to the proposed union were contained in letters written by Pirckheimer and sent to Aegidio Canisio of Viterbo, general of the Augustinian order, and to the Chapter of the Order at Cologne in 1512.

The city council also turned to Pirckheimer for other compositions. It was he who wrote to Pope Leo X, defending the city council against the charges of Anton Tetzel's son that his father had been unjustly imprisoned. When Duke Albert IV of Bavaria died in 1508, Pirckheimer not only wrote a speech of condolence, but also travelled to Munich to deliver it. Significantly, this service by Pirckheimer did not stop after he resigned from the city council at Easter, 1523. Later in that same year, for example, upon his request, the city

56 Ratsverlässe, No. 536, fol. 17v.

57 Briefbuch, No. 66, fol. 186; No. 68, fol. 131v; Br. II, ep. 18911, pp. 73-75.

58 Br. II, ep. 345, pp. 500-503. On Anton Tetzel, see below, chapter 5. There is also in the Pirckheimer-papiere, No. 266, a rough draft for a letter to the pope concerning Nuernberg's problem with the Bishop of Bamberg over the provosts. See above, pp. 61-63.

59 Ratsverlässe, No. 488, fol. 13r; Br. II, ep. 174vii, pp. 16-18.
council commissioned him to translate a letter to the French king into Latin. 60

In his second domestic activity related to the city's foreign policy, Pirckheimer was frequently called upon to produce legal opinions (Gutachten) over diplomatic problems. These opinions were primarily the function of the city's legal advisers (Ratskonsulenten or, as they are referred to in the city documents, Gelehrten). These were university-trained lawyers, doctors of civil and canon law, who were paid handsome salaries for their professional counsel. Pirckheimer's father, Johann, had been one of the city's legal advisers, and Willibald might also have done the same if he had completed his doctorate. Nevertheless, his legal training at Pavia and Padua and his knowledge of foreign affairs induced the city council frequently to request his legal opinions. Predominantly, these requests involved matters related to the city's diplomacy. 61

Most interesting about this activity of Pirckheimer is its continuation after his resignation from the city council. The documents indicate that the city council

60 Ratsverlässe, No. 696, fol. 9v.
61 For examples, see Ratsverlässe, Nos. 336, 357, 361, 378, 384, 450, 500, 525, 553, 589, 676, 679, 681, passim.
considered Pirckheimer an expert on those matters in which he had been closely involved diplomatically. In 1527, in its continuing affair over the Fraiss with the Margrave of Brandenburg, the city council requested Pirckheimer, in addition to the legal advisers, to give his advice, as one who "...had negotiated so much" and who "...had more knowledge than others in these affairs." His opinion was accepted over those of the regular legal advisers and the council expressed its appreciation to him.62 When the city council attempted finally to settle its differences with Margrave George in 1528 by a formal treaty, Pirckheimer was frequently called upon for counsel on legal aspects of the agreement.63 Also in 1527 Pirckheimer was asked for his advice concerning a problem with Count Palatine Frederick. The city council concluded its decision in the following words: "...and, moreover, say[To Pirckheimer] that the city council will bear in mind his effort in this and other affairs."64

Willibald Pirckheimer achieved his greatest successes

62 Ratsverlässe, No. 739, fol. 7; Ratsbuch, No. 13, fol. 221 (January 16, 1527).

63 Ratsverlässe, Nos. 756, fol. 11v; 760, fol. 25r; 761, fol. 9v; 763, fol. 14v, 16r, 18v. (April to November, 1528).

64 "Und daneben sagen das ein Rat sein muhe in den und anndern sachen bedencken woll." Ratsverlässe, No. 747, fol. 14r. See also, No. 749, fol. 10, 23r.
as a city councilor in his diplomatic service for Nuernberg. His diplomatic missions, especially those of 1505-1507 and 1512-1514, consumed much time and effort. And for a person who enjoyed humanistic scholarship as much as he did, this represented a considerable sacrifice. He frequently apologized to his friends for his inability to write to them because of long absences from the city on official business. But the apologies are not usually complaints, for Pirckheimer seems to have enjoyed thoroughly his work as a diplomat. The city council, in turn, in its use of Pirckheimer in important diplomatic missions and in its numerous indications of appreciation for his diplomatic work, evidenced clearly that it considered Pirckheimer to be one of the city's best diplomats. The situation was quite different, however, both for the council and Pirckheimer, while he was serving domestically as a councilor, which aspect of his public service must now be examined.

65 See especially his letters in 1505 and 1514, two of his busiest years, to Johannes Trithemius, Br. II, ep. 172, p. 3, and Georg Spalatin, Br. II, ep. 321, p. 44.
CHAPTER FOUR
DOMESTIC SERVICE FOR NUERNBERG

Willibald Pirckheimer first entered the city council as one of the thirteen junior burgomasters in 1496. This position, which he held until his initial withdrawal from the council in 1502, committed him to a very active participation in the business of the state. The city council was intimately involved in every facet of the city's life, and it was the burgomasters who carried the brunt of executing the city council's domestic policies. The council sessions alone were held almost daily and lasted three or more hours. As a junior burgomaster, Pirckheimer also served once a year for four weeks as one of the two governing burgomasters, a position requiring even more intense activity.  

Being a governing burgomaster also necessitated membership in the court known as the Fünf Herren. It met three times a week for three hour-sessions and heard cases involving

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1 On the position of junior burgomaster, see above, pp. 6-8. In addition, on this position and the others discussed in this chapter, see especially Scheurl, passim, and Reicke, Geschichte..., passim. Pirckheimer's service as a governing burgomaster was in the following periods: June 1-24, 1496; November 8-December 5, 1497; September 6-October 3, 1498; October 17-November 12, 1499; October 4-November 10, 1500; June 9-July 3, 1501.
slander and injury.

Three years after his withdrawal, in 1505, Pirckheimer was re-elected to the city council, this time as one of the eight alte genanntte. This was a less burdensome position than that of the junior burgomaster and it is uncertain whether his election to it was with or against his will. As an alte genanntte, Pirckheimer still had to participate in the council sessions, was entrusted with various commissions, and was sent on diplomatic missions. The latter, as already seen, became Pirckheimer's primary function. The eight alte genanntte were also ranked according to speaking and voting privileges in the council sessions. Pirckheimer rose from the fifth position in 1505 to first by 1521. He held this office until his final withdrawal in 1523.

Since the city council controlled every aspect of the city's operation, the councilors were appointed to additional positions that carried various administrative functions. Pirckheimer also had his share of these.

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2 The position was, as Scheurl relates, either for retired "veterans," or brothers of a patrician already holding the office of burgomaster, since two brothers could not hold it at the same time. Since neither of these stipulations applies to Pirckheimer, and, in view of his later expressed ambitions for higher office (see below, pp. 92-93), it can be surmised that it was against his wishes.

3 Aemterbäüchlein, Nos. 28-42.
Nuernberg, initially for purposes of defense, had been divided into administrative quarters (Viertel), eight in number since 1449. Each quarter was under the authority of two officials called Viertelmeister, who were from the patrician class and directly responsible to the three captains general. The primary function of these officials was to keep their sections in military preparedness in the event of an attack or siege. But they served other functions as well, such as census taking, fire fighting, and taxing. Other officials entitled Gassenhauptmänner, whose number varied according to the size of the district, were assigned to assist the Viertelmeister in these tasks.

Pirckheimer was appointed a Gassenhauptmann in the Weinmarkt district on March 21, 1497. On August 21, 1507, he was promoted to the position of Viertelmeister in the same district. He bore the responsibility of this office until after his withdrawal from the city council, and was finally released from the office on April 6, 1524, "upon his request."

Next to their military duties, the most frequent use of the Viertelmeister was fire fighting. The city council, however, also appointed officials to be in charge of this

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4 Ratsverlässe, No. 342, fol. 11r.
5 Ibid., No. 480, fol. 20v.
6 Ibid., No. 702, fol. 7r.
very important activity. There were nine of these Feuerrn by the beginning of the sixteenth century. They were members of the city council and were required to proceed immediately to the site of a fire after being notified of its breaking out. They had supervision over the use of the fire fighting equipment and its maintenance. Pirckheimer served as a Feuerberr while he was a junior burgomaster but did not return to the position when he became an alte genannte.7

Still another important position was that of Kriegsherr, which Pirckheimer held from 1517-1525.8 The council appointed seven Kriegsherren, although only three bore the burden of office at one time. Except for 1520, Pirckheimer served continuously as one of the three. These men had a separate office in the city hall, received a stipend of 100 gulden a year, and had jurisdiction over everything that covered preparations for war.

Another position, although of less significance, which Pirckheimer held only while he was a junior burgomaster, concerned the city council's jurisdiction over the forested area surrounding Nuernberg.9 Beginning in 1436 the council appointed an official who provided for the

7 Aemterbüchlein, Nos. 20-24.
8 Ibid., Nos. 37-43.
9 Ibid., Nos. 20-24.
maintenance of the roads and bridges in this area. Later, in 1491, the council began to appoint nine of its members, entitled die Herren den Wald zu bereiten, to ensure a better control of the forests. This office, however, was discontinued in 1526.

These formal positions provide some knowledge of Pirckheimer's domestic service, but it is even more informative to examine some of his specific activities while executing the responsibilities of office.

Pirckheimer was called upon by the city council to supplement the opinions of the city's legal advisers with his own legal advice on domestic affairs. The legal opinions given ranged over a wide variety of problems. These included the handling of the city's forests and towers, the procedure to be followed for a city councilor having problems with the pope, and even the course of action to be pursued against the inadequate work of goldsmiths. As a junior burgomaster, Pirckheimer was regularly assigned to the handling of minor strifes among Nuernberg citizens. But even as an alte genannte, especially in the period from 1508-1511 when he was in-

10 On his legal advice on foreign policy, see above, pp. 68-69.

11 Ratsverlässe, Nos. 596, fol. 18r; 394, fol. 8v; 487, fol. 1v.

12 See, for example, ibid., Nos. 330, 332, 334, 348, 351, 382, 404, 408, passim.
active in diplomatic missions, he was asked to perform the same service. This often required considerable time, as was manifested by his mediation between the Vischer brothers in 1508 and the Löffelholz brothers in 1511.13

Pirckheimer was frequently commissioned by the council to handle religious affairs. In 1497 he was instructed to correspond with the convent at Engelthal over its affair with the neighboring peasants.14 In the following year, when the council instructed the Kriegsherren to prepare militarily in this business, it delegated Pirckheimer to give these officials a complete report on the situation.15 In another instance, when Sixtus Tucher, the provost of St. Lorenz and holder of a benefice with St. Clara's died in 1507, it was Pirckheimer who negotiated with Georg Beheim, to whom the benefice had been offered by the city council.16

Pirckheimer's commitment to religious affairs was made more difficult by the introduction of the Reformation.

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13Ibid., Nos. 489, fol. 14; 525, fol. 14v; Ratsbuch, No. 7, fol. 439.
14Ratsverlässe, No. 349, fol. 18v.
15Ibid., No. 359, fol. 4r; Ratsbuch, No. 7, fol. 19v.
16Ratsverlässe, No. 483, fol. 2v, 16r; Ratsbuch, No. 7, fol. 401v. See also Pirckheimer's letter to Beheim, Br. II, ep. 174, pp. 10-11.
in Nuernberg. He was placed in a position of intervening with the city council on behalf of his sisters and daughters, who strongly resisted the city council's attempts to change the pattern of their convent existence. Pirckheimer's defense of the interests of his sisters and daughters tended to strain his relationship with the city council. In a letter to Philip Melanchthon, Pirckheimer complained about the city council's removal of the Franciscan priests from the convents and their replacement by the new Lutheran preachers. But this dissatisfaction did not prevent Pirckheimer's co-operation during this time in other areas, such as his advice on foreign policy. Nor did it hinder the city council from asking Pirckheimer for advice even in the problem of the convents. This is shown in 1527, when the council established a committee for the visitation of the convents, in order to question each sister individually as to whether she wished to remain in the convent. Before proceeding to its visitation the members of the commission were instructed to seek Willibald Pirckheimer's sister, Charitas, played the most prominent role in this resistance. See Franz Binder, Charitas Pirckheimer (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1878), pp. 105-183, and Gerta Krabbel, Claritas Pirckheimer (Münster, 1947), pp. 86-198. Charitas also wrote her own account. See Josef Pfanner (ed.), Die Denkwürdigkeiten der Charitas Pirckheimer (Landshut, 1961).

17 Willibald Pirckheimer's sister, Charitas, played the most prominent role in this resistance. See Franz Binder, Charitas Pirckheimer (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1878), pp. 105-183, and Gerta Krabbel, Claritas Pirckheimer (Münster, 1947), pp. 86-198. Charitas also wrote her own account. See Josef Pfanner (ed.), Die Denkwürdigkeiten der Charitas Pirckheimer (Landshut, 1961).


19 See above, pp. 68-69.
Pirckheimer's advice, as to how the nuns, "who were without priests, might be helped." The situation of the nuns did not improve after the visitation. Pirckheimer was thus led to compose a defense of the convents that was presented to the city council in 1529. The failure of this appeal demonstrated Pirckheimer's inability to change the council's policy on the convents.

