

Bach
and the
“Snake=Fire=Sprayers”
Fire=fighting Regulations and Equipment
During Bach’s Time in Leipzig



London, England (1670)

Commentary and Translation by Thomas Braatz © 2011

Introduction

*Ach! laßt uns bald aus Sodom fliehen,
Eh uns das Feuer überfällt!*

*O let us soon flee from Sodom,
Before the fire catches up with us and takes us by surprise!*

BWV 70/3

One might rightfully ask how this topic will enhance our understanding of Bach's life and music. For this I do not have a reasonable answer. Perhaps this topic was selected out of frustration that other digitized scholarly sources like the 1733 revision of the *Schulordnung* for the Leipzig *Thomasschule* are not available online. A comparison with the original 1723 source¹ might yield a few new insights that could pertain directly to Bach's duties and activities in the *Thomasschule* as well as the *Thomaskirche* in Leipzig. In regard to topics remotely connected to important individuals, I am reminded in this regard of serious scholarly efforts directed at describing the underwear that Friedrich Schiller wore, or, better yet, his method of inducing inspiration by sniffing some partially rotten and fermenting apples which he kept in one of his desk drawers. In this presentation I am also acutely aware of the distant, very likely forced connection that I am attempting to make with something that Bach very likely experienced on an almost daily basis.

As far as firefighting in Leipzig is concerned, Bach would very likely have seen the lean-to (shed) that had been placed against the outer wall of the *Thomaskirche* as depicted in the well-known engraving found in the 1723 *Schulordnung*. Here the Leipzig City Council had strategically located the

¹ presented here on the BCW at: <http://bach-cantatas.com/Articles/OrdnungEng.pdf>

placement of one of its four fire-fighting units (fire engines) not far from the water fountain within the retention pool [*Der Steinerne Wasser-Kasten*] visible from the *Thomasschule* and not too distant from the *Thomaskirche*. It is very likely that some of the other lean-tos were used for storing wood, etc. (There are a number of entrances on this side of the church, but it is fairly easy to see which of these are not.) Of one thing we can be quite certain: Bach did not hear any sirens. The warnings or alarms had to be sounded with church bells and people running through the streets and shouting “Fire!”

Twice every year, just before the Easter and Michaelmas Fairs began, those assigned to perform their duties as firemen held very public practice sessions which were exercises to demonstrate their abilities and which offered at the same time an opportunity to determine whether all of the fire-fighting equipment was in good condition. It is quite likely that the members of the crew assigned to the equipment stored right next to the *Thomaskirche* were doing their exercises in broad daylight right on the square in front of the church and school and used the water supplied by the fountain located there. After an actual fire, the square in front of the school and church, weather conditions permitting, would be used for drying out the fire-hose and making any necessary repairs.

What kind of fire engine did Bach actually see? This is much more difficult to describe since the document [the *Leipzig Fire-fighting Regulations from 1691*] which I have translated does not offer sufficient details to give us a clear picture. Using the John Keeling (London, 1670) illustration above as a possible basis for conjecture, we are still left with an incomplete description of some key elements: Did the Leipzig fire engine have wheels? They are never mentioned anywhere in this document, but we have to assume that they might have had wheels. The first groom with his horse to appear at the

fire-fighting shed would receive a special remuneration. Or did the engine have bars attached to both sides allowing a number of firefighters to carry it like pall-bearers to the scene of the fire?

