

# Economy, Trade and Politics

## Evidence of Long-Distance Contacts with the North Based on Archaeological and Historical Sources for Ingelheim

### ABSTRACT

The exchange of goods with the northern territories of Europe can be confirmed for Ingelheim during the Early Middle Ages by archaeological finds, especially by sceattas, as well as on archaeological features, such as the cremation burial in the necropolis near the harbour in Frei-Weinheim. The written sources also provide a clear indication of the direct contacts with the North: in the year 826, the Danish King Harald visited Louis the Pious at the *palatium* in Ingelheim shortly before his planned baptism in Mainz. Despite these sources and the results of previous research, some questions can be still raised: is it possible that the archaeological evidence and historical sources on Ingelheim also indicate an exchange of ideas, migrations of customs or human encounters? Can the intensity and the type of contacts with the North be verified with available resources for the area of Ingelheim? These central questions and some examples of the archaeological and historical sources constitute the main part of the published article.

### KEYWORDS

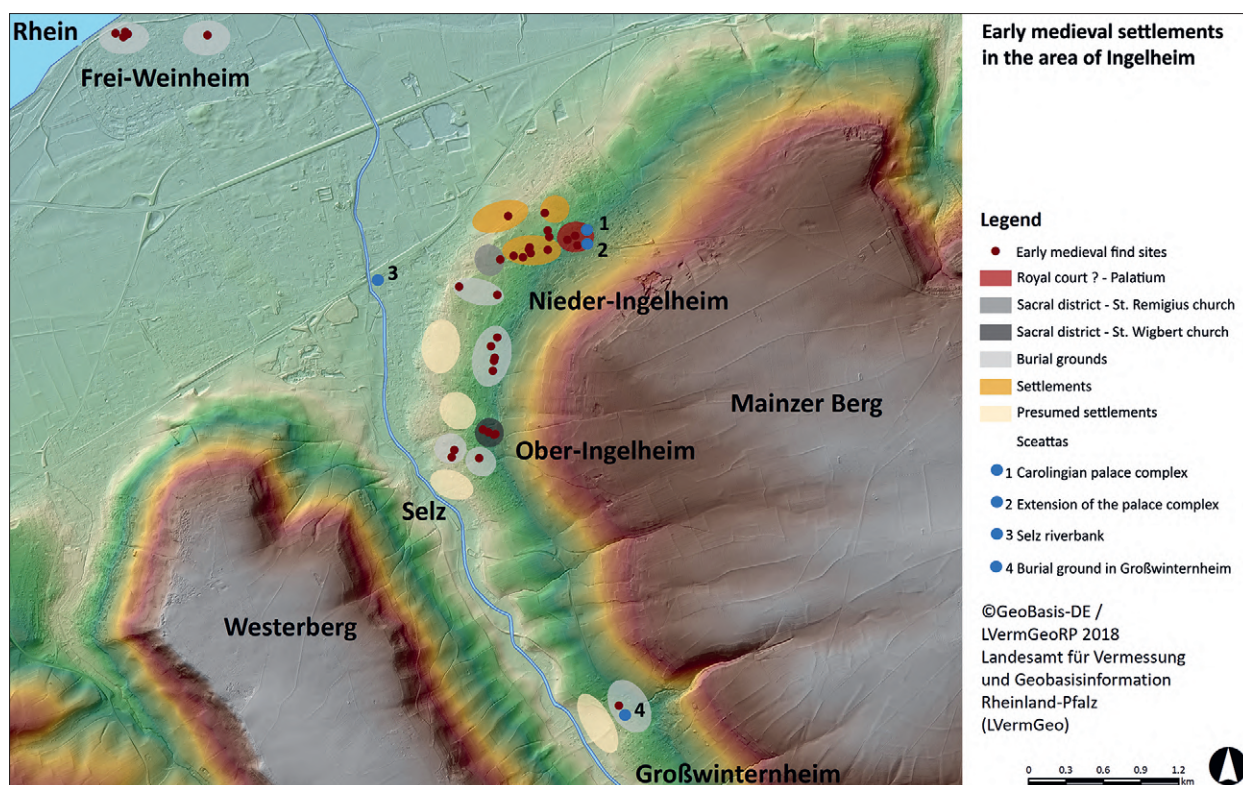
Early Middle Ages / Charlemagne / long-distance contact / sceatta / cremation burial / Ingelheim / *palatium*

Ingelheim was a well-known and much visited place, not only during the reign of Charlemagne, but probably also in the Merovingian period (Schmitz 1974, attachment: Graphische Gegenüberstellung der Königsaufenthalte in Ingelheim und Mainz [770–1188]). The archaeological features and finds at the different sites in Ingelheim underline its great importance during the Early Middle Ages. Outstanding examples are a settlement with a massive ditch in the area of »Saal« and a baptismal font in the church of St Remigius that dates back to the late 7<sup>th</sup> century as well as the burial ground »An der Rotweinstraße«, which has several hundred graves dating to between AD 500 and the first half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century.

Such an extensive settled location as Ingelheim attracted people from other regions for trading

or the exchange of goods as well as for political or other social intentions. These activities can be confirmed by finds of ceramics, which were imported, for instance, from the Rhineland and Mayen areas or by sceattas found within the settlements or graveyards in Nieder-Ingelheim and Großwinternheim (Gierszewska-Noszczyńska/Wilke 2021; Kaiser 2021, 255–257). Additionally, long-distance contacts with the North were thematised in some historical sources, especially the visit in 826 by the King of Jutland, Harald Klak, among others.

The presented study illustrates known and early-discovered examples of different kinds of contacts with the Far North between the inhabitants of Ingelheim and certain officials that were stationed there temporarily.



**Fig. 1** Early medieval findspots and the topography of the Ingelheim area. – (Digital execution M. Gierszewska-Noszczyńska after Wenzel 1997; Böhner 1964; Saalwächter 1966; archaeological documentation 1993–2019, Forschungsstelle Kaiserpfalz, Stadt Ingelheim; LIDAR-Data © GeoBasis-DE/LVerGeoRP 2018).

## Research Area and Historical Background

The entire research area extends between the north side of the east-west flowing Rhine and the south side of the Rhenish-Hessian Plateau with its two distinctive elevations of the Mainzer Berg and the Westerberg (fig. 1). Most of the medieval settlements were located on the middle terraces of the Rhine, which were not endangered by flooding. The only exception was the settlement and the former harbour in Frei-Weinheim, situated directly on the bank of the Rhine. Nevertheless, it is quite possible that the buildings around the harbour were also established on a slight elevation to counteract natu-

