

Gender and Control in the Merchant's World

Stralsund, 1750–1830

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Never let friendship become romanticized [*romanhaft*] and sentimentalized; do not let the pleasure of friendship cause you to neglect your position, your family, your public engagement, or your fortune.

Carl Friedrich Bahrdt, *Handbuch der Moral für den Bürgerstand*

Both Nature and Society agree that the man is the woman's protector and master, whereas the woman should cling to him as his lifelong companion and helpmeet—loyal, supportive, and grateful.

Joachim Heinrich Campe, *Väterlicher Rath für meine Tochter* (1789)

Despite his anguished protestations, the very wealthy Stralsund merchant and town councillor (*Ratsverwandte*) Carl Ehrenfried Reimer could not prevent the 1803 remarriage of his former wife, Johanna Sophia Gebhardi Reimer, to Georg Emmanuel Charisius, a lawyer and merchant. The case provoked a great deal of talk in the port city on the Baltic (population roughly fourteen thousand, including the garrison), involving as it did members of the elite, allegations of adultery, the virtually unprecedented occurrence of divorce, and most of the other dramatic ingredients necessary for a public scandal. Reimer seems to have lost control of his wife as well as of just about everything else: his composure, his honor, his household. In short, this is a tawdry fable, like something out of Boccaccio, the moral of which would seem to be the oft-told one in early modern times that a man who cannot control his wife deserves to lose her and his standing in the community.¹

That conclusion, so baldly stated, may be accurate by eighteenth-century lights but nevertheless is incomplete. We know that both folk custom and learned opinion supported such a conclusion: the normative gender system² of late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century

Germany,³ as formulated ultimately by Kant, Campe, Hegel, Fichte, and many others, prescribed this summation. But not all the elements of the Reimer/Gebhardi/Charisius story fit the standard interpretation—the woman is rewarded, for one thing—and we do not know why the actors did what they did until we explore the context of their actions. Gender systems are not separate from the people who comprise such systems—that is, they are organic, mutable, and multivalent sets of relationships between real individuals, each of whom has a particular agenda and may or may not follow the supposed script. Gender systems are inscribed on and embedded within the concrete, the local, the personal: we need to understand how such systems operated and how individuals manipulated the world through them.⁴ Interpretations of gender are time and place specific.⁵ Reconstructing the tale of Reimer and his wayward wife—or, rather, the story of the bold new woman and her truculent husband—using contextual evidence will enable us to see how the ideology of gender informed and was informed by other personal considerations.

According to the Stralsund archives, Carl Ehrenfried Reimer (1744–1813) was one of the city's leading grain exporters, amassing a huge fortune between the 1770s and the Napoleonic occupation and serving as a member of the town council beginning in 1790.⁶ In 1786, at the age of forty-two, he married for the second time. His new wife was Johanna Sophia Gebhardi, a Stralsund pastor's daughter who at between eighteen and twenty-five was much younger than her husband. It was her first marriage. In 1798, after the birth of three children, Carl and Johanna Reimer approached the consistory for permission to divorce.⁷

This request appears to have been one of the first divorce petitions in Stralsund's history.⁸ Because marriage was not a sacrament in Protestant theology, divorce was theoretically possible in Stralsund and other Protestant territories. It remained difficult to obtain, however, at least in part because marriage and marital law remained largely under clerical jurisdiction until the mid- to late eighteenth century. The church's chief tool of authority was the consistory, a hybrid body with quasi-secular powers. Stralsund's consistory was typical of those elsewhere in northern Germany, with members taken equally from the town government and the ecclesiastical authorities. Stralsund's consistory included the head pastors from each of the city's three churches and three members of the town council (*Rat*). The consistories in northern Germany began to lose power from about 1750 onward as

secular authorities, particularly in Prussia and Saxony, increased state control over many social and familial matters. The state subsumed marital law within its civil codes, viewing marriage as a contract that, like all contracts, could be broken under certain circumstances. Little in the secondary literature examines how closely Swedish Pomerania tracked Prussia and Saxony in this regard, but it is reasonable to assume that Stralsund followed its neighbors' trends of increasing secularization of marriage and growing divorce rates.

Both Carl and Johanna Reimer took great pains to emphasize their regrets and to stress that theirs was to be an amicable parting, preferably obviating the need to go, as they put it, "en detaille" into the marriage's "sad, unhappy circumstances" and "futile efforts." Carl admitted that he and Johanna no longer shared either bed or board and that there was simply no more concord between him and his wife, "such that all his business suffered, and his days were filled with turmoil and dissatisfaction, while self-evidently—as one could plainly see—his health had been impaired." He asserted little need to investigate the cause of disharmony, since the brute fact of "the disagreement and disinclination between him and his spouse" was "already for a long time talked about by the community at large [*im Publico*], as is probably known to the reverend Consistory and in particular to each of its members."

