

DOMSCHATZ | MINDEN
CATHEDRAL TREASURY





CATHEDRAL TREASURY MINDEN

Welcome to the cathedral treasury in Minden.
As provost, I am the spiritual leader of the Catholic
parishes in and around Minden.

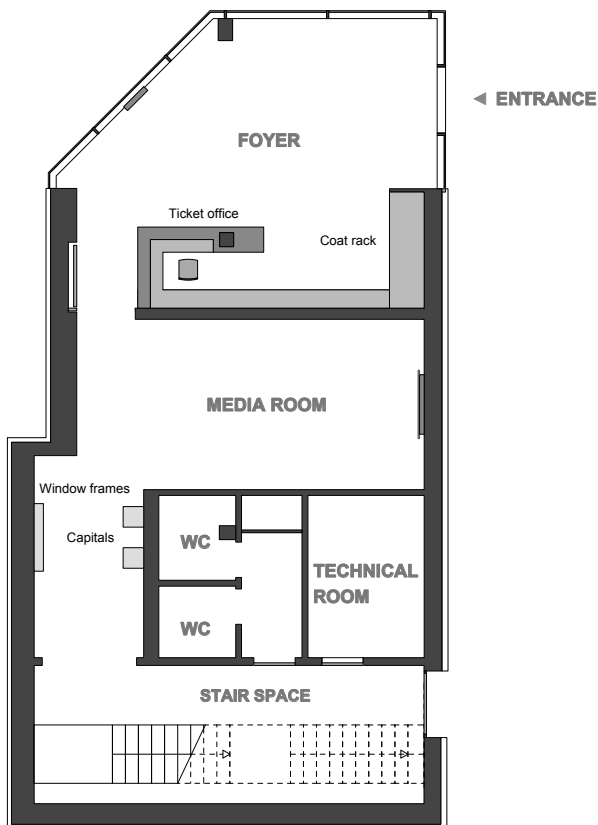
Together with the Minden Cathedral Building Association (Dombau-Verein Minden), we have built this cathedral treasury in order to show – in a contemporary form – and preserve the cult and cultural treasures that have been used in and collected at the cathedral over many centuries.

It is our desire to not just display the items, but also to explain why they were created, what they were used for and what legacy they have for the cathedral parish.

We wish you a pleasant, spiritually enriching stay in our exhibition.

Roland Falkenhahn

Provost of Minden Cathedral



Capital

[Inv. no. 116]

10th century / stone

The capital has a height of 39 centimetres and a base area of 39 x 39 centimetres. Originally, the capital was placed at the northern window of the central tower's wall at the cathedral westwork. The lower area shows a male figure crushed underneath the capital or rather is stuck in a capital body imagined hollow. Two feet standing parallel to each other and upright, with St Andrew's crosses at the bottom of the feet, a sharply oval head and a hand, which holds on to a group of sharp, crenated leaves, are other design elements.

Capital

[Inv. no. 117]

10th century / stone

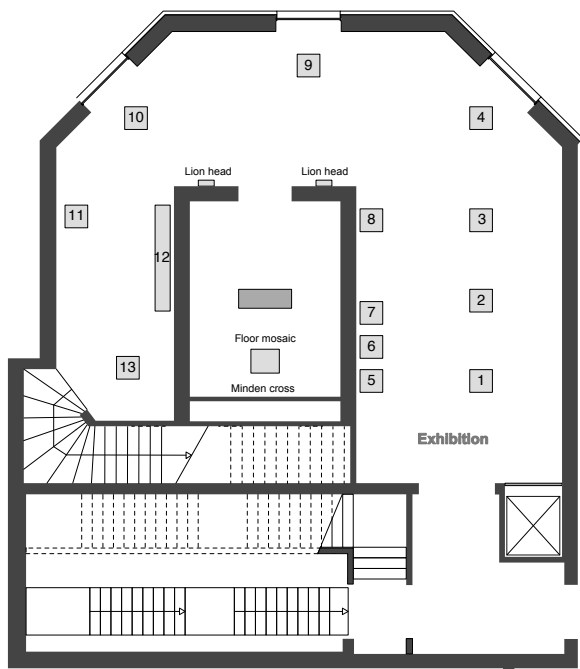
The 41-centimetre-high capital has a base area of 41 by 41 centimetres and was part of the central window of the western work of the cathedral. The chalice block capital has a two-zone Corinthian structure: eight round, closed forms stand on the capital ring. A somewhat stylized biforium window is surrounded by a deaf band, and the capital also features a round arch with inscribed lily and six narrow leaves with an inner roll. The gussets in the lower zone are thickened in the manner of capitals, from which palm-like, narrow, juxtaposed individual leaves or outwardly rolled volutes with small three- or narrow lancet leaves emerge as internal forms.

Window frames

[Inv. no. 113]

11th century / oak wood

During construction work for the swell box and the bellows of the organ at Minden Cathedral, wooden window frames were found which were dated to the 11th century and are made from oak wood, all parts of which were axled and pushed, but not sawn. This frame is 1.24 metres wide and, considering the side section, 1.58 metres high. It consists of two side sections and two gable-like head sections running into each other, which are rounded on the inside. The head sections are pegged with wooden nails. Rebates are visible for a central vertical and two horizontal dividing planks. The window possibly had a height of just over 2.32 metres. Iron remains were detected which served the attachment of glass.



Display case 01

Shrine of St. Peter

[Inv. no. 85]

North-west Germany, 1st or 2nd quarter of the 11th century / oak-wood centre (renewed), gold, wrought, hallmarked, silver, forged, engraved, stones, pearls.

This early example of a house-shaped reliquary casket of the High Middle Ages shows on one of the long sides a depiction of the crucifixion of Peter, wrought in gold sheet. He is nailed to the cross headfirst by two soldiers. The roof area above this shows the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, the narrow sides of the substructure depict portraits of saints. On one side is the inscription: CONDITVR HIC SVBITVS PETRI LE(CTISSI)MA VIRT(US) ("In here, the excellent healing power of Peter is stored"). The base plate is silver and lists the names of the saints whose relics were kept in the shrine, among them St. Peter. Until the relics of St. Gorgonius were transferred to Minden in 925, the apostle Peter was the first patron saint of Minden Cathedral, afterwards he became the second one. The depiction opposite of the crucifixion of Peter, on the other long side, shows older goldsmith's work from the 2nd half of the 10th century: a round gold sheet with enamel with female half-length figures, two pairs of birds as well as metal works with twigs and leaves and mythical creatures. According to tradition, bishop Rudolf von Schleswig (1043–1085) endowed the reliquary casket to bishop Eilbert von Minden when the cathedral was consecrated in 1071.

Display case 02

Arm reliquary of St. Margaret

[Inv. no. 95]

Westphalia (?), last quarter of the 11th century (arm reliquary)

*Minden, 2nd quarter of the 13th century (cuffs with gemstones) /
wooden core, sheet silver, stone ornaments, attested relic in 1071*

The bottom shows the engraved circumscription “BRACHIVUM SANTE MARGARETE” (arm of St. Margaret). The slenderly proportioned arm is graced with a cuff, made of wide delicate tiles. These are decorated with large, precious stones: among others ruby, sapphire, amethyst, emerald, also garnet cameo, which date to late antiquity and were reused here. The hand is raised to bless. The arm reliquary is one of the oldest of its kind still in existence. In most cases, the relics of saints were kept in shrines, boxes, altar graves (sepulcrum) or other containers. In the 11th century, “speaking reliquaries” were invented, which had the form of a human body part and in this way immediately showed what kind of relic they hosted. When the rebuild cathedral was dedicated in 1071, the relic of St. Margaret was already noted down in a document; this precious reliquary was made directly afterwards.