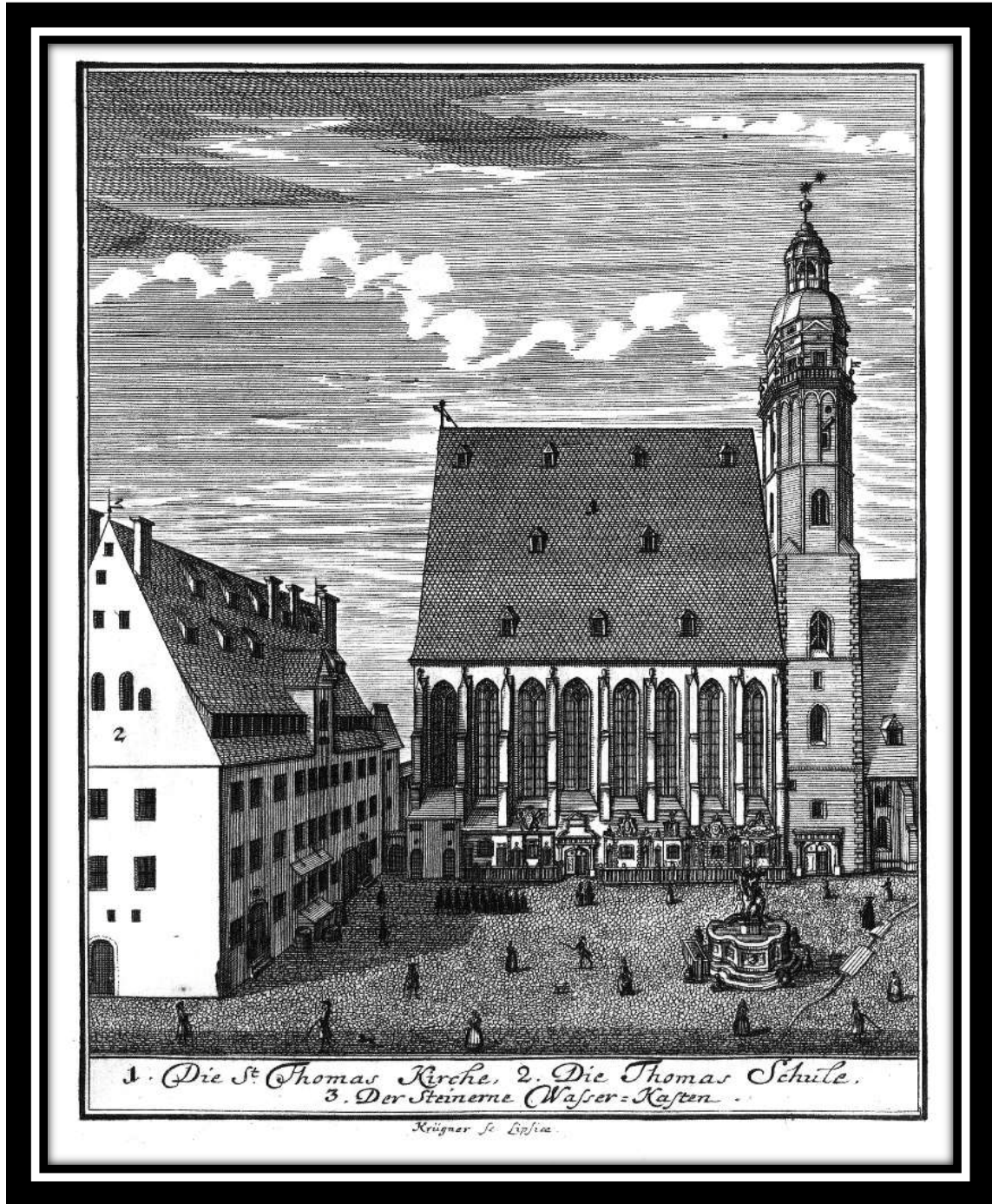


Figure 1: Leipzig 1723 from the *Schulordnung*

Horse-drawn carts or wagons are mentioned, but these seem to have been used mainly for bringing more water to the fire site. Complicating even further the description of the fire engine is the fact that the document frequently refers to the fire engine as *die Spritze* = literally the sprayer or the thing that sprays water. This is, of course, a *pars pro toto* reference to the entire fire engine mechanism (the container holding the water, the pump with its handles along with the entire fire-hose). However, in other contexts the same word refers specifically only to the brass fire-hose nozzle.

Somewhere in this portable unit called the fire engine, there is a pumping mechanism not fully described in the document except that it required at least two on either side (or front and back as shown in the Keeling illustration) to pump the water. The starting positions have 5 men on either side of the pump probably including the reserves needed to relieve those who were actively pumping. Attached to this pump was the leather fire-hose which had on the other end a brass nozzle from which the water could flow under a certain amount of pressure.

The document describes in rather great detail the procedure to be used for attaching the fire-hose and bringing it to the scene of the fire. While determining how to approach the fire entailed both heavy physical labor as well as danger to the individuals close to the fire, a much larger number of individuals was needed to keep supplying and pumping the water. Some of these might be referred to as the 'bucket brigade' who had to carry water by hand in leather buckets from the closest water supply which could be a few streets removed from the site of the fire.

A somewhat surprising innovation enacted by the Leipzig City Council was the authority granted to the overseers ('inspectors') at any given time during a fire outbreak to command those who are called 'idle onlookers' [who knows, perhaps even a pyromaniac might have been among them!] to assist those who were pumping water and needed to be relieved.

Another possible innovation enacted by the city council was the use of brass badges which were worn by the firefighters to make them clearly recognizable to their superiors and to distinguish them from the onlookers.

A system of rewards and punishments/penalties were specified to make the firefighting situation function more efficiently. Rewards were given to those who appeared first at their assigned stations while penalties awaited those who came late or did not appear at all and could not offer a good reason or excuse.

The document makes quite clear that the majority of firefighters were drawn from the trades. Master carpenters or bricklayers as well as their journeymen were expected to perform specific duties which are described in the document. All the numbers listed refer to specific individuals whose names are not printed in this document since they could change and be replaced by others for various reasons.

The city council was most proud of their newest acquisition: **die neuen Schlangen-Feuer-Sprizen** = literally, 'the new Snake-Fire-Sprayers', a compound noun which refers specifically to the new leather fire-hoses as *Schlangen* = [snakes] which unfortunately demanded very special treatment and care to keep them in proper, functioning conditions. Simply twisting or turning them upside-down or dragging them over the cobblestones could cause cracks that could easily become holes where water could escape. The compound *Feuer-Spritzen* most likely refers to the mechanism or engine which includes the pump.

The original document is found on pp. 8-19.

The translation follows on pp. 20-27.

The following footnotes or additions are found at the end of the original document:

for item 7: 2 trademasters designated as 1 and 2.

for item 9: 2 carpenters and 2 bricklayers numbered 3 – 6. Each one of these should bring along an axe or a hatchet.

for item 10: 2 masters and two of their journeymen numbered 7 – 10.

for item 11: 2 masters numbered 11 and 12 of which numbers 13-32 constitute the 20 journeymen.

