

# COLOURFUL CITY TOUR

Learn about Roman city buildings  
Explore the colours of the ancient world





# Table of contents

## Theme

This file is about the most important monuments in the Roman city. It brings to life the diversity of the buildings and highlights their vibrant colours.

## Outline

### City tour with Lisa and Tarek

Students can follow the guided tour on the city map to learn about the most important monuments.

### Monuments memory

Fill-in-the-blank and memory exercise to consolidate the knowledge gained about the buildings in Augusta Raurica.





### Colours through the ages

The students will discover how the monuments have changed over time, right up to the present day. This section contains specialised content and tasks related to painting in Roman times.

### Create your own natural paints

Students can follow the instructions to make their own natural paints.

## Keys to icons

-  **Commentary for teachers**
-  **Worksheet**
-  **Lesson idea**
-  **Specialised content**

Cover photo:

### A door frame from Augusta Raurica

Because ornate door frames are so uncommon these days, we rarely see them. And even in Roman times, ordinary houses did not always have special door frames. However, the entrances to larger buildings, such as temples, villas, squares and the like, typically featured beautifully decorated door frames.

Our example is made of marble. It comes from the «Sanctuary on Grienmatt», a large temple. Ornate foliage decorations, like the ones we see here, were the norm throughout the Roman Empire, because they were considered more appropriate than designs with figures. It was made between 60 and 80 AD.





Hello!  
Our names  
are Lisa

and Tarek.

We're both in  
Year 6.



Because we find Roman times so fascinating,  
we often go for walks here in Augusta Raurica.  
We have already discovered a wide variety  
of buildings this way.

We have already  
discovered a wide variety  
of buildings this way.



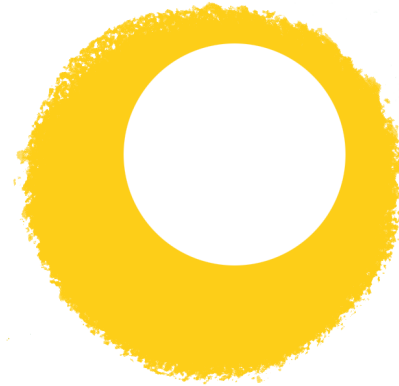
Our favourite thing to do is  
imagining what it was like  
here over 2000 years ago.  
It's really colourful and  
diverse.



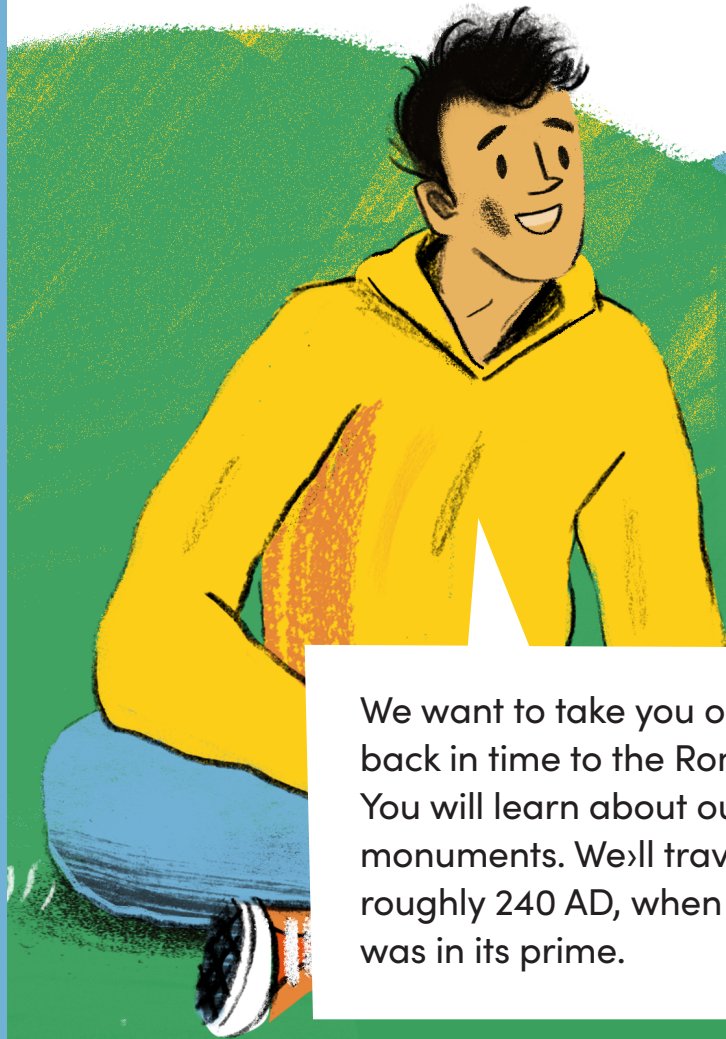
The best part is the huge  
monuments, which were  
undoubtedly a real spectacle  
in Roman times!



