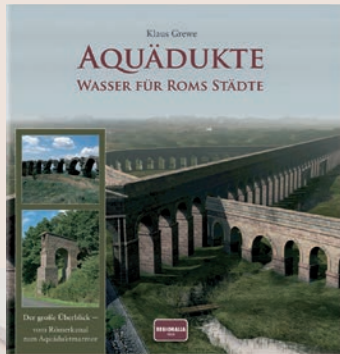


The Freundeskreis Römerkanal e.V., founded in 2008, supervises the information centre, takes care of the educational content and offers talks, guided tours and special programs.

The scientific content determined by Prof. Dr. Klaus Grewe, who dedicated more than half a century to the investigation of this Roman aqueduct.

Related to the exhibition is the book "Aquädukte – Wasser für Roms Städte", published by Regionalia Verlag, Rheinbach. The description of the walkway "Der Römerkanal-Wanderweg – wie das Wasser laufen lernte", published by the "Eifelverein", offers numerous interesting facts about the Eifel Aqueduct. The entire route from Nettersheim to Cologne is described including the Römerkanal Infozentrum.

See also: Klaus Grewe, Recent Developments in Aqueduct Research. in: Mouseion, Volume 16 Issue S2, 2019, LX-Series III, pp. 191-222. (<https://www.utpjournals.press/doi/abs/10.3138/mous.16.s2-5>)



How to find us

Römerkanal-Infozentrum

Himmeroder Wall 53359 Rheinbach
Entry through the "Naturparkzentrum", barrier-free access via the Himmeroder Wall.

Opening hours

Monday closed
Tuesday-Friday 10-12 and 14-17
Saturday-Sunday 11-17



Further information available at roemerkanal.de

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Römerkanal-Infozentrum

The Roman Aqueduct – how the water learned to run



Welcome to the Information Centre on the Roman Eifel Aqueduct.

The Römerkanal-Infozentrum is located in the medieval town of Rheinbach. It was built on the initiative of the "Freundeskreis Römerkanal" and inaugurated in 2019. It is the only information centre of this kind in the world.

The "Römerkanal" is 95 km long and Rheinbach is situated about halfway on the route to Cologne. Nearly two thousand years ago the aqueduct provided water from the Eifel hills to Roman Cologne.

The Centre provides visitors with information on the history of the aqueduct and gives an insight into the magnificent technical and architectural achievements of the Romans. Students will undergo an interesting learning experience in this light-flooded place.

The modern exhibition is divided into three sections and reflects the current state of the research on this aqueduct.

The information centre can easily be reached by public transport, on foot, or by bike. There is ample parking space. The building has been designed to offer easy access to people with disabilities. Next door are the "Glasmuseum" telling the history of Bohemian glass in Rheinbach and the "Naturparkzentrum", informing the visitor about the landscape and culture of the Rhineland region. These exhibitions are part of the "Himmeroder Hof", a conglomerate of old in-town farmhouses which have been transformed into public space. From this location between two of the medieval towers of the ramparts of Rheinbach, a wide choice of cafés and restaurants is within walking distance.



Part 1

Roman techniques for aqueduct building

Aqueducts from Roman times show a level of technical sophistication that continues to surprise even experts today.

It is as if the Roman engineers aimed to display the broad range of their capabilities through building the aqueduct. The construction of aqueduct bridges shows dimensions, seemingly surpassing the limits set by gravity. When determining the required slope of the duct along its course, a level of accuracy was reached which leads to doubts about the quality of modern measurements. All of this shows their thorough preparation and the accurate construction plan.



Aqueduct bridge in Segovia (Spain) – part of the Roman water system, but also a demonstration of Roman power?

The exhibits show the most beautiful and most complicated examples of aqueduct building of the entire Roman Empire. The impressive bridges, the pressurised ducts and the well thought through tunnels not only highlight the technical skills but, more importantly, are examples of how the Romans displayed their claim to power.

Apart from these technical achievements, the exhibition shows how simple the actual tools were for staking out the required course and how nevertheless the desired precision was achieved.

Part 2

The Eifel aqueduct – technically the most impressive Roman construction in Germany

No aqueduct in the Roman Empire has been as thoroughly investigated as the Eifel Aqueduct to Cologne. In other aqueducts, it is rare to find as large a diversity of technical elements as here, near the Rhine.



An archaeological discovery: the connection of two building sections in the course of the Eifel Aqueduct (Mechernich-Lessenich)



Mechernich-Vusse: reconstruction of an aqueduct bridge based on local finds

It was an archaeological sensation to be able to demonstrate for the first time the subdivision of an antique building project in roughly 5 km long building sections. A well armoured stilling basin connected two such building sections. Spring encasements, bridges, collection basins and sediment basins could be investigated archaeologically to then restore them. When needed, protective housing was designed to display these elements along the “Römerkanal walkway” – one of the first such archaeological oriented routes in Germany.

The exhibition uses photos, documents related to the excavations and models to illustrate the multitude of technical aspects of this overwhelming building.



Nîmes (southern France): Pont du Gard

Part 3

From lime deposit to aqueduct marble – an export success of medieval Rhineland

Because the Romans preferred calcareous water it was inevitable that lime would be deposited on the bottom and walls of the aqueduct. In the Eifel Aqueduct the layer was, in sections, 40 cm thick. This did not pose a problem during the operation since the deposits did not reach the top of the duct by far.

In the high Middle Ages, the routes used to transport marble from the quarries in northern Italy had deteriorated and were unusable for heavy loads. Thus, north of the Alps, decorative stone became unavailable and architects looked for a substitute material. For churches, monasteries and castles of the romanesque period one exploited the long defunct aqueduct for building material. But of greatest interest were the lime deposits, which skilled stonemasons and sculptors turned into very special marble.



An export success of the middle ages: lime deposit from the Eifel Aqueduct as marble for the floor of the Bishop throne in the Canterbury Cathedral (England)



Monastery Maria Laach (Germany): the anterior two columns of the baldachin over the high altar made from lime deposit of the Eifel Aqueduct

Lacking other material, one used the aqueduct marble to beautify the romanesque architecture. Aqueduct marble was sold throughout Europe: all cathedrals along the “Hellweg” (from Duisburg via Paderborn to the Elbe), the cathedrals of Roskilde in Denmark and Canterbury in England and many churches in The Netherlands have columns, altars or grave stones of aqueduct marble.

The exhibition has an ample supply of pieces of lime deposit and medieval aqueduct marble from the Eifel Aqueduct.