

A) IDENTIFICATION

Nomination : 1. Lorsch, former Benedictine abbey
2. Lorsch, former Benedictine abbey,
Torhalle and Altenmünster Monastery

Location : Hesse

State Party : Germany

Date : December 28, 1988

B) ICOMOS RECOMMENDATION

That this cultural property be included on the World Heritage List on the basis of Criteria III and IV.

C) ICOMOS OBSERVATIONS

In April 1989 ICOMOS recommended deferral of examination of this property in order to permit Germany to provide details concerning proposals for the 1991 enhancement of the property. In February 1990 ICOMOS again recommended deferral because the boundaries of the property proposed for inclusion were not well defined and because the proposed management plan for the site failed to address adequately the approach to be taken in regard to preserving the buildings and the site's archaeological interest. In June 1990, the World Heritage Bureau agreed to accept this recommendation. Germany's 10 April 1991 proposal for the nomination of the Altenmünster Monastery as an annex of the Lorsch Monastery clarifies proposals for the treatment of the property and for its boundaries. During the World Heritage Bureau meeting of June 1991, ICOMOS, while maintaining its interest in inscription, noted that a plan linking the two sites had not yet been provided. The World Heritage Bureau recommended inscription, subject to receipt of a satisfactory plan. The German authorities provided such a plan on October 1, 1991 and ICOMOS is pleased to recommend inscription, without reservation. ICOMOS is now prepared to propose the property for inclusion on the World Heritage List on the basis of Criteria III and IV.

D) BACKGROUND

In the small town of Lorsch, between Worms and Darmstadt, is the renowned "Torhalle". One of the rare buildings from the Carolingian era whose original appearance is intact, it is a reminder of the past grandeur of an abbey founded around 760-64.

The first abbot was the bishop of Metz, Chrodegang (d.766). Sometime before 764 he brought monks from Gorze to live there and in 765 donated the relics of St. Nazarius, which he had acquired in Rome. In 767, Thurincbert, one of the founder's brothers, donated new land in sand dunes safe from floods about 500 m from the original site. The monastery was placed under the emperor's protection in 772. In 774, with Charlemagne in attendance, the archbishop of Mainz consecrated the new church, dedicated to Saints Peter, Paul and Nazarius.

The Codex Laureshamensis, a chronicle of the abbey, lists the improvements made by three of the most important abbots, Helmerich, Richbod and Adelog between 778 and 837. The monastery's zenith was probably in 876 when, at the death of Louis II the German (876), it became the burial place for the Carolingian kings of Germany. To be a worthy resting place for the remains of his father, Louis III the Young (876- 882) had a crypt built, an Ecclesia varia, where he was also buried, as were his son Hugo and Cunegonde, wife of Conrad I (the duke of Franconia elected king of Germany at the death of the last of the German Carolingians, Louis IV the Child).

The monastery flourished throughout the 10th century, but in 1090 was ravaged by fire. In the 12th century a first reconstruction was carried out. In the 13th century, after Lorsch had been incorporated in the Electorate of Mainz (1232), it lost a large part of its privileges. The Benedictines were replaced first by Cistercians and later by Premonstratensians. Moreover, the church had to be restored and reconstructed after yet another fire.

