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Friedrich Reinhard, Count of Rechteren-Limpurg-Speckfeld (1751–1842): A Dutch-Franconian Champion of American Independence

Friedrich Reinhard Burkard Rudolph van Rechteren was born on September 22, 1751, as the youngest son of Johann Eberhard Adolph, Count of Rechteren-Rechteren, and his wife Sophia Carolina Florentina, Countess of Rechteren-Almelo, at Rechteren castle in the village of Dalfsen, Overijssel province, Netherlands. His family lived in Sommerhausen, district of Lower Franconia, Bavaria, from 1752 to 1757 as his father had inherited part of the county of Limpurg-Speckfeld and thus had become an estate of the Holy Roman Empire. Because of that, the Rechteren family took turns living at their possessions in the Netherlands and in Bavaria. When Johann Eberhard died in 1754, his wife and children returned to Almelo in 1757 where they lived at *Huis Almelo*, a palace still owned by the Rechteren family today. The children first had private tutors, but at the age of 16, Friedrich Reinhard was sent to the Latin school at Ijsselstein for a year, then attended Utrecht University for two years.¹

He received a solid education in the classics as well as in modern languages and mathematics. He was occupied with the authors of classical antiquity and mathematics even in his old age. Besides speaking Dutch and German as mother tongues, he seems to have had an excellent command of French—as usual for educated persons of his time—and probably could get along quite comfortably in English and Italian as well. He also seems to have dabbled in the belles-lettres, but all that has been preserved is an autobiographical text on his years as a naval cadet and officer in Dutch and French service. As a typical young nobleman of the 18th century he saw his best career chances in the military, first of all in the Dutch navy where he hoped to be able to see more of the world.



Friedrich Reinhard von Rechteren in a uniform coat wearing the chevalier's cross of the French military order of merit, about 66 years of age. Unknown painter, privately owned (photo: Michael Hettler).

At the age of 19, he took off to sea as a naval cadet on board the ship-of-the-line *Nassau*. His first voyage of one and a half year's duration took him to the Western Mediterranean. At that time, the Dutch navy took part in the patrols of the European sea powers which were meant to suppress piracy, especially on the Barbary coast of Northern Africa. The Dutch had slacked off their efforts for some years, but in the spring of 1770, the *Staten Generaal*

(the estates/parliament of the Dutch republic)—dismayed by the continuing conflicts with the Barbary states—had decided to send off a squadron of six ships-of-the-line, not merely frigates, as before, to impress the pirates with a show of Dutch political and military power. That a show of power was the main intention, not a really strict patrol of those coasts which may have involved major naval engagements, is evidenced by the grotesque course of the only encounter of Rechteren's squadron with pirate ships reported below. The squadron's itinerary also lets us see that the European sea powers were to be impressed by this display of might as well as the Barbary pirates.

The voyage took the squadron from the Dutch naval base at Den Helder to Malaga, Marseilles, Toulon, Genoa, and Leghorn where the ships called several times just as they did at Naples later on. On a trip from Mallorca to La Spezia the Dutch squadron entered the bay of Algiers where a short exchange of shots with pirate ships occurred before the Dutch veered off. Rechteren writes: “. . . on July 1st [1771] we saw the city of Algiers about an hour and a half away from us . . . Looking through our field-glasses, we saw that the appearance of three ships of war seemed to alarm them, perhaps because they were expecting the Danes who wanted to bombard them. We saw ships coming out of the port, hoisting a green flag and heard a cannon-shot. We hoisted our flags, returned the shot and put about.”²² La Spezia was the last Mediterranean port the squadron called at. From Dec. 1, 1771, to mid-January 1772, it stayed at Lisbon, then returned to the Netherlands by way of the Isle of Wight; at the beginning of March 1772, it was back in the roadstead of Texel.

As the squadron called at so many ports, the voyage offered the young naval cadet Rechteren wonderful opportunities for enlarging and enriching his view of the world. It may have taken the place of the conventional *grand tour* which many young nobles of his time took in their youth. He reports about famous sites of ancient history as well as about contemporary life in the countries he visited; not only did he see museums, palaces, and antique ruins, but he attended theater productions, dances, and church services as well. Dangerous adventures were not lacking: when visiting Toulon the party on shore (Rechteren among them) was suddenly called back to their ship by a flag signal and the route of their longboat led them straight through the field of fire of the artillery during a military exercise; late at night, out on the wide Tejo river at Lisbon, the ferrymen taking Rechteren and others back to their ships suddenly threatened to collect jacked-up fares at knife-point. Rechteren commiserated with the sailors who fell overboard while working on deck or in the rigging and who could hardly ever be saved; he also explains why this was next to impossible. He was shocked by the excessively harsh punishment for desertion in the British navy.

