

Wiborada's Journey Through Time
The Difference in Reception of Saint Wiborada in the Years 926,
1926 and 2026

Matura paper

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1 Introduction

The Saint Wiborada has been an important historical figure in St.Gallen's history. As the first woman to be canonized, she should be well known in the area where she suffered her martyrdom. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Few people recognize her name and fewer know her significance to the city of St.Gallen. In the year 2026, Wiborada will be dead thousand one hundred years. In anticipation of that, people are trying to make her name and her story more known. Presently, she is being rediscovered and reintroduced to the population of St.Gallen and Switzerland through several projects that try to achieve exactly that. This paper hopefully contributes to these efforts.

The research question discussed in this paper is the difference in reception of Saint Wiborada the year she died, the thousandth anniversary and the eleven hundredth anniversary. This is tackled by answering three questions:

- Where and how do people venerate the Saint Wiborada?
- Why do people venerate the Saint Wiborada?
- Who venerates the Saint Wiborada?

By discussing these questions in each of the respective years, a comparison can be made. To analyse the year 926, the paper will be looking into the primary sources on Wiborada and the first vita written about her by Ekkehard I. However, as the vita was written by the church, an overall reception of the general public in St.Gallen can not be made. The 1926 will be analysed by looking at contemporary newspaper articles and *Stadtratsbeschlüsse* regarding the Wiborada fountain built in 1927. The newspaper articles provide insights on only partially represent the public reception of Wiborada, as the paper only looks into digitized articles of three different newspapers. From the view of journalists. For the year 2026, an interview was conducted with a Wiborada activist and looked into sources documented by an ecumenical team trying to re-introduce Wiborada into St.Gallen's population about current projects. This provided current information and information regarding the future, but it is only the opinion of a few.

Several analyses and studies of Wiborada and the respective primary sources have been published in recent years, but as my paper discusses future and modern content and reception in comparison to older and primary data, it will contribute to research on Wiborada already written.

In section two of my paper, I will present the existing literature on Wiborada and will explain how my paper contributes to it. Section three will discuss the historical context to the year 926, 1926 and 2026 and give insights on the history of the saint. The following part will explain my sources and methods while writing this paper in chronological order. The main part will be structured into the years I will be analysing discussing the three questions mentioned above. Finally, my sixth and final part will be the conclusion which will review the process of the paper and will discuss and compare the findings of the main part.

2 Literature review

In 1855 Joseph Victor Scheffel wrote a book about Ekkehard I (Scheffel, 1855). In this book he mentions Wiborada in a chapter, completely removed from her portrayal in her vita by Ekkehard himself. She is seen as an evil woman and a witch. Additionally, Scheffel credits the Huns instead of the Hungarians for the invasion of St.Gallen in 926. This misconception has persisted, and newspapers today still write about the Huns in relation to the invasion. In 1926 in celebration the monastery archivist Joseph Müller published a book (Müller 1926) discussing Wiborada in the year 1926 and the monastery librarian Adolf Fäh published a small booklet about Wiborada and her life in general (Fäh, 1926). Newer publications examining the vitas and Wiborada's life are an article published in a newspaper by Eva Irblich 1970 discussing the vitae from the 10th and 11th century (Irblich, 1970) and a book by Walter Berschin in 1983 (Berschin, 1983). The book written by Berschin provided new translations to the vitae by Ekkehard I. and Herimann as well as critical inspection of these texts and the primary sources.

In 1998 Dagmar Schifferli wrote a fictional historical novel about Wiborada (Schifferli 1998) which attracted attention and shed light on Wiborada's role as a woman and as a forgotten saint.

A more recent work is the term paper by Lea Filliger (Filliger, 2019). This paper discusses the change of perception of Saint Wiborada through time. 2022 Gregor Emmenegger and Ann-Katrin Gässlein published a book containing several articles by eight authors contributing their knowledge of Wiborada (Emmenegger et al., 2022). The book provides insights and discussions on several topics regarding Wiborada such as the vitae, discussion of sources and information, already existing literature, and the role of Wiborada today. Especially the article by Vorburger-Bossart has similar themes as this paper.

This work as well as the paper by Filliger resemble this paper the most, as they discuss Wiborada's reception in the past and the present. However, they do not contain a specific comparison of the years 926, 1926 and 2026. They do not discuss the upcoming jubilee and current public reception. In conclusion, this paper contributes to research already done on the topic of Saint Wiborada with the discussion of current information and comparison of reception across time.

3 Historical background

3.1 St.Gallen in the first millennium

The monk Gallus settled in the Steinach-Tobel in 612 and paved the way for the eventual founding of the Gallus monastery in 719 by Otmar (Mayer, p.3, 2003). In the 8th century, the Carolingians placed St.Gallen and several other monasteries in and around present-day Switzerland under guardianship (Arlettaz et al., p.93, 2014). This led to the monastery adopting the Benedictine order in 749. In the following years, the settlement grew in a process of deforestation and urbanization and flourished economically thanks to the donations of estates from Alemannic landowners (Mayer, p.3-4, 2003). This development led to more frequent intervention of the Pope, who had a particular eye on

St.Gallen and its progress and growth (Arlettaz et al., p.94, 2014). Additionally, the Carolingian takeover led to the connection of Constance and St.Gallen as a result of the restoration of the dioceses through merging of the cathedral church and nearby abbeys (Arlettaz et al., p.93, 2014).

Before the 13th century written documents were not common, but under the Carolingian dynasty slightly more importance was placed in writing down which influenced St.Gallen and led to more documentation (Arlettaz et al., p.103, 2003). This led to the collection and creation of valuable manuscripts and books and gave St.Gallen significance and cultural influence. As a consequence of this, pilgrims started to visit St.Gallen in the 9th and 10th centuries which in turn led to economic opportunities for craftsmen and builders who settled down beyond the monastery walls (Mayer, p.4, 2003). This was the reason why St.Gallen developed into a town and after 926 eventually into a city (Zangger, 2017) and why St.Gallen became a prosperous and wealthy abbey (Arlettaz, p.95, 2014).

The eventual dissolution of the Carolingian dynasty led to the invasion of St.Gallen by the Hungarians in 926 (Zangger, 2017). The damages the Hungarians did were most likely exaggerated in the reports and not extensive (Trempe, 2013).

3.2 Wiborada

According to the *Vita Sanctae Wiboradae* by Ekkehard I., Wiborada was of aristocratic origin from Thurgau but was living devout and ascetically from early on (Ekkehard I., I.). The date and place of her birth are not known, but Wiborada had a little sister (Ekkehard I., III), and a brother, Hitto, a priest, with whom she went on a pilgrimage to Rome (Ekkehard I., IX). From him, she learned the 150 Latin psalms (Ekkehard I., VI). After her father died, she took over the task of looking after her sick mother (Ekkehard I., VII).

In 912 Wiborada came to St.Gallen from Constance and lived in a cell in St.Georgen for four years with other women. This served as a trial run for her eventual lifelong walling in at the church of St.Mangen in 916. She did this with the help of Abbot Bishop Salomon

III (Ekkehard I., XV). Her cell at St.Mangen was the place where her prophesized name revealed its meaning, her name „Wiber-Rat“ which means „Weiberreat“ or „women’s advice“ (Ekkehard I., I), as she had two windows, one facing into the church and one facing the outside, where she gave advice to the clergy, the nobility and the common people of St.Gallen (Ekkehard I., XVII).

