



Vilma Ruppienė (ed.)

**STONE AND SPLENDOR:
INTERIOR DECORATIONS IN LATE-ANTIQUE
PALACES AND VILLAS**

Proceedings of a Workshop, Trier, 25–26 April 2019

Harrassowitz



Stone and Splendor

Forschungen zu spätrömischen Residenzen

1



**Herausgegeben im Auftrag
des Verbunds zur Erforschung der
antiken Kaiserresidenzen Trier
von Torsten Mattern und Marcus Reuter**

2021

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Cover: View from the vestibule into the main hall (Basilika, Trier).
Reconstruction proposal by V. Ruppené and K.-P. Goethert, executed by F. Dießenbacher and C. Dießenbacher, Dießenbacher Informationsmedien.

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PREFACE

On 30 November 2018, in the presence of the Minister for Science, Further Education and Culture of the State of Rhineland-Palatinate, Prof. Dr. Konrad Wolf, the “Verbund zur Erforschung der antiken Kaiserresidenz Trier (VaKT)” was founded. Emerged from a cooperation between the Rheinisches Landesmuseum Trier and Trier University, it is the concern of the network to research the “phenomenon residence” in its entirety: people, size and activities of the “court”, representative and utility buildings, infrastructure, changes in the social and religious structure within the Augusta Treverorum, impacts on the surrounding countryside with the villas and settlement, the military protection and much more. This self-imposed task is large and will take a long time to complete. For this reason, VaKT is open to any colleague who would like to participate. At the same time, Trier is an ideal location to address these questions. Like in hardly any other place, historical, epigraphical and archaeological sources are available here. From the very beginning, however, connected with Trier and the founding of the network was also the hope that the comparison with other

late antique residential cities would broaden and at the same time sharpen the view. It was therefore only logical that the series of publications, the first volume of which is now available, was given the title “Forschungen zu spätantiken Residenzen”. Likewise, it was only logical that the first volume contains the results of an international colloquium that was held here under the direction of Mrs Prof. V. Ruppiené. Like hardly any other material, the coloured marbles stand for the luxury and splendor of the empire and its residences. At the same time, the large number of residences in the articles expresses what we hope to achieve with the publication series. It is not entirely coincidental that the editors have chosen for the title page a view of the reconstructed basilica with an opening door. With the first volume of the new series, you are currently also holding – symbolically – an opening door in your hands and we are excited about what lies ahead of us.

Ad multos annos!

Torsten Mattern & Marcus Reuter

VORWORT

Am 30. November 2018 wurde in Trier unter Anwesenheit des Ministers für Wissenschaft, Weiterbildung und Kultur des Landes Rheinland-Pfalz, Prof. Dr. Konrad Wolf, der Verbund zur Erforschung der antiken Kaiserresidenz Trier (VaKT) gegründet. Hervorgegangen aus einer Kooperation des Rheinischen Landesmuseums Trier und der Universität Trier, ist es das Anliegen des Verbundes, das „Phänomen Residenz“ in seiner gesamten Breite zu erforschen: Personen, Umfang und Wirken des ‚Hofes‘, Repräsentations- und Versorgungsbauten, Infrastruktur, Veränderungen des sozialen und religiösen Gefüges in der Augusta Treverorum, Auswirkungen auf das Umland mit den Villen und der Besiedlung, der militärischen Sicherung und vieles mehr. Diese selbstgestellte Aufgabe ist groß und wird lange Zeit in Anspruch nehmen. Aus diesem Grunde ist VaKT offen für jeden Kollegen, der daran mitwirken möchte. Zugleich ist Trier ein idealer Standort, um sich diesen Fragen zu widmen: Wie an kaum einem anderen Ort stehen hier historische, epigraphische und archäologische Quellen zu Verfügung. Verbunden mit Trier und der Gründung des Verbundes war von Anfang an aber auch die Hoffnung, dass der

Vergleich mit anderen spätantiken Residenzstädten zugleich den Blick weiten, wie auch schärfen würde. Es war deswegen nur folgerichtig, dass die Schriftenreihe, deren erster Band nun vorliegt, den Titel „Forschungen zu spätantiken Residenzen“ erhalten hat. Gleichfalls war es nur folgerichtig, dass der erste Band die Ergebnisse eines internationalen Kolloquiums beinhaltet, das hier unter der Leitung von Frau Prof. V. Ruppioné stattfand: Wie kaum ein anderes Material stehen die Buntmarmore für Luxus und Glanz des Reiches und seiner Residenzen. Zugleich drückt die Vielzahl der Residenzorte in den Beiträgen aus, was wir uns von der Schriftenreihe erhoffen. Nicht ganz zufällig haben die Herausgeber als Motiv für die Titelseite eine Ansicht der rekonstruierten Konstantinsbasilika mit einer sich öffnenden Tür gewählt. Mit dem ersten Band der neuen Reihe halten Sie gerade – symbolisch – ebenfalls eine sich öffnende Tür in den Händen und wir sind gespannt auf das vor uns Liegende.

Ad multos annos!

Torsten Mattern & Marcus Reuter

INTRODUCTION

by Vilma Ruppienė

From April 25th to 26th, 2019, an interdisciplinary international workshop on the subject of *Interior decorations in the late-antique imperial palaces, villas and palatial complexes* took place in the Rheinisches Landesmuseum Trier. The primary aim of this workshop was to create a platform for international exchange and networking among scientists with the research focus on the interior decorations (wall and floor incrustations, mosaics, paintings, stucco and sculpture) of late-antique Roman palaces and villas (mainly those in imperial possession) as well as of other contemporaneous palatial building complexes and luxurious villas, which are relevant for comparisons due to their rich furnishings and size. The special attention to wall and floor incrustations resulted from the current research project, which deals with the former interior decorations of the so-called Konstantinbasilika – the audience hall of the late-antique imperial palace in Trier. This study has been financially supported by the Volkswagen-Stiftung (Volkswagen Foundation) since 2016 and is currently in its final phase. As the investigations showed, the walls and the floor of the main hall of the former imperial palace were richly decorated with slabs made of various regional and imported natural stone types, which have survived in large numbers but in a very fragmentary state. The juxtaposition of the interior of the Konstantinbasilika in Trier with the other late-antique palaces and villas in Rome and Roman provinces was intended to shed new light on what decorative elements were used in the buildings in different parts of the Roman Empire and how they differed from each other and from those in the Urbs. The interest was also directed to the question of whether the *marmor* fashion in Late Antiquity continued to be based on the models in Rome, or whether the changed access to decorative materials shaped and influenced taste and created new decorative schemes in the Roman provinces.

