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Between mountains and frontiers: the Roman settlement system in the provinces of Germania Superior, Raetia and Noricum

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4. Public buildings: urbanity through monumentality

K. Lomas wrote that 'There is no doubt that public buildings were regarded in Antiquity as a significant part of the urban landscape and vital to the city's status and identity.'⁵²⁹ In the Roman mind the concept of city was inseparably connected with a certain type of monumental centre, equipped with a definite set of public buildings. Subordinate centres however, could equally develop a certain level of monumental core. Exactly these public buildings and infrastructures will serve as a guide through this chapter to investigate the physical aspects of Roman centres.

The aim of this chapter is to investigate the monumental character of the Roman centres in the northern Alpine region. Since in the case of the north-western Alpine region certain forms of evidence, such as epigraphy, are rather limited, archaeological remains and in particular the remnants of public buildings offer a good opportunity to broaden the investigation of the Roman settlement network, its towns and their townscapes. The emphasis is placed on four elements of the set of public buildings, namely *forum-basilica* complexes, spectacle buildings, water provision and baths, and finally circuit walls.

4.1 Public monuments: the threshold of a Roman urban centre

Modern scholars have often used ancient literary sources to legitimate the importance attached to public monuments when researching ancient towns. In his classic article on the ancient city, written in the 1970s, M. Finley, for example, concluded that certain 'necessary conditions of architecture and amenity, which in turn expressed certain social, cultural and political conditions', existed, and which were seen as essential by classical authors before a settlement could be considered a true city.⁵³⁰ Writing at the same time as M. Finley, L. Homo, in his book *Rome impériale et l'urbanisme dans l'antiquité*, started with a general theoretical approach to how urbanism was seen in antiquity, analysing Greek and Roman authors, from Aristotle to Vitruvius.⁵³¹ In a recent summary on Roman urbanism, J. Edmondson also draws on several passages from Vergil's *Aeneid* to conclude that a city needed to be equipped with a monumental centre, just as much as it required laws, a constitution, local magistrates or a local senate.⁵³² Edmondson not only uses written sources, but also refers to ancient images of towns to demonstrate the significance of public monuments.⁵³³

Naturally, the archaeological record has also played a large part in this debate. J.E. Stambaugh has considered the physical remains of ancient cities as the starting point for constructing an understanding of urban life in antiquity and advocating the use of multiple approaches to investigation, including social, topographical, or architectural perspectives.⁵³⁴

P. Zanker has pointed out the influence of the Roman socio-political ideology on the physical appearance of Roman cities. According to him, its origins go back to the Republican period and lie more specifically in the public infrastructure of the *forum* and the *basilica*. From the age of Augustus

⁵²⁹ Lomas 2003, 30.

⁵³⁰ Finley, 1977, 305-306; Pausanias, 10.4.1 and Aristotle, *Politics* 1330a, 34ff.

⁵³¹ Homo 1971, 13-24.

⁵³² Edmondson, 2006, 250-251. Edmondson refers to Vergil's *Aeneid*, sections 1. 419-429, 441, 446-449, 505-509.

⁵³³ Edmondson 2006, 250-254.

⁵³⁴ Stambaugh 1988, 1-2.

onwards the theatres, amphitheatres and bath complexes became also reflections of this ideological framework. Because of these buildings, the visual and physical aspect of the meaning of a Roman urban centre increased. M. Horster summarises Zanker's view as follows: 'The abstract ideals of the built environment defined the Romanness of a city in the Roman Empire'.⁵³⁵ According to Zanker the initial fixed layout for new Roman cities in the provinces, consisting of a centrally located *forum-basilica* complex, gradually faded into the background once more buildings joined the typical physical look of a Roman town.⁵³⁶ Horster adheres to this point of view by stating that most town plans were not designed beforehand, but rather resulted from a shared viewpoint of what a city should be, namely a monumental urban centre with specific public buildings. The monumentality of a Roman town was the mirror of its prosperity and wealth, mainly concentrated within the social class of the ruling elite. Both Zanker and Horster stress the influence and investments of the local elite as incentives for the building programmes. From the archaeological remains as well as from building inscriptions, they find a profound connection between the wealthy upper class and the construction and maintenance of a city's buildings.⁵³⁷ The construction of these large-scale public buildings was a vital element in the changing character of urban places in Late-Republican and Early-Imperial Italy and developed into a model for urbanity throughout the Roman Empire.⁵³⁸ In addition to this, scholars over recent decades have agreed on the fact that these monumental features became common characteristics of Roman centres, regardless of status or specific function. M. Rostovtzeff considered these public infrastructures as part of the general aim of every Roman community, namely to create a comfortable living environment.⁵³⁹ The communities in the northern Alpine region also participated in this urban process.

4.2 *Forum-basilica* complexes

Fora performed as the centres of towns, originally hosting both political and commercial activities. The *forum* was the place where politicians and traders met. The paved square was enclosed on one side by the *basilica* and on the other sides was surrounded by *tabernae*, shops and offices. According to Vitruvius, the *basilica* was 'constructed on a site adjoining the forum and preferably in the warmest possible quarter, so that in winter business men could gather in them without being troubled by the weather'.⁵⁴⁰ The *basilica* of the Roman centre in Riegel, for example, was located along the southern side of the forum.⁵⁴¹ Sessions of the local law courts were also held in the *basilica*. Its apsidal shape made sure, so wrote Vitruvius, that 'those standing before the magistrates were not in the way of the business men'.⁵⁴² The remains of a *basilica* building are therefore often recognised by the apse. It is believed that the other important buildings relating to the governing and administration of a town, such as the *curia*, treasury and prison, were generally also situated on the *forum* or in its immediate vicinity.⁵⁴³ It has been argued by F. Laurence, S. Esmonde Cleary and G.

⁵³⁵ Horster 2014, 517.

⁵³⁶ Zanker 2000, 25-41.

⁵³⁷ *Ibid.*, 25-41; Horster 2014, 515; 517-518; Duncan-Jones 1990, 174-184.

⁵³⁸ Lomas 2003, 28.

⁵³⁹ Rostovtzeff 1957, 142-145; Laurence, Esmonde-Cleary and Sears 2011, 2.

⁵⁴⁰ Vitruvius, *The ten books on Architecture*, 5.1.4.

⁵⁴¹ Dreier 2005, 188.

⁵⁴² Vitruvius, *The ten books on Architecture*, 5.1.8.

⁵⁴³ Laurence, Esmonde-Cleary and Sears 2011, 170. The *forum* of the *colonia Augusta Raurica* is described as a typical *forum* with *basilica* and *curia* (Flutsch, Niffeler and Rossi 2002, 367.). Although the interpretation of the

Sears that it was the example of the *forum* developed in northern Italy at places such as Brescia, Luni and Benevagienna during the first half of the 1st century AD, that provided the model of the Roman *forum* in the western provinces.⁵⁴⁴ The biggest change had been the addition of the religious aspect, through which the *forum* became dominated by one or more temples. That the *capitolium* – temple for Jupiter, Juno and Minerva – had become a dominant element of the *fora* in provincial towns, has recently been questioned in a study by J. C. Quinn and A. Wilson. They concluded that these *capitolia* were in fact not a very common and well distributed type of temple in Roman towns across the Empire, with the exception of the regions of Italy and Roman North Africa. According to their study no remains of a *capitolium* have been found in any centre in the northern Alpine region.⁵⁴⁵ This contrasts with the interpretation of *capitolia* by regional scholars on the archaeological sites of, for example, Augst, Besançon and Celje.⁵⁴⁶ Whether or not we are dealing with *capitolia*, adjacent to the *forum* the construction of a temple or temples lining the *forum* were often part of to the initial layout.⁵⁴⁷ The imperial cult also influenced the appearance of the *forum*. Statues of members of the imperial family were erected all over these squares, followed by monuments and sculptures of local benefactors. Being the impressive monumental centre of the town became the function of the *forum* during the High Empire.⁵⁴⁸

4.2.1 Different kinds of centres with different kinds of *fora*

The term *forum* in secondary literature can refer to a central square with related political and commercial buildings surrounding it as described above, and equally refer simply to an open market square, which makes it difficult to determine whether an official *forum* is meant. That the typical layout of a Roman *forum*, provided with porticos and *tabernae* surrounding the square, was taken over in the design of market squares, compounds these terminological difficulties further.⁵⁴⁹ However, at 53 sites in the northern Alpine region remains of a sort of public square have been identified (Fig. 4.1).

Only seven self-governing centres have *forum-basilica* complexes that have been relatively well investigated, including the *civitas* centres of *Borbetomagus/Worms*, *Lopodunum/Ladenburg* and *Riegel*, the *coloniae* *Aventicum/Avenches* and *Julia Equestris/Nyon*, all located within the borders of the province of Germania Superior, as well as the Norican *municipia* *Teurnia/St. Peter in Holz* and *Virunum/Zollfeld*.⁵⁵⁰ There are three more *forum-basilica* complexes known from subordinate

remains is uncertain, the *forum*-complex in Eisenberg was most likely provided with a *basilica* and *curia* (Bernhard *et al.* 2008, 137-138.).

⁵⁴⁴ Laurence, Esmonde-Cleary and Sears 2011, 171 ff.

⁵⁴⁵ Quinn and Wilson 2013, 117-128; overview of *capitolia*: 133-134.

⁵⁴⁶ Augst: Drack 1958, 7-8; Drack and Fellmann 1988, 239; 452. The remains in Augst have more recently been described as a podium temple for the imperial cult (Flutsch, Niffeler and Rossi 2002, 367.); Besançon: Castan 1869, 28-31.; Celje: Bausovac 2014, 17-18.

⁵⁴⁷ Rivet 1966, 104-112.

⁵⁴⁸ Laurence, Esmonde-Cleary and Sears 2011, 170-197.

⁵⁴⁹ Sommer 2007, 90-93.

⁵⁵⁰ Worms: Cüppers 1990, 673 Ladenburg: Sommer 1992a, 127-128; Carroll 2001, 47-48.; Riegel: Dreier 2005, 188; 2010, 60-61.; Avenches: Carroll 2001, 48; Castella *et al.* 2015, 69-70.; Nyon: Grenier 1931, 336; Drack and Fellmann 1988, 452; Carroll 2001, 48.; St. Peter: Glaser 2002, 140.; Zollfeld: Luschin 2003, 171.

centres, namely from *Alesia*/Alise St. Reine and Vidy (Lausanne) in Germania Superior and from *Cambodunum*/Kempten in Raetia.⁵⁵¹

Although every chartered town must have had a *forum-basilica* complex, the archaeological remains frequently fail to confirm this. That the *fora* of some towns currently remain unlocated is often due to the fact that the modern town covers the Roman site entirely. This is the case, for example, at Roman Augsburg, Salzburg and Wels.⁵⁵² The presence of a strict street grid can in some cases help to locate the *forum-basilica* complex since the political and commercial heart of a town was normally located at the intersection of the two main streets, the *cardo decumanus* and *decumanus maximus*. The area of *insulae* 20, 23, 25, 26 was always indicated as the possible location for the *forum* of the Norican *municipium Flavia Solva*/Wagna. A survey carried out in 1999 in *insula* 23 did reveal remains of the forum, a square surrounded by halls and rooms (most likely *horrea* and *tabernae*).⁵⁵³ The location of the *forum-basilica* complex of *Nida*/Frankfurt-Heddernheim, the centre of the *civitas Taunensium*, is also assumed at the conjunction of the two main roads in front of the military fort.⁵⁵⁴ Concerning the *forum-basilica* complex of *Brucomagus*/Brumath, the centre of the *civitas Tribocorum*, the remains of a 14,5 m long building found in the current *Rue des Juifs* together with structures that possibly belonged to a temple and a high number of decorated architectural fragments, have been interpreted as a *basilica*. The actual *forum* is unlocated, but it is almost certain that it was situated at the crossing of the *cardo decumanus* and *decumanus maximus*.⁵⁵⁵

It is interesting however that the number of possible official *forum-basilica* complexes is considerably higher than the number of chartered towns that could be identified in chapter two. Remains of possible *fora-basilica* complexes were found at the sites of several subordinate centres in Southern Germania Superior, such as in Lenzburg and *Vertillum*/Vertault.⁵⁵⁶ In Kempraten a public square was found belonging to the centre of *Centum Prata* that was surrounded by several formal looking buildings, but none has been identified as a *basilica*.⁵⁵⁷ This phenomenon is highly interesting concerning the province of Raetia where the *municipium Augusta Vindelicum* remains the only attested chartered town. The high level of urban development of the Roman site of *Cambodunum*/Kempten is generally known and has led to the suggestion that the place may have served as the governor's seat before *Augusta Vindelicum*/Augsburg took over that position. The *forum* dated to the Flavian period, and was provided with a *basilica* and decorated with columns.⁵⁵⁸ Remains of possible *forum-basilica* complexes were also found at the Roman sites of *Bratananium*/Gauting, *Brigantium*/Bregenz and *Curia*/Chur.⁵⁵⁹ Could it be that some of these centres were not only of regional importance because of trading, logistical or religious services, but also

⁵⁵¹ Alise St.-Reine: Bedon 2001, 65.; Vidy: Drack and Fellmann 1988, 423; Carroll 2001, 49.; Kempten: Weber 2000, 52-53; 99.

