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# How to Get Away with Treachery, or: Actor-Centered Perspectives on Entangled Conflicts and their Urban Protagonists in the Austrian Duchy, 1462/63

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## Abstract

This article examines the involvement and interactions of Vienna’s urban elites in the conflict of the early 1460s that marked the climax of the power struggle between the Habsburg brothers Emperor Frederick III and Duke Albert VI over rule in the Duchy of Austria. Vienna’s role is addressed in two aspects: first, as a central stage for the conflict, and second, as an active participant as a political community that became increasingly integrated into the broader political networks of the duchy during the fifteenth century. Following an actor-centered approach and based on prosopographical groundwork, the study focuses on the actions of individual protagonists and various factions within Vienna’s political elites. During the violent events, the urban representatives did not form a cohesive entity but interacted and allied in changing constellations with leading noble, courtly, and clerical actors in the duchy. Factors and conditions contributing to the formation of diverse interest groups among urban actors are closely examined, aiming to give a deeper insight into the dynamics and patterns of the entangled conflict.

**Keyword:** conflict; Central Europe; urban history

On 15 April 1463, Wolfgang Holzer, mayor of Vienna, was executed in the cruelest manner possible: quartered like a traitor on the command of Albert VI (1418–63), Habsburg archduke and then lord of the city of Vienna. The charges against Holzer were severe, including secretly admitting enemy troops, breach of oath, and unwarranted actions against members of the city council.<sup>1</sup> His head and limbs were put on display at the city gates for weeks as a terrifying symbol of his treachery. Also executed with Holzer were his followers and burghers who supported the former city lord, Emperor Frederick III (1415–93), Albert’s brother and opponent. Except for Holzer, Albert showed mercy to the condemned prisoners, who were not quartered but beheaded by the sword. The executions, especially that of Holzer, elicited a strong response in contemporary chronicles. Although they described Holzer as a traitor, the prominent theologians Thomas Ebendorfer (1388–1464) and Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (1405–64) sharply criticized Albert for his actions, comparing him to Voivode Vlad III of Wallachia, also known as “the Impaler,” whose reputation as a cruel ruler spread throughout Central Europe in the early 1460s.<sup>2</sup> The strong reaction from contemporaries clearly indicates that these executions were neither commonplace nor undisputed.

Less than a year earlier, in August 1462—while the city was still under the rule of Emperor Frederick—Holzer and significant parts of the city’s political elite had deposed the members of the acting city council and taken over their positions. Some of them were even imprisoned. The newly

<sup>1</sup>A vidimus of the verdict, issued by the abbot of the Viennese Scots’ monastery, is preserved in Stiftsarchiv Klosterneuburg, Charter 29 April 1463.

<sup>2</sup>Source references provided in detail by Konstantin M. Langmaier, *Erzherzog Albrecht VI. von Österreich (1418–1463). Ein Fürst im Spannungsfeld von Dynastie, Regionen und Reich* (Vienna, 2015), 609; for detailed references see also n34 below.

appointed councilors soon turned against Frederick and declared a feud against him. In fall of 1462, Vienna became the scene of hostilities. The townspeople besieged Frederick and his family in the Viennese castle (*Hofburg*) with the military assistance of Archduke Albert VI and his noble supporters. There were incidents of plundering and persecutions of Frederick's supporters inside the city walls. Due to limited financial and military options, the emperor was forced in December 1462 to give over to his brother Albert his rule over the Austrian duchy and the city of Vienna. However, within the influential groups of the city, serious discord rapidly emerged between the faction led by Holzer and the new city lord. It culminated in an armed but eventually unsuccessful uprising against Albert in spring 1463 that subsequently cost Wolfgang Holzer and some fellow burghers their lives.<sup>3</sup>

Examining these tumultuous events provides instructive insights into the social and political configuration of late medieval Vienna, where conflicts among diverse social groups and with the city lords were less an anomaly than an integral part of their reciprocal relationships.<sup>4</sup> At first glance, these dramatic events resemble the conflict of 1408, when another Viennese mayor and two council members were sentenced to death during disputes between Habsburg dukes.<sup>5</sup> Just as was the case half a century earlier, the constellation of actors cannot be narrowed down to an opposition between the city lord(s) and the city. As then, here the circumstances were more complex and involved multiple elite actors—this time nobles and clerics as well as burghers from other cities. Likewise, the events of 1462/63 have a long prehistory and were just one of the violent peaks in the transregional struggle between Frederick III and Albert over control of the duchy of Austria. Not only was the city of Vienna drawn into these struggles but some of its highest political representatives even actively participated in them—alongside noble, knightly, and clerical members of the political elite in the wider Austrian Danube region.<sup>6</sup>

Medieval Vienna had witnessed a long history of conflicts involving the Habsburgs as dukes of Austria. Transitions of power in the duchy, especially at the beginning of Habsburg rule and during disputes among the Habsburg princes, often led to violent conflicts. The princely town (*landesfürstliche Stadt*) of Vienna became a central hotbed in these disputes, and its political elites emerged as vital actors in them.<sup>7</sup> Internal struggles that affected the political community of Vienna as a whole were negotiated and mediated by the Austrian princes as city lords.<sup>8</sup>

Over the course of the fourteenth century, the relationship between Vienna and its princely lords became more formalized and differentiated: First, Habsburg dukes were involved in the everyday affairs of political life and interacted with the city's representatives, as evidenced by the numerous charters in the former council archive.<sup>9</sup> Second, from 1396, an official (town advocate/*Stadtanwalt*) was installed

<sup>3</sup>For a chronological overview and compilation of the main sources, see Peter Csendes and Ferdinand Oppl, *Wien im Mittelalter. Zeitzeugnisse und Analysen* (Vienna, 2021), 146–55.

<sup>4</sup>For late medieval Vienna, see the recently published article by Christina Lutter, “Ways of Belonging to Medieval Vienna,” in *A Companion to Medieval Vienna*, eds. Susana Zapke and Elisabeth Gruber (Leiden, 2021), 267–311, here 283; Peter Csendes, “Medieval Vienna and its Political Configuration,” in *ibid.*, 48–78.

<sup>5</sup>For a comparison, see the contribution of Christina Lutter to this special issue; Lutter has also recently mapped out the broader framework for long-term patterns of conflict in the late medieval Austrian territories: Christina Lutter, “Konflikt und Allianz. Muster von Zugehörigkeit im spätmittelalterlichen Wien und Österreich,” in *Strukturbildungen in langfristigen Konflikten des Spätmittelalters (1250–1500)*, eds. Klara Hübnerová and Pavel Soukup (Berlin, forthcoming).

<sup>6</sup>Christian Lackner, “Vom Herzogtum Österreich zum Haus Österreich (1278–1519),” in *Geschichte Österreichs*, ed. Thomas Winkelbauer (Vienna, 2015), 110–58; Alois Niederstätter, *Das Jahrhundert der Mitte: An der Wende vom Mittelalter zur Neuzeit. Österreichische Geschichte 1400–1522*, ed. Herwig Wolfram (Vienna, 1996), 245–55; Peter Csendes, “Geschichte Wiens im Mittelalter. Vom späten 14. Jahrhundert bis zur Ersten Wiener Türkenbelagerung (1529),” in *Wien. Geschichte einer Stadt*, vol. 1, *Von den Anfängen bis zur Ersten Türkenbelagerung (1529)*, eds. Peter Csendes and Ferdinand Oppl (Vienna, 2001), 145–98.