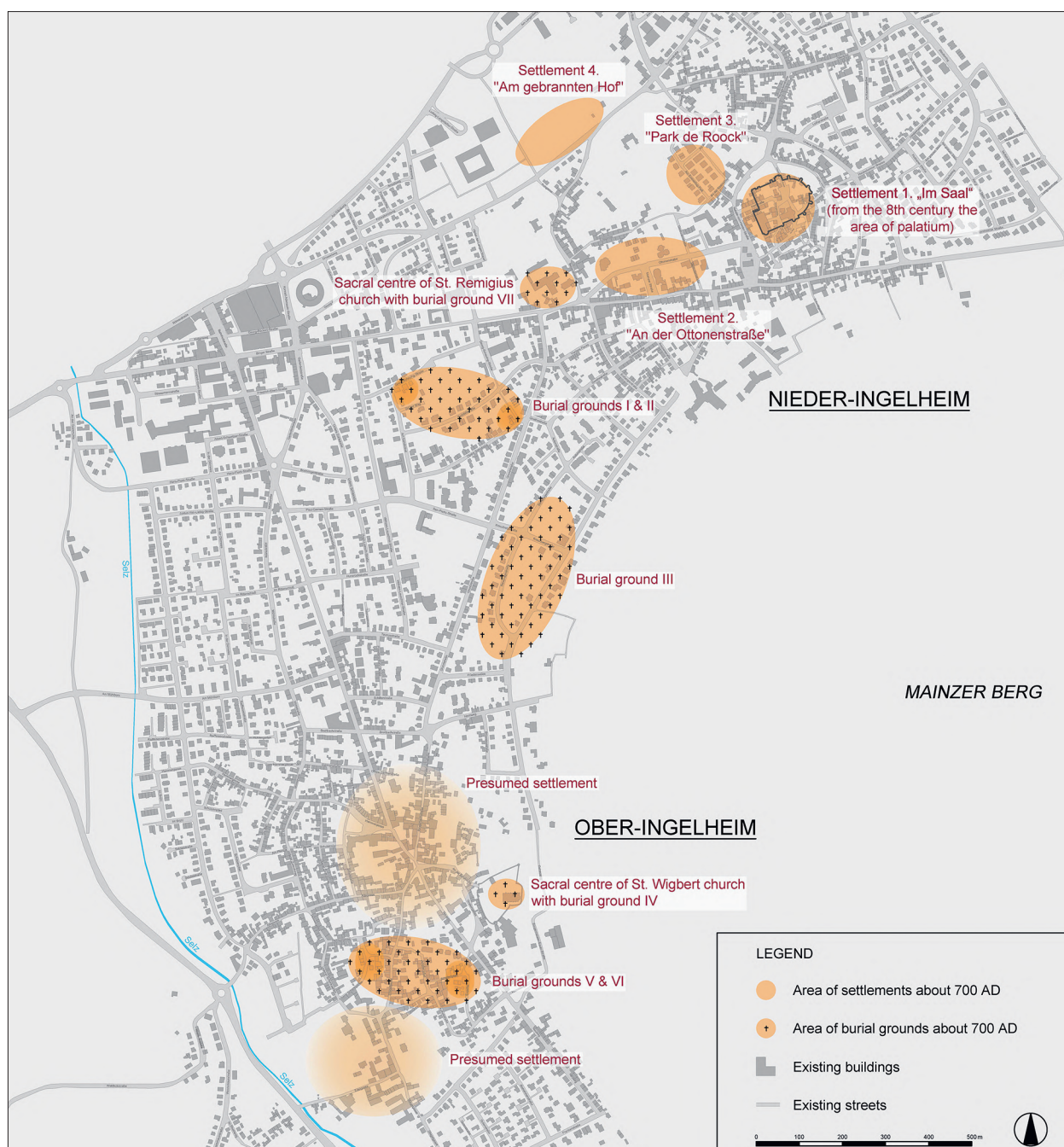
ral hazards. The studied area is also characterised by another river, the Selz, which flows in a north-south direction and divides the Rhenish-Hessian Plateau into the two above-mentioned hills. This valley formed a very attractive environment, not only in the Early Middle Ages but also in the earlier periods. The medieval settlement was not concentrated directly on the riverbank but on the slightly higher areas of Ober-Ingelheim and Großwinternheim, which are located approximately 3 km south of Ober-Ingelheim (currently a part of a municipal area of Ingelheim).

## Ingelheim between AD 700 and 800

The early medieval settlement of Ingelheim was in an area for which groups of farmyards and burial grounds were characteristic (fig. 2). There are several settlements, for instance those of »An der Ottonenstraße« and »Am gebrannten Hof«, which were investigated and documented by archaeologists from Ingelheim (Research Institution: Forschungsstelle Kaiserpfalz Ingelheim), with the earliest remains of the buildings being dated to the second

half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. During archaeological investigations over the past 25 years, around 40 pit houses and several post buildings were discovered at these find sites. These results only outlined the general picture of medieval settlement in Ingelheim and provided limited insights into the selected find sites in this area (Gierszewska-Noszczyńska 2020, 246–254; 2021, 232–237; 2022, 197–203).



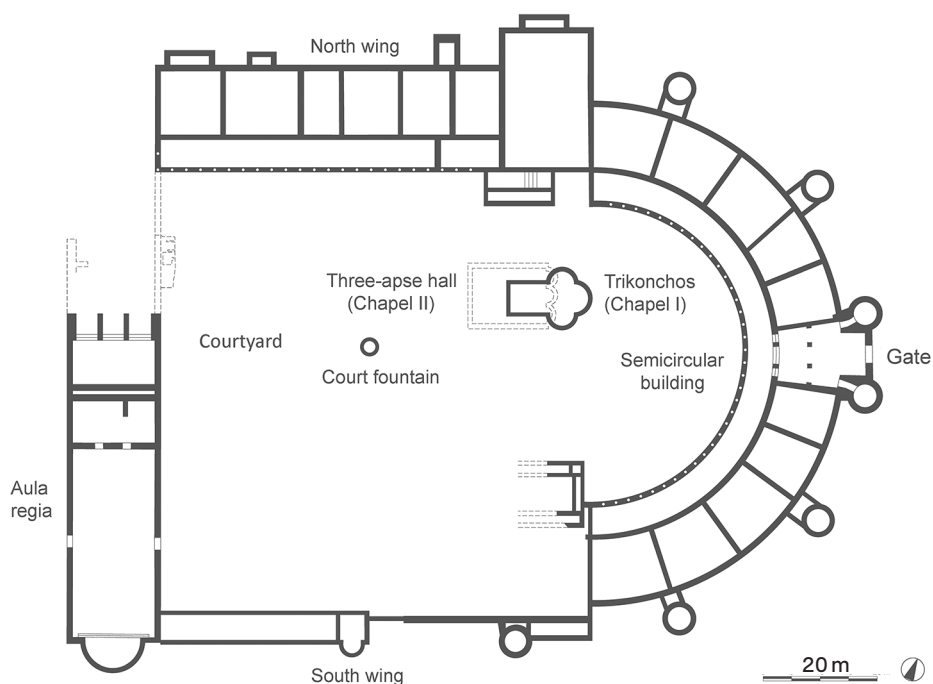


**Fig. 2** Topography of settlements in Ingelheim around AD 700. – (Digital execution R. Myszka, ArchaioGraphos, Göttingen; content M. Gierszewska-Noszczyńska / P. Noszczyński, Forschungsstelle Kaiserpfalz, Stadt Ingelheim, after Wenzel 1997; Böhner 1964; Arch. documentation 1993–2019, Forschungsstelle Kaiserpfalz, Stadt Ingelheim; cadastral map 2015, Stadt Ingelheim).

