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Constructing Modern Meanings by Rebuilding Medieval Ruins: The Castles of Stolzenfels, Haut-Koenigsbourg, and Trifels in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries



Fig. 3.1: Map showing location of the castles on the Upper and Middle Rhine. Photo: adapted from Lencer and NordNordWest/Wikimedia Commons (CC BY-SA 3.0).

Over a period of some 130 years, Germany capitalized on the animosity toward its perceived “hereditary enemy” (*Erbfeind*) France—using highly symbolic gestures and actual financial outlay—to execute three costly construction projects in the Upper and Middle Rhine regions (Fig. 3.1). At the castles of Stolzenfels, Haut-Koenigsbourg, and Trifels, lavish new buildings were erected on the ruins of medieval castle complexes under the patronage of the Kingdom of Prussia, the Second German Empire, and the National Socialist state. The configuration and formal language of these buildings con-

tain unmistakable references to the past. In all three cases, the intention was to give monumental expression to territorial sovereignty in regions bordering France that had only very recently been conquered militarily or consolidated politically. And in each case, the patron purposely adopted the medieval past as a foundational narrative and strove to construct historical continuity. These three buildings, the main case studies of this essay, are thus particularly well suited for working out key questions revolving around the political instrumentalization of the Middle Ages in the modern era and how inherited cultural material was appropriated and assigned new meaning.

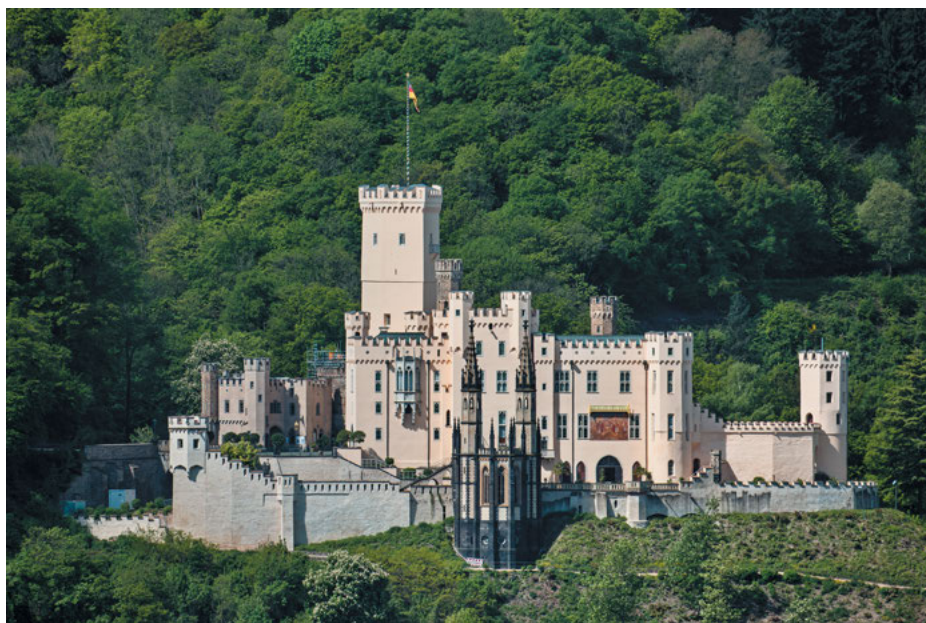


Fig. 3.2: Koblenz, Stolzenfels Castle from the east. Photo: Holger Weinandt/Wikimedia Commons (CC BY-SA 3.0 DE).

In 1815, shortly after the Congress of Vienna granted sovereignty over the Rhine Province to the Kingdom of Prussia, the ruins of the castle of the elector of Trier at Stolzenfels were transformed into an imposing summer residence for the Hohenzollern family (Fig. 3.2).¹ Stolzenfels was founded on the banks of the Middle Rhine near Koblenz around 1244 by the archbishop of Trier as a toll castle for the electorate. It was enlarged considerably over the years, particularly under Baldwin of Luxembourg

¹ Ursula Rathke, *Preußische Burgenromantik am Rhein* (Munich: Prestel, 1979), 46–115; Generaldirektion Kulturelles Erbe Rheinland-Pfalz, ed., *Stolzenfels* (Petersberg: Imhof, 2020); Robert A. Taylor, *The Castles of the Rhine* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier UP, 1998); Jan Werquet, *Historismus und Repräsentation* (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2010).

(1285–1354) and Kuno II of Falkenstein (ca. 1320–88), and was destroyed in 1689 by French troops during the War of the Palatine Succession. In 1823, the crown prince and later king of Prussia, Friedrich Wilhelm IV (1795–1861), received the ruins as a gift from the city of Koblenz; between 1836 and 1847 he had them reconstructed in the form of a medievalizing castle, first by Karl Friedrich Schinkel (1781–1841) and then by Friedrich August Stüler (1800–65).



Fig. 3.3: Orschwiller, Haut-Koenigsbourg Castle from the southeast. Photo: Bogdan Lazar/dreamstime.com.

Five decades later, the same monarch's great-nephew, Emperor Wilhelm II (1859–1941), commissioned the architect and castle researcher Bodo Ebhardt (1865–1945) to restore Haut-Koenigsbourg near Sélestat in Alsace (Fig. 3.3).² Though constructed some time before, it is first mentioned in the records in 1147 as an imperial castle of the Hohenstaufen dynasty. Haut-Koenigsbourg was destroyed for the first time in 1462 by the Palatine elector. Subsequently, it came as a Hapsburg fiefdom into the hands of the counts of Thierstein, who in 1479 had it comprehensively restored and developed as a fortress. During the Thirty Years' War (1618–48), it was captured by Swedish troops and, shortly thereaf-

² Thomas Biller, *Die Hohkönigsburg im Mittelalter* (Ostfildern: Thorbecke, 2020); Ludger Fischer, *Bodo Ebhardt* (Braubach: Deutsche Burgenvereinigung, 2010), 21–40; Monique Fuchs, "Die Hohkönigsburg," in *Burgenromantik und Burgenrestaurierung um 1900*, ed. Deutsche Burgenvereinigung (Braubach: Deutsche Burgenvereinigung, 1999), 48–67.

ter, burned down once and for all. Between 1900 and 1908, after Prussia's conquest of the regions bordering France during the Franco-Prussian War (1870–71) brought them together as the imperial territory (*Reichsland*) of Alsace-Lorraine, the ruins became a monumental symbol of German sovereignty and were used as a museum.



Fig. 3.4: Annweiler, Trifels Castle from the east. Photo: Wikimedia Commons/N-nrg (CC BY-SA 4.0 International).

It was not until thirty years later that Trifels Castle near Annweiler in the southern Palatinate began to be renovated (Fig. 3.4).³ At this time, the ruins stood in the middle of the Palatinate-Saar province (Gau Pfalz-Saar), which had been created when the Saar region was reincorporated into the German Reich in 1935. From 1940 onwards, after the German annexation of the French Moselle department, this territory was part of the Gau Westmark that marked the border with France. Trifels, an imperial castle dating back to the Hohenstaufen, was renowned as both an occasional place for the safekeeping of the imperial regalia and as the dungeon where the English King Richard I (the Lionheart) was kept prisoner. It was abandoned shortly after being damaged in 1602 by a bolt of lightning. At the instigation of Ludwig Siebert (1874–1942),

³ Bernhard Meyer, *Burg Trifels* (Kaiserslautern: Institut für pfälzische Geschichte und Volkskunde, 2001); Fabian Link, *Burgen und Burgenforschung im Nationalsozialismus* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2014); Susanne Fleischner, “Schöpferische Denkmalpflege”: *Kulturideologie des Nationalsozialismus und Positionen der Denkmalpflege* (Münster: LIT, 1999).

prime minister of Bavaria, and with the financial support of Adolf Hitler, the rebuilding of the castle as a “national shrine” (*ationale Weihestätte*) and “imperial memorial” (*Reichsehrenmal*) began. The architect Rudolf Esterer (1879–1965) planned the reconstruction, the outlines of which were retained until 1966.