After his return, Rechteren would have liked to stay in the Dutch navy, but there were very few open places for officers at that time. He therefore joined the Rechteren regiment of the Dutch army as an ensign, later becoming a lieutenant with the rank of a captain in a guards regiment. When the War of the Bavarian Succession began in 1778, he left Dutch army service and unsuccessfully tried to find an officer's place in the Prussian army. In 1779, he wanted to participate in the invasion of England then being planned by the allied French and Spanish, but finding an officer's position—he had expected to succeed within a fortnight—actually took him seven months and by then, the invasion had been aborted. So he was fortunate to get a position, first as a *cadet gentilhomme*, soon after as a *capitaine-à-la-suite* in the French army. It had helped that he had made the acquaintance of the brother of the owner of the French army's German regiment *Royal Deux-Ponts* at the races in Vincennes and that a distant aunt of his who knew the French Minister of War was able to put in a good word for him at a dinner with the minister. Finding an adequate position could evidently be quite difficult in the late 18th century. As a *capitaine-à-la-suite* he was a staff officer, something like an aide-de-camp, to the regiment's commander.

The *Royal Deux-Ponts* regiment of about 1,000 men was part of the French army corps sent to America to support the rebels there. In all, this had a strength of over 5,000 men; it was taken to America in a fleet of more than 30 transport ships escorted by seven French men-of-war. The ships departed from the French naval base of Brest at the beginning of May 1780; the voyage to Newport, RI, took 70 days. Sea travel in the 18th century was an adventurous undertaking: the *Comtesse de Noailles*, the transport ship Rechteren traveled in, had an overall length of only about 115 ft., and a width of about 30 ft., but it transported 350 soldiers as well as a regular crew of about 50 sailors, not to mention cows (for fresh milk) and chickens (for fresh eggs). Nine officers shared a tiny stateroom. Wherever one went on this ship, there was already somebody standing, sitting or lying there. Food was plentiful, but liquids were not; the soldiers suffered from some dehydration as there was only about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a quart of wine available per person and day which was sometimes replaced by $\frac{1}{4}$ of a pint of brandy and a pint of rather stale water. At least, the wine and brandy were of very good quality. Additionally, a pint of somewhat dubious soup was given out daily. But as no fresh vegetables or fruit were to be had, it is not surprising that about one third of the soldiers was suffering from scurvy when the fleet arrived at Newport on July 12, 1780. Nine soldiers of the regiment even died of it during the voyage. Several weeks of good food with fresh vegetables and fruit were needed to make the troops ready for action.

In the spring of 1781, the French corps took action in the American War of Independence. First of all, the generals tried to take a number of units to Virginia by ship in order to drive the British out of that state. Rechteren as a former navy man volunteered for this operation and thus became an eyewitness of the first battle of Cape Henry at the southern end of Chesapeake Bay on March 16, 1781; the British succeeded in preventing the French fleet from entering the bay. Therefore, the troops could not be put ashore there and had to be taken back to Rhode Island. George Washington and the French commander-in-chief, Count Rochambeau, now decided to march the troops to Virginia over land. In order to mislead the British General Clinton who occupied New York City with 12,000 men a siege of the city was feigned. Before Clinton became aware of the deception the allied troops had marched so far south that Clinton could not stop them anymore. Simultaneously, a French fleet under Admiral de Grasse-Tilly had beaten a British fleet in the second battle of Cape Henry on September 9, 1781. This naval victory gave the allied Americans and French the opportunity to win the war in the colonies as the British General Cornwallis who occupied the heavily fortified military camp at Yorktown had now been cut off from all supplies. Yorktown was placed very well for menacing both Virginia and the Carolinas, but only as long as it had open access to the sea.

