

Wanted Letter for a Murderer (1725)

Abstract

The political structure of the Holy Roman Empire with its numerous territories made it easier for wanted criminals to evade jurisdiction by fleeing to another territorial state. In response, authorities sent wanted letters, i.e., open letters addressed to all local courts and authorities as well as to those in neighboring territories, urging them to arrest fugitives accused of a crime and hand them over to the issuing court or authority. The wanted letter shown here, dating from 1725, comes from the Margraviate of Brandenburg-Ansbach in Franconia, which was ruled by a collateral line of the Hohenzollern dynasty.

Source

Simon Jung, a native of Mariäkappel in the administrative district of Crailsheim, a member of the Brandenburg-Ansbach cavalry guards, 24 years of age, of tall stature, [oblong] face, beard, long dark hair, eyes and eyebrows, having slain the local day laborer Thomas Küttenberger yesterday, Friday the 19th of this month of January, at 12 midnight, following an argument that arose between them at the Stag's Inn in the castle quarter, by shooting him dead on the spot with a pistol, and then, leaving his belongings behind, having fled on foot dressed only in a linen smock and collar with red woolen trim as well as a simple hat and goatskin trousers, the present handbill for the perpetrator's pursuit and recapture has graciously been issued;

Each and every authority outside this land, as is fitting, is hereby required, but the Brandenburg towns and districts are appropriately ordered, to arrest the abovementioned perpetrator, wherever he may be, forthwith and, should he be captured outside the country, to keep him in secure custody, with the promise that their expenses will be reimbursed, and to undertake any necessities and preparations, and further to notify the princely aulic council at once upon his entry into the jurisdiction of Brandenburg. Willing compliance by foreign authorities will be reciprocated in kind, the local districts, however, will do what they have been ordered to do. Dated

Onolzbach (= Ansbach), the 20th of Jan. 1725.

Princely Brandenburg Court Chancery.

Source of the original German text: Steckbrief auf Johann Simon Jung, Ansbach, 1725. Available online at:

<https://gdz.sub.uni-goettingen.de/id/PPN667471707?tify=%7B%22view%22%3A%22info%22%7D>

Translation: Pamela Selwyn

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