



PRESS-INFORMATION

Magdeburg, 17 February 2022

Truly cultured: Saxony-Anhalt, the home of the Sky Disc, invites you on a voyage of discovery

A symbol of the state and a part of the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme is on its travels. Saxony-Anhalt is sending its famous Nebra Sky Disc to the British Museum in London. The world's oldest astronomical artefact is on loan to the museum where it will play a central role in "The World of Stonehenge" exhibition from 17 February to 17 July. But even in the absence of the Sky Disc, Saxony-Anhalt still has a huge amount to offer, from its many UNESCO World Heritage Sites, historic baroque gardens and landscaped parks through to exciting exhibitions and concert series. With its "Inspiring Six" campaign, the state is inviting visitors to discover and enjoy its "truly cultured" [highlights](#). The Inspiring Six are testament to the proximity and interconnections between the cultural heritage in the area.

For millennia, people have been observing the night sky and trying to unravel the secrets of life. The most famous evidence of this, the Nebra Sky Disc, is normally at home in the State Museum of Prehistory in Halle (Saale), that is when it is not on display in the British Museum in London. It is by no means the only artefact to be found in the state, because the whole of central Germany is regarded as an archaeological hotspot. Saxony-Anhalt has linked together the various sites to create the "Sky Paths", a unique experience for visitors that includes the location where the Sky Disc was found in Nebra, the Goseck solar observatory, and the Pommelte Woodhenge, which is the Stonehenge of Saxony-Anhalt. There are many interesting archaeological sites to be visited.

Our spring press kit puts the emphasis on the cultural offerings throughout the year, for example in the world of art. On the "Through the Painters' Eyes" route, visitors can walk through Harz region and search out the original viewpoints for paintings across the centuries with the help of a multimedia app and GPS data. On the edge of the Harz region is the picturesque town of Quedlinburg, where the old town and the Collegiate Church are both UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The Lyonel Feininger Gallery in Quedlinburg is staging an exhibition of graphical art entitled "From Rembrandt to Richter" from 3 April to 3 July. The Route of the Romanesque takes visitors through the north of the state and gives insights into the sacred buildings and medieval murals of seventy churches. One hidden gem is the ceiling painting of a chapel near Gardelegen which is known as the "Sistine Chapel of the Altmark".

Saxony-Anhalt has also been home to famous composers, including Telemann, Schütz, Bach and Handel to name but a few. This rich heritage gives rise to many concert series and music festivals, as you can find out here. But modern music can also be heard throughout the year. "Women in Jazz" in Halle (Saale) is an international festival that has a prominent place in the European cultural scene. Electronic, hip-hop and reggae will be heard



against the impressive backdrop of huge opencast mining excavators on a peninsula and the Impulse Festival and the Film Music Festival will also shed light on different genres.

The religious reformer Martin Luther is famous throughout the world, far beyond the borders of Saxony-Anhalt. He translated the Bible exactly 500 years ago and the anniversary is being celebrated in 2022 in the UNESCO World Heritage Sites of Lutherstadt Wittenberg and Lutherstadt Eisleben. The Luther Memorials in Lutherstadt Wittenberg are marking the anniversary in an unusual way. The show "Tatort 1522" is an escape room where visitors have to solve challenging puzzles on the theme of the media, linguistic and religious aspects of Luther's Bible translation.

Cultural events can be found not only indoors but also outdoors. Saxony-Anhalt is home to some of the most beautiful parks and gardens in Germany, which are linked together in the "Gartenträume – Historic Parks in Saxony-Anhalt" network. One of the most impressive is the Garden Kingdom of Dessau-Wörlitz, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, which is famous for its canals and bridges, palaces and temples, all set in a magnificently designed Age of Enlightenment landscape. At the Rosarium in Sangerhausen, you will find yourself in a sea of roses. And the colours and scents can be enjoyed not only in the main flowering season. The exhibition "The Rose meets Art", which begins on 1 July, adds the finishing touches to the sensory experience offered by the garden.

More information on the tourist destination Saxony-Anhalt can be found at:

<https://saxony-anhalt-tourism.eu/>

<https://www.world-heritage-saxony-anhalt.com/the-inspiring-six/overview>

A selection of photos can be found [here](#):

And on IMG's social media pages: [IMG Tourismus \(@IMG Tourismus\) / Twitter](#), [Reiseland Sachsen-Anhalt \(@reiseland_sachsen_anhalt\) • Instagram photos and videos](#) and [Reiseland Sachsen-Anhalt - Startseite | Facebook](#)

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PRESSE-INFORMATION

Magdeburg, 17. März 2021

Nebra Sky Disc, the world's oldest surviving representation of the cosmos, now in London

The world of Stonehenge (17 February – 17 July 2022) is the UK's first ever major exhibition on the story of Stonehenge. This special exhibition will see over 430 objects brought together from across Europe in a once-in-a-lifetime spectacle on the history – and mystery – of this ancient monument. As a result of a cooperation between the State Museum of Prehistory Halle and the British Museum London one of the key loans will be the Nebra Sky Disc, the oldest surviving representation of the cosmos anywhere in the world.

