

Archäologischer Führer durch Augst/Kaiseraugst 8
Archaeological guide to Augst/Kaiseraugst

A short guide to Augusta Raurica



AUGUSTA RAURICA

Cover image: The theatre in Augusta Raurica
Photograph: Susanne Schenker



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A short guide to Augusta Raurica

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Numerous new photographs by Susanne Schenker

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*The Roman Empire at the
time of its greatest expansion
(around AD 117)*

History

Welcome to Augusta Raurica, the Roman town on the River Rhine! 2000 years ago, Roman army veterans and local Celts established a large town here. At that time Augusta Raurica was located on the edge of the Roman Empire on the border with Germania.

Gradually, the neighbouring Germanic regions on the other side of the Rhine were also conquered. This meant that Augusta Raurica, the political and cultural centre of the Colonia Raurica, came to be in the hinterland, where it was protected from war and skirmishes, and blossomed into an important Roman town.



Athenae

Antiochia

Alexandria

Petra

Celts in the Basle area



Celtic coins continued to be used for a long time as a means of payment in the Roman town of Augusta Raurica.

Before the Roman conquest, the indigenous Celtic tribe of the Raurici were settled in the Basle region. One of their settlements was located on the Münsterhügel hill in Basle. In 58 BC the Raurici, together with other Celtic tribes including the Helvetii, migrated west with the intention of settling in the Bordeaux region in France. This 'Helvetian exodus' came to an abrupt halt near Bibracte (France) where Roman troops led by Julius Caesar, who was on a mission to conquer Gaul at the time, defeated the Celtic emigrants. The vanquished Celts were forced to return to their homelands.

Eventually, all the regions west of the River Rhine fell under Roman sovereignty. Around 44 BC, Lucius Munatius Plancus, the governor of Gaul, founded a colony town in the territory of the Raurici. The colonial lands, i.e. the Colonia Raurica, located right on the border of the empire, were intended as a buffer zone to protect the region from Germanic incursions and to control the trade and transport routes.

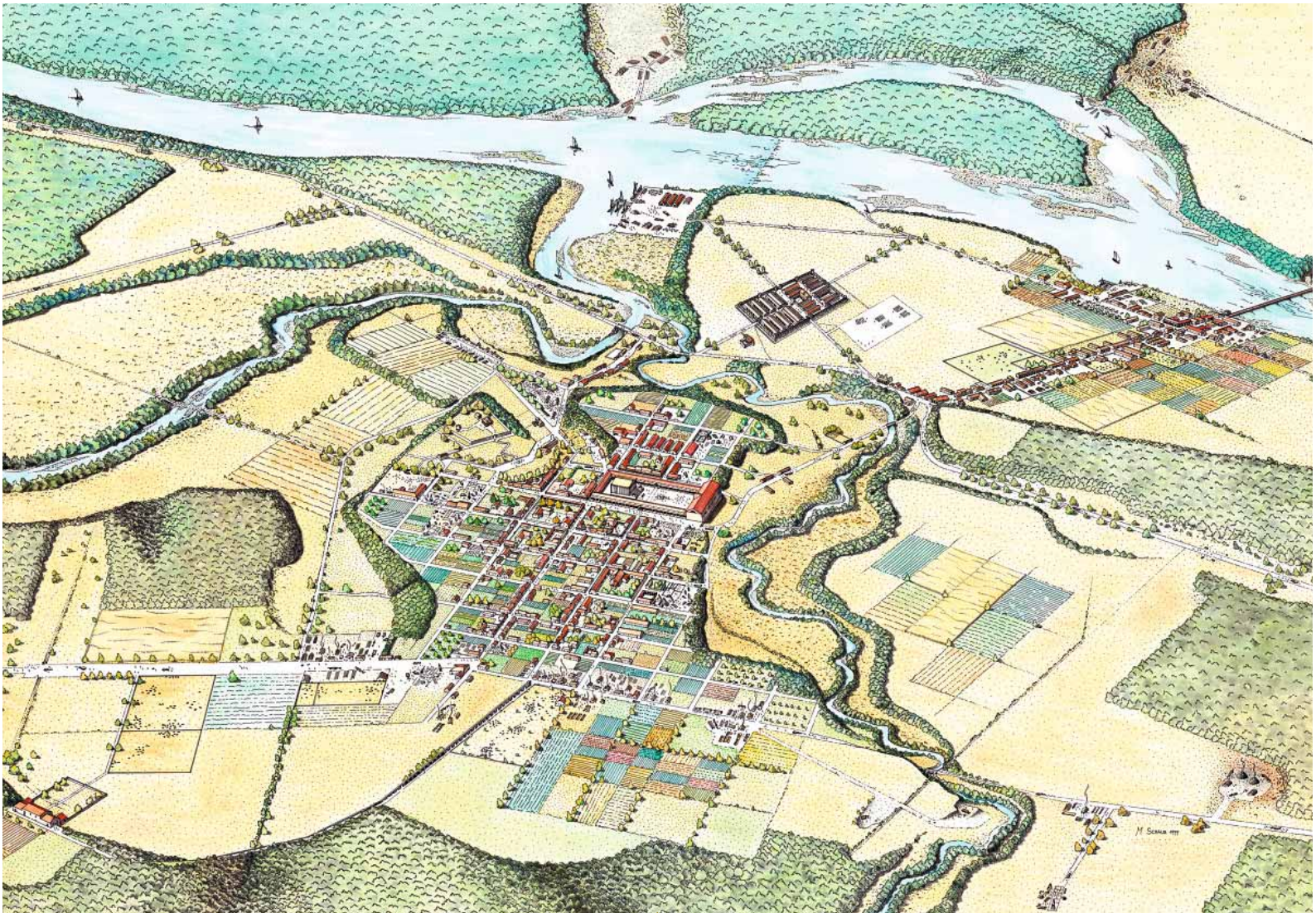
58 BC

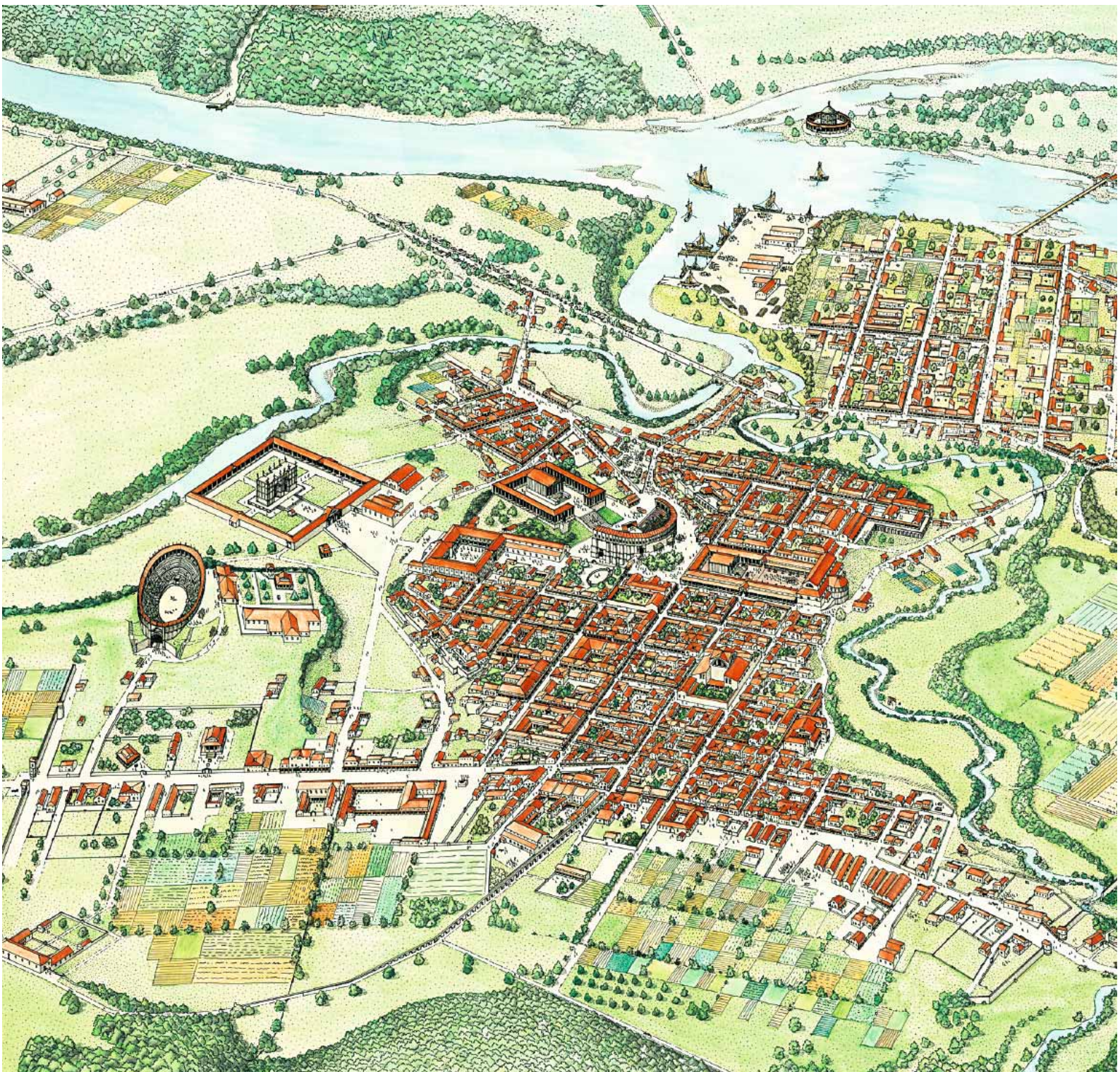
44 BC

15 BC

The newly founded colony and the obstacles it faced

After the founding, decades elapsed before the town was actually built. This delay was probably caused by an outbreak of civil war in Italy after Caesar's death. It was not until the reign of the Emperor Augustus that the construction of the town began in 15 BC after another official founding. The town was built on the Augst plateau and a military camp was established in the plains towards the Rhine near Kaiseraugst. At that time, timber was the main material used in construction.





AD 240

Metropolis on the River Rhine



The town was redesigned from AD 50 onwards. The buildings were now constructed in stone. The neighbouring regions on the right side of the River Rhine were also gradually incorporated into the Roman Empire. The border was moved northwards, away from the Rhine, where it was protected by the Upper German-Raetian limes, a fortified frontier stretching from Mainz to Regensburg in Germany. Augusta Raurica was now located in the quiet hinterland. The military camp was replaced by further residential and commercial quarters – Augusta Raurica evolved into a thriving centre of trade and commerce.



Crises, war and decline

From the late 2nd century onwards, the Roman Empire was weakened by Germanic incursions, civil wars and plagues. The economy deteriorated and the population became impoverished. After the fall of the limes around AD 260, the frontier of the empire was moved back to the Rhine. The town was once again located on the border. The times were unsettled with constant fighting. Around AD 280, the outcrop of the Kastelen, the area above the present-day museum, was fortified by a wall with a bank and ditch enclosure. The fortification provided shelter to the already badly decimated population of Augusta Raurica. The other quarters of the town were largely abandoned.



Sheltered by the fort

An impressive fort, the *Castrum Rauracense*, was erected on the banks of the River Rhine around AD 300. It replaced the *Kastelen* compound. Military personnel and the civilian population sought shelter inside the fortification from that point onwards. The fort was destroyed by Germanic tribes in AD 351 or 352. Not long thereafter it was renovated and refurbished. Many Roman troops were withdrawn from the area in AD 401. However, it was still officially a part of the Roman Empire. It was not until the second half of the 5th century that Rome lost its control over the region north of the Alps.



AD 320

AD 401

Members of the excavation team examine the remains of the residence of a wealthy family (2005).

This statuette of two lovers was found in a grave.



People

People lived in Augusta Raurica for many generations. Children were born and brought up here, men and women experienced joy and sorrow. Our excavations examine the traces of their lives.





Wall painting from a wealthy private residence in the centre of the town



Beaker fragment with incised inscription ...INVS HIC BIBET: (Reg)inus drinks from this beaker.

Mosaic floor from a residential building on the southern edge of the town

The inhabitants – Celts become Romans



In its heyday in the 2nd century AD, some 15,000 people lived in Augusta Raurica. A large proportion were indigenous Raurici. This is indicated by names like Celtillus mentioned in inscriptions, items of clothing such as the Celtic hooded cape seen in depictions and ceramic vessels painted in the Celtic style. Roman army veterans also settled here. It is no longer possible to ascertain whether their origins were Celtic or Italo-Roman. Upon the incorporation of the territory into the Roman Empire, select members of the Celtic aristocracy were granted Roman citizenship. These privileged families retained their elevated status among the indigenous population and became pillars of the Roman administration. They integrated quickly into Roman society and adopted Roman culture.

All the other locals became peregrini, 'foreigners' in the Roman Empire and while they remained free, they did not possess Roman citizenship. This had its disadvantages. Certain rights and upward mobility in society were the privilege of Roman citizens. However, ambition could earn a peregrinus Roman citizenship, e. g. by serving in the Roman army. Over time, most of the indigenous population were declared Roman citizens and they also adopted certain elements of the Roman way of life. Gallo-Roman society had been born.

Writing implements (Lat. stili). The tip was used to incise letters in a layer of wax on a writing tablet, while the flat end was used for 'erasing'.

Language

Latin was the official language and official documents were always written in Latin. Over time the vernacular probably became a mixture between Celtic and Latin.

Citizenship

In AD 212 the Emperor Caracalla decreed that every free resident of the empire shall be granted citizenship. The Constitutio Antoniniana also had its advantages for the imperial administration: the edict simplified the practice of law and increased tax revenue, as certain taxes could only be imposed on citizens.



Map no. 1: Tombstones of people that lived in Augusta Raurica are exhibited in the lapidarium.



*Remnants of the sole of
a shoe with iron hobnails*

*Grave made of tile slabs
with ceramic vessels and
a glass urn (1981)*

*Brooch with chased
inscription AMO TE SVCVRE:
I love you, come to me.*



Life and death – People like us

Roman day-to-day life was dictated by one's social status. Documentary and archaeological sources provide quite detailed insight into the everyday lives of the upper classes. Very little is known, however, about how the lower classes lived or even the slaves.

According to Roman civil law, a married man was the *pater familias*, the head of the family. He had unlimited power over his family which also included their staff and slaves and their children. He owned all the assets and funds and represented the family in public. His wife ran the house; she organised and supervised the workings of the household.

Children often received a basic education including arithmetic, reading and writing. Girls were also groomed for the running of their future households. Boys went on to secondary school – if their parents could afford it.

Love matches were rare. Marriages were arranged by the parents with societal considerations in mind. The legal age for marriage was 12 for girls and 14 for boys.

Infant mortality was very high. Funerary inscriptions, on the other hand, also show that some people lived to the age of 65 or longer.

In the Roman period the dead were buried in cemeteries outside of towns and cities. Wealthy people erected large funeral monuments for their deceased loved ones. The dead were usually cremated on a pyre and the remains buried in urns. Later, inhumation in coffins was also practised.



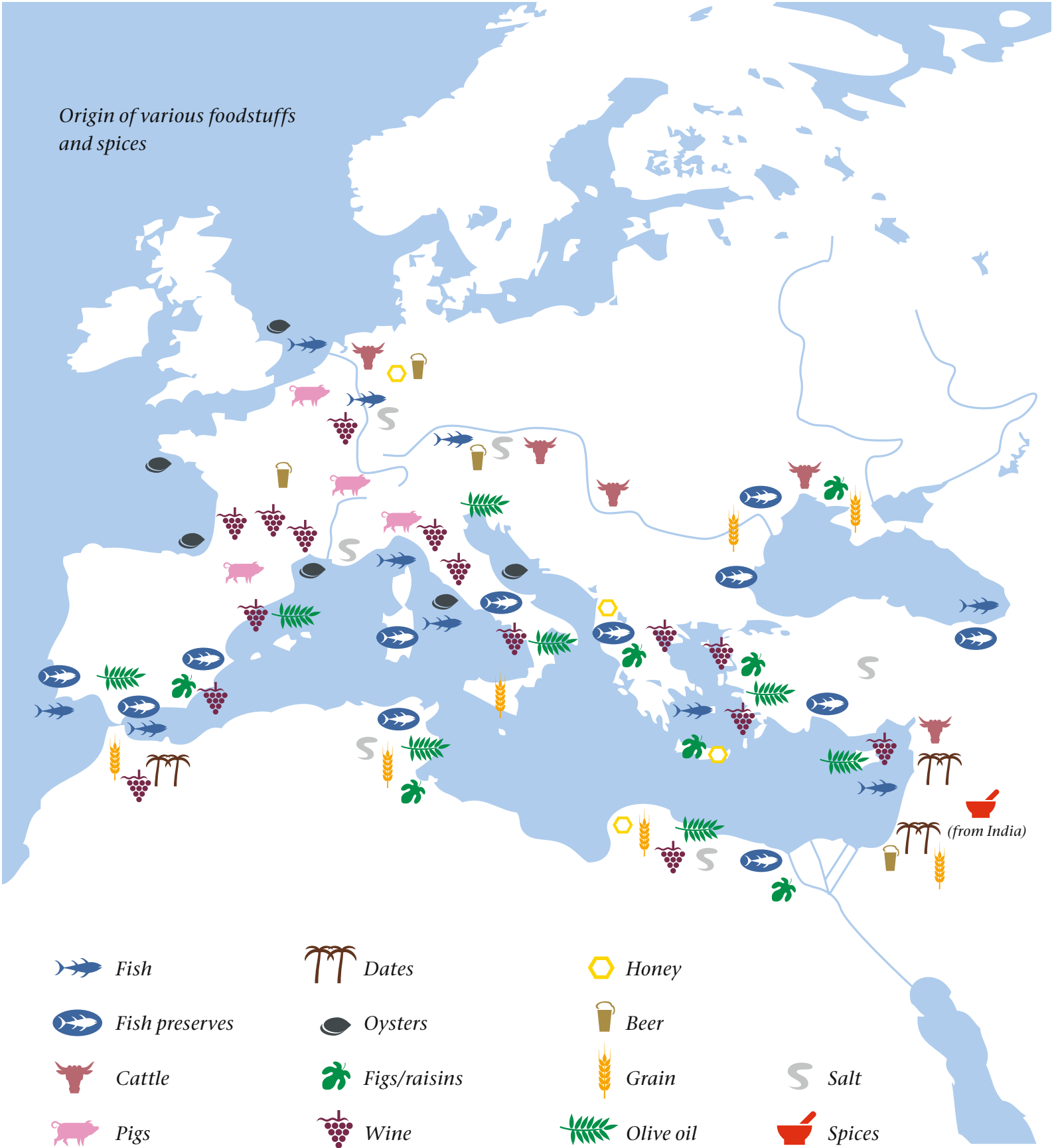
Gaming pieces and dice

Family

A *familia* could include several hundred members. The nuclear family, parents and usually 1 to 3 children, however, was no bigger than today. The adult sons were still subordinate to their *pater familias*, even after they had started their own families. Only after his father's death did the son become *pater familias* of his own household. Women were in the power either of their father, their husband or a guardian.

Map no. 16: A large funeral monument can be visited.

Origin of various foodstuffs and spices



Ground-level hearths made of tile fragments were used for cooking (1998).



Ceramic figurine of a drinker

Dining – Porridge and oysters

In the Roman period new species of plants were imported from the south and cultivated. They have left traces in Augusta Raurica in the form of grape seeds, walnut shells, celery seeds and cloves of garlic.

Moreover, various foodstuffs were imported – mainly from the Mediterranean region. Excavations have brought to light fig seeds and oyster shells as well as fragments of amphorae that once contained wine, olive oil, fish sauce and dates.

This had very little effect on the diet of the lower classes: they still lived on porridge as well as lentil and broad bean dishes. Meat was rarely available and if it was, it usually came from older cattle.

The indigenous upper classes quickly adopted Roman dietary habits. Wealthy people could afford to buy good quality meat that came from young pigs, sheep and goats. Other popular fare was poultry, fish, venison and imported delicacies such as dates, oysters and chub mackerel.

With the exception of imported commodities, food was mainly produced on farms in the countryside near the town. However, poultry and small livestock such as pigs, sheep and goats were also kept in the town.

Meals were usually eaten at the kitchen table. The villas of the rich had large dining rooms where men would lie on beds or dining sofas to eat their food at banquets. Women sat on chairs in front of them.

The food was cut into small pieces and was eaten by hand; forks were not known. Spoons were used to eat porridge and soup.



Charred grains from a cereal store found in the cellar of the trading house and workshops (map no. 10)

Archaeobiology

The sciences archaeozoology and archaeobotany analyse animal bones, fish scales, charred seeds, fruits, remnants of porridge and pollen recovered from excavations. The results provide insight into eating and drinking habits, animal husbandry and farming.

Fish sauce

The fish sauce amphorae found in Augusta Raurica came from southern Spain, southern Portugal, the South of France and North Africa. Fish sauce was used in Roman cuisine to season food.

Map no. 1: In the Roman house you can visit a Roman kitchen and a dining room modelled on typical examples from the south. Useful and ornamental plants from the Roman period are cultivated in the garden.



*Funerary relief of a centurion,
a Roman army officer, depicted
with his wife*



Finger ring with key



*Mask bead, imported perhaps
from Egypt*



Toga and hooded cape – Clothes maketh the man

Today, one's taste and budget for the most part determine one's personal style of clothing. In Roman times there were many rules. One's clothing indicated one's position in society and also provided information about one's ethnicity.

Very few remnants of textiles have survived from the Roman period. However, images on funeral reliefs, for instance, or wall paintings, depict items of clothing. Accessories such as brooches, belt buckles and jewellery found during excavations add to the overall picture.

Once the region was incorporated into the Roman Empire, local men no longer wore the traditional Celtic trousers. From then on, they wore a tunic, a knee-length shirt, and a *cucullus*, a hooded cape similar to a poncho. On festive days and during official ceremonies, high-ranking officials and rich citizens donned the toga, a long woollen fabric wrapped around the body in loose folds, as a sign of their citizenship.

Local women wore tight-fitting undergarments with long sleeves and wide robes fastened at the shoulders with pairs of brooches. Single brooches were used to fasten coats. With increasing Roman influence women started wearing tunics and coats that were wrapped around their bodies.

Shoes were made of leather. There were both sandals and closed shoes. In cold weather one wore stockings sewn from woollen fabric.

*Brooch in the shape
of a shoe sole*



Ceramic figurine of an actor wearing a hooded cloak (Lat. cucullus)

Tunic

A rectangular piece of cloth with an opening for the head was folded at the shoulders and sewn together at the sides, leaving openings for the arms.

