

“Church Castles” a Photodokumentation

of the Federal State of Baden-Württemberg
and selected districts of the surrounding Federal States of
Bayern, Hessen, Rheinland-Pfalz and Thüringen
(within the years 2006 – 2012)



District: Erlangen-Höchstadt Object: Hannberg

Ultimate: The final conclusion

About their distribution, their stage of preservation and the reasons for their existence



District: Neustadt/Aisch-Bad Windsheim Object: Burgbernhelm

About the theme

“Church Castles”: A Photodokumentation within the years 2006-2012

General content:

„Church Castles“ is a Photodokumentation about fortified Churches, the “Church Castles”. The focus of this documentation is on the architecture, fortification in primary, as well as of the church tower and nave (including the chorus), due to the score of preservation. Since 2006, the area of Baden-Württemberg in the given borderlines (by district) was covered, and in the years 2011-2012 those districts of the “neighborhood” Federal States of Bavaria, Hessian, Rheinland-Pfalz and Thuringia were covered, due to the importance of these areas within the frame of this project. Therefore, the project is proudly completed by the end of this year.

The workout itself contains four parts, about of each a short overview will be given here:

Part A – The Project – Area, Pictures HeidICON and Results

In here, a short review about duration and volume of the “Project”, the Photodokumentation will be shown. The main focus is on the Pictures taken during the reconnaissance, which are available within a subdirectory of the database HeidICON of the main library, Ruprecht Karls University of Heidelberg. A link, followed by a brief introduction how to handle is given therefore. Finally, an overview about the „density“ and the stage of preservation of the “Church Castles” is given, completed by basic statistic background in numbers and graphs.



Part B – The ones of being “Best of Preserved” in a brief introduction

This part, according to the headline, is the one most importance is put into. In there, the “Best of Preserved” will be introduced according to their siting within the Federal states and the districts belonging to. The purpose is, to give the interested the chance of an own visit to these objects; while there are wide spread over the reconnaissance area, the one or the other will be also in your neighborhood. Furthermore, the “Keyword” – the Object name therefore, with which the belonging pictures within the database HeidICON can be found, is given too. Also there will be mentioned a special area, called “the cluster”, in which walled towns still with their “Church Castles” inside, are available “en route”, and a special explanation to this is given by.



Part C – The developing of the „Church Castle“

This part gave a “view” into the world; the “Church Castles” came out from: The world of our ancestors. It was a “different time”, and especially I do not say “primitive, as some people do have the mind about the medieval. By given picture, which were also found within the reconnaissance “by the way”, this different time is highlighted thereby, and the role of the “Church Castles” as a center although of the daily social life is worked out thereby. Furthermore, the different “types”, according to the purpose, are explained by some masterpieces, covering the ones which were the center of a village, although as those, which were in walled towns as a kind of citadel. Finally, it is shown, what times “dies” to these citadels within walled towns, the way of change will be outlined by given examples therefore.



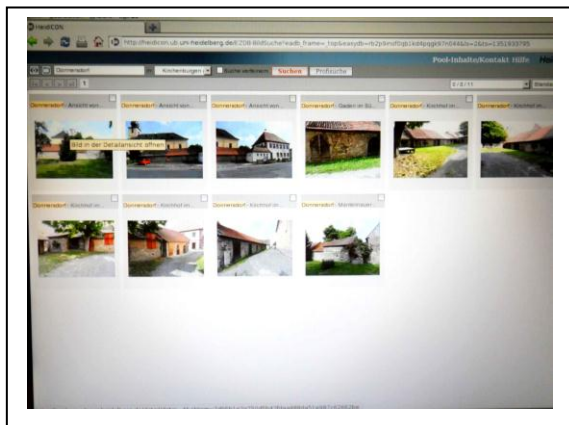
Part D – The “Reasons for the Reason”

One of the most impressive experiences during the reconnaissance were the “Reasons for the Reason”, which although laid on the way around the church-castles. For sure, the “Reason” of them all was to protect: Human life, and some more. But the “Reasons” which caused these tremendous efforts of “manpower” to build them on one hand, and to keep them in good shape on the other hand, were nearly as interesting, as the fact of their existence at all. What was the motor, the need in the background that made it necessary for centuries to build them? For sure not only one and that is right. Furthermore, there were “long lasting” reasons for centuries, controversies of great opponents- and there were “sparks or bursts” of violence and death which lasted “just” a year or a generation. In relationship to the covered area within the limits of this project, the “Actors” of the long lasting reasons will be introduced, accompanied by the “bursts” of importance.

That’s it for the moment.

Detailed content - overview

Part / Chapter	Theme	Page/s (from – to)
	Title page	1
	Brief overview	2
	List of content	3
Part A	The Project – Area, Pictures, HeidICON and Results	4
	Introduction	4
Chapter 1	The Pictures are in HeidICON – the libraries Database of Ruprecht Karls University	5 - 6
Chapter 2	General view to and a brief comment about the distribution of “Church castles”	7 - 8
Chapter 3	General view to and a brief comment about the stage of preservation	9 - 10
Chapter 4	As much as need – statistic in a mild way	11 - 12
Part B	Those of being “Best Preserved” in a brief introduction	
	About the Theme	13
Chapter 1	Districts of the Federal State of Baden-Württemberg	14 - 33
Chapter 2	Visited Districts within the Federal State of Bayern	34 - 57
Chapter 3	Visited Districts within the Federal State of Hessen	58 - 63
Chapter 4	Visited Districts within the Federal State of Rheinland Pfalz	64 - 66
Chapter 5	Visited Districts within the Federal State of Thüringen	67 - 71
Chapter 6:	The “Cluster” - something of the extraordinary	72 - 79
Part C	The developing of the „Church Castle“	80
	Introduction	80
Chapter 1	Another time – another world: A window to the “past” ?	81
Sub 1	About lime-trees, stone circles, announcement places – and more	81 - 83
Sub 2	A daily threat – the dead (messages from them and ossuaries)	84 - 86
Sub 3	Measured by stone (about scaled volumes)	87
Sub 4	Literature “out from the past” – nearly eyewitnesses –	88
Chapter 2	The developing – when there is more to protect than only life	89
	Introduction	89
Sub 1	The “Gaden” Church Castle – a multiple purpose construction	89 - 95
Sub 2	Special “addition”: The fortified nave by some masterpieces	96 - 98
Sub 3	Varieties in size and grade of fortification by some examples	99 - 101
Chapter 3	“Church Castles” within towns – how did it come to ? (“The egg was first !)	102
Sub 1	The masterpiece of Randersacker	102 - 104
Sub 2	What’s left of, after the curtains had fallen	105 - 106
Sub 3	After all – surprising outlines on a market square	107
Part D	The “Reasons for the Reason” (call them wheels within wheels)	108
	Focus on the theme	108
Chapter 1	Introducing the Actors (The “Long lasting Reasons for the Reason”)	109
	Map of the area with “influence” spheres	109
Sub 1	The Archbishopric of Mainz	110
Sub 2	The Landgraves of Hessen	111
Sub 3	The Prince Abbey of Fulda	112
Sub 4	The Counts of Henneberg	113
Sub 5	The Prince bishopric of Würzburg – and a special view to Bishop Julius Echter	114 - 115
Sub 6	The Prince bishopric of Bamberg	116
Sub 7	The Margraves of Ansbach-Brandenburg	117
Sub 8	The “Burg graves” of Nürnberg (in context with the imperial town)	118
Sub 9	A general view about the role of the imperial towns	119
Sub10	The Counts of Württemberg	120
Sub11	The Counts of Henneberg (and the imperial town of Ulm)	121
Chapter 2	Short time lasting “bursts”	122
Sub 1	The Hungarian Invasion (10 th century)	122
Sub 2	The Bavarian War (14 th century)	123
Sub 3	The First Margrave War (15 th century)	124
Sub 4	The “Hussiten War” (15 th century)	125
Sub 5	The Mainzer Stiftsfehde (15 th century)	126
Sub 6	The Bavarian war of succession (16 th century)	127
Sub 7	The Peasants War (16 th century)	128
Sub 8	The Schmalkaldic War (16 th century)	129
Sub 9	The Second Margrave War (16 th century)	130
Chapter 3	The final time after	131
Sub 1	The Thirty-Years war (1618-48)	131
Sub 2	About the Reunification wars and the Baroquisition	132
Sub 3	The 20 th century and “our” time	132
And now ?	So much for the project, yours sincerely	133

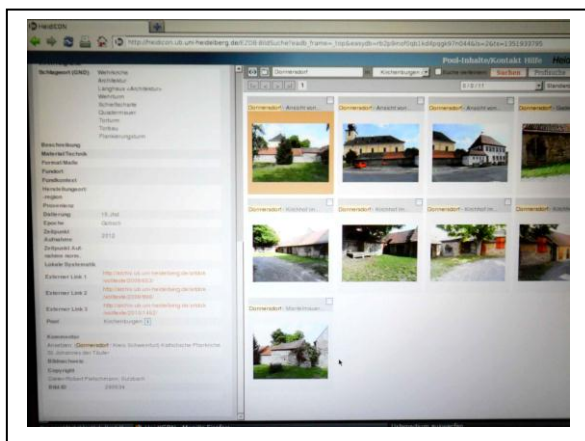
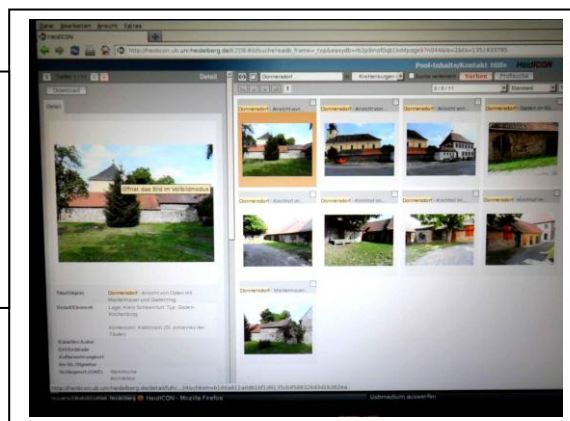


Step 4:

Here we go, with all the pictures about „Donnersdorf“.
The number of pictures can be more or less, due to the stage of preservation, the object does have at all.
“Behind” every picture, there is more information.
When you get over one of the pictures, it will be shown that a “click” will open the picture and its background information.

Step 5:

The picture is shown now in a bigger size at all, and with the given information below, you can find out more about the “background”.
Note, that there is also a scroll bar within the detail section – by scrolling down you will get to step 6:



Step 6:

In the „lower part“ of the detailed section you will find although „external Links“, which connect you instantly to background literature (scanned books, or workouts).

So much for the brief introduction. To find other objects of interest, just go to http://www.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/helios/digi/pdf/heidicon_kirchenburgen_verz.pdf

get the Name out of the “List of Objects” and went to step 3 again.

By the way: If you search within step 3 for “Objektkarte_2012”, you will get a map in scale 1:200000, with all visited objects shown, graduated by the stage of preservation.

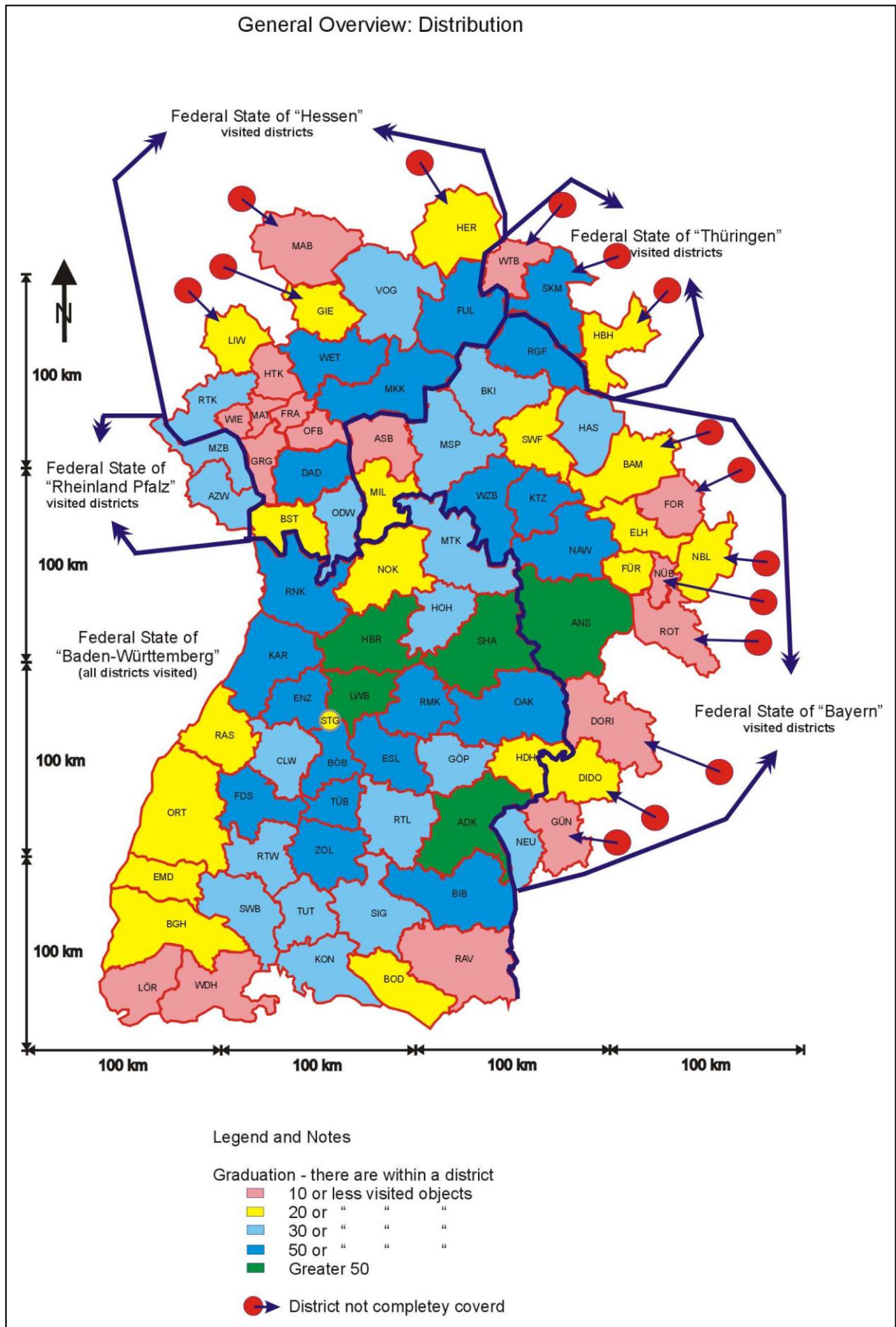
Chapter 2: General view to and a brief comment about the distribution of “Church Castles”

The general overview highlights the distribution. As mentioned before, we choose the “borderlines of today”. Therefore, that is to point out very clear, the “density” does not reflect district of today. The former borderlines have been much different, at all, although they varied even within a century either. Nevertheless, even by the “given” overview, and there we choose – empiric – a “rank of density”, expressed by different colors, which can be seen on the map in follow.

It is to say, that there are areas (covering some districts of today at all), which do have a low density. Mostly, this is reflected by geological circumstances like mountains or very hilly areas, in which the density of population was low at all. Others, for the contrary, are stretching in “blue and green” over a wide area. These are the ones with a high density, due to the areas of interest and the actors, which were responsible for the „Reason of Existence of the “Church Castles” (see therefore chapter D, the “Reasons for the Reason”. Clearly there are “islands” like the district of Alb-Donau (shorten ADK), where mostly the former territorial area of the free and imperial town of Ulm was, and their opponents, the counts of Henneberg (see therefore part D; chapter 1; subchapter 11), Another “island”, you already can name it a small “continent”, is at the center of Baden-Württemberg, around Stuttgart, the capital and to North and east. There, the imperial town of Schwäbisch Hall and Rothenburg had their „spheres”, also as the Margraves of Ansbach in the east (details given in part D; chapter 1; subchapter 9). Although in the North, within the districts of Fulda and enclosing ones, the density is high with “dark blue” – therefore we face the result of the centuries lasting controversy between the imperial Abbey of Fulda, the counts of Henneberg and Würzburg (part D, chapter 1; subchapter 3-5). So much for that –

Although there are some districts at the borderline of the “covered area, marked by the “red dot”: These are districts, we already started the reconnaissance in, but due to the limits of the project, they were not completed – at least not by us. But there is, in that relationship, an interesting result within the next chapter, when the theme came to the “stage of Preservation” – therefore, bear these “borderlines” in mind.





Chapter 3: General view to and a brief comment about the stage of preservation

The „Stage of Preservation“ is a very difficult theme. Therefore, this is, just to mention that very clear again, no judgment about the people of today – not only of them, because the reasons of destruction are multiple purposed.

Within the description about the “Best of Preserved” and although within the statistics, this is a view to the situation of today. When in some areas, means in districts and borderlines of the Federal States of Today, comments were made about the stage of preservation, this is neither blame nor to glorify. In a lot of cases, people in our days did tremendous efforts to preserves and to rebuilt although; in other cases the carelessness about history is more than obvious. This is not a judgment, just a view to the given situation – Judgment will be done by history, will be done by our successors.

The reasons for „low preservation“ in some areas and districts are multiple

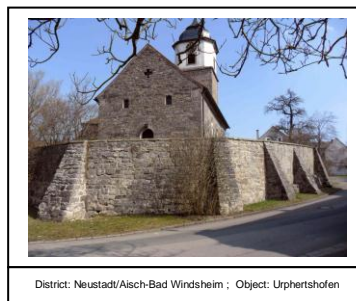
- There could have been deviations within the thirty years war, so that the people had to take the matter of the church castles to rebuild their villages and towns first.
- There could have been devastations during the French reunification wars with the same outcome
- There could have been a wave of “Baroquisation” within everything older way laid down.
- There could have been careless around the late 19th/early 20th century when a lot of church castles were laid down in some areas and only the church itself was rebuilt.
- There could have been vast devastation during the World war too, mostly by bombing
- There could have been careless about history and preservation in the younger days, still continuing –

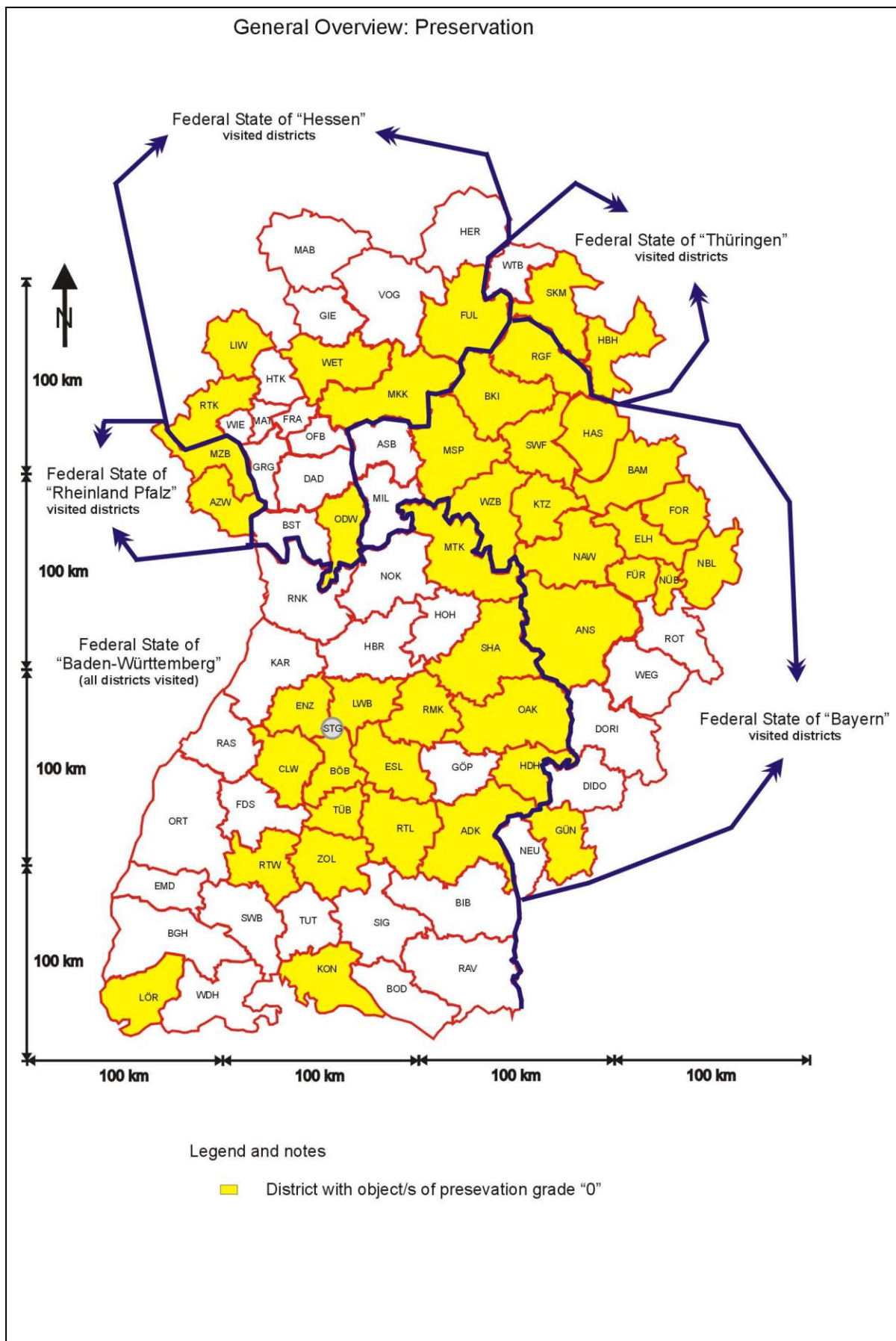
Therefore, we used as a qualifier for the overview – given by the map in follow, only the object with preservation stage “0” (extraordinary good shape, mostly complete or rebuilt).

And here, you see a relative homogenous area stretching from Southwest to Northeast, where these “highlights” still exists today. Also- and that’s why the theme was brought to that in the former chapter at all, the “borderline districts” in the Northeast do have also their highlights, despite the fact, that they are not completely covered by the Photodokumentation within this project at all.

So this is not a judgment, as we said in the beginning, but a call to preserve what is left, because the result is not too bad (for detailed data, see chapter 4 in this part).

As it is to mention furthermore, the objects of stage “0” will be briefly introduced one by one, within the districts of the Federal states, in part B.





Chapter 4: As much as needed - statistics in a “mild way”

As the focus of the Project is the Photodokumentation and the pictures taken by, we will give here just an overview in general about “total summaries”, mostly this has been the “background „for the graduation within the overview maps at all.

By the way, there is just to point out the interesting fact, that in the districts of the Federal State of Bavaria does have nearly the same amount of objects with “preservation stage 0 and I”, as the Federal state of Baden-Württemberg does – While the number of total objects in the former is less than half, the “quota” of preservation is much higher than in the latter. At highest it is in the federal State of Thüringen – why? Well, get your mind.

Federal State of	# of districts	# of objects	quota	# of objects I/0	Quota (in relation to total number)
Baden-Württemberg	36	1081	30	171	16
Bayern	22	481	22	178	37
Hessen	17	313	18	63	20
Rheinland-Pfalz	2	83	42	18	22
Thüringen	3	55	18	24	44
Total	80	2013		454	23

Note, that the given number of districts within the Federal States of Bayern, Hessen, Rheinland-Pfalz and Thüringen do not reflect the total number of districts in each of these Federal States, which is higher.



District: Neustadt/Aisch-Bad Windsheim ; Object: Ergersheim

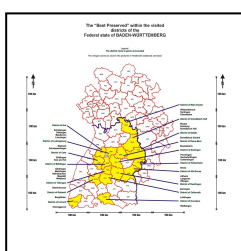
Part B: Those of being “Best Preserved” in a brief introduction

About the Theme

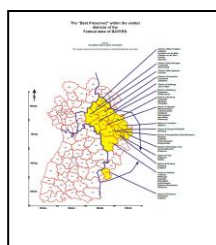
Introducing every object we found in this meanwhile wide spread area we covered within this Photodokumentation at all, would be Legion. Therefore, we had to decide, what the best background for a representative and “global” review of this Photodokumentation would be – and we choose to introduce in the following part the ones, which are “Best preserved” at all. It will be done by Federal States, one by one, and within them within every district, such a “Gem of Preservation” is still present. Lucky we saw, there are few within the area left – but not too much at all, correlating to the total number of objects, we covered within this Project at all.

As it has been already mentioned, the “bulk of the pictures” are in the HeidICON database at the Library of the Ruprecht Karls University of Heidelberg, there will with every object the note: “Search in HeidICON for:” and the given Name, by which you will find all pictures belonging to this object.

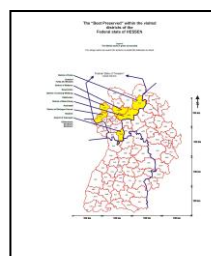
Districts within the Federal State of Baden-Württemberg



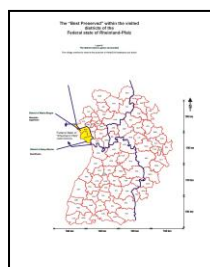
Districts within the Federal State of Bayern



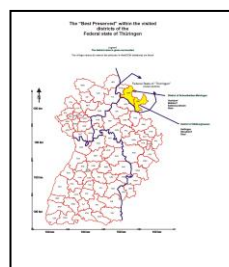
Districts within the Federal State of Hessen



Districts within the Federal State of Rheinland-Pfalz

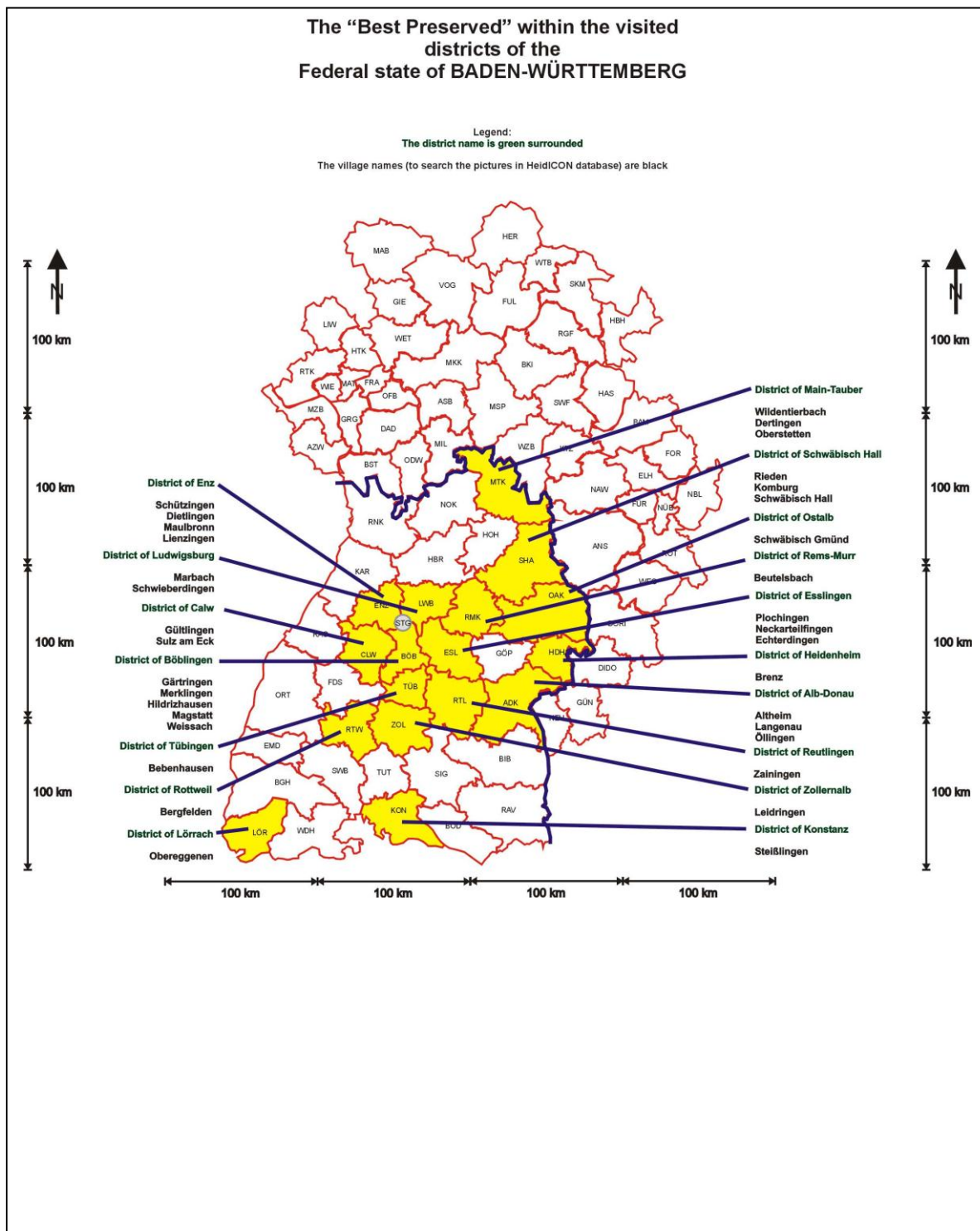


Districts within the Federal State of Thüringen



District: Schmalkalden-Meiningen; Object: Sülzfeld

Chapter 1: Districts within the Federal State of Baden-Württemberg



The situation of Baden-Württemberg its, that around the old center of the Counts (and later dukes) of Württemberg, the city of Stuttgart, the density is – seen in a wider area, relatively high. Surrounded by the imperial towns of Reutlingen, Schwäbisch Gmünd, and Schwäbisch hall, the need for protection of the rural people was given on both sides, respectively. Also you do find furthermore the area around the city of Heilbronn, which was also a very active imperial town until the decline started during the Schmalkaldic War (part D, chapter 2, subchapter 8)

When mentioning Schwäbisch Hall, then there is also the mighty imperial town of Ulm to counting, which had one of the largest territories (its said that more than 140 villages and some smaller towns belong to). Then there is in the Northwest, Heidelberg area, a “furnace” powered by the palatinate, the Dukes of Württemberg and the Monastery of Maulbronn, borderlines clashed there (see therefore part D, chapter 2, subchapter 6). In general, there are some really good preserved church castles, sadly most of them all missing the battlement and the gatehouses.

District (Kreis): Alb-Donau

Object: Altheim

(Search in HeidICON for: Altheim)



Belonging to the imperial town of Ulm, Altheim was also an administrative center for surrounding villages and a warhead at the borderline to the counts of Helfenstein.

You will find a mighty curtain, still four meters high and about 1,5 meters strong, nearly complete in the circumference but missing the battlement. Of special impressiveness is the massive tower, found in Romanesque time.

Still in use when the times of the thirty years war came around in the 17th century, Altheim was modernized by its nave, while the tower got a new upper level.



Distrikt (Kreis): Alb-Donau

Objekt: Langenau

(Search in HeidICON for: Langenau)



The curtain of Langenau, about four meters high, surrounds the church castle in two third of the complete circumference., but sadly, the battlement is dismantled in the 19th century, when the reconstruction of the nave in a much bigger way was done. Still the picture is impressive, and two of the former four corner towers are present, giving an impressive imagination with their gun slits of the 15th century. Langenau saw "battle action" when it was assaulted in the 14th century (see therefore part D; chapter 2, subpart 2) but it was rebuild stronger instantly after.



District (Kreis): Alb-Donau

Object: Öllingen

(Search in HeidICON for: Öllingen)



You can call Öllingen „nearly“ perfect: The high location at the hillside of the village and the complete preserved curtain, which only misses the battlement, give a good imagination of the terminus “Church Castle”. Never equipped with corner towers, the shape is rectangular merging into oval. While the gatehouse is gone, you will see still the impressive walls, which once outlined the gate chamber. The picture lower right shows the situation, and the small chapel like building in the corner it's the former "Ossuary" or bone house (see therefore part C, chapter 1, subpart 2), today emptied, of course.



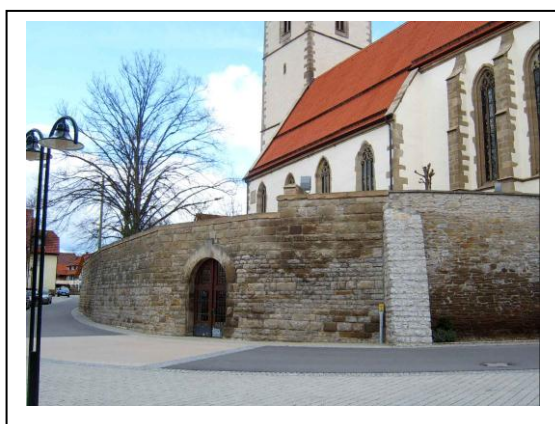
District (Kreis): Böblingen

Object: Gärtringen

(Search in HeidICON for: Gärtringen)



Within the early years of the 20th century, a complete renovation of the church also as of the remaining curtain was done. While the former was done in a good way, there is strongly to question the act of the latter: To the village side, the curtain was lowered, but is still present. Only to the field side (picture left) it has its former high of four meters left. Despite of that, the complete picture is impressive at all. The picture lower right shows the remnants of the former gate house with the former like, walled way in.



District (Kreis): Böblingen

Object: Merklingen

(Search in HeidICON for: Merklingen)



As an administration center, Merklingen was the „seat“ of a bailiff. Therefore, also the “tenth” of the harvest, collected from the belonging farms and villages, was stored in here. Still today there are impressive parts left. Founded at the place of the castle of the local nobles after the possession was fided to the monastery, the architects enlarged the former castle , build the nave into and fitted the whole with the massive church- und fighting tower. The picture lower left shows the situation in the late 15th century, after being rebuild. You will recognize the wet moat, which is still present but drained today for safety reasons, respectively.



District (Kreis): Böblingen

Object: Magstatt

(Search in HeidICON for: Magstatt)



When two of the former three curtains, which surrounded this strong fortified church castle once, are still present today, you will a good imagination of the tremendous efforts, the „former“ people did for their protection. Of course, being that strong had more than one reason behind (see therefore part D, chapter 1). Badly damaged by superior artillery during the thirty years war (1618-48),the people used great amounts of the stone to rebuild the village. Still there is left a lot, and renovation within the 20th century saved them for the 21th.



District (Kreis): Böblingen

Object: Hildrizhausen

(Search in HeidICON for: Hildrizhausen)



„Dominating“ is the right terminus, when you see the tower of Hildrizhausen first. Tracing back into the Romanesque time, this church castle with its strong curtain is one of the “oldest” in the area. Still the nave does show an ornamented Romanesque portal from the 12th century, despite of the “transforming’s” done in later years. Even the curtain, still three meters high and about 1,5 meters strong, surrounds the whole area. The battlement, still described in a prospect of the 18th century, was dismantled a century later.



District (Kreis): Böblingen

Object: Weissach

(Search in HeidICON for: Weissach)



Characterized by „great remaining’s and great missing’s“, the church castle of Weissach shows itself as one of the former also in this area not so rare “Gaden Church-Castles” (see therefore part C, chapter 2, subpart 1). As an administration center, “space” was needed to store the “tenth” of the harvest of the belonging villages and farms. The curtain is not completely present in the whole circumference, but still the remaining parts are breathtaking, as for example the picture lower right shows. Surrounded by a double curtain, containing a forcer, and two gate houses, this church castle was one of the strongest – once.



District (Kreis): Calw

Object: Gültlingen

(Search in HeidICON for: Gültlingen)



While using parts of the walls of the former noble castle (they „died“ away in the 13th century), Gültlingen can't be called and classified as "built into a noble castle", not at all. The 15th century faced a nearly complete reconstruction, stronger than before and equipped with fire arms (hand- and wall guns) to fit the needs of the changing "warfare". Missing the battlement, the curtain still is impressive and with a strength of 1.5metres one of the strongest.



District (Kreis): Calw

Object: Sulz am Eck

(Search in HeidICON for: Sulz am Eck)



The location above the village, and the complete curtain with its oval ground-shape gave a fine impression of the terminus "church castle". While the battle walk was dismantled in the 19th century, the curtain was preserved to our times. It might be the fact, that Sulz am Eck is a little bit way from the great centers of tourism and other interests, who knows. But here we have a fine example of a pure "life protector" (see therefore part C, introduction).



District (Kreis): Enz

Object: Schützingen

(Search in HeidICON for: Schützingen)



Seen from the village side, there still seems to be the former time present. A high curtain, an old church tower ,and also the nave doesn't look "baroque like" -and thankfully it is really lasting from the Gothic times. Sure, that alterations have been done, even after several damages, Schützingen saw during its active time. Belonging to the monastery of Maulbronn, it was one of the 38 "Church Castles" in the circumference, and with the jealous neighbors, trouble was granted). That the monastery still kept the late stage of warfare, is shown by the rounded loop whole, made for harquebuses (big hand gun) in the 15th century.



District (Kreis): Enz

Object: Dietlingen

(Search in HeidICON for: Dietlingen)



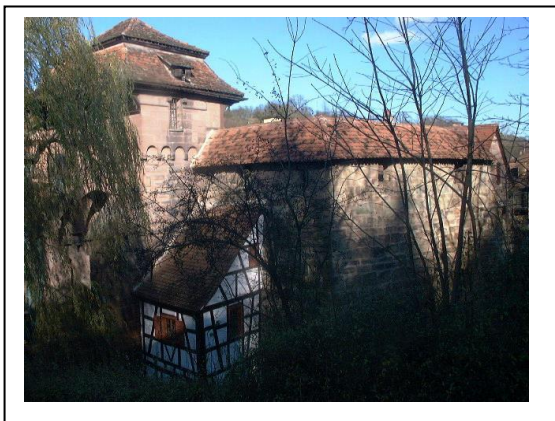
A real „Gem“ among the “best preserved” in this area is Dietlingen. First, it doesn't look like that at all, when seen from the village side (left picture). But still here, the steep staircases and parts of the remaining curtain awake the interest. From the “field side” (lower left picture), the view is breathtaking, like in the 15th century. Also a half-rounded tower can be seen to the left part. The inner view then shows the stone made battlement, equipped with staircases. While just missing the wooden roof and rear part, you can call Dietlingen anyway “like in former times”.



