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Faded Splendour

The Development of the Late Roman Residence Trier at the Transition to the Early Middle Ages

ABSTRACT

With the withdrawal of the praetorian prefecture and the imperial residence, Trier visibly lost importance, even if the *comes* Arbogast was able to maintain a certain *romanitas* in the 5th century. In the Early Middle Ages, the survival of Roman ruins in large parts of Trier is to be expected. Until the High Middle Ages, the silhouette of the city was dominated by several large buildings, some of which had changed function. In the rest of the city, there is a need for research to better understand the intensity and type of use, which varies greatly in small areas. Isolated early medieval contacts with the north are visible in the material culture. The ecclesiastical buildings, cemeteries and inscriptions as well as small finds indicate continuity in many cases, which must be investigated in more detail by contextualising features and finds, especially for the 5th and 6th centuries.

KEYWORDS

Trier / Belgica / imperial residence / Late Roman archaeology / Early Medieval archaeology / settlement archaeology

This conference volume is dedicated to the early medieval seats of power and their contacts with the north. These seats of power were rooted in the late Roman landscape under the waning influence of the Western Roman Empire and can be better understood with a backward-looking view at existing structures. In late antiquity, Trier was the seat of the Gallic prefecture, imperial residence, bishop's see and was thus a seat of power par excellence. This example will be used to show how Roman structures developed at the transition to the Early Middle Ages and made room for the emergence of new seats of power.

Rulership in Trier between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages

After the reforms of Diocletian and Constantine I, Trier was the seat of the *praefectus praetorio Galliarum*, which oversaw the civil administration of the dioceses of Britanniae, Galliae, Viennensis and Hispaniae, and was thus one of the most important cities in the Roman West. From Maximian onwards, Trier served as the residence of several emperors and members of the imperial family (Schwinden 2008, 104–110). Probably in 395, the imperial residence was moved from Trier to Milan and then in 402 to Ravenna (Radnoti-Alföldi 1970). By 407 at the latest, the praetorian prefecture was also withdrawn and Trier lost its political pre-eminence (Anton 1987, 40; Witschel 2004/2005, 243).

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The crossing of the Rhine by Vandals, Alans and Suebi in 406/407 has long been regarded as marking the end of Roman rule on the Rhine, in eastern Gaul and thus also in Trier (Prien 2022, 89–93). However, recent studies show that the border defence remained intact until beyond the middle of the 5th century (Grunwald 1997, 324–330; 2022, 494–497; Heising 2023, 76–77; Heimerl 2024).

Passages by Renatus Profuturus Frigiredus[1], Salvianus of Marseille[2] and in the so-called Chronicle of Fredegar[3] have been associated with four Frankish raids on Trier in 410/411, 413, 419/420 and 428/435 (Heinen 1985, 366–371; Anton 1987, 44–48; Schwinden 2022, 51–52). Salvianus paints a bleak picture of the destruction, but also reports the survival of the *nobiles*, who demanded circus and theatre performances from the emperors in Upper Italy after the third destruction (Heinen 2000). It is highly questionable whether Attila and the Huns devastated Trier before they were defeated by Aetius in 451 (Anton 1987, 49; Grunwald 2022, 496–497), but it is possible that Trier was briefly taken again by the Franks between 450 and 470 (Anton 1987, 49). However, the 5th century destruction, as recorded in the written sources, cannot be traced in the archaeological evidence in the form of large-scale destruction layers (Hupe 2020, 65). From an archaeological point of view, the historically recorded extensive destructions are therefore highly doubtful.

Letters from Bishop Sidonius Apollinaris of Clermont-Ferrand and Bishop Auspicius of Toul attest to the rule of a certain *comes* Arbogast in Trier (Anton 1987, 50–59). His office seems to have included civil and financial administration as well as military command on behalf of Rome; the sphere of influence probably extended over a large part of Belgica Prima (Anton 1987, 54–55). There is no unimpeachable evidence for the end of his rulership, but the 480s or even 490s seem likely (Ewig 1972, 42; Anton 1987, 55–58).

The subject of when and under what circumstances Trier was included in Clovis' Great Frankish Empire is a controversial discussion; this possibly happened in the first third of the 6th century (Böhner 1958, 360; Anton 1987, 58–59; Grunwald 1997, 330).

After the death of Clovis and the division of the empire among his sons, Rheims became the residence of Theuderic I (511–533), although Trier remained an integral part of the Rheims kingdom (Anton 1987, 97–98). When choosing a new residence, Childebert II (575–596) did not opt for Trier or Cologne but for Metz as the centre of the Austrasian kingdom (Anton 1987, 100–101). Geographically, strategically and politically, Trier had lost its once leading status, but visits from at least two Merovingian kings, Theudebert I in the mid-6th century and Dagobert in 624 (Ristow 2007, 183–184), can be inferred. In Carolingian times, the faded splendour of the old imperial city no longer had the significance that the palatinates such as Diedenhofen, Ingelheim and, above all, Aachen (see Ley/Schaub, this volume) now had (Anton 1987, 166).

According to medievalist research, the *comes* Arbogast did not have any Frankish-Merovingian successors; instead, the bishop became the decisive political authority in 6th century Trier and the surrounding area due to the legal, social-charitable and economically based position of power (Anton 1986, 12–14). Trier is the only city in the Rhine-Moselle region to have had an uninterrupted list of bishops since the 3rd century (Anton 1987, 65–81). Bishops such as Nicetius (525/526–566) and Magnerich (566–at least 586) increasingly exercised their influence politically in the area of tension between royalty and nobility (Anton 1987, 98–100; 2019, 468–469. 660–661).

