

WOODEN PYRAMID

Memorial in honour of murdered Count Hallwyl (2001/2011)

Location: Across from Marienheim (Hauersteigstraße 51, 3003 Gablitz)

Across from Marienheim at Hauersteig there is a wooden pyramid in remembrance of Count Hallwyl who was murdered in approximately this location in 1696. Concerning the details of this event, the following is known: glad that the fighting was finally over, the young aristocratic elite took a liking to gambling games in the aftermath of the second Siege of Vienna by the Ottoman Empire. Ferdinand Leopold Count of Hallwyl, one such young aristocratic nobleman, appeared to have the Midas touch when it came to one gambling game in particular, namely Basset - a popular card game for noblemen at the time. One evening he tried his hand against Portuguese envoy Carlos José Procop de Ligne, Marques d'Arronches, and won 50.000 guilder off of him - a sum which was impossible to be settled immediately by the diplomat.

Only conjectures can be made about the further events of the evening, however, it appears certain that the two gentlemen went for a ride in the Vienna Woods following their card game - from which only the Portuguese envoy returned. Young Count Hallwyl was found murdered near Gablitz a short while later - according to assertions by the Marques d'Arronches, the Count had requested to be driven to a secret meeting with a gentleman in Gablitz, with whom Hallwyl supposedly met up in the woods.

The violent death of the Count created a ripple effect up to the highest ranks of Austrian society, the imperial family: seeing as the "gentleman" described by the envoy could not easily be found, the Marques was considered to be the primary suspect. Being the son of the viceroy of Sicily, the Portuguese envoy could, however, not be easily put on trial. When it became clear that the situation was worsening for the Marques d'Arronches due to the testimony of an innkeeper from Gablitz and the ensuing press coverage, it was suggested to him that he should clandestinely try to depart. Disguised as a monk, the envoy escaped, was put on trial in his home country of Portugal and was acquitted of the crime.

Two years after the murder the confession of a Polish soldier by the name of Johann Mustriki was published in Italy:

"Mustriki confessed to having murdered Count Hallwyl. The murder had been committed at the behest of a Polish man living in Vienna. The motive for the crime had been the loss of a huge sum of money which said Polish man living in Vienna had lost to Count Hallwyl." - Manfred Zollinger in "Der Mordfall von 1696" (2002)

Since the confession was published after the death of the soldier, the matter could not be brought to court anymore and a conviction in the murder case of Count Hallwyl was never achieved. However, the wooden pyramid serves as a reminder of this murder even today and can be visited across from Marienheim (Hauersteigstraße 51, 3003 Gablitz).

- *Grimmlinger, Renate u. Haunschmidt, Angelika (2020): Gablitz - eine Geschichte. Baumgarten: Fa. Mails & More.*
- *Zollinger, Manfred (2002): "Der Mordfall von 1696." in: Sammelband Justiz und Gerechtigkeit. Historische Beiträge 16.-19. Jhd. Studienverlag des Instituts für Geschichte der Stadt Wien.*

Bilderbezeichnung + Unterschrift (Vorschlag!):

"Holzpyramide": The wooden pyramid commemorating the murder of Count Hallwyl

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