RELICS AND RELIQUARIES – THEIR MEANING

Relics (lat. reliquiae) are either mortal remains of saints or items which the saints possessed or used. They are “tangible” memory and therefore visible signs of the saints and their work, even long after their deaths.

Clergy and worldly rulers, in hope of their own salvation, both endowed the saints with the most precious works for their relics – the remains of their mortal existence. The worship of relics was immensely important during the Middle Ages. This led to the cutting up of “holy bodies” and items which had been in contact with them – people were convinced that even the smallest part had the same power as the whole body.

Reliquaries are containers for the storage of relics. Just like the worship of relics, the history of reliquaries reaches far back in time – even to ancient Christian times. Back then, small boxes, vessels and other containers made of different materials were used. These were placed in altars and therefore named “altar graves” (sepulcrum). Later, relics were presented to the faithful in shrines and other reliquaries or even in specifically made reliquary cabinets.

With the introduction of the Feast of Corpus Christi in 1264 and the need to make the Blessed Sacrament visible, the Eucharistic monstrance was created, which was accompanied by the development of reliquary ostensoirs. From then on, a manifold treasure trove of forms of relics developed: reliquary statuettes, bust reliquaries etc. “Speaking reliquaries” by their outer form give indication of the kind of the relic contained therein, as in the so-called “arm reliquaries”, for example.

Display case 03

Ciborium

[Inv. no. 23]

Osnabrück (?), 1st quarter of the 13th century / silver stamped, wrought, engraved, partly gilded; glass stones; wood core

Ciboriums served as chalice-like vessels with removable lids to hold consecrated, i.e. converted, hosts during mass and as support for the communion of the sick or dying. Since the presence of Christ is revealed in the holy bread, the containers were designed accordingly in a precious manner. The six-sided ciborium on display shows a rich architectural and ornamental structure, consisting among other things of filigree stripes decorated with glass stones. In the fields of the vessel body as well as in those of the lid, which tapers to a point similar to a tent roof, full and half figures appear, which were formed over models. They are presumably apostles, with only Peter being clearly identifiable by his attribute, the key, and the figure of Christ by its crossed nimbus. The lid can be opened by means of a hinge. A device that is damaged today probably served to fortify the textile covering of the ciborium. An earlier suspicion that the object might have functioned as a reliquary pyxis (reliquary vessel) is rather unlikely.

Display case 04

Miniature chalice with paten from a bishop's grave

[Inv. no. 1]

German, 2nd half of the 11th century / silver wrought, forged, engraved

The miniature chalice was found, together with the paten, in the course of the reconstruction of the cathedral in 1950 in its crossing area, in the grave of an unidentified bishop. Such small-format chalices, known as calix viaticus, were used as transportable liturgical utensils for celebrating Holy Mass on journeys and apparently also as burial offerings. The chalice has a typical Romanesque shape, a stocky conical shaft from which the round foot and the node (knob) are made, and a high and steep cup. In its recessed centre, the plate of the host shows the engraved blessing hand of God, a motif frequently chosen for this position during the Middle Ages.

Display case 04

Seal stamp of the cathedral chapter Minden

[Inv. no. 40]

*Minden, 1308–1376 / cast bronze, hallmarked – inscription:
+ S(IGILLUM) · MINDENS'(IS) · ECC(LESIA)E · AD CAUSAS*

The seal stamp was found in 1982 on the banks of the Weser. It shows the cathedral's patron saints: Gorgonius with a shield and Peter with a key. The inscription identifies it as "ad causas" (for services), i.e. as a small official seal of the cathedral chapter for business matters. After a new seal was introduced, the old seal was usually destroyed to prevent unauthorized use. In this case, it may have been lost or deliberately thrown into the Weser.

Display case 05

Candelabra pair

[Inv. no. 37]

Probably Helmarshausen monastery, around 1120 / cast bronze, chiselled, engraved

The light, especially that of the candle, plays an important role in the liturgy of the Church. In order to produce the *lumen sacrum* or *lumen liturgicum* – liturgical light – artistically shaped light bearers, preferably made of metal, were made at an early age. As couples and especially elaborately worked, they found their noblest use during the service on the altar. The candlesticks each stand on three griffin claws. The walls are made of three mythical creatures with a ball in their mouths, which mark the edges, and two winged dragons, which seem to bite into the legs of the corner animals. In Christian iconography, the dragon has a multi-layered symbolism. As the embodiment of the demonic, he is overcome here and taken into service for the sacred. The candlesticks were probably made, contrary to older opinion, in the workshop of the monastery Helmarshausen, which maintained close relations with Minden.

Display case 06

Lion aquamanile

[Inv. no. 35]

Saxony, late 12th century / Bronze hollow cast, engraved, chiselled

The term Aquamanile, which is made up of the two Latin words *aqua* (water) and *manus* (hand), does rather exactly name its function. The casting vessel used in liturgical hand washing is not designed as a simple jug, but mainly in the form of an animal body,

here particularly artistically in the shape of a lion. His majestically erected body features a stylized mane and ornamental engravings. The handle of the pouring lion is formed by a slender dragon supported by its head with its forelegs; the spout by a male half-figure protruding from the mouth reinforced with long teeth, the hands against its chaps. An opening at the back of the animal, which could once be closed, served to fill in the water. The Aquamanile is mentioned in the Minden Cathedral treasure inventory of 1683 with the note "A brass hand barrel in a lion format". While up to now the date of origin was mostly the 13th century, according to recent research the second half of the 12th century can be assumed.

Display case 07

Two candelabras

[Inv. no. 38]

Minden (?), 2nd to 3rd quarter of the 12th century / Bronze cast, engraved, chiselled

The probably unrelated candlesticks belong to the type of the so-called Minden candelabra – to which a whole series of works can be attached – and were probably made in a Minden workshop. Their execution is not as fine as that of the older candelabra pair (inv.-no. 37), but essentially corresponds to them: both pieces are built up from a three-sided pyramidal foot on three claws, which is formed by stylized intertwined dragon bodies and at whose corners the heads stand out plastically. Above a short shaft with a beaded ring they merge into an eaves bowl with a high thorn to hold the candles.

Display case 08

Ostensoir with Hedwig glass

[Inv. no. 94]

*Fatimid (?), 12th century (glass) / smoked glass, mouth-blown, cut.
2nd quarter of the 13th century (setting) / silver, chased, engraved,
gilded*

The Hedwig glass belongs to a larger group of thick-walled glasses, which mainly show lions, eagles and a griffin as motifs. The models are to be found in the Near East, in Byzantine and Islamic art. There is a proximity to the glass art of the Fatimids, who worked in Egypt, Syria and Palestine from the 10th to the 12th century and whose name goes back to Mohammed's daughter Fatima. Such cups or Fatimid rock crystal works served as containers for high-ranking relics in church treasures or on noble seats. The name Hedwig glass derives from St. Hedwig (1174–1243), the patron saint of Poland and Silesia, who came from Andechs. She was a deeply religious regent of her country, who contributed numerous monasteries and churches. She was already canonized in 1267. Because of her love for the poor she was highly regarded by the people. Therefore, immediately after her death, people began to collect objects related to the saint's life. This glass vessel, from which she is said to have drunk, is supposed to also belong to it.