The workshop was organized and carried out by the Chair für Geodynamik und Geomaterialforschung at the Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg, the Rheinisches Landesmuseum Trier and Verbund für die Erforschung der spätantiken Kaiserresidenz Trier (VaKT).

The workshop proceedings *Stone and Splendor. Interior Decorations in Late-antique Palaces and Villas. Proceedings of a Workshop, Trier, 25–26 April 2019 Trier* (the title was slightly modified for the publication) contains fourteen contributions. With the exception of two articles which have since been published elsewhere, all contributions presented during the conference have been published in this volume¹.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the VolkswagenStiftung for its financial support in realizing the research project and the implementation of the event, as well for reimbursing the speakers' travel expenses. Sincere thanks go also to the director of the Rheinisches Landesmuseum Trier, Marcus Reuter, for providing the lecture hall and a room for the coffee break free of charge, as well as for the opportunity to visit the Rheinisches Landesmuseum Trier and the archaeological sites on the second day of the meeting. I would also like to thank Katharina Ackenheil and Stephan Ackermann for their competent guided tours in the museum, in the city and on the archaeological excavations. Thanks to the help of Ursula Zimmer, Christine Linge and Florian Tanz, the event ran smoothly. My gratitude goes also to the head of the Institute for Classical Archeology, University of Trier, Torsten Mattern, and the director of the Rheinisches Landesmuseum

¹ The volume does not include the contributions by Matthias Bruno/Fulvia Bianchi and Katja Marasović. The latter is published in: K. MARASOVIĆ/D. MATETIĆ POLJAK/Đ. GOBIĆ BRAVAR, Colored Marbles of Diocletian's Palace in Split. In: P. Pensabene/E. Gasparini (Ed.), ASMOSIA X. Proceedings of the 10th International Conference, Rome 21–26 May 2012 (Rome 2015) 945–961; K. MARASOVIĆ/V. MARINKOVIĆ, Marble revetments of the Diocletian's palace. In: D. Matetić/P. K. Marasović (Ed.), ASMOSIA XI, Interdisciplinary Studies of Ancient Stone Proceedings of the 11th International Conference of ASMOSIA, Split, 18–22 May 2015 (Split 2018) 839–853. The originally planned contribution by Maja Zivić had to be cancelled at short notice. Instead, the contributions by Gordana Jeremić and Biljana Lucić were subsequently included in the volume, in order to expand the range of topics with two important late-antique imperial palace complexes.

Trier, Marcus Reuter, for providing the financial means to produce this publication. The editor and the authors are very grateful to Rodman Moore for correcting the English-language contributions. I would also like to thank the reviewers for their crit-

icism as well as Ulrike Melzow and Stephan Specht for the quick and smooth printing process. Last but not least, my cordial thanks go to all participants for their competence and engagement, which made the publication of this book possible in the first place.

Trier in Late Antiquity and its imperial projects

THE IMPERIAL PALACE IN TRIER IN ITS URBAN LAYOUT

by Maria Carmen D'Onza

Abstract

Starting from 286, for about one hundred years Trier enjoyed a period of prosperity by becoming an imperial residence in the western part of the Roman Empire. In this paper various remnants of late imperial architecture are presented and their dimensions, location and connection within the ancient city network are discussed. During this time, the existing public buildings in the metropolis were restored, expanded or reconstructed. Taking them into account will shed light on structural modifications and the re-use of buildings, streets and places within the ancient city by becoming an imperial residence.

A bridge to success

Around 18/17 BC the first wooden bridge over the Moselle was built as part of road construction, today's via Agrippa – from Lyon to Metz and on to Cologne¹. It was the prelude to the foundation of the city of Trier – *Augusta Treverorum*².

The first bridge over the Moselle and the orthogonal street network were aligned. The *forum* was located in the centre of the city and in the 1st century consisted, of a rectangular square with shops and columned halls. One great hall, a market *basilica*, served as a judicial court and place of assembly. The population lived in houses made of wood and clay, which were gradually replaced with stone buildings.

The 8 to 12 m wide roads were bordered on both sides by porticoes and drainage ditches that separated the footpath from the carriageway³.

By the middle of the 1st century, the urban character of the village became more and more sophisticated. The Roman geographer Pomponius Mela already called Trier an “extremely prosperous city” – *urbs opulentissima*⁴. Most likely under the rule of emperor Claudius the city was awarded the title of a colony⁵.

In the 2nd century, Trier became a metropolis. With several thousand inhabitants, Trier was an important economic centre of supra-regional significance and the administrative centre of the *Treveri* in the province *Gallia Belgica*. Important public buildings and urban villas showed its wealth. A huge city wall was erected around 170, probably for reasons of prestige rather than defense. The wall was about six kilometers long and up to eight meters high⁶. With some 50 round towers and five city gates, it covered an area of around 285 hectares – more than ancient Cologne, Mainz, and Metz combined. Only the northern gate, the *Porta Nigra*, has remained almost unscathed until this day, thanks to its medieval transformation into a church⁷. The building was first given the name “Black Gate” in the Middle Ages. Recent excavations have uncovered wooden finds in front of the city wall, and dendrochronological analysis determined that the years 169 and 170 were the felling years of the oak used for the formwork⁸.