Discovery and significance

About 3.600 years after it was deposited, the Nebra hoard was found by two illegal treasure hunters in 1999 on the Mittelberg hill near Nebra. In 2002 the find was recovered for the public through a police-led sting operation in Basel by scientist and museum director Harald Meller and presented for the first time in the State Museum of Prehistory in Halle (Saale) in Saxony-Anhalt. The most important piece of this hoard is the Sky Disc, the oldest concrete depiction of cosmic phenomena, meanwhile listed among the UNESCO "Memory of the World". In 20 years of intensive research, experts from many different disciplines - from archaeology to astronomy, from archaeometry to genetics - worked together investigating the Sky Disc and its environment. Today we know the exact findspot, the date of the find, the phases of use and refashioning, where the copper, tin, and gold originated, and where the knowledge encoded in the disc is from.



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Date

The Sky Disc was deposited with several other artefacts around 1600 BCE as a gift to the gods. It would have been in use for several generations at this point. Two swords, two axes, a chisel and two arm spirals compose the Nebra hoard. These associated artefacts help to date the moment of deposition: they represent characteristic forms of the later part of the Early Bronze Age. While most of them fit into the local cultural milieu, the swords stand out by form and quality. Their hilts imitate high-status weapons from the Carpathian Basin (the so-called Apa swords). The hilts have golden collars and originally also had organic components – radiocarbon data on birch bark residues confirm the date of the hoard.

Materials and production

The Sky Disc is a nearly round hammered bronze disc with a diameter of 31.4 cm and weighs around 2 kg. The gold inlays were fixed through damascening, a technique mostly known from the Aegean during the Early Bronze Age. As chemical analyses and experiments indicate, the surface of the disc would have been artificially patinated dark, leading to a strong contrast with the gold inlays. Analyses of trace elements show that the copper came from the Eastern Alpine Mitterberg region (Austria), while the gold used in the first phase is from the River Carnon in Cornwall; the tin in the bronze is also of Cornish origin.

Bronze Age astronomical knowledge

The Sky Disc was transformed five times during its use-life. The five phases coincide with changes of the astronomical knowledge encoded in the depictions. Initially the disc had 32 small round gold dots, a large circular plate, and a large crescent-shaped plate attached. The golden dots can be identified as stars, with the cluster of seven dots representing the Pleiades. The circular plate means the sun, the crescent-shaped object the crescent moon. Astronomers have established that this composition encodes a complicated leap rule, which allowed to settle the discrepancy between the lunar (354 days) and solar year (c. 365 days). If the crescent moon stood in relation to the Pleiades as shown on the Disc at the beginning of the spring month, an additional month had to be inserted. This leap rule is known in written form only approximately 1000 years later in the Babylonian text MUL.APIN, but the knowledge would have existed in Mesopotamia much earlier. To define this leap rule locally, at least 40 years of sky observation would have been necessary. Recording these observations seems improbable in a culture without writing. Most likely, the Sky Disc is the result of a long journey to the Middle East, where this knowledge would have been available.

A later owner added two arcs at the opposite edges of the disc. To make space for these arcs, one dot was moved, and two others were covered, so that 30 remain visible. This changed the meaning of the image significantly. The arcs span 82.7° , indicating the angle between the positions of sunset at



summer and winter solstice for a wider region in Central Germany. Standing at the findspot on the Mittelberg hill, the disc can be easily oriented using the Brocken Mountain as a landmark. Observed from this point, the sun sets exactly behind the Brocken on summer solstice – the disc could thus be used as a calendar at this stage.

In a third phase, an arc-shaped object was added, which can be interpreted as a boat. Hatching on both sides refers to the oars. The Solar Barque is an important religious symbol in ancient Egyptian mythology, referring to the journey of the sun through the sky. Starting from 1600 BCE, boat depictions become omnipresent in the Nordic Bronze Age. As the Nebra Sky Disc is between the earliest evidence for the sun barque in Central Europe, long-distance contacts are likely and further evidenced e.g., by finds of Egyptian faience beads.

In a fourth phase, the rim of the Sky Disc was perforated, possibly to mount it on some kind of support. A use in the way of a banner seems probable. Finally, in a fifth phase, one of the arcs was removed, likely intentionally to render the Disc unusable. The Sky Disc was then buried as part of a hoard.

