180. July 23, 1711. From Runckel at Schaffhausen with a list of those who have embarked to use in checking their presence on the boats, since he is informed that four others besides Heinrich Schilt ran away and that perhaps several more will follow that example at Mannheim. A list of directors, etc., is included. He reports that a difficulty with the Basel boatmen came up because the boatmen already engaged were Bernese. He fears similar difficulties will come up at Breisach and Strassburg. Again, he discusses passports and the transfer of money through commercial channels.

[page 1]

Schaffhausen[[1]](#footnote-1) July 23, 1711.

Very worthy, etc.

My especially highly honored Sirs!

My communications from Basel to you, sent the 15th and 18th of the current month, my highly honored Sirs doubtless will have safely received, besides the previous first[[2]](#footnote-2) letter of exchange for 11,400 rixdollars from Messrs. Malacrida and Company, and from those communications you have learned in detail what various happenings have occurred. First of all, after the dispatch of my last letter, I made an inspection from ship to ship of the Anabaptists departing the land and have found that beyond the previously reported Heinrich Schilt, in addition Ulrich Brechtbühl, Peter Blaser, Peter Lüthi, and Anna Eymann, who all had been imprisoned and are from the Emmental, have flown away from Basel as other thoughtless birds, keeping neither word nor faith. As far as I could learn from a cursory investigation, they have gone back to the Bern area, or at least to that neighborhood, disregarding the fact that [page 2] Mr. Bernhard Wagner,[[3]](#footnote-3) already so often mentioned, in order to please all the Emmentalers and avoid this worrisome mischief, had explicitly allowed them to go to Basel at considerable expense, and to whom they also had promised to keep faith.[[4]](#footnote-4)

This evil beginning makes me not a little afraid that among those who have been imprisoned, besides those who are permitted to stay at

Mannheim, several will sneak off along the way, and in particular Hans Bürki and Samuel Räber. I should so much the less fail to transmit to my highly honored Sirs a suitable list[[5]](#footnote-5) of all the Anabaptists departing at Basel, as is here transmitted, so that on arrival of the ships anyone who is missing might be known immediately as the passengers step out.

In my previous letter I had forgotten to report that the sailors at Basel had made a plot to have their ancient privilege acknowledged somehow and, accordingly, to allow no Bernese sailors to pass through and to undertake the journey themselves and to use us roughly. Because immediately on my arrival in Basel I got wind of the plot, besides needing to submit the credentials from their High and Mighty Lords [of the Netherlands], I reported to the government without delay in order to entreat for a remedy so that this incident might not mushroom into a widely extended affair. Then out of respect for their High and Mighty Lords, immediately two gentlemen of the Council were dispatched [page 3] to confer with me about this matter and thus to settle the dispute properly as far as possible.

After vehement and long disputation we finally reached a decision: Those from Basel should supply five expert sailors to go down to Mannheim in exchange for the payment of a somewhat higher wage than the Bernese had received and in turn an equal number of Bernese should go back. However difficult it was for us, Mr. Ritter and I had early needed to resolve to succeed—because we had ascertained that the sailors at Breisach and Strassburg had made a similar plot against the Bernese [boatmen], so that when trouble might be escaped at one place, yet without fail they would fleece [us] at another. This would happen although those from Basel have

the authority and privilege of free travel down the Rhine and could greatly facilitate the journey at Breisach and Strassburg. Generally, I fear that great difficulties await us arranged yet at Strassburg and that they will need to be removed by means of silver coin, which my highly honored Sirs will have discovered from Mr. Ritter and Daniel Rychen.

The ships departed from Basel just Saturday around noon. Because they had to touch shore already again at Hüningen[[6]](#footnote-6) so that the ships could be inspected and the people on board could be passed in review, I think it unlikely that the ships will have been able to advance far on such a day.

[page 4]

The next day I left again from Basel. For the sake of greater safety I did not take a direct route, but needed to travel through Swiss territory, and so I arrived here only the day before yesterday around noon. God be praised and thanked that I have arrived here safely and healthy. Accordingly, on account of the shortness of the time, it has been impossible for me at the present to send a detailed listing of the Anabaptist property received. This, if it please God, shall follow with the next post. I shall further then finish my bills and submit them as soon as possible in proper form and make a transfer of funds to my agent in The Hague concerning the balance of the account.

Upon my arrival here I found the welcome letter of my highly honored Sirs of the 7th of the present month, which had been sent on to me from Bern. If I had had this earlier, we would have seen that my highly honored Sirs could have been satisfied concerning the passengers; however, now it is too late. Meanwhile along with this, my highly honored Sirs will have received the list of them and[[7]](#footnote-7) can rest assured that all such make their journey on their own passports (with which they had to be provided previously before they were accepted [for the journey] and which were granted not in the least to the Anabaptists among them), and accordingly

they must meet all financial obligations on the way, except those who may enjoy some kind of [exemption] permits.

This is followed further by the second letter of exchange from [page 5]

Messrs. Malacrida and Company for 11,400 rixdollars, which my highly honored Sirs will validate as customary.

Also, I am sending with this a list of directors and assistant directors,[[8]](#footnote-8) who have undertaken the guidance of these unfortunate people. I recommend Mr. Ritter again very highly. Mr. Haller has to be paid one rixdollar per day according to my previously submitted plan. But Mr. Gruner will be dismissed with an honest honorarium because we never wanted to promise him a salary.

With this, besides a mutual commitment to God’s gracious protection and otherwise a commendation of myself and mine to your devoted prayer,

I continually remain,

My highly honored Sirs’

Most devoted servant,

Johann Ludwig Runckel.

Boats on the Rhine River. Anabaptist refugees traveled on such vessels.

1. 180 This document is translated into Dutch in Vorsterman’s Relaes (A 1392) on pp. 210-212. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See footnote on the second letter of exchange in the German original of this letter. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Mentioned in Documents 68, 82, and 170. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Government officials in Switzerland complained that the Anabaptists did not keep their promises. Swiss Anabaptists seem to have long held the position that promises made under duress were not binding. Das schweizerische Täufermennonitentum by Ernst H. Correll (Tübingen: Verlag von J. C. B. Mohr, 1925), pp. 57-58. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Document 181. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. French border village north of Basel. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. From here to the end of the sentence Vorsterman translates this obscure passage as follows: “en kunnen uwEE: verseekert sÿn, dat ze alle de reÿs op hunn eÿgen Pasporten, (daer mede zÿ sig hebben moeten versien, eer en alvorens men hen heeft aangenomen, en jn het geringste niet onder de Pasporten die aan de doperz verleend sÿn reÿsen), en darom alle de regten op den weg moeten betalen, sonder dat zÿ van de vrÿe brieven op eeniger wÿse genot hebben mogen.” [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. See Document 182. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)