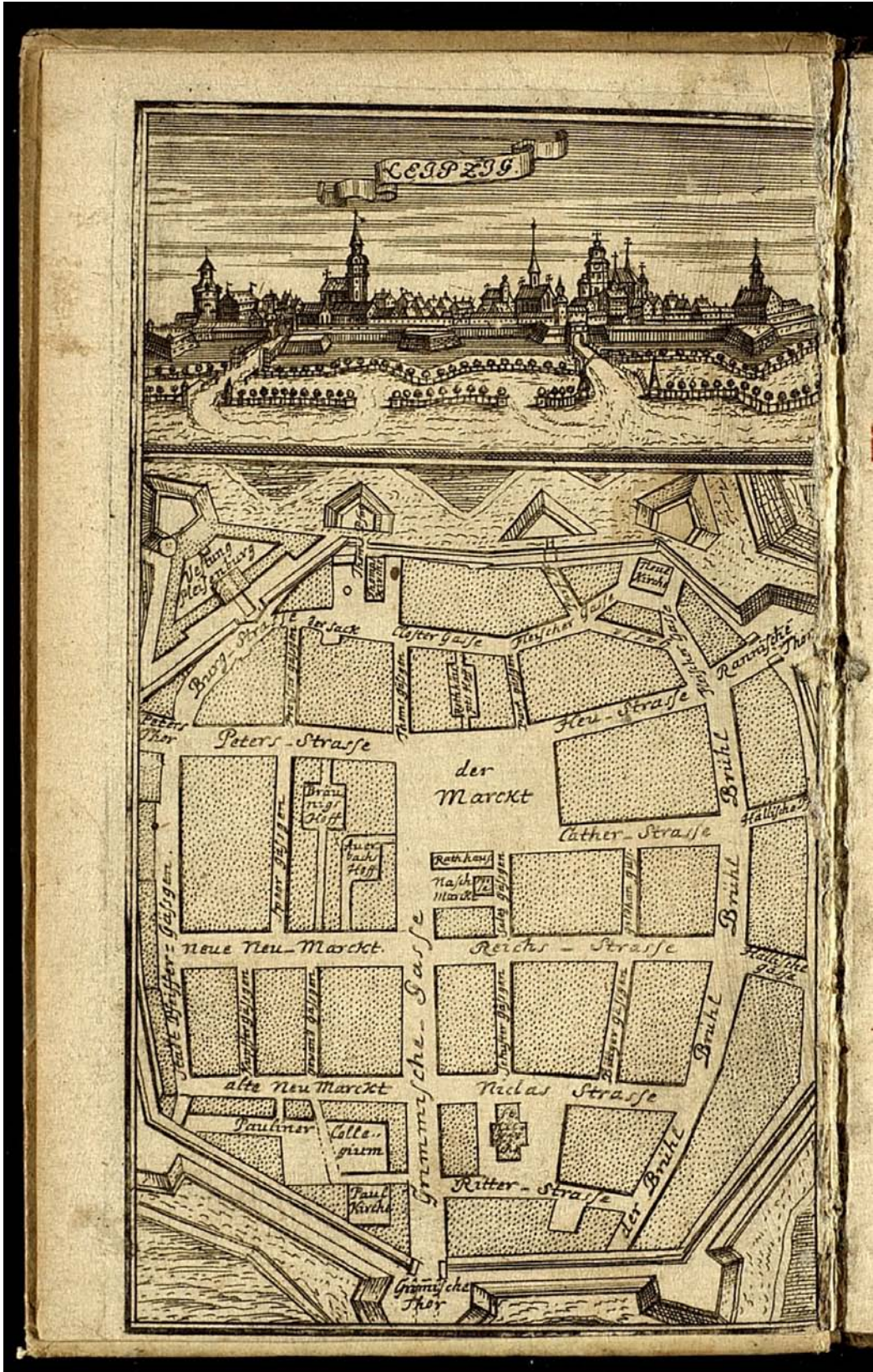


Figure 2: Leipzig, 1725

E. E. Hochweisen Raths

der Stadt Leipzig

O r d n u n g

wegen derer neuen

Schlangen-Feuer-Sprizen

wie man sich im Nothfall / den GStt ab-

wende / darmit zuverhalten



gedruckt bey Christoph Günthern. [Leipzig, 1691]

Wir Bürgermeister und Rath der Stadt Leipzig /fügen allen hiesigen Bürgern und Einwohnern hiermit zu wissen / Was massen Wir aus obliegender treuen Sorgfalt vor gemeiner Stadt bestes / sonderlich zu möglichster Abwendung grossen Schadens bey entstehenden Feuers-Brünsten / welche der Allmächtige in Gnaden verhüten wolle / vier neue lederne Schlangen-Feuer-Sprigen angeschaffet / und solche in die vier Stadt Viertel dergestalt vertheilet / daß die ins Peters Viertel gehörige in ein darzu bereitetes Häuslein an der Thomas Kirche / die ins Ranstädter Viertel in der gleichen Häuslein an der Barfüßer Kirche / die ins Hällische Viertel bestimmte am Zimmerhose im Brüele / und die ins Grimmische Viertel bey dem so genannten Wasser-Schage aufn Sperlings-Berge gestellet und anzutreffen.

Damit nun dieselbigen desto nüglicher auf erheischenden Nothfall gebrauchet werden / und ein ieder / dem eine Verrichtung darbey auffgetragen / worinne dieselbe eigentlich bestehe / wissen / auch derselben gebührend nachkommen möge / So haben Wir folgende Ordnung darüber abzufassen / und allen denen jenigen / welchen daran gelegen / zur Nachricht öffentlich kund zu machen der Nothdurfft befunden.

Und zwar I. ist einem iedweden Viertels Hauptmann die Oberufftsicht über die in seinem anbefohlenen Viertel befindliche Sprige aufgetragen / an welchen alle darzu bestellte Personen hiermit gewiesen werden / sich bey Ihm Raths zu erholen / und dessen Befehl allenthalben / biß an Uns / nachzuleben.

Hiernechst sind II. zu ieder Sprige zweene sonderliche Inspectores geordnet / und zwar iego zu der imBiertel.....

Welchen nicht allein iederzeit davor emfige Sorge zu tragen oblieget / daß die Sprigen mit ihren Schläuchen / Geräthschaft und sämtlicher Zubehörung in guten richtigen Stande erhalten / was daran schadhafft werden möchte / in Zeiten tüchtig gebessert und der Abgang ersezet werde / sondern sie sollen auch von der zu ihrer Sprige behörigen Mannschafft ein völlig Verzeichniß / und derselben nechst dem Biertels Hauptmanne zu befehlen haben / diese auch Thren Anstellungen / es sey beym exerciren / oder in FeuersGefahr selbst / oder bey andern hierunter vorkommenden Begebenheiten zu gehorsamen verbunden seyn. Absonderlich aber ist derer Inspectoren Amt / daß so bald Feuer geruffen oder Sturm geschlagen wird / wenn das Feuer in ihrem Biertel ist / einer von ihnen (warum sie beyde sich zu vorhero zu vergleichen wissen werden) sich alsofort zum Sprigen-Häuslein / zu dem ihrer iedweder nebenst dem Hauptmanne einen Schlüssel hat / verfüge / die ankommende Mannschafft anstelle / die Sprige mit ihrem Zeuge fortschaffe / und daß alles schleunig / iedoch ordentlich ohne confusion und Schaden geschehe / daran sey / der ander hergegen ungesäumt dem Feuer zu eile / dessen Beschaffenheit / wie und wo die Sprige am füglichsten zur meisten Gegenwehre anzubringen in Augenschein nehme / wenn immittelst der Erste mit der Sprige und Mannschafft ankommt / dieselben anweise / und so dann beyderseits die fernere Nothdurfft vom Anfang biß zum Ende nach aller Möglichteit / und der nachbeschriebenen Ordnung / beobachten / gestalt ihnen denn zu dessen mehrer Bewerckstelligung

Macht gegeben wird / dafern gmugsame Mannschafft / die Sprige fort und anzubringen / oder auch zum Pompen / nicht verhanden seyn solte / das umstehende müßige Volck darzu anzutreiben.