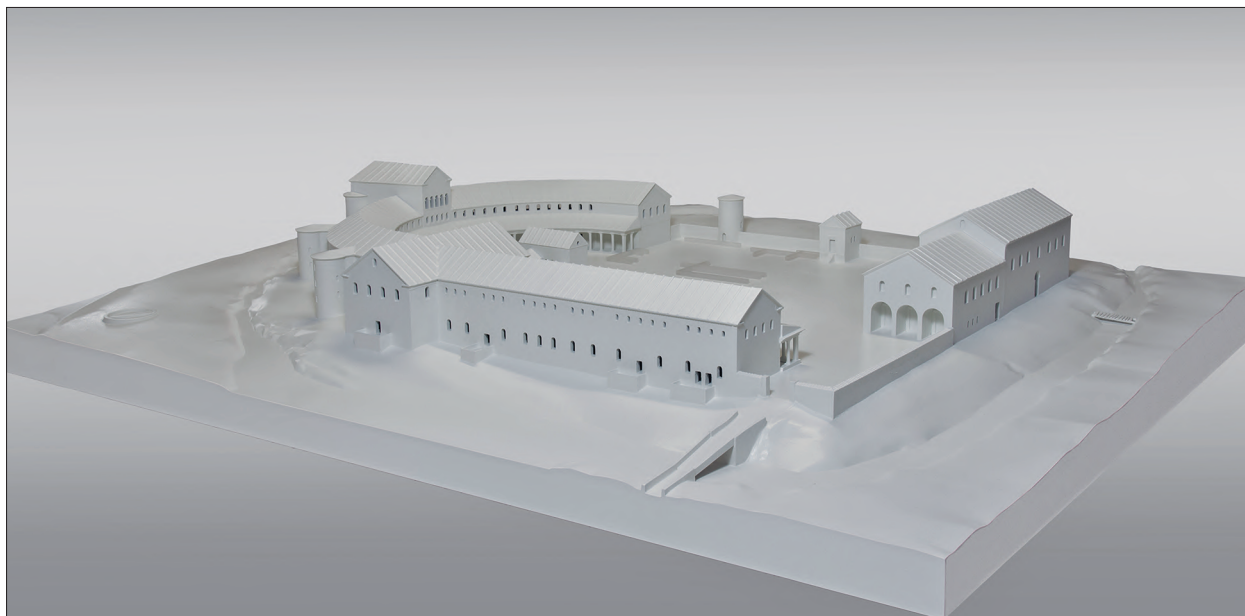
In the late 7<sup>th</sup> century, the main settlement was probably located in Nieder-Ingelheim, in the so-called »Saal« (in German also »Saalgebiet«). About a hundred years later, the *palatium* of Charlemagne was built there. During the 1960s excavations, the early medieval remains of typical pit and post buildings were recorded in the layers under the newer church from the 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> century (»Saalkirche«). The buildings were surrounded by an enormous 2.5 m deep and 6 m wide ditch, which indicates a prominent role of this place at that time. Although

it cannot be directly proven based on the archaeological evidence from current research, it is possible that the early medieval royal court was located here (Ament et al. 1968, 295–296; Sage 1976, 148; Wengenroth-Weimann 1973, 11–12; Gierszewska-Noszczyńska 2018).

Another significant location in around AD 700 was a sacral district of the church of St Remigius and the nearby necropolis. The importance of this complex emphasises the discovery of an early medieval baptismal font inside the newer tower of the church



**Fig. 3** Ground plan of the palace complex in Ingelheim around AD 800. – (Digital execution R. Myszka, ArchaioGraphos, Göttingen; content M. Gierszewska-Noszczyńska / H. Grewe / R. Myszka, Forschungsstelle Kaiserpfalz, Stadt Ingelheim; K. Peisker, Ingelheim; after Rauch/Jacobi 1976; Wengenroth-Weimann 1973; Arch. documentation 1993–2017, Forschungsstelle Kaiserpfalz, Stadt Ingelheim).



**Fig. 4** Model of the palace complex in Ingelheim, view from the northwest. – (Content H. Grewe; Photo B. May, Forschungsstelle Kaiserpfalz, Stadt Ingelheim; model execution ConstruvISION [St. Wendel]).

(Gierszewska-Noszczyńska 2020, 236–242; Gierszewska-Noszczyńska/Peisker 2023, 55–58).

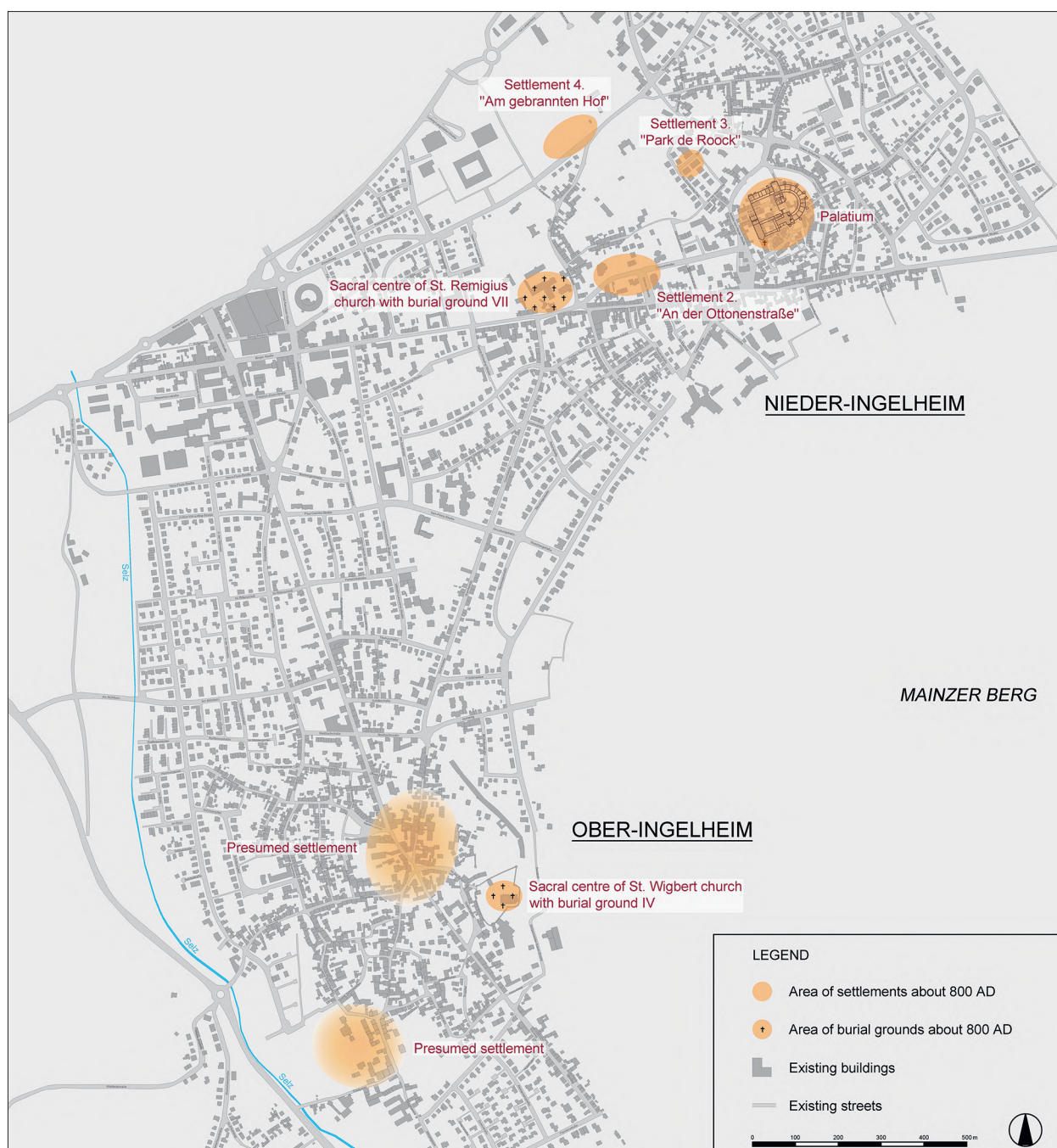
The next sacral complex in Ober-Ingelheim is related to the church of St Wigbert and a presumed burial ground near this building. According to historical sources, the construction of the church can only be dated back to the time between AD 802 and 815 as the church was given to the monastery in Bad Hersfeld (*Breviarium sancti Lulli*, 68 no. 38).

