

Giving to the Sick and the Needy (1750)

Abstract

“Housefather” literature [*Hausväterliteratur*] reached its peak in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Works in this genre provided instruction on the proper management of all aspects of a noble household and covered a broad range of topics from agriculture, cooking, and animal husbandry to education, etiquette, and the treatment of illnesses. One of the most prolific authors of the genre was Franz Philipp Florinus (1649-99), a Protestant theologian who compiled *Oeconomus prudens et legalis. Oder Allgemeine kluge und rechtsverständige Hausvatter* [*Oeconomus prudens et legalis. Or the Generally Prudent and Judicious Housefather*], a richly illustrated work first published in Nuremberg in 1702. The engraving below appeared in the 1750 edition. It shows a propertied burgher offering a gift (money or perhaps a plot of land) to a group of invalids and paupers. As the scene suggests, in addition to offering practical tips on household economy, Florinus’ text also provided examples of proper civic behavior, which entailed treating others with fairness, humanity, and respect. As the population increased after the Thirty Years War, so did the number of sick and needy, who were often forced to rely on the charity of bourgeois individuals motivated by religious-ethical principles.

Source



Source: Copperplate engraving by an unknown artist from *Oeconomus prudens et legalis. Oder Allgemeine kluge und rechtsverständige Hausvatter*, 1750.

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