

MiQua. 2000 YEARS OF THE HISTORY OF COLOGNE UNDERGROUND

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Abstract

From 2024, the archaeological museum landscape in the Rhineland will be enriched by a new building, the MiQua. LVR Jewish Museum in the Archaeological Quarter of Cologne. The site had been known for a long time since the extensive excavations by Otto Doppelfeld in front of and below the Cologne City Hall, who extensively investigated the findings of the Praetorium, the medieval Jewish Quarter and the Christian Craftsmen's Quarter in the 1950s. The name of the museum reveals that there is more to it than just the archaeology of the Roman or Medieval period. It is about 2000 years of history in the heart of the city of Cologne, about the history of the urban centre and the development of a more than unconventional museum concept. The City of Cologne, which has been running the precursor of the future museum since 1959 with the Praetorium, is the builder and the owner, while the Landschaftsverband Rheinland (Rhineland Regional Council) will operate the facility and manage the exhibition and event operations.

Keywords: Cologne, Bonn, underground city.

Introduction

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Archaeological Quarter of Cologne. The site has been known for a long time, at the latest since the extensive excavations by Otto Doppelfeld in front of and below Cologne City Hall, who extensively investigated the findings of the Praetorium, the medieval Jewish Quarter and the Christian Craftsmen's Quarter in the 1950s.

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In the 2008 architectural competition "Archaeological Zone and Jewish Museum Cologne", the design of the firm Wandel Hoefer Lorch & Hirsch from Saarbrücken (today Wandel Lorch Architekten) prevailed. The architecture of the museum building is designed as a hall-like protective structure over the archaeological site. The interior is free of columns, thus preserving perspectives and insights into archaeology, while the upper floor of the museum



Fig. 1. View of the new Jewish Museum from GÜlichplatz: MiQua and, vis-à-vis, the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum & Fondation Corboud, will border a new square, known as Augustusplatz (Wandel Lorch Architekten).



Fig. 2. Excavations of the 1950's years of Otto Doppelfeld (City of Cologne)

offers space for permanent and temporary exhibitions, for events and the necessary functional rooms such as the foyer, cash desk area and more. Air spaces enclosed by a glazed diamond-shaped structure above the archaeological findings of the synagogue and mikvah provide a variety of insights into archaeology from the exhibition level.

The archaeological site is the star of the museum. Quite simply, that is the basis for the underlying concept, which has evolved from archaeological finds at this location. Since the excavations of Otto Doppelfeld beneath and in front of the City Hall in the 1950s, the focus has been on two thousand years of history right in the heart of the city.

The archaeological site

The museum consists of an underground archaeological course of 6000 square metres and a 600-metre-long circuit and the new building placed above ground. The in situ presentation of the unique archaeological features and finds at their original site is carried out continuously with a contextual approach. Objects from other places will only be shown in the permanent exhibition in exceptional cases.

The archaeological trail adapts organically to the sequence of the monuments, so a chronological tour without major detours is not possible. Nevertheless, there will be the possibility of thematic tours devoted exclusively to the Praetorium, the synagogue or the Jewish community buildings. The tour will begin in the medieval Jewish quarter of Cologne with the synagogue, the Jewish ritual bath (mikvah), the dance house and the warm bath. The archaeological findings are particularly exciting against the background of historical tradition, as the naming of an early Jewish community in Cologne was already documented in the famous decree of 321 at the time of Emperor Constantine. The synagogue alone has been handed down in four construction phases from the early 11th to the early 15th century, and on the eastern wall of the synagogue there are remains of the foundations of Aron HaKodesch, the repository of the Torah scrolls, and the room under the Bima in the middle of the synagogue, from which the weekly Torah reading took place.