Toga

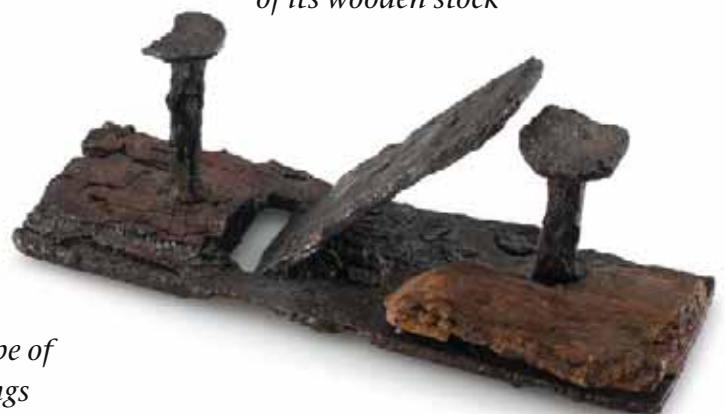
Coat made from a semicircular piece of white cloth. Togas were up to 7 metres long and could only be put on with the help of a servant.

Map no. 1: 'Roman' clothes can be tried on in the baths in the Roman house.



Potters' kilns on the eastern edge of the town of Augusta Raurica during their excavation (1969)

Iron plane and remains of its wooden stock



Brooch in the shape of a small pair of tongs



People

Craftwork – Goods for town and country

Local craftwork is represented in Augusta Raurica in a variety of ways. Remains of buildings show that accomplished bricklayers, carpenters, stonemasons, sculptors, plasterers, wall painters and mosaicists were at work. Various workshops have been discovered at excavations including potters' workshops, glassworks, tile works, bronze foundries, meat smokehouses and a cloth fullery. Finds such as tools, half-finished products and production waste are evidence of bone, horn, wood, textile and iron working.

The craftsmen were often peregrini, free men without Roman citizenship. They ran their workshops with their wives and children as well as their slaves. Despite their low social status, craftsmen were accorded a certain level of esteem by the population.

Because of the fire hazard, workshops with kilns such as potters' workshops, glassworks and tile works were usually located on the periphery of a town. This also facilitated logistics with regard to raw materials and firewood.



*Volcanus, the god of smithing,
in craftsman's clothes*



*Disused potter's kiln filled
with ceramic waste (1965)*

Potters' workshops

A variety of everyday tableware such as bowls, jugs and pots were produced in local potters' workshops.

The crockery was not only sold in the town itself but also to surrounding farmsteads.

Glassworks

Glassworks stood in the lower town of Augusta Raurica, in present-day Kaiseraugst. They are no longer visible today.

Recycled glass as well as imported raw glass melted in glass furnaces was used for blowing vessels and casting window panes.

Map no. 10: Cloth fullery and smoking kiln in the trading house and workshops.

Map no. 16: The remains of a potter's kiln beside the funeral monument

Map no. 17: Two tile kilns



Mercury wearing a winged cap and holding a wand and a moneybag. Accompanied by a sacrificant or sacrificial attendant with a billy goat.

Statuettes from a domestic shrine (Lat. lararium), found hidden beneath a wooden floor in the trading house and workshops (map no. 10).



Religion – Gods everywhere

Religion regulated people's everyday lives; it was omnipresent in the home and in public life. People asked the gods for help and tried to appease them with sacrifices.

The Celtic population had worshipped a multitude of deities but had never depicted these in human form.

When the Celtic territories were incorporated into the Roman Empire, the Celtic deities with similar personality traits were given the names and appearances of their Roman equivalents. Underneath this mantle, however, the old beliefs often lived on. The Celtic god Cissonius was one example: he was equated with Mercury, the Roman god of trade and the patron of tradesmen. Mercury was the most popular god in Augusta Raurica.

A small domestic shrine, a *lararium*, stood in every house and in many of the workshops where the tutelary gods of the family or those of the workers were worshipped.

The state religion was mainly practised in the forum in the centre of the town. The worship of the state gods such as the sovereign god Jupiter and the emperor, who was also worshipped as a god, were supported by the state and – besides the invocation of the grace of the gods – were mainly intended to demonstrate one's loyalty to the Roman Empire. However, cults with local roots were also very important, for instance the worship of Mercury and also Mars, the Roman god of war.

The Emperor Constantine the Great recognised Christianity as a religion in AD 313. Believing in only one god became increasingly popular over time. In AD 380 Christianity was declared the Roman state religion.



Snake-decorated pot – a cultic vessel from Augusta Raurica

Snake-decorated vessel

Ceramic pots decorated with applied snakes were found in Augusta Raurica. In Roman times, snakes were said to ward off evil and were seen as symbols of fertility and reincarnation. The snake-decorated vessels are probably representative of a local cult.

Magic

Magic was officially frowned upon, but a common occurrence in day-to-day life. Love charms and harmful spells as well as fortune-telling were popular. Amulets and talismans were used as lucky charms and for warding off evil.



Crescent-shaped amulet

Map no. 5, map no. 10: Statuettes from *lararia* were found in the taberna and in the trading house and workshops, where they are now on display.

*The Roman house flanked
by the exhibition building (right)
and the lapidarium (left)*

*A restorer prepares
a bronze object*



Museum

The museum exhibits a selection of excavated finds from Augusta Raurica. These finds bear witness to the people who lived here, to their tastes, their practical skills, and to their sense of humour.

The Roman house shows how these people lived and worked. Behind the scenes, museum staff ensure that the artefacts are professionally processed and stored.





The central medallion of the ocean city platter shows a seaside villa symbolising a happy life.

Marie Schmid, a Kaiseraugst landlady, with some of the silver platters she found (1962). The ocean city platter can be seen on the ground to the right.



The silver treasure – Gifts maintain friendships

The famous Kaiseraugst silver treasure is on display at the museum. It is one of the most precious and important treasures from Late Antiquity: 58 kilograms of pure silver worked into 270 artefacts including platters, spoons, coins and even a telescopic candleholder.

Many of the items in the silver treasure were decorated with rich ornaments and figural depictions. Inscriptions, symbols and stamps tell us about their places of origin, who made them and who their owners were.

The precious silver items were once owned by high-ranking imperial officials. Besides private gifts, the silver treasure also contained gifts from the emperor. Such valuable donations were an important tool to ensure the loyalty of one's subordinates and to cultivate friendships.

The silver treasure was worth an astounding amount, equivalent to the annual pay of 230 legionaries.

The last owners of the silver were one or perhaps two high-ranking officers. In AD 351 or 352, at a time of impending danger and threat from Germanic incursions and domestic power struggles, the silver treasure was buried in the Castrum Rauracense but never retrieved by its owners after the danger had passed.

A mechanical excavator tore the silver artefacts from the ground in 1961. In the spring of 1962 the treasure was discovered by pure chance. 18 pieces, however, did not resurface until 1995.

Ingot from the silver treasure with stamped portrait of the usurper Magnentius. The weight is also stamped into the ingot: P(ondo) III, 3 pounds (today some 970 g).



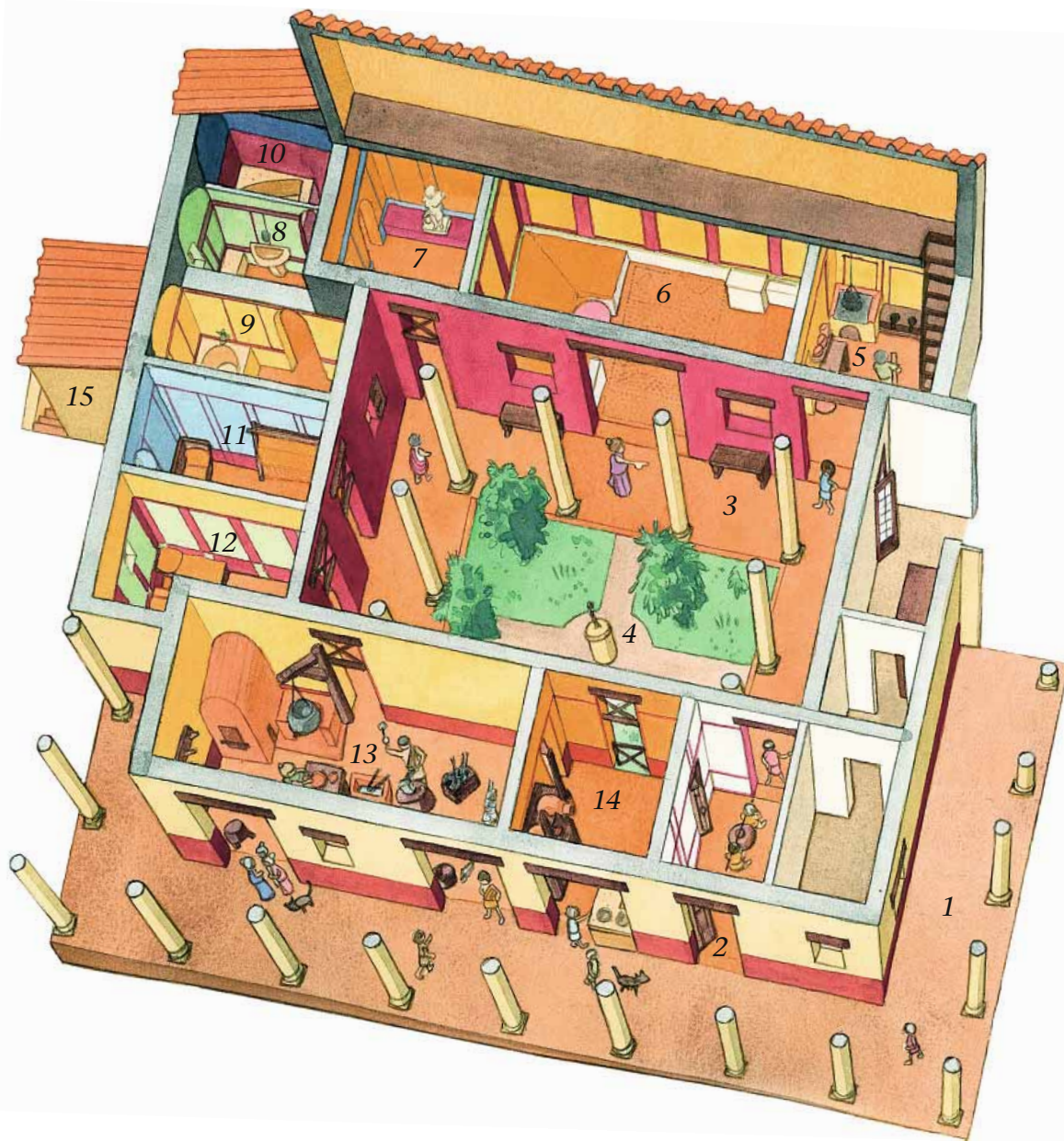
'Hack-silver' – a fragment of a silver platter that was used as currency

Capital investment

Silver could be used as currency. Therefore, many of the pieces from the silver treasure weigh quite specific amounts. If the value of a platter was larger than the debt owed, the precious item was simply cut into fragments.

In 2009 the pure silver value of the treasure was estimated at approximately 26,000 Swiss Francs or 17,400 Euro. From a cultural and historical point of view, however, the Kaiseraugst silver treasure is priceless.

Map no. 19: The site where the silver treasure was found in the fort in Kaiseraugst is marked by a stela.



- | | | | |
|---------------|--------------------|------------------------|--|
| 1 Porticus | Portico | 9 Caldarium | Hot bath |
| 2 Fauces | Entrance hall | 10 Frigidarium | Cold bath |
| 3 Peristylium | Inner courtyard | 11 Cubiculum diurnum | Living room |
| 4 Hortus | Garden | 12 Cubiculum nocturnum | Bedroom |
| 5 Culina | Kitchen | 13 Fabrica | Workshop |
| 6 Oecus | Formal dining room | 14 Caupona | Pub |
| 7-10 Balneum | Bath | 15 Praefurnium | Heating room
(not open to the public) |
| 7 Apodyterium | Changing room | | |
| 8 Tepidarium | Warm bath | | |



The kitchen in the Roman house

The Roman house – Homes & gardens

The Roman house shows a depiction of everyday Roman life. Opened in 1955, the building was modelled on an urban villa in Pompeii. The furniture and fittings were reconstructed based on ancient pictures and original finds from various Roman locations including Augusta Raurica.

The residence of a wealthy Roman family has an inner courtyard with a garden, portico, banquet hall, large private baths, bedrooms and offices. According to Roman style, the walls have been painted in various colours.

The kitchen is furnished with a flour mill, a cooking stove and a simple – original – hearth. Replicas of various kitchen utensils such as cooking pots, jugs, mortars, knives and storage containers are all on display here.

In the banquet hall with its unique mosaic floor you can lie on the dining sofas at the table and enjoy the noble atmosphere – please remove your shoes! The crockery in the wooden cupboard – all replicas – shows what fine tableware looked like in Roman times.

You can try on various items of Roman clothing available in the ample changing room of the bath-house.

The rooms facing onto the road in Roman town houses were usually rented out as shops, tabernae or workshops. A large room in the Roman house contains a butcher's shop with a smoking kiln, smithy and bronze foundry.

People who did not have their own kitchens or were just passing through could buy simple dishes in the local taberna – here with an original mosaic – and bring them home.

Flushing toilet

It goes against our modern perception of hygiene to have the toilet in the kitchen of the Roman house. However, this made perfect sense from a technical point of view: one could answer the call of nature while at the same time disposing of the wastewater from the kitchen.

A mould for making cream cheese can be seen on the kitchen table in the Roman house.

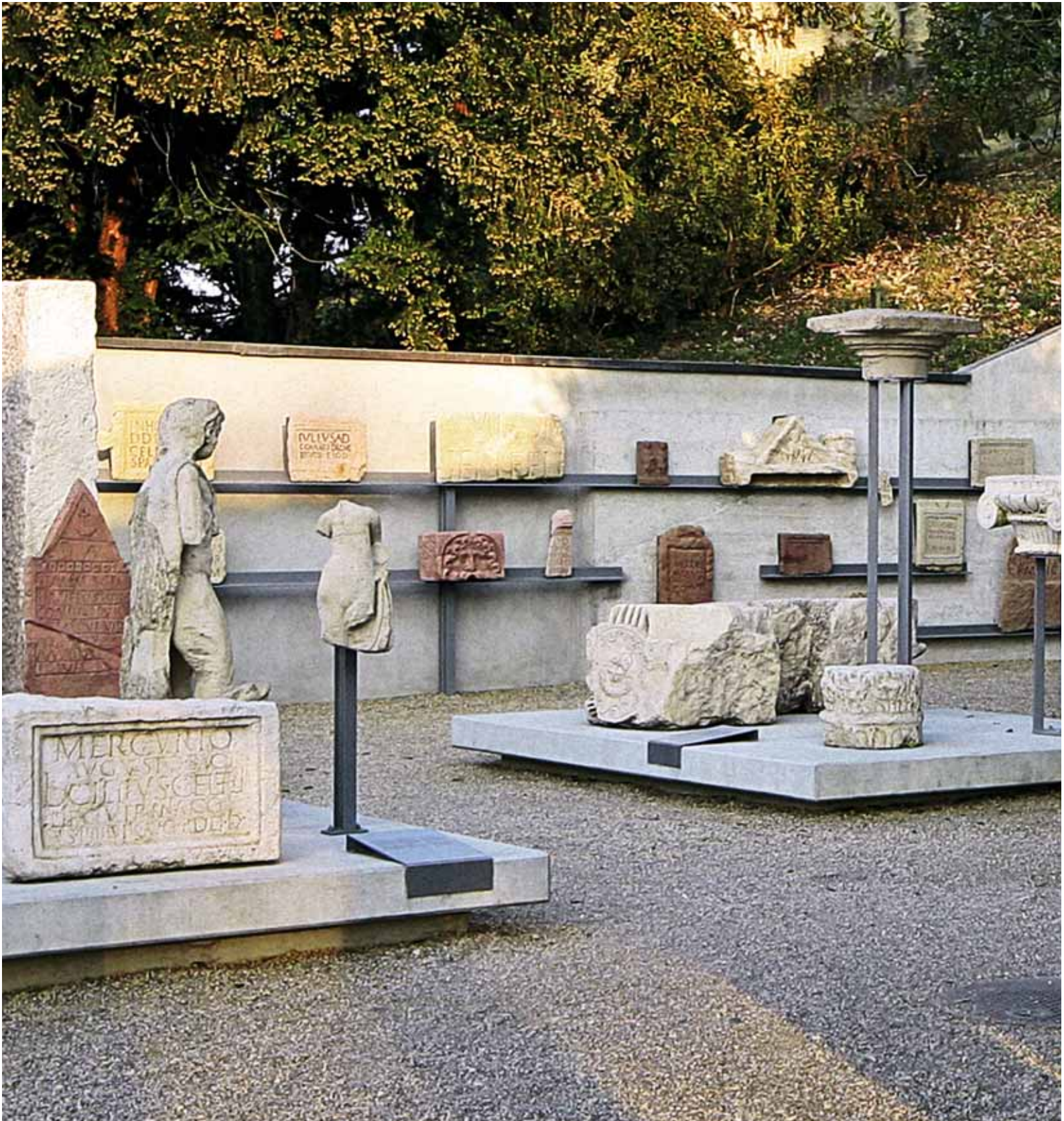


Bath

The tub built into the cold bath of the Roman house is an original find from one of the dwellings in Augusta Raurica.

The semicircular bath tub in the cold room during its excavation (1972)





*View into the lapidarium.
For conservational reasons only
copies are exhibited here.*



*The original stone monuments
are kept in storage.*

The lapidarium – Carved in stone

The lapidarium beside the Roman house with its collection of stone monuments shows a selection of the most important stone artefacts found in Augusta Raurica. They tell us what people wore in Roman times, what they were called, which professions they practised and how old they lived to be. Information about the people in Augusta Raurica, which would otherwise have been lost for ever, has survived as inscriptions carved in stone.



*Tombstone
of Eustata,
a Kaiseraugst
citizen from
the time
of the fort*

Inscription on Eustata's stone

DM
ET MEMORIE AE
TERNE EVSSTATE
CONIVGI DVLCI
SSIME QVI VISIT
A[NN]O[S] LXV
AMATVS
POSVIT

To the manes
and the eternal
remembrance
of Eusstata
the sweetest wife
ever lived
65 years
Amatus (her husband)
set this stone.

A catalogue with detailed information about the stone monuments on display in the lapidarium is available on loan from the museum reception desk.

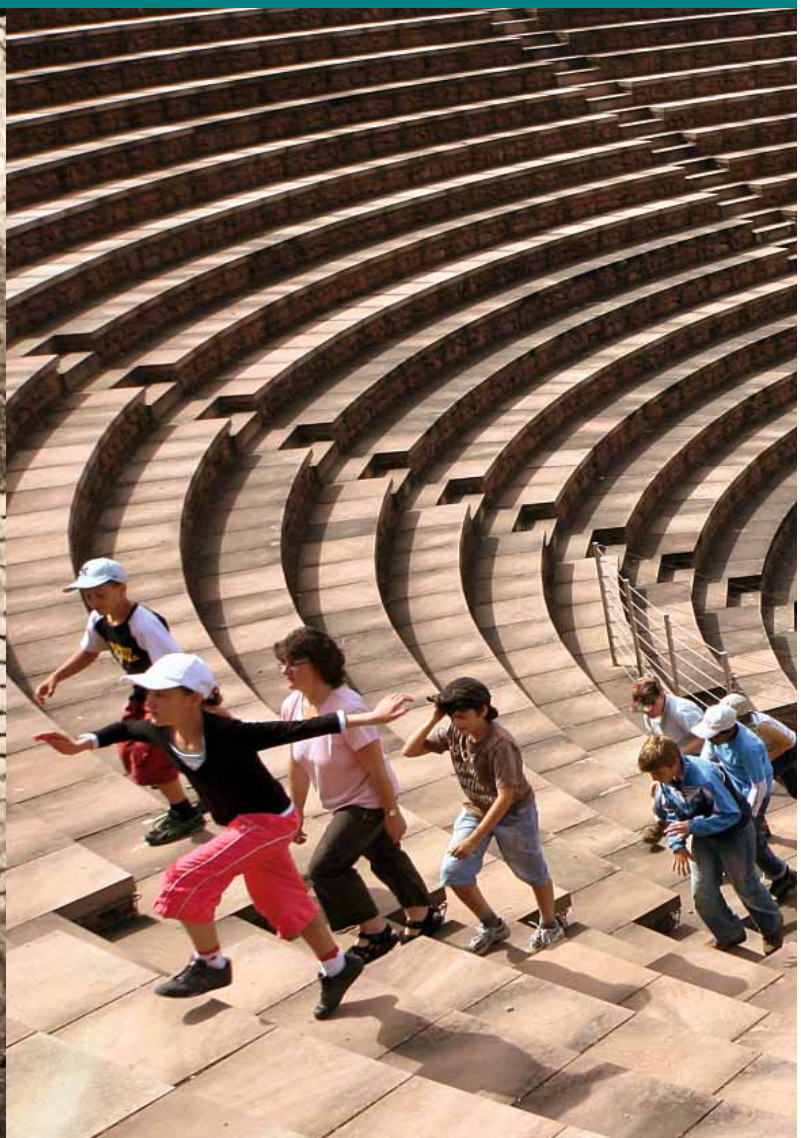
A group of tourists are having their photograph taken in the theatre ruins (around 1910).

School children climb the steps to the theatre which was restored between 1992 and 2007.



Monuments

The ruins at Augusta Raurica have been a popular tourist destination for hundreds of years. Nowadays, schools from Switzerland and neighbouring regions of France and Germany, families and visitors from all over the world find their way to the Roman town.





Temple retaining wall and modern bakery

The temple on the Schönbühl hill loomed high above the town and was visible from afar. In order to build the impressive compound, the natural elevation in the terrain had been expanded by retaining walls and filled to form a large rectangular terrace.

The remains of the retaining wall are easier to recognise when viewed from the modern bakery. The interior of the bakery, which is used for workshops, contains four buttresses built onto the massive wall at regular distances and joined by masonry arches, thus forming three chambers.

The original sandstone thresholds of the entrances to these chambers can also be seen. The sandstone corbels built into the pillars show that the rooms were two-storeyed: the wooden floor on the top storey rested on these supports. Today they support the roof of the bakery. These rooms were probably used as shops with store-rooms on the top storey.

An additional mighty buttress was later added to hold up the enormous weight of the temple hill. It is visible to the right of the bakery.

The temple retaining wall before the 'bakery' was added (1971).