These three buildings exemplify particularly radical forms of appropriation and signification. This is because the ways we view and understand them do not depend on external meanings that derive from other, secondary media. Instead, the changes to the buildings that shape their interpretation are found in the structures themselves. This makes architecture quite different from objects presented in museums, which are endowed with new meanings through association, contextualization, and commentary; and, likewise, from pictorial representation (such as painting or photography) because that transposes its subjects into other media and therefore other contexts.⁴ By contrast, the reshaping of buildings—which in the history of architecture is discussed under the concept of “reconstruction”—involves the historical remains themselves.⁵ These remains thus are simultaneously the subject of an interpretation, the site and medium through which interpretation takes place, and fully part of the newly erected buildings. Unlike the shifting frameworks of museum displays or the multifarious changes in expression encountered in visual representations, architectural recreations intervene physically in the extant fabric of a monument.⁶ And because that process takes place in the same medium—architecturally, rather than, for example, through a reconstruction drawing or an architectural model—the historical remains and the modern reshaping are indistinguishably woven together in multiple ways.⁷

Determining more closely the nature and scope of these kinds of architectural interpretations and assessing the factors that are critical to them presents a specific analytical challenge. Take the comparative examples studied here: they present three profoundly different architectural solutions despite comparable geopolitical starting points, ideological leitmotifs, and lines of reasoning.⁸ All three buildings were con-

4 Wolfgang Brückle, Pierre Alain Mariaux, and Daniela Mondini, eds., *Musealisierung mittelalterlicher Kunst* (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2015); Bernd Carqué, Daniela Mondini, and Matthias Noell, eds., *Visualisierung und Imagination* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2006). For case studies on different instrumentalization strategies, see Maike Steinkamp and Bruno Reudenbach, eds., *Mittelalterbilder im Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin: Akademie, 2013).

5 Winfried Nerdinger, ed., *Geschichte der Rekonstruktion—Konstruktion der Geschichte* (Munich: Prestel, 2010); Adrian von Buttlar et al., eds., *Denkmalpflege statt Attrappenkult* (Gütersloh: Bauverlag, 2010); Arnold Bartetzky, ed., *Geschichte bauen* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2017).

6 The same is fundamentally true for all modern conservation and restoration measures, but rarely is such a high degree of political meaning ascribed to them as happens with historic reconstructions.

7 It is therefore essential to distinguish reconstruction from the practices associated with demonstrative spoliation; on which see Hans-Rudolf Meier, *Spolien* (Berlin: Jovis, 2020).

8 Research into how the buildings treated here relate to one another has been undertaken only for Haut-Koenigsbourg and Trifels; see Günter Stein, “Trifels und Hohkönigsburg,” *Oberrheinische Studien* 3 (1975): 373–404 (which, however, is limited to discourse analysis).

structed after periods of territorial and political upheaval and all were located in sensitive border regions where, as monuments symbolizing sovereignty, they were intended to epitomize the power to protect against the hereditary enemy that France was considered to be. All did this by evoking local traditions of territorial sovereignty that purportedly reached back to the Middle Ages.⁹ At Haut-Koenigsbourg and Trifels, explicit references were made to castles of the Holy Roman Empire and to the imperial rule of the Hohenstaufen dynasty, while at Stolzenfels and Haut-Koenigsbourg, it was members of the Hohenzollern dynasty who were the patrons of these political symbols.

Yet despite these overlaps, one can hardly fail to notice that the three buildings differ greatly in appearance. Stolzenfels Castle is characterized by broad-based, compact buildings with strikingly rich fenestration. The structures are bound together by the marked horizontals of the crowning crenellation and the balustrades. In contrast, Haut-Koenigsbourg presents a defensive complex with buildings that rise in stages over many levels above the stepped curtain walls and the ramparts farther out; it has a rich variety of spires that lend it a lively silhouette. Trifels is yet again different. Here, the castle is reduced to a small number of basic stereometric forms, and the tight, blocklike construction is interrupted only occasionally by corbel tables and paired lancets. It completely lacks features typical of a medieval defensive structure, such as machicolations, battlements, and arrow slits.

These differences require an explanation. Are they specific to each set of remains, the result of the different times at which the original buildings were constructed (Haut-Koenigsbourg and Trifels date to the High Middle Ages, while Stolzenfels is late medieval)? Or should the variations be traced back to the point at which the modern historicizing rebuilding took place? In other words, are changes in architectural historicism between 1840 and 1940, especially those associated with the so-called Castle Renaissance, the decisive factor?¹⁰ Or are changing conceptions of how the past can be exploited and made present at the root of the diverse configurations and formal languages of these buildings? Did changing ideas of history determine (differently in each case) how the monumental remains were architecturally appropriated? Finally, to what extent did those evolving concepts conform to the diverse political aims of the buildings' patrons?

⁹ Michael Jeismann, *Das Vaterland der Feinde* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1992); Hélène Miard-Delacroix and Guido Thieme, eds., *Der Rhein* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2018).

¹⁰ Michael Brix and Monika Steinhauser, eds., *"Geschichte allein ist zeitgemäß"* (Lahn-Gießen: Anabas, 1978). On the *Burgenrenaissance*, see Renate Wagner-Rieger and Walter Krause, eds., *Historismus und Schlossbau* (Munich: Prestel, 1975); Wartburg-Gesellschaft zur Erforschung von Burgen und Schlössern, ed., *Burgenrenaissance im Historismus* (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2007); Stiftung Thüringer Schlösser und Gärten, ed., *Burgen im Historismus* (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2013).

Stolzenfels

The Koblenz city council offered the ruins of Stolzenfels Castle to Crown Prince Friedrich Wilhelm with the artfulness of a real estate agent: it presented the “seat of the electors of Trier, the lords of this land” as an “old knights’ castle” located in a “Romantic setting” on the “fatherland’s river.”¹¹ All the leitmotifs that would play a role in the course of the building’s reconstruction were already encapsulated in this description from 1823. But while the Romantic aspect was initially the dominant theme, the focus soon shifted to patriotism and territorial sovereignty; as it did so, the formal authority of the remains lost heft.

Early in the nineteenth century, Stolzenfels had attracted the attention of English visitors to the Rhineland, who sought the experience of being overwhelmed by the sublime impression of nature and amazed by the picturesque disorder of the ruins.¹² Similarly, in 1806, Friedrich Schlegel (1772–1829) praised these “traces of human daring among Nature’s ruins, bold castles on wild outcrops, monuments to mankind’s heroic era clinging to those greater monuments of Nature’s heroic eras.”¹³ The crown prince was also overawed by such impressions when, in 1815, he for the first time beheld the hills of the Middle Rhine valley covered with ruins.¹⁴

As a consequence, the aim of the rebuilding scheme presented by Schinkel in 1825 was to retain the picturesque impression made by the castle (Fig. 3.5). He planned to rebuild only a central section, situated on the eastern flank facing the Rhine, for use as living quarters. By contrast, the keep (ca. 1244), the perimeter towers, and the fourteenth-century curtain walls were to be left in a ruinous state. The imagery of transience and recollection associated with the aesthetic of ruins found expression at Stolzenfels very much as at Hohenzollern Castle, where the rebuilding of the dynasty’s ancestral seat was initially limited to the armory and chapel set at the heart of the extensive ruin.¹⁵ This aesthetic culminated in the quintessential Romantic experience of

¹¹ Rathke, *Preußische Burgenromantik*, 48–49.

¹² Horst-Johs Tümmers, *Rheinromantik* (Cologne: Greven, 1968); Gisela Dischner, *Ursprünge der Rheinromantik in England* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1972); Jörg Heiningen, “Erhaben,” in *Ästhetische Grundbegriffe*, ed. Karlheinz Barck and Martin Fontius (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2000–2005), 2:275–310; Friedrich Wolfzettel, “Malerisch/pittoresk,” in Barck and Fontius, *Ästhetische Grundbegriffe*, 3:760–90.

¹³ Friedrich Schlegel, “Briefe auf einer Reise durch die Niederlande, Rheingegenden, die Schweiz, und einen Theil von Frankreich,” in Schlegel, *Poetisches Taschenbuch für das Jahr 1806* (Berlin: Johann Friedrich Unger, 1806), 257–390, at 355.

¹⁴ Rathke, *Preußische Burgenromantik*, 47–48. On Friedrich Wilhelm IV as patron, see Generaldirektion der Stiftung Preußische Schlösser und Gärten Berlin-Brandenburg, ed., *Friedrich Wilhelm IV.: Künstler und König zum 200. Geburtstag* (Frankfurt am Main: Fichter, 1995); Jörg Meiner and Jan Werquet, eds., *Friedrich Wilhelm IV. von Preußen: Politik, Kunst, Ideal* (Berlin: Lukas, 2014).

¹⁵ Rolf Bothe, *Burg Hohenzollern: Von der mittelalterlichen Burg zum national-dynastischen Denkmal im 19. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Mann, 1979), 58–66; Reinhard Zimmermann, *Künstliche Ruinen* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1989).

