Wind Instrumentalists in the Churches of Maximilian I’s Augsburg

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The significance of Maximilian I (1459–1519) as a patron of music has been addressed in numerous studies over the years.¹ This itinerant Emperor drew many of the best musicians of the age to his court, his love of music being clearly expressed in the literary commissions that were to preserve his legacy for future generations.² The political demands of Maximilian’s vast and fragmented territory meant that he and his royal entourage, including many of his musicians, were repeatedly required to travel from region to region. This nomadic lifestyle, although burdensome, was incredibly fruitful for cultural development; Maximilian’s frequent visits to the cities of the Empire allowed the Emperor contact with subjects across the social strata and permitted the exchange of royal and civic customs and music. The Imperial Diets (or Reichstage) were particularly important in this respect; they not only served a political purpose but also made it possible for the musicians of the Emperor, nobility, and cities to meet in a single location.³ Projecting the correct image on these occasions was therefore of utmost importance and the performances of the accompanying musicians—royal, noble and civic—contributed significantly to this. The impact of these performances was obviously great, especially those by the musicians who served the Emperor. The townsmen who chronicled city life often singled out performances by Maximilian’s instrumentalists in all kinds of entertainments and festivals.⁴ It is their performances in civic churches that will be considered here, and more specifically the use of trombones and cornetts in the execution of music for the liturgy—sacred ceremony providing ideal opportunities for the assertion of the Emperor’s royal status to his people through music.

While council payment lists paint a clear picture of the range of royal, noble, and civic musicians who visited the cities over the year, it is the chronicles of the period that reveal further important information about musical performances.⁵ References to music and musicians in these accounts are surprisingly frequent and often quite detailed. The performances described here include those for dances, banquets, weddings, and processions, and—most importantly for this study—in the churches. Yet despite the obvious importance of these records, they should be considered with care, due to their use of ambiguous terminology. As is the case in civic payment lists and other records of the period, due to the writers’ lack of musical knowledge, chroniclers often adopted the generic term Pfeife to refer to any wind instrument, while Trompete (or variants thereof) likewise served to describe any form of brass instrument.⁶ Despite these frequent ambiguities regarding the instruments used, the reports certainly provide insightful and illuminating references to performance practices in Maximilian’s reign, as will be primarily demonstrated here by records from Augsburg.

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Augsburg was a particular favorite of the many cities Maximilian visited on his perpetual travels and provides a clear illustration of a town that enjoyed frequent interaction with the Emperor, his court and musicians. Maximilian’s bond with Augsburg appears to have been particularly strong; as an Imperial city (or Reichsstadt) it had no regional overlord and was instead in direct allegiance to the Emperor. He visited on several occasions, holding a number of Imperial Diets there from 1500 and regularly used this burgeoning metropolis as a source of income for his many military and political campaigns. Yet the city’s significance to the Emperor was not only financial and political; his fondness for the town together with its continual development as an important cultural center meant that a strong musical connection emerged between the two. Here was a place from which Maximilian drew many of the most gifted instrumentalists to his court and where many of his musicians also found their homes, often upon the Emperor’s request.

As one of the most affluent cities at that time, Augsburg clearly exemplifies the possible extent of German civic musical patronage ca.1500. Both sacred and secular music played an important role in city life; the numerous churches appointed their own personnel to provide music for the liturgy, while secular festivities were largely catered for by the instrumentalists (or Stadtpfeifer) who were subsidized by the city council. As the official ensemble of the city, the latter were regarded as the musical representatives of the council and, in turn, the town. The members of Augsburg’s Stadtpfeifer ensemble numbered four and were therefore outdone in size only by the ensembles of a few larger municipalities such as Nuremberg and Cologne, which could stretch to five instrumentalists. Along with equally significant cities such as Basel and Ulm, Augsburg’s ensemble would have far outshone the two- and three-piper ensembles of smaller towns such as Bad Windsheim and Ravensburg. Although not the civic ensemble of greatest size, Augsburg’s was surely among those of the greatest skill. Its musicians, which included members of the well-known Schubinger family, were often drawn to employment in other cities and courts due to their great acclaim as instrumentalists. Where possible, civic ensembles comprised shawm, bombard, and slide brass instrument, and payment lists in Augsburg confirm this combination throughout the period of Maximilian’s reign.