Display case 09

Madonna on the throne with child

[Inv. no. 88]

Lower Saxony (?), around 1235/1240 / sheet silver, wrought, partly gilded

The figure is formed with great craftsmanship from silver sheet metal and was originally worked over a lost wooden core. Because it is made of silver sheet, it is also known as the Silver Madonna, although it is largely gold-plated. The work is one of the most important of its time made of metal and probably comes from Lower Saxony. Similar works from Halberstadt, Hildesheim and Braunschweig suggest this. The backward leaning posture of the child, who looks up and has raised his right hand in the gesture of the Saviour, is characteristic for this group, among other things. The crowns are probably younger ingredients of the 13th and 14th centuries. Once, the sculpture was probably carried along in processions and possibly contained valuable relics of the Virgin Mary in its interior. According to the reports of the historian Hermann von Lerbeck (end of the 14th century) and the canon Heinrich von Tribbe (middle of the 15th century), the mother Oda von Blankenburg gave this Marian figure to her son, the bishop Anno von Minden (1171–1185). However, this tradition does not coincide with the dates assumed in art history.

VENERATION OF MARY – ITS MEANING

Mary occupies a special position in the Bible as a central figure of salvation. The reader of Holy Scripture does not learn much about her, nor about her husband Joseph. That is why what is written in the Gospels of Jesus' mother is not really to be understood biographically, but always in relation to Jesus Christ.

With the increasing importance of Mary for the teaching and piety of the Church, we encounter, or her pictorial representation increasingly appears, in the occidental art of the high Middle Ages. From the 10th century onwards, the repertoire of Madonna images was extended to include the fully plastic figure of the enthroned Mother of God with the child on her lap.

Regardless of the neglect in the sacred text, Mary still plays a major and important role in the Catholic Church today. "Mary is important for faith, because without her the Incarnation of God could not have taken place", says Christoph Hegge, auxiliary bishop of Münster. "Mary embodies in her life in a unique way the basic attitude of faith. She shows us, as the first of the new creation, how God works when we open ourselves completely to him".

Display case 10

Reliquary cross

[Inv. no. 60]

Rhineland, late 13th/early 14th century / silver (partly gilded), wrought, cast, rock crystal

The cross made of isosceles arms – marked with stylized leaves as trees of life – carries a round capsule in its centre. On the front, in front of a rhombic pattern, the small, compact figure of St. Andrew on the cross is depicted. He is tied to the cross with cords on his arms and legs. On the back of the capsule, beneath a convex rock crystal, is the bone relic of St. Andrew. The apostle Andrew, who was on a missionary journey in areas around the Black Sea, was murdered under Emperor Nero in the year 60 AD. His execution took place on a cross made of diagonally arranged beams, which since then has been called St. Andrew's Cross.

Room Minden Cross

Two door openers with lion heads

[Inv. no. 39]

Saxony (?), Minden (?), around 1220/1230 / bronze

The two lion heads at the entrance to the Minden Cross Room, cast in bronze, form the centre of a round shield with a smooth outer edge on which six holes for the attachment can be seen. Originally, the two high-quality door pullers adorned the north portal of the Romanesque transept of the cathedral built in the 13th century. The lion's head is on a square plate overlaid by the mane. In the open mouth there used to be a door opener, which could be used to open the portal or knock on the door in order to find access. The square centre is surrounded by a quadrilateral, under the round arches of which a pair of dragons with twisted

necks can be seen on the left and right and a proud lion on the top. Whether the animal in the lower part represents a goat cannot be determined exactly. Tendrils are between the animals. After the rededication of the cathedral in 1957, about 200-year-old copies of these two door pullers were attached to the inner doors of the church's paradise.

Room Minden Cross

Floor mosaic (fragment)

[Inv. no. 114]

Unknown origin, 11th century / marble, slate

This section of a decorative floor, probably laid around 1071 in the northern transept arm of Minden Cathedral as an exceptionally careful work, was discovered during excavations in 1954 at a depth of about 30 centimetres. It was the remains of a circular plate mosaic floor 2.70 metres in diameter made of black-brown slate, light yellow Solnhofen slate and beige marble. Some art historians do not rule out that this mosaic dates to the 9th century. Analogies with Byzantine floors suggest that mosaics of this kind were created at this time by wandering building craftsmen. Three concentric circles form two registers or zones. Ten smaller medallions are inscribed between the middle and outer circles, of which the six preserved cross and star motifs partly show double, but without symmetrical arrangement. The gussets are filled with small figures composed of two triangles. Between the inner and middle circle there is a chain of standing diamonds. The floor mosaic shows no signs of wear and tear from walking on it, but strong traces of burning. The fire may have been the cause for the abandonment of the decorative floor.

Room Minden Cross

Minden Cross

[Inv. no. 71]

Westphalia, Art Circle of Rogerus von Helmarshausen, around 1120/1130

Corpus: bronze, cast in six parts, chased, partly gilded, main and beard hairs left out in metal, silver eyes; loincloth strongly opaque due to modern lacquer coating; originally silver plating and niello on the thighs

The inscription “IE(SV)S NAZARENVS REX IUDEORUM” can be read on the crossbeam above Christ’s head and on the transom: “HOC REPARAT XP (istv)s DEVS IN LIGNO CRVCIFIXVS / + Q(Vo)D DESTRVXIT ADA(m) DECEPTVS IN ARBORE QVADAM” (That makes good again Christ, the God crucified at the wood, what Adam destroyed, deceived of the tree). Christ nailed to the cross is depicted in a relaxed posture, standing straight with arms stretched out horizontally. The head is tilted to the side, mouth and eyes are slightly open. His parallel arranged legs rest on the footrest (suppedaneum), which is formed by a bent, winged dragon. Christ is represented alive as the victor over evil, symbolized by the dragon figure. At the edges of the crossbeam, at the bottom of the transom and at the bottom of the longitudinal beam, short diagonal metal stripes point abstractly and schematically to the beginnings of the branch cross, which matches the inscription with the mention of the tree of life. Christ as the new Adam redeems mankind by his death on the cross. The attribution of the Minden crucifix, which is distinguished by its high quality of artistic design, to the art circle around Roger von Helmarshausen is attached not only to stylistic similarities with small bronze

crucifixes, but also to technical details, such as the use of niello diamonds.

CROSSES – THEIR MEANING

The cross as the most important symbol of the Christian faith began with the victory of Emperor Constantine, the first Christian emperor (died 337). In the battle against Maxentius he saw the cross in a vision as a sign of victory.

The discovery of the “true cross of Christ” in Jerusalem by the emperor’s mother, St. Helena, contributed to the further spread of the cross as a symbol for Christians. Thus, in the first Christian centuries, the meaning of the cross changed from an instrument of death to a symbol of the victory of Christ and thus to the central Christian sign of salvation.

With the spread of Christianity, the cross symbol found its way into the church rooms and into the celebration of the liturgy in a variety of forms and functions. As a sign of triumph, the cross was predominant in the Romanesque period; in the Gothic period, the cross was seen more as a sign of suffering.

The forms of the cross are also varied. In our room the best known is the Latin cross, with a shorter crossbar moved upwards. The cross with the depiction of the body of Christ was from then on used in the artistic design, crucifixus is the name for the crucified one.

Especially in the liturgy of the church the crosses were used in a variety of ways. The celebration of the Eucharist and all Christian services are celebrated under or in front of the cross. The cross is used for processions and solemn processions. The altar cross is placed on the altar in order to make the realization of Christ's sacrifice on the cross evident.