This is where the last chapter of the American War of Independence was acted out. By mid-September all allied troops had arrived and Yorktown was quickly cordoned off, just as Gloucester Point was on the opposite riverbank. The besiegers then proceeded to advance two parallel trenches against the two strongest redoubts of the fortification on which the defense of Yorktown primarily depended. The army units took two-day turns of trench duty. On the 14th and 15th of October, 1781, the French *Gatinois* regiment took up position together with Rechteren's *Royal Deux-Ponts* regiment. Rechteren's description of the night which decided the war is very vivid: At 8 o'clock in the evening both regiments advanced on the redoubts in complete silence, the sappers removed the palisades and abatis, and then the soldiers (Rechteren among them) stormed the redoubt with their bayonets. The defenders, all of them Hessians, fired once or twice, but in vain. Many of them—and of the attackers—fell in battle, one major, six non-commissioned officers, and 68 men were taken prisoner. Rechteren continues:

After the firing, it was suddenly very quiet, and then we heard someone shout “Vive le roi” for three times. This resulted in a terrible cannonade out of the fortress; all their guns were directed against these redoubts. It seemed that everything was under fire from that side. We expected them to sally out of the fortress and attack the trenches.

For this reason, all were ordered out of the trenches and had to take position on their inner edge. A hail-storm of bullets flew over our heads and between the bayonets. If the enemy should appear on the outer breastworks, we were prepared to fire our guns and jump into the trenches at the same time as the enemy.³

That night, it did not come to this dangerous hand-to-hand fighting in the dark any more. Two days later, on October 17, the *Royal Deux-Ponts* regiment was in its position in the trench and the conquered redoubt again. "The fire of our batteries to which the enemy could only respond with light artillery and howitzer fire, was now so heavy that we had to expect that we would have to storm [Yorktown] at night. Then at 1 o'clock in the afternoon, an officer came over waving a white handkerchief."⁴ The negotiations for the capitulation of Yorktown had begun; it was signed on October 19, 1781. The independence of the 13 American colonies was recognized by the Treaty of Paris in September of 1783, but by then, Rechteren had been home for quite some time.

Right after the capitulation of Yorktown he took his leave from the French army and returned to Europe. Before leaving America he bought two casks full of seeds and plant shoots from the famous botanist Bartram in Philadelphia. He evidently wanted to embellish his family's castle gardens with exotic plants from the New World; unfortunately, these casks were lost. The voyage home on a ship laden with Virginia tobacco took only 36 days (instead of 70 on the way to America), but as the ship ran into heavy storms and nearly foundered Rechteren's report on it, though short, is dramatic enough to compete with the famous sea stories about Horatio Hornblower or Jim Hawkins. In the first days of January 1782, Rechteren was back in Paris.⁵

The first relative he visited after his return was his mother in Almelo. He must have spoken quite a bit about his experiences in America there as he was popularly nicknamed *de Amerikaan*. It seems that he was more impressed by America than his memoirs show. He published an article on America in a respected newspaper, the *Rotterdamse Courant*. Because of that, he was considered as a man who had fought and risked his life for liberty and who was open for political reform. In later years in Würzburg, too, he was seen as a supporter of the constitution and of liberal ideas. But just a few years later, events in Almelo showed that his liberal stance had its limits when material interests of his family were touched.

Later in 1782, Rechteren moved to Franconia to live on his possessions there; in November 1783, he married Friederike Antoinetta Carolina, Countess of Giech and Wolfstein. In 1785, he was back in Almelo to support his mother against the citizenry who had started to infringe on what she saw as

her old-established rights and privileges. In 1783, they had formed a *patriotse burger-vrijkorps*, a militia unit trained by army officers. This mostly reflects the people's discontent with the unpopular war with England, a discontent deepened by the feeling of many of the poorer catholic inhabitants of Almelo of being discriminated against by the counts' *Gereformeerde Kerk*. Moreover, in 1781 Joan Derk van der Capellen, an Overijsselsche baron, had published a revolutionary pamphlet titled *Aan het volk van Nederland* in which he called for the abolition of the privileges of the nobility. In 1785, riots erupted at the election of the town's mayors (there were four of them) and of the city council. The controversy centered on the question of whether these officials were to be elected according to an earlier agreement between the citizens and the counts or a later one which gave the counts' vote more weight than the citizens' vote. The citizens naturally wanted to return to the older mode. Not surprisingly, Rechteren's mother was strictly opposed; she also felt threatened by the *vrijkorps*. Two mayors nominated by her were not recognized as legitimate by the citizens. The citizens then contested the election of the city council as well. Finally, the *Staten* (estates) of Overijssel decided that these elections would have to follow the rules set in the older agreement; they also permitted the formation of the *vrijkorps*.

