

## The Castle of Prunn – a Castle as Impressive as They Come

When the highly educated jurist Wiguleus Hundt visited Prunn Castle in the mid-16th century, he had no idea about the treasure that awaited him there. He had already been on numerous political missions in Bavaria and throughout the empire; he had traveled as historiographer on behalf of the Bavarian Duke Albert the Fifth; he had seen a lot. But the discovery he made at Prunn Castle clearly surpassed everything else. On this picturesque castle site, he came across a parchment manuscript of a work of world literature: The Song of the Nibelungs.

The location of his discovery alone is very special. Situated on a rocky crag above the river Altmühl, Prunn Castle is like a knight's castle straight out of a picture book.

Beyond boasting the uniquely romantic view we enjoy today, the fortress was of strategic importance in the Middle Ages. Not only was it possible to oversee large parts of the valley from its battlements; the fortress was also clearly visible itself, underlining its lords' claim to power from afar.

For this reason, the family of the barons of Fraunberg, who became lords of Prunn Castle in the 14th century, had their coat of arms – a jumping white horse on a red background – placed on the south side of the wall facing the valley. Even though the castle was to change lords several times in the course of the centuries, the coat of arms has been preserved until this day.

The good condition the castle is still in today is due in no small part to the Bavarian kings. In 1827, King Ludwig the First committed himself to preserving the castle as a monument and place of remembrance and had the first support work carried out. Having last undergone comprehensive restoration and reconstruction until 2010, Prunn Castle can continue to watch over the Altmühl valley for centuries to come.

And Wiguleus? What did he do with his remarkable discovery in the 16th century? To him it seemed almost a miracle that a manuscript of The Song of the Nibelungs – the so-called Prunn Codex – had stood the test of time tucked away in the fortress. For when Wiguleus found the codex, it was already about 250 years old.

The scholar, fully aware of the special nature of this work, felt duty bound to hand it to his employer, the Duke of Bavaria. The Prunn Codex thus found its way to Munich, where it is still kept in the Bavarian State Library today.

Even historians of our day can read the stories dating back to the 12th century at the library – stories of Siegfried and Kriemhild, dragons and heroic deeds, disappointed love and betrayal, and, above all, of the legendary, vast treasure of the Nibelungs.