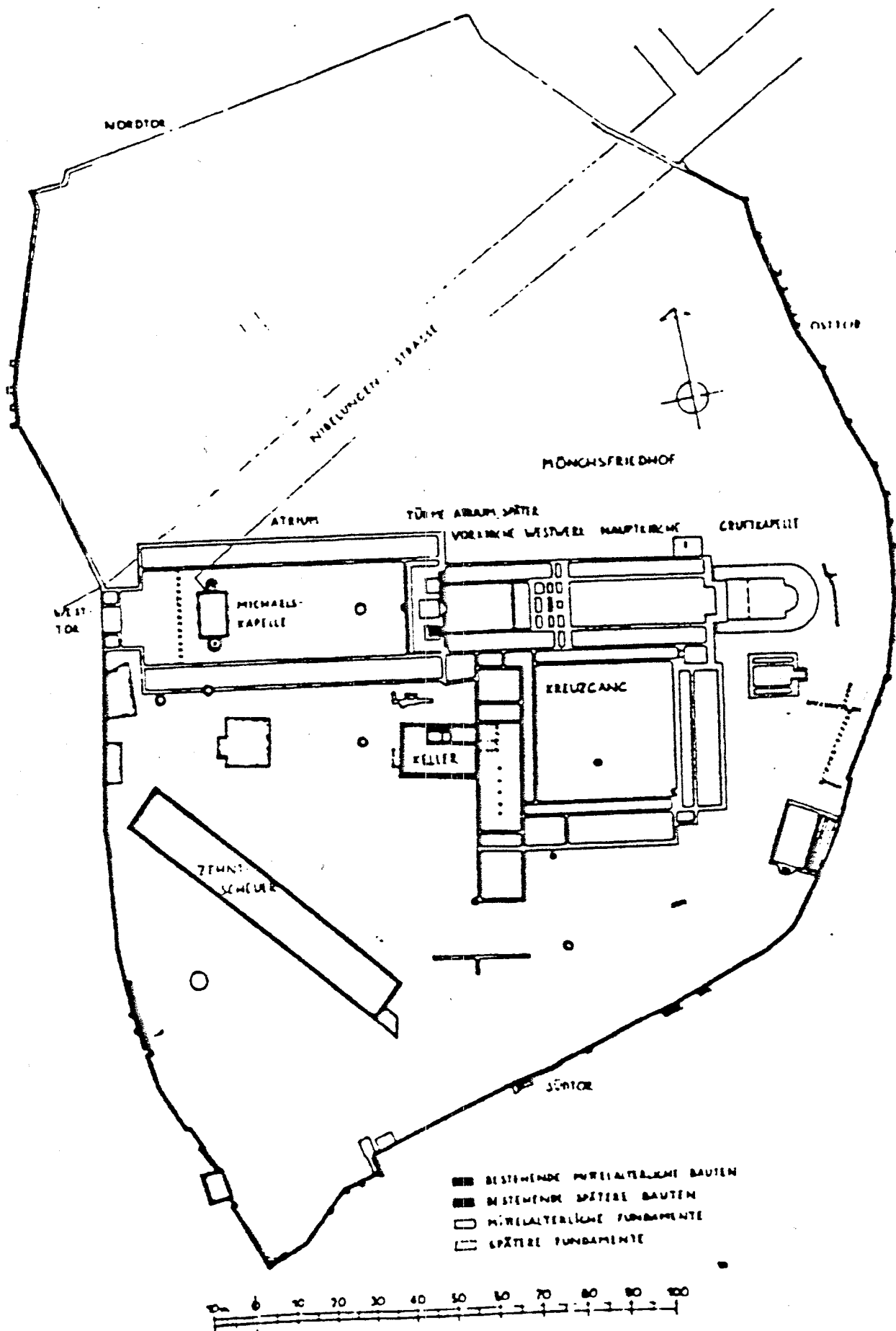
The glorious Carolingian establishment slowly deteriorated under the impact of the vagaries of politics and war: Lorsch was attached to the Palatinate in 1461, returned to the Electorate of Mainz in 1623, and incorporated in the Electorate of Hesse in 1803; and during the Thirty Years' War (1620-1621), the Spanish armies pillaged the monastic buildings which had been in a state of abandon since the Reformation. Only the Torhalle, part of the Romanesque church, insignificant vestiges of the medieval

monastery and classical buildings dating from the period when the Electors of Mainz administered the town still subsist within its boundaries.

- **Criterion III.** The religious complex represented by the former Lorsch Abbey with its 1200 year old gatehouse which is unique and in excellent condition, comprises a rare architectural document of the Carolingian era with impressively preserved sculpture and painting of that period.

- **Criterion IV.** The Lorsch Abbey with its Carolingian gatehouse give architectural evidence of the awakening of the West to the spirit of the Early and High Middle Ages under the first King and Emperor, Charlemagne.

ICOMOS, November 1991



Lorsch : plan du monastère en 774 /
restored plan of the monastery in 774