⁵⁵² Augsburg: The Stefansgarten is assumed to be the place of the *forum* (Bakker 2000, 88-94.); Salzburg: G. Thüry gives an in-depth overview of all location considered for the location of the *forum* of the Roman town (Thüry 2014b, 307-318.); Wels: The area west of the current Kaiser Josef Platz is suggested for location of the Roman *forum* (Miglbauer 2006, 11.).

⁵⁵³ Groh, Neubauer and Eder-Hinterleitner 1999, 38; Groh *et al.* 2002, 130.

⁵⁵⁴ Website: Transformation.

⁵⁵⁵ Petry and Kern 1974, 30. Bedon 2001, 127.

⁵⁵⁶ Lenzburg: Paunier 1994, 84-85.; Vertault: Bedon 2001, 322.

⁵⁵⁷ Website: Römersiedlung Kempraten.

⁵⁵⁸ Weber 2000, 53.

⁵⁵⁹ Gauting: Czysz 1995, 447.; Bregenz: see footnote 32.; Chur: Flutsch, Niffeler and Rossi 2002, 374.

because of administrative and municipal activities? It seems very likely that some of these places could have been the central settlement of some unknown *civitates*. In the case of the site of *Brigantium*, for example the epigraphic sources are very limited. However, the centre flourished thanks to its location along important roads and became an important headquarters after the withdrawal of the frontier to the lake Constance during the 3rd century. Despite the small number of epigraphic finds, a few *cives* are attested. It has been suggested that these may have been inhabitants of a *civitas* (maybe the *civitas Brigantiensis?*), although the presence of some Roman traders seems a more likely explanation.⁵⁶⁰ If some of these centres belonged to a *civitas*, the municipal network of Raetia would have been much more dense and the municipal organisation of the province would have been more similar to the situation in Gaul and the two Germanic provinces. Unfortunately, the evidence is as yet insufficient to support this suggestion. The distribution of the known *forum-basilica* complexes in Noricum is rather peculiar in the sense that they seem to be restricted only to the self-governing towns. Probably due to the relatively high density of chartered towns in this province, there was no need for other centres to provide these infrastructures and the accompanying services.⁵⁶¹

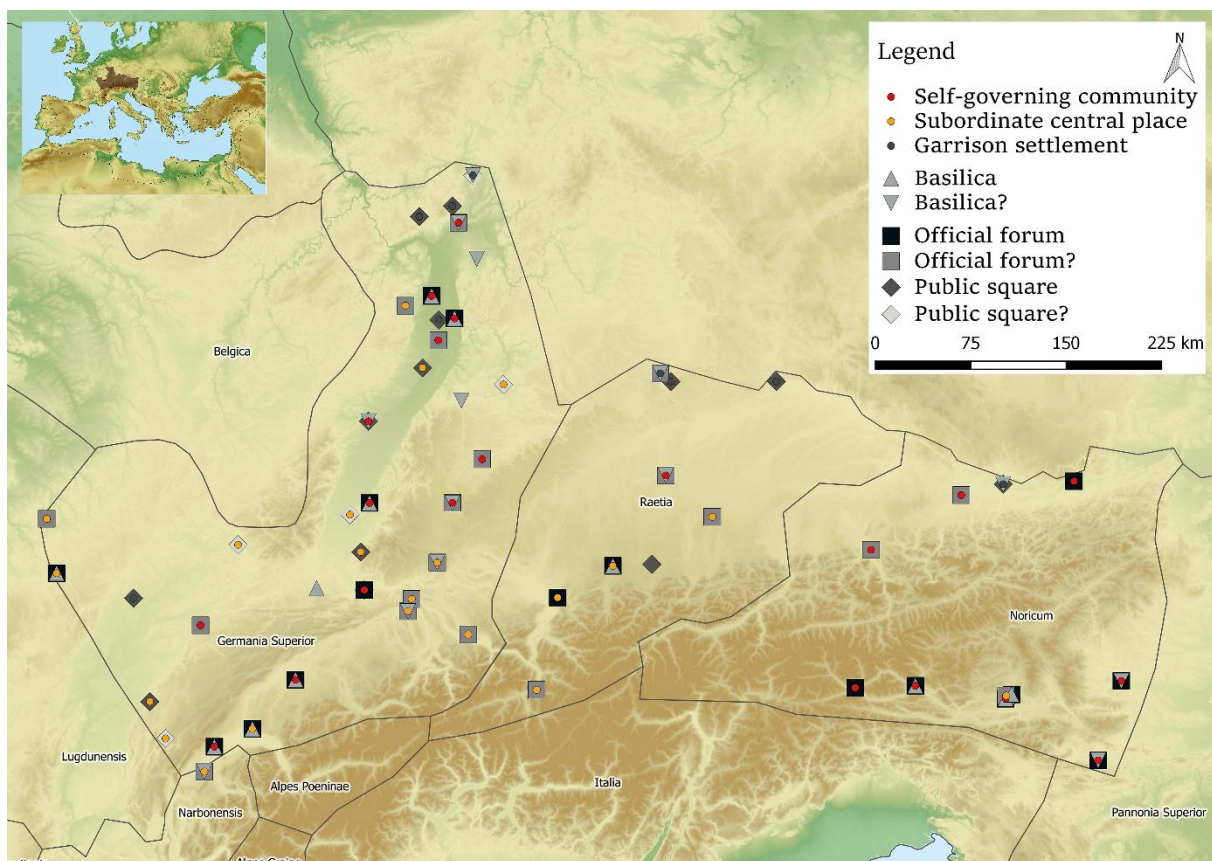


Fig. 4.1: Overview of public squares and *forum-basilica* complexes.

⁵⁶⁰ Heger 1985, 13 ff. and also website: The Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites, Brigantium.

⁵⁶¹ The only possible exception is the uncertain identification of an imperial forum in St. Michael am Zollfeld, near the *municipium Virunum* (Groh 2005, 93.).

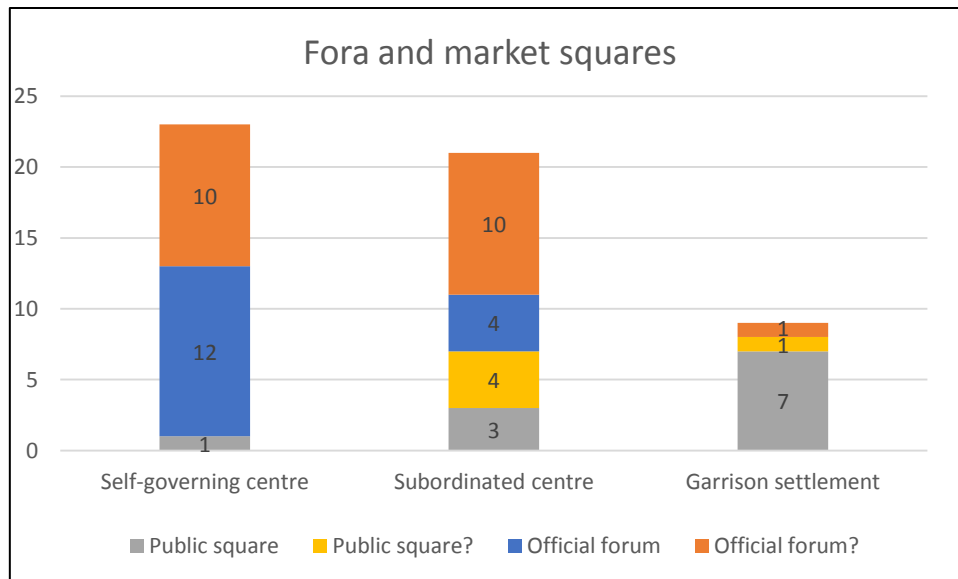


Fig. 4.2: Squares and *forum* complexes in different kinds of centres

Not all remains of public squares at the 53 sites should be considered as an official *forum-basilica* complex as described above (Fig. 4.2). Some chartered towns had second public square in addition to their *forum*, such as in the case of the *coloniae Augusta Raurica/Augst* and *Julia Equestris*.⁵⁶² From the data it appears that many subordinate centres also had an open space that possibly served as a public or market square, such as the potters centre in Rheinzabern or the spa centre of *Luxovium/Luxeuil*.⁵⁶³ The relatively high number of garrison settlements with a market square fits in with the idea of garrison settlements as regional markets for both local residents and the immediate hinterland. According to C.S. Sommer, these were open spaces intentionally planned from by the initial construction phases of the garrison settlements, including the fort and the living quarters of the civilian population.⁵⁶⁴ Some of these open spaces were rectangular in shape, such as in the legionary base of Mirebeau and the garrison settlements of *Bricinacum/Weissenburg*, *Kumpfmühl* and *Icinicum/Theilenhofen*.⁵⁶⁵ There are also garrison settlements where the open space had a roughly triangular shape, as for example in Saalburg I and Zugmantel.⁵⁶⁶ The remains of a trapezoidal-shaped market were found in the garrison settlement of the legionary base of *Lauriacum/Enns*.⁵⁶⁷

In general, the remains of these squares distinguished themselves from the official *fora* by the absence of structures that could be interpreted as official or commercial buildings, such as a *basilica* or *curia*, although there are a few contested cases. Geophysical research at Theilenhofen revealed, in addition to the outlay of an open square, the contours of an adjacent rectangular building. This prompted the questions of whether one could interpret this complex as a *basilica* and whether it is possible to speak of an official *forum-basilica* complex in the garrison settlement of *Icinicum* (Fig

⁵⁶² Augst: Ferdière 2004, 355-359.; Nyon: Drack 1958, 8.

⁵⁶³ Rheinzabern: Cüppers 1990, 533.; Luxeuil: Bedon 2001, 200.

⁵⁶⁴ Sommer 1999a, 87.

⁵⁶⁵ Mirebeau: Goguet 2008, 239.; Weissenburg: Sommer 2014, 30.; Kumpfmühl: Sommer 1999a, 87.; Theilenhofen: Mischka, Obmann and Henrich 2010, 10-13.

⁵⁶⁶ Saalburg and Zugmantel (Zugmantal II however had a rectangular shaped square): Sommer 1999a, 87.

⁵⁶⁷ The market in *Lauriacum* was a *forum venale*, a trapezoidal shaped square (57m x 64m) and surrounded on three sides by halls and shops (Kandler and Vettters 1986, 92. and website: Lauriacum.).

4.3).⁵⁶⁸ Similar results were derived from the geophysical survey in Arnsburg (Fig. 4.3).⁵⁶⁹ Nevertheless, more archaeological research is needed before such conclusions can be drawn and until then an interpretation as storage halls is equally, if not more, likely. Also, the remains of a building alongside the *forum venale* in *Lauriacum* have been interpreted as a possible *basilica*.⁵⁷⁰

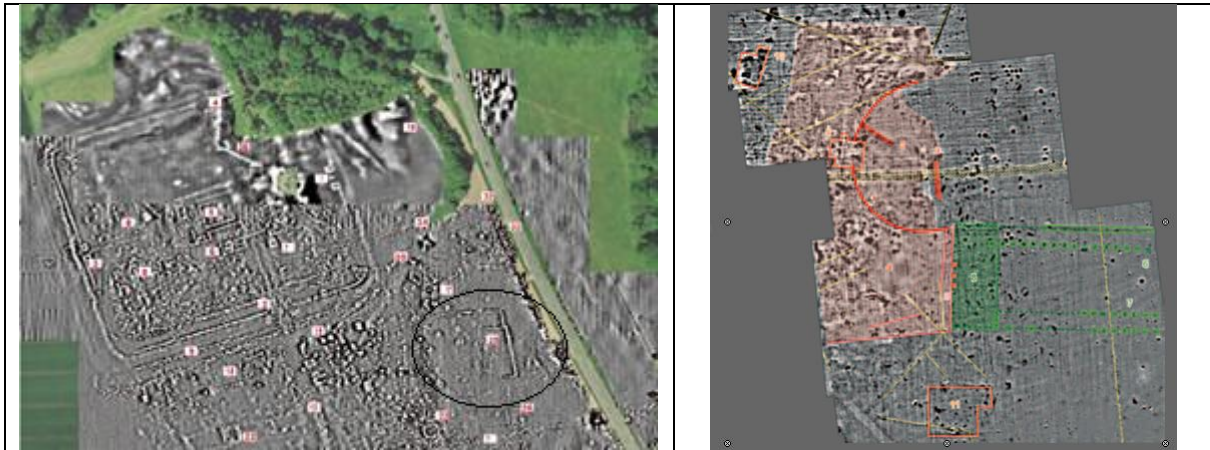


Fig. 4.3: Results of the geophysical surveys in Arnsburg (left) and Theilenhofen (right), with the structures of the possible *forum-basilica* complex encircled.⁵⁷¹

4.2.2 The chronology and size of *forum-basilica* complexes

In the three provinces in question, only a few of the *forum-basilica* complexes are dated with any degree of accuracy (Table 4.1). Some are only known via geophysical survey or have recently been excavated, so that information about their building phases has not yet been published. Elsewhere, the architectural buildings of many of the Roman towns are poorly known and their dating is therefore often based on important key moments of the centre's development. The *forum-basilica* complexes of the *municipia Arae Flaviae/Rottweil* and *Augusta Vindelicum/Augsburg* are only vaguely known or partially investigated. Yet one finds foundation dates for these squares in secondary literature that are closely related to their urban or municipal history.⁵⁷²

The earliest *forum-basilica* complexes in the northern Alpine region were built within the centres that played a significant administrative role in the first decades after the conquest. These included the centre on the Magdalensberg, the site of *Cambodunum/Kempten*, and the *coloniae Iulia Equestris/Nyon* and *Augusta Raurica/Augst* (Fig. 4.4). Otherwise there did not exist a strong correlation between the construction dates of *forum-basilica* complexes and the granting of municipal rights to communities. The earliest phases of the public squares of *Teurnia/St. Peter* and *Cetium/St. Pölten* pre-dated the period in which these two centres were granted the status of *municipium*, during the reign of Claudius and Hadrian respectively.