Worbey III. insgemein dieses in acht zu nehmen / daß wenn Feuer auskommt / nicht alle vier / sondern nur zwo Sprigen auff einmal / und zwar dergestalt darzu zu bringen / daß wenn das Feuer in der Stadt im Peters- oder Grimmischen Viertel entsteht / die in solche zwey Viertel gehörige Sprigen herbey geschaffet und gebraucht / die übrigen zwo aber / samt aller darzu bestimmten Mannschafft / an ihren Orten bereit gehalten und ohne sonderbare Erforderung davon nicht weggeführt werden.

Da aber der Brand im Rannstätter oder Hällischen Viertel in der Stadt wäre / solchen falls wären die zu diesen zweyen Vierteln gehörige Sprigen zu gebrauchen / und blieben hergegen die erstbenannten zwo in Bereitschafft an ihren Orten stehen.

Wenn in der Vorstadt Feuer auffgehet / sind zwar alle vier Sprigen fertig zu halten / aber ohne sonderliche Anordnung keine vor das Thor zu führen.

IV. Alle zu denen Sprigen geordnete Personen sollen / so bald ein Feuer beschriehen / oder deßhalben gestürmet wird / sich ungesäumt zu ihren Sprigen begeben und ein ieder sein Amt darbey nach allem Vermögen in acht nehmen / auch biß nach geleschten Brande / wiederum verwahrter Sprige und erfolgter Beurlaubung von den Inspectoren / keiner weggehen / bey Straffe wenn er ein Meister ist /

12. Gr. und wenn er ein Gefelle / 6. Gr. Wenn aber einer bey dem exerciren oder bey entstandener Feuers-Brunst gar nicht erschiene / und seinem Amte nicht nachkäme / der soll nicht nur in ietztbeniemte Straffe verfallen seyn / sondern Wir behalten Uns auch vor / denselben nach Gelegenheit noch härter anzusehen / und soll dißfalls keine Entschuldigung gelten / ausgenommen Verreisung über Land / Kranckheit und wenn einem das Feuer sehr nahe wäre. Im Gegentheil wer auff geschenehenen Sturm Schlag der erste bey der Sprige seyn wird / dem sollen auff derer Inspectoren Zeugniß / Sechzehn Gr. und dem / so der nechste nach dem ersten dahin kömt / acht Gr. aus unserer Einnahm-Stube zur Ergegligkeit gereicht werden.

V. Wer nun auff erheischenden Fall am ersten zum Sprigen-Häuslein kömmt und solches noch nicht offen findet / soll sich alsobald in Haus begeben / alwo der Schlüssel zu besagten Häuslein anzutreffen / diesen abfordern und ohn alles Versäumniß öffnen.

VI. Wann nun sechs biß acht Personen beysammen / sollen sie die Sprigen bey denen daran hangenden Seilen heraus ziehen / und dieselben neben denen bey iedweder befindlichen sechs ledernen Wasser-Eimern / eilend nach dem Feuer bringen / ißt bey Nacht-Zeit / so müssen auch zwey brennende Fackeln / und zwey Laternen aus dem Sprigen-Häuslein mitgenommen werden. Wenn aber die Sprigen nicht wohl forzubringen / so dann sind Pferde / welche am ersten zu haben / darzu zu nehmen / und welcher Knecht zu dem Ende

unerfordert am ersten mit seinen Pferden daselbst erscheint / soll davor 12. Gr. zur Verehrung bekommen.

Gleicher gestalt sollen die Wasserführer 33. 34. 35. so bald immer möglich / die ihnen angewiesenen Wasser-Fasse gegen das Feuer / zum nechsten Brunnen an / und wenn selbige mit Wasser gefüllet / zur Schlangen-Sprigen zuführen / auch allen Fleiß anwenden / damit durch abgewechselte Führen stets Wasser genug bey der Sprige sey / und daran kein Mangel vorkomme / wie denn zu dessen mehrerer Beförderung / so bald eine Feuers-Brunst entstehet / die Wasserführer aus allen vier Vierteln zugleich dem Brande zu eilen / und Wasser anführen / auch darmit bis zur gänglichen Dämpfung anhalten sollen / es wäre denn / daß inzwischen an einem andern Orte noch ein Feuer aufgienge / auff welchem Fall sie sich denen Vierteln nach theilen / und ein iedweder zu der ihm insonderheit angewiesenen Sprige begeben soll.

VII. Nachdem die Inspectores angeordnet / wo iegliche Sprige am bequemsten stehen kan / sollen 1. 2. den Wasser-Sack ordentlich von der Sprige abnehmen / und solchen nach dem nechsten Wasser-Kasten oder Brunnen zutragen / so weit der Schlauch lang will / oder wenn dergleichen nicht wol zu erreichen / sollen sie doch den Wasser-Sack also stellen / wie man mit denen Wasser-Fassen / Sturm-Fassen und andern Fahrzeuge am füglichsten ab- und zufahren kan / gestalt denn die Wasserführer und andere Kärner sich besleißigen sollen / so nahe als möglich zur Sprigen zurücken / damit entweder das Wasser aus denen Fassen gleich in den Wasser-Sack gelassen / oder doch

stracks darein gegossen werden könne / und es darmit keines
Zutragens bedörffe.

Solch Wasser-eingiessen und andere hierzu gehörige Handreichung
sollen etliche von unten benannten Gesellen verrichten / und darzu
bey ieder Sprige befindlichen ledern Cimer gebrauchen / nur daß /
wenn das Wasser in den Sack aus einen Brunnen oder Wasser-Fasse
gelassen wird / alsdann 1. und 2. fleißig acht haben / daß es nicht zu
jehling hineinschieße / und überlauffe / welchem durch vorsichtiges
Ausziehen und vorschlagen des Zapffens leichtlich vorzukommen / wie
sich dann beyde 1. und 2. auch allezeit bey diesem Wasser-Sacke
müssen finden lassen / und acht haben / daß es nicht an Wasser
mangeln möge;

VIII. Die zu denen Sprigen geordneten Officierer 36. und 57. sollen
mit ihrer Mannschafft von N.37. biß 56. inclusive die Sprigen und
Schläuche besetzen / und daß durch fahren oder lauffen dieselben nicht
beschädiget werden / verhüten / so wohl das unnütze Volck beydes
vom Feuer und von der Sprige ab- und zurücke treiben.

