Interreg
Danube Transnational Programme
Living Danube Limes

OUTPUT T3.5

Pilot Action (P13)

St. Johann im Mauerthale (Austria)

Title	Increasing the Visibility of the Roman Danube Limes	Final version 02/2022

Author(s) University for Continuing Education (Danube University Krems)
Oliver Fries

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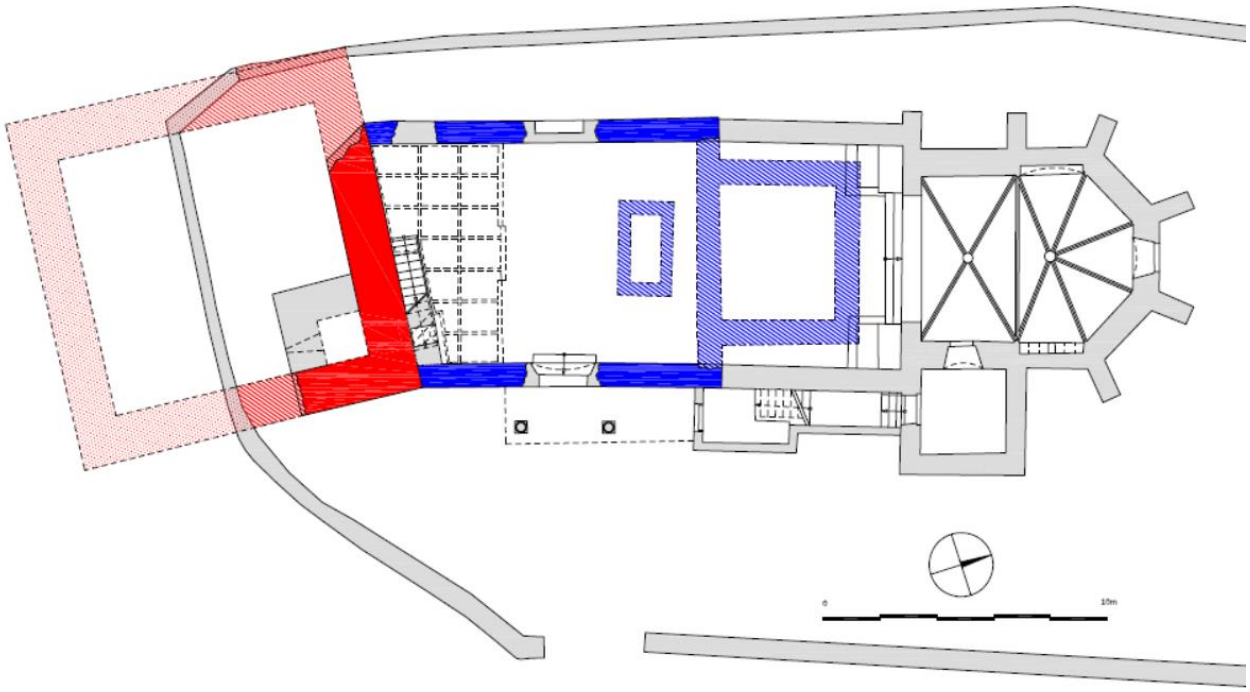
1. Introduction

This paper summarises the various efforts taken and activities organised in the framework of the project Living Danube Limes contributing to the increase of visibility and conveyance of the Roman past at the individual national project pilot sites (listed downstream the Danube): Gunzenhausen (Germany), Comagena/Tulln in combination with St. Johann im Mauerthale (Austria), Iža (Slovakia), Matrica/Százhalombatta (Hungary), Ad Labores/Kopačevo (Croatia), Lederata/Ram (Serbia), Bononia/Vidin in combination with Sinagovtsi (Bulgaria) and Sacidava (Romania).

2. General Information on the Pilot Site

From 2013/2014, the intensive phase of the preparatory work for the nomination of the Roman Danube Limes as a World Heritage Site led to an increased preoccupation with the individual objects along its Noric section. In 2015, a study project at the Danube University Krems, in which a Roman watchtower (burgus) was made probable in the church of St. John the Baptist in St. Johann im Mauerthale in the Wachau-valley, came into focus and led to research. Until the discovery of the late Romanesque and Gothic wall paintings in 1971, the little church received little scientific attention. In the previous research only one single phase of construction could be identified, which was dated to the 15th century. Adalbert Klaar, who was commissioned by the Federal Monuments Office (Bundesdenkmalamt) to draw up a first plan of the church in 1963, already recognized that the southern wall and the church are not arranged at right angles to the rest of the building, but he did not recognize the Roman building integrated into the medieval building. Archaeological investigations and in-depth architectural history investigations in the years 2016 to 2017 yielded clear indications of a Roman Burgus, the northern wall of which has been preserved up to the level of the attic the church. It turned out as a special surprise that two arched windows belonged to this construction phase. Further archaeological, geophysical, historical as well as architectural and art-historical investigations made it possible to understand a subsequent use of the Roman Burgus in the High Middle Ages, which indicates certain site continuity, as well as further construction phases of the church.

