

The Grandeur of Rome Lives On...

... In Modern-Day Germany

By Edward I. Placidi

Ominous and unnatural, the massive, black structure looms amid soaring medieval spires and ivy-covered buildings with shiny slate roofs. In stark contrast to gabled, storybook houses and flower-filled squares with outdoor cafes, the Porta Nigra will not let Trier forget.

Pass under the ancient city gate and you share history with Roman generals returning triumphantly to Trier with their legions after bloody campaigns against savage local tribes.

warring tribes, the grandeur that was Rome blossomed in the Rhineland.

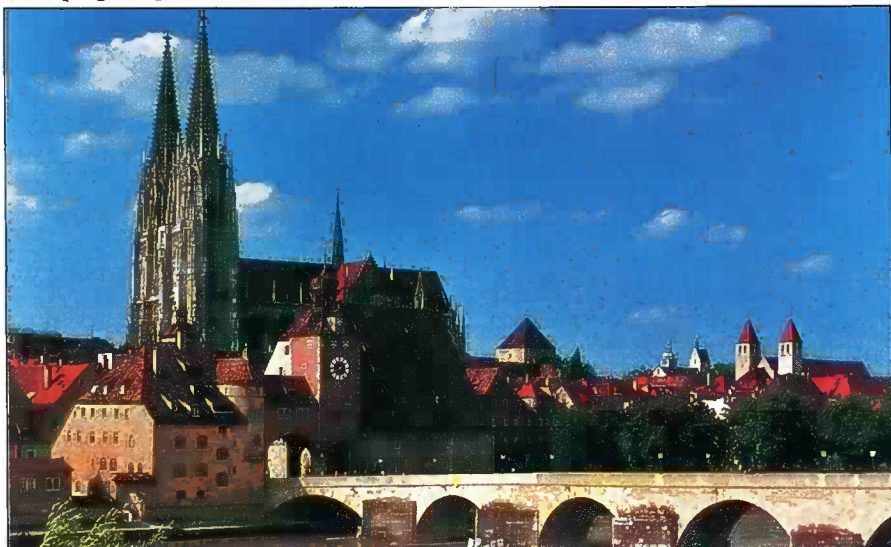
Since Roman times, history has seen many wars and rulers here, but Rome's legacies and contributions have not

As Rome consolidated control, the aggressive and brilliant engineers of the Empire raised fortresses, amphitheaters, aqueducts, and villas with vivid mosaics and baths. And in order to secure the frontiers, fortifications known as lines, considerable stretches of which are still visible, were constructed along the lengths of the banks of the Rhine and Danube.

All the major settlements were established on the rivers, tying together the lines. The exception was Trier; it sat far back from the perimeter of invasion. And in this second Rome, north of the Alps, the full potency of Roman architecture, art and craftsmanship was unleashed.

At Trier's height, its walled-in area was triple that of colonial Cologne, the second city and major port of the colony. Though little remains of the city walls, the elaborate bath houses are standing as firm as when they were erected of limestone and bricks; a Roman bridge, with original First Century, black-basalt square pillars, still spans the Moselle River here; the former forum of gladiators, the amphitheater, is open to the public; and the Rhineland Museum displays priceless Roman objects, including marble sculptures and mosaics.

Over its long history, Trier has also been endowed with magnificent structures of every architectural period, but none as startling and overwhelming as the Porta Nigra. It invokes admiration



Captivating Regensburg began as a 1st-century fortified Roman camp

Emperors too, coming from Rome to take up residence here, passed under the Porta Nigra, followed by glittering, extensive entourages as drums resounded. The notorious passed here as well — banished victims of court intrigue in Rome lucky enough to escape poisoning.

Some 2,000 years ago the Romans were carving a new colony out of Germanic lands. And it was back then that they founded Trier, Germany's oldest city, which was to become the resplendent "Rome of the North." The Caesars looked upon it with special favor, first establishing it as the colony's capital, and later as the Western capital of the Roman Empire.

For nearly five centuries, Caesars transformed Trier and their Germanic territories bounded by the Rhine and the Danube rivers. At a time when Germany was no more than a maze of

been conquered. Many cities and towns still harbor a host of Roman architectural and artistic treasures. Moreover, it was the Romans who discovered Germany's now famous curative waters and the original Eau de Cologne Germany today exports around the world; and they introduced the excellent wines grown along the Rhine and the first strains of now dominant Christianity.

