

***The Adventurous Simplicissimus*, Frontispiece of the First Edition (1669)**

Abstract

The modern image of the Thirty Years War (1618-48) as three decades of unremitting plunder and murder by marauding troops is largely attributable to a single novel, *The Adventurous Simplicissimus* (1669) by Hans Jakob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen (1622-76). Easily the most widely read German novel of the seventeenth century, it was the only German work between Luther and Lessing to enter the canon of international literature. It begins with the rural childhood of a character named Simplicissimus (literally: simpleton) and follows his development into a professional vagrant during the war. The earlier part of the book contains much realism, the latter part much allegory and fantasy. The frontispiece of the first edition of *The Adventurous Simplicissimus*, reproduced below, features a mythical creature (part human, demon, bird, and reptile). The famous caption underneath it reads, "I was born in fire like the phoenix. I flew through the air, but did not get lost. I travelled over water; I journeyed over the land. In the course of such wanderings, I became acquainted with things that often saddened and seldom pleased me. What then? I have put it all in this book, so that readers, just like me, may abandon folly and live in peace." Frontispiece of the first edition of *Simplicissimus*, unknown artist, 1669.

Source



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