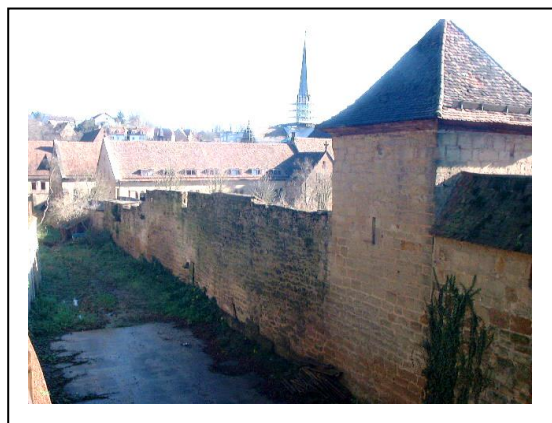
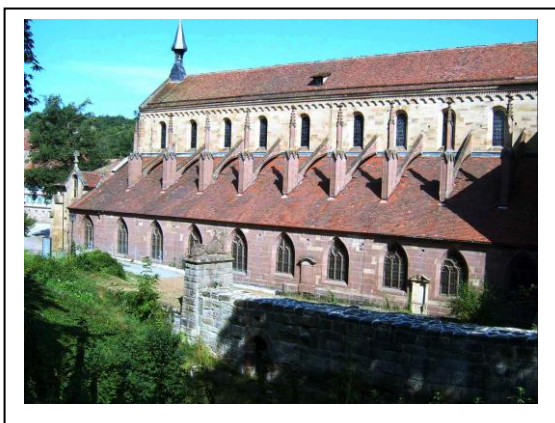
District (Kreis): Enz

Object: Maulbronn

(Search in HeidICON for: Maulbronn)



As the holder of a great possession in the circumference, the monastery of Maulbronn was seen by its neighbors always with jealousy eyes. Soon, in the 13th century, it was fortified, and thus was constantly strengthened. When the so-called "Bavarian succession war" took place in 1504 (see therefore part D, chapter 2, subpart 6) it took the troops of the Duke of Württemberg two days of siege, until the defenders of the monastery (belonging to the Palatinate) had to surrender. Damaged several times later, still parts of the strong fortifications are present, partly rebuilt, respectively. With the Romanesque church (also slight changed) it is a "must see".



District (Kreis): Enz

Object: Lienzingen

(Search in HeidICON for: Lienzingen)



Also Lienzingen represents even today the former widely used „Type“ of the „Gaden-church castle“. Belonging to the monastery of Maulbronn, it was also string fortified, and a lot of work was spent in the 19/20th centuries, the preserve and to rebuilt, even partly. Therefore you will see here a nearly complete "Gaden"-type, seen in the floor plan lower right. Still today, the "Gaden" are in partly use, for garden accessories, respectively. Impressing also is the view from the edge of the village, when you will see the centered church castle surrounded by it's curtain. The massive gothic tower is the landmark of the circumference.



District (Kreis): Esslingen

Object: Plochingen

(Search in HeidICON for: Plochingen)



The village of Plochingen, at least the old center, is sited above the Neckar river. And at one end of the village, the “Church Castle” is placed. Due to the village side, where the terrain is flat, there was once a moat in front of the strong curtain (see picture lower left). To the valley side, where the terrain is steep, the view is breathtaking – again, it is to say, because the hillside was covered by trees until few years ago. The courtyard, still used a cemetery of the village, shows to the Neckar valley the curtain with battlement and loopholes and gave a fine impression. Sadly, that the overgrowing of the inner side is cared only little.



District (Kreis): Esslingen

Object: Neckartailfingen

(Search in HeidICON for: Neckartailfingen)



The view from out of the village to the higher sited church castles demonstrates the good protection, this one is placed into. While of Romanesque founding, the nave still has, mostly internal, parts reaching from that tome (see lower right). The massive church- and fighting tower instead is a “younger” one of the 15th century, when the whole church castle was undergoing a tremendous strengthening, of which the impressive curtain is still present, at least in a height of 3 meters, while the battlement was dismantled in the 19th century finally. When you look critical to the straightness of the church tower, you may be remembered a little to “Pisa” – and you are right: it is “moving”.



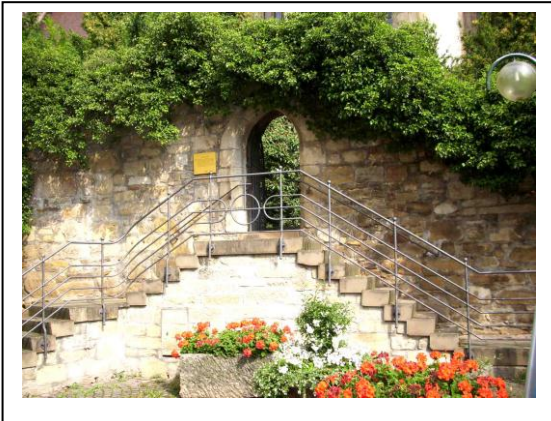
District (Kreis): Esslingen

Object: Echterdingen

(Search in HeidICON for: Echterdingen)



As it is to honor that green and plants are so much liked today, in the case of Echterdingen the evergreen covers a lot of the curtain, so that the visitor can't oversee this famous church castle from far. Lasting back into the Romanesque times, the nave still shows architectural pieces of that. The fortifications are younger, strengthened in the 15th century due to the needs. As a special, and in that case very rare, there is a piece of the former wet moat, called "Wette" rebuilt., nowadays as a water pool for ducks and in case of fire. The gothic upgrade of the nave can be seen also in the high chorus.



District (Kreis): Heidenheim

Object: Brenz

(Search in HeidICON for: Brenz)



„Down from the Romanesque“, the mighty Brenz was undergoing some remarkable changes, and it is to mention, that tremendous efforts of purifying in the 19/20th century saves the lasting Romanesque parts. Foreseen of the mighty curtain, there 144 Romanesque reliefs (mostly replaced, but showing the old origins) running around main- and secondary naves on the outer side, of partly strange looking creatures, some of them just from out of the hell, as it seems – they were placed for protection against the evil. The inner of the nave was also purified and today you will see good Romanesque atmosphere.



District (Kreis): Konstanz

Object: Steißlingen

(Search in HeidICON for: Steißlingen)



Used as an administration center , the church castle of Steißlingen belonged to the larger type, especially to those of the „Gaden Church-Castles“ (see therefore part C, chapter 2, subpart 1). Still today, the massive gate house and some of the “Gaden” are present to the village side. The Gaden within the rear courtyard are dismantled, but still the 4 meters high curtain is impressive, even without the battlement.



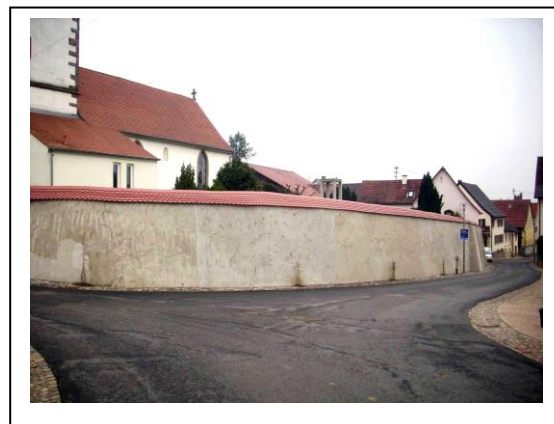
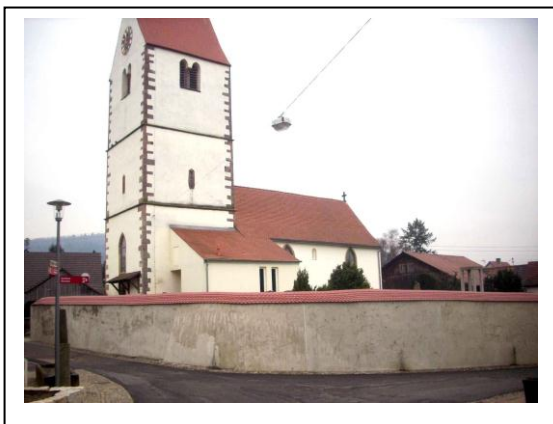
District (Kreis): Lörrach

Object: Obereggenen

(Search in HeidICON for: Obereggenen)



Lasting back into the time called „transforming time“, which means the 13th century with its changing architectural style from the Romanesque into the Gothic, the massive tower of Obereggenen still shows pieces from that time. Instead of the “old” tower, the curtain was refitted in the 15th century and “lost” it’s battle walk, also as the gate house, in the 19th century. Nevertheless, you will find a good “closed” picture, dominated by the tower.



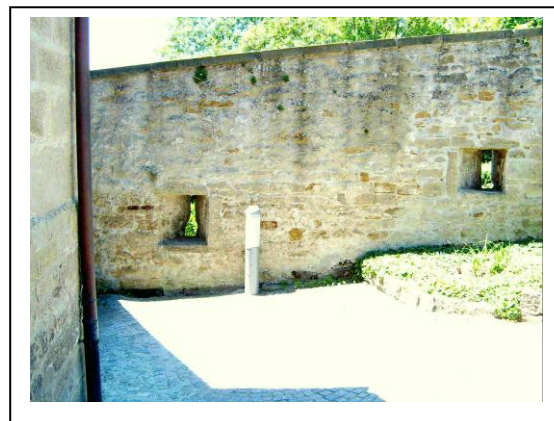
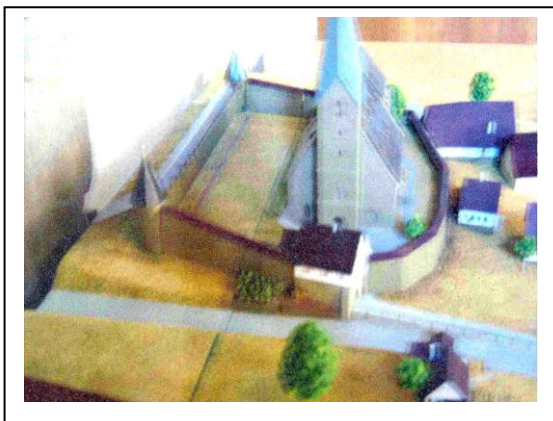
District (Kreis): Ludwigsburg

Object: Marbach

(Search in HeidICON for: Marbach)



The “Church Castle” of Marbach, named „Alexander“ is a founding of the 15th century. Financed by rich citizens, it is sited outside the walled town of Marbach. In “former times” strong fortified, as the model shows, we find today the Gate house (slightly modified) and great parts of the curtain, without the battle walk, respectively. Still there are loopholes present (picture lower right) and the view from the “town side” (picture left) is formidable. The rear curtain with the two rounded corner tower is a victim of progress: In the late 19th century, they were laid down for the new railway track, which is still running today directly “behind” the church castle.



District (Kreis): Ludwigsburg

Object: Schwieberdingen

(Search in HeidICON for: Schwieberdingen)



Located at the highest place of the village, Schwieberdingen gives the visitor a tremendous view: The curtain is nearly complete and is surrounding nave and church tower in an oval shape. The gate house was "simplified" in the 19th century, but still you can locate it. Of special interest is the stone base of the battle walk on top of the curtain, as it can be seen in the lower left picture. While also some "slit-shaped" loopholes are present, the "complete" impression is a very good one.



District (Kreis): Main-Tauber

Object: Wildentierbach

(Search in HeidICON for: Wildentierbach)



The term „stronghold" describes perfectly the situation of Wildentierbach. The history is of interest: It is founded in the place of the former noble castle, after those died away in the 14th century. The white church tower is the former keep of the noble castle, but the gate tower and the curtain were rebuild completely. Still today you will find base parts of the former battle walk at top of the curtain and also remnants of the former second "outer" curtain. Even after a good percentage of the stones had been removed in the 19th century, the complete picture is one of the best in this area.



District (Kreis): Main-Tauber

Object: Dertingen

(Search in HeidICON for: Dertingen)



The “Church Castle” of Dertingen is hard to see in our time. The village has expanded and the former “above” sited Church-Castle castle can be seen just by the last few meters when walking up. The gate tower also as great parts of the curtain have “survived”, and loopholes complete the impressive picture of today. In the rear part of the courtyard (see picture lower right), you will find staircases made of stone, leading up once to the battlement. Also the base of a former tower is present, which can be seen by the picture down right.



District (Kreis): Main-Tauber

Object: Oberstetten

(Search in HeidICON for: Oberstetten)



The “Church castle” of Oberstetten, located above the village, has held good parts of the curtain, sadly without the battle walk. A compensation therefore is given by the Romanesque church-tower, of which only the half-timbered bell house is from the 16th century. Furthermore, the nave is of special interest: Basically also dating back into the 13th century, it was upgraded into a “fortified” nave with a second level above the hall, which was used for storing crops and being equipped with loop holes too (see therefore part C, chapter 2, subpart 2). When you see the “west side”, it remembers a little to a “battleship”: The small turret in fact was a range finder and “gun director” for a better “all round defense” in case of a siege.



District (Kreis): Ostalb

Object: Schwäbisch Gmünd (Search in HeidICON for: Gmünd-Heiligkreuz)



The „Heilig Kreuz“ (Holy cross) church is a very impressive gothic town church. Even in its “rebuilt” version, it is a real gem, from the outer side although as of the inside, as you can see by the pictures left und lower left very clearly. Proudness was the motor to build this church, on the base of a Romanesque one. Within the decades lasting building period in the 15th century, part by part of the Romanesque church was laid down and rebuilt in proud gothic. But there is one sad story about it: Originally, the two Romanesque towers in the west should be re-used at all- but one mistake in the static calculation of the architect made them collapse. Therefore, a “bell-tower” is here standing aside at the edge of the courtyard, shown in the lower right picture. It is an old tower of a former noble family.

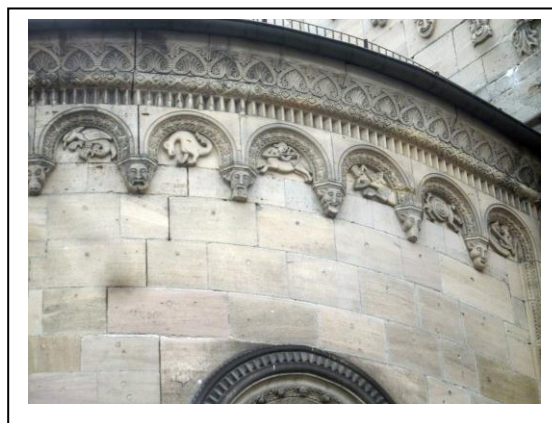


District (Kreis): Ostalb **Object:** Schwäbisch Gmünd

(Search in HeidICON for: Gmünd-Johanneskirche)



Schwäbisch Gmünd does have two great town churches, founded both in Romanesque times. Today the Johanneskirche (St. John) looks Romanesque again, more or less. Tremendous efforts were taken since the beginning of the 20th century, to “purify” the origin Romanesque substance, which was strongly transformed in the Gothic time and later. Of special interest are the relief figures, animals and symbols, running along the outer side. Also the nave’s inner side is being repainted in the old colors and symbols, still under work today (year 2012).



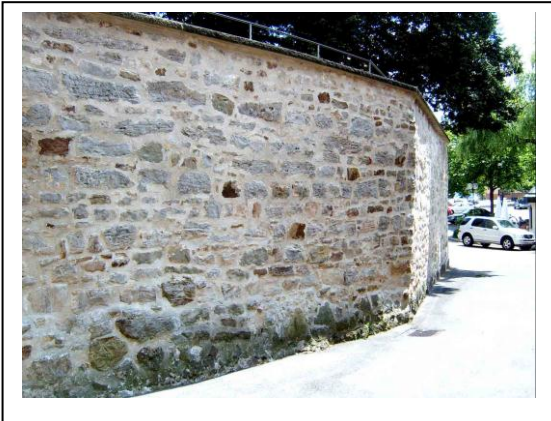
District (Kreis): Rems-Murr

Object: Beutelsbach

(Search in HeidICON for: Beutelsbach)



Today you can call it a „sleeping gem“, just in the center of the „old village“ of Beutelsbach. This „Church Castle“ referred back by its founding into the late Romanesque time, of which few relief-symbols can be seen at the Base of the church-tower. During the 14/15th century, a massive strengthening of the fortifications took place, because the nearby Count of Württemberg got to “war” with the imperial towns (see therefore part D, chapter 1, subpart 10). Of these Gothic defense walls great parts have survived, in some parts although with the stone parts of the battlement (picture down right). Even the gate tower is present (which is normally seldom in this area) so that the visitor will get a good “global impression”.



District (Kreis): Reutlingen

Object: Zainingen

(Search in HeidICON for: Zainingen)



Just missing the former battlement on top, the curtain with its height of four meters is complete in the whole circumference and that is a really impressive view - the pictures really “speak of their own”. Also, as you can see by the picture lower left, the courtyard is still in “use” as a cemetery, like in former times. The picture lower right shows something strange – in the first view: it seems to see the rudimental base of a tower, sited nearly on top of the steep hillside “behind” the church castle, which itself is located at the edge of the village. While “time” was the marginal factor in case of an enemy’s “ride”, this tower once was erected on the hill with a constantly present crew to warn the inhabitants of Zainingen “in time” if trouble came from this direction.



District (Kreis): Rottweil

Object: Bergfelden

(Search in HeidICON for: Bergfelden)



„One of the strongest at all” was – and still is – the “Church Castle” of Bergfelden, close to the imperial town of Rottweil. Belonging to the “larger type” of church castles (see therefore part C, chapter 2, subpart 3) and serving as administration center for the circumference, very strong protection was in need. Great parts of the inner and outer curtain are present, the latter additionally strengthened with rounded towers on the edges, of which out from the originally five still four have survived. The good shape and condition does refer to the “younger “ times, because tremendous efforts were done to preserve. In the 18/19th century, the situation was the opposite: The gate house was laid down and the plans to do the same to the walls were made – just in time the people changed their point of view – and today it is a “must see”.



District (Kreis): Schwäbisch Hall

Object: Rieden

(Search in HeidICON for: Rieden)



Especially the area around an imperial town is „enriched“ with “Church Castles”, and Rieden, close to “Schwäbisch Hall”, doesn’t play the exception. Founded in earlier times, it was nearly rebuild in the late Gothic time at the end of the 15th century, bigger and stronger than before. The nearly complete curtain with it loopholes, just missing the wooden walkway with the roof behind is very impressive, but although the gothic tower and the nave are – from the outer side with the ornamentation although as by the style of the inner side. The location at the highest point at the edge of the village was chosen for additional protection.



District (Kreis): Schwäbisch Hall

Object: Komburg

(Search in HeidICON for: Komburg)



„It looks like out of another world, like a throne“ – and you see, that this description is not poetical oversized. Founded in Romanesque time, the monastery of Komburg got rich soon by donations. Unfortunately, it is located between two “Millstones”: The imperial town of “Schwäbisch Hall” and the territory of the counts of “Limpurg”, and their hunger for power of course. During this long lasting controversy, the fortifications of the monastery were constantly upgraded, the most during the 16th century. Out of this time, great parts have survived (and are preserved, respectively), but also parts of the Romanesque founding can be seen today, one example shown in the picture lower left.



District (Kreis): Schwäbisch Hall

Object: Schwäbisch Hall

(Search in HeidICON for: Schwäbisch Hall)



The free and imperial town of Schwäbisch Hall is marked by the town church of St. Michael. Proudly sited with a tremendous look, this church has had its curtain until the 15th century. Then a Gothic rebuild of the Romanesque nave was done; the tower itself was kept, just added with the two Octagon-shaped top levels. Within this, the curtain was laid down and a tremendous staircase was erected, giving the "new church" really the look being sited on "throne of the town". This is pure proudness of an imperial town, and while this church in its gothic style with the Romanesque tower is preserved fine, it is a must see. Inside there are chapels of the former town nobles, telling the "who is who" of ancient times.



District (Kreis): Tübingen

Object: Bebenhausen

(Search in HeidICON for: Bebenhausen)



Although founded in Romanesque times, the monastery of Bebenhausen did starting its fortifying in the early 14th century, and continued constantly, due to the worse circumstances. In the 15/16th century the fortifications were renewed in a tremendous way, and even while the outer ring of walls and towers is gone (after the 18th century), the remaining core is a must see, still stronger than most noble castles or a fortress.



District (Kreis): Zollernalb

Object: Leidringen

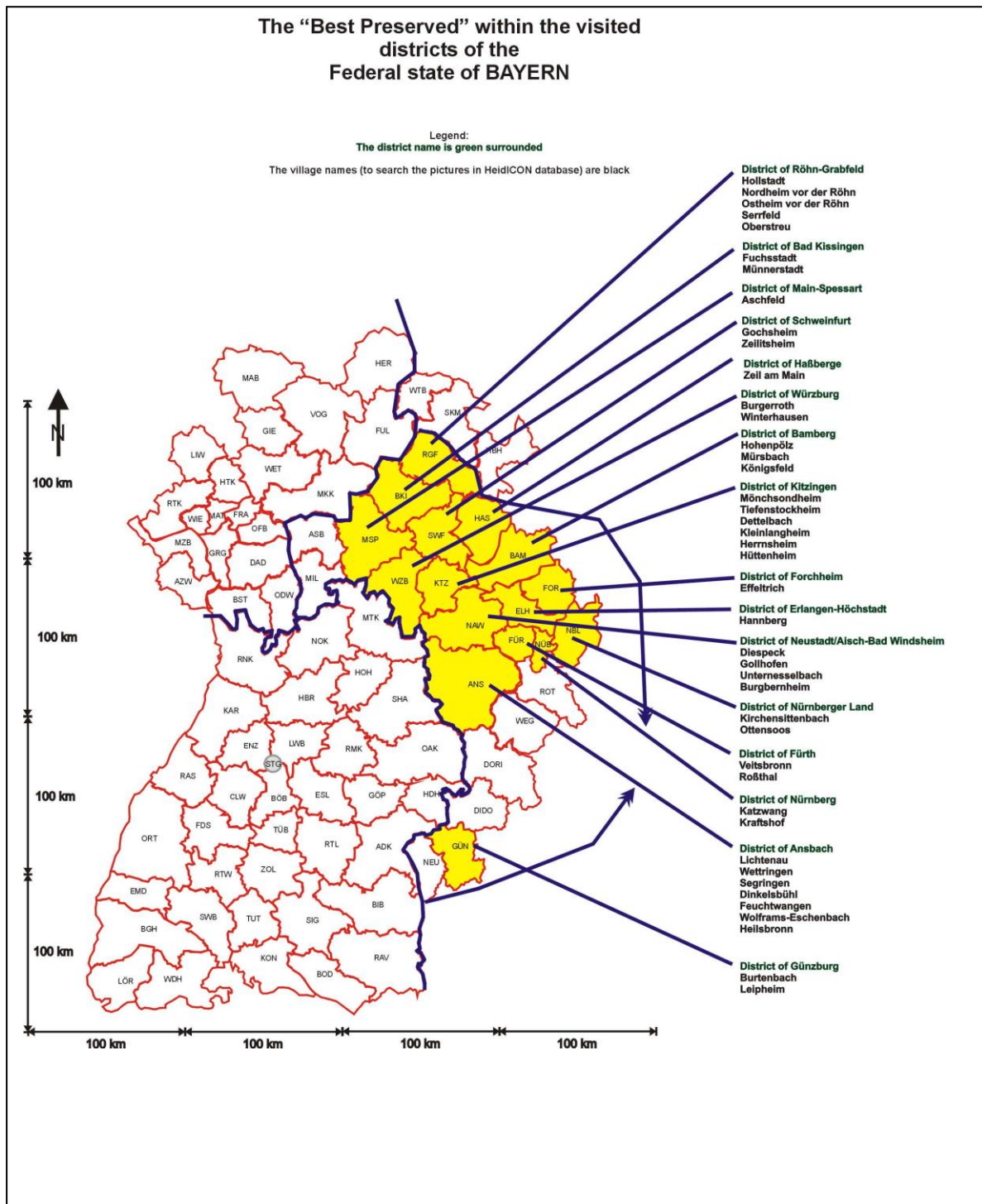
(Search in HeidICON for: Leidringen)



Most contrary to former times is not the missing battlement on top of the curtain – the enrichment of the former courtyard with trees false the picture most. As much as it is worth in our days to care about replanting, thus would have spoiled strongly an organized defense. Despite of that, the curtain, already 4 meters high, is nearly complete in the circumference and give a good "global impression". Furthermore, the church- and fighting tower has still it's loopholes (some of them key-hole shaped for special use of crossbows) and is an additional fact to complete the impression at all.



Chapter 2: Visited Districts within the Federal State of Bayern



The already, within the given needs of the project at all, visited districts do have mostly two or more „Best of Preserved“, which is a lucky circumstance. In general, was mentioned briefly in part A, the stage of preservation is, seen by the average, bigger than at Baden-Württemberg. The reasons for that are multiple, as we had listed in part A, chapter 3. So we are lucky to see in the following some very good examples, of which also the gate houses or the battlement in some cases are present, a leakage, the areas of other federal states are suffering by. It is to say, that especially here the density of objects is high, because we’re are in the center of a great “furnace of history”, the imperial towns (Nürnberg and Rothenburg) against the Margraves of Ansbach-Brandenburg in general (see therefore part D, chapter1,subchapters 7, 8 and 9).

District (Kreis): Ansbach

Object: Lichtenau

(Search in HeidICON for: Lichtenau)



Obviously, this is not a church castle – and never has been at all. So what ? It also doesn't look like a monastery, even a strong fortified one. But Lichtenau has its reputation within the "Reasons for the Reasons" (see therefore Part D, chapter 1, subpart 7/8). Getting in possession of the imperial town of Nürnberg in the 15th century, the castle had an additional benefit for the imperial town: Just a few kilometers away from the city of Ansbach, the residence of the Margraves, the greatest enemy of Nürnberg, Lichtenau was a warhead, from out of which soldiers could really hard know on the Margraves door. Of course, their efforts of conquer the fortress were constantly high, trough many centuries – countered by although expensive efforts in strengthening the fortress by the imperial town of Nürnberg. Today it is one of the best preserved fortresses at all – a Gem of history.



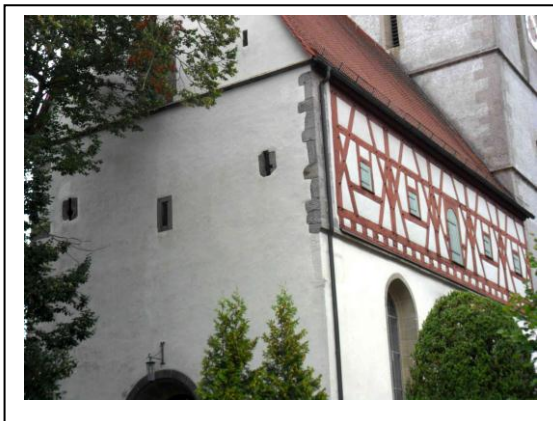
District (Kreis): Ansbach

Object: Wettringen

(Search in HeidICON for: Wettringen)



Even from far away, the 4 meter high remaining curtain and the high church tower with its steep roof show an impressing view. A closer look to the curtain (with just missing the battlement on top) show the immense strength of it. But the most surprising and breathtaking part of this "Church Castle" is the "fortified nave", which is, due to preserving, nearly complete and in "former " shape. In the late 15th century, the half-timbered upper floor was added it the origin nave, serving as a granary for the collected tenth from the belonging farms in the circumference. The key-hole shaped loopholes in the nave speak a speech of their own, demonstrating the high grade of fortification at that time (for the theme "fortified nave" see part C, chapter 2, subpart 2).



District (Kreis): Ansbach

Object: Segringen

(Search in HeidICON for: Segringen)



Founded in Romanesque times and sited on the end of a steep hillside, Segringen is still a landmark. The curtain is nearly complete in circumference, despite the fact that its remaining height is just 3 meters, it is a good “global impression”. Tower and nave show although today parts of their Romanesque founding, while they were undergoing – especially the nave – a “Gothic modernization” by the time. A very impressive picture too is the cemetery, still in “use”, on which even today everybody follows an order of the 18th century, which regulates the crosses in size, color and letters in uniform. Thus give a very unique picture which has no equal around.



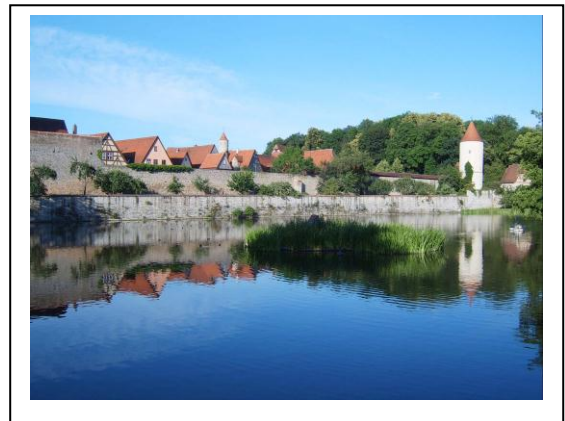
District (Kreis): Ansbach

Object: Dinkelsbühl

(Search in HeidICON for: Dinkelsbühl)



Even when the inner city with its famous arrangement of town church and surrounding houses is most impressive, there is another point of view, which made the former imperial town of Dinkelsbühl nearly unique: The view to the town walls und partly rebuilt gate towers, when you walk around the „lake side“ in front of the town. The pictures speak of their own. But foreseen from the “romantic” factor, they even demonstrate today, how important such lakes in front of the town walls have been for the defense in case of a siege. Clearly, the “source” for the lakes must have been present, and with the necessary efforts, besiegers could drain them – but it took time, and that benefits the defenders.



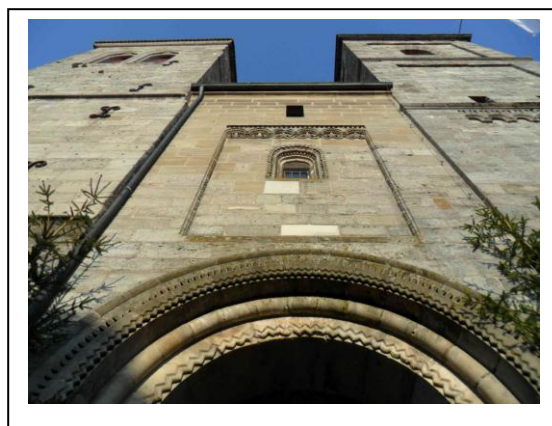
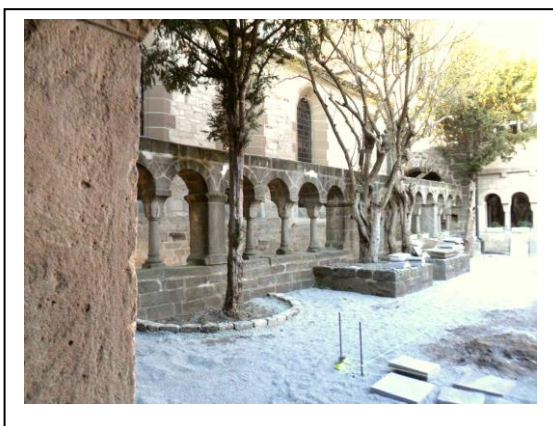
District (Kreis): Ansbach

Object: Feuchtwangen

(Search in HeidICON for: Feuchtwangen)



The city of Feuchtwangen „developed” around the monastery, which was founded in Romanesque times. Despite destructions, monastery and added town were “rebuilt” (of interest is, that one of these destructions was done by troops of the imperial town of Dinkelsbühl during a “controversy” in medieval times). Still today, after some renovations and partly building activities had taken place, the former monastery area of Feuchtwangen is a worth a visit at all. The impressive church with its Romanesque towers (picture down right) and the ornamented bow of the entrance hall is one thing, and additional there are parts of the former cloister with Romanesque arcades and pillars left although as parts of the other buildings out from the 16th century, therefore in Renaissance style, respectively.



District (Kreis): Ansbach

Object: Wolframs-Eschenbach

(Search in HeidICON for: Wolframs-Eschenbach)



Although the walled town of Wolframs-Eschenbach does have a church, which was surrounded by a separate curtain – which is already gone (the curtain, respectively). What does make this town (not an imperial one) so unique? As you can see by the pictures, this town does have its complete town wall with bastions and corner towers, and also two gates – and it is surrounded by a wide moat, kept in a good shape. Of course, not for defense and protection in our days, instead that for the good look and the tourism – and also for historical preservation. You can walk around the whole town and get the imagination.



District (Kreis): Ansbach

Object: Heilsbronn

(Search in HeidICON for: Heilsbronn)



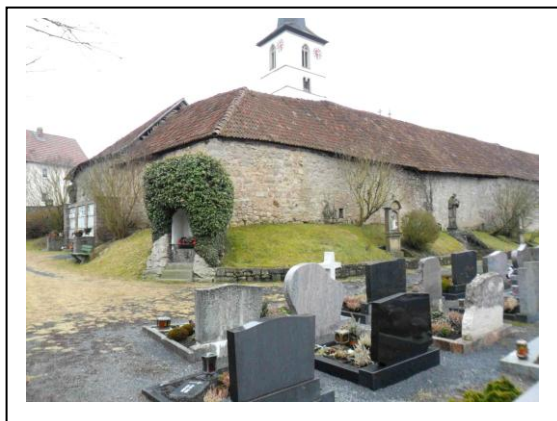
Until the 17th century, the monastery of Heilsbronn was the entombment of the Margraves of Ansbach, the great enemies of the imperial towns (see therefore Part D, chapter 1, subpart 7). After being hardly thrown by the centuries, the church and parts of the old area are preserved. Inside, while the founding of the monastery is dating back in Romanesque time at all, you will find a very impressive atmosphere – enriched with thumb stones of the margraves and three sarcophagi's of most important members of this family. For those who want to be in the time of one of the great opponents according to the "Reasons for the Reason", Heilsbronn is a must!



District (Kreis): Bad Kissingen

Object: Fuchsstadt

(Search in HeidICON for: Fuchsstadt)



You can call Fuchsstadt really a gem and a „Janus“ (twofaced head). If you walk through the village, you will see a Baroque church with a wide courtyard - and that's it. But – just a few steps into the courtyard and the surrounding “buildings” of these courtyard will spark the interest. To the former “field side”, which is already half of the circumference, the “Gaden-ring” is complete – and the most impressive picture it that you will get when walking around outside – The pictures “speak for themselves”: Loopholes, the high curtain and – the moat -which is still wide and meanwhile also used as a cemetery for the increasing number of “customers”. “Always walk around” id a master maxim as you see. (For the “Gaden Church Castle” in detail, see also Part C, chapter 2, subpart 1).



District (Kreis): Bad Kissingen

Object: Münnerstadt

(Search in HeidICON for: Münnerstadt)



Still there is the „borderline“ of the former courtyard outlined – although the town church of Münnerstadt has had its own curtain, once of course. But what makes this town so impressive at all, are the details in legion, you will find all around in the old town with the marvels half-timbered house. While the town is not “overcrowded” with tourists at any time, you can study everything in time – but take a day. The town gates with their impressive towers, the stone made mounting support for the (long gone) portcullis at the outer side – faces and figure reliefs – it is a complete impression of the variety, a medieval town, which was involved into the “Reasons of the Reasons” at all, which is the reason itself for the strong fortification (see therefore part D, focus on the theme).



District (Kreis): Bamberg

Object: Hohenpölz

(Search in HeidICON for: Hohenpölz)



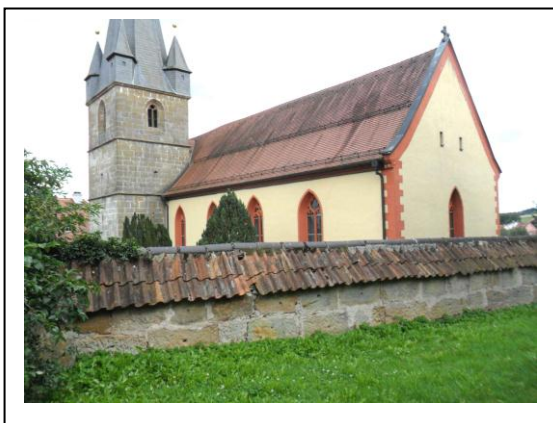
In some literature about art history of this area you will find the information „the church, which once was fortified“ – the truth of today is breathtaking, and an example, that also positive exceptions exist. First, the massive tower catches the eye – and declines the “low wall around it” to a dwarf – as it seems first. How massive the tower is, you will see when walking to and into – the curtain is four meters high, and still equipped with loopholes, just missing the former wooden rear parts of the walkway at the inner side of the curtain. A little bit sad is that the gate house is just a remnant as you can see in the picture lower left – but still the double strengthened curtain lines out this marginable part.



District (Kreis): Bamberg

Object: Mürsbach

(Search in HeidICON for: Mürsbach)



The “Church Castle” of Mürsbach referred back to the early Gothic time of the 14th century. Time by time, it has to stand a siege and did well by that. But the “great challenge” came around in the 15th century, when in 1430 the whole fortifications were rebuilt and strengthened tremendously. A really serious threat was on its way, like a desert storm: The “Hussiten Wars” (see therefore part D, chapter 2, subpart 4). The level of violence by that war outruns the devil with ease. The prince bishopric of Bamberg, like a shelter in the wave, spent tremendous efforts to protect the people. By this, the church castles were also “upgraded” for fire arms like wall- and handguns, because the Hussiten were most familiar with that at all.