<sup>7</sup>The earlier conflicts are discussed by Christina Lutter, “Negotiated Consent: Power Policy and the Integration of Regional Elites in late 13th Century Austria,” in *Disciplined Dissent: Strategies of Non-Confrontational Protest in Europe from the Twelfth to the Early Sixteenth Century*, ed. Fabrizio Titone (Rome, 2016), 41–64; and Lutter, “Ways of Belonging”; Ferdinand Oppl, “Geschichte Wiens im Mittelalter. Vom frühen 13. bis zum Ende des 14. Jahrhunderts,” in *Wien. Geschichte einer Stadt*, vol. 1, *Von den Anfängen bis zur Ersten Türkenbelagerung (1529)*, eds. Peter Csendes and Ferdinand Oppl (Vienna, 2001), 95–144.

<sup>8</sup>Richard Perger, “Die politische Rolle der Wiener Handwerker im Spätmittelalter,” *Wiener Geschichtsblätter* 38 (1983): 1–36.

<sup>9</sup>Digitally accessible regesta of medieval charters from archival holdings in Vienna *Quellen zur Geschichte der Stadt Wien* (hereafter QGW), vol. II/1–2; See also Christina Lutter's contribution to this special issue (n33).

to represent ducal interests and monitor the city councilors' actions.<sup>10</sup> By contrast, certain ducal offices, for example the advocate and master of the mint (*Münzanwalt* and *Münzmeister*), were held exclusively by Viennese burghers. Members of the burgher elite became important confidants at court and served as financiers of ducal politics. Third, from the late fourteenth century, as Habsburgs dukes vied for power, Vienna and its political representatives became intricately linked with other princely cities and likewise interacted with noble, knightly, and clerical actors, thus becoming embedded in the wider political networks of the Austrian duchy. This gave rise to a horizontally and socially mobile elite.<sup>11</sup>

Against this background, this article examines the role and participation of Vienna's elite in the events of 1462/63. It will deal with the broader political context of the 1440s and 1450s, followed by a chronological overview of the crisis of the early 1460s. Moreover, it adopts a prosopographical approach, focusing on members of Vienna's political elite and the conflicting action groups in its social and political networks. In particular, the focus is on the profiles of the deposed city councilors and those that replaced them under the rule of Archduke Albert VI. These inquiries are undertaken from an actor-centered perspective, which accentuates the roles of individual and collective agents and their relations among each other. Recent scholarship on medieval urban history conceives of towns as culturally hybrid and socially heterogeneous spaces related to each other and their environment.<sup>12</sup> Together with the city council as a central agent in communal politics, a wide range of organizations—charitable and ecclesiastical institutions, neighborhoods, confraternities, and guilds—shaped the social, cultural, and political life of medieval cities.

According to Patrick Lantschner, medieval “cities were constituted by multiple political centers, the powers and levels of authority of which varied greatly.”<sup>13</sup> Numerous studies have thus shown that “the city” and its political bodies were not cohesive entities but were shaped by individuals based on their multifaceted networks—individuals who created and handled conflicts. This conceptual shift has allowed for a general change of perspective from such large-scale categories as “the city” to various social groups, their members as actors, and their different and overlapping forms of belonging.<sup>14</sup> Through this conceptual lens, scholars have recently adopted new perspectives on conflicts in late medieval cities; for example, Justina Wubs-Mrozewicz follows a process-oriented approach to investigate practices of handling conflicts and their impact on the course of events. Her work is based on a comparative analysis of conflicts in Hanseatic cities between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. By studying conflicting parties, the focus moves from traditionally labeled institutions to individual and collective actors and their multilayered social relations.<sup>15</sup> This also corresponds with Lantschner's approach in his comparative study of the patterns of conflict of late medieval cities in Northern Italy and the Low Countries. According to him, it is important to “make analytical distinctions between such political units and the action groups that could form around them.”<sup>16</sup> Further, he

<sup>10</sup>Helmuth Grössing, “Die Wiener Stadtanwältle im Spätmittelalter,” in *Jahrbuch des Vereins für Geschichte der Stadt Wien* 26 (1970): 36–45; for a general overview of the phenomenon of town advocates in the Late Middle Ages, see Jonathan R. Lyon, *Corruption, Protection and Justice in Medieval Europe: A Thousand-Year History* (Cambridge, 2022), 263–68.

<sup>11</sup>An example is given by Christian Lackner, “Des mocht er nicht geniessen, wiewohl er der rechte naturleich erbe was. Zum Hollenburger Vertrag vom 22. November 1395,” *Jahrbuch für Landeskunde von Niederösterreich* 65 (1999): 1–15; see Lutter, “Konflikt und Allianz” and eadem in this special issue. On the general phenomenon see Duncan Hardy, *Associative Political Culture in the Holy Roman Empire: Upper Germany, 1346–1521* (Oxford, 2018).

<sup>12</sup>E.g., Justin Colson and Arie van Steensel, eds., *Cities and Solidarities: Urban Communities in Pre-Modern Europe*, Routledge Research in Early Modern History (London, 2017); Michel Pauly and Martin Scheutz, eds., *Cities and their Spaces. Concepts and their Use in Europe* (Cologne, 2014); the global context of these topics is addressed by Fabian Kümmeler, Judit Majorossy, and Eirik Hovden, eds., *Practising Community in Urban and Rural Eurasia (1000–1600). Comparative and Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (Leiden, 2021).

<sup>13</sup>Patrick Lantschner, *The Logic of Political Conflict in Medieval Cities: Italy and the Southern Low Countries, 1370–1440* (Oxford, 2015), 6f; for a similar methodological approach on urban politics using the example of late medieval Norwich see Christian D. Liddy, “Who Decides? Urban Councils and Consensus in the Late Middle Ages,” *Social History* 46, no. 4 (2021): 406–34.

<sup>14</sup>Lutter, “Ways of Belonging,” 267–311.

<sup>15</sup>Justyna Wubs-Mrozewicz, “Conflict Management and Interdisciplinary History: Presentation of a New Project and an Analytical Model,” *TSEG - The Low Countries Journal of Social and Economic History* 15, no. 1 (2018): 89–107.