Several water pipes supplied Roman Trier; each day a 13-kilometre-long pipe conducted around 25 million liters of water from the river Ruwer into the city⁹. Bridges overcame differences in height; pressure pipes made from wood and lead distributed water across the city.

1 HOLLSTEIN 1980, 133–153; MORSCHER-NIEBERGALL 2009.

2 For an historical overview: HEINEN 1985; UNRUH 2017.

3 BREITNER 2007b, 79–86; D'ONZA / BREITNER 2017, 89 f.

4 Mela, de chorographia 3, 20.

5 WIGHTMAN 1970, 40–43; HEINEN 1985, 61–66.

6 KOETHE 1936; CÜPPERS 1973; CLEMENS / LÖHR 2005.

7 GOSE 1969.

8 LINDNER 2018; NEYES-EIDEN / RZEPECKI 2018.

9 LÖHR / SCHWINDEN 2005, 38–40; TANZ 2017.



▲ Fig. 1: Reconstruction of the cityscape of Trier in the late 4th century.

► Fig. 2: Emperor Gratian (375–383) resided for most of his reign in Trier. The marble head was found in the palace area.

Historical background

With the beginning of the Roman Tetrarchy at the end of the 3rd century, Rome began to lose its importance when other centres of power were established. Emperor Constantius Chlorus made Trier his residence, and under the rule of Constantine the Great the city experienced its monumental expansion when he made it his principal residence between 306 and 316¹⁰. Not far behind the Rhine frontier and with excellent transport links to the inland of Gaul, Trier was one of the largest residences in the West¹¹. After the death of Constantine I, Trier experienced a period of political unrest. Under the emperor Valentinian I, and his son Gratian in the second half of the 4th century Trier had another period of great prosperity in which most of the buildings were completed¹² (Fig. 1).



¹⁰ The Panegyric of Constantine, which was delivered in Trier on the occasion of the anniversary of the foundation of the city in the year 310 gives a glimpse of Constantine's building program: *Video circum maximum aemulum, credo, Romano, video basilicas et forum, opera regia, sedemque iustitiae in tantam altitudinem suscitari ut se sideribus et caelo digna et vicina promittant*. Paneg. 6, 22.

¹¹ For an overview still see: TRIER – KAISERRESIDENZ 1984.

¹² SCHWINDEN 1984, 34–48. Ausonius of Bordeaux, former teacher of the emperor Gratian, speaks in his thanksgiv-

ing for his consulship amongst others about Gratian's achievements in Trier: *Non palatium, quod tu, cum terribile acceperis, amabile praestitisti; non forum et basilicae, olim negotiis plena, nunc votis pro tua salute susceptis: nam de sua cui non te imperante securitas? Non curia honorificis modo laeta decretis, olim sollicitis maesta*.

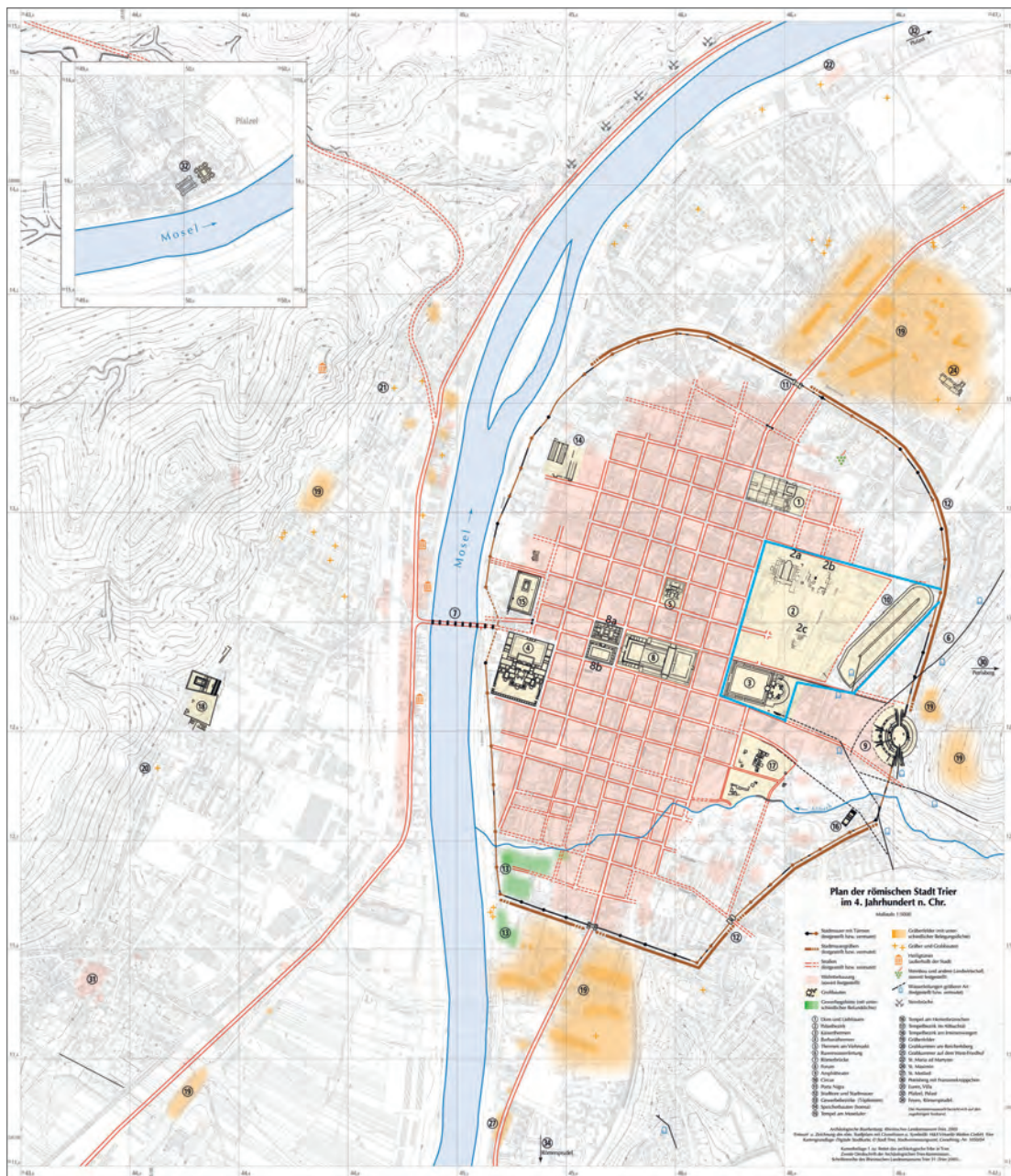


Fig. 3: Archaeological city map of Trier. The palace area is highlighted with a blue frame.