It appears that self-governing centres tended to have a larger *forum-basilica* complexes than other types of places, with a minimum threshold of around 5,000 m² (Fig. 4.5). However, larger centres did

⁵⁶⁸ Mischka, Obmann and Henrich 2010, 10-13.

⁵⁶⁹ von Kaenel, Wenzel and Zickgraf 2010, 14-20.

⁵⁷⁰ Kandler and Vettters 1986, 92. Website: Transformation.

⁵⁷¹ Image Arnsburg: von Kaenel, Wenzel and Zickgraf 2010, 18-19.; Image Theilenhofen: Mischka, Obmann and Henrich 2010, 11.

⁵⁷² Rottweil: Rabold 2005, 101; Rüschi 1976, 583. Augsburg: Tremmel and Pöllath 2012, 7-14.

not necessarily have larger public squares. The *fora* attested in garrison settlements and other subordinate centres tended to be considerably smaller. This reinforces the impression that these *plazas* should not be considered official *fora* in the sense of being the monumental and political heart of a centre.

Table 4.1: Overview of foundation dates of *fora*

Specific Overview		General Overview					References
Place (province)	Specific Date	Late Republic -Julian Dynasty		Claudius	Flavian Dynasty	Late 1 st century - early 2 nd century	
		Augustan	Tiberian			Antonine Period	
Aguntum				x			(Tschurtschenthaler and Auer 2015, 341-343.; 2016, 10-11.)
Area Flaviae (N)	AD 100?				x		(Rabold 2005, 101.; Rüschi 1976, 583.)
Augusta Raurica (GS)	1 st Century		x-----	-----	-----		(Drack and Fellmann 1988, 323-336.; Ferdière 2004, 355-359.)
Augusta Vindelicum (R)				X?			(Tremmel and Pöllath 2012, 7-14.)
Aventicum (GS)			x				(Castella, Blanc, Flück <i>et al.</i> 2015, 69-70.)
Borbetomagus (GS)	AD 80				x		(Cüppers 1990, 673.) ⁵⁷³
Brigantium(R)	AD 70				x		(Grabher 1994)
Cambodunum (R)	Flavian (with earlier phases)		-----	x-----	-----		(Weber 2000, 196.)
Celeia (N)	Flavian/Pre-Domitian				-----x		(Bausovac 2014, 17-18.)
Cetium (N)					x		(Scherrer 2002a, 225-226.)
Iulia Equestris (GS)	first half 1 st century		-----	x			online ⁵⁷⁴
Lopodunum (GS)	117					x	(Rabold 2005, 101.; Sommer 1999a, 87.)
Magdalensberg		x					(Dolenz, Krmnicek, Schindler-Kaudelka <i>et al.</i> 2009, 238-249.)
Noviomagus			X				(Cüppers 1990, 560.)

⁵⁷³ Website: Roman Worms.

⁵⁷⁴ Website: Transformation- Nyon.

Riegel						x	(Dreier 2002, 40.)
Teurnia (N)	Augustan <i>forum</i> , basilica 2 nd century	x					(Glaser 2002, 140.)
Vidy (GS)			X				(Flutsch, Niffeler, and Rossi 2002, 382.)
Virunum				X			(Luschin 2003, 157.)
Total		2	4	5	5	2	18

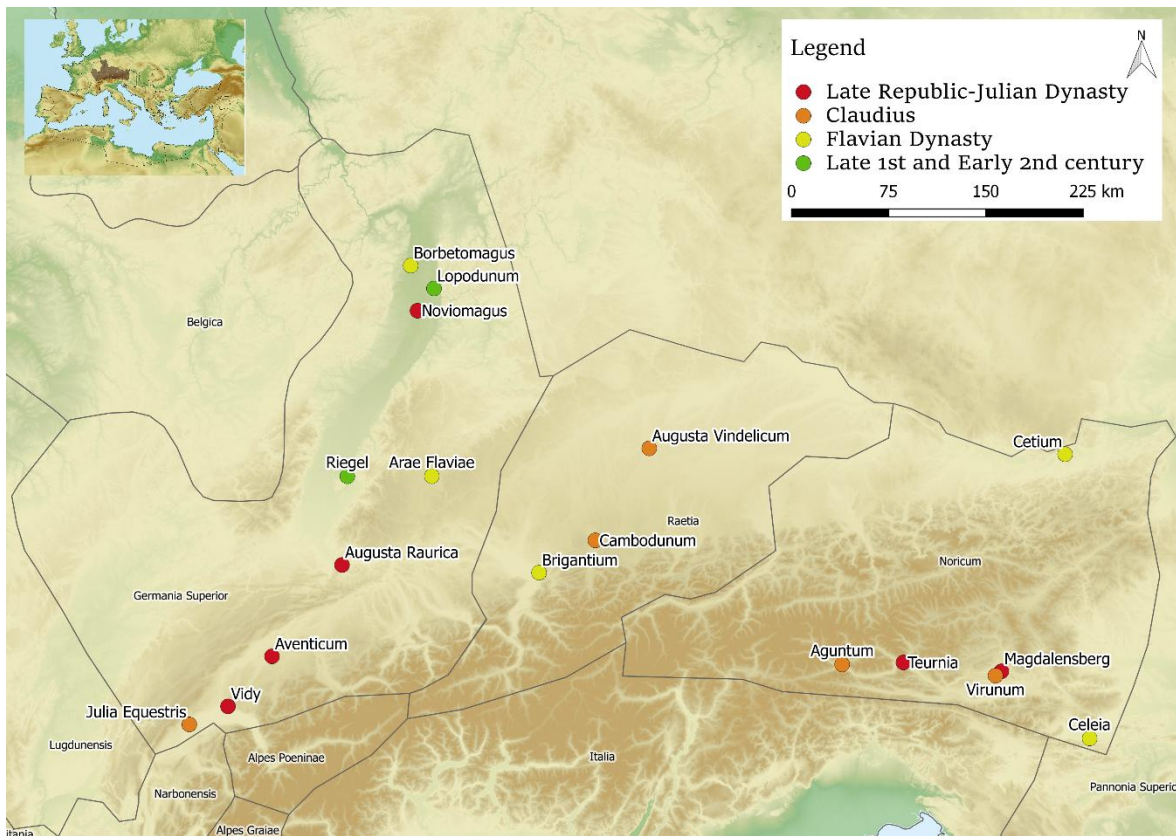


Fig. 4.4: Dates of *fora*

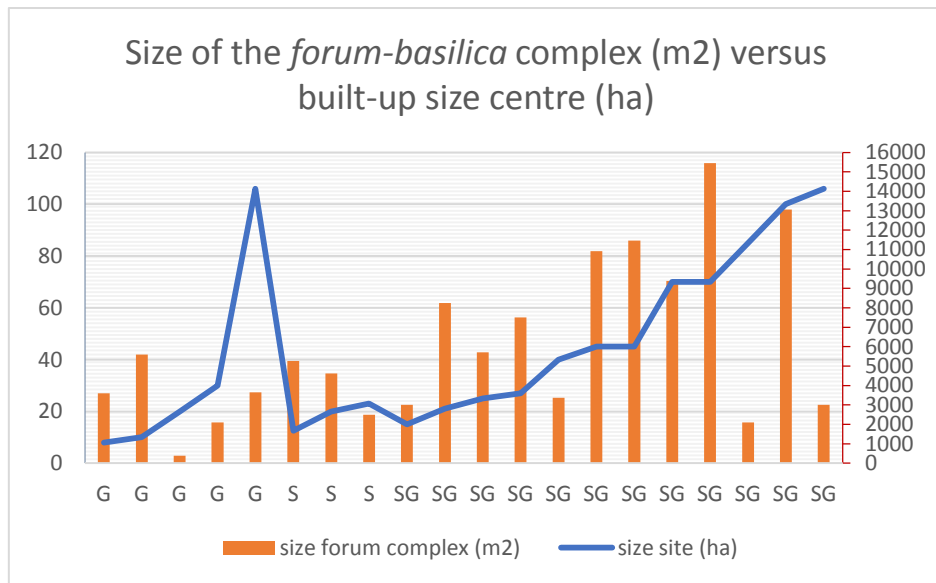


Fig. 4.5: The size of *forum-basilica* complexes
(G: garrison settlement, S: subordinate centre, SG: self-governing community)

4.3 Spectacle buildings

Equally embedded in the physical appearance of a Roman urban centre was the presence of one or even multiple spectacle buildings. Regarding the northern Alpine region, this concerns theatres and amphitheatres. So far, no remnants of a *circus* have been found in the entire region.

Not only the word but the whole tradition and concept of theatre, including the type of performances as well as the monumental construction, had originally come from across the Adriatic Sea. In contrast to the eastern parts of the Empire, theatre buildings were not a feature of Late Iron Age centres in the northwestern provinces. This cultural habit had entered the Roman world via the Greek colonies in Southern Italy and Sicily. Drama and mime evolved under the Roman taste and other acts such as pantomime were added to the different acts displayed on stage. Over time the design of theatre buildings changed in response to the needs of the diversifying activities that were organised, and as a result of the developing skills of the architects. One of the most striking differences in the construction of theatre buildings by Greeks and Romans was the technological know-how to construct the edifice without the need for any earthen support or hill slope. Wooden constructions regularly predate later stone-built theatres.⁵⁷⁵ It is again Vitruvius who explains the ideal design of the Roman theatre.⁵⁷⁶

In contrast to the theatre, the amphitheatre was a typical Roman building, not relying on any Greek predecessor.⁵⁷⁷ Recent scholarship has focused on the design and building techniques,⁵⁷⁸ and on the urban and social context in which these buildings existed. Amphitheatres were places where spectacles such as gladiatorial combats, animal fights, beast hunts and the execution of prisoners

⁵⁷⁵ Brothers 2008, 98-99.

⁵⁷⁶ Vitruvius, 5.3. For an extensive study of the architecture of Roman theatre buildings, together with a catalogue which serves as a good starting point for an overview of all the theatres in the whole Roman Empire see, Sear 2006.

⁵⁷⁷ Brothers 2008, 113.