<sup>16</sup>Lantschner, *Logic of Political Conflict*, 62.

differentiates between three *action groups* based either on institutional organizations, on parties and factions with shared political goals, or on short-lived interest coalitions that brought together actors with different characteristics of social belonging.<sup>17</sup>

### The Larger Context of the Conflicts in the Austrian Duchy, 1440s and 1450s

The background of the violent episode in Vienna in the years 1462/63 can be traced to the 1430s. After the death of Duke and King Albert V/II (1404–39), the duchy of Austria, the ancestral land (*Stammland*) of the Albertinian lineage of the Habsburgs, again became a site of a highly complex mix of regional conflicts spanning two decades. Albert's cousin, Duke Frederick V of the Leopoldinian (Styrian) lineage, succeeded him as administrator (*Verweser*) in the duchy and as king of the Holy Roman Empire. As the eldest of the House of Habsburg, Frederick also assumed guardianship of Albert's son Ladislaus, born after his father's death in 1440. This was contested by Ladislaus's mother, Elizabeth of Luxemburg (1409–42), and Frederick's younger brother Albert VI. The political struggles in Austria over Albert's succession were related to conflicts at a transregional level involving the political elites of several territories. As husband of Elisabeth of Luxemburg and thus successor of Emperor Sigismund, Albert II/V was the first Habsburg prince to unite rule in the Holy Roman Empire with the kingdoms of Bohemia and Hungary, as well as with the Austrian lands.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, when Albert died before his son was born, the geographic scope and the number of political actors involved in the struggles over succession in his patrimonies increased significantly. For example, the conflicts between the Habsburg and Jagiellonian dynasties over the Hungarian crown led to warfare in the border area between Austria and Hungary until 1446. The city of Vienna participated in its financing and sent military equipment.<sup>19</sup>

In the Austrian territories, concurrent disputes that involved nobles, knights, clerics, and cities who considered Ladislaus the rightful successor (*dominus naturalis*) concerned not only his guardianship.<sup>20</sup> The Austrian territories had been severely affected by tax burdens due to Albert V's engagement in the Hussite Wars (1419–34) and his dynastic plans.<sup>21</sup> Outstanding debts to military entrepreneurs, which dated back to Albert's reign, repeatedly led to new feuds or marauding mercenaries.<sup>22</sup> In this context, the conflicts revolved around financial and peacekeeping (*Landfriede*) issues that were negotiated at assemblies of nobles, knights, and cities, held alternately with or without the involvement of the dukes.<sup>23</sup> All at once, disputes over succession in Albert's principalities led to an increase in specific interests among administrative and political elites embedded in networks across territorial boundaries. These patterns of interactions, which developed from the late fourteenth century onward, correspond with Duncan Hardy's model of an associative political culture in the southwest of the Holy Roman Empire. Hardy underlines that "political solidarities were formed of shifting affinities of elites with context-specific and overlapping loyalties to various peers and patrons."<sup>24</sup>

The tensions between Frederick, Albert VI, and the relevant political representatives in Austria reached a new peak when Frederick prepared for his papal coronation in Rome and planned to

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Günther Hödl, *Albrecht II. Königtum, Reichsregierung und Reichsreform 1438–1439*, Forschungen zur Kaiser- und Papstgeschichte des Mittelalters 3 (Vienna, 1978).

<sup>19</sup>Julia Burkhardt and Christina Lutter, *Ich Helene Kottannerin. Die Kammerfrau, die Ungarns Krone stahl* (Darmstadt, 2023), provides details on these relations; see Csendes and Opll, *Wien im Mittelalter*, 124–27 on the latter aspect.

<sup>20</sup>For the term and concept of *dominus naturalis* as an argument in hereditary succession for a legitimate ruler, see Lackner, "Hollenburger Vertrag," 11–13 and the contribution of Christina Lutter to this special issue.

<sup>21</sup>Particularly his marriage to Elisabeth of Luxemburg in 1422 strained the financial resources of the duke. See Peter Elbel, "Die Heirat zwischen Elisabeth von Luxemburg und Herzog Albrecht V. von Österreich: rechtliche, finanzielle und machtpolitische Zusammenhänge (mit einem Quellenanhang)," in *Manželství v pozdním středověku: Rituály a obyčej/Marriage in the late middle ages: Rituals and customs*, Colloquia mediaevalia Pragensia 14, eds. Pawel Kras and Martin Nodl (Prague, 2014), 79–152.

<sup>22</sup>Uwe Tresp, *Söldner aus Böhmen. Im Dienst deutscher Fürsten: Kriegsgeschäft und Heeresorganisation im 15. Jahrhundert* (Paderborn, 2004), 47–52, here at 47.

<sup>23</sup>Karl Schalk, *Aus der Zeit des österreichischen Faustrechtes 1440–1463. Das Wiener Patriziat um die Zeit des Aufstandes von 1462 und die Gründe dieses Ereignisses*, Abhandlungen zur Geschichte und Quellenkunde der Stadt Wien 3 (Vienna, 1919).

<sup>24</sup>Hardy, *Associative Political Culture*, 172; see also Lutter in this special issue on the applicability of this model.

take little Ladislaus with him on the journey.<sup>25</sup> Most of the duchy's political representatives—nobles and knights, but also clergy and some towns including Vienna—founded a league to free Ladislaus from Frederick's guardianship and to assume joint custody of him.<sup>26</sup> After Frederick's coronation in Rome in early 1452, the conflict escalated into a series of fights, in which the league with the help of Viennese troops<sup>27</sup> prevailed and enforced its demands. Ladislaus was handed over into the custody of the members of the league. An assembly in Vienna in late 1452, which brought together multiple parties and authorities from members of regional elites to imperial princes, agreed on Ladislaus's succession as king of Bohemia and Hungary.<sup>28</sup> However, latent rivalries and new conflicts emerged among Austrian political elites as a result of their struggle for influence in the debates about Ladislaus and the colliding interests of individual factions. These conflicts also affected Vienna's politics at a local level, leading in the years 1453–57 to personnel changes in the Viennese city council, whose key figures also played significant roles in the subsequent conflict between Frederick and Albert.<sup>29</sup>

After the early death of Ladislaus in 1457, the succession was disputed again in Austria, Bohemia, and Hungary. In 1458, Emperor Frederick III and his brother Albert VI, both potential successors to Ladislaus, reluctantly agreed on a division of power in the Austrian lands. However, the agreement did not align with their political ambitions, and persisting tensions between them escalated into a new armed conflict in the summer of 1461.<sup>30</sup> At that time, Frederick had a weakened position in imperial politics, while Albert had temporarily forged alliances, foremost with George of Poděbrady (1420–71), king of Bohemia, and Louis IX (1417–79), duke of Bavaria. With the support of noble allies, Albert advanced from Upper Austria toward Vienna and captured some cities along the Danube and around Vienna, using them as operational bases. Without almost any help from Frederick, Vienna was successful in its defense against Albert and his mercenaries' attacks in 1461–62.<sup>31</sup> The mobilization of military forces and financial resources for mercenary troops underline the city's economic power at the time. Warfare was not limited to the defense of the city: targeted offensive actions by Viennese forces extended into the surrounding areas.<sup>32</sup> Vienna had by then maintained close economic relations with the surrounding regions for centuries. Hence, wealthy groups of Viennese burgher families had a strong interest in securing their capital, consisting of property rights and rental incomes from vineyards and other agricultural areas. The question of the costs and benefits of the military campaigns<sup>33</sup> against Albert was evident: Landed property in Vienna's surroundings, a crucial pillar of the political elite's capital, had to be protected.

### Staging Conflict in the Urban Arena, August 1462 to April 1463<sup>34</sup>

During these years, the support for Frederick among Austrian nobles began to decline. Thus, while a majority of Vienna's council members remained loyal to their city lord, their political backing within

<sup>25</sup>Heinrich Koller, *Kaiser Friedrich III.* (Darmstadt, 2005), 115–26.