It was not only the administration of church and civic musicians that remained independent of one another; the inner sanctum of the cities’ churches appears to have been beyond the professional sphere of the Stadtpfeifer. While singing and the playing of the organ in the churches are noted in contemporary reports (albeit rarely), chronicles provide no hint of the performance of civic wind instrumentalists in the Augsburg churches at that time, and certainly not as part of the liturgy. Events that involved both the instrumentalists of the city council and the musicians of the churches appear to confirm the divide between the sacred and secular spheres. On 15 June 1525, a few years after Maximilian’s death, a report of a wedding in Augsburg alludes to just this. On this occasion there were “many ... citizens and honorable people ... and they made use of the Stadtpfeifer. As soon as they entered the church of St. Anna, the Te Deum laudamus was played on the organ ... [A]fter the luncheon a dance was held” (“vil ... burger und erbar leut .... und haben der stat pfeiffer gehept. sobald man zu sant Anna in die kirchen ist ...“).
komen, hat man auff der orgel das te deum laudamus geschlagen ... nach dem mittagmall hat er ain dantz gehept"). 18 For a civic wedding such as this, it was customary practice that when permitted by the council, the Stadtpfeifer would perform for the secular amusements associated with the event (such as the above-mentioned dance), while performances of the liturgy were reserved for the musicians of the churches. 19 Another clear example of this demarcation of the sacred and secular worlds is provided by a report from Nuremberg of 1488. At this time, news had just been received of the release of Maximilian from his imprisonment in the Netherlands:

[U]pon the request of the council, when the clock struck three at night, all bells were rung in all the churches and monasteries and Te Deum Laudamus was sung, two bonfires, one up at the fortress and the other on the marketplace, were lit and were serenaded by the Stadtpfeifer and trumpeters, who stood on the portal of the Chapel of Our Lady. 20

The position of the wind instrumentalists here, at the entrance to the church, clearly articulates where the domain of their own performances ended, and where that of the church musicians began. 21

The exclusion of wind instrumentalists from performances in the churches appears to have been challenged during the visits of the more affluent nobility and the Emperor, who brought ensembles of greater size and diversity to the cities. Maximilian's own musical establishment was exemplary in this respect and set a standard that other patrons of music could only aspire to meet. From the early years of his reign, Maximilian assembled an impressive range of musicians. By 1500 this had amounted to two lutes, four geiger, and an organist (the great Paul Hofhaimer), as well as a shawm band of five members (basically three shawms and two trombones, but also with cornets and crumhorns at their disposal), a Swiss band (flute and drum) of three members, and a commanding trumpeter corps of twelve, in addition to a substantial and notable choir. 22 It was this array of musicians that Maximilian drew on to accompany him on his travels through the Empire and which are often noted in the payment lists of cities such as Augsburg. Although the traditional division of haut and bas had persisted into the mid-fifteenth century, in the reign of Maximilian we begin to see an overstepping of this divide, with loud and soft instrumentalists playing in various pairings, including combinations of instruments and voices. 23 Along with these changes, the exclusivity of the world of sacred music also began to disappear, as wind and other instrumentalists were gradually incorporated into musical performances in the churches.