IX. So bald der Wasser-Sack abgenommen / sollen 3. 4. 5. 6. (denn
diese viere einerley Verrichtung haben / und einander abzulösen
schuldig seyn) das messingige Rohr von der Sprige abheben / damit
nach dem Orte / wo das Feuer ist / des nechsten und bequemsten
Weges zu gehen / und solches dahin / wo die beste Rettung zu thun
/ tragen. Im Fall man aber durch die Förder-Gebäude / oder von
des Nachbars Hause dazu gelangen müste / so dann ist das messingige
Rohr unten zu lassen / und hergegen müssen obige 4. oder wenigst 2.

davon in das nechste Fenster oder Dach steigen / das Seil welches zu dem Ende auff einer Roll hinten an der Sprige hanget / mit sich nehmen / und solches von oben herunter lassen.

X. Woran 7. 8. 9. 10. das Messing Rohr fest binden / und so dann 3. 4. 5. 6. es samt dem ledern Schlauch in die höhe ziehen / indem nun dieses geschicht müssen 7. 8. 9. 10. den übrigen Schlauch fein ordentlich / iedoch nicht zu jehling / von der Sprige abnehmen / damit er sich nicht umbdrehe oder umbschlage / noch auch mehr nachgegeben werde / als die so das Messinge Rohr fort und in die höhe schaffen / nach sich ziehen / wie denn was auff solche Weise vom Schlauche zum auffziehen nicht gebraucht wird und übrig ist / unten auff die Erde rund zusammen geleget werden soll. Wann das Wasser hinein gelassen ist / müssen 7. 8. 9. 10. den ledern Schlauch durch aus ansehen / ob er auch noch allenthalben tichte und gut / und da an einem oder andern Orte das Wasser heraus dringen wolte / solchen mit denen Bind-Lappen und Faden / welche dazu im Gerethschafft-Sacke allezeit vorhanden seyn sollen / überbinden und vermachen. Auch haben diese allezeit an dem Schlauche hin und wieder zu gehen / und nach zusehen / daß der Schlauch allenthalben gleich und nicht umbgeschlagen liege / ingleichen daß keine Krümmen oder Puckel hinein gedrucket werden / solche auf befinden so fort wieder gerade zu machen / auf daß daraus nicht ein Loch werde. So ist auch dieses ihre Verrichtung / daß wenn der Schlauch von einem Orte zum andern gebracht werden muß / derselbe nicht auf der Erde und Steinen fortgeschleppt / sondern von ihnen in die höhe gehoben und getragen werde.

XI. So bald der Schlauch vom Sprigen-Kasten abgenommen / sollen 11. 12. einen Eimer mit Wasser auf die Seyger giessen / und solche damit anfeuchten / die Stangen in die eisern Mängel stecken / und ihrer Gesellen 10. auf ieder Seiten Fünff zum pompen in Ordnung stellen / auch allezeit dabey stehen bleiben und Anregung thun / auf daß unaufhörlich mit pompen angehalten werde.

XII. Wenn nun 3. 4. 5. 6. wie oben erwehnet / einen beqvemen Ort gefunden / da sie dem Feuer am meisten und nechsten Abbruch zu thun vermeinen / sollen sie überlaut ruffen: **Laffets fortgehen** / auch das Zieh-Seil von dem Rohr abnehmen / und an die Seite niederlegen / hiernechst ihrer einer das Rohr leiten / das Wasser daraus nach dem Feuer zuschiessen zu lassen / der andere so nechst hinter diesem stehet / den Schlauch in etwas aufheben und in die höhe halten / damit der erste das Rohr desto leichter nach seinem Willen regieren könne / die übrigen beyde aber diese zweene ablösen.

XIII. So geschwind nun als geruffen ist / **Laffets fortgehen** / sollen die 10. ans Werk gestellte Gesellen an der Sprige zu pompen anhaben / und zwar erstlich einmahl oder 6. etwas sachte ziehen / damit man / ob noch alles richtig und klar sey / nochmahls sehen / und wo es von nöthen / schleunige Hülffe thun könne / wenn aber kein Mangel sich findet / noch 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. oder 12. sie inne halten heissen / müssen sie immer stärker und stärker anschlagen / also tapffer anhalten / und nicht nachlassen / biß übrigen 10. Gesellen sich bey die andern / wenn einer ermüdet ist / solchen abzulösen / und also muß mit dem pompen nicht inne gehalten werden / worüber / wie oben erwehnet / 11. 12. die Obacht haben sollen;

XIV. Wann nun nechst Göttlicher Hülffe der Brand widerumb geleschet / so lassen auff derer Inspectoren vorhergehenden Befehl 3. 4. 5. 6. wiederum an dem Seile das Rohr und den Schlauch hernieder / ist aber solches nicht auffgezogen / sondern die Treppen hinan getragen worden / so müssen sie droben so lange verziehen / biß erst der Schlauch von Wasser ledig / wie dann 11. 12. bald Befehl bekommen werden / den ledern Schlauch von der Sprige ab- und loß zu schrauben / damit das Wasser so wohl aus dem Schlauch / als aus der Sprige lauffen könne / 1. 2. binden den Wasser-Schlauch auff erhaltenen Befehl auch ab / und legen solchen mit dem Sacke oben auff die Sprige / 7. 8. 9. 10. nachdem sie den ledern Schlauch vom Seile abgelöset / oder 3. und Consort damit wieder zurück kommen seyn / schlagen solchen über den eisern Bügel hin und wieder / das Seil so zum auffziehen gebraucht worden / muß 3. und Consort auffwinden / und dahin hängen / wo es abgenommen / wie auch 7. und Consort den Gerethschafft-Sack; Etliche der Gesellen nehmen die 2. Laternen mit / und ziehen so dann ihrer 6. die Sprige widerumb zum geordneten Behältnisse / ist es spät oder bey Nacht / so wird sie nur gleich hinein gesezet / auch der Schlüssel wiederum an gehörigen Ort getragen / und alda fest gebunden.

