

A piece of Hildesheim's history

The anniversary pen made from bog oak



The anniversary pens are turned out of original wooden posts from Hildesheim's fortification.

Massive oak posts supported the fortification wall at the Hagentor (Hagen Gate)

During excavations in Hildesheim, huge wooden poles were found near the Hagentor. Over the centuries, the wood had turned into bog oak.

In the 16th century, a 30-meter-wide rampart connected the Hagentor and the Almstor. At the Hagentor, a 3-meter-wide wall superimposed the rampart, this was called "curtain wall". To keep the heavy wall from pushing the rampart into the moat, roughly 3.5-meter-long oak poles were installed in front of the wall, which were conserved quite well in the moist environment in the moat. An analysis of those poles revealed that the oak trees were felled in the year 1554 (cf. U. Bartelt).



Curtain wall with oak posts

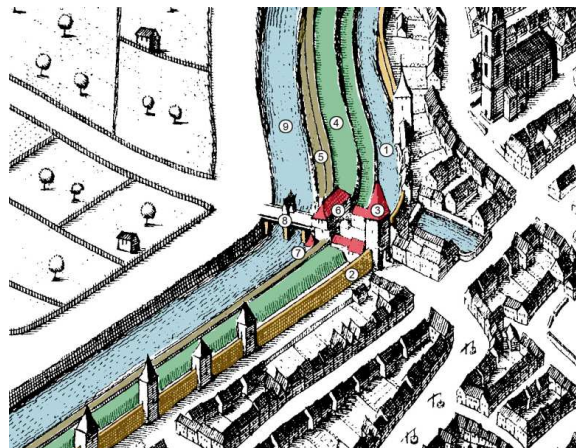
The anniversary pens are made from these bog oak posts

Bog oak is not a specific type of wood, it rather consists of tree trunks that have been lying in moors and swamps for multiple centuries.

The tannic acid in the oak wood and the iron ore in the water coalesced and made the wood rigid and discoloured. This colour can be quite different, from a light grey over dark yellow, dark brown, a bluish grey to even black. This kind of subfossil wood can be up to 8,500 years old.



Hildesheim's fortification wall around the Hagentor according to Matthäus Merian (1653)



The fortification elements with archaeological evidence are highlighted in colour:

1. Town moat (Middle Ages)
2. Town wall (Middle Ages)
3. Hagentor (Hagen Gate) (Middle Ages)
- Rampart (Late Middle Ages / Early modern period)
4. Curtain wall (Early modern period)
5. Gate in the rampart (Early modern period)
6. Round tower ("kennel") (Early modern period)
7. Hagentor Bridge
8. Fortification moat (Late Middle Ages / Early modern period) (quoted from: U. Bartelt. *Wehrhafte Stadt – Zu den aktuellen Ausgrabungen an der Hildesheimer Stadtbefestigung. Aus der Heimat – Supplement of Hildesheimer Allgemeine Zeitung*. 05 November 2011)