The main sticking point for the consistory, in fact, was that neither party wished to give any grounds for the divorce besides a general and mutual "disharmony between our temperaments" and a loss of "all love and inclination toward one another." Unable to find specific grounds for the divorce, the consistory nevertheless granted one on the condition that Johanna Reimer not remarry. It is not clear whether Carl Reimer was similarly enjoined. He kept the children, repaid the dowry, and promised to pay his former wife an annuity, while she retrieved the physical belongings with which she had entered the marriage. The consistory's proclamation of the divorce expressly confirmed that the unhappy state of the marriage had been public knowledge for many years. Both Carl and Johanna strongly desired that there be no prying into the details of their marital breakdown, insisting with forced sincerity that they were not blaming one another for what had occurred. The divorce of a town council member and a pastor's daughter was sure to cause tectonic tremors throughout the mercantile edifice of honor, so the avoidance of disclosure was very important.⁹ Reimer's public office made him exquisitely sensitive to

scrutiny, especially scrutiny of his former spouse: neither he nor Johanna wanted her thrust out of domestic privacy and into the public eye.¹⁰ In 1798, the Reimers scrupulously maintained a facade that kept Stralsund's intrusive eyes away from any dirty linen.

But Carl Reimer breached the facade in 1803 when Johanna sought to remarry. Unable to contain himself any longer, Reimer erupted with a long diatribe against his ex-wife and asked that the consistory forbid her remarriage. The particular cause of his rage was her chosen husband, Georg Emanuel Charisius, a successful merchant and lawyer, scion of one of Stralsund's most venerable lineages, and related to still other *Ratsfamilien* via his mother. "As is notorious within the entire public here," Carl Reimer wrote, Charisius and Johanna Reimer appeared together constantly in public. Reimer would seek to document that the two had been carrying on an illicit affair even during the Reimers' marriage. (Charisius bought and moved into the house next door to the Reimers in 1788, two years after the couple married.)¹¹ Carl Reimer produced a March 1792 document (*Aufsatz*; it is not preserved in the archival materials) written in Johanna Sophia's hand that he claimed proved that at that time she was already infatuated with Charisius. Another of his prize proofs was a small, worn piece of paper with eight cryptic notations in faded pencil, each one beginning with a number, such as "287, themselves to weakness." The notations might be references to page numbers—perhaps to quotations from romantic novels such as might have had meaning to clandestine lovers. One of the lovers might have underlined passages in a *Roman* (in one of Stralsund's lending libraries or from his or her collection), made sure the book was available for the other's eyes, and then alerted the other via the note. This was, after all, the time of the "reading mania" (*Lesewut*) and of the search for sensibility (*Empfindsamkeit*). Whatever the truth of the matter, Reimer had for many years brooded over that note, a token of his bitterness.¹²

Charisius was "the real disturber of my domestic happiness," belated the old town councillor. Therein lay the crux of the issue: Reimer claimed not to object in principle to Johanna Sophia's remarriage but to oppose only the fact that she sought to marry Charisius, with whom she had consorted while she was still married to Reimer. Reimer asked the consistory to consider what had gone on in his house, what his children must have experienced as a result of their mother's misbehavior. He pushed very hard on the well-known trope of the dissolute household, of the wayward mother. His ex-wife had insulted

him, acting with “well-known *Effronterie*.” Worse, the “entire public” and at least some members of the consistory knew all about the matter. His accusations fell on deaf ears, however, and the consistory permitted Johanna Sophia Reimer and Georg Charisius to marry two months later. To add insult to injury, when Reimer died in 1813, Charisius replaced his wife’s former husband on the town council.

Reimer lost honor because he lost control. He was aware of this danger in 1798, at the divorce proceedings, refusing to divulge any specific reasons for the request. He later explained that he had done so to maintain pride and face and out of “*Menagement* and great respect for our two families.” The French word *menagement* (written in the Roman script reserved for foreign words, not in the standard German hand) meant not only “respectful consideration” but also “control, direction, and guidance” and was related to the French word for *household*. There is no way of knowing why this foreign word was chosen, whether Reimer or his interlocutor selected it, or what precisely it meant. However, a word encompassing concepts of respect, control, and domesticity was appropriate for Stralsund merchant families at home in the market. A Stralsund merchant’s inability to manage, whether in keeping a wife or in keeping a bargain, impaired his honor. Honor was tied to competence, and the merchant going to market needed every scrap of both as he competed against the Charisiuses of the world.