A Look Back

Germany's Roman connection begins in the First Century B.C. As legions marched north subduing local tribes, fortified camps and garrisons sprouted. These were the forerunners of early walled Roman towns — which became such important German cities of today as Cologne, Frankfurt, Regensburg, Bonn (the federal capital), Mainz, Weisbaden, Koblenz and Aachen.



Trier's city gate, the Porta Nigra, evokes admiration among those who have seen the finest edifices of the Roman Empire.

even among those who have seen the finest edifices of the Roman Empire.

Captivating Regensburg, with Germany's largest intact medieval center, began as a First Century fortified camp on a knoll overlooking the Danube. Then, in 179 A.D., Marcus Aurelius built *Castra Regina*, the strongest fortress on the Danube — a fortification so huge that parts of it are still standing. In fact, the remaining city wall is the most important late-Roman construction of the Second Century,

Christian graves, relics and a chapel have been unearthed as well as a Fourth Century baptismal cellar of the Cybele cult, Christianity's great rival at the time. The only other such cellar has been found near Rome.

Christianity may have been the most potent force the Romans unleashed here, but it has a close rival that is still alive in German fields, taverns and on dinner tables worldwide. Archeological finds have proven that the Romans brought viticulture to

is the next best thing to a Roman orgy.

Water Cures

In graceful Weisbaden, the Roman inheritance includes a 300 A.D. arch and sections of the city fortifications,



1st-century tomb of Lucius Poblicius

Since Roman times, history has seen many wars and rulers here, but Rome's legacies and contributions have not been conquered.

while the *Porta Praetoria* is the oldest Roman gate in the country. Passing through the gate, one can see the original level of the Roman street, 10 feet below.

Early Religion

With the conquering Roman legions also came Christianity, which was taking hold as the official state religion. Ancient findings tell of the birth and early struggle of Christianity in Germany.

In 304 A.D., in Augsburg, which houses a Roman museum and boasts a Roman pine cone in its coat of arms, St. Afra was martyred. Her intact burial site was the country's first Christian holy place. At Neuss, early

Germany in about the Second Century. Over 1,800 years later, wine is a big industry in the Rhineland. In the former Roman town of Speyer, there's a wine museum that traces the long history of German viticulture. Among the priceless articles are a vintner's knife dating from 260 A.D. and a sealed glass case containing the world's oldest wine (300 A.D.) preserved in liquid state.

In the Rhinegau, along the Rhine near Weisbaden, numerous ancient chateaus produce some of Germany's finest wines and serve them with local cheeses and meats in garden cafes. A jaunt from chateau to chateau, stopping at wine gardens in local villages,

the "Heathen's Wall." But the Roman legacy runs deeper here. Legend has it that legionnaires sent their lackeys into the hot, salty waters that bubble up from 27 springs from 6,000 feet down to wash their horses, and they emerged relaxed, aching muscles soothed.

Wiesbaden was only one of countless sites where the Romans discovered curative waters and built lavish baths. Today, the 250 resorts of the highly successful German spa industry attract



The function of original Roman baths can still be seen at Baden-Baden, probably Germany's most famous spa today.

sufferers from all kinds of ailments from across Germany and around the world. At Baden-Baden, probably Germany's most famous spa, the Romans created some of their most elaborate baths. And you still observe their function from behind glass panes; tours are possible too.

Scents of Cologne

Speaking of water, have you ever wondered about the origin of Eau de Cologne? It originated in the city of Cologne — concocted by the Romans. Julia Agrippina, wife of the Emperor Claudius, first discovered and splashed on the scented waters. Cologne has been in use ever since.

Cologne is now one of Germany's largest cities and capital of the Rhineland, but more than a scented memory of Agrippina's city lingers. Wandering

the old town, one comes upon Roman Statues, portals and drinking fountains. Under Cologne Cathedral, the world's largest Gothic edifice, is a well-protected segment of the first Roman wall. A corner tower of the wall remains completely preserved, and a partial aqueduct stands. You can explore a Roman graveyard and a Fourth Century chapel, or the remains of what was the Praetorium, the governor's palace.

