

A Legacy of Resistance: The Case of the Freckenhorst Baptismal Font¹

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Abstract Since 1823 the consecration date of 1129 for the Church of St. Boniface, inscribed on the Freckenhorst baptismal font from the imperial convent of St. Boniface (Westphalia, Germany), has continued to be considered, by some, the date for when the font was carved. For over two hundred years this precocious date has divided academic communities, despite the numerous and comprehensive counter arguments asserting that the font is a later twelfth century if not early thirteenth century vessel. This raises the question, “Why has there been such resistance to recognize this vessel as a later product of the prolific Westphalian stone industry?” This article reviews the historiography to uncover the roots of the ‘sanctified status’ that the Freckenhorst font acquired over the centuries from the post-Imperial period of Germany through the two World Wars. The literature reveals not only why the Freckenhorst font came to symbolize ‘Germanic ingenuity’ for German art historians but also the challenges and changes within the evolving discipline of art history and the scholarly networks that connected art historians in the first half of the twentieth century.

Keywords Freckenhorst, Baptismal Font, St. Boniface, Medieval, Romanesque, Sculpture, Quedlinburg, Hegwald, Johnny Roosval, Inscriptions, Historiography

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ICONOGRAPHISK POST

NORDISK TIDSKRIFT FÖR BILDTOLKNING 36 NORDIC REVIEW OF ICONOGRAPHY

NR 3 / 4, 2019, PP. 6–47. ISSN 2323-5586

Introduction²

Dating Romanesque baptismal fonts is a process fraught with challenges.³ Baptismal fonts are frequently the oldest, medieval object preserved in European communities.⁴ Since World War II many of the precocious dates assigned to medieval

baptismal fonts in the late nineteenth and first-half of the twentieth century, like other medieval works, have been reviewed, revised or reconsidered according to changing methodologies, new research about the sites, comparative works, the region



Fig. 1. Freckenhorst baptismal font, late 12th century at the earliest to early 13th century, Collegiate Church of St. Boniface, Warendorf, Münster, Germany. Photo BSI.

or in relation to the general understanding of medieval art.⁵ Given the literally ‘thousands’ of medieval baptismal fonts produced in the *Golden Age*, that is the twelfth and thirteen centuries, there is an extensive corpus of scholarship, especially, on the more renowned works, which in some cases go back to the eighteenth century or earlier.

When reviewing dates for medieval baptismal fonts, scholars are faced with an especially daunting task, often complicated by the fact that many of the Romanesque fonts, produced in active ateliers, were part of a larger stone industry.⁶ This meant that a single workshop with several artisans was producing numerous works. The nineteenth-and-twentieth-century art historical divisions of medieval art into genres, such as the minor arts or types of objects, like baptismal fonts, enabled comprehensive but often segregated overviews of these hundreds of works. This, may or may not, be an advantage given that many medieval fonts were carved by the same workshops producing tomb slabs, capitals, portal sculpture and other stone works.⁷ Earlier divisions can impose constraints whether it be segregating the scholarship or simply by the sheer number of works which have been assigned to a single group or category that might need to be re-examined. For *fonters*, that is, those dedicated to the study of this single vessel, to adhere to earlier dates and frameworks is a constant temptation.⁸ For when you begin to analyse one work in a group of many, ultimately, the others must be reviewed. This

can be a daunting task. And, the legacy of non-integrated scholarship on fonts from other areas of inquiry, poses continual impediments. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that the renowned and, often, monumental surveys undertaken in the first half of the twentieth century are still the foundational work of any investigation in the field, despite the inherently dated assumptions and circumscribed methodologies.

Adding to the challenge is the accumulated literature on the comparative works, many of which have been re-dated and discussed in a wide range of dispersed publications over the decades. Consequently, the intimidating and time-consuming process of pursuing a comprehensive review of the scholarship is often by-passed. The datings in earlier scholarship may simply be repeated, especially, if attributed to renowned historians. Unfortunately, this reinforces outmoded or relevant counter arguments that have long been forgotten or submerged in the extensive literature. There are numerous reasons why a historian is prompted to return to the earlier literature, either to counter-argue or to revive an earlier, significant idea that was overlooked, rejected or not fully investigated. And, most certainly, when a legacy obstructs or continues to cast doubts on contemporary investigations and current scholarship, a closer scrutiny of the earlier arguments is warranted, no matter how extensive such a scholarly corpus may be.

The exquisite baptismal font in the Collegiate Church of St. Boniface in Waren-

dorf-Freckenhorst (Westphalia, Germany) with the inscribed date of 1129 commemorating the consecration of St. Boniface by Bishop Egbert is one such example that warrants a closer look at the historiography (fig. 1).⁹ For nearly two hundred years, since 1823, the Freckenhorst font has been at the centre of an on-going date debate. It is not unusual to encounter incongruences concerning the origins and the dates assigned to baptismal fonts in the early scholarship. Many, however, have subsequently been reconsidered.¹⁰ In the case of the Freckenhorst font, there remains a reluctance to rigorously affirm a later date for the vessel, despite the numerous counter arguments. The inscribed date of 1129 is frequently cited, but often with no firm attribution to a later period, leaving the actual date of the font ambiguous. Due to this equivocation, the earlier assertions of renowned scholars such as Erwin Panofsky (1892–1968) or those who studied baptismal fonts such as Johnny Roosval (1879–1965), Georg Pudelko (1905–1972), and Folke Nordström (1920–1997), and who advocated for the 1129 date, are often repeated, despite current scholarship and the numerous counter arguments over the decades.¹¹

In the historiography of baptismal fonts, renowned vessels often acquired a *sanctified status*. A status that was deeply rooted in the scholarship and the collective, cultural memory and identity of communities. So much so, that when new research questioned a vessel’s prestigious position, it was rejected by both local and scholar-

ly communities.¹² The Freckenhorst baptismal font is such a case, but uniquely so. In the nineteenth-and-early-twentieth-century scholarship German scholars situated and entrenched the Freckenhorst font at the *very origins* of monumental sculpture in Westphalian Romanesque art – much like Roosval did with respect to the Hegwald workshop on Gotland and the commencement of the first phase of carving stone fonts on Gotland.¹³ In fact, in 1925 Roosval suggested that the Hegwald baptismal fonts were even earlier than the Freckenhorst font, dating the Hegwald fonts from c. 1095 to 1130.¹⁴ As a result, a broader, cohesive European framework began to emerge for the development of northern Romanesque sculpture. The Hegwald fonts have since have been attributed a later date.¹⁵ The Freckenhorst font was at the forefront of the divisive and wide-spread discussions about what constituted ‘Germanic’ art, regionally, as well as, within Romanesque art, nationally and internationally, acquiring a political dimension in World War II. These wider discussions, framed by imminent scholars within the changing discipline of art history, have been of considerable interest since World War II.¹⁶ A prolonged legacy tethered the font to the idealized post-imperial discussions on what constituted Germanic culture, nationalism and artistic identity in a period when historians sought to define *Germanic art*.¹⁷ And yet, numerous historians recognized that the Freckenhorst font was an anomaly from several perspectives: the inscription, the style, the



Fig. 2. Annunciation to Mary, Freckenhorst baptismal font, late 12th century at the earliest to early 13th century, Collegiate Church of St. Boniface, Warendorf, Münster, Germany. Photo BSI (*Baptisteria Sacra Index*).

iconography and in comparison with other works dated to before the middle of the twelfth century. In terms of medieval fonts, similar sculptural works are found in the late twelfth-and-thirteenth centuries, but *not* in the first half of the twelfth century – context matters. The on-going date debate and the continued reluctance to affirm a

later date, even today, warrants a closer examination for why there remains a reticence on the part of some scholars to assign a late twelfth century date at the earliest for the Freckenhorst font.

This article examines the historiography, the highlights of earlier, often brief and nebulous arguments for why an 1129

date was accepted and examines the concurrent, as well as, the recent counter arguments for why the Freckenhorst font should be considered a later work. Due to the extensive scholarship, the historiography on this single font offers additional insights into the changing art historical methodologies and how political and ideological factors shaped and defined the views of some art historians. In addition, the historiographical review exposes some of the academic networks that aided in the construction of early medieval art history. For example, the Freckenhorst date of 1129 served to reinforce the precocious dates assigned to other medieval fonts by art historians, such as Roosval, especially in the dating of the Hegwald workshop.¹⁸ This is not surprising, since Roosval, the imminent scholar of medieval art and author of the renowned work, *Die Steinmeister Gottlands* (1918), received his early training as an art historian in Germany under the tutelage of Heinrich Wölfflin and Adolph Goldschmidt at the University of Berlin at the turn-of-the-twentieth century, retaining close contact with the German scholars in subsequent decades.

Inscription and Date Debate

The date discourse concerning the Freckenhorst font began when the archaeologist and historian Wilhelm Dorow (1790–1845) first published the font's inscription in 1823.¹⁹ Situated against a wall, only a partial view of the inscription was visible. Dorow published the following incomplete inscription:

...NEI. E. GEBERTO ORDINAT. ANNO II. CONSECRATU. E. HOC TEMPLUM + ANNO AB INCARNAT. DOMINI. MCXXVIII.E.PACT. XXVIII.²⁰

[The complete Latin inscription for this section is: NON(AS) IVN(II) A VENERAB(IL)I EP(ISCOP)O MIMIGARDEVORDENSI EGBERTO ORDINAT(IONIS) SVE ANNO II CONSECRATV(M) E(ST) HOC TEMPLUM. – This last section was not visible in 1823, see below p. 10 for the full inscription and translation.]

