3.3 Castles as Instruments of Hegemonial Space Construction and Representation. The Example of the County of Vianden

Bernhard Kreutz

Over the past twenty years, medieval research has rediscovered the castle as a subject of study. It has broken away from the older, often purely architectural or military-historical perspective (see for example, Piper 1912; Ebhardt 1939-1958) and begun to pose new questions related to cultural history and even sociology. This was initiated primarily by Joachim Zeune's study that carried the programmatic title *Burgen. Symbole der Macht. Ein neues Bild der mittelalterlichen Burg (Castles. Symbols of Power. A New View of the Medieval Castle)* (1995).

Recent research describes the medieval and early modern castle as a 'multifunctional structure'. It served as both fortification and residential complex, fulfilling military functions and at the same time acting as the home of a lord and his family, soldiers and servants. In its function as a military base, the castle served to control transport routes and borders. It was a weapons arsenal and a prison, as well as an administrative and judicial centre. Finally, a castle was a place to collect and store the levies demanded by the lord, such as grain, wine, wool and, not least, money. However, castles also had a significant representative function. This applied to their interior design as a stage for courtly culture, as it did to their exterior appearance as a symbol of power visible from afar, dominating the surroundings also in a visual sense (see Zeune 1995: 34ff. and 171ff.; Burger 2010: 72ff.; Hope 2010: 197ff.; Ehlert 2010: 144ff.). The castle thus played a part in medieval aristocratic rule similar to that described by Michel Foucault for the metropolis as a centre of the territorial state in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (see Foucault 2007 [2004]: 12ff.).

Against this background and from the viewpoint of the Foucauldian concept of sovereignty (see ibid.: 11ff.), we shall now examine the functions exercised by castles in the system of rule in medieval and early modern times, exemplified by the County of Vianden in the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg. How did these functions reflect in the architecture of a castle? What social practices, emanating from and centred on the castle, were used to constitute a sovereign space? How did castles mark the boundaries of this space? And finally, how did castles represent feudal rule and how did they contribute to conceptions of aristocratic identity? The Vianden records in the *Luxembourg National Archives* (ANLux) and the *Koninklijk Huisarchief* (Royal Archives) in The Hague (KHA) were evaluated under these aspects along with sources already published.

Apart from the eponymous seat of the Counts of Vianden in today's Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, a total of fifteen additional castles can be found in the Eifel-Ardennes region, which the House of Vianden put to various uses in their reign until their demise in the French Revolution. These castles or their ruins are

located in modern Luxembourg (not only in Vianden, but also in Brandenburg, Fels/Larochette, Klerf/Clervaux and Schengen), in Belgium (St. Vith, Bütgenbach, Salm and Sterpenich) and in Germany (Dasburg, Neuerburg, Hamm, Dudeldorf, Schönecken, Neuenstein and Schleiden) (see Fig. 2).

3.3.1 Functions and Architecture: The Example of Vianden Castle

We will take a closer look at Vianden Castle to exemplify the functions of the castle in the counts' system of rule. This also includes examining the effects which the different functions had on the architectural design of the castle during the various building phases (see Zimmer 1996: 262ff. and 2010: 96ff. on the history of the castle's construction).

As early as the mid-fourth century AD, the Romans built a watchtower, surrounded by a square wall, on the Vianden spur above the river Our. The building served to keep watch on the Our Valley and control a river crossing (see Hunold 2011: 359). Around the year 1000 the first medieval stone fortification was erected on this site. It had a curtain wall with an oval layout, containing a hall (*aula*) and a square-shaped chapel. The owners and builders were the lords of Hamm on the Prüm in the western Eifel. They held office as stewards[38] of Prüm Abbey in the eleventh century, responsible for the abbey's secular affairs. As laymen, it was the stewards' task to implement those disciplinary mechanisms among the abbey's subjects which the monks themselves, as clerics, were not permitted to carry out (see Foucault 2007 [2004]: 6ff.). This included administering justice, collecting debts and providing military protection (see Huyghebaert 1984: 34ff.). Apart from controlling the crossing on the Our, the fortification in Vianden was now also used to govern and control the surrounding territory.