The temple on the Schönbühl hill around AD 240

Bread baking oven used for workshops



2

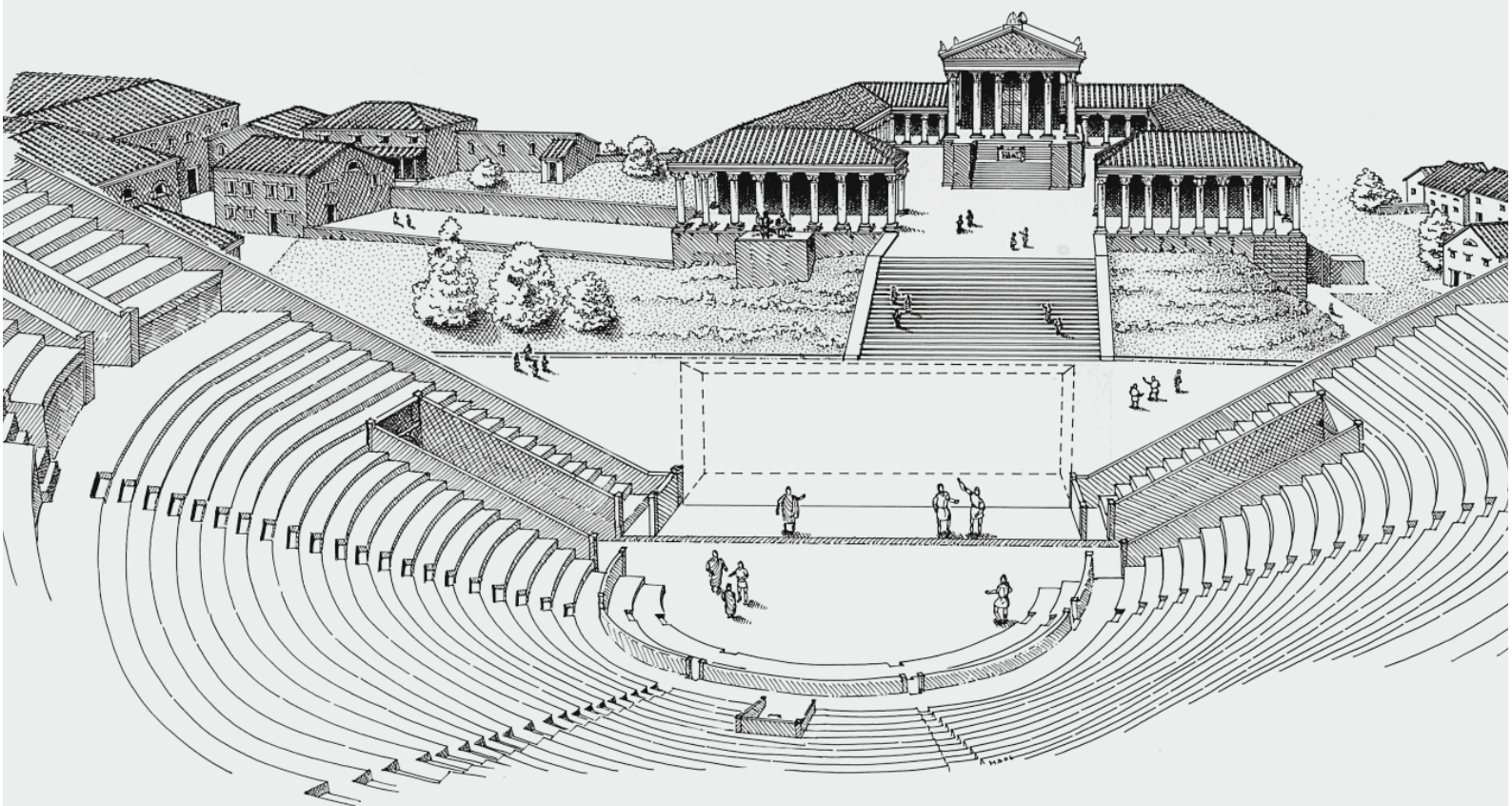
Water main

A section of the Roman water main that ran from Liestal to Augst is on display beside the large buttress of the temple retaining wall. For more information about the water supply follow the map to no. 13.



Transportation of a section of the water main from Liestal to Augst (1957).

'Roman' bread baking for schools, families and groups. More information is available at www.augusta-raurica.ch or from visitor services tel +41 (0)61 816 22 22.



Temple on the Schönbühl hill – Homage to the gods and the emperor

The Schönbühl hill had been the location of a religious district since the early period of the town. Around AD 50, several small temples were situated in an area enclosed by walls. The buildings were typical of Roman architecture in this region. The names of the deities worshipped in these temples remain a mystery.

The area was completely redesigned around AD 70. Some of the small temples had to make way for a large cultic compound. At its centre stood a massive temple on a podium surrounded by pillars. Ornamental elements made of marble bear witness to its once magnificent appearance.

In the late 3rd century the temple became a 'quarry': architectural components were carried away and either reused as building materials elsewhere or converted to quicklime by burning them in limekilns. As a consequence, only the core of the temple podium has survived. The holes on the sides show where the pillars once stood.

The large rectangular temple courtyard was once surrounded by a double columned hall, which has not survived: the interior hall was oriented towards the podium temple, while the outer hall was visible from afar and emphasised the imposing architecture of the complex.

The temple complex was probably used for the worship of the emperor and the Roman state gods. Together with the theatre, which was built around the same time, the temple was part of a monumental complex of buildings which symbolised the power of the Roman Empire.

The temple on the Schönbühl hill today and in Roman times (around AD 240)



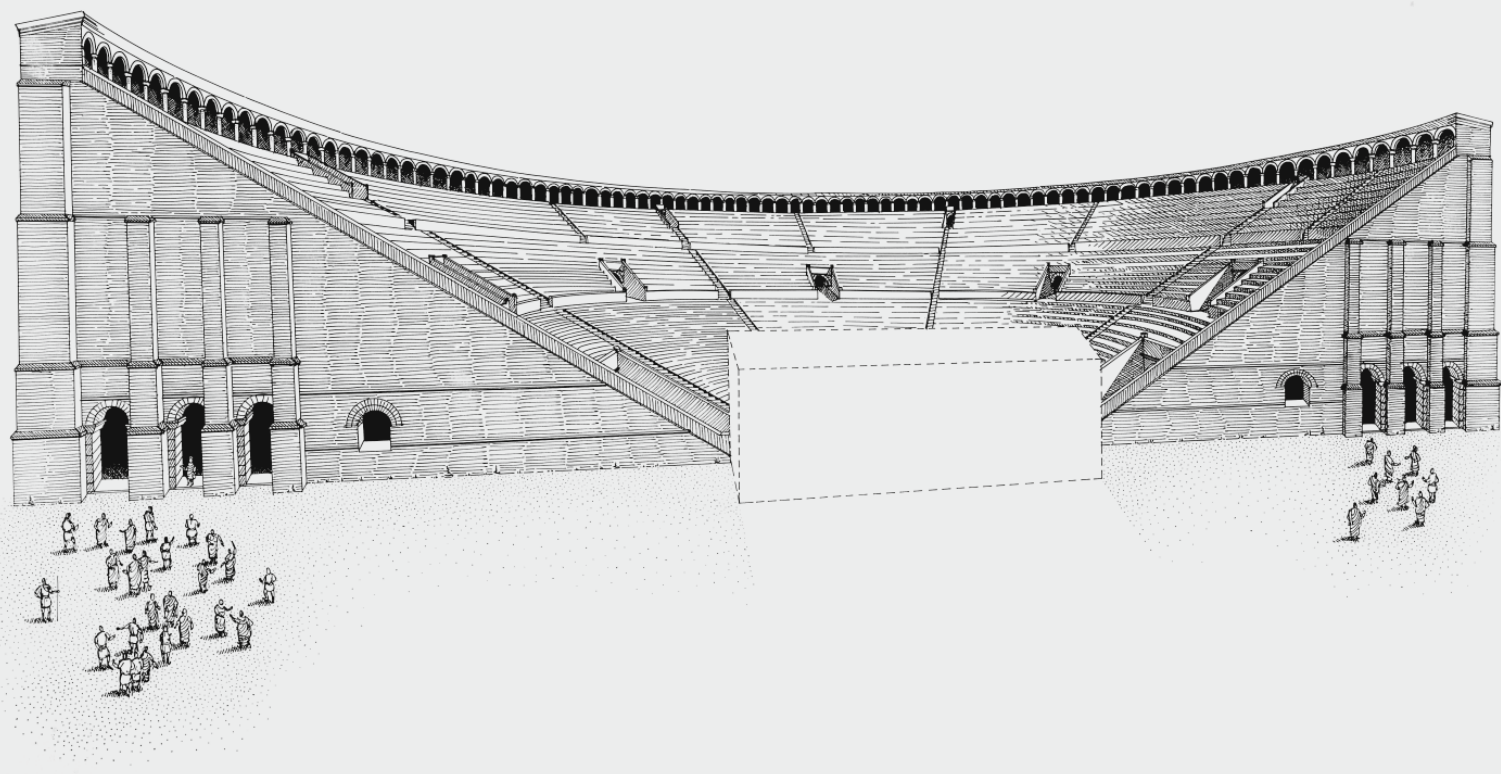
A magnificent key with a handle in the shape of a lion's head was found on the northern slope of the Schönbühl hill. Perhaps this was the key to the cella of the temple. It is on display in the museum.



Remains of two small temples from the early period of the town around AD 50



Detail of an expertly carved door frame made of imported marble



Theatre – Not just about entertainment

Three different theatre buildings replaced each other where the ruins of the theatre stand now. The remains that survive today were from the last construction, which was a stage theatre. It was used as a theatre between AD 180 and 280, after which it served as a quarry and slowly fell into ruin. The large stones were much appreciated as building materials.

The theatre had three tiers. The rows of seats on the top tier originally reached to where the tops of the trees are today. The theatre held approximately 10,000 people. Today, 2000 visitors can be seated on the reconstructed seats.

Much like in Rome, the people in Augusta Raurica probably preferred raucous comedies, farces, pantomimes and performances with music and song.

The theatre and the temple on the Schönbühl hill faced each other and formed an architectural unit. From the seating tiers, one could watch processions starting at the temple. The theatre was not just built for the entertainment of the audience but it was also used for religious ceremonies and political gatherings.

Admission to the theatre was free. However, viewers could not choose their own seats. Influential politicians and important businessmen were assigned honorary seats on the bottom tier near the stage, while lower classes and slaves were seated on the top tier – the hierarchy of the society was also adhered to in the theatre and publicly demonstrated. It remains unknown if women actually always sat on the top tier, as some ancient documents suggest.

The theatre today and in Roman times (around AD 240)

4

History of construction

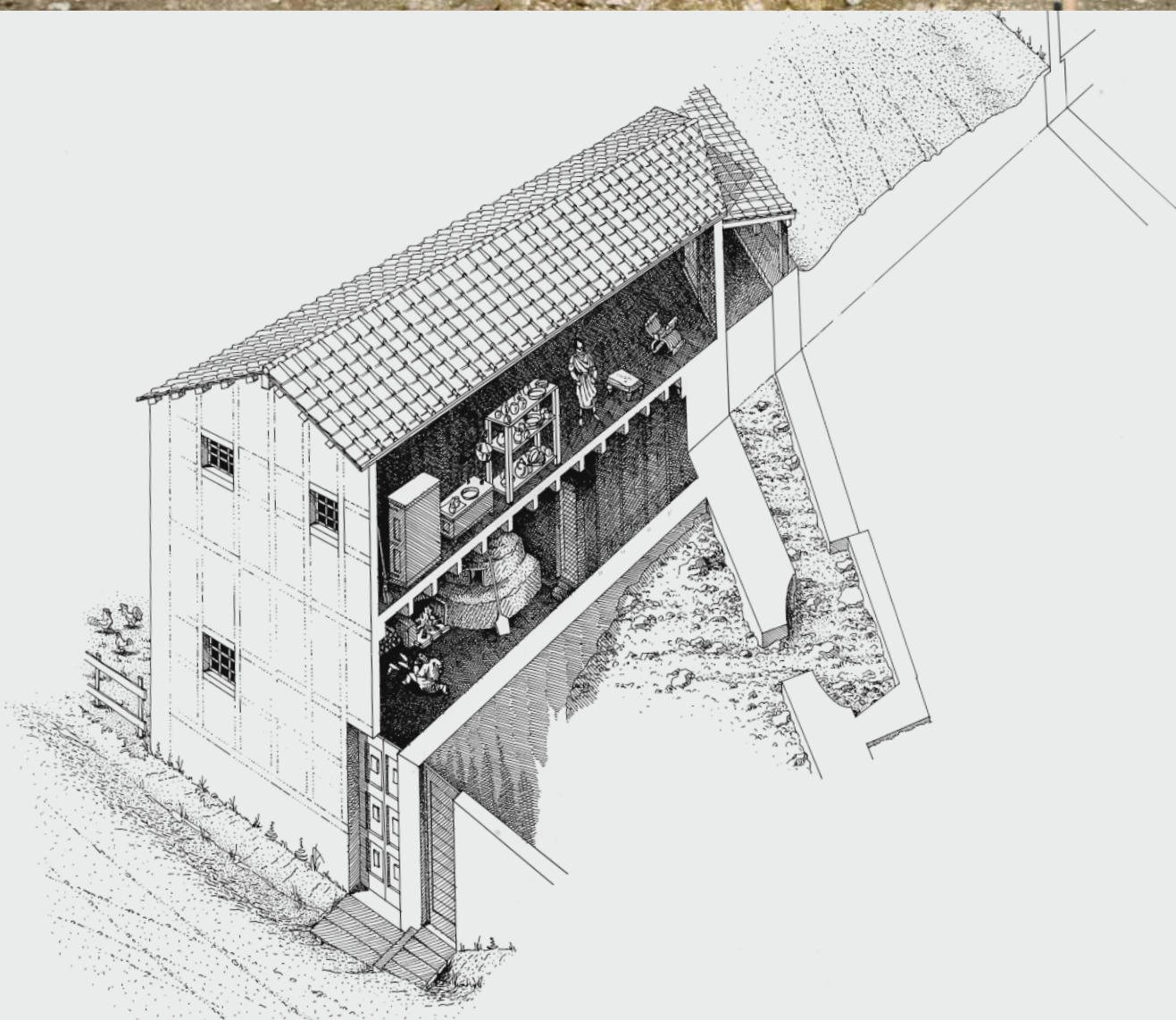
The first stage theatre was built around AD 70. Its external wall is outlined with white limestone stones in the ground at the back of the existing theatre. An amphitheatre was built on the same spot around AD 110. A section of the curved arena wall has been conserved. A new amphitheatre was erected on the outskirts of the town around AD 170 (map no. 12) and at the same time the stage theatre visible today was built in the town centre.

Foundations

Whenever possible, the foundation walls of the previous buildings were reused for the new constructions. The northern theatre foundation walls are conserved beneath the present-day snack bar. Many of the sandstone blocks used in these foundations weigh 1–2 tons.

Theatre foundation walls during their excavation (1987)





Taberna – Shop, workplace and living quarters



It is the large oven that makes the taberna particularly noteworthy. The oven was preserved almost intact when it was uncovered during the excavation. It has now been restored.

Roman ovens worked on the same principle as modern pizza ovens: they were fired through a hole in the front. Once the correct temperature was reached, the charcoal was moved aside and breads, pastries and other types of food placed in the oven for baking. The hole was sometimes closed off with a stone slab. The small opening in the top of the oven served as an air vent and smoke duct.

The oven was built into an already existing building with a horseshoe-shaped hearth around AD 250. It remains unclear whether the hearth was still used for cooking after the installation of the oven.

In Roman times, the entrance to the taberna was at ground level facing the street. One may assume that passersby, for instance theatre-goers, frequented it.

Other buildings stood to the left and right of the taberna, but have not survived. The row of houses was built against a slope retaining wall, which has been partially preserved as the back wall of the taberna.

A street running along the slope above the retaining wall provided access to the top floor of the taberna. Besides cupboards for crockery, weapons and tools were also stored here. Archaeologists assume that this was the location of a repair shop or the store-room of a craftsman or scrap metal dealer.

The taberna during its excavation (1966) and in Roman times (around AD 260).

Reconstruction drawing of the view through the eastern wall of the building.

The statuettes from a domestic shrine in the taberna

Tutelary gods

A number of statuettes were found in the taberna: two of Mercury, one of Minerva and one of a hunchbacked dwarf. They were parts of a *lararium*, a domestic shrine to the tutelary gods of the house. Replicas of the statuettes are on display where they were found.

'Mulled wine'

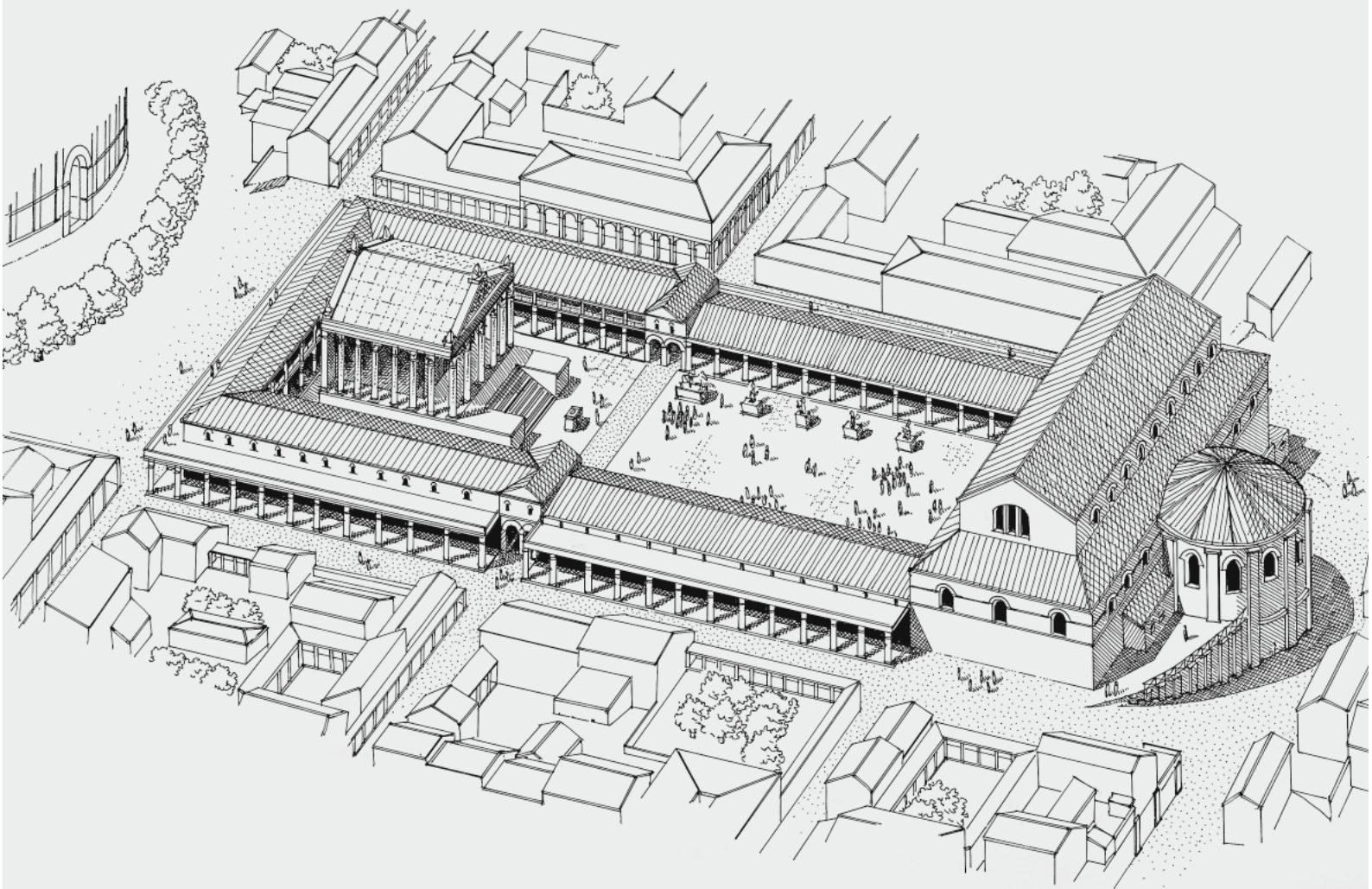
A beaker found in the oven shows that it was also used to heat drinks such as spiced wine.

Taberna

A taberna was not necessarily a tavern as we understand the word today. While the term was used for inns and guest-houses, it also included all sorts of shops, workshops, warehouses, barns and humble living quarters.



Ceramic vessels from the upper storey of the taberna



Forum – Centre of the town

The forum was the centre of a Roman town with regard to politics, the economy, administration, law and religion.

The monumental forum of Augusta Raurica was made up of the forum square at its centre, a massive administration and court building as well as the semicircular town hall in the northeast and a sacred district with a temple in the southwest.

Statues and honorary inscriptions to the most esteemed citizens of Augusta Raurica were erected in the rectangular forum square. Regular feast days with festive ceremonies and official acts were used to remind the assembled population that they were part of the Roman Empire.

The forum square was lined with columned halls and small chambers that were used as office space by the authorities and by trading companies such as money changers. The chambers on the outside of the complex probably served as shops and store-rooms.

The forum in Augusta Raurica was redesigned several times. The earliest phase was mainly built in wood (first third of the 1st century AD). Two phases of renovation followed during which the forum was rebuilt in stone (earlier stone constructions around AD 50, later stone buildings around AD 150).

Location of the forum today and the forum in Roman times (around AD 240)

Architectural components, a street fountain and the silt container of a water main are on display on the north-western side of the forum.

These features came to light in Augusta Raurica but not in the forum.

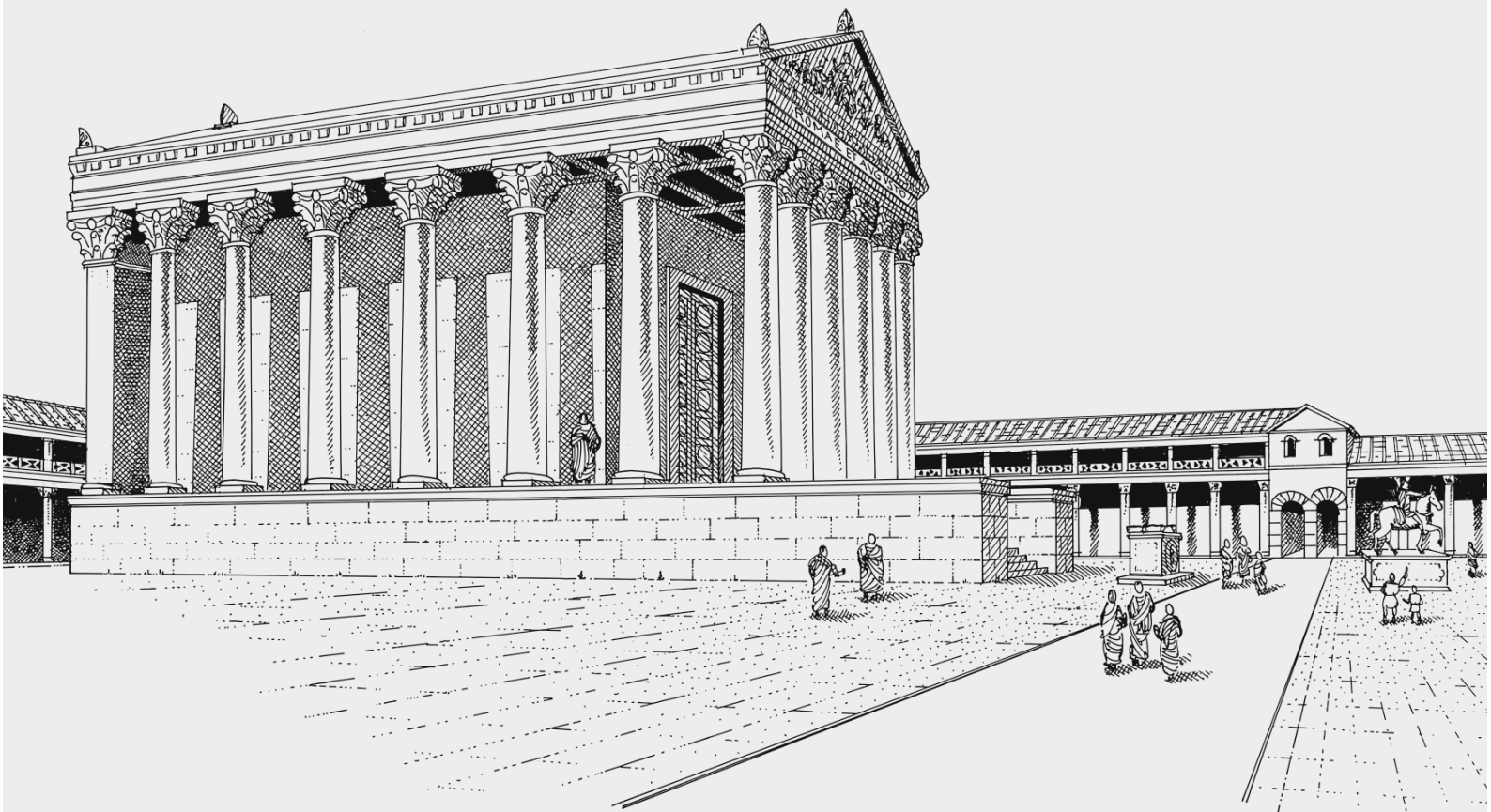


Fragment of an honorary inscription for L. Octavius, the enunciator (nuncupator) of the new name of the colony Colonia Paterna(?)Munatia(?) Felix(?) Apollinaris Augusta Emerita Raurica – probably originally displayed in the forum.