There were other commissions that Pirckheimer executed domestically. As a junior and governing burgomaster in 1498 and 1499 he was involved in the expulsion of the Jews from Nuremberg. A writing by Dr. Peter Stahel, one of the city's legal advisers, to Pirckheimer, arguing that the taking of interest was not permitted to the Jews according to biblical and canon law, probably represents a legal opinion that was requested by Pirckheimer in 1499, the year in which the remaining Nuremberg Jews were expelled. Pirckheimer himself in 1498 had been requested to give his legal opinion on the subject of the Jews and had also been directed to work with the city preachers on

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20 Ratsverlässe, No. 749, fol. 16r; Ratsbuch, No. 14, fol. 101r.


a "suitable" sermon to be given in the churches on the mat-
ter of the Jews. In a service rendered five years after
his retirement, in 1528, the city council called upon him
to examine the books on Roman imperial law that Gregor
Haloander, a jurist from Florence, had presented to the
city council. Pirckheimer and others were to establish
the desirability of their publication.

Willibald Pirckheimer's domestic responsibilities
were made heavier by the frequent requests of friends and
strangers for his intervention with the city council in
their behalf. A continual source of these requests was
from the convents in which his sisters and daughters re-
sided. In 1506, Eufemia von Murr, abbess of the convent of
Bergen, requested Pirckheimer's help with the city council
on account of the danger of losing the convent's revenues
from its possessions at Hersbruck. Her appeal was supported
by a similar request from Pirckheimer's sisters Sabina and
Eufemia, who were nuns in the same convent. In the
following year the abbess wrote to Pirckheimer soliciting
his aid in getting a loan of 200 gulden from the city coun-

\[^{23}\text{Ratsverlässe, No. 359, fol. 56.}\]
\[^{24}\text{Ibid., No. 753, fol. 10v. See also Johann Panzer, }\]
\[^{25}\text{Willibald Pirckheimers Verdienste um die Herausgabe der }\]
\[^{26}\text{Pandecten Gregor Haloanders (Nürnberg, 1805).}\]
\[^{25}\text{Br. I, ep. 102, pp. 337-338; ep. 103, pp. 342-343.}\]
The money was granted, which was probably a result of Pirckheimer's intervention. Others wrote to him in hopes of gaining positions. In a letter to Sebastian Sperantius, a friend of Conrad Celtis, Pirckheimer promised to personally pursue with the city council Sperantius' application for a position. In 1518, Gangolf Leupolt, a secretary in Wertheim, wrote to Pirckheimer, beseeching his assistance in obtaining a post as procurator with the city council. That Pirckheimer worked diligently on behalf of these requests is evidenced in a letter of 1519 to an unknown person. In it, he informed the addressee that, in order to be helpful, he had gone to the town hall immediately after receiving his letter and had recommended him to the alte herren. He cautioned him, however, about not being appointed to a position as legal adviser, since there were already nine doctors holding that position.

One of the more interesting attempts to use Pirckheimer's mediatory efforts with the city council occurred in 1517 in a letter from Emperor Maximilian. Addressed to

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26 Br. I, ep. 147, p. 489.
27 Briefbuch, No. 58, fol. 150v.
29 Pirckheimerpapiere, No. 82a.
30 Ibid., No. 44.
"our...dear, true Willibald Pirckheimer, our councilor, "

Maximilian requested Pirckheimer's assistance in an affair involving the imperial chambermaster, Balthasar Wolf von Wolfsthal. The chambermaster's son, who had recently died, had left a will unfavorable to his father, but favorable to his grandmother, Balthasar's mother-in-law. Pirckheimer was to try to seek her renunciation of the will, or, if unsuccessful in that, to solicit the Nuernberg city council to stop the will. Balthasar Wolff von Wolfsthal followed up the emperor's request with his own. Apparently judging Pirckheimer a valuable mediator, he later wrote to him in 1519, asking him to apply to the city council for a favor for one of his servants.

Among all his domestic activities, Pirckheimer, as might be expected from his humanistic interests, was often preoccupied with Nuernberg's educational system. By the fifteenth century, Nuernberg possessed four Latin schools. Two of these were attached to the parish churches, St. Lorenz and St. Sebald, one to a private religious-charita-

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31 Pirckheimer had been appointed an imperial councilor by Maximilian, probably after the Swiss War. There is no certainty, however, of the date. Charles V confirmed Pirckheimer in this position in 1525.

32 Pirckheimerpapiere, No. 463.4.

33 Ibid., No. 537.2

34 Ibid., No. 537.4.
ble foundation, the New Hospital, and one to the monastery of St. Aegidien. The city council had authority over these schools, although the abbot of St. Aegidien appears to have acted independently of the council until the beginning of the sixteenth century. In addition to instruction in the basic subjects of the Trivium, the schools were active in promoting the religious development of the students. This included morning prayers, Gospel readings, and singing of church services. 35

In the latter half of the fifteenth century, complaints over the shortcomings of these elementary Latin schools culminated in a movement for a new school. This movement was led by a circle of humanists, highly influenced by Conrad Celtis, which included Willibald Pirckheimer's father, Johann. The elder Pirckheimer was, in fact, the driving element for a new school free from church influence and under the city council that would serve as a step between the Latin schools and the universities. In this school, the patrician's son could be educated in the humanists' favorite subjects, classical languages and literature. The city council finally succumbed to the arguments of these men and established the "poet's school"

35 On Nuernberg's educational system, see Heinrich Heerwagen, Zur Geschichte der Nuernberger Gelehrtenschulen in dem Zeitraum von 1485 bis 1526 (Nuernberg, 1860).
in 1496. When it failed to gain Conrad Celtis for the position of rector for the new school, the city council appointed Heinrich Grieninger, a humanist from Munich. 36

It was one thing to establish the "poet's school," but quite another to make it a success. Judging from the city documents it was especially Willibald Pirckheimer who was most frequently commissioned by the council and who worked energetically to accomplish this goal. In September, 1496, he was requested to deliberate with the city's legal advisers whether it was necessary to bind Grieninger by an oath, as was the usual practice with the other schoolmasters. 37 The council was obviously well disposed towards Grieninger and inclined to give him a freer position than the other rectors had. It was also Pirckheimer who negotiated with Grieninger over the renewal of his appointment, since it was on a year-by-year basis. 38

When the new school was first established, Grieninger himself had to provide for its location and was then reimbursed for the expenses involved. Pirckheimer was commissioned in 1497 to reimburse Grieninger and to speak


37 Ratsverlässe, No. 335, fol. 10v.

38 See, for example, ibid., No. 359, fol. 13v.
with him over his plans for the next year concerning the school's location. In the process Pirckheimer appears to have assumed most of the responsibility for obtaining a room. In 1498, he negotiated for and obtained a permanent location in the second story of the public weighing building.

During its brief existence, the "poet's school" was faced with opposition from various elements in Nuernberg. Private tutors, who felt threatened by its existence, orally attacked its rector. The city council usually took Grieninger into its protection. This was demonstrated in 1497 when Pirckheimer and Anton Tetzel were commissioned to strongly reprimand Leonhard Vogel, a private teacher, "...on account of the offense committed against Master Heinrich." Vogel was also reminded that he would be punished if he persisted in his attacks. But a more vociferous and challenging opposition arose from the local religious orders, especially the Dominicans, who took it upon themselves to oppose the inroads of humanism. In Nuernberg, the Dominicans were the preachers in the two chief churches of St. Sebald and St. Lorenz, and thus had an effective

39 Ibid., No. 347, fol. lv.
40 Ibid., No. 364, fol. lv.
41 Ibid., No. 364, fol. 10v.
42 Ibid., No. 342, fol. 5v.
means to agitate against the "poet's school." The first indication of this opposition occurred in 1498, when Pirckheimer and Michael Behaim were sent to the Dominican preachers to warn them to refrain from their sermons on the studies in poeticis. The attacks, however, continued, especially from the preacher at St. Sebald. In March, 1499, the students from the "poet's school" countered his sermons by a demonstration in the church. The council took immediate action and directed Pirckheimer and Nicolaus Gross, "...on account of the disunity which has broken out between the preacher at St. Sebald and the students in poeseos," officially to warn the preacher that he must henceforth abstain from these attacks. The conflict, temporarily abated, nevertheless continued and reached a high point in August, 1502, when Pirckheimer was in temporary retirement from the city council. Grieninger and the students of his "poet's school" were also involved in rather vicious conflicts with the schoolmasters and students of the four Latin schools. The rectors of these schools felt threatened educationally, but especially economically, by the existence of the new school. These

43 Ibid., No. 361, fol. 6v.
44 Ibid., No. 369, fol. 5r.
conflicts were exceptionally violent in 1503,\(^\text{45}\) again when Pirckheimer was not in the council. It is perhaps no accident and also a tribute to Pirckheimer's influence in behalf of the "poet's school" that the worst attacks of the Dominicans and rectors of the other schools occurred when he was not sitting in the city council.

By the time Pirckheimer re-entered the city council these continual attacks had motivated Grieninger to leave Nuernberg. Negotiations for his return were led by Pirckheimer.\(^\text{46}\) When he returned to Nuernberg, however, it was not to continue as rector of the "poet's school," but to receive a benefice with St. Clara's that required personal residence. These negotiations had also been in Pirckheimer's hands. And on March 31, 1509, he officially presented Grieninger to the nuns of St. Clara's and also arranged for him to commence with the use of the benefice on May 1.\(^\text{47}\) With Grieninger's acceptance of the benefice, the "poet's school" ceased to exist. But before its demise, Pirckheimer's influence in the affairs of the school

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\(^{45}\) On the continuation of the struggle with the Dominicans, see Bauch, pp. 26-27, and with the rectors, pp. 33-38.

\(^{46}\) Ratsverlässe, No. 460, fol. 9v.

\(^{47}\) Ibid., No. 501, fol. 9v; Ratsbuch, No. 9, fol. 73v. This benefice had previously been offered to George Beheim, with whom Pirckheimer had also conducted the negotiations. See above, p. 76.
had been further attested to in 1508, when Georg Spalatin wrote to Pirckheimer, expressing his desire to take over Grieninger's position with Pirckheimer's help. Nothing came of this, however, for the "poet's school" already was prepared for dissolution.

During the same period in which the "poet's school" was struggling to maintain its existence, Pirckheimer was also frequently commissioned by the council in affairs related to the four Latin schools. It was usually left to Pirckheimer to find suitable candidates for the position of rector. He did this in 1497 for the Sebald school and in 1499, after giving "honorable words" to the rector of the Lorenz school, he was supposed to find a replacement. In the latter case, his efforts resulted in the appointment of Sebastian Sperantius, a friend of Conrad Celtis. Once the appointments had been made Pirckheimer was given the additional task of officially presenting the new rectors to the provosts of the churches.

In 1497, Pirckheimer was given the additional responsibility of dealing with problems related to the behavior of the students. The reputation of Nuernberg's

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48 Br. II, ep. 177, p. 28.
49 Ratsverlasse, No. 342, fol. 5v; No. 368, fol. 3r.
50 Ibid., No. 368, fol. 23v.
51 See, for example, ibid., No. 382, fol. 12r; Ratsbuch, No. 7, fol. 118r.
charitable institutions, the generosity of her citizens, and her location as the center of various trade routes were influential in attracting numerous vagrant students. These students, locally called by the derogatory word *fossen*, created problems for the city council by their generally wild manner of existence and shameless begging. The council took its first step towards correcting this situation in July, 1497, when it delegated Pirckheimer to order the proper city officials to punish the innkeepers who were granting refuge to the students, "...who beg there and don't go to school." He was also to see that the *fossen*, who carried weapons and were disobedient to the rector at the Aegidien school, be put into prison.52 But this action did not eliminate all the problems, for, on August 7, 1499, Pirckheimer, along with Georg Koler, was given additional instructions. These concerned the practice of many *fossen* who were begging for alms even though they didn't go to school. This, the council said, "...took the bread out of the mouths" of the poor but industrious students, who diligently went to school and assisted the churches in the singing of the holy offices. Pirckheimer and Koler were to institute a program by which "...such poor students, who are obedient," would be issued badges

52 Ratsverlässe, No. 347, fol. 4v; Ratsbuch, No. 6, fol. 239v.
to wear so they could be easily recognized. Alms, henceforth, were no longer to be given to those students without badges.\textsuperscript{53} In this way the council made a significant attempt to bring some order and supervision into the begging of poor students.

Despite these activities for the regular Latin schools, most of Pirckheimer's educational efforts had been directed towards the "poet's school." When it collapsed in 1509, he took the lead in trying to transfer some of the humanist program of instruction into the other Nuernberg schools, especially those of St. Sebald and St. Lorenz.

On May 7, 1509, the council decided the following:

\ldots So that the young students are educated to a more imposing fitness and are provided, with good reason, for future learning and study, it is decreed by the council, that henceforth, in the two schools of both parishes [St. Sebald and St. Lorenz] two special locations are to be constructed, in which, before and after noon, each time for one hour, the young boys...are to be instructed in the new Grammatica and poesie, or arte oratoria. And for such, each schoolmaster should have his yearly pay bettered by twenty gulden a year....And Willibald Pirckheimer should visit both schools at first for a while to see that such instruction is begun with a firm foundation.\textsuperscript{54}

\textsuperscript{53} Ratsverlässe, No. 347, fol. 14v; Ratsbuch, No. 6, fol. 241r.

