Hessen State Ministry of Higher Education, Research and the Arts

Mark Kohlbecher
Presse- und Öffentlichkeitsarbeit
Rheinstraße 23 – 25
65185 Wiesbaden
Germany

www.hmwk.hessen.de

Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Hessen
Hessen State Office for the Preservation of Historic Monuments

Prof. Dr. Gerd Weiß
UNESCO-Welterbeauftragter des Landes
Präsident des Landesamtes für Denkmalpflege in Hessen
Schloss Biebrich
Rheingaustraße 140
65203 Wiesbaden
Germany

www.denkmalpflege-hessen.de

Treasures of Mankind in Hessen
UNESCO World Cultural Heritage · World Natural Heritage · World Documentary Heritage
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Heritage is a commitment

Dear readers,

The inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List is of special value. It bestows international distinction and prestige on a cultural property. Thus, makes it a flagship and also an attractive advertising medium for a country. The treasures of mankind include a number of cultural and natural assets in Hessen which have been recognised as World Heritage by UNESCO as a result of their outstanding universal value.

Indeed, six of the 39 World Heritage Sites in Germany currently recognised by UNESCO are located in Hessen.* Those located wholly in Hessen include Lorsch Abbey, the Messel Pit Fossil Site near Darmstadt and Bergpark Wilhelmshöhe in Kassel. Three other World Heritage Sites are situated partly within the territory of Hessen: the Upper Middle Rhine Valley from Rüdesheim to Koblenz, a World Heritage Site shared with Rhineland-Palatinate, the Upper German-Raetian Limes which forms part of the international World Heritage Site “Frontiers of the Roman Empire” and the Kellerwald-Edersee National Park, forming part of the Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and the Ancient Beech Forests of Germany, also an international World Heritage Site. As evidence of the cultural history and natural environment of humanity going beyond national borders, the last two of these sites are especially appropriate symbols of the character of the World Heritage.

The recognition of UNESCO World Heritage also means an obligation to maintain this heritage for posterity, to make it accessible and to present it to the public in an appropriate way. The visitor and information centre at Messel Fossil Pit near Darmstadt, opened in 2010, is a good example in Hessen. It presents fossil finds that are unparalleled in the world and gives visitors an idea of a prehistoric ecosystem. In addition, various projects for the maintenance and expansion of the World Heritage Sites in Hessen have received total support of €29 million from the federal government and the state within the framework of the five-year investment programme for national World Heritage Sites launched in 2009.

Furthermore, six items of World Documentary Heritage on the UNESCO “Memory of the World” register are also situated in Hessen. These include the Lorsch Pharmacopoeia, which is now preserved in the Bamberg State Library, the Gero Codex from the Ottonian period, original copies of the Golden Bull of 1356, the most important constitutional document of the Holy Roman Empire, the personal copies of Children’s and Household Tales of the Brothers Grimm of 1812/1815, which are kept in Kassel, and Fritz Lang’s silent film classic “Metropolis”, restored and preserved by the Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation in Wiesbaden. Furthermore, the Documentary Heritage also includes the 30 million documents of National Socialist persecution, forced labour and the Holocaust in the archives of the International Tracing Service (ITS) in Bad Arolsen, Northern Hessen. It is precisely the inclusion of this archive in the Memory of the World that exemplifies the objective of the UNESCO programme: to preserve historically significant documents and to ensure that they are not forgotten.

I hope that you will find this brochure enjoyable and informative. I would be very pleased if it encouraged you to visit the World Heritage Sites in Hessen.

Boris Rhein
Hessen State Minister of Higher Education, Research and the Arts

* As of 9/2014
Protecting and preserving

Dear readers,

16 November 1972 was a very special date. This was the day when the 17th General Conference of UNESCO adopted the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, also referred to as World Heritage Convention. To date, this significant international convention, perhaps the most important convention adopted by the international community for the protection of its cultural and natural heritage, has been ratified by 190 countries. They have entered into a commitment to protect the World Heritage Sites in their territory and to preserve them for future generations.

It is the joint intent of the international community, expressed in the World Heritage Convention, to preserve those “parts of the cultural or natural heritage that are of outstanding interest and, therefore, need to be preserved as part of the world heritage of mankind as a whole”. Since 1972, 1007 cultural and natural heritage sites from 161 states on all continents have been added to the UNESCO World Heritage List, 39 of them are from Germany. They include 779 cultural, 197 natural and 31 mixed properties.* As new sites are added every year, the number is steadily growing.

An Intergovernmental Committee established under the World Heritage Convention has established criteria defining which of sites proposed by the member states are to be added to the “World Heritage List”. “Outstanding universal value” is one of these criteria, as is “historical authenticity” for cultural properties or “integrity” for a natural heritage site. In addition to a status report on the current state of preservation, a convincing management and conservation plan must be submitted.

In Germany, it is the responsibility of the individual states to decide on the protection and preservation of monuments. Possible applications for inclusion in the World Heritage List were combined in a tentative list and adopted by the Conference of Ministries of Education. This tentative list forms the basis for future German nominations to the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Since 1992, UNESCO has established a worldwide network in the form of a “Memory of the World” programme which nominates valuable collection of books, manuscripts, scores, and also audiovisual and film documents of worldwide significance. This objective is to disseminate information on documentary heritage items of outstanding value in archives, libraries and museums, to safeguard them, and to make them accessible via new information technology channels. The register includes 299 documents from all over the world, including 17 from Germany.* In this case too, new documents are added every year and the number is steadily growing.

In 2013, Germany ratified the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Successively, a list of German customs and forms of expression is being drawn up.