Not a market square

Originally the forum served as a location for markets. However, when the August forum was built, this was no longer the case. There may have been a food market in the so-called secondary forum (south of the Schönbühl hill, no visible remains).





Forum temple – Glorification of the state

Like the temple on the Schönbühl hill, the forum temple stood on a podium at the centre of a temple courtyard surrounded by colonnades. The religious ceremonies that took place here could be viewed by the public from the forum square. The priests had to climb a monumental flight of steps to enter the interior of the temple called the cella. A statue of the deity being worshipped stood in the cella. The temple served to glorify the Roman state and was dedicated either to the goddess Roma and the imperial cult or to the sovereign Roman god Jupiter.

The remnants of the temple podium that had survived above ground were removed in the early 20th century because they were considered an obstacle to farming. Today, a timber construction marks the original location of the temple steps and façade.

One of the most important religious deeds, performing sacrifices, was practised on the altar at the foot of the temple. The altar itself was clad in precious marble slabs from Carrara (Italy). One of the relief slabs shows an oak wreath and an eagle with a thunderbolt in its claws, which symbolises the god Jupiter. A second slab was decorated with a laurel wreath and sacrificial implements. The altar dates from around AD 50.

Former location of the forum temple and the temple around AD 240

The altar during its excavation (1990)



6

Survey point

The starting point of the town's surveying system was located near the altar in the forum.

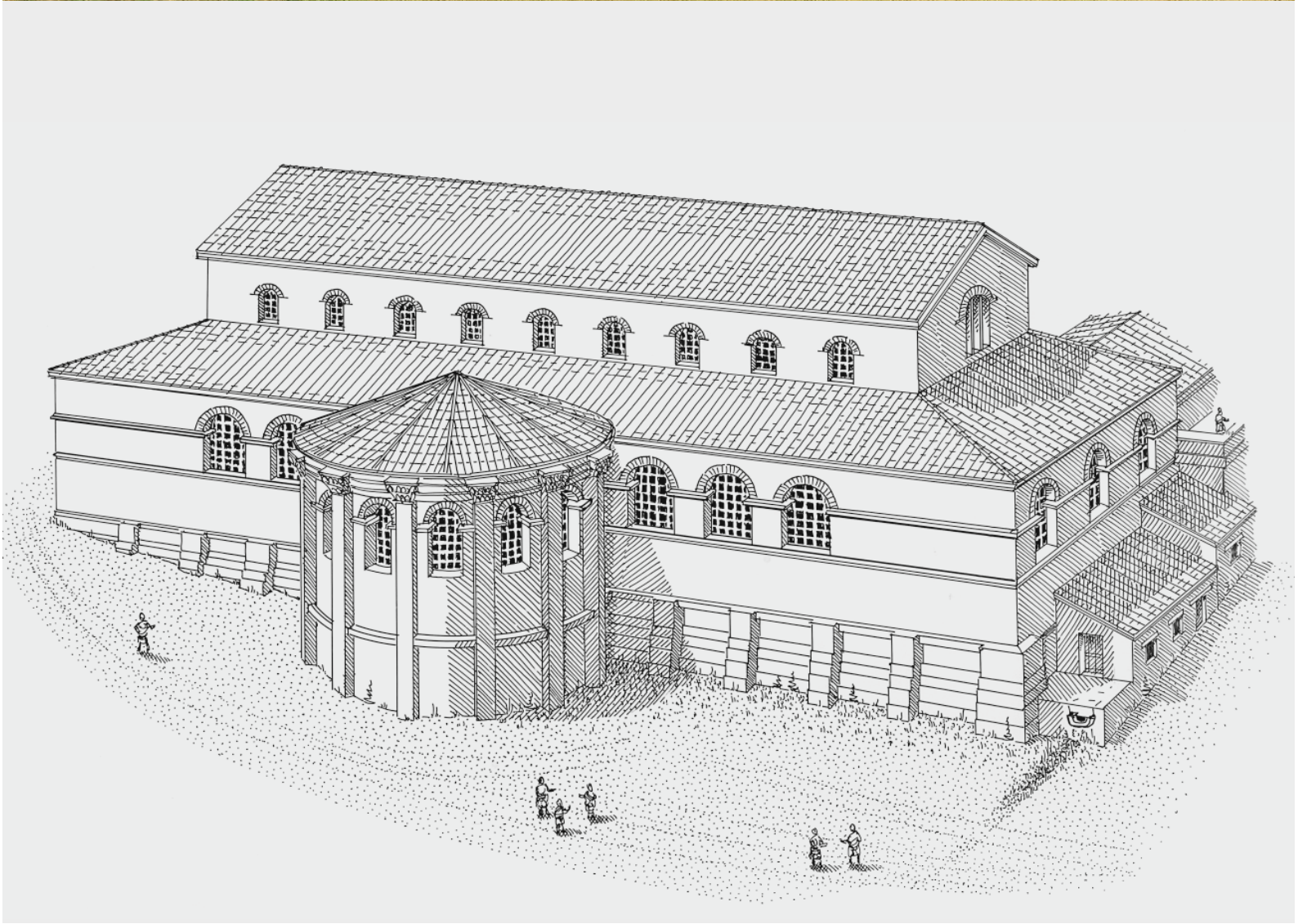
'Roman concrete'

The temple podium consisted of cast stone (*opus caementicium*) or so-called Roman concrete. With this technique, the outer shells of the wall were constructed in masonry and the void in between was then filled with a mixture of rubble and mortar.

The altar was reconstructed in artificial stone and erected in its original location.

Replicas of the relief fragments recovered were incorporated in the reconstruction.





Basilica – Administration and court building

The magnificent three-aisled hall construction of the basilica, of which only the slope retaining wall has survived, completed the forum square on its northeastern side.

The basilica was the main administration and court building in Augusta Raurica. Commercial transactions were also conducted here. Excavated decorative stone elements bear witness to the once magnificent design of the building.

The basilica was renovated at least once. The retaining wall of the earlier basilica and wastewater channel of the forum can be seen from the path leading down into the valley. This earlier retaining wall only showed bands of tiles in its lower section. The building was destroyed by a conflagration probably in the late 1st century AD and later rebuilt and expanded. The remains of this later basilica consisted of a retaining wall measuring almost 2 metres in thickness and an impressive corner reinforcement.

A staircase provided access to the structures built against the retaining wall. The latrines of the forum may have been located here above the wastewater channel.

The retaining walls of the basilica, its extensions and the curia today and in Roman times (around AD 220)

Channel for the forum waste-water at the foot of the basilica retaining wall



Doorsill

A Roman doorsill can be seen among the constructions built against the retaining wall. Chiselled cavities in the stone show that the wooden door had two wings and could be opened out onto the retaining wall. A door locking mechanism could be placed in a hole in the middle of the sill.

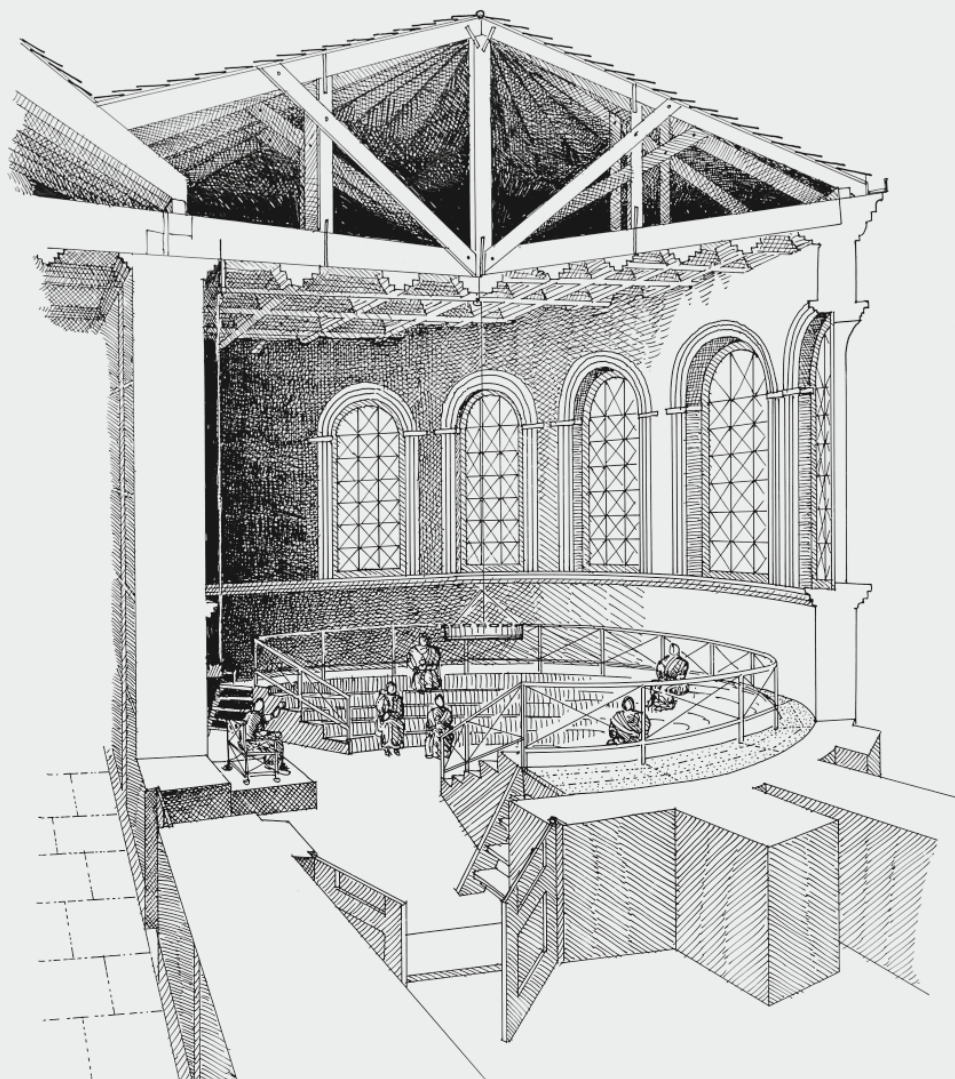


Doorsill at the foot of the basilica retaining wall

Basilica

Churches modelled on ancient hall constructions with several aisles are also called basilicas.

The stone elements on display at the basilica came from various other buildings in Augusta Raurica; the steps, for instance, were found at the so-called Rhine baths in Kaiseraugst (map no. 20).



Curia – Seat of urban power

The curia, the town hall of Augusta Raurica was where the council of *decuriones*, the town council, held its meetings. The council consisted of 100 men and together with the *duoviri*, the two mayors, decided the town's affairs. The members of the council came from families of the local elite. Besides their ancestry, their wealth was also a deciding factor.

Town councillors were held in great esteem. In return they were expected to fund expensive town buildings and spectacles – theatre plays, gladiator fights – for public entertainment.

The first curia in Augusta Raurica had two storeys. The bottom storey contained a large room which today is called the curia basement. It may have been used as a treasury or a prison. The timber-built councillors' meeting room was situated on the top floor and was accessible via the basilica.

After a conflagration, which the earlier basilica had also fallen victim to, the doors and windows of the bottom storey were bricked up and the room was completely filled with burnt rubble. The new meeting room was built above the rubble. The councillors' seating tiers and the mayors' podium were clad in stone slabs, some small remnants of which have survived.

The seating tiers in the council hall of the curia today and view into the council hall in Roman times (around AD 240).

The square holes in the masonry of the curia wall are traces of wooden scaffolding used in the construction of the building.



This iron crank might have been part of a device used for hoisting a chandelier into place in the council hall of the curia.

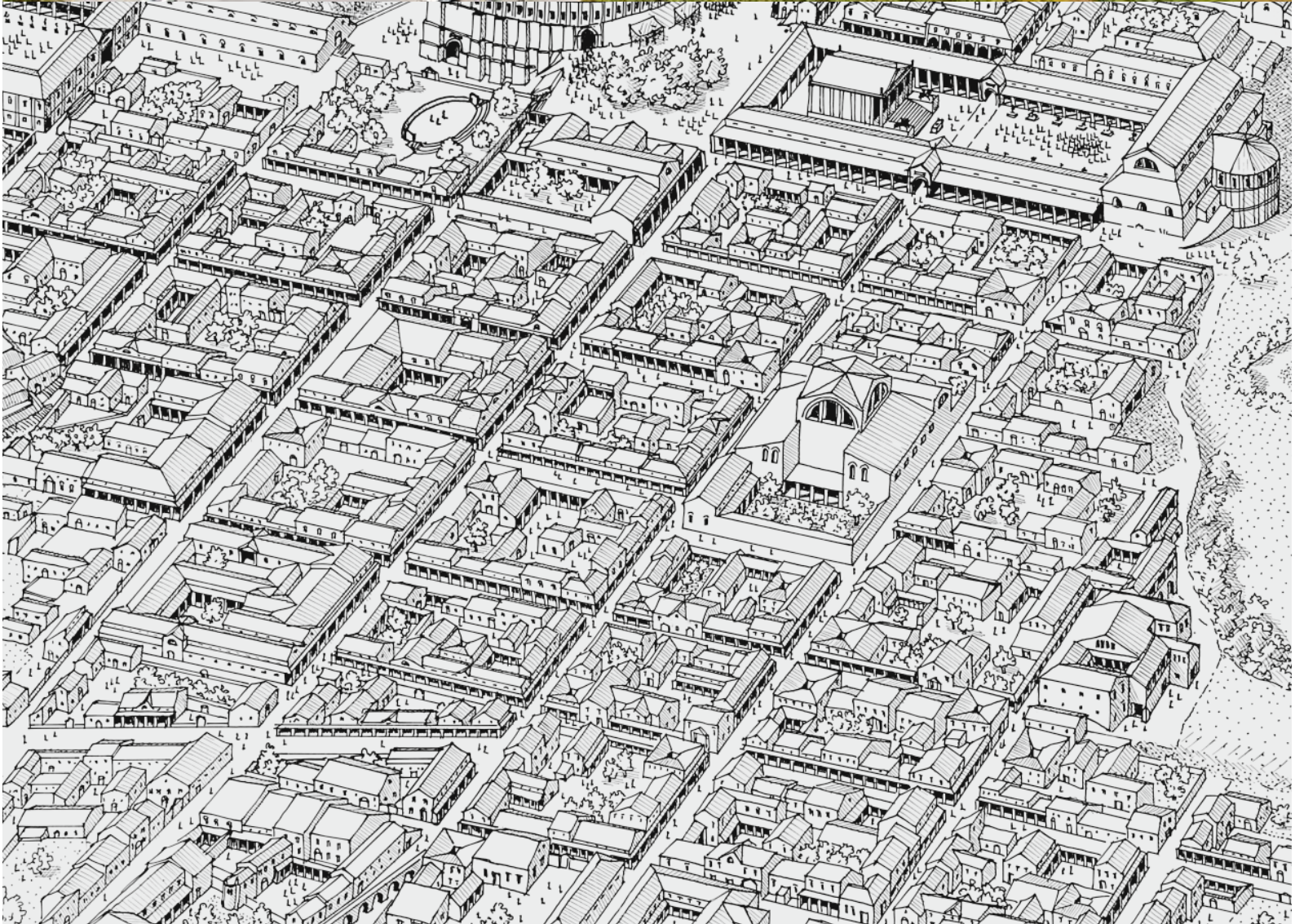
Major blaze

Three fragments of sandstone supporting pillars can be seen in the curia basement. They are chipped from the conflagration that destroyed the curia and basilica. The bricked-up entrance can be seen in the curia basement just to the right of the entrance.



The curia basement with original pillars that were damaged in a great conflagration.

Mosaics from Augusta Raurica are on display in the curia basement.



Hypocaust – Luxury in the town centre

Beneath today's meadows in the former town centre lie the remains of buildings. These buildings were parts of rectangular town quarters enclosed by streets, so-called *insulae*.

The ground plans of the buildings, which appear to have been large residential and commercial buildings, have only been partially excavated. In order to identify ground plans of houses and streets below ground, geophysical survey methods such as georadar measurements are used today. During dry periods, Roman walls can also become apparent due to sparse vegetation, which can be seen and photographed from the air.

Only a few remains of original residential buildings can be seen in Augusta Raurica. Under a protective roof parts of a heated dining-hall have been conserved above a hypocaust. It was part of a wealthy family's luxurious residence. The underfloor and wall heating, the hypocaust system, is easily visible.

The floor of the room is laid on small pillars made up of ceramic tiles. Hot air flowed from the adjacent furnace room, which has not survived, through the firing channel – today used as the entrance to the complex – into the hollow space between the floor and the subfloor, where the pillars stood. From this hollow space the air flowed through clay pipes built into the wall and then out into the open: the floor and walls of the dining room had been heated.

Glass windows were fitted in wealthy private residences and public buildings.

Meadow beneath which Roman streets and walls are discernable and the town centre of Augusta Raurica (around AD 240)



Padlock with chain and inserted key

Underfloor heating

The hypocaust systems, particularly those in large bath-houses, used up a lot of energy. This probably resulted in the deforestation of the surrounding areas of Augusta Raurica. Full heating capacity was only reached after 1–2 days. Workers were in charge of the heating.

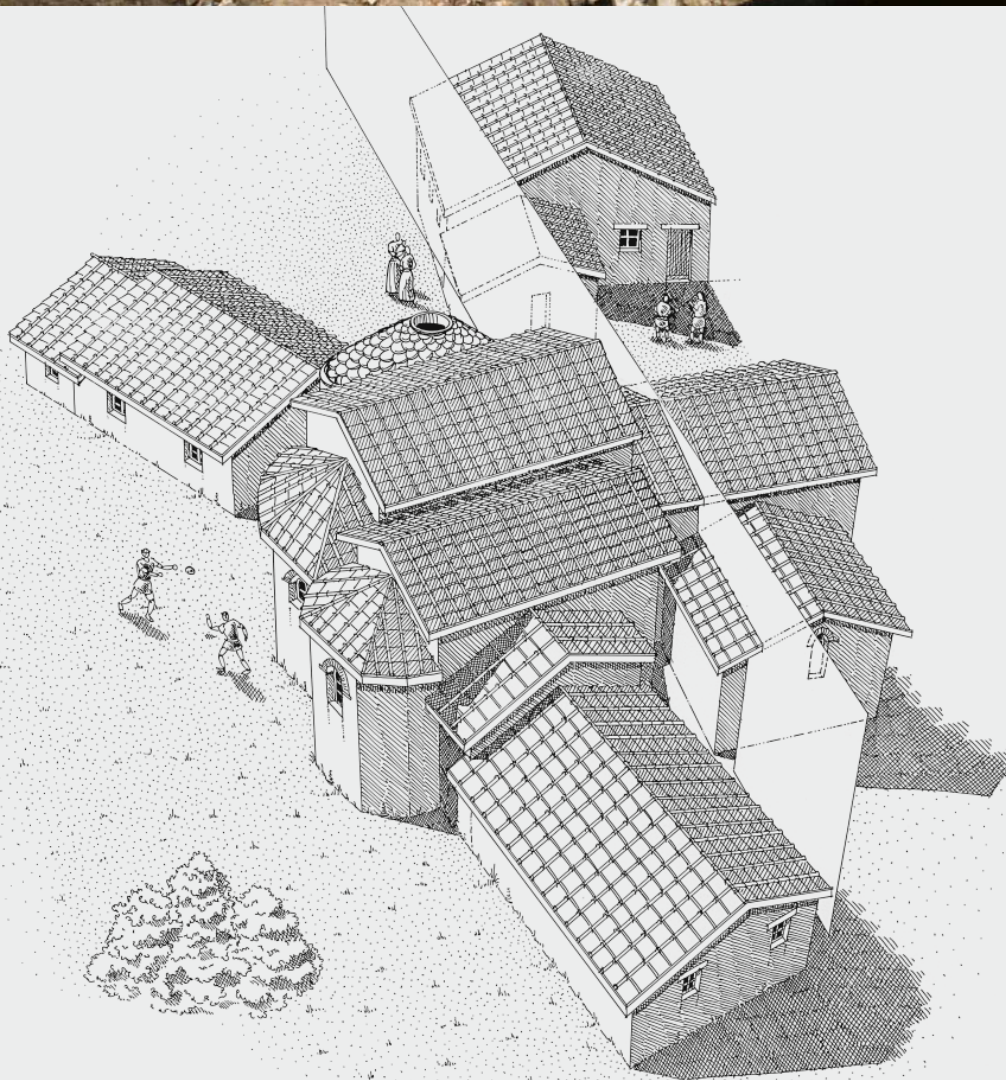
'Chouscht'

The Latin word *hypocaustum* lives on in the Swiss German word for tiled stove.

The underfloor heating system (Lat. hypocaustum) can be visited (map no. 8). The pillars measure approximately 80 cm.



Map no. 1: The Roman house gives insight into the lifestyle of the Roman upper classes. Its construction and furnishings were modelled on residential buildings in Pompeii.



Bath complex – Conveniently located spa

In Roman times a road linked the urban centre of the upper town to the lower town and the bridge across the Rhine. This main transport route which crossed the arterial road from Basilia (Basle) to Vindonissa (Windisch near Brugg in Canton Aargau), was used extensively by traders and craftsmen.

The road ran from the forum to the lower town, crossing a quarter that has hardly been investigated to date. A bath complex was found during one of the excavations. The building was located at the bottom of massive retaining walls, which reinforced the slope of the so-called Kastelen hill. Due to gravel quarrying, the slope of the hill is much reduced today.

Roman baths were almost like modern health spas, which besides hygiene also provided fun and relaxation. The bath-house had hot, warm and cold rooms, with the latter containing a cold water pool. There was also a small circular sweat room. Except for the cold bath, all the rooms had underfloor heating – hypocaust systems.