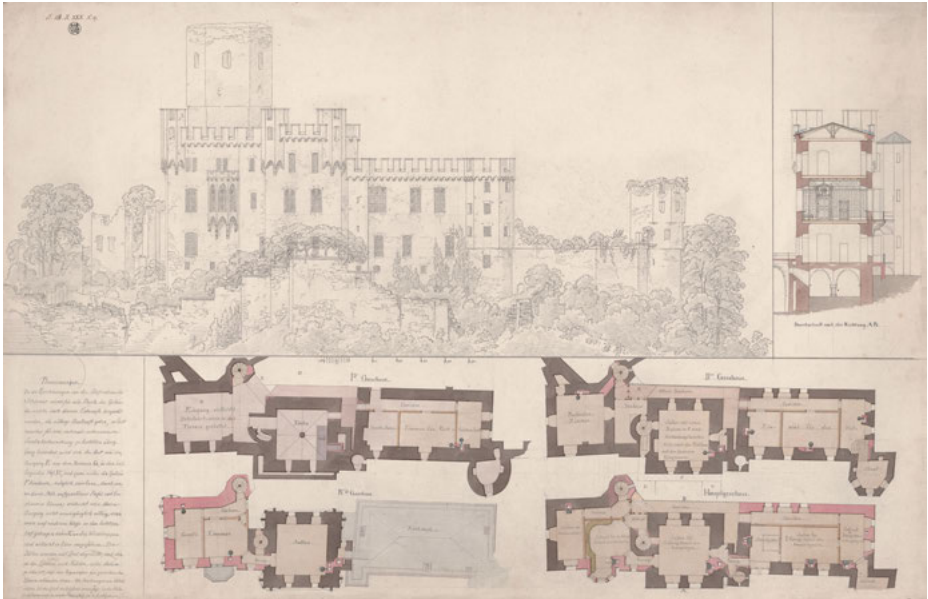


Fig. 3.5: Unknown draftsman after Karl Friedrich Schinkel, Rebuilding scheme for Stolzenfels Castle, 1825. Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Kupferstichkabinett, Inv.-Nr. SM 30.19. Photo: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett/Wolfram Büttner.

distance (cultivated especially in travel writing), with its consciousness that picturesque ruins, as embodiments of history, engender an irrevocable sense of belatedness.¹⁶

Admittedly, when the rebuilding of Stolzenfels finally started in 1836, it moved decisively away from this approach informed by Romanticism. In order to recreate the castle in its entirety, Schinkel's general plan could not simply retain the site's general outline and integrate the surviving remains of walls; instead, it had to ignore constraints arising from fragmentary discoveries and missing evidence. The architect also brushed aside the glaring inconsistencies between his creation and the visual tradition found in famous early modern topographical works; these, although they differ among themselves and exhibit improbable details, bear unanimous witness to the presence of steeply pitched roofs and spires.¹⁷ In short, Schinkel expressly decided against recreating the former appearance of the castle.¹⁸ This is because his concept for the rebuilding

¹⁶ Friederich Wolfzettel, *Ce désir de vagabondage cosmopolite: Wege und Entwicklung des französischen Reiseberichts im 19. Jahrhunderte* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1986).

¹⁷ Daniel Meisner, *Thesaurus philo-politicus* (Frankfurt am Main: Eberhard Kieser, 1630), 2, pt. 4, pl. 8; Matthäus Merian, *Topographia Archiepiscopatum Moguntinensis, Trevirensis, et Coloniensis* (Frankfurt am Main: Matthäus Merian, 1646), plate after 24.

¹⁸ Eva Brües, *Karl Friedrich Schinkel Lebenswerk, 12: Die Rheinlande* (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1968), 128–49, at 128.

was rooted in the English Castle Gothic, of which Strawberry Hill—the country residence, at Twickenham near London, of Horace Walpole (1717–97)—constituted the paradigmatic example.¹⁹ In 1833, Schinkel had begun work on Babelsberg Castle in Potsdam, a summer residence for Prince Wilhelm of Prussia (1797–1888), later the first emperor of the German Empire. Wilhelm and his wife, Augusta, wanted the impressions of Castle Gothic they had derived from Humphry Repton's illustrated *Fragments* (1816) translated into reality.²⁰

The driving imperative at Stolzenfels was to create a residential edifice that was as imposing as it was functional. Located in the immediate vicinity of the governmental and administrative institutions of the provincial capital, Koblenz, the site asserted territorial sovereignty.²¹ Here, on the western border with France, it was important—in the words of Philipp von Wussow, general chief of staff in Koblenz and later captain of the castle—to give unambiguous expression to “Prussia’s power and rule on the banks of the Rhine” and thereby to persuade the “inhabitants of the Rhineland” to strive for “the welfare and preservation of king and country.”²² Doubts about the inhabitants’ unqualified loyalty to Prussia, which had only recently come to rule the territory, were justified given the legal and administrative achievements of the French during the two previous decades when they were the occupying power. As a result, it was frequently necessary to remind Rhenish inhabitants that this “hereditary enemy” had destroyed more than Stolzenfels.²³

This geopolitical arena of conflict became more volatile with Friedrich Wilhelm’s accession to the Prussian throne in June 1840 and, especially, with the eruption of the Rhine crisis in August of that same year.²⁴ Later, in the ideologically overheated atmosphere of the years after the founding of the empire in 1871, the “French hordes” returned as a leitmotif because it was said that they had caused devastation along the Rhine, including at Stolzenfels, before Emperor Wilhelm had created “an imperial palace newly arisen from debris and rubble.”²⁵ In the nexus of territorial and political

19 See most recently Michael Snodin, ed., *Horace Walpole’s Strawberry Hill* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

20 Humphry Repton, *Fragments on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening: Including Some Remarks on Grecian and Gothic Architecture* (London: J. Taylor, 1816), 19–20, 33–39; Johannes Sievers, *Die Arbeiten von K. F. Schinkel für Prinz Wilhelm, späteren König von Preußen* (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1955), 157–218.

21 Manfred Koltes, *Das Rheinland zwischen Frankreich und Preußen* (Cologne, 1992); Jürgen Herres and Bärbel Holtz, “Rheinland und Westfalen als preußische Provinzen,” in *Rheinland, Westfalen und Preußen*, ed. Georg Mölich, Veit Veltzke, and Bernd Walter (Münster: Aschendorff, 2011), 113–208.

22 1836 letter to Crown Prince Friedrich Wilhelm cited in Rathke, *Preußische Burgenromantik*, 113.

23 Heinrich Müller Malten, *Schloß Stolzenfels am Rheine* (Frankfurt am Main: Heinrich Ludwig Bröner, 1844), 33.

24 Irmeline Veit-Brause, “Die deutsch-französische Krise von 1840” (PhD diss., University of Cologne, 1967).

25 Alexander Duncker, *Die ländlichen Wohnsitze, Schlösser und Residenzen der Ritterschaftlichen Grundbesitzer in der Preußischen Monarchie* (Berlin: Duncker, 1871–73), 12: no. 685.

concerns that arose from the new European order established by the Congress of Vienna in 1815, Stolzenfels Castle was from the start inextricably linked to the idea of a Prussian protective wall along the Rhine.

Stolzenfels had a counterpart along the eastern borders of the kingdom: Marienburg (now Malbork), the former main seat of the Teutonic Order near Danzig. The process of recreating this castle had begun as far back as 1817.²⁶ Marienburg, however, was not perceived merely as a geographically complementary border stronghold; it was first and foremost a national historical landmark—a reminder that the Order's territory was part of the Prussian heartland in the east. If Prussia's foundation myth had revolved around Marienburg and Hohenzollern Castle (the dynasty's ancestral seat on the northern edge of the Swabian Alb), that myth was now intended to embrace the Rhineland and Stolzenfels as well.²⁷ But on the Rhine this narrative was a classic case of the "invention of tradition."²⁸ There had been no Prussian rule there before 1815, nor had the territory existed as a homogeneous entity (it consisted rather of four electorates, nine dukedoms, three principalities, the lands of numerous counts and lords, not to mention abbeys, convents, and imperial cities). Unlike the dominions of the Teutonic Order, no overarching political or administrative structures were in place to assert the idea of a continuing local tradition. As a result, Friedrich Wilhelm IV's project to forge German national unity under Prussian leadership could only function through a symbolic politics that took on the "cloak of the idealistically glorified medieval imperial federation."²⁹

In the decor of Stolzenfels Castle, this historical imagination manifested itself in multiple ways, starting with its emphasis on ancestry and kinship.³⁰ In the stained-glass windows of the Knights' Great Hall, for example, the castle's original patrons, from the electorate of Trier, were represented alongside those from the Hohenzollern dynasty. To illustrate the paradigmatic virtues of both rulers and knights in the fresco cycle of the Small Hall, the painter Hermann Stilke included not only Staufen emperors and other rulers from the Holy Roman Empire, but also John of Luxembourg (1296–1346). This king of Bohemia was the nephew of Baldwin, the archbishop-elect of Trier who helped build the castle, as well as a forebear of both Friedrich Wilhelm IV and his wife, Elisabeth Ludovika of Bavaria (1801–73). The royal election in 1400 of Rupert III of the

26 Hartmut Boockmann, *Die Marienburg im 19. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main: Propyläen, 1982); Christofer Herrmann, "Die Wiederentdeckung und 'In-Dienst-Stellung' der Marienburg," *Preußenland* 9 (2018): 122–48.