Prof. Dr. Gerd Weiß
World Heritage Representative of the Hessen State Government
President of the Hessen State Office for the Preservation of Historical Monuments

* As of 9/2014
It is 764. The area of Europe that will later become Germany is in the midst of an era which later became known as the “Dark Ages”. The late Germanic population has a largely agrarian lifestyle, living in small communities surrounded by dense forests. Literacy is rare and civilisation, which has also died out to the west of the Rhine following the fall of the Roman Empire, is only continued in a few small islands. One of these is Lorsch Abbey near the city of Worms that features so prominently in mediaeval legends.

Nowadays, the ruins of the Benedictine abbey are situated in Southern Hessen, within the boundaries of the town of Lorsch. In 1991 the remains of the abbey were designated as a World Cultural Heritage Site, becoming the first World Heritage Site in Hessen.

The abbey’s landmark is a building which is known as the “gatehouse” or “king’s hall” even though its precise function has not been identified to this day. Nevertheless, it is one of the oldest and most significant pre-Romanesque buildings in Germany. As an example of Carolingian architecture and monastic culture in Central Europe it was once part of a large, imposing monastery complex. It is one of the very few historic monuments from the Carolingian era that has retained its original appearance over the centuries and it gives an idea of the size of the original monastery.

Gateway to the Early Middle Ages:
Lorsch Abbey

An intellectual powerhouse:
An attempt to reconstruct the original appearance of Lorsch Abbey.
Lorsch Abbey was founded in about 764 by the Frankish Count Cancor and his mother Williswinda in the reign of King Pippin (or Pepin) the Short (751 – 768 AD). In 772, the abbey became the property of the King who granted it numerous privileges. After the death of King Louis the German (876), it reached the peak of its power when it became the burial site of the kings of East Francia (Germany). King Louis the Younger had a crypt church built there for the burial of his father. Later, he himself, his son Hugo and Cunigunde, consort of King Conrad I, were all buried there. The prosperous abbey was devastated by a fire in 1090, but then reconstructed. In 1232 Lorsch was incorporated in the Archbishopric of Mainz and lost most of its privileges. The Benedictines were followed by the Cistercians and later the Premonstratensians. Following a further fire, the church had to be rebuilt. During the Reformation, monastic life at the abbey came to an end.

After 1557, the premises of the abbey were abandoned and left to decay. The only buildings that survived the Thirty Years’ War were the “gatehouse”, part of the Romanesque church, some minor remains of the medieval abbey and buildings from the times when Lorsch was administered by the electors of Mainz. They can still be found within the walls. At the beginning of the 19th century, the gatehouse was sold for demolition – a demolition which was prevented almost at the last minute by Louis I, Grand Duke of Hesse and by Rhine, a connoisseur who recognised the significance of the building as a historic monument.

A precious rarity:
The Lorsch lectionary is a manuscript of the Gospels written entirely in gold ink. It is considered to be the last in a major series of magnificent manuscripts from the court scriptorium of Charlemagne and was created in about 810.

―This abbey used to have a really old library which was unique in Germany. But most of the old books have been removed.‖

Sebastian Münster, Ingelheim (1488 – 1552)
A romantic river
Upper Middle Rhine Valley

Ich weiß nicht, was soll es bedeuten...! This is the first line of the Loreley song which tells of a legendary rock. It lies in the wildly romantic Rhine valley which is one of Germany's classical cultural landscapes. Before it reaches Bingen and Rüdesheim (the photo shows the ruins of Ehrenfels castle), Germany's fateful river flows through the gently rolling hills of Rheingau and Rheinhessen, clothed in vineyards, and then cuts through the dark rocks of the Rhenish Massif.
In 2002, the Upper Middle Rhine Valley – a 65-kilometre stretch of the Rhine between Bingen/Rüdesheim and Koblenz forming a ravine through the Rhenish Massif, was inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List. The UNESCO World Heritage Committee recognised “a cultural landscape of great variety and beauty”. The Upper Middle Rhine Valley boasts an extraordinary wealth of architectural and cultural heritage which remains virtually unparalleled among other European cultural landscapes in its intensity and quality. Its main characteristic is the river landscape which is naturally formed but has also been shaped by human activity. For thousands of years, the Middle Rhine Valley has been one of the most important traffic routes for cultural exchange between the Mediterranean region and the north of Europe.

The valley slopes planted with vines, the villages crowded into the narrow strips along the riverside, and castles strung high above the river like pearls on steep rock ledges are the epitome of the romantic Rhineland landscape. People from all parts of the world have been enchanted by the region and its landscape; it has inspired poets, painters and musicians. And there is still more to this deeply cut valley to the leeward side of the Hunsrück hills. Its favourable climate provides a home for animals and plants that otherwise only thrive in more southerly regions of Europe.

The landscape that has been shaped over the centuries reflects the interaction between man and nature, cultural achievements and their impact on the development of the scenery. The Middle Rhine Valley has been both a frontier and bridge linking different cultures.

“Im looking in vain for the reason
That I am so sad and distressed;
A tale known for many a season
Will not allow me to rest…”

Heinrich Heine, Buch der Lieder 1823
(Translated by Walter Meyer, reprinted with the kind permission of the translator.)
The frontier of the Roman Empire
Upper German-Raetian Limes

So the whole of Germania was occupied by the Romans? Well, not quite – as we can see from the Roman frontier fortification, the “Limes” (Latin for frontier), whose remnants run right across Europe. While Germanic tribes lived beyond the Limes, the Roman way of life flourished in its shelter in the northernmost provinces of the Empire. One section of the Limes that passes mostly over land, the Upper German-Raetian Limes, forms an archaeological monument crossing four federal states.

