

Mechanical Beheading Device built after a Design by Guillotin (1789)

Abstract

In designing the guillotine, French physician Joseph-Ignace Guillotin had actually hoped to make executions more “humane.” His invention would go on to become the symbol of the *terreur* and the principal means of executing enemies (or supposed enemies) of the Revolution. In 1798, it was briefly introduced in a number of German territories as well. This illustration, published in Germany in 1789, is based on a misunderstanding of Guillotin’s design. Here, the condemned man, who stands upright, is elevated onto a platform, where an executioner is ready to behead him with a sword mounted on a pivot.

Source



Source: Etching by Philipp Joseph Fill, 1789.

bpk-Bildagentur, image number 30020049. For rights inquiries, please contact Art Resource at requests@artres.com (North America) or bpk-Bildagentur at kontakt@bpk-bildagentur.de (for all other countries).

© bpk / Jörg P. Anders

Recommended Citation: Mechanical Beheading Device built after a Design by Guillotin (1789), published in: German History in Documents and Images, <<https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/the-holy-roman-empire-1648-1815/ghdi:image-2937>> [July 16,

2024].