

The Feme

In videos 44/45 I described how the Germanic spirit returned about 300 years after the Saxon Wars, at around 1150, and showed how the church reacted to it.

In this third part of the series, I would like to look at another interesting event from this period. It is the emergence of a strange jurisdiction in the Holy Roman Empire. It is the special court of the Feme,

It was first mentioned in writing in 1227 in Wiedenbrück in Westphalia, written with a V. What the word itself means is not exactly known. Sometimes it means punishment, sometimes "association, union of freemen belonging to the same court", sometimes peace of the land. "Vememeister" is a medieval term for executioner, "Vemedinc" for court. Today we may still know the term "verfemt", which has the meaning of contempt / ostracism.

About 15 km west of Hildesheim, near the Wittenburg monastery, there is a small range of hills called Finie. I noticed it because of its striking field names such as Hilliger Plack, Wulfeshornfeld, etc.. In 1570 it is also written with V Vynige. The linguist Rainer Schulz once told me on request that the word Vynige probably derives from the Germanic root word Wih = Heiligtum(sanctuary/holy place). If you transfer this assumption of the letter change to the word Feme, the original term would be Veme/Weme. Since we still argue vehemently in court today or vehemently demand justice/punishment, I would agree with the assumption that feme means punishment.

The Femgericht itself consisted of 8 people, a chairman and 7 lay judges. There were judgments in the "open court", but also in the "silent court". This was also called the secret eight. The oath states: "That he would preserve, hehlen and keep the people ... from all that God has left between heaven and earth." Hehlen means to conceal/keep secret.

The name affinity and the double meaning between the number word Acht(eight) and the above words Verachtung/Ächtung(contempt) is once again very striking. If one had not Acht gegeben(paid attention), the Acht, e.g. the Reichsacht, was imposed on someone. One was geächtet(ostracized). These Achtung/Ächtungs terms are certainly connected with the silent judgment, the secret eight of the feme. The senates of the Federal Constitutional Court each consist of eight judges.

The Femgerichte and their courts, also known as Freistühle, clearly have their roots in Germanic law. Like the Germanic Thing assemblies, they were held outdoors under an old judgment tree. This was usually a Linde(lime tree), but Eichen(oak trees) have also been recorded. In Gesmold, for example, there is still the Femlinde, under which people meet to celebrate today, and in Erle, near the streets Freienstuhl and Wehme, there is the 800-year-old Femeiche, known as the Rabenseiche. The area around the Rabenseiche was called Assenkamp. The Asier Odin and his ravens Hugin and Munin send their regards. It remains to be said that the court trees marked both the Germanic thing places and the Fem courts.

The Feme questioned the sovereignty of the emperor for jurisdiction throughout the empire and did not stop at big names. According to the "Reallexicon der deutschen Rechtsaltertümer" of 1885, she is even said to have summoned Emperor Frederick III and his chancellor. I quote again from the Femeid:

„Er auch wolle bringen für den Frien Stuhl in die heiligen heimlicher Acht des Königs, was er für wahr wisse... und wolle das nicht lassen noch um Liebe, noch um Leibe, ... noch um keiner Hande Dinge, die Gott hat lassen werden.“

(He also wants to bring for the Free Seat into the sacred, secret care of the king what he knows to be true... and does not want to leave it, neither for love, nor for body, ... nor for any hands things that God has left)

This idea of justice and its great importance are also typically Germanic. As I explained in video 28, the terms just/justice are linguistic abbreviations. The Germanische(Germanic) Recht(law/right) was GerRecht(just). And what is not GerRecht(just), was simply

ungermanisches(not germanic) Recht(law/right), ungerecht(unjust). The Feme was concerned with justice in reaching its verdict, making no distinction between the defendants.

The origins of the Feme lie in Westphalia. The capital of Westphalia is Dortmund. And so it is not surprising that you can still find references to the Feme here too. There is a street called Freistuhl at Dortmund station. This was the main court of the Feme. Dortmund's city history records that the stone courthouse square was marked by two lime trees, one of which was called Femlinde.

Westphalia is known as the land of the red earth. Borussia Dortmund's old stadium is called "Kampfbahn Rote Erde". The earth there is not red, of course, but rot(red) is a reference to the 5th rune, the right-justice rune Rot. The easiest way to explain this terminology is to look at the village of Rössing, which was first mentioned in Latin as Rotthingun. Rot is the rune of justice and Thing is the people's assembly. Rössing was therefore a Germanic court and meeting place. In this regard, I refer you to video 1, which explains the Robin (nickname from Old High German Hruodperath) Hood story.

Yes, but why and how did the Feme, this secret Germanic jurisdiction, come into being in the first place? Why in Westphalia, when the Germanic tribes had already been Christians for 300 years?

In the first two parts of this series, I explained that bracteates were responsible for the heyday of the Middle Ages. The enormous economic improvement led to a questioning of the Christian faith. This led some people to abandon their faith and return to their pagan roots. A Wittekind cult is documented for this time. Wittekind, Widukind, Weking (Videos 10-14) had been Charlemagne's pagan opponent 300 years earlier during the Saxon Wars, the violent Christianization of Germania as far as the Elbe. Widukind's home was Westphalia. He grew up in the area around the Externsteine. The Bracteate period caused a kind of rebirth of the Germanic spirit. The Feme will have been a part of this. Perhaps a kind of resumption of battle in Widukind's way. Opponents were hunted down with their help. That would explain the secrecy.

Widukind disappeared from the history books after his "baptism". He may even have founded the Feme himself as a secret society when he realized the momentary hopelessness of his fight against Christianization. 300 Years later, the time had come for this secret society to attempt liberation. As reported, a new class developed, the burghers. This class fiercely resisted the church. With the end of the Bracteate period around 1350, the Germanic spirit disappeared again for the time being, even though it had broken through so vehemently. The Feme, on the other hand, lasted a little longer, but increasingly lost influence. With the founding of the Imperial Chamber Court in 1495, it was effectively history

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