The bath-house was probably privately owned, but may have been run as a commercial enterprise. The convenient location may have meant that both local people and visitors paid an entrance fee to use the baths. Rooms adjacent to the bath section have been interpreted as living quarters – possibly the bath attendant's.

The baths were probably built shortly after AD 100 and were in use for almost 150 years.

The bath complex during its excavation (1998) and in Roman times (around AD 240). The location of the mural is marked.

These rare fish-scale tiles probably came from the domed roof of the bath-house.

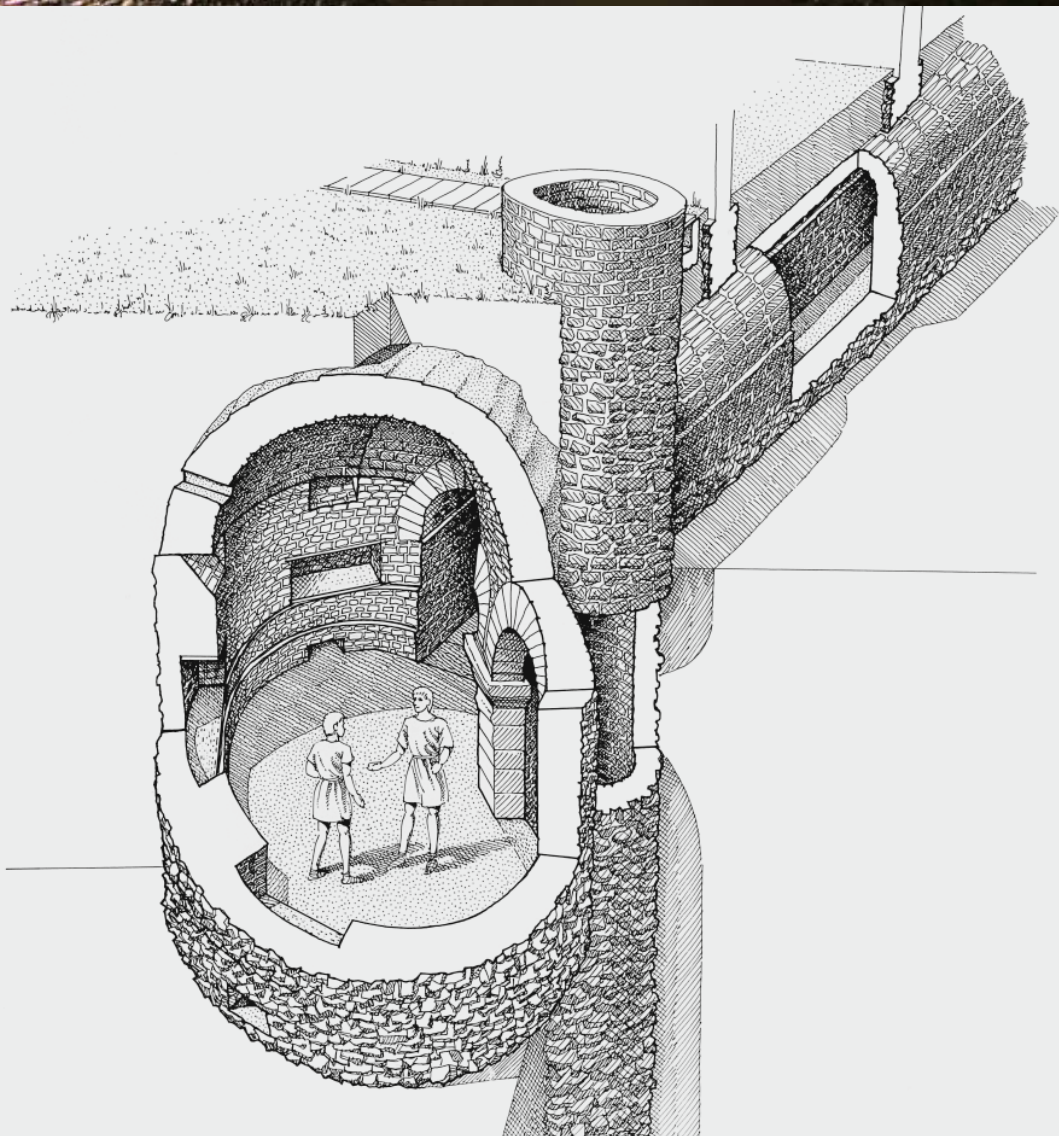


The mural shows the reconstruction of the bath complex, which was destroyed when a construction company extended its workshop. Red gravel on the ground marks the once heated rooms.



Brooch in the shape of a fish





Subterranean well house – Water with healing powers?

The discovery of the so-called well house in 1998 caused quite a stir: a completely preserved Roman construction had survived in the ground untouched for 1800 years.

The round construction consists of a vault supported by a pillar and an 11 m deep well shaft. The room can be accessed via a tunnel that has also been preserved in its original state.

It is presumed that this elaborate well was constructed because of the quality of the water: the water in the well still contains slightly elevated levels of sulphur today. The Roman naturalist Pliny the Elder recommended sulphurous water as a treatment for nervous disorders.

The construction dates from around AD 80. It was redesigned after AD 100 probably in connection with the construction of the bath complex. At that time the roof was replaced by a vault supported by a pillar.

When the bath complex was abandoned around AD 250, the use of the well house also ceased. The shaft of the well and parts of the well house were filled with all kinds of waste including a remarkable assemblage consisting of fragments of approximately 6000 ceramic coin moulds. Besides animal carcasses, several human skeletons, both adult and infant, were also found in the well. It remains unknown what exactly happened here.

*Interior view of the well house
today and in Roman times
(around AD 240)*



*Ceramic moulds for casting
coins were found in the debris
of the well house.*

Statics

The subterranean well house was built very sturdily. It did not require any additional security measures to make it accessible for visitors.

Well

From the visitor footbridge near the bath-house one can see the top part of the subterranean well house. Three metal plates between the footbridge and the well mark and protect the air vents of the vault below.

*Human skeletons in the fill
of the well house during their
excavation (1999)*





Trading house and workshops – Conducting business in a prime location

The Roman arterial road from Basilia (Basle) to Vindonissa (Windisch near Brugg in Canton Aargau) lies beneath the present-day road leading from Augst and Kaiseraugst to Rheinfelden. Several well-preserved buildings were uncovered during excavations at the ancient turnoff to the town quarters on the banks of the River Rhine and to the bridge across the river. Some of these can be visited.

The building located directly beside the road may have been an inn, perhaps with a hostel on the top floor.

Both the close proximity to a main transport axis and the layout of the rooms on the bottom floor would indicate this. The remains of a cupboard full of crockery and provisions were found in the basement. This room was linked via a flight of stairs to the rooms at street level, where the taberna is presumed to have been located. The basement also contained a sausage and meat smoking kiln.

Based on its interior furnishings consisting of wooden barrels, a large brick-built basin and a heatable drying room, the elongated building beside the taberna has been interpreted as a cloth fullery.

Further parts of the building were arranged around a small courtyard at the rear of the property. The residential area was fitted with an underfloor heating system (hypocaust) and may have been the living quarters of the landlord and his family. One of the outbuildings has been interpreted as a slaughterhouse. It is an obvious conclusion that the meat would have gone directly from the slaughterhouse to the smokery in the basement, i.e. that smoked foods were produced and sold on site.

The trading house and workshops during their excavation (1984) and in Roman times (around AD 240).

Charred barrels in the cloth fullery during its excavation (1984). New timber constructions in the protective building show where the charred timber elements were located.

10

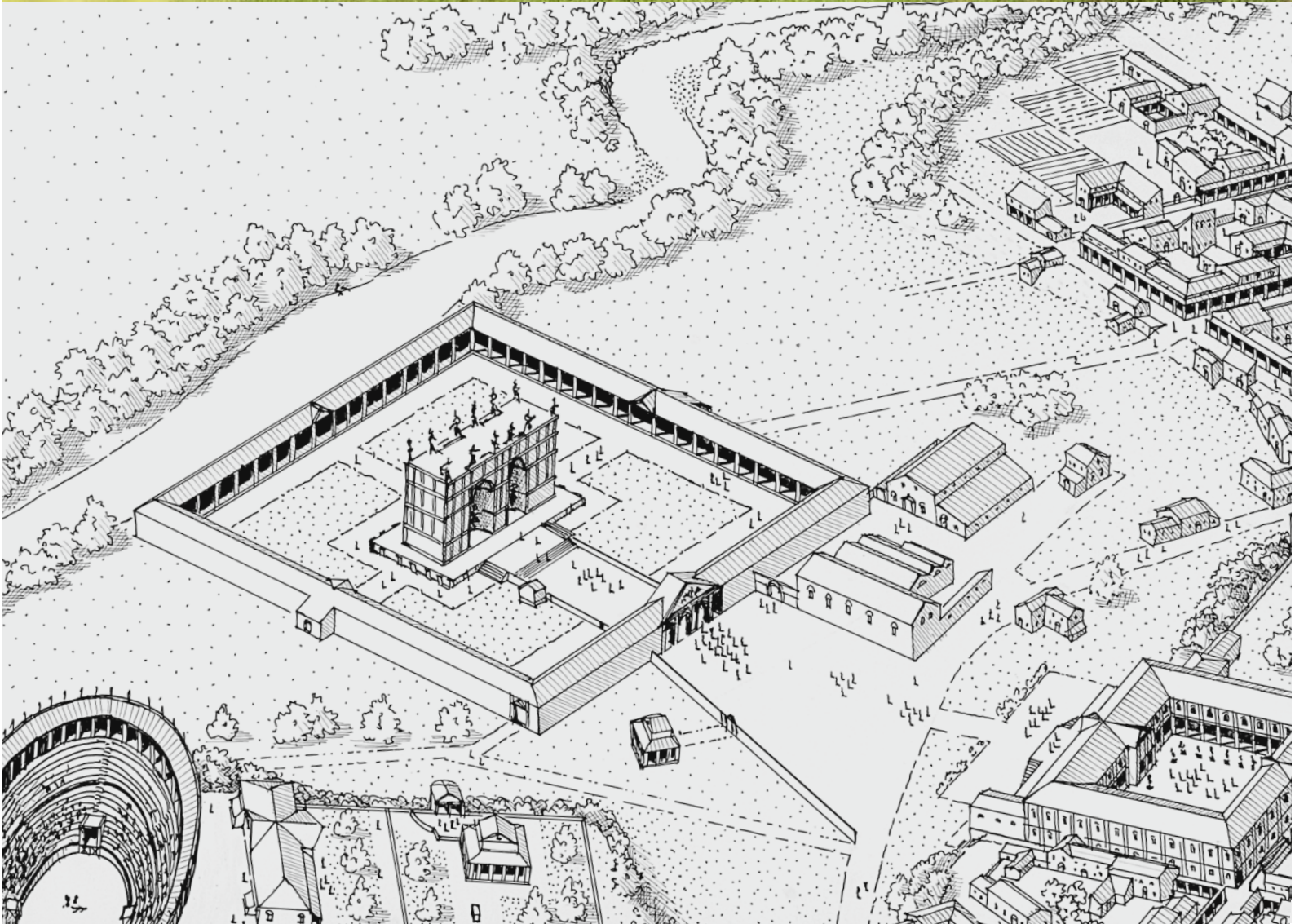
Hiding place

A box with hidden statuettes of gods was found beneath the floorboards of a living room opposite the visitors' platform. The findspot is marked by a hole in the wooden floor. The reasons for hiding the statuettes, which would have belonged to a *lararium*, a domestic shrine, are unknown. Photograph see p. 24.

Wall heating

The construction of a heated wall can be seen in the living room opposite the visitors' platform. The hot air circulated in the flue tiles. The flue tiles had rough outer surfaces so that they adhered well to the walls. Covered over with plaster and wall paintings, the flue tiles would not have been visible.





Sanctuary on Grienmatt – Place of pilgrimage for the sick?

One of the most important sacred buildings in Augusta Raurica stood on the western edge of the town. Only the lower part of the building's core survives today. What this unique edifice actually looked like has not been ascertained in detail. What we do know is that it stood in a large rectangular square which was framed by colonnades. Architectural components made of imported marble show that the sanctuary was lavishly designed and that the costs for its construction must have been huge.

A bath-house was attached to the sanctuary. Its remains are no longer visible today. Two rooms with several built-in small bath tubs clearly set it apart from the usual Roman baths. Medicinal spa treatments may have been practised here under the guidance of priests with a knowledge of medicine.

The sanctuary and the health spa formed an architectural unit. A thematic link also existed between the two buildings. This is indicated by altars dedicated to Aesculapius and Apollo, both gods of healing, which were found in the sanctuary. This was probably the location of a monumental cult district for these gods, which was frequented by people from the town and its environs.

The core building of the sanctuary today and the entire complex in Roman times (around AD 240)



Monolithic column

The sanctuary has been investigated several times since the 18th century. It served as a quarry and a supply of rarities. The scholar Aubert Parent (1752–1835) had the largest fragment of a column carved with an inscription in honour of his patron: “ICI ÉTOIT ÉRIGÉ LE TEMPLE. CETTE COLONNE A ÉTÉ RELEVÉE POUR EN PERPÉTUER LA MÉMOIRE PAR LES SOINS DE J. R. FORCART. MDCCCIII. AUBERT PARENT DIR.”

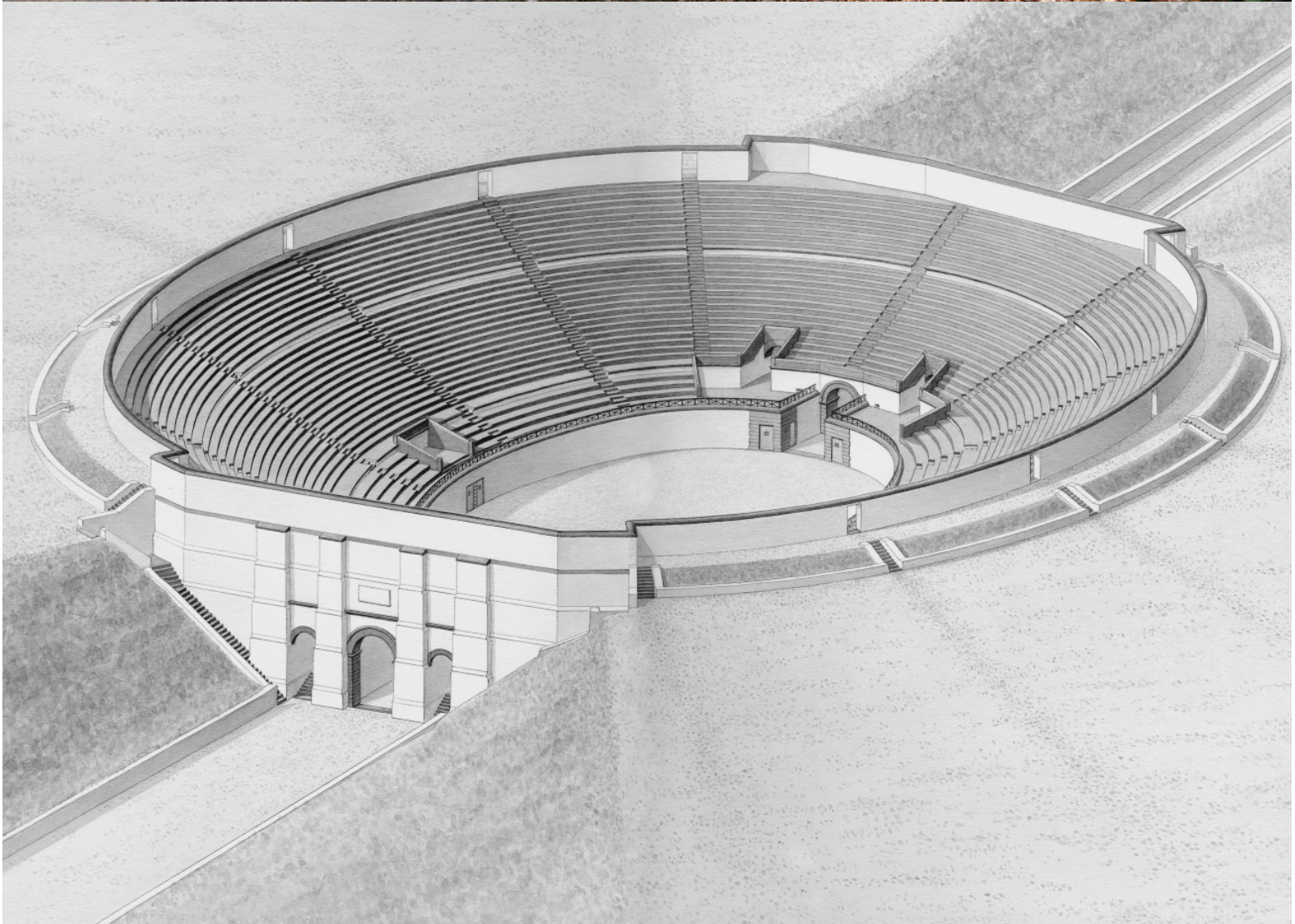
However, in Roman times the column had not stood where Parent had it erected.

Detail from a watercolour painted by a contemporary of Aubert Parent (shortly after 1803)



Map no. 1: Hercules with the dog of Hades and the altar to Aesculapius found at the sanctuary are on display in the lapidarium.

Workers with the statue of Hercules after its discovery (around 1924)



Amphitheatre – Gory entertainment on the periphery of the town

The amphitheatre in Augusta Raurica was built around AD 170. The monumental complex was erected in a natural dip in the terrain. The accesses to the arena were located on the longitudinal axis of the small valley and the seating tiers were constructed directly on the natural slopes on either side.

The amphitheatre held approximately 13,000 people. It had 16 entrance gates so that the seats could be filled quickly and the complex speedily vacated after the games. Admission was free.

Animal fights, gladiatorial combat and executions were staged in the amphitheatre. The eastern access to the arena – beneath the present-day road – had three parallel corridors no longer visible leading into the arena. These made it possible to drive entire herds into the arena for animal fights and to bring in chariots and sets for other events.

Gladiatorial combat followed strict rules. Based on the training and equipment both fighters had equal chances of winning. The gladiators reached the amphitheatre in a festive procession. Once they had arrived they were brought to two small rooms in the arena wall, where they waited until their fight began. One such room, a so-called *carcer*, can be visited.

Gladiators that had been killed were carried out through the eastern arena access, the so-called 'gate of death'. After having participated in rituals of sacrifice at a small shrine, those who had survived the fights left the arena through the 'gate of the living', where today, picnic tables are located.

The amphitheatre as seen from the western access today and in Roman times (around AD 240)



Gladiator trail

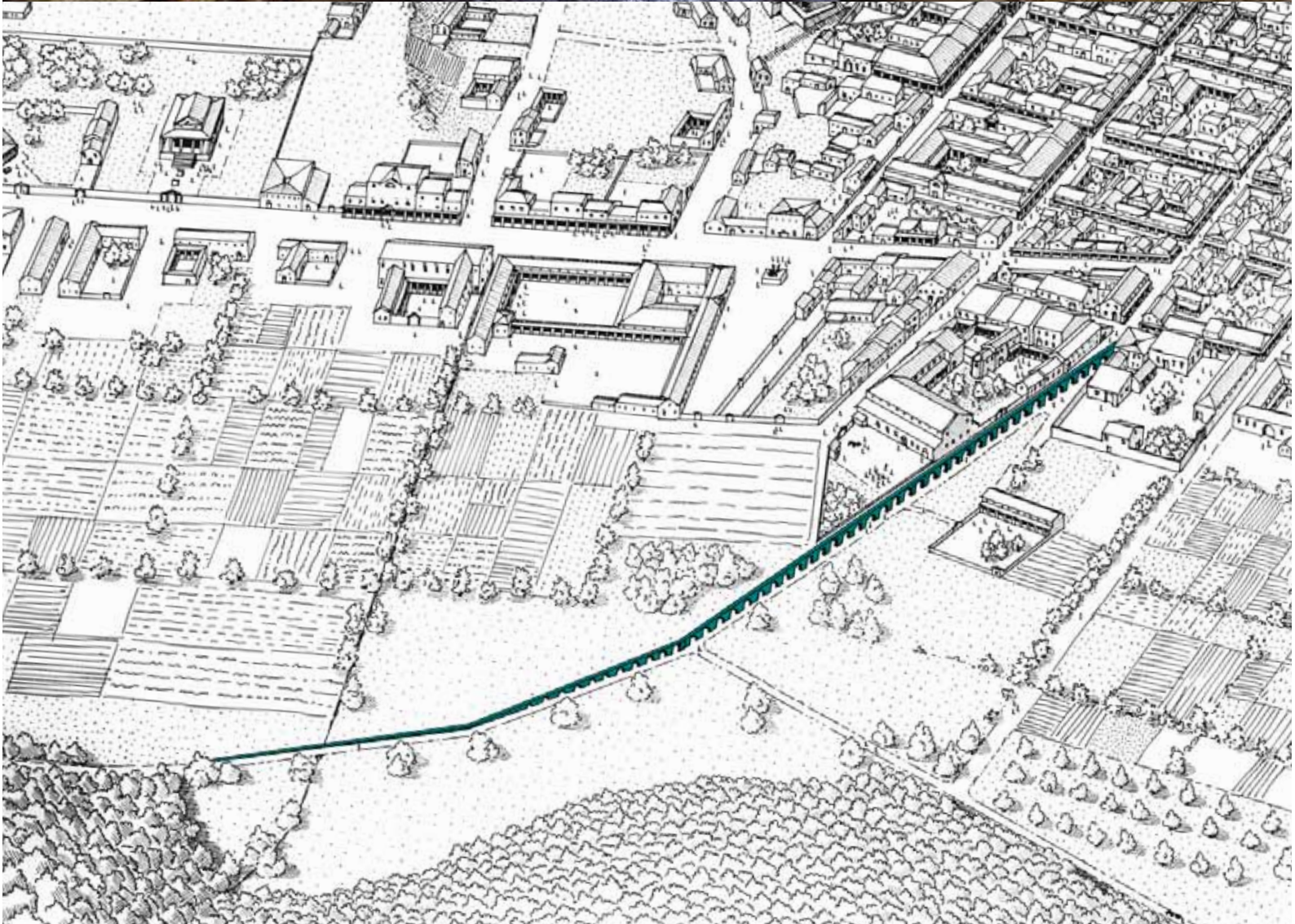
An educational trail leads from the museum and the visitor car park to the amphitheatre. A re-enactment of the last few minutes before a fight took place between gladiators can be tuned into at an audio point in the *carcer*.

Gladiator mosaic

The gladiator figures on display at the edge of the arena show types of gladiators that appear on the so-called gladiator mosaic found in Augst.



Map no. 4: An earlier amphitheatre was located in the town centre. Towards the end of the 2nd century it was replaced by the stage theatre still visible today.



Water main – Fresh water for the town

Water was brought into Augusta Raurica by means of a subterranean masonry conduit approximately 6.5 km in length from a small river called the Ergolz in the municipal area of modern Liestal, a community south of the town. The channel was 1.8 m high and had a vaulted roof. It was built in the 1st century AD and remained in use until the 3rd century AD.