Display case 11

Statuette of St. Gorgonius

[Inv. no. 98]

Westphalia, mid-15th century / silver wrought, cast, engraved, partially gilded, wood

Due to the flat form of the figure of the knightly St. Gorgonius, the figure probably comes from a shrine or tabernacle. Gorgonius was most likely born around 265 in Rome. Due to an excellent education he came into contact with the imperial palace and could ascend to becoming a high palace officer by the emperor's favour. Emperor Diocletian admired his qualities and made him the chamberlain of the imperial chamber in Nicomedia, where he held court. Gorgonius, who had become a Christian early on, promoted the Christian faith among the court people and officers. Around 300 AD, another persecution of Christians flared up in the country, which was also joined by Diocletian. When many Christians were tortured to death in front of the eyes of the palace officer Gorgonius, because they did not want to sacrifice to the pagan gods, he also confessed the Christian faith and demanded an end to the massacre. This courageous commitment to the persecuted brothers in faith also brought him a painful death in 303. By miraculous coincidence, the Christians succeeded in transporting his body to Rome, where he was buried in the early

Christian cemetery on Via Labianca, later in St. Peter. According to recent research reports, some of the bones were already transferred from Rome directly to Minden in 848. Probably in the first half of the 10th century further relics from the reform monastery Gorze were added, so that both dates have their justification. On this historical background, the reliquary containers of St. Gorgonius in the Minden Cathedral treasure chamber explain themselves, beside the valuable reliquary arm from the 2nd quarter of the 15th century also the statuette of this saint. Even today, the patron saint of the cathedral is venerated in Minden in the liturgy on 11 March under the title “Feast of the reception of the holy relics” and above all on 9 September, the commemoration day of the saint.

Display case 11

Arm reliquary of St. Gorgonius

[Inv. no. 100]

2nd quarter of the 15th century / copper gilded, silver partly gilded, gemstones, wood core (assumption based on weight)

The reliquary arm of St. Gorgonius, patron saint of Minden Cathedral, contains in a rock crystal, which functions as a viewing vessel, the only reliquary of St. Gorgonius still located at the cathedral today. Henry the Lion, who was married to the English Princess Mathilde in 1168 in Minden Cathedral by bishop Werner von Bükeburg, brought it back from a pilgrimage. In the description of the canon Heinrich Tribbe (around 1460) the relic is mentioned in its current container: “Item brachium sancti Gorgonii, patroni ecclesiae Mindensis, in brachio argenteo et deaurato cum lapidibus” (Likewise the arm of St. Gorgonius, the patron saint of the Minden church, in a silver and gilded arm with stones).

Display case 12

Arm reliquary of St. Anna

[Inv. no. 101]

Westphalia, mid-15th century / silver gilded, agate, rock crystal, emerald, glass

As in the arm reliquary of St. Gorgonius, the sleeve is folded and turned over. Beneath it, the tight sleeve of a tunic looks out. Beside the rich stone trimming, two cast silver figures are attached to the base of the front, St. Anna on the left and St. Gorgonius on the right. An almost hemispherically cut rock crystal accentuates the centre of the arm and gives a view of the relic. Compared to the Gorgonius arm, the arm reliquary of St. Anna is stylistically more developed and points to the hand of an excellent goldsmith.

Display case 12

Arm reliquary

[Inv. no. 96]

Presumably Westphalia, 13th century / oak wood, carved, formerly coloured

In the Minden Cathedral treasure inventory of 1683 “four white brachia with relics” are mentioned. The four arm reliquaries still preserved today had, as can still be seen on photos from 1895, a white paint application. On the back of the hand of this arm reliquary, raised in a gesture of blessing, there is a large oval recess for inserting a relic, which was presumably to be seen under a rock crystal cabochon.

Display case 12

Reliquary statue of St. Laurentius

[Inv. no. 93]

Westphalia, around mid-15th century

Wood core; silver, wrought, engraved, partly gilded (?); rock crystal

St. Laurentius wears the robe of a deacon, to whom belong the long undergarment, the alb falling to the shoes and the dalmatic. The inscription on the gilded collar points to St. Laurentius. In his right hand he holds the rust, the attribute of his martyrdom, the left probably held a book or the martyr's palm. The relic was originally kept behind the large oval rock crystal on the chest. Around the middle of the 15th century, the canon Heinrich Tribbe, in his description of the town and the Stift (diocese) Minden, refers to the valuable reliquary figure of St. Laurentius, who is a patron saint of the cathedral. He lived in Rome from 230–258 and is one of the most revered saints. After the victory of Emperor Otto I over the Hungarians on 10 August 955 on the Lechfeld, the veneration of the saint spread even more strongly. Since 10 August was the day of death and commemoration of St. Laurentius, victory over the Hungarians was widely attributed to him. Three years before, the people of Minden had raised him to be the second patron of the cathedral at the cathedral consecration.

Display case 12

Arm reliquary

[Inv. no. 99]

Presumably Westphalia, around mid-15th century / oak wood, carved, formerly coloured

The wooden arm, accentuated by a few oblique folds and a very naturalistic hand, has a high, originally closable rectangular niche in the upper part. Originally, relics were kept inside. An early photograph (1895) shows white colour particles, so that this arm reliquary will also belong to the “four white brachia (arms) with relics” described in the cathedral treasure inventory of 1683.

Display case 12

Arm reliquary

[Inv. no. 97]

Presumably Westphalia, around 1500 / oak wood, carved, formerly coloured

The arm reliquary carved from one piece shows a deeply hollowed round-arch niche in the middle, with remains of blue paint, for storing the relic. The hand shows finely carved veins and sinews under the skin. This naturalistic reproduction of the hand and the puffed folds on the garment refer to the time around 1500.

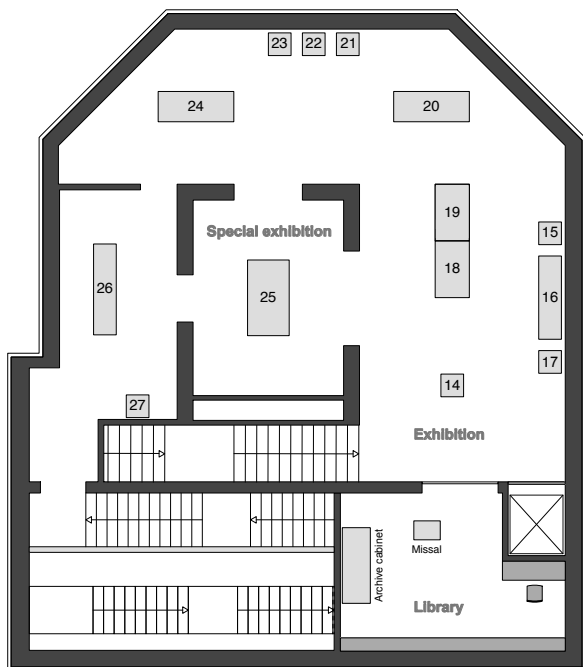
Display case 13

Reliquary shrine of St. Valeria

[Inv. no. 86]

Limoges, 1220–1230 / wood core; copper sheet, forged, wrought, gilded; pit melt

The transverse rectangular copper plate on the front, decorated with pit melting, shows in two scenes the martyrdom of St. Valeria of Limoges, where she lived in the 3rd century. On the left, the saint sits awaiting her beheading by a hangman standing next to her. On the right, Valeria, led by an angel, delivers her head to bishop St. Martial. On the sloping roof above, the tomb of St. Valeria is depicted in the presence of bishop Martial, on the left and right two angels holding the shroud in intercession. On the narrow sides the saint is depicted in a mandorla with her right hand raised and a book in her left. The Minden Valeria shrine stands in connection with the emergence of the veneration of St. Valeria, which is reflected in the Limousine enamel art of the 12th to 13th centuries. It cannot be proven how this valuable shrine came to Minden. Pilgrims probably brought this box with a relic of the saint from Limoges to Minden on their return journey from Santiago de Compostela. Prayer brotherhood already existed between both bishop cities at that time.



