

Description of the exhibition:

„Ochsenkopf und Meerjungfrau. Wasserzeichen des Mittelalters“. (Bull's head and mermaid. Medieval watermarks.)



This exhibition is dedicated to a special treasure within the framework of paper history research: watermarks. A variety of watermark motives was used since the later Middle Ages in paper produced in Europe. Watermarks offer useful and decisive information as for the quality of paper. Yet also the time of paper manufacturing and the place of paper production can be deduced from watermarks. Hence, filigranology became an important instrument for dating medieval manuscripts.

In connection with work on the [BERNSTEIN](#) project, which is financed by the European Commission, the Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg (Stuttgart, Germany) and the Austrian Academy of Sciences (Vienna, Austria) present a concise and profound introduction to watermarks through their touring exhibition. As regards content, paper history in general and techniques of paper manufacturing in the Middle Ages are considered. Moreover, the watermarks are analyzed against the background of medieval symbolism. The importance of watermarks for palaeography is underlined in a particular chapter. Since the Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg has one of the largest watermark collections in safekeeping (Gerhard Piccard, 1909-1989) there is also a focus on watermark collectors and watermark collections in Europe. Establishing the connection between the Middle Ages and the present, the digital presentation of watermarks through several European databases is also a chief subject of the exhibition. A catalogue with detailed scientific information serves to deepen the various aspects shown through the exhibition.