Just before it reached the boundary of the town, the subterranean water main was adjoined to an aqueduct which brought the fresh water into the town. Excavations have revealed that at the end of the aqueduct the water flowed into a water tower, where it could be stored and distributed via various municipal pressure water pipes. Most of these were wooden pipes laid beneath the roads like our modern water pipes. Public fountains, baths and toilets as well as the forecourts of private dwellings of the wealthy were supplied with water in this way. The villas were often connected to the water supply by lead pipes.

Groundwater was also used to supply the town population with water. Numerous wells existed mainly in the lower town of Augusta Raurica, in present-day Kaiseraugst, from which fresh water could be drawn.

Part of the water main that is accessible today and the water supply fed into the town via an aqueduct in Roman times (around AD 240)



13

No lead poisoning

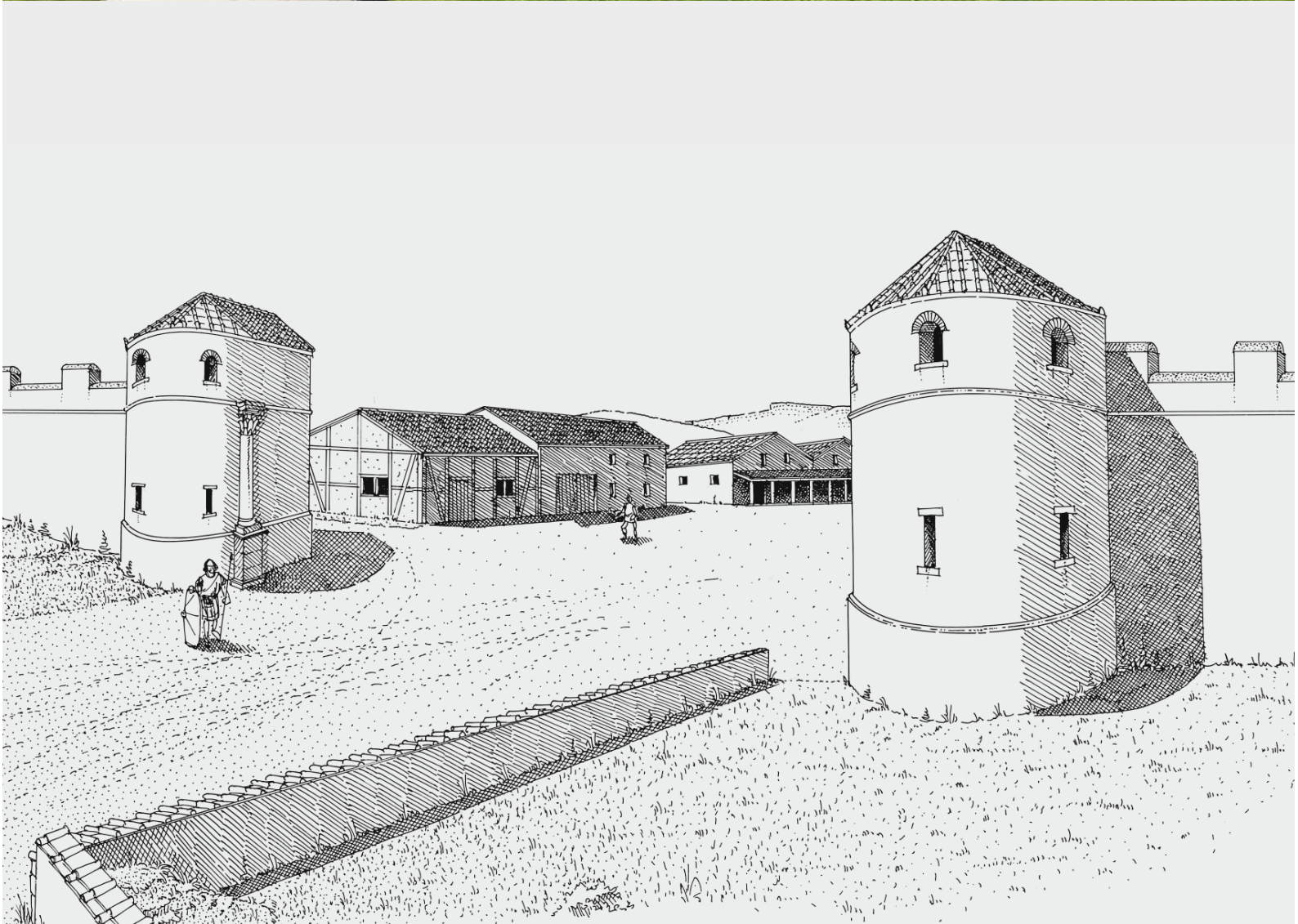
Theoretically, the water which was fed into the houses in lead pipes could have contained small amounts of lead, which might have harmed people's health. However, the water in the region around Augusta Raurica contained lime; this quickly formed a layer of sinter on the insides of the pipes which prevented the water from being contaminated.



Hollow space inside a water pipe covered in a thick layer of sinter incrustation during its excavation (1967). The wooden pipe itself was not preserved.

Map no. 2: One section of the water main is on display beside the temple wall.

Map no. 6: A public fountain and the silt container of a water main can be seen in the forum (see photograph on the left).



East gate and town wall – Costly and incomplete

Around AD 80 the construction of a town fortification commenced. The plan was to erect an enclosing wall with semicircular towers and town gates similar to the town wall of Aventicum (Avenches in Canton Vaud) built around the same time.

Some sections of the town wall have survived. The wall was almost two metres thick and it was filled with cast stone, a kind of Roman concrete. Town gates were located in the southwest on the road to Aventicum and in the southeast on the road to Vindonissa (Windisch near Brugg in Canton Aargau).

Excavations carried out at the eastern gate showed that the original project of an elaborate gate construction was initially reduced in size and later abandoned entirely. The town wall was eventually completed with rather modest horseshoe-shaped towers on either side of the road.

The construction work for the town fortification was never finished. The reasons for this are unknown. Augusta Raurica was probably already situated in the pacified hinterland of the Roman Empire when the construction of the town wall began. The planned elaborate wall may have had a mainly representative function. Perhaps in the end it remained unfinished because of a lack of funding or – due to the movement of troops to the border in the north – a lack of workers.

The east gate and town wall today and in Roman times (around AD 240)



14

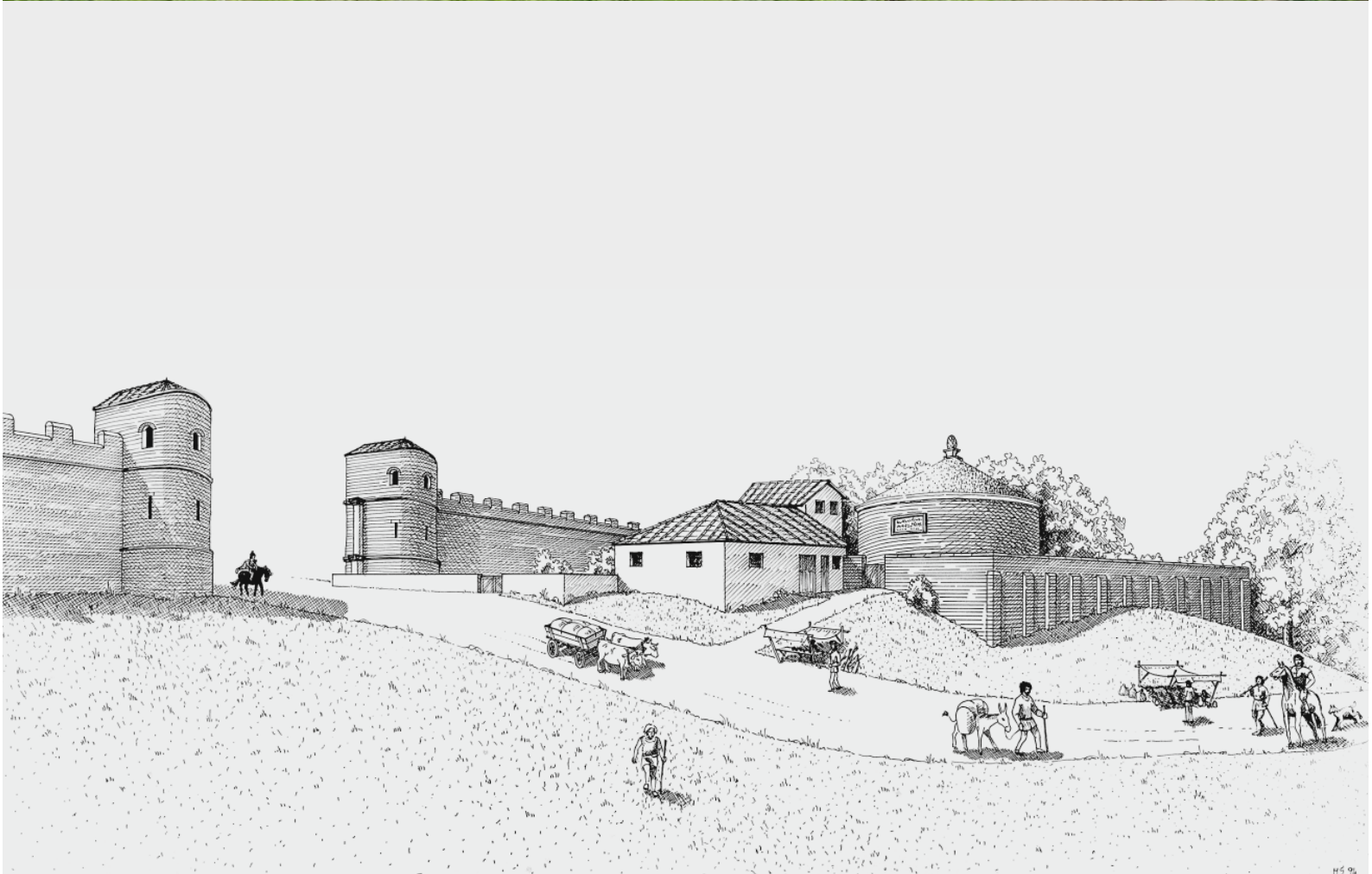
Flanking towers

With the exception of the gate constructions, the towers of the town fortification of Augusta Raurica, like those of Aventicum, were added to the side facing the town. They served as staircases to access the top of the town wall and not to defend the town. They no longer survive today.



The east gate during its excavation (1993). The gate towers face away from the town.

Map no. 1: This head of Hercules on display in the lapidarium may have once been a part of a town gate (see photograph on the left).



Animal park – Vibrant past

The animal park is home to different species of animals which were popular in Roman times. In collaboration with the Department of Archaeobiology of the Institute for Prehistory and Archaeological Science at Basle University and ProSpecieRara, the Swiss foundation for the historical and genetic diversity of plants and animals, 'ancient' breeds were chosen for the Roman domestic animal park.

Roman agriculture is well known from descriptions provided by ancient writers. However, these accounts mainly describe the situation in the Mediterranean region. Information about animal husbandry in the areas north of the Alps is provided only by depictions and finds.

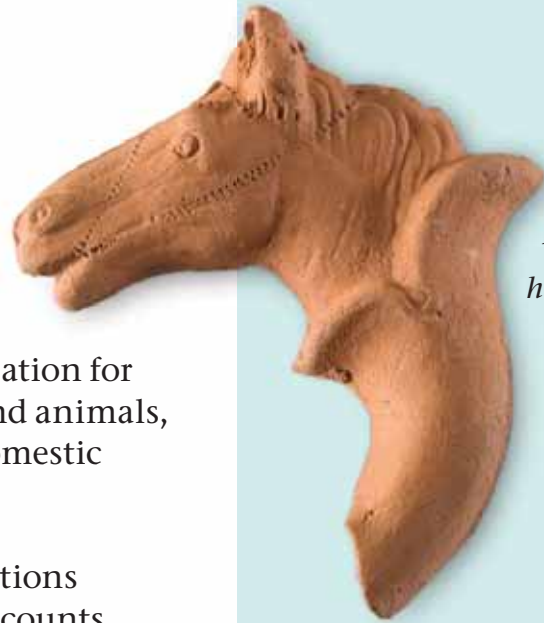
Systematic measurements carried out on animal bones recovered from excavations show that the body height of farm animals in Switzerland increased during the Roman period. The reasons were that the principles behind Roman selective breeding were different to those employed during the Celtic period, and possibly also better-quality feeding and tending of the animals.

The 'Roux du Valais sheep', 'Nera Verzasca goats', 'woolly-coated pigs' and poultry in the animal park are similar to the livestock kept in Roman times in Augusta Raurica and the surrounding farmsteads.

*Nera Verzasca goats with
the east gate in the background*

*Area of the present-day
animal park in Roman times
(around AD 240)*

15

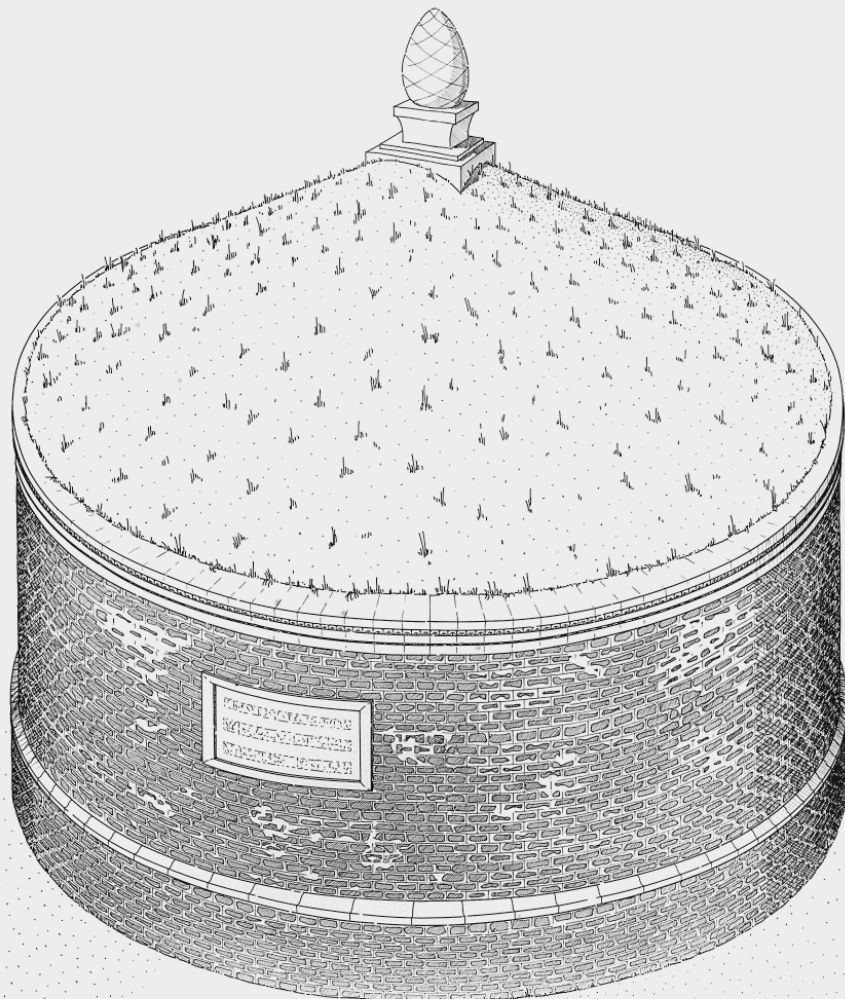


*Lamp
handle
with a
horse's head*

*Small pig carrying a pack
on its back and billy goat*



Map no. 16: A small exhibition on Roman agriculture can be seen in the pavilion near the funeral monument.



Funeral monument – A lot of effort for a renowned citizen

A funeral monument stood directly in front of the town gate on the road to Vindonissa (Windisch near Brugg in Canton Aargau). It is located approximately 400 m west of the cemetery. Its construction was unique in this region. The huge monument was erected in honour of an important person from Augusta Raurica, otherwise unknown.

The deceased had been cremated on a funeral pyre. Several wine amphorae including their contents, cereals and cuts of meat had been incinerated together with the person. After the cremation, the ashes were gathered together, placed in a wooden box with two bottles of perfume and buried in a pit on the cremation site. Analyses carried out on the cremated remains revealed that the person – male or female – had lived to be about 35 to 40 years of age.

After the burial, the funeral monument was erected above the grave. A cylindrical enclosure wall and interior scaffolding made of safety arches and masonry bracing, parts of which are still visible, bore the load of the earth mound vaulting the monument. No safety arches were located directly above the grave. The ornament crowning the monument was perhaps a statue or a stone pine cone, a symbol of life.

The funeral monument was built around the same time as the town wall, around AD 80. A potter's workshop was located nearby. The ground plan of the small kiln can be seen beside the monument.

The funeral monument beside the east gate. The remains of a potter's kiln are visible in the bottom right corner of the photograph.

The funeral monument in Roman times (around AD 240)



The cremation site of the funeral monument during its excavation. The burial pit for the deceased's ashes is discernible as a slightly lighter-coloured fill (arrow).

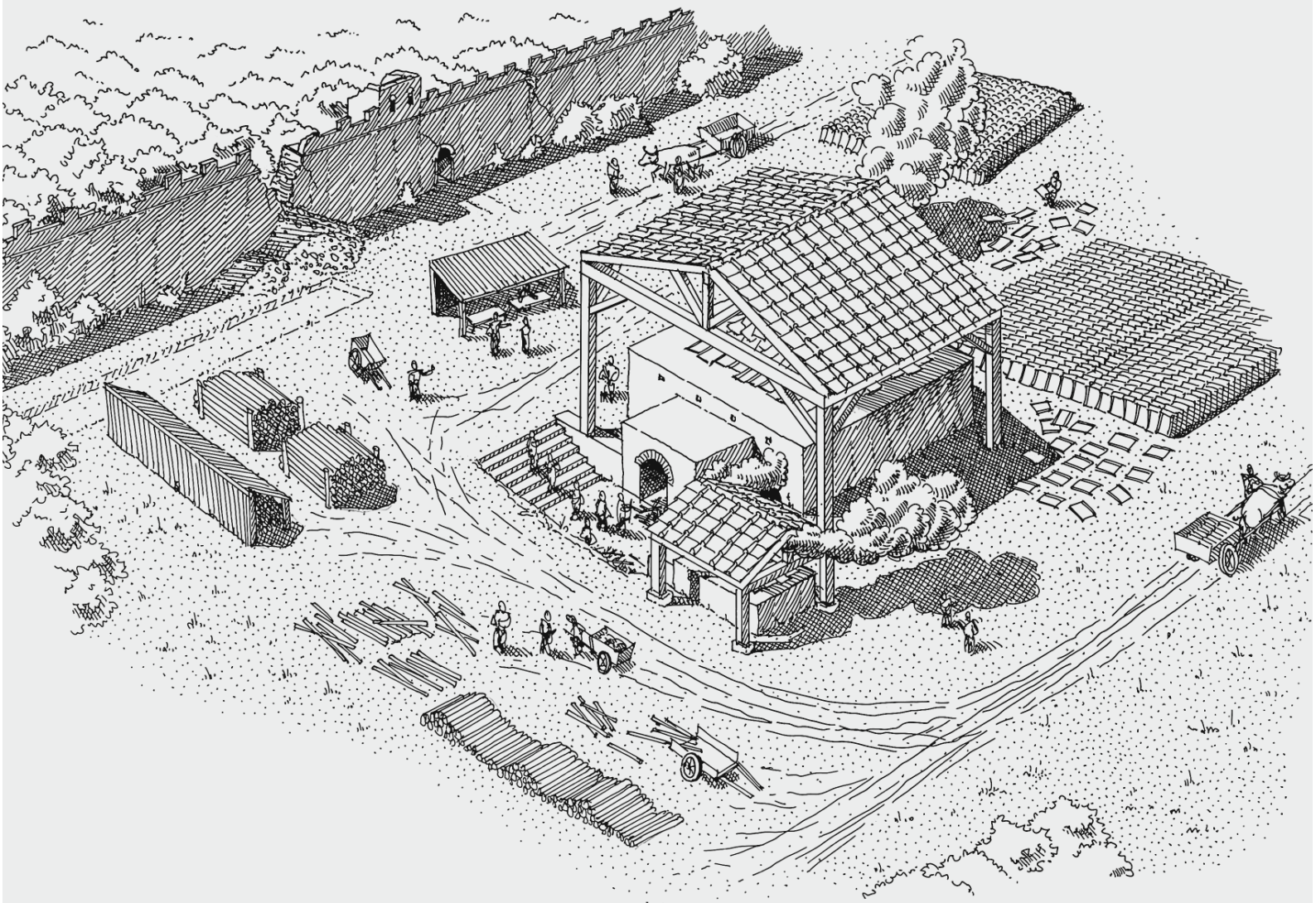
Foundation

The foundation of the funeral monument can be seen through a barred opening at the rear.

These two perfume bottles were placed in the grave together with the ashes.



Reconstruction drawings of the town and its environs are on display in the pavilion beside the funeral monument (see photograph on the left). Finds representing trade, traffic and agriculture can also be seen.



17

Tile works – Soldiers produce building materials

Several tile kilns were discovered in what is today the 'Liebrüti' quarter. Two of the kilns have been conserved.

In the 4th century AD, people lived on the River Rhine in the Castrum Rauracense, the fort in Kaiseraugst and its suburb. At that time, tile works produced architectural ceramics on a grand scale. These tile works were probably operated by soldiers of the legio I Martia (First Legion of Mars): several roof tiles and floor slabs for rooms with hypocaust heating systems are marked with the maker's stamp used by the legion.

First, the tiles and slabs were formed in clay and air-dried. The dried tiles were closely stacked side by side in the firing chamber, and covered with already fired tiles before the kiln was fired up. To fire the tiles the heat flowed upwards through holes in the floor of the kiln. The remains of the last firing of curved roof tiles, so-called *imbrices*, are still stacked in the firing chamber in the larger of the two conserved kilns. Clay analyses carried out on finds have revealed that the produce of the Kaiseraugst tile works was shipped down the Rhine as far as Strasbourg (France) and up the River Aar as far as Bienne (Canton Berne).

Enormous amounts of clay and firewood were required for the production of tiles. Both were available in the surrounding areas. Over time, however, firewood became increasingly difficult to obtain. We presume that the woods around Augusta Raurica had become deforested shortly after the founding of the town. From then on, the firewood had to be brought in from further afield by raft on the River Rhine.