The publication was met with immediate enthusiasm and triggered an avalanche of scholarly interest. By 1861 the inscription on the Freckenhorst font served to affirm not only the provenance of the font but, according to Franz Kugler, the construction history of the Collegiate Church of St. Boniface.²¹ This was the era when the written text held an authoritative place and stylistic analysis was the latest methodology. Historians, who were engaged in rewriting the Middle Ages, were debating the origins of the Romanesque or *Rundbogenstil* in contrast to the *Spitzbogenstil* at the regional and national levels.²² Far less value was placed on the liturgical context, subjects rendered and the pictorial evidence. For example, in 1886 Franz von Reber (1834–1919) noted that the subjects represented on the Freckenhorst baptismal font were of little interest in relation to the overall importance of how skilfully the work was executed.²³

The frequently cited date of 1129 is inscribed on the lower band, which separates the upper Christological scenes from the lower representation of lions. The full in-



Fig. 3. Ascension of Christ, *Freckenhorst baptismal font*, late 12th century at the earliest to early 13th century, Collegiate Church of St. Boniface, Warendorf, Münster, Germany. Photo BSI.

scription records the consecration date of St. Boniface by Bishop Egbert in 1129:

+ ANNO AB INCARNAT(IONE) D(OMI)
NI M(ILLESIMO) : C(ENTESIMO)
: XX : VIII : EPACT(IS) : XXVIII :
CONCVRR(ENTIBVS) I P(OST)
B(ISSEXILEM) INDICT(IONS) VII :
II : NON(AS) IVN(II) A VENERAB(ILI)
EP(ISCOP)O MIMIGARDEVORDENSI
EGBERTO ORDINAT(IONIS) SVE
ANNO II CONSECRATV(M) E(ST) HOC
TEMPLUM.²⁴

[In the year 1129 of the Incarnation of our Lord, epactis 28, concurrent I, after a bisextile year, indiction 7, the second none of June [4 June], by the venerable Bishop Egbert of Münster, the second year of his ordination, this church [temple] was consecrated].²⁵

The “Incarnation of our Lord” before a Roman numeral date is common on medieval fonts prior to the fifteenth century. However, the Freckenhorst addition of “...epactis 28, concurrent I, after a bisextile year, indiction 7, the second none of June...” is the unusual component of the date inscribed.²⁶ In addition, short inscriptions were incised in the following scenes: the *Annunciation to Mary* (fig. 2),²⁷ the *Ascension of Christ* (fig. 3)²⁸ and the *Christ in Majesty* scene (fig. 4).²⁹ The inscribed letters of “SVE” appears in the conflated *Harrowing of Hell* and *Resurrection* scene, under the seated angel and immediately above the band with the inscription (fig. 5). Initially, “SVE”

was interpreted as the monogram of the artisan who carved the font, but gradually historians recognized that it belonged to the inscription on the lower band.³⁰

In the early twentieth century the dubious or problematic nature of inscriptions, particularly on medieval works and baptismal fonts, had not yet undergone the forensic analysis that would later engage scholars and specialists in the field of epigraphy.³¹ Today, we understand that inscriptions are not always what they appear to be, especially, on medieval stone fonts, which were subject to multiple modifica-

tions over the centuries. There are numerous medieval baptismal fonts with inscriptions that were later additions, reflecting a different date than the making of the vessel, a trend that escalated during the Reformation. In 1903 Stephan Beissel (1841–1915), the German Jesuit and art historian, made an important point. He *adamantly* wrote that the consecration date of St. Boniface was *not the same date* as the origin of the Freckenhorst baptismal font, and cited comparable thirteenth-century works, such as other Westphalian cylindrical fonts.³² However, the disparity between



Fig. 4. Christ in Majesty, *Freckenhorst baptismal font*, late 12th century at the earliest to early 13th century, Collegiate Church of St. Boniface, Warendorf, Germany. Photo BSI.



Fig. 5. Harrowing of Hell and Resurrection of Christ, *Freckenhorst baptismal font*, late 12th century at the earliest to early 13th century, Collegiate Church of St. Boniface, Warendorf, Germany. Photo BSI.

the consecration date for St. Boniface and when the font was carved, was of no interest to those who supported the 1129 date.³³ In fact, this appears to have been purposely downplayed, disbelieved or ignored in the scholarship. Beissel's analysis and assessment of the font's style and iconography is not mentioned nor discussed by other leading historians in Germany, such as Georg Dehio (1850–1932) nor by Pudelko in the 1930s.³⁴ Yet, scholars were familiar with Beissel's work. In 1924 Panofsky dismissed Beissel's counter arguments and stated in his publication that Beissel has erroneously attributed a thirteenth centu-

ry date to the Freckenhorst font.³⁵ Without any analysis or discussion of Beissel's arguments, Panofsky wrote, "mit irriger Datierung ins XIII. Jahrh."³⁶ Clearly, there was academic resistance to alter or even question the pivotal role that the Freckenhorst font had acquired in the German Romanesque by the 1920s.

In 1918, Roosval used the example of the 1129 date on the Freckenhorst font to support his stylistic analysis of the Gotlandic baptismal fonts carved by the Hegwald workshop, dating the fonts to the last decades of the eleventh century and the first decades of the twelfth cen-

turies.³⁷ The precocious date of the Freckenhorst font offered bi-lateral support for the early depiction of elaborate and complex pictorial programs on baptismal fonts before the mid-twelfth century, as well as, the comparative works included in the discussions.³⁸ Fourteen years later, in correspondence with Roosval, Pudelko repeated the c. 1095–1130 dates assigned by Roosval to the Hegwald workshop in his book, *Romanische Taufsteine* (1932), and thanked Roosval for his assistance in the footnotes.³⁹ Pudelko argued that the Hegwald fonts were examples of early works within the larger context of Romanesque art in northern Europe, giving further support to the 1129 date of the Freckenhorst font.⁴⁰ Subsequently, reviews of the Hegwald workshop were undertaken, initially by Roosval himself, in 1925, and later by other Scandinavian scholars, who, incrementally, revised the earlier dates assigned.⁴¹ In fact, the Gotland workshops, those attributed to the first phase of figurative works and those made in the second, non-figurative period, were gradually re-dated.⁴² Counter arguments accumulated, and demonstrated that the Hegwald workshop operated at the very earliest in the late twelfth or even early thirteenth century.⁴³

Counter arguments by German scholars did not cease after Pudelko's 1932 publication *Romanische Taufsteine*. One of the more significant arguments was presented by Marie Luise Freiin von Fürstenberg. In 1934 her examination found that the title "EP(ISCOP)O MIMGARDEVORDEN-

SI" in the Freckenhorst inscription was not used during the time of Bishop Egberts (1127–1132).⁴⁴ The analysis and arguments by Freiin von Fürstenberg – later reinforced by Johannes Bauermann in 1973 – demonstrated that the reference to *Mimgardevordensis episcopus* was a later designation used by Bishop Egberts' successors of Münster in *legal* documentation.⁴⁵ This affirmed that the inscription was a later commemorative epitaph and not contemporaneous with St. Boniface's consecration date of 1129, radically shifting the Freckenhorst date discourse.⁴⁶

In addition to the points noted by Freiin von Fürstenberg, there are other aspects of the Freckenhorst inscription that are an anomaly. The recording of dates or specific historical periods on baptismal fonts is rare during the twelfth century.⁴⁷ And most certainly, it does not become common practice until the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁴⁸ The *Golden Age* of baptismal fonts in northern Europe was marked by a preference for visual messages and a pictorial language that relied primarily on a minimum of text, brief biblical phrases or names to identify the figures portrayed.⁴⁹ With the addition of pictorial programs around the basins of fonts, inscriptions were of secondary importance and were fitted into the scenes and on the architectonic frames that divided the programs, similar to the short inscriptions added to the scenes on the Freckenhorst font. The inscriptions in the scenes on the Freckenhorst font are in keeping with con-

temporary practices in late twelfth and, for the most part, thirteenth century.

Except for a few extant exceptions, the date when a font was made was not generally recorded in northern Europe until the later thirteenth century. Of the few extant examples, the inscribed dates on fonts made in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries follow regional patterns. It should be noted, however, none of the known examples match the type of date inscribed on the Freckenhorst font.⁵⁰

The earliest examples of fonts with inscribed dates are located in Spain where evidence of the earlier Roman tradition for inscriptions survived. Northern Spain is an area which has an abundance of inscriptions on the facades of churches dated to the eleventh and twelfth centuries.⁵¹ On the Spanish font from Cruilles (Gerona, Catalonia) the inscription reads “:1232:FONS”.⁵² On the Lomeña font (Iglesia Parroquial de San Juan Bautista, Cantabria) the date is inscribed as “ERA MILESIMA CCXXXVIII NOTUM E DIE V IDUS DECEMBRIS”, 1238 *era*, which – when converted – is equivalent to 1200 A.D.⁵³ The inscribed date on the font from Caniego (Burgos, Castile-León) reads “ERA DE MCCXXXVII” which is equivalent to 1199.⁵⁴ The few known fonts in Spain with inscriptions tend to follow this pattern.

Date inscriptions on northern fonts differ. The metal font from Tirmont (today in Musées royaux d’art et d’histoire de Bruxelles) has this inscription and 1149 date:

ANNO DOMINICE ENCARNATIONIS
Mo Co QUADRAGESIMO NONO, REG-

NANTE CONRADO, EPISCOPO HENRICO II, DE[...]ANTE, MARCHIONI SEPTENNI GODEFRIDO.