\textsuperscript{54} Ratsverlässe, No. 503, fol. 23; Ratsbuch, No. 9, fol. 87v-88r; printed in Johann Siebenkees (ed.), Materialien zur Nürnbergischen Geschichte (Nuernberg, 1792-1795), I, 283.
It can be assumed from the designation of Pirckheimer as sole visitor and overseer of these two schools that he was the driving force in the creation of the new courses of study. This decision, however, that was made in 1509, was not carried out until the following year, when the new humanistic instruction was inaugurated in May. At that time the council stipulated that two additional councilors, Hieronymus Ebner and Hieronymus Holzschuher, were to serve with Pirckheimer as school visitors on a regular basis. With the establishment of the humanist instruction in the \textit{arte oratorica}, it was now especially desirable to have good rectors at the Lorenz and Sebald schools. When the rector at the Lorenz school retired in 1510, Pirckheimer was probably influential in securing the highly-qualified Johannes Cochlaeus as his replacement.

Pirckheimer retained his position as a school visitor until 1521, when Michael Cadan was given the position. Cadan was instructed to conduct his visitation of the schools "...according to the command and instruction of

55 Ratsverlässe, No. 517, fol. 14v-15r; Ratsbuch, No. 9, fol. 159r; Siebenkees, p. 284.

56 There is no documentary evidence for this assertion. It can be inferred, however, from his influential position on educational matters, and his close friendship with Anton Kress, provost of St. Lorenz, who worked hard to get Cochlaeus. On Kress's role, see Johannes Haumann, \textit{Documenta literaria varii argumenti in lucem prolata} (Altdorf, 1753), pp. 4-9.
Willibald Pirckheimer." Pirckheimer evidently still retained some influence in educational affairs, however, since he was very instrumental in obtaining Hans Denck as rector for the Sebald school in 1523. While Pirckheimer continued to provide advice to the council after his retirement in 1523, there is no evidence that he gave any assistance in matters concerning education. In 1526, when the city council established the so-called "Melanchthon-Gymnasium" in response to Luther's call to the German cities to assume more of the burden of educating Germany's youth, Pirckheimer held himself aloof from the new school and its teachers. When one considers his previous educational effort this seems incongruous, although his reaction by that time against the Lutheran religious changes introduced into Nuernberg probably explains his inaction.

In his educational efforts, as in his other domestic

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57 Ratsverlässe, No. 660, fol. 21v; Siebenkees, p. 287.

58 See Alfred Coutts, Hans Denck, 1495-1527. Humanist and Heretic (Edinburgh, 1927), p. 18. Pirckheimer's efforts for Denck later brought suspicion upon him since Denck was banished from Nuernberg in 1525 for his Anabaptist beliefs.

59 On the beginnings of the "Melanchthon-Gymnasium," see Hugo Steiger, Das Melanchthon-Gymnasium in Nürnberg (1526-1926) (Munich, 1926), pp. 20-47. There is also no evidence that he was asked to participate in the establishment of the school.
activities, Pirckheimer diligently and faithfully served the city council. In return for this service, he expected to be advanced to the higher offices of state. This ambition was clearly revealed in an account of a dream which he claimed to have had on August 25, 1501, in which his deceased father-in-law, Hans Rieter, appeared to him. In response to Pirckheimer's inquiry as to what was in the book of fate for him, Rieter indicated that Pirckheimer was destined to become one of the greatest and most powerful of men. Pirckheimer was, however, to proceed slowly, for otherwise jealousy and even plots on his life would come as a result of this power. These statements clearly project Pirckheimer's dream-wish to attain the higher positions in the city government. When he did not achieve these he became highly disappointed. This disappointment found expression in his correspondence with his closer friends. On May 19, 1508, Lorenz Beheim wrote to Pirckheimer, comforting his friend over the ingratitude of his fellow citizens who had advanced two others ahead of him. Beheim gave his remedy: "Is it not better, as I do it, to refuse to toil with any affair that concerns the

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60 Er. I, ep. 42, p. 130.
Pirckheimer obviously did not think so. His humanist admirers who were further removed from the real situation perhaps only added to his discontent with their fulsome praise and overestimation of his influence in the city. Hermann von dem Busche, for example, dedicated a poem to him in which he stated: "And what Pericles once was in Athens, what Metellus was once in powerful Rome, that you also attain."62

Pirckheimer placed the burden of responsibility for his inability to achieve the higher offices of state on his enemies in Nuernberg. His conflicts with those enemies must now be examined to ascertain the validity of this belief and to gain a clearer picture of his relationship with the city council.

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61 Ibid., II, ep. 175, p. 19. Beheim's reference is to the Easter election of 1508, in which two new members were elected to the council in the position of burgomasters. Pirckheimer evidently hoped to advance again to this position which he had held previously to his withdrawal in 1502.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ENEMIES IN NUERNBERG

In his autobiography, Willibald Pirckheimer presented himself as a man beset and oppressed by numerous enemies in his native city. In fact, over half of this short work was devoted to a discussion of the numerous intrigues against him. Pirckheimer undoubtedly exaggerated the nature and extent of these intrigues, but it is still necessary to examine the enemies he had in Nuernberg and to determine the effect they had upon his relationship to the Nuernberg city council. These enemies included not only members of the city government, who had a direct influence on that relationship, but also others who indirectly affected it.¹

The first of a long series of altercations with his enemies came to fruition in 1502 when Pirckheimer withdrew from the city council at the Easter election. The first written indication of his decision to retire occurred in

¹Pirckheimer did not specifically mention his enemies by name in his autobiography. Their identities can, however, for the most part, be ascertained by the information he gives about these men.
a letter to a friend at the end of 1501. He did not, however, reveal to his friends the reasons for his withdrawal until after his retirement. In the spring of 1502, he explained to a friend that the labors of the state were a burden which drew him away from the study of the humanities which singularly pleased him. For that reason, through the efforts of friends, he was now free of the affairs of state. In order to remain forever free of that burden, he expressed his desire to go to Italy and receive his doctor's degree. However, Pirckheimer's most revealing statement of his motivations came in a letter written in the summer of 1502. Directed probably to Kilian Leib, a relatively close friend, he stated:

Speaking frankly with you, our governors are by no means pleasing to me, for into how many disturbances have they led and daily lead the republic, the deed itself demonstrates; oh, that I am said to have performed foolishly and not more wisely! I acknowledge that we are indebted to the state and republic, and that we should not reject any

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3 Pirckheimer to Dr. Thomas von Thierstein (?), Br. I, ep. 51, p. 166. No one holding a doctor's degree was permitted to be a member of the small city council. See above, p. 17, footnote 35. Pirckheimer didn't carry this out, although the exact reason is unknown. The assertion itself may have been more of a threat than an actual intention.

4 An apparent reference to the criticism of Pirckheimer after Nuernberg's defeat in the battle of the Nuernberg forest on June 19, 1502. See above, pp. 33-37.
labor for these, if we can turn something to account by doing so. But as soon as you arouse only hate in your work, then it is the most extreme foolishness to remain in the same.5

Pirckheimer was obviously dissatisfied and piqued over the failure of his fellow city councilors to give him the kind of recognition he apparently thought he deserved for his efforts. In his autobiography, which was written near the end of his life, this resentment was converted into charges of persecution by an enemy bent on eliminating him.

This enemy, although not specifically named by Pirckheimer in his autobiography, was Paul Volckamer, who held the position of first losunger in 1502.6 He and Pirckheimer had become embittered over a conflict that occurred in 1497-1498. During that period, Volckamer, who was the ecclesiastical administrator for the church of St. Sebald, entered into an angry struggle with Pirckheimer and his brother-in-law, Hans Rieter, over the eternal lamps of the Rieter-Volckamer Foundation.7

Pirckheimer, possessing a quarrelsome, dogmatic nature, as well as a violent temper, was not one to quick-

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5Br. I, ep. 53, p. 176.

6Pirckheimer indicated that his enemy had been elected to the highest position in the government. Rück, Vita, p. 144.

7Ratsverlasse, Nos. 352, fol. 6v-7r; 357, fol. 2r; 358, fol. 13r; 364, fol. 13v, 17r.
ly forget a controversy, as is evident in his portrayal of Volckamer in his autobiography as a "man wholly violent and factious, of extreme avarice, who cared about nothing so long as he could acquire wealth, legally or illegally."\(^8\) According to Pirckheimer, when Volckamer was unable to make him fall in line with his evil plans, he began to disturb Pirckheimer by force. Gradually, Pirckheimer grew so tired of these attacks that he wanted to withdraw from the council. The death of his father (May 3, 1501) provided him with a legitimate occasion for leaving the council, since he now needed time to pursue domestic business. Then, as Pirckheimer continued, he withdrew to "respectable leisure," pursuing the study of the humanities, especially Greek. When his adversary died suddenly,\(^9\) he decided to re-enter the council and was elected again with a large majority.\(^10\)

After his re-entry in 1505, Pirckheimer remained in the council until 1523, but not without further altercations. In 1507, he was involved in an unpleasant affair that got him into trouble with the city council. In that year he came into conflict with Kraft Vetter, a citizen of Donauwörth, who was entangled in a legal struggle over matters of inheritance with a relative, Ursula Grundherr,

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\(^8\) Röck, *Vita*, p. 144.  
\(^9\) Volckamer died of a stroke on February 9, 1505.  
\(^10\) Röck, *Vita*, pp. 144-145.
the wife of a Nuernberg patrician. How Pirckheimer became involved in this business is not spelled out in the documents, but it is probable that he was providing legal assistance for Ursula Grundherr, which brought him into direct contact with Kraft Vetter. On March 1, 1507, in response to insults from Vetter, such as being called a "foolish man," Pirckheimer "slugged him in the face," apparently causing some injury. The city council acted quickly. The case was brought before the court of the Fünf Herren on March 2, and the decision was communicated to Pirckheimer and Vetter on the following day. In its sentence, the council ordered Pirckheimer to pay Vetter twenty pounds as compensation for the "blow in the mouth" and the doctor's fee, a like amount to the council as a punishment for his misdeed, and the court costs. In addition, he was condemned to two days and nights imprisonment "in a tower in a locked chamber."
This affair did not seem to cause any lasting damage to Pirckheimer's favor with the city council, for on August 21 of the same year he was named to the position of Viertelmeister. But it does provide a glimpse of Pirckheimer's tendency to passionately defend any insult to his pride. It is this that offended his fellow councilors and seemed to be at the heart of his more serious conflict with the city council in 1511.

In that year, probably at the beginning of August, he was suddenly invited before the seven alte herren and presented with four charges in which he had violated his duty as a city councilor. These were that he did not forfeit his tokens (Zeichen) when he was absent from council sessions; that he disturbed his fellow councilors by his interruptions during the voting and debating; that he did not wait for the council sessions to end, but took walks outside and inside the town hall during the sessions; and that he served as legal advocate for private persons,

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15 See above, p. 73.

16 According to Scheurl, p. 793, the city councilors received for every session they attended a token worth fifty Pfennige. These tokens could then be cashed in at the end of the month. If they came late to a session, they were fined four Pfennige, and if they were absent without excuse they forfeited one of their tokens.
which did not befit a city councillor.  

In the middle of August, Pirckheimer defended himself against these charges before the entire assembled city council. After informing the council that he felt insulted and his honor impugned, he proceeded to a detailed refutation of each accusation. He rejected the first charge as patently false and absurd. As often as he had been absent from the council sessions, he had always forfeited his tokens. After all,

If I had wanted to be unfaithful to the state, I had many better opportunities, as, for example, in the Swiss War, where several thousand gulden were entrusted to me.... I could easily have kept half the money, and no one could have found out, ... but such a thought never came into my mind. What need do I have that, for the sake of such a despicably small sum of money, not even two or three gulden a year, I should forget my honor, my oath, and my conscience?

Pirckheimer did not deny the second charge that he had interrupted debating and voting. He argued, however,

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17 The four charges are contained in a writing by Pirckheimer, in which he defended himself against them. Although his defense was delivered orally, the work probably faithfully follows the oral defense. The written defense is printed in Br. II, ep. 193, pp. 84-92. The four charges are on pp. 85-86, 88.

18 Ibid., pp. 85-86.
that in so doing he was only fulfilling his duty. He objected strongly to the third accusation and stated that, since the last election, he had missed only two sessions, but that it made little difference whether he attended the sessions or not, since he was not used for anything when he was there, nor was he asked any more to execute decisions of the council. That, he stated, was how the city council showed its appreciation for his previous service.

Have I not faithfully served you and the state for many years, unsparing of my body and property? First, in the Swiss War, where I not only offered my life, but also my possessions and spent over 150 gulden. In all the following affairs, in which you used me, I have faithfully served you according to my abilities, in the negotiations with Cunz Schott, the margrave, and the Elector of the Palatinate. In all of these I was regarded not slovenly, as I am now accused, but useful to you to such an extent that I received honor from it. But I ask all of you, what thanks or reward have I received up to this hour from such service? This is the reward: that my honor is greatly slandered. Whether this is right or just, I leave to you to judge.