Yet it took a number of years before these new approaches to liturgical performances were widely accepted. Before his accession to the throne and even in the early years of his reign, reports of Maximilian's visits to Augsburg make no mention of the use of his wind instrumentalists in church services. 24 Later accounts show that by 1500, performances of the Emperor's musicians within the city's churches had become more frequent, although even then the inclusion of wind instruments was, it would seem, reserved for occasions
that demanded a greater degree of musical representation.\textsuperscript{25} A report of the Imperial Diet of 1500, held in Augsburg, describes a church service conducted in honor of the recently deceased Count Leonhard von Görz where, in addition to the Emperor, numerous nobles were present. Here, “the Bishop of Trieste sang the Mass of Our Lady with the King’s choir and playing on trumpets and organs” (“hat der bischoff von Triest das ampt von unser liebe frauen gesungen und des kinigs canterei mit trumethen und orglen”).\textsuperscript{26} In the course of the same Imperial Diet, on Whitsun a Mass was performed in the presence of the princes: “the King’s choir sang the Mass with all kinds of trumpeting, piping and playing of the organ” (“des kinigs canterei haben das ampt gesungen mit mancherlei trumethen, pfeiffen und orglen”)\textsuperscript{27} and a similar range of musicians seems to have been employed in another performance of the liturgy later that year: “On St. Ulrich’s day the King of the Romans attended Mass with all princes, bishops, prelates, counts, and estates who were at the Imperial Diet.... The King’s choir sang the Mass accompanied by organs and trumpets” (“an sant Urlichs tag ist der ro. king mit allen Fürsten, Bischoffen, Prelaten, graven und stenden bei dem ampt gewessen, die auff dem reichstag sind gewessen.... des kinigs canterei hat das ampt gesungen mit orglen und thrumethen”).\textsuperscript{28} Likewise, during Maximilian’s final Imperial Diet in Augsburg in 1518, the investiture of Albrecht of Brandenburg as Cardinal was conducted in the Church of Our Lady with the customary splendor assigned to such an occasion. This first involved the singing of the Mass and then, towards the end of the proceedings, the newly appointed dignitary knelt “until the Emperor’s choir had finished singing the Te Deum Laudamus accompanied by organs and trumpets” (“bis daß des kaisers canterei das te deum laudamus haben ausgesungen mit orglen und thrumethen”).\textsuperscript{29} The above descriptions of the affairs of the Reichstage confirm the regular performance of Maximilian’s wind instrumentalists in Augsburg’s churches alongside the choir and organist. Yet, owing to the continuous use of the generic terms \textit{trumethen} and \textit{pfeiffen}, we can only form a vague picture of the instruments involved here. Luckily, another manuscript of the same chronicle\textsuperscript{30} (by Clemens Sender, a Benedictine monk of the monastery of St. Ulrich and Afra in Augsburg) provides useful clarification. His further comments on the first performance of 1500 mentioned above include the remarks, “with the King’s choir, and playing on trumpets, cornetts and organs” (“mit des kinigs canterei, busannen, zingen u. orglen”),\textsuperscript{31} while that of 1518 is revealed as having the “choir with singing, piping, and playing on trumpets, cornetts, and organs” (“canterei mit singen, pfeiffen, trumethen, zingen und orglen”).\textsuperscript{32} Along with the traditional use of choir and organ in the church, the two instruments common to these performances are the cornett and a form of trumpet—namely the trombone, as is inferred here by the use of the term \textit{busannen} (an early variant of the current term \textit{Posaune}). The encouragement of this pairing of cornett with trombone is confirmed in Maximilian’s well-known \textit{Triumphzug}, an unfinished set of woodcuts depicting a procession of the personnel of his court, albeit in an embellished form. The culmination of the various groups of musicians presented here is the choir which, in contrast to the preceding groups in the parade, performs from sheet music, together with a trombonist and cornettist.\textsuperscript{33}
The images, in their unfinished form, include a number of empty banners, which were to contain phrases introducing many of the personnel presented. The intended content of the plaques can be reconstructed from the initial program for the images, which was dictated by the Emperor himself. His instructions regarding the picture of the Kantorei reveal the significance of the cornettist and trombonist within the group:

After that should be the choir, and also cornettist and trombonist placed in good order ... Item among the trombones Stewdl should be the Master; among the cornets, Augustein, and their verse should be carried by a boy on the wagon, which should bear the message: how at the Emperor's instructions they attuned the trombones and cornets in the most joyous manner:

We have added trombones and cornets
To song, as this pleases His Imperial Majesty
Who has often taken pleasure from this,
Most cheerfully, with good reason,
As we have been informed.³⁴

From this outline, it would seem that the trombonist depicted in the final woodcut can be identified as Hans Stewdl, while the cornettist—here performing on the straight instrument that was popular in Germany—was the famous Augsburg musician Augustein Schubinger. As Keith Polk has revealed, Augustein's skill as a musician brought him great recognition across Europe. He first appears in the payment lists of Augsburg as trombonist in the resident ensemble of the city from 1481 to 1487, after which he moved to Maximilian's court, where he is variously described as trombonist, trumpeter, and piper, as well as cornettist and even lutenist.³⁵ Schubinger’s performances on the cornett—seemingly his instrument of choice from ca. 1500—for church services are also documented in the Netherlands where, while on loan from Maximilian to his son Philip, Schubinger is reported as having performed alongside the court choir there.³⁶ He also received payment for a performance during a celebration of the High Mass in Mechelen in 1501,³⁷ and it is likely that he played on similar occasions when he visited Augsburg as part of Maximilian’s musical retinue (such as for the church services during the Imperial Diets of 1500 and 1518, mentioned above). As Polk has remarked, if by 1500 Schubinger was known for his performances on the cornett rather than the trombone (as he had been as Stadtpfeifer in Augsburg), it is possible that he had taken up the former instrument before his initial departure from his native city.³⁸

