

A Peasant Song: *Hei, Michel* (c. 1525)

Abstract

This song from the Peasant's War (1524-25) by an anonymous author is written from the perspective of the rebellious peasants. The lyrics reference the *Bundschuh*, a tied shoe typically worn by peasants that became a symbol for the peasant uprisings and was featured on the peasants' banners. The song also references Florian Geyer von Giebelstadt, a Franconian knight of the lower nobility who sympathized with the peasant rebellions and became one of their strategic leaders. He organized a cavalry division called the Black Company [*Schwarzer Haufen*], alluded to by the "black horse" in the song. The lyrics about Weinsberg castle and the count Palatinate recall the massacre of Weinsberg on April 17, 1525, during which the castle was stormed and burned by rebellious peasants who killed numerous members of the local nobility, their guards, and lansquenets, including Count Ludwig von Helfenstein.

Source

Source: Anonymous, "Hei Michel," c. 1525. *Early German Ballads*, sung by Wolfgang Roth with lute accompaniment, vol. 1. Folkways Records (FH 3071), 1960.

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