

Guild Papers for the Apprentice Johann Daniel Weber (1773)

Abstract

A “Kundschaft” was issued by craftsmen’s guilds and served as an early form of identity papers. Apprentices were issued these credentials when they embarked on the customary period of apprentice travel as a journeyman in order to provide proof of work experience and skills acquired during this period. Since the German-speaking territories varied significantly in terms of their political organization, the authorities had no coherent means of controlling apprentice travel. Therefore, these documents were also meant to regulate their travel by establishing a uniform legal means. All the guilds in the Holy Roman Empire were obliged to issue these identification documents which listed the apprentice’s name, place of birth, age and work experience and also testified to his law-abiding behavior.

Source



Source: Augsburg, 12. September 1773, type print, handwritten, copperplate engraving, Berlin, Deutsches Historisches Museum, Do 2001/44, Kat. 7.3. See also Rosemarie Beier-de Haan, ed., *Zuwanderungsland Deutschland - Migrationen 1500 - 2005* [exhibition from 22. October 2005 to 12. February 2006, Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin], Wolftratshausen 2005, p. 176.

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