On 15 July 2005, the Upper German-Raetian Limes, passing through Rhineland-Palatinate, Hessen, Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria was recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is about 550 kilometres long; the area designated as a World Heritage Site covers about 220 square kilometres and crosses 20 rural districts and 150 civil parishes. About 900 watchtowers and the remains of almost 120 fortresses (military camps) make the Upper German-Raetian Limes one of the most extensive cultural monuments in Germany.

“During this period and on many other occasions also, in many regions where the barbarians are held back not by rivers but by artificial barriers, Hadrian shut them off by means of high stakes planted deep in the ground and fastened together in the manner of a palisade.”

Aelius Spartianus for the year 122 AD (from the Loeb Classical Library translation of the “Historia Augusta”)

Powerful figures: The provinces of Germania inferior and superior were established under the rule of Domitian (80 – 96 AD). As a result, the boundaries of the provinces had to be defined. Emperor Trajan (98 – 117 AD) stationed troops along the new border. His successor Hadrian (117 – 138 AD) had the Limes clearly marked by building a palisade.
The Saalburg, situated on a ridge in the Taunus hills near Bad Homburg, was one of these fortresses. The fortress was painstakingly reconstructed between 1897 and 1907. Nowadays, it offers an educational programme giving an impressive glimpse of life on the northern frontier of the Roman Empire.

At the beginning of the 2nd century AD, the Limes was initially established as a patrol route with watchtowers. In the decades that followed, it was reinforced by palisades, ramparts and a moat (Upper German Limes), or a wall (Raetian Limes). Merchants and craftsmen, as well as legionnaires’ families, used to live in settlements outside the walls of the fortresses. The Limes remained on the frontier of the empire until 260 AD.

The Limes was by no means an impenetrable line of defence. On the contrary, apart from visibly marking and securing the northern border of the Roman Empire, it was intended to control the movement of people and goods, and to allow the collection of customs duties.

The Hessian section of the Limes extends from Grebenroth in the Rheingau-Taunus district to Seligenstadt am Main in the Offenbach district over a length of 153 km. With 18 large and 31 small fortresses as well as more than 200 watchtowers, the route crosses the wooded Taunus hills and sweeps around the fertile Wetterau district in a wide bend before reaching the river Main.

The Upper German-Raetian Limes is part of the first World Cultural Heritage Site intended to include several countries right from its conception. The Limes in Germany and Hadrian’s Wall in the North of England, declared a World Heritage Site in 1987, later joined by the Antonine Wall in Scotland, are the first sections of the international World Heritage Site “Frontiers of the Roman Empire”. In the future, the site is to include all the countries along the borders of the former “Imperium Romanum”.

Demonstration of power: The Saalburg near Bad Homburg is the only Limes fortress of the Roman Empire which has been largely reconstructed.

The Upper German-Raetian Limes: its course after about 160 AD.
The primeval force of water
Bergpark Wilhelmshöhe

Not only the people in and around Kassel see the monumental water displays and the Hercules statue in Bergpark Wilhelmshöhe as something simply unique. For centuries, the park landscape on a steep slope with its water features has attracted visitors from the whole of Europe. Nowadays, people from throughout the world visit the park.

Nowhere else has a prince attempted to create such complex water architecture in a park located on a steep slope, let alone succeeded in the attempt, as the case in Kassel, where five central stations regularly supply some 750,000 litres of water.

With their concept of monumental water displays, the princes who resided in Kassel adopted a very different approach to their contemporaries when it came to ostentation. The result is unique. In the baroque era, the epitome of ostentatious representation was the court of the French roi soleil. At Versailles, Louis XIV (1638 – 1715) celebrated his mastery over nature, one of the key ideas of his times, in a spacious landscaped park. At the same time, Landgrave Charles (1654 – 1730) realised an entirely different model combining monumental baroque representation with concepts of Italian renaissance landscape gardening. He also triumphed over nature by releasing vast quantities of water apparently at the top of the hill and guiding it through artificial channels.
In the whole world, there is no other park where such monumental water displays are created over a distance of about two kilometres at five central stations with entirely different scenery: the baroque cascades, the Steinhöfer waterfall, the Devil’s Bridge, the aqueduct with the Peneus cascades and finally the fountain pool with the Grand Fountain, almost 50 m high. The whole scene is dominated by a gigantic statue of Hercules, one of the world’s highest-quality wrought copper sculptures created some 300 years ago.

It is also significant that the water features of the park were not created by a single prince. Landgrave Charles started the work at the end of the 17th century but it was only completed about 130 years later by Elector William II (1777 – 1847) when the New Waterfall was constructed. Bergpark Wilhelmshöhe with its monumental water displays is therefore the central representation project of several generations of the princely house of Hesse-Kassel, convincingly demonstrating the princes’ rulership claims. The result is a gesamtkunstwerk in which different trends in landscape gardening, art history and the history of technology are reflected right down to the present day.

On 23 June 2013, Bergpark Wilhelmshöhe was inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List as a 300-year-old cultural landscape with matchless waterworks constituting a “unique example of European absolutism”.

“Perhaps the most grandiose manifestation of the baroque style in the combination of architecture and landscape.”

Georg Dehio (1850 – 1932), 1905

Aqueduct: With an overall length of 160 metres and a drop of 30 metres, the aqueduct is one of the largest romantic follies of its type in Europe. 1788 – 1792.

Steinhöfer Waterfall: The waterfall, some 50 m wide, consists of artificially positioned basalt blocks. 1793.
The Pompeii of Palaeontology
Messel Pit Fossil Site

The surface of the circular lake glistens in the morning sun; crocodiles float motionless beneath the water surface. In the hot air, birds glide over the water and chase the insects that are hovering around. In the dense subtropical jungle on the banks of the lake, prehistoric horses and other mammals like rodents, flying squirrels and anteaters are foraging for food – this was the scene in Hesse some 47 million years ago.

