

Medieval frescoes

A fortunate circumstance ensured that the medieval wall paintings of the church of Groß Gievitz came to light.

The church's history in the 20th century is closely linked to Pastor Werner Bollmann and his wife Wera, née Bennöhr. Without their efforts, the 13th-century wall paintings might never have been unveiled.

Werner and Wera Bollmann married in 1951. Before Wera Bollmann with her husband to Groß Gievitz she studied German and spent a few months at a village school in her birthplace Rothenmoor. In Groß Gievitz, Werner Bollmann was in office from 1953 to 1995. Wera Bollmann brought She taught herself to play the organ and worked as an assistant organist in Groß Gievitz for many years. Together they worked to research the history of the church and its frescoes.

As early as 1958, Werner Bollmann discovered a dissolving lime stain on the wall of the church and informed Wera Bollmann recounts in a 2021 interview that the family, which at that time was still seven members, took an active part in the uncovering of the frescoes: "We were always watching, including the children on the scaffolding." Mrs. Bollmann gave birth to a total of nine children. She is the author of various brochures about the field

stone church and about the count family of Voss.



1 Consecration cross fresco

2 Wera and Werner Bollmann in front of the church in Groß Gievitz, 2005

3 Choir vaults with Christ on the Cross

4 Battle scene from the western Schiffjoch

Consecration crosses

At various places in the church there are so-called consecration crosses. These indicate places where churches are anointed and sprinkled with holy water during the consecration; usually there are either twelve (for the number of apostles) or fourteen crosses (for the Stations of the Cross). Not all consecration crosses have survived today. One is from

Surrounded by lilies; probably a container with sacristy objects was consecrated underneath.

Did you know?



The little soul on the lion's breast is literally "The head is turned by evil, blasphemous words." The tongue represents malicious talk; the archer on the fish wants to save the little soul and "silence" the lion. Salvation comes through Christian baptism. The little soul can be found once more in the church.

Can you find her? What do you think she's doing there?



Christ on the Cross with the Evangelists

In the first painting, only the four crosses and the ornaments were created. Christ, as Judge of the World, was added later, surrounded by an almond-shaped aura (the mandorla). Surrounding him are the symbols of the four evangelists: an angel (Matthew) at the top left, an eagle (John) at the top right, and a lion (Mark) at the bottom left. Only a remnant of the bull for Luke (bottom right) remains. Mary (left) and John the Baptist (right) were also added as intercessors. Unfortunately, the banners they hold in their hands can no longer be deciphered.



In 1964, the monument preservation authorities gradually uncovered the medieval frescoes. Various

These sacred wall paintings were created shortly after the church was built and thus date back to the 13th century. These early paintings include four crosses in the choir vault (choir = chancel), Christ on the choir arch, as well as mythical creatures, tendrils, and colorful rosettes.

In a second painting, which took place a few years later, a crucifixion group, Christ as Judge of the World and a saint, possibly Peter, were added in the curve of the choir arch.

The wall paintings were probably created around 1700 in. The walls were whitewashed for the first time by order of Count Ernst Christoph von Voß, as they no longer corresponded to contemporary taste. The church's Baroque furnishings also date back to this period. The walls were whitewashed again in the mid-19th century.



Pisces and Leo

The interpretation of these mythical creatures poses the most puzzles. Since the gallery did not exist from the beginning, allowing visitors to look directly at the church ceiling, the drawing probably had greater significance than one would assume today. It presumably depicts the baptized person (on the fish) and the devil (the lion with red hair) wrestling over the little soul emerging from the lion's chest. The lion's Slavic cap could also refer to the

Wendish paganism. The "shadow" is a preliminary drawing that was not finished.

Medieval wall paintings

The discovery of the medieval frescoes is closely linked to Pastor Werner Bollmann and his wife Wera. As long ago as 1958 they discovered a peeling patch of whitewash on the church wall and informed the preservation authorities. Gradually, the figures of saints, ornaments, mythical creatures and consecration crosses were expertly exposed and re-stored. Some drawings are relatively easy to interpret; others remain mystifying to this day. Around 1700 and then again in the mid-19th century, they were white-washed over because they no longer corresponded to contemporary taste.

