

English Abstracts of Articles in the Present Volume of "Fortid og Nutid"

Translated by Jørgen Peder Clausager

Peter Wessel Hansen:

Culpable Generosity. Views on Alms-Giving, Begging and Poor Laws in 18th Century Denmark

In the 17th and 18th Centuries, begging was nothing short of a veritable nuisance. For that reason the occupation was outlawed by the absolute monarchy of Denmark in 1708; at the same time it was made illegal for people to give alms to beggars. The present article describes the opposition met by the authorities in their endeavours to eradicate all begging and alms-giving to beggars. Further, the article attempts to pinpoint the background for the animosity of the people at large to the law as well as their persistent defence of the beggars in the so-called beggar riots, and it is argued that the giving of alms may be seen in the context of the insurance-like social communities which were a feature of the early modern society.

Anne Dorthé Holm:

The Most Beautiful Sight in Skagen Is a Wreck! Shipwrecks in Skagen (the Skaw) 1820-1870

Over the centuries, the coasts of Skagen (the Skaw, the northernmost tip of Jutland) have been the scene of many shipwrecks. Concurrently with the increased shipping of the 19th Century the number of shipwrecks at Skagen rose. In the second half of the 19th Century, there was an average of one shipwreck a month. Over the centuries, tales of the greedy behaviour of the rough people of Vendsyssel towards the poor seafarers have established the notion that the local population made a handsome profit on the shipwrecks. In the present article, the author makes an estimate of the number of shipwrecks at Skagen over a fifty-year period in the 19th Century. The number of shipwrecks is then compared to the earning power of the town judge, the wreck-master and the common salvors respectively. The article is the first quantitative study of the economic importance of salvage operations to the fishing community of Skagen in the 19th Century, and it documents that salvage work was indeed an important extra source of income to the town's fishermen in that period.