Now Friedrich Reinhard entered the fray. From farmers' sons of the Rechteren villages in the area, he formed his own militia company to compete with the citizen's *vrijkorps*. His men got military training, too, and, to top it all, he procured three cannon for his company. To impress the *vrijkorps*, he repeatedly marched his troops through the town and fired the cannon a couple of times, as well. A worried *patriot* (a supporter of the citizens) was afraid that very soon there would be a bloodbath in town. But the *vrijkorps* was not intimidated at all and also marched through Almelo under arms. Soon, the situation got out of hand and there were fist and knife fights between the *patriots* and the Rechterens' supporters. The *patriots* threatened to set fire to the palace, and people were shouting in the streets that someone should shoot Friedrich Reinhard off his horse (*van zijn paard zou schieten*). Only after the Prussian occupation of 1787 was the *vrijkorps* disarmed, and quiet returned to Almelo. Friedrich Reinhard was not unduly impressed by these threats as he returned to Almelo several times afterward, thus in 1796 and in 1802, then after his mother's death in 1805 to secure his inheritance, and again in 1809. Most probably, he also went there after his brother's death in 1814. On the other hand, it is easy to see that he now would have preferred the Franconian parts of the Rechterens' domains where—as far as is known—nobody ever wanted to shoot him off his horse.⁶

Friedrich Reinhard and his first wife had eight children between 1785 and 1794, but only two sons and two daughters survived their childhood. In

1787, he and his elder brother Johann Christian were officially installed as regents in their county of Limpurg-Speckfeld. In 1790, Friedrich Reinhard was present at the Imperial coronation of Leopold II where he—like his father had at the coronation of Francis II in 1745—served food at the emperor's table (symbolizing his feudal dependence on the emperor). In 1793, in the Imperial war against revolutionary France, he led a company of the county of Limpurg into the Imperial army camp at Fürth, but resigned his commission because he thought that the Imperial army was hopelessly disorganized.⁷

When Friedrich Reinhard had established his permanent residence in Franconia in 1782/83, he immediately started to fight the corruption and cronyism in the administration of his county caused by the long absence of a legitimate regent. This went together with crass exploitation of the subjects, embezzlement of taxes and dues, and moral decadence. It was laborious work to prevail against the resistance of some officials and local dignitaries, but his subjects appreciated his efforts as they were in their interest as well as in his. They were certainly grateful that—probably because of his good relations with the French army—he was able to obtain a *sauvegarde*, a letter of protection, for his territory at the time of the first French occupation of Franconia in 1796 which sheltered them from the worst abuses of the occupation.⁸

Friedrich Reinhard also worked to improve his direct income, the part which did not derive from manorial or sovereign rights. He had new and better varieties of vines planted in his vineyards as he had become aware of the quality problems which the Franconian wine producers had at that time; agricultural amelioration was a widespread hobby of the 18th century nobility, anyway. His attempts to install an apothecary in Sommerhausen succeeded only after the resistance of the apothecaries in the neighboring towns of Kitzingen, Marktbreit, and Ochsenfurt had been overcome several years later. It seems that Rechteren supported legislation to protect young mothers, probably from the experience of having seen several of his own children die in early childhood.⁹

Rechteren's peaceful life as the regent of a small, semi-independent territory of the Holy Roman Empire was violently interrupted in 1803. The violence didn't originate with a rebellion of his subjects this time, but with an attempt of the electorate of Bavaria to annex his county. At least that is what Rechteren assumed after Bavaria had begun to meddle in what he considered to be his and his county's own affairs. It is not necessary to go into this affair in great detail here. It all began with the famous *Reichsdeputationshauptschluss* of 1803 whereby the independence of all ecclesiastical territories and of most Free Imperial Cities, but not of all lay princely territories, within the Empire was abolished; these territories and cities then were incorporated into the larger secular states, such as the electorate of Bavaria. But in 1803,