# City tour with Lisa and Tarek



Lesson idea: City tour with Lisa and Tarek



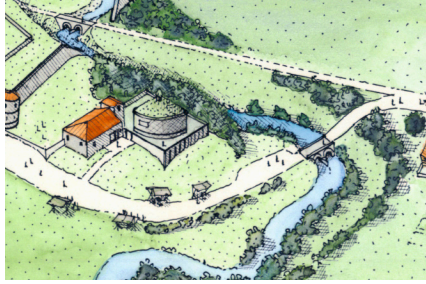
Take the city map from this period. Try to follow the whole journey on the map. Trace our route on the map with a pen and mark the monuments we have seen. But first, we have to find our starting point.

We want to take you on a journey back in time to the Roman city. You will learn about our 13 favourite monuments. We'll travel back to roughly 240 AD, when the city was in its prime.





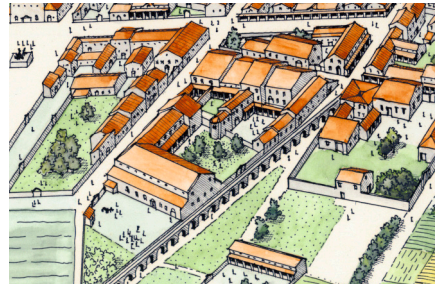
## The city wall **A** and the funeral monument **B**



The map shows one wall section in the east and one in the south. They look like straight lines, each interrupted by a gate. Did you find them?

A city wall normally protects a city from outside attacks. However, in Augusta Raurica, it was never finished, so there are only two sections of the wall. Our second monument is the funeral monument. Look outside the city, but close to the eastern city wall. There, you will see a round building with a green roof. This is a tomb where an extremely wealthy man from Augusta Raurica was probably buried after his death. In Roman times, people were always buried outside the city. This was required by law. We set off from the funeral monument and enter the city through the east gate.

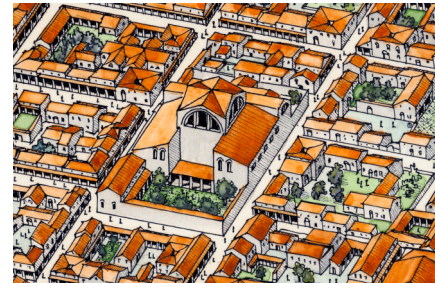
## The aqueduct **C**



Walking directly ahead from the road that leads through the East gate, the rows of houses become denser and denser. The houses are built in blocks and sit like islands between the streets and alleys. This is why a block of houses is also called an "insula". Augusta Raurica was meticulously planned. It didn't just happen. It is the height of summer, and the sun is shining. We're thirsty and would like a drink. Fortunately, almost every insula has a fountain. We're bound to come across one soon. A large bridge in the south-west catches our eye. However, it is not intended for human use but for transporting water. The name for this type of elevated waterway is an aqueduct. No effort was spared to provide enough fresh water for an entire city. It was brought from far away using water pipes and water bridges like these. The reservoir is about a three-hour walk from Augusta Raurica. We can walk very close to the aqueduct. The road we are following leads to the point where the aqueduct ends.

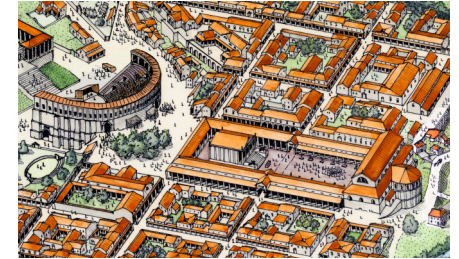
The water flows into a water tower here, which stores it before it is distributed to underground water mains. The pipes then lead into wealthy peoples' houses, fountains and public baths across the city.