38 | The historical German term used here is that of *Vogt*. "The terms 'Vogt' and 'Vogtei' originate from the Latin *advocatus, advocatia*. They refer to a wide range of institutions. What the various connotations have in common is the fact that individual persons acted on behalf of a third party or at least on formal authorization, exercising power, organizing administration, collecting taxes, presiding over a court of law or taking over legal representation in a trial [...] The *Vogt* was a layman who represented a cleric, a church, a cloister or a monastery in secular affairs, particularly in court, and administered church property." Personal translation of: "Den Begriffen 'Vogt' und 'Vogtei' liegen lat. advocatus, advocatia zugrunde. Sie bezeichnen eine breite Palette von Institutionen. Gemeinsam ist den unterschiedl. Begriffsinhalten die Tatsache, daß Personen im Auftrag – oder zumindest formal beauftragt – Herrschaft ausübten, Verwaltung organisierten, Abgaben einzogen, Gericht hielten oder bei Prozessen die rechtl. Vertretung übernahmen. [...] Der V. war ein Laie, der einen Geistl., eine Kirche, ein Kl. oder ein Stift in weltl. Angelegenheiten vertrat, v.a. vor Gericht, und das Kirchengut verwaltete." (see H.-J. Schmidt 2003, LexMa, vol. VIII: col. 1811-1814)

Towards the end of the eleventh century, the lords of Hamm moved their residence to their new castle above the Our. From then on, they called themselves Counts of Vianden after their new residence (see Beyer 1860: 447, No. 390). This incisive change was also reflected in the architectural design of the castle. A square keep, serving as a residential tower, was built in the northern part of the structure. The castle remained the counts' residence for around three hundred years (see Margue 2012: 1562ff.). Like the main city of a territory, the castle now also added aesthetic and symbolic purposes to its political and economic functions (see Foucault 2007 [2004]: 14). In the course of the following roughly 150 years the complex was expanded into a monumental, prestigious seat.

The first step was taken around 1170, when the square chapel was replaced by a two-storey, decagonal central structure. Around 1200, Vianden Castle reached its greatest extent. A large, prestigious *palas*[39] was added to the northeast side, to be used for receptions and celebrations. A majestic gallery with large, cloverleaf windows was constructed connecting the new *palas* and the chapel. In the mid-thirteenth century, finally, all the buildings were furnished with high roofs and stepped gables in the Gothic style. The castle retained this late medieval state of construction essentially until its demolishment in the 1820s (see Milmeister 2003: 261ff.) and was restored to this former state in the twentieth century.

The County of Vianden was inherited by the Counts of Nassau in 1417. They did not reside at Vianden, however, but in the Netherlands. Having lost its function as a residence, the castle continued to serve an important function in territorial rule. It became the seat of a district magistrate who performed governmental functions for the absentee counts. The halls in the *palas* were now used as grain store, weapons arsenal and powder magazine (KHA, C2, No. 72).

Starting with the Roman hill fort intended to keep watch over the Our crossing, from the turn of the millennium on, the medieval castle in Vianden constantly acquired new functions and was redesigned accordingly. While the first *aula* was still used by the stewards of Prüm for judicial purposes, once these had taken up permanent residence in Vianden, the castle was redesigned successively, until the mid-thirteenth century, into an ostentatious building of the ruling nobility. After losing its residential function in 1417 the castle remained frozen, as it were, in its late medieval state of construction. From then on, the building was used as an administrative castle with only minor additions being made to it (see Zimmer 1996: 401f.).

39 | A *palas* (Lat. *palatium*) is "a residential hall of a medieval German palace or castle. The *palas* houses the ceremonial rooms in one, or more often two storeys above a partly deepened basement, initially in royal and episcopal palaces, and since the 10th century also in castles." Personal translation of: "Wohn- und Saalbau einer ma. Pfalz oder Burg in Dtl. Der P. beherbergt die Repräsentationsräume in einem oder zumindest zwei Geschossen über einem teilw. eingetieften Untergeschoß, zunächst in kgl. und bfl. Pfalzen, seit dem 10. Jh. auch in Burgen" (see G. Binding 2003, LexMa, vol. VI: col. 1631f.).

