

Magistrate of the City of Trier to the Elector: Hospitals and Poor Relief in Trier (June 24, 1718)

Abstract

This letter from the Trier city magistrate to the Elector (the Archbishop of Electoral Trier) establishes provisioning for the poor and needy, as well as for pilgrims who also spent the night in the city's hospitals. Here, it was the responsibility of the mayor to regulate the number of people receiving support, so as not to overtax the city's capacity.

Source

The extant older foundations, donations, bequests, and endowments, and their jubilees focus in intent and content on their having been established and set up for the greater glory of God, the Holy Virgin Mary, and his Holy Apostle Jacob [James]. In this way, the poor and sick, and pilgrims (without precise numbers being stated, however) are better fed, supplied with drink, and provisioned in the above-mentioned hospitals, and furthermore masses may be held reliably on certain days for the benefactors and their relatives. In consequence, and to accomplish this end as satisfactorily as possible, nineteen people, but sometimes more, most of them citizens, men and women, in part sick, in part old without means, shall at times be permanently kept and fed in the intended hospitals. And every pilgrim going to Rome shall be received and fed in the above-mentioned hospitals, just like the citizens living there, for one day and night, on the return trip, for two nights, and a pilgrim traveling to Saint Jacob's shrine, for two nights, and on the return trip for three nights, according to the old custom. In addition to this, the poor, frail people who often pass through here shall at times, because of illness, be provided for several days with rest and a bed; however, neither pilgrims nor other poor people may be taken in by the temporary hospital caretaker without a special written certificate brought from the governing mayor. If the number of pilgrims passing through becomes too great or frequent, as often occurs, a governing mayor usually will respond by granting about one day, as the matter requires. The poor and the infirm living there and also pilgrims and others shall be served a decent soup and vegetables daily at midday, soup or vegetables and a half-measure of good beer in the evening, and in addition, three times a week, namely on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, as well as otherwise on high holidays, a fair portion of meat, that is, mostly fresh meat, sometimes bacon, now and then dried beef, and a half-measure of wine; and if foreigners arrive on three such stated days, they shall receive the same equal portions. Bread shall be distributed to the people living in the hospitals all day long on certain days, but to the pilgrims, portions of white bread at every meal. Further, one or another of the infirm, needy citizens of the city shall receive about one, two, three, or four Vierzel [virdecella, about 2 sacks] of fruit a year for their own use, with prior knowledge of the magistrate.

Source: LHA Koblenz, 1C, No. 9833, no page numbers.

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