The area between these two sacral districts was used for the establishment of at least two additional necropolises in the Early Middle Ages. During con-

struction work and regular archaeological investigations, single graves and row burial grounds were discovered at several locations. An important site is the necropolis »An der Rotweinstraße«, whose usage is confirmed, based on archaeological finds, for the time between AD 500 and 750. Until 2023, more than 300 graves were excavated, which represent only about 15–20 % of the total number of individuals in this graveyard (Gierszewska-Noszczyńska 2020, 254–257; 2022, 204–206).

In the late 8<sup>th</sup> century, the settlement »Im Saal« was architectonically significantly changed. Almost



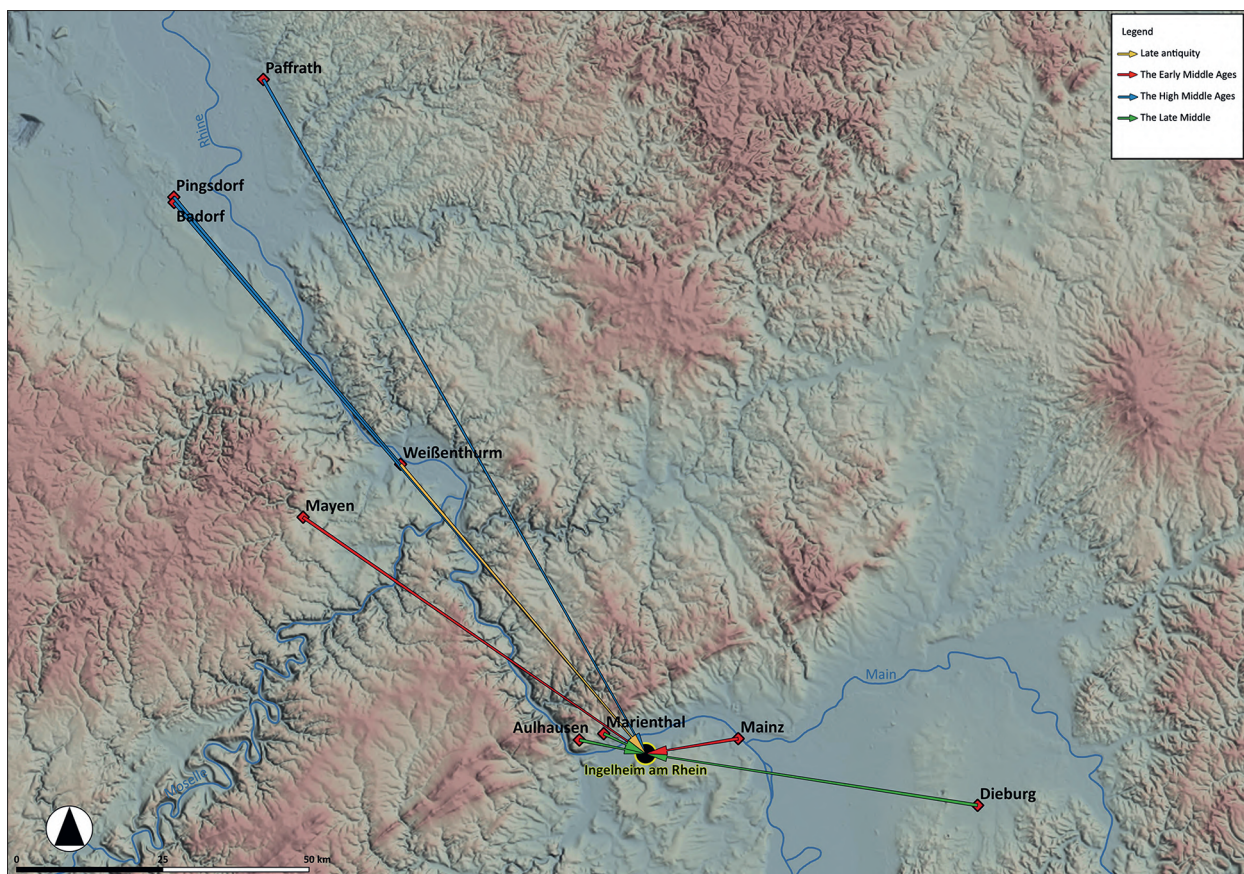


**Fig. 5** Topography of settlements in Ingelheim around AD 800. – (Digital execution R. Myszka, ArchaioGraphos, Göttingen; content M. Gierszewska-Noszczyńska / P. Noszczyński, Forschungsstelle Kaiserpfalz, Stadt Ingelheim; after Wenzel 1997; Böhner 1964; Arch. documentation 1993–2019, Forschungsstelle Kaiserpfalz, Stadt Ingelheim; cadastral map 2015, Stadt Ingelheim).

the entire area was levelled for the future imperial palace and a new residence for Charlemagne was built here. The ditch was filled with the remains of the Merovingian settlement. The new residence represented a monumental complex in the landscape of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries. Its symmetrical ground plan consisted of two simple geometric forms, a square and a semi-circle with approximate dimensions of 150 m × 115 m (fig. 3). Almost all of the constructions of the *palatium* were situated around an

inner courtyard, which was developed as an open space. The main hall, the so-called *aula regia*, with its additional vestibule or open peristyle formed the western side of the residence. On the north side, the *palatium* was closed off by a long construction, a so-called north wing (»Nordtrakt«), which consisted of six smaller rooms and a second large hall at the eastern edge of this section. The semi-circular construction was directly connected to this building. This remarkable construction constituted the





**Fig. 6** Origin of the ceramics found in Ingelheim according to haptic and visual analysis, as well as XRF spectroscopy. – (Digital execution M. Gierszewska-Noszczyńska / P. Noszczyński, Forschungsstelle Kaiserpfalz, Stadt Ingelheim; content M. Gierszewska-Noszczyńska, Forschungsstelle Kaiserpfalz, Stadt Ingelheim, D. Wilke, Wilke Management & Consulting GmbH, Wennigsen).

entire eastern side of the residence and, probably like the north wing, it could be entered through a portico. The six round towers were also added to the outside façade of the semi-circular building. The southern part of the palace complex was formed by some additional buildings, which could not be fully reconstructed. A rectangular construction with an open courtyard and a portico were probably built in this part of the palace (figs 3–4) (Gierszewska-Noszczyńska/Peisker 2020, 103–114; Grewe 2021a, 87–90; 2021b, 94–97).

In the late 8<sup>th</sup> century, the nearest peripheries of the *palatium* were still populated, although not as

intensively as before (fig. 5). The church of St Remigius was an important sacral complex, especially in the 10<sup>th</sup> century during the Universal Synod that was held here. The burial ground surrounding the church was certainly in use for the next several centuries. This can also be assumed for the area of the church of St Wigbert. However, there is no archaeological evidence, so far, for such burials in the other early medieval necropolises in Ingelheim (Gierszewska-Noszczyńska/Peisker 2023, 55–58; two graves from the 8<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> centuries were found on the southern side of the *aula regia*, but without any further archaeological context).