Figure 1: Vianden Castle after restoration. The chapel can be seen beneath the ridge turret, next to it the gallery with its four cloverleaf windows, at left in the background the palas with the stepped gables (photo: Jengel)

3.3.2 Spatial Construction and Boundaries

As an administrative castle, Vianden Castle continued to be the centre of rule in the county even after 1417 (see Meyer 2010: 18ff.; Burger 2010: 72ff.; Mersiowsky 2010: 126f.). Apart from Vianden, the rule of the counts was built upon three other administrative castles. Since the late Middle Ages, the county also comprised the fiefdom of Dasburg on the northern border, today a part of the German West Eifel, as well as the fiefdoms of St. Vith and Bütgenbach, now in Belgium. In each of these four territories the eponymous castle was the seat of a district magistrate and the centre of the system of rule.

The earliest evidence of Dasburg being owned by the Counts of Vianden dates from 1222. The castle, the appurtenant village and the surrounding country to the north with 34 villages formed the dominion of Dasburg (see Milmeister 2003: 67ff.). A castellan is first mentioned as governor of the count in Dasburg in 1399 (ANLux, LV, No. 192). In 1380, Count Simon of Sponheim-Vianden was able to secure the castles and dominions of St. Vith and Bütgenbach in the Ardennes for the County of Vianden for good (see Mötsch 1993). A governor at St. Vith Castle is documented for the first time in 1388 (ANLux, LV, No. 114). From 1403 onwards this governor was also in charge of Bütgenbach (see Milmeister 1993: 95). Except for Dasburg, which was a fiefdom of the Abbot of Prüm, the Vianden dominions were under the suzerainty of Luxembourg. This applied to the County of Vianden proper from 1269, and to St. Vith and Bütgenbach from 1380 (see Margue 2012: 1566f.; Mötsch 1993: 268f.). However, there is no evidence that the suzerainty of Prüm and Luxembourg, and the implications resulting from it under feudal law,

had any direct effects on the everyday life and the relations between the count's office-holders and subjects inside the Vianden territories.

The administrative castles of Vianden, Dasburg, St. Vith and Bütgenbach were the backbone of the territorial sovereignty of Vianden until the county's dissolution in 1795. They formed a chain running from south to north along the Our. Several villages were assigned to and governed by each of the four administrative castles. The collection of the manorial rents, both monetary and in kind, was the hegemonic practice which most strongly affected the everyday life of the population.

The counts' territorial dominions were divided up into sub-districts (feudal estates) with several villages assigned to each, along with agricultural properties and common rights to forestry, grazing and hunting. The administrators of the feudal estates, the stewards, were responsible for collecting the tributes from the peasants in the villages of their district. The stewards were directly subject to their superior, the district magistrate, whose seat was the respective administrative castle. There were seven estates in the County of Vianden proper: Lahr, Nussbaum, Geckler, Mettendorf, Karlshausen, Geichlingen and Krauthausen, with a total of 38 villages (KHA C2, No. 66). The fiefdom of Dasburg included the estates of Eschfeld, Daleiden and Leidenborn, with a total of 34 villages (see Vannérus 1928: 94f.). The seven estates of Weiswampach, Neundorf, Recht, Amel, Büllingen, Bütgenbach und Pronsfeld, with a joint total of 64 villages, were governed from the administrative castles of St. Vith und Bütgenbach (see Vannérus 1928: 97ff.).

A list of properties and revenues compiled in 1615 by Philip William, Prince of Orange, provides an insight into the organization of the manorial system in Vianden (KHA C2, No. 66). Owing to the armed conflicts between the House of Orange-Nassau and the Spanish Habsburgs in the Netherlands, which had been affecting the County of Vianden since 1567 (see Milmeister 2003: 177ff.), it seems that severe irregularities in the payment of the tributes had occurred in the previous decades. Philip William, Count of Vianden, made use of the brief period of peace during his reign from 1604 to 1618 to restore and consolidate the economic base of his rule. He had the Vianden tax collector Gilles Bouvet compile a list of tributes setting down in detail the procedure centred in the administrative Castle of Vianden (KHA C2, No. 66, f. 2r-4r).