As the story goes, Wiborada the recluse had a vision which predicted an attack by the Hungarians May 926, a year before it happened (Ekkehard I., XXIX). This enabled the abbot Engilbert and the monks to rescue the library of St.Gallen to the island Reichenau. She entrusted this vision to the abbot Engilbert who in turn had the scriptures books and texts removed from the library of St.Gallen and taken away (Ekkehard I., XXIX). The people of the monestary and the town fled St.Gallen, save for Wiborada who did not want to break her devotion by leaving her cell. She was murdered by the Hungarians in her cell 1 May 926 (Ekkehard I., XXXIII).

Shortly after, a note in the Book of Professions was added and in the Book of the Monastic Liturgy of the Hours, and „Wiberat“ was mentioned in the monastic annals (Berschin, p.4, 1983). Around 960 or 970, Ekkehard I. wrote the first vita of Wiborada on the order of Bishop Ulrich around 960 and 970 and based on the testimony of Hitto and Ulrich himself (Berschin, p.1, 1983). Wiborada received her saintly name after her canonization in 1047 through Pope Clemens II and is since then a patron saint of St.Gallen (Berschin, p.5, 1983).

3.3 Reformation

The reformation of the church in the 16th century, catalysed by Martin Luther, affected large parts of the Swiss confederation. The Catholic teaching was questioned and several reformers started to emerge such as Zwingli in Zurich, Calvin in Geneva, and Mayor Joachim von Watt, better known as Vadian, in St.Gallen. Faith in the Catholic Church in St.Gallen had already started to dwindle in the late 15th century because of an attempt at reform within the church by Abbot Ulrich Rösch (Arlettaz et al., p.211-214, 2014).

St.Gallen was one of the first cities in present-day Switzerland to introduce the Scripture principal, which means that sermons have to be based on the bible, in 1524 and three years later to celebrate Holy Communion with Reformed practice. Because at that time only one faith was accepted within the same territory (*cuius regio, eius religio*), all of St.Gallen adopted the Reformed faith, although the bishop remained and owned many estates in the region. During the iconoclasm in St.Gallen, the church of St.Mangen was stormed in 1528 and Wiborada's tomb and her bones were lost (Mayer et al., 2024).

In 1566 a wall was built to separate the Catholic monastery and the Protestant population. The two territories established themselves into a Catholic prince-abbey and a Protestant city republic which were only dissolved in 1789 after the intervention of French troops. In 1803, the canton of St.Gallen was founded in a decree by Napoleon with the city of the same name as its capital (Mayer et al., 2024).

3.4 1920s

The economic crisis after the First World War, which affected almost all of Europe, affected Switzerland only late. The war even boosted the Swiss economy and secured its influence and importance in banking due to the stability of the Swiss franc (Maissen, p.254, 2010). However, the war did have an adverse effect on the east of Switzerland and on St.Gallen in particular. The embroidery for which the region was famous fell out of fashion, which led to unemployment emigration and a recession (Mayer, 2012). New industries emerged in St.Gallen and its surrounding area, such as the metal, machine and food industries, but they struggled initially due to a lack of experienced workers (Mayer, 2012).

New political parties emerged due to a polarization in society and growing international tensions around Switzerland. In 1925, after the federal council elections, two parties shared power: The *Freisinnig Demokratische Partei* (FDP) and the *Katholische Volkspartei* (KVP), also known as *Katholische-Konservative* (KK), later renamed the *Christlichdemokratische Volkspartei* (CVP) and today *die Mitte* (Mayer, 2012). The population in the municipality of St.Gallen was almost split evenly between the

Protestant and the Catholic faith, with around 31,000 members each in 1930 (Mayer et al., 2012).

Women's suffrage wasn't introduced in St.Gallen until after the federal vote in 1971, with only 20 to 30 percent of the population voting in favour of it. This is evidence that St.Gallen is one of the most conservative cantons of Switzerland (Arlettaz et al., p.587, 2014).

In the year 1926 the idea of a fountain dedicated to the Saint Wiborada came into fruition due to the 1000th anniversary, with the final construction happening in November 1927 (StadtASG, 14.02.1928).

3.5 2020s

In recent years, the news were dominated by a number of crises, starting in 2020 with COVID-19 and continuing with the Ukraine war instigated by Russia in 2022, resulting in a below average GDP in the year 2024 and inflation all around the world. Although Switzerland has a low percentage inflation in comparison to other European countries the SNB still holds a restrictive monetary policy which decreases global demand (State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, 2024).

After the election of 2023 the federal council is made up of members of the *Schweizerische Volkspartei* (SVP), the *Sozialdemokratische Partei* (SP), the *Mitte* (former CVP) and the *FDP.Die Liberalen* which is a coalition of the *Freisinnige Demokratische Partei* and the Liberal Party of Switzerland. The city council of St.Gallen includes members of the SP, the *Grünliberale Partei* (GLP), the FDP and one non-partisan. The conservative SVP and *die Mitte* are not represented in St.Gallen (*Stadtrat*, 2024) although both have a lot of seats in parliament.

Church and religion do not have the same importance in Switzerland today as in the 1920s, much less 920. Currently, the Catholic as well as the Protestant church struggle with increased resignations. 34'561 people left the church in the year 2022 and twice as many in 2023 with 67'497 resignations. This is likely due to the cover-up of sexual

violence within the church which came to light. The importance of the church is dwindling accompanied by a decline in public trust. (Freudiger, 2024).

4 Sources and methods

4.1 Vitae of Wiborada

All literature existing about the saint Wiborada is based on the the *Vita Wiboradae* by the monk Ekkehard I. He documented her life in this script written in Latin around 960 to 970 and with the purpose in mind to give this vita to the pope for Wiborada to be canonized. Ekkehard IV added a part to this vita around 1047 after her canonization. This text was written with the firsthand knowledge of Wiborada's brother Hitto and Abbot Engilbert but it has to be assumed that some parts are embellished or even made up. A second vita was written in 1072 based on the first vita by the monk Herimannus with the name *Vita sanctae Wiboradae*. It is a rewritten and stylized version of the first vita after Wiborada's canonization. These vitae provide insights on the church's perception of Wiborada. Walter Berschin translated these vitae to German in 1983 and adding valuable insights to the credibility of the sources.

4.2 Archival sources

The documents about a fountain, memorial dedicated to Wiborada in 1926, are stored in the *Stadtarchiv St.Gallen*. To get a better understanding of why the fountain was built by whom, who authorized it and how much it cost, I studied the documents *Stadtratsbeschlüsse* that recorded the decisions regarding the fountain including the budget set aside for the renovation and letters addressing the initiators, A. Bürke and Clara Wettach, the first name of Bürke not mentioned. These documents were filed as the *Stadtkanzlei Akten Wiboradabrunnen, Faszien Artikel No. 221 VI*. Additionally, a file with photos and description of St.Gallen's monuments and statues of *Denkmäler der Stadt St.Gallen* by Dietrich Suter was valuable for the research as the most important information and documents of the construction of the Wiborada memorial are compiled

in dossier with references to the documents in the archives. These documents were written in modern script, and it was not necessary to translate them.

More general information I got from the *Archiv für Frauen-, Geschlechter-, und Sozialgeschichte Ostschweiz*. They have five files packed with newspaper articles, booklets and other relevant documentation regarding Saint Wiborada. The focus of the search was the year 1926 and recent articles and documents.