Library

Minden missal

[Inv. no. 82] (see Library on page 51)

Display case 14

Processional cross (chapter cross)

[Inv. no. 72]

Presumably Westphalia, early 16th century (after 1508)

Cameo, Roman, after 54 AD / after 81 AD / wood, silver, chased, cast, engraved, partly gilded; cell enamel, amethyst, glass paste, garnet, sardonyx

The view side or the reliquary side of the processional cross, which is called chapter cross because of its use in the cathedral chapter, contains an oval cut rock crystal in the middle, under which a cross relic is located. Splinters of the Holy Cross are already mentioned in the consecration report of 1064. For the earlier, probably destroyed cross with a relic, a new one was created at the beginning of the 16th century using a Roman cameo with the portrait of Emperor Nero (1st century). The drawing originals for the figure decoration go back to Martin Schongauer (evangelist symbols and St. Peter) and Albrecht Dürer (St. Gorgonius), which gives the dating to after 1508. In the cross ends in three-piece form medallions with representations of the four church fathers are reproduced, on the “cameos side” corresponding medallions with the evangelist symbols. St. Peter is engraved under the cross relic on the lower longitudinal beam and St. Gorgonius under the emperor’s portrait on the other side. On special occasions – such as the introduction of a new cathedral provost or his funeral – a processional or chapter cross is carried up front attached to a pole. Before the abolition of the diocese of Minden this cross was

carried in front of the bishop. The tradition goes back to Byzantium, when the emperor was preceded by a cross with a cross relic.

Display case 15

Ciborium

[Inv. no. 25]

German, early and mid-16th century / silver, partly gilded, forged, wrought, cast, engraved

The vessel consists of a hemispherical cup with a similar lid. Its base is decorated with twelve silver-cast apostle figures between chased hunchback ribs. The node, in Gothic style, is characterised by diamond-shaped fields that emerge; the top is crowned by a cross with a crossed spear and staff with a vinegar sponge – tools of the Passion of Christ – above a vase-shaped top and surrounded by a wreath of tendril-like fittings. This part of the coronation, as well as the cross, must be considered as a later addition which enriched the motif of the ciborium a short time after it was made.

Display case 16

Chalices

2nd half of the 15th century / height 17.6 cm, foot diameter 15 cm, cup diameter 11.5 cm, silver gilded [Inv. no. 06]

1st half of the 15th century / height 14.5 cm, foot diameter 11 cm, cup diameter 10.5 cm, silver gilded [Inv. no. 4]

1st half of the 14th century / height 15.8 cm, foot diameter 11.6 cm, cup diameter 9.3 cm, silver gilded [Inv. no. 2]

Mid-17th century / height 19.8 cm, foot diameter 14 cm, cup diameter 10 cm, silver (?) with rose gold plating [Inv. no. 10]

Late 15th century / early 16th century / height 16.2 cm, foot diameter 14 cm, cup diameter 10.5 cm, silver gilded [Inv. no. 7]

4th quarter of the 17th century / height 26.6 cm, foot diameter 15.6 cm, cup diameter 10.1 cm, silver partly gilded [Inv. no. 12]

1464 / height 21.5 cm, foot diameter 11.4 cm, cup diameter 13.5 cm, silver gilded [Inv. no. 5]

1645 / Höhe 21,5 cm, Fuß Ø 11,4 cm, Kupa Ø 13,5 cm, Silber vergoldet [Inv. no. 9]

Early 18th century / height 21.3 cm, foot diameter 13.4 cm, cup diameter 8.7 cm, silver gilded [Inv. no. 13]

Late 15th century / early 16th century (1500 or 1512, respectively) / height 15.9 cm, foot diameter 13.5 cm, cup diameter ?, silver gilded [Inv. no. 8]

Display case 16

Paten

15th century / diameter 14 cm, silver gilded [Inv. no. 16]

15th century / diameter 14.2 cm, silver gilded [Inv. no. 15]

15th century / diameter 15.5 cm, silver gilded [Inv. no. 17]

18th century / diameter 13 cm, silver gilded [Inv. no. 21]

*Late 15th century / early 16th century / diameter 16 cm,
silver gilded [Inv. no. 18]*

18th century / diameter 12.5 cm, silver gilded [Inv. no. 20]

CHALICE AND PATEN – THEIR MEANING

The **chalice** is one of the oldest and most important vasa sacra (a device used in the Eucharist). Since it receives the blood of Christ, it has a special meaning which is expressed in Jesus' words at the institution of the Lord's Supper: "Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you" (KJV Luke 22:20). The structure of a mass cup is traditionally divided into the following components, each of which can be artistically designed: the drinking bowl/cup (Latin cuppa), the shaft (Latin stipes), in between mostly a knob/node (Latin nodus) and the foot (Latin pes).

The **paten** (Latin patena = bowl) serves to receive the Eucharistic bread. It has a flat round shape, usually is concave and formed with a smooth rim and a slightly recessed (circular or multi-passage) mirror. Like the chalice, it is usually made of gold or silver or gilded and was often decorated with motifs until the 15th century.

Display case 17

Bust reliquary of St. Peter

[Inv. no. 90]

Westphalia (?), around 1380 / silver, cast, wrought, hallmarked, chiselled, partly gilded; wood core; rock crystal

The two keys are placed in front of the shoulders of the saint, who is portrayed in strict frontality, as his personal attribute: “And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven” (KJV Mt 16:19), Jesus said when he called him into the circle of his disciples. On the back of the bust two coats of arms give information about the possible donor of the reliquary. One coat of arms with the crossed keys stands for the diocese of Minden and the other one with the eagle’s quill points to the Edelherren zu Berghe (“noblemen at the mountain”, Hausberge). Two Minden bishops emerged from this dynasty: Wedekind II (1369–1383) and Otto III (1384–1397). This engraving on the back justifies the dating of this precious reliquary to the time around 1380. Which bishop donated the bust of St. Peter to Minden Cathedral must remain open.

Display case 17

Reliquary figure of St. Peter

[Inv. no. 92]

Westphalia, 3rd quarter of the 15th century / silver, wrought, chiselled, engraved, partly gilded (?), glass, glass paste

The bearded St. Peter wears a Pope's mantle and a tiara with a crowning cross, which is reserved for the Pope. In his hands he holds a book and a key, in front of his legs leans a reliquary with hinges, which can be opened as a container. Two coats of arms, a mill wheel and a jumping wolf are attached to the base, which is decorated with tracery forms. An inscription plate on the floor mentions the relics found in the statuette: "of the Holy Cross, of St. Peter, of St. Thomas, of the tomb of the Lord, of the sweat cloth of the Lord".