The outstanding and unique finds include an extensive collection of slates with Hebraic inscriptions. They include names, biblical quotations and exercises, giving an insight into the topics of Jewish teaching and scholarship in the Middle Ages. MiQua also aims to embed the people who lived here and their stories into the exhibition. The objective is to make the site and the remains easier to understand and to introduce a new perspective: giving the people a voice of their own as well as presenting an exhibition about Jews and Jewish history. They include a family that probably lived in the Jewish quarter in Cologne for 250 years until the pogrom of 1349, identified by the name HaLevi. Their family tree will be presented in the exhibition, linked to the



Fig. 3. Aerial photo of the excavations on the square „Rathausplatz“ (City of Cologne)

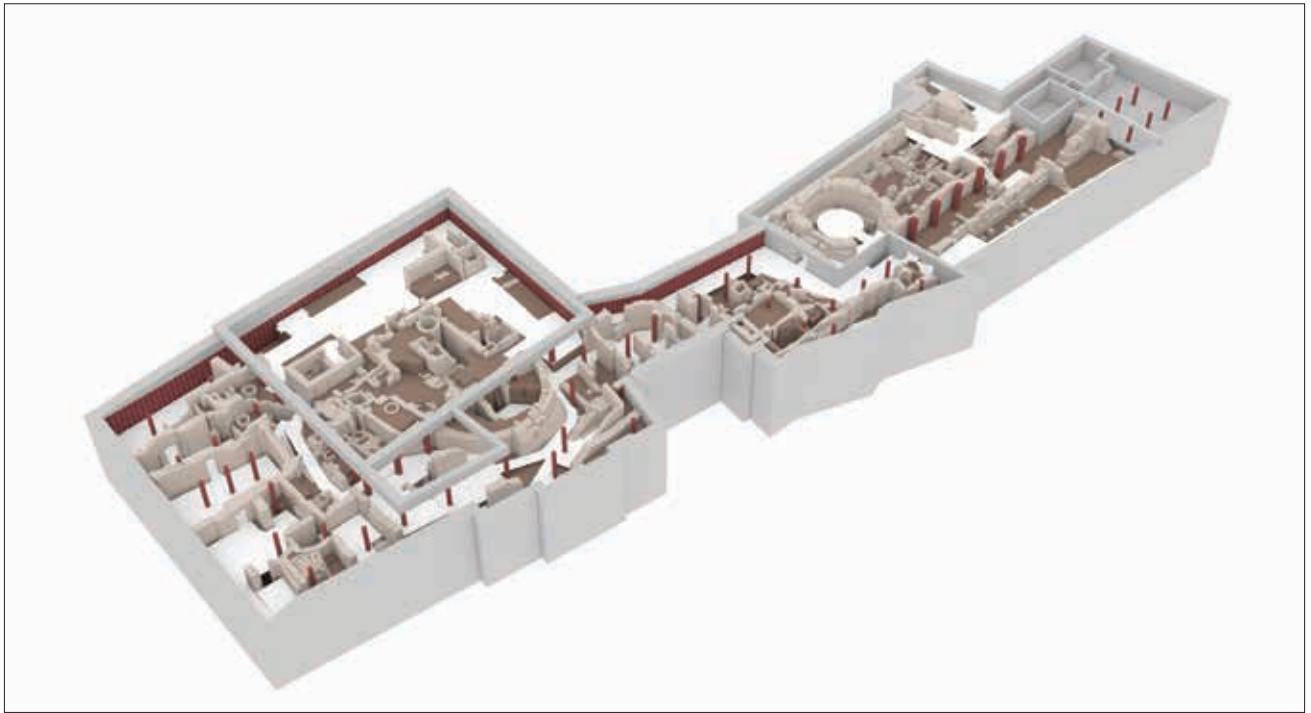


Fig. 4-6. 3D-Modelling/Rendering of the Archaeological Parcours (Wandel Lorch Architekten/Architectura Virtualis, M. Grellert)

medieval synagogue and supported by information, quotations and audio presentations.

Through a “time lock”, the visitor will go back more than 1000 years in time and take a look at the Praetorium – the Governor’s Palace, administrative seat of the Lower German Province and thus the centre of Roman rule on the Rhine. The Praetorium is unique among the archaeologically known sites in this size and preservation. As the central site of the Lower German Province, the Praetorium will be the core of the UNESCO World Heritage application “Frontiers of the Roman Empire – The Lower German Limes”, which is being prepared together with the Netherlands and Rhineland-Palatinate and has been submitted to UNESCO in January 2020.

The complex building history of the Praetorium from the 1st century to late antiquity is explained

in at least four building phases, the history of the province and the continuity of the building and the square in post-antiquity.