The majority of twelfth and thirteenth-century baptismal fonts in England with inscriptions that provide dates were later additions.⁵⁵ Likewise, most of the extant twelfth and thirteenth century fonts in France have later inscriptions that include dates.⁵⁶ There are a few exceptions. The fourteenth century font from Saint-Ferrol (Haute-Garonne) has the 1319 date “ANO DMOI / M CCCXIX” inscribed.⁵⁷ The fourteenth-century font in Cathédrale Saint-Étienne de Toulouse (Haute-Garonne) has the inscription “[...] 1305 [...]”.⁵⁸ In Germany the bronze Würzburg font (Bayern) has a 1279 date and inscription:

REGNANTE RVDOLFO REGE [P.ANE-
RUM:] ANNO REGNI SVI SIXTO ET
BERTHOLDO DVCTO DE STERRE-
BERGE P[r]O ECCLESIAE ISTIVS
ANNO PONTIFICAT[?] SVI QVINTO
PROCVRANTE WWALTHERO PLEB-
ANO KAPELLANO EIVSDEM COM-
PLATVM + ANNO INCARNATIONIS
DOMINI MCCLXXXIX.⁵⁹

The later font from Kirton (Lincolnshire, East Midlands) has an ambiguous date inscription, which has been published as 1355 or 1405, “ORATE PRO A[n]I[m]A ALAUNI BURTON QUI FONTEM ISTUM FIERI FEC[it] A[n]no D[omi]ni MCCC:v.”⁶⁰ In Germany too, like England and France, there are several twelfth-and-thirteenth-century fonts with date inscriptions that were added later, like the fonts from Brackel (Nordrhein-Westfalen)⁶¹ and Sillensiede (Niedersachsen, Friesland).⁶² In the con-

text of medieval fonts in the Romanesque or Gothic periods, there are no known comparable date inscriptions to the Freckenhorst inscription.

Similarly, within the context of Westphalian medieval works, there are few comparable works. Calvin Kendall has noted that there are few comparable inscriptions of equal length in Westphalia, the closest being the inscription on the carved reliefs over the northern twin portals in the north transept of the Basilica St. Emmeran in Regensburg. In this example, however, the message is a moralizing text with the name of the patron without a date.⁶³ Furthermore, the judicial type of date inscribed on the Freckenshorst font with the incarnation year of the Lord, the epacte cycle of twenty-eight, the indiction cycle of seven, date of the none and the fact that it was a leap year, as indicated by the reference to *bissextilem* year, is a highly unusual inscription on medieval works and monuments. In terms of baptismal fonts, as noted previously, the closest example is the metal font at Tirmont (Belgium), now in the Musées royaux d’art et d’histoire de Bruxelles. The inscription with the date of 1149 includes *incarnation year of the Lord*, like on the Freckenhorst font, but makes no reference to the other legal components of the date as noted in the Freckenhorst inscription.⁶⁴ The only other medieval work known to have this type of judicial date is the late twelfth-century dedication plaque that is mounted on the façade of the Church of St. Martin in Limeuil (Dordogne, France).⁶⁵ The epigraph dated to 1194 states:

+ : ANNO AB INCARNATIONE DOMINI
MILLESIMO : CENTESIMO NONAGE-
SIMO : QUARTO INDICTIONE : DVO-
DECIMA : CONCVRENTE QVINTA :
EPACTA : XXVI : TERCIO : KALENDAS
: FEBROARII : DIE DOMINICA : LVNA
QVARTA : DEDICATA EST : HEC EC-
CLESIA : ALTARE : A DOMINO ADE-
MARO PETRAGORICENSI : EPISCOPO
: IN HONORE SANCTE TRINITATIS :
ET SANCTE MARIE VIRGINIS : ET BEA-
TI MARTINI : EPISCOPI ET CONFES-
SORIS ET BEATI P[AV]LI APOSTOLI :
ET BEATI B. THOME : ARCHIEPISCOPI
ET MARTIRI : ET SANCTE K[A]TERINE
VIRGINIS ET MARTIRIS : ET OMNIVM
SANCTORVM DEI : HEBRADO DE VI-
LARS HVIVS ECCHLESIE DIACONO
EXISTENTE : CELESTINO PAPA SANCTE
ROMANE EECLESIE PRESIDENTE :
ET PHILIP REGE FRANCORVM IMPER-
ANTE : RICHARDO REGE ANGLIE DV-
CATVM AQVITANIE TENENTE : HELI-
AM TALEIRANDVM PETRAGORIORVM
COMITEM : IN METROPOLITICA BVR-
DEGALENSI HELIA RESIDENTE.⁶⁶

[+ The year of the Incarnation of Our Lord 1194, indiction 12, concurrent 5, epactis 26, 3rd kalends of February, Sunday, 4th day after the new moon, this altar and church were dedicated by Ademar, Bishop of Périgueux, to the honour of the Holy Trinity, to Saint Mary the Virgin, to the Blessed Martin, Bishop and Confessor, to the Blessed Paul the Apostle, to the Blessed B[ecket] Thomas, Archbishop and Martyr, to Saint Catherine, Virgin and Martyr, and to all of God’s saints; being Hebrardo de Vilars present Deacon of this church; Celestine [III], presiding Pope of the Holy Roman Church, and Philip [II], commanding King of the Franks; Richard [I], King of England and Duke of Aquitaine; Hélie Taleirand of Périgueux, present Count of the city of Bordeaux +]⁶⁷

This inscription is considered a rare example. As Freiin von Fürstenberg pointed out, this type of official date was generally used in legal charters, papal bulls and other such documents and not typically in epigraphs inscribed on ecclesiastical monuments or liturgical vessels.⁶⁸ This raises several questions yet to be investigated. Why, for example, would the abbess or authorities at the convent of St. Boniface be motivated to add a judicial inscription? The Freckenhorst font, as Silvia Schlegel pointed out, would have been used for ceremonial rituals and not regular baptisms as there was the regular parish church, St. Petrus or *Leutkirche*, to address community needs.⁶⁹ Schlegel argues that the large Freckenhorst font asserted the higher rank of the collegiate church of St. Boniface over the parish church of St. Petrus.⁷⁰

Description

The Freckenhorst font (fig. 1) is tub-shaped, the preferred shape for Westphalian Romanesque fonts, unlike the predominant chalice-shaped fonts carved in Scandinavia. It was carved from Baumberg sandstone that is believed to have been quarried in the area west of Münster. The exterior sides of the vessel have acquired a reddish colour in the corners due to the earlier polychroming.⁷¹ Since the major restoration of St. Boniface in 1859 the Freckenhorst font has stood in the western end on the north side of the nave. Where the baptismal font was originally positioned in the church is not known. The unusually large vessel, compared to oth-

er Westphalian Romanesque fonts, has a monumental stature. It measures 127–128 cm in height (including the lower base), 102 cm without the base, and has an inside diameter of 74–83 cm (the diameter of the font including the rim is 105–117 cm). In comparison, the average height for medieval fonts, whether in Scandinavia or Spain, is circa one metre, similar to the height of altars, which enabled priests to perform the baptism with a degree of ease. The Freckenhorst baptismal font is one of the few, taller stone fonts which exceeds the average height that were made in the Romanesque period in Germany.

The Freckenhorst font is often compared to the Merseburg font, originally from the Church of St. Thomas Becket, known as the *Neumarktkirche*. Since 1831 the font has stood in the Merseburg Cathedral (Merseburg, Saxony-Anhalt). The Merseburg font has a similar monumental height of 127 cm and an inside diameter of 90 cm excluding the rim (fig. 6). Both fonts were made from the similar beige-grey-pinkish sandstone. Marks on the top of the Freckenhorst font rim indicate a lid once fitted over the top of the basin, protecting the blessed water. Like many other very large or decorative baptismal fonts, the Freckenhorst font was not carved for the regular baptism of infants. The earlier, nearby older church of St. Petrus served the community for regular baptisms and was known as the *Leutkirche* for the affiliated parish, even though St. Boniface had been given the right to baptise.⁷² The Freckenhorst font's considerable size visually re-

inforced the authority of the collegiate church, St. Boniface. Like the Neumarktkirche in Merseberg, where the Merseberg font was originally located, St. Boniface was also a renowned pilgrimage site with a relic of the *Holy Cross*. The Freckenhorst font was what Schlegel has called a *festive* rather than *everyday* font which was destined for ceremonial uses at Easter, Pentecost and other rituals.⁷³

Variations of the popular Romanesque palmette and geometric borders found

frequently on other Romanesque fonts were carved around the upper rim of the Freckenhorst font and on the arches framing the scenes (fig. 7).⁷⁴ The palmette motif encircling the font is a variation of the palmette motif encircling the early thirteenth-century Vellern font (St. Pankratius, Nordrhein-Westfalen) made from Baumberg sandstone by the Münsterländischen Ornamentformen workshop (figs. 8 and 9), the thirteenth-century baptismal font at Lippoldsberg (figs. 10 and 11)

Fig. 6. Merseburg baptismal font, c. 1170–1190, Merseburg Cathedral, Saxony-Anhalt, Germany. Photo BSI.





