

English summaries

Matthias Klefenz: The Salic castle of ‚Hundheim‘ – a relic of settlement in the high middle ages in the Odenwald and on the southern Neckar

High above the Neckar between Heidelberg and Eberbach and above Neckarhausen lies the ruin of ‚Hundheim‘ castle, with scant masonry remaining. The original name of the castle is not known, but its present name dates from the 19th century. It is about 170 m above the Neckar at the highest point of a steeply rising spur-like outlier of the Odenwald which is domed in shape and known as the ‚Schlossbuckel‘ (castle hillock).

The layout and extent of the castle can be deduced from the relief of the terrain. A ditch and embankment originally surrounding the site circular, and an additional ditch on the north eastern side protected the castle. The outer ditch has largely fallen victim to a quarry of more recent date.

An archaeological survey was carried out in 2004, providing the first tangible information on the architecture of the site and the period in which it was inhabited.

The castle was built in the second third of the 11th century, initially as a compact structure with an octagonal living tower and ring wall, to which residential apartments were added, probably in about 1100.

The site covered an area of at least 33 m x 36 m and was surrounded by a polygonal ring wall reaching a thickness of ca. 1.70 m in places. The wall had foundations of coarsely dressed, largely vertical stone. The dominant feature of the castle was the octagonal tower with an external diameter of max. 12 m and an internal diameter of max. 8.50 m. Its double-shell masonry which is 1.40 m thick is unusually carefully constructed for a castle and the standard of workmanship is found almost exclusively on religious buildings of the 11th and 12th centuries (e.g. the cathedral of Speyer and Lim-

burg (Haardt)). Comparable towers dating from the same period are very rare and usually found only in the castles of the higher nobility.

The castle also had a spacious building divided into two areas by a partition wall. Unfortunately, most of the building was used as a quarry. It was at least 7 x 10 m. The outer façade, which no longer exists, faced the Neckar valley. The masonry, which again shows considerable attention to detail, and very finely worked door frame on the inner façade emphasise the representative importance of the building. In view of its size and design this building can be interpreted as living quarters or as a great hall.

The castle is a typically compact fortified castle from the 11th and 12th centuries, although its outstanding architectural features set it apart from castles of comparable design.

The pattern of land ownership of the high mediaeval period in the vicinity of the ‚castle hillock‘ indicates that the castle belonged to the imperial monastery of Lorsch or its bailiffs. The reasons for its abandonment probably lie in the warfare in the 1130s between Berthold the Younger, bailiff of Lorsch, and Bishop Siegfried of Speyer. It is highly likely that it was one of the fortifications which, according to the Lorsch chronicler, were confiscated from Berthold the Younger following the feud of 1130 and ultimately demolished.

Andreas Hummel: „Castrum Meldingun“ – a long-forgotten castle near Weimar

The article is a summary of a master's dissertation submitted in summer 2009 to Jena University presenting the results of excavations on Kapellenberg (2000–2004) in Mellingen near Weimar. The research was confined to the tower area. The findings show that building started on the tower – which has a hexagonal interior and a circular exterior (both diameters can be reconstructed with reasonable accuracy) – in about 1100 or the early part of the 12th century. Major fire damage within the tower and arrowheads which are rarely encoun-

tered in Thuringia could be connected with the destruction of the castle in 1175 for which there is historical evidence. The finds, the extent and quality of which are rarely encountered at castles, all date from the late 11th to the early 13th centuries. The historical analysis clearly showed the important role played by the lords of Mellingen in the area around Erfurt and Weimar, even though they are rarely mentioned in connection with the castle. It is not clear exactly what purpose the castle served from the 13th to the 15th centuries, which is why a survey of the rest of the castle area and an analysis of late mediaeval sources would be desirable.