Finally, Pirckheimer did not deny the fourth accusation.

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19 Ibid., p. 86.

20 The Ratsverlasse indicate otherwise, although it can be noticed that Pirckheimer was directed to a much greater activity after this affair than before. Compare, for example, Ratsverlasse, Nos. 526-533, passim, with Nos. 535-541, passim.

21 On Pirckheimer's service concerning Cunz Schott, see above, pp. 28-29; the margrave, pp. 44-47; Elector of the Palatinate, pp. 39-44.

22 Br. II, ep. 193, p. 87.
sation that he advocated. He explained, however, that he didn't do it for the sake of money, which he didn’t need, but for his friends, poor people, widows, and orphans. For this reason it was certainly no detriment to the city.  

Having defended himself against the four charges, Pirckheimer then went over to the offensive. He declared that even if he had attended every council session, said nothing during the sessions, and had not devoted himself to private legal practice, these accusations against him still would have been made, for behind all these reproaches there stood only the hate and envy of his enemies. For that reason, he wanted to withdraw from the council and requested it to release him.  

Pirckheimer's defense was quite successful. In its decision of August 18, the city council declared that it had erred on the first three charges and apologized for having made them. On the fourth point, however, it enjoined him to quite his service as a legal counsel. However it was not absolutely forbidden to him since he might serve as advocate for his friends, relatives, and "poor,

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\(^{23}\)Ibid., p. 88.  
\(^{24}\)Ibid., pp. 88-90.
miserable persons." The council also informed him that it could not grant his request for dismissal from the council since it was not usual to do so in the middle of the year. He should remain until the new election and then take his leave if he wanted.

After a few days' consideration Pirckheimer made a reply to the council's decision. In it, he demonstrated a continuing irritability over the first charge concerning the tokens, even though the council had absolved him of all guilt in the matter. On the matter of his service as a legal counsel, he agreed not to accept a new case before the next election. Otherwise, "I am satisfied with the council's decision for, with that answer, my honor has been restored." In accordance with the council's wishes, he indicated his willingness to remain in the council and to let the subject of his withdrawal rest until the new election.

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25 Pirckheimer's service as a legal counsel was henceforth done with the permission of the council. See Ratsverlässe, No. 559, fol. 13r; Ratsbuch, No. 10, fol. 88r: "Willibald Pirckheimer is permitted to counsel and serve as advocate for Leonhard Grundelfinger's widow before the imperial supreme court in her case against Barbara Sturmer." See also Ratsverlässe, No. 570, fol. 7v; Ratsbuch, No. 10, fol. 131v.

26 Ratsverlässe, No. 534, fol. 3v-4r; Ratsbuch, No. 9, fol. 235r; printed in Br. II, pp. 92-93. Pirckheimer's defense also contains the substance of the decision. Ibid., pp. 90-91.

27 Ratsbuch, No. 9, fol. 235; Br. II, pp. 91-93.
Pirckheimer must have considered his honor restored for he did not withdraw from the council in the election of 1512. But the absolution of 1511 did not bring an end to the problems he had with his enemies, to whom he had referred in his written defense. His chief enemy was Anton Tetzel, who, because of his position in the city government, could create many difficulties for him.

Pirckheimer had at one time been a close friend of Tetzel. In 1505, when he and Tetzel had undertaken a mission to Cologne together, Pirckheimer had considered him "...a colleague very dear to himself." At that time, Tetzel had been the third captain general but was raised to the position of second Losunger in 1507. Pirckheimer's hostility toward him developed soon after Tetzel had obtained this position. Pirckheimer rapidly came to consider him an arrogant, deceitful, and greedy man who, along with the faction that supported him, "...preferred their private interests to the state's." Consequently, Tetzel and his faction became violent opponents. As Pirckheimer narrated it, they tried to force him out of the city council, kept him from the important affairs of the city, and prevented him from advancing to higher of-

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In fact, Pirckheimer claimed that he had to guard against ambushes and that "...his rivals were so insinuate that, when he went on diplomatic missions, he had to conceal the day of his going and coming." Pirckheimer probably exaggerated the situation, but an affair involving Pirckheimer and Tetzel in violent disagreement that dragged on from 1509 to 1513 indicates that the city council partially accepted Pirckheimer's opinion of his opponent. Anton Tetzel's son had married Anna Haller, the widow of Karl Haller, in 1509. In 1508, Karl Haller had been granted controlling authority over Sigmund Oertel's possessions, which were valued at 1250 gulden and bore a rent of fifty gulden for a foundation established by a member of the Rieter family. The possessions had been placed in trust due to Haller's spending habits, and Anna Haller, after the death of her husband and marriage to Tetzel's son, now attempted to claim possession of the estate. The Rieter family, thinking the Rieter foundation threatened, opposed her actions and complained to the city council. In this effort, they received the help of Pirckheimer as legal counsel, who was related to the Rieters.

29 Being kept from advancing to higher offices seemed to disturb Pirckheimer more than anything else. See above, pp. 92-93.
30 Rück, Vita, p. 147.
By 1511, the affair had advanced to the point where Pirckheimer and Tetzel, who was supporting the claims of his daughter-in-law, were exchanging angry words in the council sessions. Tetzel disputed the right of the Rieters and their lawyer, Pirckheimer to meddle in the case. Anna Tetzel went so far as to introduce a writing containing complaints over Pirckheimer. The city council, now incensed over the entire business, decided on October 14, 1511, that Pirckheimer was guiltless and had been "attacked unfairly" in the writing. It also demanded that Anton Tetzel see to an orderly arrangement of the entire business.

The affair was apparently not settled then, for in 1513, Jorg Rieter, who had been pressing the case for his family, lost his patience and threatened to take the case to the Swabian League. When he informed the city council of his decision, it pressed again for a settlement of the affair. This led to another violent debate between Pirck-
heimer and Tetzel. This time the council asked the two opponents to leave the council room while the remaining members debated the situation and then informed the two men of its decision. Tetzel was given a formal reproach for behavior unbecoming a councilor of his rank. Pirckheimer was not formally reproached, but both men were enjoined to see that the affair did not reach the Swabian League.  

Pirckheimer apparently felt little satisfied in the way the affair had turned out. In 1513, he made a hidden attack upon Tetzel by publishing a Latin translation of Plutarch's De his qui tarde a numine corripiuntur. Clearly aimed at Tetzel, Pirckheimer stated in the dedication to his sister Charitas:

'We especially magnanimously suffer the injuries of wicked men..., since criminals living or dead are not able to escape the judgment of God. For Jupiter (as the poets say) at last arises and compensates for the tardiness of the punishment with the gravity of the punishment....It is impossible for a treacherous, deceitful man to gain stable and lasting power. Even if fortune accompanies him a while, nevertheless the time comes (as Demosthenes says) when it disperses into nothing.'

In 1514, Pirckheimer was subjected to a libelous

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34 Ratsverlässe, No. 556, fol. 14r.

35 This is evident in Pirckheimer's written defense in the Hans Schütz affair. See below, pp. 109-111.

attack that resulted in a vexatious affair lasting for four years. This was outwardly the work of Hans Schütz, but as the affair unfolded it was evident that Anton Tetzel was the instigator behind Schütz's efforts.

Hans Schütz was a Nuernberg merchant who had for many years created problems for the city council. He was finally forced to leave Nuernberg on account of his debts, even though his father had been one of the richest men in the city. On March 19, 1514, the city council received from Schütz a libelous tract against Pirckheimer. He also sent copies of the same work to twenty-five persons in Nuernberg. In it, Pirckheimer was pictured not only as the chief author of Schütz's financial troubles, but as a purveyor of many "malicious actions." Schütz requested the city council to punish Pirckheimer for these actions and to help him gain 5000 gulden compensation for all the damages Pirckheimer had caused him. If the council would not co-operate with him, Schütz threatened to take his complaints to the emperor and all the estates of the empire.

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37 On Hans Schütz, and for a brief account of this affair, see Emil Reicke, "Willibald Pirckheimer und sein Ehrenhandel mit Hans Schütz," Jahresbericht des Vereins für Geschichte der Stadt Nürnberg, XXIV (1921-1922), 35-38.

38 Br. II, ep. 302, pp. 341-345. The charges he levied against Pirckheimer are mentioned below, pp. 110-111, in the discussion of Pirckheimer's defense.
At the time of Schütz's attack Pirckheimer was on a diplomatic mission to Linz and Innsbruck. Instead of notifying Pirckheimer directly, the council had Caspar Nützel, his travelling companion, inform him at an "opportune" time of Schütz's attack. It is clear from the council's letter to Nützel that it did not consider this affair to be Schütz's work alone. It characterized Schütz as a "disobedient citizen" and stated that this had not happened "...from his own head, but out of the envious hate and direction of certain evil people," who must have had much knowledge of the council's affairs. Nützel was to assure Pirckheimer that the council would spare no effort or cost in proceeding against Schütz and all his backers.\(^39\)

When Pirckheimer had returned to Nuremberg from his diplomatic mission, he composed a lengthy defense which he presented orally to the council on April 24.\(^40\) In the introduction, he stated that this indictment against him really originated not from Schütz, but from his enemies in the city council. Only through these, Pirckheimer charged, could Schütz have revealed things he would not otherwise have known.\(^41\) Pirckheimer then proceeded to a point-by-

\(^{39}\)Br. II, ep. 302, pp. 352-353.

\(^{40}\)His written defense, Br. II, ep. 310, pp. 377-402, probably follows faithfully his oral presentation.

\(^{41}\)Ibid., pp. 377-381.
point refutation of the charges levied against him. Schütz had dredged up the old charge of 1511 that Pirckheimer served as legal advocate contrary to the council's regulations. This Pirckheimer easily refuted, going into detail over the eight specific cases his opponent had mentioned. To the accusation that he had said malicious things about the losunger and alte herren, Pirckheimer indicated his regret that some of these officials conducted themselves in such a way that one could say nothing good about them, although they themselves believed one should speak well of them regardless of what they do.

One charge Schütz had made against Pirckheimer was undoubtedly a great source of amusement to his fellow councilors, namely, that Pirckheimer, "...as had happened in Bologna, Florence, and many other powerful communes," planned to make himself lord of Nuernberg. Pirckheimer did not even bother to refute it, but used it as an opportunity to attack his enemies. If it were possible, he said, that anyone could have made himself lord of Nuernberg, it would have happened in the past several years when some councilors had ruled by pure wantonness. Indeed, no one, regardless of how pious, honest, or capable he was, could

42 See above, pp. 99, 102.
43 Br. II, ep. 310, pp. 381-390.
44 Ibid., p. 390.
have been promoted by them. Pirckheimer was plainly thinking of himself here, for he went on to say that he had been in the way of these people, which led them to attempt to force him out of the city council several years earlier (1511).\(^4\) He was further reproached that he had published a little book in which he attacked pious people, predicted misfortune for the city, and allowed himself to be given high titles belonging to princes and gentlemen.\(^{46}\) To this Pirckheimer replied that he was glad Schütz had read the book, but apparently he had not understood it and its lesson, namely, that no evil man had a good end. Pirckheimer further stated that he had given himself no high titles, but he could not hinder others from doing so. Besides, "even if I had called myself a bishop in my little book, what is that to Tetzel, I mean, to Schütz."\(^{47}\) Pirckheimer next catalogued a long list of malicious deeds perpetrated by his enemies and reproached the council for having permitted these to continue so long. Without its indulgence the present situation would never have happened. In conclusion, he presented three requests: that the council accept his answer; that it allow no injury to him in this

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\(^{45}\) Ibid., pp. 390-392.

\(^{46}\) The little book is Plutarch's *De his qui tarde a numine corripiuntur*. See above, p. 107.

\(^{47}\) Br. II, ep. 310, pp. 392-393.
evil affair; and that the council let him know if it would allow him to go to court against several of the perpetrators. 48

The council gave its reply to Pirckheimer on the same day. Concerning the first two requests it stated that it had already, through Caspar Nützel, 49 expressed itself with respect to his innocence and had condemned the business undertaken by Schütz. However, in regard to his third request, it could give no answer because it was worded too generally. If Pirckheimer could give some specific names the council would deliberate further. 50

The council's reply brought about a violent exchange of words between Pirckheimer and Tetzel in the council session on April 25. Two days later Pirckheimer was reprimanded for his behavior. The council indicated its displeasure with these speeches against Tetzel, "...since nothing good will follow from them." For the future Pirckheimer was advised to refrain from invectives against Tetzel, since he had no cause for them. As it had already demonstrated, the council concluded that it was

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48 Ibid., pp. 394-399.