The bishop's rule was probably replaced by a county in the early 7th century (Anton 1986, 14). However, the bishops of Trier were able to displace the count to Bitburg and to establish a bishop's rule in Trier and the immediate surrounding area from around 650/700 to around 770, which also included the right to mint coins, to customs payments and various rights to levy taxes (Anton 1986, 15–17). This episcopal city and regional rule was only dissolved by Charlemagne, who re-established a county in Trier at the expense of Bishop Weomad (762–791) but granted immunity to the Trier church in 772 (Anton 1986, 17–21). The Trier church received further royal privileges, the restitution of rights and sources of revenue at the expense of the count in the late 9th century and the early 10th century, so the rudiments of the bishop's territorial rule become visible in the 10th century (Anton 1986, 21–24).

In the 9th century, Trier involuntarily came into momentous contact with the north. The Normans devastated the important abbey of Prüm in 882 and also reached Trier (Anton 1987, 180–181; Himstedt 2004, 31–34; Haas 2011; Blöck/Thiel 2022, 9). Indications of destruction in the city area has been associated with the invasions (Anton 1987, 180; Clemens 2011, 40). However, the few destruction layers that have been documented cannot all be dated with the precision necessary to be able to attribute them without doubt to the Norman invasions (Haas 2011,

1 Gregory of Tours, 2,9.
2 Salvianus of Marseille, 6, 39; 6, 72-75; 6, 82-89.
3 Fredegar, 84.

162–165). Although the full extent of the invasions in Trier is difficult to estimate, according to Lukas Clemens, the event destroyed essential ancient structures of the urban layout (Clemens 2011, 40).

The Late Roman Metropolis at the Transition to the Early Middle Ages

In the following, it will be shown how the late Roman seat of power developed in the Early Middle Ages. Therefore, the current state of research on the former residence, the temples and ecclesiastical buildings, the public buildings *intra muros*, the residential quarters and the distribution of material culture will be discussed (**fig. 1**).

Durability of the Infrastructure and City Wall

The late Roman infrastructure continued to be used for a long time. The most obvious example is the still-functioning Roman bridge (**fig. 1, 1**) (Cüppers 1969, 10–32). Also, a 5 m-wide late Roman slabbed surface, made of reused spolia from tombs and cult buildings, in the Altbachtal (**figs 1, 2; 2**) shows deep ruts on the surface, which suggest long-term use (Deppmeyer 2022, 223). In today's Bischofsgarten (**fig. 1, 3**), a late Roman slabbed surface still survives over a larger area (Hupe 2020, 64). A feature in Zuckerbergstraße (**fig. 1, 4**) shows that Roman roads were still being repaired in the 9th or 10th century (Clemens 2001, 56–57). The orthogonal system was probably only abandoned with the establishment of the market in front of the cathedral at the transition to the High Middle Ages (Clemens 2001, 56).

The city's fresh water supply via the Ruwer water conduit (**fig. 1, 27**) probably came to a halt at the end of late antiquity (Tanz 2020, 110), after which, in the course of the Early Middle Ages, a branch of the Altbach was channeled into the cathedral immunity (Clemens 2001, 56).

The 2nd century city wall covered an area of 285 ha and a second ditch, probably constructed in Constantinian times, was filled in during the 4th century (Clemens/Löhr 2005). The inner ditch, which was repaired again, was filled in during the early 5th century. The city wall is still mentioned in the 6th century by Venantius Fortunatus[4], but the condition of the entire wall is unclear (Anton 1987, 105). Certainly, the northern side of the city wall was dominated by the Porta Nigra (**fig. 1, 5**), which was converted into a double church complex under Archbishop Poppo (1016–1047) (Clemens 2003, 68). The other city gates also lasted until the High Middle Ages (Clemens 2000, 62–64; 2003, 73).

It has been suggested that the rampart (**fig. 1, 6**) around the cathedral immunity (an area of around 7 ha) could represent a reduction of the defended city area frequently attested in late Roman Gaul (Hussong/Cüppers 1972, 127–129; Clemens 2000, 78). However, no late Roman dating of the spolia wall, generally attributed to Archbishop Ludolf (994–1008), has been proven so far (Hupe 2020, 64).

Afterlife of the Late Roman Residence

The Aula (so-called basilica; **fig. 1, 7**), which was probably not completed until after 337, was a central element of the late Roman palace, the comprehensive publication of which is still pending (K.-P. Goethert 2021, 34). Due to the later overprint, a continuous use of the Aula itself cannot be proven, but there are 5th century finds from its surroundings (Clemens 2001, 43; Kiessel 2012/2013, 150–154). So far, no evidence of a change of use or destruction at the transition to the Early Middle Ages has been presented. The Aula probably passed into the possession of the Frankish king (Anton 1987, 105–106; Clemens 2003, 64; Fontaine 2003, 153); Gregory of Tours mentions a *palatium regis*[5] in an episode concerning Bishop Nicetius (Anton 1987, 105–106). After the High Middle Ages, the Aula served as an archiepiscopal

