

## Lauf an der Pegnitz (Franconian: Laff an der Bengadz)



The town of Lauf is situated at a spot on the river Pegnitz (the Regnitz in Erlangen, of course) where, thanks to a sizeable flow of water, it made good sense to construct a number of water mills, some of which were later to become hammer mills and important for the economy of the town.

In 1355 this settlement next to the Pegnitz was accorded, as part of the New Bohemian territory, the status of “town” by Charles IV, the emperor who proudly overlooks Nuremberg’s Market Square from the Frauenkirche. It was in Lauf that Charles had his Bohemian masons build a strategically located castle, the Wenzelschloss.



Wenzel was Charles’ son, who, legend tells us, unfortunately urinated in the font in the Church of Saint Sebald during his baptism. Whatever, Lauf and its new castle was an important stopover on the road to Prague, famously known as the “Golden Road”.



Above: A sign to be seen in Weiden...

Lauf is worth a visit at any time, and I suggest a tour with a city guide along and beneath the half-timbered buildings of the 13<sup>th</sup> century market square. By “beneath” I mean, of course, the labyrinth of cellars created centuries ago to store goods and produce from the town and its environs. And don’t leave until you have visited the parish church (the Johanneskirche) with its tower. From here you get a panoramic view over the Fränkische Schweiz and even Nuremberg. It’s within this tower that the town’s watchman lived whose job was to spot anything on fire within the city walls, an official post that continued from the Middle Ages until 1931!

**Frank Gillard**