



# Medieval Histories

CREDO in Paderborn

2013 September

# Medieval Histories

News about our Medieval Heritage & History

Black - Münster - Paderborn

Cultural Christians

CREDO - The Christianisation of Europe

Dying Gods - some highlights from the CREDO exhibition

Widukind - facts and fictions

Waterscape Paderborn

---

Medieval Histories  
News about our  
Medieval Heritage & History

Editor-in-chief: Karen Schousboe  
2013 9:1  
ISBN 978-87-92858-11-5

KIMMING ApS ©  
Paradisstien 5  
DK2840 Holte  
Denmark

[www.medievalhistories.com](http://www.medievalhistories.com)  
[info@medievalhistories.com](mailto:info@medievalhistories.com)  
+45 24 23 36 10

Photo (frontpage):  
Paderborn on a summerday  
© Paderborn Diocesan Museum





*The Wall around Medieval Paderborn is nearly intact © Medieval Histories*

## Black – Münster – Paderborn

In Paderborn in North Western Germany there is no need to set an alarm clock. Each morning a cacophony of chiming bells greets you while the view from your window is filled with a panorama of shining church towers towering up high. Strolling through the streets you will be met by a series of dedicated shops selling Catholic vestments and other religious paraphernalia compete with religious bookshops, while chances are high that you meet religious persons walking around airing their cowls or veils as if a 1000 years have passed unnoticed. More Roman Catholic than Rome itself, Paderborn is definitely the Northernmost Catholic Outpost in an alien (Protestant) world. Complete with an Archbishop it is no wonder that locals in North Rhine-Westphalia grammatically compare the adjective black as follows: black – Münster – Paderborn! However, what shines seems more than anything

to be an invention of tradition.

True, Paderborn was founded by Charlemagne in 795 and was soon embellished by a royal palatio, a church and a bishopric. And yes, it was to Paderborn Pope Leo III fled to meet up with Charlemagne after his enemies in Rome had

hounded him out. And yes, the Bishop of Paderborn became a Prince of the Empire in 1100 lord-ing it over a city with a Cathedral and a remarkable series of monasteries, convents and chapels. Later the region – Paderborner Land – was even termed “Hochstift Paderborn”, an epithet, which is still

*The Bookshop belonging to the Archdiocese © Medieval Histories*





used locally. For instance the local Radio is called “Radio Hochstift”.

However, In 1803 – 1815 Paderborner Land became annexed by Prussia and was redefined as Minden. At the same time the local government was secularised, the Jesuits were expelled and room was made for an evangelical congregation, which found its home in the “Abdinghofkirche”, the former Abbey-Church of the Benedictines from the 11th century. Following these changes local Catholics began to evolve a new consciousness and a new and very dogmatic Catholic counterculture. Through extensive lobbying this finally resulted in a reinstallation of an archbishop, who found his home in a former palace, called Dalheimer Hof in 1930.

Today - even though no more than 60% of the population in Pader-

born are Catholics - the Diocese with its lay and clerical staff is busy seeking to promote a vision of Paderborn as a latter-day Jerusalem. For instance the Cathedral regularly have Tridentine Masses said according to the Pre-Vatican-II rite, as was recently allowed by the former Pope Benedict.

Although the city also sports a MultiCulti Youth Centre in the Northwest, the local administrators are obviously happy to go along, e.g. promoting and actively participating in organising the traditional “Libori-fest”, celebrating the patron saint of the city, as well as the large exhibitions in the Museum of the Diocese and the reconstructed Ottonian Palace, which have come to brand the city. According to the Evangelical Pastor in the Abdinghofkirche it is “peculiar to live in the 21st century in a city, where the Mayor and the

local councillors greet you in the street just because you are a vicar – even though you belong to the “wrong” denomination. You will not find that easily elsewhere”!

### Paderborn and its exhibitions

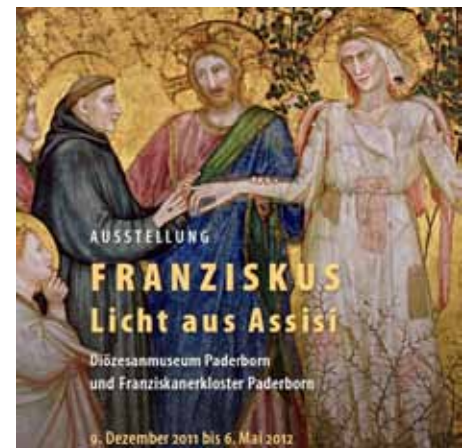
Emotions, memories and morality – all should according to the director of the Diocesan Museum, Christoph Stiegemann, be evoked in the visitor to a historical exhibition. Since 1999, when Paderborn first entered the international scene of museum blockbusters, the aim has been exactly this: to inspire visitors to engage with not only the “past as a foreign country”, but also the moral choices, which were involved in its unfolding, as well as the emotional dilemmas posed by these choices. By stressing these dimensions the curators have wished to make the histories of past events emotionally and morally pertinent to our

*The Reliquary of St. Liborius is carried out of the Cathedral.*

*More than 1 mill people take part in the festivities every summer © Michael Bogedain*







present time. In this sense any museum changes into a theatrical scene.

To some extent this ambition has been successful. Today Paderborn is branded as a place where huge and vastly interesting medieval exhibitions are mounted in state-of-the-art surroundings – the Diocesan Museum and the reconstructed Ottonian palace just behind the Cathedral. Known to be well curated and researched, some of the most precious objects in international collections have consistently been made available as loans to these exhibitions, raising the expectations of any visitor; even those armed with only a slight foreknowledge will obviously be able to derive pleasure from this very well curated exhibition.

However, starting with the exhibition “Charlemagne 799”, which was seen by 311.287 visitors, the number to the Canossa exhibition fell to a 190.000. According to the organisers of the present exhibition (CREDO 2013), 150.000 visitors are expected. Part of this reflects a widened supply. During 1991 – 2009 the number of museums in Germany grew by 48% while the number of visits to cultural museums grew only by 16%. But part of the development probably also reflects the choice of themes. While Charlemagne is

well known amongst a wider audience due to his emblematic status in the EU, the German emperor Henry IV and his controversies with pope Gregory VII, which ended in the barefooted penance in the snowy mountains at Canossa, definitely had less appeal.

Thus, there is no doubt that the blockbuster exhibitions in Paderborn as elsewhere are risky business. Other huge exhibition ventures like the three Otto-exhibitions in Magdeburg have felt the same declining lack of interest. In 2001 the first exhibition could



muster 300.000 visitors. The last exhibition in 2012 did not reach even the 100.000 benchmark.

So far, however, the organisers in Paderborn have been satisfied with the performance of CREDO 2013. Even though the exact number of visitors has as yet not been made available, the press office tells us that the exhibition has gone off to a flying start compared to the Canossa exhibition in 2006. More significant is the fact that visitors are pouring in from not only the local region, but from all of Germany as well as Benelux, France and Eastern Europe.

The theme of the CREDO exhibition – what we believe and how we all became Christians in view of the combined missionary effort of Churches and Emperors - seems to have hit a raw nerve in the 21<sup>st</sup> century characterised by the re-emergence of religious fervour amongst a growing segment of fundamentalists.

### The Economy

Added to these reflections it is perhaps also worth mentioning the sound investment such an

exhibition might be. Compared to the latest Otto-exhibition in Magdeburg, which had a budget of €3mill, the current exhibition in Paderborn operates within a budget of €7 mill. With a projected number of visitors: 150.000 and after subtracting the highest possible income from the teller, the expense is app. €5mill, most of which have been paid by the city of Paderborn and the The Westphalia-Lippe Regional Association (LWL); all in all this may in a worst case scenario amount to a “gift” to every visitor of app. €33.