## Long-Distance Contacts – Pottery

Long-distance contacts were very important for settlements and royal seats such as Ingelheim, among others, for the supply of various kinds of goods, such as ceramics. The ambulatory form of government was a trigger for the exchange of wares, ideas and, above all, for encounters between people. The production sites, such as Mayen, from which a large

amount of pottery was exported, supplying many markets in Europe (see Grunwald, this volume), were also starting points for contacts with nearby consumption centres, such as Ingelheim, as well as with more remote areas. The development of these places even affected the increase in the intensity of the contacts.

The analysis of ceramics from the medieval find sites in Ingelheim was helpful by the reconstruction of the network and the changes of contacts between this centre of power and the production sites. During this investigation, about 700 fragments of the different wares were analysed using the X-ray fluorescence spectroscopy method to specify their provenience. They were compared with several available reference samples from various pottery workshops and assigned to specific groups. It was not possible to determine all the sources, but the main centres and major trade routes were identified, such as the late antique production centre of Weißenbühl. In the Early Middle Ages, ceramic vessels for the settlements and the palace complex were imported in limited amounts from Mayen. The larger number of ceramics was introduced to the market in Ingelheim from the workshops in Mainz. In the

High Middle Ages, the potters of the Cologne-Bonn region, particularly from Pingsdorf, were the main suppliers of this material group for Ingelheim. The late medieval sources of ceramics were mainly geographically closer to Ingelheim, in Rheingau and Dieburg (fig. 6) (Gierszewska-Noszczyńska/Wilke 2021, 267–287). It is evident that the Rhine played a crucial role in the contacts and in the transport of goods. However, there were also land routes that followed the ancient road network, which were used for communication and for various kinds of exchange. Ingelheim was situated directly on two main roads that led from Mainz, passing through Bingen and Koblenz to the Rhineland. One of these routes passed directly by the palace complex and the other to the north of the medieval residence. It is likely that both of them ran along current traffic routes.

## Long-Distance Contacts with the North - Sceattas

There are not many archaeological finds or features from Ingelheim that indicate direct contacts with the North during the Middle Ages. The main evidence consists of four sceattas found in Ingelheim and its surroundings, as well as a cremation burial discovered directly on the Rhine in Frei-Weinheim. Additionally, some historical written sources testify to encounters between rulers and other emissaries in 9<sup>th</sup> century Ingelheim (Ehlers et al. 2023).

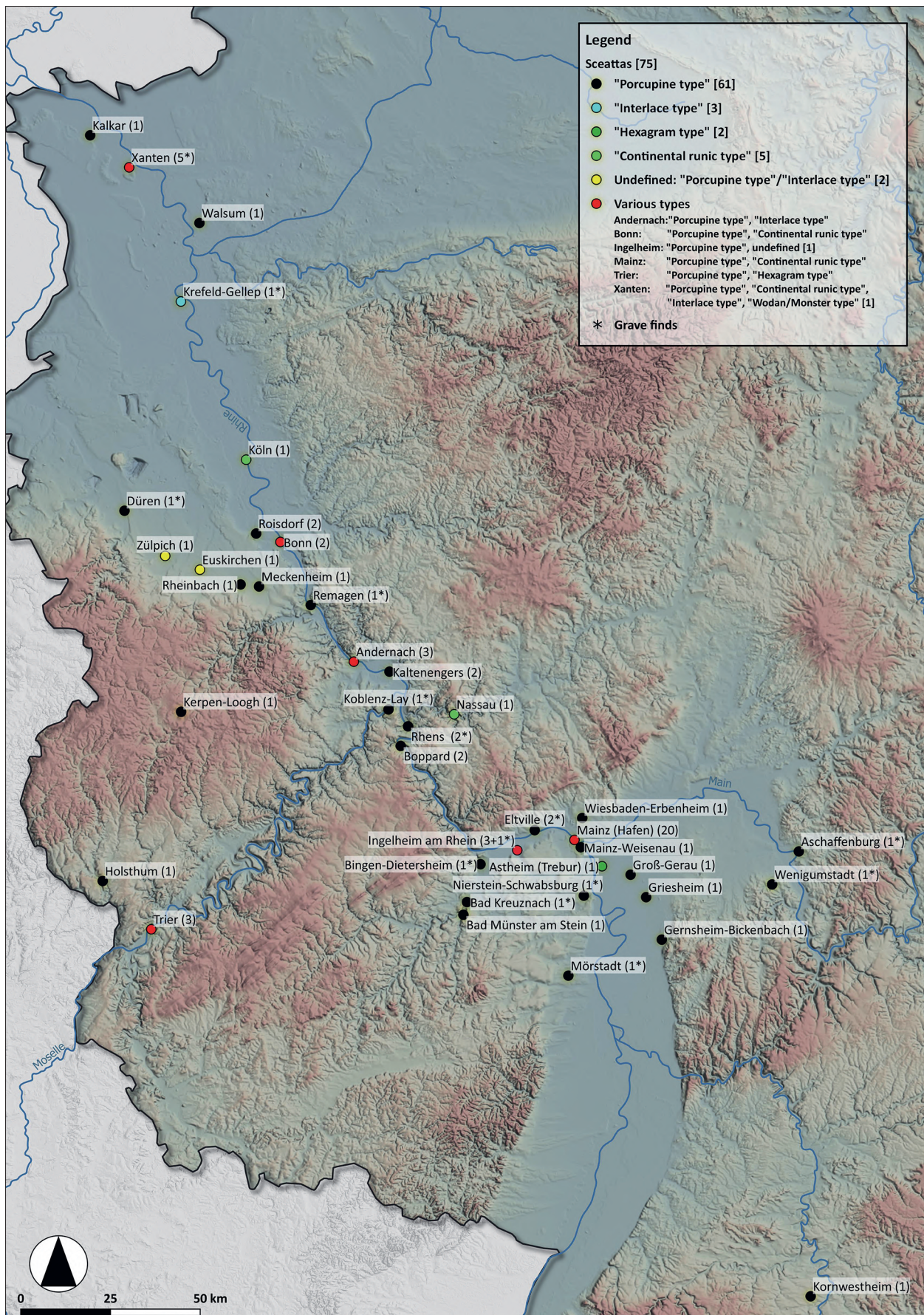
The sceattas, small silver coins minted from the late 7<sup>th</sup> century, initially in the Anglo-Saxon region and later also in Friesland, were mainly found in southwestern and western Germany along the Rhine and its tributaries, such as the Main, the Moselle, the Nahe, and the Neckar rivers. The highest number of sceattas found in these regions were documented in two locations, namely Mainz (20 coins) and Xanten (5 coins) (fig. 7). Also found were many different types, such as the »Hexagram«, »Continental runic«, »Porcupine« and »Wodan/Monster« in the area of Germany (sincere thanks to B. Schröder for pointing out a self-discovered sceatta of the »Hexagram type« from Trebur Astheim to complement the map; Becker 2022, 302 fig. 2A). During the 8<sup>th</sup> century, sceattas were a common form of currency in England, Denmark, the Netherlands, east Friesland, the Rhineland, and even in France. They were used as a currency along the Lower and Middle Rhine until the introduction of the Carolingian *denarii*. Sceattas were found mainly at major trading centres outside their places of origin, as well as in small settlements or as grave goods. Their distribution is linked to

Frisian long-distance trading activities. M. Schulze-Dörlamm in her article about Frisian in Mainz described and located their quarter directly on the left bank of the Rhine, probably in the present-day downtown area called »Am Brand« (Schulze-Dörlamm 2021, 351–354 fig. 4). Presumably, the relatively high number of sceattas found in Ingelheim is connected to the proximity of this area to Mainz or directly to Frisian trade.