The pairing of cornett and trombone depicted in the Triumphzug seems to have become widely accepted by the start of the sixteenth century. While the brass instrument was better suited to playing tenor and bass parts, the cornett could more easily accommodate the upper parts, with greater fluidity where necessary.³⁹ Together, the instruments started to become a regular feature of sacred music, supporting the choir in their performances for the liturgy.⁴⁰ While only one of each of these instrumentalists—trombonist and cornettist—is represented within the choir of the Triumphzug, the accompanying verse
for this scene refers to the use of a greater number of these instruments, as seems to have been common practice at that time. The Emperor’s trombonists and cornettists (rather than one of each) are noted as having participated in church services at the Imperial Diet in Trier of 1512, where a celebration of the Mass was reportedly performed “with cornetts and trombones” (“mitl zincken vnd basunen”). These practices do not seem to have been restricted to the Imperial court; at the wedding of Duke Johann of Saxony and Sophia of Mecklenburg in Torgau in 1500, the choir there was supported by three trombones and a cornett, as well as four crumhorns. It would therefore seem that, although largely the reserve of the wealthier noble and royal courts, the performances of the cornett and trombone had become a staple adjunct of the music for the liturgy, albeit for ceremonies of particular importance and prestige, where the greatest degree of musical representation was required.

The common pairing of cornett and trombone was often supplemented by additional instruments such as crumhorns, as was the case in Torgau in 1500. An impressive array of instruments was likewise on display during a service at the Imperial Diet of Constance in 1507. On this occasion, “After the Salve Regina, a splendid mass began to be sung with playing on the organ, trombones, trumpets, cornetts and all kinds of string instruments” (“fieng man an nach dem salue Regina, ain kostlich Amt ze singen In Organis, busonen, Trumpeten, Zinggen vnd allerlay sayten spil”). While performances of string instruments in the liturgy have been remarked upon on other occasions, what is interesting here is the mention of two kinds of brass instrument: the trombone and what would seem to be a trumpet. The trumpet held particularly prestigious status in the representation of those of royal and noble standing, yet the inclusion of the instrument in the performance of the Mass is unusual and even questionable. Other mentions of the use of trumpeters within churches imply that they had a wholly heraldic role here, to communicate the pomp and splendor of an occasion. As Sabine Žak has pointed out, this certainly seems to have been the case in 1486 Frankfurt, where Maximilian was elected King of the Romans: “when the King had been crowned, there were on the choir-screen the trumpeters of the Emperor, the King, the Duke of Saxony, and the Count Palatine and for a while and then once again, they all piped and played at the same time” (“als der konig gekornt war, da waren uff dem lettener des keysers, des konigs, hertzogen von Sachsen und pfaltzgraven trommeter und phiffen und bliesen alle durch eynander ein wile und abermals”). The trumpeters did not therefore participate in the performance of the Mass on this occasion, as the trombone and cornett would do in later years, but instead provided a musical acknowledgement of Maximilian’s new status to all those present. The use of the signals of the trumpeters to articulate sacred ceremony of great importance was also witnessed in Vienna in 1515, at the grand double wedding there that joined the Habsburg dynasty with the monarchy of Hungary and Bohemia. One report of the proceedings in the cathedral there commented that “At once, the Te Deum laudamus was sung. And all trumpeters blew with a rich joyful sound” (“Als paldt sang man Te deum laudamus. Vnd all’Trumetter pliesen mit reichem frolichem schall”). It is likely that, although performing within the church, rather than playing the Te Deum with the choir, the trumpeters in fact brought the ceremony to a
close with their signals clearly communicating the completion of this politically significant event.

