

Tina und Horst Herzig & Sylvia Gehlert

Journey through

SAXONY



Stürtz

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First page:
Saxony boasts a veritable wooden wonderland of children's toys and

Christmas decorations. Angels of light, candle arches, Christmas pyramids, nutcrackers and

pipe smokers made in the Erzgebirge have brought pleasure to generations of kids and adults alike.

Previous page:
On February 13, 1985, forty years after its destruction, an exact

replica of the Semperoper in Dresden (Semper Opera House, depicted here) was reopened.

Below:
Richter's coffee house. In 1720 there were over 30 coffee houses in

Leipzig's Katharinenstraße alone; the new-fangled beverage had taken the city by storm.

Page 10/11:
The seven arches of the Bastei promontory have spanned the precipitous gorges of the Elbsandsteingebirge since 1851, providing generations of intrepid visitors with

spectacular panoramas. In the same year the first trains began chugging through the valley of the Elbe to neighbouring Bohemia; paddle steamers had been navigating the river for almost a decade.

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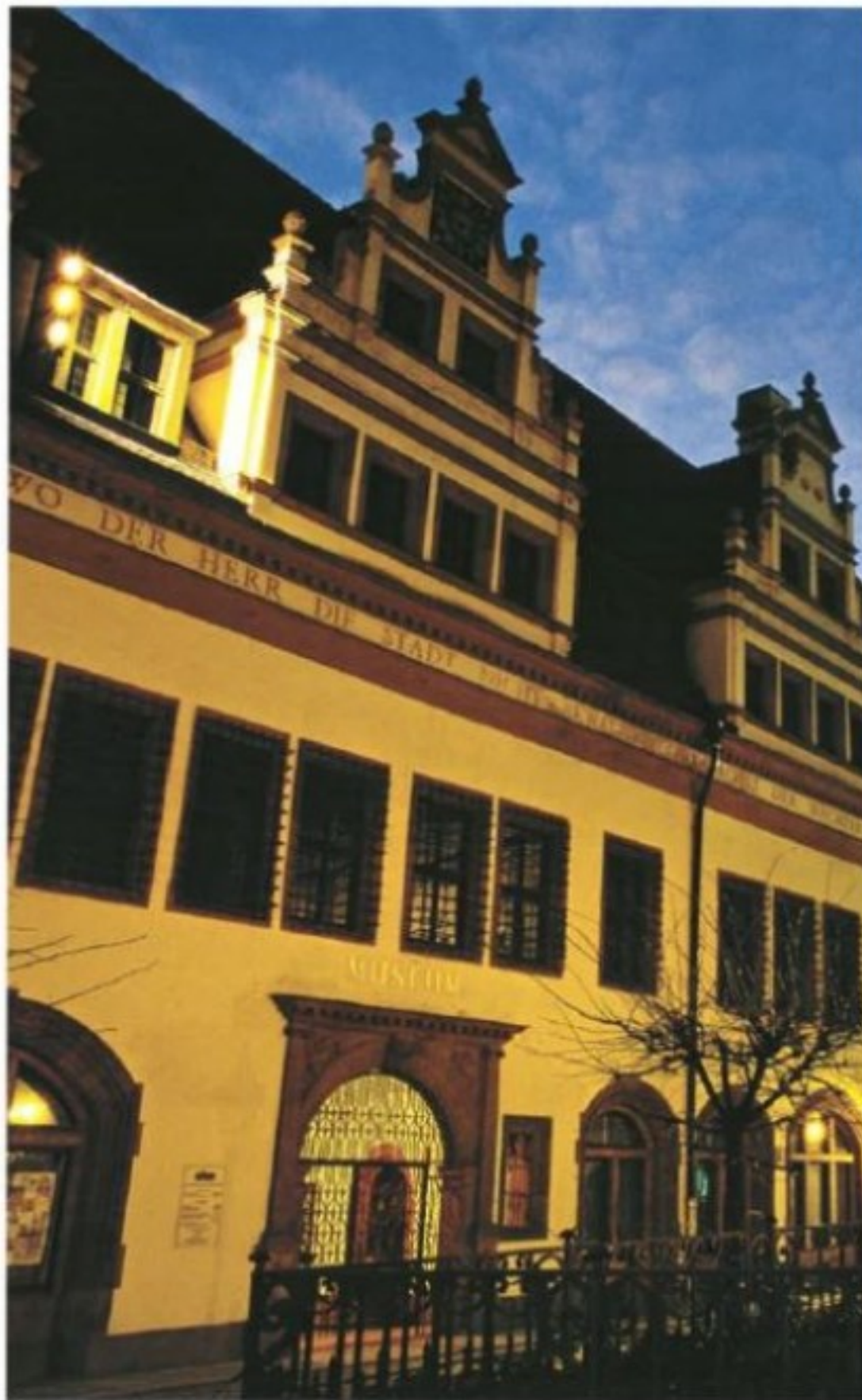
SAXONY – AT THE HEART OF EUROPE