## The central thermal baths **D**



A bath to get rid of the dust would be great after our long journey, wouldn't it? Let's find the central thermal baths! You can bathe, sweat out impurities and wash there for free. From here, we turn right at the end of the aqueduct and go straight on until we see a huge building on the right-hand side: the central thermal baths. The roof of the tallest part of the building is special because it looks like a cross from above. The central thermal baths have a tree-lined courtyard where you can relax. That means we've arrived at our third location where we can enjoy a refreshing swim!

## The forum with Basilica **E** curia **F** and forum temple **G**

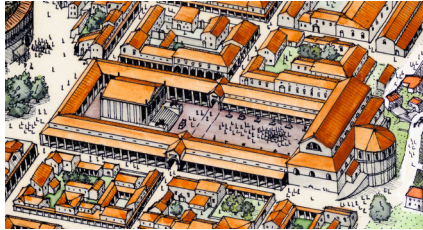


After leaving the baths, we continue straight ahead down the road we came from. We pass through an archway into a large square at right angles to our road. This is the forum. Everything important for business, politics and more can be found here. The square is surrounded by smaller chambers used as offices. The chambers on the outside of the complex are used as shops and storage areas. They all have porticoes. This is practical. Even in the rain, you can walk around with dry feet, and it is pleasant, shady and cool in the summer. The forum is a great place to meet people, exchange money or find out about the latest news. The basilica is at the eastern end, on the right. This is the large courthouse. It has an elongated, two-tier roof. The semi-circular curia is located next



to the basilica. This is where the city's politicians meet. The forum temple is at the other end of the forum square. Ceremonies are held here to summon the Roman gods.

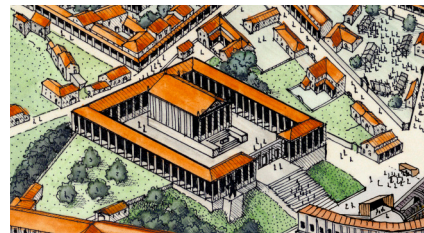
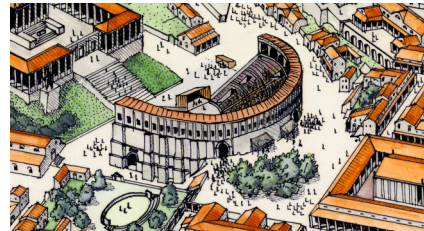
## The taberna **H**



We leave the forum by the northern exit and turn left. We are immediately hit by the delicious aroma of freshly baked bread and realise that we are hungry. We continue along the road, turning diagonally right between the forum and another huge monument. There, we can see the source of the amazing food smells: the taberna on the right side of the road. It used to be a snack bar near the theatre. We are lucky and get served quickly. We order a bottle of mulsum (sweet spiced wine) and two puls (grain soup). Our eyes are drawn to the wonderful bread oven, and we order another bread roll. As we wait for our meal, we hear metal hitting metal from upstairs. Of course, the taberna offers more than just food and drink. There is also a repair workshop here. In Roman times, it is common for a small restaurant to be located on the ground floor of a house along the

road. The entire family often helps out with it. Our food is ready, so we take it with us.

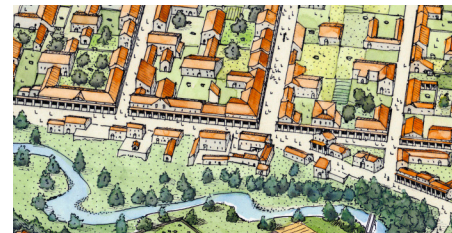
## The theatre **I** and the temple on Schönbühl hill **J**



Time for some entertainment! Fortunately, we're already quite close to the theatre. It's easy to find because it's huge. Around 10,000 people can sit in the building and watch the theatre performances. You can recognise the building by its distinctive shape: It looks like a large slice of lemon! Did you find it? We enter the theatre through one of the huge rear entrances and take our seats on the upper levels. Even though the performer is at the bottom of the stage, we can hear him very well. This is due to

the shape of the theatre. It is designed to allow voices and sounds to travel easily from the stage to the upper rows of seats. We listen to the performer while enjoying our meal. The largest temple in the city is right next to the theatre. This is not a coincidence. If the theatre audience looks straight ahead, they should see the temple. The theatre performances take place as part of religious ceremonies. Sacrificing for the gods is not the only thing that is important to the Romans. The temple is also used to make sacrifices to the \*emperor's family. This is to remind us that we are part of the Roman Empire.