### Sceatta from the Area of the Carolingian Palace Complex

One of the sceattas from Ingelheim was found in a layer of soil within the area of the Carolingian palace complex in 2002 (Kaiser 2021, 256–257). It was discovered in a thin plane layer situated above a stone lining layer and a foundation horizon related to the establishing of the 8<sup>th</sup> century residence. Directly above this stratum, a layer of mortar was found that indicated a utilisation level within the colonnade of the semi-circular building (Peisker 2002). The sceatta was from the second phase of minting, dating to between AD 720 and 740, of a »Porcupine type«, series E, subvariety b or c according to M. Metcalf and W. Op den Velde (2009, 43–46). On the obverse, the ornamentation resembles a porcupine, which is actually a highly abbreviated depiction of a profile portrait of a ruler. In this case, the representation is even more abstract than, for instance, the examples from Rhens or Eltville (Saal 2014, 286 fig. 66, grave 2;





**Fig. 7** Scaetta finds in the southwestern and western Germany. – (Digital execution M. Gierszewska-Noszczyńska / P. Noszczyński, Forschungsstelle Kaiserpfalz, Stadt Ingelheim; content M. Gierszewska-Noszczyńska, Forschungsstelle Kaiserpfalz, Stadt Ingelheim; after Becker 2022; Fischer zu Cramburg 2017; 2018; Heinrichs 2009; Künzel 2017; Metcalf/Op den Velde 2009; 2014; Saal 2014; Saalwächter 1966; Stoess 1994; Zedelius 1980).





**Fig. 8** Sceatta of the »Porcupine type« from the Carolingian palace complex, Nieder-Ingelheim. – (Photo B. May, Forschungsstelle Kaiserpfalz, Stadt Ingelheim).



**Fig. 9** Sceatta of the »Porcupine type« from the late antique settlement and the area of the extension of the palace complex, Nieder-Ingelheim. – (Photo B. May, Forschungsstelle Kaiserpfalz, Stadt Ingelheim).

Blaich 2006, 201, grave 33; 486). The reverse features a wreath of pearls in the shape of a rectangle with the characteristic symbols ToT and the pseudo-letters / \ without a pellet in the centre. The occurrence of several crosses at the corners and in the middle of that rectangle indicate that it belongs to the subvariety b or c (fig. 8). However, the depiction in this case is not complete and clearly visible and cannot be precisely interpreted. The weight is 0.99 g and the size ranges between 11.9–12.9 mm, falling within the standards recorded for these kind of sceattas.

### Sceatta from the Late Antique Settlement in the Area of the Extension of the Palace Complex

A further sceatta from Ingelheim was discovered in 2007 in the area between the Carolingian palace complex and the Roman main road connecting Mainz and Bingen (former names: *Mogontiacum/Moguntiacum* and *Bingium*). The coin was found in a historical layer situated above the remains of the building, which was dated to the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century based on ceramics finds and a coin of Constantine I (Gierszewska-Noszczyńska 2022, 196–197; Kaiser 2021, 255–257). This sceatta was also from the second phase of minting and falls under the »Porcupine type«, series E, but in this case it corresponds to subvariety c (Metcalf/Op den Velde 2009, 45–46). The obverse of this coin is very similar to the first example. However, there are small differences in the stamped surface; for instance, two quills are depicted as a cross. The reverse corresponds even more with the first coin; it depicts a pearl wreath in the shape of a rectangle with the characteristic symbols of ToT, and the pseudo-letters / \ without a pellet in

the centre formed this side of the sceatta. Individual crosses can also be observed at the corners and in the middle of the rectangle's sides and further crosses could be presumed (fig. 9). The weight of the coin of 0.98 g and the size ranges, from 11.4 to 12.4 mm, differ only slightly from the dimensions of the first coin.

### Sceatta from the Selz River Valley Area

The third example of the sceatta finds from Ingelheim is known only from the publication by A. Saalwächter (1966, 51–52). This coin was found in 1905 near the current train station, about 1.7 km to the west of the Carolingian *palatium*. Unfortunately, due to the insufficient documentation of this find, its exact location cannot be identified. However, this sceatta was discovered directly in the Selz Valley, very close to the already-mentioned main road that led to Bingen, then to the Rhineland, and from these regions to Ingelheim. The location could be identified more precisely in the so-called area »Altebach« (in German Gewann »Altebach«, Flur 9, Grundstück Nr. 53 und 54 [cadastral map 1844, 1901, Stadtarchiv Ingelheim StAI, Rep. II/417 a, I]). It was an accidental discovery during the cultivation of a field. Saalwächter incorrectly described this sceatta as a Celtic silver coin of about 1 g in weigh and 1 cm in size. It is the same type as the two other coins (a »Porcupine type«, series E, subvariety b or c according to Metcalf/Op den Velde 2009, 43–46). A tiny difference from earlier-mentioned finds is a pellet placed between the pseudo-letters / \ beneath the characteristic symbol of ToT on the reverse of the sceatta (fig. 10). The presented illustration is the only available image of this coin.



**Fig. 10** Sceatta of the »Porcupine type« from the Selz River Valley, Nieder-Ingelheim. – (After Saalwächter 1966).



**Fig. 11** Sceatta(?) from the early medieval burial ground in Großwinternheim. – (Photo B. May, Forschungsstelle Kaiserpfalz, Stadt Ingelheim).

### Sceatta (?) from the Early Medieval Burial Ground in Großwinternheim

The following described »coin« (fig. 11) was found in Großwinternheim, currently a part of the municipal area of Ingelheim. It was classified as a stray find, although it was discovered within an early medieval burial ground during the building of the former gym hall in 1858 (Zeller 1992, 69 fig. 86/10; Wenzel 1997, 151 fig. 19/4). Currently, this find is a part of the collection of the State Museum in Mainz (Landesmuseum Mainz; sincere thanks to B. Heide for making the find available for measurements and photographs). A. Wenzel indicated its Anglo-Saxon origin (Wenzel 1997, 70). It is quite possible that the specimen from Großwinternheim was not a finished coin; it could presumably be a kind of trial embossing as only one side of this »coin« was minted (sincere thanks to L. Grunwald for the discussion about this find). On the other side, a negative of the pattern can be seen. The sceatta differs significantly from the other three specimens found in Nieder-Ingelheim. The reverse side consists of several elements: a negative of the

pearl wreath, five pellets and a linear pattern. Their origin could hypothetically be traced back to the different sceattas. For instance, the rectangle with the negative of the pearl wreath is reminiscent of the »Porcupine type« of the third phase, specifically the B variety, Corpus 0187 primary (Metcalf/Op den Velde 2009, 59), which circulated from around AD 740 onwards. The combination of the three pellets on the right side of the coin could be related to the coins known as the »saltire« standard, type 70, minted between AD 710 and 760 in the current English-speaking regions of Western Europe (British Numismatic Society 2023). The next element of a kind of »fork« or parallel and orthogonal lines is similar to a section of one specimen of the »Porcupine type«, the D variety (Metcalf/Op den Velde 2010, 431. 691). The weight of the specimen from Großwinternheim is about 1.53 g and its diameter varies between 1.63 and 1.74 cm. It was converted to a pendant: there is a hanger in gold or brass located on the top of the silver sceatta, suggesting its secondary usage as a necklace and probably grave goods.

