

Udo W. Hombach

Laura (von) Oelbermann - Founder in favour of Imperial Churches

Laura Oelbermann - a charitable woman

Laura Oelbermann in Berlin

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Laura Oelbermann and her wealth

Laura Oelbermann - a charitable woman

Laura Oelbermann, born in Cologne in 1846, was knighted in 1918, eleven years before her death. Her husband Emil was an extremely successful businessman, not only in Cologne but also in New York. Emil Oelbermann already died in 1897 with only 64 years. His business was so profitable that his wife became the wealthiest widow if not even the richest person in town. As an avowed Protestant, Laura Oelbermann endowed many protestant social institutions in Cologne or even initiated them. The Weyertal Hospital was created with her help - but also with the help of the Empress Auguste Viktoria. She got along well with the Empress, who was similarly caring, so that a friendly relationship between the imperial family and Laura Oelbermann developed. So it turned out that she also donated money to six churches of the last German Emperor, four in Germany, two in Jerusalem.

Laura Oelbermann in Berlin

The Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church in Berlin, named after Wilhelm I, who from 1871 on was the first German Emperor after the Middle Ages, was the showpiece of Wilhelm II's church building campaign. Laura Oelbermann financed the mosaics in the vestibule of the church. She was allowed to have a commemorative plaque put up in the mosaics: in honour of Wilhelm I, her husband and their sons. With the date "February 27, 1906" the plaque commemorates the silver wedding of the imperial couple.

Laura Oelbermann in the Eifel (between Cologne and Luxembourg)

Laura Oelbermann was active in the Eifel in two fields : for the Chapel of the Redeemer in Mirbach and for the Church of the Redeemer in Gerolstein. In September 1903 she took part in the Mirbach inauguration ceremonies. A coat of arms window in the chapel was dedicated to her: the "Chair lady of the Rhenish women's aid of the Evangelical Church aid association and donator of the chapel" (deed of foundation, Berlin 1903). The window was destroyed in World War II. In the church of Gerolstein a coat of arms in the southern mosaic wall of the western wing commemorates "L.Oelbermann".

Laura Oelbermann in Bad Homburg (near Frankfurt/Main)

In the record about the inauguration of the Church of the Redeemer in Bad Homburg (Berlin 1908), "Frau L.Oelbermann zu Cöln" is mentioned as a donator. She was given "a picture of His Majesty the Emperor and King signed by his own hand in a gilded bronze frame".

Laura Oelbermann in Jerusalem

Laura Oelbermann repeatedly transferred money to Jerusalem: for the "Syrian Orphanage", a protestant educational institution, for the "German Church" (probably the Church of the Redeemer) and for the Church of Ascension.

For this church she contributed an immense sum, more than even the imperial couple itself gave. The Ascension Church is an integral part of the "Kaiserin Auguste Victoria Foundation", a large building complex at the north end of the Mount of Olives (Mountain of Olives Foundation). A coat of arms window in the church refers to "L.Oelbermann". In April 1910 she took part in the inauguration celebrations and received a bust of the Emperor as a gift.

Almost at the same time, the most important German-catholic church in the Holy Land was inaugurated in Jerusalem, the Church of "Mariae Dormitio" on Mount Zion, close to the tomb of King David. The "Dormition", as it is called in English, along with the adjoining Benedictine monastery also exists thanks to Wilhelm II. He obtained permission from the Sultan for something that was difficult to accomplish in the Ottoman Empire - the purchase of land by foreigners, specifically for a Christian institution.

Laura Oelbermann and her wealth

To praise Laura Oelbermann as a "big spender" is very honourable of course. But it should not be forgotten to whom she owed her millions: her diversely active husband Emil Oelbermann and his hard work. Emil Oelbermann was not only a merchant. With his business dealings he was also involved in several insurance companies in Germany and in the USA.

For pictures and more detailed information see
["www.udo-w-hombach.de"](http://www.udo-w-hombach.de).