4.3 Newspaper articles

The contemporary reception of Wiborada in 1926 was mostly based on archived newspaper articles. Newspaper articles offer an insight in the published opinion of journalists and therefore educated opinion. However, journalists write what they believe could be of interest to the general public.

The *St.Galler Tagblatt*, a non-Catholic but relevant newspaper to St.Gallen, did not have any mention of Wiborada or the Wiborada fountain in the non-digitized archives on the dates 2 May 1926, Wiborada's death date and her anniversary, and 28 November 1927, the opening of the fountain. In 1926 up to three newspapers were published per day. I checked all of these on the days mentioned and the respective days before and after.

Few newspapers relevant to St.Gallen have been digitized as far back as 1926 but fortunately, the website *E-periodica* of the ETH Zürich and the *E-Newspaperarchives.ch* had archives of the newspapers *St.Galler Schreibmappe*, *Neue Zürcher Nachrichten* (now known as the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, *NZZ*) and the *Schweizerische Kirchenzeitung*. These newspapers offer a diversity, as the *St.Galler Schreibmappe* is a local non-religious newspaper offering insights on the situation in the city of St.Gallen, the *NZZ* is a Catholic newspaper from Zürich and the *Schweizerische Kirchenzeitung* is a national Catholic-liberal newspaper. The *St.Galler Schreibmappe* published an article on the anniversary celebrations in St.Georgen. The *NZZ* as well as the *Schweizerische Kirchenzeitung* mentioned Wiborada in several different contexts, such as the anniversary, the Wiborada play by Anna Sartory and general public perception of Wiborada. However, it is still only three newspapers and not representative for the whole of St.Gallen and

Switzerland. To search articles related to Wiborada, I used searchwords of variations of her name; Wiborada, Wiberat and Wyborada and narrowed down the time period from 1920 to 1930.

4.4 Interview

What are the plans for 2026 and the jubilee of Wiborada? It is too early to know specific plans or dates at which Saint Wiborada is to be celebrated but what we do know is who the driving force is behind the revival of Wiborada and her anniversary: The ecumenical team responsible for the Wiborada cell next to the church St.Mangen. Hildegard Aepli is one of the founders of this project and has committed herself to the saint and her reintroduction to St.Gallen's population as well as nationwide. As a theologian and a pastoral assistant, she has invested a lot of her time in the reappraisal of Wiborada and is personally invested in her story as a forgotten woman. In order to find out the current plans for the jubilee in 2026, I conducted a 30-minute interview with Aepli and recorded it with my phone on the 14 October 2024. I structured the Interview into two parts: Firstly, the background of the Wiborada project, trying to replicate the walling-in of the saint, and who participates in said project and what it has achieved until now. Secondly, what are the plans for the upcoming eleven hundredth anniversary of Wiborada's death. The latter part is noticeably shorter than the former because it does not seem as if there will be a big jubilee. This will be discussed in the paper. I later transcribed the audio by hand (Appendix 1). This interview reveals the ideals, hopes and plans of the driving force behind the revival of Wiborada.

5 Reception of Wiborada

5.1 AD 926

How was Wiborada remembered in the years after her death? What is there to say about her reception in 926? This question will be discussed in this section. More than a thousand years have passed since the death of Saint Wiborada and our understanding of a contemporary view is limited. However, three notes about Wiborada in the

monastery of St.Gallen and the vita written by Ekkehard I. still provide us with valuable insights.

5.1.1 Where and how

Wiborada died in her cell at the St.Mangen church where she had lived for the last years walled in (Ekkehard I., XXXIII). She did not leave it once in the time between her walling in and her death. People came to her for advice and for miraculous healing (Ekkehard I., XLVI). Even after death were her bones stored in the St.Mangen church, people visiting her grave, until the iconoclasm in the 16th century (Emmenegger, et al., p.96, 2022). Her last years were in the St.Mangen church and her body did not leave it even after.

The monastery is where her memory was stored. The monks documented her death in the profession book, which could be symbolic for an inclusion of Wiborada into their society, as the book is usually reserved for monks only (Emmenegger et al., p.62, 2022). Furthermore, is the monastery the place where the vita would eventually be written.

5.1.2 Why

Wiborada's name before the canonization was "Wiberrat". Her life's purpose was being devoted to God and to help the people around her. Not only did she give advice the towns folk and the clergy but according to the vita by Ekkehard I., she healed people's suffering and maladies (Ekkehard I., XXXIV). People believed in her healing abilities and sought out Wiborada and her grave to be granted a blessing. Not only did people believe that she had the ability to heal but she had divine visions as well. In one of those supposed visions, she saw the invasion of the Hungarians (Ekkehard I., XXIX). This was how the abbot could save the people of St.Gallen and the library containing important texts and scripts. Therefore Wiborada was seen as the saviour of St.Gallen and its treasures. Wiborada died a martyr and became patron of the books (Ekkehard I., XXXIII). This was her last living act. But she continued to prove her holiness after her death. Her corps previously mangled by an axe had healed and was emitting a light (Ekkehard I., XXXVI). This is the narrative written down by Ekkehard I. In the eyes of the people living during the writing of the vita, or at least within the church, Wiborada was a devout and

holy woman and she blessed St.Gallen with her altruism and her love and that is how the church wanted to present her for the future.

5.1.3 Who

Wiborada came from a wealthy family and had a noble background, but she devoted herself early on to God (Ekkehard I., I). The abbot Salomon, with whom she made the journey to St.Gallen would later become bishop (Ekkehard I., XX). In Ekkeharts Vita Wiboradae, he writes that after living the life of an include in S..Georgen, Wiborada was visited by the people to tend to her and offer her items she may have of use in her cell (Ekkehard I., XVI). During her time of inclusion in St.Mangen she met with a duke (Ekkehard I., XXVI) and after her vision of the invasion by the Hungarians she confided in the abbot Engilbert who believed her and set the plan in motion to bring the books and the people to safety. He even made efforts to change Wiborada's mind on staying in her cell and dying as a martyr (Ekkehard I., XXX). After her death people kept visiting her grave. For example, a merchant from Zürichgau sought out Wiborada's grave to be healed from his injuries (Ekkehard I., XXXIV) and another time a monk named Ulrich visited her for the same reasons (Ekkehard I., XXXIX). This is what the first vita tells us. According to this text Wiborada was revered and known not only by the common people but also by the nobles and the clergy. People came to her for guidance and healing because of their faith.

Aside from the embellished picture the vita paints of her, the historical notes that name and remember her show her influence during the time. The monks of St.Gallen honoured her by mentioning her in their profession book after her death as well as in the book of the monastic liturgy of the hours (Berschin, p.4, 1983). And she had enough of an impact on the society of St.Gallen to have a vita written about her. The abbot Ulrich commissioned the monk Ekkehard I. to write it in between 960 and 970 (Berschin, p.4, 1983).

5.2 AD 1926

In the thousand years after Wiborada's death, she was venerated, forgotten and then rediscovered. This was because of the Reformation where the city republic of St.Gallen adopted the Protestant faith. A core belief of the Protestant faith is that only the bible is holy, and no person should be worshipped. Consequently, the city saints were forgotten by St.Gallen's population, their relics destroyed and no longer venerated. But after the Napoleonic Wars, when the city republic and the prince-abbey merged, both people with Catholic and Protestant faith were welcomed in St.Gallen. In 1926, the city had an almost equal amount of Protestant and Catholic citizens with the KVP being one of the most prominent parties in the city. The 1000th anniversary of Wiborada's death spiked interest and faith for her. However, did this faith follow the same pattern as the one in the Middle Ages, or had her image changed in the public eye?