⁵⁷⁸ Golvin and Landes 1990, 85-154; Rosin and Trucco 2005, 2 ff; Jones 2009a, 5-16.

took place. This typical Roman type of entertainment gained popularity in the rest of the Empire. In the early days, these gladiatorial camps and other fights just happened in open spaces, or at the *fora* with no need felt for a specific building.⁵⁷⁹ Over time however the amphitheatre became a well distributed monument, especially over the course of the 1st and 2nd centuries. In the Greek-speaking Roman world, more modifications can be seen of existing theatres to the demands for these new Roman shows than new construction projects. It was mainly in the western provinces that inhabitants of cities invested in the foundation of new and monumental amphitheatres, in addition to theatre buildings.⁵⁸⁰ There is only one known example of such a conversion within the study region. In the *colonia Augusta Raurica*/Augst the first century theatre constructed in the heart of the centre was converted into an amphitheatre around the reign of Trajan. Nevertheless around AD 170-180 a new amphitheatre was constructed on the outskirts (Augst Sichelengraben) and the old spectacle building was again modified to serve as a theatre.⁵⁸¹

These spectacle buildings were often located just outside the built-up area, but on a spot that benefitted their accessibility and visibility, as for example the theatres in Avenches, Mainz and Zollfeld, or the second amphitheatre in Augst (Sichelegraben).⁵⁸² There was also often not enough space left within the existing centre of Roman towns when these large spectacle buildings were constructed during later development phases. This might explain why many can be found on the outskirts of Roman centres along one of the main access roads. The non-central location of many theatres may have been partly due to the availability of space, but possibly also due to their connection to the sacral area belonging to these centres. According to E. Bouley, Roman theatres often appeared nearby or even within a sacred area, as for example in the centres of Roman Mandeure, Ladenburg and Bad-Kreuznach. Elsewhere, they formed one monumental complex with the temple, such as in Avenches.⁵⁸³

4.3.1 Different kinds of centres with different spectacle buildings

The remains of a total of 29 spectacle buildings have been found (18 theatres and 11 amphitheatres) within the three provinces of the northern Alpine region. Many more of this kind of venue probably consisted, since there is indirect evidence for at least 4 or 5 more theatres and 7 more amphitheatres (Fig. 4.6). One assumes, for example, that the Roman subordinate centres of Basel and Dijon (*Divio*) were provided with a theatre.⁵⁸⁴ Based on a building inscription, it is thought that the centre around the legionary base of Mirebeau also had a theatre, although it has been suggested that the theatre belonged to the civil centre in Langres.⁵⁸⁵ The Roman fort in Alzey was constructed with building material taken from other Roman monumental buildings of the centre of *Altaiensium*. Based on the inscriptions on some of the *spolia*, one suspects the existence of a Roman theatre here.⁵⁸⁶ At the sites of the garrison settlements of Arnsburg and Unterkirchberg and at the centre of *Brigantium*/Bregenz, circular structures have been found which are thought to be the remains of

⁵⁷⁹ Vitruvius, 5.1.1.

⁵⁸⁰ Zanker 2014, 113; Brothers 2008, 113; von Hesberg 2005, 168.

⁵⁸¹ Hufschmid 2009, 105 ff.

⁵⁸² Dumasy 2011, 6; Zanker 2000, 37. Augst: Hufschmid 2009, 105.

⁵⁸³ Bouley 1983, 552-57; 561-568.

⁵⁸⁴ Basel: Sear 2006, 219. Dijon: Frézouls 1988, 231.

⁵⁸⁵ CIL 13, 5614 and Frézouls 1988, 367; Joly 2003, 235-237.

⁵⁸⁶ Website: Theatrum.

amphitheatres.⁵⁸⁷ The idea that the legionary base in Mainz also might have had an amphitheatre rests on two pieces of evidence: the discovery of an undefined large stone construction, and on the mention of a Roman amphitheatre in Mainz in the Medieval saga called the Sigehard Passion.⁵⁸⁸ The epigraphical attestation of deities who were traditionally connected to games, such as Diana Nemesis or reliefs of gladiators and wild animals, is for some scholars enough evidence to assume the presence of a Roman amphitheatre, as for example in the case of the Norican *municipia* *Ovilavis/Wels* and *Teurnia/St. Peter in Holz*.⁵⁸⁹

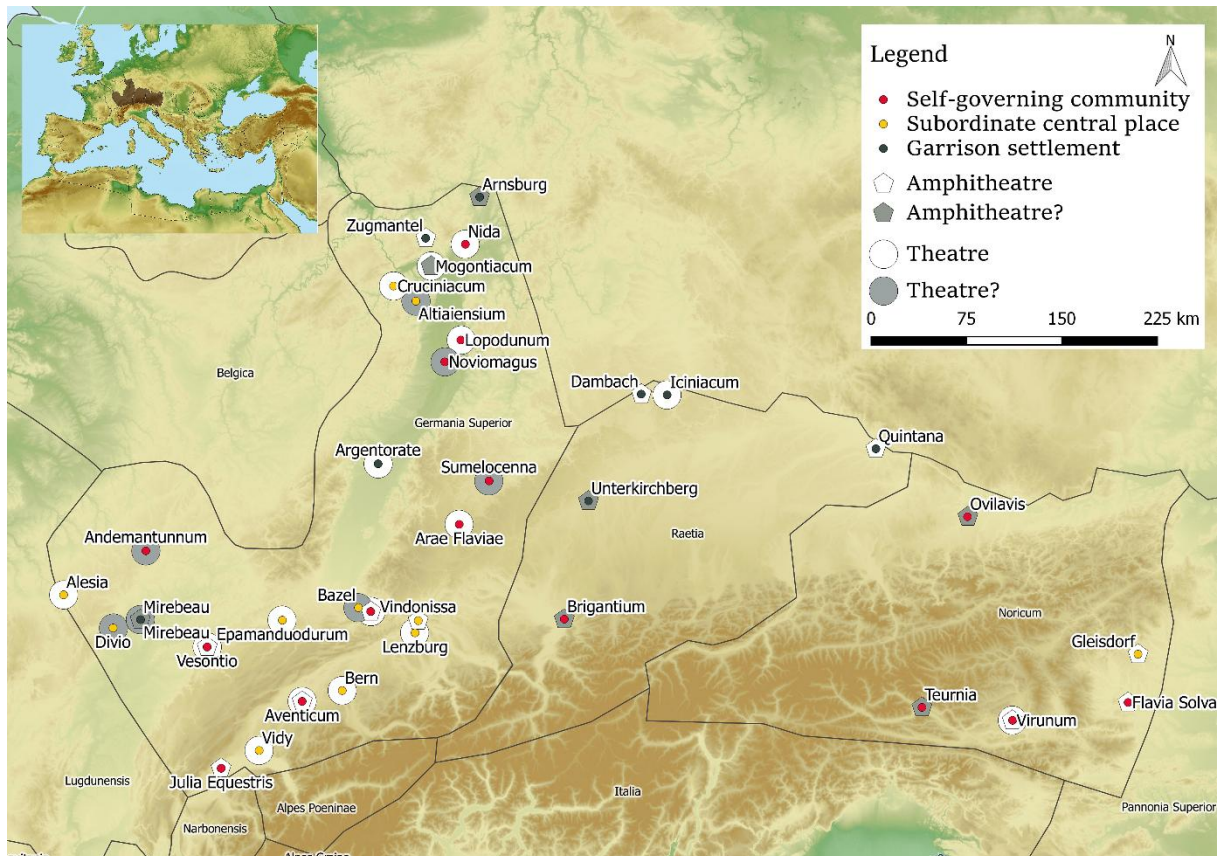


Fig. 4.6: The distribution of Roman spectacle buildings

The distribution of spectacle buildings in the northern Alpine region, displayed on the map (Fig. 4.6), shows a majority of monuments belonging to centres within the province of Germania Superior, including between 17 and 22 possible theatres and between 6 and 9 amphitheatres. A much smaller concentration shows up along the frontier in Raetia and in the southern part of Noricum. The cluster of arenas in southern Noricum might be explained by a local tradition of hunting and animal breeding. For a long time, most of the wild beasts used for races and fights in the arenas in Rome and Italy had come from North Africa. But D. Bomgardner explained that due to overexploitation the population of wild beasts must have dropped. Almost simultaneously one notices an increased use of trained, rather than of wild animals in the Mediterranean theatres.⁵⁹⁰ According to S. Groh these

⁵⁸⁷ Arnsburg: Sommer 2006, 109; 2009, 47; von Kaenel, Wenzel and Zickgraf 2010, 17 Unterkirchberg: Sommer 2009, 53. Bregenz: Gairhos 2016, 123.

⁵⁸⁸ Website: Amphi-Theatrum.

⁵⁸⁹ Wels: Kandler and Vettters 1986, 56-58.; St. Peter: Glaser 1992, 28-29.

⁵⁹⁰ Bomgardner 1992, 161-164.

amphitheatres in Noricum were used to give horse breeders a place to prepare their animals for races in Mediterranean arenas.⁵⁹¹

Because municipal magistrates shouldered the costs of many public buildings and also of shows and games, it is not surprising that spectacle buildings are more often found in or nearby chartered towns and *civitas* centres than elsewhere (Fig. 4.7). Despite the lack of archaeological evidence, it is assumed that the *municipium Augusta Vindelicum*/Augsburg, the main centre of the province of Raetia, was also provided with at least one spectacle building.⁵⁹² It appears furthermore that it was more common for communities living in subordinate centres to invest in theatres, whilst the remains of amphitheatres are more frequently found on the territory of garrison settlements. The spectacle buildings in garrison settlements turn out to be variants of those built within a civilian context, when comparing their nature, their purpose, or their building material.

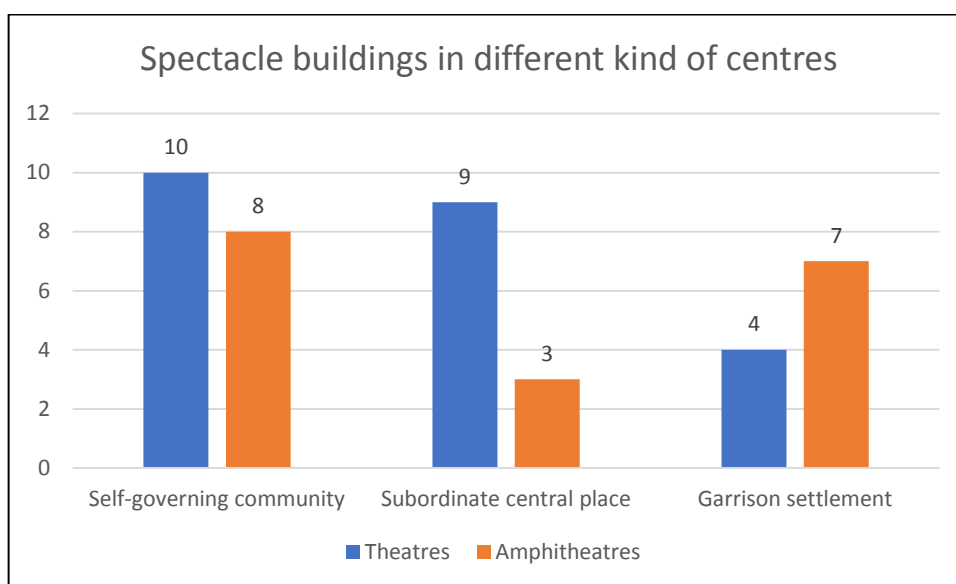


Fig. 4.7: Spectacle buildings in different centres

It was very common for a theatre first to be constructed in timber and only later rebuilt in stone. Nevertheless, some were never completely converted into stone, such as the ones in *Nida*/Frankfurt-Heddernheim or *Brenodurum*/Bern.⁵⁹³ During the 1st century wooden amphitheatres appeared regularly in the northern provinces, often accompanied by the presence of a military unit. A perfect example is the amphitheatre at *Vindonissa*/Windisch, of which the first wooden phase is dated to the reign of Tiberius. However, after its destruction in a fire around AD 40 a new stone-built amphitheatre was erected during the reign of Claudius.⁵⁹⁴ It continued to be common for only the

⁵⁹¹ Groh 2005, 98-100.

⁵⁹² The river Lech eroded quarters of the Roman town. It is plausible that the centre's spectacle building(s) also got washed away. It might be that the Roman theatre or amphitheatre is still buried beneath the modern centre of Augsburg. According to S. Gairhos, the likelihood of the building being constructed in perishable materials is high, since the region was naturally poor in natural building stone. The only indications for the presence of a Roman spectacle building in Augsburg are arena scenes depicted in mosaics (Gairhos 2016, 123-124.).

⁵⁹³ Frankfurt: Baatz and Herrmann 1982, 275.; Bern: Martin-Kilcher and Kaufmann 2009, 17.

⁵⁹⁴ Matter 2011, 8-12; Matter and Auf der Maur 2011, 30-38;42. However, it is uncertain whether a relationship can be seen between the changes in the legionary unit and the rebuilding of the amphitheatre. In any event, it is clear that a new stone-built amphitheatre was constructed after the wooden version had been destroyed.

outside and the foundation structures to be erected in stone, but the interior and seating were made out of wood. This was the case with the theatre of *Alesia/Alise-St.-Reine* and possibly *Iciniacum/Theilenhofen*.⁵⁹⁵

From the charts in figures 4.8 and 4.9 a clear division becomes apparent between the building material used for spectacle buildings in garrison settlements on the one hand and civilian centres on the other hand. The vast majority of theatres and amphitheatres built in civilian centres were stone-built monuments. These were costly investments - both in terms of money and labour. The spectacle buildings attested in garrison settlements meanwhile were most often made out of perishable materials or of a combination of stone and less durable material. The only exceptions were the spectacle buildings of legionary bases, such as the monumental theatre from *Mogontiacum/Mainz* and the stone-built amphitheatre in *Vindonissa/Windisch*.⁵⁹⁶ More limited financial resources may be a partial explanation for this difference, in addition to the different purposes these buildings served within the garrison settlements.