The Nebra Sky Disc not only features the oldest concrete depiction of the cosmos known so far. It also attests an interconnected world during the Early Bronze Age and a powerful individual of the Central European Únětice Culture able to acquire and safeguard complex astronomical knowledge.

Together with five other World heritage sites in Saxony-Anhalt the Nebra Sky Disc is one of “The Inspiring Six”. [UNESCO World Heritage in Saxony-Anhalt - Overview \(world-heritage-saxony-anhalt.com\)](https://www.unesco.org/en/whs/saxony-anhalt)



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More information:

[State Museum of Prehistory \(landesmuseum-vorgeschichte.de\)](http://landesmuseum-vorgeschichte.de)

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PRESS-INFORMATION

Magdeburg, 17. Februar 2022

Interview with the Nebra Sky Disk

You are more than 3800 years old. Most people have known you for about 20 years. What did you do in all the previous years?

In the beginning I was the night sky, the moons and stars for 3770 years.

I was the sunrise and the sunset for 3720 years.

I was the myth of the golden arc for 3670 years.

I was presented to a broader public 3650 years ago.

I was damaged and buried 3620 years ago.

I was hidden for 3600 years.

I was unearthed in 1999. I was damaged, washed and carelessly cleaned. I got scratched. I was packaged in plastic bags and backpacks and women's handbags and wrapped in towels and tied around a belly. I travelled a lot undercover sitting in the back seats and trunks of several cars from 1999-2002. I was presented in my museum 2002. A new public life began. I was examined and restored, photographed and described. I got my own restorer, my own scientists, my own PR management, my own crate and my own caregivers. I got famous again.

Do you remember the time when you were born? How were you made and why?

I remember fire, heat, draft. Liquid and solid. The noise of hammers and chisels. I remember people talking and scolding and cursing. It took ages. Don't ask me why. Just to please the rich? To show off? To demonstrate power and knowledge? To impress people? As an emblem of a kingdom?

You are very famous today. Why?

That is a very simple question, never mind. I am a most beautiful antiquity. I am the oldest image of the cosmos made by humans. I am a flat disc but at the same time I am the universe. I am a piece of art. My colors are fabulous, iridescent green and shining gold. Everyone recognizes the sun, the moon and the stars at first sight. But my secrets are hidden. I am a mystery and that's what people like.

There has been a great deal of research on you. What is the latest news?

Most surprising were the great variety and the origins of the raw materials and the knowledge I am made of: copper from the eastern Alps, tin and gold from south-west England, the myth of the sun ship from Egypt and the astronomical knowledge from Mesopotamia.



You have many supporters and friends including the German astronaut Matthias Maurer. He took a copy of you to the International Space Station (ISS). What do you think of this?

As far as I am concerned, I like the idea of being an ambassador on Earth and in space. I wished only he would have taken the original.

As we can see you became only recently popular in the universe. Many people around the world are also familiar with you. Are you well-traveled?

I have been to many places. I travelled Europe as the showpiece of exhibitions on the Bronze Age – Vienna, Copenhagen, Basel and Mannheim. More than a million people saw me, the original. More than a billion know my picture. Howsoever my favorite place is my home in the Halle-museum.

Where does your next journey go to and why?

I spend some time in London from February to July 2022. First time following my roots in England, where my gold comes from. They do an exhibition on Stonehenge what is supposed to be “The Sky Disc in architecture” or kind of. Let’s find out. I am very excited to meet some fabulous colleagues, the antiques in the British Museum.

Who represents your interests in Central Germany during your holiday?

This is not a holiday, love, it is a business trip. I am on duty forever. There are still many places to see and things to do in Saxony-Anhalt: one can visit the Nebra Ark, the exhibition center at the site on the Mittelberg with interactive elements and visual sequences detailing my background and provenance. Worth visiting are also the monuments along the Sky Paths, an archaeological tourist route, including the Goseck solar observatory, the Woodhenge Pömmelte or the Dolmen goddess of Langeneichstädt.

Do you have a message to us all? What do you want to tell the people looking at you in amazement?

Well, I look in all kinds of faces: amazed, scared, worshiping, curious, tired, incredulous, happy, doubtful, surprised... I want to say: Thank you for your attention! Take a note of your ancestors! Take care of your past! I am not only a flat disc or a beautiful image of heavens. I have many a story to tell. I am the stuff dreams are made of in past and present.