<sup>26</sup>See the study of Petra Heinicker, "Anführer ohne Gefolge? Ein netzwerkanalytischer Versuch zur Genese des Mailberger Bundes Mailberger Bund," in *Entangled Worlds: Network Analysis and Complexity Theory in Historical and Archaeological Research*, ed. Johannes Preiser-Kapeller (Vienna, 2023), in preparation; for Vienna's role in the "League of Mailberg" see Karl Gutkas, "Der Mailberger Bund von 1451. Studie zum Verhältnis von Landesfürst und Ständen um die Mitte des 15. Jahrhunderts," *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 74 (1966): 51–94.

<sup>27</sup>Schalk, *Faustrecht*, 123–125; Otto Brunner, *Die Finanzen der Stadt Wien. Von den Anfängen bis ins 16. Jahrhundert*, Studien aus dem Archiv der Stadt Wien 1/2 (Vienna, 1929), 311f; for the historiographical accounts see Langmaier, *Albrecht VI*, 323–25.

<sup>28</sup>Csendes and Opll, *Wien im Mittelalter*, 134.

<sup>29</sup>Perger, "Wolfgang Holzer," 36–39; Schalk, *Faustrecht*, 235–43; Perger, *Die Wiener Ratsbürger 1396–1526* (Vienna, 1988), 85–89.

<sup>30</sup>Niederstätter, *Jahrhundert der Mitte*, 250–55.

<sup>31</sup>Peter Csendes, *Wien in den Fehden der Jahre 1461–1463*, Militärgeschichtliche Schriftenreihe 28 (Vienna, 1974).

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.; Brunner, *Finanzen der Stadt Wien*, 313–18.

<sup>33</sup>See the contribution of Alexandra Kaar to this special issue on the imperial city of Regensburg as a military entrepreneur in the 1410s.

<sup>34</sup>The main chronicle sources on what follows are Johannes Hinderbach, "*Historiae rerum, a Friderice tertio imperatore gestarum*," in *Analecta Monumentorum Omnium Aevi Vindobonensia*, vol. 2, ed. Adam František Kollár (Vienna, 1762), 555–666;

the broader political community dwindled against the backdrop of a veritable economic crisis, which culminated in the debasement of coinage in 1457–60 and resulting currency devaluation. Moreover, military support for Frederick against his brother Albert significantly burdened the city's finances. Against this backdrop, discontent among the urban population grew. Social unrest and opposition to Frederick and his supporters within the city were deliberately fueled by agitators loyal to Albert and his ally Wolfgang Holzer's followers. In particular, the Viennese burghers Simon Pötel and Niklas Teschler, two of Frederick's key financiers with substantial influence on the economic management of the city and duchy, were accused of being the main culprits and thus stigmatized as hypocrites (*Heckler*), endangering the common good of the city through their maleficent politics.<sup>35</sup>

In the summer of 1462, tensions reached a violent climax, as a group of armed burghers led by Johann Kirchheimer and Johann Ödenacker stormed the town hall. The members of the city council were arrested, together with half a dozen close associates of Pötel and Teschler. Wolfgang Holzer assumed the role of interim mayor, and new councilors were appointed. While this event may seem an internal matter among burghers, it was in fact a well-coordinated coup backed by noble groups who supported Archduke Albert VI. The latter was well informed about the plans.<sup>36</sup>

Frederick III, who then resided in Wiener Neustadt, south of Vienna, arrived in the city with his troops a few days after the removal of the city council and aimed to restore order. Despite his efforts, Frederick's attempts to intervene unilaterally by appointing a new mayor and city council proved unsuccessful. As stipulated in the city's town ordinance, the *Gemein* (common people), the largest political body of the city, insisted on their right to vote and elected a new city council, which subsequently pledged allegiance to Frederick. Frederick's decision to approve the election and the oath of an evidently resistant council was influenced by his limited financial means and, consequently, by his military inflexibility. Unable to continue paying his mercenary troops or settle outstanding debts, he was forced to dismiss them—a prime example of the impact of economic constraints on military decisions. The marauding troops posed a direct threat to the wine harvest in Vienna's surroundings. The city's newly elected representatives took advantage of this situation and argued that the common good was in danger, as Frederick, their lord, was unable to provide protection. As a result, they officially declared feud against Frederick on 4 October—an act again coordinated with Archduke Albert VI and his noble supporters.<sup>37</sup>

Subsequently, the emperor and his family and entourage were besieged in Vienna's castle (*Hofburg*) from mid-October until early December. During these weeks, conflicts within the city escalated, particularly when Albert, supported by mercenaries and a large group of Austrian nobles and knights, arrived there on 2 November. The archduke forged a temporary alliance with the urban representatives, while the princely cities of Krems, Stein, and Korneuburg remained under Frederick's rule and declared feud against Vienna.

Meanwhile, Mayor Holzer and his supporters persecuted those burghers who had sided with Frederick and seized their property. Niklas Teschler and others were taken prisoner again, with Teschler subjected to torture. The conflict expanded to involve further actors both within the duchy and beyond its borders: responding to the emperor's plea, the Bohemian king George of Poděbrady,

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Thomas Ebendorfer, *Chronica Austriae*, MGH *Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum* N.S. 13, ed. Alphons Lhotsky (Berlin, 1967). The German chronicle for the years 1454–67 is attributed to a well-informed, but unknown author—perhaps the urban scribe Ulrich Griessenbeck (1461–67), although recent research tends to exclude him as the author. See the recently published edition *Die Österreichische Chronik der Jahre 1454–1467: Edition, Übersetzung, Kommentar*, eds. Alexander Hödlmoser, Christina Jackel, Matthias Meyer and Stephan Müller (Vienna, 2023) and the chronicle of Michel Beheim, *Das Buch von den Wienern*, ed. Theodor G. von Karajan (Vienna, 1843). The work of Beheim, who served as a poet at the court of Emperor Frederick from 1459 until 1465, has been rarely examined to date, but see Albert Müller, “Stigma und Stigmatisierungstechniken im Spätmittelalter. Zur symbolischen Bekämpfung aufständischer Untertanen am Beispiel Michel Beheims ‘Buch von den Wienern,’” in *Kommunikation und Alltag in Spätmittelalter und früher Neuzeit*, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Realienkunde des Mittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit 15, ed. Helmut Hundsichler (Vienna, 1992), 219–49. A compilation of these sources is provided in Schalk, *Faustrecht*; Peter Csendes, *Fehden*; Langmaier, *Albrecht VI.*, 569–647.

<sup>35</sup>See nn41–44.

<sup>36</sup>Langmaier, *Albrecht VI.*, 560f.

<sup>37</sup>This depiction of the events is based on the sources cited in n34.

whose policy during these years was characterized by swiftly shifting alliances within the empire alternately benefiting either Frederick or Albert,<sup>38</sup> dispatched relief forces to Vienna; however, despite their large number, Albert's forces and the Viennese defenders prevailed, and negotiations started in mid-November.