Sculptor Carl Seffner fashioned this determined likeness of a purposeful young man to commemorate Goethe's years as a student in Leipzig. The two girls on his medallion show where the scholar's thoughts lie; not with his books but with his flame Käthchen Schunkopf, the daughter of a local publican, and his confidante Friederike, whose artist father Adam Oeser gave the young Goethe lessons.

The story of Saxony – and that of the indigenous population – is not the easiest tale to tell, but no less exciting for it. Let's start from the very beginning, namely with the land itself. The present terrain – a free state, no less – is now not even half the size of the grand electorate it once was – and the Saxons themselves aren't really Saxons at all, but a mixed bag of creeds and colours thrown together by the ravages of time. Maybe that's what makes life here so stimulating, with the local ethnic makeup marrying vigour and drive with natural wit, warmth and friendliness, a modicum of composure and a light-hearted ability to poke gentle fun at themselves and their fellow human beings. Grumpy, quick-tempered, narrow-minded Saxons, know-alls and party-poopers totally devoid of a sense of humour are few and far between and if one of them does happen to cross your path, then he or she is the famous exception to the rule – in Saxony as anywhere else in the world. The Saxons themselves, with tongues firmly in cheeks, also have a few words to say on the matter, namely in one of their favourite rhymes which goes something like this:

*Us Saxons, we're not stupid: the world knows that's a fact,
And if we sometimes play the fool,
we're putting on an act!*

The first inhabitants of the region date back to the Stone Age, as excavations near Leipzig have shown. The area wasn't permanently occupied until the 4th millennium BC, with early settlers building dwellings in the river valleys with their fertile loess soil and later in the foothills of the Erzgebirge



and Vogtland. During the first centuries AD Germanic Hermunduri are recorded along the Middle Elbe; they later wandered west during the migration of the peoples. We can only make assumptions as to why; one theory suggests that a prolonged period of cold induced them to go in search of milder climes. The region was suddenly almost devoid of human habitation, its beautiful countryside perhaps made the more enticing by the lack of inhabitants. During the 6th century Slavonic tribes from the area between the Dnepr and Oder rivers in Bohemia were drawn to this quiet haven, peacefully settling in hamlets which they gave Slavonic or Sorb names. In the wake of Germany's colonisation of the east at the turn of the millennium these tiny villages mushroomed into towns such as Leipzig, Dresden, Meißen, Bautzen, Chemnitz and Zwickau, to name but a few. Most of the older place names in Saxony have Sorb origins; those that start with the word "Windisch" (Wendish), such as Windischleuba in mining country south of Borna, are a reference to the Germans' term for the Sorbs, the Wends, which the Sorbs themselves detested. Nevertheless, the ancient denominations have stuck.

And now we come to the word "Saxon" itself. Like the Sorbs or Wends, the Saxons obtained their title from somebody else, somebody far removed from their part of the world. Once upon a time in Holstein in Northern Germany there was a Germanic tribe whose warriors liked to hack away at their opponents with a one-edged sword called a "sax" or "sax", prompting a Roman historian to refer to them as "saxones". During the 5th century a number of these hooligans of yore teamed up with their equally brutal neighbours, the Angles, and set sail for Britain, seizing supremacy and adding their gene pool to the ethnic (and now Anglo-Saxon) collective in the land of the Angles. Those remaining on the Continent were decimated by the Frankish armies of Emperor Charlemagne during the Saxon Wars; those who survived converted to Christianity. The Old Saxons soldiered on west of the Harz Mountains under the rule of a duke who in 919 was crowned Henry I, king of Germany, by both Franks and Saxons in Fritzlar. The Saxon promptly decided to invade the Slavonic territories along the Elbe and Saale rivers, bequeathing his tribal designation to the land and people he sought to conquer.