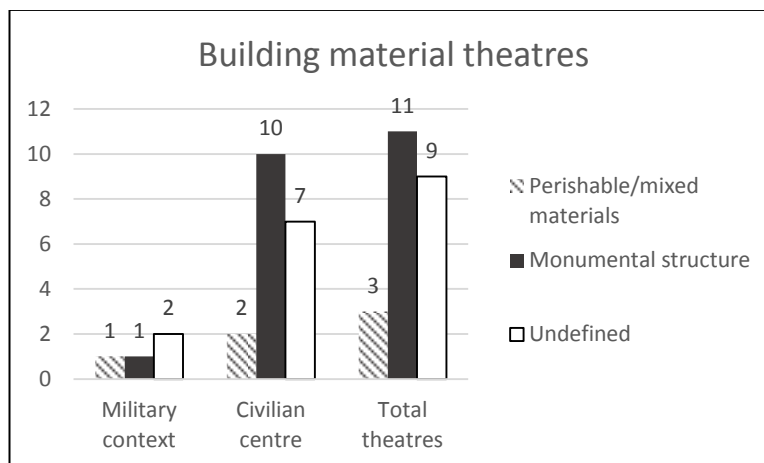


Fig. 4.8: Building materials used for Roman theatres

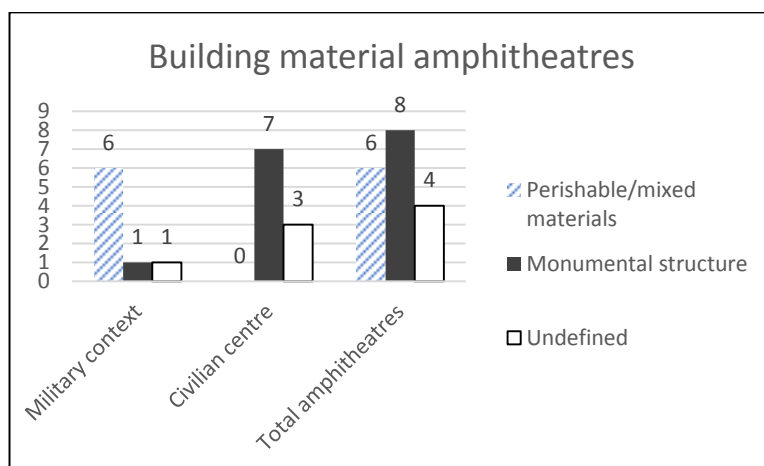


Fig. 4.9: Building materials used for Roman amphitheatres

⁵⁹⁵ Alise St.-Reine: Bedon 2001, 64-65.; Theilenhofen: Mischka, Obmann and Henrich 2010, 10-13.

⁵⁹⁶ Mainz: Carroll 2001, 53. Windisch: Drack and Fellmann 1988, 537 and website: Amphi-Theatrum.

M. Junkelmann has suggested that amphitheatres in a military context should be considered as *Mehrzweckgebäude*, buildings with multiple purposes, serving as training grounds, gathering places and the locations of spectacles and games, such as gladiatorial fights. One could expect there to have been one at each legionary and auxiliary fort.⁵⁹⁷ This assumption however can hardly be endorsed, based on the weak evidence from the few remaining structures of amphitheatres attested along the frontiers. C.S. Sommer explained that these amphitheatres were generally even too small to serve as training grounds.⁵⁹⁸ Moreover, often immediately around the fort, or between the fort and the civilian settlement, more suitable land was kept free for this purpose.⁵⁹⁹ Executions, which were also performed in amphitheatres, have also been suggested as a possible explanation for the erection of these arenas found close to military forts. It is likely that the *legati legionis* had the right to exercise this punishment, apart from the provincial governor. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that commanders of auxiliary units had the same authority. It is also doubtful whether a few executions made it worthwhile to construct an arena.⁶⁰⁰ It is indeed believed that the amphitheatres in garrison settlements were nevertheless temporary constructions, erected for special occasions, such as commemorative festivities or the visit of an emperor.⁶⁰¹ The fact that these amphitheatres were erected in wood, or in a combination of stone and earth, rather than durable stone, counts in favour of a limited period of existence.⁶⁰² K. Schmotz, in the particular case of *Quintana/Künzing*, thinks it likely that the wooden amphitheatre here could be related to Hadrian's visit to the northern frontier.⁶⁰³ Archaeological research has indicated that from the mid-2nd century onwards the arena was no longer in use and had possibly turned into a rubbish dump. It is not unlikely that the area became overbuilt again as well.⁶⁰⁴ Only inscriptions could provide the true facts and reasons for the creation of these amphitheatres, but the question is whether such evidence will ever be found.⁶⁰⁵

4.3.2 The chronology and size of spectacle buildings

Questions arise about the point in time when these spectacle buildings were built and when they became part of the architectural core of Roman centres in the northern Alpine region. The earliest examples date to the early first century and the Flavian period (Fig. 4.10). These monuments belong to centres which were located within the southern area of the province of Germania Superior and which, due to the relatively early conquest, underwent changes in their urban character before other parts of the study region, examples include the *colonia Augusta Raurica*/Augst and the centres of *Alesia*/St. Alise-Reine, *Brenodorum*/Bern, *Epamanduodurum*/Mandeure and Lenzburg.⁶⁰⁶ In the

⁵⁹⁷ Junkelmann 2000, 21.

⁵⁹⁸ For an overview of the sizes of amphitheatres in garrison settlement found along the Roman frontiers see Sommer 2009, 48.

⁵⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 55-58. S. Bödecker interpreted circular structures showing up in the airborne laser scan images of military sites along the Lower Rhine as practise grounds for soldiers (Bödecker 2013, 10-13.).

⁶⁰⁰ Sommer 2009, 60.

⁶⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 47 (Arnsburg).

⁶⁰² However, the use of perishable building materials, such as wood and earth was rather typical for this northwestern Alpine region and should therefore not be dismissed out of hand as temporal complexes. The amphitheatre of the *Colonia Ulpia Trajana* by Xanten was also largely constructed out of earth and timber. The main part of the *cavea* of the amphitheatre of *Carnuntum* (Pannonia) is supposed to have been of wood, see: Hönle and Henze 1981, 154; 156-157. Even in Rome theatres were constructed in wood, but due to the nature of the material they did not survive into the modern town: Lomas 2003, 34.

⁶⁰³ Schmotz 2006, 114.

⁶⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 112-116; Schmotz 2007, 145-149.

⁶⁰⁵ Sommer 2009, 60.

⁶⁰⁶ Sear 2006, 215-218; 221; Martin-Kilcher and Kaufmann 2009.

course of the late first century, and mainly during the 2nd century, a building explosion took place, with spectacle buildings constructed in, for example, the *coloniae Aventicum/Avenches* and *Iulia Equestris/Nyon* and the *civitas* centres *Lopodunum/Landeburg* and *Nida/Frankfurt-Heddernheim*.⁶⁰⁷ Most apparent, however, were the investments made in southern Noricum during the reign of Hadrian. In the *municipium Virunum/Zollfeld* a theatre and amphitheatre were built. A large amphitheatre also appeared in the *municipium Flavia Solva/Wagna* and in the Roman subordinate centre of Gleisdorf. As mentioned earlier, S. Groh has suggested a connection with an increased demand for trained animals from the 2nd century onwards.⁶⁰⁸

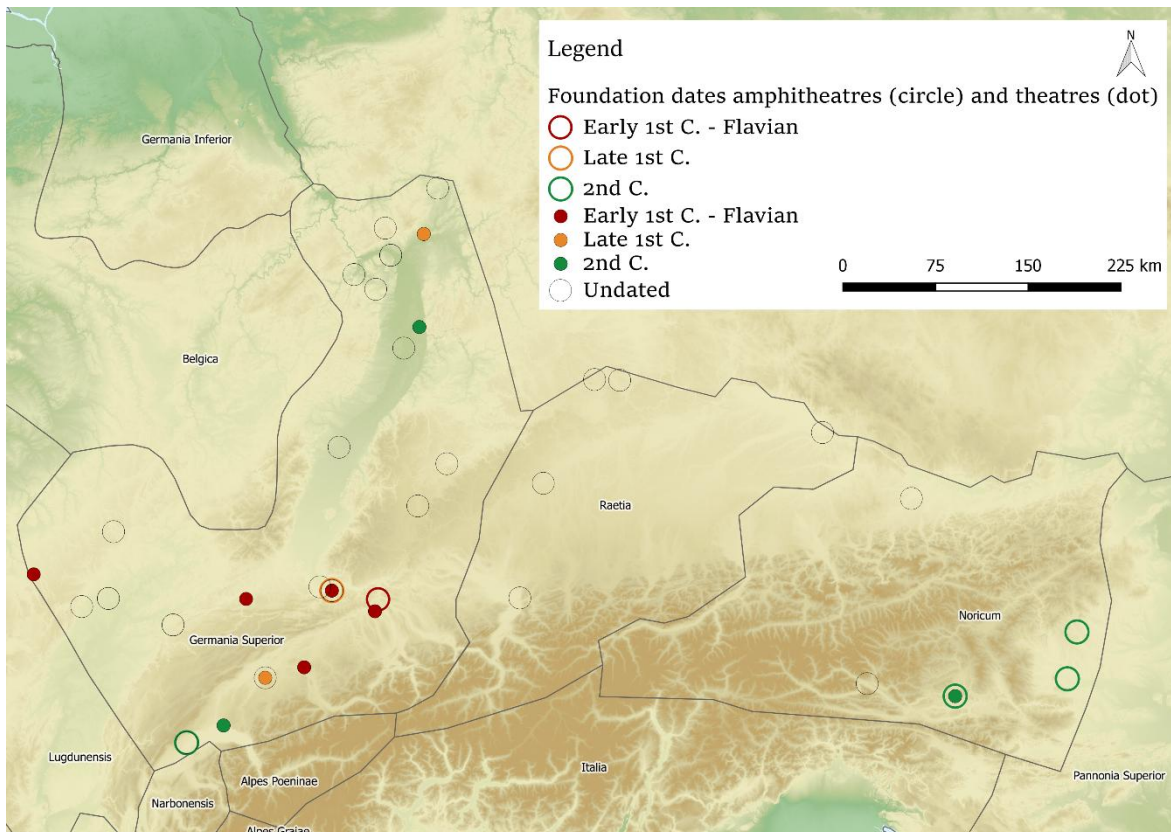


Fig. 4.10: Chronological overview of spectacle buildings

The amphitheatres in Noricum are also amongst the largest of all the arenas attested in the northern Alpine region, with the exception of those at the legionary bases of Mirebeau and *Vindonissa/Windisch* (Fig. 4.11).⁶⁰⁹ There does seem to appear a vague indication of standardisation, since the sizes of the arenas in Augst and Avenches had very similar dimensions.⁶¹⁰ The arenas of the amphitheatre structures found in garrison settlements, although considerably smaller than those built within civilian centres, also had comparable dimensions.⁶¹¹ Apart from the dichotomy between

⁶⁰⁷ Avenches: Castella *et al.* 2015, 41.; Nyon: Flutsch, Niffeler and Rossi 2002, 389.; Landeburg and Frankfurt-Heddernheim: Sear 2006, 218-219.

⁶⁰⁸ Groh 2005, 98-99.

⁶⁰⁹ Norican amphitheatres: Flavia Solva: 83,5m x 36,7m; Gleisdorf: 45m x 65m; Virunum: 93m x 30m (all: *ibid.*, 92.); Mirebeau: 100m x 70m (Goguey 2008, 236.); Vindonissa: 73m x 58m (Frei-Stolba *et al.* 2011, 9.).

⁶¹⁰ Augst: 1) 49, 33m x 36m 2) 50,6m x 33,38m (Hufschmid 2009, 111; 114.); Avenches: 51,7m x 38,72m (Castella *et al.* 2015, 41.). M. Carroll also commented on the standardisation of the dimensions of Roman amphitheatres (Carroll 2001, 53.).