First Bouvet summoned all seven of the county's stewards to the castle, where they were asked to provide information under oath concerning the number and size of the taxable farms, as well as the amount of all monetary fees and rents in kind in their districts. This information would then be compared with the older records available in the castle. The stewards, however, stated that they were unable to do so. Even the subjects could no longer provide precise information, since the goods had in the meantime often been divided up and the payment obligations for them were also divided up amongst several persons. The tax collector responded by giving the stewards a few days' time to obtain exact information. If they were unsuccessful, he would summon the subjects individually to the castle

for questioning or go to the villages himself to appraise the situation. After the deadline passed, the stewards again claimed they were unable to obtain accurate information on the amounts of the rents. Thereupon the tax collector carried out his threat and summoned all the farmers in the County of Vianden to the castle starting on 1 June 1615. After being cautioned and sworn in, each of them provided information on the size of their property and the consequent monetary fees and rents in kind. Contentious cases were clarified by mutual agreement among the farmers, stewards and the tax collector, or postponed to be decided at a later time.

The role of the stewards in these proceedings becomes apparent from their delaying tactics. They obviously did not see themselves primarily as overseers of the tax collector's interests and thus of the count's regime. Instead, they acted in the interest of the subjects, whose tax obligations they at first attempted to conceal – in their own interest, as well, since they themselves were obligated to pay taxes on the farms they owned. The farmers, probably on the advice of the stewards, accepted having to appear at Vianden Castle and disclose the size of their properties. This seemed better than having to undergo a visit by the tax collector. However, tax collector Gilles Bouvet also expressed his satisfaction. Even though the subjects may have withheld some due payments, the questioning put the taxation of the subjects on a new and – since it involved a consensus with those obligated to pay – legally firm basis. Weighing the costs against the benefits, the tax collector can be said to have achieved selective obedience from the subjects (see Foucault 2007 [2004]: 64ff.). The result of the survey of 1615 was a detailed inventory listing, in French, all 218 taxable farms in the County of Vianden, along with their owners and the individual amounts of the annual rents, divided up according to the seven estates and the appurtenant 38 individual villages.

Apart from the four administrative castles, the counts made use of additional castles, those of their relatives and branch lines in Hamm, Klerf, Salm, Schönecken and Neuerburg (see Fig. 2). The ancestors of the House of Vianden, who had been the stewards of Prüm Abbey, came from Hamm Castle in the Eifel. In the mid-thirteenth century, an independent branch of the family of the Counts of Vianden established itself in Hamm (see Milmeister 2003: 39ff.; Klein 1997: 426ff.). Another branch was founded by Count Gerhard, a brother of Frederic I of Vianden in the twelfth century. Its seat was Klerf (Clervaux) Castle on the eponymous river in the Ösling (see du Fays 1985: 39f.). In 1163, the House of Vianden acquired through marriage the castle and the County of Salm in the Ardennes, today Vielsalm in Belgium. In 1248, the Salm-Vianden branch had to recognize the suzerainty of Luxembourg (see Du Fays 1985: 26ff., 40, 83f.; Margue 2012: 1562 and 1568). The Schönecken branch of the family broke away from the House of Vianden in the course of an inheritance dispute in 1264 (see Du Fays 1985: 168ff.). One final branch line had its seat in Neuerburg in the western Eifel. Around 1230, the castle and fiefdom of Neuerburg separated from the county of Vianden and became the seat of a branch line (see ibid.: 93ff.; Margue 2012: 1567). The castles of the branch lines, to which the Counts of Vianden still had sovereign rights in some cases, formed a ring

around the central area with the four administrative castles. No longer belonging to these, they marked the boundaries of the sovereign territory of Vianden proper.

A third group of castles were the vassal castles and *Offenhäuser*. These were castles over which the House of Vianden had suzerainty, in which it had proportional ownership or had a so-called *Öffnungsrecht*, meaning that the counts were able to use these castles as a military stronghold on the basis of a contractual agreement, that is, the castles were 'open' to them. At the same time, the lord of the castle was not allowed to make his castle available to any enemy of the House of Vianden (see Rödel 2010: 66f.). This third group included Brandenburg (see Wampach 1949: 313, No. 226), the castles of Fels (see Friedhoff 2013: 130f.), Dudeldorf (see Vannérus 1919: 275), Schengen (ANLux, LV, No. 335, 430, 457, 469), Sterpenich (see Vannérus 1919: 235), Schleiden (KHA C2, No. 22) and Neuenstein (ANLux, LV, No. 348). The seven vassal castles and *Offenhäuser* formed a second, wider ring around the sovereign territory of the Counts of Vianden.

