

B KULTURWISSENSCHAFTEN

BE SCHÖNE KÜNSTE

BEC Graphik

Andachtsbild

Liborius <Le Mans, Bischof, Heiliger> <Motiv>

26-1 ***Der Heilige Liborius in der grafischen Kunst*** : "Kleine Andachtsbilder" von 1647 bis heute / Hans-Walter Stork. - Paderborn : Bonifatius-Verlag, 2026. - XVI, 314 S. : überw. Ill. ; 27 cm. - (Analecta Liboriana ; 2). - ISBN 978-3-98790-107-2 : EUR 52.00
[#9982]

In the great panoply of Roman Catholic saints, the name of Saint Liborius is known to relatively few people, even among Catholics. A Gaul by birth, he rose to become the second Bishop of Le Mans, was a close friend of Saint Martin of Tours, and died in the last decade of the fourth century. During his lifetime he devoted his energies to solidifying the presence of the Church in his area, and although he is not known for having caused or experienced any great miracles, some are attributed to having occurred later at his tomb. It is not, however, with Le Mans that Saint Liborius is associated but, rather, with Paderborn. Because the diocese, which had been established there in 799 lacked the relics of a patron saint, Emperor Louis the Pious arranged to have Liborius's bones moved to Paderborn in 836 to help with the conversion of the Saxons. The shrine¹ became a pilgrimage site, where pilgrims could pray for relief for such ailments as gall stones, colic, and fever. (One print, no. 66, for example, shows the saint holding a gall stone between the thumb and index finger of his right hand, while several others are on a book he is holding with his left hand.) The shrine remained intact until the early years of the Thirty Years' War, when in 1622 it was plundered by Christian the Younger of Brunswick-Lüneburg.

Although fanciful images of Saint Liborius exist in early manuscripts, it was not until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that printed images of him became common, and it is these that form the core of Hans-Walter Stork's richly illustrated study. There are variations in the way Saint Liborius is depicted, but frequently he is shown wearing a bishop's miter and holding a bishop's crozier. In many cases he stands alone. In general, Stork's study is arranged in such a way that one page has an image while the facing page has the necessary commentary.

¹ ***Der Liborischrein des Hohen Domes zu Paderborn*** : Geschichte - Beschreibung - Bedeutung / Hans Jürgen Rade. - Paderborn : Bonifatius, 2024. - 128 S. : Ill. ; 27 cm. - (Analecta Liboriana ; 1). - ISBN 978-3-98790-046-4 : EUR 26.00.

Stock has assembled a fascinating collection of images of this lesser-known saint, some in color. If one studies printed religious imagery of the post-Tridentine era, the names of well-known and prolific printmakers such as Antonie Wierix, Adriaen Collaert, Theodoor Galle, and Cornelis Cort appear again and again. Few items in Stork's work, however, are by leading printmakers of the time, yet each item is reproduced by a high-quality half-tone image that allows one to study them in great detail and to compare elements between images. As a result, images that have long been known to very few have now been made available to all.

The images, however, are only part of the story, for what brings them to life is the commentary, which is clearly and succinctly written without unnecessary academic jargon. A good example is no. 64, Michael Strunck's 1736 history of Saint Liborius and his holy relics. Written from an aggressively Jesuit standpoint, Strunck's work raised concerns among the Catholic establishment in Paderborn that George I, King of England and Elector of Hanover, might take offence and possibly cause difficulties for the diocese. As a result, the book was to be suppressed and all sold copies retrieved, if possible. Another example is no. 126, an 1856 steel engraving by Heinrich Kipp. At face value it is just another common steel engraving, but what makes this one particularly interesting is the fact that it was produced by the Düsseldorf Verein zur Verbreitung Religiöser Bilder² as part of its attempt to raise the general quality of printed religious imagery. Many of those small devotional images are also part of Stork's study.

The 148 entries in the catalog are followed by 16 pages of footnotes, 9 pages of sources, 6 pages of bibliography, and at the very end an index. The work is well-conceived and a welcome addition to our knowledge of a minor saint. The numerous images are visually engaging and offer the reader a glimpse of popular religious imagery over several centuries.

John Roger Paas

QUELLE

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² https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verein_zur_Verbreitung_religi%C3%B6ser_Bilder