Characteristics

Name

The Nebra Sky Disc

Address

State Museum of Prehistory, D-06114 Halle, Richard-Wagner-Str. 9

www.landesmuseum-vorgeschichte.de

www.himmelsscheibe-erleben.de

Date of birth

1750 BC

Place of birth

central Germany

Size

diameter 32 cm, thickness around 4,5 mm, weight: 2,050 kg

Special features

oldest artistic representation of the cosmos

Awards

UNESCO "Memory of the World" since 2013

Current value

unique and invaluable

More information:

[State Museum of Prehistory \(landesmuseum-vorgeschichte.de\)](http://www.landesmuseum-vorgeschichte.de)

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PRESS-INFORMATION

Magdeburg, 17 March, 2021

Sound journey through Saxony-Anhalt: Discover festivals and music from different eras

What does Saxony-Anhalt actually sound like? So unbelievably diverse, through centuries and genres, that a trip through Saxony-Anhalt would be well worth it just for the music alone. Here is a look at the best concert series and festivals.

In Saxony-Anhalt, the music year begins with the 30th [Kurt-Weill-Festival](#) in Dessau from 25 February to 13 March. Its motto, "Music. Mirror of the Time" embodies the atmosphere and moods of different eras and various genres. With over 50 events at 21 venues in four cities, the festival helps to ensure that Weill, who was born in Dessau and emigrated to New York to escape from the Nazis, is also remembered around the world.

From 18 to 27 March, the baroque composer Georg Philipp Telemann will be celebrated and his music brought to young audiences, in particular. The [Telemann Festival](#) helps to keep the works of this Magdeburg composer alive with an extensive programme including school concerts, a children's competition, and an experimental outreach lab.

[Women in Jazz](#), hopefully live once more in 2022, will reflect true "girl power" at five different venues in Halle (Saale). Since 2006, this festival for contemporary jazz under the artistic direction of women has rapidly developed into a cultural highlight on the European cultural calendar. As well as a first-class programme, young female jazz players will also be given space for artistic development with concerts and workshops.

Major anniversary for concerts in honour of Halle's most famous son: the [Handel Festival](#) celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2022. Concerts and oratorios will be performed at various venues in Halle from 27 May to 12 June. The programme is rounded off by operas in Halle, in the restored Goethe Theatre in Bad Lauchstädt and the Carl Maria von Weber Theatre in Bernburg, and the highlight – as in the past – will be an open-air concert in the Galgenberg former quarry. Parallel to the performances, there will be a science conference, family events and a poetry slam.

At the time of the solstice on 21 June, pop-up stages will appear throughout the region. The [Fete de la Musique](#) has not only established itself in the three big cities of Magdeburg, Halle and Dessau, but also takes place in smaller towns such as Burg, Sangerhausen or Salzwedel and surprises audiences with an upbeat, non-commercial programme.

From June onwards, major festivals are on the way again. Huge discarded excavators in Ferropolis, a museum of industry dubbed the "city of iron" on the Pook peninsula in the former open-cast mining area near Gräfenhainichen, will form the grandiose backdrop to the [Melt!](#) and [Splash!](#) festivals. While Melt!, from 9 to 12 June, focuses on indie, electronic and hip-



hop music, Splash! on the first and second weekends of July is devoted to reggae, dancehall and drum and bass.

In contrast, the [Bach Festival](#) in Köthen from 28 August to 4 September is less about dancing but equally about enjoyment. This musical master has left extensive works behind, and Köthen was where he spent his happiest and most productive years. The aim of the festival organisers is authentic locations, personal encounters and contemporary formats, creating an enthusiastic but informal atmosphere.

Autumn is the time of the Wittenberg [Renaissance Music Festival](#) from 16 to 25 September, with "Myths and Fairy Tales" already on the agenda. This is followed by the [Heinrich Schütz Music Festival](#) in Weißenfels in the south of Saxony-Anhalt from 7 to 16 October. On the 350th anniversary of the composer's death, the motto "because I live" reminds us that music is immortal.

For a week in October, sound designers, composers, film-makers and producers come together at the [Filmmusiktage](#) film music festival in Halle (Saale), to share their experiences of tradition and progress in film music.

What else? Of course, there's also the [Impuls Festival](#) for German contemporary music, not to mention countless venues and initiatives in many of the region's towns. But we shouldn't forget the highlight for classical music fans, the [MDR Summer of Music](#), which stops off at central Germany's most beautiful venues from 18 June to 3 September, and treats audiences to performances by international stars on balmy summer nights.

More information on the tourist destination Saxony-Anhalt can be found at:

<https://saxony-anhalt-tourism.eu/>

And on IMG's social media pages: [IMG Tourismus \(@IMG Tourismus\) / Twitter](#), [Reiseland Sachsen-Anhalt \(@reiseland_sachsen_anhalt\)](#) • [Instagram photos and videos](#) and [Reiseland Sachsen-Anhalt - Facebook page](#)

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PRESS-INFORMATION

Magdeburg, 17 February 2022

Dreams come true in the dream gardens of Saxony-Anhalt

Saxony-Anhalt is home to one of Germany's most beautiful parks and gardens, with splendid baroque gardens, world-famous landscaped parks, and idyllic grounds filled with botanical abundance.

