



On Assistance to the Poor (RSART: Renaissance Society of America Reprint Text Series)

Juan Luis Vives

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'I wish we were able to eliminate poverty completely in this city' Those words written by Juan Luis Vives, a Spanish humanist living in Bruges in 1526, could have been written in the late twentieth century. The urban problems of sixteenth-century Bruges are very familiar to the modern reader: poverty, overcrowding, crime, the problems of the mentally ill, and the issue of the responsibility of government for the care of the poor. Published in 1526, *On Assistance to the Poor* was Vives' effort to bring these questions to the attention of the City Council of Bruges, and have them addressed by local government. His distinctive development of a single integrated system out of the several practices already in use in Northern Europe presaged the English Poor Laws of 1601 and later laws in the New World.

The present edition, originally published in 1971 with an introduction, translation, and commentary by Sister Alice Tobriner, is a valuable primary source in Renaissance social history.

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