⁶¹¹ Arnsburg: 31m diameter; Dambach: 32m diameter and Zugmantel: 26m diameter (Sommer 2009, 48.).

the size of the amphitheatres built in military and in civilian contexts, there seems to be no further relationship between the type or the size of the centre and the dimensions of the monument. This in contrast to theatres which tended to be bigger in larger centres (Fig. 4.12). The diameter of the *cavea* shows a slight increase along with the size of the built-up area of the centres. The smaller theatres in subordinate centres seem to be all related to temples, for example, at the sites of Basel and of Lenzburg.⁶¹² However the largest theatre in the region belonged to the subordinate centre *Epamanduodurum/Mandeure* and was also part of the centre's sacral area.⁶¹³ As the phenomenon of a strong connectedness between theatres and temples appeared to be mainly limited to (southern) Germania Superior, it can possibly be considered as a typical Gallic tradition, as it has also been described by E. Bouley.⁶¹⁴ However, the large Roman theatre in Mainz could equally be considered a cult theatre, providing space for a large audience far beyond *Mogontiacum's* own inhabitants. It is assumed that the theatre was used during the annual commemoration of Drusus and the associative festivities.⁶¹⁵

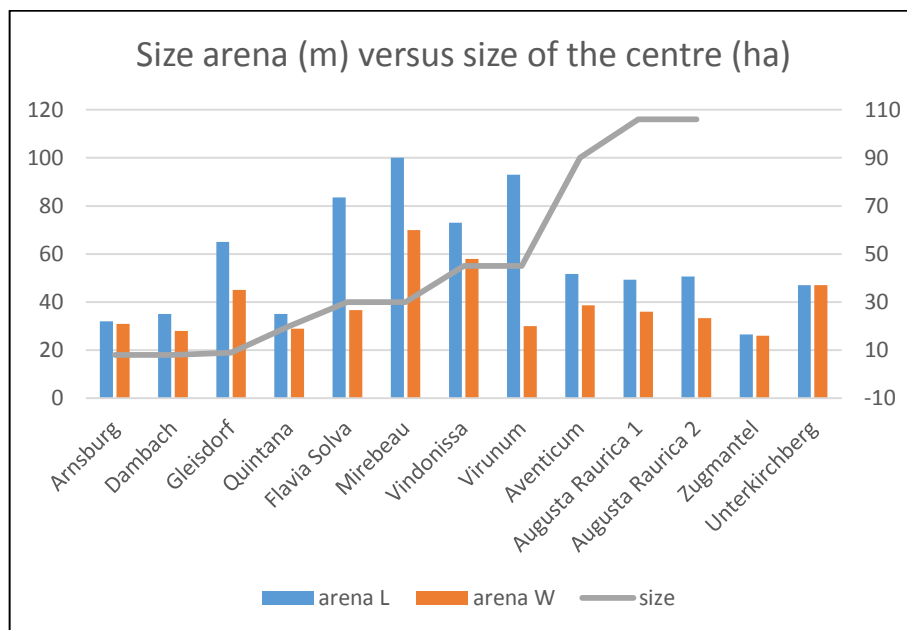


Fig. 4.11: Size of Roman amphitheatres

⁶¹² Basel: diameter *cavea* 32m; Lenzburg: diameter *cavea* 74m (Sear 2006, 218-219.).

⁶¹³ The *cavea* of the theatre in Mandeure measured 142 (ibid., 217.). Roman Mandeure flourished because of its sanctuary.

⁶¹⁴ Bouley 1983, 552-557; 561-568; Laurence, Esmonde-Cleary and Sears 2011, 244. In the study by R. Laurence *et al.* the specific connection between theatres and sacred spaces also emerged as a Gallic element of the spectacle building. Archaeological research in other regions, such as North Africa, did not confirm the often assumed association between theatres and temples.

⁶¹⁵ Diameter *cavea*: 116, 25m. Cüppers 1990, 463; Carroll 2001, 53; Sear 2006, 218.

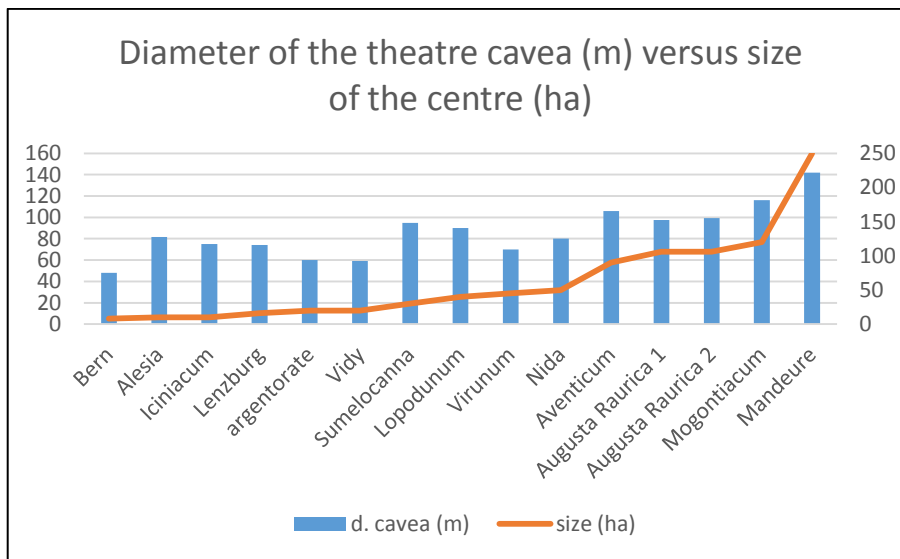


Fig. 4.12: Size of Roman theatres

4.4 Aqueducts and baths

Where people live, there must be water. In the Roman period water was commonly drawn from local streams, springs and wells, even in the biggest urban centres, such as Rome.⁶¹⁶ A.T. Hodge stressed the importance of private wells and cisterns, since these rather simple infrastructures often formed the biggest sources for water in most centres and settlements. Some centres, such as Roman London for example, never felt the need to increase the amount of water and ran their whole existence purely on – even in some cases small – water wells. Similarly, in the case of the town of *Andemantunnum*/Langres it seems most likely that the whole centre was provided with water from wells and cisterns, including all public buildings, such as the baths. So far, there is no indication of a public water management system.⁶¹⁷ In the *municipium Celeia*/Celje, only a few elite houses were connected to the general water canals that ran through the centre. The majority of the households drew water from private wells.⁶¹⁸ In other words, local springs and water basins were the primary sources of water supply in a Roman centre. Aqueducts, as A.T. Hodge says, were a luxury.⁶¹⁹

It is often stated that aqueducts were one of the most ingenious constructions of Roman architectural engineering.⁶²⁰ That the aqueduct which supplied the Roman centre of *Vindonissa*/Windisch remained responsible for the town's water supply until 1897 and still feeds one of the fountains, amply illustrates the durability of this Roman engineering work.⁶²¹ The most well-known aqueducts, such as the Pond du Gard in France, or the aqueducts of Segovia, Merida and Tarragona in Spain or Carthage in North Africa, are nevertheless rather exceptional.⁶²² Apart from

⁶¹⁶ Frontinus, *The Aqueducts of Rome* 1.4.

⁶¹⁷ Bedon 2001, 183-184.

⁶¹⁸ Reuckl 2012, 423.

⁶¹⁹ Hodge 1991, 48-66., 48-66.

⁶²⁰ *Ibid.*, 48; Garbrecht 1986, 23-28.

⁶²¹ Website: Kanton Aargau - Wasserleitung – Aquaeductus.

⁶²² Gockel 1986, 146-215.

these elevated aqueducts, the Romans more often used surface channels 0.50-1.0m below the surface. These were generally made out of brick, as for example in Mirebeau.⁶²³ Within the northern Alpine region, the best example of such a subterranean aqueduct is the water channel in Nyon, excavated in 2003.⁶²⁴ Furthermore, water was often fed via open channels, such as in *Augusta Vindelicum*/Augsburg, Cetium/St.Pölten, Iuvavum/Salzburg or Lauricaum,⁶²⁵ or via pipes made out of ceramic, stone or wood. The most important aspect of these aqueducts is that water could be transported over long distances, coming from a river or fresh water spring kilometres away from the urban centre.

As far as is known, the aqueduct in Roman Augsburg had the most distant source in the region. The aqueduct was built in the 1st century AD and brought water into the centre of *Augusta Vindelicum* from over 35 km away.⁶²⁶ The water in the centre of *Argentorate*/Strasbourg was brought in from nearly 20 km away.⁶²⁷ The six aqueducts that ran through the centre of the *colonia Aventicum*/Avenches obtained water from a source located at a maximum distance of 17 km away.⁶²⁸ The aqueducts in the *coloniae Iulia Equestris*/Nyon and *Vesontio*/Besançon were fed by springs located about 10 km away from the towns.⁶²⁹ Likewise, the water that fed the water system in the legionary base of *Mogontiacum*/Mainz was transported over a distance of 9 km.⁶³⁰ The water source that provided the *colonia Augusta Raurica*/Augst and the centre of *Sumelocanna*/Rottenburg with water was not further away than 7 km.⁶³¹ If water was supplied from outside the Roman centre, the source was generally located within a radius of less than 10 km (Fig. 4.13). Once the water had entered the city, it was collected in big reservoirs or immediately channeled off to different locations.⁶³² In the case of *colonia Augusta Raurica*/Augst, the incoming water was stored in a water tower, and distributed via wooden pipes to public fountains, baths and latrines, as well as to some of the richer houses.⁶³³

Among the prestigious architectural monuments and buildings that used water were bathhouses. Such facilities often led to an increased demand for water. The bathing culture became an important part of the Roman society, especially during the late first and second century.⁶³⁴

Bath complexes were one of the biggest and most expensive buildings, both in terms of their construction, their renovations and constant maintenance ever after.⁶³⁵ The bath complex in the *municipium Aguntum*/Lienz was rebuilt at least three times and an annex was added to the 1st

⁶²³ Goguet 2008, 247-248.

⁶²⁴ Website: Roman museum Nyon.

⁶²⁵ Augsburg: Website: Roman Aqueducts romaq.org, last seen on 13.8.2015; St.Pölten, Salzburg and Enns: Reuckl 2012, 423-424.

⁶²⁶ Website: Roman Aqueducts.

⁶²⁷ Website: Roman Aqueducts.

⁶²⁸ Carroll 2001, 50; Ferdière 2004, 360. and Website: Roman Aqueducts.

⁶²⁹ Nyon: Drack and Fellmann 1988, 452. and website: Roman museum Nyon; Besançon: Bedon 2001, 105.

⁶³⁰ Baatz and Herrmann 1982, 427-428; Cüppers 1990, 459; Carroll 2001, 50.

⁶³¹ Augst: website: Augusta Raurica (besuchen – Sehenswürdigkeiten – Wasserleitung); Rottenburg: Rabold 2000, 101.

⁶³² Garbrecht 1986, 26; Hodge 1991, 93-106.

⁶³³ Drack and Fellmann 1988, 323-336. Website: Augusta Raurica (besuchen – Sehenswürdigkeiten – Wasserleitung).

⁶³⁴ Nielsen 1999, 38; Wilkes 1999, 17-18; Laurence, Esmonde-Cleary and Sears 2011, 365.

⁶³⁵ 2011, 375-376.

century bathhouse in the garrison settlement of *Briciniana/Weissenburg*.⁶³⁶ Where possible, the consumption of energy was well thought through, as illustrated by the reuse of the water from the baths in the latrines in the garrison settlement in Schirenhof.⁶³⁷

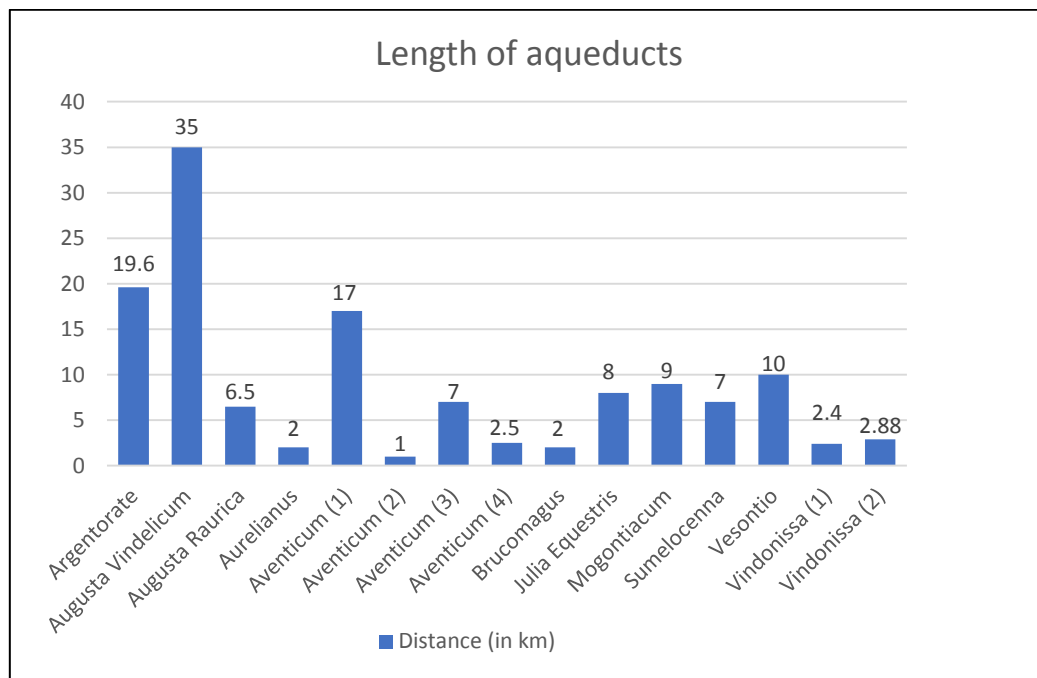


Fig. 4.13: Distance over which water was transported to Roman centres

G. Fagan, J. DeLaine and many others have stressed how different the Roman culture of public baths and bathing was from the modern spa fashion.⁶³⁸ Bathing was considered an essential part of a healthy life and guaranteed good health.⁶³⁹ However, perhaps even more importantly, it also supported the social constellation. Visiting the baths defined a person as civilised and urban, distanced from the barbarians who used rivers.⁶⁴⁰ Bathhouses were from this perspective 'social theatres'.⁶⁴¹ It is also clear that the construction of support for these bath complexes needs to be interpreted within the context of the culture of euergetism, because the cost of construction, maintenance, and fuel was a major investment.⁶⁴²

It should therefore come as no surprise that there was a huge variation in Roman bathhouses. Not all bathhouses were large, or richly decorated with mosaics and marbles. The overall lay-out of the bathhouses in the western provinces of the Empire relied on the building tradition well known from the Italian peninsula, and more specifically from Campania.⁶⁴³ Much research has been done on the typology of Roman bathhouses (rectangular, double rectangular or circular shaped), but the location, the climate, the architect's individuality and the available financial resources all contributed to an

⁶³⁶ Lienz: Zabehlicky 1999, 16; Walde 2002, 155; Tschurtschenthaler and Auer 2015, 341.; Weissenburg: Cysz 1995, 534.