4 Venantius Fortunatus, 242 v. 21: »*Perducor Treverum qua moenia celsa patescunt*«.

5 Gregory of Tours, 10, 29.

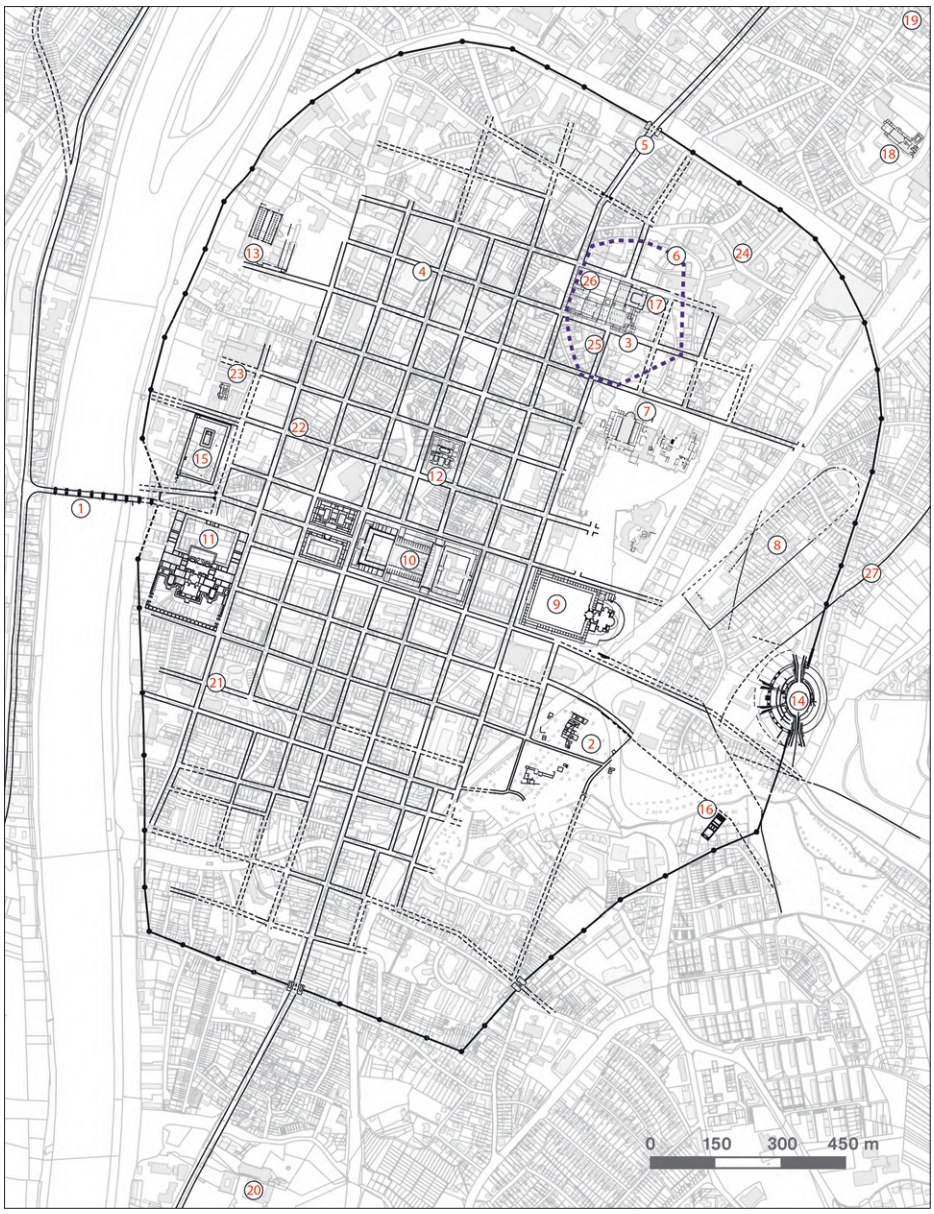

Fig. 1 Map of Trier in late antiquity: **1** Roman bridge. – **2** Altbachtal. – **3** Bishop's garden. – **4** Zuckerbergstraße. – **5** Porta Nigra. – **6** Ludolf's Wall. – **7** Aula. – **8** Circus. – **9** Imperial Baths. – **10** Forum. – **11** Baths of Barbara. – **12** Baths at the Viehmarkt. – **13** Horrea. – **14** Amphitheatre. – **15** Temple on the banks of the Moselle. – **16** Temple at Herrenbrünnchen. – **17** Cathedral. – **18** St Maximin's. – **19** St Paulin's. – **20** St Matthias'. – **21** Friedrich-Wilhelm-Straße 29/31. – **22** Feldstraße 23/25. – **23** Feldstraße (Mutterhaus). – **24** Sichelstraße corner Deworastraße. – **25** Palais Kesselstadt. – **26** Palais Walderdorff. – **27** Ruwer water conduit. – (Map T. Zühmer; © GKDE/Rheinisches Landesmuseum Trier).

castle complex (Clemens 2000, 71–72; Fontaine 2003, 154).

Among the residential buildings, the circus (**fig. 1, 8**) was an important place of imperial representation and communication (Witschel 2004/2005, 228). However, the exact location in the southeast of the residential quarter is disputed due to the few existing building remains (von Massow 1949; Hupe 2011, 106; Wulf-Rheidt 2014, 18–20; Deppmeyer 2022, 225–226). Salvianus' comment on the third destruction of Trier suggests that the circus was still intact in the first half of the 5th century (Heinen 2000). The further use of the area in the Early Middle Ages is unclear.