27 Catharina Hasenclever, *Gotisches Mittelalter und Gottesgnadentum in den Zeichnungen Friedrich Wilhelms IV* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2005), 140–67.

28 Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

29 Frank-Lothar Kroll, *Friedrich Wilhelm IV. und das Staatsdenken der deutschen Romantik* (Berlin: Colloquium, 1990), 124. On medievalizing conceptions of rulership, see also Hasenclever, *Gotisches Mittelalter*, 118–83.

30 Rathke, *Preußische Burgenromantik*, 94–102; Werquet, *Historismus und Repräsentation*, 373–85.

Palatinate that took place in nearby Rhens was recalled in a monumental history painting on the palace facade facing the Rhine commissioned from August Gustav Lasinsky (1811–70). It also highlighted Rupert's brother-in-law, Frederick I of Brandenburg (1371–1440), who later became the first prince-elector from the Hohenzollern house and likewise counted as one of Friedrich Wilhelm's ancestors. When he received the castle, the crown prince had therefore taken possession of a multifaceted site with links to both imperial history and his own family's history.

The fiction of a unified territory with deep historical roots was certainly made manifest by the building itself. Importantly, this did not occur through meanings ascribed to its form. Castle Gothic, atypical for the area, referred only very generically to a legitimist understanding of the Middle Ages and its prerevolutionary traditions of rulership. The construction of an all-embracing, continuous local tradition of territorial lordship instead rested with the building's structural arrangement and the forms of control it enabled. By means of deliberately constructed vistas and sightlines, the castle complex was woven as closely as possible into the Middle Rhine's natural landscape and the *lieux de mémoire* (sites of memory) on the valley's ruin-scattered hills. Monuments that Schlegel lauded as representing natural and human "heroic times" were integrated into the building complex. One sees their presence in the park conceived by Peter Joseph Lenné (1789–1866) as an English landscape garden; in the extensive gardens and terraces laid out within the defensive-wall circuit;³¹ and in individual elements of the building, such as the arcaded hall, the pergola garden, the chapel, and even the glazing of the windows.³²

Through the arcaded hall, realized by Stüler according to the patron's specifications, the gaze travels downward from the castle courtyard to the pergola garden, from where aptly positioned window openings lead it further down toward the river and the provincial capital, Koblenz. The chapel, added between 1843 and 1847 during the final building phase, serves also as a stage for this architectonic *mise-en-scène* of the gaze (Fig. 3.6). Set in front of the sweeping terrace overlooking the Rhine, the chapel stands out thanks to the high contrast between the light-colored tufa and the dark basaltic lava. The heightened visibility of the sacred part of the castle refers to the power that the Hohenzollern family claimed *gratia Dei* (by the grace of God). Finally, the roof of the chapel, crowned with crenellations, offers a viewing platform onto a landscape panorama divided into discrete, picture-like portions by the small, slender pinnacles. Contemporary guides similarly described the views from the arched window openings in the chapel towers as a sequence of "paintings." Framed in stone, the views combined "the charms of nature" with "historical reminiscences."³³ This is very close to Schlegel, who perceived the Rhine landscape as "a self-contained painting and premeditated

31 Generaldirektion Kulturelles Erbe Rheinland-Pfalz, *Stolzenfels*, 180–279.

32 Claudia Schumacher and Ivo Rauch, "Inszenierte Ausblicke—preziös gerahmt," in *Le vitrail dans la demeure des origines à nos jours*, ed. Karine Boulanger (Ghent: Snoeck, 2018), 184–201.

33 Malten, *Schloß Stolzenfels*, 94.



Fig. 3.6: Koblenz, Stolzenfels Castle from the south. Photo: Dominik Ketz. Reproduced by kind permission of Dominik Ketz.

work of art” featuring “sublime scenery adorned with the bold remains of old castles standing proud on hillsides.”³⁴ The diorama entitled *The Royal Castle of Stolzenfels and Its Surroundings* that opened in Cologne in 1843 would eventually enshrine this pictorially organized perception.³⁵

For the castle’s occupants, this astutely calculated scenery conjured historical monuments belonging to a vast memory landscape, even if numerous *lieux de mémoire* had only lately gained significance, partly through the work of restoration.³⁶ The Königsstuhl (King’s Seat) at Rhens, a significant site in the empire’s history, had been rebuilt between 1841 and 1843 with Prussian support in just the form in which it appears in Lasinsky’s fresco on the facade of Stolzenfels. And the hermitage at Kastel on the River Saar, although not immediately visible from the castle, had been converted a few

³⁴ Schlegel, “Briefe,” 350, 353.

³⁵ Werner Neite, “Das Diorama in Köln,” *Jahrbuch des Kölnischen Geschichtsvereins* 48 (1977): 199–217.

³⁶ Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Rheinland-Pfalz, ed., *Preußische Facetten* (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2001); Alexander Thon and Johannes Erichsen, *Der Königsstuhl bei Rhens* (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2015); Eduard Sebald, “Die Memoria für Johann den Blinden,” *Die Gartenkunst* 32 (2020): 395–408.

years earlier, after plans drawn by Schinkel, into a mortuary chapel for the remains of the crown prince's royal ancestor John of Luxembourg.

To sum up: one can say that the constitutive factor for conceptualizing a polycentric historical landscape was not so much the castle at Stolzenfels itself as the views it afforded onto the surroundings. This experience was not only permanently built into the castle's structure but also performatively staged when needed. Thus, at the castle's inauguration in 1842 and also three years later during a visit by Queen Victoria, the monuments of the panorama of the Rhine—from the fortress of Ehrenbreitstein in the north to the King's Seat at Rhens and the Marksburg at Braubach in the south—were lit up at night with fireworks.³⁷ Contemporary courtly self-representation and glimpses into the past were put in a reciprocal relationship designed to bring before the viewer's eyes the tradition of sovereignty that was claimed for this site.

Haut-Koenigsbourg

While Stolzenfels Castle constituted the focal point of a multipartite landscape of memory, Haut-Koenigsbourg was conceived in isolation as a landmark visible from far and wide in the heart of the imperial territory of Alsace-Lorraine. Wilhelm II received the ruins of this structure—with its high castle dating back to the Staufeu period and its outer wards and bastions built around 1500—as a gift in 1899 from the city of Sélestat (Fig. 3.7).

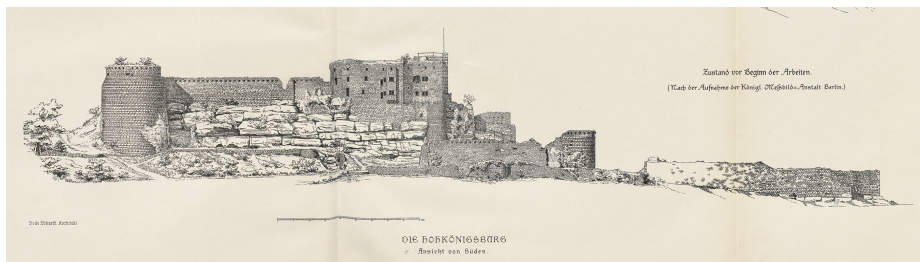


Fig. 3.7: Bodo Ebhardt, Haut-Koenigsbourg before reconstruction, 1908. Photo from Bodo Ebhardt, *Die Hohenkönigsburg im Elsaß* (Berlin: Wasmuth, 1908), fig. 35.

The following year, he decided to have it rebuilt with the help of the architect Bodo Ebhardt. According to a journal founded by Ebhardt and published by the German Castle Association, an “ivy-clad idyll” and “tranquil castle ruin” was thus transformed

³⁷ Malten, *Schloß Stolzenfels*, 35; Robert Dohme, *Beschreibung der Burg Stolzenfels* (Berlin: Carl Kühn, 1850), 95–98, 99–104.

into an “imperial palace.” Completed in 1908, Haut-Koenigsbourg was now filled with Hohenzollern life after having been inhabited by the Hohenstaufen and Hapsburg dynasties. As “an emblem of the German emperor’s sovereignty in the Western March,” it should be regarded “like Marienburg in the Eastern March: as a symbol of German power.”³⁸ At the building’s solemn inauguration, Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg, state secretary of the interior and later imperial chancellor, even more decisively encapsulated this historical sentiment, saying that an emblem of “the power of the Hohenstaufen emperors” had come back to life.³⁹

Such meanings can hardly be inferred from the building’s form. Ebhardt produced a perfected version of a late medieval castle (see Fig. 3.3), but one that differed both overall and in detail from the neo-Romanesque imperial style favored by the Hohenzollerns. Buildings that corresponded much better to the ideal model of an imperial palace of the early or High Middle Ages were taking shape elsewhere. After the foundation of the German Empire in 1871, the first such palace intended to demonstrate a link with the medieval imperial tradition was at Goslar. Completed in 1879, the extensive transformation of the architectural leftovers from the Salian and Staufer eras was undertaken to stage, pointedly, the new imperial power of the Hohenzol-



Fig. 3.8: Postcard showing castle residence at Poznan, 1910. Private collection. Photo: Author.