District (Kreis): Bamberg

Object: Königsfeld

(Search in HeidICON for: Königsfeld)



It is a little bit hard to overview the “Church Castle” of Königsfeld. Houses are built close to the curtain or use it as one of the outer walls – no wonder the latter, because the curtain is nearly one meter strong. However – inside the courtyard, which is still in use also as a cemetery, you will overlook the curtain with its stone parts of the battlement (which is an outer wall about 1,5 meters high with the loopholes). But there is one thing more: An existing proof, that these fortifications at least were erected back in Romanesque times: The outside of the former gate house still has the rounded entrance bow, which is based on characteristic abutment of these times. The curtain itself was strengthened during Gothic centuries several times, respectively.



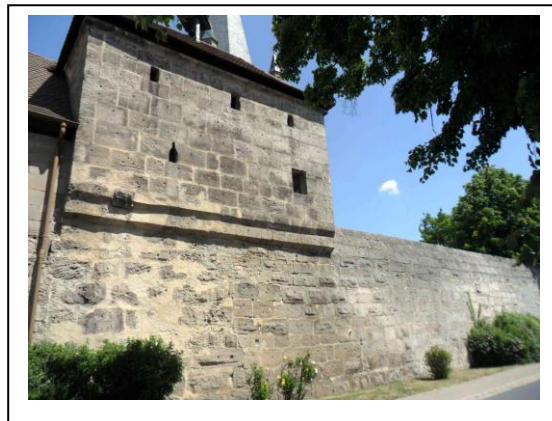
District (Kreis): Erlangen-Höchstadt

Object: Hannberg

(Search in HeidICON for: Hannberg)



If there would be a second level, one „above of the best preserved“, the “Church Castle” of Hannberg would be ranked in. Sure, parts are rebuild – but the whole picture is marvelous – even today, in its slightly de-armed being, Hannberg outranks most noble castle by fortification. Rectangular, quadratic and rounded towers strengthen the curtain. It is obvious, that this one was not only built to protect pure life of the rural inhabitants (see therefore Part C, chapter 2) It is sadly to say, that the former surrounding moat is filled up since the 19th century, and also the gate house was “kissed by destruction”. However – the remaining parts are looking for an equal in wide circumference.



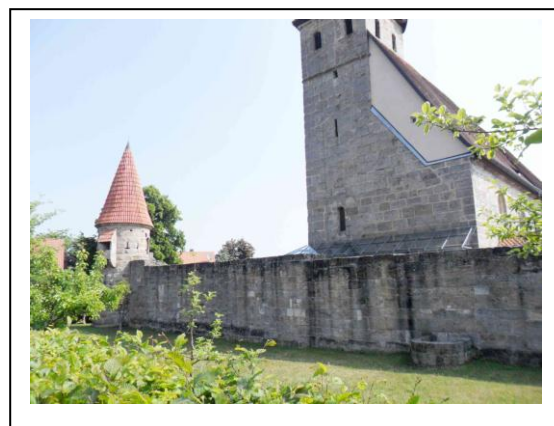
District (Kreis): Forchheim

Object: Effeltrich

(Search in HeidICON for: Effeltrich)



Complete curtain, just missing the battlement on top, strengthened by rounded corner tower (except one rectangular) – these are the characteristics of the "Church Castle" of Effeltrich – which is one among the "best of the best preserved" at all. But, by the way – there is something more, just across the road (not shown here; therefore, see part C, chapter 1): An old judge place with its giant and centuries old lime tree. However – the road "replaces" the former (dry) moat, which surrounded the church castle additionally. To the entrance side, a twenty meter long part of the former battle walk is rebuild (see picture left), so that from the inner side, also this impression can be gathered. Effeltrich – bear that name in your mind !



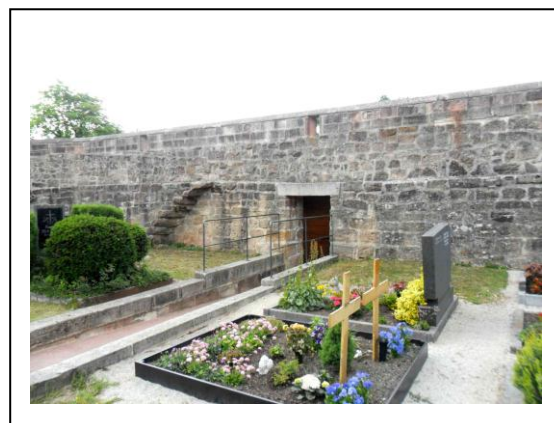
District (Kreis): Fürth

Object: Veitsbronn

(Search in HeidICON for: Veitsbronn)



The curtain in a height of four meters, and that completely in circumference of the rectangular shape and loopholes – you wouldn't find that very often today anymore – therefore, Veitsbronn gives a good "global imagination" of the former look at all. The already filled moat was dry moat, and surrounded the curtain would improve the picture additional. Furthermore there are the wooden parts of the battlement missing, like the roof and the rear walkway at the inner side. Despite of that, you find there the stone base of the battlement itself, and with its staircases made of stone, still present, this is an also very rare picture in our days.



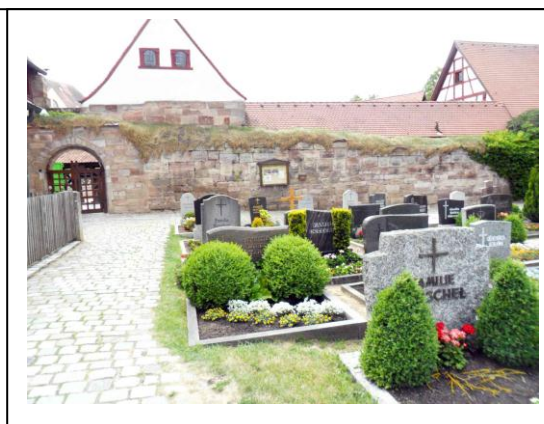
District (Kreis): Fürth

Object: Roßtal

(Search in HeidICON for: Roßtal)



The village of Roßtal (the name means valley of the horses) is sited, despite to the name, on top of a hill itself, and was, due to its high importance was one of the master villages for administration (see therefore also Part C, chapter 2), walled by itself. The real big sized "Church Castle", with its own curtain, saved as a kind of citadel inside. Still today, you find a gate tower and a slightly changed former gate house. The Romanesque founding can still be seen in some of the old windows of the nave, while the tower is a rebuild out of Gothic times, when a general strengthening of the fortification s, especially the curtain, was done. From the latter, great parts, sadly without the former battle walk, are still present too. Unforeseeable, the nave, Romanesque founded as we said earlier, was also upgraded during the Gothic time and today it is a "mixture of styles".



District (Kreis): Günzburg

Object: Burtenbach

(Search in HeidICON for: Burtenbach)



Sited on top of a hill at the edge of the village, the "Church Castle" of Burtenbach is hard to find today, because great green trees are surrounding it completely. If you continue just the way up, you will find first the view to the nave, which is of modern style, although as the octagonal, double store top of the tower is, with its characteristic "onion-roof" of the 19th century. But underneath the clock, you see loopholes in the tower – and the real surprise can be seen, after entering the courtyard: The curtain is made of brick-stones! Everything – the loop holes, the chambers to them at the inner side – everything. Today, Burtenbach is the one and only left, at least visible, that is built with brick-stones – which was in former times, especially in this area respectively, not too seldom.



District (Kreis): Günzburg

Object: Leipheim

(Search in HeidICON for: Leipheim)



The walled town of Leipheim still has great parts of the town wall with a town castle at one edge of the city, cited in a high position (see picture lower right). Close to it, there is the Gothic founded town church, which is still – inside and outside – in a nearly gothic like style. Therefore, it is worth a visit of its own, while although the former courtyard is lined out – the curtain is gone since the 19th century. Leipheim is also called the “white town” - by all three pictures you see clearly why. In the southeast of the town, a corner tower with the town wall and parts of the dry moat are present – therefore a walk around the town is recommended too.



District (Kreis): Haßberge

Object: Zeil am Main

(Search in HeidICON for: Zeil am Main)



„Zeil am Main“ is a walled town (not an imperial one, respectively). Within the town there is the church, it still can be called a “Church Castle”, while the curtain is present in great parts of the circumference, despite of that, the height of the latter is just two meters. The highlight at all: You see, that the remnants of the curtain are older in its stone matter that the town wall with its towers is: Clearly, the “egg is older than the chicken” (see part C, chapter 3). The ways around the church castle are small and narrow, so that you also get a good impression about the “space” in a walled town of medieval times – it was always less (see picture left). A part of the former gatehouse can be seen in the picture lower left, while lower right shows the remnants of the curtain out of the courtyard.



District (Kreis): Kitzingen

Object: Mönchsondheim

(Search in HeidICON for: Mönchsondheim)



„Best preserved“ (and partly rebuilt too) and therefore looking for an equal in wide circumference, the “Church Castle” of Mönchsondheim speaks for its own. Also here, we have a “Gaden Church Castle” (see therefore part C, chapter 2, subpart 1). Compact, dense and narrow – these words describe the situation inside, as the picture lower left shows. The outer environment is still – more or less – free of tress, so that the situation of former days is also represented by the look of today. The gate house is a little bit changed by additional half-timbered houses – this is a sign of our time, because what held Mönchsondheim in that good condition is the fact, that it was refitted as a crafts museum – in very of the “Gaden”, there will be shown the tools and made-outs of more than 25 different professions of the ancient times.



District (Kreis): Kitzingen

Object: Tiefenstockheim

(Search in HeidICON for: Tiefenstockheim)



Although a type of the Gaden “Church Castle”, Tiefenstockheim has its origin ring of Gaden within three quarters present (picture lower left). Only in the West the former Gaden were laid down, when a new and bigger nave was built in the 19th century (see picture left). There are two points to be highlighted especially in this case: First, despite to so many “giants” we have already listed, it is relatively small in size, and second – the Gaden are made completely out of stones (picture lower right), except the wooden roofs with the roofing tiles, of course. Therefore, Tiefenstockheim is a good variety of what the term “Gaden Church Castle” covers, because also here this term is common in the peoples tongue.



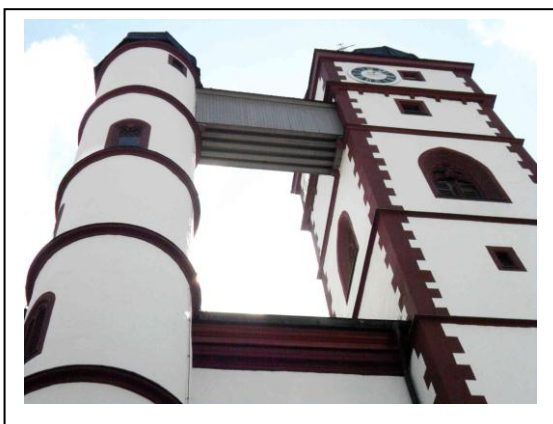
District (Kreis): Kitzingen

Object: Dettelbach

(Search in HeidICON for: Dettelbach)



„At least one day“, it is said, is the absolute minimum if you want to see and study all the details, this walled town does have, including its church castle. The latter is sited on the place of the former nobles castle on a flat hill spin inside the town (picture down right), but it is a complete independent rebuild. Still you can see, even without the former battlement around, the character of a citadel within the strong walled town. And there are some more architectural “extremes or exceptions”, like the “twin towers” of the church (picture down left), the old part of the town itself, and again, the very strong fortifications, as the picture to left shoes by the upper gate: It was in the late 15th and early 16th century, when the whole town fortification was rebuilt in a much stronger way and it is not an imperial town at all).



District (Kreis): Kitzingen

Object: Kleinlangheim

(Search in HeidICON for: Kleinlangheim)



As you see by the roofs of the „Gaden“, which are also inclined to the „outer“ side, to the village side therefore, it indicates, that the situation is not completely that of the former look (see therefore part C, chapter 2, subpart 1). Despite of that, the Gaden-circuit is complete (picture down left), the gate house slightly changed. Centered in the village, the church castle of Kleinlangheim served also as a center of social life. The size of this in late Romanesque time founded one is impressive, also as a special relief out from the 15th century, shown on the picture down right: First it seems to show that kind of the “Calvarias Mountain” ones, mostly be present – but this one is an “eyewitness” it its time: Inhabitants of the village, in battle armor und equipped with crossbow (man to the right) or handgun (man amidst) – preparing for defense – and have a look to the expressions of their faces: As if this is just “frozen in stone” - out from the reality.



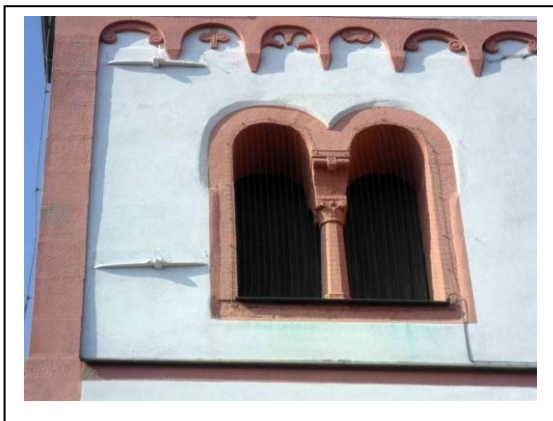
District (Kreis): Kitzingen

Object: Herrnsheim

(Search in HeidICON for: Herrnsheim)



Although in the case of the “Church Castle” of Herrnsheim, the „circuit“ of the Gaden is complete, and parts of the outer side are still visible, despite of so many other which are „enclosed“ by new houses meanwhile. This fact does give a good imagination of the size, of which Herrnsheim is of the larger type. Despite of that, the picture down right shows the situation “inside”: At left to the frame you see the nave, rebuilt larger in the 19th century, which made the already rare spare “rare to square”. But – why did the people still let the Gaden inside, why do they still use them as store rooms, as centuries ago? At Herrnsheim, the historic tradition is alive, even among the young people. The founding of the church castle can be set back into Romanesque times, as the Biforien in the picture down left shows, even partly rebuilt.



District (Kreis): Kitzingen

Object: Hüttenheim

(Search in HeidICON for: Hüttenheim)



„In accordance to the others within the district of Kitzingen“, although Hüttenheim is in a good shape today. Kitzingen is really an area, where people did care about their history a little more than in some other places, especially in case of their “Church Castles”. Needless to say, that also the inhabitants of Hüttenheim even today named it still church-castle. Some changes in some parts are done, but the circuit of the Gaden (picture down right) is complete, most of them still in use (for garden tolls and that like, respectively), and the view gathered by a walk around, which is here still possible, is impressive. You see that also Hüttenheim is of “larger” size, therefore it was once the center of administration and harvest collection for the surrounded farms and smaller villages (see Part C, chapter 2).



District (Kreis): Main-Spessart

Object: Aschfeld

(Search in HeidICON for: Aschfeld)



The “Church Castle” of Aschfeld really dominates the village with its „throne-like“ siting above. Still you can see parts of the curtain between the houses out from the village (picture left). While walking up the steep way, you will first see the gate tower, accompanied by the main- and a lower curtain, sadly both without battle way anymore. Despite of that, the circuit of Gaden is nearly complete – again it is to say, because the centuries did worse to this “Church Castle” – and it was in a very bad shape, when in the late20th century reservation and partly rebuilding – especially of the Gaden, was done. Therefore it is a masterpiece again, looking for an equal in its stage of preservation in this area.



District (Kreis): Main-Spessart

Object: Karlstadt

(Search in HeidICON for: Karlstadt)



The founding of the village goes back into Romanesque times, as it still can be seen by the tower of the church in the picture down left and right. . Did I write “village”? Doesn’t it look more like a walled town? That’s right. Very soon, under the possession of the prince bishopric of Wurzburg, the former village got town rights. Not only with increasing territory, but also by increasing “hunger for power and trading”, Karlstadt, which was – in the view of the former times – located at the “western border” of the expanding territory, got the importance of a warhead – and the most interesting is, still after the time called “medieval”: It was in the 16th century, when the town walls and gates were strengthened tremendously, because there was a very powerful and jealousy neighbors: The Prince abbey of Fulda: For the background of this, see part D, chapter 1, subchapter3.

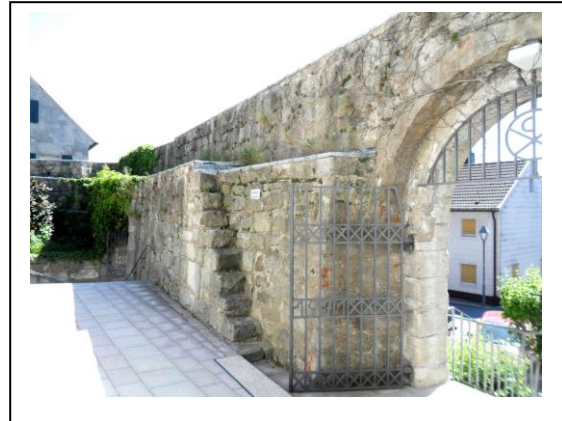


District (Kreis): Neustadt/Aisch-Bad Windsheim

Object: Diespeck (Search in HeidICON for: Diespeck)

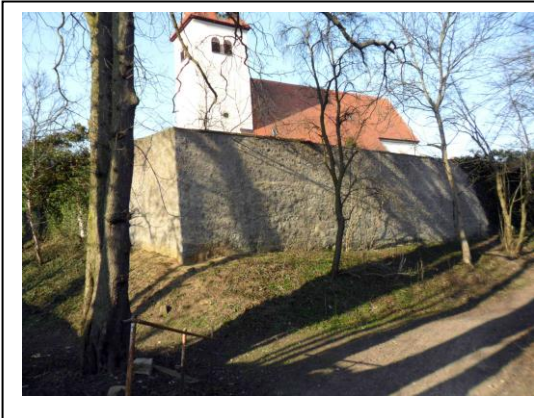


Call it a "stronghold", and you are right: It outrivals most noble castles of that time in wide circumference. Founded in the 14th century, the "Church Castle" of Diespeck was badly damaged in the 15th century during the "first Margrave war" (see part D, chapter 2, subpart 3). Afterwards, it was rebuilt bigger and stronger than ever seen – just in time, to be besieged and assaulted in the "second Margrave war" within the 16th century. That behemoth assaulted? For more details, see part D, chapter 2, subpart 9; but for the moment get this: When 1200 - in words "twelve hundred" soldiers " are around, there is little chance – nevertheless, afterwards it was rebuild again, and so on. The number of battle actions seen by this "Church Castle" is legion - and despite of the remnants are impressive – therefore the pictures "speak for their own".



District (Kreis): Neustadt/Aisch-Bad Windsheim

Object: Gollhofen (Search in HeidICON for: Gollhofen)



Gollhofen can be counted into the line of those, of which the curtain is complete, seen from the circumference, although as it is equipped with loopholes. As very often in that case, the wooden parts of the battlement are missing (roof also as the wooden walkway from out which the defenders served the loophole at all. But there is more at Gollhofen – something that is gone first by a lot to good preserved in the 19th century: Wide parts of the surrounding moat are present, only the part to the village was filled and is in use as a car park anyway. Despite of the trees, which gave a false picture especially in the summertime, the impression of Gollhofen is the strongest, when you walk around. And there is something more: A crest at the nave, on top of which the year 1493 is engraved and which is underlined by the Name "Limburg" shows the situation: The red zigzags belong to the prince bishopric of Würzburg, which was the Master – and the counts of Limpurg (five silver clubs on the blue field) held the village of Gollhofen as a fief from them.



District (Kreis): Neustadt/Aisch-Bad Windsheim **Object:** Unternesselbach (Search in HeidICON for: Unternesselbach)



As in so many cases today, although Unternesselbach is camouflaged by too much „green“. The curtain, already about four meters high and still keeping its loop holes, the stage of preservation is a real good one. While missing the wooden parts of the former battlement (clearly that these parts would be replaced, because the effort to keep them save for visitors needs volunteers, which are mostly very rare although). As it can be seen out of the pictures, the curtain is walled by regular, large stones, and that was done during an upgrade of the fortifications in the 15th century after the first Margrave war (see therefore part D, chapter 2, subpart 3). Furthermore, to the North and the East side, the former moat is already present, while half filled (picture down left).



District (Kreis): Neustadt/Aisch-Bad Windsheim **Object:** Burgbernheim (Search in HeidICON for: Burgbernheim)



The “Church Castle” of Burgbernheim can be traced back by its founding to Romanesque times. Only little of from this time has left, for example the (partly rebuilt) Romanesque portal shown in the picture down right. Upgraded although several times, it has had rounded corner towers within the curtain, and by its high location over the village within a steep hillside, the “protection” was a good one – for the defenders, respectively. While the curtain has just a height of about two meters anymore, this couldn’t be the master point why Burgbernheim is listed here: It is its location, and also the remaining gate house with half-timbered upper floors, which gave – in the right ankle with nave and church tower, a tremendous impression.



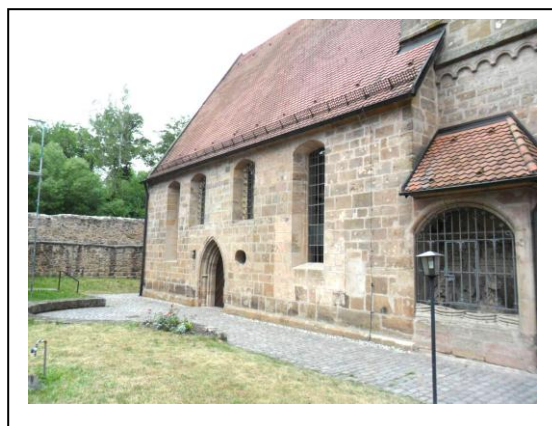
District (Kreis): Nürnberg

Object: Katzwang

(Search in HeidICON for: Katzwang)



Decide by your own, what is more impressive at Katzwang: The massive tower, founded in early Gothic time (14th century), or the nearly complete curtain with its height of about five meters. The former moat, surrounding the “Church Castle”, was filled in the 19th century. Therefore, the nave had also to stand some “modernization” changed, as it can be seen in the picture down right, by the loss of its gothic windows at all. Anyway, the impression of the curtain (take a walk around inside and outside both) is given – and the picture to left shoes something more: The “red/orange” painted house is not a new one from our times: Tit is a chapel, called St. Michaels, founded in the 15th century and it was until the 19th century the Ossuary (also called “Karner”, see details to that theme in part C; chapter 1, subchapter 2) – sadly to say, it is “emptied” today.



District (Kreis): Nürnberg

Object: Kraftshof

(Search in HeidICON for: Kraftshof)



The controversy between the imperial towns and the nobles (see part D, chapter 1, subpart 9), especially the imperial town of Nürnberg and the Margraves of Ansbach, created real stronghold of “Church Castles” on “both sides”: The Kraftshof was once founded by Nürnberg citizens in the 15th century, and today, well preserved, you can visit most parts, also the battlement which is complete preserved even with its wooden parts (see picture down right). Enriched with details, like the picture down left shows – different shaped loopholes and underneath the left one a relief-head – you can spent hours in studying all the details. In that case, the relief head is called “envy-head” and should protect the defenders, by showing to an attacker “try me if you tough enough” - mercy was never be ask in these time – and frankly spoken – it wouldn’t have been given either.



District (Kreis): Nürnberger Land **Object:** Kirchensittenbach (Search in HeidICON for: Kirchensittenbach)



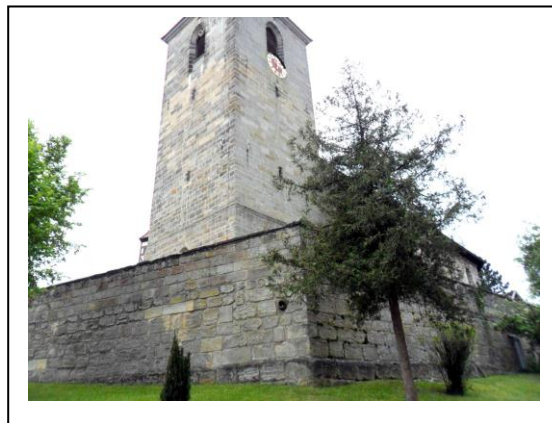
Despite of most of the already shown „Best preserved“, which have a relative large size, the “Church Castle” of Kirchensittenbach is – relatively – small. Nevertheless, it also belong to the “Gaden-“ type (see therefore part C; chapter 2, subpart 1). Impressive at all is the view from the entrance side – with the gate house and its half-timbered upper level, the curtain with the loophole and the dominating church tower. Although a partly modified half-timbered Gaden is left, while the others have been dismantled in the early 20th century. The curtain is also present to the “rear”, which means, complete in its circumference. “Compact and strong”, are the attributes of this Gem.



District (Kreis): Nürnberger Land **Object:** Ottensoos (Search in HeidICON for: Ottensoos)



As already pointed out at the “Church Castle” of Kraftshof, the one at Ottensoos is in the same line one of these “strongholds”: Two curtains, an outer “lower” one, and the four meter high “inner” curtain (see picture left) gave really good protection. The area between the two curtains, the “forcer” was absolutely free of plants, trees or bushes, contrary to the situation of today. The picture down left shows the situation: From the higher inner curtain, defenders could give additional firepower to those “down” at the outer curtain. Ottensoos saw a lot of sieges – with different outcome. After being damaged, it was repaired instantly during the rough tomes of the 15th and 16th century, so that it never degraded to ruin in these times. Ultimately, it belongs to the people of today, who kept this one (after some dismantling’s in the 19th century) in good shape.



District (Kreis): Röhn-Grabfeld

Object: Hollstadt

(Search in HeidICON for: Hollstadt)



It is a need picture, when you stand in front of the gate tower, and you see the church tower in the background. Some details, tile the former drawbridge, which once allowed, when lowered, the crossing of the meanwhile although filled moat. But – as the maxim says: “Always walk around” – the breathtaking is just around the corner: The wide moat, walled also to the outer side and running up the steep hill, the “Church Castle” is located into is still present, nowadays used as an additional cemetery. And at the “rear”, to the hill itself the moat continued, and in combination with the present curtain, which does have a high of six meters, it is an awesome picture at all. Very impressive is also the rounded corner tower with its key-hole shaped loopholes. Therefore – if you want to gather “dimensions” – go to Hollstadt.



District (Kreis): Röhn-Grabfeld

Object: Ostheim vor der Röhn

(Search in HeidICON for: Ostheim vor der Röhn)



Even among the „Goliaths“ there have been extraordinary „Giants“ – rare, but if the need was given (see therefore part C, chapter 3), also they existed. One has survived: Ostheim vor der Röhn (the name refers to the siting of the village in front of the Röhn-Mountains). Despite of being partly a ruin, there is so much left (and little had to be rebuild), that you will need hours to study the whole area. Ostheim has an inner curtain, reinforced with different corner towers. Additions, there was a second outer curtain, also with corner tower, which have been lower: Two “fire lines” welcomed attackers. Founded in the early Gothic time, the fortifications were constantly enlarged and were putted to the test several times. Within the 20th century, recreation to the remaining parts were done, and this is still continuing.



District (Kreis): Röhn-Grabfeld

Object: Nordheim vor der Röhn

(Search in HeidICON for: Nordheim vor der Röhn)



When walking up through the village to the “Church Castle” (picture left), the visitor will be welcomed by two towers: The high-roofed church tower and the rounded gate tower, which was enclosed to the today missing gate house. Therefore you get an impression of the benefit of a high located place in case of a siege. When walking around, you will find in the still existing wide moat half-timbered house (see picture down left), which use the high curtain as one of their outer walls. This picture is false ! Why ? These “Gaden” are from the “newer” time, are were built into the moat, after the need for defense had fallen obsolete in the 19th century at all, But if you continue further on to the hillside, you will be benefit by the origin view of the moat, which was sectioned by intersectional walls. The former second “outer” curtain, which protected the moat additionally, is, sadly to say, gone.



District (Kreis): Röhn-Grabfeld

Object: Serrfeld

(Search in HeidICON for: Serrfeld)



One of the oldest documented founding's of “Church Castle” is the one at Serrfeld: It is referring back to Romanesque times at all. Still today the gate tower dominated the way up from the village (picture left), accompanied by the curtain in full height to Southwest, were also one of the “Gaden” exists (see therefor part C, chapter 2, subpart 1). Sadly to say, that most of the remaining curtain measures only 2 meters in height, despite of the former five, but it is complete in total circumference. Nevertheless, the church tower with the nave show still pieces of their Romanesque nature at all, as it can be seen in the picture down left. The nave was never “replaced” by a new one, just some changes were made to the windows. Finally, the picture down right shoes the former situation: Two of the former 38 “Gaden” are still present, accompanying the gate tower. In the 19th century, attempts started to get “rid” of this old artifact at all – but then the mind of the people changed.



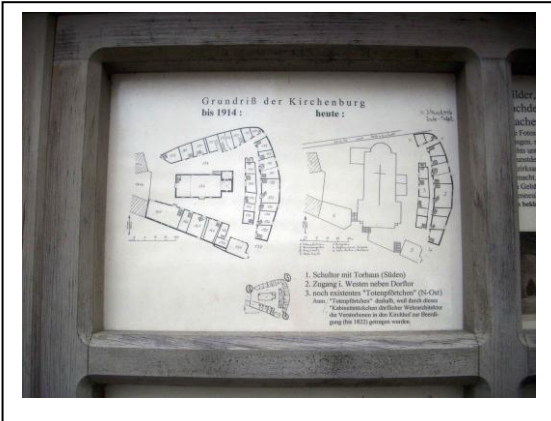
District (Kreis): Röhn-Grabfeld

Object: Oberstreu

(Search in HeidiCON for: Oberstreu)



The example of a „Gaden Church Castle” is Oberstreu. Dark and impressive, as the picture left shows, it is even today like a stronghold. For further information to the principle of the “Gaden”, see Part C, chapter 2, subpart 1), where Oberstreu will be explained as a representative of this type in Detail. But so much for the moment: Oberstreu is not anymore “complete”, it just looks since the year 1914 only just from two sides “like in former times”. In this year the people decided to get rid of the old and overcome “Gaden” and the curtain and start wrecking down. When half of the destruction was done, the mind changed and those with respect and responsibility to history got superior. So we half a “perfect half one” today, anyhow at least that. You will find “inside” the dense and narrow situation, which was common therefore.



District (Kreis): Schweinfurt

Object: Gochsheim

(Search in HeidICON for: Gochsheim)



„Gochsheim“ – this name stands for a nearly „complete remaining“ “Church Castle” of the Gaden-type. From the “outer side”, means from the side of the surrounding village, the “circuit” of Gaden is nearly unchanged, and only in the Northeast, there is the “new school house” built in, as it can be seen on the floor plan shown down left . Although the irregular, oval shaped structure is to see, and furthermore the impressive number of “Gaden” within the circuit. The picture down right gives a view to the gate house out of the courtyard. Obviously, the gate hose is slightly changed, as some of the Gaden re too. But the thing is, that also this “church castle” is still in “use” – on one hand the church, of course, and on the other hand the Gaden itself as store rooms, even not for the harvest anymore. The fact that is “used” causes the slight changes, but guarantees a goof shape for the future – after so many centuries !



District (Kreis): Schweinfurt

Object: Zeilitsheim

(Search in HeidICON for: Zeilitsheim)



Come on and „join“ the next „nearly complete one“ in the chain of best preserved, the “Gaden Church Castle” of Zeilitsheim. Also here, church and Gaden are in use, for service the former, for storage the latter – as is has been for hundreds of years! Only the need for protection has fallen obsolete since the 18th century, therefore the look of the half-timbered additions, set on the massive curtain as their base, is a picture of the “new time”, when the people need more space to store whatever they want. However, that guarantees another lifetime for at least a century, and you can study still a lot of “origin” details, like the year of construction of every single “Gaden” from the inner side, carved in the stone by chisel in the top of the entrance bow. So, these stones are “telling”, and if you can read the old Gothic cyphers, then you will understand them.



District (Kreis): Würzburg

Object: Burgerroth

(Search in HeidICON for: Burgerroth)



As there are a some of the “Church Castles”, also those of the „Gaden-„ type, founded in Romanesque time, there are some founding which can be traced back within the time period to their beginning. Most of them are gone or changed in such a way, that their origin can’t be recognized anymore. The fortified chapel of Burgerroth is one the very rare “survivors”. Even when the curtain is just a “shadow of its own”, the chapel itself show so much and good preserved details, that you can spent hours in studying them, as an example is shown in the picture down right. The complete overview down left shoes some changes in the manifestation of few Gothic windows and a some lasting of the Romanesque times. It was at the time of the “counterrevolution” in the early 17th century, when under Prince bishop Julius Echter upgrades were done – but this man preserved history very well – see therefore part D, chapter 1, subpart 5).



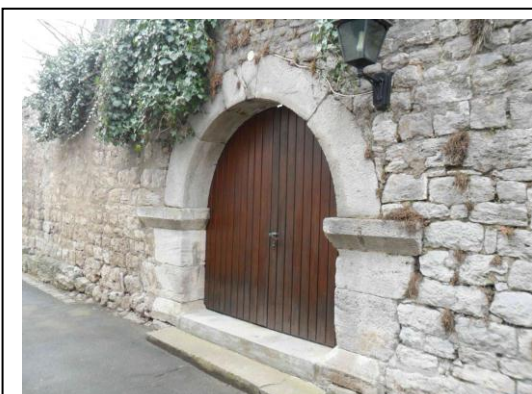
District (Kreis): Würzburg

Object: Winterhausen

(Search in HeidICON for: Winterhausen)



Impressive remnants of the inner, also as of the outer curtain are present. The picture left sows the way up from the village, while the staircases and the simple gate replace the gate tower since the 19th century. Originally, the founding traces back into the late Romanesque area, when under the mastership of the Prince bishopric of Würzburg a lot of churches and villages were “fortified. Winterhausen, as one of then, was fortified twice: Once by its “Church Castle”, which was one of the stronger ones, and second the village itself, which got market rights and was walled and had it won gate- and additional towers. The “Church Castle”, curiously, is located just outside the village, serving as a citadel in case the village was sieged. The picture down right shows remnants of the second curtain and the base of a half-rounded tower, still equipped with its loopholes.



District (Kreis): Fulda

Object: Soisdorf

(Search in HeidICON for: Soisdorf)



The “Church Castle” of Soisdorf can be described easy: Walls, walls and one rounded tower! While the gate house was laid down in the 19th century, in accompany action with filling up the complete dry moat, the people of that “time” still saved the mighty curtain, which is running at all four sides of the rectangular shaped courtyard. Even the loopholes are present – while the wooden rear parts of the battlement were not be replaced, due to the decision, that the courtyard still serves as a cemetery. Of interest is the unusual “one rounded corner-tower” in the Northeast. As is can be seen in the picture left, the tower explains its origin: The “laying loop-holes” indicate their origin out of the 15th century, made especially for Handguns. At that time, the church castle was “upgraded”, and while the Northwest corner was pointing to the open filed side, the tower with the new “distance weapons” was added.



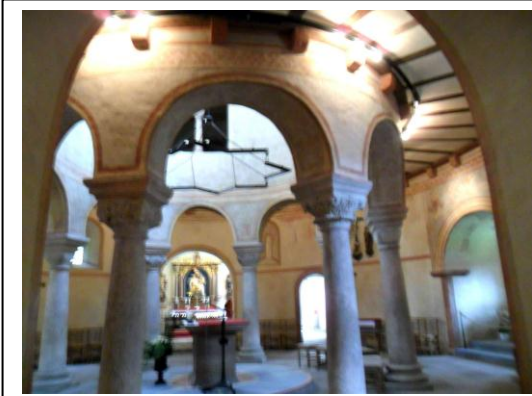
District (Kreis): Fulda

Object: Sankt Michael

(Search in HeidICON for: Fulda-Sankt Michael)



As old as the (former) Prince Abbey of Fulda is, that means out from the Carolingian time of the 8th century, something of these very first days has remained: The Chapel Sankt Michael. In the first moment, it looks like “conglomerate” of different styles and centuries – and that is correct too. But the very first time, there is the so called “rounded church” or “central church” – and good eyes will find it on the picture left also as on the picture down right. And what about the picture down left ? This is the “inside”, which was “purified” in the late 20th century, after so much changes during the Romanesque, the Gothic, the Renaissance, and so on, was done – inside although as outside. In the picture left you see the massive Romanesque tower added by, and the rounded upper part of the central church with the steep roof was also added later. However. At least something has survived, and even with the Baroque rebuilt cathedral of Sankt Salvator (not shown) in the neighborhood, Sankt Michaels outrivals that.



District (Kreis): Limburg-Weilburg

Object: Dietkirchen

(Search in HeidICON for: Dietkirchen)



Nor far away from the well-known cathedral of Limburg an der Lahn, there is something, that outrivals that with ease: Dietkirchen. Only the siting is marvelous, like “the Acropolis North of the Alps”. Founded in Romanesque times, the cathedral does still have good parts out of that time, within the substance of the “twin-towers” although as in the nave, the walls of the latter do show the Romanesque walling technique “opus spicatum” on several places. With parts of the former curtain left (without battlement, respectively), the view from the way up out of the village is a sight of its own. While changes during Gothic and later times were done, like in so many other places, you wouldn’t find a pure Romanesque building – but also the “mix” of different styles, combined with Romanesque portals, do have their very own skill.



District (Kreis): Main-Kinzig

Object: Hochstadt

(Search in HeidICON for: Hochstadt)



„Just missing the battlement“, that is all, which can be blamed in the case of Hochstadt. The remaining is breathtaking by its own: Of Romanesque founding, the walls show mostly in their base parts the typical walling technique called “opus spicatum”, as it can be seen at left and especially down right. While the “Church Castle” – within the walled and although strong fortified town of Hochstadt, saw battle actions before the former village was walled, the curtain of the church castle had to be repaired several times during the Gothic time. The former gate tower, still in this function today, serves also as a bell tower, since the old church tower collapsed in the 16th century. Also the nave is a Gothic rebuild, one of the strong or fortified size (see picture at left therefore). An impression of its own is the partly four meters high remaining curtain (see at down left), while of the other parts still reach a height of three meters.