How did Stralsund merchants generally think about honor?¹³ Honor meant precedence, rank, and standing, but it also meant one’s reputation for prompt payment and commercial competence. The merchant’s honor was a matter of his (or, in some cases, her) creditworthiness; fellows had to honor bills so that a merchant could operate in the market. As the eighteenth century advanced, commercial ability appears to have mattered more and more in calibrating honor, eventually equaling (but never quite displacing) family connections, manners, and cultural refinement.¹⁴ In other words, disputes over honor increasingly focused overtly on latent or obscured economic tensions. For example, the conflicts over precedence in church seating and chapel ownership—ostensibly pure manifestations of rank consciousness having little to do with commerce per se—seem to have become less heated and less frequent after 1750.¹⁵ A decline also seems to have occurred in the number of people buried within the church, both in private chapels and under the floor stones, previously the prerogative of the elite who wished to make their presence and their family’s influence visible even

after death.¹⁶ (The decline may, of course, also have been caused by the growing sanitary concerns and increased olfactory sensibilities of the late eighteenth century.)¹⁷ In 1733 the mercantile bylaws (*Kaufmannsordnung*) in neighboring Wolgast still included, “for the avoidance of all conflict over rank,” specifications about precedence, but they were already based on the objective criterion of age rather than on the more nebulous and thus more arguable basis of innate quality.¹⁸ Similar stipulations are missing altogether from documents one generation later.

Members of the later generation were not shy, however, about protesting their injured honor in other terms, especially when business reputation was at stake. In 1799, for example, Stralsund merchant J. G. Bevernis went to court to halt the circulation of an “insulting pamphlet” written against him by another merchant, C. C. Grimm.¹⁹ The matter was pure commerce: Bevernis was the managing partner for a ship partly owned by Grimm, and Bevernis claimed that the entire partnership, including Grimm, had agreed to Bevernis’s sale of certain goods brought via the ship from London at “then-current prices” (the unspoken but likely fact being that these goods had been sold at a loss, possibly because of damage caused through operation of the ship). Subsequently, however, Grimm not only ridiculed Bevernis’s handling of the sale “at a large gathering” but also issued the offending document. Likewise, the *Stralsundische Zeitung* frequently ran personal announcements in which a merchant defended his honor against calumny and idle rumor.²⁰ J. F. Homeyer of Wolgast, one of Swedish Pomerania’s most important grain exporters, felt compelled in 1801 to refute publicly the rumor, “spread by evil-minded people out of trickery and malice,” that he was buying fresh grain in contravention of the law and offering inflated prices for it. In 1815, Stralsund merchant J. D. Gierow went to court to deny rumors of his insolvency, offering a large reward to anyone who could lead him to the origin of the slander. Merchants F. A. Spalding and J. F. Eggert, trustees of the von Wulfcrona bankruptcy estate, likewise felt forced to deny the rumor that they would close the estate’s wine business. All of these quarrels or denials were matters of the purse, resolved through publicity, courts, and accounts rather than with pistols or rapiers.

The honor of male merchants qua merchants was sometimes indistinguishable from their honor as fathers and husbands: the respectability of their daughters and wives was something to be cherished as much as the coins and bills they kept locked in their strongboxes. The lan-

guage of eighteenth-century merchants reflected the proximity of commercial and familial or even sexual honor. When writing about financial difficulties, merchants typically used the term *Verlegenheit* (embarrassment or predicament, much as in modern usage). *Verlegenheit* could also apply to the wider spectrum of embarrassment, including most notably social and sexual matters. The dual application of *Verlegenheit* is not, of course, peculiarly German: it is mirrored in French and English use of *embarrass* and perhaps represents the middle-class fusion of money and sexuality that Freud, Simmel, and others have posited. The fear was that losing control over one's wife implied a similar lack of mastery over one's business affairs; in either case, a male merchant's masculinity became imperiled.²¹

Given such stakes, then, how could a man as rich and powerful as Reimer fail to block the remarriage of his ex-wife and thereby avoid public humiliation? Why could he not exercise the kind of oligarchic influence otherwise fairly commonplace in Stralsund and prevalent in similar small cities and towns? The question is not why Reimer felt himself dishonored and bereft, but why his fellow oligarchs were so singularly unmoved by his complaints. Why was Reimer doubly thwarted?²² In this case, far from being blamed and punished, Johanna Reimer was in effect rewarded in a very public and unprecedented way. I believe that the consistory's refusal to grant Carl Reimer's wishes and the *Rat's* co-optation of Charisius a decade later represented calculated efforts to humiliate first the man and then even his memory. Gaps in the sources preclude definitive statements, but enough oblique evidence exists to build a workable hypothesis. Gendered roles and gendered conflicts meshed with the wider social and economic environment.