Does this make sense? Yes, the organisers claim that any boost to the business of tourism is worth every Euro. In 2009 270.000 visited the region of Paderborn. This generated a turnover of €78 Mill or the equivalent of €288 per traveller. With just a minor growth - 5-6 % or 15-20.000 - in the number of visitors to the city, the €5 mill would surely be recouped in the form of local business, jobs etc. In this crude estimate the fact that cultural travellers are known to spend more freely, when travelling, has not been taken into account.

### SOURCES:

#### Christoph Stiegemann:

“Ein Erlebnis von Gleichzeitigkeit“. Die großen kunst- und kulturhistorischen Mittelalterausstellungen in Paderborn seit 1999 zwischen Wissenschaft und Inszenierung. Paderborn 2010

#### Statisches Jahrbuch 2011.

Kreis Paderborn 2012

#### Albrecht Steinecke:

Management und Marketing im Kulturtourismus. Basiswissen – Praxisbeispiele – Checklisten, Wiesbaden 2012

“Was besichtigen wir morgen?“ – Trends und Herausforderungen im Kulturtourismus. – In: Hausmann, A./ Murzik, L. (Hrsg.): Neue Impulse im Kulturtourismus, Wiesbaden 2011, S. 11-34

*Organising an exhibition with a budget of £7 mill is big business. © Medieval Histories*







*Churchgoing in the 21st century?  
Visitors are listening to an introduction to the CREDO-exhibition © Diocese Museum in Paderbor*

## Cultural Christians

Europe in the 21st century is known as a highly secularised part of the world where people in general have dropped out of their churches or at least diminished their engagement in official religion. The question is how this came about? Is it a reflection of the overall disenchantment, rationalisation and bureaucratisation, which has taken place in the 20th century? Or are there other explanations?

This conundrum has been investigated by the social scientist Jochen Hirschle, who in a series of brilliant essays has analysed the co-variation between data from the European Social Survey concerning religious faith and behavioural patterns, plus accounts of the gross domestic product in 82 regions from 20 European countries. In this analysis he has shown how there is a marked correlation between on one hand the affluence and economic prosperity of people and on the other hand their declining religious fervour.

However, according to him this does not imply that economic prosperity in itself causes a direct lessening of the existential anxiety of affluent Europeans. A declining self-assessment of modern people as religious does not correlate precisely with rising affluence. Instead the relationship is more complex. "Religious values... are fairly persistent and decline only marginally as GDP rises," he says. Hence "with income development individuals increasingly engage in consumption related practices, while traditional religious activities, contexts and symbols lose their significance as mediators for social action". Instead consumption becomes geared towards what various competing players like cinemas, libraries, art institutions, museums etc., can offer: a steady alternative intellectual nourishment and mental stimuli.

Hirschle's research simply indicates "that increases in gross domestic product lead to religious decline primarily by supplanting the

dominant modes of social action - from churchgoing to consumerism." According to Hirschle "the increasing provision of secular goods and the expanded purchasing power of households, individuals consume these alternative products and engage in secular, rather than religious activity schemes."

Very fundamentally this has resulted in a situation, where people instead of being limited by what is on offer in the local church, get the possibility to shop for intellectual nourishment in a wide variety of contexts.

### The exhibitions in Paderborn

In the Archdiocese in Paderborn in Western Germany they have obviously thought long and hard about this. And have come up with the idea of competing with all these new cultural market-leaders in the modern affluent society. Using the Archdiocese Museum as the primus motor in a series of ingenious exhibitions of which



*Bundespräsident Gauck at the opening of the CREDO Exhibition, Paderborn 2013 © Diocese Museum in Paderborn*

CREDO is the culmination so far, the museum has simply tried to enter this market.

### A New Mission?

Is the exhibition in itself part of a missionary effort, we asked? “Yes definitely, answered the director of the Diocese Museum, Professor Christoph Stiegemann, at a press meeting. “Credo is part of a

missionary effort. We have wished to seduce the cultured museum-visitor not just to be awed by the splendid pieces of art, but also to get a sense of the context, in which they were created and used. And hence to get a sense of why Christianity became this unstoppable flood, blazing a trail through the world. For this reason the very first thing, which the visitor encounters is a font, filled with water,

### SOURCES:

#### Jochen Hirschle:

The affluent society and its religious consequences: an empirical investigation of 20 European countries.

In: Socio-Economic Review (2011) Volume 9, Issue 2, Pp. 261-285.

Secularization of Consciousness” or Alternative Opportunities? The Impact of Economic Growth on Religious Belief and Practice in 13 European Countries

In: Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion (2013) Volume 52, Issue 2, pages 410-424

reflecting a beautiful blue mosaic from above, reminding us all about the baptism of Jesus, where it all began. And our baptism”, he concludes.

*Deliberately letting the museum shadow the Cathedral. Paderborn 2013 © Diocese Museum in Paderborn*





# CREDO

## – The Christianisation of Europe

CREDO is a marvellous exhibition currently underway in Paderborn in North Western Germany. Here a bonanza of medieval treasures is on show until the 11th of November, reflecting the fervour of the curators, who must have petitioned, cajoled or even begged to be able to show all these masterpieces in one sweeping exhibition located in three venues: The Archdiocese Museum next to the Cathedral of Paderborn, the reconstructed Ottonian Palace at the back and the local Art Museum to the East. All within walking distance, visitors are invited to visit all three locations one after the other. But be warned, you will wish to spend more time on the two first parts and you might even wish to visit the first part of the exhibition several times.

The cultural-historical exhibition explores the Christianisation of Medieval Europe, covering aspects such as the foundations of the missionary church, its spread through the Roman Empire, the Christianisation of Ireland, the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons, the missionary initiatives from the British Isles to the Continent, and the Christianisation of first Saxony, later Scandinavia and of Eastern and Central Europe. However, visitors are not invited to consider Christianisation as one sweeping and uni-dimensional development. Instead, we are invited to reflect upon (some of) the very diverse ways in which the Christian Church evolved from ca. 200 – 2000 AD.

It stands to reason the curators have at some point taken the

chicken to the shed and cut off its head. Visitors may thus look long but not find anything about the Christianisation, which took place in the New World post 1500; also the myriad of encounters with Islam have been carefully weeded out. (Though rumour has it this will be the focus for the next great endeavour of the museums of Paderborn). However, these “missing” perspectives do not diminish the experience.