5.2.1 Where and how

In 1926, 1000 years after the death of Wiborada, two women came forward with the idea of building a Wiborada fountain as a memorial at *Magnihalden* in St.Gallen, close to the historical site where the saint was walled in (StadtASG, 14.02.1928). This fountain still stands today in 2024.

It was made on the initiative of Ms. A. Bürke and Clara Wettach and built and completed in red artificial stone by Joseph Büsser on 28 November 1927 (StadtASG, 2017, p.107). (While it is known that it was Clara Wettach on the initiative, the first name of Bürke was not mentioned in any document). The trough has eight corners. On the front, the year 926 is engraved into the stone in Roman numerals to commemorate the year of Wiborada's death; on the opposite side, 1926, for the year the idea of the fountain came into fruition. In the centre of the fountain is a column with a small statue of Wiborada, facing the same direction as the inscription 926, made of the same material as the rest of the fountain. The statue depicts Wiborada with a halberd in one hand and the Book of Psalms in the other. The halberd represents the murder weapon with which she was killed, and the Book of Psalms which shows her devotion and her sanctity.

Bürke and Wettach found the previous iron fountain in the middle of Magnihalden unfitting and wanted to replace it for a local historical motif, with a memorial for the Saint Wiborada reflecting the significance of the site. The thousandth anniversary of her death was the perfect occasion for starting this project and the city council agreed and lent their support. (StadtASG, 1927).

The budget for the fountain, discussed and provided by the city council, amounted to 7'000 CHF. The total costs after construction came up to 4'167 CHF (StadtASG, 03.02.1928) with 500 CHF each for the initiators of the project, Ms. A. Bürke and Clara Wettach (StadtASG, 14.02.1928). Initially, Wiborada's name was to be engraved on the trough of the fountain alongside the year dates but this idea was dismissed. As an alternative was the staircase adjacent to it named after her, but only in 1972 (StadtASG, p.559-560, 2017).

The millennium of Wiborada's death was on the second of May 1926. The diocese of St.Gallen did not invest in an extensive jubilee, at least not officially, only honoring her with a commemorative publication and *Heiligenbildchen* (Emmenegger et al., p.120, 2022). That did not stop people from celebrating and organizing their own jubilee. At the historical site in St.Georgen, where Wiborada had lived from 912 until 916 and a city district of St.Gallen, a celebration was held with a public sermon, followed by the third act of a theatrical play „Wiborada“ written by Anna Sartory (NZN, 30.04.1926), a woman active in several women's newspapers with a Catholic background (Grandjean, 2012). This play had 5 acts and was to be performed again in its full length once in St.Georgen and once in the city of St.Gallen (NZN, 30.04.1926) with its last show scheduled on the 19 October in the „Casino“ of St.Gallen (Frauenarchiv, 1926).

Two places were relevant in 1926 in the veneration of Wiborada. Firstly, Magnihalden. With the renovation of the fountain the place regained its significance as the place where Wiborada lived her last years and died. But it was the idea of two sole women and not where most people thought to venerate their saint and the completion of the construction only ceased in late 1927. The millennium celebrations took almost exclusively place in St.Georgen and it is where Anna Sartory performed her play of Wiborada, specifically

written for the jubilee. Even the chapel converted to the Wiborada chapel in 1931 was built in St.Georgen at the St.Georg's church (Emmenegger, p.126, 2022). This is likely due to the above mentioned spring and the fact that the former women's monastery located in St.Georgen was named and founded after St.Wiborada(Emmenegger et al, p.119, 2022). The monastery was dissolved in the early 19th century (Emmenegger et al, p.119, 2022). The people associated this part of town with their faith of the saint Wiborada and that is probably why they paid their respect to her in St.Georgen in 1926.

5.2.2 Why

Why was Wiborada venerated in 1926 and why had masses of people participated in the celebration on 2 May? The reason for it did not change drastically from 926. It was still the desire to celebrate one's own faith and venerate saints important to the city of St.Gallen. Wiborada has a significant role in the history of St.Gallen as the patron of books and the library as well as the „Wiberat“, lending her ear to the population of the city. The image of a holy woman and not at all the picture that the author Scheffel wanted to portray. Dr. Adolf Fäh, a monastery librarian, mentions his book and the portrayal of Wiborada in an article in the Schweizerische Kirchenzeitung on the 29 April in 1926 how it's the duty of the Swiss Catholics to rectify this false view of the saint.

According to an article in the *Neue Zürcher Nachrichten*, one reason for celebrating her death was the recognition that Switzerland had relatively few saints, making it all the more important to honour those it did have. Another reason mentioned that she deserved the gratitude of the people for her presence in times of great peril and for offering comfort to those in need. (NZN, 17.09.1926). The worship that people paid her in 1926 was because of her canonization and her importance to the people during her lifetime and of course, her miraculous deed.

But aside from her role as a saint from Switzerland, her role as a woman did slowly emerge in 1926. The passion shown from women, Bürke, Wettach and Sartory, with her working in a women's newspaper, does tell a story about the commitment as a woman to Wiborada.

5.2.3 Who

Who participated in the celebrations on 2 May 1926 and who contributed to it? According to one contemporary document, „*hunderte und hunderte*“ of people honoured Wiborada by visiting a natural spring dedicated to her (*St.Galler Schreibmappe*, p.46-47, 1927), which is said to produce healing water and the NZN talked about a „*grosse Anteilnahme des Volkes*“ (NZN, 04.05.1926).

The *St.Galler Tagblatt*, a major newspaper in St.Gallen, did not have mention of the millenium celebrations on the 2 May 1926. It is a non-Catholic newspaper, with assumably Protestant readers. That being the case, it can be assumed that primarily Catholic citizens celebrated Wiborada. But although people celebrated her, as mentioned previously, the diocese did not organize and celebrate an official jubilee (Emmenegger et al., p.120, 2022). Despite this, the people of St.Gallen celebrated.

But it does seem, that the topic of Wiborada and her role as a saint did touch women specifically. Aside from the publications by Adolf Fäh and Joseph Müller, both working at the monastery, the initiatives to create something of Wiborada came from women. Anna Sartory wrote and performed a five act play about Wiborada's life. Bürke and Wettach brought the idea of the Wiborada fountain to the city council and to life, creating something that still stands today.

5.3 AD 2026

Almost hundred years have passed since the millenarium and a thousand more since Wiborada's death. Social and economic change was apparent during the last century with the fight of equality between genders and the dwindling importance of the church in Switzerland. How is Wiborada remembered today, as the eleven hundredth anniversary approaches? This will be discussed in the following section.

5.3.1 Where and how

In 2021 an ecumenical team wanted to recreate the experience of Wiborada as a recluse. They built a cell on the wall of the St.Mangen church where her original cell was placed

(Gässlein, 2021). Every year since 2021 a few selected people can enclose themselves in this cell around May. This project will continue until 2026, the eleven hundredth anniversary of Wiborada's death (Appendix 1). The group consists of Hildegard Aepli, the initiator of the project, Kathrin Bolt, Cornel Dora, Ann-Katrin Gässlein, Christian Kind, Ines Schaberger, Judith Toma, Monika Terzer, Karin Weiss and Christa Zingg. A goal of this project was to bring up the topic of Wiborada and to re-educate people on her and her life (Appendix 1). Not only did they build the cell but also several other awareness-raising projects. This includes a historical path around the St.Mangen church, an action bound, as a game-based-learning method for children and teenagers, and guided tours (Gässlein, 2021). This project has created quite a stir and media attention regarding Wiborada (Appendix 1) with about 810 people visiting the cell occupied by temporary includes in 2021 (Gässlein, 2021) and in 2024 around 1000 visitors. Aepli says that in 2021 hundred-twenty media articles were published and forty to sixty in each year since then (Appendix 1).