With George of Poděbrady as a mediator, a peace treaty was agreed upon on 2 December 1462. However, the agreement already contained the seeds of future conflict over the rule of Vienna and Austria, as the question of legitimate authority remained ambiguous. The treaty acknowledged Frederick as lawful ruler in Austria below the Enns, but he handed the duchy with all possessions, rights, and revenues over to Albert for four thousand pounds per year. After eight years, all rights were to revert to Frederick. However, most of those princely towns that Albert and his supporters had not previously occupied remained under Frederick's control. Albert's decisional power was further limited by the fact that pledges of sovereign rights could not be executed without Frederick's consent.<sup>39</sup>

The faction around Mayor Holzer refused to accept these conditions, as they had—unlike Albert's other allies—not been included in the treaty negotiations. They were especially frustrated that Frederick demanded compensation payments along with the restitution of confiscated assets. Although Holzer and the council members swore an oath to Archduke Albert as the new town ruler on 26 December 1462, tensions between the mayor and the archduke became apparent during public events. The reasons for Holzer's political maneuvers in the subsequent months and the ongoing dynamics in the conflictual web of divergent interests are difficult to interpret. Around the turn of the year 1463, Holzer engaged in negotiations with the emperor's court circles and former council colleagues who had remained in the city, most notably Oswald Reicholf.

Albert's position, both within and outside the city, remained precarious. At the imperial level, his role was weakened as the coalition with the Bavarian Wittelsbachs and other opponents of Frederick waned. George of Poděbrady, who had an ambivalent relationship with the emperor, was facing problems in his Bohemian realm.<sup>40</sup> Albert's financial resources were constrained by the smoldering conflict, outstanding debts to his supporters and creditors, and his aim to maintain his new position. Thus, a general land tax (*Landsteuer*) was imposed on urban communities and ecclesiastical dignitaries to generate new revenue.<sup>41</sup> However, the additional burden of levying new taxes had its limitations. The economy of Vienna and many parts of the country had been negatively impacted by the years of conflict, which particularly affected (wine) harvests and trade: most importantly, Vienna was cut off from its trade networks by the embargoes that the emperor offensively imposed on the city. Albert was compelled to pledge all the towns he occupied to his noble captains and mercenaries. Nevertheless, he could not prevent some of them from switching sides due to pending payments for their military engagement, resulting in raids both around Vienna and in the Moravian-Lower Austrian border region.

Against this background, rumors emerged in February 1463 suggesting that Holzer's and Frederick's supporters were planning to poison Albert and to set fire to Vienna. Allegedly, these harsh accusations originated in Hebrew letters that hinted at assassination attempts.<sup>42</sup> While some individuals were captured, no concrete evidence was found to justify any punishment. This incident, however, illustrates the tense social atmosphere within the city.

Regardless of the allegations of attempted poisoning, Mayor Holzer was indeed planning to make a move against Albert. Together with court members, he exerted significant pressure on Archduke Albert to compel him to give up his rule over Austria and Vienna. Holzer invited town councilors

<sup>38</sup>The Bohemian king's involvement in the conflict at this time, on the side of Friedrich III, can be attributed to domestic issues in Bohemia, where George's reign was contested, and disputes with Pope Pius II, for which he relied on the intervention and support of the emperor. George's intricate policy of oscillation is summarized by Langmaier, *Albrecht VI.*, 595f.

<sup>39</sup>Csendes, *Fehden*; the clauses of the charter are discussed by Langmaier, *Albrecht VI.*, 580–82.

<sup>40</sup>Langmaier, *Albrecht VI.*, 588.

<sup>41</sup>A register of the *Landsteuer* survives in the abbey archive of Klosterneuburg, representing the only known property taxes on an Austrian urban community before 1500. StIAKI, Rb 29-1.

<sup>42</sup>Regarding the contemporary sources, Michael Beheim and the anonymously authored chronicle reported on the poisoning. Bibliographic details can be found in n34.

and other important representatives of the community to his house, planning to have Albert's supporters among his colleagues arrested. Although unsuccessful, the plan shows that the city council was divided into several groups at that time, with their opposing positions becoming markedly deeper.<sup>43</sup>

Subsequently, Holzer summoned around four hundred horsemen led by the knight Augustin Tristram, who had switched to Emperor Frederick's side. They entered the city and united with other followers of Holzer, thus demonstrating military strength against the archduke by means of an assembly that took place at the largest square in town (*Am Hof*). However, Holzer was unable to mobilize further segments of the city's population. Hence, before more of Frederick's troops were able to support Holzer and his followers, Albert swiftly gained military advantage within the city and defeated the mercenaries.

Eventually, Albert seized the opportunity to arrest Holzer's followers and other supporters of his brother who were still present in the city, including two eminent burghers, Oswald Reicholf and Sebastian Ziegelhauser. Other prominent supporters, such as Niklas Teschler and Simon Pötel, had already left the city or managed to evade immediate arrest through escape. The outcome is known: on 15 April 1463, the mercenary leader Augustin Tristram was beheaded at the *Hoher Markt*—the city's ordinary execution site for burghers sentenced to death. While Wolfgang Holzer was executed by quartering as a traitor, Hans Ödenacker, Oswald Reicholf, Sebastian Ziegelhauser, Johann Burghauser, and Georg Hollerbeck fell by the sword, the punishment reserved for burghers. Unlike Tristram, however, they were executed at the site of the traditional residence of the archdukes within the city (*Am Hof*). The change of site seems to have been a deliberate act. It was not the city and its representatives in charge of the execution but Albert himself who asserted his authority. Moreover, Albert used the act of having Holzer quartered to exert pressure on those burghers who were still in prison and eventually pardoned upon the payment of high sums of ransom. This money, along with extraordinary taxes and other contributions, became a crucial source of income for Albert's financially strained situation. The conflict, however, persisted until Albert's sudden death on 2 December 1463.

### The “Old” and “New” Councilors in Structural Comparison

The following section provides an overview of the composition of the deposed and newly elected councils of 1462/63. The analysis focuses on factions that coalesced around the council and on other urban groups that were closely connected by business relations, patronage, and kin networks, exemplifying the city's polycentric nature. Frederick's supporters among the members of the deposed council of 1462 display varying degrees of relatedness to the emperor's court. One closely connected group centered around long-serving council members and influential merchants like Niklas Teschler and Simon Pötel, who played a major role in urban politics. They were among the wealthiest burghers in the city and the entire duchy of Austria and acted as Frederick's financiers.

Niklas Teschler originated from a wealthy family in the Swabian town of Ravensburg and settled in Vienna in the early 1430s. His wife, Anna, daughter of the Viennese burgher Johann Galnroder, brought a considerable fortune into their marriage, which enabled Niklas to expand his trade activities and his properties in and around Vienna. From 1437 until his death in 1485, he was—with only a few interruptions—a council member and held various other offices in municipal administration. Teschler followed Holzer as master of the ducal mint in 1456–57, a circumstance that intensified their rivalry and opposition. He was again appointed master of the mint after Frederick's takeover of power in Austria in 1460.<sup>44</sup>

Simon Pötel's career resembles that of his companion Niklas Teschler. He likewise served repeatedly between 1441 and 1461 on Vienna's council and held various other offices within municipal administration. Originating from Lower Austria, he married the widow of his Viennese business partner Johann Scheibelwieser in 1431, thus establishing one of Vienna's largest trading companies, which

<sup>43</sup>Discord among Albrecht's supporters arose after his death. Schalk, *Faustrecht*, 431f.

