

## Collegiate Church, Castle and Old Town of Quedlinburg

Quedlinburg is a town located north of the Harz mountains, in the district of Harz in the west of Saxony-Anhalt, Germany. In 1994 the old town was set on the UNESCO world heritage list. The city of Quedlinburg has existed since at least the early ninth century, when a settlement known as Gross Orden existed at the eastern bank of the river Bode. As such the city is first mentioned in 922, as part of a donation by Henry the Fowler. The records of this donation were collected at the abbey of Corvey.

After Henry's death in 936, his widow Saint Mathilde founded a religious community for women ("Frauenstift") on the castle hill, where daughters of the higher nobility were educated. The main task of this collegiate foundation, Quedlinburg Abbey, was to pray for the memory of King Henry and the rulers that came after him. The first abbess was Mathilde, granddaughter of Henry and Saint Mathilde.

The Quedlinburg castle complex, founded by Henry the Fowler and build up by Otto I the Great in 936, was an imperial palatinate of the Saxon emperors. The palatinate with a men's convent was in the valley, where nowadays the Roman Catholic church of St Wiperti is situated, while the women's convent worked on the castle hill.

In 961 and 963 a Canon's monastery was established in St Wiperti south of the castle hill. It was abandoned in the 16th century, and at one time the church, which boasts a magnificent crypt from the 10th century, was even used as a barn and a pigsty before being restored in the 1950's. In 973 shortly before the death of Otto I the Great a Reichstag (Imperial Convention) was held at the court of emperor Otto I the Great where many nobles, including Mieszko, duke of Poland and Boleslav, duke of Bohemia, and even nobles from as far away as Byzantium and Bulgaria, gathered to pay homage to the emperor. It was here that Otto the Great introduced his new daughter-in-law Theophanu, a Byzantine princess whose marriage to Otto II brought hope for recognition and continued peace between the rulers of the Eastern and Western empires.

In 994 Otto III gives the right of market, tax and coining and established the first market place to the north of the castle hill. Between the upcoming town and the women's convent there was a struggle for power in the area that lasted the following centuries until the convent was finally abandoned in 1802.

During Nazi reign the memory of Henry I became a sort of "cult", as Himmler saw himself as the reincarnation of the "most German of all German" rulers. The collegiate church and castle were to be turned into a shrine for Nazi Germany.

In the 1980s, restoration specialists from Poland were called in to carry out repairs on the old architecture, now one of the biggest selling points of the town.

In the innermost parts of the town a wide selection of half-timbered buildings from at least five different centuries are to be found (including a 14th century structure one of Germany's oldest), while around the outer fringes of the old town there are wonderful examples of Art Nouveau buildings, mainly dating from the early 20th century.

Since December 1994 the old town of Quedlinburg and the castle mount with the collegiate church are listed as one of UNESCO's World Heritage Sites. Quedlinburg is one of the best-preserved medieval and renaissance towns in Europe, having miraculously escaped major damage in World War II.

Source:-- Wikipedia [<http://www.wikipedia.org>]