In correlation to the Wiborada project or inspired through it emerged several other projects. There is for example a Wiborada dance-performance by Robina Steyer, or the future Wiborada story by Moni Egger. Additionally, a Wiborada cookie was designed and can be bought at the chocolate manufacturer *Bonnheure* in St.Gallen as well as a Wiborada bread at the *Café Goldkind*. A new bridge was recently named after Wiborada, called the „*Wiboradasteg*“. This was an idea by the ecumenical team suggested to the city council. It was adopted with no votes against it in parliament (Appendix 1).

In an interview with Hildegard Aepli (Appendix 1), she revealed the plans for the eleven hundredth anniversary of Wiborada's death in 2026. The ecumenical team of the Wiborada project is trying to organize a jubilee but lack time and finances. They will continue their current projects such as the cell, the guided tours and other projects they have in store until 2026. However, they do not have the capacity to do more they already do, as the team works on a voluntary basis. In order to expand the project, the team organized so called „*Wiborada Dialogtage*“ during which they tried to get more people to engage in the topic of Wiborada in relation with the city of St.Gallen and organized

another day just for the upcoming jubilee. Unfortunately, no-one stepped up and took the reins. At the time of the interview, it was still unclear if anyone would take on the job of organizing and budgeting the jubilee. The city of St.Gallen says they would love to participate in the jubilee and support it but they too, do not want to take responsibility.

Although much is still uncertain at the moment, it does not appear as if the jubilee will take place on a grand scale. It is even uncertain if the celebrations will go beyond the current projects. These are all focused around the St.Mangen church and Magnihalden. Starting with cell that resembles the one of Wiborada when she was walled in during her times. That is where she made her last stand and eventually died a martyr. That is why most projects circle around said place.

5.3.2 Why

Wiborada is a saint. That is why people know her. However, today she is not only a saint, who gets venerated by Catholics. The ecumenical team of the Wiborada project is set on moving Wiborada away from the religious perspective and discover her in new lights. Several possible approaches were documented during the „Wiborada Dialogtage“. The very first one is titled „Vergessene Frauengeschichte“ or „a forgotten history of a woman“ followed by the second one; „Präsenz wichtiger Frauen“ or „the presence of important women“ (Hildegard A., personal communication, 23.08.2023). Others include Wiborada as an advisor and as a keeper as well as self-responsibility or her role as the first female canonized saint. It is clear that the potential of Wiborada goes beyond her role as a saint in today's society. Hildegard Aepli even expressed her wish for St.Gallen to be renamed to St.Wiborada to bring balance to a world focused on men (Appendix 1). The focus of Wiborada lies in her role as a forgotten woman. The ecumenical team wishes for Wiborada to be more distanced from the church for an upturn in public interest due to controversies surrounding it (Appendix 1). This wish may or may not be realized until 2026. But with a possible jubilee it is feasible get more recognition and for Wiborada to separate herself more from the church and be a role model as a woman and as a historical figure.

5.3.3 Who

Christians with Protestant believe do not venerate saints. But in recent years it does not seem to matter much which denomination one belongs to. The church St.Mangen has been a Protestant church, and it can not be taken for granted that the new Wiborada cell could be built. But Hildegard Aepli asked Noa Zenger, a Protestant priest, if she would be on board as well as the now former president of the Protestant-reformed church community of St.Gallen, Christian Kind, to rebuild the Wiborada cell at the St.Mangen church (Appendix 1). Noa Zenger would later be the second person to be „walled-in“ in the cell after Aepli (Appendix 1). Additionally, Catholic as well as Protestant institutions donated money for this project (Appendix 1). This shows that denomination does not hold the same relevance as it did 100 years ago in St.Gallen.

More so is the gender relevant. Not only is the reason why people venerate or honour Wiborada her sex but also who reverences her. In the ecumenical team are ten people, eight of them women (Gässlein, 2024). Robina Steyer who made a dance-performance in honour of Wiborada or Moni Egger, who will also have an upcoming project dedicated to her. Of course, the topic of Wiborada is not exclusively a women’s topic but more a feminist topic, which tends to be mostly driven by women.

6 Conclusion

This paper discussed and compared the reception of Saint Wiborada in the years 926, 1926 and 2026, structured by answering three questions in each respective year: Where and how was Wiborada venerated, why and by whom? This was achieved by discussing primary sources and the vita written about Wiborada as well as newspaper articles and documents from the *Stadtarchiv St.Gallen*. An interview provided current insights on the happenings regarding the saint.

The reception of Wiborada changed over the course of thousand-one-hundred years. The simple question of where she was venerated changed from 926, when she left her footprint in St.Gallen, and 2026, where her current spirit resides. In 926, she lived her life

first outside of St.Gallen. This paper did not touch on her birthplace or the time Wiborada spent before coming to St.Gallen. Her first „home“ in St.Gallen was the cell next to the church of St.Georgen. This is where she spent her years previous to her cell at the church of St.Mangen. This was the most significant place for her, as it was there, she spent her last years walled in and where she died. Wiborada later lived on in the monestary of St.Gallen through the documentation of abbot Ulrich, Ekkehard I. and the monks. In 1926 the millennium celebrations focus on St.Georgen. That is where people venerated her and where the focus of Wiborada was. St.Mangen was during that time only relevant because of the memorial fountain, as the church of St.Mangen turned Protestant. This changed again in recent years with the Wiborada project being centred around the St.Mangen church and the recreated cell as well as the other projects. St.Georgen seems to have lost its significance regarding the veneration or revival of Wiborada. People do not appear to associate it with the saint. So, the answer to the question where Wiborada was and is venerated is firstly, in 926 simply where she was at the moment. In 1926 the focus was on St.Georgen and has now shifted to St.Mangen.

The question as to why Wiborada was and is venerated starts another discussion and that is; Is she truly being venerated today? In 926 her significance and influence came from her faith and the faith of other people in her. She was relevant because of her religion and her supposed healing abilities and other miracles she performed. In 1926 it seems to be solely for the fact that she was canonized and a citizen of St.Gallen. The Catholics of St.Gallen venerated Wiborada for her status as a Saint and historical relevance to the city. This reasoning fell apart in recent years. She is no longer just a saint. She is also a forgotten woman and an example for coming years. The people who are committed to Wiborada and are engaged in her historical revival want her to break free from the ecclesiastical and for her to be a relevant woman in St.Gallen's history. Currently, Wiborada is still mostly tied to a religious context but her role as an important historical woman of St.Gallen becomes clearer and it is quite possible that by 2026 people know her as such.

Lastly, who venerates Wiborada? During her time, Wiborada was revered by noble, clergy and the common folk. These people were religious Catholics and of all genders. It is mostly the same in 1926. The Catholic population of St.Gallen and Switzerland remembered Wiborada and celebrated her. However, it can be noted that women took a particular interest in her. Anna Sartory and Wettach and Bürke were initiators for Wiborada related projects. Similar as it is today with Hildegard Aepli as the initiator for the Wiborada Project.

Wiborada's reception changed over time and the woman once known as a devout and holy woman, later canonized saint to be venerated, became an important historical woman of St.Gallen, important not mainly for her holiness but for a strong woman and a feminist figure.