## Commercial buildings **M**



So far, we've only seen the upper part of the city. But there is also a district near the Rhine. Many craftsmen have set up their workshops here, for example, in the commercial buildings. Let's see if you can find them. Let's go! Return to the theatre via the same route from the

amphitheatre, passing the sanctuary. We take the main road from the theatre towards the two small rivers, now called Ergolz and Violenbach. The road is flanked on both sides by small houses. We walk to the end of the road, which is right in between the two small rivers. At this point, we turn right and follow the road over the little bridge. Then we stop where the road turns left for the third time. The commercial buildings can be found on the right-hand side of the road. Two buildings arranged in an L-shape form a courtyard with a further extension. They are no larger than the other houses in the neighbourhood. However, there are numerous floors with storerooms, an inn, a \*fumatorium for smoking meat, a laundry and much more. There's a lot going on here! And no wonder. After all, many travellers pass along this road. The road is used when leaving or entering the city from the east – a prime location for traders and shops, you might say. Perhaps you would like to stop for refreshments or buy a souvenir nearby?

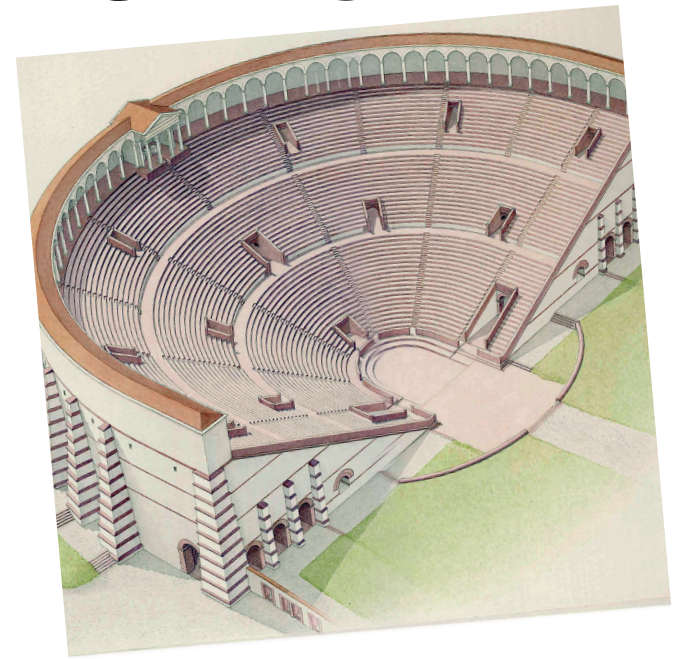
This is the end of our journey, and I think it would be a good idea for you to take a souvenir from the Roman times back with you. Think about what it should be. A little figurine of the god \*Mercury? A lovely felt cloak? Some tasty sausages from the smokehouse?



# Identifying monuments

- 1 Here, you can see pictures of the monuments along with a brief description. The building names have been lost. Fill in the gaps with the right terms.
- 2 Decorate the monuments with colours and patterns.
- 3 Cut out each card and use them as a memory aid. The text and image of a monument always form a pair.