Trier remained the seat of government for over 100 years: Many stays of several years are documented for nine Roman emperors¹³ (Fig. 2).

The imperial residence

An entire urban quarter was redesigned for the new imperial residence in Trier. The area was characterized by an elevated terrace location and had already been inhabited by wealthy citizens since the 1st century¹⁴. The new complex of palace buildings stretched all along the eastern side of the central part of the city (Fig. 3). The complex consisted of a series of structures to house the emperor and the court in

Auson. G. a. 1, 3. Also Ammianus Marcellinus calls Trier a “*domicilium principum clarum*”. Amm. 15, 11, 9.
13 SCHWINDEN 2008.

14 STEINER 1917/1918; REUSCH 1956, 35–38; D’ONZA / BREITNER 2017, 89 f.

Fig. 4: Aerial view of the present area between the Imperial Baths and the *aula palatina*.



order for the emperor to discharge the duties and ceremonies of his office¹⁵.

On the site of a former administrative building¹⁶, an imperial audience hall, the so-called Basilika, was built around the first years of the 4th century¹⁷ (Fig. 3, No. 2a; Fig. 5). A long, transverse apsidal entrance hall led into the 30 m high *aula palatina* with a deep apse at the northern end. Large courtyards bordered by columns surrounded the building.

The other major surviving structure from the palace area is a large set of baths, the now called Imperial Baths at the southern end of the palace quarter¹⁸ (Fig. 3, No. 3; Fig. 4). Their construction began simultaneously with the *aula palatina*. A large *domus* with peristyle courtyard, which occupied two *insulae* of more than 7000 m² since the 1st century, had to be demolished and leveled, before the construction of the new building¹⁹.

The scale was important, and the Imperial Baths were designed to be the size of the substantial earlier baths near the river (the so-called Baths

of Barbara) and incorporated the most modern architectural forms (Fig. 3, No. 3). However, they were never completely finished. Later in the 4th century, a large part of the semi-finished building was to be demolished while maintaining the former *tepidarium* and *caldarium* and then rebuilt with a new layout: the courtyard of the former *palestra* was enlarged by completely leveling the *frigidarium* and adjoining rooms. The enlarged courtyard was now surrounded by porticoes and a series of small rectangular rooms on the eastside. The main entrance still remained in function but smaller entrances on the northside and southside were added. North of the main building a small bath complex was built. Character and function of the new building are still a subject of debate²⁰.

According to excavations in the 1980s, buildings and a large plaza stretched east of the Basilika²¹. A monumental hall construction with columns in the front completed the court (Fig. 3, No. 2b; Fig. 5). The alignment of the hall did not correspond to the

15 FONTAINE 2003; GOETHERT/GOETHERT 2005; GOETHERT 2010, 149–179.

16 REUSCH 1956, 35–39; D'ONZA/BREITNER 2017, 90 f.

17 For the *aula palatina* see the contributions of K.-P. Goethert and V. Ruppené in this volume.

18 KRENCKER et al. 1929.

19 REUSCH et al. 2012.

20 To mention only the most debated suggestions: as *praetorium* or *palatium*: KRENCKER et al. 1929, 161–173. As accommodation for the palace guards: GOETHERT 2010, 128. As the *curia* mentioned by Ausonius (Auson. Mos. 401–402; Auson. G. a. 1, 3): WIGHTMAN 1970, 114.