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Appendix 1. Interview with Hildegard Aepli

Berger: Ich würde das Ganze in zwei Teilen machen. Zuerst, wer ist alles involviert im Wiborada Projekt und der zweite Teil; was ist der Plan für das Jubiläum 2026. Was ist dein Name?

Aepli: Ich heisse Hildegard Aepli.

Berger: Gut, dann würden wir gleich mit der ersten Frage anfangen. Wie wurdest du überhaupt aufmerksam auf das Thema „Wiborada“ und wann war das?

Aepli: Willst du die ganze Geschichte hören? Also, ich bin im Kanton St.Gallen aufgewachsen in einem Bergdorf. Ich habe nie etwas von Wiborada gehört. Ich bin 1963 auf die Welt gekommen. Ich habe ein Lehrerinnen Seminar gemacht im Kanton St.Gallen und habe natürlich nie etwas von Wiborada gehört. Dann wurde ich Katechetin im Bistum St.Gallen. So mit 20 schon. Habe nie etwas von Wiborada gehört. Dann war ich Lehrerin und habe dann mit 26 Theologie gelernt, habe nie etwas von Wiborada gehört. Und dann kam ich hierher ins Bistum St.Gallen zum Arbeiten, so etwa 1994.

Und in dieser Zeit wurde ich einmal angefragt von hier von St.Gallen aus, ob es gäbe dann ein... Nein das war viel später. Da war ich in Fribourg tätig. Das war irgendwie 2006, 2007, so irgendwas. Da wurde ich von hier aus angefragt, es gäbe dann mal einmal ein Wiborada-Jubiläum. Ob ich etwas schreiben könnte über sie und ich: „Schreiben über wen?“. Und dann wurde mir zum ersten Mal das Buch gegeben von Dagmar Schifferli über Wiborada. Dann habe ich diesen historischen Roman gelesen und das war mein erster Kontakt. Vielleicht habe ich vorher schon von ihr gehört, aber es ist einfach nicht angekommen.

Und dann habe ich sie ich wieder vergessen.

Und dann pilgerten wir ja 2016 nach Rom für eine „Kirche mit den Frauen“. Da war die Frage, wann pilgern wir los und dann war für mich klar, am 2. Mai am Wiboradtag, weil Wiborada ja auch, sagt die Geschichte, nach Rom pilgerte. Und so nahm das Ganze dann kontinuierlich Fahrt auf.

Berger: Gut, was waren denn deine ersten Schritte bezüglich Wiborada? Was hast du unternommen...

Aeppli: Also meinst du zum Projekt?

Berger: Ja, zum Projekt.

Aeppli: Es gibt einen wichtigen Schritt der noch nicht mit dem Projekt, wie es dann entstand, zu tun hatte. Jetzt muss ich dir wieder eine Geschichte erzählen. Es gab in Buchs eine Skulptur Ausstellung in der katholischen Kirche, vom Künstler Det Blumberg, mit dem Namen "Himmlischen Weibsbilder". Er hat acht Skulpturen geschaffen, nicht nur religiöse Frauen. Acht starke Frauen hat er einfach in Holz geschaffen. Das heisst auch die Frida Kahlo zum Beispiel, dann auch die Rigoberta Menchù, eine Friedensnobelpreisträgerin, aber auch die biblische Judith, Maria Magdalena. Und dann war da auch noch die Heimatheilige des Künstlers darunter, Crescentia von Kaufbeuren. Also, und dann wurde ich vom Leiter dieser Ausstellung dieser Ausstellung gefragt, ob ich einen Beitrag machen würde, zu dieser Crescentia von Kaufbeuren. Einer Heiligen, einer Frau, die ich nicht kannte. Und dann dachte ich, oh nein. Jetzt soll ich hier im Kanton St.Gallen eine Heilige vorstellen, die niemand kennt und dabei kennt niemand die Heilige von *hier*.

Dann habe ich dem gesagt, ich mache das, wenn ich die Crescentia von Kaufbeuren in Dialog bringen darf mit der Wiborada von St.Gallen. Dann hat er gesagt „ja, klar mach das, okay, alles gut“. Dann wusste ich aber nicht, dass er mit dem Künstler das nicht besprochen hat. Und dann hat

er das dem Künstler gesagt und mir nicht rückgemeldet, dass dieser Künstler gefunden hat, „was ist das für eine freche Person? Die setzt einfach eine Heilige, dabei sind acht schon da. Spinnt die eigentlich?“. Also der ist wirklich total sauer gewesen, aber ich wusste das nicht.

Da bin ich da nach Buchs und habe mein Konzept gehabt, die beiden Frauen. Von der Wiborada hatte ich einfach ein Plakat mitgenommen, weil die gabs da ja nicht. Das habe ich aufgehängt am Rednerpult. Und ich habe mir noch überlegt, dass ich zu jeder von seinen anderen Skulpturen eine Referenz machen werde, also eine Körpergestik. Ich bin vor eine hingestanden, vor eine habe ich mich auf den Boden gelegt, vor einer bin ich hingekniet. Während dem der Chor gesungen hat, habe ich einfach so eine Position eingenommen. Und das hat offenbar total gewirkt. Zum Schluss kam die Wiborada. Mit der Wiborada machte ich auch den Abschluss und dann kam der Künstler zu mir, also es war fertig, kam er zu mir und sagte, also er sei auf hundertachtzig gewesen, das ginge gar nicht was ich da... aber jetzt müsse er sagen, dass sei ja grossartig gewesen, also diese Wiborada sei ja eine Entdeckung! Also für diese Wiborada müsse er eine Skulptur machen! Und das ist die Skulptur, die jetzt bei der Kirche St.Mangen steht.

Und dann hat er diese gemacht und dann hat er gesagt, ja, aber jetzt muss ich die ja kaufen. Aber ich sagte: „ja was kostet die?“, „Ja, die kostet 10000 Franken“. Dann habe ich gesagt: „Okay, ich nehme sie, ich kaufe sie einfach und ich schaue, dass ich irgendwie das Geld... Dann habe ich ein paar Jahre von allen Leuten 10 Franken verlangt. Es ist jetzt immer noch nicht abbezahlt, aber es kommt.

Und das ist ein wichtiges Detail, bevor die Idee kam mit diesem Wiborada Projekt. Das Wiborada Projekt ist dann entstanden an einer Tagung im Lasalle-Haus, wo auch Christian Kind war und die Noah Zenger. Die beiden sind wichtig, weil der Christian Kind war damals der Präsident

der Kirchgemeinde St.Gallen Zentrum, wo St.Mangen hinzugehört. Der Ort, wo die Wiborada gelebt hat, gestorben ist. Also, der war wichtig für das, dass das Projekt überhaupt starten konnte. Und die Noa Zenger, sie habe ich damals im Lasalle-Haus, als diese Idee kam, gefragt: „Noa, könntest du dir vorstellen dich eine Woche einschliessen zu lassen, wie die Wiborada?“, und sie hat gesagt, „Ja, das würde mich interessieren“. Und ja, das war für mich wichtig, quasi bin ich da völlig neben der Schiene mit dieser Idee, finden das alle total meschugge, verrückt? Auf jeden Fall habe ich nach dieser Tagung im Lasalle-Haus mit Christian Kind gesprochen, habe ihm die Idee, dass wir am Platz der Zelle der Wiborada, eine Zelle nachbauen lassen, oder wir haben auch an einen Container gedacht, oder ein Gartenhaus oder sowas. Und er war von Anfang an begeistert und hat mir natürlich enorm geholfen, dass auf einem reformierten Gelände eine katholisch Heilige; ja, das geht ja eben nicht mehr zusammen, oder, seit der Reformation, dass das möglich wird. Und die Noa hat sich dann tatsächlich 2021 nach meiner Woche hat sie sich auch einschliessen lassen. Eine reformierte Pfarrerin.