49 In its letter asking Nützel to inform Pirckheimer of Schütz's attack, see above, p. 109.

50 Ratsverlasse, No. 570, fol. 4; Ratsbuch, No. 10, fol. 130b-131r; the entry is also contained in Pirckheimer's written defense, Br. II, ep. 310, pp. 399-400.
inclined in the Schütz affair to help Pirckheimer as much as possible.  \(^{51}\)

The city council began to execute this offer of help on April 25 when it wrote to Schütz and stated its refusal to undertake anything whatsoever against Pirckheimer.  \(^{52}\)

Nevertheless, the problem of Hans Schütz was not eliminated that easily since he had threatened to take his complaints to higher authorities. The council, realizing this, now made attempts at mediation, in which Caspar Nützel for the council and Hans Scharpff, a Bamberg magistrate, for Schütz, played the chief roles. This attempt revolved primarily around the effort to get Schütz to make an apology to the council and Pirckheimer for his attacks, as well as a solemn agreement to forego any further accusations. It is evident in the rough draft of the apology that the city council was being quite generous to Schütz and even gave him the possibility of shifting guilt from himself to those who had undertaken this and supported him.  \(^{53}\) But Schütz refused all of these first attempts at compromise.

\(^{51}\)Ibid., p. 400.

\(^{52}\)Briefbuch, No. 72, fol. 101v; Br. II, ep. 311\textsuperscript{i}, p. 413.

\(^{53}\)The relevant documents are in the Staatsarchiv, Nuremberg, S.I I., 57, No. 13. The drafts for the apology are printed in Br. II, ep. 318\textsuperscript{vi}, p. 434; ep. 318\textsuperscript{vii}, pp. 435-436; ep. 318\textsuperscript{viii}, pp. 437-438.
Pirckheimer was now able to gain some satisfaction even though these mediation attempts had floundered. In November, 1514, Anton Tetzel, his chief enemy and the instigator of Schütz's action, was removed of all his high offices and put into prison. This was not done, however, because of the Hans Schütz affair, but because of other instances in which Tetzel had received bribes and given state secrets to his relatives. But Pirckheimer could not enjoy for long the pleasure of seeing his opponent fall since the Schütz business continued unabated. Attempts were made in 1515 by Schütz's brother, Gregory, and cousins, Dr. Hieronymus Schütz and Hans Pauer, to effect a settlement with Pirckheimer. But their conception of a settlement was the granting of compensation to Hans Schütz for the damages he had suffered, which the council categorically refused. These efforts were therefore also in vain and Schütz reacted in November, 1515, by issuing new threats and libelous statements against Pirckheimer and the city council. The council responded with a new pledge of

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54 On Tetzel's fall from power, see Reicke, "Der Sturz...," No. 9, pp. 51-53.

55 Briefbuch, No. 73, fol. 174v; Ratsverlässe, No. 583, fol. 12r, 14r; Ratsbuch, No. 10, fol. 224v-226v; the Ratsbuch entry is printed in Br. II, ep. 358, pp. 538-542.
support for Pirckheimer. 56

By the end of 1515 and the beginning of 1516, the city council, obviously tired of this burdensome affair, was beginning to be inclined to arrive at an amicable settlement with Schütz. For that reason, following a suggestion of Schütz himself, 57 the council now separated Pirckheimer's case with Schütz from its own and made arrangements for a "friendly hearing" before the Bishop of Bamberg on March 3, 1516. 58 Pirckheimer, however, did not believe that an honorable conclusion could be reached in this way. His own solution to the affair had been proposed already in July, 1514, to which he adhered throughout the four-year affair. Pirckheimer wanted the matter brought as a legal case before a proper judge, namely, a Nuremberg city court, since both he and Schütz were Nuremberg citizens. If Schütz, however, was not willing to have this, then the case should be tried before anyone Schütz wanted, but with the stipulation that neither contender be given safe-conduct, so that each party would have to subject

56 Ratsverlässe, No. 591, fol. 3v; Ratsbuch, No. 10, fol. 274r; printed in Br. II, ep. 37311, p. 583, but with incorrect page citation and date.

57 City council to Hans Pauer, Briefbuch, No. 75, fol. 43v.

58 City council to Bishop of Bamberg, Briefbuch, No. 75, fol. 59v.
himself unreservedly to the punishment meted out by the judging party. Neither the council nor Schütz had yet agreed to this proposal by the beginning of 1516. Consequently, Pirckheimer was discontented over the entire situation. This is demonstrated in a letter to Hieronymus Emser in which Pirckheimer discussed the forthcoming session between Schütz and the council before the Bishop of Bamberg:

My case has been entirely excluded because I, in no way, on account of the grave injuries, aim to act and reply otherwise than in criminal proceedings and those without a safe conduct, which my adversary is continually unwilling to accept. Therefore I shall wait.

Pirckheimer also indicated that Schütz, after negotiations with the city council, had finally demanded a reward of 1000 gulden for which he would reveal the names of all the people in Nuernberg who were involved in the affair against Pirckheimer. This the council was not prepared to pay.

The effort before the Bishop of Bamberg was also a failure and Schütz now, in 1516 and 1517, turned to various secular lords, including the Landgrave of Leuchtenberg in the Upper Palatinate and Duke George of Saxony. The city council had to explain in lengthy letters the real situa-

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59 Pr. II, ep. 324, pp. 444-446.
60 Pirckheimerpapiere, No. 331c.
tion to these different lords. It is obvious from these extensive efforts by the council that it greatly feared, as had happened before in Nuernberg's history, that Schütz would win over to his cause some of the Franconian landed nobility who would be only too willing to begin a feud with the city. Pirckheimer realized this, as well as the possible personal danger to himself, when he asked the city council if he could hire a bodyguard.

With these considerations in mind it was understandable that the council now reacted favorably to the attempt of Gregory Schütz, in November, 1517, to bring about a reconciliation between the council and his brother. The council decided on November 24 that, if Schütz were to make sufficient promises to desist from any further actions against it, it would "...free him from worry for his past actions." Nevertheless, Pirckheimer would still be allowed to bring his case against Schütz before a regular court of law. After some altercations over the

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61 For example, see city council to Duke George of Saxony, Feb. 17, 1517, Briefbuch, No. 76, fol. 143r-145v.

62 Pirckheimer's request was in a postscript to his answer to Gregory Schütz's petition to the council printed in Ernst Münch, Bilibald Pirckheimer's Schweizerkrieg..., p. 286. The original is lost.

63 Gregory Schütz's petition is in ibid., pp. 277-279.

64 Ratsverlässe, No. 616, fol. 22; Ratsbuch, No. 11, fol. 113r.
exact wording of his written promise, the council and Schütz reached a settlement at the beginning of February, 1518. 65

Since Pirckheimer's argument with his opponent had been excluded from this agreement, he now requested and received permission from the council to bring his case against Schütz before the court of the Fünf Herren. 66 Pirckheimer appeared before the court on April 13 and presented his charges. 67 On the following day a written citation was sent to Schütz requesting him to appear before the court to answer to Pirckheimer's charges. 68 The council's efforts to get Schütz to appear before the court dragged on for months. To Pirckheimer, the city council appeared to be delaying deliberately, due to its leniency towards Schütz, over which he bitterly complained. 69 Finally, on November 19, Schütz was judged in contumaciam to four months imprisonment, although he could commute two

65 Ratsverlässe, No. 619, fol. 12r. The exact terms of the agreement are in Amts- und Standbuch, No. 47, fol. 209v.
66 Ratsverlässe, No. 620, fol. 20v; on the Fünf Herren, see above, p. 71.
67 Ratsverlässe, No. 622, fol. 7r. Pirckheimer's charges are in Pirckheimerpapiere, Nos. 136a, 221.
68 Ratsverlässe, No. 622, fol. 8v.
69 Pirckheimer to city council, Pirckheimerpapiere, No. 136b.
two months to a money payment. He was also supposed to pay all of the court costs. Since Schütz did not return to the city to accept the punishment, he lost his Nuernberg citizenship forever.

The final decision could not have given Pirckheimer much satisfaction, for it had been at the cost of four years of effort and vexation. It was, as is evident from his correspondence, especially disconcerting that the city council, which had been helpful in the beginning, showed itself eventually to be only too willing to consider its interests at the expense of Pirckheimer's.

During the Hans Schütz affair, Pirckheimer came into open conflict with another city councilor, Conrad Imhoff, who had been at odds with him for years. The earliest reference to disagreements between the two men is in a letter from Venice of Albrecht Dürer to his good friend in 1506. Dürer wanted to know when Pirckheimer intended to come to an agreement with Imhoff, an apparent reference to their constant opposition in the council sessions. Even the marriage of Pirckheimer's daughter Felicitas to Conrad Imhoff's nephew, Hans, in 1515, failed to lessen the hostility between the two men, for in May, 1517, they abused each other so violently in a council session that the coun-

70 Amts- und Standbuch, No. 47, fol. 210r.
oil formally censured them both.

This scene occurred during an innocuous debate over the procedure of wine inspection in Nuernberg. After the exchange of some mild unpleasantries, each became disturbed enough to request a hearing to prove that the other had no right to be a member of the city council. Three days after this scene, the senior burgomasters and alte genannte met to discuss this affair, and after "diligent examination" arrived at a decision that was then communicated to Pirckheimer and Imhoff. The two men were first reminded of the necessity to maintain a peaceful and faithful concert among the city councilors.

For whoever is unfaithful to the maintenance and promotion of the common good and such good faithfulness for the sake of his own interest, presents also an evil example to subjects and the common man, and a diminution of the rulers and their own persons.72

Neither Pirckheimer nor Imhoff, the council continued, had the right to challenge the other's right to sit in the council. They rightfully deserved a punishment for their accu-

72"Dann das wer zu erhaltung und furderung gemains nutz und solhs gutten vertrewlichen ainigen willens nicht dienlich raichet auch bey den unnderthanen und dem gemeinen mann zu einem posen beschwerlichen exempl und verclaynung der Regenten und irer selbs personen." Ratsbuch, No. 11, fol. 85v-87r, contains a lengthy discussion of the entire affair; the Ratsverlässe, No. 610, fol. insert between fol. 7 and 8, contains only the council's decision.
sations, but instead the council commanded them hereafter to refrain from such arguments and to keep peace towards one another "in word and deed." To buttress this, Pirckheimer and Imhoff had to formally promise to adhere to this command, as well as to swear an oath to this effect in the presence of the other city councilors.73 The council's policy was effective, for there is no further mention of disagreements between them before Imhoff's death in 1519.

At this point, Pirckheimer's problems with his enemies and the city council were further complicated by the stirrings of the Reformation in Nuremberg and his own conflict with Johannes von Eck.74 His affliction with the gout also began to especially plague him. It became so bad that he was forced to ride on horseback the short distance from his house to the town hall.75 In addition to these problems, he was, according to his autobiography, confronted now with another faction in the council whose leader was a man who had been a close friend of Pirckheimer. By his favor, he said, the man had greatly increased his power, and "by the pretence of uprightness" had secured a

73 Ibid.
74 See below, chapter 6.
considerable reputation. Although, as usual, Pirckheimer did not name his opponent in his autobiography, what evidence he gave points to Lazarus Spengler, the city secretary.

The friendship Pirckheimer and Spengler had earlier achieved was primarily a result of their common diplomatic missions and humanistic interests. As late as 1520, their inclusion in the first papal bull of condemnation against Luther and their joint effort to be relieved of that burden had strengthened their amiable relationship. But Pirckheimer's growing dissatisfaction with the Lutheran religious changes in Nuernberg, in which Spengler was a leader, led to a break between the two men. The first written evidence of Pirckheimer's change of attitude occurred in 1524 in some lines of poetry. In these, Pirckheimer castigated Osiander, a preacher at St. Lorenz, and Spengler, the city secretary, for imposing their views upon Nuernberg:

76 Rück, Vita, p. 149.

77 His discussion of this enemy (ibid., pp. 149-151) gives few tangible clues for identity. Pirckheimer did say that the man was burdened by poverty and a multitude of sons. Although Spengler, as city secretary, was not poor, he did not possess the wealth that most patricians did. In the time period to which Pirckheimer is referring, Spengler had six sons. See Gottlieb Haussdorff, Lebensbeschreibung eines christlichen Politici, nehmliche Lazar Spenglers (Nuernberg, 1741), pp. 19-25. The general tenor of his comments coincides with his other known statements on Spengler which are given in the following paragraph.

78 Their earlier friendship is shown in Hans von
Is it not a special plague from God
And a source of ridicule to the Nuernbergers,
That a priest without any experience
And an arrogant secretary without any honor
Should rule such a praiseworthy city
And correct everything according to their wills.
Whatever they want must be right and must be done. 79

Pirckheimer, who was generally impervious to reconciliation once he had become alienated from a person, expressed himself in a similar fashion in the last year of his life, 1530. In a letter to Johann Tscherte, a Viennese architect, Pirckheimer recounted how Spengler had once been his and Albrecht Dürer's good friend, but if he, Tscherte, only knew "...what sort of business the man...carried on, you would scarcely be able to wonder how words and deeds could be so contradictory in one man." 80

It was this man and his faction, Pirckheimer claimed, that ultimately led him to withdraw permanently from the city council in 1523. With his usual exaggeration, Pirckheimer recounted the "plots," "ambushes," and "harassments," fostered against him, since he was the one man,

Schubert, Lazarus Spengler und die Reformation in Nürnberg ("Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte," XVII; Leipzig, 1934), pp. 81-146.