With a brief regal flourish successor to the throne Otto I furthered Henry's cause. He dispatched a team of margraves to "pacify"

Top and centre left: Richard Wagner was made musical director of the Semperoper in 1843. He attempted to generate an enthusiasm among his audiences for German

Romantic music, one of the more sensational performances being of Beethoven's 9th Symphony and "Ode to Joy". Busts of Schiller and Goethe flank the main entrance.

Bottom left: The Semperoper was again destroyed in the air raids of 1945 and has since been painstakingly rebuilt.

Below: On October 7, 1989, tens of thousands stood up for their rights outside the opera house on Theaterplatz. Inside the hall was buzzing to the strains of "Fidelio" which

featured a controversial set of barbed wire and pseudo Berlin Wall. Beethoven's tale of the triumph of bravery and loyalty over the despotism of the state proved extremely topical.

Page 28/29: Dresden. Magically majestic, the city lies embedded in a romantic river valley, its impressive silhouette the

source of inspiration for many a poet and painter. The mighty sandstone Augustusbrücke straddling the Elbe links the famous baroque left bank

to Dresden-Neustadt, the new town erected in place of Old Dresden after it was destroyed by fire in 1685.



Below:
Completed in 1912,
Yenidze was once a ciga-
rette factory and is one
of the first industrial
buildings in Germany
to be made of reinforced

concrete. Moorish fea-
tures mingle with playful
elements of Jugendstil;
the slim minaret towers
flanking the bulbous
dome mask chimneys and
ventilation shafts. The

building caused an uproar
among the general public
and precipitated designer
Martin Hammitzsch's
exclusion from the coun-
try's imperial chamber
of architects.

Top right:
The Historicist Königliche
Kunstakademie (Royal
Academy of Art) on
the Brühlische Terrasse
was finished in 1894.

Centre right:
Old Dresden on the right
bank of the River Elbe
was destroyed by fire in
the 17th century and sub-
sequently replaced by
"Neustadt bey Dresden".
In one of the stately

baroque residences lining
the main street, at the be-
ginning of the 19th cen-
tury painter Gerhard von
Kügelen once received
such notable guests as
Caspar David Friedrich,
Goethe, Körner and Kleist.

Bottom right:
The four corners of the
steps leading up to the
Brühlische Terrasse are
guarded by statues re-
presenting the four

times of the day by aca-
demy professor Johannes
Schilling. At the bottom
right of the steps is Night,
with her cloak wrapped
protectively around Sleep.

The present statues are
bronze casts which
replaced the weathered
1868 originals just
40 years after their
installation.



Below:
Moritzburg, Augustus
the Strong's impressive
summer residence,
gracefully resides atop
a man-made island

surrounded by sparkling
water and lush forest.
The Renaissance hunting
lodge belonging to his
predecessor Moritz forms
the nucleus of the com-

plex. Louis XIV, whom
Augustus strove to
emulate his whole life
long, also had his father's
hunting pavilion built
into Versailles.

Top right:
The entrance to Schloss
Moritzburg is guarded
by two horn-blowing
hunters entrusted
with the supervision of
the pack of hounds.

Pöppelmann was employ-
ed to manage the erec-
tion of the palace which
with its four banqueting
halls and ca. 200 other
rooms is indeed royal in
its proportions.

Centre right:
Schloss Moritzburg now
holds an interesting
museum of the baroque
packed with works of
art, various household
implements and a first-
class collection of

trophies. Käthe Kollwitz,
probably the most signif-
icant female German
painter, graphic artist
and sculptor of the
20th century, died here
in her Moritzburg house
of Rüdenhof in 1945.

Bottom right:
The old palace hunting
stables have housed
Saxony's state stud farm
since 1828 where cart-

horses in particular
were once a speciality
breed. The yearly stud
parades in September
still draw huge crowds.