⁶³⁷ Filtzinger, Plack and Cremer 1976.

⁶³⁸ Fagan 2002; DeLaine 1999.

⁶³⁹ Isrealowisch 2015, 117-124.

⁶⁴⁰ Laurence, Esmonde-Cleary and Sears 2011, 215.

⁶⁴¹ Zajac 1999, 97-105.

⁶⁴² Ibid., 97-105; Laurence, Esmonde-Cleary and Sears 2011, 212.

⁶⁴³ Nielsen 1999, 42-43.

endless variation.⁶⁴⁴ The three main rooms, *frigidarium* (cold water bath), *tepidarium* (tepid water bath) and a *caldarium* (warm water bath), were sometimes supplemented with sport halls and swimming pools.⁶⁴⁵

In the Roman west, bathhouses were very well spread and constructed in many different kinds of centres.⁶⁴⁶ A Roman town had to have a bath or it could not be considered an urban centre.⁶⁴⁷ Some towns had multiple public baths, such as *Andemantunnum/Langres*, *Augusta Raurica/Augst*, *Aventicum/Avenches* or *Celeia/Celje*.⁶⁴⁸ Bathhouses were equally part of the facilities in subordinate centres. Religious centres, such as the previously described sites of *Villards d’Heria*, *Epamanduodurum/Mandeure* or *Juliomagus/Schleitheim*, were all provided with a bath complex.⁶⁴⁹ Accommodating the expectations and needs of travelers, road stations, such as *Biesheim*, *Immurium/Moosham*, *Petinesca/Studen* or *Pons Aeni/Pfaffenhofen* also had a bathhouse.⁶⁵⁰ Remains of bathhouses have been found at the majority of garrison settlements. There is, however, some uncertainty as to whether these facilities were open for non-military users.⁶⁵¹ These complexes were most often situated a few hundred metres away from the fort, but in a few exceptional cases they were constructed within the fort, for example in *Favianis/Mautern* and *Niederbieber*.⁶⁵² In his publication on the bathhouse in *Zülpich* (Germany), M. Dodt concluded that civilian baths in smaller settlements could look like military baths and occasionally were built with the help of the army, or at least with the know-how from soldiers and former soldiers.⁶⁵³ At the site of *Brucomagus/Brumath*, similarities between the bath complex here and that of the garrison settlement in *Niederbieber* may be due to the support of the army.⁶⁵⁴ Bathing infrastructure was present even in elite houses, in urban centres such as *Cambodunum/Kempton* or *Hallstatt*, or on *villa*-estates.⁶⁵⁵

In some centres the bath complex took up the surface of an entire insula, as for example in the *coloniae Augusta Raurica/Augst* and *Aventicum/Avenches*.⁶⁵⁶ The size of public baths in most Roman towns did not exceed 5,000 m², with the exception of the bathhouses in Roman spa centres, as described in chapter 3. Those in *Cambodunum/Kempton*, for example, measured 4,200 m² and the two complexes in *Nida/Frankfurt-Heddernheim* 2,304 m² and 3,060 m².⁶⁵⁷ However, the majority of bathhouses however were not bigger than 1,500 m².⁶⁵⁸ The baths attested in garrison settlements or

⁶⁴⁴ Brödner 1983, 39.

⁶⁴⁵ Fagan 2002, 10-11.

⁶⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 1; Laurence, Esmonde-Cleary and Sears 2011, 203.

⁶⁴⁷ 2011, 377.

⁶⁴⁸ Langres: Bedon 2001, 183.; Augst: Drack 1958, 7-8.; Avenches: Castella *et al.* 2015, 77-81.; Celje: Lazar 2002, 75; Bausovac 2014, 20.

⁶⁴⁹ Isrealowisch 2015, 117. Villards d’Heria: Rorison 2001, 194.; Mandeure: *ibid.*, 187.; Schleitheim: Petit and Mangin 1994, 130; Paunier 1994, 84-85.

⁶⁵⁰ Biesheim: Reddé 2011, 178-180.; Moosham: Fleischer and Mouchka-Weitzel 1998, 22-27.; Studen: Drack and Fellmann 1988, 519.; Pfaffenhofen: Steidl 2010, 85-86.

⁶⁵¹ Fagan 2002, 6.

⁶⁵² Sommer 1999a, 86; Sommer 2006, 97-103. Mautern: Flynt 2005, 96; Steigberger 2012, 89-95.; Niederbieber: Cliff 2009, 10.

⁶⁵³ Dodt 2003, 97-101.

⁶⁵⁴ Petry and Kern 1974, 31.

⁶⁵⁵ Kempton: Weber 2000, 69.; Hallstatt: Fischer 2002. and Pliny, *The Letters* 2.17.

⁶⁵⁶ Carroll 2001, 49-50.

⁶⁵⁷ Kempton: Weber 2000, 69.; Frankfurt-Heddernheim: Baatz and Herrmann 1982, 275.

⁶⁵⁸ Laurence, Esmonde-Cleary and Sears 2011, 216.

in road stations did not exceed a few hundred square metres.⁶⁵⁹ Regardless of the grandeur of the bathhouses, their association with the societal value of *'humanitas'* was ubiquitous.⁶⁶⁰

4.5 Wall circuits

City walls are the last monumental feature strongly connected to the image of Roman towns that will be discussed in this chapter. P. Goodman described city walls as *'a characteristic feature of Roman urbanism that served to mark the limits of that which was strictly urban'*.⁶⁶¹ In contrast to the many other elements of the Roman idea of an urban centre, such as *fora* and spectacle buildings, many centres in the western provinces had no circuit wall during the High Empire. Nevertheless, other kinds of visual markers were used to demarcate the border of the urban centre, not in the least, monuments, natural features, or the organisation of the street- and road network.⁶⁶²

Remains of wall circuits have been found at 19 possibly 24 sites (Fig. 4.14). Only three city walls were constructed during the 1st century, namely those encircling the centres of *Alesia/Alise-St.Reine* and the *coloniae Augusta Raurica/Augst* and *Aventicum/Avenches*, all located in the southern area of *Germania Superior*. In this respect too, this particular region corresponds strongly with the building tradition of city walls around Gallo-Roman centres.⁶⁶³ From the late 2nd century onwards a new series of defensive walls appeared.⁶⁶⁴ The wall circuit surrounding the *municipium Augusta Vindelicum/Augsburg*, for example, is thought to have been built not long after the Marcomannic wars.⁶⁶⁵ A strong increase in the number of walled centres can also be observed along the northern frontier in *Germania Superior*. This development mainly affected places appointed as the centres of *civitates*, including *Alisinensium/Bad Wimpfen*, *Nida/Frankfurt-Heddernheim*, *Med./Dieburg*, *Lopodunum/Ladenburg*.⁶⁶⁶ According to S. Gairhos, these defensive structures were a response to invasions of Germanic tribes that caused unrest and threatened the region. He considers these investments as part of a bigger strategic plan to fortify the hinterland as a reaction to a weakened frontier.⁶⁶⁷ The fortification of urban centres continued into the 3rd century, with walls being built around centres such as *Phoebiana/Faimingen* and *Sumelocenna/Rottenburg*.⁶⁶⁸ The construction of defensive walls was no longer limited to the frontier region, but became a striking element of Late Antique urbanism, that stretched deep into the northern Alpine region, but even more convincingly into the three Gallic provinces as well as into the Balkan region.⁶⁶⁹ The circuit wall erected in *Celeia/Celje* in the 3rd century, however, was probably not constructed in response to an increased

⁶⁵⁹ The bathhouse of the road station in Moosham measured 120 m² (Fleischer and Mouchka-Weitzel 1998, 22-27 (12 m x 10 m). The size of the military baths found in Buch was 800 m² (Filtzinger, Plack and Cremer 1976, 5004-514 (40 m x 20 m).), in Hüffingen 570 m² (ibid., 303; Peuser 2012, 22 ff (19 m x 30 m).) and in Zurich 600 m² (Drack and Fellmann 1988, 571 (20 m x 30 m).).

⁶⁶⁰ Laurence, Esmonde-Cleary and Sears 2011, 216.

⁶⁶¹ Goodman 2007, 62.

⁶⁶² Ibid., 63-65.

⁶⁶³ Esmonde Cleary 2003a, 74.

⁶⁶⁴ Goodman 2007, 203; Hanson 2016, 59.

⁶⁶⁵ Czysz 1995, 423; Bakker 2000, 92.

⁶⁶⁶ Esmonde Cleary 2003a, 77.

⁶⁶⁷ Gairhos 2008, 153.

⁶⁶⁸ Esmonde Cleary 2003a, 77; Gairhos 2008, 153.

⁶⁶⁹ Goodman 2007, 203; Poulter 1992, 104.

level of unrest or violence, but in response to flooding problems caused by the river Savinja around that time.⁶⁷⁰

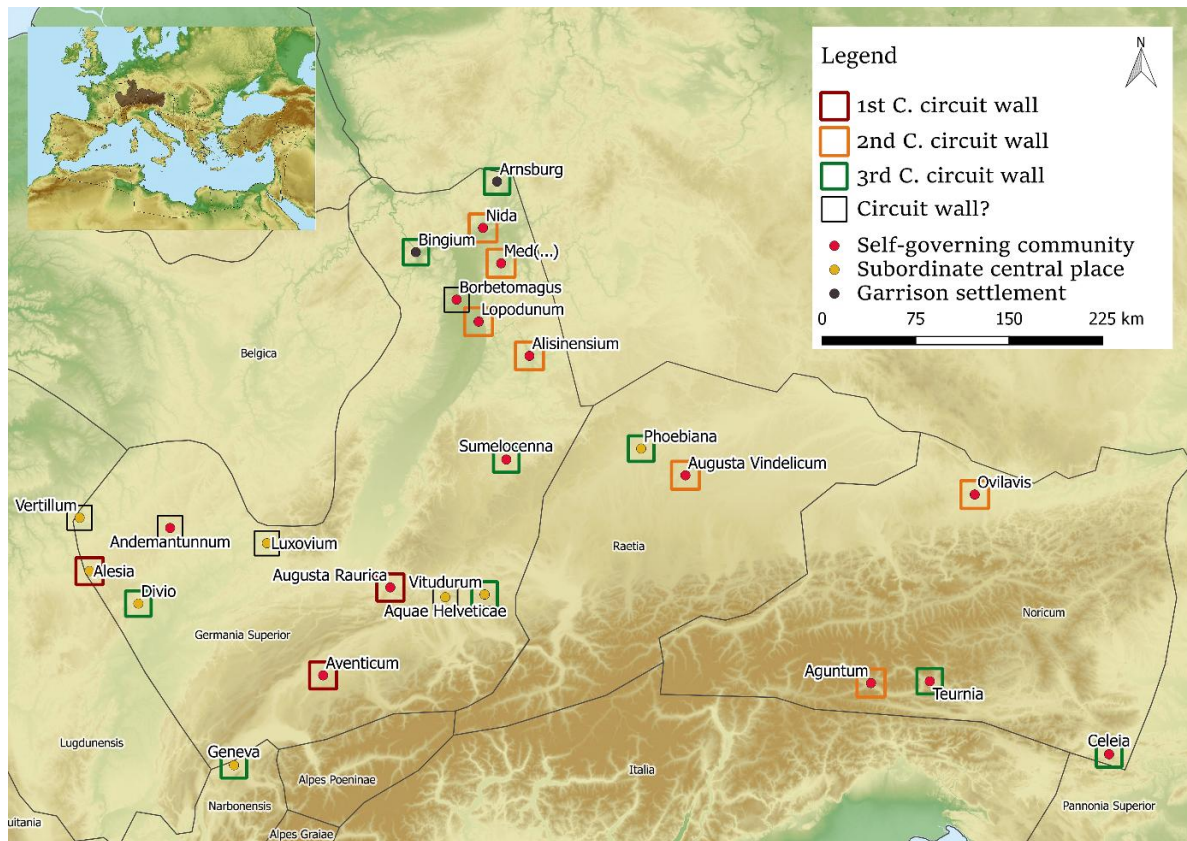


Fig. 4.14: Chronological overview of the construction of circuit walls

From the data it appears that the majority of circuit walls were built by self-governing communities, although only about half of the total number of self-governing communities in the northern Alpine region were fortified (Fig. 4.15). The aspect of protection only gained priority in the later centuries, whereas initially these walls were expressions of prosperity and prestige. The 1st century circuit wall in *Aventicum*, for example, was very thin and tall, and its watchtowers were, very exceptionally, not orientated outwards but towards the city centre and had therefore little defensive power. Likewise, the *colonia Augusta Raurica* was never entirely enclosed by its wall, despite the fact that the earliest investments date back to the 1st century. Monumental entries to the city centre were clearly of higher priority.⁶⁷¹ The inhabitants of subordinate centres also invested in circuit walls, although to a lesser extent. This urban feature meanwhile remained almost entirely absent in garrison settlements. The trapezoidal-shaped ditches enclosing the Roman garrison settlement in Arnsburg, discovered by geophysical survey, are therefore very uncharacteristic.⁶⁷²

These late 2nd and 3rd century walls often redefined the urban centres; they regularly surrounded only a small portion of the previously built-up area or they blocked off streets.⁶⁷³ The majority of the late wall circuits did not enclose an area bigger than 40 ha, with the exception of the centres of

⁶⁷⁰ Lazar 2002, 90.