79 Georg Waldau, Vermischte Beyträge zur Geschichte der Stadt Nürnberg (Nuernberg, 1785), I, 250.

80 Georg Lochner, "Pirckheimers Brief an Tzerte," Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft, II (1879), 38.
above all others, who opposed this faction's clandestine plans, "...useful to themselves, but most dangerous to the republic." Having a legitimate excuse, his affliction with the gout, he applied for and received his discharge from the city council on April 5, 1523, as is recorded in the council's decree:

Herr Willibald Pirckheimer, upon his request and report of his physical weakness, is released from the office of alte genannte and trust of the city council. He should therefore be informed of that with this announcement. If his physical weakness does not prevent it, the city council would like to keep him longer in its midst because of his intelligence and ability. And the city council will look to him, when it, from time to time, is in need of his advice and requests it, that he will show himself obliging in that, as he had done up to now.  

To the council's request, Pirckheimer gave a positive response, which also gives insight into Pirckheimer's motivation for his service as a city councilor:

81 Rück, Vita, p. 149.

82"Hr. Wilbolt Birckhaimer ist auff sein pitlich an­suchen und anzaigen seins leybsschwachait des alten ge­nannten ampts und pflegnuss des rats erlassen, das soll ime also eroffent werden mit disen anzaigen. Wo ine seins leibs schwachait nicht verhindert, wolt ime ein rat seiner ver­nunft und schicklichaithalben gern lennger bey inen haben. Und woll sich ein Eat zu ime versehen. Wo man yezuzeitten seins rats notdurfftig und darauf ansuchen er werd sich darinnen gutwillig erzaigen wie er bisser gethan hab. Ratsverlässe, No. 689, fol. lv-2r; Ratsbuch, No. 12, fol. 160r.
Although he knew he was inferior to the city council, ... nevertheless, he rejoiced exceedingly that the city council held such an opinion of him. He had always worked diligently as was completely fitting, since it was especially the duty of a good man that he always thinks first of his usefulness to his fatherland at the right time. Therefore, since he had always cared for the public good (bonum publicum), hereafter, when asked to give advice, he could not fail to do the same as far as he might help and promote that.  

In his autobiography, Pirckheimer claimed that the city council, upon the instigation of the hostile faction, also offered him a liberal stipend for work as a consultant, a request that is not documented in the city's sources. This, Pirckheimer said, he refused, but indicated his willingness to give his advice when called upon without financial reimbursement. This request occurred when Nuernberg again had troubles with her neighboring princes (1527-1528). As Pirckheimer indicated in the concluding sentence of his autobiography, he gave this assistance "kindly and diligently."  

During the same time that he was serving the city council with his advice on matters of foreign policy in 1528, Pirckheimer was again brought into suspicion with

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83 Rück, Vita, p. 150.  
84 Ibid., pp. 150-152. On this assistance, see above, pp. 68-69.
the council. This time it occurred through the hostile actions of Christoph Scheurl, one of the city's legal advisers.

Scheurl and Pirckheimer had had a friendly relationship that went back at least to 1506. In that year, Scheurl gave witness to his high opinion of the Nuernberg patrician in a letter to the latter's sister, Charitas, then abbess of St. Clara's. Scheurl praised Pirckheimer as one of the most talented men in Germany, who was adept in politics, law, warfare, and literary activity. 85 This cordial relationship was strained considerably during Pirckheimer's affair with Hans Schütz. In his legal opinions during this altercation, Scheurl invariably took a position detrimental to Pirckheimer's cause. 86 In 1518, Pirckheimer wrote to a friend requesting him to ignore the malicious gossip that Scheurl was spreading in Eichstätt over Pirckheimer.

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85 Goldast (ed.), Opera, pp. 340-341. On Christoph Scheurl, see Franz von Soden, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Reformation und der Sitten jener Zeit mit besonderem Hinblick auf Christoph Scheurl II (Nuernberg, 1855), and by the same author, Christoph Scheurl der Zweite und sein Wohnhaus in Nürnberg (Nuernberg, 1857). See also Wilhelm Graf, Dr. Christoph Scheurl von Nürnberg (Leipzig and Berlin, 1930).

86 See Staatsarchiv, Nuernberg. Ratschlagbuch, No. 1, fol. 170v-173r (November 23, 1517). Scheurl here expressed the opinion that the city council should seek a reconciliation with Hans Schütz. Such a course of action, another legal adviser pointed out, would be highly detrimental to Pirckheimer.
heimer's affair with Schütz. Pirckheimer apparently brought his case against Scheurl before the city council, for, on February 23, 1518, Scheurl defended himself against the charge that he had had said anything prejudicial to Pirckheimer, in Sulzbach and Eichstätt, where he had accidentally been brought into contact with Hans Schütz. The city council decided against Pirckheimer in this instance for it expressed its satisfaction with Scheurl's answer and allowed him to continue giving legal advice in Pirckheimer's affair with Schütz.

Ten years later, in 1528, the two men were involved in a controversy that resulted in a virulent and irreconcilable animosity. The cause of the controversy was the supposed existence of a Catholic alliance aimed at the extermination of the Protestants. Martin Luther, although doubting its existence, had, in a letter to Wenceslaus Linck, a preacher in Nuernberg, expressed himself violently against Duke George of Saxony, the alleged head of the alliance. When Duke George later obtained a copy of this letter, he sent a delegate, Thomas von der Haiden, to Nuernberg to investigate Nuernberg's and especially Linck's role in disseminating the letter. While in Nuernberg, the

87 Pirckheimerpapiere, No. 43.
88 Ibid., No. 498.
89 Ratsverlässe, No. 620, fol. 11r, 13v.
Saxon delegate, through Christoph Scheurl's efforts, was able to examine the original letter. When this was revealed, Scheurl was called before the council to answer for his actions.  

Scheurl, now in a difficult position, attempted to alleviate it by implicating another party. He claimed that he did not have the much-mentioned letter, but said he had learned from a friend that Willibald Pirckheimer had had the letter and had sent it to a friend, Johannes Cochlaeus. Pirckheimer, upon his request, received a copy of Scheurl's defense from the city council, and then sent a written defense against these charges to the city council. Pirckheimer accused Scheurl of deliberately lying to avoid punishment for himself. Scheurl had not only done him an injustice, Pirckheimer said, but also had disgracefully slandered him. Scheurl could never prove his charge, since he, Pirckheimer, had not even seen the letter, let alone sent it to Cochlaeus. Pirckheimer expressed the hope that the city council would henceforth entrust no duties to this "lying and thoughtless man," since he would

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90 On the background, see the lengthy discussion in the Ratsbuch, No. 14, fol. 270v-272r.

91 Scheurl to the city council, Staatsarchiv, Nürnberg, S.I L. 37, No. 5.

92 Ratsverlässe, No. 764, fol. 17v.
only injure the city. After Scheurl had replied to the city council to answer Pirckheimer's accusations, the council decided to call a halt to the growing controversy. Scheurl's latest reply was not imparted to Pirckheimer and both parties were informed by the council that it had heard their replies and regretted that they had carried on this affair so passionately. If they could not settle their differences, the council reminded them that regular legal processes stood open to them, although they should refrain from libel. A day later, December 29, 1528, Pirckheimer and Scheurl decided to rest their case against each other, and the city council, now satisfied, allowed the whole affair to be dropped.

In all his encounters with his enemies, Pirckheimer reacted violently to what he considered to be attacks on his honor. As seen, he was of an easily excitable nature, and in reacting as strongly as he did, he oftentimes only worsened his position in the eyes of the city council, even in those instances in which he was clearly in the right. In addition, usually one of his reactions was to

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93 S.I L. 37, No. 5.
94 Ratsverlässe, No. 765, fol. 1v; Ratsbuch, No. 14, fol. 283r.
95 Ratsverlässe, No. 765, fol. 2v; Ratsbuch, No. 14, fol. 283v.
accuse the city council of sacrificing him, who had done so much for the city, for the sake of expediency in finding a solution. This reproach was especially apparent in 1520-1521, when he was officially excommunicated.
CHAPTER SIX
WILLIBALD PIRCKHEIMER, THE NUERNBERG CITY COUNCIL,
AND THE PAPAL BULLS OF 1520-1521

In 1520, Willibald Pirckheimer became entangled in a problem that seriously affected his relationship to the city council. It began with the inclusion of his name in the papal bull Exsurge Domine, issued June 15, 1520. Although the primary purpose of the bull was the condemnation of Luther, six others, including Pirckheimer and Lazarus Spengler, the Nuernberg city secretary, were accused of having exalted and propagated Luther's teachings and were given sixty days to recant on pain of excommunication.¹

¹Many of the relevant documents for this affair have been published in the two works of Johann Riederer, Beiträge zu den Reformatursurkunden... (Altdorf, 1762), pp. 60-155, and Nachrichten zur Kirchen-, Gelehrten- und Büchersgeschichte (Altdorf, 1763-1768), I-II. There is still no completely satisfactory account of this affair. The earlier accounts of Paul Drews, Willibald Pirckheimers Stellung zur Reformation (Leipzig, 1887), pp. 46-76, and Rudolph Hagen, "Willibald Pirckheimer in seinem Verhältnis zum Humanismus und zur Reformation," MVGN, IV (1882), 108-127, did not make use of city documents. There are two brief articles containing pertinent city documents: Karl Schornbaum, "Nürnberg und die Bulle exsurge domine," Zeitschrift für bayerische Kirchengeschichte, X (1935), 91-96; H. Westermayer, "Zur Bannangelegenheit Pirckheimers und Spenglers," Beiträge zur bayerischen Kirchengeschichte, II (1896), 1-8. There is a good account by Hans von Schubert in his biography of Lazarus Spengler based on most of the sources, but unfortunately it contains factual errors.

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The inclusion of Pirckheimer and Spengler was the personal act of revenge of Johannes von Eck of Ingolstadt, a bitter foe of Luther and of the two Nuernbergers. Eck assumed that Pirckheimer was the author of the satire *Eckius dedolatus* and Spengler the author of a defense of Luther's teachings, as well as the German translator of the *Eckius dedolatus*.2

While in Rome, Johannes von Eck had been given the responsibility of publishing the papal bull in Germany, which he did first at Meissen on September 21. Pirckheimer, who at that time was residing at his brother-in-law's estate at Neumhof because of the plague in Nuernberg, did not receive notice of the bull until October 18.3 In a state of complete disbelief he wrote to his friend Hein-

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2 Until the twentieth century, Pirckheimer's authorship of the *Eckius dedolatus* was uncontested. Although he himself, with good reason, denied authorship, his contemporaries, including Luther, Cochlaeus, Adelmann, Scheurl, and Eck considered him the author. The traditional arguments for Pirckheimer's authorship are in Siegfried Szematolski (ed.), *Eckius Dedolatus* (Berlin, 1891), p. vii. Two attempts to refute Pirckheimer's authorship have been largely unsuccessful. Paul Merker, *Der Verfasser des Eckius Dedolatus und anderer Reformationsdialoge* (Halle/ Saale, 1923) argued for Nicholaus Gerbelius as the author, Hans Ruprich, *Der Eckius Dedolatus und sein Verfasser* (Vienna, 1931), for Fabian Gorteler, although he concedes that Pirckheimer was a collaborator. Pirckheimer and Spengler received confirmation of their assumptions over Eck's reasons for including them in the bull. See Spengler to Pirckheimer, Riederer, Nachrichten, II, 191.

3 Miltitz to Pirckheimer, Oct. 9, 1520, *ibid.*, I, 169.
rich Stromer in Leipzig, requesting him to send a copy of the bull. In the meantime, Eck had sent a copy of the bull with an accompanying letter to the city council, in which he expressed his friendliness to the Nuernbergeres. At the same time, referring to his papal commission, he demanded that the council forbid the printing and sale of Luther's and his defenders' books and burn those already published. In addition, the council was to execute the bull against the two Nuernbergeres who had "praised, promoted, and exalted" Luther's teachings. They were given sixty days to seek absolution, effective since the last publication of the bull on September 29. Eck added that if the two would make a proper confession before him he would "...goodwillingly absolve them without all prejudice on the basis of the papal commission and special authority."

The council reacted quickly to Eck's letter. On the same day that it had received the letter, October 19, it sent a copy to Pirckheimer and Spengler and requested them to consider what was to be done and "...for our part we will do the same." From a letter written the follow-


5Oct. 15, Riederer, Beytrag, p. 56; Waldau, I, 237-239.

6Briefbuch, No. 81, fol. 265v; Riederer, Beytrag, p. 60. Since Pirckheimer was staying at Neunhof, this necessitated a correspondence between him and Spengler over each step of this affair. Pirckheimer's letters to Speng-
ing day by the council to its delegates, then at Aachen, can be noticed the impression Eck's news made on the city council. After describing the uproar and disturbance that this bull would make throughout Germany, the council narrowed its attention to Nuernberg. It indicated that if it were to follow Eck's mandate and publicly burn Luther's books, there would be a "remarkable uproar and schism in our community," especially among the religious leaders. It would also bring upon them the scorn and mockery of most people in Germany. As the council then stated, the problem of Pirckheimer and Spengler was not theirs alone but the city's as well. For this reason, the council requested the immediate return of the city's legal advisers, who had also fled Nuernberg before the plague. This consideration, that the problem was as much the city's as Pirckheimer's and Spengler's, gradually became the overriding factor for the council after the affair had dragged on with little success.