Although with variations and additions, it would therefore seem that the trombone and cornett maintained a unique position as wind instruments in their regular performance for the liturgy, alongside the customary choir and organ. Returning once more to Augsburg, the wedding of Susanna of Bavaria to Margrave Casimir of Brandenburg, which occurred among the proceedings of the Imperial Diet of 1518, provides a final example of this exclusive status, as opposed to other civic and court musicians who contributed to the celebrations. The Augsburg Stadtfeifer, for example, were paid for a dance for the couple, and therefore remained, as was typical, in their own sphere of performance primarily for secular matters. Yet for the procession to the church, the musical resources of the town were presumably supplanted by the instrumentalists of their royal and noble guests: “Her husband, the Margrave, rode on the right side, on and on through the town with great triumph, to the sound of trombones, trumpets, and all sorts of musical instruments that can be imagined” (“Ir gemahel der Marggraue rit auff der rechten seitten durch die Stat auff vnd auff, mit grossem Triumph, Busanen, Trum[m]etten, vnd allerlay Instrument[e]n der Musica, so yemands erdencken moch”). The emphatic and piercing sounds of the instrumentalists in the open then gave way to the more restrained and solemn music of the church, which was again reserved for the trombone and cornett, together with Maximilian’s choir and organist. This was “held triumphantly with great solemnity and elegance and particularly by His Imperial Majesty’s singers, organists, trombonists, and cornettists” (“mit grosser Solennität vnnd Zirheit vnnd sunnderlichen durch key. Mat. Cantores, Organisten, Passawner vnnd Zinckenplasser Triumplich gehalten worden”).

Thus the frequent visits of Maximilian I to Augsburg, among other cities in his vast territory, allowed for the regular demonstration of the Emperor’s promotion of musical pursuits, the great extent of his patronage in this respect, and the skills and practices of the musicians of his court. This use of musical performance to assert the Emperor’s heightened status was not only confined to the secular entertainments of the cities, but also infiltrated the realms of sacred performance. During Maximilian’s reign, the world of sacred worship, which had previously been the domain of the choir and organist (and seemingly remained so for many years in the cities), soon came to incorporate other musicians when the importance of the occasion demanded it, most notably the combination of cornett and trombone. While other wind instrumentalists continued to be largely excluded from performances of the liturgy, this well-suited pairing appears to have been considered an acceptable addition to the solemnity of the church, supporting the singing of the choir, and leaving a lasting impression on those who watched of the expression and skill of their music.

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NOTES

1 See, for example, Franz Waldner, Nachrichten über die Musikpflege am Hofe zu Innsbruck nach archivalischen Aufzeichnungen. I. Unter Kaiser Maximilian I von 1490-1519 (Beilage zu den Monatshefte für Musikgeschichte; Langensalza, 1897/98); Walter Senn, Musik und Theater am Hof zu Innsbruck (Innsbruck, 1954); Othmar Wessely, “Archivalische Beiträge zur Musikgeschichte des Maximilianischen Hofes,” Studien zur Musikwissenschaft 23 (1956): 79–134; Louise Cuyler, The Emperor Maximilian I and Music (London: Oxford University Press, 1973); Keith Polk, German Instrumental Music of the Late Middle Ages: Players, Patrons and Performance Practice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); as well as his “Musik am Hof Maximilians I” in Kurt Drexel and Monika Fink eds., Musikgeschichte Tirols I: Von den Anfängen bis zur Neuzeit (Innsbruck: Wagnner, 2001), 629–51.

2 References to music and musicians can be found in, inter alia, the semi-biographical works Der Freydal, Der Weisskunig, and Der Theuerdank as well as in Der Triumphzug, which presents a favorable view of the personnel of Maximilian’s court and is discussed in more detail later in this study. See Uta Henning, Musica Maximiliana: Die Musikgraphiken in den bibliophilen Unternehmungen Kaiser Maximilians I (Neu-Ulm: Stegmiller, 1987).

3 Civic payment lists, such as those of Augsburg and Nuremberg, reflect the diverse range of musicians who were present in the cities on these occasions.

4 City chronicles document the regular participation of visiting musicians in a whole range of festivities, such as dances, banquets, and processions, as well as the performance of the civic musicians for their guests.

5 The series Die Chroniken der deutschen Städte includes chronicles from the period for many cities in Germany, including Augsburg, Nuremberg, Regensburg, Munich, and Cologne.