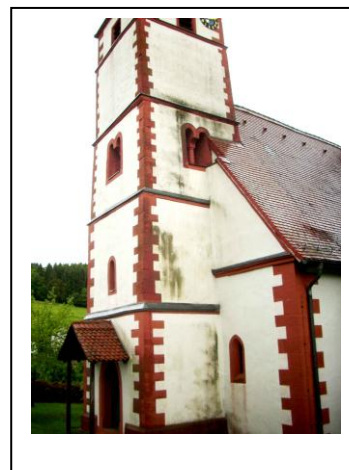
District (Kreis): Odenwald

Object: Güttersbach

(Search in HeidICON for: Güttersbach)



Sited at the edge of the small village, the “Church Castle” of Gütterssbach shows even today its origin out of the Romanesque time. Therefore, also the village is that old, but the centuries wiped out in there every visible sign of the origin. Not to by the church, which undergoes a Gothic “modernization” as it might be called, what means in detail by the nave, that most of the Romanesque windows were replaced by greater Gothic ones – but even those lost their style meanwhile. Despite of that and although concerning the fact, that the curtain is just a “shadow of its former size”, this church is still worth to be shown among the first -and the Romanesque founding referred back to the (former) imperial Monastery of Lorsch, which “colonized” the “Odenwald forrest” by founding new villages with church castles to protect the inhabitants from jealousy neighbors.



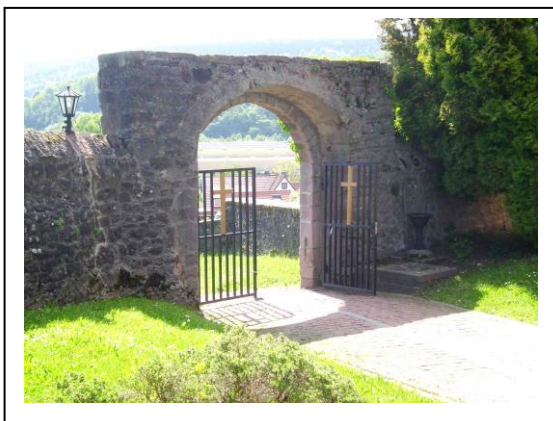
District (Kreis): Odenwald

Object: Sandbach

(Search in HeidICON for: Sandbach)



The inhabitants of the village of Sandbach had top e smart at all time to reach their “Church Castle” in time in case of trouble: Sited above the village on a small hill, the protection therefore was marvelous: Two curtains, two gate house, a lower one close to the village, from which a walled forcer goes up to the second gate house, the latter enclosed by the inner curtain. While both gate hoses and the outer curtain are gone since the 19th century, the siting and the remaining inner curtain are sights of its own. The church castle was founded relatively late, in Gothic times, as so many other were in this area – already existing ones were upgraded – the times in the relative calm area of the Odenwald had become hot, after the former servants of the monastery of Lorsch grew mighty after the power of the Monastery was broken in 13th century – and the price for the “domination games” of their masters has to paid by the rural inhabitants.



District (Kreis): Odenwald

Object: Steinbach

(Search in HeidICON for: Steinbach-Einhardsbasilika)



Looking for buildings with a long and eventful history, you have to consider the „Einhardsbasilika“ of Steinbach among the first. Founded by „Einhard“, a friend of Charlemagne himself (Karl the Great, therefore), and has been his biographer although. Founded by himself, with his own money, the Carolingian building was changed during the Romanesque, Gothic and every time period after – additions were made, it served finally as a barn and stable- Until in the 19th century people get aware about the great treasure, this build was at all. Therefore, purifying was started, but it should last until the late 20th century, when reasonable, or visible progress was made. Still not in its origin look (and it will never be), the inside of the nave look meanwhile more Carolingian than ever before -and also the very rare “tunnel crypt”, down right, can be visited – the former inhabitants are still missing, respectively.



District (Kreis): Rheingau-Taunus

Object: Kiedrich

(Search in HeidICON for: Kiedrich)



Today, with parts rebuilt, Kiedrich shows the proudness and importance of the archbishopric of Mainz, to which it belongs. Even with the battlement missing, the high curtain itself, in combination with the Gothic church and the St. Michaels Kapelle (which was built in the 15th century as an Ossuary – therefore, see part C; chapter 1, subpart 2) give an impressive picture at all. While this area, the so called “Rheingauer Gebück”, was a relatively “closed territory” of the archbishopric of Mainz, it got hot even in here, even the fire came out from the own house: During the so called “Mainzer Stiftsfehde”, the villages of the Rheingauer Gebück, and especially the inhabitants, needed every protection, they could get. Impressive is the picture down left with St. Michaels “Chapel” in a new dimension of view. The courtyard, today relatively empty (see picture down right) has had its own “Gaden” too - once - respectively.



District (Kreis): Wetterau

Object: Dauernheim

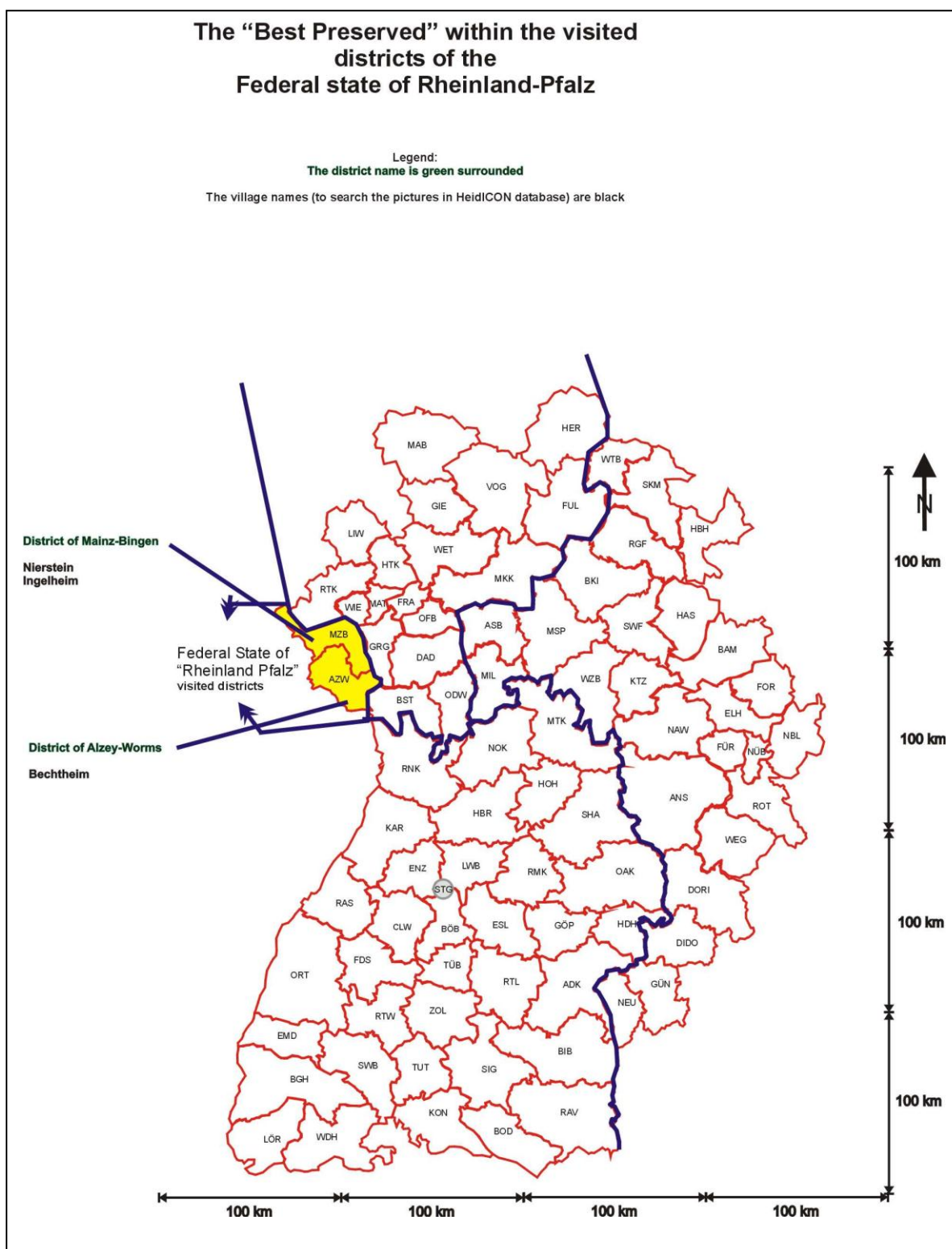
(Search in HeidICON for: Dauernheim)



One of the „strongest“ has Dauernheim been during its active time as a church castle. Still today, the impressive remnants of the double curtain catch the view instantly, dominated by the nave with the chorus, which were rebuild partly in Gothic time – while the first founding reaches back into Romanesque times at all (see picture down left). On the picture shown left, the cellar entrances do look misplaced in a curtain at all, and that is right: They are relatively new, from out the 18th and 19th century, after the need of defense had fallen obsolete. The special benefit of Dauernheim is, that you can see the whole “dimension” of the church castle, due to the fact, that the curtains are present in the oval-shaped floor plan.



Chapter 4: Visited Districts within the Federal State of Rheinland-Pfalz



Just two districts, within the given frame of the Project have been visited within the Federal State of Rheinland-Pfalz. These districts therefore, were of special interest at all, covering the area of the Archbishop of Mainz. Furthermore, it was the “battlefield” of one of the most violent “Bursts” in the history, when the “Mainzer Stiftsfehde” took place in the 15th century (see therefore part D, chapter 2, subchapter 5 for background information). The density of objects is high, the stage of preservation is just average – no wonders when considering that in the thirty years war and later times vast destructions took place around (see therefore part D, chapter 3). The more enjoyable are the “Best of Preserved” here, which are partly rebuilt at all, but in an authentic way, which underlines the sense for history although in this area.

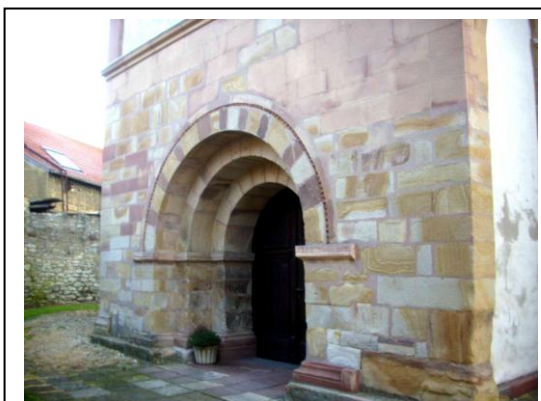
District (Kreis): Alzey-Worms

Object: Bechtheim

(Search in HeidICON for: Bechtheim)



The first impression of the nave and the tower of Bechtheim may be startling: Which style is that at all ? In fact, none – or better: A mixture. There are Romanesque ones at the tower and seemed to be also alongside the nave – but the rest ? The story of this back in Romanesque times founded "Church Castle" is also a pity one: In Gothic time changed partly into Gothic style (mostly the windows therefore), a marginable change happened also in the Baroque time within the 19th century. It needed strong efforts in the late 20th century, to purify as best as possible back to the Romanesque origins. The tremendous remnants of the curtain, still widely spread and about four meters high, had more "luck" in being untouched, at least in its current stage. Despite of its every "changing" styles, the "global impression" is a good one at all, serving many detail for the interested.



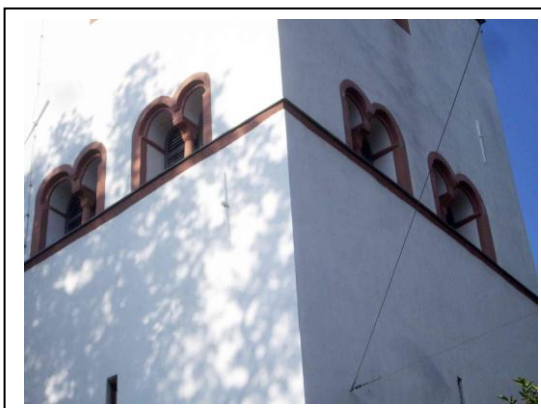
District (Kreis): Mainz-Bingen

Object: Nierstein

(Search in HeidICON for: Nierstein)



You really think in the first moment, that this will be a part of a town wall, and in the left picture you do face a former town gate, even in slightly changes manner. In fact: This is the "Church Castle" of Nierstein, upgraded to this tremendous strength during the "Mainzer Stiftsfehde" (see therefore part D, chapter 2, subpart 5). Founded in Romanesque times, as it still can be recognized by the Biforien of the church tower (see picture down left), the fortifications were constantly upgraded during the time. While partly destroyed within the thirty years war (1618-48), it was in the 20th century, when people with historic view and responsibility cared about the remnants and ordered to rebuilt and to preserve. Nierstein is a fine example of a "Church Castle" centered within the village; and while the village once was walled itself, the church castle served as a "citadel" within.



District (Kreis): Mainz-Bingen

Object: Ingelheim

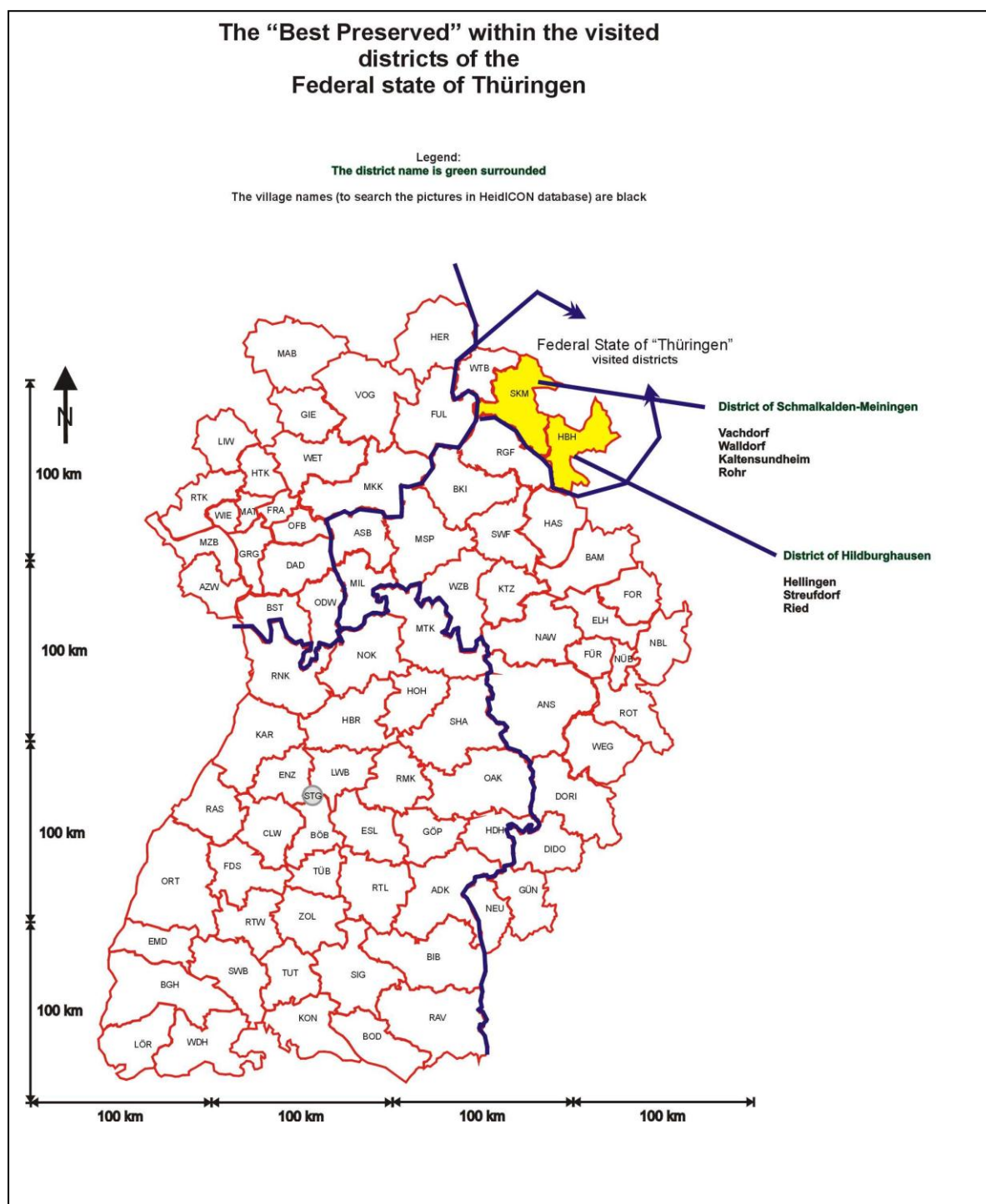
(Search in HeidICON for: Ingelheim-Burgkirche)



If there would a score within the „best preserved in our days“, Ingelheim would rank among the top ones. Impressive from the field side (see picture left) with its double curtain it does look like stronghold at all. Part of the town fortification, the “Church Castle” is equipped to the “field side” with double curtains. But the real eye-catcher is the really extraordinary looking nave with its high chorus. Originally out from the Romanesque times, only the church tower “survived” nearly unchanged. The nave with the chorus were rebuilt during the Gothic time, and as it was usual in this area, although here the “background style” is that of the Mediterranean area. It is to say, that the very good shape of the curtains and the nave refers to intense restoration and preservation within the 20th century, when the interest for this gem, which was fallen nearly into oblivion, saved it at last.



Chapter 5: Visited Districts within the Federal State of Thüringen



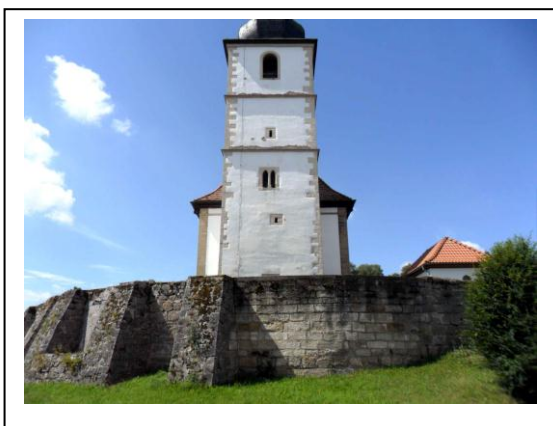
There is „more“, even in the already visited districts, and much more in those „behind“. Here, the average of density is high, caused by the controversy between the Prince Abbey of Fulda and the Counts of Henneberg (see therefore part D, chapter 1, subchapters 3 and 4). Especially in the valley of the “Werra River”, you find “Church Castles” like pearls on a string, and that was the reason, why these districts have been enclosed into the Project at all: The results proofed the “rumors”, the results are proud. Therefore, it is to say, that the stage of preservation in general does not exceed the average at all, despite, it is a little lower. Therefore, only few objects are cared in an intense way, considering the tremendous costs even to keep the stage of preservation. But these few objects are really “Best of Preserved”, and you will enjoy the details for sure. Imagine, what a look that was in the 16th century, for example, when everything was in shape! But – by the way – also sword and crossbow had to be ready at every minute.

District (Kreis): Hildburghausen

Object: Hellingen (Search in HeidICON for: Hellingen)



High located above the village of Hellingen, the “Church Castle” serves as a landmark at all. Founded in the late Romanesque/early Gothic period (within the 13th century), the tower still shows in its midst level the typical windows of that time, called “transition style”. While here, in the area of the controversy between the counts of Henneberg and the Prince Abbey of Fulda (see therefore part D, chapter 1, subpart 4) the times were “hot” over centuries, the fortifications were damaged often – but also repaired instantly. The curtain of Hellingen, characterized by its buttresses, is missing the battle walk today, but as you can see, it is complete in the circumference. Also the house is still present, changed with half-timbered parts in the 18th century, completing the picture.



District (Kreis): Hildburghausen

Object: Ried (Search in HeidICON for: Ried)



Not of the smallest size at all is the “Church Castle” of Ried. With the curtain in its complete circumference present, and the height already still four meters, it is an impressive view at all. The very massive tower, definitely not founded as a bell tower, indicates once more, how necessary protection for the rural people was, here in the “furnace of history” between the Counts of Henneberg and the prince Abbey of Fulda. Still in “active duty” within the 17th century, the battlement was in the 19th century finally gone. It was an action in accordance with the building of the new nave, such one of no style as usual at this time, and thereby the tower got its bell-level. A pity is, that the gate house with the draw bridge was completely laid down and the former surrounding most was filled too. But the “remaining” are impressive of their own as well.



District (Kreis): Hildburghausen

Object: Streufdorf

(Search in HeidICON for: Streufdorf)



From the side out of the village, the „Gaden Church Castle” of Streufdorf looks really impressive: The curtain with its loop-holes still present, is „climbing” up the steep hill side where the “Church Castle” is sited in. The doorways on the base of the curtain, to the outer side, were broken in since the 17th century, when storage room was needed, but they led only into cellar chambers underneath and give no way into the church castle at all. The top of the curtain, seen in the picture left, is made half-timbered, which looks strange to the outer side at all. And really, it is a result of the late 20th century, when most of the Gaden were rebuilt of historic reasons, as it can be seen in the picture down right at all. However, the existing and rebuild parts are the background of a good “global picture”.



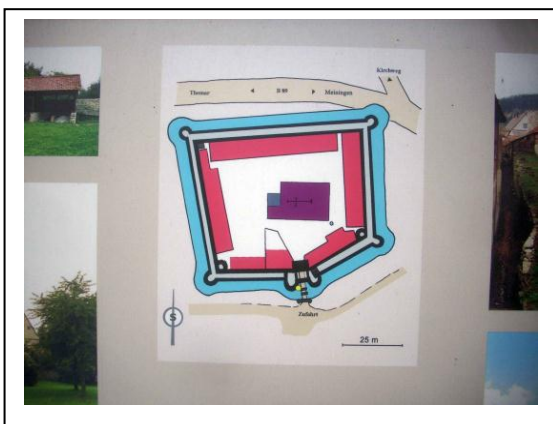
District (Kreis): Schmalkalden-Meiningen

Object: Vachdorf

(Search in HeidICON for: Vachdorf)



Sited at the edge of the village, and once additional protected by a wet moat, the “Church Castle” of Vachdorf has had a strong fortification at all: As it can be seen by the floor plan down left there were double curtains, the outer one with half rounded corner towers, the inner one with two round towers to the corners in the south. The most tremendous thing was the gate house – which is mostly gone today and just the line-out in the stones show the former place. Anyway, great parts of this giant have survived, also some the “Gaden” (see therefore part C, chapter 2, subpart 1) are present, and it is a pleasure to explore the remnants – as it can be seen by the given pictures anyway. Therefore, Vachdorf is another of the “pearls on a string” at the valley of the Werra river



District (Kreis): Schmalkalden-Meiningen

Object: Kaltensundheim

(Search in HeidICON for: Kaltensundheim)



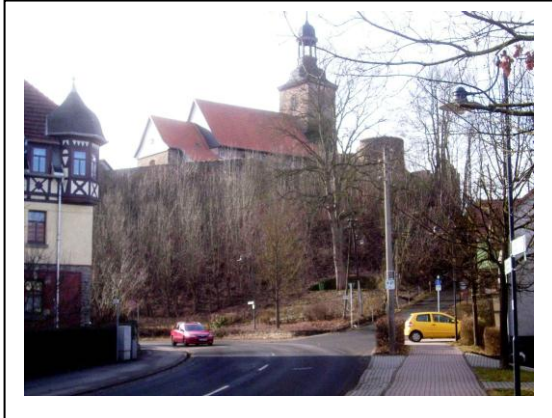
„Three different views, three different looks“, that describe the „Behemoth“ of Kaltensundheim. The picture left shows the “Church Castle” form the direction of the village with the great gate house and four meter high curtain. There has been a moat, covered by a drawbridge, once. The picture down left is taken from the way up to the hill side, the “Church Castle” is located in. Get the massive high curtains! Yes, two of them were running in former times around, and to this side parts of the second have remained. The picture down right, finally is taken from the “field side”, where the inner curtain has survived, sadly not with their origin height anymore. The church tower shows the origin of founding by its window: The “Transforming style” indicates the second half of the 13th century. And – by the way: That thing has had four rounded corner towers, which were laid down in the 19th century – plans are in progress to rebuild at least one.



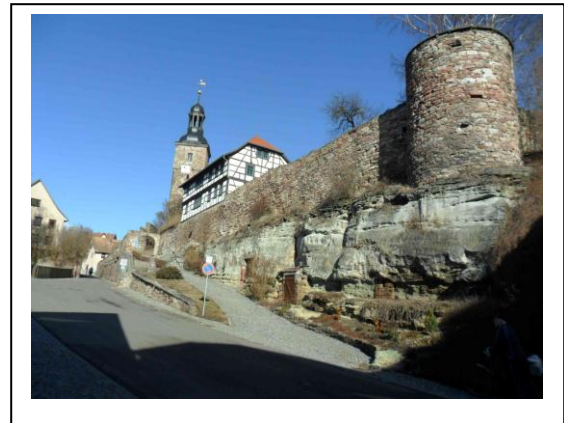
District (Kreis): Schmalkalden-Meiningen

Object: Walldorf

(Search in HeidICON for: Walldorf)



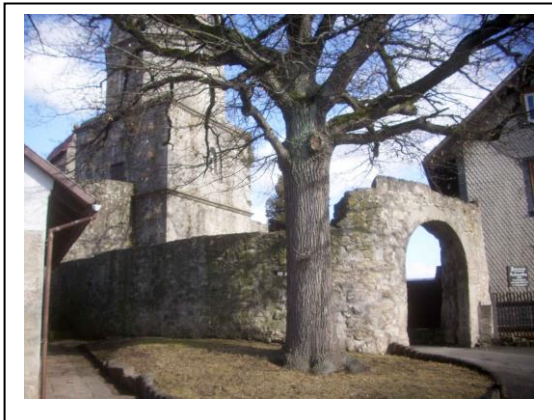
„Sited on a throne and dominating the village like a protector” - these words describe the situation, even of today. From the “Best of Preserved” in the valley of the “Werra River”, Walldorf is first. Two side are really steep, based on rock; one side is “climbing” up to that point, where the only “flat” corner is (see picture down right), but even this flat side is protected by an impressive array of walls, round towers and loop-holes (see picture down left). Despite of its high siting, the “Church Castle” does have rounded corner towers and high curtains also to these steep sides. Although the church itself is worth a visit at wall, of which the Gothic period as those of founding can still be seen. While the gate house, and being more precious, both former gate houses are “gone”, the way up from the village seems to be easy – very contrary to the former situation.



District (Kreis): Schmalkalden-Meiningen

Object: Rohr

(Search in HeidICON for: Rohr)



You can call it a „sleeping beauty“ – in our days, respectively. This strong behemoth has seen a siege more than once. The fortifications are impressive: The five meter high curtain, complete in circumference and also with the stone parts of the battlement on top, just missing the former wooden walkway and the roof (see picture down right); there is a gate tower with double doors, which still does have a forcer with the remnants of the outer gate (see picture left). The founding does last back to Romanesque times at all, of which the church tower also as the nave is still present, even with some Gothic and later transforming’s (see picture down left). And you also can buy that: This has been a “Gaden Church Castle” once, while the “Gaden” were completely dismantled in the 19th century to get more space within the courtyard – which is still in use as a cemetery!

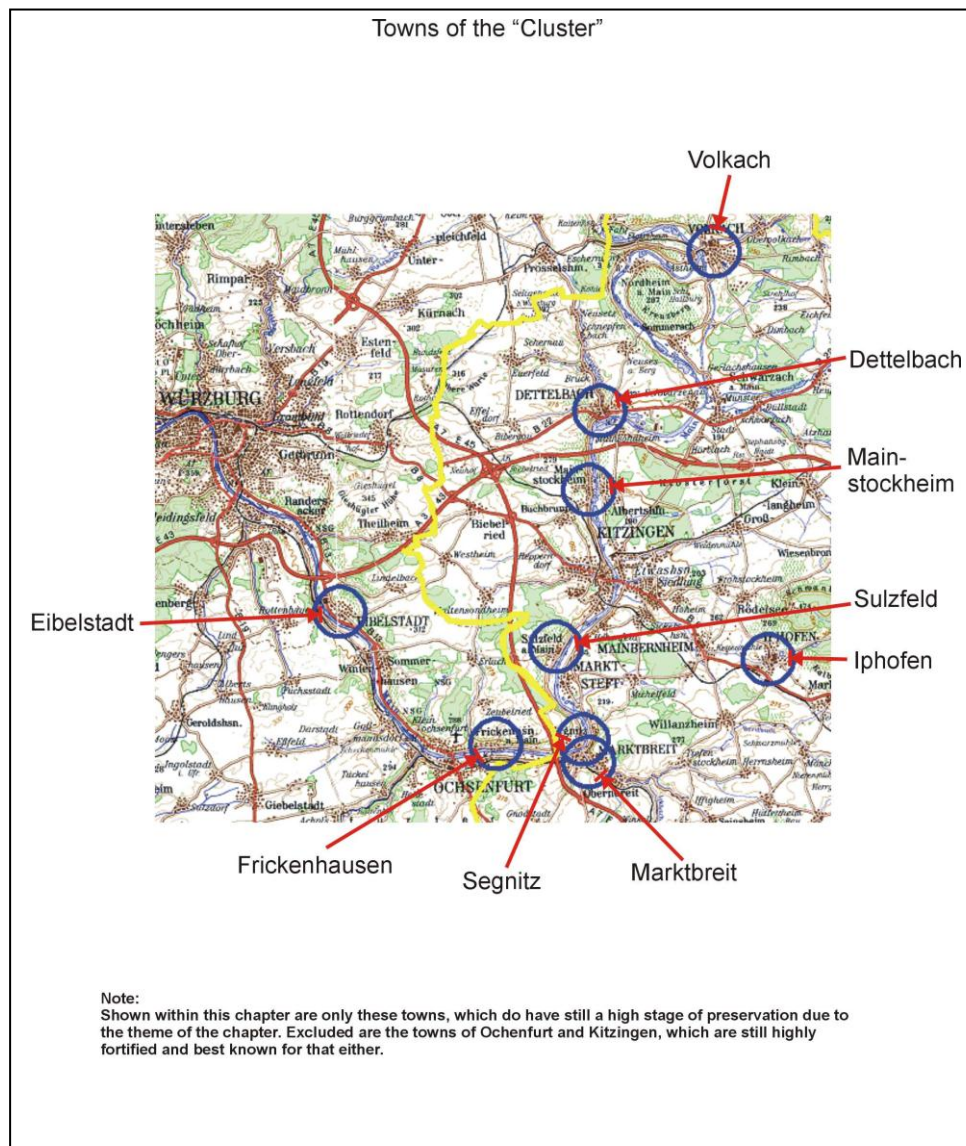


Chapter 6: The “Cluster” - something of the extraordinary

Introduction

Throughout our reconnaissance's, we found many interesting things in different areas - and of special interest there is a small region along the Main River between Würzburg and Schweinfurt, where a lot of towns have been fortified in a tremendous way – one aside the other. The background of that: They belonged to different masters, just when they were sited one by one: The Prince bishopric of Würzburg had a lot of possessions around here, but also the Margrave of Ansbach. And when they worked tighter this day, they were opponents the next one: The Main River, as the “main trading route” was a source of money of its own in this area, even by the „rights of way” and the toll out of that. Therefore, everyone wanted to demonstrate their power – with the outcome of really extreme strong town fortifications, some of them could have served for an imperial town at all.

Lucky, that a lot of these are in more or less good condition, and in the following, we will introduce these few towns in brief case – with the one or other additional interesting point at all. For example, a lot of these towns still do have remnants of their “Church Castles”, out from the time; they have been villages at all.



District (Kreis): Würzburg

Object: Eibelstadt

(Search in HeidICON for: Eibelstadt)



The characteristics of Eibelstadt are: Double town wall (picture down left), of which the outer one is reinforced by a dozen rounded towers of which (town wall and towers) a good deal is still present (the former moat, which was in front of that was filled in the 19th century; furthermore high and strong rounded towers at marginable points of defense (see picture left), and finally (picture down, respectively), the “Church Castle” does have at least its gate house, even when the latter has changed in some cases, also parts of the former curtain are present, mostly as outer walls of surrounding buildings (see therefore part C, chapter 3).



District (Kreis): Würzburg

Object: Frickenhausen

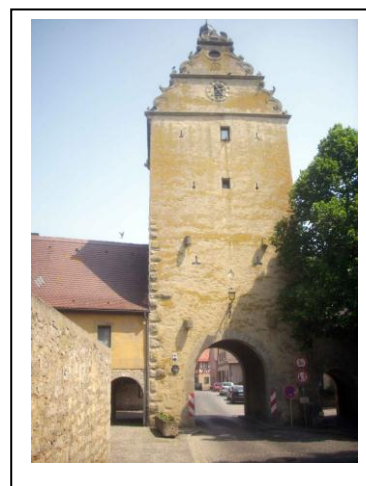
(Search in HeidICON for: Frickenhausen)



The characteristics of Frickenhausen today are its three remaining gate towers, which are a landmark therefore.

The “Mühltor” (picture left), slightly changed, but still with the door hinges present (therefore the former wooden doors, reinforced with iron benches, have been two stories tall); the “Maintor” (picture down left), which still has the former entrance from the partly “lowered” town wall, and finally the “unteres Tor” (which is the picture down although, respectively). The latter does have the bulky head stones on each corner in the base and the first upper level, a former sign for “try me, if you could”.

The three towers, also as the town wall, were founded in the 14th century, but tremendously strengthened in the late 16th, and early 17th century, when the whole area was undergoing a general “renewing”, while within the early 16th century upgrades by first firearms were made.



District (Kreis): Kitzingen

Object: Segnitz

(Search in HeidICON for: Segnitz)



Segnitz is the „exception among the examples“, while most of its town wall is missing today. Therefore, the “Church Castle” is nearly “unharmd” within its complete structure (just the battlement and parts of the curtain to the town side were laid down in the 20th century). The church castle therefore, shows very well its “independence, while it was a citadel within the walled town: As lined out in part C, chapter 3, also here the “Church Castle” with the village were existing when the latter got town rights and was walled therefore. As important and strong as the “Church Castle” was, it was integrated into the town defense in one corner of the town wall (picture left); to the town side, still a rounded tower with key-shaped loopholes exist (picture down left), while the curtain to the “outer side „just leaks its former battlement (picture down then). As it can be seen by the church tower (picture left again), the founding of the “Church Castle” is to set in the early Gothic time.



District (Kreis): Kitzingen

Object: Sulzfeld am Main

(Search in HeidICON for: Sulzfeld am Main)



Obviously renovated (but that has to be done even in past in regular intervals), the „Mantel“ of Sulzfeld is the proud „outer sign“ of this walled town. Therefore, you see the “shining inner highlight” in the background (also picture left, respectively): The town hall built by Prince Bishop Julius Echter (therefore, see part D, chapter 1, subchapter 5). While the town is sited in a hillside, the town wall follows up from out the Main River valley along the hillside, reinforced in regular intervals by towers (picture down left). Once, there was a (dry) moat in front of the wall, which is still recognizable by the flat (while filled) area outside the town wall. Finally, the wall stretches along the “hill side”, where it is also “nearly” complete and reinforced with impressive towers (picture down right, therefore).



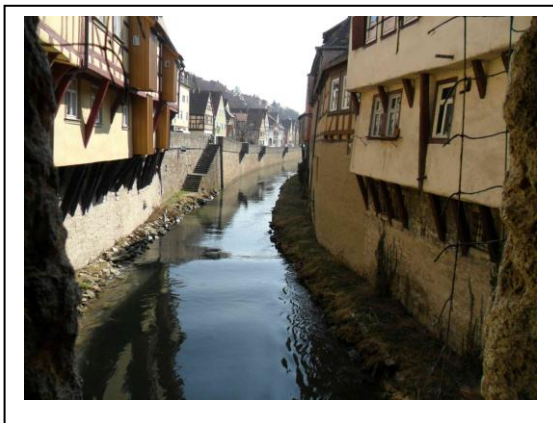
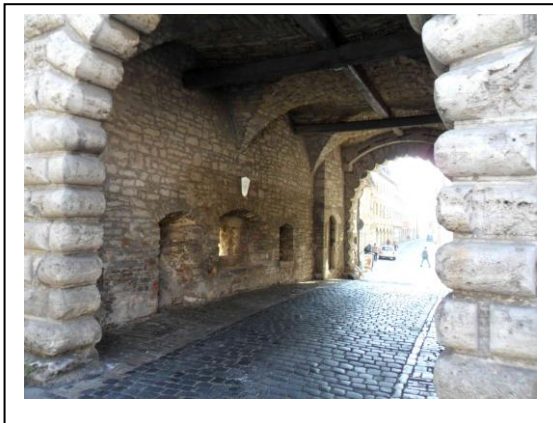
District (Kreis): Kitzingen

Object: Marktbreit

(Search in HeidICON for: Marktbreit)



While the little tributary river called „Ickbach“ merges at Marktbreit into the Main River, there are some chute pictures in this strong fortified town. Still today the visitor is welcomed by an impressive array of rounded towers and gate houses (picture left, therefore). The gates or gate towers, respectively, were strengthened in the 16th century, as the whole fortifications were. The picture down left shows the impressive gate chamber of the main gate, which had two intersection-gates, additional to the outer and inner doors, respectively. Inside the town, the area of the former "Church Castle" can also still be recognized, while parts of the old curtain (without battlement), still exist, but it is not a citadel within the town anymore.