- Terms:
- Commercial buildings
  - Sanctuary
  - Temple on Schönbühl hill
  - Central thermal baths
  - City wall
  - Theatre
  - Curia Amphitheatre
  - Funeral monument
  - Taberna
  - Forum temple
  - Aqueduct
  - Basilica

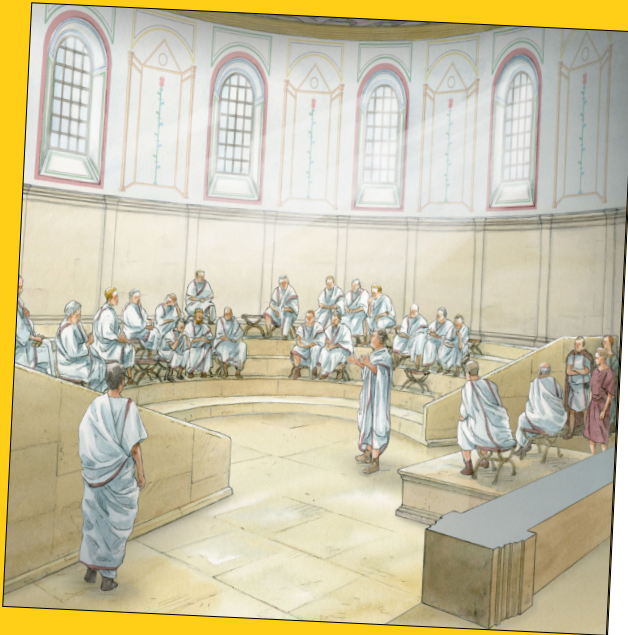


This \_\_\_\_\_ had three tiers for spectators and could hold around 10,000 people. Plays and other events accompanied by music and singing were performed





# Worksheet: Monuments memory



The city council held its meetings

here in the \_\_\_\_\_  
There were a total of 100 councillors  
and two city presidents who nego-  
tiated the city's policies here.



The \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ were the place for hygiene, sport  
and relaxation. Admission was  
low-cost if not free, so all Augusta  
Raurica residents could afford to  
stay



The

\_\_\_\_\_ was Augusta Raurica's administrative  
and court building. It had a  
spacious hall and was probably  
lavishly decorated.



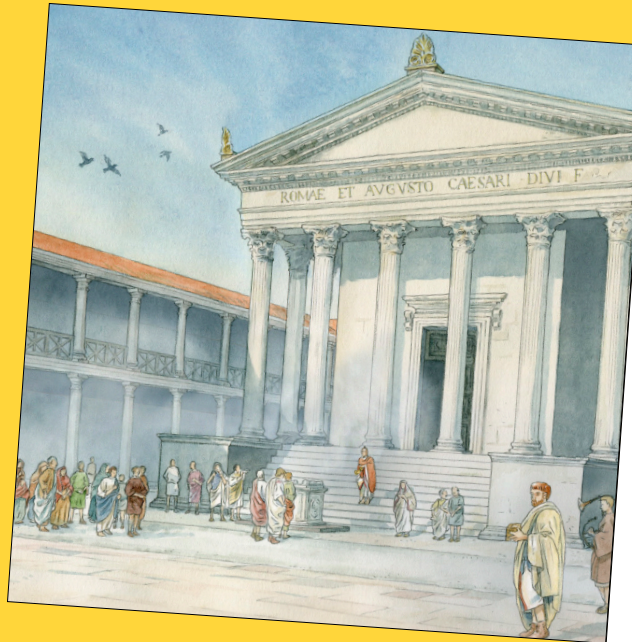


# Worksheet: Monuments memory



In its early decades, Augusta Raurica was a city on the border of the \*Roman Empire and therefore needed effective protection. However, the

\_\_\_\_\_ was only completed in a few places, for example, at the East Gate.



The \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ was dedicated to the goddess \*Roma and the emperor \*Augustus. Inside were statues of the goddess and emperor, which were worshipped.

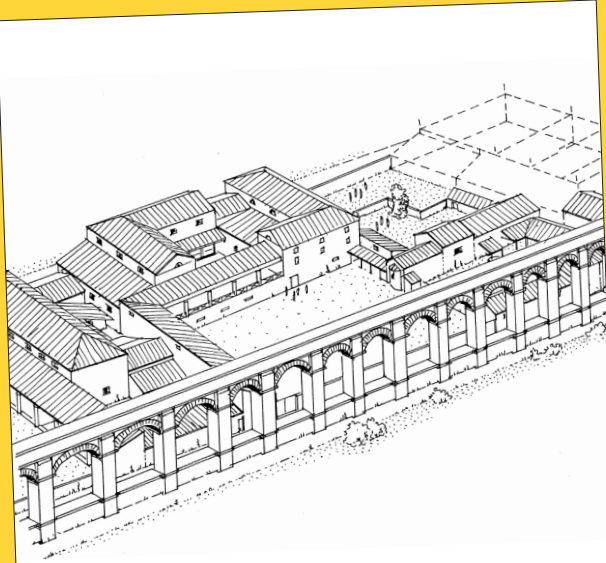


The \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ was located on the road between the upper and lower city. It housed various trades, an inn and living quarters. There really was a lot going on!



