

RG M ROEMISCH GERMANISCHES MUSEUM

English





Valuable glassware

The Romano-Germanic Museum has the largest collection of Roman glass in the world. The different manufacturing techniques and the great variety of decoration are proof of the technical expertise of the glass blowers and casters. The ornate decorations include applied coloured glass threads, gold bands or scenes cut into the glass. The star exhibit is the early 4th century cage cup (vas diatretum) with its filigree network carved through layers of different coloured glass. The miniature portrait of the Emperor Augustus is made of turquoise-coloured glass.





Roman arts and crafts

The many craftsmen active in the Roman city included potters, glass blowers and bronze casters. Other items were imported into Cologne from southern Gaul, Italy and other Mediterranean regions. Works of art were sold at high prices. Marble statues in temples and private houses, bronze vessels, gold and silver jewellery, carved amber and jet, expertly executed cameos and intaglio gems all indicate an elegant lifestyle in Roman Cologne.

Gold jewellery of the Migration Period

The sumptuous gold objects in the Diergardt Collection are among the most valuable items in the museum. They once belonged to Eurasian nomads or Germanic people in the 4th to 6th centuries and come from all over Europe. Costly objects like the ‚Kerch Crown‘ and the diadem set with precious stones from Tigris are world famous.

The descendants of the Roman inhabitants and the Franks

There seems to have been a smooth transition from classical antiquity to the Middle Ages in Cologne. Descendants of the Roman inhabitants and the Franks both lived within the old city walls. The dead were buried near churches outside the city gates. Many rural settlements around Cologne had their own cemeteries. The abundant grave goods from burials of the 5th to 7th centuries reflect the costumes, jewellery, weapons and everyday life of the early Middle Ages.

Archaeological excavations in Cologne

The Romano-Germanic Museum is also the Municipal Office for the Preservation of Archaeological Monuments in accordance with the heritage protection laws of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia. Every year, several dozen surveys and excavations are carried out within the city area.

These excavations relate to all the phases of the city’s culture and history: the physical remains of the early history of mankind, the stone and metal age cultures, the Roman and medieval city as well as finds from the more recent past.

The Romano-Germanic Museum also takes care of more than a hundred permanent sites in the city, including the remaining sections of the Roman city wall, the excavations under St Severin’s Church, the Roman sludge trap in the Berrenrather Strasse and the Roman burial chamber in Cologne-Weiden.

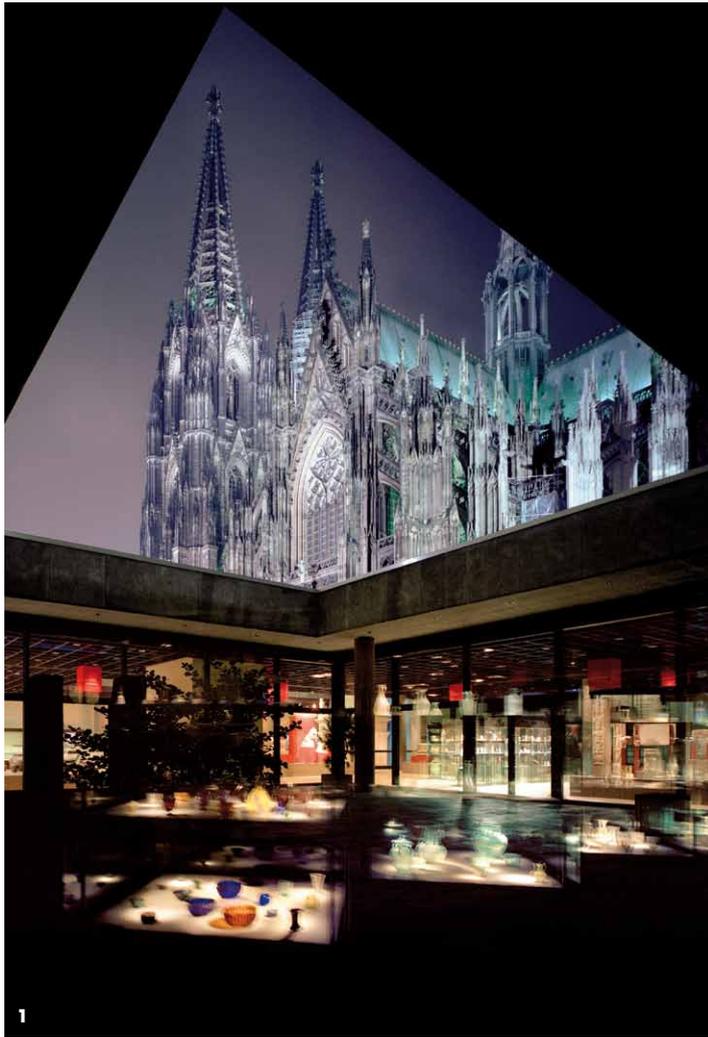
1. The Dionysus mosaic and various stone exhibits
2. The ‚Kerch Crown‘, 5th century AD
3. The tombstone of the cavalryman Bassus, end of the 1st century AD
4. The cage cup (vas diatretum) from Cologne-Braunsfeld, 4th century AD
5. Scene on the ‚boar-hunt bowl‘, 3rd century AD
6. Gold bracelet with emeralds, 3rd century AD
7. Belt buckle with enamel decoration, 6th century AD
8. Marble sarcophagus in the burial chamber in Cologne-Weiden, 3rd century AD

Cover:

The tomb of the veteran legionary Lucius Poblicius, (c.AD 40), and the Wallraf Medusa (1st century AD)

Photographs:

Rheinisches Bildarchiv, Cologne, and Axel Thünker, DGPh



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The Romano-Germanic Museum in Cologne

On display in the Romano-Germanic Museum in Cologne is the archaeological heritage of the city and its environs, from Palaeolithic times to the early Middle Ages.