In centuries past, kings and princes had a penchant for magnificent, meticulously planned gardens. In Saxony-Anhalt, they left behind countless palaces surrounded by green parks that are at least as impressive as the buildings. Life is blooming and budding, with deep cultural and historical roots, in over 1,000 garden landscapes. The "Gartenträume – Historic Parks in Saxony-Anhalt" network encompasses the 50 most beautiful and significant parks in Saxony-Anhalt, which are representative of this region's green treasures. Some of these have welcomed visiting major poets and thinkers, while others were home to rulers whose views were way ahead of their time.

Garden Kingdom with UNESCO World Heritage status

You can still see the traces these people left behind in the Garden Kingdom of Dessau-Wörlitz, for example, which is one of six UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Saxony-Anhalt. Wörlitz Park, in particular, is renowned for its canals and bridges, palaces and temples, and forms a truly incomparable cultural landscape. In all, the Garden Kingdom offers visitors seven parks and gardens. A walk through these takes you on a trip through time, tracing the culture and history of the Enlightenment and encountering architectural exemplars from various epochs. Many special events take place at different seasons of the year, such as the Garden Kingdom Summer Festival with lakeside and palace concerts, evening trips in a gondola, and an Italian buffet in Wörlitz Park.

Every year, on the second Saturday in August, Garden Kingdom Day commemorates the cultural landscape's founder with guided tours, concerts and exhibitions. One of Wörlitz Park's top tourist attractions is Europe's only artificial volcano, which can actually breathe fire. On nearby Rock Island, between the Villa Hamilton, the classical theatre and mysterious rock caves, visitors can even imagine they are in Naples. Another highlight is planned for September, when the Dessau-Wörlitz Cultural Foundation unveils a new exhibition centre in the "Princess's House".

A sea of roses in Südharz

At another of Saxony-Anhalt's Gartenträume dream gardens, lovers of magnificent blooms even get an audience with the queen! In 1,000-year-old Sangerhausen in Südharz, the world's largest collection of roses awaits visitors in the Europa-Rosarium, with around 8,700 varieties and species. Every year from early summer to autumn, visitors can dive into a veritable sea of roses and also delve into history. The Rosarium in Saxony-Anhalt is



not only blessed with a myriad flowers, colours and perfumes – it's also a gene bank and living museum. You can even "sniff out" the history of roses, especially when the Historical Roses come into bloom in June. At the main flowering time on the last weekend of June, the Rosarium also invites you to the Mountain and Rose Festival, with the crowning of the Sangerhausen Rose Queen and Rose Princess. And at the annual open-air exhibition, "Rose meets Art", which starts on 1 July, visitors can experience a delightful symbiosis of art and nature in various hues, starring the rose as the "queen of flowers". The illumination of the artworks and the entire park on the closing evening on 20 August will be a real highlight.

Between the "Kingdom of Roses" and stately grounds, park lovers in Saxony-Anhalt searching for tranquillity in monastery gardens, amusement in mazes, or simply a nice spot for their picnic blanket, are also well catered for. And all this, of course, in a divine, green setting.

Incidentally, the regional initiative "Gartenträume – Historic Parks in Saxony-Anhalt" offers 360° panoramas of nearly all sites on its website. This way, you can enjoy an all-round view and, in some cases, even a flight over these green travel destinations from the comfort of your sofa. Atmospheric music accompanies you on your virtual travels. Articles, photos and videos give you a foretaste of what awaits you here in person.

Author: Manuela Bock

Further information:

- www.gartentraeume-sachsen-anhalt.de
- www.gartenreich.de/en
- www.europa-rosarium.de
- www.rosetriffkunst.de

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PRESS-INFORMATION

Harz

Walk through the real locations of historic paintings: Experience an artist's view of the Harz region

The Harz region has been favoured by artists for centuries, and is also one of Germany's most magnificent landscapes. Ever-growing numbers of artists have been coming here since the late 18th century. The Harz Tourist Association (HTV) now offers an app and multimedia guide that set out the real locations of paintings so that you can walk in the footsteps of their creators.

The story of this cultural heritage is now told using modern, digital formats, offering visiting art fans the opportunity to get close to the Harz region's landscapes and attractions in a very special way. To make this a reality, 39 selected works of art from several centuries have been artfully staged. Art historian Dr. Iris Berndt from Magdeburg extensively researched the artworks themselves and the artists, and uncovered fascinating insights into the periods in which they were created. She then used this to write suitable articles and compile the images, so that everything could be represented digitally.

All paintings are now available to view, along with extensive information, on the HTV website www.harzinfo.de/malerblicke. At each location, as well as the main motif you will see two comparative scenes from other artists, along with further information. This way, you can browse through a diverse range of over 100 drawings, watercolours, prints and paintings, search for individual artists and rediscover the region afresh.