21 KIESSEL 2012/2013.

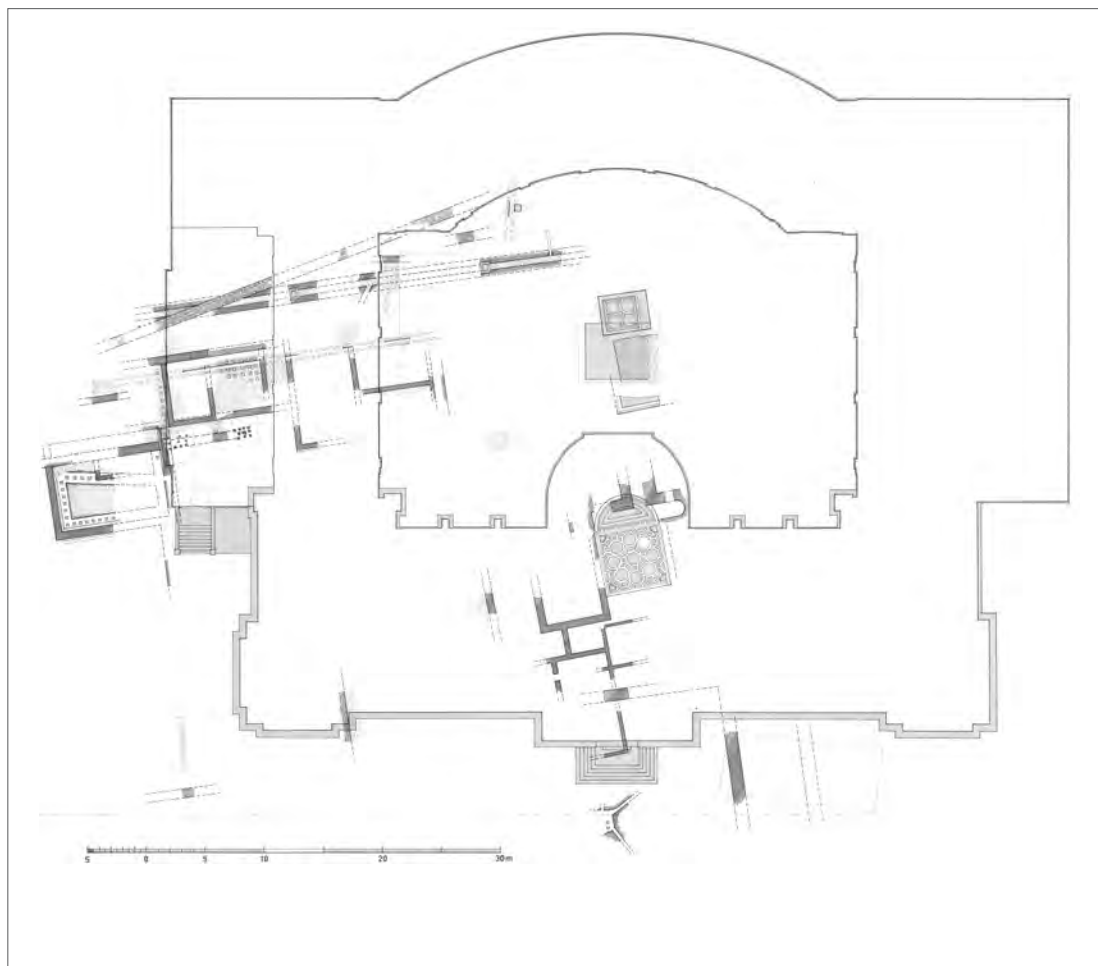
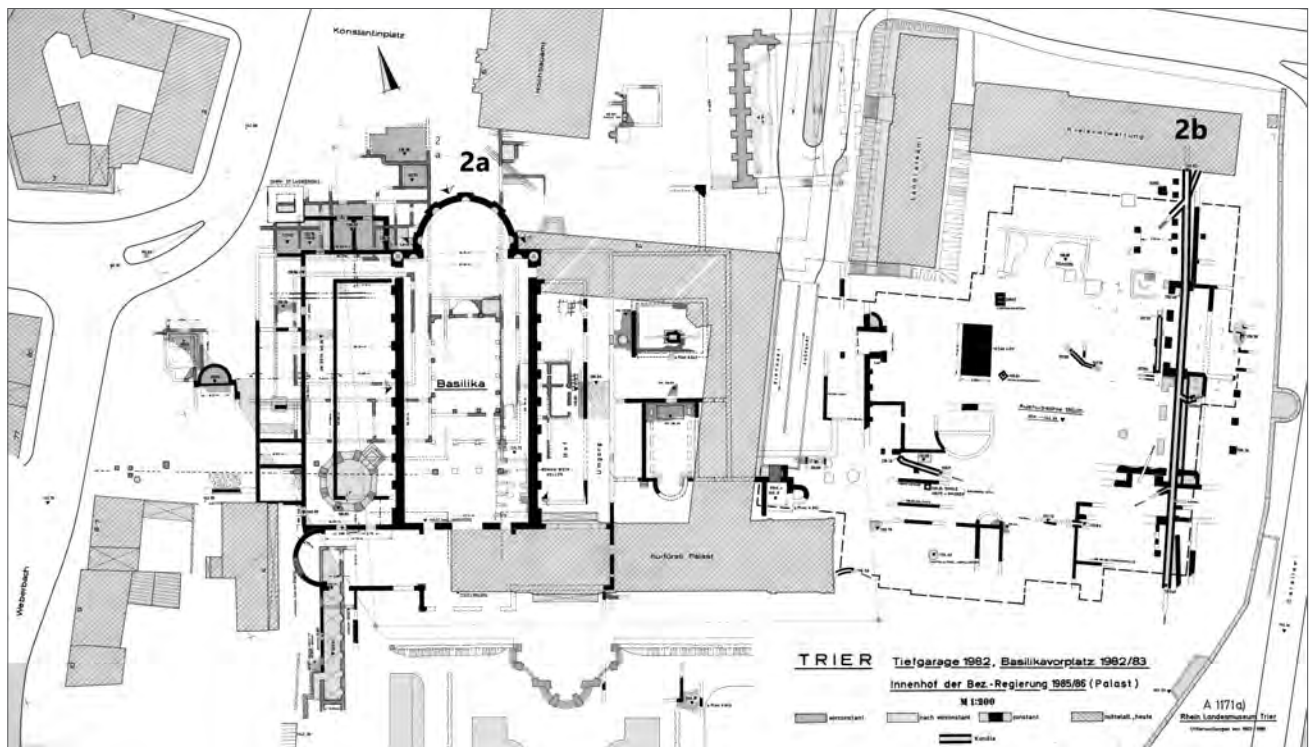


Fig. 5: Plan of the *aula palatina* with the archaeologically documented further buildings in the west and east.

Fig. 6: Plan of the *domus* beneath today's Landesmuseum Trier.

Fig. 7: Reconstructed ceiling painting from the late-antique *domus* beneath the later double Church. The painting shows, divided into panels, putti and portrait busts.



street grid of the city. Instead it seems to align with the course of the circus, which probably followed a short distance to the east and thus formed the eastern boundary of the palatial estate (Fig. 3, No. 10). This might indicate a structurally designed connection between the palace and the circus. The circus was enlarged by emperor Constantine around 310²², but little is known of its shape²³.

The last significant monument of the palace that we know of are the two large Christian *basilicas* (Fig. 3, No. 1). Construction started during the reign of Constantine, but again this monument was finished by Valentinian I or his son Gratian in the second half of the 4th century. The building complex consisted of two churches of comparable size placed alongside each other and a baptistery in the space between them²⁴. The size of these churches with up to 12,500 m² and their date of construction are unique for the West and must be a testament to imperial patronage.