Berger: Es hat sich ja dann das ökumenische Team gebildet. Wer ist da dabei und wie sind die dazu gekommen?

Aeppli: Also Christian Kind habe ich ja schon genannt, wir waren zu zweit. Dann habe ich natürlich hier im Haus gesprochen und ich habe mit dem City-Team gesprochen, das hier so angestellt ist für besondere Seelsorge in der Stadt, und da bin ich auch auf offene Türen gestossen. Und dann hat da jemand vom City-Team aus Benjamin Ackermann ein Jahr lang mitgemacht. Aber seit Anfang an, Ann-Katrin Gässlein. Da waren wir schon zu dritt. Kathrin Bolt war im ersten Jahr noch nicht dabei, aber sie ist jetzt dabei. Und von Anfang an dabei ist, die Judith Toma. Die jedes Jahr für ein Kunstprojekt sorgt. Und dann hat es auch Wechsel gegeben. Im Moment ist die Christa Zingg dabei, sie schaut immer für den

Mahlzeitendienst. Die Karin Weiss macht den Tag der offenen Tür. Cornel Dora unterstützt uns, der Stiftsbibliothekar. Er ist nicht immer an den Sitzungen, aber er liest unsere Protokolle und berät uns auch, wenn wir etwas haben. Dann haben wir jemanden für die Schulklassen, für die Führungen. Es gibt ja praktisch 40 Schulklassen im Mai, die kommen. Das ist die Moni Terzer. Immer, wenn ich alle aufzähle, habe ich Angst, dass ich jemanden vergesse. Was gibts denn noch. Ah, wichtig ist die Kommunikation. Es ist immer jemand für Kommunikation dabei. Da hatten wir jetzt immer Wechsel. Im Moment ist es die Ines Schaberger. Die auch den Insta-Kanal bedient, die Website macht. Ja, vielleicht kommt mir dann noch jemand in den Sinn.

Berger: Was habt ihr bis jetzt mit dem erreicht?

Aepli: Mit dem Projekt. Was für eine Frage. Es ist zum Beispiel ein Buch schon herausgekommen. Im Theos Verlag. Wissenschaftliche Beiträge. Jedes Jahr im Mai werden 5 Personen für eine Woche eingeschlossen. Im ersten Jahr waren es sogar zehn. Also, sind unterdessen 25 Leute für je eine Woche eingeschlossen gewesen. Alle diese Leute mussten sich mit Wiborada befassen, alle diese Leute haben sich mit dem Einschliessenlassen befasst und dann die Woche auch so gelebt. In der Stiftsbibliothek gibt es keine Wiborada Statue, obwohl sie die Patronin ist. Da geschieht etwas. Die Schrift von Berschin ist im Reclam Heft heraus. Die Wiborada Vita ist digital abrufbar. In der Kirche St.Mangen gibt es jedes Jahr diesen Stationenweg im Mai. Es gibt viele Besuchende und wir haben... es gibt im ersten Jahr über 120 Medienberichte und seither jedes Jahr 40-80 Medienberichte. Also, wir haben eine Öffentlichkeit erreicht. Wir haben Broschüren geschrieben, wir haben Vorträge gemacht, wir haben die Wiborada Statue auf die Reise geschickt. Die war schon an etwa 10 Orten für einen Monat.

Wir haben erreicht, dass der Wiborada Steg "Wiborada Steg" heisst, die neue Brücke da, über den Unteren Graben, die Strasse da. Ja, das haben wir dem Stadtrat mal gesteckt, wir wussten, dass sie die bauten, wir haben gesagt; ja, eine Möglichkeit wäre ja das und das und haben es so formuliert, dass der Stadtrat sagen konnte "das ist unsere Idee, so isse jetzt auch". Es wurde im Parlament mit keiner Gegenstimme angenommen.

Wir haben zwei Wiborada Dialogtage durchgeführt. Auf das Jubiläum hin, haben wir versucht das andere Player aufsteigen, das ist jetzt noch nicht gelungen... Es gibt Gruppen, die machen eine Reise nach St.Gallen, wegen Wiborada jetzt, es gibt Lieder, es gibt Texte, es gibt Gedichte. Ja es gibt noch mehr.

Berger: Und das habt alles ihr organisiert, oder habt ihr da auch Unterstützung gekriegt von äusseren Faktoren.

Aepli: Wir haben jedes Jahr Geld bekommen von reformierten/katholischen, zum Teil kulturellen Institutionen. Ansonsten ist alles unsere Arbeit.

Berger: Deiner Meinung nach, was bringt es St.Gallen, dass Wiborada wieder geschätzt wird, und dass sie wieder öffentlicher wird.?

Aepli: Wir haben die Idee, dass St.Gallen mal die nächsten tausend Jahre St.Wiborada heissen sollte. Wir haben ja nicht nur in St.Gallen, sondern wir haben ein Weltproblem, ein Frauendefizit Problem und hier haben wir das exemplarisch in St.Gallen, was das heisst. Wir verehren hier den Gallus den Otmar und den Vadian und Müllers-Friedberg und überall die Männer, oder, die rumstehen. Und wir haben hier eine Frau, die auf unserem Boden, aus unserer Mitte, die für St.Gallen so bedeutend ist, dass St.Gallen gar nicht das UNESCO Welterbe sein könnte, wenn es sie nicht gegeben hat, weil sie die Stadt bewahrt, hat über ihre Vision. Diese Vision hatte sie, weil sie ein Leben führte, wo sie eben total aufmerksam war,

nicht nur auf Gott hin, sondern auf die Geschehnisse in der damaligen Welt. Und sie wurde in dieser Zeit als Inkludin eine geschätzte Ratgeberin, eine ZuhörerIn, auch für den Abt des Klosters, für Mönche, für die Stadtbevölkerung, für reiche Leute, die hier durchzogen. Und deshalb hat man auf sie gehört und hat ihren Ratschlag ernst genommen.

Deshalb sage ich die Wiborada als Bewahrerin, ist eine Kraft, eine Figur, ein Erbe, ein Teil unserer DNA, der uns einfach noch abgeht. Er kommt in den Schulbüchern zu wenig vor, sie ist in der Stadt zu wenig im Bewusstsein. Wir haben hier ein Potential, an dem wir uns freuen und aufrichten und stärken können, als Frauen und als Männer. Denn die Zukunft unserer Welt ist männlich und weiblich und dieses Gleichgewicht muss man überall herstellen. Und wir haben hier die Chance auf dieses historischen Frauenpotentials, auf dieser Frauenkraft... ja, wir können stolz darauf sein, wir können etwas daraus machen, darum freut es mich so sehr, dass du diese Arbeit machst, wirklich. Das finde ich einfach echt toll, dass eine junge Frau sich überhaupt daran interessiert, für so eine alte Schachtel, sagen manche, "was wollt ihr mit dieser alten Schachtel?", ja, und es gibt so viele Aspekte, du hast ja mal das Blatt bekommen, wo steht wo man überall ansetzen kann. Man kann ansetzen an ihrem einfachen Lebensstil, an diesem Lebensstil, der ein Ohr nach innen, hinein, zu sich und ein Ohr nach aussen, in die Welt und dass es beides braucht. Menschen brauchen beides um gesund, möglichst gesund und stark zu werden. Wir brauchen nicht nur die Welt und den Erfolg in der Welt. Wir brauchen auch das Horchen auf uns und auf die tiefe Stimme, die Gott in uns ist und sein kann, wenn wir hören.