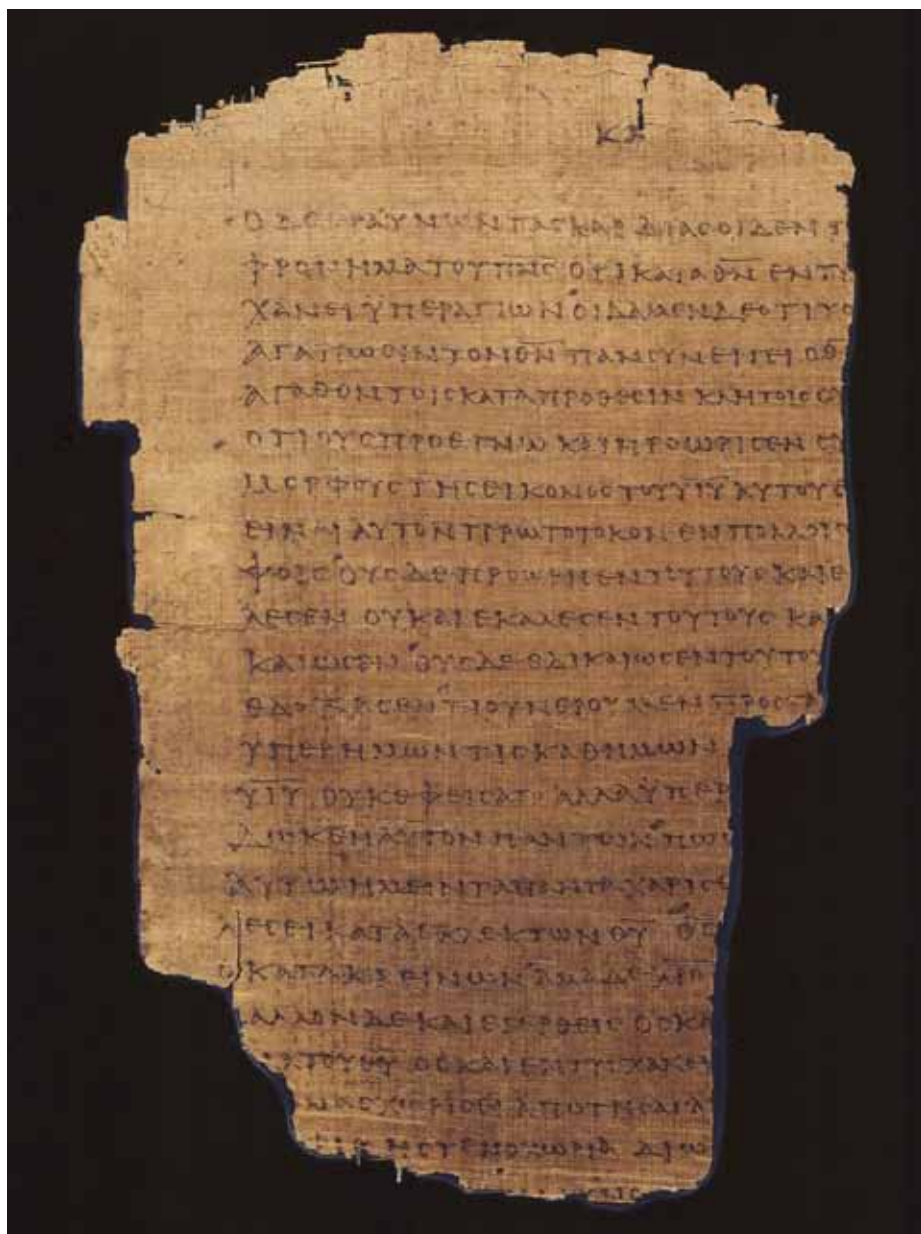
### LUX MUNDI

The first part of the exhibition is called Lux Mundi and is in the Diocese Museum. Here the visitor

is first met with a becalming installation, reminding us all of the beginning – the baptism. High up is a digital rendering of the blue mosaic from the cupola of one of the earliest existing baptisteries in Italy from Albenga in Liguria. This mosaic showing the Chi Ro floating in the sky and venerated by a flight of doves is reflected below in the still waters of a baptismal font, inviting us all to dip our fingers and “rearrange” the mosaic according to our dreams. This is flanked to one side of a digitally rendered porticus of a Temple. On the other side hovering above is yet another digital rendering of a

*The Golden disc from Limons. From the 7th century and of Frankish-Alemannish origin it mixes pagan and Christian symbols in a complex manner. © Paris, Bibliothek Nationale - Cabinet des Medailles*





*The Letter to Romans from St. Paul AD 200*  
 © The Trustees of the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin

mosaic from the 4th century from Santa Pudenziana in Rome, showing Christ teaching his disciples.

Underneath is the first breathtaking exhibit: A papyrus from the beginning of the 3rd century with a text from the Letter to the Romans by St. Paul. The leaf belongs to a manuscript holding the oldest collection of his letters and renders the legible text of the verses 27 – 35 from chapter 8. Amongst these is the famous quote: If God is for us, who can be against us? A very good question since the next 800 artefacts actually represent a

heady mixture of Christian and pagan treasures reaching from Byzantium all across Europe to the Vikings in Greenland. To answer the question: In the beginning as well as later on, someone was definitely against each other.

This is not to say that the exhibition exclusively traces the many clashes between the new Christian faith and its many competitors, from the Mithraic mysteries to the pagan sacrificial cult. A lot of the exhibits in fact tell the story of the continuous consolidation of the new church in terms of organisa-

tional, doctrinal as well as liturgical development.

However, the point is on the missionary effort of the church and the many symbolic as well as violent encounters with the “others”, which this caused.

## IN HOC SIGNO

This becomes especially pertinent in the second part of the exhibition, which is located in the reconstructed Ottonian palace, which lies just behind the Cathedral. This was raised upon the foundations of the palace, which Charlemagne built in the late 8th century, when he constructed a regional centre in the newly conquered Saxony complete with a royal hall, a church and a bishopric. Paderborn was simply the centre from where the enforced Christianisation of the pagan Saxons was conducted, which later led to the conquering of the rest of Eastern and Central Europe.

Very aptly the title of this second installation - “In hoc signo” – reflects the story of how Constantine the Great defeated his stronger but pagan rival, Maxentius, in the famous battle of the Milvian Bridge. According to Eusebius the sign of the Chi Ro came to Constantine in a vision in a sky. Later he painted it on the Labarum, the Roman standard, which was carried into the battle – which he won!

The same way of thinking seems to have characterised Charlemagne in his efforts to subdue his unruly neighbours the Saxons, which kept rebelling from 772 to 804. All in all 18 battles were fought here in North Western Germany starting with the first, whereby he conquered Paderborn and nearby Irminsul, named as the primary heathen sanctum.





*The rebuilt Ottonian Palace in Paderborn from the mid 10th century, the current Pfalz-Museum.*

© LWL-presse-photos

Most infamous was the campaign in around 782, when Charlemagne issued a capitulary promising the Saxons a choice between baptism or death (exhibit no. 362). The same year he is said to have had 4500 Saxon rebels executed in one day at the so-called Blood Court of Verden. Without doubt later Crusades took some inspiration from these events. This story is told in a parade of a fantastic series of treasures from Eastern and Central Europe.

Although difficult to choose amongst all these, one of the most evocative pieces might just be the so-called baptismal bowl of Widukinds from the treasury of St. Dionysius in Enger. Widukind was the famous leader of the Saxon rebellions until he surrendered in 785 and according to *Annales Mosellani* was baptised with Charlemagne as his Godfather. At that occasion a series of magnificent gifts were said to have honoured him. Amongst these may have been a late antique stone bowl made out of Serpentine,

which was later kept in the church of Enger as a relic of Widukinds. Probably it became part of the treasures in Enger after queen Mathilde (a descendant of Widukinds) founded a collegiate there commemorating his (probable) burial place there.

### QUO VADIS?

Finally we are invited to exit and walk to the entrance of the Local

Art Gallery where an art exhibition raises the question: Quo vadis? Here we are goaded to explore the different perspectives and interpretations – histories – which rulers, artists and designer have proffered in order to give their own spin on the history told in the two first instalments. To say the least, most of what is exhibited here has the character of kitsch. Not necessarily mass produced,

*Widukind's Baptismal Bowl. Part of the treasure of St. Dionysius in Enger, where Widukind is said to have been buried, it was taken to Berlin in the 19th century.*

© Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Kunstgewerbe - Museum, Inv.Nr. K 3672. Foto: Sarturia Linke



but never the less designed to enchant the popular masses.