While representative and public buildings from the 4th century, such as the *aula palatina* and the Imperial Baths, dominate today's cityscape, it is not yet known where the imperial family resided during their stay in Trier. However, some findings provide an insight into what the private residences might have looked like, specifically during the last decade of the 3rd and the first half of the 4th century.

First, worth mentioning are the remains of a large *domus* located between the Basilika and the Imperial Baths, beneath today's Landesmuseum Trier²⁵ (Fig. 3, No. 2c; Fig. 6). It was built in the 1st century and went through several phases of renovation – the last massive reorganization can be dated to the end of the 3rd and beginning of the 4th century. The building consisted of smaller and larger rooms equipped with floor heating systems, lavish mosaics and marble incrustations.

Another example for wealthy private houses in Trier is one that was destroyed for the construction of the early Christian double church. This *domus* is suggested to be linked to Constantine or his family by the discovery of mural paintings with imperial-style portraits which formerly adorned the ceilings of a large room²⁶ (Fig. 7). Little can be said of the layout of the *domus*.

Two other building complexes could also have fitted the needs of the emperors and their families. The buildings lay to the west of the *forum* and occupied one insula with the *decumanus* passing between them²⁷ (Fig. 3, No. 8a–b). Due to limited excavations and a fragmentary documentation, little can be said of their layout and function. But it seems that the complex belongs to the 4th century. From the plans it can be suggested that the northerly block (Fig. 3, No. 8a) was occupied by a large *domus*, with rooms large

22 Paneg. 6, 22.

23 VON MASSOW 1949; HUPE 2012/2013, 424–434.

24 WEBER 2016; WEBER 2017.

25 GOETHERT/GOETHERT 1979.

26 ALFÖLDI 1959/1960; SIMON 1986.

27 KRÜGER et al. 1928, 173–175; STEINER 1928, 202 f.

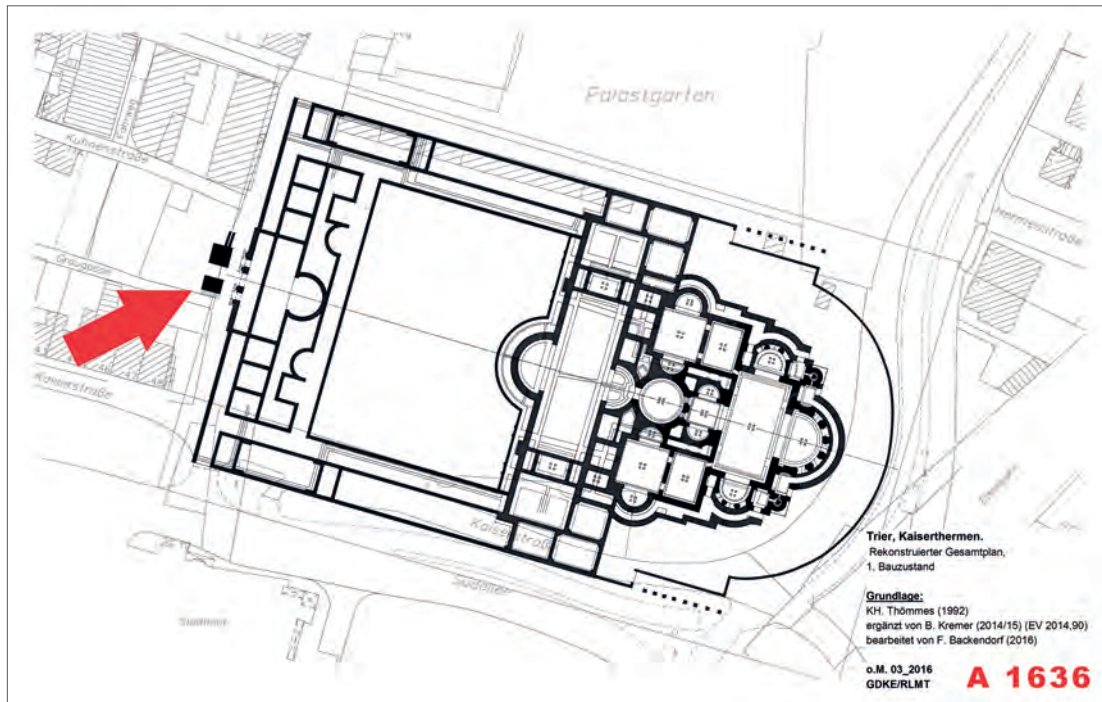


Fig. 8: Plan of the Imperial Baths. Recorded are the foundations of the arch monument in front of the western side found in 2014/15.

and small, decorated with mosaics, grouped around open areas. The southern area was characterized by a large central court and narrow ranges of rooms round the sides (Fig. 3, No. 8b).

evidence of this, although they must have taken up considerable areas and have significantly changed the layout and appearance of the city.

The imperial court and the city

The imperial presence and the court were not the only factor bringing wealth to Trier in the late 3rd and 4th centuries. Even during the absence of the emperor, Trier remained one of the most important administrative and economic hubs of the imperial system. The *Notitia Dignitatum* lists a number of imperial factories producing arms, woolen goods and luxurious cloths at Trier²⁸. Apart from the imperial court, the city became the administrative seat for the *praefectus praetorio* of Gaul, who ruled from Scotland to Morocco. His subordinate, the *vicarius* of the diocese of the Gaul and also the governor of the province of *Belgica I* resided in Trier²⁹. Moreover, besides the ministries, there was also a mint in Trier where gold coins of the highest quality were minted³⁰. All of these officials had staffs appropriate to their rank. Each of these would have had a residence containing formal reception rooms and dining halls. Unfortunately, we currently have little

The urban environment

The imperial residence in Trier was located within a city in which existing monuments were curated and refurbished as part of the projection of imperial power and splendor. In particular, the *forum*, Baths of Barbara, amphitheater, and streets were rebuilt. The setting of the palace complex was linked to the main roads, public monuments, and places of the existing city via streets and courtyards.