But a direct comparison with the original motif is even more exciting. That's why all content can also be found in the MALERBLICKE Multimedia Guide, enhanced by recommended walks and by audios recorded by Berlin-born actor Jonas Hartmann. All this is based on what's known as a progressive web app. This optimises the display for mobile devices, enabling the user to discover the artist's view there and then in situ. All you need is a smartphone that can connect to the internet. If you'd like to walk through these artist's views – which are often situated in lovely, attractive landscapes –you can use the Harz app as well as the multimedia guide. Here, too, you can pinpoint the artists' vistas, as GPS data is included. Using the app's integrated navigation feature, you will find the precise locations without problem.

Dr. Iris Berndt has already worked on many projects involving the history of art, and has designed exhibitions and compiled reports. The Harz is especially close to her heart, and she herself refers to the MALERBLICKE research as her favourite project: "I explored all the artists' original locations myself, sometimes searching for a spot for hours on end. On these lonely walks, I could really empathise with the artists of the time. It was really hard to choose, but it was a joy to write."



Carola Schmidt, Manager of the Harz Tourist Board, is also delighted with this project's success. "The Harz is a treasure trove and offers infinite possibilities for us to underpin our marketing with very special topics and stories. But there's never been anything quite like MALERBLICKE. Here, we allow the artists of times long gone to speak using today's storytelling techniques. I am certain that our visitors will love it, too."

You can see an overview of all the motifs, with comparative motifs, a list of all artists involved, and the stand-alone multimedia guide at www.harzinfo.de/malerblicke.

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PRESS-INFORMATION

Rock of ages: Follow in history's footsteps in the Altmark

A Trojan horse, a Sistine Chapel and megalithic tombs older than the Pyramids: when it comes to art and cultural history, the “Antiqua Marchia”, as the Altmark was first called in 1304, has some surprises in store. The people of the Altmark have always preferred creating their cultural heritage from the materials that the region has to offer. For this reason, the history of the Altmark is, above all, found in stone, in its “rock of ages”. Here, visitors with an urge to explore can set off on a varied and fascinating trail of the region’s stones.

For over 5,000 years, the Altmark landscape has been marked by numerous ancient stone burial mounds. Older than Egypt’s pyramids, 50 of these are still fully preserved today. You can find traces of Stone Age people all around Diesdorf, Molmke, Drebenstedt, Bornsen, Lüdelsen, Stöckheim, Mehmke, Kläden and Steinfeld. These megalithic tombs are thought to be the oldest visible witnesses to human settlement in the Altmark.

From quaint Romanesque fieldstone to imposing Brick Gothic, the Altmark boasts over 500 churches, where lovers of culture will encounter architecture from the High and Late Middle Ages in parish churches, convents and collegiate churches in town centres and villages everywhere. And not many people know this: seventy Altmark churches are regarded as cultural treasures because of their medieval wall paintings. Among the many buildings well worth a visit, the “Sistine Chapel of the Altmark” in the village of Berge near Gardelegen, with its ceiling paintings reminiscent of its famous Italian counterpart, is a real gem.

A trip along the northern loop of the Romanesque Route is also highly recommended. This road steeped in culture stretches right across the Altmark via 14 stopping places, and leads not only to convents in Diesdorf, Salzwedel and Arendsee but also to the Havelberg Cathedral tourist magnet, with its mighty Romanesque westwork.

Imposing gates, magnificent town halls, splendid churches and impressive town houses – between the 13th and 16th centuries, the Hanseatic League brought prosperity and prestige to the Altmark and also made the Altmark’s merchant cities stinking rich. No other region in Europe’s Hanseatic League can boast such a density of member cities. Today, visitors can still see the traces of the Altmark’s Hanseatic heyday in the cities of Havelberg, Gardelegen, Osterburg, Salzwedel, Seehausen, Stendal, Tangermünde and Werben.

In Stendal, birthplace of Johann Joachim Winckelmann in 1717, you can choose to follow in the footsteps of this founder of modern archaeology. In the grounds of the museum that bears his name, you will see the world’s largest Trojan horse. You can even climb this and gain a wonderful view of Stendal. Or you can become an archaeologist yourself at the Langobardenwerkstatt Zethlingen workshop near Kalbe/Milde.

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Surely the most famous Altmark resident, and one of German history's most irascible personalities, is Chancellor of the German Empire Otto von Bismarck. At his birthplace in Schönhausen, you simply can't miss the small but excellent Bismarck Museum. The Bismarck Castle, Schloss Döbbelin near Stendal, has been in the hands of the Bismarck family for 19 generations. Grete Minde, who achieved sad fame as the arsonist in Theodor Fontane's novella of the same name, comes from the imperial city of Tangermünde. In the Jenny Marx House in Salzwedel, a permanent exhibition tells the life story of this Altmark resident and her famous husband, the philosopher and politician Karl Marx. And no tour of Gardelegen is complete without signs of the singer and comedian Otto Reutter, who was born here.