Initially, however, the city council was content to provide only advice and assistance. At this point, ler are mostly lost, but those of Spengler remain the single, most valuable source for the details of the affair. From this correspondence it appears that Spengler occasionally met with Pirckheimer at Neunhof.

7Briefbuch, No. 81, fol. 266v-267v.
8Ibid., No. 81, fol. 267v-268.
it was as concerned as Pirckheimer and Spengler to avoid humiliation before Eck. On October 19, the two men had already composed a provisional public confession of orthodoxy that was to be sent directly to the pope. But this plan did not come to fruition since the council decided to proceed instead through the Bishop of Bamberg. It had sent Heinrich Knod to Bamberg on October 19 to ascertain more precisely the feelings of the bishop. Knod reported that the bishop was inclined to Luther and strongly disliked Eck, probably because he saw the entire affair as an incursion into his own jurisdiction. With this encouraging news, the decision was made to forget temporarily the open appeal to the pope and conduct the case before the bishop. On October 30, Pirckheimer and Spengler sent their earlier confession of orthodoxy, now considerably revised in the form of a letter addressed directly to the bishop, to Bamberg. In it they argued that they had defended Luther's teachings only in so far as these were not contrary to Christian belief and assured the bishop of their complete submission to the church as obedient, humble sons. They requested the bishop's protection and stated their willingness to submit to his judgment as their spiritual

9Spengler to Pirckheimer, Oct. 20, Riederer, Nachrichten, I, 320; the writing itself, pp. 323-326.

10Spengler to Pirckheimer, Oct. 22, ibid., p. 326.
This writing was accompanied by a letter from the city council, in which was expressed the hope that, because the affair also greatly concerned the council, the bishop would prevent the continuation of Eck's undertaking "against us and our two citizens." 12

The city council had meanwhile decided to try to apply pressure on Eck from a different direction. Influenced by the opinion of Peter Burkhard, rector of the University of Wittenberg, who had written to his friend Spengler, 13 the council attempted to gain the mediatory efforts of Duke Wilhelm of Bavaria, Eck's secular overlord. In its letter of October 29, the council requested the duke to get Eck to quit his proceedings against them, or at least to silence him until this affair could be handled and taken in hand by other, higher estates in the empire. 14

Before the council had received a reply from Duke Wilhelm of Bavaria, the Bishop of Bamberg had sent a discouraging reply on November 2 to Pirckheimer and Spengler. The bishop indicated that he was inclined to help, but there was nothing he could do, since he had no power over Eck as a papal nuncio. In order to show his good will, how-

11 Ibid., pp. 442-445.
12 Briefbuch, No. 81, fol. 274v-275r.
13 Riederer, Beytrag, pp. 69-72.
14 Briefbuch, No. 81, fol. 273v-274r.
ever, he offered to send their writing and the council's accompanying letter directly to Eck and to ask him to be satisfied with their offer and to let the case be dropped.\footnote{Riederer, \textit{Beytrag}, p. 75.} Spengler reported to Pirckheimer his disgust with the bishop's reply, but still thought it best to accept the bishop's proposal for fear of losing his favor. Spengler composed the reply and also made corrections in their earlier writing to the bishop.\footnote{Spengler to Pirckheimer, Nov. 5, Riederer, \textit{Nachrichten}, I, 446.} These were then corrected and approved by Pirckheimer before they were sent to the bishop on November 6.\footnote{Pirckheimer and Spengler to Bishop of Bamberg, \textit{ibid.}, p. 448.} The bishop then sent the writings to Eck on November 9.\footnote{Bishop of Bamberg to Pirckheimer and Spengler, Nov. 9, Riederer, \textit{Beytrag}, p. 77.}

The mediation of the bishop, however, led to no favorable result. On November 12, in a letter to the bishop, Eck declared his complete dissatisfaction with Pirckheimer's and Spengler's confession of orthodoxy. When they stated that they had defended Luther's teachings only in so far as these were not contrary to Christian belief, that was not enough, said Eck, since every heretic has asserted that "...his teachings were not against Christian
belief." Instead, they must expressly disavow all of Luther's teachings. Eck also added, without further explanation, that they could gain absolution by doing what Bernhard Adelmann, the Augsburg humanist, had done.19 The bishop then sent Eck's reply to Pirckheimer and Spengler on November 16 and said that he could do no more in this case.20

The first idea of a direct appellation to the pope was again taken up, especially under Spengler's influence. Upon Spengler's request, Bernhard Adelmann sent him a copy of the appellation he had made and advised the Nuernbergers to do the same.21 On November 19, Spengler sent this document to Pirckheimer with the advice that they proceed along these lines.22 This step was further supported by the city's legal advisers in their opinion of November 22. This opinion also provides some insight into the city council's attitude at this stage of the affair. The advisers first indicated that they had read the report that Elector Frederick of Saxony had given to the Nuernberg city councilor Anton Tucher. In it, the elector stated that he had

21 Spengler to Pirckheimer, Nov. 7, Riederer, Nachrichten, II, 63.
learned from the papal nuncios in Cologne that Eck did not have the power to specifically include anyone in the bull. Under this impression, the advisers decided "unanimously" that the city should neither protest nor appeal the bull since they had not seen the original anyway. Henceforth, the council should proceed in this affair only through the Bishop of Bamberg as its spiritual ordinary. There was no need to hurry since it was decided to reckon the sixty days limit from the day the council was informed of the bull by its bishop (October 19) and not the last day of its publication (September 29). Moreover, although the publication of the bull "...concerns only Pirckheimer and Spengler, it nevertheless also basically concerns the city council and city." The advisers therefore recommended that Pirckheimer and Spengler revise their earlier confession of orthodoxy (October 30) into an appellation to the pope. This should be sent to the Bishop of Bamberg and through him to Eck. In fact, all further actions with Eck should be done through the bishop as their ordinary.\textsuperscript{23} The city council was obviously not yet prepared to face the humiliating step of proceeding directly with Eck.

This way was now followed. On November 26, Spengler sent the drawn up document of appellation to Pirckheimer.

\textsuperscript{23}Ratschlagbuch, No. 3, fol. 1r-2r; Westermayer, pp. 3-6. Spengler and Caspar Nützel also participated in the deliberations of the advisers.
for his approval. 24 Then, on December 1, the appellation was solemnly proclaimed in the town hall by the notary, Gabriel Schneider, in the presence of both burgomasters as representatives of the council and three additional witnesses. 25 The appellation first described the steps taken up to then and gave notice of Eck's personal hatred towards them. For that reason, they were willing to be judged by their bishop and every spiritual and secular authority, but not by Eck, and appealed not to a council, as Eck had said they had done, but to the pope, to whose authority, as "obedient sons of the church," they would willingly submit. In the most important section, that covering their attitude toward their position to Luther, the appellation followed closely the declarations from the October 30 writing to the Bishop of Bamberg. 26 Pirckheimer and Spengler then sent this appellation to the bishop with an accompanying letter requesting him to act again as a mediator. 27

The bishop confirmed reception of the letter and the ap-

24 Riederer, Nachrichten, II, 184.

25 Ratsverlässe, No. 657, fol. 8v; Ratsbuch, No. 11, fol. 322v. The act is also witnessed in the appellation itself. Riederer, Beytrag, p. 91, and Goldast, ed., Opera, p. 201.


27 Dec. 1, Riederer, Beytrag, p. 97.
pellation and stated he would send the latter to Eck. 28

The city council in the meantime also continued its efforts with Duke Wilhelm. In response to the council's letter of October 29, 29 the duke gave a rather evasive reply in a letter of November 5, pointing out that he would exert his influence so that nothing "burdensome" or "disgraceful" happened to either the council or Pirckheimer and Spengler. He would, however, first have to ask Eck why he had undertaken such action. 30 In response to the duke's inquiries, Eck replied on November 15 that there was little he could do if Pirckheimer and Spengler refused to conduct themselves according to the papal bull and send a valid confession of belief to the pope. After all, he would come into the disfavor of the pope if he overstepped the limits of his commission. He made no mention of absolution by himself, which he had, of course, indicated as a possibility to the Nuernbergers. 31 Duke Wilhelm sent a letter and a copy of Eck's letter a week later to the city council, informing it of the failure of his undertakings. 32

Meanwhile, the council had acquired some additional

29 See above, p. 136.
30 Riederer, Beytrag, p. 103.
31 Ibid., p. 104.
32 Nov. 23, ibid., p. 106.
information that motivated it to continue its efforts with Duke Wilhelm. As Spengler reported in a letter to Pirckheimer on November 19, Eck himself had revealed that Adelmann had not only made an appellation, but, upon the intercession of the Bavarian Dukes Wilhelm and Ludwig had been absolved by Eck. Eck had imposed the strictest silence on Adelmann over the conditions and kind of absolution. The council now decided to send its own delegate, Jacob Muffel, to the duke. According to his instructions, which were prepared by Spengler, Muffel was to stress the general political dangers presented for all the German estates, not just Nuernberg, by Eck's proceedings. When Muffel finally came to mention the absolution of Adelmann through the intercession of the Bavarian dukes, he was to expressly say that he expected Duke Wilhelm to perform the same favor for Pirckheimer and Spengler if they faithfully followed Adelmann's procedure. On December 2, Muffel informed Spengler that the duke had given him favorable promises. This good news Spengler communicated to Pirckheimer on December 5.

33 Riederer, Nachrichten, II, 66.
34 Spengler to Pirckheimer, Nov. 17, ibid., p. 64.
35 Spengler to Pirckheimer, Nov. 23, ibid., p. 183.
36 Riederer, Beytrag, p. 107.
37 Riederer, Nachrichten, II, 187.
But, on the same day that Spengler wrote to Pirckheimer, Eck wrote unfavorably to the Bishop of Bamberg. He had received the appellation of Pirckheimer and Spengler but he considered it unlawful because it presented no valid reasons. If it were excommunication that they wanted, Eck stipulated, then they would get it. He also threatened the possibility of an interdict as well because of the invalid appellation. He did not dictate any course of action to the bishop, but intimated that he would shortly attend to the preparation of a mandate to forbid the sale of heretical books in Nuernberg.\footnote{Joseph Greving et al (eds.), Briefmappe. Erstes Stück ("Reformationsgeschichtliche Studien und Texte," XXI-XXII; München, 1912), pp. 220-221.} Eck had already demanded the same in his letter of October 15 to the council, although Nuernberg, upon the advice of the Bishop of Bamberg, had not complied.\footnote{On the letter of October 15, see above, p. 133. The bishop's advice is in a letter of Spengler to Pirckheimer, Dec. 5, Riederer, Nachrichten, II, 187.}

Eck's news was then communicated by the bishop to Nuernberg.\footnote{There is no existing letter to support this, but it is apparent from the opening lines of the council's appellation. See below.} Although he had not completely shut the door on Pirckheimer's and Spengler's entreaties, Eck had left no doubts about what Nuernberg had to do in so far as the
sale of Luther's books was concerned. The effect of Eck's threats is evident in the council's decision of December 10, a decision that also reflects the dilemma in which the council found itself. It decided, so that "...no disobedience may be attributed to the city council, also to prevent further annoyances and disadvantages," to make its own appellation against the papal bull. On the other hand, the council decided at the same time to execute one part of the bull as demanded by Eck by forbidding the further printing of Luther's books "without special permission." 41

Pirckheimer now strongly advised the council to complete its appellation before the sixty-day limit, reckoned according to their calculation, expired. 42 Whether with his advice or not, the council acted accordingly, and on December 15, proclaimed its appellation and protestation against "...the papal bull sent by Eck." 43 In its appellation, the council called upon Pope Leo X to reconsider the bull Exsurge Domine, for if it were to be followed, then "...of necessity, the entire epistles of Paul to the Romans, Hebrews, and Galatians must be burned,

41 Ratsverlasse, No. 657, fol. 12v; Ratsbuch, No. 11, fol. 323r; Waldau, I, 239.

42 This would be Dec. 19, see above, p. 139. Pirckheimer to Spengler, Dec. 11, Riederer, Nachrichten, II, 190.

43 Ratsverlasse, No. 657, fol. 16v; Ratsbuch, No. 11, fol. 323v; printed in Schornbaum, p. 92.
destroyed, rejected, and torn asunder." The Lutheran sentiments of the appellation are unmistakable throughout. The position of the council at this time was not an enviable one. It was attempting to appease Eck by executing one part of the bull. But more was involved than just the appeasement of Eck, for the council was well aware that Emperor Charles V was not favorably inclined to Luther and his cause. Following the advice of the papal nuncio Aleander, he had allowed the burning of Luther's books in Cologne and the Low Countries. Aleander was pressing him to execute fully the papal bull Exsurge Domine. It was a necessity for the council, which wanted above all else to maintain good relations with the emperor, to see that Pirckheimer and Spengler were relieved of the possibility of excommunication. Their excommunication would only endanger its cause with the emperor if Charles V decided to proceed against the "heretics." But, until now, the council had backed Pirckheimer and Spengler in their refusal to gain absolution by the humiliation of proceeding direct-
ly through Eck. The appellation had again demonstrated the council's support and there was still the hope that the efforts with Duke Wilhelm might bear fruit.