Doesn't it look like little Venice, on the picture left? We face houses along the tributary river of the Ickbach there. The pictures down left and right show some "strange" beings – Remnants of a fortress, buildings, with barbicans – or, obviously on the picture down right, a crane with fortification? That is correct. But not against human attack – these are "ice-breakers" against the Main-river: After a hard winter, when even the river was frozen, the new spring caused damages by ice-flows to the buildings at the riverside, especially when it was combined with a flood in spring. Therefore, ware-houses, cranes and anything else had to "armored" in a really hard way – and still today, it is kept "in shape".

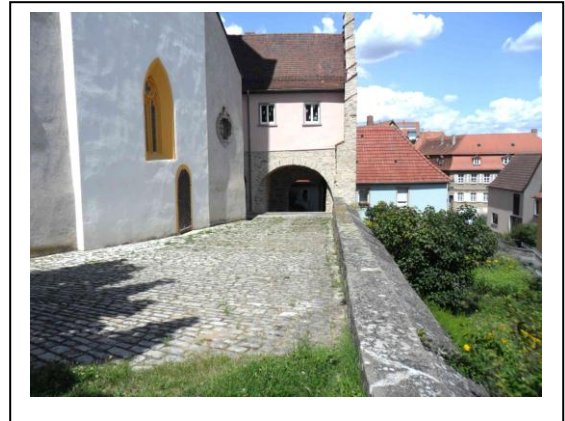


District (Kreis): Kitzingen

Object: Mainstockheim (Search in HeidICON for: Mainstockheim)



The next within the chain of the cluster is Mainstockheim, which is a fine example therefore, that the “Church Castle” stayed as a citadel within, even after the town was walled. In this case, more exactly, in the situation of today, the former strong town walls with gate- and reinforcing intersectional towers along the wall are gone – but therefore the “Church Castle” still is sited at the highest point, “overlooking” the scene at all (picture down right therefore). Still impressive is the view out from the village, shown in the left picture, which show that even the curtain is not complete in its former presence anyway, it was laid down in the 20th century for a better look to the church at all. Despite of that, the gateway with the outer wooden door is impressive; also as the (picture down left, therefore) loop hole at the right side of the picture indicate the upgrade of the “Church Castle” within the 16th century for fire-arms.



District (Kreis): Kitzingen

Object: Volkach (Search in HeidICON for: Volkach)



Also the lovely town of Volkach belongs to the „cluster“ region, and welcomes the visitor thy high gate towers, of which the environment to the former „outer“ or field side has changed drastic in our time by the growing „new town“. Despite of that, the inner town, the “old one” still has the flair from out of the Renaissance time, indicated very well by the town hall at the market square, as shown within the picture down left. Also here, the town church was “in the days before the walled town” a “Church Castle” of its own, a protector of the inhabitants of the village. Still today, you find the former courtyard, also not in use as a cemetery since the 20th century, outlined by the surrounding houses, showing the rectangular shape.



District (Kreis): Kitzingen

Object: Dettelbach

(Search in HeidICON for: Dettelbach)



As it was mentioned already earlier within this chapter, that some of the town walls and fortifications could serve for an imperial town with ease, it has to be done again in the case of Dettelbach. We have already pointed this marvel out in the earlier chapter in brief case, but now we set the focus on the fortifications in general. The picture left shows the long side of the town to the main river, and still here you find the reinforcing rounded towers, today used as rooms in some cases, parts of the town wall (without battlement respectively) and the former moat, used as a garden area today. Within the picture down left you see the siting of the town as one in a steep hillside. Therefore the town wall “climbed up”, also here reinforced in regular intervals by rounded towers. The most marginable point is at the „upper gate”, which is shown in the picture down right, and here from out of the town, respectively: Even after the main gate, there are forcing side walls, so that there was no direct access into the town, until you had passed the former inner gate at all.



An impression of the tremendous efforts to protect this town is given best at the most upper point, which was as marginable as the lower river side down to the main at all: Here, the steep hill flattens to the outer land, and within an attack, this would have been a more successful point to try an assault than the river side at all. Therefore, the reinforcing rounded towers were set in shorter distance into the town wall, which was additionally protected by a (former) deep and wide moat (a dry one, respectively). And again, special care was taken to the upper gate, which was, as already mentioned a gate house of the extraordinary at all – but here, as is can be seen in the picture down left, a tremendous high and strong rounded tower was added, overlooking its smaller brothers with ease – what was the most important reason for his existence: A lookout and battle director in case of a siege. Finally, as shown down right, there is the former “Church Castle”, of which still the fortified courtyard is lined out today.



District (Kreis): Kitzingen

Object: Mainbernheim

(Search in HeidiCON for: Mainbernheim)



Don't be startled, if this is not the same town as the one introduced before? For sure, not – because we are in the cluster, were one stronghold is sited close to the other. And when the term stronghold has to be proofed, Mainbernheim is a masterpiece also in that case. Sited within the here relative flat valley of the Main river, really high walls, strengthened by intersectional towers, were necessary for best protection, surrounded by a wide and deep moat, a "wet one" this time. But that brings us to the question: Why were such tremendous efforts done at all? The answer sounds simple, but triggers the most important Reason about the theme: To save the "face" at all. One of these towns would have been conquered by surprise during a local dispute, it would have cost more than tremendous amounts of money to get it back within negotiations at all – Therefore –that shouldn't happen at all (of course, plans were backfired during the second margrave war at all).



The „inner look“ of Mainbernheim is quite a lovely one. Still dominated by the gate towers of tremendous height, old houses of different style – therefore, lasting from different centuries at all, welcome the visitor. But the whole thing is overlooked by another tower: As the picture down left shows, the tower of the "Church Castle", of which the first view out of the down, is most impressive at all. Still after the strong fortification of the town, the "Church Castle" served as a citadel, protected by its own curtain. Finally, in the years of the Renaissance (16th century therefore), the curtain was partly laid down and new houses joined the former courtyard, when the outer walls of the town were upgraded during the time of upgrading within the 16th century at all.



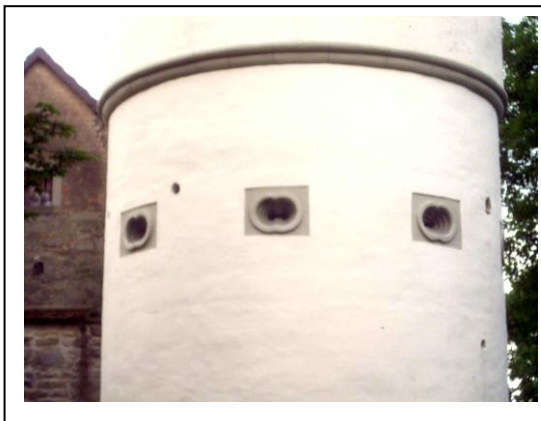
District (Kreis): Kitzingen

Object: Iphofen

(Search in HeidICON for: Iphofen)



The reign of the cluster will be finalized by the town of Iphofen (which was brief introduced also before for her importance). This town shows very well the "change" within the style of fortification from the „medieval time“ (as so often called) to the Renaissance. When you face the town from the Southern side, you will be welcomed by the reinforced outer gate, as shown in the picture left. While this was done within the late 15th century, it looks very familiar to that, what in common is expected for that century. In the "background", there are, like the skins of an onion, two more towers, referring back to different times: The more massive one is the "inner gate" from out of the 14th century, which was once the "outer gate" at that time see therefore picture down right in detail). And "behind" that, there is the tower of the "Church Castle", greeting from the late 13th century - still with its courtyard outlined. Finally, in this sequence, the picture down left shows the "Renaissance" upgrades by example: "Mouth-shaped" loopholes for harquebuses.



Also in the case of Iphofen, the town wall is „complete“, foreseen from some small „break ins“, of the 20th century for modern traffic, respectively. To the north and the West, the moat is still present and allows an imagination of the look of former times at all. While the dimensions of this town do not reach those of an imperial town at all, Iphofen still is not one of the smallest "walled" towns. The picture down left shows, also like the upper sequence, the „upgrades“ which were made for additional protection during the centuries: Early 14th in the back, represented by the high (origin) gate tower, and reinforced within the late 15th century by the long gateway added to all gates during this time.

So much for the "cluster".



Part C The developing of the „Church Castle“

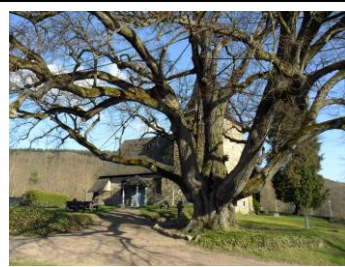
Introduction

The world, such “things” like “Church Castles” developed, must have be really “another one than ours” Really ? For my point of view, it was not completely “another” world, it was the world of our ancestors.

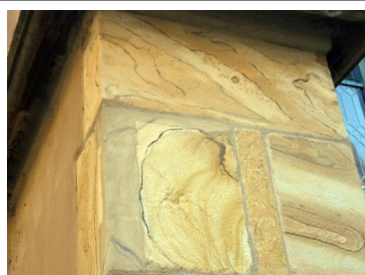
A world in a former time, with partly different circumstances in a lot of cases. By travelling through the districts, gathering what has left of the “Church Castles” at all, we found sometimes – on a few rare places, other remnants of this “former time”-but still existing. All of them enclosed to the “Church Castles”, underlining their importance as the center of the social life in ancient villages.

We will have in the second chapter a brief look to such additional “remnants”, which gave us a very good “view” into the world, they came out from. In the further chapters, the developing of the “Church Castles” at all will be handled then.

District: Rheingau-Taunus; Object: Michelbach



District: Forchheim; Object: Effeltrich



District: Kitzingen; Object: Volkach



District: Main-Taunus; Object: Floersheim



District: Vogelsberg; Object: Frauombach



District: Main-Kinzig; Object: Udenhain

Chapter 1 Another time – another world: A window to the “past” ?

Would we ever be able to “understand” a former world, another world. This is hard to answer, even when this “former” world is the one of our ancestor. Of course, today so called “re-enactments” are very popular, the time of the medieval, or the Romans, of Markets, fighting’s -but will that be helpful ? Always we are aware, that these “re-enactments”, or also movies, are just an interpretation of our time about this “former” world. Always, we could come “back” if we don’t like it anymore -and the “real people of these times” – could they ? – of course not, because they don’t know another “world” than theirs, their world of strong religious being, noble and cleric masters who decide in the name of the Lord about them. We only can “try” to get a better understanding – and very helpful in this case is, not to “transfer” for some hours into another person by changing your clothes – instead of that, look for “signs and remnants” out from the past, existing windows “back in time”, which still exist – by given examples you will find them also in your own circumference, more or less, respectively.

Subchapter 01 About lime-trees, stone circles, announcement places – and more

For us, the world about eight – to four hundred years ago may sound strange – we read about that, we report -but do we really understand what was going on in these centuries ? How the rural people had thought - some of us may smile about this “simple minded” people who had less connections and education – but be aware: Are we with our modern world really independent ? Are we safe from being manipulated? You may give yourself the answer.

District (Kreis): Forchheim

Object: Effeltrich

(Search in HeidICON for: Effeltrich)



For “former times” it was a common picture, in our times it is a very rare one: Not talking (only) about the “Church Castle” of Effeltrich – which is already known and noticed within this report – Let’s put focus within the picture upper left – to its right frame: Some kind of tree, stabilized by a kind of logs, seriously not natural grown – and the picture upper right shows the „whole thing” in full-scale.

A kind of “Bonsai tree ?” Definitely, we are not in Japan – the answer is coming out from the “past”: It is a judgment place with its characteristic lime tree, therefore it stands for the “high judgment” in case of crime and murder at all. Here, the village major (if the village was important enough that this position were held by the village major at all) or a representative of the responsible authorities (worldly, noble or cleric) held meetings, the so called “judgment days”, mostly in regularly intervals – or instantly, if a serious crime has happened recently.

While this place was always in direct neighborhood of a “Church Castle”, the importance of the latter is lined out there in addition.

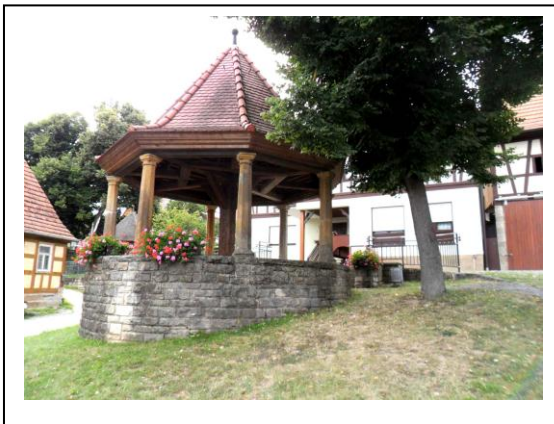


Some of these lime trees – and also this one shown in the picture, are hundreds of years old. Cared by the inhabitants, they were the symbol and center for justice. When they had grown relay tremendous, and their main branches got into danger to break down at all, wooden constructs to stabilize the tree were made, as it can see seen by the picture at in detail. Every century or so, another “ring” had to be added.

District (Kreis): Bamberg

Object: Mürsbach

(Search in HeidICON for: Mürsbach)



Just underneath the church castle, aside the “lime tree”, there is something else preserved: The “announcement hall”

It looks like a romantic garden house for a picnic when the weather is right –

Therefore, the purpose of this “being” is a much more serious one: Close to the “judgment” place with the characteristic lime-tree shown above, this was the decision- and announcement place for “internal” administration belongings. Here, the village major and his associated held their meetings.



It looks like a kind of temple, a Greek or Roman., may be –but we haven’t to go that far back in time for solving this riddle: Out from the medieval, and also in use still in the 18th century, this is the place, the village mayor and his associates sat and held their meetings – in official belongings, it is to say (there were also kinds of meetings without official character, it is to say).

However, when a decision was made, the speaker of the group stood up and faced the already present inhabitants with the words “By the wisdom or Lord, the village major had come to the following:”

When the case was judged, then the executioner had his hour – in other districts people were not decapitated even in murder crimes – more merciful and longer lasting as a shining example was hanging – and therefore, the gallows was placed to be seen from far, on a hill outside.

District (Kreis): Vogelsberg

Object: Hopfmansfeld

(Search in HeidICON for: Hopfmansfeld)



Two rounded pillars, made of sandstone, each about five meters high, in a distance of also five meters.

Had the Romans let a greeting out from their time on this place? It looks like remnants of an ancient temple, but the purpose of this was a much harder one:

Just imagine a strong wooden log, about five meters long and four sided, which fit exactly into the carvings on top of each pillar – and the gallows is ready “for action”.

Especially in this area, some of these landmarks are still existing, therefore not in active duty anymore, respectively. But still the visitor of today feels a very strong chill of his own bones, when standing in front of that. Here once, not too long ago, some fellows had hung up – for weeks, respectively, as a visible sign for everybody who walked by, that justice and judgment were in “good shape”.

Subchapter 02 A daily threat – the dead (about messages from them and ossuaries)

As the courtyard of a „Church Castle“ was the cemetery, containing also the Gaden and administrative buildings in some cases – the people had another view to death and life. The dead could come every day - not only in form of geriatrics – this was rare -or sickness – more reasonable was a “visit” by the enemies. Ossuaries have been everywhere, because the space of the courtyard was limited - also, you could find plates like the following:

District (Kreis): Röhn-Grabfeld **Object:** Sondheim vor der Röhn (Search in HeidICON for: Sondheim vor der Röhn)



It is always mounted at the gateway to the cemetery, and it is a message from the inhabitants of the cemetery to their visitors:

In translated sense:

All of you, who walk by,
and you see about our situation,
that, what you are, we have been,
that, what we are, you will be.

A really “encouraging” welcome for the visitor, isn’t it ?

By the way –the awareness that “this” could happen all the time to everyone (of the living) was common. There is no sarcastic background by this, just a remembering of what could (and often would) happen every day.

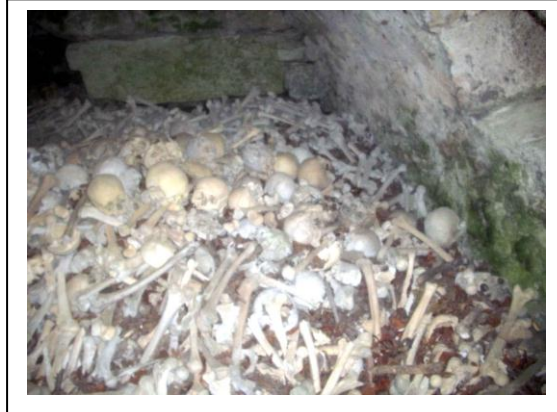
The Ossuary or bone house: Meet your “Ancestors”

While the cemeteries, outlined by the curtain with it battle walk on top, has had only “limited space”, and the population increased by the generations too, there had to be “clean up” activities from generation to generation. But the bones were not thrown away, they were kept in a so called Ossuary or bone-house (sometimes also called Karner) within the courtyard. When in the 19th centuries, after the need of defense and protection had fallen obsolete long ago, most of the cemeteries were enlarged and the bone-houses emptied and laid down. Only in a few rare cases, you will find remnants, or still existing ones, like in the following examples:

District (Kreis): Bamberg

Object: Teuchatz

(Search in HeidICON for: Teuchatz)



Added in north of the church tower (which serves in its ground floor as the chorus), there is the vestry, which has in its east wall a small gate. “What for ?” you may ask -and a closer look shows the door made as an iron grille.

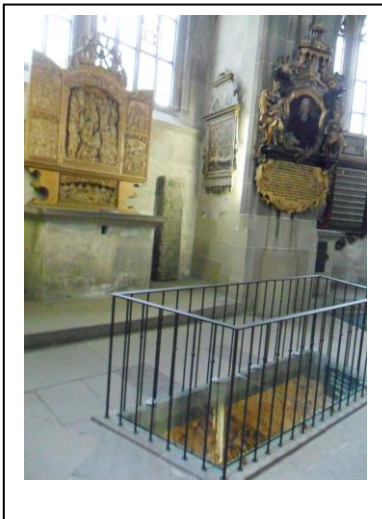
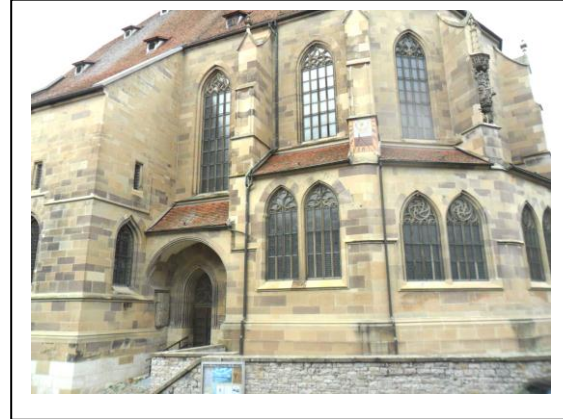
If you don’t have nerves, forget the final picture at left - but here they are: Meet the ancestors, still inhabitants of the ossuary. In former times, people had a very “cool” point of view: Time goes by, death comes in. For some sooner (for a few more sometimes very soon), for some later – but it was a fact. And with the knowledge, that the church care about the soul when it had come to, people stand this.

District (Kreis): Schwäbisch Hall

Object: Schwäbisch Hall

(Search in HeidICON for: Schwäbisch Hall)

Would you expect also an Ossuary at the former imperial town of Schwäbisch Hall ? Long time ago, based on some mentioning by old documents, it was expected to be there, but gone already. But by random – during a recently done preservation in the chorus area of the Sankt Michaels church, there was "found something":



Proudly dominate Sankt Michael the picture of the upper town on the highest point of the market square. While the church was rebuilt in Gothic times, except the Romanesque tower which was kept and leveled up, it is outside and inside a gem of architecture. Although the chorus, which is surround by several chapels belonging to the former mighty "town nobles" of the city, is a masterpiece of Gothic architecture. Recently, during some preservation work need to done inside, there was found a chamber underneath, when solid ground was expected (picture left, respectively). And the surprise was guaranteed, then the workers found: The old bone-house or ossuary, out from the time when the courtyard was still in use as a cemetery and surrounded by it's curtain. Therefore, you can visit also here some on the noble ancestor nearly in "real", because only the privileged people of the town were buried at Sankt Michael.

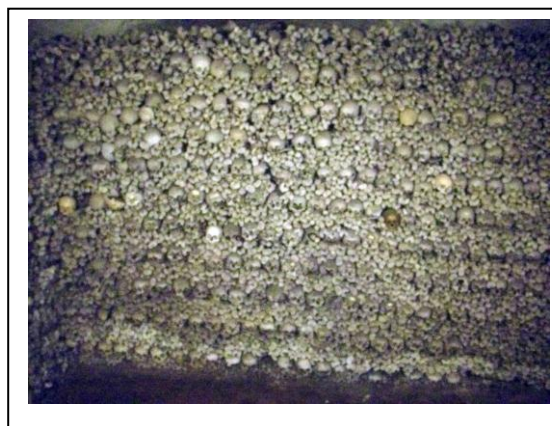
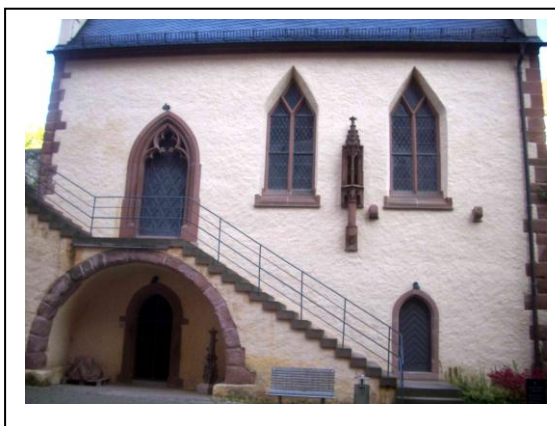


Last example in this line is Oppenheim

District (Kreis): Mainz-Bingen

Object: Oppenheim

(Search in HeidICON for: Oppenheim)



Within the courtyard of the church of Oppenheim, which is located proudly "over" the town (not shown in this theme), you will find the chapel of Sankt Michael (left upper picture, respectively). While the upper level is serving still as a chapel room, the ground floor keeps a collection out of the former centuries:
In a town, there will be more "inhabitants" for the cemetery than in a much smaller village, and therefore you will find about 20000 (twenty thousand) skeletons – as it is said, still in and fine lined up. Respectively, no one has counted them in total – but as the pictures show by themselves, the number of "inhabitants" is a great one.

Subchapter 03

Measured by stone (about scaled volumes)

District (Kreis): Röhn-Grabfeld

Object: Bad Königshofen im Grabfeld

(Search in HeidICON for: Bad Königshofen)



On the market square, just in front of the town church, there is to find this stone – A memorial ? Not at all.

It is out from the year 1525, and it is made to measure corn and others by scaled volumes – therefore, a "window" into that time. Trading was done on the Market square at all – and while some of the merchants did sometimes have their problems with "volumes", the problem was solved by defined "volumes" under the town councils authority. With that stone, and its defined "officially" volumes, deals were done, under the eyes of the town servants, of course.



The picture show the four different "standardized" volumes to measure the corn, while the Volumes are $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{3}{4}$ and one "Metze". This "Metze" is a "sub-unit" of the bushel and helps to measure smaller amounts than the bushel itself. One "Metze" is $\frac{1}{8}$ of the volume, one bushel does have.

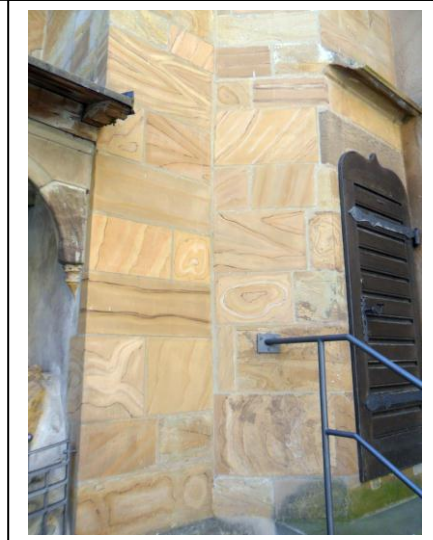
Therefore, just one moment for the "Volumes", or distances, or money – of the former time.

There exist a lot of different ones, and you have to know always, where you are. Within the territory of the imperial town of Nürnberg, things were measured, weighted and paid in the "Nürnberger Way". Within and around the imperial town of Frankfurt, in their way – and so on.

For the tradesmen, it was sometimes the "Hell", to know all the different measures, weights, lengths and so on – and they had to be able to transform from one system into the other when they went to another place. If you were good, you could make money out of that – if not, you won't be long in the business anyway.

Therefore, back to the "bushel": The range of the volume could rank from 40 liter to 200 liter (extremes therefore). So, one "Metze" still $\frac{1}{8}$ of the volume of a bushel – but always know with which "bushel" you are dealing !

By the way – in some cases, it was not necessary to paint the outer side of a church, if the people want to have the outside colorful either. Sometimes, the nature delivers patterns and colors by itself. With a smart architect, there could be really arts outside – as shown in the example of the town church of Volkach, district of Kitzingen.



Subchapter 04

Literature “out from the past” – nearly eyewitnesses –

Very helpful – (but sometimes hard to understand) are “eyewitnesses” reports out from the past.

By the way, while these are written around the end of the 19th century, the language by all of them is still German, and furthermore German of that time – which is almost a very interesting comparison of how it had changed today. All of them are from different “centuries” and therefore it is most helpful to read them intensively, if you do want to get impressions and there out a “crude” imagination about the circumstances, our ancestors lived within. Given are the Signatures, these books are available by the Library of the University of Heidelberg – for members only, respectively.

First:

Hessen und die Mainzer Stiftsfehde 1461-63

Almost 450 years later, in 1899, the actuality of this theme hasn't dwindled at all. Doctor Grundlach describes the general background of this furious event also as the development of this dramatic event at all. By origin documents (as a reprint, respectively), the conversation and “speech” of the 15th century will be brought directly into your mind of today. For a brief background about this theme, see part D, chapter 2; subchapter 5.

(Mit einem Anhang von Urkunden und Aktenstücken
Von Dr. Franz Grundlach; Marburg; N.G. Elwert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung 1899)

SIGNATUR: B 5893-10

Second:

Erhard Schürstab's Beschreibung des Ersten Markgräflichen Krieges gegen Nürnberg.

Within that, a member of the town council of Nürnberg describes by his point of view the situation of the eventful time. When Joseph Bader published this, by referring to the origin protocols of town council member Schürstab at all, in the year 1860, nothing to the dramatic view was gone, even 4 centuries after. A further gem of this Eyewitness report are lists about weaponry, arsenal lists, and common rules about military tactic in defense and field battle of this time, also mentioning the tactics of the “Hussiten Wars”, which were fresh in mind for everybody (see therefore part D, chapter 2, subpart 4).

(Quellen zur Bayerischen und Deutschen Geschichte. Herausgegeben auf Befehl und Kosten seiner Majestät des Königs Maximilian II. Achter Band; München, 1860 Herausgegeben von Joseph Bader, Vorstand des k. Archiv-Conservatoriums in Nürnberg)

SIGNATUR: Haeusser 484::8

Third:

Julius Echter von Mespelbrunn, Bischof von Würzburg und Herzog von Franken

This is more than a biography about Prince bishop Julius Echter, Duke of Franconia. Written in 1843, it is more close to this eventful time than our days are. Doctor Buchinger describes the situation of the Prince bishopric in general, how it has turned worse by the spreading Protestantism at all. Furthermore, he draw a picture of the Prince bishop and also of the environment, he lived in. The diplomatic connections, the alliances, the controversies – all this give a real „inside view to that time”, even when it was written two centuries later. And of course, the great role, Julius Echter played in the „counter-reformation” of that time will be highlighted in detail.

Von Dr. Joh. Rep. Buchinger,
Kgl. Bayer. Rathe, vormaligem Archivar zu Würzburg und dermaligem ersten Adjutanten im königl. Reichs-Archiv, Professor honorarius an der Universität zu München, und außerordentlichem Mitgliede der Academie der Wissenschaften
Nebst des Bischofs Portrait und Facsimile in Stahlstich und 4 radirten Steinzeichnungen
Würzburg, 1843; Verlag von Voigt und Mocker.

SIGNATUR: B 4741-8

Chapter 2 The developing - when there is more to protect more than only life

Introduction

The next step is a “bigger” size – due to the importance of the village:

If this is sited on a trading route, or is the center of administration for the encircled farms and smaller villages, then mostly a custos or a bailiff has had his “seat” here. Therefore, the „Church Castle“ needs more than to protect only the life of the rural inhabitants. Sounds crude ? Not at all. For the “masters”, equal if they were nobles, imperial towns, monasteries or a bishopric, the “tenth” was also of a formidable importance. Therefore, that was collected and stored in here, until it was transported by guarded convoy to the masters seat.

Subchapter 01 The “Gaden Church Castle” – a multiple purpose construction

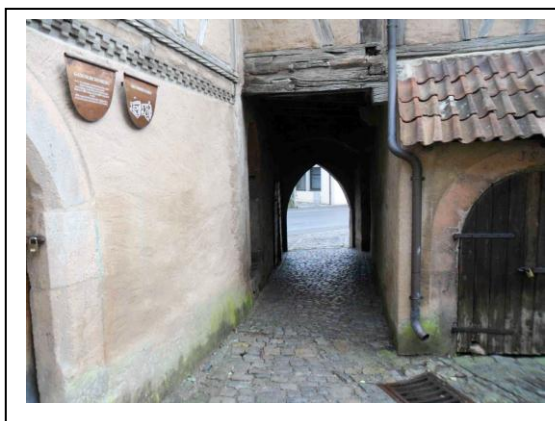
District (Kreis): Röhn-Grabfeld

Object: Oberstreu

(Search in HeidICON for: Oberstreu)



It looks like a stronghold, and by the way, it is one. But not only a stronghold to protect rural inhabitants, this type of church castle, the “Gaden Church Castle” is also store space for harvest and other goods and meeting point for the social life within the village. So, there was a daily frequency of a church castle, not only on Sundays for the service. Bring in something or do some repair-work, in some cases, craftsmen had their rooms inside the church castle, in their own “Gaden” (we come to that later this chapter with the church castle of Mönchsondheim). But by the way – what are these fabulous, name delivering “Gaden” ? How do they look like ? Well, from the outside you won’t see them, because the “Gaden” are built inside the curtain in the courtyard using the strong curtain as outer wall – And the battle walk was served from inside the Gaden, it was their upper level.

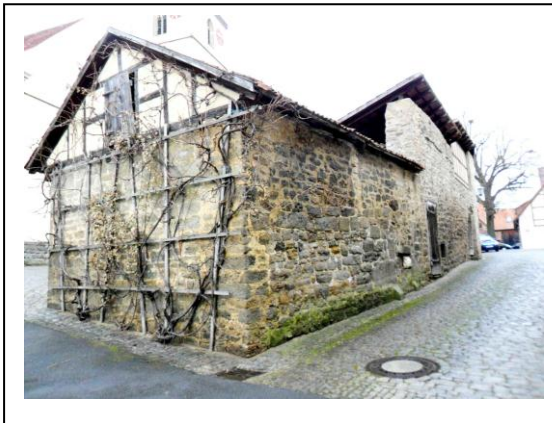


To get what the “Gaden” are, we step into the “Church Castle” by one of the postern gates, still reaching up from the 14th century, while simplified and without the three staged doorway today. Inside we see: The “Gaden” – The base level is made of stone, mostly there is a cellar underneath. The upper levels are made half-timbered. You may say: These are half-timbered houses” or “block-houses” , are you are right. Except the fact, that the outer wall is the strong, five meter high curtain and the upper floor of each Gaden is the battle walk with loopholes to the outer side. To store and to fight if necessary – that is the characterization of the “Gaden Church Castle”. In the natives tongue, the term “Gaden” is still today most common, and the name “the Kirch-Gaden” is often used for a road running close to the church castle. In some cases, there was also a small school inside the church castle – for the privileged inhabitants from the 15th century onwards, to learn to read and to write.



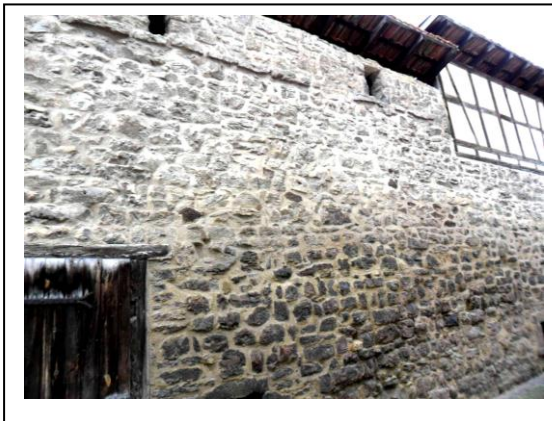
The situation in the Southeast of Oberstreu shows different varieties, Gaden could „develop“ when the need for defense had fallen obsolete. While still the Gaden belong in most cases to special people and are in “use”, some of them replaced the battlement with its loophole by half-timbered structures to get more space.

It is clear to say, that this is not the former situation at all – the former one, the defense form, can be seen left of the half-timbered “outer structures”, where the roof is still on top of the curtain at its highest point and inclining to the courtyard.



A closer look to the „dissection“, which shows the „origin – or defense situation“ by the higher curtain with the existing battlement and the roof inclining to the courtyard.

The “Gaden” in front of that has lost its battlement and the roof is inclining to both sides symmetrically. You will find this in a lot of cases, if the Gaden are still existing at all. Very often, the people care about the historic background and try to keep the shape as authentic as possible, but on the other hand, it is also a question of the money.



Oberstreu was left a part of its origin curtain with the battlement, which is shown in detail from the outer side: You can see the loopholes, which were served by the defenders with their crossbows in case of a siege.

Clearly, the door in the left corner – made of wood and to the outer side – is from 19th and 20th century, cut into the curtain for a better use in our days. It is to point out, that this special part of the Gaden-circle is under care of the historic section of the town authorities, which kept the historic “look” as their primary purpose.

District (Kreis): Schweinfurt

Object: Gochsheim

(Search in HeidICON for: Gochsheim)



To get a „complete impression“ of what a „Gaden Church Castle“ means, Gochsheim is one of the best for. As you can see in the upper pictures, the “circuit” of the “Church Castle” is (nearly) complete, the strong curtain as the out wall still has some loopholes either. Somewhat sad is to mention: The “iving” of wide parts is not good for the mortar of the curtain at all, by the way.

The picture at left shows the floor plan, and even if it titled with “the thick tower”, it does reflect the whole, oval shaped being, with the church nearly centered. The “Dicke Turm”, outlined by the red circle #23, was one of the Gaden, of which the curtain to the outer side was enlarged to a half-round tower, which projected out into the surround former moat vor better protection; the former place of that thing is shown in the picture down left.

Furthermore, you see that the “Church Castle” still does have about 30 “Gaden”, in former times some more, which were dismantled when the “Schule” (the new school) was built into in the 19th century – at that time the need for defense had already fallen obsolete.

The picture down right shows the (former) gate tower, which has “changed slightly” since his active duty as a protector of the entrance was over: Portcullis and draw bridge are missing, and the loopholes in the upper levels are replaced by windows, while the rooms behind serves as apartments today. The whole “Church Castle” is in combined village- and private use, which caused changed in the look – but keep the substance in general in good condition – a compromise then.





Let's complete the „visit“ of Gochsheim by a short views around the courtyard. The upper pictures shows the situation in direction to the (former) gate tower, with (slight modernized) Gaden enclosed. To “upper left” you get a view to the rear side of the (former) gate tower, which was equipped with two double-doors, made of strong wood and reinforced with iron bends. In the top of the passage you still can see the “murder hole”. Left to the (former) gate tower there is a “modern looking” building, which is the rear side of the enclosed town hall, but that replaced the former “Gaden”, at least the size was kept.

In general it is say, the rest of the Gaden, partly shown by the picture left, were still in relative “origin” look, despite of the fact, that they are in commercial use today: The people here do care about their “Church Castle”, and are aware about this historic treasure, more than even a century ago. Changes were made only if really necessary, and, frankly spoken: The “Church Castle” in general was never a static being, changes in the “inner” had been done all the centuries either.

However, sometimes there will be still details that indicate the “former nature” – remember the former “Church Castle” of “Oberstreu” on which we introduced the theme of the “Gaden-“, and that on one part at the “outer side” you still can see the battlement with its loopholes – so it is at Gochsheim too: Here in the west, as shown in the picture down, you still see the battlement – covered by the roof of the 20th century.



District (Kreis): Kitzingen

Object: Mönchsondheim

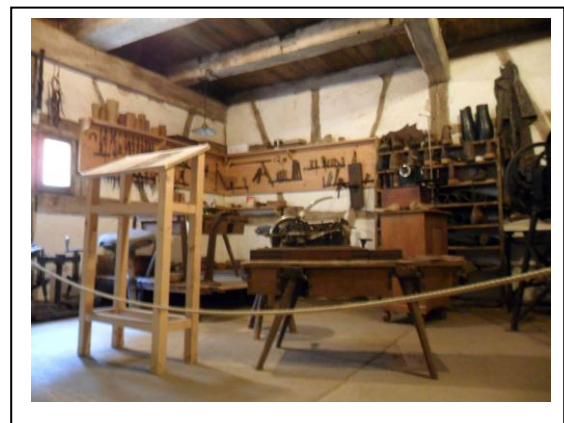
(Search in HeidICON for: Mönchsondheim)



The „Gaden Church Castle” of Mönchsondheim is a Museum today. It is not one of the “biggest”, although not one of the smallest – as it can be seen by the floor plan above, it’s shape is nearly quadratic (to rectangular, respectively). While the number of Gaden is limited within the given space of the courtyard, it is quite “narrow” inside (see picture down left).