Fig. 7. Border on Freckenhorst baptismal font, late 12th century at the earliest to early 13th century, Collegiate Church of St. Boniface, Warendorf, Münster, Germany. Photo BSI.

and around the border of the later tomb slab for Abbess Beatrice I, known also as Beatrice of Franconia (1037–13 July 1061) of Quedlinburg Abbey (fig. 19).⁷⁵ A variety of similar borders to the Freckenhorst font are illustrated in the *Gospel of Henry the Lion*, c. 1188 (*Evangeliar Heinrichs d. Löwen*, Cod. Guelf. 105 Noviss. 2°), a manuscript from the Helmshausen Benedictine abbey, which re-emerged in 1983 after having been lost for several decades (now in München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 30055).⁷⁶ Folios 10v, 11r, 12r, and 16r are a few examples in this manuscript that have variations of the same palmette motif.⁷⁷ Likewise, the same crossed-square carved on the arch over the font's *Christ in Majesty* scene is embellished and frames

the *Presentation of Christ in the Temple* in the manuscript on folio 111r.⁷⁸

The Freckenhorst baptismal font has two pictorial registers separated by a narrow band that has the incised inscription. The upper register depicts seven scenes from the three seasons of Advent, Christmas and Easter that celebrate the life of Christ on earth and the victory of the Christian faith. The narrative reads chronologically from the right to left: the *Annunciation*, *Christ in Majesty*, *Baptism of Christ*, the *Crucifixion*, the *Harrowing of Hell*, the *Ascension* and the *Nativity of Christ*. The lower register has the bodies of four lions, three beastly heads and one male. The male flanked by two lions has been identified as the Old Testament

Fig. 8. Border, Vellern baptismal font, early 13th century, Parish Church of St. Pankratius, Beckum-Vellern, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany. Photo BSI.



Fig. 9. Vellern baptismal font, early 13th century, Parish Church of St. Pankratius, Beckum-Vellern, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany. Photo BSI.



Fig. 10. Border on Lippoldsberg baptismal font, mid-13th century, Parish Church of SS. George and Mary, Lippoldsberg, Westphalia, Germany. Photo BSI.

Fig. 11. Lippoldsberg baptismal font, mid-13th century, Parish Church of SS. George and Mary, Lippoldsberg, Westphalia, Germany. Photo BSI.



figure of Daniel (Daniel 6:20–22), signifying the victory of Daniel's God. When king Darius saw Daniel was unharmed among the lions, he declared: "It is decreed by me, that in all my empire and my kingdom all men dread and fear the God of Daniel. For he is the living and eternal God for ever: and his kingdom shall not be destroyed, and his power shall be for ever (Daniel 6: 26)." The victory of Daniel's God and his eternal kingdom were appropriate reminders in a historical period consumed with *holy wars* in the Baltic region and the Holy Land.

The Roots of Resistance

The academic opposition to a later date for the Freckenhorst baptismal font had its roots in the nineteenth century and the pre-World War II discourse on what constituted national Germanic Medieval art. By the late nineteenth century the font symbolized the "artistic ingenuity," the "originality" of *Germanic* "innovation" as expressed by Wilhelm Lübke in 1853, and again by Wilhelm Effmann in 1889.⁷⁹ Effman stated that the scenes on the font are the oldest known Christological images from the New Testament carved in stone in Germany.⁸⁰ After that, numerous art historians simply cited Effman's publication and the date for the Freckenhorst font.

The debates shifted in the late nineteenth century when historians sought the regional origins of the Romanesque in terms of sculpture, monumental art and architecture. It resulted in noticeable rivalries, debates and questions, such as:

where did the German Romanesque appear first? In Westphalia, Saxony or the Middle Rhine?⁸¹ In 1887 Reber elaborated on the regional rivalries in *A History of Medieval Art*:

The backwardness of Cologne, and indeed of all the towns of the Middle Rhine, in the sculpture of figures...The neighboring province of Westphalia, though decidedly inferior in architectural respects, produced in sculpture some significant results, such as...the baptismal font of Freckenhorst..., all of which, though of little interest in their subjects, still possess certain merits of execution.⁸²

In the bed of early twentieth-century European nationalism, debates in the 1910's asked whether the essence of the Romanesque had originated in Germany or in France.⁸³ This *exalted* view of the Freckenhorst font's origins continued with discussions in the evolving discipline of art history. The concept of a *Germanic style* in the history of art within the broader debate of nationalism was fettered to German culture, identity and what constituted *great* Germanic art.⁸⁴ In 1907 Dehio outlined a systematic analysis of German traits in the arts in his article "Deutsche Kunst und deutsche Geschichte" in *Historische Zeitschrift*.⁸⁵ This was followed by his monumental work in 1919, *Geschichte der deutschen Kunst*, in which, as Hans Belting would later write, Dehio's intention was to reveal how the "greatness of German history [...] history attested to by monuments of art, in the sense that they reveal conditions of the national soul and bring secrets to light, which no other kind of historical source would be capa-

ble of expressing.”⁸⁶ From this perspective, Dehio, a staunch defender of the ingenuity of Germanic traits, positioned the Freckenhorst font in the context of monumental Romanesque sculpture in Westphalia.⁸⁷ He notes that the carved relief, the *Descent of Christ from the Cross*, at the Externsteine, near Horn-Bad Meinberg (Westphalia, Germany) “was securely dated to 1115” which is later confirmed by Panofsky (fig. 13).⁸⁸ Neither art historian points out that the sculpture is carved on the exterior and that the date of 1115 is inscribed on the interior altar. In fact, Panofsky introduces his discussion of the Freckenhorst font with the opening statement “Das 14 Jahre nach den Externsteinen...” creating a

previous context of carving monumental works for the Freckenhorst font. The Externsteine is the name for an ancient open-air site with a group of dramatic sandstone formations in the Teutoburg Forest next to the Oberer Teich lake and Weimbecke river (fig. 12). In the medieval period the site was provided with a chapel, which had an altar with the inscribed date of 1115–1119. On the exterior side of the rock formation is the monumental relief of the *Descent of Christ from the Cross*. Dehio’s assertion of the 1115 date for this relief was based on the inscription on the altar in the chapel, a view that was widely held at that time. Today, however, this monumental sculpture has been re-dated to c. 1190 at the earliest or



Fig. 12. View of Externsteine site, Horn-Bad Meinberg, Westphalia, Germany. Photo Michael aus Halle, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons.



Fig. 13. *Descent of Christ from the Cross*, Externsteine, Horn-Bad Meinberg, Westphalia, Germany. Photo Sebastian Rittau, Wikimedia Commons.

to the first quarter of the thirteenth century.⁸⁹ After providing this comparative context, Dehio continues with a description of the Freckenhorst font as a goldsmith work in stone, “eine Goldschmiedearbeit in Stein” dated to 1129.⁹⁰ And in 1924 Hermann Beenken (1896–1952) refers to the Freckenhorst font as the oldest and richest sculptural work in Germany.⁹¹

The reference to comparative works, ideally within the same region and medium, served to legitimize and validate an early twelfth-century date. However, the quest for comparative, early twelfth century works within Westphalia to support an early twelfth century date for the Freckenhorst font failed. In fact, no comparable sculptural works were found even within the broader scope of northern Germany. To compensate for this absence, a range of metal and ivory works as well as manuscripts were sought. In 1924 Panofsky argued that Belgian and Cologne ivories of the eleventh century were influential, although later Karl Noehles in 1953 would dispute this influence.⁹² Dehio’s idea that a metal worker had carved the baptismal font due to the high degree of skilled workmanship, was an idea that was later reiterated by Pudelko in 1932.⁹³ The fleur-de-lis motif and the band with the inscription separating the two registers on the font were compared to features found on regional metal works and formed part of the hypothesis supported by Dehio in 1919 and Panofsky in 1924.⁹⁴ The fleur-de-lis motif on the band around the basin was compared with similar motifs on met-



Fig. 14. *Imperial Head, c. 1129, Collegiate Church of St. Boniface, Warendorf, Germany. Photo BSI.*

al works from the earlier period of Ottonian metalwork. Works by Roger of Helmarhausen and the reliquary known as Oelde-Lette from St. Vitius Church continued to be cited as possible influences for the precocious font in the 1930s and 1950s.⁹⁵ In 1933 Franz Jansen and in 1924 Beenken proposed that English manuscripts of the twelfth century were influential in the making of the Freckenhorst font and in the pictorial compositions.⁹⁶ Karl Hoelker suggested the influence of Netherlandish art.⁹⁷ But as Richard Hamann had pointed out in 1924 there was an absence of ‘logical continuous development’ of medieval sculpture in Germany.⁹⁸ Not all scholars were comfortable with the jump from metalwork and portable ivory work to a single monumental sculptural



Fig. 15. *Capitals, c. 1130, Baumberg sandstone, Freckenhorst Stiftskammer, Collegiate Church of St. Boniface, Warendorf, Germany. Photo BSI.*

work. In 1931, the earlier views of Dehio revealed itself in the 1931 discussion of ‘German national characteristics’ in the work of Heinrich Wölffin and later, again, as the “all German tradition” in the dissertation about Westphalia cylindrical baptismal fonts by Noehles in 1953.⁹⁹