At the Diesdorf open-air museum, visitors can immerse themselves in rural life over 100 years ago. With more than 20 houses and farm buildings, the museum village paints a vivid picture of the culture and way of life of Altmark people between the 17th and 20th centuries. The home-made cake in the museum's café is highly recommended!

Old watchtowers, remnants of border fences and villages razed to the ground tell the moving tale of more recent East-West German history along the Green Belt former border region. The stretch of this National Nature Monument that lies in the Altmark is 123 km long and 200 metres wide. Experience contemporary history up close at the Böckwitz-Zicherie border museum, which tells of the first people to die attempting to cross the Iron Curtain, and life in the village that was split into Böckwitz in the East and Zicherie in the West.

Further information:

<https://www.museen-altmarkkreis.de>
<http://www.grenz-museum.de/>
<https://www.winckelmann-gesellschaft.com/>
<https://www.landkreis-stendal.de/de/hanse/der-altmaerkische-hansebund.html>
<https://www.bismarck-stiftung.de/ueber-uns/die-stiftung-in-schoenhausen/>
<https://kirchengemeinde-berge.de/>
<https://www.altmarkkreis-salzwedel.de/kultur-tourismus/Kulturschaetze/megalith-kultur-grosssteingraeber-werden-zur-megalith-route-altmark.aspx>

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Luther, Bauhaus, Garden Kingdom: A unique region looks forward to welcoming visitors

Nowhere in Germany is there such a wealth of UNESCO World Heritage Sites as in Anhalt-Dessau-Wittenberg. Within a radius of just 35 kilometres, you will find three places designated as World Heritage Sites by the German Commission for UNESCO and one UNESCO Biosphere Reserve: the Luther Memorials in Wittenberg, the Bauhaus and Masters' Houses and Houses with Balcony Access in Dessau-Roßlau, the Garden Kingdom of Dessau-Wörlitz and the UNESCO Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve.

Visitors have a whole range of itineraries to choose from, and can follow in Luther's footsteps in Luther's Wittenberg, which is steeped in the history of the Reformation, experience a perfect Bauhaus day in Dessau, enjoy a ride on an Italian gondola on Wörlitz Lake in the Garden Kingdom of Dessau-Wörlitz or catch sight of the shy Elbe beaver undisturbed in its beaver lodge in the Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve. This World Heritage Region promises you a fascinating variety of experiences to enjoy.

Free entry with the WelterbeCard

With the WelterbeCard all-inclusive guest card, you can experience UNESCO World Heritage Sites and over 120 further attractions from the worlds of culture, nature and leisure free of charge. The card is available as a 24-hour or 3-day card for adults and children. What's more, the new Family Card now offers free entry and other advantages on any three days of the year all over this tourist region. Now, in 2022, a digital version of the WelterbeCard is also available.

The UNESCO World Heritage Tour by bicycle

A World Heritage Tour is a marvellous way to discover the UNESCO World Heritage Sites of the Anhalt-Dessau-Wittenberg region, as well as other visitor attractions. In Luther's Wittenberg, visitors can experience world history at the original sites of the Reformation. In Dessau, visitors can learn how the Bauhaus revolutionised artistic and architectural thinking all over the world and laid the crucial foundations for modernity. In contrast, the gardens and palaces in the Garden Kingdom of Dessau-Wörlitz, with their precious art collections, have remained unchanged for over 200 years.

Further information:

www.anhalt-dessau-wittenberg.de/unesco-welterbetour
www.welterbecard.de

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Saale-Unstrut celebrates Schütz and Novalis

No one has set their stamp on the music of their era as much as composer Heinrich Schütz (1585-1672). He revolutionised German music with new Italian influences. The 350th anniversary of his death in 2022 makes this a year of celebration in Weißenfels and Zeitz, where he lived and worked. And Weißenfels celebrates another anniversary in 2022: the 250th birthday of Novalis, the most important German poet of the early Romantic period.

Exhibitions and concerts are being organised in Weißenfels to honour the composer

The town of Weißenfels in the region of Saale-Unstrut is celebrating Schütz's anniversary with a rich cultural programme. It has a special connection to the Baroque master: it is the town in which his talent was discovered and where he completed his musical masterpieces many decades later.

The Heinrich Schütz House in Weißenfels is one of many sites where events are being held in this special year. From January to December 2022, **numerous concerts of Early to High Baroque music** will be played. The spring schedule includes love songs from the Schütz era on 5 March and participatory concerts on 14 May.