## Worksheet: Monuments memory



This "bridge", called an

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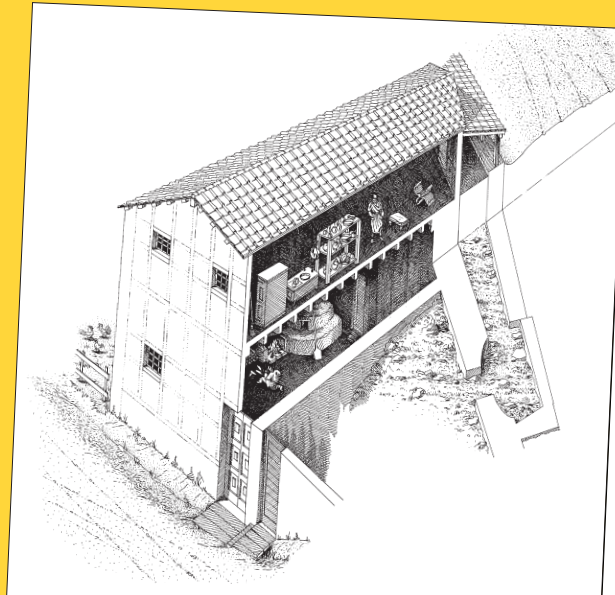
provided the city with fresh water. The structure then continued underground throughout the city.



The spa was located in the west of the city, right next to the

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It was an important therapeutic centre where people could come to seek treatment for their illnesses or recuperate.



Food was prepared and sold in the

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The bread oven can be seen on the ground floor, while upstairs, there is a shelf with crockery.



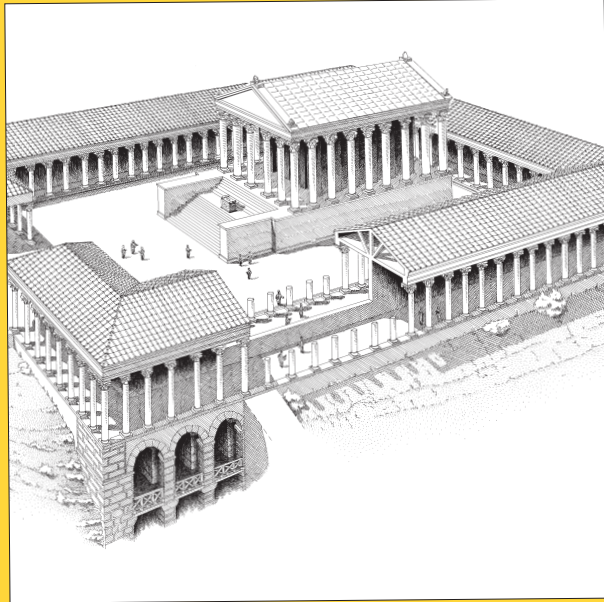
# Worksheet: Monuments memory



This is where the more brutal spectacles took place. Executions, \*gladiators, \*animal fights and other similar events took place at the