³⁸ “Die wiedererstandene Hohkönigsburg,” *Der Burgwart* 9 (1908): 73–74.

³⁹ “Der Kaiser auf der Hohkönigsburg,” *Der Burgwart* 9 (1908): 105–112, at 108.

lern family.⁴⁰ To that end, the preferred formal language was for the most part a generalized High Romanesque. The only concrete historical reference, to the galleries of the Palatine Chapel built by Charlemagne (ca. 747/748–814) at Aachen, appears in the fenestration of the avant-corps of the central portion of this imperial residence. Inside, opposite the monumental window, a wall painting by Hermann Wislicenus (1825–99) presents an apotheosis of the foundation of the German Empire aggrandized with allegories, including an image of Emperor Wilhelm I receiving homage from personifications of Alsace and Lorraine.⁴¹

The castle residence at Poznan (present-day Poland) was conceived in its entirety as the monumental expression of a historical claim to sovereignty (Fig. 3.8).⁴² Erected between 1905 and 1910 by the architect Franz Schwechten (1841–1924), this building, located in what was then a Prussian province, was on the front line of the ongoing conflict between Poland and Germany. It was intended as an unmistakable symbol of the continuity between the Hohenzollern rulers, who had only very recently acceded to the imperial dignity, and various dynasties that had ruled since Charlemagne. Embodying an aggressive and repressive Germanization policy, the extensive complex can be seen as the architectural equivalent of a threatening gesture. Contemporaries described it as an “emblem of the power of Germanness,”⁴³ equal to the “proud remains of old imperial palaces that proclaim, for today’s generation, the exalted hymn to the power and greatness of the Holy German Empire of the Middle Ages.”⁴⁴

To emphasize the semantics of power and greatness with an architectural style that could count as truly national, Schwechten chose the formal vocabulary of the Romanesque. Inside, he fused it into a hybrid by combining it with two more artistic expressions; one conveyed an ancient northern ideology of the Germanic peoples while the other, couched in a Byzantine manner, expressed the divine right to rulership. On the outside, by contrast, the castle appeared as a modern residential building cloaked in pure pastiches of the Romanesque style: ashlar masonry (some of it hammer-dressed), fenestration borrowed from the Palatine Chapel at Aachen (as at Goslar), oculi in the chapel apse, and dwarf galleries (for example, on the rotunda that crowns the corner tower). The purpose of these motifs was to endow this castle-like ensemble

⁴⁰ Ludger Kerksen, *Das Interesse am Mittelalter im deutschen Nationaldenkmal* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1975), 105–111; Monika Arndt, *Die Goslarer Kaiserpfalz als Nationaldenkmal* (Hildesheim: Lax, 1976); Godehard Hoffmann, *Architektur für die Nation? Der Reichstag und die Staatsbauten des Deutschen Kaiserreichs 1871–1918* (Cologne: DuMont, 2000), 15–20.

⁴¹ Monika Arndt, “Der Weißbart auf des Rotbarts Throne”: *Mittelalterliches und Preußisches Kaisertum in den Wandbildern des Goslarer Kaiserhauses* (Göttingen: Goltze, 1977).

⁴² Hoffmann, *Architektur für die Nation*, 233–38; Stefanie Lieb, *Der Rezeptionsprozeß in der neuromanischen Architektur* (Cologne: Kunsthistorisches Institut der Universität, 2005), 168–95.

⁴³ Friedrich Schultze, “Das neue Residenzschloß in Posen,” *Zentralblatt der Bauverwaltung* 30 (1910): 453–458, at 453.

⁴⁴ Georg Voss, *Die Kaiserpfalz in Posen. Die Schloßkapelle* (Poznan: Ostdeutsche Buchdruckerei und Verlagsanstalt, 1913), 7.

with marks of dignity borrowed from religious buildings such as the imperial cathedrals of Worms and Speyer.

One might observe that this “neo-Staufen” style was also deemed appropriate for transportation-related structures in politically or militarily sensitive locations (the train station in Metz and the Hohenzollern Bridge in Cologne) and for administrative buildings (the royal government building in Koblenz).⁴⁵ Everywhere, it materialized the idea of sovereignty and political genealogy, but nowhere was that intent more memorably expressed than in the monument to Emperor Wilhelm I constructed in the Kyffhäuser hills in Thuringia between 1890 and 1897 after plans drawn by Bruno Schmitz.⁴⁶ There, above the huddled figure of Frederick Barbarossa (ca. 1122–90) sculpted into the rock at the monument’s base, Wilhelm rises high on his steed as the fulfillment of the promise made in the Kyffhäuser legend that the imperial power would one day be reinvigorated. The Hohenzollern here have truly become the heirs of the Hohenstaufen.⁴⁷

At Haut-Koenigsbourg, one looks in vain for historical reminiscences of this nature. In particular, propagandistic claims about “the power of the Hohenstaufen emperors” were not asserted architecturally. Precisely in the places where the largely unaltered Staufen-era masonry could be seen and touched—notably at the foot of the keep in the inner courtyard of the main castle—Ebhardt blocked the view with a late Gothic stair tower known as the *Große Schnecke* (“large snail”). This is because he had something else in mind: a recreation based on the state of the building as it was after its destruction in 1462 and the comprehensive reconstruction undertaken by the Counts of Thierstein from 1479 onwards. It was not the old Hohenstaufen-era configuration but this more recent layer that became the focus for Ebhardt’s historical and architectural imagination.

In his dealings with the on-site evidence and the written sources, Ebhardt was shaped by the fundamental principles of historicism as developed in the academic discipline of history.⁴⁸ His faith in historicism explains why he circumvented Wilhelmine

45 Martin Stather, *Die Kunstpolitik Wilhelms II.* (Constance: Hartung-Gorre, 1994). For Alsace in particular, see Klaus Nohlen, *Baupolitik im Reichsland Elsaß-Lothringen 1871–1918* (Berlin: Mann, 1982); Niels Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum* (Saarbrücken: Institut für Landeskunde im Saarland, 2000). The term *Neostaufer* is borrowed from Georg Gölter, “Rheinland-Pfalz und seine preußische Vergangenheit,” *Jahrbuch für westdeutsche Landesgeschichte* 10 (1984): 367–79, at 376.

46 Kerssen, *Das Interesse am Mittelalter*, 97–105; Gunther Mai, ed., *Das Kyffhäuser-Denkmal 1896–1996* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1997); Camilla G. Kaul, *Friedrich Barbarossa im Kyffhäuser* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2007); Herfried Münkler, *Die Deutschen und ihre Mythen* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 2009), 36–68.

47 Heinz Gollwitzer, “Zur Auffassung der mittelalterlichen Kaiserpolitik im 19. Jahrhundert,” in *Dauer und Wandel der Geschichte*, ed. Rudolf Vierhaus and Manfred Botzenhart (Münster: Aschendorff, 1966), 483–512; Elisabeth Fehrenbach, *Wandlungen des deutschen Kaisergedankens 1871–1918* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1969).

48 Otto Gerhard Oexle, *Geschichtswissenschaft im Zeichen des Historismus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996); Fischer, *Bodo Ebhardt*, 176–77, 222–27.

propaganda aims with his concept for the rebuilding of Haut-Koenigsbourg. Ebhardt was faithful to the historiographical paradigm formulated by Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886), to say or to show “how it essentially was.”⁴⁹ He was of the firm conviction that the ideal of historical objectivity could be reached by applying rigorous methods of source critique; an absent past could be inferred from its surviving remains and then visualized through reconstruction. With such an idealistic conception of history, it was possible to overcome the concepts of belatedness and unrepeatability that had been central to the historical thinking of the Romantic era and that had determined Schinkel’s rebuilding scheme for Stolzenfels (see Fig. 3.5). Physical remains and written records were now of unimpeachable epistemological authority. The largely arbitrary transformation of ruins—perhaps employing the formal language of Castle Gothic as at Stolzenfels—was no longer possible. If the recreation of Haut-Koenigsbourg focused on its late medieval state of around 1500, this was because the evidence did not permit a complete reconstruction that reached further back in time. In particular, the original, Hohenstaufen-era edifice eluded Ebhardt’s methodologically disciplined grasp. Despite the Wilhelmine interest in the Staufens, Ebhardt chose not to highlight the original structure in his architectural work at Haut-Koenigsbourg. Indeed, he actively masked the high medieval remains. Historicism and its principles thus help to explain how buildings as diverse in appearance as the castles at Poznan and Haut-Koenigsbourg could both emerge from similar political and ideological assumptions.

