

News from Münster from the 25th of October in the Year 1648: A Dispatched Postilion Bringing Joy and Peace (1648)

Abstract

This broadsheet shows a postilion announcing the Peace of Westphalia, which was signed in the Westphalian cities of Osnabrück and Münster and put an end to the Thirty Years War. Discarded weapons and a cemetery cross make reference to the war and its devastating aftermath. Suspended in the sky, allegorical figures (peace and Mercury) spread their message of peace and glory all over Europe: to Vienna, Paris, and Stockholm, the capitals of the main belligerents. The figures in the background appear to receive the news with skepticism.

The accompanying text begins with the postilion's appeal for peace, followed by another from Mercury, the god of messages and commerce, who speaks to artisans and merchants, inviting them to look optimistically toward the future. The text ends with a request to offer thanks to God. With its lavish praise of the Peace of Westphalia, the text introduces a somewhat ironic take on the exalted joy associated with the famous accord.

Source



News from Münster from the 25th of October in the Year 1648; a Dispatched Postilion Bringing Joy and Peace (1648)

I've ridden all the way from Münster at full gallop
and have most of the journey behind me.

I bring good news and announce a new time of peace,
peace is made, all suffering has ended.
Sound it out joyfully with bright field trumpets,
resounding kettledrums and shrill clarions.
Mercury flies in the air, and peace too, hooray,
All of Münster, Osnabrück, and the whole world rejoices.
The bells chime loudly, the organs hum pleasingly,
Lord God, we praise you, happy people sing.
Songs thunder and whirl in the air,
flags fly bewitchingly, and everything calls out:
Praise be to the highest, peace is sealed.
From now on, everyone has a better year to hope for.
The priest and the book, the councilman and the sword,
the farmer and the plough, the ox and the horse.

The churches will go forth in full bloom.
People will go to the house of the Lord in full splendor
and hear God's word: art will be highly esteemed,
the youth will study day and night.
They will spread the glory of the Lord in psalters and on pages
in East and West, South and North:
the Seine and Paris, the Danube and its Vienna,
the Belt and its Stockholm are peaceful, fresh and verdant.

Peace comes, thank God, with swift flight,
with him comes happiness and blessings all in one.
He brings messages of peace and golden peacetime,
the war is now over, all suffering ends.
Spike, bow, shield and sword and spear are shattered,
Justice and Peace kiss each other.
Where Mars, the god of pikemen, reigns supreme,
there is a hotbed of vice, and virtue is not seen.
So rejoice, rejoice, all you high potentates
and all of you who have to advise the big cities.

From now on land and sand and villages will increase,
and lord and servant shall enjoy pleasant respite.
Princes will not sweat nervously in chancelleries,
the Council will not sit up at night with grave concerns,
thinking about where to get advice,
to numb the tyranny of war.
One will always be mindful of how rightful things may endure,
how to thwart what is unjust by what is just.
One will not overlook what evil is done,
as usually happens in wartime, but without pleasure.
There will be authorities and subjects

in unity and peace: the good will be rewarded,
punish the evil: In short, there will be peace
at City Hall in the city where you live.
You of high rank thank God, peace is made,
you of low rank praise him, the grudge is settled.
It lives in peace and the joy of the councilors and the city.
Till there's something in the world and it ends.

I, too, the merchant God Mercury, come hither
and I swung through the air and tufts with the letter.
You merchants are well and in good cheer.
You craftsmen are too; all shall be well.
From now on one shall surely trade by water
and without fear attend trade fairs on land.
The goods are likely to be torn to pieces,
the shops and vaults will be full of buyers.
They'll measure out silk cloth day after day
and there won't even be time for lunch,
spices and seasonings will sell swiftly,
being sold at a hundredweight, day and night.
The cobbler won't be able to count his money for all his shoes,
the tailor will be hounded by people for new clothes.
The brewer won't go hungry, the baker will get rich.
The cherry picker will always have work and never celebrate.
The blacksmith, the anvil-beater, will get hot from the fire.
Which leaves me only the poor sword-polishers.

They will have nothing to do: Let swords be swords,
make a plow of it and a plowshare for it.

You farmers are harnessing the strong plough-horses,
cracking the whip sharply, driving the plowshare into the ground.
Sow millet, heather, corn, hemp, wheat, barley,
Cabbage, beets, onions, cabbage; fill cellar, basement, house.

You gardeners will then be able to go to markets
and earn many a bundle from your green verities.
And then you'll tuck into a cake with pleasure
and eat a piece of sausage and quench your thirst with wine:
Hooray, hooray, you're freed from a thousand hardships
and rest your farmer's bones until daylight.

You innkeepers rejoice too, peace is profitable for you.
There will be a parlor and a stable full of guests and horses.
First of all you who sleep well at The White and Red Rooster [inn],
at The Tree, Bear, Angel, Star, Wolf, Lamb, Spires, Swan [inns],

at the Bitterhold, at The Cross, Goose, Cow's Foot, Little Wheel, Table,
The Wild Man, Crown, Moon, Golden Ox, Fish [inns],
also at the Ochsenfelder: you get good things,
yet you won't make the prices inviting.
Yet I do not fully believe it: there is no need.
Each of you just give me a good messenger's supper.

But all this is done with prayer and thanksgiving,
that no man may cross the bounds of respectability.
It is all thanks to God, give thanks to him early and late,
what creeps, flees, lives and floats, and everything that
breathes.

Printed in the 1648th year after the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Translation: GHI staff

Source: Neuer Auß Münster vom 25. deß Weinmonats im Jahr 1648 abgefertigter Freud- vnd Friedenbringender Postreuter. [S.l.], 1648. Broadsheet. Available online through the city of Münster at: <https://www.muenster.de/presse-meldungen/web/frontend/output/index.php?offset=/design/standard/page/1428/show/987527>

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