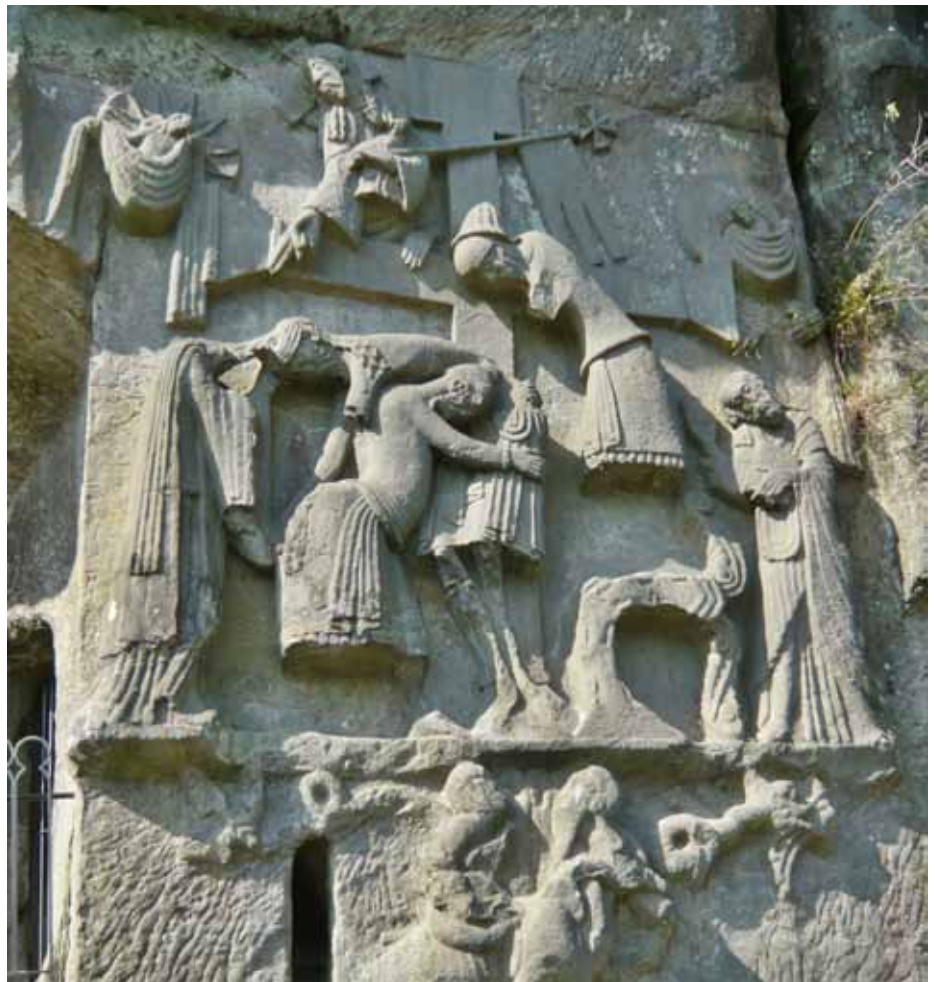
Not least is this the case with the “reuse” of the story of Irminsul by the Nazis, who tried to create a fascist sanctum out of the Externsteine, a medieval relief, believed to have been carved celebrating the triumph of Christianity where the Saxons had their rumoured heathen temple.

Quite interesting, but if you are pressed for time, we suggest you skip this and do yet another tour through the first exhibition in the Diocesan Museum. Walking back and forth between the two first parts allows you to see not only the details of the many wonders collected, but also to get a feeling for the grand story of the Christianisation of Europe. Another option is to head out for the Externsteine themselves and enjoy the magnificent scenery there.

The dare of it all! It is indeed a remarkable exhibition showcasing more than 800 exquisite pieces of art and history, carefully chosen from our common European heritage. But it is also a challenge to us all to tell the history of that which really unites us: Christianity.

### Why missionize?

It seems unfashionable in this time and day, when the European elite is busy propagating the idea that our common denominator is



*The Externsteine are a distinctive rock formation located in the district of Lippe within the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia, not far from the city of Paderborn. The Nazis believed it was the site of the heathen sanctum of the Saxons and used the bent palmtree on the right of the cross as inspiration for their reconstruction of the “Irminsul” mentioned in the Royal Frankish Annals for 772. The stonecarvings are generally said to date from 1150 - 70. © Nikater - Wiki 2008*

our diversity. However, something more unites us than just the ubiquitous MultiCulti Youth centres, which are creeping up everywhere - even in the backwater of Paderborn. This “something” is without doubt our common Christian his-

tory and heritage.

But why do people come to believe a change in their religious adherence might be advantageous? For a long time scientific studies of religion have tried to decide ex-



### CREDO – Christianisierung Eu- ropas im Mittelalter

Paderborn in Germany  
26.07.2013 – 03.11.2013.  
Audioguides are available in  
English

Read more:  
[www.credo-ausstellung.de](http://www.credo-ausstellung.de)

CREDO - Christianisierung  
im Mittelalter 1 - 2.  
1400 pages in German, Fully  
illustrated. Michael Imhof  
Verlag 2013



actly what pushes people in one or the other direction. Very, very roughly there seem to be two competing explanations. Either they are pushed towards changing their affiliation by politics or even by suppression – or they get pulled by missionaries doing their best in a pluralistic religious economy. But what works the best - missionizing or politicking?

Looking at scientific studies of religion carried out during the last 50 years (and for the most part either published or reviewed in the “Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion”) some conclusions might now be reached:

- In a given locality (region or country) religious pluralism seems to engender a higher rate of conversion; if possibilities abound, people seem to take them.
- Especially this is the case if one of the contenders is peddling a monotheistic religion; it simply makes more sense to stake everything on one almighty God than on a panoply of lesser (and competing Gods).

- People also seem to convert the more they are offered intense religious beliefs concerning an after-life – and perhaps guidance to a corresponding religious way of life
- Part of this seems to be that the better educated, people are, the more prone to conversion, they seem to be.
- However, if the powers in place try to restrict conversion, it will have an impact. It does matter if for instance people are persecuted, if they convert (or not).
- However, it does not seem as if conversion is necessarily related to economics as such: people do not convert because they become wealthier.

What might this mean for our understanding of the history of Christian conversion in Europe?

In fact very little! Both procedures seem to have been followed and both seem to have had remarkable results. At any time people have gauged both the costs of switching as opposed to keeping the “wrong”



religion; and have made their choices.

Thus the conversion of Europe to Christianity was the result of both brilliant thinkers and dedicated missionaries as well as hell-bent kings; which is exactly the story we are told by CREDO: the current exhibition in Paderborn and which just might be worth pondering for church-leaders in the 21st century.

Congratulations to Paderborn for being ready to tell us this grand story! And with such success! Worth a world-travel...

*Scenes from a manuscript showing St. Bonifatius baptizing and being killed. Fulda, Anf. 11. Jh. (Msc.Lit.1, fol. 126v).*

©Staatsbibliothek Bamberg



## READ MORE:

The Oxford Handbook of the Economics of Religion. Edited by Rachel M. McCleary  
Oxford University Press  
2011.  
ISBN: 9780195390049

Religious Conversion in 40 Countries. By Robert Barro, Jason Hwang and Rachel McCleary.  
In: The Journal of the Scientific Study of religion 2010, vol 49 (1): 15 – 36.

# Dying Gods

## - some highlights from the CREDO -exhibition

To call them pagans or heathens is problematic. Nevertheless, such were the epithets used by Christians while conquering and missionising the “others” in Germania and further North from 300 AD and onwards.

But what did they “believe” in and how was their world-view construed? Such questions are in no way new, nor has there been any lack since Tacitus of competing ethnographic endeavors to try and encompass their “orther-worldliness”. It stands to reason that current research cannot consist of anything but accumulating layers of yet more detailed studies of tiny fragments. Nevertheless, whenever such explorations deal with new archaeological finds and tries to contextualise them in older research traditions something new may occasionally crop up.

For this reason new archaeological finds have apparently been allowed to play such a marked role in the exhibition, CREDO, currently on show in Paderborn, while a select group of scientists, - the Sachsensymposium - has been invited to hold their 64th international meeting in Paderborn during september 2013.

