

A Rural Commune Organizes its own Affairs—Ingenried (Bavaria) (1549)

Abstract

Most villages in the Empire enjoyed some measure of self-governance. In this document from May 31, 1549, the village mayor, court, and commune of the village of Ingenried, which lay under the authority of the abbot of Irsee (Bavaria), decide to appoint, pay, and stipulate the duties of two village employees: a priest for the parish church and an attendant for the village bathhouse.

Source

Let everyone take cognizance from this public announcement that the mayor, court, and whole commune of Ingenried have decided on and established the following ordinance and rule in their village.

Namely, first of all, that the village employees, the sexton and the bath attendant, shall be annually appointed by the vicar and the whole commune of Ingenried.

Namely, that the bath attendant shall proceed as follows. On Saturdays he shall have the bath ready by noon and shall open it for anyone who wants to bathe. Once a month he shall open it for washing heads and shall wash heads until 2 o'clock in the afternoon, and afterwards he shall cut hair. If anyone needs his hair cut earlier, he shall wash the hair and cut it on Saturdays. And for a fee he may open the bathhouse at other times. He shall also have buckets and boxes ready for the men and the youths. If sick persons want to bathe, he shall inform the mayor and the IV [the village court] whether it would not do more harm to keep them out. He shall provide the sick people with a special knife for shaving. His pay shall be from each farmer a measure [Metzen] each of rye and oats, and each farmer shall fetch wood for him from the forest four times. Item, a small farmer [Soeldner] shall also give him a measure each of rye and oats, and he shall split wood for the bathhouse for one day. The commune shall give him the wood. And on high holy days everyone shall give him a kreuzer of "wedding money" [Hochzeitsgeld].^[1] Item, servants whom he barbers shall give him 3 shillings, and otherwise male and female servants shall pay him a Bohemian coin or a measure of oats. He shall also keep hot water in the kettle, which the commune bought for him, and he shall keep the kettle clean and in good order. For this purpose, the commune gives him a piece of meadow in the Upper or Lower Stellin, which will produce about one small measure [Fuder] of hay.

Item, a sexton shall be obedient to the vicar of Ingenried, and he shall ring the bells and take care of everything necessary for the mass and for the church. He shall not leave the village without the vicar's knowledge and permission. He shall take care of the church and see that the bells ring out the times of the day, around four o'clock in the winter and in summer between two and three, also at midday and before storms. He shall watch the clock and keep the hours as best he can. And whatever is needed for the saints [i.e., their altars], such as hosts, wine, bells for ringing during mass, and such things that pertain to the mass, he shall fetch and have ready, though not at his own cost. His pay shall be as follows. Each farmer shall give a measure each of rye and oats, and also six sheaves of grain—half summer and half winter crops—for ringing the bells. Each small farmer shall give a half-measure each of rye and oats. Whoever has land outside his farmstead, he shall give sheaves—half summer and half winter crops—for ringing the bells.

Given on the Friday after Ascension Day, 1549.

NOTES

[1] The *kreuzer* was both a silver coin and a unit of currency valued at one-sixtieth of a florin. It was common in the southern German lands, whereas the northern lands used *groschen*—trans.

Source of original German text: Staatsarchiv Augsburg, Reichsstift Irsee MüB 46.

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