7 The city payment lists (Baumeisterbücher) testify to the frequent presence of Maximilian’s musicians in Augsburg during his reign.


10 The organist Paul Hofhaimer was permanently resident in Augsburg from 1507 to 1519 (see Manfred Schuler, “Paul Hofhaimer in seinen Beziehungen zu Augsburg,” Musik in Bayern 50 (1995): 11–21) and the instrumentalist Augustein Schubinger retained his home in Augsburg while in the service of the Emperor (see Polk, “Musik am Hof,” 650). Maximilian’s Hofkapelle was also based in the city from 1492 to 1496 before it moved permanently to Vienna (Cuyler, The Emperor Maximilian I, 51).
12 For the range of civic patronage at that time, see Polk, *German Instrumental Music*, 109; and Green, “Defining the City ‘Trumpeter’, 20. Nuremberg was exceptional in its musical patronage; in addition to its wind ensemble the city also subsidized a lute-and-portative duo earlier in the fifteenth century. See Polk, *German Instrumental Music*, 113.
13 For details of the career paths of the Schubinger family, see Polk, “The Schubingers.”
14 Polk, *German Instrumental Music*, 112–13. While the use of the slide brass instrument in the shawm bands of the period has been a bone of contention among scholars, a general consensus has been reached that this was the case.
15 In 1490, for example, “3 pfeiffern und den Busaner” were paid by the council (Augsburg, Stadtarchiv, Baumeisterbücher Nr. 84, fol. 42r). Augsburg payment lists do not yield further details of the instruments bought for the ensemble during this period. It is however likely that additional instruments were purchased. The Nuremberg ensemble, for example, is known to have added crumhorns and recorders to their own selection of instruments at that time. See Polk, *German Instrumental Music*, 113.
17 In other European cities performances of civic wind instrumentalists in churches seem to have become customary towards the end of the fifteenth century. For example, in St. Donatian’s Church, Bruges, from 1483 an instrumental *Salve* performance was given after the singing of the “laudes Beate Marie”; motets were also specifically written for these regular performances (see Reinhard Strohm, *Music in Late Medieval Bruges* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 86).
19 The Augsburg *Baumeisterbücher* include frequent payments to the *Stadtpfeifer* for dances as well as for weddings.

In 1473, for example, both Maximilian and his father, Emperor Friedrich III (1415–93), visited Augsburg, where singing of the Mass in their presence is recorded (Wilhelm Rem’s chronicle, f. 261r, quoted in “Chronik des Hector Mülich,” 239, note).


“Die Chronik von Clemens Sender,” 80.

Ibid., 83.

Ibid., 86.

Ibid., 139.

Formerly Stadtarchiv Augsburg, Schätze Nr. 78; now Chroniken Nr. 8.

Stadtarchiv Augsburg Chroniken Nr. 8, fol.279, in “Die Chronik von Clemens Sender,” 80. The performance on Whitsun includes an additional description that “hat mit allen seittenspillen das ampt volpracht” (“the Mass was conducted with all kinds of playing on string instruments”). Stadtarchiv Augsburg Chroniken Nr. 8, fol. 283v, in “Die Chronik von Clemens Sender,” 83.

Stadtarchiv Augsburg Chroniken Nr. 8, fol. 342 in “Die Chronik von Clemens Sender,” 139.


“Darauf solle sein die Canterey, vnnd dabey Zingkenplasser vnnd pusauner in ordnung gestelt. ... Item vnnder den Pusaunen solle der Stewdl maister sein, vnnder den Zynngken der Augustin, vnnd Iren Reim solle fuieren ain knabel auf dem wagen, solle auf die maynung gemacht werden: Wie Sy auf des kaisers beschaidt die pusaunen vnnd Zynngken auf das frölichist gestimpt haben.

  Posaun vnnd Zinckhen han wir gestelt
  zu dem Gesang, wie dann gefelt
  der Kaiserlichen Mayestat
  dar durch sich offt erlustigt hat
  aufs fölichist mit rechtem grundt
  wie wir desselben hetten kundt.” (Dammann, “Die Musik,” 280)


Ibid., 89.


44 See n. 31.
48 Augsburg Stadtarchiv, Baumeisterbücher Nr.112, fol. 67v.