The tile kilns during their excavation (1975) and in Roman times (around AD 320)



Fragment of a roof tile with the stamp of the army tile works of the First Legion of Mars (legio I Martia)

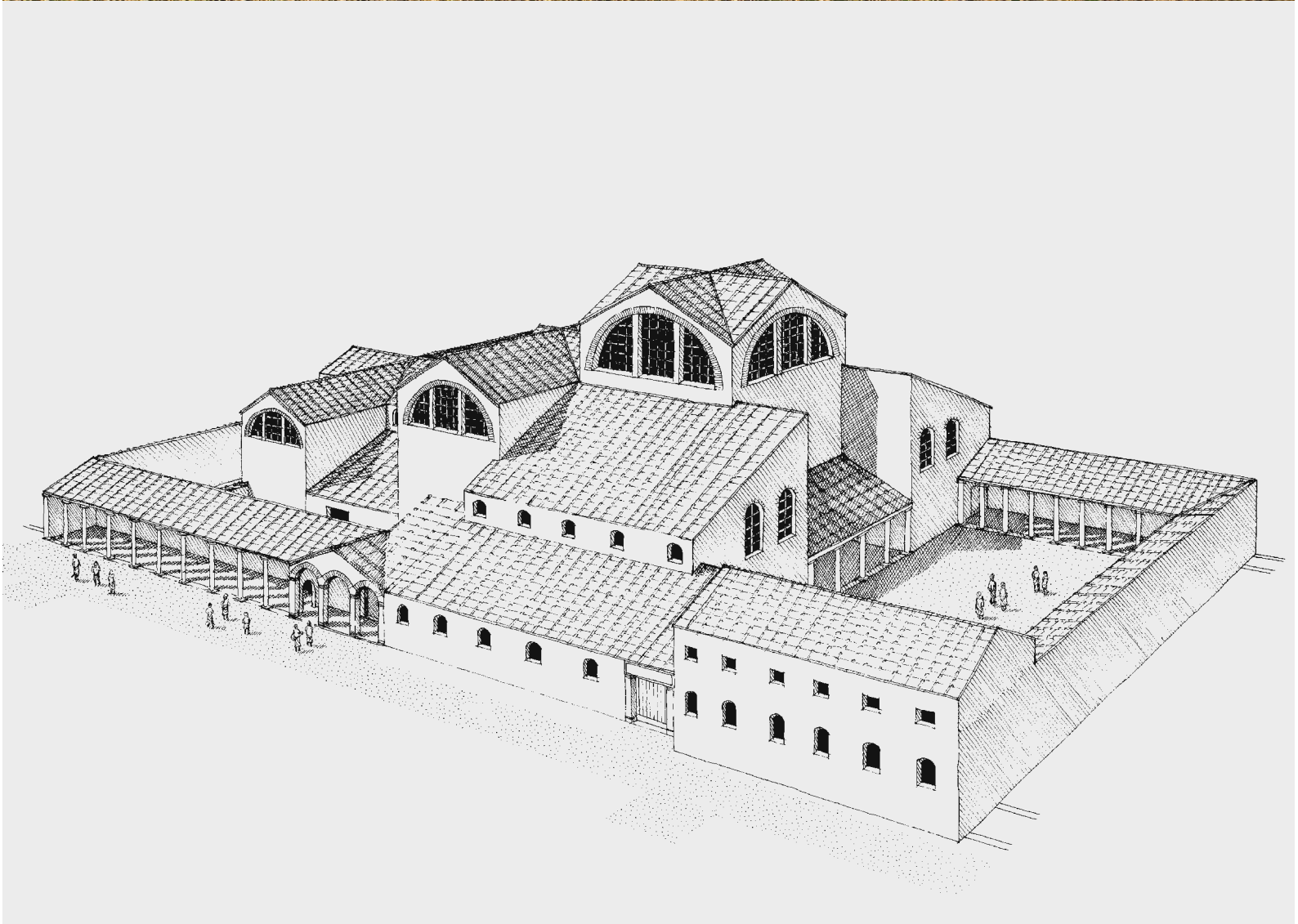
Traces in the clay

The wet clay tiles were laid out in the open to dry them out and sometimes animals trod on them. This led to hoof and paw prints on some of the tiles and slabs. Human hand and foot prints are also occasionally found.

Fragment of a clay slab with a dog's paw print



Map no. 14: A section of the eastern town wall of Augusta Raurica has survived near the protective building with the tile kilns.



18

Sewer of the central baths and cellar – Witnesses to bygone splendour

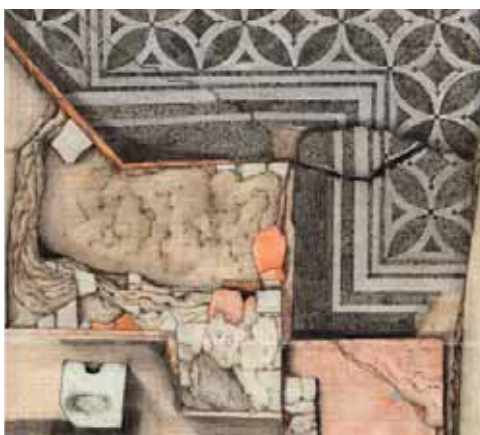
Around AD 100 a huge public bath complex was built south of the town centre, which has become known today as the central baths. Three of the town's quarters were cleared for the construction of the largest baths in Augusta Raurica. The residential buildings and roads in the quarters had to make way for the monumental edifice. The basement of one of the demolished residential buildings was filled with rubble; today it can be found next to the modern entrance to the sewer (cloaca) of the baths and can be visited.

Roman baths were used not only for hygiene and beauty treatments, they were also popular as social meeting points and places of entertainment. Admission was usually free or cost very little. Bathing was open to everyone. Bathers were naked so men and women usually bathed separately.

A faint elevation in the terrain is all that is left of the once vast and luxurious bath-house. Today only the cloaca, a large masonry channel which gathered the wastewater from the bath and carried it into the nearby stream, is visible and accessible from the central baths. During the Roman period the cloaca could be entered through several manholes in the top so that it could be cleaned. There were also inlets on the sides which drained water from the streets above the channel.

Location of the central baths today and the baths in Roman times (around AD 240)

Detail of the drawing of a mosaic floor (1942)



In the sewer (cloaca) of the central baths

Sewer

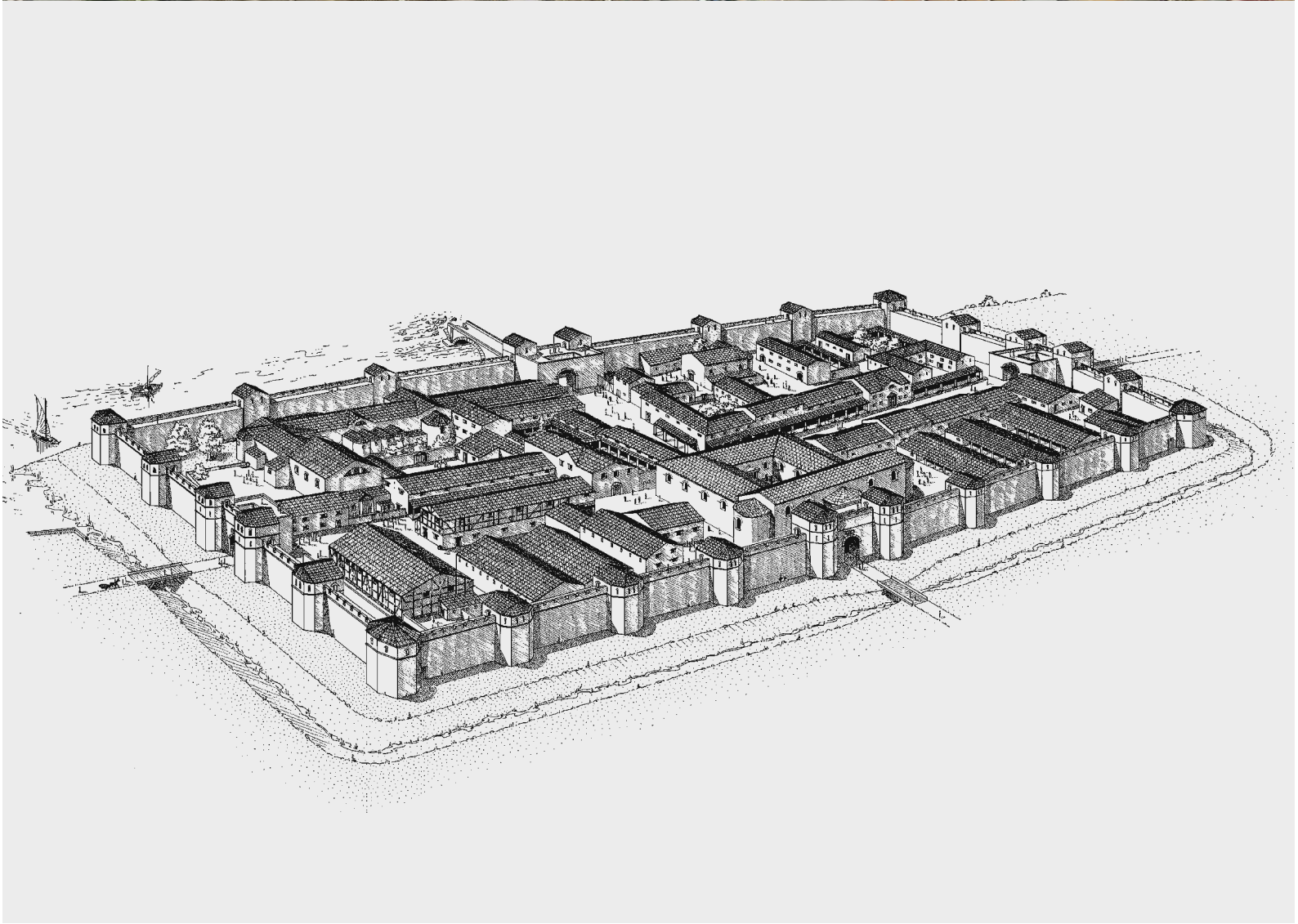
Imprints of Roman form-work boards can be seen in the vault of the sewer. Visitors who suffer from claustrophobia should refrain from visiting

the basement and cloaca: the entrance to the cellar and the sewer is very narrow.

Women's baths

Another public bath complex, the women's baths, was also located in the town (no visible remains). Once the central baths had been built, these baths were mainly frequented by women – an assumption based on the numerous hair-pins found there.

Map no. 20: Another public bath-house was located on the River Rhine in Kaiseraugst. Its ruins can also be visited.



Kaiseraugst fort – Securing the Rhine crossing

The Castrum Rauracense, the fort in Kaiseraugst was built by the Roman army around AD 300. The centre of the settlement was thus moved from the upper town in Augst to Kaiseraugst on the Rhine.

The construction of the fort was prompted by the northern border of the empire being drawn back to the River Rhine: the area around Augusta Raurica was once again located directly on the border with Germania. The fort was part of the imperial frontier-defence programme and served, for a while in conjunction with a bridgehead on the opposite bank of the Rhine, to secure the Rhine crossing.

The enclosure wall of the fort was 8 to 10 m high and fortified with towers at regular intervals. Four gates led into the interior and a V-section ditch surrounded the edifice. The ditch was intended to repel siege machines and prevent enemy troops from undermining the fort walls. Besides members of the Roman army, civilians also lived in the fort, some permanently, others only in times of need.

From 350 AD onwards, the frequency of Germanic incursions across the Rhine increased. The period was also characterised by power struggles. It was in these insecure times that the silver treasure, which is exhibited today in the museum, was buried. A short while later, in AD 351 or 352, the fort was laid waste by Germanic Alemanni.

The reconstruction of the fort commenced approximately a decade later. The descendants of the previous inhabitants of the fort continued to live there as so-called Romanic people.

Fort area and village of Kaiseraugst today and the fort in Roman times (around AD 320)

19

Traces of the fort

Dorfstrasse, the main street in the village centre of Kaiseraugst still shows the west-east axis of the fort. The east side of the fort today is a built-up area. 'Fähriweg', the link between Dorfstrasse and the Rhine, runs along the fort's former ditch. The fort wall foundation can be seen near the sports ground. It consists of numerous reused building blocks, so-called spolia. The findspot of the silver treasure is marked with a stela.



Wheel ruts at the west gate of the fort during its excavation (1975)

The west gate of the fort was excavated. The ground plan of the west gate and the road leading through it including its wheel ruts are today marked in the tarmac at Dorfstrasse. Red cobblestones show the outlines of walls and towers, whereas grey cobblestones symbolise the paving.



Rhine baths – A place of relaxation even in turbulent times

During the construction of a playschool in Kaiseraugst, an imposing Roman bath complex was discovered. The baths on the Rhine were built around AD 260, before the construction of the fort. The baths were in continuous use and were redesigned during the period the fort was occupied in the 4th century AD.

Parts of the bath complex can be visited. What has survived is located today below the Roman street level and mainly consists of the subfloor of the hypocaust heating system, where hot air flowed around the pillars which supported the actual floors of the baths. The remains of the earlier and later phases of the baths lie directly on top of each other.

The so-called Rhine baths were a characteristic Roman bath complex with baths and service facilities for water and heating. The changing room has not survived, but the large pool in the cold room with its seating steps and outlet can be visited. There are two warm baths with underfloor heating. This may represent a desire for large recreational rooms. The warm baths not only served to slowly prepare one's body for the heat in the hot bath, they were also places of entertainment: debates took place here, games were played, lotions applied and massages enjoyed. The hot bath with its apse that once contained the pool can also be visited. The remnants of colourful paintings have survived in the apse.

The western part of the Rhine baths during their excavation (1975) and the entire bath complex in Roman times (around AD 320)

Steps of the cold bath during their excavation (1975)



20



Scraper (strigilus) for removing oil from one's body after a sweat bath.

Construction techniques

The pink plaster visible in many places consists of mortar with the inclusion of minute pieces of tile. It was water-proof and stored heat, and was used in baths and heated rooms.

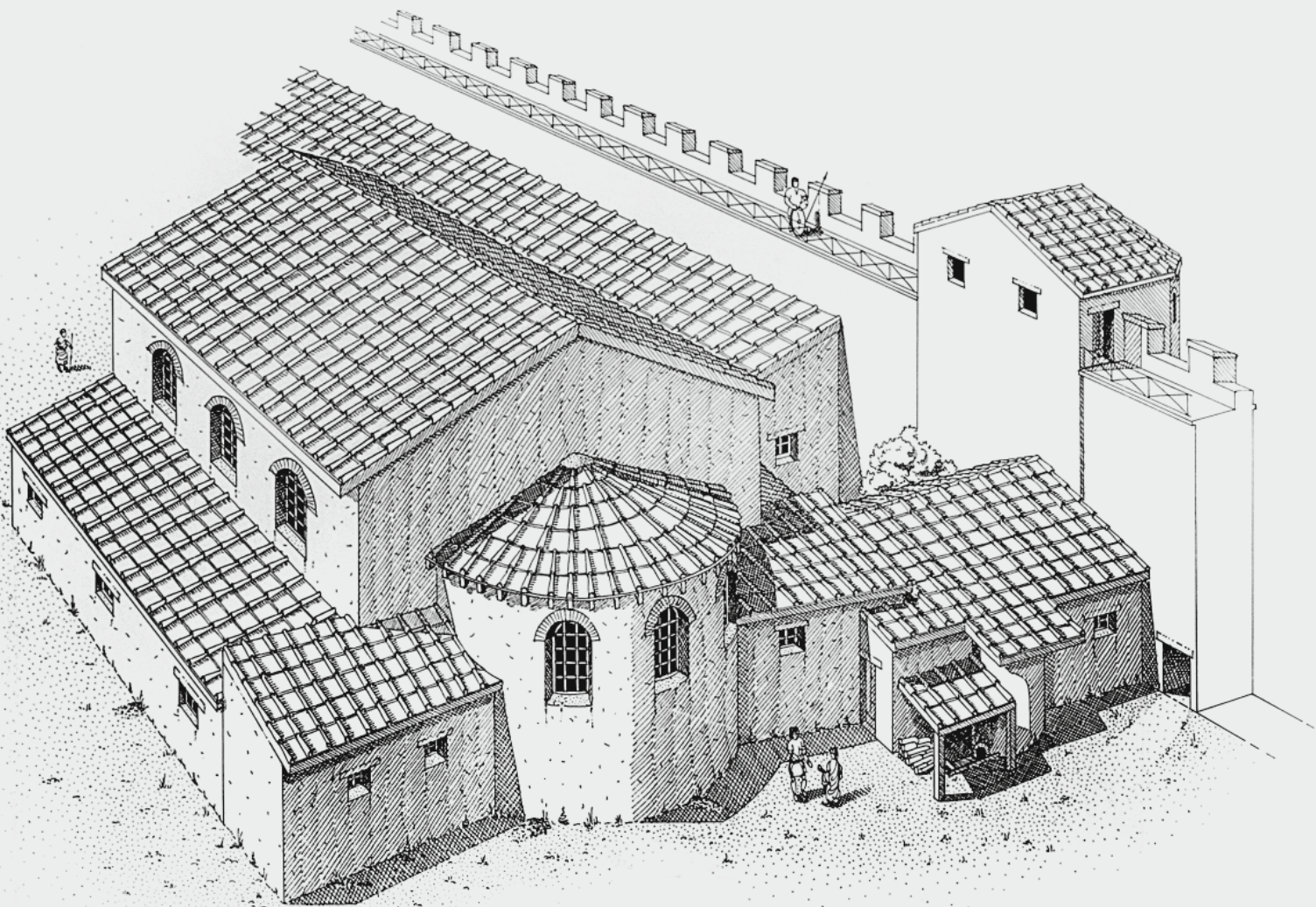
Heating room

Exiting the Rhine baths on the side facing the river, one leaves the bath-house via one of the former heating rooms.

Cold water basin with a drain hole



Map no. 6: The entrance steps of the cold room of the Rhine baths, carved from a single block of stone, are on display in the forum.



Early church and bishop's residence – The first Christians

The spire and stork's nest of the Kaiseraugst parish church is one of the village's landmarks today. Dedicated to Saint Gallus, the church is surrounded by an idyllic courtyard. The choir and tower are Gothic, while the nave is Baroque.

Emperor Constantine the Great was the first to recognise Christianity as a religion in AD 313. Christians lived in Kaiseraugst at the time: they wore personal items such as finger rings adorned with Christian symbols. One Justinianus was elected bishop by the Christian congregation in AD 340. His name is known from church records. We do not know where Bishop Justinianus and his clerics lived or where the church stood at the time.

Excavations carried out at today's parish church of St. Gallus have revealed that an early church was built here, close to the fort wall, between AD 360 and 400. Some of the church walls rest on foundations of earlier Roman buildings. Measuring 18 m in length and 10 m in width, the church's nave was very large for the time.

Today, one steps through the fort wall into a protective building. At the very back of the protective building one can see a curved wall. This wall was part of the semicircular apse of the Late Antique church. The walls of a small bath-house can be seen built against it. This was probably the private bath of the bishops, and part of their residence. The interpretation as a baptistery previously suggested has recently been rejected by researchers for liturgical and architectural reasons. No later than AD 750, the then bishop moved his seat to the up-and-coming city of Basle.

The baths of the early church during their excavation (1965).

The church apse is visible in the top left corner.

Church and fort wall in Roman times (around AD 400)

The Church of St. Gallus



*Finger ring with Christogram
(Greek XP – ChiRho)*

Christians

Replicas of jewellery and tombstones of early Christians from Kaiseraugst are on display in the protective building. The objects often show a Christogram.

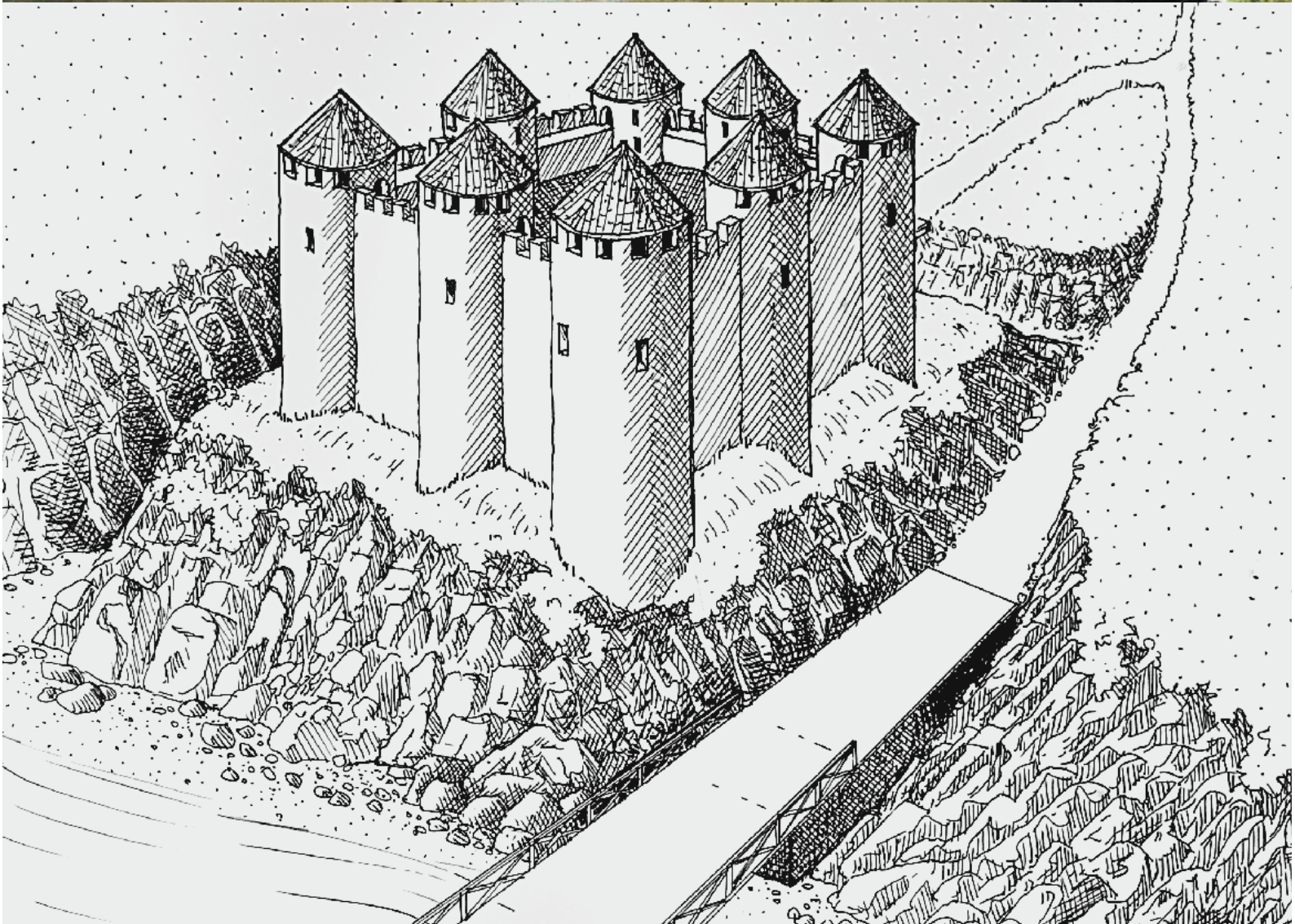
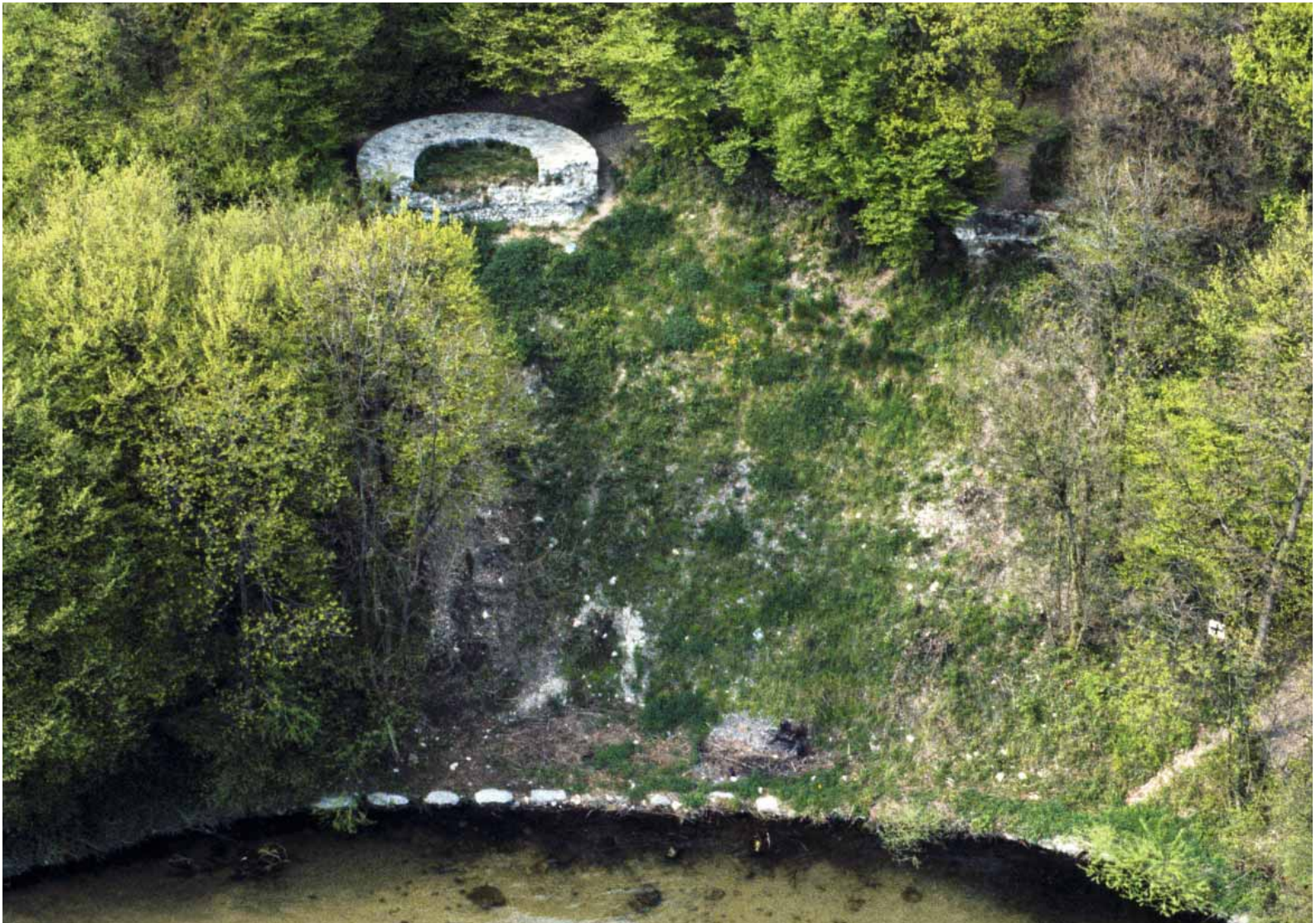
Jews