Nowadays, the fossilised remains of the animals and plants that used to live in and around the lake at Messel are preserved in deposits of fine oil shale. The lake which provided a habitat for so many organisms was created by volcanic activity. Since the 19th century, the surface mining activities at Messel, near Darmstadt, have brought this evidence of primeval life to the surface. The unique fossil site documents a complete Eocene ecosystem in which the evolution of the mammals took a dramatic step forward following the extinction of the dinosaurs.

Messel Pit near Darmstadt was the first Natural Heritage Site in Germany to be inscribed in the UNESCO World Natural Heritage List on 8 December 1995.
The fossils found in Messel Pit are outstanding in terms of the great variety of species and the unique quality of preservation. In addition, Messel Pit is one of the most bio-diverse fossil sites. To date, 100 vertebrate species have been confirmed, including 40 species of mammals. The most famous are the prehistoric horses – 30 skeletons have been found – and “Ida”, classified as an early but very distant relative of the humans. In some cases not only the skeletons of vertebrates have been fossilised, but also soft body contours, fur and even stomach contents.

The bird fossils found at the site have provided important information on the composition of early tertiary birdlife, which showed a surprisingly large number of species.

Tropical conditions: Surrounded by a primeval forest, the lake was populated by crocodiles, turtles, water snakes, frogs, beetles and fish.

The variety of reptiles and amphibians provide insights into food chains including the very large number of insect species. Among experts, Messel is considered to have the richest flora among Palaeogene sites. Plant remains bear witness to the climatic situation and special local conditions.

Since 2010, the visitor and information centre built by the State Government conveys the great fascination of this “showcase” of geological history. The architecture of the centre and the wide range of topics presented make the unique site considerably more attractive. The tertiary habitat of Messel is presented in its geological context and brought to life.

**“With its famous fossils, Messel Pit in Germany is one of the world’s hot spots.”**

Dr. Jon de Vos, Leiden

**Time travel into geological history:** The new visitor and information centre of Messel Pit provides fascinating insights into the times when Messel was situated on the equator.
Leaving nature to its own devices

**Ancient Beech Forests of Germany: the Kellerwald**

Hessen is the land of the beech tree. Almost every third tree in the woodlands of the state is a beech. It may therefore seem rather surprising that five beech forests in four states of Germany were inscribed in the World Heritage List in 2011 under the title of “Ancient Beech Forests of Germany”. Since then, they have formed a World Heritage Site together with the “Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians” in Ukraine and Slovakia which were inscribed in 2007.

Why should beech forests be classed as World Heritage? What is unique about them? The global value of beech forests is connected with their distribution and the history of their development. Deciduous forests dominated by the common, or European beech (fagus sylvatica) are a purely European phenomenon. Germany is the centre of their area of distribution. Without the impact of humans, beech woods would dominate the landscape of Central Europe in its entirety and cover two-thirds of the land area of Germany. However, the dense population of the continent has reduced the distribution of natural beech woods in Europe to a very small area.

**A sea of beeches:** The beech forests in Kellerwald-Edersee National Park cover more than 50 hills.

The beech recovery by the beech of its former range following the last ice age (an ecological process that is still continuing), the tremendous competitive power of this tree species and the wide variety of beech forest types in terms of geography and ecology, with specific animal and plant communities in each case, is unique in the world.

The World Heritage Site, consisting of 15 separate properties, reflects almost the full range of beech forest types found in Central Europe. The German lowland and hill forests supplement the undisturbed mountain forests of the Carpathians.

The Kellerwald in Northern Hesse represents hill forests on acidic soil. Within the Kellerwald-Edersee National Park, with a total area of about 5700 hectares, a contiguous forest area representing the most typical and natural deciduous forests and two remains of forests similar to primeval forests on the steep slopes over Edersee lake were selected. This core section has an area of 1467 hectares and mainly consists of beech stands with an age of more than 160 years on greywacke and argillaceous slate. The bizarre shapes adopted by the trees on the steep slopes in the area are a special feature.

**A wild forest:** Old beech trees can no longer resist attack. Fungi gradually start to penetrate the ward.
Believe me, you will find more lessons in the woods than in books. Trees and stones will teach you what you cannot learn from masters.

Bernhard von Clairvaux (1090 – 1153)

The Kellerwald provides a habitat for 17 species of bat, the wildcat, the black stork, the red kite, the honey buzzard and the grey-headed woodpecker as well as indicator species for undisturbed forests such as the fungus Hericium coralloides and the violet click beetle – in some cases, Hesse bears responsibility for these species at the European or even global level.

Nature-lovers can explore the Kellerwald World Heritage Site throughout the year. Well-signposted hiking routes, in some cases over rough terrain, provide an unforgettable experience whether they are tackled alone or as part of a guided tour accompanied by rangers. The services available are rounded off by information facilities such as the Kellerwald National Park Centre or the BuchenHaus at Edersee Wildlife Park.
A modern classic
Fritz Lang’s silent film “Metropolis”

It was 1926 and the Weimar Republic had reached its zenith. Following the horrors of World War I, Germany and its capital had come back to life. The vibrant metropolis of Berlin was the trendsetter in European art and culture: jazz, the Charleston, permissiveness and the film. Berlin was the artistic and commercial centre of the German film industry – and it shaped the culture of the cinema with courageous, expressive works at the transition to the talking film.

Germany’s most famous silent film, “Metropolis”, was produced at Babelsberg Studios. The cinematically brilliant vision of the architectural future of the city makes this film a unique document of the Heritage of Mankind. Fritz Lang’s monumental work received its premiere in 1927.