Recent excavations on the western side of the Imperial Baths give new insights into the design of the street space in the 4th century. Two massive foundations made of *opus caementitium* with a width of about 7.30 m were exposed. Material, construction technique, stratigraphy and their orientation towards the passage of the Imperial Baths led to the preliminary proposal: the foundation blocks are part of a begun but not executed entrance building, which stood 14 m before the entrance to the street (Fig. 8). Due to its location on the intersection of two central street axes, the excavators assume a planned realization as a *tetrapylon*³¹. Thus, a comparison with the designed route and the position of the *tetrapylon*

28 Not. dign. occ. 9, 37–38; 11, 58, 77.

29 HEINEN 1985, 219–223.

30 GILLES 1984.

31 HUPE/KREMER 2015.



Fig. 9: Reconstructed view from the amphitheater on the palace area and the west-east axis of the city with the Imperial Baths, *forum* and the Baths of Barbara in the background.

in Thessaloniki is therefore obvious³². However, this monumental entrance was never realized. At a later date, perhaps in the second half of the 4th century, the foundation crowns were covered with limestone slabs and the road surfaces were redesigned.

In its final phase, a monumental gateway with three openings dominated the richly decorated west façade of the Imperial Baths. A broad porticoed street linked the entrance of the Imperial Baths with the *forum*. The baths were at the southern end of the palace district as well as being on the straight line of the east-west axis. The richly decorated west façade marked the beginning of the palace residence for those who entered the town from the west. The Imperial Baths lead into the new centre of power like a hinge. Their orientation, which is unusual for thermal constructions, was based exclusively on the urban plan³³.

Almost all public buildings have been restored along the city's central axes (Fig. 9): in the 2nd century, the so-called Baths of Barbara were built near

the Moselle and the Roman bridge³⁴ (Fig. 3, No. 4). The baths were still in use in the 4th century. The vast bathing complex, which covered an area of 42.000 square meters, was the second biggest of its time in the Roman Empire. The main axis of the symmetrically laid-out bathing block is at right-angles to the axis of the Imperial Baths and was formed by the *frigidarium*, *tepidarium* and *caldarium* facing south. Various changing and recreation rooms were grouped around the main axis, and the complex had over 15 pools³⁵. The large swimming baths were equipped with floor heating. The interior and exterior decoration of the bathing and recreation halls was lavish: marble floors and facings, stucco ceilings, paintings and pillars with worked capitals and various sculptures in all sizes³⁶. In the 4th century new stone floors were embedded in many rooms and basins. The tiles were mostly made of

32 BRENK 1996, 108 f.; MAYER 2002, 55–57.

33 BREITNER 2017.

34 HETTNER 1910; KRENCKER et al. 1929, 241–246; KÄHLER 1949.

35 DODT 2012.

36 DODT 2014; The statues and statuettes are catalogued: BINSFELD et al. 1988, Kat. 2. 57. 82A. 95. 303–305. 332. 337. 511. 527.



white marble (most probably local marble from the Odenwald)³⁷ and black limestone from the Belgian area (Fig. 10).

In front of the main entrance of the Baths of Barbara and facing to the *decumanus*, a large temple rose on a high podium – it is not known to which god it was consecrated (Fig. 3, No. 15).

Following the *decumanus* versus east, one reached the large *forum* (Fig. 3, No. 8). With nearly 39.000 m² it occupied six *insulae*. The courtyards were enclosed by porticoes with underground cryptoporticoes and shops on either side. At the eastern end of the *forum* was a market *basilica* (100 × 21 m), which held the entire width of the square. In the course of the late-antique urban development extensive construction measures were also carried out at the *forum*. Thus, the *tabernae* were replaced



Fig. 10 (left above): Slabs of white marble and black limestone from the *caldarium* of the Baths of Barbara from the 4th century.

Fig. 11 (right above): Pilaster capital of the wall paneling in the market *basilica* from the late 4th century.

Fig. 12 (left below): Remains of a painted sandstone column still *in situ*, imitating *giallo antico*, in the ancient burial hall under today's church St. Maximin.

by multi-story halls. The market *basilica* was almost completely renovated in the 4th century and received an apsidially closed annex on its eastern long side. The hall was subdivided by two rows of columns and the floor was paved with stone slabs. The style of the structural elements can be dated to the second half of the 4th century³⁸ (Fig. 11). The rooms north and south of the market *basilica* had floor heating and were paved with mosaics. In eastern direction a gently raising square, paved with limestone slabs, completed the *forum* area. A gate led from the eastern end of the *forum* on the vast, colonnaded street to the Imperial Baths. Just in front of the gate, a pillar monument emphasized the important axis³⁹.

Further east on the *decumanus*, across the Imperial Baths, the amphitheater rose on the eastern edge of the Roman town⁴⁰ (Fig. 3, No. 9). It formed the end of the grand boulevard and was incorporated into the city wall – the wall ran up to the east side of the north gate and proceeded along the top of the *cavea* to the west side of the south gate⁴¹. It was for the most part an earthwork, being partly sunk into the western slope of the Petrisberg. The seats for spectators in the *cavea* were of stone blocks.

The visitors entered the building via two main monumental entrances in the west facing the city, while participants in the games found their way into the area directly through a gate. The entrances led to the seats through multi-story tunnels.

The roughly cross-shaped cellar beneath the arena housed a lifting platform to upheave stage designs, gladiators and animals into the arena⁴². Thanks to the wet environment in the basement most of the timberwork was found in a good state of preservation. Dendrochronological investigations have shown that some of the wooden beams can be

38 CÜPPERS 1979, 240–245; BREITNER 2007a.

39 CLEMENS / LÖHR 1997, 374–381.

40 KUHNEN 2017.

41 HUPE 2016/2017.

42 KRÜGER 1909.

37 Determination and notice by V. Ruppienè.

dated to the 4th century – the cellar was probably renovated or enlarged during this period⁴³.

