

The Robber Schinderhannes (Johann Bückler) during his Trial in Mainz (1803)

Abstract

Early modern state-building slowly strengthened police powers, but brigandage was still hard to suppress. The drawing below shows one famous outlaw, Johann Bückler (c. 1778-1803), known as “Schinderhannes” or “Hans the Skinner.” The leader of a sizable gang, this highwayman committed various armed robberies and murders in the Hunsrück region between the Mosel and Nahe Rivers. Idealized by some as a romantic hero, he became a popular figure – in part, perhaps, because his victims were wealthy (often Jewish) merchants. He was declared a public enemy by the French, who occupied the region at the time. After several arrests and escapes, authorities ultimately captured Bückler, put him on trial, and executed him, along with nineteen accomplices, in Mainz on November 21, 1803.

Source



Source: Drawing by an unknown artist, 1803.

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