Display case 18

Chasuble cross (new acquisition)

[Inv. no. 50]

Westphalia / Lower Saxony, around 1480/1500 / linen, cuticle gold, silk, sequins, metal, coniferous wood, mounted on a cross-shaped support of coniferous wood with wooden frame (19th century)

The cross, which was probably made in the late 15th century in a workshop in or close to Westphalia and Lower Saxony, is characterised by its unchanged condition. There are no later additions, nor has its substance been reduced in size and altered in keeping with the times, as was often the case in the Baroque period. This shows that even in the Baroque period, when the late medieval robes and with them the embroidered chasuble trimmings were adapted to the new, now much smaller robe form, this chasuble

cross was given special significance and esteem. The chasuble cross is characterised by particularly impressive figures in high relief, which are close to contemporary sculpture, the effect of which was obviously sought to correspond with the means of relief embroidery. This required a high level of craftsmanship. The good state of preservation of the chasuble cross indicates that one was aware of the high quality and rarity of the piece. In comparison with the chasuble cross (inv.-no. 49], which corresponds almost exactly to the centimetre to this cross, the iconography varies, but there are numerous similarities in the design, in the choice of materials and in the embroidery technique, which indicate an origin from the same workshop. So far, only a few late medieval embroideries of this kind are known. It is therefore a stroke of luck that – as in this case – two crosses of this quality can be assigned to the same workshop.

Display case 19

Chasuble cross

[Inv. no. 49]

*Southern Germany or Westphalia / Lower Saxony (?),
around 1500 / embroidery made in laid work technique,
silk threads, gold threads, sequins, wood*

The chasuble cross, which was originally placed on the back of a chasuble, is now placed on a wooden base for better preservation. The name for the liturgical garment of the priest, chasuble, is taken from the Latin word *casula* (= small tent, cottage), which suggests the original form of the garment. It was a bell-shaped overlay without sleeves and with a neckline for the head. Since the late Middle Ages, it was customary to decorate the chasuble with a cross-shaped decorative trimming. This may be interpreted

with the word of Jesus: “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (KJV Mt 16:24). Since the priest celebrated mass with his back to the people until the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965), the actual front side of the chasuble was the chasuble cross, embroidered in elaborate relief here: in the centre Christ on the cross, on both sides St. Peter with book and key and St. Paul with sword. Floating angels hold chalices under the wounds on the hands and feet of the crucified one in order to catch the escaping blood. Facing the cross, Mary and John stand in a mourning pose. Mary Magdalene is depicted firmly clasping the lower crossbeam, while God the Father, with the globe in his left hand and the right hand blessing, forms the upper conclusion.

Display case 20

Dalmatic from White Chapel

[Inv. no. 51]

Around 1760–1770, modifications in the middle of the 19th century; silk fabric, gold- and silver lamé, embroidery made in laid work technique; basic material: rep basis with embroidery, tambour work; lining: satin, silk

The “chapel” is understood to mean the entirety of the vestments belonging to the regalia worn for a mass: the chasuble of the celebrating priest, the dalmatics of the two assistant deacons with the associated insignia, the stole and the maniple (= strip-shaped band placed over the arm) and the pluvial (choir coat). This Minden ornament is a gift from the cathedral provost Hugo Franz Karl von und zu Eltz (1736–1779). [In the special exhibition “Episcopal Insignia – Donation of the auxiliary bishop Dr. Paul Nordhues” further paraments are shown.]

Display case 21

Tower monstrance

[Inv. no. 30]

*German, late 15th century / early 16th century /
copper cast, fitted, formerly gilded*

The monstrance was originally probably used as a reliquary ostensorium. It contained the remains of an unknown saint or martyr, which were shown to the faithful in the glass cylinder. The glass container is embedded in a tower-like structure formed with architectural elements of the Gothic period, such as the system of buttresses with its applied pinnacles, crabs and stylized animal heads. Surrounded by lily wreaths, the cylinder is mounted on a high foot with a six-part base. The upper end of the lace was probably formerly a crucifix. The device thus corresponds to a type of tower monstrance which was produced in large numbers during the 15th and 16th centuries.

Display case 21

Sunburst monstrance

[Inv. no. 33]

*Rhineland (?), mid-18th century / brass and copper wrought, cast,
silvered and partly gilded*

In the late Middle Ages, monstrance-like reliquary vessels with a glass frame in the centre developed in connection with the need to look at sacred objects and to participate directly in them. In the Baroque era, these often took the form of a sun ostensor, as shown in the exhibition. It is characterized by a wreath of rays that surrounds the now empty reliquary capsule. This is surrounded by a decorative frame with rocaille elements and heightened by a cross. The foot and shaft are also lavishly decorated with

typical shell-shaped ornaments and a baluster vase with a leaf wreath.

Display case 22

Sunburst monstrance

[Inv. no. 32]

Southern Germany, around 1740–1750 / silver, wrought, cast, chiselled, engraved, partly gilded; amethysts, topaz, rock crystal

Display case 23

Sunburst monstrance

[Inv. no. 31]

Caspar Heinrich Vogelsang, Minden, 1718 / silver, wrought, cast, chiselled, engraved, partly gilded; rock crystal

People wanted to see Christ in the consecrated host with their eyes. This development gave rise to new forms of Eucharistic worship: the exposure of the Blessed Sacrament in the devotion, eternal adoration outside worship meetings, and the Corpus Christi procession from 1264 onwards. The faithful wanted to worship the sacred altar bread by looking at it and praying their intentions before God. Because of this spiritual change, new liturgical instruments were created, especially the monstrance. The word comes from the Latin word *monstrare* (to show). Two monstrances from the baroque period are in the cathedral treasury. They have a central showcase with the lunula – the crescent-shaped holder for the host – which is framed by various elaborately decorated frames and ray wreaths, which is why they are called sunburst monstrances. One of the sunburst monstrances (inv.-no. 31) was worked by the Minden goldsmith Caspar Heinrich Vogelsang in 1718. Both the initials CHV and the year are engraved. The other

sunburst monstrance (inv.-no. 32), which probably comes from Augsburg and was built between 1740 and 1750, has a similar structure. According to tradition, it is a gift from cathedral provost Hugo Franz Karl von und zu Eltz (1736–1779). The foot is higher than on the other monstrance and decorated with roses and grapes. The coat of arms shows a bishop's mitre, dragons and lions.

Display case 23

Censer

[Inv. no. 61]

***Henrich Niederstädt II, Paderborn, around 1730/1740 /
silver, wrought, fitted, engraved***

According to the stamps of inspection and master craftsmen still found on the vessel, the metal vessel used to burn incense or to distribute the aromatically scented smoke during the worship service was made by the Paderborn goldsmith Henrich Niederstädt II (died 1745). Further works by Niederstädt have been preserved in the cathedral treasure. The bulbous body of the vessel is covered in late Baroque motifs with shells and winged putti heads, some of which are fully plastic, in addition to egg-and-dart and acanthus friezes in late Baroque motifs. The handle of the lid, which opens over the carrying chains, is formed by the figure of an unknown bishop holding a church model. The incense rising from the openings serves in the liturgy as a sign of worship or symbolises the elevation of prayers to God.

Display case 24

Cope from Red Chapel

[Inv. no. 52]

18th century and 1861 (restoration and adaptations)

silk fabric, gold and silver lamé, silk cord; basic material: velvet, probably second-hand use; lining: cotton

The basic fabric, a dark red velvet, is composed of several pieces of fabric. It probably dates from the time of the Minden Cathedral provost Hugo Franz Karl von und zu Eltz (1736–1779). As with the White Chapel, his family coat of arms is embroidered here as well. The cartouche of the coat of arms at the lower edge of the cope consists of an oval divided shield with a golden lion, above the shield two helmets facing each other, the right one with a mitre, the left one with an eagle as crest. During the necessary restoration of the ornate in the middle of the 19th century, gold-coloured trimmings with a historicizing Gothic pomegranate pattern consisting of a damask-like silk fabric were added.