Around 300, a large construction project was initiated in the palace district with the Imperial Baths (**fig. 1, 9**); the baths were completely redesigned in the second half of the 4th century, although the new use as a forum or barracks for the imperial guard is controversially discussed (Wulf-Rheidt 2014, 20–21; Deppmeyer 2022, 227). Based on the so-called Umbau-Keramik, a chronological gap in the material culture between the first half of the 5th century and the 8th/9th century was postulated (Hussong/Cüppers 1972, 99–100; Clemens 2001, 44). However, a revision of the chronology shows clear evidence for material from the second half of the 5th and early 6th centuries (Heimerl 2021, 129–131). Whether this can be linked to measures taken under the rule of the *comes* Arbogast would still have to be investigated on the basis of the features (Heimerl 2021, 130); medievalist research has assumed that the Imperial Baths became the seat of the Frankish count (Kentenich 1927, 33; Anton 1987, 105–106). In the 12th or 13th century, parts of the building were incorporated into the city wall (Kentenich 1927, 22).

Fig. 2 Late Roman road in the Altbachtal. – (Photos T. Zühmer; © GKDE/Rheinisches Landesmuseum Trier, AT.168 / Inv. ST. 11040, GKDE/Rheinisches Landesmuseum Trier).

Usage of Public Buildings *intra muros*

The forum (**fig. 1, 10**) of the ancient city was rebuilt in the 4th century (K. Goethert 2005, 92), but its further development cannot be traced in detail. However, up until the 12th century, the *forum antiquum* was visible, at least above ground (Clemens 2000, 69–70).

It is generally assumed that bathing in the Baths of Barbara (**fig. 1, 11**) was abandoned in the course of the 5th century and that the area was used for different purposes, such as glass production (Dodt 2012, 207–213; Deppmeyer 2022, 227). According to L. Clemens, small finds indicate the presence of military units to control the Moselle bridge (Clemens 2011, 33). The stray finds of pottery point to settlement activities in the 5th to early 6th centuries and beyond (Heimerl 2021, 130).

The Baths at the Viehmarkt (**fig. 1, 12**) were built towards the end of the 3rd or the beginning of the 4th century; in-depth research of the extensive excavation documentation is required to determine the duration of maintenance (K.-P. Goethert 2005b, 86–87). Above ground, the Viehmarkt Baths were still visible until the second half of the 13th century (Clemens 2003, 70–71).

In the area of the late Roman horrea (**fig. 1, 13**), the nunnery of St Maria *in horreo* was established around the middle of the 7th century (on the following, cf. Clemens 2001, 48–53). The late Roman walls must still have been preserved above ground when waste shafts were constructed in post-Roman times and filled in during the 8th century. The small finds, as well as the 9th and 10th century buildings, are interpreted as the remains of the monastery settlement. The use of old material from Roman buildings for dry construction was typical in Trier until the High Middle Ages. The remains of metalworking, glass and textile production as well as the Carolingian »Hospitalkeramik« are significant in terms of economic history. Based on the finds from the 10th century, including a comb and a coin brooch, L. Clemens was able to prove connections with the north, which he associates with Frisian long-distance trade (see Clemens, this volume).

According to the so-called Fredegar Chronicle of the 7th century, the people of Trier survived a siege by Vandals because they had entrenched themselves in the amphitheatre (**fig. 1, 14**). The conversion of the amphitheatre into a fortification can be proved archaeologically by the presence of barrier walls (**fig. 3**) and further late installations at its northern passage (Hupe 2020, 62–63). However, since the modifications are undated, the historicity of the Fredegar episode remains controversial (cf. Anton

Fig. 3 Late Roman modifications in the amphitheatre. – (Photo © GKDE/Rheinisches Landesmuseum Trier, C914).

Fig. 4 Early medieval glass cameo brooch from St Maximin's. – (Photo T. Zühmer; Inv.-No. 2000,2 no. 215, after Heimerl/Päffgen 2018, 407 fig. 1; © GKDE/Rheinisches Landesmuseum Trier).

1987, 46–47; Clemens 2003, 89; Hupe 2020, 62–63). The material culture of the 4th and 5th centuries suggests a conversion of the site, but its character in the Early Middle Ages is difficult to assess (Clemens 2003, 87; Bange-Goddard 2017, 168; Deppmeyer 2022, 225).

Transformed World of Faith

On the bank of the Moselle, to the northeast of the Roman bridge, stood a monumental podium temple (**fig. 1, 15**) (Clemens/Faust 2005, 114–115). Its substantial preservation is indicated by the Gesta Treverorum at the turn to the 12th century, which refer to the temple as a *capitolium*[6] (Clemens 2003, 71). The remains of other temples, such as the temple at the Herrenbrünnchen (**fig. 1, 16**) in the east of the city, were perceptible until the High Middle Ages (Clemens 2003, 71–72).

In the temple district of the Altbachtal (**fig. 1, 2**), cult buildings were demolished in late antiquity and subsequently built over by residential buildings. Here, Merovingian-Carolingian half-timbered buildings were found, some of which still included the Roman wall courses; according to L. Clemens, there is a gap in the material culture in the late 5th and 6th centuries, but the extensive ensemble has not yet been presented in its entirety (Clemens 2001, 46–48). According to the published material, a hamlet-like settlement with a commercial use existed here between the 7th and 9th centuries.