“Metropolis” is one of the most famous science fiction films in the history of cinema, and, at the same time, one of the most influential silent films in visual terms.

Shortly after the premiere, a mutilated version of the film, which had been shortened by about 1000 metres, was produced. The original was lost. In many years of work, the Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation, located in Wiesbaden, succeeded in finding footage which had been believed lost. Investigations showed that only one of the three original negatives was still preserved and that this negative was incomplete. Foreign archives still held copies that had been taken from the lost original negatives. Even so, about one fifth of the original version was missing.

In 1999 and 2000, the film was restored. The objective of the restoration was to recover the original sequence of scenes and to get as close as possible to the original version. The optical quality of the footage was restored to a very large extent by digital image editing. In 2001, what was at the time the longest reconstruction and the most faithful to the original intention of the work (thanks to an intensive search for fragments all over the world) was declared UNESCO World Documentary Heritage.

Further footage which had been feared to have been lost was found in Argentina in 2008, allowing this masterpiece of the cinema to be completed. A new digital procedure was developed especially to allow the additional 25 minutes to be inserted in the film. The premiere of the restored version took place in Frankfurt am Main and Berlin on 12 February 2010.

“Metropolis is certainly the most important work in the history of the German film […] hopelessly obsolete, and yet stunningly topical. Metropolis has the power to inspire right down to the present day; indeed, it is still inspiring Hollywood.”

Artem Demenok
Reichenau book illumination

The Gero Codex

There is scarcely any era in the history of the book illumination that produced such magnificent manuscripts as the Ottonian period. One of the main centres of manuscript illumination in the 10th and 11th centuries was the monastery on the island of Reichenau in Lake Constance. In response to commissions from leading figures in society – emperors, kings, bishops and members of the nobility – the monks at Reichenau created magnificent manuscripts intended for the churches of the Empire. They took their inspiration from Carolingian manuscripts produced at the court of Charlemagne as well as early Christian and Byzantine works. In 2003, 10 of these magnificently illustrated manuscripts were recognised as World Documentary Heritage by UNESCO. These also include the Gero Codex, which is now preserved by Darmstadt University and State Library.

The Gero Codex is an outstanding example of manuscript illustration in the 10th century. The gospel lectionary, which contains the gospel readings for the various days of the church year, is named after Gero, the original sponsor of the manuscript, who was later Archbishop of Cologne from 969 to 976. Gero, who came from a noble family, was a canon and custodian of Cologne Cathedral and chaplain to the Emperor. As he is not referred to as a bishop in the dedication to the manuscript or shown in the dress of a bishop, it is to be assumed that the Codex was produced before he was elected Archbishop in 969. The scribe and illustrator is also mentioned in the text and shown in the illustrations. The artist was Anno, a monk who is recorded as a subdeacon in the monastery register for 958. The manuscript therefore represents the oldest group of the Reichenau book illumination school which was responsible for the renaissance in magnificent liturgical manuscripts following the Carolingian period.

As regards the motifs portrayed, the illustrations are typical of Gospel manuscripts of the Middle Ages, although there were some variations in the sequence of full-page illustrations. The Gero Codex begins with four illustrations of the evangelists, followed by Christ enthroned and two votive illustrations: one shows Gero dedicating the work he commissioned to St. Peter, the patron saint of the church for which it was intended, while the second shows Anno dedicating the work to Gero. On the pages opposite these images, we find decorative pages painted purple with Bible verses suitable for the illustrations inscribed in gold ink.

Additional ornaments are the initial pages at the beginning of the gospel readings for high church festivals. The majuscule letters on these pages are so richly decorated that some of them are very difficult to read.

The magnificent decoration of the Codex shows that manuscripts of this type were not really intended for everyday use but were considered to be consecrated works of art. The manuscript, dedicated to a saint, has more the character of a sacrament or a relic.

“... Prince of the church, named Peter after the rock, who is given the highest power to absolve earthly debts, I beseech you to accept the valueless present of a servant. I bring you what I can, not what I ought to bring you as a debtor. In my service, I have had this little book presented to you ...”

Dedication text of the Gero Codex
Fabulous tales

The Children’s and Household Tales of the Brothers Grimm

Once upon a time... This is the beginning of the tales that are familiar to every child, at least in Germany. But not only in Germany: together with the Luther Bible, Grimm’s fairy tales are among the best-known books in German cultural history and those that have enjoyed the widest distribution throughout the world.

When the brothers Jacob (1785 – 1863) and Wilhelm Grimm (1786 – 1859) – born in Hanau and raised in Steinau an der Straße – collected the tales, this was the first systematic collection and scholarly documentation of the European and Oriental fairy tale tradition. Since then, the stories have been translated into more than 170 languages from all continents.

The Children’s and Household Tales group together the storytelling traditions of different cultures and present them in a new form. The achievement of the Brothers Grimm was to transcend the German and European framework in which they lived and to create a universal model of storytelling embracing the world’s peoples. This explains the unique nature of the fairy tales and their effect throughout the world.

Little Red Riding Hood:
The characters of Grimms’ fairy tales are among the most formative childhood memories of whole generations throughout the world.

“In fairy tale literature there is the same inner purity for the sake of which we see children as so lovely and blissful. Children’s tales should be told in such a way that children’s first thoughts and movements of the heart awaken in their bright, pure light.”

Jacob Grimm (1785 – 1863)

The personal annotated copies of the Brothers Grimm, from Kassel, are the most important sources still extant for the development and reception history of the tales. These printed copies of the first edition bear extensive handwritten additions and notes from the pens of the Brothers Grimm. Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm lived and worked in Kassel for more than 30 years.