### Bracteates

Uppmost on the agenda at the Sachsensymposium is the ongoing reflection upon the iconography of the bractates, which since the massive work of the medieval historian, Karl Hauck has continued to occupy the effort of the international team, he gathered around him. However, from the program



*Collection of Bracteates. The one in the bottom left corner shows the death of Baldr with Odin trying to save him from the machinations of Loke*  
© National Museum in Copenhagen

of the conference it appears that nowadays it is more the context of the bracteates, which seem to interest the archaeologists, art-historians and philologists than the bracteates themselves.

Even though it is definitely contested most will agree to some extent that the bracteates with

their motives originally were made as copies of Roman medallions showing emperors. Little by little the iconography shifted finally ending up in what we understand as a bracteate: a golden medallion or amulet decorated in Nordic style I with iconic content typically showing the death of Balder, Thor with his hand in the mouth



of the Fenris wulf or (very often) Odin trying to save the dying foal of Balder by blowing into its ear.

It seems superfluous to stress that these interpretations by Karl Hauck have been highly contested. The pictures and narratives on the bracteates were condensed into clever pictorial codes by the goldsmiths responsible for the matrices (see overview by Wicker and Williams 2013 on the debates) turning it into a highly specialised effort to understand the deeper meaning of the iconography .

Recently, however, one of these interpretations have been thoroughly confirmed by new finds from Bornholm (Axboe 2007: 153) raising the hope that further finds may vindicate other more

contested interpretations by Karl Hauck and his team.

It has been estimated that more than 100.000 bracteates were once in existence. With a mere 1000+ bracteates known, spanning 600 different bracteate models (as counted 2010), it seems reasonable that new information will keep cropping up.

It is also a fact that the known bracteates can be rather easily categorised and stylistically grouped together, although they must have been produced inside a timespan covering a couple of hundred years. This has led a scholar like Alexandra Pesch to characterise the bracteates as a kind of tightly controlled brands identifying local elites inside a common cultural



*Bracteate from Uppåkra in Sweeden from the late 5th century. Gold 2.4 cm in diameter. Lund University Museum No U209465*

sphere reaching from Southern Germany to Norway with outliers found in Anglo-saxon graves from the migratory period.

*Metal-beaker and glass bowl from Uppåkra. The migration period app. 500 AD  
© Lund University Museum No U31000*





*The reconstruction of the temple in Uppåkra in paderborn  
© The Diocese Museum in Paderborn*

## Uppåkra

Faithful to the concept of the exhibition we are not treated to a comprehensive show of the different bracteates, although they play such a prominent role in our understanding of the world-view or the Germanic and Scandinavian people in Early Medieval Europe.

Actually only one is shown, of Type C. According to the catalogue the bracteate shows Odin riding his horse Sleipner. According to Hauck it is rather Odin trying to save the Balder's horse. What we can see is a man with a very elaborate hairstyle – plaited and decorated with jewels and a diadem – riding a horse, in whose ear he whispers. What makes the bracteate intriguing is its runic inscriptions which just might be understood as *alu* (beer) and *wine* (*simasina*). However, here the

catalogue is once again more decisive than the Runic scholars might accept offhand. (At least according to the original presentation of the find, see Axboe and Stoklund, 2003)

Instead we are treated to a unique presentation of the bracteate (exhibit no 271 – 281) in the nearest thing we can come to a recreated heathen sanctum: the temple from Uppåkra, a central place located somewhat inland in Scania near the later metropolis, Lund. The building in question was compared to other ceremonial halls (more properly called “*sala* or *sals*” as in Uppsala) rather small, measuring only 13.5 x 6 meter. In the interior four large postholes showed how the roof must have been supported by heavy post (more properly called “*suler*” or “*søjler*”, hence “*sal*”, cf. “*Irminsul*”).

Probably it was what is called a high-timbered house supporting an elevated roof. With slightly curving stave walls the building had three entrances and the remains of a hearth.

Inside this building metal detectors uncovered not only a very rich deposit of gold-foil-figures (small stamped gold emblems) but also two totally unique vessels, a metal beaker with embossed foil bands and a magnificent glass bowl with a clear underlayer and a cobalt blue overlay. Both have been dated to around 4 - 500 AD but were obviously in use for a long time, before they were carefully deposited some time after 750 AD. From stylistic grounds it is believed the beaker was produced locally, while the glass bowl may have been imported from the region around the Black Sea. What role they played



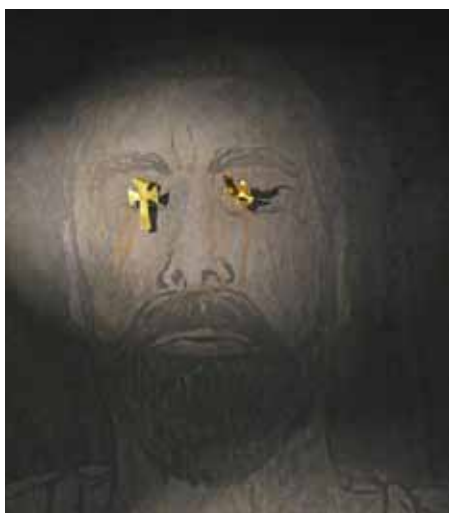


*The reconstruction of the Prittlewell grave*  
© The Diocese Museum in Paderborn

in the rituals which must have taken place there? We shall probably never know.

One very interesting thing about the small house is that it was continually rebuilt from the early Roman Age and up until the early Viking Age, 9 times in all. And further that it was circled by peculiarly rich heaps of sacrificed weapons and a residue of “blóted” (sacrificed) animals mixed with human bones.

*The layout of the dead from the Prittlewell grave*  
© The Diocese Museum in Paderborn



Archaeologists agree that the building must have been some kind of sacred abode for the gods, thus laying to rest the old assumption that the heathen Germans and Scandinavians prayed and sacrificed to their gods in sacred groves in the open. This has wetted their appetite to try and identify similar sanctums. So far this has yielded a series of contenders, cf. cultic houses at both Tissø and Lejre in Denmark located near the large mead-halls as well as a pre-Christian cult place at Ranheim in Trøndelag in Norway from the 4th to the 10th century. Probably more locations will be identified in the coming years complete with large halls and small heathen cultic houses-

### Prittlewell

Another significant place where new and exciting finds from 2003 have contributed to a more fluid understanding of the process of Christianisation, is Prittlewell. Located in Essex a series of Anglo-Saxon graves were excavated here already in 1930/31. However in 2003 a couple of more graves were discovered, including an intact

chamber-burial of a man dated from the end of the 6th and the beginning of the 7th century. The tomb was originally a deep walled chamber, but the walls had later caved in. The chamber was luxuriously furnished with a hanging bowl, other feasting equipment, drinking horns, a folding (imperial) stool, buckets, a sword and a lyre plus more than a 100 other objects. One of these was a Byzantine spoon with an engraved cross in the bowl. Another feature was of course the famous golden foil-cross, which were placed on top of his eyes. Thus the grave contained clear signs of Christianity while at the same time presenting the deceased in his familiar surroundings – a hall equipped for festivities: music, drinking and companionship. In 2004 a monograph of the burial of the Prittlewell Prince was published. However at the current Sachsensymposium new research concerning the grave is to be presented. In the CREDO-exhibition a reconstruction of his burial chamber may be seen (exhibit no 153 – 162)

The trend is clear. We have decidedly moved from an understand-

*Crosses made of gold-foil and placed upon the eyes*  
© Southend Museums Service , No. EX-PR003[168] 11-12





*The Belt-Buckle from Saint-Maur © Musee Lons-le Saunier inv no 4799*

ing of the heathen pagans as primitive earth-bound pantheists and nature-dwellers to neighbours parading a highly sophisticated religious life complete with shamanism and a practice characterised by a sacrificial thinking; and with a discerning eye for the “opposition” – the Christian Faith.

