

A „hare story“

Three hares and three ears and nevertheless each hare has two ears.



To explain the “hare window” on the cemetery of the Paderborner Dom, we quote the following work from Dr. Günther Heinemann, called “three hares”:

Already in the roman period the hare portarayel, was very popular, as we can see in the Landesmuseum in Trier. There we can see on a plinth of jura calk from the 1st century A.D. the figure of a hare, many roman oil lamps in the front of a hare are pictured. The rapidity and vigilance of the hare must have had mystical importance at the time, an impotence that continues in the Christian symbolic.

One will find hare figures in the kloster Sinai (6th century after Justinian, consecrated to the holy Katharina) or on the door of the Wüstenkloster. In the middle age the hares appear in the Christian numerology, depicting the unity of the trinity. (tree hares springing in a circle).

Originaly a hare springing to the right was portrayed.

The famous “Drei Hasenmotiv” (three hare motif) is in Paderborn. The hare window in the late gothic cloister of the dom is nearly the symbol of the city.

Further “three hare motif” are to be found in Mpnster in westfalen, under the vaults of the Johannis-choir (1250). Furthermore “three hares motifs” are also to be found in Hardehausen in eggegebirge, near Paderborn and the Riehen Estate between Basel and Lörrach, depicted on the wrought iron railings.

Tree further sites are the church in Lauenen by Gstaad, in Berner Oberland, in the Muothal monastery by Schwyz. Three hares in circle can be found in Luceuil les Bains in the Palais du Cadinal (France).

The hare as a symbol of the Trinity

In the bible the hare is described as impure in the book of Moses, not to be eaten from the Israelites. Nevertheless in the middle age the hare is prortrayed in biblical works: the hare hardly ever fails on portrates of the creation, and often appears symbolizing the Trinity like the famous window in Paderborn or in various other sites as the Trinity, the Holy Three, that always wakes, sees and hears everything.

Martin Schongauer copperplatted engraving “Jesus after the temptation” depicts “Joy in Heaven” as three small hares playing. On thies engraving the three hares are watched by a fox. The cunning fox, Jesus recalls the scriptures in Matthew 8 and compares, an other work Herodes.