CHAPTER FOUR

FORTIFICATIONS OF THE CITY

If cities deserve praise by virtue of their outer fortification, then this city will be pre-eminent and distinguished not only among those in Westphalia but also among those in many regions. For it is heavily fortified with gates, ditches, ramparts, walls, towers, and other bulwarks made both of stone and earth and of wood. It would certainly have a circular shape if it could extend to the north-northwest. Its diameter is 1610 short paces (steps), that is, 4002 1/2 feet. From this it is easy, since the periphery or circumference of any circle is three times the diameter plus one seventh of it, to calculate that the circuit of the walls measures 5031 5/7 feet. It has ten gates named after the saints to whom most of the churches are dedicated. Hence, it can be inferred without obscurity that the churches are much older than the gates. Accordingly, I would imagine that since they gave their names to the gates, most churches were already built before the city was surrounded with walls and gates. We enter through these gates not in a straight line but in a diagonal path with much to-ing and fro-ing, and the example of many other cities shows that this was brought about through careful planning in order to prevent frequent blows made by artillery from opening up a straight path into the city for the enemy. Instead, the great momentum of the shots was to be slackened when they smashed into the obstruction furnished by rampart or wall.

In the direction of sunrise on the equinox, the direction from which the constellations first begin to shine, and the winds from the south-southeast and east stirred up torpor in the air with their gusts, there is a gate that it is called Maurice’s since it faces the prominent college.

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1 This entire chapter was the initial cause of the city council’s disquiet about K.’s work, and it continued to take a prominent place among the passages to which the council took exception. The council objected to K.’s detailed description of the city’s defenses that even included measurements, and given the importance of the walls to the city’s safety, it is easy to see how those who were anxious about such matters would have taken this account amiss (see General Introduction 3b).

2 The schoolmaster cannot resist adding in an edifying lesson in arithmetic!

3 Logically, this circumstance demonstrates only that the names of the gates were more recent than the dedications of the churches.
dedicated to St. Maurice that is located outside the city. From this gate there goes a road that is higher than the public one and is paved at the expense of the college. Protected on one side by garden walls and shaded on the other by leafy willows, it extends all the way to St. Maurice’s cemetery. With a wondrous sort of delight it receives travelers already worn out and directs them to the city after making them forget their weariness. This entrance to the city has two bulwarks raised up out of earth on the right side. While the lower bulwark protects the ditch and rampart extending to the Horst Gate, the neighboring one, because of its height, protects not only the gate itself and the other fortifications to the city’s left but also the fields all around. Within the stockade on the right side is the chapel dedicated to St. Antony, where a certain number of paupers are fed. Full provision is also made for their heavenly nourishment, and on every holy day the mass is celebrated for them by the priests. The parish of St. Maurice is responsible for the administration of the sacraments. For we read that by the authority and at the expense of Louis, the thirty-fifth bishop of Münster, the chapter of St. Maurice built and founded this chapel along with the cemetery and alms-house in their parish in the year 1368, on the understanding that the city council had the right to appoint the parish priest for the chapel and that the men of St. Maurice’s would authorize such appointments.4

In the direction of sunrise in winter, at the time when the southeast wind also blows, there is a very great bulwark that juts out in a circular shape. Starting with a stone foundation at its root, it rises up to a height of almost ten feet above the water, and on top of it is placed a tall mound of earth that has low bastions attached to it on both sides, rather like breasts. The construction of these bastions, which are situated back from the water, is such that to a great distance on both sides they can protect the ramparts and ditches against enemy assault with projectiles. Through the middle of this mound there is a path to the gate that is named Servatius’ after St. Servatius, whose church is near the wall. Outside this gate is a mill that grinds grain by being driven by the gusting of the wind and for this reason they call it a windmill.5

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4 In 1531–1532, there would be much wrangling about the prince’s desire to have the radical preacher Bernard Rothman removed from the position of preacher at St. Maurice’s.

5 The point of this circumlocution is that Classical Latin had no word for “windmill” (such mills were a medieval invention).