In the surveys on medieval art in Westphalia, the Freckenhorst font retained its enshrined place. In Pudelko’s summary of Romanesque fonts in the Latin West (1932), the Freckenhorst font is introduced as the “famous Freckenhorst font.”¹⁰⁰ He affirms the date of 1129 and repeats Dehio’s and Panofsky’s earlier convictions that the font was carved by a metalworker.¹⁰¹ In his 1953 dissertation, Noehles accepted the earlier arguments for why the Freckenhorst font was made in 1129 but recognized there were problems with this early date.¹⁰² Noehles’ detailed analysis and superb assembly of the numerous Westphalian cylindrical fonts segregates the font from the rest and returns to the

earlier nationalist ideology: “The [style of the] Freckenhorst font ... is rooted in the all-German tradition, which continued to draw on the heritage of Ottonian imperial art well into the 12th century.”¹⁰³ He discusses the comparative stone fragments from the church of St. Boniface, such as the imperial head (fig. 14) and capitals (fig. 15) made from Baumberg sandstone and by the same workshop as the Freckenhorst font, which, at that time, was believed to be part of the earlier church.¹⁰⁴ Today, the St. Boniface imperial head and capital fragments in the Stiftskammer in Freckenhorst have been attributed to the first quarter of the twelfth-century date, restrained by the unresolved dates attributed to the Freckenhorst font.¹⁰⁵ Whereas, the other Romanesque pieces, such as the graveslab fragment, c. 1185–1207,¹⁰⁶ and the thirteenth-century fragmented lion (fig. 16), are dated to the thirteenth century.¹⁰⁷ The fact that these two fragments also carved from Baumberg sandstone were not tethered to

the 1129 Freckenhorst date in the scholarship, has enabled historians to attribute a thirteenth-century date.¹⁰⁸ The other comparative work was the above-mentioned relief at the Externsteine depicting the *Descent of Christ*, which was dated to 1115 based on the inscription on the altar in the chapel and subsequently, redated to c. 1190 at the earliest or to the first quarter of the thirteenth century.¹⁰⁹ Given the overwhelming authority, scope and breadth of Pudelko and Noehles' research on medieval fonts, like many of the earlier historians, their research is often referenced by scholars entering the field or left unresolved with references to the date disputes.¹¹⁰

By the mid-1930s through to the 1950s the Freckenhorst font had received the 'sanction of tradition' and was considered a canonical work.¹¹¹ In later publications, historical and cultural guides, scholars often repeated earlier assumptions without

questioning the political debates or ideological contexts in which the 1129 date had been accepted. With each additional publication by renowned scholars that supported an early twelfth century date, it became increasingly difficult to argue for a later, more appropriate date for the Freckenhorst font. Nevertheless, from the beginning, counter arguments were introduced that questioned the pivotal role that the font acquired within the scholarship. In 1834 Fredrick Wiggert, on the basis of the inscription, dated the Merseburg font to the last decade of the twelfth century or first decade of the thirteenth century.¹¹² In 1910 Max Creutz, instead of seeking earlier sources, once again drew readers' attention to the similarities between the lower lion motif on the Merseburg and Freckenhorst fonts. In 1924 the Merseburg font was dated to 1170–1190 by Beenken, who acknowledged that it was a later work than



Fig. 16. Lion fragment, 13th century, Freckenhorst Stiftskammer, Collegiate Church of St. Boniface, Waren-dorf, Germany. Photo BSI.

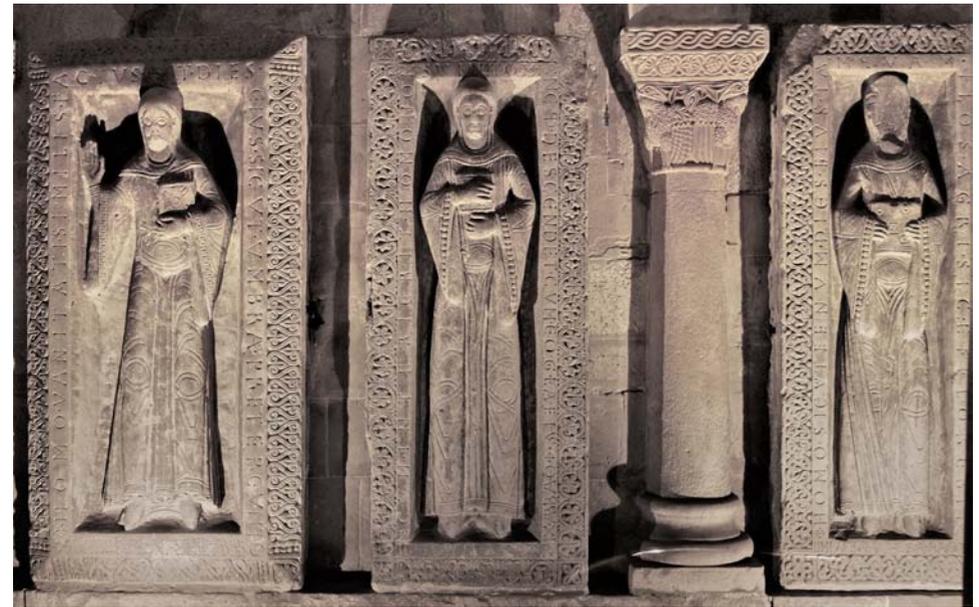


Fig. 17. Abbesses Adelaide I, Beatrice I and Adelaide II, tomb slabs, late 12th century, Quedlinburg Abbey, Saxony-Anholt, Germany. Photo BSI.

the Freckenhorst font and pointed out the problems of using only stylistic analysis when determining dates for medieval objects, such as the Freckenhorst font.¹¹³ In 1929 Heinrich Schütter posed a date of ca. 1200 for the latter.¹¹⁴ As scholars grappled with methodological issues and incongruities, Hoelker in 1936 proposed a date of decades post the 1129 following the inscription analysis by Freiin von Fürstenberg, and Paul Wember in 1941 suggested a date of 1180–1190.¹¹⁵ In 1942 Kurt Pohle too supported a post-mid-twelfth-century date; in the year 1952, Wilhelm Sandforth proposed a date in the first half of the thirteenth century date as Beissel originally had back in 1903.¹¹⁶

Recent Studies and Comparative Works

To support the 1129 date of the Freckenhorst font, Panofsky and Beenken discussed the comparative works of the three tomb slabs at Quedlinburg of the imperial Abbesses Adelaide I (973/73–1043/44), Beatrice I (1037–1061) and Adelaide II (1045–1096), and the tomb of Reinhildis in the Riesenbeck parish church of St. Calixtus (north of Münster) (figs. 17, 18 and 19).¹¹⁷ Both Beatrice I and Adelaide II were daughters of the German Emperor, Henry III (1016–1056), and Reinhildis was a local holy person known as "Saint Reinhildis."¹¹⁸ There has been a gradual, but somewhat reluctant shift, in the controversial dates assigned to the three tomb slabs for the Ab-



Fig. 18. Reinbildis Holy person, tomb slab, c. 1180, St. Calixtus Church, Reisenbeck, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany. After Panofsky 1924, vol. II, Taf. 17.

besses of Quedlinburg, again partly due to the political views associated with the site since the 1930s and 1940s.¹¹⁹ In 1951 Otto Schmitt reviewed the comparative works discussed in the earlier scholarship that supported the 1129 date for the Freckenhorst font.¹²⁰ He adamantly rejected a date prior to the mid-twelfth century for most of the comparative works, except for the *Gernroder Heiligen Grab* which he does not address in this article, “Die Dauer der ersten Epoche ist, wie wir sehen werden, zu weit gegriffen; sie beginnt in Wirklichkeit erst mit der Jahrhundertmitte und umfasst ziemlich genau das dritte Viertel des 12. Jahrhunderts.”¹²¹ In 2004 Willibald Sauerländer acknowledged the date controversy but did not pursue the earlier arguments. Instead, the focus of his analysis was to affirm a later context for the Quedlinburg tomb slabs by analysing the three tomb slabs from Hesse and the tomb of Count Eberhard III von Nellenburg from Schaffhausen from 1150–1160.¹²² The academic silence since Schmitt’s 1951 assertion and Sauerländer’s environmental scan of comparative works, suggests there is a general consensus that the three abbesses’ tomb slabs were commissioned in *memoria* and most likely belong to the second half of the twelfth century.¹²³ In 2008 Karen Blough disregards the German scholarship about the date and, instead, turns to sigillography and the creation of a historical compendium based on the abbesses’ lives, emphasizing the memorial creation of the three slabs and suggested the later influence of Abbess Gerburg of Cappenberg (r.



Fig. 19. Abbess Beatrice I, tomb slab, late 12th century, Quedlinburg Abbey, Saxony-Anholt, Germany. Photo BSI.

1126–1137).¹²⁴ Karen Blough situates the making of these works within a political framework, “the anti-Salian partisanship and reform” during the time of Gerburg of Cappenberg but does not discuss the comparative context of other twelfth-century stone tomb slabs.¹²⁵ Other tomb slabs, such as the Reinhildis tomb slab, have since been redated to c. 1180, which aligns the work with the similar types of tomb slabs produced in Skåne by the Majestatis workshop from Valleberga and Fjellie, and the slab inserted into the wall of the Dalhem Church on Gotland.¹²⁶ Discussions about the dates of these and other regional comparative works gradually shifted the development of monumental sculpture in northern Germany to the second half and third quarter of the twelfth century as historians acknowledged that some of these works were commissioned posthumously as memorials to individuals.¹²⁷

The earlier discussions on other works, such as the monumental *Descent of Christ from the Cross* on the exterior side of the Externsteine rock formation (fig. 13), has also undergone a re-evaluation from several perspectives. In a superb collection of articles, edited by Larissa Eikermann, Stefanie Haupt, Roland Linde and Michael Zelle, in *Die Externsteine: Zwischen wissenschaftlicher Forschung und völkischer Deutung. Beiträge der Tagung am 6. und 7. März 2015 in Detmold* (2018), the inscription, history and date of the Externsteine site is thoroughly examined.¹²⁸ Roland Pieper dates the *Descent of Christ from the Cross*, measuring 5.50 m. high and 3.50

m. wide, to c. 1190 at the earliest or to the first quarter of the thirteenth century.¹²⁹ More articles in the edited collection reveals how earlier romanticized ideals associated with the Externsteine site and the 1930s–1940s Nazi ideology acquired right-wing political associations in the twenty-first century.¹³⁰

While not all of the comparative works used as part of the earlier twentieth century arguments for dating the Freckenhorst font before the mid-twelfth century have been reviewed, the majority have been attributed to later periods. The gradual academic erosion of the original arguments pertaining to the comparative works that once supported a 1129 date for the Freckenhorst font have, consequently, served to weaken a date prior to the mid-twelfth century for this vessel.