### Long-Distance Contacts with the North – Cremation Burials in the Area of Frei-Weinheim, the Harbour of Ingelheim

During the Early Middle Ages, the practice of cremation burials was typically limited to the North Sea coastal areas, such as Friesland, the Lower Rhine, Westphalia, and the Elbe-Germanic region. However, there are also individual cremation graves in the southern part of Germany where this custom was practiced in exceptional cases. The graves, including the Ingelheim example, were mainly found in a necropolis context, and they are mostly chronologically

associated with the Merovingian period. They have been interpreted in various ways, for example, as a transition from the burial customs in the Alamannic region, as the result of internal societal conflicts, or as »foreign« influences. Possibly, they indicated a different origin of the buried individuals or even a manifestation of a penalty (Wamers 2015, 178).

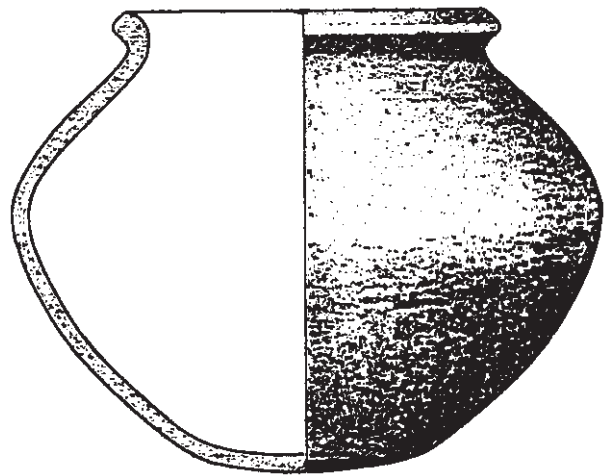
The cremation burial at Frei-Weinheim was interpreted by D. Ellmers (1973, 52–53) as the grave



of a Frisian cloth merchant, perhaps one of those who traded extensively in the Rhine region during the Carolingian period and settled, for example, in Mainz. Wenzel (1997, 80–81) suggested that to some extent the deceased individual was integrated into the local social community during his lifetime. Thereby, this untypical burial practice in this particular case was allowed in the area of Ingelheim. It is also possible that the importance of this person from an administrative perspective permitted such a burial custom.

The vessel and the ware (globular pot, Badorf ware) also indicate the arrival area or origin of an individual from the northern regions. However, this type of ceramic was also found in other locations in Ingelheim, albeit in a very limited quantity.

The cremation burial at Frei-Weinheim is the only medieval grave of this type found in the area of Ingelheim and its surroundings. It was discovered during construction work approximately 100 m from the bank of the Rhine within a Merovingian burial ground. Fourteen graves that were found within this necropolis date to the late 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, cremation grave no. 15 was completely isolated from the other burials. In this case, a globular pot, probably made in Badorf, measuring about 16 cm in height and 12.5 cm in diameter, was used as the urn



**Fig. 12** Urn from cremation burial no. 15 in the Frei-Weinheim area. – (After Wenzel 1997, 189 fig. 17/7).

for the interment of this individual (**fig. 12**). The vessel dates back to the first half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. It could be assumed that the burial ground either continued to be used beyond the 7<sup>th</sup> century or was later reused, perhaps for special purposes and for individuals of different, possibly northern, origins.

## Long-Distance Contacts with the North – The Written Sources

Written sources for Ingelheim report direct and high-level contacts with the North. It is highly likely that, in the summer of 826, Louis the Pious received Harald Klak, a sub-king of Jutland, during an imperial assembly in Ingelheim, after which he was baptised in Mainz. Harald Klak had also been fighting for the claim to the crown in other Danish territories since 810.

Several sources provide an account of this visit, differing in terms of their level of details and credibility. These and other written records on the Ingelheim palace have recently been compiled, translated, and analysed in the publication »Schriftquellen zur Pfalz Ingelheim« (Ehlers et al. 2023).

The episode of Harald's visit and baptism is recounted in the *Annales regni Francorum* (MGH SS rer. Germ. 6, 169–172). Initially, the chronicles reported on King Louis' imperial assembly in Ingelheim in 826 and they list the attendees: the sons of the Danish king Gottfried, Leo, the bishop of Civitavecchia, who spoke in favour of the Roman Church, and guests from Jerusalem, Pannonia, the Slavic territories and the Bretagne were present. It

is further stated that Harald arrived at the same time with his wife and a large number of Danes and was baptised and generously rewarded, together with his entourage, in Mainz at the Abbey of St Alban (more about the Abby of St Alban in Schmid 1996). Afterward, he returned via Friesland along the same route. In the event of a failure in the struggle for the throne and in the dynastic disputes in Danish territories, he was granted the county of Hriustri/Rüstringen (a Frisian territory) as a place of retreat. For this, and probably also during the encounter in Ingelheim, he sought support from Louis the Pious.

It is particularly noteworthy that among the attendees of the imperial assembly were envoys of the sons of the Danish King Godfred, which were the very same individuals with whom Harald was contending for the Danish throne (MGH SS rer. Germ. 6, 169).

Another related source, the *In Honorem Hludovici Liber* by Ermoldus Nigellus, provides a detailed account of Harald's visit and baptism (MGH Poetae 2, 62–76). As the title suggests, this written source is a

Written source	<i>Annales regni Francorum</i>	Ermoldus Nigellus, <i>In Honorem Hludovici</i>	Astronomus, <i>Vita Hludowici Imperatoris</i>	Theganus, <i>Gesta Hludowici imperatoris</i>	<i>Annales Xantenses</i>	Rimbert, <i>Vita Sancti Anskarii</i>
Date of origin	Close in time to the events described	826–828	840–845	Around 837	860–875	865–876; 1101–1140
Who is coming?	Harald came with his wife and a large number of Danes	Harald came with hundred ships	Harald from the Norman region came with his wife and a large group of Danes	Harald of the Danes came to Ingelheim	A large group of Normans came to Ingelheim, led by Heriold	Harald came to Ludwig and asked him for help
Who is baptised?	He and all those who accompanied him	He asks for baptism for himself and his family and all those who accompanied him	Harald with all his people	Harald and his wife are baptised by Ludwig and his wife Judith	Harald, his wife and 400 people of both sexes	Harald von Ludwig himself, becomes his godchild
Place of baptism	Mainz, St Alban's Monastery	Directly on site in Ingelheim, followed by a large baptism ceremony	Mainz, St Albans Monastery	On site in Ingelheim	Not mentioned	Not mentioned
Gifts	Gifts and the province of Rüstringen as a fiefdom	Gifts and priests to missionise the Danes	The province of Rüstringen as a fiefdom	Gifts and a large part of Friesland	Not mentioned	Ansgar and Autbert for missionary work, church equipment, chests, tents, provisions, etc

**Tab. 1** Comparison of the information contained in the sources on Harald's visit. – (Compilation R. Kaiser, Forschungsstelle Kaiserpfalz, Stadt Ingelheim, after MGH Poetae 2; MGH SS 2; MGH SS rer. Germ. 6; MGH SS rer. Germ. 12; MGH SS rer. Germ. 64, translation H. Geißler 2023).

eulogy dedicated to Louis the Pious. Ermoldus was a clergyman from Aquitaine, who belonged to the entourage of King Pippin. He was banished to Strasbourg by Emperor Louis the Pious around 824 and composed the above-mentioned poems during his exile (Schaller 1986, 2160).

