

Reflections of lifestyle and professional career of Tallinn's musicians in their probate inventories in the 18th century

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Abstract

The article examines lifestyle and professional profile of town musicians, church organists and cantors as municipal and church employees from sociocultural perspective. The research is based on the probate inventories of seven musicians preserved in the Tallinn City Archives; namely the cantors Johann Gonsior (1711), Christoph Erdmann Bieck (1750), Heinrich Benjamin Hessler (1776), the town musician Ernst Jacob Tewes (1776), and the organists Heinrich Ernst Giese (1777), Johann Carl Justus Welsch (1787) and Alexander Forbus (1792). As all the belongings of the musicians, both immovables and movables have been recorded in the lists of inventories, they reflect musicians' probable economic situation and everyday life, i.e. their living conditions and consumption habits. Moreover, the lists include several musical instruments, books, sheet music, items of art etc., which refer to their vocational activities and cultural interests. In this paper, a detailed overview of the three types of professional musicians, their duties and social standing is followed by a close analysis of the book, sheet music and musical instrument collections recorded in their inventory lists.