The research results were published as part of the "Focus Denkmal" series of publications by the Federal Office for the Protection of Monuments (Bundesdenkmalamt) and should have been presented to an interested public in spring 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, however, this could not take place and has not been made up for to date.



St. Johann im Mauterhale: simplified ground plan with marking of Burgus (red) and the high medieval church building (blue). The current church-building is shown in grey. Surveying and design by Oliver Fries (2022).

3. Documentation of Selected Visibility Measure(s) Implemented On-Site

The “trompe l’oeil”-technique, used by Romans and Greeks, is based on perspective drawings, in order to create the impression of larger spaces. One of the best practice examples for a so called “trompe l’oeil” as a visibility measure on an archeological site can be found at the Heidentor in Carnuntum (Austria). From a precise point of view, the shape of the original construction can be visualized through a glass-panel, overlapped on the ruins.

The remains of the late Roman watchtower in St. Johann im Mauerthale are not visible part from the outside of the medieval church builing of St. John the Baptist. The Roman walls can only be seen from the attic or the inside of the bell-tower. Without detailed information, the Roman building remains cannot be put into context by the interested visitor. Most of the time the church is closed. Religious activities hardly ever take place anymore. Guided tours rarely take place or aren’t offered at all with a focus on the Roman past.

From our point of view, the "trompe-l'oeil”-technique is particularly suitable for heavily unclear structural connections or completely invisible building remains. For these reasons, we decided to implement this visualization measure in the case of St. Johann im Mauerthale.

We have adapted the concept of "trompe-l'oeil" from the Heidentor in Carnuntum and developed it further for our purposes in St. Johann im Mauerthale. Similar to Carnuntum, the viewer looks through a pane of glass which is intended to visualize the Roman building status.

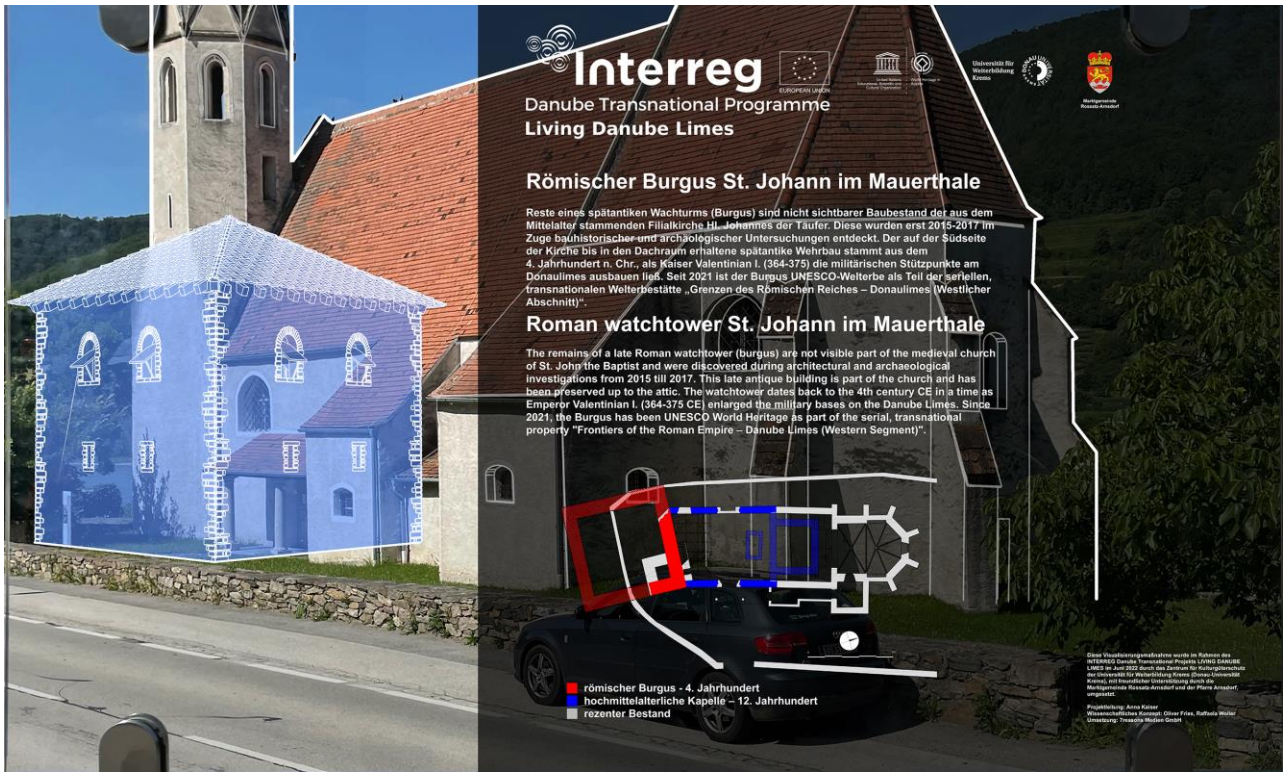
Unlike in Carnuntum, we opted for a colored differentiation in contrast to the monochrome representation that prevailed there.