Added to these earlier date revisions was the later iconographical analysis in 1987 by Stefan Soltek who convincingly demonstrated through a detailed iconographical analysis that the Freckenhorst font belonged to the latter half of the twelfth century, at the very earliest.¹³¹ He painstakingly proved that many of the iconographical features in each of the compositions carved around the basin of the font gained widespread popularity in the last half of the twelfth century. He re-affirmed what others had pointed out, that the inscription was a ‘commemorative inscription’ and not indicative of when the vessel was actually made.¹³² With each detailed, scene by scene, comprehensive iconographical analysis by Soltek, a later provenance for

the Freckenhorst font has been successfully argued, which, in turn, supported earlier arguments, such as those presented by Beissel in 1903.

Soltek’s iconographical evaluation of the scenes laid a firm, methodological foundation for asserting that the font was a product *at the earliest*, c. 1150–1175. In 2015 Didier Méhu agreed that the vessel was probably made c. 1170.¹³³ In addition, after Soltek’s 1987 analysis, the lost *Gospel of Henry the Lion*, c. 1188, from the Helmshausen Benedictine abbey resurfaced (see above, p 18).¹³⁴ As previously noted, this manuscript has many of the same ornamental borders and figural styles as portrayed on the Freckenhorst font, including the portrayal of the *Judenhut* and Jews.¹³⁵ Following Soltek’s dissertation, several historians have concluded that the font is indeed a later work.

The Baptismal Font Context

The structure of the pictorial cycle on the Freckenhorst font shares several features with other pictorial programs carved on the *Westphalian cylindrical fonts*, such as the seven scenes framed in an architectural arcade, the sequence and relationship of events in the program and the subjects rendered. The chronological reading from right to left with the first scene of the *Annunciation* followed by the *Nativity* and the *Baptism of Christ* is similar to the placement of the same three events on the Romanesque fonts from Alsfeld, Eschau, Finedon, Gehrden, Knislinge, Rone and Stockum. In fact, the pictorial cycle

on the tub-shaped, thirteenth-century baptismal font at Stockum (fig. 20), only 40 kilometers from Freckenhorst, depicts similar topics in the narrative cycle as seen on the Freckenhorst font. Both fonts depict the *Annunciation*, *Nativity* (fig. 21) and the *Baptism of Christ*. The *Ascension of Christ* and the *Harrowing of Hell* on the Freckenhorst font are replaced by a representation of the *Adoration of the Magi* and St. Pancratius on the Stockum font. Each scene on the Stockum font is framed by an arcade with a palmette border around the rim. Both the Stockum and Freckenhorst fonts were part of the northern trend in making cylindrical fonts with Christological narrative cycles.



Fig. 20. Stockum baptismal font, mid-to-late 13th century, St. Pankratius Church, Sundern-Stockum, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany. Photo BSI.



Fig. 21. Nativity scene, Stockum baptismal font, mid-to-late 13th century, St. Pankratius Church, Sundern-Stockum, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany. Photo BSI.

The representation of *Christ in Majesty* on the Freckenhorst font, is a well-known motif from earlier periods. However, it is not until the mid-to-late twelfth century when variations of *Christ in Judgement* or *Majesty* begin to ornament northern stone baptismal fonts. The motif is known on the German Romanesque fonts at Assel, St. Ulrich im Schwarzwald, Gernrode, Lippoldsberg, Stockum and Würzburg. Farther afield, there are numerous representations of *Christ in Majesty* or *Christ in Judgement* on fonts located in England,

Scandinavia, France and Spain, again attributed to the late twelfth or the thirteenth centuries.¹³⁶

Several notable anomalies regarding iconographical details in the Freckenhorst scenes do not support an early twelfth century date as demonstrated in Soltek's 1987 iconographical analysis. In the making of medieval fonts, there is further support to substantiate Beissel's and Soltek's arguments for two features they discussed: the presence of the *Judenhut* or Jews' cap on Joseph in the *Nativity scene* (fig. 22), and the kneeling patron next to St. John in the *Crucifixion scene*. Beissel noted that the *Judenhut* was a later feature, citing the examples of the rood, c. 1200, and the carved tympanum on the western portal of St. Maria zur Höhe in Soest (Nordrhein-Westfalen), c. 1200–1230. Joseph wears a *Judenhut* in the *Nativity scene* on the St. Mary tympanum, and Jews are rendered at the burial of Christ on the rood.¹³⁷ Soltek argues that one of the earliest examples of the *Judenhut* appears in a manuscript dated to 1160–1170 (in the Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart, Cod. Hist. Fol. 415, fol. 62v.). In addition, the *Judenhut* is portrayed in the already mentioned *Gospel of Henry the Lion* from c. 1188.¹³⁸ The *Judenhut*, or *pilleus cornutus*, worn by Joseph in the *Nativity scene* was a feature portrayed more widely in the thirteenth century after the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 (canon 68), which asserted that Jews had to wear this hat and a dress code to differentiate them from Christians.¹³⁹

On baptismal fonts the portrayal of



Fig. 22. Nativity scene with Joseph wearing a *Judenhut*, Freckenhorst baptismal font, late 12th century at the earliest, Collegiate Church of St. Boniface, Warendorf, Germany. Photo BSI.

Jews is found primarily on works dated to the thirteenth century. For example, the *Israelites Crossing the Red Sea* on the Hildesheim font (c. 1225–1226) wear the *Judenhut* (fig. 23). In addition, the thirteenth century font at Stockum depicts Joseph in the *Nativity scene* wearing the *Judenhut* and it appears on those persecuting Christ in the *Crucifixion* scenes on the Bochum (Cofbuokheim) font, c. 1200; Nicodemus wears the *Judenhut* in the scene with Christ

on the Lippoldsberg font dated to the mid-thirteenth century; Joseph wears the *Judenhut* in the *Nativity scene* and the soldiers wear the *Judenhut* in the *Crucifixion scene* on the Aplerbeck font, dated to the end of the twelfth century; Joseph wears the *Judenhut* on the Borne font, dated to second quarter of the thirteenth century and so does a Jew depicted in the *Crucifixion scene* on the Wiarden font, c. 1270–1280. Similar patterns are seen on the ear-



Fig. 23. Moses leading the Israelites across the Red Sea, Hildesheim baptismal font, c. 1225–1226, St. Maria Cathedral, Hildesheim, Germany. Photo BSI.

ly thirteenth-century fonts by the Danish medieval “Knislinge workshop”, which depicted Joseph wearing the *Judenbut* on the fonts at Knislinge, Kviinge, Norra Lundby, Okome, Oppmanna and Södra Mellby, which tend to be dated to c. 1200 or the early decades of the thirteenth century.

On medieval fonts the addition of a patron is primarily a late twelfth or early thirteenth century development that accompanied the new trend of depicting events from the life of Christ on baptismal fonts. This is seen on the Hildesheim font, attributed to the early thirteenth century,

which has a kneeling donor in the scene of the enthroned *Madonna and Child*, identified in the dedication inscription as Wilbernus.¹⁴⁰ In addition, the Merseburg font (fig. 6) has a kneeling patron and the 1279 font at Würzburg has two kneeling donors in the scene of *Christ in Majesty*, and the mid-thirteenth century font at Assel (c. 1250) has two donors kneeling in the *Christ in Majesty* scene. It should also be noted that the badly eroded *Crucifixion* scene on the Hegwald font from Etelhem on Gotland may have kneeling patrons, and the early thirteenth century font in

Sörup (Schleswig-Holstein), by the Calcarius workshop, has two donors kneeling at the base of the cross (fig. 24).¹⁴¹

The digital project, *Baptisteria Sacra Index* (BSI), at the University of Toronto has compiled iconographical information on more than 23,000 baptismal fonts dated from the Early Christian period to the seventeenth century, and with more than 1,400 inscriptions. A large component of this iconographical index consists of works produced in the *Golden Age*, the second-

half of the twelfth century through the thirteenth centuries. The evidence compiled in the BSI demonstrates that the popularity of representing events from the life of Christ, beginning with his childhood through to his resurrection, was predominantly a late twelfth-century development, which escalated in the thirteenth century in northern Europe. There are no known fonts with Christological narratives dated to before the mid-twelfth century in Europe. Within this context, a date before



Fig. 24. Calcarius workshop, Crucifixion scene with Donors. Sörup baptismal font, 1st half of the 13th century, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany. Photo BSI.

the mid-twelfth century for the Freckenhorst font appears untenable. Christological cycles on fonts continue in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but to a lesser degree and with considerable modification to the iconography.

Conclusion

The underlying resistance to accepting a later date for the Freckenhorst font is rooted in the nineteenth and early twentieth century scholarly discussions on Germany's post-imperial, romanticised cultural identity, an association that has left lingering divisions in some communities. Nevertheless, current scholarship affirms that the earlier arguments supporting a later date by Foerstemann (1834), Beissel (1903), Creutz (1910), Schütter (1929), Freiin von Fürstenberg (1934), Hoelker (1936), Schmitt (1951), Sandforth (1952), Wember (1941), Bauermann (1973), Soltek (1987) and Sauerländer (2004) were indeed correct.