The unique objects in the museum's collections include many Stone, Bronze and Iron Age finds as well as exquisite items made by expert goldsmiths during the Migration Period in addition to examples of Roman and early medieval art and culture in the city and the surrounding area.

The museum was opened in 1974 right next to Cologne Cathedral. It was built over the remains of a Roman villa with the world-famous Dionysus mosaic (AD 220/230) that once decorated the floor of an elegant dining room. The glass-fronted ground floor of the museum allows passers-by to look down on the mosaic from the open area outside, from where they can also admire the reconstructed two-storey-high grave monument in memory of the veteran legionary Lucius Poblicius (c.AD 40).

Hunters and gatherers

The oldest finds in the museum are evidence of the presence of hunters and gatherers on both sides of the Rhine during the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods (approx. 100,000 - 6,000 BC). Mobile groups would have sought edible plants and hunted game here. The best-known exhibits are the Palaeolithic hand axes and other tools from the Kartsteinhöhle cave in the Eifel mountains.

Early Neolithic farmers

The first farmers arrived during the 6th millennium BC. They cleared the forests and built permanent houses. Particularly exciting was the discovery of a 'Linear Pottery' settlement in the Lindenthal district of Cologne. Later Neolithic cultures also left stone tools and pottery.

Metal was first used in the Rhineland in the early 2nd millennium BC to make everyday tools, weapons and jewellery.



Celtic and Germanic tribes

In the last millennium BC, the Rhineland was settled by Celtic and Germanic tribes whose presence is confirmed by numerous finds within the City of Cologne itself. These people buried their dead under grave mounds: grave goods from the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age are on display.

Oppidum Ubiorum

Shortly before the birth of Christ, Emperor Augustus ordered the military to found a settlement on the site of today's inner city. This Oppidum Ubiorum was the starting point and terminus of Roman roads from the Alps to the North Sea and also to and from what is now France. The population of the new town grew rapidly, large stone buildings were erected, trade and crafts flourished. Finds from this period demonstrate the prosperity of the local citizens.

Everyday life in Roman Cologne

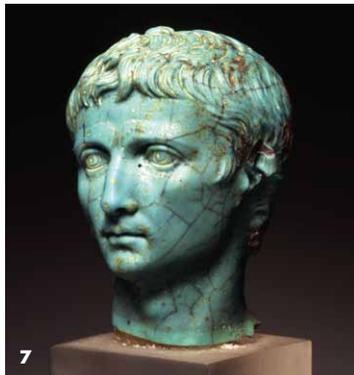
In AD 50, Emperor Claudius granted the settlement the legal status of a Roman colony, called Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium (CCAA), which later became the capital of the imperial province of Germania Inferior.

The remains of decorative architectural structures, inscriptions carved in stone, artistic portraits, colourful wall paintings and mosaics as well as high-quality tableware reflect the wealth and domestic luxury of the Roman citizens of Cologne.

Trade on the Rhine was the main source of this wealth. Goods were imported from all parts of the Roman Empire: limestone from

Lorraine, timber from the Black Forest, wine from Asia Minor, fish sauce, oil and olives from North Africa and southern Europe.

Death and the afterlife were ever-present in Roman Cologne. Cemeteries lined the major roads leading North, West and South. Extravagant memorials and rich grave goods show how expensive an appropriate burial could be. Relief sculptures and images of the gods in stone, bronze and clay are an expression of the prevailing religious beliefs.



1. The Roman glass collection with Cologne Cathedral in the background
2. Roman travelling carriage (reconstruction), 2nd century AD
3. Imperial portraits and a gateway arch with the Roman city's initials CCAA
4. Neolithic finds from Cologne-Lindenthal
5. Celtic vase from Troisdorf, 1st century AD
6. Amber boat with cupids playing musical instruments, 2nd century AD
7. Miniature portrait of Emperor Augustus, turquoise-coloured glass, early 1st century AD
8. Harvest wagon on the Dionysus mosaic, approx. AD 230



Romano-Germanic Museum in Cologne

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Opening hours

Tue to Sun 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Public transport

Rail service: Hauptbahnhof
Bus, tram, underground: Dom/Hauptbahnhof

Guided tours:

please contact Museumsdienst Köln
Tel. (02 21) 221-234 68 and -273 80;
service.museumsdienst@stadt-koeln.de

Museum shop:

Koeselsche Buchhandlung
Literature on classical antiquity, replicas of museum exhibits
and Roman glass, museum publications

Ein Museum der



Stadt Köln