the county of Limpurg-Speckfeld had not been *mediatised* yet, and the political scene of the time did not make an incorporation into Bavaria look inevitable. Thus, Bavaria had annexed the bishopric of Würzburg in 1802, but, in 1806, had to cede it to the house of Habsburg. So Rechteren was justified in doubting the legality of the steps the electorate began to take against him. This is the outcome of what is known as the “Sommerhausen War of 1803” in regional historiography: in the summer of 1803, Bavarian troops forcibly occupied Sommerhausen, and bloodshed was only avoided by Rechteren’s strict order to his militiamen not to open fire in any event. To add insult to injury, the Bavarians then charged the cost of the military action to the county of Limpurg-Speckfeld. Rechteren and his brother filed a suit against the electorate of Bavaria at the Imperial Court in August, 1803; in January of 1804, they had a favorable decision in hand: the electorate of Bavaria was sentenced to abstain from any threat or use of violence against the county of Limpurg-Speckfeld, to retract its letters of taking possession and to compensate the house of Rechteren for all damages wrought by the military in 1803; any contravention would be fined with ten pounds of pure gold. Of course, this favorable decision had no visible political effect so close to the end of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806. With the empire’s collapse and under the terms of the *Rheinbund*, the Confederation of the Rhine of the same year—Napoleon’s legal instrument for the empire’s dissolution—, the county of Limpurg-Speckfeld was legally annexed by the Kingdom of Bavaria in 1806 after all, and Rechteren became a Bavarian subject, a status that he had never wanted to have.¹⁰

When the kingdom of Bavaria took over the county of Limpurg-Speckfeld it had acquired a small territory of nine villages which had about 3 700 inhabitants and net annual receipts of about 14,500 Rhenish florins (rh fl). Its debts amounted to approximately 48,000 rh fl, the annual interest payments to ca. 1,900 rh fl. These numbers were of some importance when the Rechteren family’s dominions in Franconia and in the Netherlands were divided between Friedrich Reinhard and the heirs of his deceased brother in 1819. Friedrich Reinhard as the younger brother naturally took the Franconian part which the family had acquired more recently, his brother’s heirs the Dutch part which consisted mainly of the town and bailiwick of Almelo with approx. 4,000 inhabitants and annual receipts which probably corresponded quite closely to those of the Franconian possessions.¹¹

In June of 1798, Rechteren’s first wife died. In August 1807, Rechteren was married a second time, this time to Auguste Eleonore, Princess of Hohenlohe-Kirchberg (1782–1847). The couple had seven children between 1808 and 1818; again, only three of them survived their childhood. In 1806, Rechteren had become a Bavarian subject against his will, but he soon reached

a respected political and social position in Bavarian service. When Lower Franconia again fell to Bavaria in 1814, the Bavarian king and government took pains to avoid the mistakes they had made at the time of the first take-over. On June 29, 1815, king Max I Joseph appointed Rechteren as regional commander of the National Guard (later known as *Landwehr*, the regional militia). His resistance in the “Sommerhausen War” of 1803 may have helped him now even though King Max Joseph had been his adversary then. But in 1814, crown prince Ludwig began to gain more and more influence on Bavarian politics, and he was a sworn enemy of the Confederation of the Rhine; Ludwig probably saw Rechteren’s stance of 1803 as evidence of his resistance against undue French influence on German politics. In those years, Ludwig was a liberal and a constitutionalist, and so Rechteren’s liberal leanings and support for the Bavarian constitution of 1818 apparently worked in his favor.

With this appointment Rechteren received the rank of a major general at the behest of the competent government department. The argument was that he would have at least one colonel under him and would need higher rank to be effective as a commander. Moreover, he had served with Lt. General von Zollern and General von Verger in America and had been recommended as an able military officer by both of them. This all shows how the Bavarian government was taking into consideration the popular mood in the newly acquired territories now; the department thought that if the king balked at this conferment of rank now it would have a negative influence on the mood of the regional nobility in Lower Franconia. In 1817, and again in 1820, Rechteren as newly appointed major general of the infantry was the acting commander-in-chief of the whole Bavarian army reserves. He was made a Knight of the Order of Merit (civilian version) of the Bavarian Crown in 1817 as well and was permitted to accept the French Order of Military Merit in the same year. As a protestant he was not eligible for the Order of Saint-Louis. Then in 1818, he and every head of his family after him were raised to the rank of *Reichsrat der Krone Bayern* (state councillor of the Bavarian crown) with a hereditary seat and vote in the *Kammer der Reichsräte*, the “upper house” of the Bavarian *Landtag* (parliament). In 1813, Rechteren bought one of the secularized canon’s palaces in Würzburg, the *curia Weinsberg*, across from the *curia Conti* which had become the official residence of the bishops of Würzburg after they had had to give up the much grander *Residenz*.¹²