Although Ebhardt’s words employed the full range of the German empire’s ideology (he called Haut-Koenigsbourg the “emblem of the new German Reich” and a “symbol of occupation visible far and wide” across Alsace-Lorraine),⁵⁰ his architectural work at the castle deliberately overlooked the semantic possibilities of the neo-Romanesque style (which was ubiquitous, especially in Alsace) and the Hohenstaufen ideology that undergirded it.⁵¹ Instead, he retreated to an imagined Germany of the time of Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) that corresponded much better to the widespread conception of an ideal medieval castle.⁵² In the case of Haut-Koenigsbourg, this could only be achieved by a reconstruction that aimed to match this ideal type. This meant filling physical lacunae (and gaps in the historical record) through analogy and ex-

49 “To say how it essentially was” (*sagen, wie es eigentlich gewesen*) appears in the first edition of Leopold Ranke, *Geschichten der romanischen und germanischen Völker* (Leipzig: Reimer, 1824), 1:6; “to show” (*zeigen*) is used in the second edition (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1874), 1:7.

50 Bodo Ebhardt, *Die Hohkönigsburg im Elsaß* (Berlin: Wasmuth, 1908), 52; Ebhardt, *Denkschrift über die Wiederherstellung der Hohkönigsburg* (Berlin: Ernst, 1900), 6.

51 Jürgen Dendorfer, “Die Staufer im Elsass,” in *Nationales Interesse und ideologischer Missbrauch*, ed. Martina Backes and Jürgen Dendorfer (Ostfildern: Thorbecke, 2019), 155–79.

52 For the imagined idea of Germany in the age of Dürer, see Norbert Götz, *Um Neugotik und Nürnberger Stil* (Nuremberg: Verein für Geschichte der Stadt, 1981); Sigrun Brunsiek, *Auf dem Weg der alten Kunst* (Marburg: Jonas, 1994). For the ideal of the medieval castle, see Heiko Laß, ed., *Mythos, Metapher, Motiv* (Alfeld an der Leine: Coppi, 2002); G. Ulrich Großmann, ed., *Mythos Burg* (Dresden: Sandstein, 2010).

trapolations from surviving buildings as well as removing more recent historical alterations to bring the monument in line with what was supposed to be the spirit of the era of its original construction. Supported by the epistemological optimism of nineteenth-century historicism, Ebhardt followed the principles articulated by Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (1814–79)—that most influential scholar and preservationist of medieval buildings—in constructing at Haut-Koenigsbourg a stylistically pure, ideal image of late medieval castle architecture.⁵³

Trifels

As at Stolzenfels, the rebuilding of the castle of Trifels also abandoned any empirical evidence and adopted instead the path of a political construction of meaning. Here it would have been possible for decisions concerning the former appearance of the castle to be placed on a new footing as a result of archaeological excavations that took place between 1935 and 1938 (Fig. 3.9).⁵⁴ But as soon as the planning came under the influence of National Socialist ideology, the project became focused on a conception of imperial sovereignty that was rooted in the Staufer era.

In 1936, the governor of Bavaria, Ludwig Siebert, said in a speech given in Annweiler that the “great past” of the First Reich should be correlated with “the vigor of the Third Reich” and the “collapse of Hohenstaufen power” connected with Hitler’s “reestablishment of Germany.”⁵⁵ Bodo Ebhardt cited these passages in his report on the reconstruction of Trifels and in his monograph on the castle’s architecture. Friedrich Sprater (1884–1952), the lead excavator and director of the Historical Museum of the Palatinate in Speyer, formulated the same historical relationship as follows: “A great monument of the First Reich will thus receive the recognition that it has long deserved under the Third.”⁵⁶ Such ideological expectations placed demands

53 Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, “Restauration,” in *Dictionnaire raisonné de l’architecture* (Paris: Morel, 1866), 8:14–34, at 14: “To restore a building is not to preserve it, to repair, or to rebuild it; it is to reinstate it in a condition of completeness which may never have existed at any given time.” Cited from M.F. Hearn, ed., *The Architectural Theory of Viollet-le-Duc: Readings and Commentary* (Cambridge: MIT University Press, 1990), 269.

54 In the nineteenth century, ideas about how Trifels had looked vacillated between the neo-Romanesque and the “Germany of yore;” see Bernd Carqué, “Zwischen Romantik und Reichsherrlichkeit,” in *800 Jahre Stadt Annweiler*, ed. Jan Keupp, Sabine Klapp, and Jörg Peltzer (Ubstadt-Weiher: Verlag Regionalkultur, 2021), 189–239, at 202–5, 207–8. On the excavation in the 1930s, see Meyer, *Burg Trifels*, 153–263.

55 Stein, “Trifels und Hohkönigsburg,” 387–88; Bodo Ebhardt, *Burg Trifels* (Braubach: Burgverlag, 1938), 7, 44.

56 Friedrich Sprater, “Der Trifels,” *Germanen-Erbe* 2 (1937): 178–86, at 186.

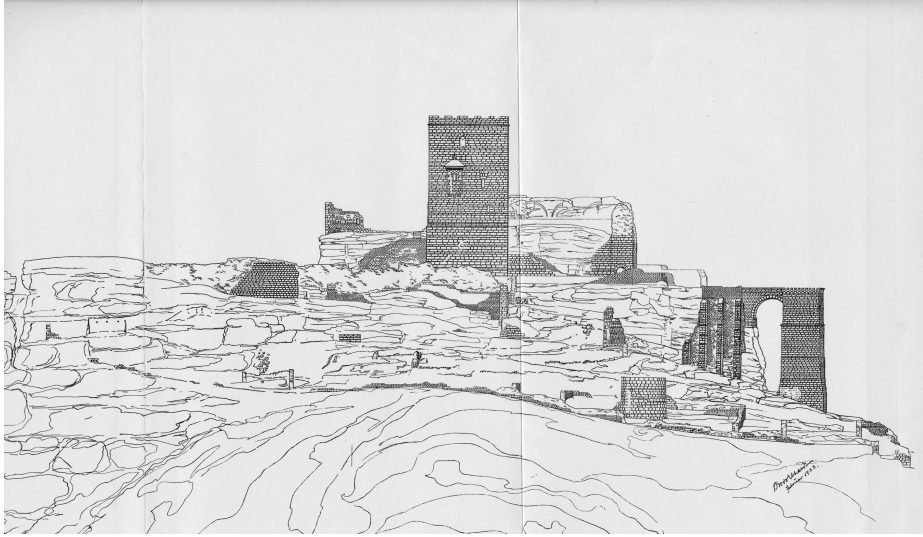


Fig. 3.9: Bodo Ebhardt, Trifels Castle before reconstruction, 1938. Photo from Ebhardt, *Burg Trifels*, pl. 8.

on the reconstruction of the ruin and caused difficulties that Ebhardt, the evaluating architect, considered to be barely surmountable.⁵⁷ The surviving remains were so few that his belief in showing how it essentially was (in Ranke's sense) was impossible. Furthermore (unlike at Haut-Koenigsbourg), there also was a lack of written and visual sources.

These constraints left the architect Rudolf Esterer undeterred. In 1937, he took on responsibility for reconstructing Trifels, a project financed partly out of Hitler's personal pocket. Esterer's design did not emerge from a reconstruction process based on the critical investigation of sources or an architectural analysis; instead, it was an act of what has been termed creative preservation (*schöpferische Denkmalpflege*). He described this approach as "discerning the soul of a building and awakening it to new life." That could be accomplished by establishing an "inner connection with the way our forebears led their lives," to which the present was closely affiliated through the axiom of "spirit (*Geist*) from their spirit" and "blood from their blood."⁵⁸

At Trifels, Esterer gave architectural expression to this ideology of century-bridging "inner connections" by planning a so-called *Weiheraum* (Hall of Honor) for the main tower. Soaring above the still-extant old imperial chapel, it would make "the visitor aware of the immortality of German power and the German will to live by

57 Stein, "Trifels und Hohkönigsburg," 391; Ebhardt, *Burg Trifels*, 44.

58 Rudolf Esterer, "Wiederinstandsetzung geschichtlicher Baudenkmäler," in *Wiedererstandene Baudenkmale*, ed. Ludwig Siebert (Munich: Bruckmann, 1941), 19–29, at 19–20.

grounding the new Reich in the blood and soil of the old empire.”⁵⁹ This idea of an eternal and, at the same time, self-renewing Reich made Esterer abandon not only the concepts of historical belatedness and unrepeatability that were central to the Romantic consciousness but also the historicist approach based on the careful evaluation of sources. In short, Esterer dispensed with the conceptualizations of history that had guided Schinkel and Ebbhardt. His understanding of history, based on empathy and timelessness, helped to give the cultural ideology of National Socialism a built form that was in line with the principles for architectural representation that, as will be discussed next, were promulgated by the so-called Thousand-Year Reich.