<sup>44</sup>For a detailed biography with comprehensive source references see Richard Perger, “Niklas Teschler und seine Sippe,” *Jahrbuch des Vereins für Geschichte der Stadt Wien*. Wien: Verein für Geschichte der Stadt Wien 23, no. 25 (1967–69): 108–82, here at 114; an overview is provided by Perger, *Ratsbürger*, 184.



expanded its vast trading and credit networks by the mid-fifteenth century from Swabia through Northern Italy to Hungary. Beyond urban politics, Pötel played a crucial role as creditor for debtors from all social strata, including Ladislaus Posthumous and Frederick III. While Pötel left the city council in 1461 and officially held no office in 1462, contemporary chroniclers like the well-informed Johannes Hinderbach attested to his considerable influence on politics in the council due to his wealth and connections at Frederick's court: "Although he was not a member of the council, he nevertheless managed to achieve everything he wanted through the mayor [Christian Prenner], Niklas Teschler, and others; he was also a staunch supporter of Hans von Rohrbach [councilor and treasurer of Emperor Frederick] and responsible for all the burdens imposed on the burghers."<sup>45</sup>

Hinderbach's observations can be considered largely accurate. Nearly half of the city council in 1462 belonged to this group, with members either related to each other or associated with Pötel's trading company. One of Simon Pötel's former business associates was Leonhard Jemnitzer, who married his niece Margarethe. He rose to prominence as a confidant at Frederick's court in Wiener Neustadt, where he served on the city council and was imperial mint master in the 1450s. Jemnitzer also acted as an envoy in Frederick's delegation sent to Rome in 1452. In 1461, he was appointed town advocate of Vienna and later assumed the position of an imperial secretary in the Austrian chancery.<sup>46</sup>

Regarding Vienna's council in 1462, three further members belonged to the group around Pötel and Teschler. The merchant Johann Tanhauser was Teschler's stepson. Tanhauser married a daughter of Jakob Rechwein, *Grundbuchsverweser* and long-time colleague of Pötel and Teschler on the city council, whose sons served at the court of Frederick III.<sup>47</sup> Another councilor who was closely related to Pötel was Johann von Eslarn, whose family had been part of the city's political elite for over a century.<sup>48</sup> Ulrich Kerner, an experienced councilor, was also a long-time business partner of Simon Pötel.<sup>49</sup> The fact that this particular group was a target of Holzer's agitation is evident from his assaults against other Viennese burghers who were closely related to Simon Pötel and Niklas Teschler by family ties or business associations. Holzer had their properties within the city walls plundered, and he personally seized control of Pötel's town house at the High Market, making a material and symbolic point of his takeover of power.<sup>50</sup> Ulrich Perman the Younger, Pötel's stepson, and Christian Kornfail, both business partners in Pötel's trading company, had to take refuge in the *Hofburg* together with other former councilors of 1462. They endured its siege for weeks. After Frederick and his family left Vienna in December 1462, many sympathizers followed them to Wiener Neustadt, anticipating the threat of capture, torture, or even execution.<sup>51</sup> Simon Pötel himself had already left the city shortly after the imprisonment of city council members, retreating to his castle southwest of Vienna.<sup>52</sup>

Another prominent council member and supporter of Emperor Frederick was Heinrich Hinderbach. Although he was not directly connected to the aforementioned group, he gained access to the city's political elite through marriage and close familial ties to court officials and confidants of Frederick III. Heinrich's brother, Johannes Hinderbach, held distinguished ecclesiastical positions as provost and bishop of Trent (1455/65–86) and remained a devoted official under Frederick's administration.<sup>53</sup> Another relative, Hartung von Kappel the Younger, resided in Vienna and was also a victim of the plundering initiated by Holzer. Together with Johannes Hinderbach and Enea Silvio

<sup>45</sup>Hinderbach, *Historiae rerum*, col. 574f.

<sup>46</sup>Heinig, *Friedrich III.*, 1423; Perger, "Simon Pötel," 41f.

<sup>47</sup>Daniel Luger, *Humanismus und humanistische Schrift in der Kanzlei Kaiser Friedrichs III. (1440–1493)*, Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung, Erg.-Bd. 60 (Vienna, 2016), 100–06.

<sup>48</sup>Perger, "Simon Pötel," 31.

<sup>49</sup>Perger, *Ratsbürger*, 177.

<sup>50</sup>Perger, "Wolfgang Holzer," 30f.

<sup>51</sup>Teschler and Pötel are likely to have returned to the city, as they were held for a few weeks due to the alleged assassination attempt on Albrecht in February. See Csendes and Opll, *Wien im Mittelalter*, 150.

<sup>52</sup>Perger, "Simon Pötel," 50.

<sup>53</sup>Details provided by Daniela Rando, *Johannes Hinderbach (1418–1486). Eine "Selbst"-Biographie*, Schriften des Italienisch-Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Trient 21 (Berlin, 2008).

Piccolomini, he formed part of a group of influential legal experts and advisors at Frederick's court during the 1440s and 1450s.<sup>54</sup>

The remaining members of the "old council" (with the exception of Jakob Starch and Valentin Liebhart, who supported Archduke Albert VI and were also part of the newly elected council) were largely considered supporters of Frederick III by contemporary chronicles. They neither played a significant role in the rivalries nor belonged to the inner circle of Pötel and Teschler. Christian Prenner, for instance, an affluent burgher who served as mayor in his advanced age, was considered loyal to Frederick. But apart from his capture after his removal from office and his re-capture in April 1463 during the "uprising" initiated by Holzer, little is known about his role in the events.<sup>55</sup> Likewise, the loyalties of experienced office holders such as Stephan Tenk, Laurenz Stadler, Martin Guldein, or Johann Kandsorfer can primarily be deduced from their capture or the plundering of their properties during the events of 1462/3. There is no evidence of their active participation in them, nor did they hold any office in ducal administration.<sup>56</sup> The same applies to the less experienced council members who had only recently started in this function.<sup>57</sup> Compared to other years around mid-century, the professional activities of the deposed council members of 1462 did not differ from each other: more than half of all members of the "old" council were engaged in trade or were members of the minters' *Hausgenossenschaft*, a committee responsible for coin minting, currency exchange, and precious metal trading in the duchy of Austria. Some individual members held significant positions that extended beyond the borders of the domain. In 1456, Kandsorfer assumed the position of a chamber count (*Kammergraf*) in Kremnica, one of the major mining towns in Hungary. In this capacity, he held significant responsibilities, including overseeing jurisdiction and the supervision of mining and minting operations on behalf of the Hungarian crown.<sup>58</sup>

While kin and marital relations were key assets for Vienna's urban elite, they provided no guarantees of safety during the upheavals. Christian Wissinger, an experienced council member and supporter of Frederick, had been involved in municipal politics since 1446 but witnessed the political vicissitudes of the 1450s and 1460s without being involved. His stepdaughter was married to Wolfgang Holzer. However, this connection did not guarantee the integrity of his possessions: during the siege of Vienna's *Hofburg*, his properties were plundered. Captured in April 1463, Wissinger was forced to sell his house for his ransom.<sup>59</sup>