The presence of Jews in the 4th century is suggested by the discovery of a finger ring, the bezel of which is decorated with a menorah, a seven-branched candelabrum. The ring was found during excavations outside the fort wall and is now exhibited at the Jewish Museum in Basle.



Finger ring with incised Jewish candelabrum (menorah)





Bridgehead – Border fortification in enemy territory

Around AD 369 the Emperor Valentinian repaired and reinforced the border fortifications on the River Rhine between Basle and Lake Constance. The construction of the bridgehead on the right bank of the Rhine, opposite the Castrum Rauracense, may be dated to the same time. The plan was to erect a small stronghold with six to eight towers to secure the Rhine crossing. The remains of three towers on the side facing away from the river have survived. The towers originally had diameters of approximately eight metres and walls of up to two metres in thickness. A ditch surrounding the bridgehead on land provided additional protection.

It remains unclear to this day whether the bridgehead was ever completed or whether the section facing the river was simply washed away over time.

We know from documentary sources that the bridge across the Rhine had become impassable shortly before the construction of the bridgehead. It remains unclear whether the bridge was subsequently rebuilt or whether the stronghold was for the protection of temporary pontoon-bridges or a ferry crossing.

*Bird's eye view of the location
of the bridgehead and the
bridgehead in Roman times
(around AD 400)*



*The preserved parts of
the bridgehead show modest
proportions.*

Ferry across the River Rhine
The current timetable of
the ferry between Kaiseraugst
and Herten can be found
at the landing stages or at
www.kaiseraugst.ch.

Detail from Emanuel Büchel's
documentation on the theatre
(1763)

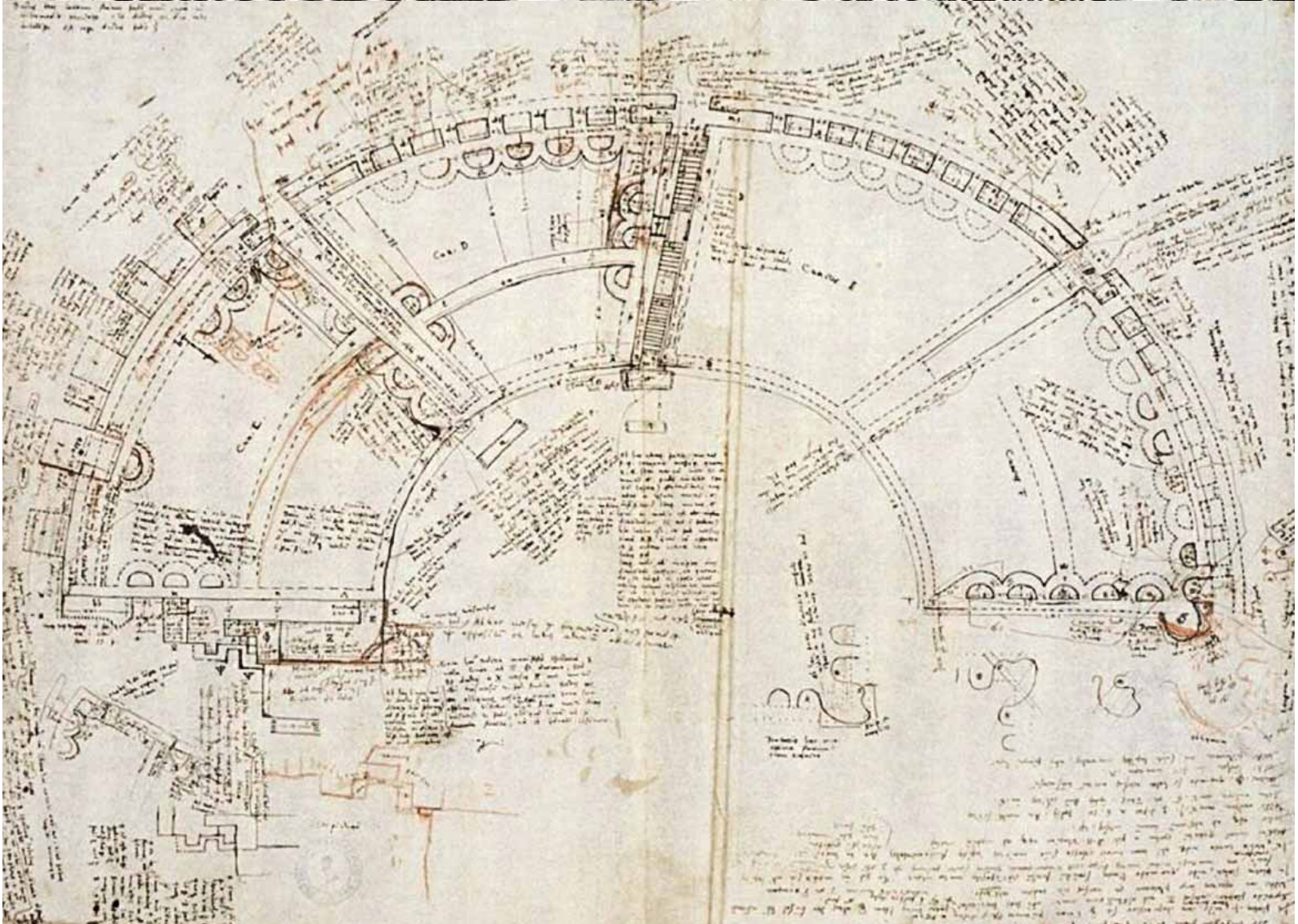
Archaeologist carrying out
post-excitation work



Research

The ruins of Augusta Raurica have been searched, excavated and investigated for centuries. Time and time again, new research results call into question the traditional schools of thought and change our perception of the ancient town.





Ruins – From quarry to place of research

The deserted town of Augusta Raurica and its impressive ruins, which remained visible for a long time, have always been a centre of attraction for people.

Starting as early as the 3rd century AD, tons of stones were taken away and reused as valuable building materials or turned into quicklime by burning them in limekilns on site. There were also rumours of valuable treasures concealed below ground and guarded by terrible monsters.

The Renaissance period revived the ideals of the ancient world and an interest in antiquities began to emerge. At that time, the ruins of Augusta Raurica were almost completely covered in earth and vegetation.

The earliest research excavations were carried out in Augusta Raurica by Basilius Amerbach (1533–1591). He examined the theatre and had it mapped meticulously.

During economically and politically hard times in the Thirty Years War, fraught with famine and disease, the interest in the past ceased.

The theatre around 1548.

At the time the monument – with the exception of the safety arches – was overgrown. Copper engraving by Johannes Stumpf

The theatre according to excavations carried out in 1588.

Ground plan drawn up by Basilius Amerbach and Hans Bock

Munatius Plancus

As early as 1531 the Basle humanist Beatus Rhenanus described the funeral inscription for Lucius Munatius Plancus, which was preserved in Italy. It stated that the deceased was the founder of the Colonia Raurica.



The funeral monument for L. Munatius Plancus in Gaëta, Italy (1763)

Map no. 3: An exploratory trench dating from the Renaissance period can be seen in the temple podium on the Schönbühl hill.



Vergleiche genau, & am lieb. Von dem Fruchtkorn zu fließen aus
 das Holz und das Scherz ist gut, die Scherz sind aus
 Jellenen zu erkennen.
 Im Kinde die Sprache im rechten Bräunlich & manchen von man
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1792. 1792.

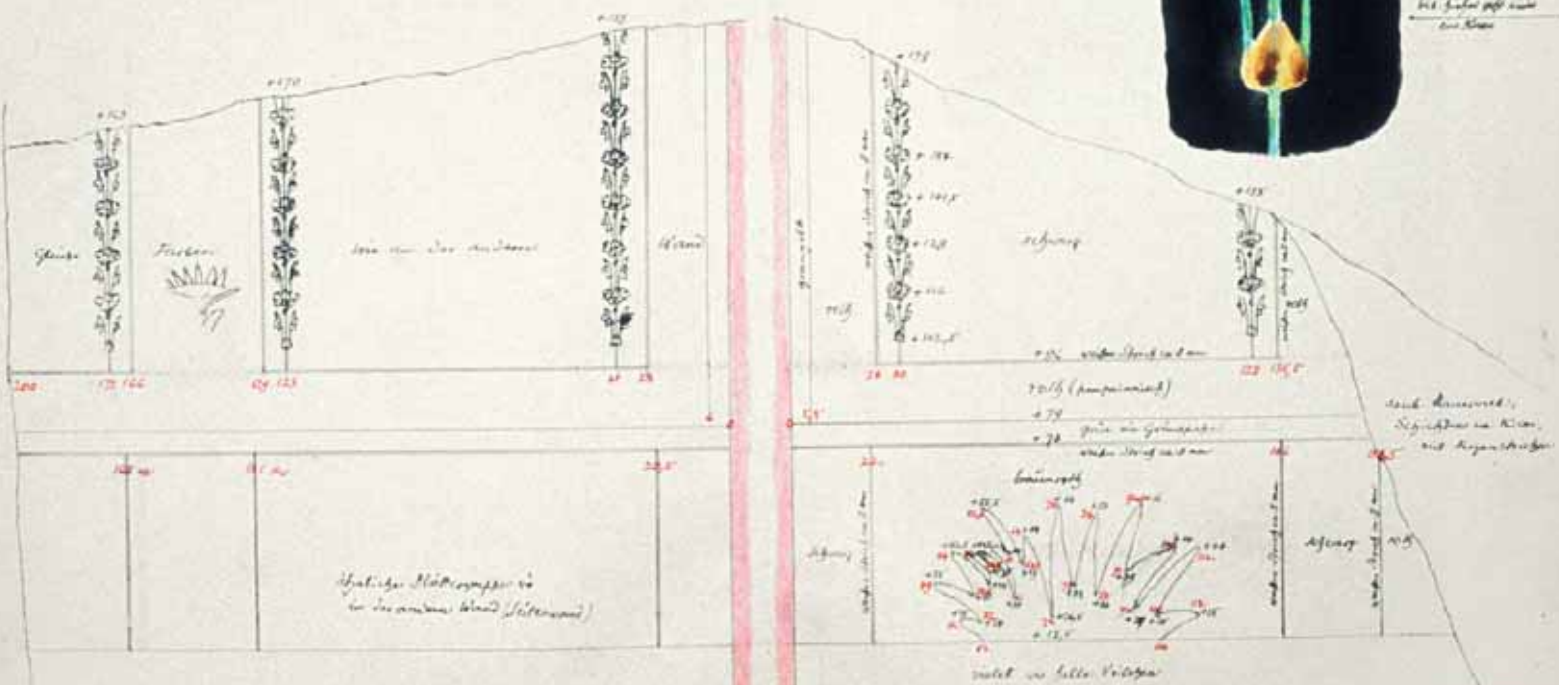
Les. Jacque de Klotzberg

175



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die Länge derer ist, die die Länge ist, die die Länge ist, die die Länge ist,



Antiquities craze and searching for the origins of our ancestors

The period of Enlightenment brought a new interest in research. In his work “Attempt at describing the historical and natural rarities in the Basle landscape”

Daniel Bruckner (1707–1781) wrote extensively about Augusta Raurica.

It was only a few decades later during the period of Romanticism that ancient architectural components were excavated and taken away to adorn private parks in Basle.

Aiming to establish a national consciousness, the Helvetic Republic in the early 19th century promoted the quest for a common origin of the Swiss population. However, the Celtic Helvetii were chosen as the glorious ancestors to be celebrated, not the Romans.

It was not until the late 19th and early 20th centuries, based on research results obtained by scholars of ancient history, that the image of the Romans as pre-eminent bearers of culture was consolidated. Theophil Burckhardt-Biedermann (1840–1914) was charged with studying Augusta Raurica by the ‘Historical and Antiquarian Society in Basle’, founded in 1836.

As part of a ‘back-to-nature’ movement in the early 20th century, the so-called pile dwellers became popular; Romans were then seen as a rather decadent occupying force. Despite this fact, Augusta Raurica was placed under heritage protection by governmental edicts. At that time private individuals including the Basle solicitor Karl Stehlin (1859–1934) were studying the town at their own expense.

Excavations at the Grienmatt health spa around 1800.

Anonymous artist

Drawing of a painted wall by Karl Stehlin around 1918



Private researchers

Aubert Parent (1753–1835), French architect and explorer of Augusta Raurica, invented a device to facilitate the transport of large parts of columns.



Drawing of a device for transporting Roman architectural components. Aubert Parent (1794)

Map no. 11: Aubert Parent had one of the columns engraved with a dedicatory inscription and re-erected near the sanctuary on Grienmatt (see p. 61).



Saving from destruction – Augusta Raurica today

Since the 1940s, the conservation, study and conveyance of Augusta Raurica has been funded to an increasing extent by public finances.

The building boom of the 1960s and the construction of a motorway made it necessary to carry out large-scale rescue excavations in the area of the Roman town. Entire districts of the town were excavated and documented, sometimes under considerable time constraints, and the plots subsequently cleared for development.

Today, an archaeological by-law ensures that the preserved parts of the upper town of Augusta Raurica are not threatened and destroyed by further development. Wherever possible, the ruins remain well protected below ground.

Approximately 1.6 mill. finds from excavations are housed in storage facilities at Augusta Raurica. The artefacts belong to the Cantons Basle Landschaft (finds from Augst) and Aargau (finds from Kaiseraugst). The collection of excavated finds is available to researchers from all over the world: the finds are studied and the results published in scientific publications. These studies are the basis for our knowledge about the past.

During the construction of the motorway, large areas of the Roman town had to be excavated under considerable time constraints (around 1967).

The excavated areas are today limited as much as possible, but the excavated remains of the Roman town are documented in great detail (2009).

Decay

Once the ruins are excavated and exposed to the elements, they are relentlessly weathered and fall into decay, and can only be saved by protective buildings and elaborate conservation measures.



The walls a few years after their excavation. Vegetation and the weather quickly lead to the decay of the unprotected Roman walls.

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Illustration credits

History

- pp. 4–5: Map: DesignConsult, Aarau, based on a map by Michael Vock.
 p. 6: Coin, potin (alloy of copper, tin and lead), Inv. 1973.9593. Ins. 24. Diameter: 1.8 cm. 1st cent. BC.
 Photograph: Ursi Schild.
 pp. 7–11: Reconstruction drawings: Markus Schaub.

People

- p. 12: Excavation photograph (excavation 2005.054, photograph no. 2115). Ins. 27. Photograph: Anita Springer.
 p. 13: Couple, pipe-clay, Inv. 1991.02.C09080.3. Southeastern cemetery. Height: 12 cm. 1st cent. AD.
 Photograph: Susanne Schenker.
 p. 14: Wall painting, Inv. 1965.11002. Ins. 28. Preserved height: c. 16 cm. Around AD 200.
 Photograph: Susanne Schenker.
 p. 14: Fragment of a beaker, pottery, Inv. 1964.10969. Unterstadt, Reg. 20 W. Width graffito: c. 7 cm. 3rd cent. AD. Photograph: Susanne Schenker.
 p. 15: Mosaic (excavation 1973.052, photograph no. 34). Oberstadt, Reg. 5. Photograph: Augst and Kaiseraugst excavations.
 p. 15: Writing implements, from top to bottom.: Inv. nos. 1967.18959, 1974.8472, 1992.051.D0688.348 (length: 10.5 cm). Several findspots in Augst. Photograph: Susanne Schenker.
 p. 16: Footprint (excavation 2006.004, photograph no. 444). Unterstadt, Reg. 17 D. Photograph: Philipp Schürmann.
 p. 16: Brooch, bronze, Inv. 1924.546. Stray find Augst. Length: c. 3 cm. Around AD 100.
 Photograph: Susanne Schenker.
 p. 16: Urn grave (excavation 1981.003, photograph no. 67). Southeastern cemetery. Photograph: Germaine Sandoz.
 p. 17: Gaming pieces/dice, bone. Inv. gaming pieces (from left to right): 1962.9163, 1980.31401, 1962.9689, 1961.1922, 1968.3080; Inv. dice (from left to right): 1963.8890, 1958.2011. Various findspots Augst.
 Edge length big die: 1.3 cm. 1st to 3rd cents. AD. Photograph: Susanne Schenker.
 p. 18: Map: DesignConsult, Aarau, based on a drawing by C. Demarmels. In: M.-F. Meylan Krause: Vom Geschirr zum Genuss. Documents du Musée Romain d'Avenches (Fribourg 2000).
 p. 18: Hearth (excavation 1998.060, photograph no. 4816). Ins. 8. Photograph: Cornelia Alder.
 p. 18: Reveller, pipe-clay, Inv. 1966.4175. Oberstadt, Reg. 5. Length: 13.3 cm. Around AD 50. Photograph: Susanne Schenker.
 p. 19: Cereal grains, no inv. no. Unterstadt, Reg. 17 E. Grain length: c. 0.5 cm. Around AD 250.
 Photograph: Susanne Schenker.
 p. 20: Relief, stone, Inv. 1962.2079. Secondary location in the Kaiseraugst fort. Height: 33 cm. AD 200–250.
 Photograph: Susanne Schenker.
 p. 20: Finger ring, bronze, Inv. 1975.10756. Oberstadt, Reg. 5 D. Length key: 2.2 cm. AD 150–250.
 Photograph: Susanne Schenker.
 p. 20: Bead, glass, Inv. 1980.28409. Ins. 22. Diameter: 1.7 cm. AD 1–50. Photograph: Susanne Schenker.
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 Photograph: Susanne Schenker.
 p. 21: Grotesque male figure, pipe-clay, Inv. 1967.13728. Oberstadt, Reg. 5. Height: c. 15 cm. AD 170–200.
 Photograph: Susanne Schenker.
 p. 22: Potters' kilns (excavation 1969.053, photograph no. 1092). Oberstadt, Reg. 7 c.
 Photograph: Augst and Kaiseraugst excavations.
 p. 22: Pincer-brooch, iron, Inv. 1982.6838. Ins. 50. Length: 8.9 cm. AD 150–250. Photograph: Susanne Schenker.
 p. 22: Plane, iron, remains of wood, Inv. 1982.6253. Ins. 50. Length: 14.8 cm. 1st to 3rd cents. AD.
 Photograph: Susanne Schenker.
 p. 23: Potter's kiln (excavation 1965.053, photograph no. 1041). Ins. 28. Photograph: Augst and Kaiseraugst excavations.
 p. 23: Statuette of Volcanus, bronze, Inv. 1963.3271. Ins. 31. Height: 6.6 cm. 1st to 2nd cents. AD.
 Photograph: Susanne Schenker.
 p. 24: Relief, stone, remnants of paint, Inv. 2008.003.F07001.1. Unterstadt, Reg. 19 D. Width: 19 cm.
 Around AD 150–300. Photograph: Susanne Schenker.
 p. 24: Inventory of a *lararium*, bronze. Mercury: Inv. 1984.26898; Hercules: Inv. 1984.26901; pedestal with ram: Inv. 1984.27186; Lar: Inv. 1984.26899; Somnus: Inv. 1984.26900; mouse on base: Inv. 1984.27187–27189. Unterstadt, Reg. 17 E. Height Somnus: 9.9 cm. AD 80–200. Photograph: Susanne Schenker.
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 Photograph: Susanne Schenker.
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Map of monuments

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Map of monuments

- 1 Museum with Roman house and lapidarium
- 2 Temple retaining wall and modern bakery
- 3 Temple on Schönbühl hill
- 4 Theatre
- 5 Taberna
- 6 Forum and forum temple
- 7 Basilica and curia
- 8 Hypocaust
- 9 Bath complex and subterranean well house
- 10 Trading house and workshops
- 11 Sanctuary on Grienmatt
- 12 Amphitheatre
- 13 Water main
- 14 East gate and town wall
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- 16 Funeral monument
- 17 Tile works
- 18 Sewer of the central baths and cellar
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- 20 Rhine baths
- 21 Early church and bishop's residence
- 22 Bridgehead

 Roman town area