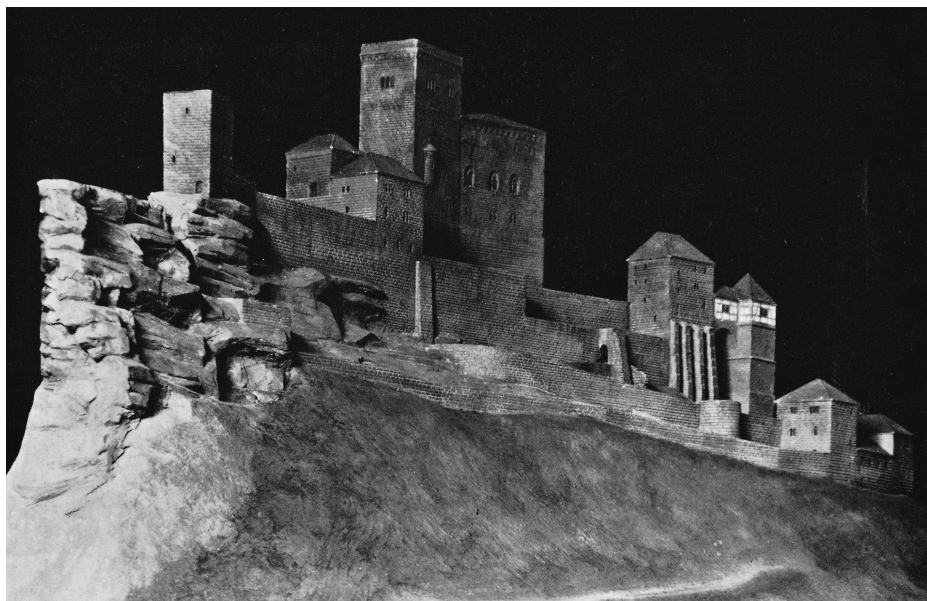


Fig. 3.10: Architectural model of Rudolf Esterer's reconstruction of Trifels Castle, 1939. Photo from Stein, "Trifels und Hohkönigsburg," fig. 5.

Esterer's design served as a guide for the rebuilding that was carried out, with interruptions, between 1938 and 1966. We know it mainly in the form of an architectural model created in 1939 while the plans for reconstruction, which are now mostly lost, were being worked out (Fig. 3.10).⁶⁰ The building's general outline and its formal language were unmistakably determined by historical borrowings in combination with modern design principles derived from the Neues Bauen (New Building) movement of

⁵⁹ Rudolf Esterer, "Gedanken zum Trifelsausbau" (undated draft), quoted from Fleischner, "*Schöpferische Denkmalpflege*," 95.

⁶⁰ Fleischner, "*Schöpferische Denkmalpflege*," 56, 66, and figs. 37, 45–48.

the 1920s and 1930s. The High Romanesque vocabulary of rusticated stonework, twin-lancet windows, and rounded and toothed friezes forms a hybrid with the building's spatial configuration and the lines of its walls, which are crowned with modest hipped or tented roofs lacking machicolations or crenellations. From a morphological point of view, the elaborate comparisons that architectural historians have made with supposedly Hohenstaufen architectural models found in southern Italian fortresses and fortifications are misleading,⁶¹ since what viewers saw in the second quarter of the twentieth century (when the Italian structures had not yet been restored) was defensive work consisting of machicolations and crenellations.⁶² None of these Italian buildings evince a particular affinity with Trifels in either the treatment of masonry or the architectural decoration.⁶³

The formal architectural language adopted at Trifels under Esterer's influence also informed other building projects sponsored by the National Socialists.⁶⁴ The design philosophies employed for two types of Nazi-era castles are of particular interest. One is the so-called *Ordensburgen* (Order castles). In the Middle Ages, these were associated with military orders, but under the Nazis they were designed as training centers for the future leadership elite of the Party. The other philosophy of design was used for the *Totenburgen* (Castles of the Dead) built at the behest of the German War Graves' Commission (Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge) on World War I battlefields. As funerary monuments and sites of honor, these *Totenburgen* were conceived from the start as symbols. The Nazi *Ordensburgen*, on the other hand, needed to accommodate multiple uses. This placed stricter limitations on the buildings' formal and semantic possibilities, which usually affected only specific sections.

Take Ordensburg Vogelsang, conceived as a training facility for the Third Reich after plans by Clemens Klotz (1886–1969) (Fig. 3.11). A spread-out castle complex, set on a ridge in the Eifel mountains, it culminated in a sequence of structures made up of the community hall and an end tower.⁶⁵ It is primarily in this part of the complex, staged to be a landmark visible from a great distance, that it becomes clear how Klotz interpreted the historical typology of castles in terms of the Neues Bauen. Essentially, he reduced the traditional parts of a medieval castle—the hall and the keep—to elementary geometric volumes, expressing their defensive purpose through massive monumentality rather than by adding typical defensive elements. As at Trifels, the language of modernism manifested itself in the Eifel mountains in an idiosyncratic

61 Stein, "Trifels und Hohkönigsburg," 395–97, 399–403.

62 Arthur Haseloff, *Die Bauten der Hohenstaufen in Unteritalien* (Leipzig: Hiersemann, 1920).

63 Thomas Biller, *Die Burgen Kaiser Friedrichs II. in Süditalien* (Darmstadt: wbg Theiss, 2021), 164–73.

64 Frank Pütz, "Die Burg im Nationalsozialismus," in Laß, *Mythos, Metapher, Motiv*, 43–66; Link, *Burgen und Burgenforschung*, 47–80.

65 Ruth Schmitz-Ehmke and Monika Herzog, *Die ehemalige Ordensburg Vogelsang*, 4th ed. (Worms: Werner, 2010). For the wider context, see David H. Haney, *Architecture and the Nazi Cultural Landscape* (New York: Routledge, 2023), 197–264.

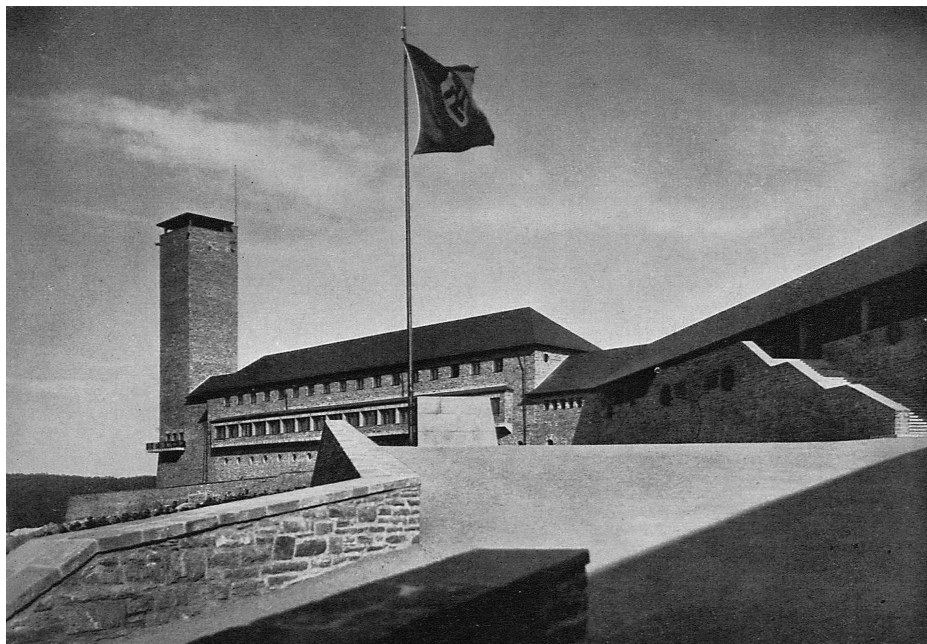


Fig. 3.11: Vogelsang, Ordnensburg, 1937. Photo from *Die Kunst für alle* 52 (1936–37), 165.

combination with the conservative style associated with the *Heimatschutz* (preservation of the homeland) movement.⁶⁶ Its influence explains the presence of materials typical of the region, such as the graywacke (a coarse dark sandstone) used for the rubble stonework and the slate cladding of the roof.