"STOLLEN", THE POTATO AND "LEIPZIGER ALLEREI":

Where did Schiller write his "Ode to Joy"? In Leipzig, of course, where he was treated to a warm welcome and plenty of warm Saxon hospitality. Leipzig is also where Lene Voigt, the "Saxon Nightingale", once paid homage to a common root vegetable which for over three hundred years has thrived throughout the land and inspired generations of cooks to come up with a bevy of imaginative uses for it. Whether grated, boiled, mashed, chipped, fried, steamed or "au gratin", with the staple potato you can make much of very little. Voigt made much of it indeed; in addition to her successful cookery book she also penned an ode to the potato in her native Saxon dialect which would have had Sir Walter Raleigh turning in his grave ...



Left: The "Leipziger Kochbuch" was first published in 1745 with this frontispiece. The author of the cooks' bible was Susanna Eger.

Above: Delicious vegetables, fresh herbs, gourmet dumplings, morel mushrooms, melted butter and a creamy sauce topped with scampi

instead of the traditional crayfish are the mouthwatering ingredients of "Leipziger Allerlei", a tasty local dish.

Top right: "Dresdner Eierschecke", a quark gateau, has a yeast dough or shortcrust pastry base under a layer of quark, sugar,

THE CUISINE OF THE SAXONS

In Saxony the potato is manifold. Its use is not limited to the savoury; it's also found in a traditional dessert called "Quarkkäulchen". Mashed with quark, sugar, lemon peel and sultanas, the potato mix is kneaded to a dough and rolled into small buns which are baked until golden brown on both sides. Sprinkled with sugar and cinnamon and served with stewed fruit or sugared berries, "Quarkkäulchen" are a hot favourite.

from under the roots of the trees lining the banks. Today there's no need to get your feet wet; pre-packaged scampi is the perfect substitute.

"STOLLEN" FROM DRESDEN

The traditional "Stollen" from Dresden has also undergone a few changes. Hundreds



CULINARY HERITAGE

The Saxons like their food both mild and hot, sometimes plumping for the sweet and sour and always for the imaginative. The abundance of herbs in the garden, the many exotic spices introduced by medieval traders and the influence of the Sorb and Bohemian cuisine have added plenty of extra flavour to local dishes from the simple stew to the hunter's game, from cherry crumble cake to sweet dumplings with bilberries. The standard grey broiler has been banished from the table; the free state is now fully focussed on its culinary heritage. This is partly down to Ingrid Biedenkopf, the wife of the former leader of the state, who at the beginning of the 1990s called on hobby cooks and housewives to send in their favourite recipes. The result is a useful and practical work of reference – entitled "Sächsische Küche" – no self-respecting Saxon kitchen should be without.

"LEIPZIGER ALLEREI"

Whether you believe the old saying that here beautiful girls grow on trees or not, to the joy of the creative cook Saxony does cultivate an entire range of edible delights in its fields and gardens, on its trees and bushes and in its forests and rivers. "Leipzig variety" or "Leipziger Allerlei" is thus an appropriate name for one very popular local dish. Carrots, peas, kohlrabi, cauliflower and asparagus are lightly steamed in lovage and nutmeg, morel mushrooms fried in butter, crayfish boiled and bread dumplings steamed. The vegetables and crayfish tails are covered in a creamy herb sauce, dribbled with melted butter and garnished with the morels. In the olden days, when mill streams used to run right through the heart of Leipzig, the cooks of the house hitched up their skirts, stepped into the water armed with buckets and plucked the crayfish out

of years ago it was a lean sweet bread eaten during periods of fasting, totally devoid of butter. Over the years ever more ingredients were added, turning the humble "Stollen" into a masterpiece of Saxon cuisine, the success of the cake directly proportional to the experience and expertise demonstrated in its preparation. Brought gently steaming out of the oven, its crust golden brown, memories of the good old days loom large: "D'you remember when Grandfather was a little lad? That time he marched through the snow to the baker's with his handcart to pick up the village's Stollen and the baking trays all slid off the cart ..."



lemon and sultanas which is topped with a mixture of sugar, butter, eggs and custard and sprinkled with cocoa and sugar.

Bottom right: Potato soup in Saxony contains not just the humble potato but also carrots, onions, celeriac, leek, bacon and meat.