In the area of the present cathedral (**fig. 1, 17**), the building history of the early Trier church can be traced from a modest »southwest basilica« to a monumental complex in the 4th century (Weber 2016, 15–30; 2022, 120). Two destruction layers have been associated with damage in the 5th century by W. Weber (2003, 477; 2016, 31). Bishop Nicetius then ensured a partial reconstruction of his episcopal church with the help of Italic builders (Weber 2003, 483–484; 2022, 122–123). In the area of the so-called southwest basilica, small buildings were erected as post-and-beam houses in the first half of the 6th century, which were levelled again between the second half of the 6th century and the 9th century (Weber 2016, 33–35; 2017, 244–268).

Late Roman roots have been postulated for further *intra muros* churches, although the evidence is scarce (Ristow 2007, 213–214). It is unclear, for example, how far back in time the first phases of St Gervasius' and Protasius' in the Imperial Baths, St Maria's *ad pontem* in the Barbara Baths and St Laurentius' near the Aula go (Clemens 2003, 64;

6 Gesta Treverorum, 132.

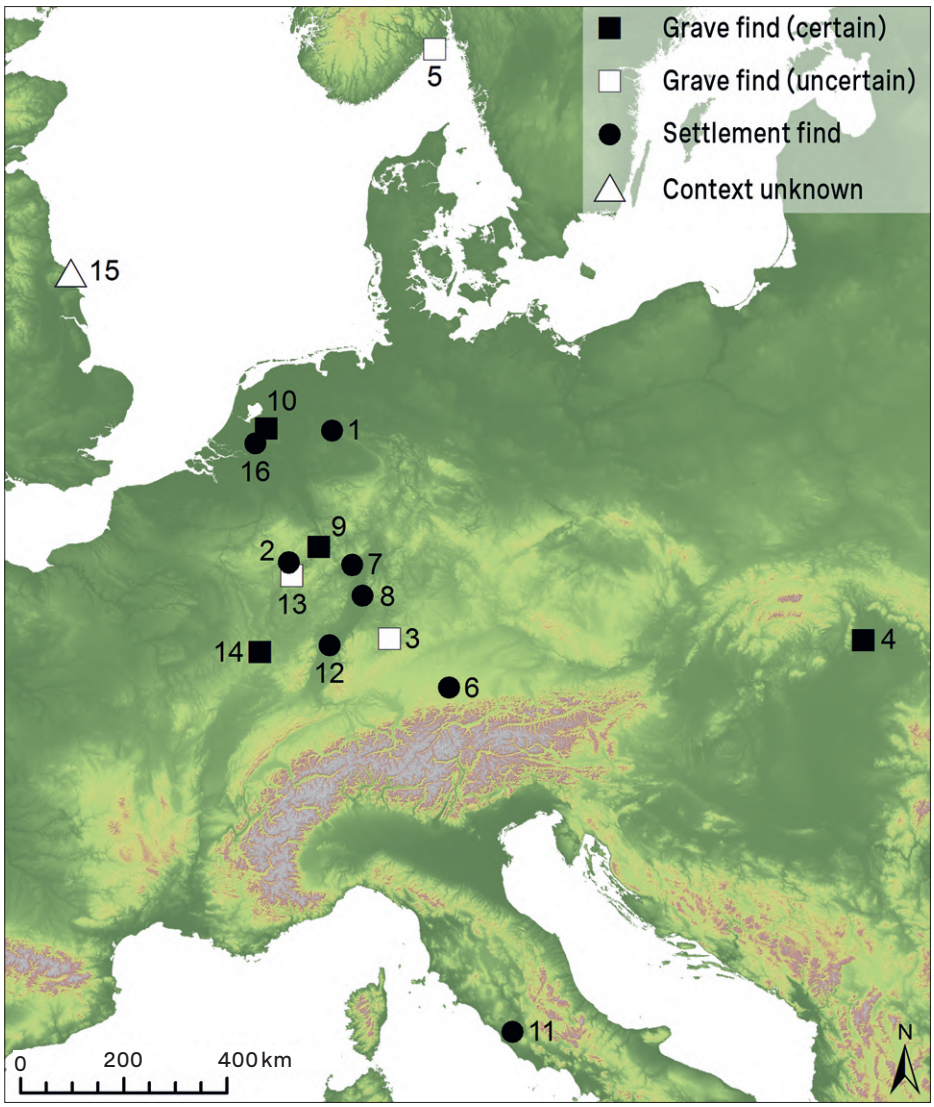

Fig. 5 Glass cameos or glass cameo brooches from burial and settlement contexts without finds from collections and church treasures: **1** Altenrheine-Rheine. – **2** Bitburg. – **3** Esslingen. – **4** Karos-Eperjesszög. – **5** Kaupang. – **6** Lorenzberg near Epfach. – **7** Mainz. – **8** Mannheim-Seckenheim. – **9** Mertloch. – **10** Putten. – **11** Rome. – **12** Strasbourg. – **13** Trier. – **14** Vicherey. – **15** Whitby. – **16** Wijk bij Duurstede. – (Map S. E. Metz; Database Shuttle Radar Topography Mission, SRTM V4.1 3 arc-seconds, NASA; modified after Heimerl/Päffgen 2018, 410 fig. 3).

