

Two Pig-headed Schoolmasters around 1600

Already with the appointments of the first two schoolmasters whose names have come down to us, the responsible authorities had bad luck. The schoolmaster did not bring the necessary human qualities to their profession. The following are the disagreeable fallings-out between the town council and the perplexed schoolmasters.

Basti Flacht before 1600

His name is known to us only from the proceedings of a visitation of 1605, though at this time he was long let go from school service. He had been called before the court in Schorndorf because of mistreatment and condemned, unjustly in his view. Back in Geradstetten he refused to take part in Holy Communion and was therefore called to account for this by the Pastor and the Dean.

Non communicantes

Basti Flacht, formerly schoolmaster of this township, was set in the pillory two years ago in Schorndorf, and for this reason was deemed a disreputable person, unqualified to be a godfather according to the church rules.

Since then he has not appeared at communion, and as he was addressed concerning his absence in the presence of the Pastor at this visitation he said: If he is not good enough for Godfatherhood, and cannot attest to his beliefs in that way, he decided also not to go through the communion, and supposed he was prohibited from joining with baptism, out of a grudge, notwithstanding that the Pastor had easily explained to him that this was not the case.

It is however only a bad prank of him, in line with his several years at the school, when it was difficult to get him to communion. Many times we had to deal with him, but there was never any improvement.

Sigmund Ramser 1598-1603

With the next Geradstetten schoolmaster Sigmund Ramser, there were as well difficulties, soon after his appointment. Besides his job as sexton, he also had to take care of his post as secretary of the town hall where he appears to have done a slovenly job. This one could have overlooked, but as he was a very stubborn man, he soon came into conflict with his superior, Pastor Johannes Braitmayer. So it came to a discharge and the almost 60 year old Ramser had to look for a new position, the seventh in his career.

His Personal Record:

1545 born in Heibronn
Studied as goldsmith and painter

1575 -1578	Schoolmaster in Oberstenfeld
1579 -1580	Eberdingen
1581 -1592	Rutesheim
1593 -1595	Muehlhausen/Enz
1596 – 1597	D...tzelhausen
1598 -1603	Geradstetten

It was common in these parts after the Reformation that the Pastor trained the school boys for the church choir and trained them in the liturgy. Soon many pastors tried to pass this job over to the schoolmaster.

This lead at first to difficulties in many towns, including Geradstetten. Schoolmaster Ramser often had different ideas from the Pastor about the music for the service, which lead finally to his discharge. In addition it came out that he carried on with his children in a very loose way, and that his writing skills were not up to snuff.

In the visitation of 1601, all these charges against the schoolmaster were first put in writing. As he promised improvement, no further action was taken. In the proceedings it reads as follows:

Sigmund Ramser from Heilpronn, Schoolmaster and Sexton, is a goldsmith and painter, a citizen of Marpach. He is 56 years old and has seven children and had 36 students.

He still shows limitations in singing, in assisting at Holy Communion, when the Pastor asked him to lead with another song. Is very sloppy in his record keeping at the Rathaus. Upon reprimand, he wants however to change and work harder to improve, and thus no further complaints were made about his behavior.

However, already in the next year, the superiors of our schoolmaster became even clearer in their complaints:

Pastor, Mayor, and the town council complained about the schoolmaster, that he was unable to lead the singing in the church...began singing before the Pastor came down from the pulpit, and got into difficulties, so that the Pastor had to begin another one.

When reprimanded, he said he could lead the singing by himself, if the Pastor did not stand next to him. When the Pastor stayed by him, the song went clear out of his head.

According to reports, the schoolmaster appeared to be very negligent in school. And to his children in school he was somewhat heavy-handed regarding using the rod. (Which was pointed out to him after the first visitation. So he is also not the neatest in his writing, though he would like to believe it is good, as long as every other sentence was not halfway deficient.

In the year 1603 the community discharged Schoolmaster Sigmund Ramser:

Sigmund Ramser, Schoolmaster and Sexton is by these chancellery proceedings let go, and in his place Jacob Jeytt of Heppach is taken on.

Of his later life there is nothing known us.