The personal annotated copies were added to the UNESCO list of World Documentary Heritage in 2005. They are the first written documents from Hessen to be included in the Memory of the World Programme.
From the early days of medicine

The Lorsch Pharmacopoeia

It has been in Bamberg for more than 1000 years and was one of the first books in the Cathedral library, which was later to become so important.

For a long time, it was referred to as “Bamberg codex medicinalis 1” and was known to academics under this name. Later, it became normal practice to refer to it by its place of origin as “Lorsch Pharmacopoeia”. As a collection of copies of ancient Roman and Greek prescriptions, some of better, some of worse quality, the manuscript is one of the earliest known statements of medical tradition from the early Middle Ages.

It is not so much the prescriptions or recipes themselves that make the manuscript, which was included in the UNESCO World Documentary Heritage in 2013, unique. It is rather the preface written by an unknown author which takes up the first nine pages of the work. This text is the most comprehensive theoretical and theological justification for the heathen science of medicine. It states that is not only permitted to study medicine but also necessary for the benefit both of the patient and the healer in a spirit of Christian charity.

In the year 800, when this justification of the art of medicine was written on calfskin parchment in Lorsch, now in Hessen, as one of the first examples of manuscript art from Lorsch, this justification was by no means self-evident. However, at that time Charlemagne had gathered important scholars of his age around him at his court and ideas which had never been expressed before were allowed to blossom in a spirit of intellectual tolerance. A feeling for Latin style was cultivated taking Virgil as an example, people studied ancient metres and efforts were made to understand pure Roman choral singing, ancient technology and architecture. People were also working on medicine. A work which appeared in 819 already required future clerics to have a solid knowledge of medicine. Only a generation before, any attempt to provide medical care would have been regarded as an effort to influence the unfathomable divine healing plan, as an instance of sinful overweening pride.

The Lorsch Pharmacopoeia not only marks the beginning of the science of medicine in Christian Western Europe but also provides, in the form of its preface, the most comprehensive statement of the intellectual programme of its time, giving us a profound insight into the ideas of the Carolingian renaissance or educational reform.

“There are three reasons why the body is affected by sickness: because of sinfulness, as a trial and because of susceptibility to sickness. The human art of healing can only help in the third case. Only the grace of God and divine mercy can help in the other cases.”

Preface to the Lorsch Pharmacopoeia

A precious writing material:
A page from the Lorsch Pharmacopoeia showing a flaw. The scribe simply wrote around any holes in the parchment.
“We find, moreover, from the most renowned accounts and traditions of the ancients that, from time immemorial it has been continuously observed by those who have felicitously preceded us, that the election of the king of the Romans and future emperor should be held in the city of Frankfort, and the first coronation in Aix, and that his first imperial court should be celebrated in the town of Nuremberg. Wherefore on sure grounds, we declare that the said usages should also be observed in future…”

Golden Bull, 1356

The Empire copy: the Frankfurt copy of the Golden Bull

The “constitution” of the Holy Roman Empire

The Golden Bull of Emperor Charles IV

When Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV promulgated this law, soon known as “Golden Bull” because of the Golden Seal (or “bull”) attached to it, following protracted negotiations with the electors, the Holy Roman Empire had experienced more than 100 years of disputes and wars over political power. The objective of this “imperial and ever valid edict” was to avoid such strife in the future and “to put an end to future danger of discords among the electors”.

The Golden Bull is considered to be the “constitution” of the Holy Roman Empire and is one of the most important testimonies to German history. It is the result of two imperial diets held at Nuremberg and Metz in 1356. Among other things it defines the procedure for the election of kings and the order of precedence of the electors at public events such as diets or processions. Up to the abdication of the last Holy Roman Emperor in 1806, the Golden Bull remained valid as the constitution of the Empire.

The Golden Bull was included in the UNESCO World Documentary Heritage “Memory of the World” in 2013. All seven original copies of the Bull are preserved in German and Austrian archives. One of them is located at the Institute for Civic History in Frankfurt am Main and one in Darmstadt University and State Library.

The Empire copy in Frankfurt

The Golden Bull had special significance for the city of Frankfurt am Main. Emperor Charles IV, who confirmed many privileges of the city, stated in his edict of 1356 that future elections of the German king and emperor were to take place in Frankfurt. Seven, later nine prince electors had the exclusive right to meet in St. Bartholomew’s Church, now the Kaiserdöm (or Emperor’s Cathedral) to elect the king and future emperor.

Privilege 107:
Dr. Evelyn Brockhoff and Dr. Michael Matthäus with the Golden Bull in the Chamber of Privileges of the Frankfurt Institute for Civic History.
From 1562 to the demise of the Holy Roman Empire, most of the kings and emperors were also crowned in Frankfurt. For centuries, the election and coronation ceremonies were major events within the Empire. In addition to the trade fairs, these events gave Frankfurt the importance which it still holds to this day.

In 1366, the city of Frankfurt had its own copy of the Golden Bull made. Although this copy is 10 years younger than the five surviving copies of the electors, dating from 1356/57 (the Nuremberg copy was only produced between 1366 and 1378), it was still legally valid. As this copy was referred to for each election, it soon became known as the “Empire copy”, the best-known and most frequently used original copy of the Golden Bull.

The Cologne copy in Darmstadt

“... pro archiepiscopo Coloniensi originaliter expedita” (originally issued for the Archbishop of Cologne): this is the dedication on the first page of the Golden Bull currently held by Darmstadt University and State Library. This is clearly the copy of the Archbishop of Cologne who was among the select band of princes entitled to elect the king.