Therefore, one can expect that the account was of a flattering nature and aimed to present Louis in a favourable light and to please him, with the hope that Ermoldus could return from exile.

In Ermoldus' narrative, Harald intentionally went to Louis with the goal of being baptised, not seeking his help in the dynastic disputes; Ermoldus did not mention these struggles at all (Geißler 2023, 67).

Further, he reported that Harald sailed up the Rhine with a hundred ships, anchored close by (probably at a harbour in Frei-Weinheim) and was escorted to the palace on horses sent by Louis. He requested baptism, which was immediately performed on-site. This was followed by a grand baptismal cel-

eburation, followed by a large hunt on the second day. On the third day, Harald's farewell and investiture took place. Priests were sent with him for the Christianisation of the Danes. One of Harald's sons and a nephew remained at Louis' court for a Frankish upbringing (MGH Poetae 2, 62–76).

In Ermoldus' account, Louis was portrayed as the Christianiser of the Danes through Harald's baptism. However, this did not correspond to reality, as Harald could no longer establish himself as a ruler in Denmark and likely remained in Friesland (Helten 2019, 102–103).

The claim of a hundred ships is also likely an exaggeration. In his poem, Ermoldus also spoke of a hundred columns adorning the Ingelheim palace, as well as a thousand doors and a thousand rooms within it as well as a thousand antlers acquired during the hunt (MGH Poetae 2, 63–64). Therefore, one can assume that Ermoldus' numerical figures are more of a poetic and euphemistic nature.

Three additional sources, which contain only brief accounts and largely summarise the Royal Annals, are Astronomus (MGH SS rer. Germ. 64, 430–432), Theganus (MGH, SS rer. Germ. 64, 220), and the *Annales Xantenses* (MGH SS rer. Germ. 12, 6–7) (with Theganus being their likely source (Geißler 2023, 71). Astronomus also mentioned St Alban's as the place of Harald's baptism. The *Annales Xantenses* mention that 400 people were baptised along with Harald and his wife.

## The Background

The culmination point of the relations between Harald and Louis the Pious was the meeting in Ingelheim, but they were in contact in previous years. They probably met for the first time in the year 814. At that time, Harald was already the king of Jutland but was overthrown by Godfred's sons. He fled to the Frankish Empire, seeking Louis' support, which he received. The Frankish ruler sent Harald to Saxony and provided him with an army one year later (MGH SS rer. Germ. 6, 141). However, there was no confrontation with Godfred's sons (Helten 2019, 92).

Subsequently, there were years of battles and disputes for power as Harald continued to fight from Saxony. Louis was passively brought into these conflicts through his connection with and support for Harald. This led to frequent contacts between the Frankish Empire and the North, with envoys from Godfred's sons as well as from Harald (such as at an imperial assembly in Frankfurt in the year 822), or Harald himself (in the year 823) appearing before

Another interesting source is the *Vita Sancti Askarii* (MGH SS 2, 694–696), which describes the life of Ansgar, the missionary who accompanied Harald to Friesland. It was written by his successor, Rimbert, several decades after the events. However, the place of baptism is not mentioned in this source.

When comparing the sources, a rough picture of the events emerges (cf. **tab. 1**). There was an imperial assembly of Louis the Pious in Ingelheim in 826, as evidenced by several charters. This assembly also discussed the situation in Denmark, where there had been dynastic disputes between Harald and the sons of Godfred since 810.

Harald was most likely baptised with his entourage in Mainz at St Alban's Church/Monastery during the same period. After this event, Harald was sent back to the North with gifts and two missionaries. The area of Rüstringen in Friesland was granted to him as a fief in the event that he could not return to Denmark.

The explicit mention of Harald being in Ingelheim and not just visiting Mainz is found only in Theganus and the *Annales Xantenses*, both of which represent heavily abridged excerpts of the *Annales regni Francorum* (MGH SS rer. Germ. 6; Geißler 2023, 75). However, since Harald's visit to Louis is mentioned in the Royal Annals in direct connection with the imperial assembly, it is probable that he also participated in that encounter in Ingelheim.

Louis to negotiate the situation in Denmark (Helten 2019, 94–99).

For Harald, the idea of entering into a relationship of loyalty with a Frankish ruler was not new, as his father Halfdan had already placed himself under the protection of Charlemagne through commendation in the year 807, according to the *Poeta Saxo* (Helten 2019, 110, MGH SS 1, 263). The *Poeta Saxo* already mentions Halfdan in the year 782 when he appeared as an envoy of King Sigfried before Charlemagne (MGH SS rer. Germ. 6, 60; MGH SS rer. Germ. 7, 349).

It is evident that the contacts between Harald's relatives and the Frankish Empire existed for some time before the year 826. The nobles of both regions had maintained contacts since the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, and diplomatic missions repeatedly visited imperial assemblies. In the year 826, the places Ingelheim and Mainz served as the backstage for these global events.



However, the baptism of Harald represented a unique event, as he was the first Scandinavian ruler to be baptised (Sawyer 1987, 68), although this played a subordinate role in the Christianisation of Scandinavia, as Harald most likely did not return to Denmark after the baptism and thus did not rule anymore.

Since the Early Middle Ages, baptismal sponsorship has been assumed not by the biological par-

ents but by the godparents, who thereby become the spiritual parents. Socially and politically, this expanded the possibilities of social networking. Ruling families gained another means of alliance-building, in addition to common options such as marriage or purely political agreements. Therefore, baptismal sponsorship became a popular means of political alliance formation (Helten 2019, 108–109; Angenendt 1984, 106–109).

## Conclusions

The research history of the Ingelheim palace is complex and its peripheries has been the focus of scientific investigation for decades. In addition to the examination of the local topography of settlements and material research, the study of regional contacts plays a significant role. The exchange of goods between Ingelheim and regional or even more distant economic centres can be confirmed through numerous findings of various material groups, such as ceramics or metal, from the Early Middle Ages.

The number of artefacts that indicate direct contact between Ingelheim and the North or northern adjacent regions of the Carolingian Empire is rather limited. However, Ingelheim was not a production centre like, for example, Mayen, which regularly exported goods. Consequently, the contacts cannot often have been reciprocally confirmed. There was

only a small quantity of goods imported to Ingelheim or brought through exchange, which were the remains and manifestation of such contacts, such as the four above-mentioned sceattas and the cremation burial found in Frei-Weinheim with the Badorf ware globular pot used as an urn.

Nevertheless, the presence of four sceattas provides evidence of long-distance trade with the Frisian or Anglo-Saxon regions. However, it is thanks to the role of Ingelheim as a centre of power that there is some written evidence of direct contacts between high-ranking individuals from the Danish territory and the Carolingian Empire, such as the above-mentioned account about the visit of the Jutlandic King Harald to Ingelheim and his baptism in Mainz in 826. The written sources also demonstrate that such contacts had already existed decades before.

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