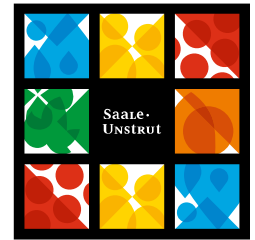
A **new museum app** guides visitors through the composer's former home with audio guides, music and digital exhibits. At this permanent exhibition, sound samples, videos, instruments and fragments of sheet music immerse visitors in the world and times of Heinrich Schütz.

Zeitz dedicates an exhibition to Schütz

The **special exhibition "Lemons for Zeitz"** at the Schloss Moritzburg museum lasts until 6 November 2022 and will celebrate Schütz's work in Zeitz. When the composer had already returned to live in Weißenfels, Maurice, Duke of Saxe-Zeitz, was building his new residence in Zeitz, 25 kilometres away, and asked Schütz for help in organising music for his court.

Weißenfels celebrates a double anniversary: 250th birthday of Novalis

As well as Heinrich Schütz, Weißenfels also remembers its second famous son: the poet Novalis, who would have been 250 years old in 2022. A **première** by the composer Maria Leontjewa, with works from Novalis specially set to music, will be held in Weißenfels on 26 March. In addition, **exhibitions** at the Brand-Sanierung art gallery and the museum of Neu-Augustusburg Castle are dedicated to Novalis as a poet and geologist. After all, Novalis was also employed as an assessor at the salt mines. Following his degree in law and studies at the Mining Academy in Freiberg, he was involved in the extraction of lignite deposits and the first comprehensive geological survey in the Electorate of Saxony. His life and works are honoured in the **Novalis Memorial House** in Weißenfels, where this literary figure lived and died.



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From winter aconites to the Spring Wine Festival – more travel tips for spring

The spring air entices us outside. Every year winter aconites, which mostly flower in February and March, are a highlight of the year at **Ostrau Palace and Park**. And the Palace Café, run by volunteers, is open every Sunday from February onwards. The **Nebra Ark Visitor Centre** is also well worth a visit: the special exhibition “Looking to the Stars – From the Sky Disc to the Rosetta Mission” has been extended until September 2022. The modern works of art along the new art trail to the Mittelberg allow archaeology, art and nature to merge into an experience “between world and cosmos” that is so far unique in central Germany. In fact, the wine year in Saale-Unstrut starts with two highlights: Covid permitting, the two regions **Saale-Unstrut and Saxony** are holding a **New Wine Tasting event** on 29 April, and the **Spring Wine Festival** in Freyburg takes place on 1 May. ■

Further information:

<http://schütz22.de>

<https://schuetzhaus-weissenfels.de/veranstaltungen/>

<https://heinrich-schuetz-haus.yunow.app>

www.schütz-musikfest.de

Contact:

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High resolution press photos of the Heinrich-Schütz anniversary year:

www.press-area.com/saale-unstrut/bildarchiv/heinrich-schuetz-festjahr-2022.html

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PRESS-INFORMATION

Magdeburg, February 17, 2022

Truly special: Pömmelte Woodhenge, Saxony-Anhalt's cousin to Stonehenge

The tourist region of Elbe-Börde-Heide in Saxony-Anhalt is home to a very special archaeological treasure: not far from the town of Schönebeck, visitors can wonder at this imposing ring sanctuary, the Pömmelte Woodhenge.

This site near the Elbe cycle path sheds light on the culture of our ancestors from the Stone Age and early Bronze Age. The remains of this cult site dating from roughly 4,300 years ago were excavated in 2005 and reconstruction began in 2013. This place was a sacred site for over 800 years, and provides an insight into the rituals and way of life of the Neolithic period.

The ringed enclosure, consisting of painted wooden posts, ditches and banks, can be compared to the world-famous Stonehenge. The main entrances lead to the centre and are astronomically aligned with the sun. The site was probably intended to reflect the cosmos and be a place where people made contact with the forces of nature. In mystical rituals there, ceramic drinking vessels were broken and the contents poured onto the sacred earth. Other sacrificial offerings such as stone axes and animal bones have been unearthed from pits in the circular ditches.

The sight can be appreciated from on high, on a 9-metre viewing platform in the midst of expansive nearby fields. A new visitor centre will also open in autumn 2022. What's particularly special is that the centre is being built using the traditional rammed earth method, as was common in the region 200 years ago. It is therefore the first building in central Germany for about 70 years to be built with solid mud walls.

Pömmelte Woodhenge is freely accessible all year round. Guided tours in English are also possible with advance notice. A visit to the Salzland Museum in Schönebeck, where original excavation finds are on show, is also a worthwhile extra.

Further information:

Pömmelte Woodhenge

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Tel. +49 3771 6842560
www.ringheiligtum-poemmelte.de

Salzland Museum in Schönebeck

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