Like so many manuscripts, the Cologne copy of the Golden Bull passed into other hands as a result of wars. During the first Napoleonic war, the archbishopric of Cologne transferred books and documents from the cathedral library and archive to the monastery of Wedinghausen in Arnsberg, Westphalia for safekeeping. In the Peace of Lunéville, which ended this war in 1801, Hessen-Darmstadt received the Duchy of Westphalia, previously held by the Archbishop of Cologne, in compensation for the loss of the County of Hanau. Following secularisation in 1803, not only the books from the southern Hessian monastery libraries but also the Cologne documents from the monastery of Wedinghausen were transferred to Darmstadt.

In 1866, the books from the cathedral library were returned to Cologne. However, Darmstadt retained the Bull, arguing that it had been part of the collection of the cathedral archive and not the cathedral library. The valuable document, with its original binding still preserved to this day, remained in the library of the Grand Duke of Hesse.

“... We found this room, which is so remarkable in German history, where the most powerful princes were accustomed to meet for transactions so momentous, in no respect suitably furnished, but thoroughly deranged with beams, poles, scaffolding, and similar lumber, which ought to have been thrown away. The imagination, for that very reason, was the more excited and the heart elevated, when we soon after received permission to be present in the Council-House, at the exhibition of the Golden Ball to some distinguished strangers.”

Goethe, Dichtung und Wahrheit, Bk 1 (translated by Parke Godwin, 1846)
Evidence of National Socialist crimes

Archives of the International Tracing Service (ITS)

The International Tracing Service (ITS) is located in Bad Arolsen in northern Hesse. The archives house about 30 million documents of National Socialist persecution, forced labour and the Holocaust. They are evidence of one of the cruellest chapters in the history of mankind and bear witness to the individual fates of countless victims.

Originally established as a centre for tracing lost relatives in the midst of the four occupation zones of Germany in 1946, the ITS is now a centre for documentation, information and research. Its main functions include the investigation of persecution, the search for family members and the provision of information, research, education and remembrance work as well as the preservation, conservation and analysis of the documents held.

The original documents from concentration camps, ghettos and Gestapo prisons, documents concerning forced labour and the fate of displaced persons were included in the register of the World Documentary Heritage, “Memory of the World” by UNESCO in 2013 together with the 50 million or so cards that form the central register of names kept by the ITS.

As the number of witnesses to this period of history is steadily dwindling, the documents will have to speak for themselves in the future. All the documents included in the UNESCO register have been fully digitalised and can be viewed in the database of the ITS. Interested parties can use the ITS for research at any time.

The centre has a number of reading and seminar rooms as well as a library. The archives give an indication of the causes of National Socialism and view held at the time, arouse sympathy for the suffering of the victims and contribute to a greater understanding of the significance of democracy, freedom and respect for people who are “different”.

“... are an awe-inspiring monument that is preserved in trust and in honour of the millions of victims of the Holocaust and other Nazi crimes.”

Thomas Bürgenthal, survivor
World Heritage in Germany

39 monuments in Germany are inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List.* They are protected by the International Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. The Convention, which was adopted by UNESCO in 1972, is the most important international instrument for preserving cultural and natural heritage sites of “outstanding universal value”. A monument cannot be inscribed on the World Heritage List unless it meets the criteria set forth in the Convention such as uniqueness and authenticity (for cultural sites) or integrity (for natural sites), and unless a convincing preservation programme is submitted.

The UNESCO World Register “Memory of the World” (World Documentary Heritage) is a global digital network including selected outstanding documents: valuable libraries, manuscripts, musical scores, unique prints, audiovisual and film documents. 17 documents from Germany are included in the Register.* The objective of the programme is to safeguard documentary heritage of outstanding value in archives, libraries and museums worldwide and to make it available via new information technology channels.

The UNESCO “Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage”, which was adopted by UNESCO in 2003 and came into force in 2006, focuses on cultural traditions. Skills and customs such as dance and theatre, rituals, festivals and knowledge and skills in arts and crafts which have been handed down over the generations are compiled in this list. As Germany only acceded to the Convention in 2013, no German or Hessian forms of cultural expression are currently included in the list. However, a national application procedure for the Convention such as uniqueness and authenticity (for cultural sites) or integrity (for natural sites), and unless a convincing preservation programme is submitted.

The UNESCO World Register “Memory of the World” (World Documentary Heritage) is a global digital network including selected outstanding documents: valuable libraries, manuscripts, musical scores, unique prints, audiovisual and film documents. 17 documents from Germany are included in the Register.* The objective of the programme is to safeguard documentary heritage of outstanding value in archives, libraries and museums worldwide and to make it available via new information technology channels.