### **The Burgundian Belt Buckles**

Nowhere is this more evident in a renewed evaluation of the so-called plaque-buckles which have been found in graves dating from the migration period in a Burgundian and merovingian context. hibition.

One of these buckles from Einville-au-Jard is shown (exhibit no. 108), but it is lying there curiously decontextualised. These buckles made of bronze are quite large and known for their “christian narratives”. The one from Einville-au-Jard was found in 1863 in a grave of a warrior together with his lance, sax, two knives, a spear, a sword, two arrowheads and a key. It measures 6.3 x 14.5 x 1.5 and must have been quite heavy to carry around the waist. In the hollow compartment was later found a lock of hair wrapped in a piece of cloth; by some believed to be a relic.

The scene itself is quite enigmatic. In the centre a bearded man is sitting on a throne, who is blessing a man in front of him holding a shepherds crook or a crozier. Another man is apparently waiting in line. Behind the sitting man is a third waiting, also holding a crook or crozier. All three are dressed in quilts (?) and presumably girded with swords. In the catalogue the third man is described as a carrying the crozier of the man who is sitting on the throne, who is identified as an abbot. However the question remains why the other two men who are queuing up for a blessing should carry croziers too?

*The Belt-Buckle from Enville-au-Jard © Musee lorrain, No D.ML.183.07*





Maybe they are just staffs and the people lining up, pilgrims? And if clericals, why are they are not dressed in long clerical robes? And how come a serious warrior armed to his teeth should carry a “clerical” buckle? And maybe the hair in the “reliquary” is just the left-overs of a vanquished enemy (to cut or rip somebody’s hair out was one of the ultimate denigrations, which according to the secular laws might befall a Burgundian in the early Middle Ages?

New research by Michael P. Speidel has shown that some other bucles which have formerly been understood as depicting Daniel amongst the Lions, are instead depicting Balder’s Helway or how he

overcomes the Beasts of the Dark turned on him by Loke. Thus it appears that the Myth of Balder’s death and the following death of the Nordic Gods was central to the religious beliefs of the Early Medieval Germanic people in the migration period, not only in the North as witnessed by the bracteates but also in the early Burgundian Kingdom.

Concluding that these migration-age buckles may turn out to be yet another rich mine for our knowledge of the Germanic Goods, Speidel sees them as complementing the work done by Karl Hauck and his team on the bracteates. It might be very fruitful to examine not only the syncretism of

such contextualised finds as the Prittlewell grave but also the apparent discourses going on in the prominent buckle-fashion of the Burgundians.

Indeed a collaboration amongst archaeologist publishing these buckles and their rich narrative iconography on the internet should be high on the international agenda for migration-period archaeologists.

Bracteates, beakers and buckles - all seem to pay when diligently explored under the microscope, thus enriching our understanding of the heathens from their own point of perspective.

## Sources:

### Bracteates:

Studies in Gold Bracteates.  
By Morten Axboe  
In: Series: Nordiske Fortidsminder 2007, Ser. B, Vol. 25, pp 141 - 158  
Published by: Det Kongelige Nordiske Oldskriftselskab, Copenhagen

Bracteates and Runes. Review Article. By Wicker, Nancy L. and Henrik Williams:  
In: Futhark. International Journal of Runic Studies vol 3, 2013, p. 151 - 213.  
(Recent review of the work of Karl Hauck and his international team and their series of publications)

Die Goldbrakteaten der Völkerwanderungszeit – Auswertung und Neufunde. Edited by Wilhelm Heizmann and Morten Axboe . Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde 40. Berlin and New

York: De Gruyter. 2011. ISBN 978 3 11 022411 5

### Uppåkra and other temples:

Horg, hov and vé – a pre-Christian cult place at Tranheim in Trøndelag, Norway, in the 4th -10th century. By Preben Rønne  
In: Adoranten 2011, p. 79 – 92.

Old Norse Religion in long-term Perspectives. By Anders Andrén, Kristina Jennbert, Catharina Raudvere (Eds) Nordic Academic press 2006 ISBN: 978-9189116818

Continuity for Centuries. A Ceremonial Building and its Context at Uppåkra, Southern Sweden. By Lars Larsson (Ed). In: Acta Archaeologica Lundensia, Series in 8° Stockholm 2004.

### Prittlewell:

The Prittlewell Prince: The Discovery of a rich Anglo-Saxon Burial in Essex. By Sue Hirst. Museum of London Archaeology, Oxbow 2004 ISBN: 9781901992526

### Burgundian Belt Buckles

Burgundian Gods on Sixth-Century Belt Buckles. By Michael P. Speidel.  
In: Frühmittelalterliche Studien 2012. Volume 45, Issue 1, Pages 1–36

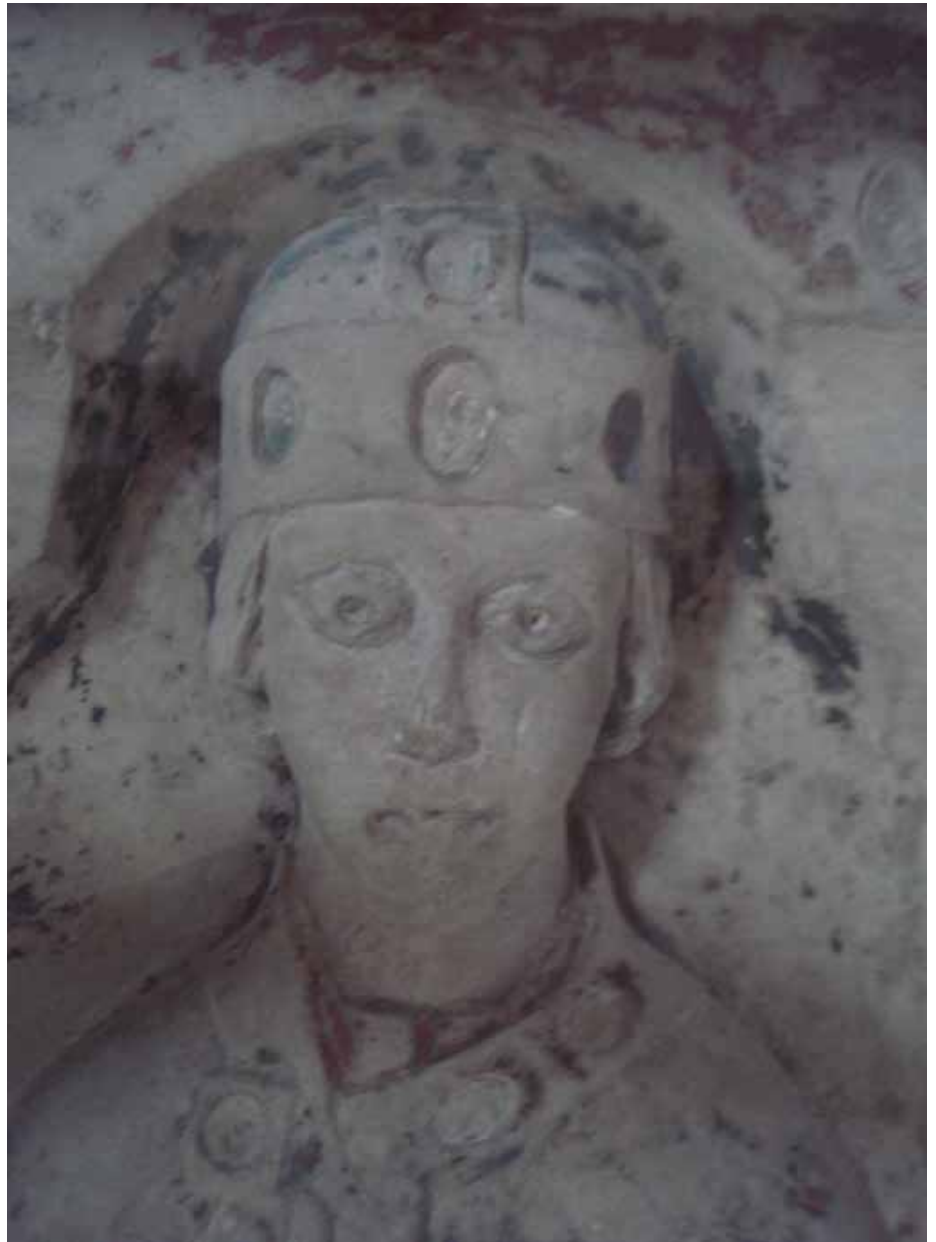
Sogenannte Klerikerschnallen. Zur Interpretation merowingischer Gürtelschnallen mit rechteckigem Beschlag. By Dorothea  
In: Miscellanea Archaeologica. Aufsätze zur Archäologie von der Bronzezeit bis zum Hochmittelalter. Ed. by Dirk Vorlauf und Thilo F. Warneke (69-87). Verlag Marie Leidorf GmbH 1997