The Reimer/Gebhardi/Charisius affair occurred during a tumultuous time in Stralsund. The city's economy depended almost entirely on the export of grain, and prices across Europe hit all-time highs around 1800 as population soared and English industrialization transformed markets, resulting in both tremendous opportunities and great misery. Large export volumes and the possibility of arbitraging prices between eastern European producers and western European consumers meant huge potential profits for merchants. Fierce competition occurred in all the Baltic ports, including Stralsund, during the 1790s and early 1800s—competition for grain supplies from the countryside; for buyers and brokers in Hamburg and Bremen, Amsterdam and Rotterdam, London and Liverpool; and for the shipping space, credit, and

insurance that made deals happen. In Stralsund, the newly heightened competition led to increased concentration in the market as small-scale merchants were squeezed out. In 1755, ninety-one merchants exported grain from Stralsund (overwhelmingly malt to Sweden), with the ten largest accounting for 30 percent of the total volume. In 1796, only fifty-seven merchants participated in a much larger trade (now including sizable wheat and oat exports to England and the Netherlands), with the top ten controlling more than 53 percent of the total volume.

The merchants' drive to export also meant fear of hunger among the local populace, however, sparking "moral economy" riots, mobilization of troops in response, and growing political unrest throughout Swedish Pomerania from 1795 on. Fueled by this fear and led by a renegade merchant named Gemeinhardt, Stralsund's disenfranchised shipmasters and artisans mounted a serious and very dramatic political challenge to the *Rat* between 1801 and 1804. Stralsund's elite closed ranks, concerned about infectious Jacobinism and about both the vagaries of an erratic King Gustav IV Adolf in Stockholm and the looming threat of Napoleon. The town council, consisting exclusively of merchants and lawyers, quashed the Gemeinhardt disturbance and even strengthened its position vis-à-vis the *Bürger* of Stralsund; though no violence occurred, much bitterness lingered on both sides.

Carl Ehrenfried Reimer's problem may have been that for all his wealth and his position as a town councillor, his place among Stralsund's elite was far from assured because he was a social climber, a *nouveau riche*. His father had been a customs official, a second-class *Bürger* within Stralsund's tripartite *Bürgertabelle*, socially far removed from the first-class merchants though well positioned to help launch sons into commercial careers. Carl's older brother, Joachim Hinrich, had become a Stralsund merchant at age thirty-six in 1763, suggesting a lengthy apprenticeship and accumulation of startup capital. Joachim died in 1787, leaving behind a son, who also became a merchant in Stralsund. Carl Reimer was somewhat younger than his brother—twenty-eight—when he acquired his *Bürgerschaft* as a merchant (*Kaufmann*), but he was still several years older at the time than was common for sons of established merchants. Marriage partners and godparent choices further illustrate Reimer's second-class (solid, respectable, but middling and modest) background. His first wife was the widow of a pastor in a small neighboring town and the daughter of a small-scale Stralsund merchant who was not native to the city and who began his career as a baker. Reimer's first mother-in-law also came from a fam-

ily of Stralsund bakers. Joachim Reimer appears to have married the daughter of an innkeeper, and his son married the daughter of a small-scale merchant in a neighboring town who had close family ties to leading Stralsund shipmasters (*Schiffer*). Based on this and a great deal more genealogical detail (especially valuable are the records of godparentage for children of the two Reimer brothers and their descendants, affines, and business connections), Reimer's social milieu can be characterized as being dominated by bakers and innkeepers—provisioning trades—as well as shipmasters and to some extent tenant farmers (*Pächter*) and plantation managers. These groups became increasingly wealthy in the late 1700s in Swedish Pomerania and increasingly agitated for greater political voice. Many had migrated to Stralsund from surrounding towns or resided in the countryside. In short, Reimer's people did not have deep roots in Stralsund, and they were born with at best pewter rather than silver spoons in their mouths.