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World Heritage Sites
- Aachen Cathedral
- Speyer Cathedral
- Würzburg Residence with the Court Gardens and Residence Square
- Pilgrimage Church of Wies
- The Castles of Augustusburg and Falkenlust in Brühl
- St. Mary’s Cathedral and St. Michael’s Church at Hildesheim
- Roman Monuments, Cathedral and Church of Our Lady in Trier
- Hanseatic City of Lübeck
- Palaces and Parks of Potsdam and Berlin
- Abbey and Altenmünster of Lorsch
- Mines of Rammelsberg, Historic Town of Goslar and Upper Harz Water Management System
- Town of Bamberg
- Maulbronn Monastery Complex
- Collegiate Church, Castle and Old Town of Quedlinburg
- Völklingen Ironworks
- Messel Pit Fossil Site
- Cologne Cathedral
- Bauhaus and its Sites in Weimar and Dessau
- Luther Memorials in Eisleben and Wittenberg
- Classical Weimar
- Warburg Castle
- Museuminsel (Museum Island), Berlin
- Garden Kingdom of Dessau-Wörlitz
- Monastic Island of Reichenau
- Zollverein Coal Mine Industrial Complex in Essen
- Historic Centres of Stralsund and Wismar
- Upper Middle Rhine Valley
- Town Hall and Roland on the Marketplace of Bremen
- Muskauer Park (Park Muzakowski)
- “Frontiers of the Roman Empire”: Upper German-Raetian Limes
- Old Town of Regensburg with Stadtamhof
- Berlin Modernism Housing Estates
- The Wadden Sea
- Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and the Ancient Beech Forests of Germany: Kellerwald
- Fagus Factory in Alfeld
- Prehistoric pile dwellings around the Alps
- Margravial Opera House Bayreuth
- Bergpark Wilhelmshöhe
- The Carolingian Westwork and the Civitas Corvey
- The 1507 printed map by Waldseemüller (Universalis cosmographia secundum Ptolomaei traditionem et Americi Vespucci aliorumque Lustrationes)
- The Bibliotheca Corviniana Collection
- Letters from and to Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz within the collection of manuscript papers of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz
- Song of the Nibelungs, a heroic poem from medieval Europe
- Benz Patent of 1886
- Construction and Fall of the Berlin Wall and the Two-Plus-Four-Treaty of 1990
- Lorsch Pharmacopoeia (The Bamberg State Library Msc. Med 1)
- Nebra Sky Disc
- The “Golden Bull” – All seven originals and the King Wenceslaus’ luxury manuscript copy of the Österreichische Staatsbibliothek: The Empire copy in Frankfurt; the Cologne Copy in Darmstadt
- Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei, draft manuscript page and Das Kapital. Erster Band, Karl Marx’s personal annotated
- International World Documentary Heritage in Germany
- Archives of the International Tracing Service (ITS)

* As of 9/2014

* As of 9/2014

* As of 9/2014
Contacts and Information

Lorsch Abbey
Nibelungenstraße 32 · 64653 Lorsch
Phone: +49 (0) 6251 103820
Email: info@klöster-lorsch.de
www.kloster-lorsch.de

Opening times:
Benedictine Monastery: Mon, Wed – Sun 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Church: Mon – Fri 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., Sun 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Directions:
By car: A5 exit Heppenheim or A67 exit Bensheim, B47 and B460.
By train: DB Train station Lorsch from Worms, Bensheim, B47 and B460.
By car: A5 exit Friedberg/direction Friedberg, then via the B3 to Bergpark Wilhelmshöhe.

Upper Middle Rhine Valley
Rheingau-Taunus Kultur und Tourismus GmbH
Pfortenhaus Kloster Eberbach · 65346 Eltville am Rhein
Phone: +49 (0) 6175 9374-0
Email: info@saalburgmuseum.de
www.saalburgmuseum.de

Opening times:
March – Oct.: daily 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Nov. – Feb.: daily except Mon 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Closed on Dec. 24 and 31

Directions:
By car: A5 exit Heppenheim or A67 exit Bensheim, B47 and B460.
By train: to ICE station Kassel Wilhelmshöhe.
By bus (line 22) to the Hercules statue (beginning of water features)

Messel Fossil Pit
Grube Messel gGmbH
Rolländer Straße 108 · 64409 Messel
Phone: +49 (0) 6159 717590
Fax: +49 (0) 6159 7175922
Email: service@welterbe-grube-messel.de
www.grube-messel.de

Opening times:
The visitor centre houses a museum and a park:
Messel Welten, is open daily 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
The public can only access the pit during guided tours.

Directions:
By car: A5 exit Weiterstadt or Langen/Mörfelden or A661 exit Langen/Offenthal.
By train: to ICE station Kassel-Wilhelmshöhe.

Kellerwald-Edersee National Park
Nationalparkamt Kellerwald-Edersee
Laustraße 8 · 34537 Bad Wildungen
Phone: +49 (0) 5621 75249-0
Fax: +49 (0) 5621 75249-19
Email: info@nationalpark-kellerwald-edersee.de
www.nationalpark-kellerwald-edersee.de

Opening times:
Kellerwald National Park Centre
Weg zur Wildnis 1 · 34516 Vöhl-Herzhausen
Phone: +49 (0) 5635 992781
Email: info@nationalparkzentrum-kellerwald.de
www.weltnatureerbuchenzaehlerde.de

Directions:
By car: A49 exit Kassel-Auestadion, then via the B3 to Bergpark Wilhelmshöhe.
By train: to ICE station Kassel Wilhelmshöhe, then by tram (line 1) to “Wilhelmshöhe” terminus (Palace entrance to Park) or by tram (line 3) to Druseltal terminus and then by bus (line 22) to the Hercules statue (beginning of water features)

Gero-Codex
Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek
(University and State Library)
Sonderlesesaal (Special Reading Room)
Magdalenenstraße 8 · 64289 Darmstadt
Phone: +49 (0) 6151 1676260
Fax: +49 (0) 6151 1676393
Email: sammlungen@ulb.tu-darmstadt.de
www.ulb.tu-darmstadt.de

Directions:
By train: to ICE station Kassel Wilhelmshöhe.

Kinderlachen und Landesbibliothek
(University and State Library)
Friedrich-Wilhelm-Murnau-Stiftung
Schöne Aussicht 2 · 34117 Kassel
Phone: +49 (0) 561 7872033
Email: grimm-museum@t-online.de
www.grimms.de

Directions:
By car A49 exit Kassel-Auestadion, then towards city centre up to the old vineyard.
By train: to ICE station Kassel Wilhelmshöhe, then by tram (line 1, 3 or 4) to “Rathaus”, then five minutes walk
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