

Allegorical Depiction of King Frederick William I as the Patron of the Salzburg Protestants in the Year 1732 (1734)

Abstract

In 1731, the Archbishop of Salzburg, Leopold Anton Eleutherius Reichsfreiherr von Firmian (r. 1727-1744), expelled some 20,000 Lutheran Protestants from his territory. Forced to seek refuge in other German principalities, many of them accepted an invitation by Frederick William I of Prussia (r. 1713-1740), a Protestant Calvinist, to settle in East Prussia, which had been depopulated by the plague and the Northern War in the early 1700s. Frederick William's policy was the second successful settlement scheme in Prussia – his grandfather Frederick William ("the Great Elector") (r. 1640-1688) had offered refuge to 20,000 French Calvinists (Huguenots) in the late seventeenth century. By welcoming the Salzburg Protestants, farmers from the Alpine hinterland, Frederick William I helped advance agricultural production in the east. In this allegorical depiction, the king appears as a benevolent patron, allotting the refugees land for settlement. The larger-than-life figure has a simple message: "I will show you a land wherein you shall live." Copperplate engraving by unknown artist, 1734.

Source



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