The history of Mönchsondheim was very dramatic, not only in the “active” time as a “protector”: In the 19th century, ideas and plans existed to lay down the whole “Church Castle” – but really in the “last moment” also the people here get aware (and the responsible authorities too) about the worth of this treasure of history, which was in a very bad stage at this time. After long lasting restorations, and the basic idea of a museum, the outer look is nearly that of the former times, when also slight missing’s about the loopholes can’t be overseen, therefore the former battle walk, made of stone, is replaced by half-timbered work today.

The museum shows nearly a dozen different handcrafts, each in one room of a Gaden, by origin tools which were collected over Generations in the surrounding villages – therefore this will preserve the knowledge of these arts at all. In regular intervals, also “life” demonstrations were done.



District (Kreis): Kitzingen

Object: Marktstef

(Search in HeidICON for: Marktstef)



When there was the speech about that „a Church Castle inside a village or a town was a kind of citadel”, then Marktstef is even today a fine example. The great gate tower welcome the visitor, and along both sides the houses do follow the former circuit of the curtain – and in most of them, still the curtain is the outer wall, because the houses do replace the former “Gaden”. The Picture down left shows the situation seen from “inside”. The nave at left, the gate tower in front and despite of the real narrow situation, there is space for the „modern horses” at all – the houses are private rooms, therefore. But not the entire curtain is gone - the rear part of the courtyard still has its “flavor” with the 4 meter high curtain, which just leaks of its battlement. Therefore – like centuries before, this “Church Castle” is even today a center of “social life”.



When the “Gaden” are gone – how does it look like ?

Although, a lot of former “Gaden Church Castles” got lost of their “Gaden” meanwhile

District (Kreis): Schmalkalden-Meiningen

Object: Rohr

(Search in HeidICON for: Rohr)

Here, you wouldn't expect at all, that once alongside the inner face of the curtain “Gaden” were placed. In the 19th century, when their functionality had fallen obsolete, the Gaden were completely dismantled and the space used until nowadays as cemetery.



If you see the facts of today, you really wouldn't believe that in the case of Rohr, also “Gaden” have been once inside the courtyard, using the strong curtain as the outer wall. When in the 19th century, without the need for storing crops anymore inside, the decision was made to enlarge the cemetery, therefore the Gaden were dismantled – the alternative would have been to lay down the curtain in some parts to “open” the cemetery to the field side. No majority could be find fore this alternative at all, because also the people here liked their “Church Castle” with a complete curtain.

Subchapter 02

Special “addition”: The fortified nave by some masterpieces

The „fortified nave“ is very rare – today – respectively. We do not know if there have been fortified naves even within the first known founding's of church castles, which is to be set into the Romanesque time during the 9th and 10th century, it is to assume, for additional protection, but still the proof therefore is waiting to be found. For sure is, that in the 15th and also the 16th century the type of the “fortified nave” was very common: It was used as a grainy, which was “able” to defend its goods, philosophically spoken. And in real -what is that “fortified nave” at all ? It is a nave with extreme strong walls, about 1 to 1.5 Meters in strength . It has two “levels” (at least): The ground floor is used for the service at all. Above, separated by a strong roof, is a second level which can be made partly half-timbered . In here, goods were stored, mostly the “tenth” of the harvest, but also people life woman and children could find protection up here in case of a siege – and they defend additional with crossbows from out here, were they could fire trough the loop hole over the curtain – that’s the fortified nave.

District (Kreis): Schwäbisch Hall

Object: Blaufelden

(Search in HeidICON for: Blaufelden)



Slightly changed, the fortified nave does still have the typical look. The high walls of the nave, the upper side walls half-timbered, with modern windows today instead the former loop holes. In this case, the nave does have above its second level a third one, which was served in former times with a lifting winch in a bay-window.



Left picture: Characteristically for a fortified nave is the windowless gable-wall. Here at Blaufelden you can see still today two slit-shaped loop holes in the “third” level. The whole structure looks massive and strong, and it is !



Right picture: The „church“ tower of Blaufelden does look „extraordinary“: Cross-shaped loopholes for crossbow, which allowed the defenders best ankle for firing out, while the danger that a bolt from an attacker find its way in was low (but not zero at all! - with a crossbow you can hit a rectangle of ten centimeters in square over a distance of 50 feet).

District (Kreis): Ansbach

Object: Wettringen

(Search in HeidICON for: Wettringen)



The view of Wettringen is even more impressive than the former example, with its given parts of the curtain (without battle walk today, respectively). It is clear to say, that fortified naves have been always surrounded by a curtain, therefore they have been part of a church castle, not substitute it! Although here, the “second level” of the nave is have-timbered, topped by a third one.



The gable-wall of the nave is still equipped with loop hole, in this case of the more complex key-shaped ones instead of simple slits. That shows again, and especially from this position, that the nave was an additional part of the defense: The curtain, even with the former battlement on top, wasn't higher than 5 meters (a maximum of 6 is known as an exception). Therefore, the “inhabitants” of the nave – in case of a siege, could fire over the curtain with ease.

District (Kreis): Main-Tauber

Object: Oberstetten

(Search in HeidICON for: Oberstetten)



Although Oberstetten has a fortified nave, this one is of the extraordinary type among the „fortified“ ones. It is so say clear: In our days, because what we see here does make sense in very case. Again, there is the window-less gable-wall, with slit-shaped loop holes in the upper level. In the “background” you recognize the “church tower”, which came out of the Romanesque time. But for the nave and its extraordinariness: The “small tower” at the gable, doesn't it look like a gun-director?



It is to say, that this tower not only look like a gun-director - it has been one - once, during the „active time“ of the “Church Castle”. From out here, the “rear part” of the “Church Castle” could be overlooked and the inhabitant could advise additional defenders to marginal points of the curtain, in case that the attacker started an assault which can't be seen by a single defender on the battle walk with its narrow loop holes (and never ! really never ! took your head over the battle walk for a round look during a siege – unless you want your head decorated with 1 ten inch long, iron reinforced bolt !



In the case of Oberstetten, the upper parts of the nave are completely walled. The former loop holes aside have been replaced in the 19th century by “modern” windows, when the whole nave was renovated, and thereby all “warlike” installations – including the intersectional roof – were removed. But despite of that, the typical look was not changed in general, and therefore this masterpiece is a “must see!”

District (Kreis): Hohenlohe

Object: Morsbach

(Search in HeidICON for: Morsbach)

Missing it's complete curtain in our days, the tower of Morsbach is still a landmark. And “behind” this massive tower, which was obviously not a “bell-tower” at first, you see a “slender” nave, in the same width as the tower. Here we have, even when changed partly during the centuries, another masterpiece of the type of “fortified nave”.



From aside the upper levels of the tower still have their loopholes (of which those in the upper lever are key-hole shaped. But also the nave still does have long and small light-slits, which were used also as loop holes by the defending crossbow-men during a siege in former times. Characteristic is the upper – half-timbered level, which was used as a granary in the 15th and 16th century.

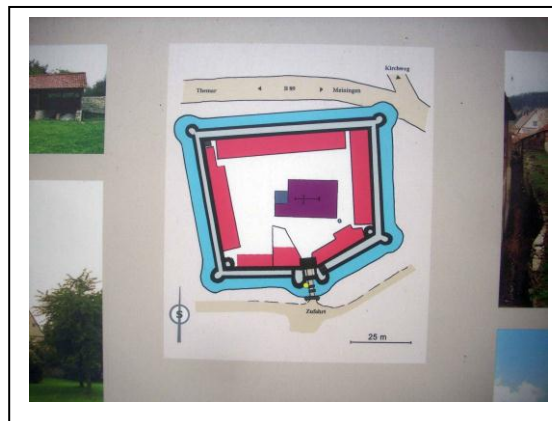
Subchapter 03 Varieties in size and grade of fortification by some examples

While this is a really wide spread theme, the variety is show by some imperial examples

District (Kreis): Schmalkalden-Meiningen

Object: Vachdorf

(Search in HeidICON for: Vachdorf)



At Vachdorf, the floor plan has a rectangular shape, which slightly could be interpreted as a pentagon also, while the South-side with the gate house is projecting especially. While the situation of today with all changes made during the last two centuries is differing from the given floor plan (which shows the situation in the 15th century at all), the picture show a view from East with the nave from the front side and the Southeast rounded tower. Whenever possible, a moat was "wet", also here it has been once. A draw-bridge lead over the moat to the massive gate house which was made of two half rounded towers, inner and outer portcullis and more. That the defense was created in a systematic way can be seen by the outer curtain with the half-rounded towers, and the inner curtain with its two rounded towers in the Southwest and Southeast.

District (Kreis): Erlangen-Höchstadt

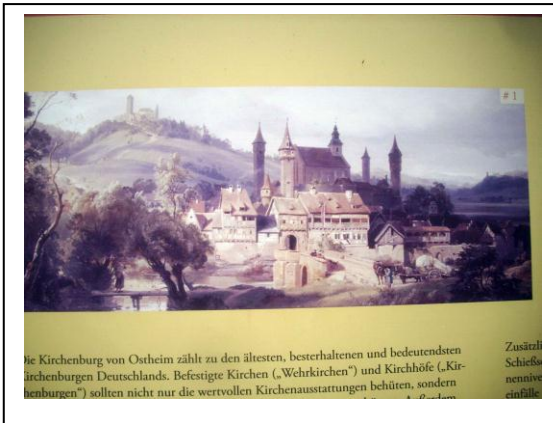
Object: Hannberg

(Search in HeidICON for: Hannberg)



The floor plan of Hannberg shows a rectangular shape, with rounded towers at each corner and a mix of rectangular and rounded towers in midst of each side. The floor plan shows the situation of today, with strong changes in the South and South-east, which were made in the 20th century, when a new commercial use by the cleric was worked out, and therefore parts of the fortifications were laid down. Despite of that it can be seen that the architect of Hannberg trust on only one, strong curtain and their reinforcing by the ad midst of each side placed towers, in addition to the corner towers at all. In former times also here a wet moat and a gate house (in the southeast) were present, respectively.

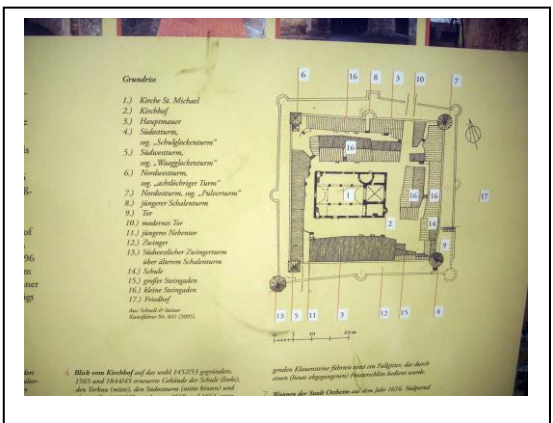
District (Kreis): Röhn-Grabfeld **Object:** Ostheim vor der Röhn (Search in HeidICON for: Ostheim vor der Röhn)



As a masterpiece of its own, there its o mention Ostheim vor der Röhn. One of the biggest, one of the strongest, one of the best preserves – but also one of the most often destroyed, and often enlarged and strengthened either. The “copper print” shown in the upper left picture does show the situation in the 18th century. The four very high towers seemed to be oversized in the first moments, as an artist’s impression of a kind of “super church castle” – but the picture in the upper right, taken in early 2012 shoes that it is a fact: “The higher”, the better” (due to the static limits, respectively). It is clear to point out, that only such ones of very great interest, like in this case, have been built that strong. Main fortifications last back to the 14th century, while in the 15th the outer curtain with their corner towers were added, equipped with special loop holes for fire arms (hand- and wall guns, no heavy artillery like cannons).



After being damaged badly in the thirty years war (1618-48), the “Church Castle” didn’t “recover” really at all. Lots of stones were taken away to rebuild the also damaged village, and later when the village expanded at all – matter for free ! As the situation of today is shown upper left, there is just l the Southwest corner the interesting combination of the towers at the inner and the outer curtain present, which is shown in the picture upper present day (2012). Whenever possible, a “symmetric” shape was chosen, but often enough the circumstances within a village were different – the outcome than have been oval- or irregular shaped sizes, as they have been shown already earlier in this Part.



The floor plan show the very „compact“ situation of this “Church Castle”. In basic, it is a relative regular structure, which was first protected “only” by the inner curtain, out from the 14th century. But very soon, when first fire-arms came into service, the fortifications were strengthened with the “outer curtain”, which is mostly ruined today, except the rounded tower in the Southwest (the other former round and half-round towers can still be outlined today). With the adding of the second curtain the space of the courtyard was absolutely limited, so therefore the second layer of Gaden was added in the 15th century thereby.

Chapter 3 “Church Castles” within towns – how did it come to? (the egg was first!)

Does a walled town have a „Church Castle” inside its walls? And if so, is these “Church Castle” also surrounded by a curtain and battlement?

In case of the first question, the answer is “Yes”; for the latter there can be said “not anymore, with some rare exceptions”. How did it come that a “Church Castle” is within a walled town? The answer to that is – in general – simple: “The egg was first” – in other words, the “Church Castle”. Founded mostly within the village, long before the one got town rights and was walled therefore by its own. In the generations after that, the “Church Castle” mostly existed as a kind of citadel at all – but more and more the change, done by the time, moved on: Houses were built on the outer side of the curtain, while the moat was already filled, centuries later, there could just the former courtyard be recognized by the adjoining houses, while its function as a cemetery was moved to a new, pure cemetery. And if the town was successful finally in growing up, then a new town church was build, the surrounding houses therefore were laid down, and a visitor of today will never expect, how this has looked centuries ago.

Assumptions? No, it can be proofed by some “artifacts” which were found on our way through time.

Subchapter 01 The masterpiece of Randersacker

District (Kreis): Würzburg

Object: Randersacker

(Search in HeidICON for: Randersacker)



Nevertheless from which side of the town you will get the first view to, there will be mostly the Romanesque church tower catching your eye.

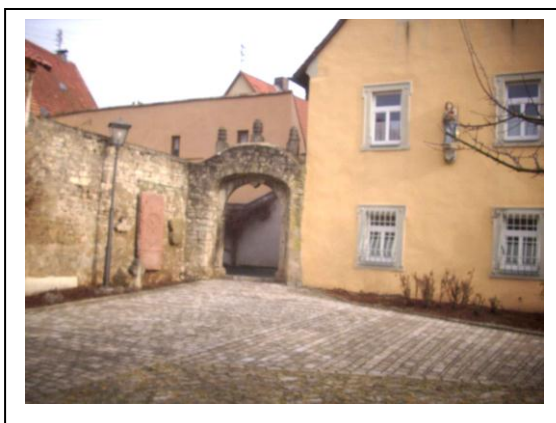
In the picture upper left, there is also a part of the nave visible, surrounded by the houses of the town. The picture to upper right shows the tower just as it grows out from the houses. The bulk of the town does have a preserved “Renaissance” character, which was the time; most buildings were renewed, replacing Gothic stone made or half-timbered houses either. The more positive it is that at least the Romanesque church tower is more or less “unharmd”.



If you do came from East or North-East direction, the „first view” will be completely different: A four meter high, massive wall, just alongside the narrow streets, slightly oval shaped in its run – therefore, you face the curtain of the “Church Castle”, without its battlement, respectively. And that is the very rare benefit you will hardly find today, which turns out Randersacker to such a Gem in this case.



Also from this direction, which is North-east, you will get aware of the church tower, but this time the tower is not dominating: The "wall" seems to be superior. Multiply this by imagination around the whole courtyard and you get the complete impression – added by the missing battlement on top, respectively. When the town grew larger, still the "citadel" of the "Church Castle" was the visible sign of the "authorities", the Prince bishop of Würzburg therefore.



The courtyard in the east.
To left, you still see the remaining curtain, enclosed by the postern-gate which is accompanied by a house of the 17th century, which uses the curtain as one of its walls. Here already the "change" has started, and this is also a very good imagination, when you see the different stages directly enclosed. Today, the responsible authorities do a lot, to keep the "old look" in shape, because here the people are aware of the importance of history!



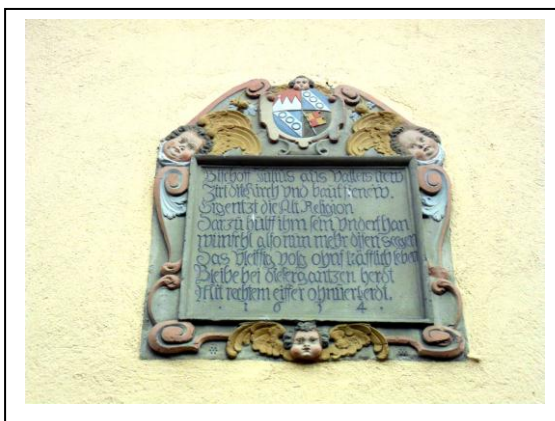
Viewing from the South, there is still the „ring of houses" to the Southeast, in which you can see the courtyard outlined thereby - but directly to South, there is a gap through which you see base of the Romanesque tower, partly covered by the Mount of Olives out from renaissance times. It was in the late 19th century, when there were really strong attempts to lay down the whole curtain and create a new and "open" place around the church – but it could be turned to better at last.



The courtyard in the South, facing towards West direction, is outlined by more or less different looking buildings, which use also parts of the former curtain in their base walls of the courtyard side. This process also started in the late 19th century, in accordance to the mentioned ones within the upper picture. Also here, the authorities of today keep a strong eye on the "steady state" of the given situation.



Again we are in the courtyard this time, Southern part respectively, and face it from West to East direction. The picture upper left shows the aisle of the nave with the Mount of Olive in the back, placed on the South base of the Romanesque tower. To the right you see a "modernized building", which is shown in the upper right picture over its long side. We face the former gate house of the "Church Castle" with the gate way) – Strong fortified, even when the village already had become a walled town, the gate house had double doors, and a portcullis at the outer side –but despite of the "citadel-character", there was also a part of the social life still in here, with the "judgment place in the gatehouse also as a school.



The upper left picture shows the entrance way of the gate house in the situation of today – with little left of the former double-doors anyway.

The upper right picture gives a view to the church with nave, chorus and the top of the Romanesque tower. Nave and chorus were rebuilt in Gothic times, and during the "counter-reformation" (see therefore part D, chapter 1, subchapter 5), they were overworked. A plate outside the nave remembers to that, with the text referring to Prince bishop Julius Echter and his merciful work in renewing this church, in the name of the Lord and the "true belief" (means the "origin Catholicism".), dated by 1614.

Subchapter 02

What's left of, after the curtains had fallen

District (Kreis): Hildburghausen

Object: Heldburg

(Search in HeidICON for: Heldburg)



In a lot of cases, like here within the example of Heldburg, the curtains are „gone“, either laid down, or they are still part of the surrounding houses. The former courtyard, already not in use as a cemetery anymore, it's still outlined by the houses, even when parts of the former are "opened" to the market- or another town square.



The picture at left show the situation in the Northern long side of the courtyard: Narrow. Also here the houses still line out the former, and even in the West (picture down left) there is still a "border house". By this – and compare it with the former gatehouse shown before within the example of Randersacker, you also recognize here at the right side of the house a gate way, which is given in detail by the picture down right. Also here, we are facing the "remnants" of the former gatehouse with its gateway. Watch for such details, sometimes there are some left – but, as in this case too, not always to the „open" side of the courtyard.



District (Kreis): Ortenau

Object: Oberkirch

(Search in HeidICON for: Oberkirch)



As a second example, you will find several hundred kilometers away from Meiningen the following “remarkable” Situation: When walking along the main road of the old town of Oberkirch, you will find along both sides more or less preserved houses lined up. And there are some fine gateways, like in the picture upper left is shown. Seems like one of these roomy gateways of the Baroque style, leading to a small courtyard at the back of the house. But in this case – see the picture upper right, there is a small plate titled with “Kirchgätter” and explaining text, which tells you that this was (and still is) the entrance gate to the courtyard of the church, and therefore also of the former “Church Castle”.



And you will really be flabbergasted, when stepping trough: Get the picture upper left – rectangular shape, outlined by houses, now in use as a car park instead of the former function as a cemetery (while the driveway is on the opposite side, modern and much wider than the „Kirchgätter“ at all. And by the way, as you see upper right: There is also a church present, in this “roomy” former courtyard, with the tower reaching out from the Romanesque time and the “modern” rebuilt nave (therefore the tower was over formed to its look of today, when the new nave was build).

Subchapter 03 After all – surprising outlines on a market square

Finally, of most in the growing towns, it came to a today “fading” of the former courtyard. As mentioned earlier in part B, by the example of Schwäbisch Hall, you can assume, that this process is given. Therefore, we will highlight this by another example, where the curtain also was laid down in the medieval time, when the town of Meiningen was partly rebuilt by its new market square. Today, you wouldn't expect that the church was surrounded by a curtain once – of course not this church out of the late medieval, which was rebuilt on the place of the former, walled one therefore. But by the way, you will find in sometimes a surprise, like here.

District (Kreis): Schmalkalden-Meiningen **Object:** Meiningen (Search in HeidICON for: Meiningen)



With proudness, the town church of Meiningen welcomes the visitor, as a landmark within the town, surrounded by the wide market square. Despite of so many other towns, in which nothing remembered to the fact, that their town church has been a “Church Castle” once, you will find here a plate with the history of the church at all and a floor plan, on which one detail sparks the interest. Outlined there is a part nearby the chorus in the Northeast alongside the nave. It is the outline of the former curtain, out from a time when the former town church, founded at Romanesque times, still was a “Church Castle”. And there is more, the authorities have done: They outlined the former part of the curtain, which was ensured by its given part during excavations at that place, by stones of different color within the plaster.



It looks like a special kind of art within the stones, the market-square is plastered with – But only a closer look indicates the different way, these special stones are – they are smaller and in their run its looks like the base of a wall – the former curtain than. It is to say that this small part sparkles the interest of how the former curtain had run around the Romanesque founded church at all – but only this outlined part is really secured, because there are no floor plans or detailed descriptions left, out of which an authentic outline of the former could be made. Anyway, even this part, and the awareness about Historic responsibility here at Meiningen is a positive example at all!

Part D The Reasons for the Reason (call them wheels within wheels)

Focus on the theme

The Reason of the “Church Castle”: To protect human’s life (from being endangered by other humans)

On our way through the districts, we found that what remained of them – and the “Reason for their existence” was clear.

By the way, we found more – you might call it “wheels within wheels“, but for my point of view, there are different Reasons behind the Reason, and in a lot of different small indices, there formed a picture by itself – the picture behind the Reason – therefore
“The Reasons for the Reason”

The basic ingredients were always the same: Hunger for power and importance, if not in good will or by the law, then with violence and terror.

The “actors” have been multiple. The “old ones” are the nobles and the cleric, the “younger” ones the imperial towns.

Within the chapter 2, we will introduce, in brief case of course, the different “Actors”, their basic environment and interests. Given by an overview map, the „influence spheres” will be given in an “idealized” circle. Of course, the reality in the past (and also in our time) is much more complex, with winkled borderlines of area and interests. Therefore, we use the “circle” as a symbol – and often enough you will see the overlapping not only in once case. These actors held for their ambitions for centuries, in some cases from the Romanesque time until the Baroque at all.

And in every case, there had been the “shoulders” of the rural people, which were “asked” to carry the burden of blood, pain and death – by the will of their masters, and therefore “in the name of the Lord”, spoken with their tongue at all.

And the rural people, the people in bondage – how could they stand for centuries ?If you don’t be able even to hear about something different that the world you are born into, then you will believe and accept it was given also “in the Name of the Lord”

“Oh my Lord, what a world!”

Chapter 3, the “Burst”, will handle some extraordinary events.

In metaphoric tongue, like the continents drift as a part of earth’s surface, lasting for generations (seems in geologic generations), there are from time to time “some” earth-quakes or Volcanic eruptions, which are relatively short – but the more violated at all. Also within history of Mankind, there are such “Burst”, and we will introduce in brief case those of importance for of the Church-castles either, just in high lightening, for example “what was the first Margrave war” about ? Or the “Mainzer Stiftsfehde?”

Therefore – time to dance...



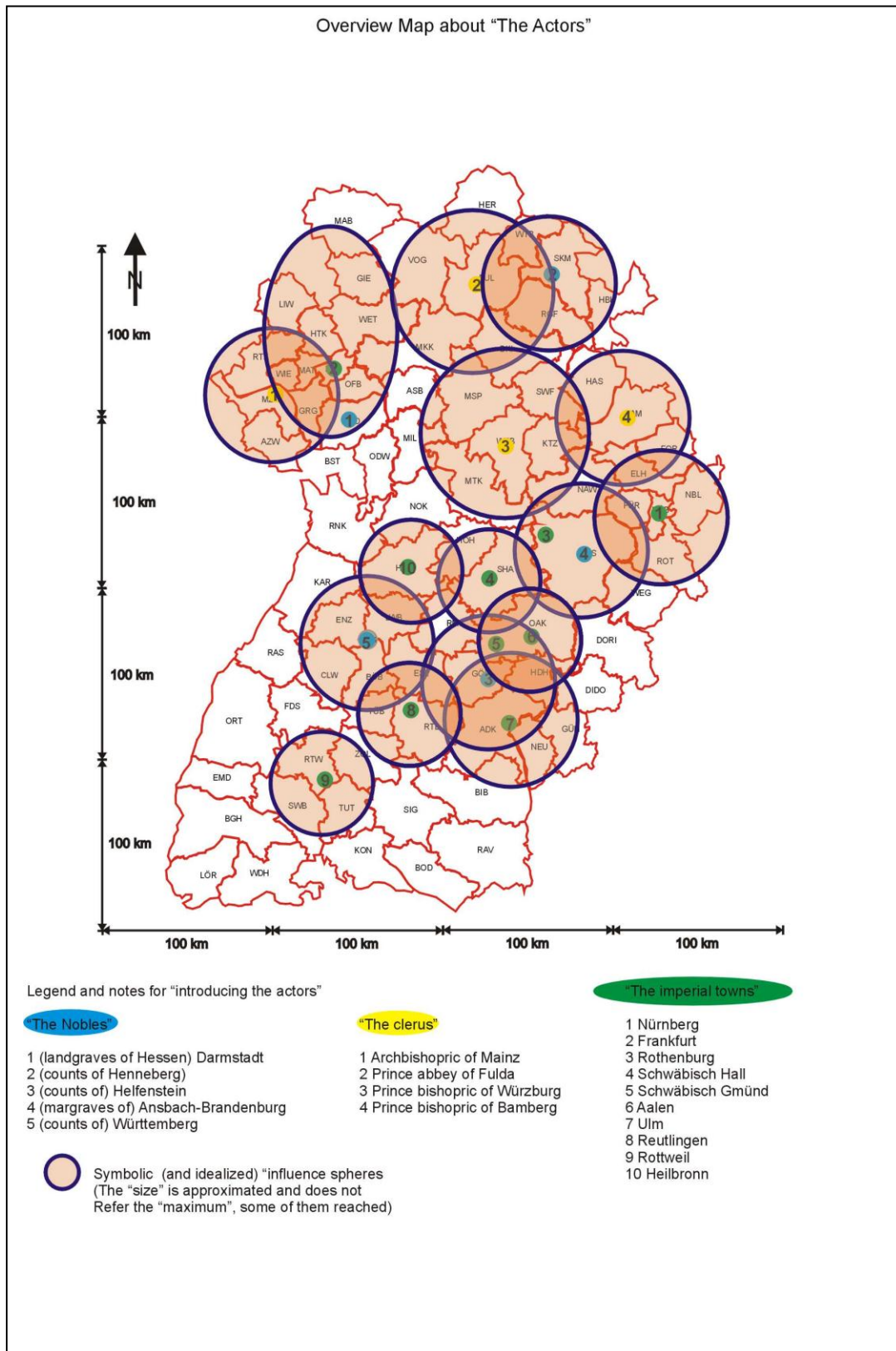
Note:

The following chapters „Introducing the actors“, are not a complete chronological listing of events or mandatory dates within a case or a family, neither do they list completely every person of importance within them.

“Introducing the actors” does give a general overview about the different “parties”, their ambitions and attempts of expanding, their different points of views, even in political or religious ambitions, to work out the background for the “need” of building “Church Castles” – in other words “THE REASONS FOR THE REASON”

Chapter 1 Introducing the Actors (The "Long Lasting Reasons for the Reason")

Map of the area with "influence" spheres



Subchapter 01 The Archbishopric of Mainz

Among the Archbishoprics (Trier, Cologne and Mainz), Mainz can be ranked at the first.

First mentioning's came out from the 4th century, when Bishops of Mainz occurred on the theater of history. But it should last until the 8th century at all, when really importance took place: It was the famous Bonifatius, who became Bishop of Mainz around midst of this century. Due to his popularity, a lot of bishoprics were “put” under the mastership of Mainz. The “breakthrough” in importance started with King Heinrich I, who put the Archbishop of Mainz into high ranks in the imperial structure, and he was followed by his fellows at all.

Of course, this success although caused jealousy among worldly and cleric neighbors, and by the time, Mainz had to care although with “sword and crossbow” about its possessions.

The prince bishopric of Würzburg, although as the one of Bamberg, - nominally was the Archbishop of Mainz their absolute master, tried to get independence – and progress by the time. Although two Monasteries were a “thorn in their sides” with their wide possessions: The imperial Abbey of Fulda and the imperial Abbey of Lorsch. The Archbishops of Mainz did best to get them down, but while the former was too strong against even political intrigues, the latter failed in the 13th century when, as a result of the intrigues, the emperor redeemed the “imperial” Title of the monastery of Lorsch and handed it back into direct mastership of Mainz.

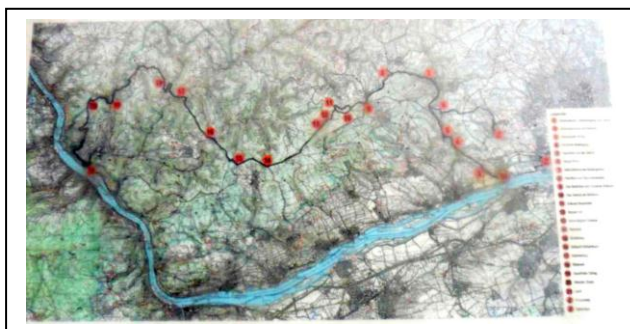
But the plan was backfired, because the former servants of Lorsch, local nobles, did best in benefit themselves with possession of the former Monastery, they had been responsible for, as their own land. Therefore, despite law and order, mostly “sword and crossbow” discussed the different points of view, between the local nobles and Mainz although as between themselves.

Welcome to the furnace of History.

The Archbishopric had, in attempt to get a close territory around the town of Mainz, success in that way, that they could gather the Rheingauer Gebück, a relatively homogeneous area with pure possession of Mainz, which was border lined by brier (which were interwoven in a special way, which was called “Gebück”, and gave the whole Area the name).

During the centuries, Mainz and the Landgraves of Hessen clashed, also as Mainz and Fulda – any some special events, even the enemies Fulda and Würzburg worked together against the ambitions of expanding of Mainz.

The Rheingauer Gebück



Overview map of the “Rheingauer Gebück”, of which the Rhine River the Southern border was. This was a relative “homogenous” territory of the Archbishopric of Mainz, you can call it “home territory”. Of course, the further possessions of the Archbishopric stretched far, but in most cases they were “island”, with regulated “right of way” through the heighbourhood.



A scheme of the „Gebück“

It was a “simple kind” of borderline, which was “made” of briars, while these were cared by “gardeners” in such a way, that they were bend down. The whole hedgerow has had finally a height of 2 meters or more, as a “living” borderline around the territory. Such hedgerows were used mostly to “line” out territories, in a lot of cases.

Subchapter 02 The Landgraves of Hessen

As most dukedoms „grew up“ generation by generation as a benefit of hard working of a noble family (including some profitable marrying into), the dukedom of Hessian was the result of the break of a bigger one:

There was the mighty family of the „Ludowingians“, and under them a great territory could be built, containing the later „subparts“ of Thuringia and Hessian. Sadly, the Ludowingians died away, and the so called „Thuringia-hessian war of succession“ caused by the not clear successors and enclosed family parts was worse for the whole area within the years 1247-1264. Finally, when no clear superior get out of the struggled of war and destruction, it was decided to „separate“ the former territory into two parts, and therefore „Thuringia“ and „Hessian“ were „born“. The rulers of hessian beard the title „Landgraves“, respectively and the first in this line was Heinrich I. in the year 1247.

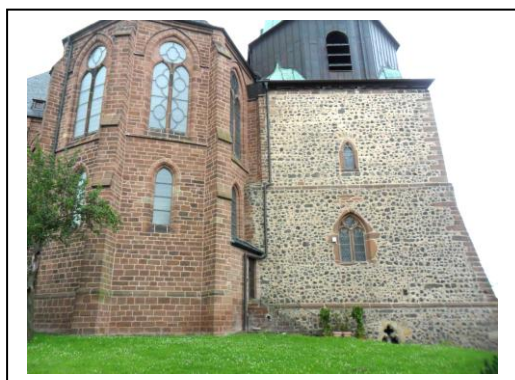
Of interest and of importance as a „reason for the reason“ in the theme of the church castles within this area is, that here was also not a „closed“ territory with clear and sharpened borderline every square mile and every farm, barn or village belonged directly to the Landgrave of Hessen. Foreseen from the sub-fiefs of local nobles, who(had to) accept the landgrave of hessian as their superior master, there was one really great „counter power“: Since the very first days, the archbishopric of Mainz had possession all along the area, and in trying to expand, the Archbishops of Mainz got in direct controversy with the Landgraves of Hessen. Therefore, the situation was often enough very complex and curious: To get to an area belonging to the Archbishopric of Mainz, tradesman on supply at all had to cross often enough borderlines to Hessian territory. Mostly this was regulated by contracts and toll rights, and it is clearly to say, that (mostly) first both parties tried to find solution in a peaceful way by law and order.

Only sometimes, when the one or other party felt overreached, sword and crossbow did „speak up“. Therefore, it was not a constant hit and run day by day – but it could happen here and there sooner or later – every day. While also often enough people of Hessian had to cross borderlines on Archbishopric territory on their way to Hessian villages, there are two examples mentioned in the follow which developed really to „warheads“ or in more peaceful words „islands in foreign territory“: The shining island of the Archbishopric „Amöneburg“, and the counterpart of Hessian „Grünberg“. Both were surround by the „enemies territory“, and it took both parties tremendous efforts, to keep their „warheads“ alive –but both continued over centuries.

By the way, also hessian converted to the Protestantism in the year 1526 by order of Landgrave Philipp I. Also the landgraves of Hessian had their „great separation“: It was landgrave Philipp the Generous, who split within the year 1567 the territory by four, and handed it over to his four sons. In attempt to prevent succession war, which later were partly re-united to the Landgrave ship of Hessen-Kassel and Hessen-Darmstadt.- but also that is another story.



„The Rock“ - a landmark of its own. Since the early times. This hill was in possession of the Archbishop of Mainz, who founded the castle of „Amöneburg“ to protect the possession around. Soon a strong walled town developed by the castle, still on top of the hill. When the Landgrave of Hessian got stronger, the Archbishop fortified the town too, and it was a very expensive „warhead“ within the territory of the Landgraves, still in the 17th century at all.



Even the church, asides to the castle, was strong fortified when founded first – the tower has remained out of that time. When the walled town was enlarged, the former „Church Castle“ was integrated, and the nave with chorus were rebuilt in Gothic style, later in Baroque. The Landgraves of Hessen founded nearby the strong fortified town of „Grünberg“ („Green Hill“) and surrounded Amöneburg by a system of watchtowers, to scope out every movement on the territory of the Archbishop, who had access through the Landgraves land by „right of way“. With tremendous efforts, both parties hold each other in check.

Subchapter 03 The Prince Abbey of Fulda

It was in the year 744, when by the order of Winfried Bonifatius the monastery was founded ,and a man named Sturmius became the first Abbot.

The monastery grew fast by donations – but also by the smartness of the monks and Abbots (for example, the famous “Hrabanus Maurus” started as a monastic school boy here at Fulda Abbey.

Also pleased by Charlemagne (Karl the great, respectively) the Monastery grew further in importance and one of the most famous Abbots is Ratgar (but also one of the most disputed in case of his ambitions);

During the time of the “Saxonian wars” the existence of the Abbey was several times in great danger, finally Charlemagne clarified that, but it should last until Emperor Frederic II, when the Abbey got rank and status of a Prince Abbey.

Aside the mighty abbey, the village and later town of Fulda developed, housing the “worldly associated” of the monastery. When the “citizens” tried to break apart from the ruler ship of the Abbey in the year 1331, it ended, with the help of emperor Ludwid IV, with the defeat of the citizens.

However, the mastership of the imperial Abbey continued and the influence sphere grew – and lead to the collision with the archbishopric of Mainz, and the Landgraves of Hessen in Southwest and in the East and Southeast first with the Counts of Henneberg and later with the prince bishopric of Würzburg.

Too many dogs will cause the dead of the rabbit at all, as the proverb says, but this “rabbit” was a very powerful one: Hundreds of local nobles belonged to the Abbey, they were not really people in boundage like the peasants, but it was “better” for them anyway to stand to the ambitions of the Abbey instead of being an opposite. Therefore, the “recipe” for “local trouble” carried on and by the shoulders of the rural people was given and granted and every “party” tried to save the life of “their” people (and the harvest) with church castles -frankly spoken: You need some people alive for the counterstrike the day.

Officially, most of the “combatants” were out from the same “party”: The cleric. Nevertheless, the ambitions were very worldly and therefore held by sword and crossbow in the hand of the rural people in boundage on every side.

While also Fulda suffered in the year 1525 by plundering peasants, which collaborated with the citizens of the town of Fulda, the landgrave of hessian came to help and chased the peasants away– thereby the town was plundered and burned too by the hessian troops.

