

Bettina Jost: Babenhausen castle – a well-proportioned moated castle from the 1180s and its relationship to other buildings of the Hohenstaufen period

In 1180/1190 the Münzenberg family, senior officials of the Empire, erected an unusual, regularly shaped moated castle on the road from Darmstadt to Aschaffenburg. Its striking characteristic features are the almost square ground plan, the use of brick in an area rich in stone, the stair tower projecting from the west wing with a spiral staircase, the undivided open ground floor hall and the elaborate ornamentation on the capitals. As part of the restoration programme which has been under way since 1995, the ceiling of the hall has been dated dendrochronologically to 1188/89; i.e. the castle was built some ten or twenty years earlier than the date usually supposed. The capitals are comparable with those in religious buildings in Aschaffenburg, Gelnhausen, Mainz, Bamberg and Frankfurt, while the stair tower is also of a type found only in churches. The regular ground plan as a feature of buildings of the Hohenstaufen period illustrates the special status of the castle, which the open ground floor hall serves to reinforce. There are echoes of contemporary residential quarters, town halls and the gate hall in Lorch. The use of brick is also redolent of the romanesque house in Seligenstadt, the imperial residence in Kaiserwerth, the Zähringen castle of Burgdorf in the canton of Berne and contemporary religious buildings. The overall impression, then, is of an unusual castle which will be a point of reference for future research into castles of regular shape in Europe and which displays close similarities with religious buildings.

Walther-Gerd Fleck: Aschhausen in Schoental on the Jagst, Hohenlohe district

The castle of the knights of Aschhausen was burnt down in 1523 by a punitive force of the Swabian League because of Hans Joerg von Aschhausen's involvement in the Absperg feud. Some time later it was rebuilt. In 1657 the Aschhausen family died out and the fief reverted to the Archbishopric of Mainz. The neighbouring Cistercian monastery of Schoental on the Jagst bought the castle and the estate in 1671. In the first half of the eighteenth century the mediaeval monastery building was gradually replaced with a new baroque building. Abbot Angelus Muench had the present palace built between 1737 and 1740 as a country seat and Summer residence. Some of the existing parts of the building on the ground floor were used for this purpose. The three-storey building faces the village in the valley. In other respects a simple stucco building, it is impressive because of the two massive round towers with their irregular tops. The ground floor contains domestic offices, the first floor living rooms and bedrooms for guests and the abbot's entourage and the second floor – the bel étage – contains the hall, the abbot's quarters and the chapel. These rooms have richly stuccoed rococo ceilings. When the monasteries were suppressed in

1803 Aschhausen was annexed by Wuerttemberg which in the same year was raised from a duchy to an electorate. When he succeeded to the throne in 1797, the elector, and subsequent king, Friedrich had appointed his old friend and adjutant Karl Johann von Zeppelin as his chief minister. However, Zeppelin died in 1801 at the early age of 34 and in 1803 the elector granted his heirs the palace and estate of Aschhausen in his memory. The fifth and sixth generations of the family of the counts of Zeppelin-Aschhausen still live there.

Ernst-Rainer Hoenes: The preservation of monuments as an international problem – The Hague convention a century on

After 100 years of the Hague convention and 50 years of the Geneva convention, the protection of cultural objects in armed conflicts is guaranteed under international customary law. Examples of this are the Hague Land Warfare Conventions of 1899 and 1907 and the subsequent Hague convention of 14 May 1954, together with the Geneva additional protocol of 1977 to the Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 relating to the protection of victims of armed conflicts which in turn refer to the Hague convention of 1954 and other relevant international agreements. In a sense, the second protocol of 26 March 1999 to the Hague convention of 1954 brings these efforts under international law to a conclusion after 100 years. International law now recognises the protection of cultural objects of significant importance for the cultural heritage of all peoples, such as buildings, works of art or historical monuments of a religious or secular nature, archaeological sites, groups of buildings and buildings used for the preservation of the cultural objects, e. g. museums, libraries and archives. There is a growing desire to avoid war but, despite the Hague and Geneva conventions, there is little possibility of war itself becoming assigned to a museum in the future.

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