

The Colonia Tour Book

SAMPLING (OLD) COLOGNE

Perhaps you are here for a day, or just don't have a lot of time, but you want to see *something*. Here is a tour that gives you a little of everything—aqueducts, gravesites, Roman buildings, and the city Wall—and it doesn't involve a lot of walking time. Enjoy this sample of the ancient city.

The original **North Gate** fronted *Cardo Maximus* and would have been found in today's street between the Domplatz and the Cologne Tourist Center, and considerably more underground. It had three entrances—two small side gates and one large center one. A brick arch, with the letters CCAA carved into a piece, is all that is left of the main, large gate, and that is found in the Romano-Germanic Museum (*Römisch-Germanisches Museum*). One side gate is visible on the Domplatz' edge, next to the street, as a rebuilt, slightly shifted from its original location, public display. It is where we would start our tours.



Walls of a Roman building, with heat ducts from under the floor heating in the lower right, and a pathway in the street for water to drop into the sewer system, in the upper right, under the Dom.

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Our first stop from here, though, is the **Kölner Dom**, the great Cologne Cathedral, Dom for short. At certain times, a tour of the excavations under the Dom is given (see Appendices at the end of the book—the regular Dom tours do NOT go underneath!). Here you can see foundations of Roman buildings, and some of the functional parts of the old city, such as water channels, sewer pipes, collectors for the sewers, and two kinds of under-the-floor heating systems, something still common in modern Cologne and area buildings of age. There is a place where you can literally walk on a ‘modern’ floor made of



Roman bricks. The excavation is a bewildering jumble of several Roman and Middle Ages eras, of varying street levels, walls, columns, but even so, this is a great introduction to what that part of Colonia, butted up against the northern wall and towers, was like.

Outside, on the corner to the right of the main entrance and down stairs, is an glass-enclosed excavation of a **typical Roman building cellar**, with its walls and other features clearly evident, in place. Indeed the entire Domplatz plaza on the west side, and south side of he Dom, named

Roncalliplatz, used to cover up numerous Roman structures. Their walls are now merely indicated by dark lines in the plaza brickwork.



From the side gate, go across Trankgasse, due North, onto the old Limes Road, now Marzellenstrasse (head past the McDonalds). You will come to a traffic circle, turn left onto

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A floor made from real Roman bricks underneath the Dom, Cologne's Cathedral.

An den Dominikannern. After several name changes every block or two, it becomes Gereonstrasse. In about ten minutes walk, the church St. Gereon will be in front and to your left.

The location of the **St. Gereon Church** might well have been the first burial ground for the Colonia citizens. It is not on the long distance roads that go west or south; perhaps they didn't exist yet. It is quite close to the city Wall, as cemeteries go.

The church itself was built on top of a Roman building that had an oval floor plan with niches. A tiny fragment of the original floor's mosaic pattern is visible in the first niche on the right in the main room (below left). To the left of the door as you enter the main room



is the stump of a column, (below right) apparently the only original one of several columns still in place from the Roman



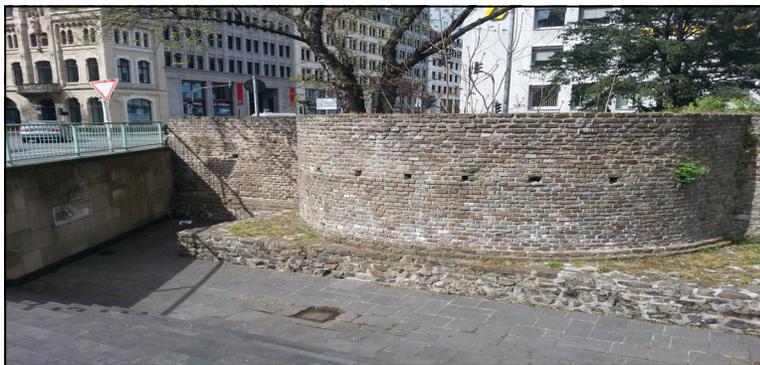
predecessor. No one is exactly sure what the structure was—a villa? A temple? There is a grave chamber inside (and some sarcophagi around the outside of the building), but whether these are Roman is not obvious.

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Far more interesting is something else outside, the remains of a **Roman atrium**. Numerous bases for columns make a rectangular pattern on the ground behind the church. It takes little imagination to “see” this open-air, roofed atrium. Around its borders are some remaining wall bases, and nearly two millennium old gutters in the ground to carry off rainwater. In fact, they are still connected, and thus in use today, to the current drainage system!



Return from St. Gereon on Gereonstrasse; it will change name to Unter Sachsenhausen. Four streets from the church, counting on the right side of the road, will be Tunisstrasse. Cross Tunisstrasse to get to its far side, and then turn right onto the street. Soon you will cross two close, parallel streets, Komödienstrasse and Burgmauer.



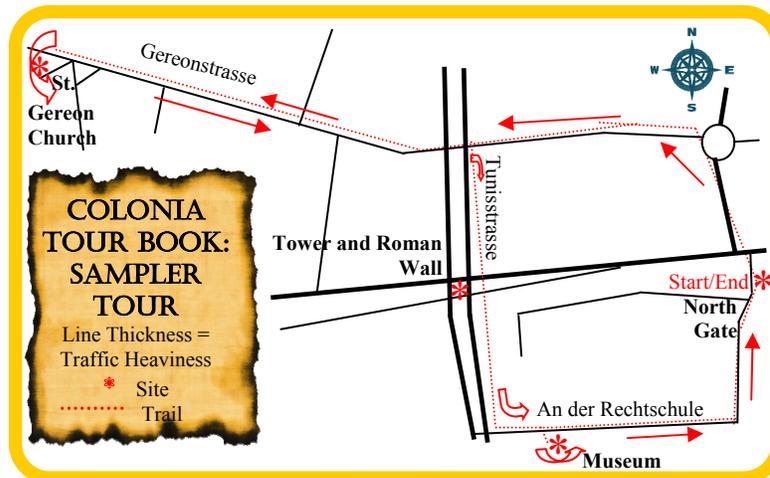
As you do, you can view part of one of the **Roman Wall towers**, and some parts of the old **Wall** itself.

Continue through the intersections, going a long block to An der Rechtschule; turn left, then right in one short block, onto Drususgasse. There is a small park there, and the big Museum für Angewandte Kunst (Museum of Applied Art) behind it.

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Near the museum building you will see a piece of **aqueduct** and three **sarcophagi** displayed outside on the museum's western side.



Return to An der Rechtschule and continue away from Tunisstrasse, until you can make a left turn onto Unter Fettenhennen (at Wallraf Platz). This will take you to the North Gate.

Oh, and under the parking lot under the North Gate is a large, nearly full size segment of the **Roman City Wall!**