In the Middle Ages, and to some extent into modern times, as well, it is not possible to identify a clearly defined territory, with linear borders and coherent laws, for the County of Vianden. The exercise of power in medieval times operated via a range of specific legal relationships that individuals entertained with their ruler. These could consist of obligations under the manorial system to provide labour and pay taxes, obligations of noble vassals under the feudal system to provide military services and aid, or obligations to open and hand over castles. The feudal rights of princes often overlapped and interfered with one another. It was non uncommon for various landlords to be represented in one village, and noble vassals frequently had several competing overlords. Hence the House of Vianden in Dasburg were vassals to the Abbots of Prüm, while their family seat of Vianden had been under the suzerainty of Luxembourg since 1269. So although the Counts of Vianden were able to use the castles of other noble lords for their own purposes, they had to open their family seat to the Counts of Luxembourg upon request (see Estgen 2009: 30ff., No. B. 26). Nonetheless, the example of the Vianden castles shows how the counts' policies by degrees produced a sovereign space. The practices of sovereignty thus here had the object to gradually create a territory (see Foucault 2007 [2004]: 11f.). The first part of this paper already showed that castles also had functions other than that of consolidating claims to a territory.

The building of Vianden Castle by the lords of Hamm c. 1000 already marked a local claim to power at the crossing over the Our. The sovereign's hold over the tax-paying villagers was greatest in the vicinity of Vianden Castle and the three additional administrative castles in Dasburg, St. Vith and Bütgenbach. It was institutionalized by the district magistrates and stewards, and stabilized through daily enforcement. The creation of written registers of tributes, as in 1615, as well as their maintenance and enforcement, made for an effective practice of sovereignty in the construction of a space. This hegemonial space was constituted by the taxable farms, the villages in which they were located and their districts. Several villages formed a feudal estate and the estates taken together in turn established

an administrative district assigned to an administrative castle. The castles of the branch lines of the House of Vianden were grouped outside this immediate vicinity. They marked no clear, linear border, but probably staked out a zone within which the Counts of Vianden held a dominant position. The outer ring of vassal castles and *Offenhäuser* formed an advanced line to the south and east made up of castles which could not readily be used against the House of Vianden. They constituted a sort of secure area which Vianden could at least militarily neutralize in the event of conflict. The three different groups of castles served to varying degrees to secure the rule of the House of Vianden. The farther from the centre on the Our, the weaker the counts' power and their ability to assert it.

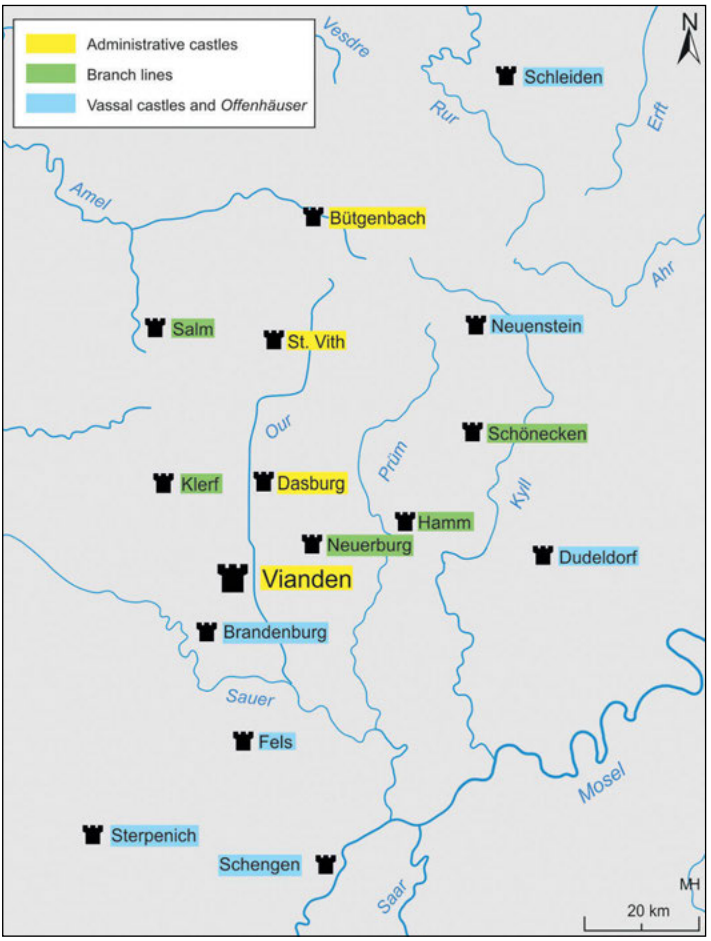

Figure 2: The castles of the County of Vianden (yellow: administrative castles, green: branch lines, blue: vassal castles and Offenhäuser*) (design: Bernhard Kreutz, realization: Malte Helfer)*