The *cardo*, which crossed the city from north to the south was upgraded in the 4th century by arcades, which flanked the street throughout its whole length, starting at the northern gate, the so-called *Porta Nigra*. Besides, the streets were repaved with large, rectangular stones⁴⁴. These architectural elements can be interpreted as a reassessment of the north-south axis as another main road to the palace area.

The beginnings of Christianity in Trier go back to the 3rd century. In the 4th century bishops were buried in the northern cemetery (Fig. 3, No. 19), north of the *Porta Nigra*. The place became so attractive to the growing Christian community that a hall-like tomb was constructed, which measured 100 × 30 meters at the end of the 4th century, to enable burial as close as possible to Saints Agritius and Maximinus (Fig. 3, No. 24)⁴⁵. The burials in the *coemeterium*, the place of rest, were carried out with undecorated sarcophagi made of sandstone, which were buried in the ground. The deceased were buried with precious textiles of silk from the Mediterranean area and purple wool as well as gold jewelry⁴⁶. Marble plaques on the floor marked their position and displayed name and age of the deceased, as well as the names of those they left behind⁴⁷.

Stuccoed and painted sandstone pillars divided the interior of this building as six-arched arcade wall on the northern and southern sides. The painting of the columns imitated *giallo antico*⁴⁸ (Fig. 12). Dimensions and equipment of this funeral hall can only be explained with the support of the imperial court.

Excavations show that parts of the pagan sanctuary complex Altbachtal south of the palace zone (Fig. 3, No. 17), which was founded at the beginning of the 1st century, were still frequented during the 4th century⁴⁹. The “Altbachtal” with its temples, shrines, altars and a theatre was one of the largest temple complexes north of the Alps in the 2nd and 3rd century⁵⁰.

In addition to the pottery district in the south of the city, we have a further look at the economy of the 4th century Trier through the large storehouses of St. Irminen near the river north of the city⁵¹ (Fig. 3, No. 14). Their location probably marks the position of the ancient harbor of Trier – unknown today,

since massive renovations have been carried out in this area in modern times.

Living standards in the city of Trier

The spectrum of Trier's dwellings was characteristic of a Roman city. There were spacious *domus* with courtyards or peristyles and also *insulae* with multi-story residential and commercial buildings with rented dwellings, single room apartments and simple sleeping quarters in guest houses⁵². Glass windows and colorfully plastered walls were part of the basic furnishing of the houses; the rooms were laid with mosaics⁵³. Colored stone slabs (Fig. 13), pilasters or stuccoed cornices were part of an up-scale living standard⁵⁴. The socle area in the houses was often decorated with wall-paintings imitating colorful natural stones. A large spectrum of colored *marmora*, both in the form of incrustation and *opus sectile* technique was imitated – the most popular was the combination of red, green and yellow, imitating *porfido rosso*, *porfido verde* and *giallo antico*⁵⁵ (Fig. 14).

From the end of the 3rd century onwards restorations and new installations, primarily hypocaust systems and heated baths, were made in many up-scale *domus*⁵⁶. Around the imperial palace new *domus* were built or existing residential buildings were extended⁵⁷.

From the middle of the 4th century on the outskirts of the city, residential plots were abandoned and former courtyard areas converted, into gardens, stables or funeral grounds⁵⁸.

The presence of the imperial court in the countryside around Trier

The palatial country estates at Konz and Pfalzel, a few kilometers from the city, were likewise in the possession of the emperor. Today they exist only as sparse ruins. The building in Pfalzel, just a few kilometers north of Trier on the Moselle, resembles in its arrangement a late-antique fort⁵⁹. Given its size

43 HOLLSTEIN 1980, 153–155.

44 KOETHE et al. 1937, 278.

45 NEYSES 2001, 20–61.

46 REIFARTH 2013.

47 MERTEN 2018.

48 DEPPMEYER/D'ONZA 2018, 68.

49 GHETTA 2008.

50 GOSE 1972.

51 MYLIUS 1949; CLEMENS/LÖHR 1998, 419–424.

52 BREMEN 2014.

53 WILLBURGER 2014.

54 DEPPMEYER/D'ONZA 2019, 40–43.

55 DEPPMEYER/D'ONZA 2018.

56 BREITNER 2011.

57 RHEINISCHES LANDESMUSEUM TRIER 1938, 244–247.

58 BREITNER 2011, 279–281.

59 Layout and construction technique are very similar to the fortified palace in Oedenburg, also built in the Valentinian era. REDDÉ et. al. 2005, 241–247.



and decor with mosaics, murals, and natural stone incrustations, a representative function is most likely⁶⁰. Also, a great number of large villas existed in the land surrounding Trier, not only serving as centres of production, but also as luxurious country estates for the nobility⁶¹.

Several decrees of 371 testify that Valentinian I resided in the villa of Konz (*Contionacum*), ca. nine kilometers south of the imperial palace in Trier⁶².

To sum up, in the wake of the new residence during the 4th century, almost every public building underwent restoration, extensions or structural changes. These urban development impulses monumentalized existing visual axes and redefined them by interlinking public and imperial buildings.

For about one hundred years Trier enjoyed a period of great prosperity and enjoyed the fame of a



metropolis, though by 395 the warlike intentions of the Goths drove the imperial court to Milan and the prefecture to Arles⁶³.

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Fig. 13: Black limestone wall cladding panel, re-used as a coffin lid, dated between the 2nd to 4th century.

Fig. 14: Wall painting, imitating *opus sectile* technique, from a residential building dated to the end of the 3rd century, found under today's cathedral of Trier.

60 KUTZBACH 1935.

61 SEILER 2015.

62 SCHWINDEN 2008, 109–110; COŞKUN 2014/2015.

63 HEINEN 1985, 259–264.

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