In 1819, the city of Würzburg conferred the title of “honorary citizen” on Rechteren, on mayor Wilhelm Joseph Behr, and on state councillor Johann Michael Seuffert, and in January of 1820, gave a joint festive banquet for the three of them. The reasons given for the conferment of this title on Rechteren are remarkable for their vagueness: he had taken “a beneficial influence on general affairs in his capacity of councillor of the crown,” the dedicatory

poem speaks of him as “a courageous fighter for a foreign nation’s liberty,” as “an agreeable poet of soft, beautiful songs,” and as a “forceful speaker for the rights of the people and public welfare.” Rechteren was honored for his stand in favor of the Bavarian constitution which was popular with the citizens of Würzburg, as well; he had been a guest at the laying of the foundations of the “constitution obelisk” at Gaibach in 1821. He was honored for his participation in the American War of Independence and for his literary works which are not known today. But it is very likely that the citizens actually wanted to honor his manly stand against the Bavarian elector in 1803 because they had been strongly opposed to the Bavarian takeover in 1803 themselves. That could not be stated publicly, of course.¹³

The persons who were elected to be honorary citizens between 1819 and 1830 let us see that the political spirit of those years was mainly liberal. Rechteren belonged to the personalities who were considered as liberals in the public view, and the city council hoped to curry favor with the crown prince (or later the new king) by choosing them for this honor. That this was the main object of their distinction became very clear when Behr was politically persecuted after 1832: with all of his other functions and titles he lost the status of honorary citizen as well. When the eminent professor of medicine Johann Lukas Schönlein was suspected of spreading revolutionary ideas in 1833, the city promptly asked him to return the diploma of his status as honorary citizen; he sent it back from Zürich as a *Papier ohne Wert* (document without value). Rechteren was not asked to give his document back. It seems that, in Würzburg, Georg Ignaz Brock, who had been mayor of the city for many years, and Franz Oberthür, a theologian of the enlightenment, were prominent in his circle of friends. It is not likely that Rechteren was on a very friendly footing with mayor Behr—even setting aside the scandal of Behr’s possible liaison with his wife—because Behr was quite critical both of the *Landwehr* and the *Kammer der Reichsräte* whereas Rechteren had important functions in both of these bodies. In 1829, Rechteren, together with another liberal personage and personal friend of his, Count Schönborn, was elected to the *Landrat* of Lower Franconia (an administrative body mostly concerned with social and cultural affairs); this shows the high esteem in which he was held in the city and the region. Naturally, he was a member of the leading social and cultural club in Würzburg, the *Harmonie*, as well whose house happened to be right next to his own.

But in 1832, the political climate in Bavaria and Lower Franconia underwent a sea change and Rechteren was affected by it, too. The famous *Hambacher Fest* (meeting at Hambach Castle) in 1832 had made the governments of the *Deutsche Bund* (German Federation)—already scared by the Paris Uprising of 1830—very fearful of a democratic revolution and caused them to

take massive measures of suppression. The *Gaibacher Fest* (meeting at Gaibach) which happened on the same day and was actually meant to celebrate the Bavarian constitution was barely noticed by the press and by the politicians at first, but Ludwig I (now King of Bavaria) whose political thought had turned towards the ideas of romanticism and restoration in the late 1820s saw the security of the state and of the monarchy imperiled (incomprehensibly from today's point of view). Most of all, his former friend of liberal days, mayor Behr, had now become his very special *bete noire*.

Behr had been observed by the police for quite some time, and this was now intensified under the unscrupulous *Stadtkommissär* (city supervisor) Dr. Anton Wiesend. Wiesend had been ordered by the *Regierungspräsident* of Lower Franconia (the head of the regional government) to collect incriminating material on Behr by any means. The observation was now extended to Rechteren as *notorisch ein Liebesverständnis zwischen Behr und der Frau Gräfin Rechteren bestehen will* (as it is notorious that a liaison of love exists between Behr and Countess Rechteren). Behr's correspondence with the countess was closely observed. Rechteren's house in Würzburg and his castles in Sommerhausen and Markt Einersheim were repeatedly searched by the police, but no incriminating material was found. Whether Auguste Eleanore von Rechteren and Behr really had a love affair cannot be known with certainty anymore.¹⁴

Rechteren must have seen his position in the city compromised by this scandal; this was probably his motive for selling his Würzburg house in 1833. Maybe he finished the memoirs of his youth now as they could console him under these new circumstances. From 1833 to the end of his life he lived in his castles in Sommerhausen and in Markt Einersheim. On June 20, 1842, three months before his 91st birthday, he died in Sommerhausen; three days later he was buried in the family vault in Markt Einersheim.