Weber 2003, 435–438; K.-P. Goethert 2005a, 84). In the course of the Early Middle Ages, however, the number of ecclesiastical buildings increased. In the 9th century, 20 churches and monasteries are attested in the purlieus of the city (Clemens 2011, 38).

Important *nuclei* for the early Christian community are the late Roman burial places *extra muros* with bishops' tombs, which became places for the veneration of saints. St Maximin's (**fig. 1, 18**), north of the city wall, is an example of this. In the area of the necropolis, a rectangular building was erected in the first half of the 4th century, which was extended to form a large early Christian burial hall in the middle of the 4th century and was expanded again at the end of the 4th century (Clemens/Seferi 2022, 337–339). Research assumes that the tombs of the bishops Agricius († c. 330) and Maximinus († 346) were located here, and the area was used intensively in late antiquity and the Early Middle Ages for burials of the urban elites *ad sanctos* (Reifarth 2013; Clemens/Seferi 2022, 338–340). The installation of an ambo indicates the conversion from a coemeterial hall to a church in the mid-6th century, in which burials continued; the graves of the first half of the 7th century near the ambo have yielded very high-quality grave goods (Neyses 2001, 66–72). There are burial inscriptions from the area dating from late antiquity to the 8th century (Clemens/Seferi 2022, 341). In the second half of the 8th century, the site was rebuilt and then possibly destroyed by the Normans in 882, and after 934 the new Ottonian church was built (Neyses 2001, 100–105). The stray find of a glass cameo brooch (**fig. 4**), which is also likely to be a 7th or 8th century grave good, is remarkable (Heimerl/Päffgen 2018, 407–408). Pieces of comparable design can be found, for example, in Mainz and Mannheim-Seckenheim, but also in Wijk bij Duurstede and in Kaupang, Norway (Heimerl/Päffgen 2018, 409–411), which may indicate contacts with the north (**fig. 5**).

North of St Maximin's, early Christian funerary inscriptions at St Paulin's (**fig. 1, 19**) also indicate

Fig. 6 Inhumation burial. – (Digi-EV 2007,93/67; Photo K. Bissinger; © GKDE/Rheinisches Landesmuseum Trier).

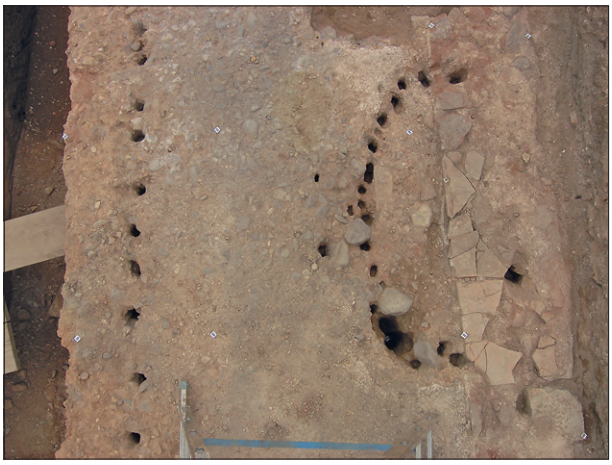

Fig. 7 Pen for small livestock on late Roman floor pavement. – (Photo B. Kremer; © GKDE/Rheinisches Landesmuseum Trier).

extensive use by the Christian community (Ristow 2007, 209–210). The bishops Paulinus († 358), Britto († 386) and Felix († 399) are said to have been buried here. The vita of Bishop Felix attributes the foundation of the church to him, which perhaps developed from a coemeterial building (Ristow 2007, 210).

In the area of the late Roman burials around St Matthias (**fig. 1, 20**), Bishop Cyrillus probably renewed a Memoria for the saints Eucharius and Valerius in the 5th century, although the site has been discussed controversially with regard to sepulchral architecture or an early church (Ristow 2007, 210–213; Siedow 2020, 535–538). The Benedictine monastery is first mentioned in the 8th century and a monumental church building was begun under Archbishop Egbert (Ristow 2007, 210–211).

Conversion of Living Quarters

Apart from the large public buildings, evidence of urban development at the transition from late antiquity to the Early Middle Ages can only be traced in glimpses on the basis of individual excavations and the distribution of finds in the city area. In the west of the Roman city, individual residential areas were already abandoned after the middle of the 4th century (Breitner 2011, 280–281). At Friedrich-Wilhelm-Straße 29/31 (**fig. 1, 21**), indicators of livestock husbandry and planting ditches were found, showing an agrarian use of the previous residential complex after the middle of the 4th century (Hupe/Löhr 2010/2011, 320–321). There is a numismatic terminus post quem in the middle of the 4th century for the screed floor of the hypocaust complex there (Hupe/Löhr 2010/2011, 320). This screed contained a burial pit with the skeleton of a 26 to 35-year-old woman (**fig. 6**), whose bone material was radiocarbon dated to 261–415 (2σ) (Hupe 2020, 68). Two radiocarbon dates from the scattered skull fragments of another individual yielded dating ranges of 266–531 and 262–417 (2σ) (Hupe 2020, 68). Parts of the residential architecture at Feldstraße 23/25 (**fig. 1, 22**) were also converted after the middle of the 4th century (Hupe/Kremer 2013, 34–35); for example, a drainage ditch was cut through the walls of a former interior room, which was thus of only limited use and, in a room with canal heating, posts were driven into the screed floor to support a roof. The makeshift repairs cannot be dated precisely, but the house was probably abandoned in the last quarter of the 4th century.