One focus of the research work is the reconstruction of monuments from Roman and medieval times. Both the Praetorium as governor’s seat of the Lower Germanic province and the medieval synagogue of the Jewish quarter have been handed down as extremely complex findings. In a research project sponsored by the Fritz Thyssen Foundation, reconstruction models of the buildings are being developed for the exhibition. The reconstruction steps and the process of weighing up the merits of certain detailed solutions are documented and all the results are discussed by international teams of experts. This method guarantees that research results are always up to date and are shown directly in the



Fig. 7. 3D-Modelling/Rendering of the Synagogue and the so-called 'Tanzhaus' in the medieval Jewish Quarter of Cologne (Architectura Virtualis, M. Grellert)

exhibition in analogue and digital models as well as in short films.

Inscriptions and other stone monuments, a gallery of the governors as well as dating individual finds illustrate this finding. The 250 m² exhibition room north of the Praetorium houses the history of the provincial administration and the Lower Germanic Limes. A special guided tour of the Colonia sewer is also possible. Along the display facade of the Praetorium, a 3D reconstruction of the late antique palace complex is illustrated.

The same exhibition area to the north of the praetorium is already used for exhibitions, presenting the history of this Roman province, the Roman administration and the creation of the Lower German Limes. A special tour of the sewer system of Roman Colonia is also available. 3D reconstructions of the praetorium based on the latest scientific research highlight the monumental nature and distinctive architectural features of the palace complex.

Defined sections of the tour provide information about the stratigraphy of the site and profiles provide a fascinating insight into 2000 years of city history. The tour then leads back to the Jewish Quarter, with an equally urgent and today's current topic, which is based on the archaeological findings. The rubble from the pogroms in 1349, a layer of destruction documented over a large area with rich finds, tells us about the caesura of the medieval Jewish pogroms, exclusion, expulsion and expropriation, which was important for the whole of European history. On the basis of the archaeological findings, the entire history of the resettlement of the Jews from 1372 until the complete restitution and return of the synagogue to the community in 1395 can be presented.

Due to the complex archaeology of the square, there are repeated overlaps between the Roman and

medieval findings. For example, the Jewish residential buildings on Enggasse and Judengasse overlap the southernmost sections of the Praetorium – visitors literally move between the layers.

Remains of a Roman thermal bath can be found among the findings of the medieval goldsmith's quarter, and the later medieval Jewish quarter is also located above the large Roman apse. At various locations the visitor is offered scenic stagings as well as reconstructions based on new scientific findings. This is intended to provide a visual impression and an examination of the reconstructed historical architecture in direct comparison with the original findings.

In the Roman apse the exhibition will present Emperor Constantine's decree of 321, along with the question of a Jewish settlement to the north of the Alps in the first millennium. Results of archaeological and historical research are incorporated in an interactive map, based on archaeological finds and written sources.

The third focal point is a dense sequence of medieval cellars, which spatially, chronologically and functionally mark the area where the Jewish quarter and the Christian goldsmith quarter meet. These rooms were in use until the destruction of the Second World War, as a rich early modern material shows. Central themes, however, are everyday medieval culture and the phenomenon of Christians and Jews living together in a confined space. Supplemented by a wealth of historical sources, the exhibition deals with the most diverse aspects of social and economic history as well as with the examination of narratives that have been handed down and ingrain-



Fig. 8. 3D-Rekonstruktion of the gothic architecture of the Bima in the medieval synagogue of Cologne (Architectura Virtualis, M. Grellert)



Fig. 9. Reconstruction of the late antique Praetorium (Architectura Virtualis/TU Darmstadt, M. Grellert)

ned. The latter becomes clear, for example, in the topic of “ghettos”, i.e. the question of the stigmatisation and coinage of this term and its charging of content. A rich tradition of finds from handicraft production such as melting furnaces and crucibles, tools and production remnants such as slags illustrates the medieval goldsmith’s craft.

After the archaeological trail, visitors experience the continuation of the permanent exhibition with the history of the Jewish community after 1424 up to the present day in the permanent and temporary exhibition area of the new museum building. A focus will also be on the history of the reception of the Jewish Museum as a construction, its origins and its different reception in modern urban society.