This last hope quickly disappeared. Duke Wilhelm personally negotiated with Eck on December 11. Eck's answer was then sent on the same day by the duke to the city council. Eck declared that he had received full power from the pope to designate people for the bull; that if Pirckheimer and Spengler had followed Adelmann's procedure, he could have absolved them, in fact, he would still do so if they requested it legitimately; that he could not accept their earlier appellation because it was too general and did not touch upon Luther's forty-one articles designated as heretical in the bull; and finally, that to please the council he was still prepared to absolve them in the mildest form, even though the sixty-day limit was past, and even though they had appealed to the pope. They had only to conduct themselves properly in the affair.46

After this failure, the city council, anxious to end the case, took the affair completely into its own hands. This is evident in Spengler's report to Pirckheimer on December 18:

46Riederer, Beytrag, pp. 109-111.
I am sending you the duke's answer....Now, for that reason, the alte herren have held a session and have diligently deliberated and also commanded me to write their opinion to you. Although, on their part, they do not like to negotiate with this unscrupulous man...nevertheless, they think it might be useful to seek an end to this affair and not to wait upon Luther's case, which might damage our case more than help us, and to accept the least annoying or toilsome means. And from Eck's instructions [i.e., his last letter] they find that what disturbs him the most is that we don't negotiate with or through him, but circumvent him entirely; also that we will not recognize his authority.... But we can not deny that he has the power to absolve those suspected of Lutheranism. Therefore my herren think it is not such a difficult thing for us to request him to liberate us as he did Bernhard Adelmann, so that, nevertheless, as up to now, we need not admit that he had full power to nominate or publicize us [in the bull] ....

In addition, Spengler continued, if Eck were to go to Rome again, as appeared likely, it would greatly harm them. And even if they were to try to go through the papal nuncios, the case would probably not be ended since Eck would do everything "to fan the fire against us." Therefore, as the herren consider the case, Eck wants nothing other than that we give him a placebo and negotiate with him, and if that happens, he will absolve us to everyone's pleasure. They, therefore, all unanimously advise, that we consider more our interest in this than our anger against Eck and we should not reject this procedure. Thus they want to dispatch Dr. Marsilius [Prenninger] or Dr. Rorer, whichever you prefer, to Eck in Ingolstadt, to negotiate an end to the case. Upon their request, I did not want to conceal this advice of the alte herren; with the request that you will therefore consider the case, that we support our herren with good will, who have spared no effort, work, and costs in this affair for our good and
are still willing to do so. And what you consider
good, or due, that will I support and stand with
you.47

Pirckheimer, as he no doubt realized, had very little
choice in the matter. His consenting answer came quickly,
for, on December 22, the city council, acting under the
impression that Eck was ready to depart for Rome, sent a
letter to him. In it, the council requested Eck to specify
a day when the procurator of Pirckheimer and Spengler could
meet with him in order to bring the case to an end.48 Eck
answered immediately and stipulated either December 28 or
January 4.49 The council chose the latter day and dele­
gated for this task Dr. Martin Rorer, outfitted with in­
structions written by Pirckheimer and approved by Speng­
ler.50 Pirckheimer began these instructions by emphasis­
ing that Dr. Rorer was to negotiate with Eck not in his
and Spengler's names alone, but in the council's as well,
"as long as the case has been brought to this procedure
through it." For that reason, he stated, Duke Wilhelm
had written to them, "...so that the case would be more

48 Briefbuch, No. 82, fol. 28v.
49 Eck to city council, Dec. 24, Riederer, Beytrag,
p. 115.
50 City council to Eck, Jan. 2, Briefbuch, No. 82,
fol. 40r.
respected and would proceed from the state rather than from individuals." The chief thing was, Pirckheimer continued, to find out what Eck wanted of them. Dr. Rorer was not to admit Eck's right to nominate persons to the bull, especially innocent ones, as he was, since he had neither authored the Dedolatus nor praised Luther's teachings. Moreover, if Eck did not think, as he had indicated, that their previous appellation had been sufficient, he should specifically say what Adelmann had had to do.51

At the time of writing these instructions, Pirckheimer was highly dissatisfied with the way the council was proceeding. In a letter to a friend, he wrote,

Eck is not ashamed to burden me ruthlessly without cause. If the Nuernbergers were not there, I would, with all honor, fight off his crafty attacks, but they, in the meantime, step in and consider it their own case. Unfortunately, they again communicate with Duke Wilhelm and Eck himself, although in my and Spengler's name.52

Although he had consented to the direct negotiations with Eck, it was obviously done quite unwillingly.

The negotiations with Eck now floundered. In his detailed report to the city council, Dr. Rorer indicated that Eck had declared that the power of attorney that had been

51 Riederer, Beytrag, pp. 117-119.
52 Ibidl, p. 122.
given to Rorer was not sufficient to swear an oath in the names of his clients. Without an oath, as Bernhard Adelmann had sworn, absolution was not possible. Eck refused any further information over Adelmann's other steps and Rorer was able only to obtain copies of the papers used in Adelmann's absolution. These did, however, enable them now to know what procedure to follow. 53

Accordingly, Spengler wrote to Pirckheimer on January 10, 1521, informing him that the city council now desired that they should proceed as Adelmann had. For that reason, he would legally grant full power of attorney to Dr. Heinrich Voyt of Ingolstadt, who had offered his services to them through Dr. Rorer. Pirckheimer might do the same when his illness permitted his return to Nuremberg. 54

Spengler then executed his grant of power on January 17 before leaving for the Reichstag at Worms, and Pirckheimer, delayed because of illness, did the same on January 26. Both granted it only for the mildest form of absolution, as Adelmann had done, and which Eck had promised to them as well. 55 This mild form was the absolutio ad cautelam, in which, if the accused ones are supposed to have sinned by inclination to heretical teachings and

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53 Ibid., pp. 125-130.
54 Ibid., pp. 131-132.
against the commands of the church, they ask for absolution and swear by oath to refrain from all heresy in the future.

But Eck again hindered the way. Dr. Voyt appeared before him on February 1 in order to ask absolution in the names of his clients. Eck refused and said that since the set deadline of January 27 had now passed, both had incurred the punishment of excommunication. Eck presented this situation in a letter to the council in which he also declared, as a special favor, that he would still absolve them but only in the form of absolution simplex. This was the strongest form of absolution and comprised an unreserved confession of guilt as heretics. Although the evidence is sketchy, Pirckheimer probably went through the humiliating procedure and was finally granted absolution by Eck.

In any case, the absolution came too late, for both

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56 Feb. 4, in R. Albert, "Aus welchem Grunde disputierte Johann Eck gegen Martin Luther in Leipzig 1519?" Zeitschrift für die historische Theologie, XLIII (1873), 438.

57 At this stage of the affair, there are few existing documents to ascertain precisely what happened. There is in Riederer, Beytrag, p. 138, a document that sets forth Pirckheimer's absolution, absolution simplex, but this is only a rough draft and not the final document. In an undated letter to a friend, Pirckheimerpapiere, No. 164, Pirckheimer stated "...post multas sycophantas me Eckius liberaret..."
Pirkheimer and Spengler were included with Luther in the actual bull of excommunication, *Decet pontificem romanum*, issued on January 3, 1521. Spengler received news of the bull and its content at Worms, where the papal nuncio Aleander received it on February 10. Spengler protested to the emperor that he had already been absolved by Eck. Aleander, to whom the emperor had passed on Spengler's complaint, declared that only the pope could absolve him, but that he was prepared to help obtain the absolution. Pirckheimer had also turned to the emperor and through him to Aleander.

Since Pirckheimer and Spengler had protested that they had already been absolved by Eck, it was to be expected that Aleander would want to see the relevant documents. The Nuernberg city council, again taking the

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58 Paul Kalkoff, *Pirkheimers und Spenglers Lösung vom Banne 1521* (Breslau, 1898), attempted, quite unsuccessfully, to reconstruct the events of this affair in 1521.


60 Aleander to Medici, May 26, Balan, p. 251; Kalkoff, pp. 207-208.

61 Pirckheimer to friend, n.d., Pirckheimerpapiere, No. 164. In the same letter, Pirckheimer also complained that he was impeded in his course of action since he had to submit to the will of the city council.
initiative, sent these to Johann Ferenberger, an imperial secretary, who was now acting as procurator on behalf of the two Nuernbergers. The council expressed the wish in its letter to the secretary that Ferenberger would be able to bring an end to these "inept and mischievous" proceedings. On July 6, Aleander indicated in a letter to the papal vice-chancellor, Julius de' Medici, that he had received a request by Pirckheimer and Spengler for a new absolution if Eck's had not been sufficient, through their procurator, an imperial secretary. Aleander requested a papal brief from the vice-chancellor granting him full power to absolve them, which he received on August 3. There is no evidence to indicate when the final step of actual absolution was taken. That it did occur is evident from a letter of Erasmus to Pirckheimer on November 29, in which he indicates that he had been shown by Aleander the document of his final absolution.

The entire affair had been quite disturbing to Pirckheimer, Spengler, and the city council. But Pirckheimer was especially angered over the city council's domination of the proceedings. His attitude was best ex-

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62 June 8, Briefbuch, No. 82, fol. 162.
63 Balan, pp. 274-275.
64 Medici to Aleander, ibid., p. 279.
pressed in a letter from 1521 to his humanist friend, Ulrich von Hutten:

That you pity me on account of the injustice of the Romans and comfort me so friendly, I thank you well. They have laid all kinds of snares in order to damage me. But God has again protected me from their schemes and will liberate me, I hope, in the future from them entirely. Although born in a free city, I am, for that reason, not however my own lord. I must obey our council, which has conducted this affair more wisely than boldly and yet not without costs.66

It is perhaps doubtful whether Pirckheimer could have done better without the council, but that is irrelevant compared to the light this attitude sheds on Pirckheimer's relationship to the city council.

CONCLUSION

It has been generally assumed in the literature on Willibald Pirckheimer that, as one historian recently stated, he "...drew little pleasure and few rewards from his public service." Such a view of Pirckheimer's service as a city councilor is derived from his own complaints about the burdens of that service but overlooks his actual pattern of behavior as a city councilor as well as other statements by him that clearly contradict his complaints.

As much as any other city councilor, Pirckheimer possessed a great pride in his patrician class and native city. In telling Erasmus why he should visit Nuernberg, he boasted that "...you will see such a commonwealth as, I may say without offence to others, you have not yet beheld in Germany." As a result of his family's background and tradition, Willibald Pirckheimer was well aware of the duties and responsibilities that he would have when he became a city councilor in 1496. It is evident from his desire to achieve the higher offices of the city government that he was quite willing to accept those duties and responsibilities.

The chief obstacles to Pirckheimer's realization
of his political ambitions were his own nature and, to a much greater degree, the influence of Renaissance humanism, especially strong after his seven-year stay in Italy. As a result, Pirckheimer had an overwhelming desire for self-esteem and glory. This was not, however, always compatible with the political realities of Nuremberg, which demanded the subordination of individual interests to the dictates of collegial government and the common good of the city. These basically conflicting interests between the individual and the group created tensions that ruined his chances of maintaining a good relationship with the city council.

There was only one area of service in which Pirckheimer could resolve these tensions, namely, the diplomatic. Here he could achieve glory while carrying out the city's wishes and interests. It is this that explains his close, personal identification with the city's diplomatic problems, and it is this that one notices so strikingly in his autobiography and correspondence, where his successes on behalf of the city are a great source of pride to him. Not only from his own viewpoint, but from the city council's as well, he was most beneficial to the city as a diplomat.

In domestic affairs it was another story. In these Pirckheimer could achieve little glory and little recognition, for the day-to-day details of city admin-
istration left little room for individualistic self-expression and recognition. This led to conflicts with other members of the city council in which Pirckheimer interpreted any reproach as an attack upon his own honor. Being of a passionate, dogmatic nature, his strong reactions, even when he was clearly in the right, only led to a further diminution of his own stature in the eyes of the council.

These tensions inherent in Pirckheimer's relationship with the city council were especially evident in the excommunication affair of 1520-1521. Pirckheimer reacted strongly to what he considered to be the city council's sacrifice of him and Spengler for the sake of its own policies. Spengler did not like the situation either, but he more easily accepted it because of his willingness to subordinate his interests to the city's. Pirckheimer also knew the necessity for this, but he was constitutionally unable to accept it to the degree that Spengler was, thus causing him great bitterness. Even after his final withdrawal from the council, however, Pirckheimer remained willing to serve that council that had been the source of his bitterness. In this, as in the rest of his career, he demonstrated his underlying conviction of the role which a patrician, or any citizen for that matter, had to play in a community of his kind. As he expressed it, it is "...especially the duty of a good man always
to think first of his usefulness to his fatherland at the right time."
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