In September 1462, the newly elected council, which Frederick was compelled to acknowledge, introduced mostly men with limited political experience to the highest political body of the city. When comparing their years of service as council members or in other municipal or princely functions, the difference is evident: the years of service of the deposed council members amount to a total of sixty-two years, while the newly elected councilors under Mayor Wolfgang Holzer only account for thirty-three years. Out of eighteen councilors, fourteen had never served in this function before. Only two out of those fourteen had previously held minor positions in urban (or ducal) administration, while twelve had never held any office before. They probably did not play any active role during the conflicts, as their mentions in the sources are marginal. Apart from Holzer, there were only a few long-serving administrative experts among the new councilors: Johann Ravensburger had been serving as a judicial scribe since 1438, and Jakob Starch—who sympathized with Albert VI—had served as

<sup>54</sup>Paul-Joachim Heinig, "Monarchismus und Monarchisten am Hof Friedrichs III.," in *König und Kanzlist, Kaiser und Papst: Friedrich III. und Enea Silvio Piccolomini in Wiener Neustadt*, eds. Franz Fuchs, Paul-Joachim Heinig and Martin Wagendorfer (Vienna, 2012), 151–80. Hartung von Kappel represented the emperor on diplomatic missions and advocated for the interests of Viennese councilors loyal to the emperor in the legal proceedings for compensation after 1463.

<sup>55</sup>Perger, *Ratsbürger*, 172.

<sup>56</sup>The varying mentions in the sources compiled by Schalk, *Faustrecht*, 365.

<sup>57</sup>This applies to Wolfgang Rueland, Wolfgang Hollabrunner the Elder, Thomas Braitenweidacher, Laurenz Stadler, and Peter Gwerleich. The latter two, however, established themselves in city politics permanently, unaffected by the events. Perger, *Ratsbürger*, 207 and 248.

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, 216.

<sup>59</sup>Schalk, *Faustrecht*, 442–46.

town judge from 1454/55 and was mayor from 1457 to 1460.<sup>60</sup> Of particular interest are also Ulrich Matzleinsdorfer, one of the few Viennese councilors of the time whose father had already held this function, and Laurenz Schwanz and Friedrich Ebmer. All three held numerous positions in the service of the city throughout their long careers, which began in the 1440s, but only Ebmer was considered to be a supporter of Albert.<sup>61</sup> Importantly, in addition to a few members from wealthier crafts, Holzer and Albert's supporters replaced previous council members with people who came from occupations that rarely or never were represented on the council during the fifteenth and even the early sixteenth centuries, such as bakers, hat makers, and carpenters.<sup>62</sup>

This novel social configuration of the city council corresponds with observations in contemporary chronicles. They underline that support for Albert VI mainly grew among the craftsmen, their guilds, and broader segments of the *Gemein*,<sup>63</sup> while the group of politically influential supporters of Albert among the newly elected councilors was relatively small (around a third of the new councilors). In this context, the role of the physician Johann Kirchheimer is interesting. He came to Vienna from Württemberg in 1437, where he married into a burgher family and made quite an impressive career at the medical faculty of Vienna's university, serving as dean multiple times from 1450 onward. He was not involved in politics, and it was only in 1462 that he rose to the status of a burgher. Kirchheimer was among the new councilors of that year and may have recruited further council members with university educations.<sup>64</sup> The fact that it was Kirchheimer, and not Wolfgang Holzer, who led the armed group of burghers and craftspeople who occupied the town hall in August 1462 requires some explanation. As both were members of the new council, they formed a loose coalition with their followers for a few months, which soon disintegrated in the spring of 1463. A link between the two could have been established through Holzer's brother-in-law, Michael Schrick, who was a well-known physician and alternated with Kirchheimer in the role of dean of faculty.<sup>65</sup> Kirchheimer's pivotal role could be attributed to his actions as a skilled speaker for the *Gemein*, publicly opposing the "old" council. Moreover, he succeeded in mobilizing university members in political conflicts.<sup>66</sup> Comparable to Holzer, Kirchheimer also fostered personal enmities with some council members and their peers. Several years prior, Simon Pötel and Wolfgang Hollabrunner, acting as representatives of the city, were engaged in a protracted inheritance dispute that involved Kirchheimer, leading to his incarceration and ultimately resulting in an unfavorable outcome for him.<sup>67</sup> After Holzer's execution, Kirchheimer remained one of the most prominent Viennese supporters of Albert VI, accompanying him on diplomatic missions in the second half of 1463.<sup>68</sup> When Emperor Frederick III eventually regained control over the city in 1464 after the sudden death of Albert, Kirchheimer soon left Vienna out of fear of revenge.

Despite the larger number of sources compared to the events of 1408 discussed by Christina Lutter, evaluating the motivations of the principal actors in the events of 1462/63 remains a challenging task. This can be demonstrated by the case of Friedrich Ebmer. He was among the more prominent supporters of Albert among Vienna's burghers and, likely at Albert's order, assumed the role of the city's mayor after Holzer's execution in April 1463. From the 1440s onward, he served on the city council and in other municipal offices ten times, acting together with those councilors who had been captured or suffered losses during Albert's rule. While Ebmer had a noteworthy *cursus honorum*,

<sup>60</sup>Walter Aspernig, "Der Wiener Bürgermeister Jakob Starch und die Storchen zu Klaus in Oberösterreich," *Forschungen und Beiträge zur Wiener Stadtgeschichte* 7 (1980): 43–80, here at 46–48.

<sup>61</sup>Schalk, *Faustrecht*, 572f.

<sup>62</sup>An overview of the professions of all Viennese councilors in Perger, *Ratsbürger*, 264–66.

<sup>63</sup>Langmaier, *Albrecht VI.*, 557.

<sup>64</sup>Laurenz Schönberger and Georg Krempl were scholars, and in the process of the council's reorganization following the executions in April 1463, Niklas Vörstel, another physician without previous political experience, joined the city council. On Kirchheimer's biography see Perger, *Ratsbürger*, 179.

<sup>65</sup>Schalk, *Faustrecht*, 247.

<sup>66</sup>Langmaier, *Albrecht VI.*, 557f. In late 1462, he won the faculty of arts over to serve as creditor for the city. Schalk, *Faustrecht*, 434f.

<sup>67</sup>Perger, "Simon Pötel," 42f.