3.3.3 Representation and Aristocratic Identities

The first identity-establishing function of a castle for a noble family was providing a name. Many noble families named themselves after their family seat. This name was transferred to the dynasty, from there to the principality and later to the successor states. Some of these castle names are still found in the names of present-day states, such as Luxembourg, Limburg, Mecklenburg or Brandenburg. Vianden Castle also took on an identity-establishing function of this nature. After the lords of Hamm, who came from the eponymous castle on the Prüm, had settled in the new castle, they named themselves after their new seat. At the same time as the castle was being converted to a residential edifice in the late eleventh century, the sources mention a certain Gerhard of Vianden (*Gerardus de Vienna*) in 1096 (Beyer 1860: 447, No. 390).

The expansion of Vianden Castle in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, with the aligned two-storey chapel, gallery and majestic *palas*, was modelled on Salian and Hohenstaufen imperial architecture. A typical example of this imperial type of construction is the Imperial Palace (*Kaiserpfalz*) of Goslar. Here we also find a two-storey chapel with a polygonal layout, an open gallery and a *palas* set in a line (see Knapp 2008: 55ff.). There is no evidence to suggest that the Goslar palace was the direct model for Vianden Castle. However, the similarities would have been obvious to contemporaries. The Counts of Vianden used this architectural reference to position themselves as partisans of the Hohenstaufen faction and as imperial princes of the highest rank (see Margue 2012: 1572f.).

The expansion of the castle also created the stage for the courtly culture which was an integral part of aristocratic identity in the Middle Ages. The biography of Yolanda of Vianden, written in the late thirteenth century (see Moulin 2009) provides us with a vivid picture of the kind of feasts that were held at Vianden Castle. This young daughter of Henry I, Count of Vianden and his wife Margaret refused an arranged marriage befitting her station, renounced courtly life and, against her parents' will, entered the Dominican monastery of Marienthal in 1248. In order to emphasize all that Yolanda was willing to forego, her biographer, Hermann von Veldenz, describes the courtly feasts at Vianden Castle in scintillating colours, such as the marriage of Yolanda's brother Frederic to Mathilde of Salm in 1247 (see Moulin 2009: 267ff., v. 5277-5324). Yolanda's refusal to take part in this feast and join the others in exuberant dancing marked her breach with her former aristocratic world in favour of a life of monastic poverty and humility. The author of the Yolanda epic compares the majestic Castle of Vianden to the humble monastery of Marienthal as examples of these two medieval ways of life (see Margue 2001: 106ff.).

The Vianden castles retained their function as symbolic centres of sovereignty in Foucault's sense until the county's dissolution. They were not only political and economic centres, but also the scene of the symbolic legal acts, which had a key legitimating significance for the aristocratic rule of the *Ancien Régime*

(see Foucault 2007 [2004]: 11f.). This becomes clear in 1683, when John, Prince of Isenghien[40], whom Louis XIV had been able to install temporarily as Count of Vianden in his fight against William III of Orange (see Milmeister 2003: 210ff.). A detailed report of the handover of the County of Vianden to the Prince of Isenghien on 9 August 1683 has come down to us (see Bassing 1913: 1ff.). On this day, the envoys of Louis XIV, the mayor, the judges and jurymen of the City of Vianden, as well as representatives of all the estates and all the other office-holders in the county gathered at Vianden Castle. There he forbid them in future to accept instructions from William III, Count of Orange and commanded them to obey their new lord, John, Prince of Isenghien, exclusively from then on. Then he handed over the County of Vianden with the fiefdoms of Dasburg and St. Vith to the nobleman Gabriel Lefebvre of Bierbais, who was representing the absent Prince of Isenghien. The French king's envoy handed him the keys to the castle, to the *Vorstadt* (part of a city outside the city walls) and to the city itself, lit a fresh fire in one of the castle's fireplaces and symbolically gave Lefebvre, in front of the city gates, a handfull of earth representing the entire county. Then, in Vianden City Hall, he discharged all the judges, jurymen and mayors of the town and the seven stewards from their duties, only to reinstate them immediately in the name of the Prince of Isenghien. Finally, the gathering made its way to the parish church of Vianden, where Gabriel Lefebvre took an oath by proxy for the prince, vowing to rule the county in a manner agreeable to God and to safeguard the rights of the subjects. Three days later, the fiefdoms of St. Vith and Bütgenbach were handed over in a similar ceremony (KHA C2, No. 123).