# Widukind - Facts and Fiction

Unux ex primoribus Westfalorum – one of the first from Westphalia. This is the epithet Widukind is given in 777, when we are told by the Frankish Annals that he did not take part in the great assembly in Paderborn, but instead had fled to the Danes finding refuge with King Siegfried there. Again in 782 we hear he was absent from another assembly at Lippequellen near Paderborn. Instead he achieved a major victory over the Carolingians at Süntel, where a Frankish army attacked his forces. According to the revised edition of the Annals (and echoing Livy), the losses were hefty and two military leaders, four counts and up to twenty distinguished nobles were killed.

During the next years Widukind seems to have been the rallying point of the Saxon rebellion, which was perhaps fed by the draconian measures of Charlemagne's as stipulated in the "Capitulatio de Partibus Saxoniae" and carried out at the Blodbath in Verden.

Not much is known about the actual role of Widukind in the next few years except it seems he contracted with the Frisians and continued to associate with the Danes. However, in 785 Charlemagne spent the winter in Eresburg and led a series of attacks on encampments and other strongholds all through Saxony. Finally in Barden-gau up north he sent for Widukind and his brother-in-law Abbio and started on negotiations. Apparently a truce was struck, Charlemagne sent hostages and Widukind and Abbio went to Attigny, where they were baptised "with their companions" and where Charlemagne acted as Godfather.



*Inventing a tradition: The portrait of Widukind from the tomb, which was erected in the 12th century at Enger © Urlaub-im-Web.de*

After which the rest is silence. According to the traditional myth Widukind may have gone to Enger (north of Paderborn) as a local magnate or - as has been suggested by some later German Historians - entered the Monastery of Reichenau. We simply don't know.

Whatever his fate, he was claimed as an ancestor by queen Matilda of Ringelheim (895 - 968 ) who was married to the duke of Saxony, later Henry I of Germany. She was

responsible for installing a college of canons at Enger in 947, to which was donated some inherited land in the neighbourhood. Enger is located 100 km south of Wildeshausen, where a nephew of Widukind built a church and a monastery in 807.

**The church of St. Dionysius.** Sometime during the High Middle ages, Enger became identified as the last burial ground of the rebellious duke.



In 1971 archaeological excavations were carried out in Enger in the former church of St. Dionysius.

Undeneath the present church the foundations of the first church were found. With a nave measuring 14.6 x 6.5 meter and a square chancel 4.7 x 4.7 it was a small church. However, built on an broad foundation of stones and with an elevated choir it was in no way a plain construction. The church had obviously been used for burials. Quite remarkable were three graves found in the former choir placed on either side of the altar and in front: two elderly men and a young one. Obviously these graves can be dated to the building of the church from around 800. Anthropological investigations showed that both men had severe lesions on their spines, caused by continuous riding throughout life.

Naturally this excavation fuelled the imaginations of the locals, who wanted to identify the two men with Widukind and his friend or kinsman Abbio. Today this has resulted in a renewed interest in the local Widukind-museum.

*Archaeological Excavations in st. Dionysius in Enger*  
© Photo: Harald Wurm



*The Museum in Enger is located in an old half-timbered house*  
© Urlaub-im-Web.de

### The Nazis at Enger

Founded in 1938 the museum in Enger was originally part of the Nazi veneration of Widukind. This played a fascinating part in the formation of the ideology in the nascent third Reich.

As per definition totalitarian states should be without controversies. Nevertheless an intense and very public conflict broke out in Nazi-

Germany focusing on how to define the “Reich”. Was it a popular Volksgemeinschaft with pagan roots and symbolised in Widukind the warrior? Or was it a State with roots in the Holy Roman Empire as founded by Charlemagne? Who was to be the hero?

This fascinating story has very recently been explored in a brilliant essay by Peter Lambert (Aberystwyth University) on “Duke Widukind and Charlemagne in Twentieth-Century Germany”. In the article he tells the story of how a quarrel over the two opposing “heroes” kept the German elite occupied in the 30ies. On one hand a dedicated group of neo-pagan Nazis kept rallying in Enger and at the nearby Externsteine erecting memorials and statues as well as flooding the market with historicizing fictions of a hilarious kind (had it not been so deplorably amoral). On the other hand historians tried to toe the dilemmas of squaring these fictions with the actual facts. The question was of course: how do you write the



*The Widukind Memorial in Enger from 1903 was also a war-memorial. Photo Klaus Hansen*

history of Germany if you banish the story of Charlemagne and his aftermath from the curriculum? In 1934 – 35 it all culminated in Himmler and Rosenberg erecting a massive memorial at Verden, in the spot where Charlemagne was said to have executed 4500 Saxons. For each of these victims a huge stone was raised making it into

*The new Widukind memorial in Enger - The Widukind Well by Eberhard Helling in Enger, 1994 Photo: Klaus Hansen)*



a sacred Nazi pagan stone-circle. (The place may still be visited!) In the end, however, Hitler put a stop to it at the Nuremberg rally, where he in his didactic fashion explained to the people, that “they” were the result of the intervention of the State and not the instigators of said state. Hence Charlemagne was the German hero par excellence, since he had de facto created the embryo of the “Reich”, which was now to culminate through the Nazi’s.

Part of this story of the construction of the so-called “völkischen Weltanschauung” is told in the present exhibition (2013) in Paderborn in the local Art Gallery (CREDO: Quo vadis?). Part can be studied through local photos in the Widukind-Museum in Enger, which in itself was the result of the “Heimatsgefühl” or “Sense of Homeland”, which fed the local patriots of Saxony. (A trip to Paderborn this autumn might be fruitfully accompanied by a drive up to Enger.)

Some of these photos show the celebrations, which took place at the inauguration of the Museum in 1938. It appears this first museum was furnished as a sacred spot with an inner sanctum equipped with an altar topped with a quotation from Hitler. Nevertheless, at that point the more prominent Nazis had chosen another path. Now it was no longer a question of mounting a résistance against the (depraved) French (Jews) led by Charlemagne; rather the focus was on the conquest of Europe from one end to the other. Enger was left in peace by Berlin.

### The New Museum

After the war, the Museum naturally had to be de-nazified. However, it took nearly 30 years until

## SOURCES:

### Regine Krull:

Das Widukind Museum Enger: Geschichtsbilder zwischen seriosität, Kult und Marketing. Paper presented at a meeting at the “Deutschen Museumsbund” 2011.