With the *Totenburgen*, Robert Tischler (1885–1959), the leading architect of the War Graves' Commission, developed a novel type of monument to honor the fallen soldiers. Though these “castles of the dead” served as funerary monuments and sites of memory, they register above all as monumental self-projections of the present.⁶⁷ The Tannenberg Memorial in East Prussia, designed by Walter and Johannes Krüger and built in the years 1924–27, provided an antecedent with its monumental walled octagon sur-

⁶⁶ Dieter Bartetzko, *Illusionen in Stein* (Berlin: Zentralverlag, 2012), 229–56 also noted the influence of modernism at Trifels. On the *Heimatschutz* movement, see Winfried Speitkamp, “Denkmalpflege und Heimatschutz,” *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 70 (1988): 149–93; Raphael Rosenberg, “Architekturen des ‘Dritten Reiches,’” in *Die Politik in der Kunst und die Kunst in der Politik*, ed. Ariane Hellingner, Barbara Waldkirch, and Elisabeth Buchner (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2013), 57–86.

⁶⁷ Gunnar Brands, “From World War I Cemeteries to the Nazi ‘Fortresses of the Dead,’” in *Places of Commemoration*, ed. Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks, 2001), 215–56; Bernd Ulrich et al., *Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge* (Berlin: be.bra wissenschaft verlag, 2019), 145–72, 228–63.

mounted by defensive towers.⁶⁸ Tischler pushed the process of reduction to elemental forms and materials to its extreme in works such as the *Totenburg* at Quero (1926–39) built on the Col Maor above the Piave Valley in the Veneto region (Fig. 3.12).

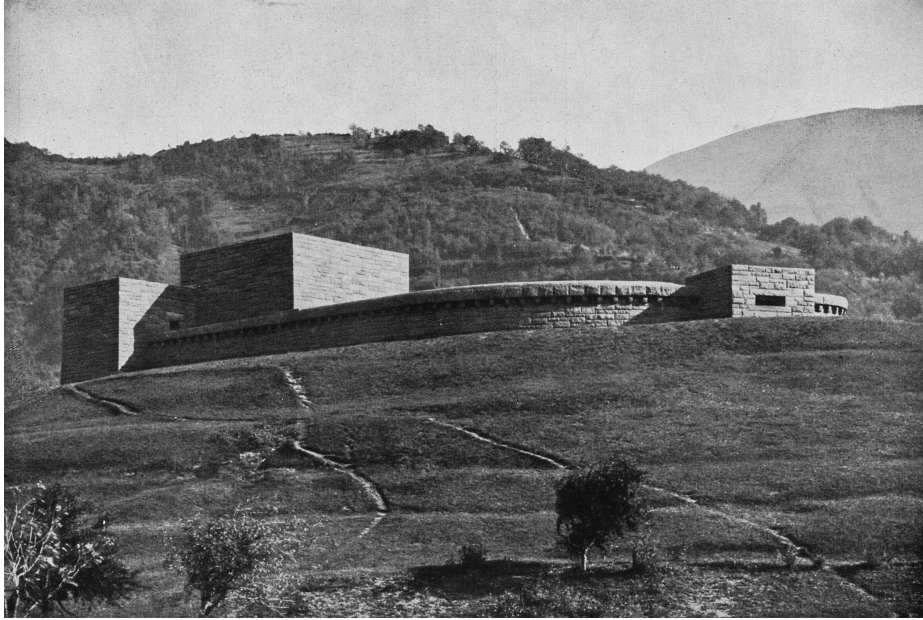


Fig. 3.12: Quero, *Totenburg*, 1939. Photo from Gerdy Troost, ed., *Das Bauen im Neuen Reich* (Bayreuth: Gauverlag, 1938–43), 2:24.

Here he reduced the design to three basic elements—tower, ring wall, and bastion—each built out of rusticated ashlars as a series of compact blocks. Historicizing references are limited to the abstracted adaptation of individual motifs, such as the console moldings. Quero’s commanding presence was achieved with the creative vocabulary of the *Neues Bauen*, whose archaizing monumental characteristics deliberately avoided specific historical references. Geopolitically, the *Totenburgen* were intended to mark the coming Germanic empire; their elementary formal language, with its supposed timelessness, helped to express the National Socialists’ claim to eternal rule.

Trifels was similarly intended to function as an everlasting demonstration of power. As an imperial memorial and pilgrimage site, it was designed to instill in the visitor “a sacred awe” when confronted with a German Reich that “was already in

⁶⁸ Jürgen Tietz, *Das Tannenberg-Nationaldenkmal* (Berlin: Verlag Bauwesen, 1999).

existence a thousand years ago and will exist forever.”⁶⁹ Trifels, moreover, was also meant to act as a bulwark against France, the alleged “hereditary enemy” lurking on the other side of the western border. Thus, in a 1937 report to the Palatinate’s regional government in Speyer, Ludwig Siebert underlined that, with the redevelopment of Trifels, the Western March would see the construction of “a monumental memorial to German imperial rule and to the German people’s will to defend itself.”⁷⁰ But because the castle was meant to evoke a sense of timelessness and perpetuity, the “Trifels problem” arose for historic preservationists. Siebert wrote that his goal was “not to undertake a questionable renovation of the lost and dead form of a historical edifice”; rather, it was his intention “to express this site’s timeless (*überzeitliche*) significance in a new, artistic form.”⁷¹ According to him, the “new building” at Trifels had to become an “emblem of the inner connectedness of the new Reich to the old empire” and thus “a symbol of the immortality of the German spirit.” This reasoning expressed a fundamentally hybrid mode of thinking about history, one that appropriated specific traditions for the Nazi state and yet strove to transcend historical time altogether. When looking forward in time, the National Socialist imperial ideology took on a decidedly ahistorical claim to perpetuity; by contrast, when looking backward, it identified specific medieval precursors.⁷² These included the “German empire of yore” of the Hohenstaufen, represented by Trifels (among other examples) at the propaganda exhibition of 1940–42 devoted to “German Greatness.”⁷³

Once more we see how changing conceptions of history had a formative effect on the ways in which monumental remains were architecturally appropriated, interpreted, and reconstructed. This means (to answer our initial questions) that the overall configuration and formal language of the Prussian castle of Stolzenfels, the Wilhelmine-era Haut-Koenigsbourg, and the National Socialist Trifels were determined neither by the specifics of each ruin nor by then-current standards for historicizing architecture. From

69 As W. Zahn expressed it in 1941 in his article “Gralsburg Trifels” for the *Saarländische Tageszeitung*, quoted from Stein, “Trifels und Hohkönigsburg,” 395.

70 Link, *Burgen und Burgenforschung*, 307. On the idea of the Western March (Westmark), see Burkhard Dietz, Helmut Gabel, and Ulrich Tiedau, eds., *Griff nach dem Westen* (Münster: Waxmann, 2003); Jean-Pierre Legendre and Laurent Olivier, eds., *L’archéologie nationale-socialiste dans les pays occupés à l’Ouest du Reich* (Gollion: Infolio, 2007); Thomas Müller, *Imaginerter Westen* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2009).

71 Ludwig Siebert, “Deutsches Kulturschaffen als völkische Pflicht,” in Siebert, *Wiedererstandene Baudenkmale*, 7–10, at 9.

72 Ursula Wiggershaus-Müller, *Nationalsozialismus und Geschichtswissenschaft* (Hamburg: Kovač, 1998), 38–42, 115–19, 161–70; Frank-Lothar Kroll, *Utopie als Ideologie* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1998); Steinkamp and Reudenbach, *Mittelalterbilder im Nationalsozialismus*; Christopher Clark, *Von Zeit und Macht* (Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2018), 189–229, 289–99; Hans Maier, “Hitler und das Reich,” *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 67 (2019): 521–36, at 527–30.

73 Hans Hagemeyer, ed., *Ausstellung Deutsche Größe*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Limpert, 1940–41), 105; William J. Diebold, “The High Middle Ages on Display in the Exhibition ‘Deutsche Größe’ (1940–1942),” in Steinkamp and Reudenbach, *Mittelalterbilder im Nationalsozialismus*, 103–17.

the recognition of historical distance in Schinkel's rebuilding scheme and the interweaving of monument and landscape of memory in his general plan, through Ebhardt's improving reconstruction, to Esterer's construction of timelessness, fundamentally different conceptualizations of history were at work; each produced its own, distinct architectural solution. As a result, there was no reconstruction of the past at work in these buildings; instead, they expressed in monumental form perceptions and interpretations that governed the modern political appropriation of the medieval past.