In Feldstraße (Mutterhaus hospital) (**fig. 1, 23**), it was also possible to identify subsequent activity in the area of a monumental building erected after 367/375: In a ruined vestibule of the building, small wooden posts (**fig. 7**) were hammered into the screed, which were interpreted as pens for small livestock (Hupe/Löhr 2010/2011, 301 fig. 31). In the courtyard to the west of the monumental building, the double

grave of two decapitated men was also documented (Teegen 2012/2013). Radiocarbon dating of one of the individuals yielded a calibrated date (2σ) of between 330 and 430 (Hupe 2020, 67).

The skeletal finds from Feldstraße and Friedrich-Wilhelm-Straße show that the prohibition of burial *intra muros* in Trier was – as elsewhere – no longer consistently observed in the late 4th century or later (Hupe 2020, 68).

An interesting contrast to the ruined residential quarters was revealed in the excavation at the corner of Sichelstraße and Deworastraße (**fig. 1, 24**), about 150 m northeast of the cathedral (Clemens 2002, 121–122). The documented planting trenches and the agricultural horizon of the High Empire show that the area was always used as a garden in antiquity. Only a few fragments of Argonne sigillata point to late Roman activities; in the Early Middle Ages, a settlement site was established in this agriculturally-used area, as shown by pit houses, other buildings with dry-set wall bases and 7th and 8th century finds (Clemens 2002, 121).

In the immediate vicinity of the cathedral (Palais Kesselstadt [**fig. 1, 25**], Palais Walderdorff [**fig. 1, 26**], dry-stone wall foundations were documented that were dug into late Roman stratigraphy and can be dated to the late Carolingian period (Clemens 2001, 52). This shows a settlement pattern that is similar to those at Sichelstraße, St Irminen's and the Altbachtal.

For the south of the Roman city area, there is evidence of agricultural use, such as vine cultivation, since the second half of the 7th century, but also for the operation of lime kilns (Clemens 2001, 59). The use of different areas inside and outside the city walls could take very different forms and intensities.

Material Culture

With regard to the continuity and intensity of settlement, the material culture from the 5th century onwards is of particular interest. After the end of the supply of small change in the late 4th century, the minting of precious metal in Trier probably came to a halt around 440 (Wigg-Wolf 2016; Gilles 2014, 74). In addition to lead coins as substitute money, imitations in silver were still minted in Trier or its surroundings in the second half of the 5th century (Gilles 2014, 74–77; Chameroy 2020, 210–219).

Fig. 8 Pseudo-Imperial *argenteus*, recasts of Eastern Roman imperial coinage, coinage of Merovingian coin masters from Trier and Carolingian *denarii* from Trier. – (Photos T. Zühmer; compilation by F. Heimerl; © GKDE/Rheinisches Landesmuseum Trier).

Fig. 9 Red-brown slipped ware from Trier. – (Photo T. Zühmer; after Heimerl 2021, 119 fig. 1; compilation by F. Heimerl; © GKDE/Rheinisches Landesmuseum Trier).

The mints that produced imitations of the emperors Anastasius (491–518) to Heraclius (610–641) can rarely be determined (Gilles 2014, 79). Under the Merovingians, several 6th century coin masters were attested in Trier, until Trier became one of the most important mints of the empire under the Carolingians (Gilles 2014, 79–82). Overall, however, the number of coins found (**fig. 8**) in the Trier city area is not suited for statistical analysis.

M. Martin has pointed to outstanding finds from the 5th century, such as bronze exagia, silver ingots, silverware, lead products, belt fittings and weapons, which have not yet been presented in context (Martin/Binsfeld 2017, 277–281). Argonne sigillata still reached Trier in larger numbers in the mid-5th century (Bakker 2006, 68; 2014/2015, 201–202; 2015, 24–28). A continuous ceramic tradition is expressed in the red-brown engobed ware (**fig. 9**), which was produced in the 5th century and continued in the Early Middle Ages (Heimerl 2021). In the case of coarse ware, the pottery kiln in the Altbach valley is of particular interest. The products (**fig. 10**) are very much based on the late Roman pottery tradition (Hussong 1936, 81–82). It is questionable whether there is a break here (Böhner 1958, 294) or whether there is not much more continuity evident in the pottery craft, such as at Mayen in the Eifel (Grunwald 2016; 2022, 480–511). The aim is to work up this assemblage, which is very important for the early medieval economic history in Trier. Regarding pottery traditions in Trier, the reappraisal of Carolingian »Hospitalkeramik« is also an urgent desideratum (Clemens 2001, 48).

The approximately 1300 early Christian inscriptions from the 4th to the early 8th centuries represent an outstanding source (Merten 2018, 18; 2022, 86). The typography of the 4th century was maintained until the middle of the 7th century and the late Roman formula was used until Carolingian times (Merten 2018, 29). According to H. Merten, the 6th to 8th century inscriptions point to a population in Trier that was clearly Romanesque (Merten 2018, 28).