[www.museumsbund.de/fileadmin/fg\\_gesch/Votraege\\_u\\_Publikationen/2011\\_Krull\\_Vortrag\\_in\\_Berlin\\_mit\\_Bildern\\_.pdf](http://www.museumsbund.de/fileadmin/fg_gesch/Votraege_u_Publikationen/2011_Krull_Vortrag_in_Berlin_mit_Bildern_.pdf)

### Regine Krull:

Warrior, Christian and Legendary Hero - Our Heritage of Widukind, Duke of Saxony, Herford 2008

### Peter Lambert:

Duke Widukind and Charlemagne in Twentieth-Century Germany. Myths of origin and Constructs of National Identity.

In: Rethinking the Space for Religion: New Actors in Central and Souteast Europe on Religion, Authenticity and Belonging. Ed. by Catharina Raudvere, Krzysztof Stala and Trine Stauning Willert.

Nordic Academic press 2013.

the embarrassment became so tangible, the locals felt, something more had to be done. In 1983 a new museum opened showing a didactic and scientifically based presentation of the Saxon wars and the role of Widukind. Very soon this approach also felt dated. Finally in 2006 a new museum was fitted out – this time as a place where not only the history of Widukind per se was told, but



also the history of the mythos of Widukind.

From the very early hero-worshipping in the 12th century and up until now, where Widukind has been turned into a modern, peace-loving pilgrim on his lonely way to Attigny by the sculptor Eberhard Hellenge 1994, the museum gives a good and up-to-date introduction to Widukind, the phenomena. Very properly Attigny has been gifted with a copy of this statue.

### The Lost Treasure of Enger

The description of Widukind's baptism in the Royal Frankish Annals is somewhat terse. We hear about the hostages presented by Charlemagne in order to secure the surrender of the two leaders of the Saxon rebellion and we hear they were baptised in Attigny – not at a public show in Saxony. We have to turn to one of the minor annals (the *Annales Mosellani*) in order to get a more fleshed out description of what (perhaps) took place. Here we are told how “the king lifted him up of the baptismal font and honoured him with magnificent gifts” (*Annales Mosellani* 785, MGH SS 16, 497)

Tradition has it, that some of these gifts were kept in Enger and later came to be included in what is called “The Dionysian Treasure”. From here they were transferred to Herford in 1441. Where they were kept in the sacristy of St. Johannes. In the middle of the 19th century the city tried to sell the treasure several times. In the end Berlin expropriated the different pieces of art. Today they are kept in the “Berliner Kunstgewerbemuseum”.

Currently this is under reconstruction. Accordingly some pieces of the treasure have been lent



© 2010 Genevra Kornbluth

#### *The Enger Reliquary*

© Genevra Kornbluth 2010. By kind permission by [www.kornbluthphoto.com](http://www.kornbluthphoto.com)

to the small museum in Enger, where a special exhibition is being mounted this winter showing parts of the treasure of St. Dionysius and the stories behind the different pieces of art.

In 1888 an inventory showed 32 pieces were sent to Berlin. Today, however only 18 still exist (the rest were lost during the war). Famous amongst them are the baptismal bowl of Widukinds, which is currently on show in Paderborn and then moves on to Enger. But also a small pyxis of ivory from the 10th century will be shown in Enger as well as several pieces of late medieval art.

One piece – which definitely dates from the end of the 8th century –

and just might have been one of “the magnificent gifts” presented to Widukind, is the so-called Enger Reliquary. Unfortunately this precious piece of metalwork is not up for loan. The Museum in Berlin has declared its fragility is such that it has to undergo conservation.

### The Lost Treasure of Engers – or the story of the Dionysius Treasure.

Enger Museum  
Kirchplatz 10  
32130 Enger  
17.11.2013 – 21.04.2014  
[www.widukind-museum-enger.de](http://www.widukind-museum-enger.de)

# Waterscape Paderborn

Paderborn was nearly totally destroyed in air raids in the winter and spring of 1945. Even though the city has been meticulously rebuilt, the charm of the city is not so much its architectural heritage as is its layout and surroundings.

As it stands today the inner city is encircled by the remnants of a medieval wall, which it is possible to walk along nearly all the way. But choose as far as possible the path or small road on the inner-side. Outside the noise and smell from the ring road is really annoying.

This wall was built around the medieval city, which grew gradually up after the year 1000 around the central “Domburg”, a walled complex dating back to the end of the 8th century. This was conveniently placed on top of a hill next to a swampy area fed by scores of springs.

Paderborn is first mentioned in 777 after the opening military campaign of Charlemagne against

the Saxons as the location for a “general assembly”. Such occasions usually took place in May and gathered bishops, abbots and counts from his whole realm. With their respective retinues they often functioned as a preface to the upcoming military campaign of the season. Such assemblies must have gathered many thousand men in the same location, calling for at least two important prerequisites: water and flat land. Both abound in and around Paderborn.

In the cellar of the rebuilt Ottonian Palace the central spring, which furnished the “Domburg” may still be seen. Nowadays it simply flows out from below the reconstructed palace wall of the museum. However in Charlemagne’s time, his new palace was built next to the spring, which ran freely down the slope. Walking up to the palace and cathedral complex from northwest you may get a sense of the watery landscape, which enclosed the original layout; although of course the proper and



*A pleasant walk around the city*  
© Medieval Histories

traditional way into the fortress was from the south. Here the visitor – or rather the emissary to the assembly – would have entered an open space leading directly to the protruding balcony, from where we must imagine Charlemagne lording it, while being venerated

*Charlemagne’s Palace in Paderborn 799. Digital Reconstruction by Archimedix GbR (dipl.ing. Architektur, Reinhard Munzel), Ober-Ramstadt, Juni 2013*

© Paderborn, Museum in der Kaiserpfalz – Ausstellungsgesellschaft Paderborn mbH







*The spring from underneath the Pfalz-Museum*

© LWL Presse

and admired by his brothers-in-arms.

Around 777 AD there was ample room at the walled fortress for both the palace and the first church. However, the following year the Saxons attacked and succeeded in burning down the complex. In the next building phase the church began bit by bit to encroach upon the palace until in 799 AD a whole new cathedral was built. This nearly overshadowed the palace. At that time both buildings were sumptuously decorated with wall-paintings, glass windows and – according to a contemporary poem (Karolus Magnus et Leo Papa) the walls were covered in hangings while the drinking vessels were of gold. Infused by imperial phraseology the poem may be a literary fiction. However it does probably portray exactly the kind of atmosphere, Charlemagne wished to create around him, while meeting with important emissaries in his palaces.

Later, around 1000 AD, Paderborn was hit by a devastating fire and both the palace and the earlier cathedral burnt down. At this time a descendant of Widukind, Meinwerck, was bishop. To a large

extent he was responsible for rebuilding the cathedral as well as several other churches and monasteries in the city: the Benedictine abbey of Abdinghof, where he was originally buried and the Busdorfkirche to the east.

Visiting Paderborn today, these three elements are worth getting a sense of: the Domburg with its churches, chapels and the rebuilt palace, the walk around the old wall, which leads you to a number of other churches, and finally the water: the Paderquellen, the springs of Pader.

With more than 200 of these brooks and streams welling up inside the city it is no wonder, water seems to be pouring out from beneath you wherever you walk. Together they emit app. 3 – 9000 litres pr. second streaming down-

hill to feed the shortest river in all Germany, the Pader.

“Live by the water” was a slogan pitched by the Paderborners a few years ago. Today it has changed into a postmodern, denglish motto: “Urbane Waterscape Paderborn”. Under this umbrella the city is pitching for UNESCO World Heritage recognition.

This initiative is not innocent. Some parties in Paderborn obviously wishes to brand the city as more than what it so obviously always have been and still is - a Catholic headquarter anchoring the mission directed towards the heathens living in the Northeast.

In this mission grand exhibitions like CREDO seems to play a very central role.

*The spring pouring out from beneath the Pfalz-Museum*

© LWL Presse