There is no doubt that the remarkable Freckenhorst font was part of the *Golden Age* of baptismal fonts. A time when Christological pictorial narrative cycles ornamented fonts, wall murals and sculptural programs on the thousands of new stone churches. The vessel was carved as part of the vast and complex stone industry that escalated in Westphalia, in fact, across northern Europe, resulting in the many *Westphalian Cylindrical fonts* as documented by Noehles and the numerous other German Romanesque fonts documented by Schlegel.¹⁴² The Freckenhorst font, while

clearly an individual commission, was not a 'single innovation' uniquely representative of the origins of the Romanesque in Westphalia, but very much part of a rich period that witnessed the production of thousands of stone products, including fonts, in the many workshops that evolved in Westphalia and across northern Europe. It is within this wider, political and prosperous ecclesiastic context, that the finely carved Freckenhorst font (fig. 1), in addition to the works attributed to the same workshop, the Imperial Head (fig. 14) and capital (fig. 15), should be re-examined and investigated.

In the historiography of medieval fonts, Freckenhorst's pictorial program and iconographical details support a late twelfth date at the earliest and even an early thirteenth-century provenance around the year 1200, or shortly after, as previously suggested by other scholars. The model used for the inscription was a legal document, this has been established. Nevertheless, further questions need to be asked about the underlying motivation, political or ecclesiastical, that necessitated a legal epigraph be incised on this liturgical vessel in a female convent, affirming an earlier consecration rite, which in turn, might reveal more precise information about the font's provenance and the convent's historical context.

Notes

- This article is dedicated to two inspirational individuals: Stephan Beissel, S.J. (1841–1915) who rejected the precocious date reinforced by leading art historians in 1903, and Stefan Eugen Solteck, who in 1987 tenaciously pursued a detailed iconographical analysis to counter argue the continuous resistance in accepting a later date for the Freckenhorst baptismal font. A special thank you to Miguel A. Torrens.
- Earlier papers on this subject were presented, "Confronting the Past: Inherited Scholarship, Antiquated Theories and Challenges in the Study of Gotland's Medieval Baptismal Font Workshops" in September 2017, in the session entitled *Nordic Splendour: Medieval Church Furnishings in Scandinavia* organized by Dr Justin E. A. Kroesen, Bergen, in the conference, *Forum Kunst des Mittelalters, Berlin and Brandenburg*, in Berlin, and "German Innovation and Nationalism: The Case of the Freckenhorst Font and the Proposed Origins of the Romanesque in Westphalia," in the June 2017 *Northern/Early Medieval Interdisciplinary Conference Series*, University of York, England. At the 2017 conference in Berlin, my suggestion that the Freckenhorst font was a later work than the 1129 inscribed date was met with resistance, which, subsequently, led to a deeper examination of the historiography.
- Berggren 2002, 148–151.
- The research undertaken in the *Baptisteria Sacra Index*, an iconographical database of baptismal fonts from the Early Christian period to the seventeenth century at the University of Toronto, co-directed by the author and Miguel A. Torrens, has contributed greatly to this analysis. As of January 2020, there are circa 23,000 fonts documented from around the world, with more than 100,000 images assembled for research purposes.
- Berggren 2002, 148–151; Sonne de Torrens 2013, 49–76.
- It is estimated that at least 25,000 to 35,000 fonts were needed and produced from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries (calculation, BSI).
- Ferber 1975, 274–277; for examples of workshops producing fonts and other stone products see Berggren 2002, 144–147, 164; Meyer 2011, 1–61; for the classic analysis of Liège's stone industry and workshops (fonts, captials, grave slabs, etc.), see Tollenaere 1957; for English fonts and other stone works carved by the Herefordshire school or workshops, see Thurlby 1999, 225–256.
- Colin (known as Paddie) Stuart Drake (1928–June 25, 2005), author of *The Romanesque Fonts of Northern Europe and Scandinavia* (2001) coined the descriptive noun *fonters* and the verb *fonting* at the International Medieval Congress at the University of Leeds in 1997.
- References on the Freckenhorst font are too extensive to be listed in this article. For references from the thirteenth century to c. 1898, see Schwieters 1903, 11–13; for publications from 1823 to 2005, see Jászai 2004/2005, 63–92, and Soltek 1987.
- For example, the San Isidoro font in Léon, see Sonne de Torrens 2013, 49–76; for the Hegwald workshop, see Sonne de Torrens 2020; for the Eschau font see Jean-Philippe Meyer 2011; for the Namur fonts, see Ghislain 2009.
- Panofsky 1924, 85; Roosval 1918, 73; Nordström 1984, 50; Pudelko 1932, 103.
- As an example of how the medieval sculpture at Externsteine in Germany retained a sanctified but right-wing political status in the twentieth and twenty-first century, see Eikermann et al. 2018, 293–554.
- Roosval 1918, 6, notes a date of 1126 for the Freckenhorst font.
- Roosval 1925, 98–104.
- Tuulse 1968, 83–88; Lundberg 1969, 127.
- Belting 1998, 3 5; Berggren 2002, 148–151.

- 17 Belting 1998, 29–35.
 18 Roosval 1918, 145–157.
 19 Dorow 1823, xii–xiv.
 20 Dorow 1823, xiii.
 21 Kugler 1861, 27.
 22 Curran 2003, 10–16, 20.
 23 Reber 1886, 443; Forthingham 1887, 110–119.
 24 Soltek 1987, 47; for a discussion of the term ‘templum’ in the Freckenhorst inscription in reference to the Maria-Ecclesia theme, see Soltek 1987, 363–366, and continued discussion on variations of this theme, *Ecclesia-Sapientia*, see Jászai 2004/2005, 78–80; Méhu 2008, 313–314.
 25 English translation by Schmitt 2010, 161.
 26 Legal date formats in medieval charters and legal documents is addressed in Hampson 1841.
 27 “AVE GRA(TIA) PLENA D(O)M(INU)S TECU(M)” and “FIAT M(IHI) SEC(UN)D(U)M V(ER)BV(M) T(UU)M.” (Luke 1:38), Schäfer 2012, 14.
 28 “VIRI GALIL(EI) Q(VI)D STATIS ASPIC(IENTES) IN C(OELVM)” and “SIC VENIET Q(VEM)ADMOD(VM) VID(ISTIS) EV(M).” Schäfer 2012, 24. English is “Men of Galilee, what are you doing there, looking up to Heaven? He will come again as you have seen Him before.” (Acts 1:11; translation by Ulrich Schäfer).
 29 In the *Christ in Majesty* scene the scrolls held by Christ read: (right hand scroll) “+VENITE BENEDICTI P(ATRIS) MEI (AC)CIPITE ? REGNUM” (Matt. 25:34) and (left hand scroll) “+DISCEDITE AME MALE/DICTI IN IG-NEM ETERNA(M).” (Matt. 25:41) Schäfer 2012, 26. English “Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom of Heaven” and “Go down from me, ye accursed, into eternal fire.” (Translation by Ulrich Schäfer).
 30 Neumüllers-Klauser 1993, 69; for discussion of the ‘SVE’ see Méhu 2008, 301, note 56.
 31 Bauermann 1973, 1–17; Fürstenberg 1934, 193–303.
 32 Beissel 1903, 326.
 33 Panofsky 1924, 85, Tafel 16.
 34 Pudelko, the German art historian and son-in-law of G. F. Heber, was active in Florence before the war and in Lausanne during the war. He was reported in 1944 to be a member of the German propaganda organisation in Norway, <http://www.lootedart.com/MVI3RM469661>. List of Red Flag names assembled by OSS (USS Office of Strategic Services) Art Looting Intelligence Unit (ALIU) Reports 1945–1946 and ALIU Red Flag Names List and Index.
 35 Panofsky 1924, 85, Tafel 16.
 36 Panofsky 1924, 85.
 37 Roosval 1918, 40, 73; Pudelko 1932, 120, 155, note 148.
 38 Roosval 1918, 40, 73.
 39 Pudelko 1932, 155, note 148.
 40 Pudelko 1932, 120.
 41 Roosval 1925, 98–104.
 42 Lundberg 1937, 197–231, revised version in Lundberg 1940, 281–301; Tuulse 1968, 83–88; Lundberg 1969, 127. For the later phase of the font industry see Berggren 2002, 143–180; Landen 1993, 40–45; Landen 1997, 81–93; Reutersvärd 1983, 360–368.
 43 Sonne de Torrens [2020 in press].
 44 Fürstenberg 1934, 242.
 45 Bauermann 1973, 4.
 46 Fürstenberg 1934, 6.
 47 The analysis of inscriptions in this section is based on the patterns and trends evident in the research compiled on over 21,000 medieval fonts in the BSI project (cfr note 4).
 48 On the Würzburg font (1279) the inscription notes the year as “...ANNO INCARNATIONIS DOMINI MCCLXXIX...” Source: Index of Medieval Art; the date of the 1310 Ebstorf font is “...ANNO – D[omi]NI – M° – CCC° – X°...”, BSI on-site visit in 2014.
 49 There are a few exceptions, such as the long runic narration on the Aakirkeby font, see Jansson 1987, 168.
 50 The inscription on the Welsh font at Partrishow provides not a year but a historical period according to J. Romilly Allen: “MENHIR ME FECIT I[N] TE[M]PORE GENILLIN.” Allen attributes Genillin as the late 11th century figure, see Allen 1888, 167, 173 and ill. on 167.
 51 Kendall 1998, xi.
 52 *Catalunya romànica* 1984–, vol. VIII, 290.
 53 The Spanish ERA is a calendar numbering system used on the Iberian peninsula from 5th century until the 15th century. Deduct from the ERA year 39 and you will have the equivalent AD date.
 54 Bilbao 1996, 251.
 55 Downholme (retooled in 19th century, North Yorkshire), Hanbury (Staffordshire), Attlebridge (Norfolk), Bramley (Surrey), Atcham (Shropshire), Bowes (Durham), Cranstock (Cornwall), Great Malvern (Worcestershire) and numerous more.
 56 For example, the font at Tubersent (on-site evaluation, later addition of “1430,” Pas-de-Calais, Hauts-de-France, France).
 57 Mesplé 1970, 136.
 58 Listed in Palissy [ref.: PM31001489].
 59 On-site transcription.
 60 Allen 1833, vol. 1, 348, gives a 1405 date; Paley 1844, 27, provides a 1405 date; Cox 1907, 182, dates the font to 1355; Pevsner 1989, 430, gives a date of 1405.
 61 “GAT HEN PREDIGET DAT CHRIS HAT VNISVNO / EVANGELIVM VND DOPET -- AM HOLT GEDRAGEN 1605.” Bolege-Vieweg 1998, 214, 215, 222.
 62 “ELD[...N] – IEVERAE – 1584 BAPTIZATE: IN NO[m]I[n]E PATRIS, ET FILII, ET SP[irit]u V[s] S[anct]u[s]: IO[h]A[n]n[es] CO: ET DEL: D[omi]N: IEVERAE / A[n]n[us] 1584,” Kroesen and Steensma 2004, 346–348.
 63 Kendall 1998, 261, “[...] INTRANTES BEN-EDIC AVDIQ[ue] PRE/CANTES EMMER/AMME TVI CVSTOS FIDISSIME TEMP-LI” (Bless those entering, and hear those praying, O Emmeram, most faithful guardian of your church.) ... “+ ABBA REGENWARDVS HOC FORE IVSSIT OPVS” (Abbot Regenwardus ordered this work to be made.)
 64 “+ ANNO DOMINICE INCARNATIONIS Mo Co QUADRAGESIMO NONO REGNANTE CONRADO. EPISCOPO HENRICO II, DE ...ANTE, MARCHIONE SEP-TENNI GODEFRIDO...” Favreau 1979, 125.
 65 Favreau 1979, 21 and plate 9.
 66 The author’s hand written transcription notes the inclusion of “DIE DOMINICA” where as the typed print has excluded this day, Bernaret 1875, 298–301; Deschamps 1929, 41.
 67 Translation of French from Bernaret into English by H. Sonne de Torrens.
 68 Fürstenberg 1934, 242 and Bauermann 1973, 6.
 69 For discussion of the special privileges given to some collegiate churches, see Schlegel 2013, 133–136.
 70 Schlegel 2013, 136.
 71 Jászai 2004/2005, 66.
 72 On the relationship between St. Petrus and St. Boniface, see Kohl 1975, 70–71 and 104–105.
 73 Schlegel 2013, 133–135.
 74 Variations of the palmette motif is found on Westphalian fonts at Boker, Lippborg, Welver, Uentropen and on the tomb slab for Beatrix I from Quedlinburg, figure 19.
 75 Noehls 1953, 55 and 65.
 76 <http://diglib.hab.de/mss/105-noviss-2f/start.htm?image=1111>
 77 Permalink: <http://diglib.hab.de/mss/105-noviss-2f/start.htm> folios 10v, 11r, 12r and 16r.