XV. Des folgenden Tages aber / wenn es trocken Wetter / und dazu beqvem ist / sollen 1. 2. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. und 12. in Beyseyn der Inspectoren die Sprige auf einen gelegenen Platz bringen / wieder / wie oben erwehnet / zum Gebrauch fertig machen und probiren / ob auch etwan Schaden daran geschehen seyn möchte / welcher so dann verbessert werden muß / im Fall aber noch alles richtig / sollen 1. 2.

den Wasser-Sack und Schlauch mit reinem Wasser abspülen und reinigen / aufgehängen und in der Sonnen oder Luft trocknen lassen / darnach den Schlauch wiederum hinten an die Spritze feste binden / und solchen hin und her auf den Brete fein gleich aufschlagen / auch mit der herab hangenden Schnur zusammen binden / und wenn sonst das übrige alles fertig / den Sack mit dem Packer oben auf die Spritze legen / wo er vormahls abgenommen worden;

11. 12. Sollen das Messing Rohr und Schrauben besehen / ob noch alles gut / solche auch mit reinem Wasser / wie auch die Spritze selbst / saubern / die Seuger heraus nehmen / alles abtrocknen / und was nöthig ist / einschmieren;

7. 8. 9. 10. Sollen den ledern Schlauch mit reinem Wasser abspülen / und an der Sonnen oder Luft trocknen / ist's aber in Winters Zeit / so muß das trocknen in einer warmen Stube geschehen / welche ihnen so dann angewiesen werden soll.

Darnach nehmen 11. 12. den ledern Schlauch / und schrauben solchen mit 8. verkehrten Umbschlägen wiederum an die Spritze feste / 7. und Consort legen solchen über den eisern Bügel hin und wieder / damit die Enden inwendig in die Spritze zu hängen kommen / iedoch daß er gang gleich und nicht überschlagen liege / darauf wird die Spritze mit aller zu behör / wie sie anfänglich heraus genommen worden / ins Haus gesetzt / und unten die Schleiffe mit Del-Lappen geschmieret / auch dazu Lichter und Fackeln / so viel derer heraus genommen worden / samt der Nothdurfft in Gerethschafft-Sack / wieder hinein verschaffet.

XVI. Damit nun keiner mit der Unwissenheit sich zu entschuldigen habe / so sollen diese Sprigen alle Jahr zweymal vor dem Ofter- und Michaelis-Marccke / probiret / und das Volck ieder zu seiner Berrichtung angewiesen und exerciret / auch einem ieden nicht allein hiervon ein exemplar gegeben / sondern auch ein messingnen Zeichen von denen Inspectoren gereicht werden / worauf diejeinige numer stehet / womit seine Berrichtung hierinne bezeichnet ist / dieses Zeichen soll er / so bald er zur Sprüze kommen ist / an die Inspectoren lieffern / woraus man bestes erkennen wird / welches die Ersten oder Letzten seyn / Die Mannschafft aber von N. 37. biß 56. inclusive sollen Ihre Zeichen an Ihre vorgesezte Officierer N. 36. und 57. einhändigen. Wenn alles wiederum repariret ist / und die Sprige an ihren Ort gebracht worden / sollen sie sich bey denen Inspectoren anmelden / welche dann solche Zeichen wieder reichen sollen. Würde von denen Handwercks-Gesellen einer oder der ander von himmenweg ziehen / soll er vor seiner Abreise das Zeichen dem ihm dißfals vorgesezten Meister einzuhändigen schuldig seyn woran sie die Meister zuerinnern haben / als welche auch bey willkührlicher Straffe davor stehen sollen. Zu Urkund haben Wir unser gewöhnlich Stadt-Secret anhero auffdrucken lassen / Signatum Leipzig / den L.S.

zu VII. 2. Meister N. 1. und 2.

zu IX. 2. Zimmerleute. 2 Mäurer N. 3. 4. 5. 6. davon ein ieder eine Art oder Beil mit sich bringen soll.

X. Zwey Meister und zwey ihrer Gesellen. 7. 8. 9. 10.

XI. 2. Meister 11. 12. 13. bis 32. seynd die 20. Gesellen.

The Very Honorable and Wise City Council of Leipzig,
Due to the Recent Acquisition of Fire Hoses,
Has Established New Fire-fighting
Regulations

To Be Followed in an Emergency
When There Is an Outbreak of Fire
(May God Spare Us!)



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[Leipzig, 1691]

We, the mayors and city council of Leipzig, out of our responsibility and concern for our communal city, have purchased four new leather fire hoses and have placed them in the four wards of the city, particularly in order to prevent most of all the great damage that might arise from an outbreak of fire (may God help us!), and herewith issue this decree to all citizens and inhabitants of Leipzig. (The fire hoses are located in special sheds ('little lean-to houses') in the four city districts. 1. in the Peter's Quarter up against the outer wall of the *Thomaskirche*; 2. in the Ranstatt Quarter in the lean-to attached similarly to the *Barfüsserkirche*; 3. in the Halle Quarter attached to the *Zimmerhof* in the Brühl; and 4. in the Grimm Quarter placed next to the water tank on Sparrow Hill.)

In order that these fire hoses might be used even more effectively in an emergency that demands attention and so that every individual who has a specific task or duty assigned to him will know what this task actually involves and will be able to carry it out properly, we have found it necessary to publish the following regulations as a public notification to all those for whom these directions will be important.

These are the regulations:

1. The captain of each quarter is in charge of the fire engine located in his assigned quarter. All those individuals who have been ordered specifically to help in this quarter should report to this captain and accept his orders and, in the last instance, appeal to us as the final authority in these matters.
2. Next we will list here the names of each of the two special inspectors assigned to each fire hose and the quarter in which they will serve: [these are handwritten in the margins].