Georg Emmanuel Charisius was accustomed to silver. Members of the Charisius family had served on the town council for at least seven generations. Georg Charisius's great-grandfather had served not only as Stralsund's *Bürgermeister* but also as a member of the provincial council (*Landrat*) for Swedish Pomerania. His grandfather had served as Stralsund's speaker of the Community Assembly (*Bürgerworthalter*) and treasurer; one great-uncle had served as *Bürgermeister* and on the *Landrat*; another great-uncle had been a royal chamberlain and was later ennobled; and an uncle had been a *Landrat* member and was ennobled. Georg Charisius's father was a medical doctor, one of the few first-class *Bürger* occupations besides those of merchant and lawyer, and had married (as had most of the male Charisiuses) into another *Ratsfamilie*.²³ Georg Emmanuel was, however, the first Charisius for at least a generation actively to engage in commerce. He may well have pushed hard to revivify his family's fine old tradition, and by 1809, he had become Stralsund's nineteenth-richest person. (Carl Reimer was fifth.)

Living next door to the Reimers gave Georg Charisius the opportunity to cross paths with Johanna Sophia Reimer. Socializing in the best circles enabled him to win support for his aggressive and almost certainly adulterous suit. Her father was a pastor at St. Nikolai, Stralsund's most important church, a grand structure towering over the Old Marketplace and connected to the *Rathaus*. (One of her brothers or a cousin became a doctor and had Stralsund's thirty-second-largest net worth in 1809.) Her father's superior was Archdeacon P. B. Droysen,

whose son also served as a pastor at St. Nikolai. Both Charisius and the archdeacon were members (although their tenures would have only barely overlapped during the late 1780s) of the most influential card game in town, a weekly game that rotated for years among five or six of the leading town councillors and top church officials and their wives. Records of this floating game survive in the form of accounting entries in the daybook of one of Stralsund's most important *Bürgermeister*,²⁴ and there is no way to know what sort of conversation flowed over hands of *l'hombre* and *picquet*. But the list of attendees is very grand indeed, representing Stralsund's bon ton, all of whom had deep roots in the city and whose families had ruled together for more than a century. And no one from Reimer's world ever attended.

In the end, family connections outweighed moral scruples. Johanna Sophia Gebhardi Reimer's father had sat on consistorial panels with Georg Emmanuel Charisius's great-uncle in the late 1750s.²⁵ Although her father did not sit on the panel convened to hear the Reimers' 1798 divorce petition, the consistory noted that she had conferred with her father and had received his approval for the divorce. All four of the men sitting on the consistorial panel reviewing the Reimers' petition were regular attendees at the exclusive card game. Many of those men or their protégés would be among those who voted Charisius onto the *Rat* as Reimer's replacement.

No definitive evidence shows exactly why Reimer ran afoul of his colleagues, but extant records suggest that he was considered a parvenu who outreached himself in his second marriage. Clear evidence from many other sources shows that Stralsund's old-line, dynastic merchants, forced to compete much harder in late-eighteenth-century grain markets, sought to thwart or contain the upward thrust of new men. Politics entered heavily into the struggle. The *Gemeinhardt Aufruhr* raged at its fiercest in 1803, the year Charisius married Johanna Reimer. As a town councillor, Carl Reimer was a target of *Gemeinhardt's* attacks, and there is no record that he ever supported the protesters' aims. Conversely, Reimer was not among the councillors who led the counterattack and did not countersue *Gemeinhardt* for libel and defamation of character. *Gemeinhardt*, so reviled by the old *Ratsfamilien*, may even have evoked at least a little sympathy from Reimer. *Gemeinhardt* was the same age as Reimer and like him was a first-generation merchant. The son of a cabinetmaker, *Gemeinhardt* had married the daughter of one of Stralsund's slightly faded old-line

families. If Reimer wavered in his solidarity with his new first-class confreres even for an instant, did the old families sniff that out and retaliate at a time when they were almost hysterically closing their ranks?

And what of Johanna Sophia Reimer? Ironically, she is almost absent from this account except as an objectified ideal to be sought after. The story smacks of Homeric warriors vying for honor, with a woman both as source of discord and as prize for the victor, families mobilized in support, and the public as chorus. Anthropological and historical research has long focused on women viewed by men as trophies, as tokens in a male-defined system of political economy.²⁶ Carl Reimer and Georg Charisius may indeed have perceived the struggle as primarily involving masculine prowess. What is far more difficult to ascertain—impossible, really—is how Johanna Reimer felt about the events, how she framed the issues in her mind. The difficulty stems from the sources themselves: we have nothing from her directly but only references in the consistorial report about what she stated to the panel.