Promising him the time of his life Mephistopheles enticed the gullible Faust into Auerbachs Keller where they were raucously received by a bunch of merry students full to brim with wine conjured up by Goethe's devil incarnate. A visit to the tavern today is far more civilised – even if you may encounter the odd likeness of the Prince of Darkness...



Right page: Manufacturer of bags and suitcases Anton Müller modelled the Müllerpassage on the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele in Milan. Built between 1912 and 1914 as a showcase for his wares, the arcade has been lovingly restored, its glass-and-concrete roof protecting shoppers from the elements as they peruse the goods on sale today.



In 1525 university professor Heinrich Strömer from Auerbach in the Upper Palatinate had wine served to his students in the cellar of his town house in celebration of the Easter mass. Over the centuries his business boomed, with generation after generation of students – the young Goethe among them – taking liquid refreshment here after a hard day of lectures and seminars.





Left:

On the market square in Chemnitz the late Gothic Altes Rathaus borders on its newer neo-Renaissance and Jugendstil contemporary. Both are worth a visit, the former for its reconstructed

Ratsstube and stellar vaulting, the latter for its unusual Jugendstil furnishings and a portrait of Max Klinger from Leipzig bearing the curious title of "Work, Prosperity, Beauty".

Below left:

In the 18th century cotton weaving and calico printing were the mainstays of the Chemnitz economy. Splendid patrician houses, such

as this one on Innere Klostergasse, are reminders of the great wealth the city once enjoyed as a major centre of the textiles industry established in the Middle Ages.



Left:

The Siegertisches Haus built for a wealthy merchant is painted in the vibrant pink and white of the baroque. Not far from here was

the home of Georg Bauer or Georgius Agricola, the founder of the coal and steel industry and doctor and mayor to the city of Chemnitz

Above:

The Altes Rathaus in Chemnitz has been carefully reconstructed following its destruction during the Second World War. The town hall

tower now bears a portal from one of the city's old Renaissance houses which was also bombed during the war.



Below:

The open air museum at Seiffen explores everyday life in the central Erzgebirge during the 19th and at the beginning

of the 20th century, dominated by the toy-making profession and other trades involving the processing of wood. A water-powered lathe,

a sawmill and tiny cottages-cum-workshops clad in wooden shingles illustrate how the people of the age lived and worked.

Top right:

In the characteristic houses of the region the main living room with its Dutch stove, the larder,

animal pens or workshops are on the ground floor with the bedrooms and stores above.

Centre right:

Wooden decorations from the Erzgebirge and colourful window boxes brighten up the simple half-timbered or stone

Bottom right:

The open-air museum is a collection of buildings complete with historic furnishings which have

been removed from their original location and reconstructed on site. There's even a village shop.



Wooden figures wearing traditional Erzgebirge dress. The miner is usually depicted with an angel of light. In the run up to Christmas people used to place these figures in their windows, with an angel for each little girl in the house and a miner for each little boy.



...at least that's what the miners of the Erzgebirge once claimed. Silver was first discovered here in the 12th century. The rich pickings underground soon attracted permanent settlers; the precious metal they extracted made Saxony rich. In the midst of dense forest powerful cities shot out of the ground, adorned with spacious market squares, elegant patrician houses and magnificent chapels and churches, among them Freiberg, Schneeberg, Annaberg and Marienberg. Sankt Joachimsthal, now Jachymov in the Czech Republic, was another where in the 16th century Joachimsthal groschen were minted as the silver equivalent of the golden guilders of the Rhine.



EVERYTHING COMES FROM THE MOUNTAINS...

Not only silver and iron ore were mined. Tin was extracted and turned into elaborate tableware, lead was made into printing stamps for books and cobalt was used to dye glass and paint porcelain. The abundance of ore gave the Erzgebirge or "ore mountains" their name. Yet with the limited mining equipment of the day these natural resources soon proved impossible to access. Many miners were forced to seek alternative sources of income, turning to time-honoured crafts such as carpentry, woodwork and carving to survive. The furniture, household objects and ornamental figures they fashioned didn't make them rich; they did, however, establish a tradition which has since been inextricably linked with the Erzgebirge: the manufacture of wooden toys and Christmas decorations.

