

## A Female Beggar (18th century)

### Abstract

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This etching by Johann Wilhelm Meil (1733-1805) represents a female beggar in the late eighteenth century. She uses a cane and wears foot-wrappings since she does not own shoes. Collecting twigs and kindling to sell or to burn for heat, the woman participated in an informal economy based on gleaning and collecting scraps or castoffs. The number of people forced to resort to these methods of subsistence living would wax and wane over the course of this period.

### Source

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Source: Johann Wilhelm Meil, Eine Bettlerin auf einen Stock gestützt vor einem verdorrten Baum mit einem Krug unter dem Arm, etching, undated. Staatliche Museen Berlin Kupferstichkabinett. Photo: Volker-H. Schneider.

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