I cannot imagine that she saw herself as a marker in a male contest of honor, though she may have manipulated masculine sensitivities to win her case. Her actions offer glimpses that she was a clever politician. To seek the hitherto unthinkable—divorce—from a town councillor and then to compound that with remarriage while swinging public opinion to her favor must have taken considerable social and political skills. She and Charisius worked patiently and carefully for years; the sub rosa negotiations with those whose opinion mattered must have been artful and intense. For Johanna Reimer, the conflict may have involved youth versus age, true love versus arranged marriage, free will versus social constraints. Her actions may symbolize the putative emergence among the *Bürgertum* of the affectionate, companionate model of marriage, with Reimer as patriarch representing an archaic form of household ideal. Heroine of the Romantic Age dethrones the old *Hausvater*? Johanna Reimer seems clearly to have subverted at least some gender expectations of the time and to have suffered no penalty for doing so. She and Charisius appear to have mounted their campaign with cool audacity, to have acted as rational merchants, whereas Reimer acted in a *romanhaft* fashion, passionately harping on his sufferings and displaying his wounds. In a resolutely commercial city, Johanna Reimer's controlled, calculating approach was more

appropriate than her former husband's uncontrolled and melodramatic fulminations. In the end, gender relations cannot be separated from other social and economic considerations.

Notes

1. Merry Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1993), 18–19, 252–55; Sara F. Matthews Grieco, “The Body, Appearance, and Sexuality,” in *A History of Women in the West*, vol. 3, *Renaissance and Enlightenment Paradoxes*, ed. Natalie Zemon Davis and Arlette Farge (Cambridge, 1993), 81–82; Silke Lesemann, *Arbeit, Ehre, Geschlechterbeziehung: Zur sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Stellung von Frauen im frühneuzeitlichen Hildesheim* (Hildesheim, 1994), 117–18.

2. “Gender system” is a difficult concept to define and is thus defined in a great many ways, some of them contradictory. (It is apposite to recall Benedick's plaint to Beatrice in Shakespeare's *Much Ado about Nothing*: “Thou hast frightened the word out of his right sense, so forcible is thy wit” [act 5, scene 2, lines 55–56].) I adhere to Joan Wallach Scott's twofold definition of gender as “a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes” and as “a primary way of signifying relationships of power” (“Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” in Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* [New York, 1988], 42). For an excellent overview of how various social scientists define gender, see Mary Hawkesworth, “Confounding Gender,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 22 (1997): 649–85.

3. Karin Hausen, “Die Polarisierung der ‘Geschlechtscharaktere’—Eine Spiegelung der Dissoziation von Erwerbs- und Familienleben,” in *Sozialgeschichte der Familie in der Neuzeit Europas*, ed. Werner Conze (Stuttgart, 1976), 363–93; Barbara Duden, “Das schöne Eigentum: Zur Herausbildung des bürgerlichen Frauenbildes an der Wende vom 18. zum 19. Jahrhundert,” *Kursbuch* 47 (1977): 125–40; Ute Frevert, *Frauen-Geschichte Zwischen Bürgerlicher Verbesserung und Neuer Weiblichkeit* (Frankfurt, 1986), 1, 3, 4. See also, more generally, Wiesner, *Women and Gender*, chap. 1; Sylvana Tomaselli, “The Enlightenment Debate on Women,” *History Workshop Journal* 20 (1985): 101–24; Lieselotte Steinbrügge, *The Moral Sex: Woman's Nature in the French Enlightenment*, trans. P. Selwyn (Oxford, 1995); Michèle Crampe-Casnabet, “A Sampling of Eighteenth-Century Philosophy,” trans. A. Goldhammer, in *History of Women*, ed. Davis and Farge, esp. 328–31; Londa Schiebinger, *The Mind Has No Sex? Women in the Origins of Modern Science* (Cambridge, 1989), chap. 8.

4. I am heavily influenced by David Sabeen's close reading of his Neckarhausen sources and by the work of J. F. Boshier and Jacob Price on the world of eighteenth-century merchants around the North Atlantic. Sabeen, Boshier, and Price have taken genealogy out of the realm of the antiquarian and placed it at the service of analytical social science. My contribution is an

effort to help balance the situation Silke Lesemann identifies: "Overall, research based on normative/prescriptive sources [e.g., conduct books] predominates. In many cases, the archival sources for research into women's history remain undiscovered or unconsidered." (*Arbeit, Ehre, Geschlechterbeziehungen*, 3). For further considerations on method, see Sylvia Möhle, *Ehekonflikte und sozialer Wandel: Göttingen 1740–1840* (Frankfurt, 1997), 16–19; Stephan Buchholz, "Ehescheidung im späten 17. Jahrhundert: Marie Elisabeth Stoffelin und der Husar," in *Frauen in der Geschichte des Rechts: Von der frühen Neuzeit bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Ute Gerhard (Munich, 1997), 105–7.