After recovering, also the Prince bishopric of Fulda was confronted with the slowly undergoing process to the Protestantism within his territory; furthermore the thirty years war did destructions also in this area- but again – that is another story



Fulda, the town, which developed out from the Prince Abbey, the “heart” of a big territory at all. Today, there are two buildings in neighborhood, Sankt Michael in the right, and the Dome Sankt Salvator. Both were “separated” by more than a thousand years, due to their time of founding, while Sankt Salvator dates back originally into the Romanesque time, but the building of today is a complete new one of the 18th century. Sankt Michael was originally founded in the 8th century, which is the Carolingian area, but was tremendous enlarged during the Romanesque time and later.

Subchapter 04 The Counts of Henneberg

As funny as the Crest looks, and the name may sound in German: Chicken on a hill, the counts of Henneberg got a mighty territory and were fearful enemies.

Also this noble family started their career from the 11th century onward, and with their growing territory they soon “clashed” with the prince bishopric of Würzburg in the South and most of all, with the growing sphere of influence of the imperial Abbey of Fulda, which was also titled as Prince Abbey and therefore had very worldly hunger for power.

Within their growing territory and therefore the combined influence of the counts of Henneberg, members of this family were titled with “burg grave of Würzburg”, from mid of the 12th century onwards. In long and hard attempts that could be “extinguished” by the prince bishops of Würzburg finally at mid of the 14th century, while the territorial fights with Henneberg still continued.

Especially the clashes with the sphere of the imperial Abbey of Fulda led to a tremendous density of “church castles” in the area of the “Werra river” (the Werratal, therefore see the “best of preserved” in part B, chapter 5 “Thüringen”) where they were really lined like “pearls on a string”.

The family of Henneberg had, like the others, ups and downs, were split and reunited – but finally their importance faded in the 16th century drastic way, while the “power” was fading since the 15th century already. Nevertheless, wherever you find today in the crest of a village a “chicken on a hill”, the one once belonged to the counts of Henneberg.



On top of the hill there is the castle sited, from out of the Counts of Henneberg build their „family empire“. Since the thirty years war, the castle is ruined, but still the hill is a landmark, while on the base the small village of Henneberg is sited.



The map shows the „territory“ of the Counts of Henneberg within the 14th century then. While the borderlines are very irregular, the territory therefore was homogenous within. Of course, the Counts had a lot more possessions “outside”, some of them far away – also these were “islands” – mostly in controversy with the Prince Abbey of Fulda.

Therefore, note also the “Chicken crest”, which represents directly the name “Henneberg” means “Chicken on a hill” or the “Hill of the Chickens”. Anyway – don’t take it “funky” – in former times, this chicken had a very hard and sharp beak!

Subchapter 05 The Prince bishopric of Würzburg – and special view about Bishop Julius Echter

Originally founded as a bishopric in the year 741 by Bonifatius, it is a really "old and early" one. Donations were made by the nobles and the territory, therefore the influence too, grew in a tremendous way.

It was a slam in the face for Würzburg when King Heinrich II founded a new bishopric in the year 1007: The bishopric of Bamberg (see there)- the worse was: Heinrich took great parts of Würzburg and handed it over to found Bamberg. As one of the last absolute rulers as he was, he had the power therefore, and Würzburg had to "smile" officially – within the next two centuries, doubled the efforts to get new territories and power again: They got independence from one of their greatest sponsors, the Counts of Henneberg, and it was Emperor Friedrich I (called Barbarossa-the red bearded) who freed the bishopric from very obligations against worldly and nobles, and the Bishops of Würzburg got the title "Duke of Franconia", which made the bishopric to a prince bishopric with tremendous worldly power.

Ups and downs within the next centuries lined on the way of the Prince bishopric, which had constantly "differences" with Bamberg, the Counts of Henneberg, other nobles although as the Margraves of Ansbach, not to forget imperial towns also,, and the more they expanded along the main river to Northwest they collided with the attempts of the Prince Abbey of Fulda. Officially, everything was regulated by negotiation and the laws of the public peace – but when one of the parties felt overreached, there still was the call to sword and crossbow and a short visit to the next village of the combatant – and a present there would be taken a burning torch.

Anyway, when the Protestantism raised, and the "Schmalkaldic War", officially ended by the contract of Passau, (and therefore, this was the fundamental document for the "Augsburger Religionsfrieden" of 1555, it seemed to be peaceful again – but like caner grew still and underneath, the situation got worse by the years: Julius Echter (of Mespelbrunn) became Prince bishop of Würzburg and Duke of Franconia, more than half of the nearly 140 parishes had converted to the Protestantism, in other words the responsible nobles, who belonged still to their Master Würzburg, had converted and now a priest of the new confession did the service.

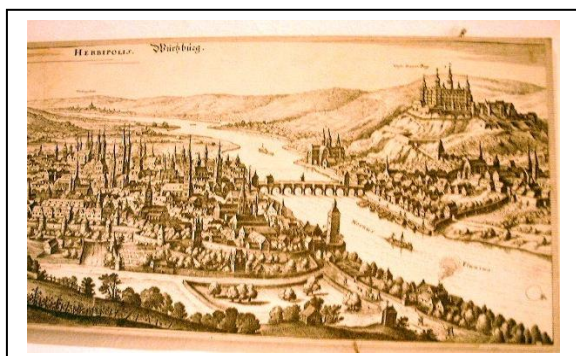
Underneath the line that means frankly: Very less money and income from them for Würzburg. It was the Genius of Julius Echter, not to force them down instantly (with half of his territory and people hunting down the other half ?), instead of that he developed a long lasting "counter revolution". After twenty years, he started with, village by village, and therefore he rebuild every nave in late renaissance style, with a plate that remembers the people which religion the right one is – and he changed the priest by a catholic, a "right one", of course. Year by year, and as slow and unnoticed in the beginning the Protestantism had spread out more and more, Julius fight "cancer with cancer". When he finally died, his counter revolution was nearly complete, and the prince bishopric of Würzburg was stronger than before. Just right in time to be stroked hardly again by the thirty years war (1618-1648, officially said) – what would have been, if Julius had lived ten years longer ? Who would know at all – we don't, only one does.



Julius Echter,
Prince Bishop of Würzburg and
Duke of Franconia

During his 40 years lasting "in charge" of these positions, he "renovated" the Prince Bishopric, forced the Protestantism down, renewed towns and villages, build new naves within Church-Castles and strengthened them at all. But also the towns along the Main river were double strengthened, because at his time, the "Sphere" of Würzburg "clashed with the one of the Prince Abbey of Fulda !

Note: The picture is taken out from
Julius Echter von Mespelbrunn, Bischof von Würzburg und Herzog von Franken
Von Dr. Joh. Rep. Buchinger, Kgl. Bayer. Rathe, vormaligem Archivar zu Würzburg und demaltem ersten Adjutanten im königl. Reichs-Archiv, Professor honoris an der Universität zu München, und außerordentlichem Mitgliede der Academie der Wissenschaften, Neben des Bischöflichen Porträt und Facsimile in Stahlstich und 4 radirten Steindruckungen; Würzburg, 1843; Verlag von Voigt und Mocker.
Stored at the library of Ruprecht Karls University, Heidelberg.



Würzburg, the capital of the Prince bishopric, around the middle of the 16th century. Still the town is surrounded by the medieval walls, and upon the hill to the right, the Fortress of "Marienberg" is sited on. While there were often "disputes" between the Bishop and "his town", he had to go- for safety reasons, upon Marienberg fortress – from time to time. Within the 17th century, after the time of Julius Echter, the following Prince Bishop turned Würzburg into a disaster: He order to lay down the medieval walls and substitute them by "modern" fortress walls and bastions. When this was done, it turned out, that 20.000 men were needed to defend the town fortress - therefore the whole town would have been turned into a garrison – a ridiculous thing at all.

Julius Echter, out from the house of Mespelbrunn, was a man born into a world of change, of worse and disastrous change. Since the days of Martin Luther, the Protestantism spread around and “undermined” the old Catholic structure, the one and pure religion of the “origin” Catholicism. Julius Echter realized very soon, that open violence would have gained the final showdown of the Prince bishopric at all, and therefore, as mentioned in the general overview about the Prince bishopric, he started something more smarter: From the beginning of the 17th century onward, he ordered to rebuild the churches within the Prince bishopric. As he was the owner of the villages and therefore the churches too, he let rebuilt mostly the nave in the kind of art, which was later named in general the “Julius Echter Style”. One by one, time by time, year by year – and of course, in his position “Duke of Franconia” he also replayed in some villages, if necessary, the priest, if the one didn’t go exactly by the „true Religion”, that means the Catholicism. While he was also, in his position of the „Duke of Franconia”, the master of the local nobles, no one tried to measure up with him. Although, he made it that “slow”, that a lot of the Protestant nobles didn’t realize that there was a general wind of change. By the way, Julius also strengthened the fortifications – of the Church castles also as of the towns, because the „clashes” with jealousy neighbors get stronger at all. And for the rural people, he let, according with every knew nave, school or hospital, in some cases also town halls, a plate with a short poem, that should remember the people at any time, who the “good guy” is. – Therefore, more and more people at these times, in the greater villages most, could simply read or write, schools came up by this time for a greater population. In the follow, some examples of these “Halloda to Julius” textures are shown, with translation in given sense.



This example is from the nave of Burgerroth; in the year 1617, it was written then:
 “Bishop Julius, in charge by forty years, has given the new church (means the nave), a school and the new house for the priest. He renew the religion, for the real pleasure of the subjects. He did well in the eyes of the Lord”.

At the nave of the church of Hendungen, you will find:
 “Bishop Julius, forty years in charge, has renovated this church and the house for the priest. He also re-established the old Religion again, and he died everything in unflappable loyalty to the Lord at all”.



In the town of Sulzfeld, Bishop Julius donated a large and proudly new town hall, on which also there is to read that in the name of the lord, the true religion has been re-established, for the good of the subjects and in by the care of the Bishop at all. No matter that the building was relay oversized for the needs of the town at all.

In the town of bad Königshofen (at that time just Königshofen), he donated a hospital for the rural people, and still today, it is called “Juliuspital”. A lot of hospital do have this name, also as schools do. Therefore – as long as there is remembering – somehow “Bishop Julius” does still exist – in the one or the other point of view.



Subchapter 06 The Prince bishopric of Bamberg

The founding of the bishopric was done by King Heinrich II in the year 1007, when he took great parts of possession of the still existing bishoprics of Würzburg and Eichstätt. For both of them it was a disaster in the rank of power, but as absolute the ruler ship of the King has still been at these times, they had to “simile and agree”.

In later times, the „conflicts” between Würzburg and Bamberg, just in local “questions” about villages, harvest, the right of way, and so on, were legion. Therefore, “differences „did not only occur between nobles and imperial towns, or nobles among themselves – as you can see, they happened in “every family”.

In the beginning, Bamberg was under the mastership of the Archbishopric of Mainz, and a great success of getting more independent could be done in the year 1245, when only the Pope at Rome was “overlord” of the prince bishopric of Bamberg. By the way, it was – according to our areas of the Photodokumentation, the Prince bishopric od Bamberg, which suffered during the “Hussiten Wars” (see therefore part D, chapter 3, subpart 5), and a lot of church castles in the territory of the Prince bishopric were tremendously strengthened – an example is “Mürsberg “, which was like a real stronghold after.

By the way, although in the territory of Bamberg, the rising of the Protestantism caused severely problems, but this them is handled comprehensive in the chapter about Würzburg (see therefore the former subchapter).



At the church of Scheßlitz, you found a „welcome”, sided with the crest of the Prince bishop of Bamberg – as visible sign, that there is on one hand the cleric mastership, represented by the Abbots iron bar, and on the other hand, the worldly responsibility (and power) by the sword (in other words, if the people don’t obey to the former – they will be cared by the latter).

It was the Prince bishopric of Bamberg, which first got the “side effects” of the Hussiten Wars for real. Within shortest time, all Church-Castles were strengthened, like Rattelsdorf (upper right) and Mürsbach (lower right). Just save the life of the rural people, while the forces of the Hussiten lead on their way just fire and death. Never before, there were so much Church castles “upgraded” also with fire-arms – at least what was possible in that short time.



Subchapter 07 The Margraves of Ansbach-Brandenburg

This is the “noble side” in the great controversy between the imperial town of Nürnberg and the margraves of Ansbach. In the early times, when the imperial town of Nürnberg was founded by the “Staufer” emperors, there was a special position within the town: On the mighty castle, sited above and protecting the town, the latter at least in the beginning, there was the special position of the “burg graves of Nürnberg”. This was a very high position, as they were also – in absence of the emperor, his representative. The noble family of which the “burg graves of Nürnberg” came from, was the one of the Hohenzollern. This family had also wide parts in the Franconia area in family position.

While the town of Nürnberg get bigger and stronger, a tragedy started, as in some other imperial town also: The town itself, represented by the town council (and the inhabitants), tried to “break free „from their noble masters. Although at Würzburg, for example, or at Mainz, there with the stronger self-respect and growing richness of the towns by trading and merchandising, attempts to get independent – in the latter case, the town council of Würzburg tried to break free from the bishop -) – here at Nürnberg, a generation long lasting “power fight” between the “burg graves” and the town council developed, and the Pendulum of success swung many times from one to the other. Meanwhile, with the last “active” burg grave of Nürnberg, Frederic VI, the family hired the area of Brandenburg, and while they meanwhile their “home” capital in this area was the walled town of Ansbach, the naming margraves of Ansbach-Brandenburg took place. The position of being the “burg graves of Nürnberg” had become worse for the Margraves of Ansbach , because the town council gathered more and more privileges and “strangled” the “burg graves”, wherever they could. Finally, when the “soup was really spoiled at all, it was also Margrave Frederic II, who sold finally the town castle of Nürnberg, the „Nürnberg” to the town council – and the “legendary” burg graves of Nürnberg were out of the business – by the title, respectively. Similar with the growing power of the town of Nürnberg, the “burg graves” used their mighty position in the circumference, in combination with their family power and influence, to “collect” villages, farms and power, trading rights, and so on –

Needless to say, that there a controversy grew up, of which it was only a question of time, when it “explode” – and it did during the “First Margrave war” and within the “second margrave” war – (see therefore) –

In the meantime, the „conflict” was still running very hot between the interwoven areas between the imperial town of Nürnberg and the margraves of Ansbach-Brandenburg – also here, just a visit of one or two of the opponents villages, some burning, some terror, to put some pressure into running negotiations – and in revenge the other party did too.

It is too add, that the whole and relay big territory of the Margraves was split after the death of margrave Albrecht Achilles (meet him in the first margraves War) between his two sons – afterwards, it was changing, growing, lost some parts, got them back – but still, margraves and the imperial towns (and among them especially Nürnberg, because the Margraves never forget the forcing out of the position of the “burg graves”) faced not only as enemies – they were foams ! None of them ever asked for mercy – while no one would have given either.



Since the town of Ansbach get the capital of the Margraves, constant enlargement and renewing was done. Despite of all clashed the Margraves had, they spent tremendous efforts into their capital, which get also a new and great representative castle area from the Renaissance-age onward. As it was “fashion” in these times, “big and bulky”.

Also the town itself was plastered by new and fine buildings at all the time, representing the proudness, power and responsibility of the Margraves – and it impresses noble guests at all. Impressive is also the town church, which was rebuilt in Gothic times by great donations of the Margraves.



Subchapter 08 The “Burg graves” of Nürnberg (in context with the imperial town)

The (former) imperial town of Nürnberg is dominated by a wide known castle, the “Nürnberg” which was the seat of the so called “Burg graves”.

The founding in general was done by King Heinrich III, who founded an imperial castle around 1040, and he proclaimed a wide area round that as “Bannwald” and declares it therefore to imperial territory, in attempt to “create a counterweight” to the expanding ambitions of the Prince bishopric of Bamberg.

Around the year 1105, the counts of Raabs (from lower Austria) got the fief of the imperial castle. As they were very ambitious in expanding, they used very smart their tile, the power that came from and some „luck” and gathered a large territory around the castle, bigger than the first proclaimed by King Heinrich III. This Territory simply was called the “BURGGRAFSCHAFT” of Nürnberg.

Finally, around the year 1190, the last Count of Raabs died without a son, and therefore, the possession although as the tile had to be handed over to his son in law, who was Friedrich I. of Zollern (later named “Hohenzollern”).

Being constantly in the possession of this very ambitious and successful family, they build a relay “empire within the empire”, spread out, married into – but always stayed superior, like a real big Master-tree.

And for our theme, there is the “twig” of interest, of which the Margraves of Ansbach-Brandenburg did came out, after they lost finally the title of the “burg graves of Nürnberg”, while the imperial town of Nürnberg became too powerful at all. For all further conflicts, see the former chapter, handling the Margraves of Ansbach-Brandenburg. Also, as a more or less direct outcome of these difficult background, there were two “bursts”, handled in chapter 2:

The first Margrave war (subchapter 03) and The second Margrave war (subchapter 09)

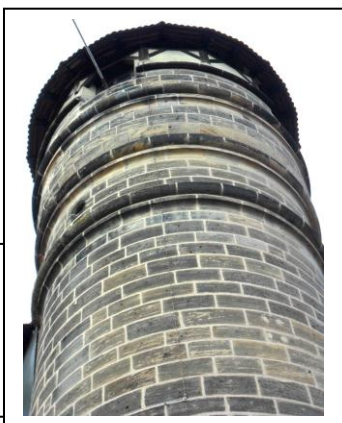


Little has left of the tremendous town fortifications, which were that strong, that two times a siege of the margraves failed (see above). With the fast changing town in the younger past, lots of the “old” fortifications were used as quarries, but therefore you will find, like islands of the history” towers like the one, within the “sea of modern time”.



Indubitable, this is the style of „Nürnberger Architects“: The fortress of Lichtenau, since the early 15th century in the possession of the imperial town, was upgraded into a “modern fortress” in the 16th century.

Not by random, the towers of Lichtenau fortress look like the keep of „Nürnberg castle“. In neighborhood if the Margraves of Ansbach, it signed them “Nürnberg always keep an eye on you”.



Subchapter 09

A general view about the role of the imperial towns

As mentioned in the general introduction of this part, the imperial towns are the „youngest“ of the Actors.

Within the 12th and 13th century, the current kings and emperors found a new source of money, while their own “family possession” was declining at all: They free existing towns to “imperial” towns (or found one by themselves, if possible), which meant, that those were only responsible to the current ruler of the empire -and, most important of that in general – there tax had to be paid to him too. Therefore, the imperial towns got special extensions of the “normal” town rights (thereby, there was “Standard” of town rights at all) in an extraordinary way, which means far distant trading, “global markets” and they could make their own money – sometimes.

But this “rising star” was a serious threat to the given law and orders for the nobles and the Cleric too. The new imperial towns were proud, self-ambitioned – and the win of someone does came from the loss of another one – needless to say, that with the increasing power of the imperial towns, which could also buy villages from nobles or a monastery, the “old establishment” started attempts to held their own influence up – with the outcome of a long lasting controversy too.

For our theme, means in the area of the Photodokumentation of Church-Castles, there are the following imperial towns of most importance:

Nürnberg
Rothenburg
Schwäbisch Hall
Ulm
Frankfurt

The imperial towns had their own, growing possessions with borderlines, called the “Landhege” or “territory of an imperial town” within there “own” villages, also towns farms, and so one were, and the town court had mostly the absolute authority in every belonging. Crossing to neighbor territory was only possible by “checkpoints”, and not allowed for the rural people on both sides either, which were, also those of an imperial town, people in boundage.

Furthermore, imperial towns could although have normal towns within their possession, as a fief from a noble who loaned money from the imperial town and couldn’t give it back – or he had finally to sell the town at all. That also happened more than once. In general you can say, if there was profit for both, nobles and imperial towns traded or worked together – just to be opponents the next day again. Sometimes, and this also not to seldom at all, there were clashes with nobles as an outcome of such companionship, while the latter felt overcharged: High-jacking of trading convoys to and from the imperial town could be expected. Sure, the imperial town send forces – but if the noble and his fellows had a good and well protected castle, it was expensive for the imperial town to “break” that.

If the noble overturned the value, then the imperial town had to react, and in some cases, forces of imperial towns joined together if necessary. But in any way, as long as the losses were not too great, the was terror and anti-terror: The noble still had own villages and farms within his possession: If the strangulated the trading routes too much, forces of the imperial town would hit first these “soft targets”: Burning and plundering one or two villages in revenge – and in counteraction, the noble would do the other month the same. Of course, negotiations were done, law and order was held up in these times first, and most of the cases were first given to the imperial law court. But – only if – it seemed to took too long time – sometimes – sword and crossbow said hello. These cases are Legion.

Furthermore, there were

Heilbronn
Röttweil
Reutlingen
Schwäbisch Gmünd – and -
Aalen

Associations were made, like the “Schwäbische Städtebund” or the “Rheinische Städtebund” (and more), kind of trading and military alliances, and sometimes their “forces” marched reinforced by contingents from nobles, sometimes against them.

Just for that to the theme in General, and for the moment.

Subchapter 10 The Counts of Württemberg

Among the noble families, some have been more lucky as the others. But also among those "lucky guys", there were "just sparks" and some "shining candles".

One of these shining candles were the nobles of Württemberg, who started their wild "career" on their small home castle on a hill called the "Wirttemberg", from out which the name "Württemberg" developed.

With strong ambitions to "grew" in power and importance, their history is full of success –and being defeated sometimes too..

From the 14th century onward, the "count of Württemberg" was the great leader of the other and less mighty nobles in their fight against a serious threat which had grown very worse for the nobles at all: The free and imperial towns, which were also "organized" in "town associations", one of most famous and strongest known as the „Swabian town association“.

Anyhow, in the 12th century the nobles of "Wirttemberg" climbed up on the ladder of importance within the empire: The got the title "counts".

Soon after, ad midst of the 13thcentury, it was Count Ulric I, who married Mechthild of Baden. And therefore he enlarged the "family territory" tremendous.

Soon after, by the year 1265, the possession of the former mighty counts of Urach was finally handed over to the house of Württemberg, followed by the one the counts of Teck in 1306-26.

Therefore, a back-stroke happened in year 1307, when Count Eberhard Negotiated with the mighty family of the house of Habsburg, and awaked the mistrust of the current emperor of the house of Staufer: The result was the conquering of Wirttemberg castle by the emperor –in the year 1311, it was given back, due to brilliant negotiation done by the count.

Other Ulrics followed in such successful marriages (the name Ulric was a preferred one)

Another tremendous win for the house of Württemberg was the story with the Count Palatines of Tübingen, which split within the 14th century into three parts, and one after the other was "absorbed" until 1382 by the house of Württemberg.

Talking about the conflict with the imperial towns –there were two "battles" under the leadership of the Württembergian: In the year 1377, the one near Reutlingen, in which count Eberhard lost his son Ulric, and the one at Döffingen in 1388, when under the leadership of count Eberhard II (so, Eberhard was the second most preferred surname in this family) the jyoned forces of the imperial towns were defeated.By the Way:A central point of the battle was the siege of the church castle of Döffingen !

In the year 1442, the countdom of Württemberg was split among the two Brothers Ludwig I. and Ulric V., and it should last until 1492, when the countdown could be re-united with the town of Stuttgart as capital again.

There is to mention in brief case, that the counts became Dukes from 1495 onward, and a first glimpse of the peasant war of 1525 occurred in 1514, when the rebellion of the "poor Konrad" took place in Württemberg – a first attempt of the peasants who were strangulated by too much noble pressure. The rebellion was solved – in blood, of course.

Although the dukedom of Württemberg converted to the Protestantism, in 1534. This was the Price, Duke Ulric had to pay to the Landgrave Philipp I of hessian, who had help him to reconquering his dukedom, of which the duke was chased away since the year 1519 by –ironically, troops of the Swabian town association, which were called to arms by the emperor, because the Duke of Württemberg has a burden of dept. against his creditor, the Austrian house of Habsburg. After he even was not able to pay his interest, his dukedom was "taken" and handed over to house Habsburg in commission. But that's a story of its own - at all.



The „three antlers“ in the town crest of „Markgröningen“ line out the town as under the major possession of the Counts of Württemberg. The three antlers were well known during the medieval, symbolizing the will and strength of a noble family to "rule".

Subchapter 11 The Counts of Helfenstein (and the imperial town of Ulm)

From out of the early medieval, the nobles of Helfenstein grew up in importance by „various activities“, like some other „lucky“ noble families too. But this one had a family possession, which was nearly homogenous inside to them at all, which was looking for an equal at all. Their crest, shown below, any look at the first moment like something of a fiction – an Elephant ! By the way, in these times, that crest made enemies shiver, and it is a real true one: The Elephant as an animal was well known among the medieval nobles, since a lot of them have been in the holy land during the age of the crusades. And the name "Helfenstein" came from „Elephant-stone“ originally, slightly changed in pronunciation by the landsmen's tongue. Therefore, also a noble alliance for protection and military companionship (against imperials towns) was named "Elephant association".

However, the imperial town of Ulm rose in power and importance, it were the Counts of Helfenstein, who got their fiercely enemy, and the contest lasted for generations. Often the Pendulum of success swung though and through – but the raids, the terror and fighting were Legion!

Therefore the "end" of the "family story" is a real sarcastic one:

The "finalization" of the Counts of Helfenstein didn't happened by being defeated at all – they impoverished within the 15th century! What make then strong in former time, turned out to be a backlash later: Their household had become that expensive, that even their possession couldn't gather the money they needed - and so they started loaning money – by their greatest "former" enemy -because that was the only one willing to loan, and the only one, which had that amounts at all: The imperial town of Ulm!

Just after one generation, the Counts of Helfenstein couldn't even pay the ransom anymore – and the imperial town of Ulm went to the imperial law court at Rottweil: Money or possession! was the demand.

And the imperial town went superior by law: The counts had to give about 80% of their whole land to the imperial town of Ulm, which was a tremendous plus – and furthermore, the mighty counts lived in that, what's left for tem – fading down.



The crest of the Counts of Helfenstein is he Elephant – and that is serious! Their "family castle" went, according to their heavy indebtedness at the end of the 14th century into the possession of their great opponent, the imperial town of Ulm, which used it as a warhead for the own ambitions then.



After the Counts got nearly impoverished and had to hand over great parts of their land to the imperial town of Ulm, a small territory around the town of Wiesensteig became their last refuge. Here, they "ruled" a shadow of the former glory, but still in 1600, a new castle was built in the town, which has this tremendous "family crest", with all the "marring-in's" the Counts had done in the centuries – still you will find the Elephant head on top left, although as whole Elephants within the crest below.

Chapter 2 Short time lasting “Bursts”

Subchapter 01 The Hungarian Invasion (10th century)

It was in the year 899, when the Hungarian tribe of the „Magyars” started their raids into neighborhood territories in attempt to expand. In the follows, changing success between attacks and defeating them took place, after the first surprise was gone. Saxonian, East-Franconia and other parts of the empire were afflicted.

Within the early 10th century, also Bavaria was not secure anymore. Also here, the pendulum between success of defense and prevention had to work hard; very often the defenders could react only after an attack by the Magyars was done, because they didn't know exactly, where the next raid would came down.

Within these times, it is known first that, by order of the current king or Emperor, the local nobles were asked to fortify the churches of their villages, to save at least the life of the rural people.

From that on, the “systematic” construction of church castles started in the afflicted areas.

This worse situation continued under King Konrad, went on with King Heinrich I (since 919) and also by King Otto I (since 936 and later emperor Otto I).

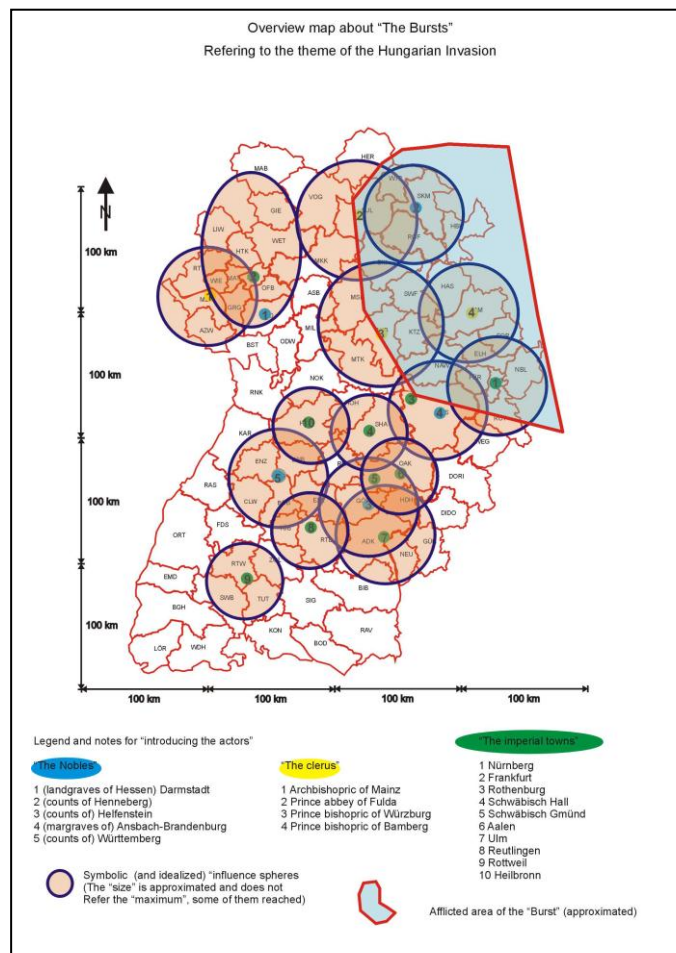
Under the leadership of Otto I, but also with great efforts of the imperial nobles at all, a change to the betters could be reached – within many smaller and greater battles and with the final battle on the “Lechfeld” in August 955, emperor Otto I and his troops stayed superior on the battlefield against a great army of the Magyars, which felled at last after being defeated badly.

But – there is a story “afterwards” –

There was problem for Otto: Several times before, there were successful battles against the Magyars, not that total victory, Otto has done here –and several times the responsible leader of the empire thought, that the treat of open violence would be over now – with the result that just years afterwards, slight raids started again, followed by massive in the follow and the whole bushfire was aflame again. Also negotiated contracts between the Magyars and the empire didn't keep the raids away very long

Therefore, Otto decided to set a sign: To break the military power at least for one generation: He ordered his troops to ambush the fleeing Magyars, and by hit and run most of the fleeing Magyars were “extinguished”

Brutal? Not at all – think about all the dead rural people, violated by the raids of the Magyars – However – at least this kept them away - while new threads were just in progress.



Subchapter 02

The Bavarian War (14th century)

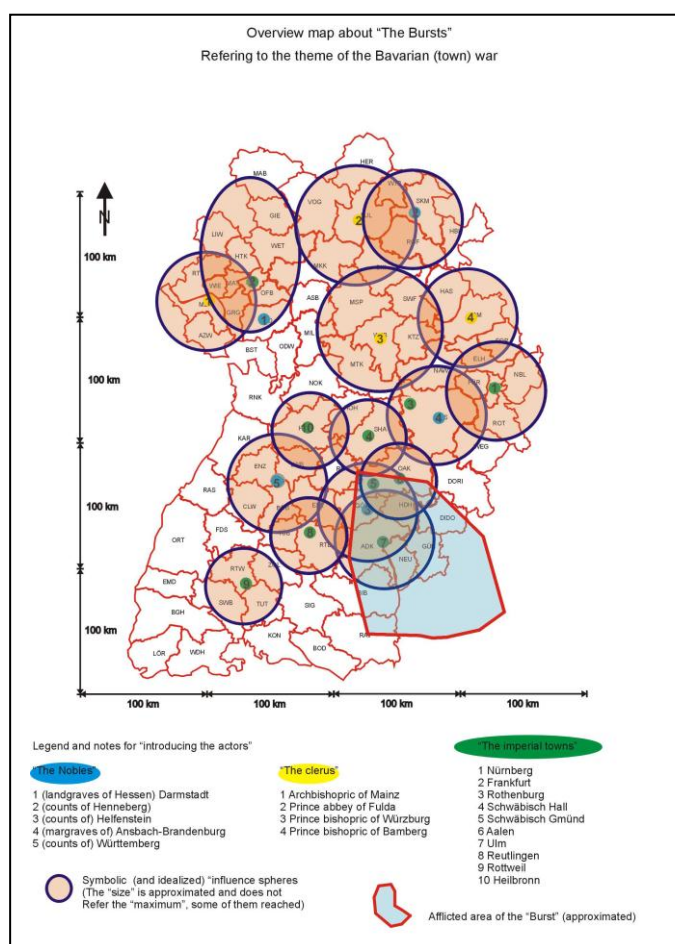
It was a very complex situation, even in the decades before the “great violence” broke out. The imperial towns, always in attempt to enlarge their territories and power, the trading contracts of which the money came from, had made an alliance with the Bishop of Salzburg, who gave special contracts to them. Well and good – Where is the worse in that ?

As there have been no straight borderlines or “homogeny territories”, always separate contracts for bypassing and protection on the trading routes had to be made with the responsible nobles. Therefore, anger was guaranteed. While the nobles didn't have the market connections, they forced the screw by the price of passing and protection when the convoys of the imperial towns passed through. And the master of them all in this area was the Duke of Bavaria (Bayern). While the so called “Frankenland” (Franconia) was partly belonging to Bavaria (other parts to the princebishopsrics of Würzburg and Bamberg), the Duke tried to get the imperial towns under his thumb, whenever a change was. Needless to say, that the imperial towns react in the same way and hit Bavarian villages and towns in revenge. While even written contractzs existed, the “interpretation and realizing of the words” was sometimes (and not too seldem) done by sword and crossbow.

As its said in the beginning, this lasted for generations, in local hit and runs – but sometimes there was a “burst” like the follow, when the water in the pot boiled over.

It was in early 1388, when King Wenzel officially called to war against the Bavarian Duke,who tried too much screwing at all (according to theview of the imperial towns, who made a declaration at the imperial town of Ulm in late 1387 already).King Wenzel joined to the “imperial towns”, that is frankly to say, not only while the law was on their side: Also the money, and not little amounts of that, came from them -always please your sponsors ! And by the way, the imperial towns had to finance their war by themselves.

Therefore, the nobles joined the Duke of Bavaria, who reacts first and overwhelming: With about 10000 soldiers he “rushed” to the territory of one of the greatest enemies: The free and imperial town of Ulm. In that territory, about four dozens of villages were overrun and burned, and although such might church castles (also as nobles ones) like Langenau were conquered. In revenge, forces of the imperial towns did raids with the same violence to Bavarian villages and towns. Officially, the “piece of Eger” in 1389 – by negotiation of the imperial town of Nürnberg, ended to „official war actions”, but you really can imagine, that the rural population had the one or other visit by raider.



Subchapter 03 The First Margrave War (15th century)

In the „Long lasting controversy“ between the Margraves of Ansbach and especially the free and imperial town of Nurnberg, there was a „Burst“ by violence called Erster Markgrafenkrieg (later one by historians) within the years 1449-1450. “If there something had to be found, serving as a morale reason for extraordinary violence, it will be found” it was once said by a wise man – and also in this case, Margrave Achilles of Ansbach Brandenburg demanded “old family territory” back from the possession of the town of Nürnberg, back out from that time, his family still has been “burg graves” of Nürnberg.

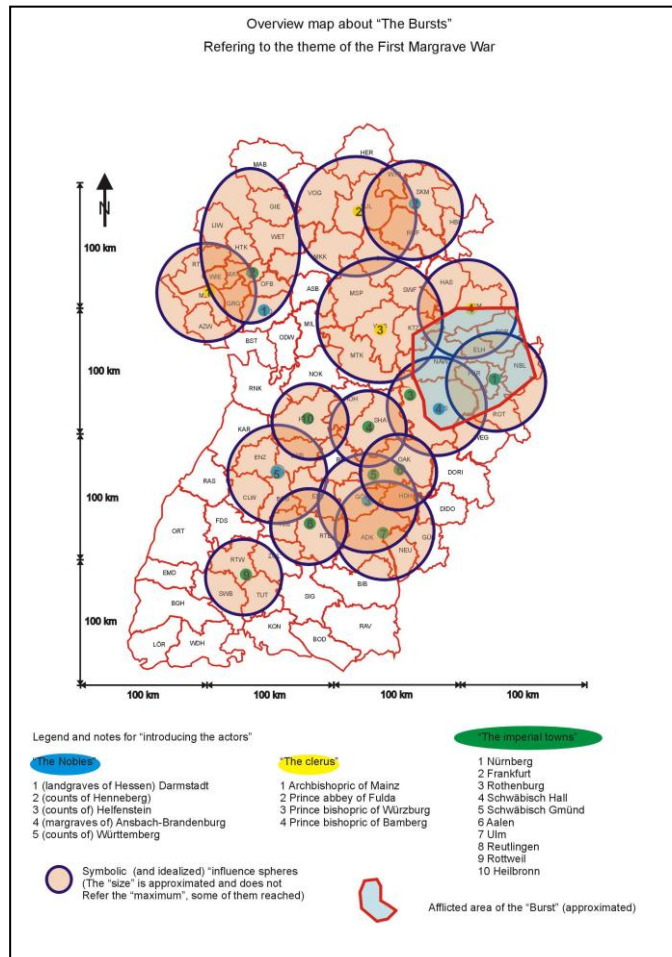
While his demanding were refused by the town council of Nürnberg, the Margrave called his men to arms by instant, and with about 7000 men (food soldiers – means peasants in arms mostly, and horsemen – mostly nobles therefore) he tried to overrun the town of Nürnberg directly by surprise. No surprise that the Margrave found the citizens of Nürnberg, who were aware what was going on, ready for defense. The surprise didn’t work and the siege of the town didn’t brought at positive result either, while a siege is very fast getting expensive at all.