<sup>68</sup>Langmaier, *Albrecht VI.*, 618, 620.

no kinship or marriage relations to Vienna's urban elite can be discerned. Although he kept his position on the city council in 1464, it appears that impending legal proceedings regarding the restitution of unlawfully acquired property led Ebmer to leave the city, and his house was ultimately confiscated by Frederick.<sup>69</sup>

In his and other cases, the actors' connections to Wolfgang Holzer formed a loose coalition of shared interests that temporarily opposed the policies of Frederick and his supporters. Apart from this "community of purpose," nothing points to any specific cohesion among these people. Yet, final conclusions are tenuous, as the group supporting Holzer can only sketchily be identified in historical sources. One of its few known adherents was Johann Ödenacker, who was a member of the *Gemein* and served as a "newcomer" to the city council from 1462 until his execution in 1463. He consistently appeared as Holzer's closest confidant and played a pivotal role in the uprising against Archduke Albert in early April 1463.<sup>70</sup> By contrast, the reasons behind the executions of Johann Burghauser, Georg Hallerbeck, and three more burghers remain unclear. Burghauser and Hallerbeck were members of the *Gemein* and did not belong to Vienna's political elites. Aside from Georg Hallerbeck's role in handing over the formal declaration of enmity (*Absagebrief*) on behalf of the city to Frederick III in October 1462, neither of them is mentioned during the conflict in any source. They did not hold significant positions during this period or prior to the events. It thus remains uncertain whom they supported or sympathized with in the course of the events.<sup>71</sup> The most plausible explanation, at least for Burghauser's execution, is that among those who were captured, he did not possess enough economic capital to raise the ransom amount.<sup>72</sup>

Despite the violent upheaval in 1462/63, which was embedded in deeper structural, economic disruptions brought about by prolonged conflicts in various configurations, Vienna's political community adapted to Frederick as "new old" city lord and remained functional in the long run. Both the members of the deposed and of the newly elected council, as well as those who had served under Albert, eventually held offices in the city's most important institution. On the one hand, the group of politically influential merchants led by Simon Pötel and Niklas Teschler succeeded in resuming their influence on city politics and even strengthened their networks in court circles. On the other hand, aside from Johann Kirchheimer, Friedrich Ebmer, and Jakob Starch, who eventually left the city, not all council members who had actively supported Albert VI necessarily faced the risk of disadvantages under the rule of Frederick.<sup>73</sup>

As for their social background, the vast majority of the eighteen men on the city council for the short period under Albert's rule did not belong to Vienna's elite. While they were burghers of the city and part of the *Gemein*, they were neither related to the families from which members of the city council were traditionally recruited nor represented in politically significant positions after Albert's death in 1463. Those who were neutral members of the "new" council and already had political experience did not face any disadvantages.<sup>74</sup> The same applies to two other councilors, who both pursued typical careers in municipal as well as territorial offices.<sup>75</sup> Disputes within the political elite of Vienna related to the events of 1462/63 and traceable in the sources until the 1470s were primarily rooted in material and economic concerns. These disputes largely revolved around compensation claims for properties that were sold under duress by the captives or for plundered assets.

<sup>69</sup>QGW II/3, No. 4086 (23 August 1464); for a comparison of the actor's motivations and victims in the conflict of 1408 see Christina Lutter's contribution to this special issue.

<sup>70</sup>Perger, *Ratsbürger*, 230.

<sup>71</sup>The few pieces of evidence are put together by Schalk, *Faustrecht*, 310, 367.

<sup>72</sup>*Ibid.*, 364.

<sup>73</sup>Valentin Liebhart, who was promoted by Albrecht to the position of mint master, held this office until his death in 1473. Johann Haug, a furrier and supporter of Albrecht, was not reelected as a councilor but later became a tax master (*Steuerherr*) and continued to regularly attest legal transactions on behalf of the city until 1489. Perger, *Ratsbürger*, 209, 220f.

<sup>74</sup>*Ibid.*, 225. Ulrich Matzleinsdorfer, for instance, became mayor after Frederick reconciled with the city and remained a council member for several years. Ravensburger retained his position as judicial scribe.

<sup>75</sup>*Ibid.*, 205 (Jakob Gschmechl), 245 (Laurenz Schwanz).

## Concluding Remarks

During the long-lasting conflicts over the succession of Albert II/V in his domains, cities emerged as politically relevant actors in the duchy of Austria in the 1440s and 1450s, acting in conjunction with nobles, knights, and clergy. Especially the city of Vienna, the most populous and economically powerful among them, became actively engaged in feuds and military operations, thereby enhancing its political significance and independent agency.

The escalating conflicts over the control of Austria between Emperor Frederick and his brother Archduke Albert in the aftermath of the death of Ladislaus Posthumous in 1457, as well as the violent events that unfolded in Vienna during the years 1462/63, also illustrate the complex and ambiguous interdependencies between the city and ducal authority. On the one hand, the lord of the city was the duke himself; on the other hand, segments of the urban elite were integrated into the courtly elite, occupying specific positions within the ducal administration. Hence, political vicissitudes within the duchy invariably had implications for the city; likewise, during the late Middle Ages, there existed no major internal conflicts in which the dukes did not exert their influence. Against this backdrop, the violent removal of the Viennese council in 1462 by fellow burghers cannot be seen as a matter confined to the urban sphere. Although the orchestrators, led by Wolfgang Holzer, were most likely driven by personal motives and enmities, the events in Vienna were embedded within broader political structures and involved external actors as well.

Furthermore, conflicts provide a helpful prism to examine the interactions and negotiations of political power holders within the late medieval urban arena, prompting a critical reevaluation of an alleged unitary harmony—an aspect that has been under scrutiny in recent research for several years.<sup>76</sup> Urban political life was not shaped solely by the city council; rather, it relied on a plurality of organizations. These were, like the council itself, not cohesive entities but rather were characterized by multiple interests of various groups and factions. Thus, a comparison between the “old,” deposed city council and the newly established one in 1462/63 helps differentiate the formal composition of the political organization and the action groups operating within it. Just over a third of the deposed council consisted of a closely knit and politically experienced clique that extended beyond the council itself. Their cohesion was rooted in occupational (trade) and marital alliances and courtly duties in the service of Emperor Frederick. The initiatives instigated by Wolfgang Holzer primarily targeted this group, as discontent spread not only among wide sections of Vienna’s population but also within significant organizations of political life such as the *Gemein*, the guilds, and the university, all of which increasingly opposed Frederick’s role as city lord. The newly elected council bore a “provisional” character—aside from Wolfgang Holzer as the new mayor, only a few of the new councilors possessed political experience or belonged to influential urban families. As newcomers, they played an insignificant role in the conflicts. Comparatively small within the ranks of the new city council was the number of loyal supporters of the new city lord, Albert VI. This applies also to the supporters of Holzer, among whom only a few names are known, all of them individuals who did not previously appear in prominent political circles. Aside from their stance against Frederick’s supporters in the council, these small interest groups within the city council had few shared interests and connections. Thus, the period of their consensus-based actions under altered political constellations was to come to an end within a few months under the reign of Albert.

<sup>76</sup>For instance, the introduction in Caroline Goodson, Anne E. Lester, and Carol Symes, eds., *Cities, Texts and Social Networks, 400–1500: Experiences and Perceptions of Medieval Urban Space* (Farnham, 2010), as well as the contribution to this volume by Franz-Joseph Arlinghaus, “The Myth of Urban Unity: Religion and Social Performance in Late Medieval Braunschweig,” 215–32; Lutter, “Ways of Belonging”; one of the first scholars who critically stressed the unity of urban community is Valentin Groebner, “Ratsinteressen, Familieninteressen: Patrizische Konflikte in Nürnberg um 1500,” in *Stadtregiment und Bürgerfreiheit: Handlungsspielräume in deutschen und italienischen Städten des Späten Mittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit*, eds. Klaus Schreiner and Ulrich Meier (Göttingen, 1994), 278–308.