5. See Lesemann, *Arbeit, Ehre, Geschlechterbeziehungen*, 7.

6. Reimer was Stralsund's seventh-largest exporter by volume in 1778, third-largest in 1786, eighth-largest in 1796, and the sixth-largest in 1806 (calculated from data in the Stadtarchiv der Hansestadt Stralsund, 15-248, 251 *Schifferbücher* for 1786, 1796 [hereafter cited as SAHS]; SAHS 35-345, *Getreydebuch* for 1778; SAHS 35-481, *Zulageregister* for 1806–7). In 1809, when the occupying French extracted a large wartime tax, Reimer was the city's fifth-richest person (calculated from data in SAHS 33-1699, *Generalbüro/Die städtische Vermögenssteuer vom 22 März 1809*). Genealogical data is from the SAHS baptismal, wedding, and death registers and from Peter Pooth, *Mitglieder des Stralsunder Rats, 1800–1933* [Stralsund, 1939(?)].

7. SAHS 3-7371, *Konsistorialgericht/Verhandlungen zur Aufhebung der Ehe d. Ratsverwandten C. E. Reimer mit J. S. geb. Gebhardi, 1798–1803*.

8. For divorce in Germany generally, see Dirk Blasius, *Ehescheidung in Deutschland, 1794–1945* (Göttingen, 1987); Luise Schorn-Schütte, "Wirkungen der Reformation auf die Rechtsstellung der Frau im Protestantismus," in *Frauen*, ed. Gerhard, 94–104. For secularization of marital law, see Dirk Blasius, "Reform gegen die Frau: Das preussische Scheidungsrecht im frühen 19. Jahrhundert," in *Frauen*, ed. Gerhard, 663–64; Möhle, *Ehekonflikte und sozialer Wandel*, 22–23, 31, 182; Marion W. Gray, "Men as Citizens and Women as Wives: The Enlightenment Codification of Law and the Establishment of Separate Spheres," in *Reich oder Nation? Mitteleuropa, 1780–1815*, ed. Heinz Duchhardt and Andreas Kunz (Mainz, 1998), 290. For consistory organization, see Tanya Kevorkian, "Piety Confronts Politics: Philipp Jacob Spener in Dresden, 1686–1691," *German History* 16 (1998): 151–52. I thank Tanya Kevorkian and Stefan Kroll for valuable suggestions on this section. For a bibliography on marital separation and divorce in early modern Europe, see Julie Hardwick, "Seeking Separations: Gender, Marriages, and Household Economies in Early Modern France," *French Historical Studies* 21 (1998): 158, 180.

9. As Olwen Hufton has indicated about the early modern household, "smoothing the path by promoting the right public image of private solidarity, careful management or moral strength, was the job of the professional man's wife. The fitting management of the household defined its standing in the com-

munity. Apparent harmony in domestic relations mattered" (*The Prospect before Her: A History of Women in Western Europe, 1500–1800* [New York, 1996], 155). For a similar perspective, see Michelle Perrot and Anne Martin-Fugier, "The Actors," in *A History of Private Life*, vol. 4, *From the Fires of Revolution to the Great War*, ed. Perrot (Cambridge, 1990), 143–53.

10. See Karin Hausen, "Öffentlichkeit und Privatheit: Gesellschaftspolitische Konstruktionen und die Geschichte der Geschlechterbeziehungen," in *Frauengeschichte-Geschlechtergeschichte*, ed. Hausen and Heide Wunder (Frankfurt, 1992), 81–88; see also Margaret Hunt, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender, and the Family in England, 1680–1780* (Berkeley, 1996), chaps. 6, 8, esp. 211–12. For a good overview of work on women in the public sphere in eighteenth-century Europe, see Lenard Berlanstein, "Women and Power in Eighteenth-Century France: Actresses at the Comedie-Française," in *Visions and Revisions of Eighteenth-Century France*, ed. Christine Adams, Jack Censer, and Lisa Jane Graham (University Park, 1997), 155–90.

11. Reimer lived at Badenstrasse 42, which he bought in 1772; Charisius was at Badenstrasse 43 (SAHS 33-260, *Cataster f. St. Nikolai Quartier*, 280, 282; SAHS 33-1655, *Steuer f. Bevorrattung: Vier Steuerreg. 1808/St. Nikolai Quartier*).

12. Handling the note in the archives gave me the sort of melancholy frisson described by A. S. Byatt in her novel, *Possession*.