On a free space at the display, the visitor receives brief textual information in German and English as well as a floor plan for additional orientation.

In the course of the preparations for this visualization measure, we became aware of a major disadvantage of this type of presentation. Sufficient space is required to get a proper perspective of the building. Due to the cramped location due to the small space between the Danube, the cycle path, the federal highway and the settlement, there was only a few places for the installation of the "trompe-l'oeil".

The company 7reasons from Vienna (www.7reasons.net), which already has a lot of experience with such visualization measures, could be won as a partner for the implementation of the project.
We also received active support from the municipality of Rossatz-Arnsdorf, who helped us to install the "trompe-l'oeil".

St. Johann im Mauerthale, installing the frame of the "trompe-l'oeil". Cooperation between workers of the municipality of Rossatz-Arnsdorf, the company 7reasons and local supporters.



St. Johann im Mauerthale, a look through the display of the "trompe-l'oeil".

4. Visibility Workshop

In preparation for the visualization measure, we held a workshop in the municipality of Rossatz-Arnsdorf. In order to be able to implement the best version of a visualization measure at St. Johann im Mauerthale, it was important for us to understand the current situation in a larger environment. That's why we decided to include the Roman watchtowers in the large municipality of Rossatz-Arnsdorf in the considerations for the workshop.
For the workshop we chose a mix of theoretical and practical approach. The aim of the workshop was to review the current state of research, to analyze the environmental conditions (landscape, terrain, traffic, accessibility and transportation) and the development of uniform and suitable visualization measures for the situation in the Wachau-Valley. The workshop was organized as a field trip using local public transport (bus and bike). The remains of the Roman watchtowers in Rossatz-Windstallgraben, St. Lorenz in der Wachau, Bacharnsdorf and St. Johann im Mauerthale were visited and analyzed. A special focus was on the two churches of St. Lorenz and St. Johann, where the Roman remains of the watchtowers are integrated in the building structure but not a visible part of the current state of construction. The preserved building stock is of great importance here. It is all the more important to convey this appropriately and to make the interested visitors familiar with the Roman heritage. Possible visualization measures were developed by the workshop participants. The participants included a Student from the Danube University Krems, Locals, Members of the Parish of Rossatz and Arnsdorf, members of a local compay in monument preservation, a tourist guide and the Archivist of the municipiality of Rossatz-Arnsdorf.

The joint result was that a "trompe-l'oeil"would be the best solution for St. Lorenz and St. Johann im Mauertal.

5. Virtual Reality Reconstruction and 3D Models

Besides the 3D virtual reality models which have been created in D.T2.3.1, a 3D model both for of the church and the Roman watchtower of St. Johann im Mauerthale have been developed for the creation of the "trompe-l'oeil". Both representations were overlapped in the correct position. The 3D model was the basis for the later visualization of the "trompe-l'oeil". The 3D model was based on a reconstruction of the Bacharnsdorf Burgus by H.J. Ubel from the 1980s. The planning and execution was carried out by the author and the company 7reasons.

6. Interplay between the 3D Models and Physical Visibility Measure

The 3D model was used exclusively as a basis for the visualization of the Burgus in St. Johann and can be reused for future projects, such as e3D printing.

7. Further Project Initiatives and Activities Fostering the Visibility of the Pilot Site

If no measures are planned in the near future by a future world heritage management, the municipality of Rossatz-Arnsdorf is willing to present the four Roman watchtowers based on the pilot project in St. Johann im Mauertal and develop a joint comprehensive visualization concept for the strongly interconnected sites.

8. (Future) Initiatives at the Pilot Site Triggered Through *Living Danube Limes*

The visualization measure and the Burgus of St. Johann im Mauertal are to be presented to the local public as part of the national "Monument Day" on September 25, 2022 (https://tagdesdenkmals.at/de/programm).

9. Existing Synergies Capitalised and New Synergies Generated

The greatest success of the workshop was to inspire and win over the municipality of Rossatz-Arnsdorf, which has a significant section of the Danube Limes, as a future partner.

10. Feedback of Participants

Above all, the participants from the municipality of Rossatz-Arnsdorf and the two parishes were very grateful for the information about the Roman architectural heritage. Now they are able to appreciate their monuments much better and take better care of them. The participants were pleased to be able to actively participate in the development of a suitable visualization measure on the pilote site.