At all times these inspectors are to take special care in maintaining the fire engines with their [leather] hoses and other apparatus and keeping them in good condition by removing any possible defects or replacing parts before they become unusable. These inspectors are also obligated to keep a complete list of all those firemen assigned to their fire engine and must obey their orders as well as those of the captain whether these involve exercises, actual fire-fighting situations, or any other events related to these activities. Another specific duty assigned to these inspectors is that one of them (they must agree with each other in advance who this will be) must run directly to the fire

engine shed as soon as anyone cries out 'Fire!' or an alarm is sounded [church bells, etc.]. Each inspector including the captain will have a key to the shed and assist the fire brigade as its members arrive in taking away all of the fire-fighting equipment as quickly as possible without causing any confusion or damage to the equipment. Meanwhile the other inspector must hurry directly to the location of the fire, observe and assess its nature, and decide how and where the fire engine [with its fire-hose] might best be applied in extinguishing the fire. When the first inspector arrives with the fire engine and the members of the brigade, the second should both give instructions/directions as much as possible from the beginning to the end of the fire and observe whether these are being carried out and indicate how they should be accomplished. In case there are insufficient numbers of firemen present to move and direct the fire engine or pump the water, the second inspector should make some of the people who are idly standing by and observing the fire assist the firemen in these [fire-fighting] activities.

3. Likewise in this situation when fire breaks out, it is generally necessary to watch out that not all four fire engines, but only two of them may be used at the same time, as, for example, when a fire breaks out in the city in the Peter or Grimm Quarter, only the two fire engines belonging to those quarters may be brought to the scene and used. However, the other two, including all the members of the brigades assigned to them must remain in readiness in those locations and may not be moved away without special permission or a demand for them being issued.

If fire should break out in the suburbs (beyond the city wall fortifications), the equipment in all four of the locations within the city is then not to be moved outside of the city gates without express permission.

4. As soon as a fire has been established or an alarm has been sounded, all those individuals who have been assigned to their specific fire equipment sheds are to hurry to them directly without delay and carry out their assigned duties to the best of their abilities until the fire has been extinguished, the equipment returned and put back in its safe place, and permission to leave has been granted by the inspectors. If anyone should leave their positions prematurely, they will be fined as follows: a master 12 Groschen = \$45.00² and a journeyman 6 Groschen = \$18.00. If anyone does not appear at all for a

² Christoph Wolff [English Edition], *Johann Sebastian Bach: The Learned Musician*, Norton, 2000, p. 539-541; [German Edition] S. Fischer, 2000, pp. 578-580.

practice session or a real fire outbreak, he will not only be fined as indicated above, but will receive an even heavier penalty which we reserve the right to assign according to the given situation for which there will be no excuse except for the following reasons: a trip away from the city, an illness, or when the fire affects anyone directly (by being in the same building or any building close by). In contrast to these penalties, there will be special rewards granted as follows from our income treasury to those who appear first at the scene of the fire after the alarm has been sounded and based upon the witness given by an inspector: 16 Groschen = \$48.00 for the first to appear and for the second 8 Groschen = \$24.00 as remuneration.

5. Whoever, when the situation so demands, is the first to arrive at the fire engine shed and finds it still locked, should immediately go to’s house, where the key is located and demand to use it so that it can be unlocked as soon as possible.

6. Now when 6 to 8 firefighters have assembled there, they should pull out the fire engines by the ropes which are attached to them and bring these as well as the 6 leather water buckets [‘Wasser-Eimer’ = water pails or buckets] to the fire in a hurry. If this occurs at night, then 2 lighted torches and 2 lanterns should also be removed from the shed and brought along to the scene of the fire. If there is any difficulty in moving the fire engines, then the first horses that are available should be used and the groom who appears with his horses and was not required to be present will receive a reward of 12 Groschen [\$36.00] for his admirable services.

Likewise the members of the ‘bucket brigade’ 33, 34, 35 should take their assigned water barrels [‘Wasser-Fasse’ = a keg, barrel or vat] to be used in fighting the fire to the nearest spring/fountain/well where they will fill them with water and take them to the fire engines. In accomplishing this task, they must pay close attention to staggering their deliveries of water so that there will always be sufficient water for the fire engines so that they will never lack water. In order to secure this continual supply of water, members of the bucket brigades from all four quarters should hurry to the site of the fire as soon as a fire breaks out and continue to bring water until the fire has been put out entirely, unless, of course, another fire breaks out elsewhere, in which case they should return to their former divisions according to city quarters and report to the fire engine sheds specifically assigned to them.

7. After the inspectors have specified by order where each fire engine should be most suitably situated, then 1 and 2 should properly remove the water sack from the fire engine itself and carry it to the nearest water tank [the large containment area surrounding a city well or fountain where the water is retained] as far as the hose will reach. If this is not possible, then they should place the water sacks on a cart or wagon the way drivers do in order to move them in the most efficient way to and from the fire whereby the wagon drivers should try to move their vehicles as close as possible to the fire-hose nozzles so that the water from the barrels can flow directly into the water sack or at least can be quickly poured into it so that water will not have to be carried to it.

Several of the journeymen listed here are required to carry out such actions as pouring water into the containers and all other actions along these lines. For these they should use the leather buckets that come with every fire-hose. When the water flows directly from the fountain or water barrel, journeymen 1 and 2 are to make certain that the supply of water does not run out. They are to stay right next to the water sack and pay very careful attention to how fast the water flows into it. It should not be too fast so that it might overflow which frequently happens when the plug [for the water sack] is not cautiously pulled out or pushed in again.

8. The officers, 36 and 57, in charge of the fire-fighting equipment along with their crew including all the named individuals from 37 to 56 must do everything to prevent any damage to this equipment arising through transport on wagons or dragging it while running through the streets. They must also ensure that idle onlookers are driven back from the fire and the firefighting equipment.

9. As soon as the water sack has been taken down from the wagon, the individuals 3, 4, 5, and 6 (these 4 individuals perform the same tasks and should relieve each other as necessary) should detach [lift off] the brass nozzle from the hose and carry it to the site of the fire using the closest and most easily accessible path and find the place where the fire can be fought most effectively. In case they have to access the fire through the storage areas or through a neighbor's house, they must leave the brass nozzle down below and instead 4 individuals, or at least 2 of them, must climb through the nearest window or through the roof with the rope which is attached to the reel on the back end of the fire-hose. This rope they must take along with them and lower it from above.