[In the special exhibition “Episcopal Insignia” further paraments are shown.]

SPECIAL EXHIBITION

A FRIEND OF MINDEN CATHEDRAL EPISCOPAL INSIGNIA

Donation of the auxiliary bishop of Paderborn Dr. Paul Nordhues to the cathedral parish in Minden in 1990

From 799 to 1648, Minden was a temporarily important diocese in Germany with some great bishops who set lasting pastoral, liturgical and artistic accents. They all had episcopal insignia, which unfortunately have not been preserved. Since 1990, however, the Minden Cathedral treasury has again had insignia bequeathed to it by the auxiliary bishop of Paderborn, Dr. Paul Nordhues (died 2004), who was closely associated with the Minden Cathedral congregation.

Among them is also his episcopal coat of arms with his motto “suscipe – accept”.

The pontifical equipment of a bishop used to be very elaborate; today, many things have become simpler, also in liturgical clothing. Since through the consecration of the bishop the fullness of the sacrament of ordination is transmitted, it also contains the ordination of deacons and priests; both have their own liturgical garments, which were formerly worn by the bishop during pontifical acts. At the Eucharistic celebration the bishop also wears a vestment or a choir robe, two of which are in the treasury. Both were created in 1961 by the Paderborn artist Edith Ostendorf (died 1985) for bishop Nordhues.

Both the white (inv.-no. 127) and the purple cope (inv.-no. 128) are made of silk and artificial silk and are decorated with gold threads. While the purple cope is simpler with six panels on the front, the other one contains ornamental embroidery of stylized peacock wheels flanking a tree of life. Both copes are held together by pluvial clasps.

Bishop Nordhues wore a pectoral cross (inv.-no. 143) created by Hildegard Domizlaff (Cologne) in 1958/59. Nordhues had taken it over from his predecessor auxiliary bishop Dr. Wilhelm Tuschen (died 1961). The gold front contains a representation of the “Majestas domini” in the middle. Christ is enthroned on a rainbow; the right hand is raised; in the left hand he holds the book. Eight gemstones are inserted in the cross arms and gussets. At the top, there is an eyelet for attaching the silver chain. On the back there is an ivory bas-relief, which contains a net with fish in connection to the many fish caught in John 21:6. Inside is bishop Tuschen’s motto: “Pro Christo legatione fungimur – then we are ambassadors for Christ” (KJV 2. Cor. 5:20). In the middle, the pectoral contains a relic of St. Liborius, the Paderborn diocese patron.

Bishop Nordhues also donated to the treasury his two precious but very different bishop rings; one, which bears the inscription YCHTHYS in the representation of a fish, comes from Hildegard Domizlaff (inv.-no. 126), the other one is the Council Ring (inv.-no. 125), which all participants of the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) received from Pope Paul VI. On the simple ring at the front under a cross, Christ is depicted between the apostles Peter and Paul. Inside, the coat of arms of Paul VI is engraved.

Of the other insignia worn or used by bishop Nordhues for 30 years, the treasury contains a zucchetto (red artificial silk cap, inv.-no. 130), another pair of bishop's gloves (by E. Ostendorf, inv.-no. 131), an old pewter baptismal instrument with jug and cymbal (from 1816, inv.-no. 136), which was also frequently used for hand washing during church services, two silver vessels for chrism and salt with the coat of arms of bishop Ledebur (1825–1841, inv.-no. ?) for confirmation, a silver sick oil vessel with the coat of arms of the Wolff-Metternich family (presumably from the possession of bishop Franz Arnold of Paderborn 1704–1718), a silver pointing staff, a silver hand lamp (1950) and a white stole.

The cathedral community is very grateful to bishop Nordhues for this inheritance with the decoration of his episcopal insignia.

Display case 25

Bishop's crozier

[Inv. no. 123]

Hildegard Domizlaff, Cologne, 1958 / silver gilded

The slender staff contains in its bend two sculpture-in-the-round figures, which refer to a story from the Old Testament book of Tobit, according to which the archangel Rafael urges the young Tobias to catch a fish, which threatens to devour him. The angel, whose outstretched wings nestle against the curve, leads Tobias by the hand over the cleverly integrated gap to the shaft, thereby referring to the symbolism of the bishop's staff or the bishop's office as leader and shepherd of the faithful and to his own need for protection. The staff was created by the artist Hildegard Domizlaff (1898–1987), who worked in Cologne mainly in religious contexts, originally for the Paderborn auxiliary bishop

Dr. Wilhelm Tuschen (1903–1961), after whose death Paul Nordhues received it.

Display case 25

Pectoral

[Inv. no. 143]

Hildegard Domizlaff, Cologne, 1958/59 / gold, silver; ivory; glass; mother-of-pearl; green and red nephrite; silk, gold threads, paper; relic

The pectoral cross has the shape of a Greek cross, i.e. arms of the same length, at the angles of which semi-circular extensions stand out. The front of the cross is decorated in the centre with a representation of the “Majestas Domini” – the enthroned glorified Christ – over a mother-of-pearl overlay, surrounded by gemstones in the cross axes and diagonals. The back is filled with an ivory relief, which picks up the biblical motif of the wonderful fishing and reproduces the motto of the auxiliary bishop Tuschen: Pro Christo legatione fungimur (then we are ambassadors for Christ). In its centre it holds a capsule with a relic of St. Liborius, patron saint of the diocese of Paderborn. The pectoral was also created by Hildegard Domizlaff for Wilhelm Tuschen, before auxiliary bishop Nordhues took it over from his predecessor.

Display case 25

Cope

[Inv. no. 127]

Edith Ostendorf, Paderborn, 1961 / natural silk, artificial silk, silk threads, silver, rock crystal

The liturgical cloak developed from the choir clothing of the early Middle Ages and is held together over the chest by a chain and hook fastener. It shows pairs of stylised peacocks alternately with diamond patterns on the sides of a tree of life on the edge trimmings. On the outside, the embroideries form circular shapes which can be read as abstract peacock wheels and on which crosses are inscribed. The cope was made by the well-known textile artist Edith Ostendorf (1911–1985), who, after training at the Werkkunstschule Münster, ran a parament workshop in Paderborn.

Display case 25

Mitre

[Inv. no. 129]

Edith Ostendorf, Paderborn, 1961 / silk, gold threads made in laid work technique, silver threads, leather

Since the middle of the 11th century, the pontifical headgear became one of the insignia of the bishops and in the 12th century substantially received its still usual form. The cornua (laces) of the exhibited mitre are structured by vertical lines of red silk and gold threads, among other things worked in laid work technique. The circle (lower edge) is decorated with a frieze in herringbone pattern. On the ends of the infulae (ribbons) are, on the left, the coat of arms of the auxiliary bishop Nordhues, and, on the right, a medallion with the half-figures of the apostle princes Peter and Paul.

Display case 25

Gloves

[Inv. no. 132]

Edith Ostendorf, Paderborn, 1961 / cotton, artificial silk, silk threads, gold and silver threads, gold lamé, glass stones

The gloves also belong to the ornate of auxiliary bishop Paul Nordhues and were made in Edith Ostendorf's studio in the year of the bishop's episcopal consecration. They have a lily cross on the back, while the wide cuffs feature gold embroidered rosette motifs and spiral ornaments enriched with white glass stones. Pontifical gloves were usually worn during Holy Mass, when celebrated by a bishop as the head of the church, until the washing of hands and the bestowal of blessings. The gloves show the liturgical colours.