The selection of products is huge, ranging from the first rather naive crib figures and ring-turned animals to expertly modelled collector's items and splendid Christmas pyramids; from celestial angels of light to fierce-looking, teeth-gnashing nutcrackers; from kindly pipe smokers to angelic flower children. Boxes of bricks and model farmyards, doll's houses and general stores, spinning tops, marbles, bowls and balls and miniature trains all came from the Erzgebirge to steal the hearts of children far and wide. Some of the traditional workshops are now open to the public; in the run up to Christmas market places are lit up by enormous pyramids gently spinning in the heat generated by their candles. The toy village in Seiffen is open to kids big and small all year round, the ancient buildings and workshops providing visitors with a riveting insight into the history of craft in the Erzgebirge.

Magnificent witnesses to the communal blossoming of the mining industry and of art and architecture in the Middle Ages are dotted all along the Silberstraße which traces the ancient silver transportation route from Zwickau through the Erzgebirge to Dresden. There's plenty to discover and enjoy along the way: a bevy of marvellous architectural monuments in the old silver towns and numerous mines and museums set in beautiful surroundings. This harmonious union of the creations of man and nature is Saxony – or at least was. Such was the need for new-found forms of energy that during the 19th century things suddenly went horrendously off track. The robust deciduous forest of the Erzgebirge was largely replaced by colonies of conifers, which grew faster and were commercially more viable yet more susceptible



Right:
A giant seam of hard coal was discovered on the edge of Oelsnitz in 1844. In 1923 a new red-brick winding tower was erected which is still visible for miles around. The last tram trundled out of the deep mine shaft in 1971. The complex reopened as a mining museum in 1986.

Left:
Nutcrackers have been made in the Erzgebirge since the mid-19th century. The nutcracker in one of Heinrich Hoffmann's picture books is said to have been the model for the first originals.

Top far left:
Tools were fabricated and coins minted at Frohnau near Annaberg for centuries until the plant closed in 1904. The three tilt hammers were powered by water, pounding the metal with tons of force. Demonstrations of the smallest of the three are given at the museum.

Bottom far left:
These scenes depicting the life of local miners by Hans Hesse adorn the back of the miners' altar from 1521 in the St Annenkirche in Annaberg.