Geschichtlich ist sie relevant. Stadtgeschichtlich, für die Frauengeschichte, für die Frauen-Männer Geschichte, für die Klima-Fragen, mit dem nachhaltigen einfachen Lebensstil. Archäologisch kann sie Anstöße geben, man weiss ja nicht, wo sie ist, sie ist verstreut.

Künstlerisch ist sie, haben wir jetzt schon gesehen, was Künstler*innen machen. Wenn sie auf diese Geschichte stossen, sie haben gar keine Berührungängste, sondern die finden, was wow, und bringen etwas Modernes dazu und das finde ich total einfach genial. Inspiration kann sie für uns sein... ja, ich weiss nicht, ich kann jetzt nicht alle Bereiche auswendig sagen, müsste das Blatt noch vor mir haben, aber das hast du ja selber, falls du noch etwas dazufügen willst, wenn noch etwas fehlt. Bildung ist wichtig, Frauenförderung.

Berger: Das wäre dann das Ende des ersten Teils, willst du noch etwas dazu anfügen, etwas, was du denkst, das noch wichtig wäre zu sagen?

Aepli: Unter welchem? ...

Berger: Also, das ist jetzt der Teil, bevor es ums Jubiläum dann geht. Noch allgemein etwas, das du jetzt noch dazu sagen willst, bevor wir ...

Aepli: Ja, pff... zum Jubiläum gibt es ja vielleicht gar nichts zu sagen. (lacht)

Berger: Ja, das wäre dann aber auch eine Aussage

Aepli: Jaja, klar. Ich habe jetzt schon viel erzählt...

Berger: Was sind stand jetzt genau... was ist der Plan für das Jubiläum im Jahr 2026? Die realistischen Pläne, die man umsetzen könnte, oder umsetzen wird

Aepli: Also, wir haben vom ökumenischen Projekt-Team aus ja gesagt, dass wir Wiborada mit der Zelle, wo sich Menschen einschliessen lassen können, mit der Ausstellung, mit Veranstaltungen rundherum, dass wir das bis 2026 machen. Und dann beenden wir das Projekt und lassen die Zelle auch wieder rückbauen, werden die Kirchenmauer St.Mangen wieder schliessen.

Es gibt die Idee, dass dort dann am Platz ein Gedenkort entstehen soll, aber da ist noch nichts weiter geschehen. Und wir vom Projekt hier, sagen,

wir können auf das Jubiläum hin nicht mehr machen als das. Das machen wir, aber mehr können wir nicht, mit unseren zeitlichen Ressourcen. Und haben zweimal Wiborada Dialogtag gemacht. Im Mai dieses Jahr nochmals einen Tag, wo wir nochmals angeschrieben haben, andere Player, für einen Brainstorming auf das Jubiläum hin. Und da sind ja immer sehr viele Ideen da, aber schlussendlich niemand, der sagt, ja ich nehme jetzt das in die Hand, ich steige da mit ein. Und seither tümpeln wir mit der Stadt jetzt so rum und haben Ende Oktober einen Termin mit einer möglichen Event... mit einer Frau, die Events organisiert. Ob sie dann darauf einsteigt, weiss ich nicht.

Die Stadt hat gesagt, ja wir wollen schon einen Akzent setzen, aber wir können den Lead nicht übernehmen. Und wir können auch nicht weiss-nicht-was bezahlen, das geht in der momentanen finanziellen Situation nicht. Und ja, von daher, weiss ich jetzt noch nicht mehr.

Es hat sich eine Frau gemeldet ein Wiborada Theater noch entwickelt. Wir haben Dinge, die können abgerufen werden, zum Beispiel die Tanzperformance von Robina Steyer, kann man buchen. Oder nächstes Jahr ist die Moni Egger, eine Theologin, die macht eine Wiborada Erzählung, die kann man nachher auch buchen. Es gibt viele Dinge, die einfach laufen. Es gibt da das Wiborada-Guetzli, es gibt das Wiborada-Brot. Das läuft alles weiter, aber das ist das, was jetzt so läuft, weil wir seit 2021 dran sind und in dem Sinn, auch wenn jetzt nichts darüber hinaus geschieht, sagen wir vom Projekt-Team, das ist das Jubiläum. 21 – 26, die ganze Zeit, mit dem Ziel das Wiborada bekannter ist und das ist uns gelungen. Und jetzt schauen wir, was von der Stadt herkommt.

Berger: Was wären den eure Wünsche gewesen, wenn man es so umsetzen könnte?

Aepli: Vor allem ein Wunsch, dass es von der Kirchenprojektgruppe wegkommt, in die Stadt, zur Bürgergemeinde, zu den Schulen. Das da

andere Player sagen, mir machen jetzt da was. Weil es nicht ein rein kirchliches Projekt ist, oder sein-bleiben muss. Weil es Stadtbedeutung hat, weil es gesellschaftsrelevante Aspekte mit sich bringt, weil es für das Geschichtsbewusstsein dieser Stadt ein Beitrag ist, eine Vision für die Zukunft.

Berger: Dann sind jetzt die nächsten Schritte mal abwarten, was dann mit der Stadt passiert Ende Oktober, oder habt ihr sonst noch Pläne, die ihr dann umsetzen wollt?

Aepli: Ich habe ja von mir her schon gesagt wir Enden das, ist okay. Und dann hat sich ein Stadtrat gemeldet und hat gesagt, "ja, das kann doch jetzt nicht sein", dann gabs dann noch eine Sitzung, wo auch die Stadtpräsidentin und die Stadt hat dann auch Leute angefragt und eine ist dann sofort wieder abgesprungen, eine zweite ist eben jetzt, am überlegt es sich noch, aber ich weiss nicht, ob sie dann einsteigt. Wenn sie nicht einsteigt, dann glaube ich dann ists..., weil es ist ja auch nicht mehr so viel Zeit. Wenn man etwas eingeben will, muss man das nächste Jahr im Juni. Denn wenn man Geld will für 26, dann muss man das 25 in den ersten Monaten ein Konzept haben und Budget eingeben und sonst verläuft sich das von daher aus.

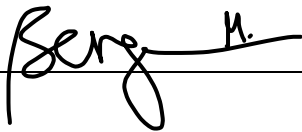
Berger: Willst du sonst noch was erwähnen zu Jubiläum oder...?

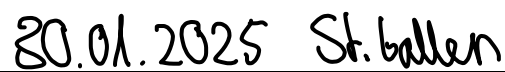
Aepli: Nein.

Declaration of Original Work

I confirm with my signature that this paper is entirely my own work and that any assistance given by others was restricted to advice and proof-reading. All sources employed in preparation of the paper and all quotations used are clearly cited and due acknowledgment is given for all help provided by others. I am aware of the definition of plagiarism in the Matura paper guidelines and that submission of work which has been plagiarized is a serious breach of the Matura regulations.

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Handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Berg M.' with a stylized flourish.

Handwritten date '20.01.2025' and place 'St. Gallen' in black ink.

Place and date