13. For European context, see Wiesner, *Women and Gender*, 34–35; Arlette Farge, "The Honor and Secrecy of Families," in *A History of Private Life*, vol. 3, *Passions of the Renaissance*, ed. Roger Chartier (Cambridge, 1989), 579–607; Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination in England, 1500–1800* (New Haven, 1995), chap. 6.

14. See Martin Dinges, "Die Ehre als Thema der Stadtgeschichte: Eine Semantik im Übergang vom Ancien Regime zur Moderne," *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 16 (1989): esp. discussion of Weber and Bourdieu on 418–20; Klaus Schreiner and Gerd Schwerhoff, "Verletzte Ehre: Überlegungen zu einem Forschungskonzept," in *Verletzte Ehre: Ehrkonflikte in Gesellschaften des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Schreiner and Schwerhoff (Cologne, 1995), esp. 9–10, 18–28; Martin Dinges, "Die Ehre als Thema der historischen Anthropologie," in *Verletzte Ehre*, ed. Schreiner and Schwerhoff, esp. 48, 55.

15. Jan Peters, "Der Platz in der Kirche: Über soziales Rangdenken im Spätfeudalismus," *Jahrbuch für Volkskunde und Kulturgeschichte* 28 (1985): 89, 77. Peters gives many examples from Swedish Pomerania. For examples involving Stralsund merchants, see also SAHS 38-766, Ratskirchenarchiv/Verkauf einer Kapelle in der Marienkirche an Fried. Stievelen, 1733–1738; SAHS 28-946, Verkauf einer Kapelle in der St. Jakobi Kirche, 1760.

16. This statement is only impressionistic, based on unsystematic observations of church burial records and of remaining grave sites in St. Nikolai and St. Marien today. (St. Jacobi's ruined interior is closed to visitors.)

17. See, for example, "Die Begräbnisse in Kirchen," *Greifswalder gemeinnütziges Wochenblatt*, 4 October 1794, 137–40.

18. Johann Carl Dähnert, *Sammlung gemeiner und besonderer pommerscher und rügischer Landes-Urkunden, Gesetze, Privilegien, Verträge, Constitutionen, und Ordnungen: Supplement*, comp. Gustav von Klinckowström (Stralsund, 1799), 176.

19. SAHS 5-6585, Kammer/Klage d. Kfms. Bevernis g. Kfm. Grimm w. Herausgabe eine ihre beleidigenden Schrift, 1799. Unfortunately, neither the pamphlet/broadside nor the court's verdict has been preserved.

20. The following examples are taken from *Stralsundische Zeitung*, 5 September 1801, #107; 4 April 1815, #40; 9 December 1830, #147.

21. See Lyndal Roper, "Stealing Manhood: Capitalism and Magic in Early Modern Germany," *Gender and History* 3 (1991): 4–22; Toby Ditz, "Shipwrecked, or Masculinity Imperiled: Mercantile Representations of Failure and the Gendered Self in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia," *Journal of American History* 81 (1994): 51–80.

22. As Anthony Fletcher remarks, "A woman's adultery dissolved the household order and thus the social order; cuckolding made nonsense of the gender order: the woman took the blame and was held responsible" (*Gender, Sex, and Subordination*, 101). Fletcher refers here to Tudor and early Stuart England, but his point also applies to eighteenth-century Germany.

23. Genealogical data from SAHS baptism, marriage, and death registries; Johan Albert Dinnies, *Stemmata Sundensis* (ms. compiled in the 1790s, held at SAHS); Stefan Kroll, *Stadtgesellschaft und Krieg. Sozialstruktur, Bevölkerung, und Wirtschaft in Stralsund und Stade 1700 bis 1715* (Göttingen, 1997), 133, 181, 209–10.

24. SAHS Hs III 234–35, Anschreibebücher D. L. Kühl, for example, in 234, p. 27, 110, for 1787–94.

25. SAHS 3-7344, Konsistorialgericht/Dispensation zur Heirat in verbotenen Verwandtschaftsgraden, 1752–71.

26. Lévi-Strauss was one of the most influential in this regard. For examples relating to early modern Europe, see Anne Deneys, "The Political Economy of the Body in the *Liaisons dangereuses* of Choderlos de Laclos," in *Eroticism and the Body Politic*, ed. Lynn Hunt (Baltimore, 1991), 41–62; Irene Fizer, "Women 'Off' the Market: Feminine Economies in Diderot's *La Religieuse* and the Convent Novel," in *Illicit Sex: Identity Politics in Early Modern Culture*, ed. Thomas DiPiero and Pat Gill (Athens, 1997), 89–108.