- 78 Permalink: <http://diglib.hab.de/mss/105-noviss-2f/start.htm>
- 79 Lübke 1853, 372; Effmann 1889, 109–116.
- 80 Effmann 1889, 112: “Taufstein von Freckenhorst, wenn nicht das älteste, sodoch eines der ältesten Beispiele in Deutschland [Darstellungen des biblischen Bilderkreises], welches diesen Gegenstand zur Darstellung bringt.”; Beenken 1924, 80–85.
- 81 Reber 1886, 443.
- 82 Reber 1886, 443.
- 83 Levy 2011, 373–400.
- 84 Wölfflin 1931, 171–180.
- 85 Dehio 1907; Dehio 1914, 61–74.
- 86 Belting 1998, 54.
- 87 Dehio 1919, 174; Levy, 384.
- 88 Dehio 1919, 174; Panofsky 1924, 84.
- 89 Pieper 2018, 104–114.
- 90 Dehio 1919, 174.
- 91 Beenken 1924, 70–73.
- 92 Panofsky 1924, 85; Noehles 1953, 99–100.
- 93 Dehio 1919, 174; Pudelko 1932, 39.
- 94 Dehio 1919, 174; Panofsky 1924, 84.
- 95 Beenken 1924, 84; Noehles 1953, 37.
- 96 Jansen 1933, 49; Beenken 1924, 82–86.
- 97 Hoelker 1936, 83.
- 98 Hamann 1924, 1 and 21.
- 99 Noehles 1953, 100.
- 100 Pudelko 1932, 103.
- 101 Pudelko 1932, 39.
- 102 Noehles 1953, 35.
- 103 “Der Stein zu Freckenhorst gehört zweifellos noch der Zeit vor der Herausbildung landschaftlicher Sonderformen an. Sein Stil wurzelt in der gesamtdeutschen Tradition, die bis weit in das 12. Jh. hinein noch vom Erbe der ottonischen Reichskunst zehrt. Dagegen lassen die Reliefs am Taufstein zu Roxel bereits eine westfälische Variante des Stils der zweiten Jahrhunderthälfte erkennen. Ihre ornamentale Flächen-rhythmik und starre Einzelform zeichnen die westfälische Reliefkunst allgemein aus.” Noehles 1953, 100.
- 104 Noehles 1953, 35; Westermann-Angerhausen 1979, 120–133. Dates of capital and Imperial head as per Kamps 2015, 34, 30.
- 105 Kamps 2015, 34, 30.
- 106 Kohl 1975, 297; Schweisters 1903, 40.
- 107 Kamps 2015, 39.
- 108 Kamps 2015, 30–37.
- 109 Noehles 1953, 35; Schmitt 1951, 26–38; Gaul, 141–164; Pieper 2018, 104–114.
- 110 Schlegel 2012, 386–389; Drake 2002, 95.
- 111 Moxey 1995, 392.
- 112 Wiggert 1834, 36 and 39; Pudelko 1932, 154, note 139.
- 113 Beenken 1924, 86; Otte 1868, 212.
- 114 Schütter, 1952, 30.
- 115 Hoelker 1936, 83.
- 116 Sandforth 1952, 17–18; Beissel 1903, 326; Pohle 1942, 48.
- 117 Panokskywrote, “der Stil unseres Denkmals [*Reinheldis* graveslab], der dem Freckenhorster Taufstein so nahe steht, dass es geradezu der gleichen Werkstatt zugewiesen werden könnte,” 1924, 87; Beenken 1924, 70–73.
- 118 Fozi 2015, 160.
- 119 Scheck 1995, 170–176; Himmler 1936; Manvell and Fraenkel 1965, 47, 56.
- 120 Schmitt 1951, 26.
- 121 Schmitt 1951, 26.
- 122 Sauerländer 2004, 689–709, 705–706.
- 123 The German scholarship on the Quedlinburg tomb slabs is not mentioned or discussed by Karen Blough in her 2008 article, but the idea of *memoria* is discussed in her historical compendium of the abbesses’ lives.
- 124 Blough 2008, 162–163.
- 125 Blough 2008, 147.
- 126 Fozi 2015, 194, 159 fig. 1; Andersson 1928, 181–184; Lindkvist 2015, 340 bild 72,73, 94, 95.
- 127 Fozi 2015, 189, note 50.
- 128 Eikermann et al. 2018.
- 129 Pieper 2018, 104–114.
- 130 Eikermann et al. 2018, 293–533; Raabe and Wilke, 2018, 477–509. See also Steinkamp and Reudenbach 2013, 1–188.
- 131 Soltek 1987, 47; Dorow 1823, XIII.
- 132 Soltek 1987, 47.
- 133 Méhu 2015, 281.
- 134 <http://diglib.hab.de/?db=mss&list=ms&cid=105-noviss-2f>
- 135 There are not many examples of the *Judenhut* in this manuscript, see <http://diglib.hab.de/?db=mss&list=ms&cid=105-noviss-2f.fol.74r>.
- 136 For example, the following fonts: Tirlmont font (Belgium); Mauriac, Montdidier, Ars-sur-le-Ne, L’ Huitre, Chantelle (France); the fonts by the Hegwald, Lyngsjö, Majestatis, Mörarp, Sighraf and Tove workshops in Sweden; Skjeberg, Østfold (Norway); Valtierra de Albacastro (Burgos, Spain); Abia de las Torres and Moarves de Ojeda (Palencia, Spain); Massa Marittima font (Italy); numerous examples in the counties of Warwickshire, Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire and Herefordshire (England).
- 137 Beissel 1903, 327.
- 138 The digitized manuscript is available at: <http://diglib.hab.de/?db=mss&list=ms&cid=105-noviss-2f>.
- 139 Fordham University. Medieval Sourcebook. Twelfth Ecumenical Council: Lateran IV 1215. <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/basis/lateran4.asp>
- 140 Williamson 1998, 79, 81.
- 141 Roosval 1918, Taf. II; Lindkvist 2015, ill. 65, 365.
- 142 Berggren 2002, 143–180.

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