Fig. 10. Latrina in the medieval House Lyverman (City of Cologne)

The new museum

Following after the tour through the archaeological parcour in the modern Museums building the Jewish history from 1424 to the present will be presented. This concept reacts on the history of the place, where the history of the Jewish community and its archaeological traces ended in 1424, the year in which Jews were expelled from Cologne. A sequence of rooms in the upper floor of the museum will present Jewish history in Cologne from 1424 to the present day. The architecture of the museums building allows visitors, to have insights into the remains of the medieval jewish quarter with the synagogue, with a transparent rhomboid frame providing a visual link between the exhibition area and the archaeological site.

So the architectural concept of the building contains two functions, the visual as well as the thematic link between the two levels of the building, as also the two levels of the permanent exhibition.

The permanent exhibition in the new museum concentrates on Jewish history and culture in Cologne, especially cultural identity. Therefore, will be used different positions, perspectives and intentions spanning time and space. As everywhere, Jewish history and culture in Cologne is dominated and shaped by people. This multiple picture stands against a simple and superficial perception of two cultural identities, because never Jews and non-Jews co-existed without contact to one another. At the same time the concept differentiates and highlights the fine boundary between the identities.

Jewish history and culture in Cologne deals also with historicity and authenticity of places, their past, present and future. Some memorials still exist or have recently been created, while others have been forgotten or overlaid, so they are hardly perceptible in the urban organism of the city.





In the archaeological tour as in the permanent exhibition of the new museum the focus lays on three key ideas: a multi-perspective view on history, the fact that people shape history, time and space, and the main motive for the museum here and only here in this authentic place. For Jewish history in Cologne since 1424 that means going out into the city, virtually and in reality.

The exhibition is departed in three sections. The first part of the exhibition will look at the history of Judaic exhibitions and collections in Cologne over

the last century. It will explore the different motives and historical contexts in which they were embedded, the message they were used to convey, and the messages and identities ascribed to them. The multiperspective concept includes the own sight of exhibitors and collectors. Of great importance in this meaning is the Werkbund exhibition of 1914, where on the site of the present Kölnmesse exhibition centre a look at Jewish religion and contemporary Jewish life took place. The organizer, as the responsible institution was the Deutscher Werkbund, which was founded in 1907. As a testimonial for the different faiths was aside a Catholic and a Protestant church the vestibule and prayer hall of a synagogue, a public sign of the equality of Jewish religious life, designed by the architect Friedrich Adler. Two other important exhibitions must be mentioned here, which presented Jewish life and culture in a wider context: the Millennium exhibition in 1925 and the Pressa exhibition with a special Jewish section. This part of the museum concludes with important objects from a contemporary private collection and the collection and donations of the MiQua-Friends.

The second section of the exhibition follows a biographical approach. It will focus on prominent and normal people from the past 600 years. The focus is on showing Jewish society as part of normal urban society. Among the personalities are for example Cilli Marx, a teacher at the city's Jewish school and co-author of the interconfessional "Domfibel" published in 1929, or also Ernst Zwirner, architect of the synagogue in the Glockengasse, and also Mr. and Mrs. Stern, who in 1798 became the first Jewish inhabitants of Cologne since the expulsion of the Jews in 1424.

The third section will feature an interactive digital tour of the city, enabling visitors to discover the places in Cologne that are connected with its Jewish history and culture. There will be the possibility to be guided through the city by different people, so that there is a connection from the museum to the city and vice versa. Pictures and stories will construct a complex and diverse view of Cologne's varied Jewish history, which extends across the entire city and was and is still today part of the city.

In this way, MiQua's concept covers the entire 2000-year history of the city and raises awareness of an important part of the cultural heritage of Cologne, the Rhineland and Europe. The museum will therefore create a close link between a multi-faceted past and the challenges of the present and future.

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Born in Bonn in 1966. Studied prehistory and early medieval archaeology, classical archaeology and ancient history at the University of Bonn and at the University

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As a Curator responsible for organising the archaeological exhibitions “Fundgeschichten: Archäologie in Nordrhein-Westfalen” in 2010 and “Revolution jungSteinzeit” in 2015. Director of MiQua. LVR-Jewish Museum in the Archaeological Quarter Cologne since 1 June 2016.