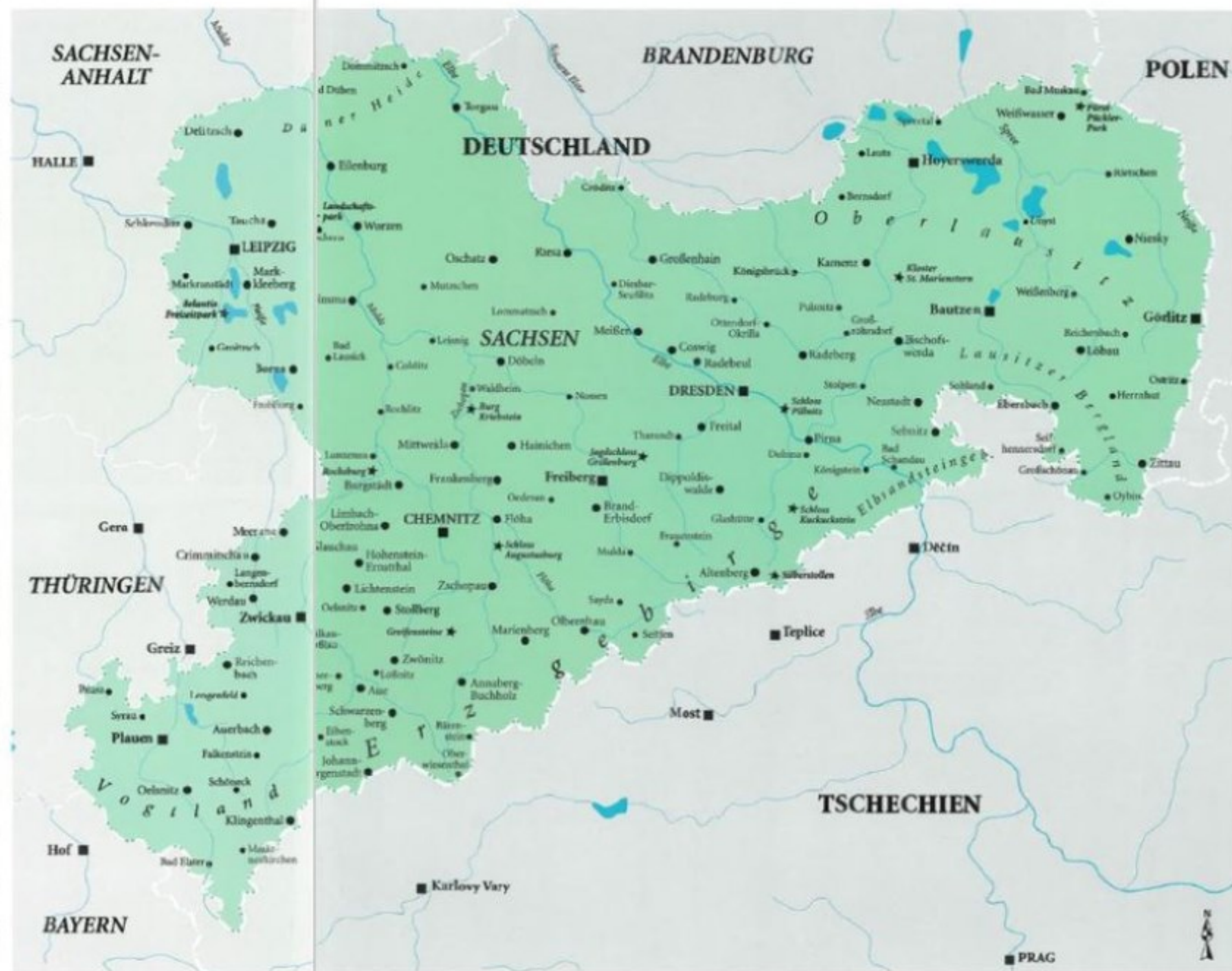


to disease and pollution. Huge swathes of forest fell victim to the toxic emissions of North Bohemia's industrial environment. Today the area is being replanted with deciduous trees.

Not only the trees died. The exact number of miners and locals killed by the extraction of uranium ore for the Soviet Union between 1946 and 1989 will never be known. In the early years working conditions were lethal; safety measures, most of them totally ineffective, were only introduced later. The Erzgebirge was the only source of uranium the Soviets had access to and was absolutely essential in the arms race against the USA. Yet an entire army of Stasi officials made sure that not much other than lethal radon gas leaked out from the tunnels of the Wismut-AG. "Wismut miners keep world peace" was the slogan used to market the deadly operation: outrageous dialectics or an exercise in cynicism?

In 1996 the western and central areas of the Erzgebirge were incorporated into the Naturpark Erzgebirge/Vogtland. The national park is serviced by well-maintained hiking trails, cycling tracks and bridleways, cross-country ski and toboggan runs. The eastern region of the mountains is no less attractive with its colourful alpine meadows, cosy holiday homes in secluded villages and warm hospitality. The Bohemians on the other side of the mountains are no less welcoming; a foray out into the Czech Republic is heartily recommended.

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SAXONY



The Free State of Saxony, the most easterly of Germany's federal states, is diverse in both its culture and scenery from the highest point in the land, Fichtelberg, in the Erzgebirge to the jagged precipices of the Elbsandsteingebirge, from the Saxon Wine Route hugging the gentle contours of the River Elbe to the romantic valleys of the Mulde and Zschopau. The entire region has profited from its rich natural resources, with the metal deposits in the Erzgebirge funding Saxony's glorious development of the arts.

Many of the most important buildings in Saxony and particularly Dresden date back to the rule of Augustus the Strong under whose auspicious patronage Matthäus Daniel Pöppelmann made architectural dreams come true. What the Zwinger, Schloss, Hofkirche and Semper Opera House are to Dresden, the historic trade centres and merchant stores are to Leipzig, its most famous being the Mädlerpassage with Auerbachs Keller and Goethe's »Faust«. Chemnitz is a city of secular cathedrals, of imposing monuments to industrial architecture from the »Gründerzeit« of the late 19th century.

From the Muskauer Heide to the Vogtland, from the Leipziger Tieflandbucht to the Elbsandsteingebirge Saxony is portrayed here in over 180 colour photos.

ISBN 978-3-8003-1644-1



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