It is clear to say, that the margrave´s men burned down whatever was in their way towards Nürnberg, and after the siege was broken off, they made raids in revenge to villages of Nürnberg in the Northwest of the town, towards Bamberg. Also, troops of the imperial town terrorized best by their raids against villages of the Margrave.

A slight victory seems to be for the Margrave and his fellows, when they are able to conquer the „warhead of Nürnberg in sight of Ansbach“: The fortress of Lichtenau in August 1449. Shortly before, the nobles of Lichtenau had sold their territory, including their castle, to the imperial town of Nürnberg, after the Margrave had put too much pressure on them, willing to buy it for his own. Nürnberg therefore took this change instantly, to have now some own territory so close to the capital of the Margrave, the walled town of Ansbach, and strengthened to castle tremendously. You my calculate the coasts of or that and the outcome for a realistic background- there was none- but in “war times or a war like controversy, money doesn’t count (as long as it didn’t run out at all).Therefore, the margrave of Ansbach had to care about this warhead of Nürnberg, because his villages in circumference were terrorized by troops of Nürnberg out of there.

With the conquer of Lichtenau there seemed to be a victory, even partly, for the Margrave – but as soon as won, it was also lost again: In spring of the year 1450, the Margraves troops faced such of Nürnberg in the battle of the “Pillenreuther Weiher” (lakes of Pillenreuth, plural, respectively). While the troops of Nürnberg became superior during the battle, the pendulum was equalized again and by negotiation of the Prince bishop of Bamberg, the Parties agreed of peace in summer 1450. The Margrave had to give back the Fortress of Lichtenau and the conquered villages during his raid – therefore nominally he lost this war – but who counts the dead and all the pain among those who really had fought – the rural people.

The “Burst” was over – and the daily terror, village by village, took place again. The destroyed church castles in the villages of both sides, as the villages itself were rebuilt instantly, it is to say.



Subchapter 04 The “Hussiten War” (15th century)

This “Tragedy”, and you can really call it, “started” originally at the imperial town of Prague in the small Kingdom of Bohemia. Therefore, out of a religious controversial desert storm occurred which was as furious as the thirty years war in later times.

First – there was Johannes Hus, a professor of the University of Prague, with the theme of theology. While he was inspired by Ideas of the English guy John Wycliff (about 1330-1384), who, in brief case, was criticizing the too worldly ambitions and personifications of the Church, „everything does came directly and only from the Lord”; there will be no substitute of the Lord on earth, even the Pope is a servant (still at that time not named Catholic church – because there was no other!). Johannes Hus agreed with Wycliff and proclaimed by himself a purification of the religion (doesn't that sound like the later Martin Luther, somehow?). Clear, that the Pope at Rome get an eye on him, and not a smiling one – while Hus was very popular among the Bohemians, his proclamation found much run after by the people at all.

By the way – the Bohemians. still within the empire, they were a Kingdom of their own, born out of the history. And they hat their own “king”, who stand “loyal” to the empire too – but always, there was the strong proudness of the Bohemians and attempts get more independent at all.

The situation in these years were the follow: The empire was ruled by emperor Sigismund, while his Brother Wenzel was King of Bohemia. It had come to that in a way, the Bohemians didn't really like, and it needs already a little “force” from the big brother to keep them clam. Meanwhile, Johannes Hus, pashioned as he was, had become to a real threat for the Pope at Roma and the teach by the church, because his demanding found more and more friend. It was King Wenzel, who allowed Johannes Hus to go to the council of Konstanz in the year 1415, where he should explain und discuss his demanding's with representatives from Rome. While King Wenzel guaranteed him Immunity, Johannes Hus went to Konstanz, and he was burned in Order (and with the “allowance” of the Pope) of Emperor Sigismund –who declared that, when Hus didn't refuse his demanding's at all, he would be burned, because the Immunity of “King Wenzel” didn't count for him – he never promised Hus immunity.

Among the Bohemians there a one outcry, when they get that news – and King Wenzel tried now best to extinguish the fire within Bohemia; he forced out every parity liner of Johannes Hus from any positions – and the “water boiled over” on July, 30th 1419, when the first “Defenestration of Prague” happened the open Revolt of the Bohemians started. Three weeks after, King Wenzel died (strange piece of ill-luck, isn't it ?) – so Emperor Sigismund, as his brother at all, declared himself also as King of Bohemia, and that called the Bohemians finally to arms.

So long this short “pre-story” is in words, the rest of the story is pure violence, drawn in blood and pain”.

An imperial army, send by the Emperor, was badly defeated by the Hussiten in late 1419, and it was the first of a long chain of victories, the Hussiten should have under their brilliant tactical leader Jan Ziska.

Finally, every imperial domination was gone at Bohemia, and also further attempts of imperial troops to turn the pendulum of domination back, emend always in a disaster for them.

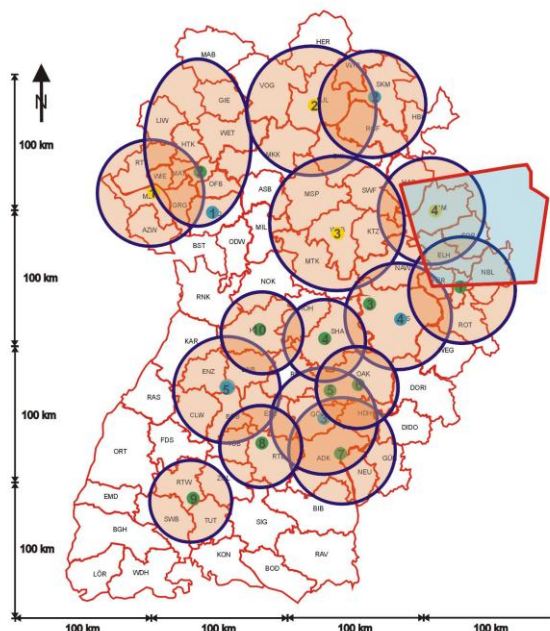
The Bohemians had, under their leader, a brilliant tactic in open field battles: The “barricade of wagons”. Forming a circuit, out of which they fired with light cannons. They were headway within that too.

Attempts to copy their tactics in that failed badly.

It turned that worse, that the Pope five times proclaimed a crusade against the Bohemians, but all military actions followed by, ended also disastrous. By the time, the superior Bohemians “spread” out of gathering supplies at all, and they went to Saxonian and Franconia (see therefore also chapter 2, subchapter 07) and lower Austria by their raids. By the time, negotiations were done, with changing success, because even when the leader of the Bohemians, Jan Ziska died, he was replaced instantly by Prokopp, who was also a marvel on the battlefield.

Not by military power, instead of that by internal power struggle, meanwhile there were different points of view among the bohemians at all – the closed military power faded by the years. Andin 1439, finally this desert storm was “over” which had out ruled for a long time even the fear about the devil, because even long time after, rural people said to their children, if they were nasty: If you don't obey, the Hussiten will came back !

Overview map about “The Bursts”
Referring to the theme of the Husiten War



Legend and notes for “introducing the actors”

The Nobles

- 1 (landgraves of Hessen) Darmstadt
- 2 (counts of Henneberg)
- 3 (counts of) Helfenstein
- 4 (margraves of Ansbach-Brandenburg)
- 5 (counts of) Württemberg

The clerus

- 1 Archbishop of Mainz
- 2 Prince abbey of Fulda
- 3 Prince bishopric of Würzburg
- 4 Prince bishopric of Bamberg

The imperial towns

- 1 Nürnberg
- 2 Frankfurt
- 3 Rothenburg
- 4 Schwäbisch Hall
- 5 Schwäbisch Gmünd
- 6 Aalen
- 7 Ulm
- 8 Reutlingen
- 9 Rottweil
- 10 Heilbronn

Symbolic (and idealized) “influence spheres”
(The “size” is approximated and does not refer the “maximum”, some of them reached)

Afflicted area of the “Burst” (approximated)

Subchapter 05 The Mainzer Stiftsfehde (15th century)

It was in the year 1459, when a new Archbishop of Mainz had to be elected out of the candidates from the chapter. From out them, Dieter of Isenburg won the contest against Adolf of Nassau.

While the Archbishopric of Mainz had a controversy with the Prince Elector of the Palatine, Friedrich I, his first worldly action was to battle him – and he and his troops were badly defeated by Friedrich at Pfeddersheim in 1460.

Although Dieter had several other hard stands, he fell into disgrace and was finally banned by Pope Pius II, who replaced him by the former unsuccessful Adolf of Nassau.

But a decision had to be realized, and as hard as the stand of Dieter has been at all, he still had some friends and companions, who tried to get their special benefit out of the situation – also Adolf of Nassau did.

Therefore the theater of war was ready for action:

While the party of Adolf counted the Archbishop of Trier, the Bishop of Metz and Speyer, and the Count of Württemberg. The party of Dieter was joined by the town of Mainz itself and the Prince Elector Friedrich I, well, the same guy he had lost the battle of Pfeddersheim (while Friedrich I, frankly to say, has been a genius on the battlefield at all, Dieter hoped to have some chances against the superior opponents, but he had to give Friedrich therefore some towns and areas along the "Bergstrasse" (road alongside the hills, running from North to South).

A last attempt for a peaceful outgoing of the controversy was made by the Margrave of Baden, who negotiated between them – but finally he also joined the already superior party of Adolf of Nassau.

Thoroughly convinced of their superiority, Adolf's Alliance invaded the Palatinate areas left of the Rhine, trying to make Friedrich I to surrender, by terrifying his people with burning, plundering and murdering. It was a desert storm, so furious, that even generations after people would still talk about.

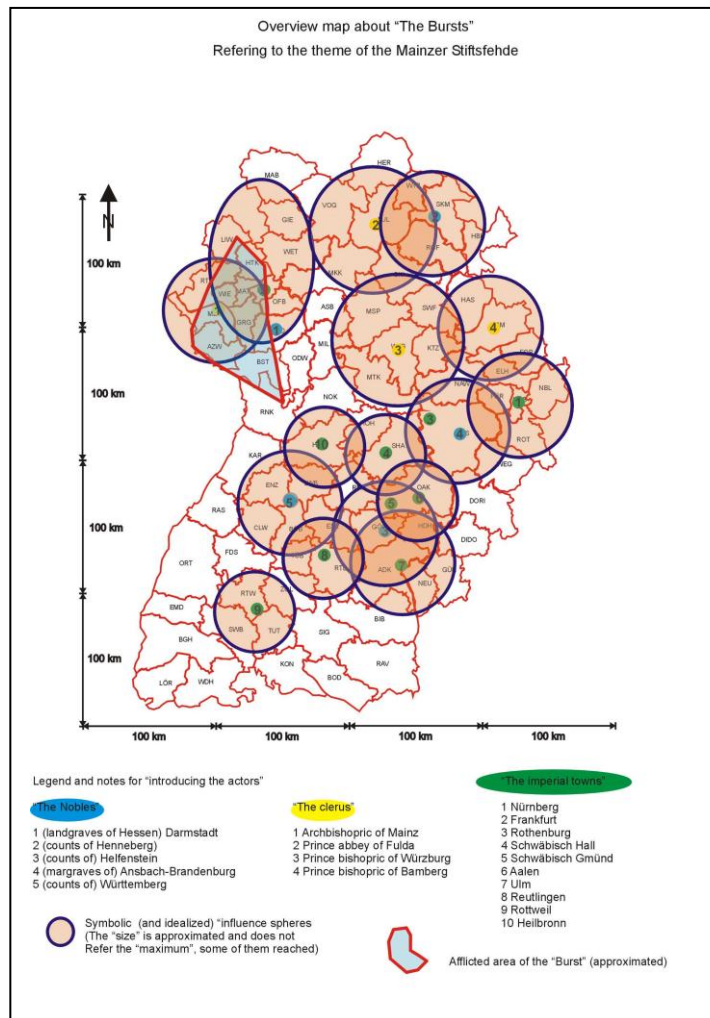
And Friedrich? As the genius he has been, he stands the terror (brought by the death of his subjects) and made the opponents believe, he and his troops were just around at the area of Ansbach, where the margrave of Ansbach had a fight with the Duke of Bavaria and Friedrich was an ally of the former.

Take the chance or not – Adolf's party crossed the Rhine and marched against Heidelberg at all! This must terrify the Count Palatine and he would surrender.

It was a masterpiece, Friedrich did in summer 1462 at the village of Seckenheim, when he defeated Adolf's allies, counting about 8000 men, with less than half. More than that: All "heads" were captured by Friedrich, and a high ransom had to be paid by each of them.

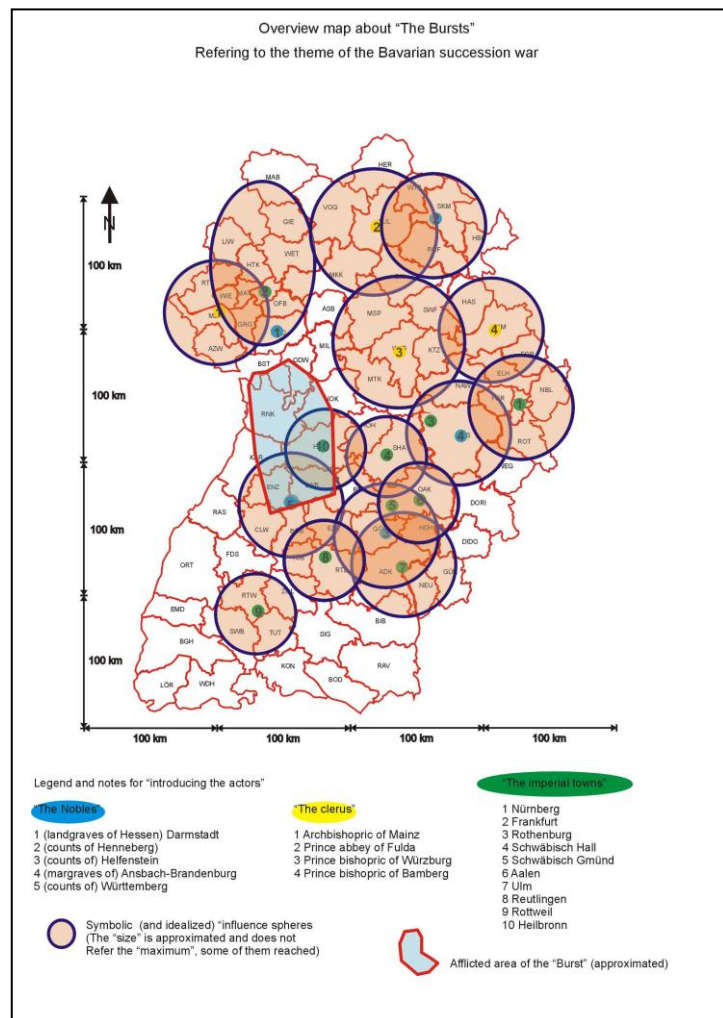
So much for the glory, but who tells how the rural people suffered? Who counted the death, or the wounded?

Still Adolf didn't give up, and in autumn 1462, by the help of traitors, he overran Mainz by nighttime. And with local rides on both sides, it should last till autumn 1463, until "peace" was accepted by all parties.



Subchapter 06 The Bavarian War of Succession

In general, it's a story of father and son, and originally, the former just want to help the latter. As so often, when done by best intention? – the plan was backfired and violence took place. There was the Prince Elector Philipp, also Count Palatine, since the year 1476 in charge. Among his three sons, Ludwig, Ruprecht and Friedrich, it was Ruprecht, who married in 1500 the daughter of the Duke of Landshut (area called “lower Bavaria, at the Lech River”). Well and good, but when Duke Georg was gone to die by high age shortly after, he promised that his daughter and her husband, Ruprecht, should hire his Dukedom. That made the close relatives and the nobles of “lower Bavaria” in general to revolt, because they don't like the “Palatinate married in” at all. Therefore, both parties went to the imperial law court, but as it is in the nature of at all, it seemed to be a long story by this. Finally, Duke Georg died in 1503, still there was no decision made by the imperial law court - but rumors spread, that it will be decided against the “Palatinate”. In the name of “facts are always better than words”, Ruprecht called his people at Landshut to arms – with low response, of course. Therefore, his father Philipp sent Palatinate nobles with their forces (people in bondage, as always) down to the Dukedom, “just for prevention”. But this obvious affront put the emperor in rage (he already was suspected against the count Palatine) and put him for the “invasion of lower Bavaria” into imperial proscription. Once in imperial proscription, there should be executors to fulfill the proscription – in that case: Forcing Philipp and his son to redeem the soldiers and to obey whatever the law court will decide. And in there were jealousy neighbors, who were more than willing to force the Count Palatine, because there were “old bills”: The Landgrave of Hessian and the Duke of Württemberg (since 1495, therefore count) called their nobles to arms (and also, they were followed by their people in bondage). Therefore, the executor's didn't march against Landshut – they used the old roman principle: Hit the real capital of the evil: They invaded the Palatinate. Plundering and destroying village and farms. The Palatinate nobles and their forces had hard to do, to slow down this invasion, and even Heidelberg, the capital of the Palatinate, was prepared for a long and hard siege. The Duke of Württemberg (and his forces) besieged the Monastery of Maulbronn, which had about 38 villages in circumference in possession (most of them with church castles) and destroyed them one by one – the Palatinate forces did best, but they couldn't stop them, and finally the strong fortified monastery, defended by soldiers of the Count Palatine, had to surrender after 2 days – and was handed over to the Duke of Württemberg by the emperor to compensate his costs for being the executor. By negotiation of the bishop of Speyer, the Count Palatine and his son finally obeyed to all demanding's in 1504. That was the short story – for this time.



Subchapter 07 The peasants war (16th century)

First, it may sound "harmless" – the "Peasants War"

Peasants at war ? What would they do ? Protesting on their fields, with their sickles ? What about would they go to "war ?"

Despite of that, this very short "Burst" in time is one of the most surprising, most violent and also most deadliest one.

For centuries, the rural people, mostly farmer and therefore people in bondage, lived their life, accepted their role „that was given in the order of the world by our Lord at all“, as they eared so many centuries from the cleric. They had to carry everything on their shoulders, the burden of the daily care about their fields and families, they had to follow their nobles master in case of war (even in local struggles) – and therefore, peasants were not only trained in using sickles at all. Not to compare with well-trained soldiers at all, not to compare with the nobles and their armed servants – but the farmers knew also to use a sword, a halberd, war axe – and the crossbow, of course. And therefore, they haven't been so "untrained" at all: Within their villages, who defend their women and children from out of the Church castle, whenever struggle was around : The Peasants. And, consider this too, they have been really great in number –compared with the number of nobles at all – varying from area to area, but 20 to one or more was given.

Therefore, this was a potential power – but they always obeyed and fight, bleed and died – until there was a "wind of change" from the end of the 15th century onward.

It is said that the spark, which enlightened the "sleeping powder barrel" was matched around the imperial town of Strassbourg, in the Alsace – it could be assumed, that with the raising "Protestantism" the rural people at least got the idea that the "old order of the world „was not the one and only –

However, that bushfire spread around then in 1525 within weeks – nearly as soon as the message spread out.

Peasants joined together, made their demanding's – which were of that character at all, that they want to have a little bit more basic human rights, a little bit more respect from their masters – they didn't want to break free at all- not in the beginning.

But in some places, were the pressure from "above", equal if noble or monasteries were the masters, has been too great within the last generation, the rebellion turned into violence at all: And the nobles , also as the Cleric, were completely taken by surprise about that. Re-organizing and countermeasure were slow, and so the peasants got superior – in the beginning (remember that they were great in number and also the main part of the "forces at all" . Towns joined them or refused the rebellion – normal ones also as imperial ones – by which the latter had mostly own serious problems with their "peasants", their people in bondage, from out the villages and farms belonging to the imperial towns. Free and equal were only the citizens of an imperial town (and even in that, there were big differences). The „outlanders“, the rural people were in the same bad bondage, as if there were noble or cleric masters at all.

Anyway, in late spring of 1525, the emperor called the "Swabian town association" for help, because the situation had become most worse at all: The peasants had their own associations, hundreds and sometimes thousands of then marched against imperial towns and made their demanding's, and the whole "act of getting basic rights" had become self-dynamic, most in pure violation at all.

The forces of the town association, led by the noble "Georg Truchsess of Waldburg" and other nobles, started from Southeast, and in a few battles, they turned the pendulum of success: First, the peasants faced the town forces in their own awareness of their superiority – but it turned out fast, that the drill and organization of the town forces (which were, by the way, also mostly joined by rural people and citizens) stayed superior – and after two months, the peasants fled in panic, while the "cleanup-mission" took progress. In revenge for the violence, done by the peasants, their leaders were decapitated, hanged, or whatever, and every resistance was extinguished in their blood. . The last great battle was in autumn near Königshofen at the Tauber-River, and it is said, that more than half of the peasants army, which had tried to re-organize for a last resistance, was slaughtered:4.000 of them, in one day. The others had to rebuild, to repair, to work double hard.

The outcome of that:

A lot of Church castles were destroyed under direct attack of thee town forces, when the fleeing peasants tried to use them as a last defense at all.

Some of them were repaired afterwards instantly – then the "normal life" had taken place at all –

And some of them lay in pieces since that time.

NOTE, that there is now map of an "influence sphere" shown, because the area was afflicted in general.

Subchapter 08 The Schmalkaldic War (16th century)

You also could call it the „rise of the Protestantism“. Especially among a lot of nobles, the teach of Martin Luther became very popular. Therefore, it spread out, and established parts of the Empire, including the emperor – at that time Karl V., and the cleric get really upset, because this new “fashion” turned out to be a serious threat for the old structures of power and position. Therefore, pressure was put on these nobles, with the outcome that they founded the “Association of Schmalkalden in 1531 (town of Schmalkalden, today district of Schmalkalden-Meiningen, Federal State of Thuringia). There, the “heads of the association met in regular intervals to formulate their demands and to protect each other if necessary. Strengthened by this – (because ether emperor was really busy at some other places – so against France and the Turks, it should last until the imperial days of 1545, when the emperor with the “outer problems solved” could concentrate now with his military strength in the background about the “Schmalkalic/Protestantism problem. Negotiation were made, but additional strengthened by the promise of the Pope to send soldiers and money “if really necessary”, the diplomats had no good success at all.

The frontlines were stiffened either, because the town heads of the Schmalkaldic association , Prince Elector Moritz of Saxonian and Landgrave Philipp of Hessen, were also secure of their military backup, “if necessary at all”.

And it did came to, when in 1546, both parts concentrated their military backup, the one in Thuringia, the other in the Southern parts of the empire, reinforcing were on their by both sides either.

It was the Schmalkaldic association, which decided, after calculating their chances, to start a preventive war.

Their forces went down to South, with the success of surprise in the beginning.

Within this theme, we won't now list every battle or there like: It is to say that, in “good old manor“, villages and people of the enemies party were terrorized, and more than once, rural people felled into their church castles –as a result therefore (by the strong concentration of troops and the use of artillery too), heavy destructions were done to the CC’s either.

When the emperors forces were strong enough for counteractions, the whole controversy turned out into a real situation.

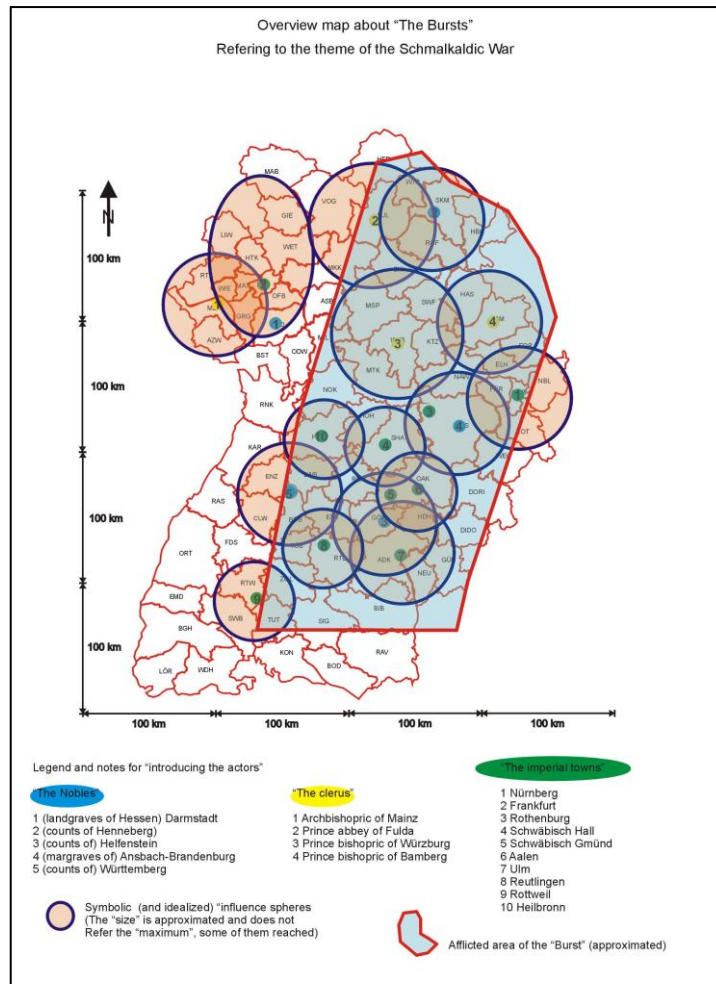
Finally, a few months later, the emperors forces got superior and marched north to Saxonian Thuringia. Briefly spoken, the War ended officially with the capture of the “heads of the Schmalkaldic association – in 1547. But still the idea “lived” and the military success of the emperors forces didn't extinguish the Protestantism- again local skirmish took place, and again the Diplomats negotiated – with the outcome of the contract of Passau:

By the way - both sides agreed to talk and they choose Passau as their meeting point. So that's where the name “contract of Passau” did came from. On August, 2nd in 1552, emperor Frederic I and the representative of the Schmalkaldic association signed the contract – in which the conversion to and believe in the Protestantism was guaranteed without any more pressure in case of – in simplified words.

“Officially”, the Emperor won, but the “problem” was not solved thereby at all - still the “gap” grew bigger and bigger, and when at the imperial days of Augsburg in 1555 the “religious liberty” (the so called “Augsburger Religionsfrieden”) was proclaimed thereby, it was the contract of Passau, the new declaration was based on.

Again – not a good solution, even when it was proclaimed also, that both parties agreed to negotiate for a final and peaceful solution –

Which came (as we know now) 53 years later, by the Thirty years war – wheels within wheels then.



Subchapter 09

The Second Margrave War (16th century)

Named in accordance to the „First Margrave War“, it was nearly century later, but the „actors „have been the same: The imperial town of Nürnberg (and allies, respectively) and the „Family“ of the Margraves of Ansbach-Brandenburg.. From among them, it was this time Margrave Albrecht Alcibiades, of Brandenburg-Kulmbach, who started, inspired by (and also involved into) – the “Schmalkalic War”, (see therefore chapter before), when he started in 1552 his activities. Again, first he besieged the imperial town of Nürnberg, also (like a century before) without success, but with heavy devastation of the villages belonging to Nürnberg.

He suppressed high reparation payments by the imperial town for leaving their territory and went with his soldiers against the Prince bishopric of Bamberg, which had to surrender.

Although he conquers the imperial town of Schweinfurt and took it furthermore as a warhead for his activities in this area. Furthermore, the Margrave suppressed although high amounts from the Princebishopsrics of Bamberg and Würzburg both. He made contract with both ,that villages and land will be handed over to him.

Emperer Karl V. didn't accept that contracts, because they were “suppressed by violence”, and put the Margrave therefore under imperial proscription.

But – the power still stood to the Margrave – because the emperor had problems with a neighbor, and he and his troops were on their Way towards France.

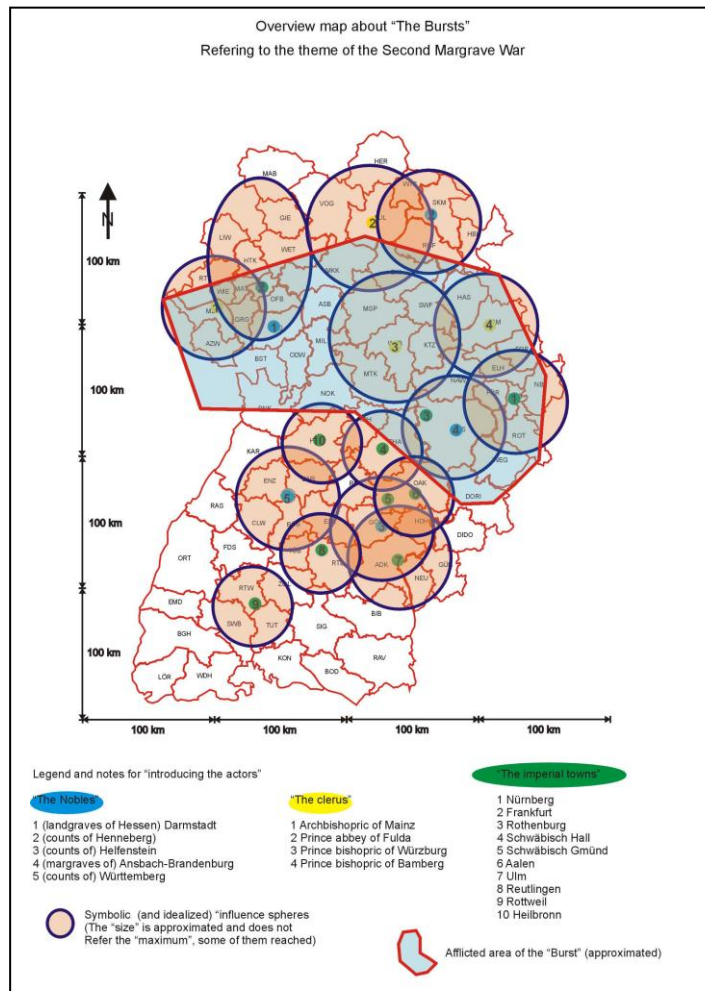
While luck wouldn't last forever, the Margrave decided to join the emperors forces, after the news had reached him the former and his fellows had problems when sieging the French town of Metz.

On his Way to, the Margrave plundered at the area of the Archbishopric of Mainz and along the Rhine, suppressed the bishoprics of Speyer and Worms too.

But with the contract of Passau, which ended the Schmalkaldic war officially, a lot of the Margraves noble companions break apart, because they only had joined his parts to fight for the Protestantism (or against the catholic areas, depending on the point of view). Although, the Princebishopsrics and the imperial town of Nürnberg had called their men to arms and in counterstrikes, some of them combined. They could re-conquer parts of their territory and marched finally into the Margraves land at all.

Looking for new men and power, the Margrave went to lower-Saxonian, were relationships guaranteed new troops, and there was finally the battle of Sievershausen on July, 9th in 1553, when the army of the Margraves was defeated – but it is to say that the battle was a “slaughterhouse” for both , and their story written with pure blood only. Now, the combined forces of princebishopsrics, with strong contingents of the imperial towns and also of the emperor, who was back from France, the Land of the Margrave was devastated, towns and villages sieged and destroyed. In late 1554, battleactions calmed down, because wide landscapes were “gone”.

So much for that....did mankind never learn?



Chapter 3 The final time after

The "time after" does over the one from the thirty years war onward, the time in which definitely neither new "Church Castles" were founded, nor existing ones were strengthened at all (therefore, existing ones were still kept in shape, but with a declining need of importance).

Subchapter 01 The Thirty-Years war (1618-48)

The thirty years war, officially lasting from 1618-1648, can be called a repeat performance of the Schmalkaldic War – with some other actors, slight other reasons, but by the way, that would be really philosophic on one hand. On the other hand, when in the Schmalkaldic war the Church-Castles still served in their role as protectors for the rural people, they did the same nearly a century later here in the 17th century.

Also here it is to point out, that not one of the church castles couldn't have withstand a direct attack even by a squadron at this time, and although not talking about the artillery at all. Were the great armies marches, they lead behind only destruction and death, and they marched a lot. They did for better strategic positions, and of course for supply, because there were no home bases out of which the army, hundreds of miles away, could be supported. They did by themselves, and like "migratory ants", they had to keep marching at all. Therefore, aside the main bulk of such an army of 5.000 to 15.000 men (and additional, half the number by the followers), raids were done of scooped out. And in that case, more than once, even when partly in ruins, the Church Castles saved the rural peoples life – or the latter sold their life as best of our them – depending on the point of view.

The area therefore, is "Global" – there were regions, in which there was no battle actions or even a passage of troops for years, and then it happened three times in row the next year after. There were regions, where there seemed to be no influence of this war either – but there the opponents fought each other like they did before. So even in the 17th century, for example, the area of the Main river was facing the old controversy between the prince bishopric of Würzburg against the Prince Abbey of Fulda – and so on. New Church-Castles were not build anymore, but most of the existing ones were kept in good condition, powered by the one or other Reason for Reason.

And by the way – when it was said in the beginning, that the war lasted officially from 1618-1648, get this: With the piece in the year 1648, about 250.000 men were in armor and arms, mostly mercenaries. When it was said „The war is over" – they lost their job! Go back home? Where is home? Those who were already born before the war, which have had a remembering of "home", had to realize that their home was burned – other, and that was the bulk of them, were born in the war and recruited young. Those who survived battles and disease – could go where? For years, there were marauding mercenaries, just on their own, ten thousands of them spread all over, a devastation of the rural inhabitants in every afflicted area. Sure that the local authorities did best to get law and order back – but with what? It lasted years until they recovered (mostly by these mercenaries).

So – the "war" ended in 1648 – but the hell on earth had just started!

Subchapter 02 About the “Reunification Wars” and the Baroquisation

It is really “multiple purposed” in case of the reasons, why in one Area so much “Church castles” survived, in others they have nearly faded away. While this is not the place to “judge” about, again in brief case, the main reasons should be listed.

Reunification Wars

There is the term „Reunification Wars“, which is often used to describe the war actions done by the French, in general starting with the „palatinate war of succession 1689-93), and continuing with the so called“ Hispanic war of succession, followed by other, until the mid of the eighteenth century. It would be Legion to enlist all the devastations done within these wars, and most of them were done by intent – to frighten the enemies. Generals like Melac often were „pictured“ with two torches in front of a burning town, and that was the general principle: Terror and plundering. In our case of the church castles it means, that where ever these armies marched through, everything was burned and destroyed, and if there parts survived, then the rural people used it after the French were gone, as quarries to rebuild their villages at all. Mostly, these armies marched along the Rhine valley, but also parts of Baden- and Württemberg were afflicted.

The Baroquisation

Despite of the great devastations, already done during the Reunifications wars in the area of the Rhine valley, few church castles survived, more or less in peaces, when a new wave of destruction came within the late 18th, early 19th century: Not by war at all – it was passion now, to lay down the „old ancient churches“ (and that means really everything) and rebuilt them in baroque style, only the nave and the church tower, therefore. It was a new sign of the cleric to show its power within a new, shining period of glory. In here, mostly the Rhine valley and the districts of Alb-Donau. Biberach and Neu-Ulm were afflicted in the kind of “Baroquisation”.

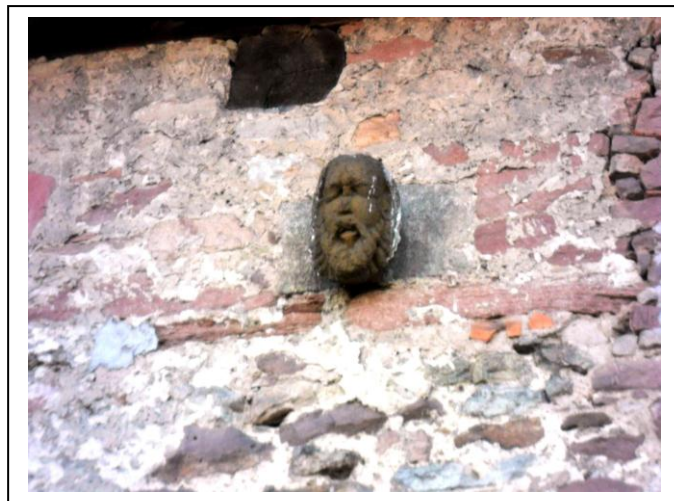
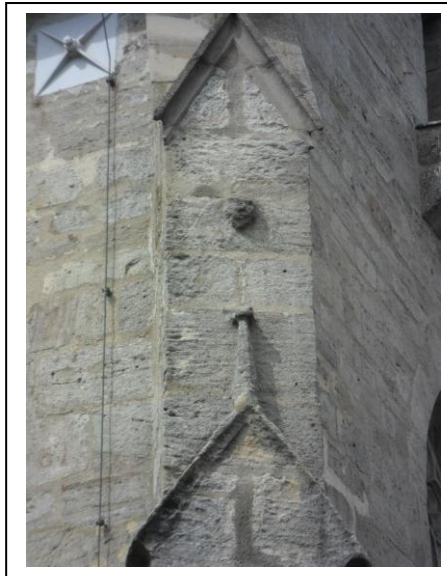
Subchapter 03 The 20th century and “our” time

In a lot of cases, people in our days did tremendous efforts to preserve and to rebuild although; in other cases the carelessness about history is more than obvious. This is not a judgment, just a view to the given situation – Judgment will be done by history, will be done by our successors.

The reasons for „low preservation“ in some areas and districts are multiple

- There could have been deviations within the thirty years war, so that the people had to take the matter of the church castles to rebuild their villages and towns first.
- There could have been devastations during the French reunification wars with the same outcome
- There could have been a wave of “Baroquisation” within everything older way laid down.
- There could have been carelessness around the late 19th/early 20th century when a lot of church castles were laid down in some areas and only the church itself was rebuilt.
- There could have been vast devastation during the World war too, mostly by bombing
- There could have been carelessness about history and preservation in the younger days, still continuing –

And now ?



**After all,
We have traveled that far,**

**After all,
We have seen these things,**

**And now,
We just know,
How much more there is left to learn...**

*Yours sincerely,
Margaret Keller*