⁶⁷¹ Esmonde Cleary 2003a, 74.

⁶⁷² von Kaenel, Wenzel and Zickgraf 2010, 15-16.

⁶⁷³ Goodman 2007, 203-204; Hanson 2016, 59.

Augusta Vindelicum/Augst and *Nida*/Frankfurt-Heddernheim (Fig. 4.16). In contrast to the 1st century walls in Augst and Avenches, which enclosed large plots of open land, Late Antique walls cut across existing town quarters in the centres of *Celeia*/Celje, *Divio*/Dijon, *Lopodunum*/Ladenburg and *Teurnia*/St. Peter in Holz. All these centres shrank at least 10 ha.⁶⁷⁴ Various reasons could lie behind the diminishing size of the Roman centres. A smaller walled centre created a more effective defensive structure, which was an important motivation for their construction. Furthermore, the erection of a circuit wall was a major financial investment. The Roman walls built, for example, in Bad-Wimpfen, Ladenburg and Rottenburg, had a length of 1,9 km, 1.2 km and 2,05 km respectively. S. Gairhos has estimated that at least 175 000 tons of stone were necessary for their construction. This was an expense which stretched thin the financial resources of many Roman centres in the late 2nd and early 3rd century.⁶⁷⁵ Because of the high cost, it is not surprising that some walls were never finished, for example in *Aguntum*, or that creative solutions were found with the available resources. In *Lopodunum*/Ladenburg, for example, the wall consisted of stone-built sections that were connected with segments of ditch and bank.

Despite the fact that circuit walls were a prestigious monumental expression of urbanity within the Roman concept of town life, the majority of walls were only built during the late 2nd and early 3rd centuries. Their appearance has therefore been connected to the increased unrest and stress on the Empire's borders around that time. S. Gairhos even speaks of a well-considered fortification plan involving the most important centres on main information routes in the hinterland of the collapsing frontier. Most of the walls built around centres in the northern Alpine region were in the first place defensive structures rather than an expressions of urban culture.

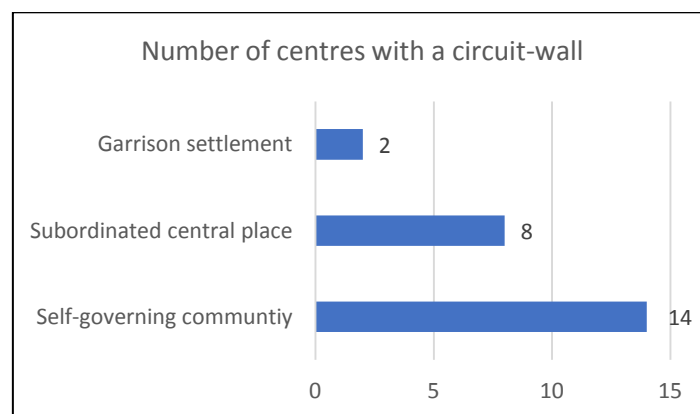


Fig. 4.15: Circuit walls in different kinds of centres

⁶⁷⁴ The walled area in *Aventicum* was much bigger than the actual built-up area. Of the 230 ha area enclosed by the city wall, only 90 ha were inhabited. Geophysical and archaeological investigations have not brought to light any signs of occupation or inhabitation concerning this open land. It has been suggested that this 140 ha open space was possibly used for livestock (Jacobi 1996, 490; Esmonde Cleary 2003b, 74; Ferdière 2004, 360; Castella *et al.* 2015, 25-27. I am grateful to Matthias Flück who has always been very kind in answering my questions concerning *Aventicum*'s wall and sharing information from his own PhD research in which he focuses on this Roman monument in particular.).

⁶⁷⁵ Gairhos 2005, 197.

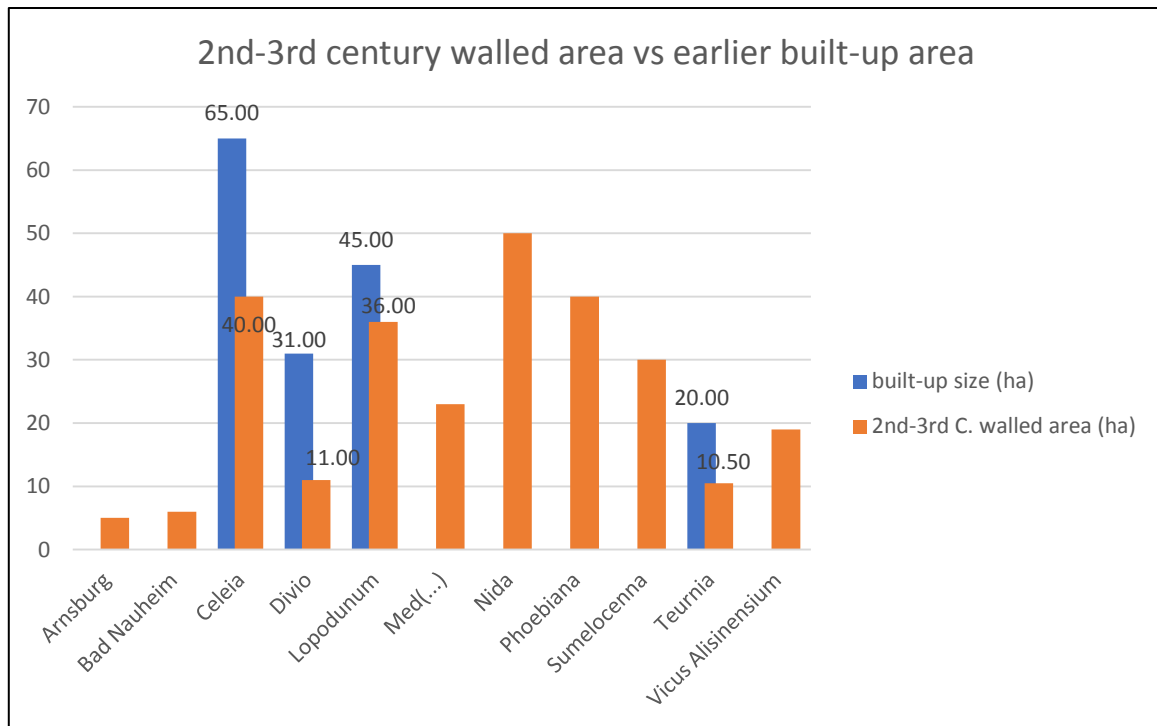


Fig. 4.16: Late 2nd and 3rd century walls reduced the urban core of many centres

4.6 Conclusion

In this chapter it became clear that many centres within the northern Alpine region did – to a greater or lesser extent – live up to the set of public buildings described by ancient writers and modern scholars as characteristic of Roman urban centres, including a *forum-basilica* complex, spectacle buildings, baths and a circuit wall.

The analysis has shown, however, that baths were so deeply established within Roman culture that the presence of a bathhouse should not be considered as a townlike feature. Only their richness and size separated the urban from the non-urban bath complexes, with a general threshold of 1,500 m². Defensive circuit walls also appeared to be a less strong urban feature than initially assumed, with the exception of the earliest 1st century examples, such as those in Augst and Avenches. The majority of circuit walls in the northern Alpine region were late 2nd and 3rd century additions to existing centres. Defensive motives rather than civic aspirations lay behind their construction. The consistent fortification of many *civitas* centres in the hinterland of the collapsing frontier has been interpreted as a conscious act of improving inland security. It is even possible that the army was involved in this endeavour. Only the *forum-basilica* complex and the spectacle buildings remain of the set of typical Roman urban public buildings. It appears that many centres of all kinds were furnished with a public square. However, most squares were not an official *forum*, built-up with commercial, administrative and political buildings representing the urban lifestyle. In most cases they were little more than a market square. Nevertheless, the number of official *forum-basilica* complexes in places that have not yet provided evidence of being self-governing is very striking. This phenomenon was very strong in Raetia and therefore seems of high importance to our understanding of the municipal organisation of this province. If the sites where remnants of a *forum* complex have been found belonged to unknown *civitates*, the urban network would have been much denser than can currently be reconstructed

from epigraphic and literary sources. It also appeared that in the northern Alpine region spectacle buildings did not belong to the initial public infrastructure of the Roman centres, but were added to the monumental core during later building phases. The late 1st and 2nd centuries AD were the period during which the majority of theatres and amphitheatres were constructed. A vague correlation could be observed between theatres and civilian contexts on the one hand and amphitheatres and military environments on the other hand, with the exception of chartered towns.

From the archaeological record – as it is now known – the southern region of the province of Germania Superior seems to have been the most densely monumentalized area. This region - more than elsewhere - flourished slightly earlier in terms of the construction of *forum-basilica*-complexes, as well as circuit walls and spectacle buildings. In general, the region shows similarities in its development to Roman Gaul, for example in the strong connection of the urban centre with religious places, i.e. sacred areas or temples.

As a general rule, chartered towns had the most extensive building programmes. At the sites of *Augusta Raurica*/Augst, *Aventicum*/Avenches and *Iulia Equestris*/Nyon, *Vesontio*/Besançon in Germania Superior and the *municipium Virunum*/Zollfeld, archaeological evidence has been found for almost all monuments discussed in this chapter. Yet the state of preservation of the archaeological remains does not always allow a good reconstruction of the townscape, since many Roman towns have been overbuilt by modern towns, such as Augsburg, Salzburg and Wels, to name but a few. The centres of *civitates* tended to have a less monumental appearance. Most of them had a *forum* or *forum*-like square, baths and a circuit wall. At some centres indications have been found for a spectacle building, most often a theatre. Although the majority of the houses had access to water via private wells, some centres had a limited public water management system. A market square and a small bathhouse were ubiquitous features of subordinate centres, in contrast to the presence of a spectacle building which proved to be highly exceptional. Archaeological research over the last decade has revived the question concerning the urban character of Roman garrison settlements, with surprising results of urban-like infrastructure on the sites of Arnsburg and Theilenhofen, for example. Open spaces between the forts and the settlements have been interpreted as market squares, but lacked any infrastructure that characterises a Roman *forum*, such as shops or administrative buildings. The latter were, of course, present within the walls of the fort itself. At a few garrison settlements remains of a spectacle building were attested. Nevertheless, they can hardly be considered urban features, because of their temporary nature, built from perishable materials and used for only a short time. One can expect the presence of a bathhouse at every garrison settlement, but the public character of these buildings is questionable. The vast majority of the garrison settlements, however, seem to have lacked the monumental infrastructure distinctive for a Roman urban centre, with the exception of the legionary bases.

Overall, this analysis of public buildings has illustrated that in the northern Alpine region the Roman concept of a monumental built-up centre influenced the appearance of the Roman towns, especially the chartered towns. Centres that were positioned lower in the administrative hierarchy generally exhibited a lower monumental profile. In order to understand the relationships between the different centres of the settlement system, the research focus should move beyond the individual centres. Answers to questions such as how these different kinds of centres related to each other, or how men and goods moved between them, will be sought in the following chapter.