In 1941, workmen digging an air-raid shelter in Cologne uncovered a dazzling mosaic floor from a Third Century Roman villa. The mosaic — created from more than one million tiny stones and shards of glass, and depicting a god of grapes surrounded by mythical figures — is now the famous Dienysus Mosaic which has become the centerpiece of the city's

highly regarded Roman-Germanic Museum.

Entering the museum, you are immediately overwhelmed by the mammoth three-story, First Century tomb of Lucius Poblicius, a Roman officer. Then the Roman world is brought to life through frescoes, statuary, a triumphal chariot, glassware, coins and jewelry all displayed in thematic presentations.

Rome is alive here. Yet it seems somehow incongruous to follow up a morning of experiencing its history with a lunch of bratwurst, pumpernickel bread and a stein of beer. There is an alternative, however. At Xanten, north of Cologne, an amphitheater has been unearthed and partially reconstructed. The area is now an archaeological park and, to enhance its flavor, they even serve Roman food. •

Customs

To enter the United Kingdom or Germany, you need only a valid passport. No visas or shots are required of U.S. citizens as long as you are entering from the United States. If, at any time, you enter a country which has disease risks, however, you will be required to have specific inoculation before re-entry.

Upon flying into each country, you will go through a customs inspection before entering the city. This is a simple procedure where customs agents check for restricted or illegal drugs, weapons, animals, animal products, fruits and vegetables, and a variety of miscellaneous items. You

will be permitted to take small quantities of liquor and tobacco into Germany and England, and there is no restriction on transporting currency of the countries.

Re-entering the United States, the guidelines and restrictions are similar to entry regulations of England and Germany. You may bring back gifts or personal purchases of \$300 valuation without taxation.

Liquor, tobacco, and perfumes are not included, however, and if you bring in more than your allotment (one liter of alcohol and 200 cigarettes and 100 cigars), you will be assessed.

A traveler abroad is allowed to send

back to his friends via mail gifts of \$25 valuation or less without tax. So, if you're planning to do much shopping, seriously consider mailing some of your parcels.

Special Tip for Travelers

"Know Before You Go" is a pamphlet published by the U.S. Customs Service. It is a valuable source of information for the traveler leaving and returning to the United States. It may be picked up at your local Passport Office or ordered by mail from: Supt. of Documents, U.S. Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20229 (Stock #4802-00039, 55 cents per copy).

Currency

West Germany (Federal Republic):

Currency Unit: Deutsche Marks/100 pfennigs (coins). Official rate (as of 7/6/82): DM2.44 = \$1.00 U.S. Currency Regulations: unlimited... import or export.

United Kingdom (England):

Currency Unit: Pounds Sterling/100 new pence (coins). Official rate (as of 7/6/82): .55 = \$1.00 U.S. Currency Regulations: unlimited import/export.

Experienced travelers know exchanging currency before going abroad saves time, headaches, and often money.

As soon as you arrive, you'll be expected to pay for everything in the currency of the country you're visiting. Tips for the porter, cabs to your

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hotel, purchases for necessary items you forgot... all have to be paid in local currency. By waiting until you arrive, you'll probably find long lines at exchange counters, as well as unfamiliar banking hours... and keep in mind that the exchange rates at shops and hotels usually yield less per dollar than banks. So travel smart by exchanging some currency in advance. Between \$50.00 and \$100.00 worth of foreign currency per person for the first few days is a recommended amount.

Travelers checks are still one of the safest ways to carry money. You can purchase United States currency denominations or you can purchase Deutsch Mark or Pound Sterling amounts in travelers checks. This will

eliminate having to exchange your money, and you simply pay your bills with currency of the country.

A pocket calculator is handy if you plan to do extensive shopping. Check bank rates daily and calculate the costs of purchases to make sure you know what you're spending.

Remember to keep your money in a safe place. Leaving it in a hotel room is not recommended. If you carry large amounts with you, a money belt or inner shirt pouch is useful.

Credit cards are good to have for emergencies, unanticipated purchases, or simply to use for much of your food and lodging. VISA cards are accepted as widely as are American Express cards.