Display case 26

Book cover of an evangeliary

[Inv. no. 75]

Ivory plate (Carolingian): around 860–870

Book cover: late 15th century / silver forged, engraved, gilded; ivory, gemstones / glass stones; wood

While the evangelion or gospel book contains the gospel texts of all services of the whole church year, the evangeliary contains only parts of it. The elaborately designed book cover of such an evangeliary was severely damaged by fire in the cathedral in 1945 and separated from the book block. Its components originate from different times. The decorative cover, made of gold-plated silver sheet backed with wood, was probably made in the late 15th century. Its frame is formed by a wide late-Gothic acanthus ornament set with large precious stones (emeralds, sapphires, chalcedony,

amethyst, garnet) as well as blue glass stones in frames of arranged heart leaf forms. The ivory relief in the centre of the frame shows the Ascension of Christ. Accompanied by angels, the Risen One grasps the hand of God extended towards him, observed by the group of apostles and Mary. It was probably made between 860 and 870, thus in Carolingian times, and was apparently, together with a liturgical book, a gift from bishop Milo of Minden (969-996), to whom Hermann von Lerbeck referred at the end of the 14th century with the words: “May this book – which bishop Milo had made in gold – bring – so I hope – honour to you, Gorgonius”. The stones, too, are apparently pieces from Roman times which may have been reused in connection with jewellery and which could easily have been procured due to the close relations between bishop Milo and the court of Otto II or his wife Theophanu from Byzantium.

Display case 26

Evangelary

[Inv. no. 76]

3rd quarter of the 9th century / parchment

The evangelary contains excerpts from the Gospel texts for the Sundays and holidays of the year. The manuscript was incorporated into the book cover (Inv. No. 75) until it was damaged in the Second World War. It is of Carolingian origin. The oaths of the 11th century were attached, according to which the canons and other church officials were obligated until the Minden Cathedral chapter was dissolved in 1811, which is why it is also called the “Juramente” book. For this reason, it was the only medieval manuscript that was not transferred to Berlin in 1683 after the Peace of Westphalia of 1648.

Display case 26

Book cover of an epistolary

[Inv. no. 77]

2nd half of the 13th century / (oak-?) wood carved, coloured frame remains, gold leaf

The precious book cover dates from the second half of the 13th century. Unfortunately, during the fire of the cathedral treasury in World War II in March 1945 – the treasury had been moved to the south tower of the westwork of the cathedral shortly before – almost all handwritten texts were destroyed. They contained the epistles, i.e. the excerpts from the Apostles' Letters or from the Old Testament that were intended for the first reading in the worship service. The cover shows the so-called *Majestas Domini*, the Christ enthroned on a rainbow, surrounded by a mandorla, in the gesture of blessing and with the book of life in the veiled left hand. Above the Christ figure and on the lower left side of the wood carved lid are cracks caused by the fire. The earlier coloured version with the elaborate gilding has also been destroyed except for a few traces. Remains of the leather binding and clasp have survived. In the Minden Cathedral treasure inventory of 1683, the book cover is mentioned and called "epistolary book".

THE CATHEDRAL LIBRARY

Today, the Minden Cathedral Library contains not only books and writings but also remains of older archives; altogether, a dispersed remnant of former church libraries and archives of the Minden Cathedral chapter and the former monastery of St. Mauritius. The collection has been sifted and catalogued and comprises a total of 556 numbers.

By order of the Elector of Brandenburg, the most valuable manuscripts of the library were transferred to Berlin in 1683. Later losses can be noted, especially after the dissolution of the cathedral chapter in 1811.

The library's holdings today include edifying 19th century literature and several reference works for school use as well as a collection of sacred literature from the possession of former cathedral capitulars and vicars and from the former monastery of St. Mauritius. Particularly noteworthy are prints of the 16th and 17th centuries on philosophy, science and literature of the classical period. Another important collection includes theological literature from the Reformation years.

The holdings of numerous early prints, chronical works, sermon books, bibles and editions of the New Testament, some of which date from the 15th century, are important. The liturgical books of the former diocese of Minden form the outstanding value of today's cathedral library. The **breviary** (*Brevarium ecclesie Mindensis*; preserved as a reprint from Mainz from 1516), the **missal** (*Missale secundum veram rubricam et ordinarium ecclesie Mindensis*; printed in Nuremberg in 1513) and the **book of liturgies** (*Agende rerum ec-*

clesiasticarum secundum consetum usum Mindensis dioecesis; printed in Leipzig in 1522) are available.

Display case 27

Bust of St. Magdalena

[Inv. no. 89]

Westphalia (?), 3rd quarter of the 13th century / silver, wrought, wood core

The almost half-figure reliquary bust consists of a wooden core over which silver sheet is beaten. This is fastened with nails. Face and neck were left out. A bomb attack in March 1945 and the subsequent fire in the cathedral affected parts of the cathedral treasure stored in the cathedral. Thus, the wooden core of the reliquary bust was charred, with the result that the metal sheathing has stood out from the wood ever since. The face of Mary Magdalene was blackened as a result of the fire damage and an inappropriate application of paint. In the crown area of the head, an opening with a closable flap serves to hold relics. The reliquary bust of St. Magdalena is stylistically very similar to an older bust of St. Paul from Münster Cathedral, so that its origin in Westphalia is obvious. Most probably, the Minden Magdalena is the oldest surviving reliquary bust in Germany.

LIBRARY

Since Christians, as God's people, gather for common worship services, orders and rules must be in place to enable prayer as a community. For this reason, liturgical books have emerged, often with a long history. The cathedral congregation also still has some old liturgical books.

One of these liturgical books is the Minden Breviary, which is only available as a copy in the treasury. The originals of the two volumes can be found in the cathedral and municipal archives. The breviary or the ecclesiastical Liturgy of the Hours, which is regularly prayed by all priests and many lay people all over the world, contains psalms, hymns, biblical readings, texts by theologians and synods, council statements, prayers and intercessions. The second important liturgical book is the Book of Liturgies, which regulates the administration of the seven sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Communion, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Priestly Ordination and Marriage. A copy of the second edition of the Book of Liturgies from the Leipzig printing house Melchior Lotther from 1522 can be seen in the cathedral treasury.

The most important of the liturgical books is the Minden Missal, which was printed in Nuremberg in 1513 with the help of the newly invented art of Georg Stuck. It was printed in two colours and contains coloured woodcuts.

In 1958, this book, which was important for Minden, was bought at an auction in Heidelberg and returned to its place of origin. Previously it had been in possession of the Duke of Parma.

The Missal contains the official Mass liturgy of the Church, which has developed over the centuries, for all Sundays and holidays, Marian feasts and saints' feasts. Of particular importance for Minden is the Mass form of St. Sophie, which is listed on page 305 of 1st July. Her head is kept as a relic in the reliquary stele in the anteroom of the Adoration Chapel. Charlemagne probably received this valuable relic in 799 from Pope Leo III in Paderborn and passed it on to the newly founded diocese of Minden for the conversion of the Saxons.

Long before that, precious manuscripts had been created in the writing rooms of the Minden bishops, in the so-called scriptorium, most of which are located in the Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin.

CATHEDRAL TREASURY MINDEN

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Opening times:

Daily except Mondays, from 10 am – 12:30 pm
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On the following days, the treasury is closed:

New Year (1st January), Good Friday, Easter Sunday,
Christmas Eve (24th December), Christmas (25th and
26th December), New Year's Eve (31st December)

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