10. Then individuals 7, 8, 9 and 10 must tie the rope securely to the brass nozzle so that individuals 3, 4, 5, and 6 can pull it up along with the fire-hose. While this is happening, individuals 7, 8, 9, and 10 should carefully, and not too abruptly, remove from the reel attached to the pump the remaining fire-hose so that it does not get twisted or turn upside down. They should also yield when the brass nozzle is being moved forward or upwards while nevertheless pulling towards themselves the remaining, unused fire-hose and placing it on the ground in a neat circle. When water is pumped through the fire-hose, then individuals 7, 8, 9, and 10 must inspect the entire leather hose to determine if it is good and watertight everywhere and if here and there the water comes through, they must use the rags and thread (which should always be present in the fire-hose equipment sack) to cover and tie these leaking spots. These individuals should always check to see if the fire-hose is not twisted or turned upside down anywhere, otherwise kinks or bumps could be pressed into it. At the same moment when this is noticed, the fire-hose should immediately be turned over and flattened out so that no holes are created. Another task they must perform is to transport the fire-hose from one place to another. This should be done in such a way that they do not drag it on the ground over over cobblestones. This can be accomplished by lifting it up and carrying it properly.

11. As soon as the fire-hose has been removed from the reel [attached to the water tank on the wagon], individuals 11 and 12 should pour a bucket of water on the funnels [to prime the pump] to get them wet, then stick the metal poles/bars into the iron rings, place their 10 journeymen in position, 5 on either side/end, and remain there while encouraging them to continue pumping without stopping.

12. When individuals 3, 4, 5, and 6 (mentioned above) have found a good place where they might fight the fire best of all, they should cry out with loud voices: "Let it go!" They should then take off the rope they used to pull up the fire-hose and place it off to one side. Then one of them should aim the pipe [nozzle] at the fire and let the water from it shoot right at it while the other individual standing directly behind him lifts and holds up the hose somewhat so that the first individual can control his aim better. The other two individual behind them stand ready to relieve them.

13. As soon as the shout "Let it go!" is heard, the 10 journeymen positioned at the pump should begin pumping in such a way that with the first to sixth the pumping

action be done by gently pulling and checking if everything is working properly so that corrective actions can be undertaken quickly. If there are no defects and individuals 7 – 12 do not tell them to stop, the pumpers should gradually pump more vigorously and continue to pump in this manner until one of them has tired at which point one of the remaining 10 journeymen should relieve him without having the pumping action stop. As mentioned above, individuals 11 and 12 will supervise this activity.

14. When, with God's help, the fire has been extinguished, the inspectors will have individuals 3, 4, 5, and 6 lower the nozzle and the fire-hose using the rope, or if they had not been lifted this way to the site but rather carried up the stairs, then the fire-hose must first be emptied of water, whereupon individuals 11 and 12 will soon receive the order to unscrew first of all the nozzle from the fire-hose so that the water can run out of the fire-hose as well as the nozzle. Upon a command that will be given, individuals 1 and 2 will tie up [with the rope] the fire-hose and place it with its sack (containing other fire-fighting equipment) on top of the pump [fire engine]. Individuals 7 – 10, after having removed the rope from the fire-hose, or after individual 3 and his group have returned with it, will place it in a back and forth motion over the iron hanger. Individual 3 and his group must wind up the rope on the reel and hang it up where it came from; likewise, individual 7 and his group must take care of the equipment sack. Some of the journeymen will take the 2 lanterns along while 6 of them will return the fire engine to its designated spot. If it was late or at night, it should simply be placed immediately into the shed and the key returned again to the place it belongs and fastened there securely.

15. However, on the following day, if the weather is dry and the situation suitable, individuals 1, 2, 7 – 12 accompanied by the inspectors should bring all the fire-fighting equipment to a convenient place and, as already mentioned above, prepare and test it to see if it has sustained any possible damage. Such damage should be repaired immediately. If everything checks out to exhibit no problems, then individuals 1 and 2 should rinse out the water sack and hose with clean water to clean them and hang them up to dry in the sun or air. After that the fire-hose should be tied securely to the back of the fire engine. It should be placed in a back-and-forth motion on the board and tied together with the cord that hangs down. Then, if everything else is ready, the sack with all the equipment should be placed on top of the fire engine from where it had originally been removed.

Individuals 11 and 12 should examine the brass nozzle and the screws to see if they are still in good condition. Otherwise they should be cleaned with clear water as well as the nozzle itself while the funnels should be taken out and everything dried off, and if necessary, treated with grease.

Individuals 7 – 10 should rinse off the leather fire-hose with clean water and let it dry in the sun or air. Should it be winter, it will be necessary to accomplish this drying in a warm room to which they will be directed.

After this, individuals 11 and 12 will take the leather hose and with the help of individual 8 fasten securely the upturned cuffs to the pump. Individual 7 and his group will lay the hose in a back-and-forth motion over the iron hanger so that both ends of the hose will be hanging inside the fire engine and yet in such a way that it is very even and not lying crossed-over. Then the fire engine with all the other fire equipment will be placed right there from where it had been originally taken. The iron loop down below should be greased with oily rags and all the lamps and torches, as many as had been taken out before the fire, and all other items necessary for fighting fires, should now be put back into the equipment sack.

16. So that no one can claim ignorance regarding these matters, all units of fire equipment will be tested publicly twice yearly just prior to the Easter and Michaelmas Fairs. Each individual from the population will be directed to his assigned position and will carry out the prescribed exercises. Each individual will also receive from their inspectors a brass badge on which the number appears that designates the assigned tasks [as described above]. With these badges the inspectors will be best able to recognize who the first and the last individuals were to arrive at the scene of the fire. However, those individuals 37 to 56 should hand off their badges to their superior officers 36 and 57 when they report for duty. After the fire, when everything has been repaired and the pump returned to its storage area, they should report to their inspectors who will then return these badges to them again. If anyone of these journeymen should move away from the city, it is his duty to hand over his badge to his master before he leaves; just as it required of the master to remind his journeymen to do so. Otherwise there will be a penalty for both for failing to do so. To officially document these regulations, we have placed our usual city seal here: Leipzig with the current date. [Place for the seal is indicated]