Würzburg, Germany

Notes

¹ This article is based on Rechteren's own memoirs, edited by Jane A. Baum, Hans-Peter Baum, and Jesko Graf zu Dohna, *The Adventures of Friedrich Reinhard count of Rechteren-Limpurg in the Mediterranean and the American War of Independence 1770–1782*, Mainfränkische Hefte 115, 2nd ed. (Spurbuch-Verlag Baunach, 2018). This is a bilingual edition in German and English and contains a biographical article on Friedrich Reinhard von Rechteren by Hans-Peter Baum (9–43). Most of the pertinent literature on the county on Limpurg-Speckfeld in Rechteren's lifetime is quoted there. Therefore, only direct quotes from Rechteren's memoirs and statements not supported by that text will be annotated in a footnote here.

² *Adventures of Friedrich Reinhard*, 62. The ships of the squadron that Rechteren traveled with actually belonged to different Dutch admiralties and did not always stay together. That is why only three ships took part in the trip to Algiers

³ *Adventures of Friedrich Reinhard*, 106–7.

⁴ *Adventures of Friedrich Reinhard*, 109.

⁵ *Adventures of Friedrich Reinhard*, 113–16.

⁶ For the events in Almelo see Henk Beijers, “Frederik Reinhard Burchard Rudolph van Rechteren Limpurg (1752 – 1842),” in *Stad & Ambt*, ed. by the Historische Kring *Stad en Ambt Almelo* (Almelo, April 2003); Gerard Brouwer, “Stad ontkomt aan Bloedbad,” in *Stad & Ambt Almelo* (Almelo, April 2018); idem, “Gravin verliest greep op Stad,” in *Stad & Ambt Almelo* (Almelo, January 2018); Jean Streng, “Hausmacht en Republiek. De graven van Rechteren en de heerlijkheid Almelo tijdens het Oude Bewind,” in *Mensen van Adel. Beelden, manifesten, representaties, opstellen ...*, ed. by Historisch Centrum Overijssel (Hilversum, 2007).

⁷ See *Adventures of Friedrich Reinhard*, 10–11.

⁸ *Adventures of Friedrich Reinhard*, 20.

⁹ *Adventures of Friedrich Reinhard*, 26–27.

¹⁰ For these events in greater detail, see: *Adventures of Friedrich Reinhard*, 13–20, and: Friedrich Gutmann, *Sommerhausen in Wort und Bild. Geschichtliche und kulturgeschichtliche Darlegungen nach Quellen*, 2nd enlarged and corrected ed., by Georg Furkel, Sommerhausen 1970.

¹¹ *Adventures of Friedrich Reinhard*, 23–25, and Beijers (cf. n. 6).

¹² *Adventures of Friedrich Reinhard*, 21–22.

¹³ *Adventures of Friedrich Reinhard*, 22–23; see also Beate Kann: *Würzburger Ehrenbürger 1819 bis 1837* (Stadtarchiv Würzburg, Hinweise—Informationen 19), Würzburg 1994.

¹⁴ Leo Günther, *Würzburger Chronik. Personen und Ereignisse von 1802–1848* (Bonitas Bauer: Würzburg, 1925) took the supposed liaison to have been a political “red herring,” a manoeuver to mislead the prosecutors; Max Domarus, *Bürgermeister Behr: Ein Kämpfer für den Rechtsstaat*, 3rd ed. (Schöningh: Würzburg, 1986) was undecided about it; Eva Pfeiffer, *Wilhelm Joseph Behr: Studien zum bayerischen Liberalismus in der Metternich-Zeit* (Emsdetten, 1936), and Walter Ziegler, “Ludwig I und Behr,” in Ulrich Wagner, ed., *Wilhelm Joseph Behr: Dokumentation zu Leben und Werk eines Würzburger Demokraten*, Veröffentlichungen des Stadtarchivs Würzburg 1 (Schöningh: Würzburg, 1985), 63–112, assume that it was really a love affair, but Pfeiffer’s closing remark on this point of her research is “that we cannot be absolutely sure in this question anymore.”