Christof Krauskopf: ‚Mein Kurzweil, die ist mangelrai‘ (‚How I amuse myself‘) – Oswald von Wolkenstein's poems as a source for everyday life in the late Middle Ages

Many of the poems of the Tyrolean nobleman Oswald von Wolkenstein (ca.1377–1445) are complex structures of various literary types set against an autobiographical background. In castelology the poem ‚Durch Barbarei, Arabia‘ (‚Travelling through Morocco, Arabia...‘) (the ‚Hauenstein song‘, Kl. 44) is often cited because of its alleged description of aspects of everyday life in castles. The problem is, however, that using lines taken out of context means that Oswald's intention is lost. The poem contains winter scenes, a complaint about poverty and a politically motivated plea, combined with elements of travel description and marital comedy. Oswald's intention was not to describe his life in the castle. The noise caused by animals and children symbolises, on the one hand, his conflict with Friedrich IV - represented by the Habsburg emblem of the peacock's feather - and, on the other hand, the conflict involving Hauenstein castle: the donkey symbolises greed and acquisitiveness. The children whom Oswald introduces into many poems as an unpleasant background of noise illustrate the poet's sensitivity. However, an examination of other poems, for example ‚Zergangen ist meins herzens we‘ (‚My sorrow is

over') (Kl. 116), makes it clear that Oswald's attitude towards Haunstein was not essentially negative; both positive and negative topographical descriptions depended on his personal situation, and also on the season. The description, then, clearly reflects Oswald's mood and also specific literary themes.

There was, of course, a background of noise at castles. We have the evidence of archaeological research and our knowledge of livestock management etc. derived from the written sources. Given the complex literary structure and the manifold intentions of the poet, it is not possible to deduce from Oswald's poems how late mediaeval man lived in respect of aspects such as comfort, warmth and cold and noise etc. Some impression of what life was like can be obtained by comparing contemporary forms of accommodation: for example, a simple peasant's dwelling compared with a nobleman's seat and life in a monastery. But this, too, is only an approximation. One would search in vain for an unimpeachable, unambiguous source.

Werner Meyer: Drapham Dzong. Excavations at a castle in Bhutan in 2008–2010

Bhutan in the Himalayas is virgin territory for archaeologists. The first ever excavation took place from 2008 to 2010 at Drapham Dzong, an extensive ruined fortification. It lies at ca height of 3 000 m in the district of Bumthang. The castle is in four parts: a donjon at the highest point of the mountain, two outlying defensive works on lower-lying terraces and a fortified settlement in the valley. The excavations concentrated on the donjon. Before work started it was covered in dense jungle and building debris under which only a few traces of the wall were visible.

The work resulted in exposing a section of wall of ca. 95 by 35 m. This was a two-phase operation. The surviving buildings are grouped around an inner courtyard. They are a main tower on the north side (Utse), a smaller tower on the southern side (Ta Dzong) with two long wings consisting of several sections on the long sides of the cour-

tyard. The surrounding wall is protected by three projecting rectangular towers. Access is through two representative gates on the southern side.

The finds consist of animal bones, local pottery, Chinese porcelain and a limited number of metal objects (including arrowheads and lead musket balls). The castle can be provisionally dated to the 16th and 17th centuries. It came to a violent end some time before 1700 when the main tower was destroyed by fire.

Ingo Nuss: Dry Rot – A Disaster?

Dry rot is one of the most feared and most frequently described fungi. It has an impressive ability to adapt to varying conditions in flats and houses. There are, however, a number of incorrect assumptions that only someone familiar with the biology of dry rot can counter. A dry rot mycelium needs a moisture content in wood of at least 20% and a relative humidity in the immediate surrounding air of at least 85% to live and grow; a draught-free environment is also essential. The DIN standard (68800, Part 4) which is the official guide for conservation assessors and experts, must therefore be regarded with extreme scepticism since it ignores these factors. As a result, expensive and pointless conservation action is often taken which may even destroy conservable building fabric for no purpose. The author refers to a six-point plan for all dry rot treatments: elimination of the cause of the infestation; drying-out of all damp areas; replacement of all clearly rotten wood; isolation of wood bordering the infested area; creation of air circulation; and preventive protection with a suitable wood conservation product (e.g. Wood Bliss).

Philip Côle/Ivor Bloor

Suche

Burg, Schloss, Rittergut
oder historisches Gebäude
mit großem Grundstück
Tel. 07381 9292-17