In general, the assessment of the 5th and 6th centuries is difficult due to the lack of well-dated complexes. This has sometimes led researchers to assume that the city was largely uninhabited in the 5th and 6th centuries (Clemens 2001, 43. 59; Witschel 2004/2005, 243–244; Hupe 2020, 60). However, this circumstance is possibly due to the preservation conditions and the dark earth phenomenon (Heimerl/Metz 2022), i. e. homogeneous black layer packages in urban contexts that often contain mixed find assemblages dating to the period between late antiquity and the High Middle Ages. Dark earth can form through interactions of various factors (input of inorganic and organic material and various processes of soil transformation). A formerly existing stratigraphy cannot be identified with the naked eye, but only with the help of geoarchaeological methods. For a long time, the black layers were not

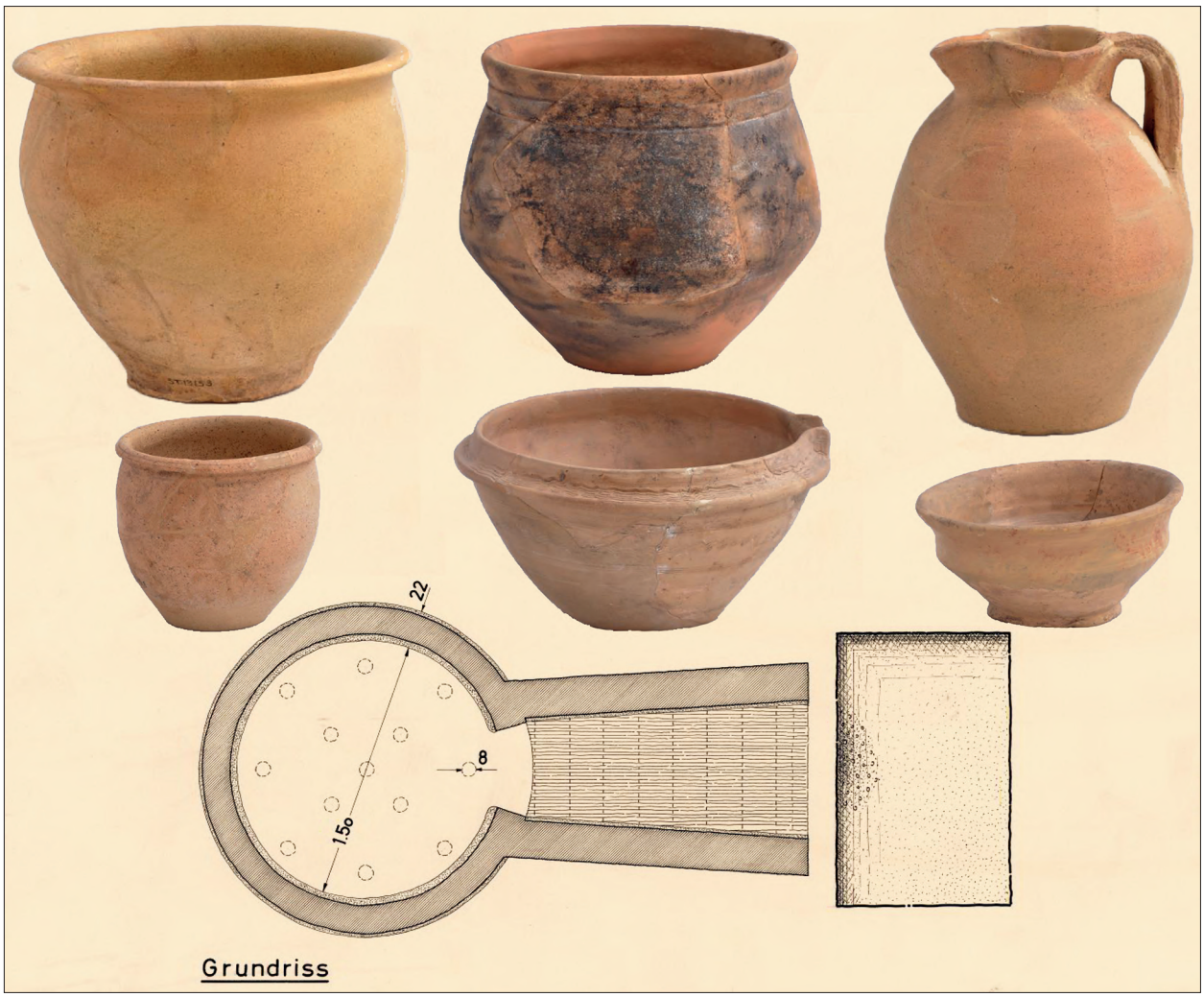

Fig. 10 Plan of the kiln in the Altbachtal and a selection of the pottery produced. – (Photos T. Zühmer, Plan G321; compilation by F. Heimerl; © GKDE/ Rheinisches Landesmuseum Trier).

considered meaningful in archaeological practice and were removed with the bulldozer without documentation.

This could be one reason why there have so far been few 5th and 6th century finds in Trier. An initial unsystematic review of the excavation documentation has already revealed that black layers were encountered several times in the past within the Trier city area, but were not examined in detail. A more systematic analysis of these horizons could help to develop a differentiated picture, especially for the 5th century.

R. Schindler assumed a 10–15 % re-use of Roman buildings in the Early Middle Ages, although such generalisations are problematic (Schindler 1973, 141). More recent mapping of 8th to 10th century coins and brooches show a fairly even distribution over the entire ancient city area, which is still referred to as *civitas* or *urbs* in the written tradition of the 8th and 9th centuries (Clemens 2001, 58–59). A systematic examination of the possible dark earth findings and a synopsis of the 5th to 9th century material would help to determine whether the early medieval settlement was more extensive than previously assumed.

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