Vianden Castle was used *pars pro toto* to represent the entire county at the handover. The count's office-holders were gathered at the castle and sworn to their new lord. Here a fire was lit in a fireplace for the new landlord, here he or his envoy accepted the keys to the city. John, Prince of Isenghien, however, was only able to keep his position as Count of Vianden for barely fourteen years. The Treaty of Ryswick in 1697 obliged Louis XIV to yield the occupied territories in the Low Countries. William III of Orange, now also King of England, repossessed the County of Vianden along with the fiefdoms of Dasburg, St. Vith and Bütgenbach in February of 1698 (see Milmeister 2003: 219f.).

3.3.4 Conclusion

Although Michel Foucault developed his concept of sovereignty with regard to the absolutist territorial state of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Foucault 2007 [2004]: 11ff.), his ideas on techniques of domination, securing the territory, selective obedience achieved by judicial means, and power symbolism can, however, be profitably applied to the history of castles in the Middle Ages.

40 | Izegem in Flanders.

Using their castles as a base, the Counts of Vianden were able, in the course of the centuries, to create a hegemonial space by means of practices of sovereignty. The core area was formed along a south-north axis by the seat of Vianden and the three other administrative castles of Dasburg, St. Vith and Bütgenbach. Collection and control of the manorial rents ensured that the sovereign's hold over the residents of this region was strongest. This control was institutionally strengthened by the district magistrates and stewards. The core territory was surrounded by outlying castles of the Vianden branch lines of Schönecken, Hamm, Neuerburg, Klerf and Salm. The outermost ring was composed of the vassal castles and *Offenhäuser* of Schleiden, Neuenstein, Dudeldorf, Brandenburg, Fels, Schengen and Sterpenich. They marked an area of the counts' influence which put limitations on the ability of neighbouring, competing rulers to act against the interests of Vianden.

The residents were subject to disciplinary control in the form of hearings held at the castle on certain days, the compulsory labour the subjects had to perform there, and the summonses to determine the amounts of rents and taxes. However, the counts often achieved only selective obedience by these means. This shows up, for instance, in the double role played by the stewards who, although they were the counts' administrators, in practice also acted in the interest of the subjects and, not least, of themselves.

Finally, the castles of Vianden, and especially the family seat, were an integral part and the source of aristocratic identity models. From Vianden Castle, the name passed over to the dynasty and to the county. The houses of Nassau and Orange also added it to their many titles after 1417. The architecture of the castle embodied an imperial political programme and identified the House of Vianden as a supporter of the imperial House of Hohenstaufen. Life at Vianden Castle was described in contemporary literature as the epitome of courtly culture and as the antithesis of the monastic ideal. In the castle, aristocratic rule manifested and legitimized itself through symbolic legal acts up into modern times.

Owing to the sources, this analysis focuses primarily on the actions of the protagonists and the perspective of the aristocratic rulers and their functionaries. The compilation of the tax lists in 1615 shows, however, that the subjects even in pre-democratic systems of government were by no means mere recipients of orders. Sovereignty in the *Ancien Régime* was often a process negotiated between the rulers and the ruled, who not infrequently met as equals.

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3.4 Biogas – Power – Space. On the Construction of Energy Regions in Border Areas

Fabian Faller

The use of renewable energy sources has generally come to be recognized as a promising way to tackle some of the greatest social challenges of our time, such as climate change, issues of resource efficiency or aspects of social justice. Decentralized power generation systems are the most effective and most efficient approach to the use of renewable energy. These can be adapted flexibly to regional needs and to the respective context, and enhance regional economies. In addition, plants for generating renewable energy are less complicated and less expensive in terms of investments, planning and maintenance than large infrastructures, such as coal-fired power stations. They also require less professionalism, thereby enabling actor groups from local and regional civil society to become active in the energy sector. These aspects are directly tied to the question of the spatial effects