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



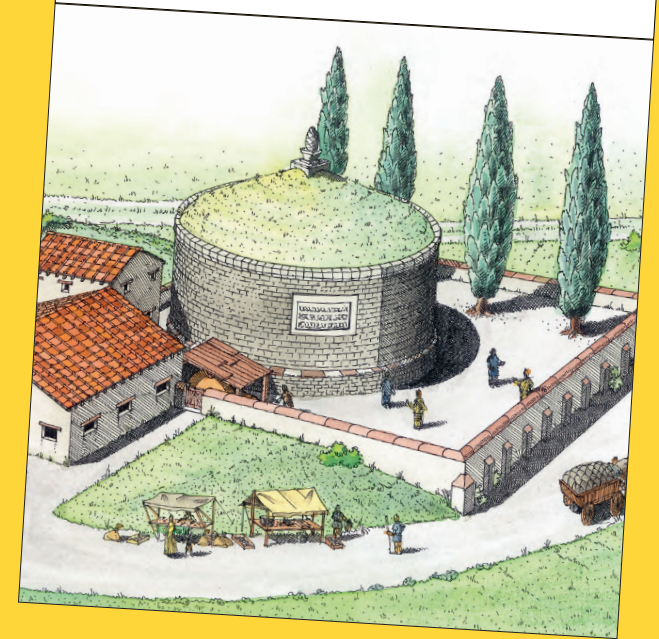
The massive

\_\_\_\_\_ on

\_\_\_\_\_ dominates the cityscape on the hill opposite the theatre. It is unknown who was worshipped here, although it may have been a \*sacred site in honour of the \*emperor.

The huge \_\_\_\_\_

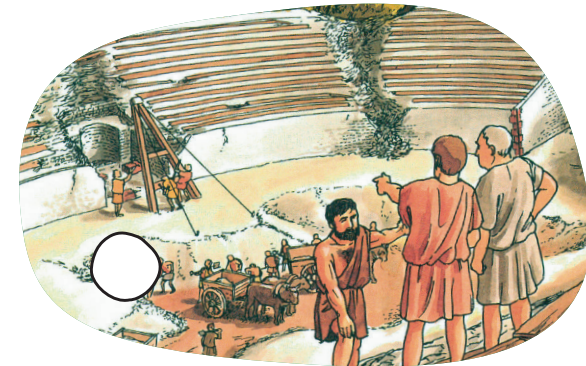
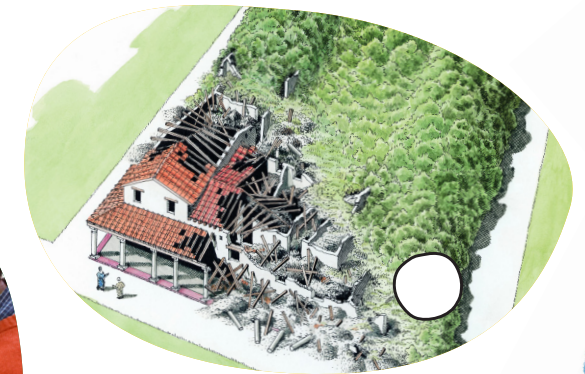
\_\_\_\_\_ in front of the eastern city gate was erected in honour of a prominent but unknown person from.



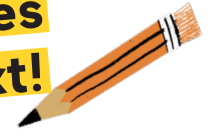


# From colourful to white

The buildings in Roman times were colourful. Today, with a few exceptions, they are mostly white. But why? Discover what happened to the monuments over almost 2000 years.



**Match the images to the correct text!**



- 1 The abandoned buildings were looted, and the construction materials were reused.
- 2 The buildings fell into disrepair and eventually became overgrown with vegetation. Earth also gradually covered the monuments, and their colours faded over time.
- 3 The ruins were rediscovered several centuries later. People began to take an interest in the ancient buildings and painted them as they found them: as white monuments.
- 4 It is difficult to know what they looked like because so few buildings have survived. The monuments are thoroughly documented and researched. The same goes for the limited traces of colour that have survived the test of time.
- 5 The Roman buildings need to be protected from further deterioration. This is why some of the old walls have been reinforced and rebuilt. This is called restoration. However, no colour is used.



# Colourful traces

In a few rare cases, the ancient colour has survived, for example, as small remnants on statues. The wall paintings from the Roman city of \*Pompeii in Italy are especially well-known. But there are wall paintings in Augusta Raurica as well. Here you can see some examples. Some of the colours and patterns are easy to see. Others require a closer look.

### Different preservation

Unfortunately, not all of the colours used are equally durable.

Earth colours fade quickly, whereas colours from rocks, called minerals, last much longer.

Artists always applied the paint directly onto the wet plaster when creating murals. This made the colours last much longer.



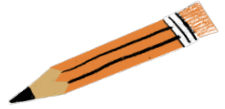
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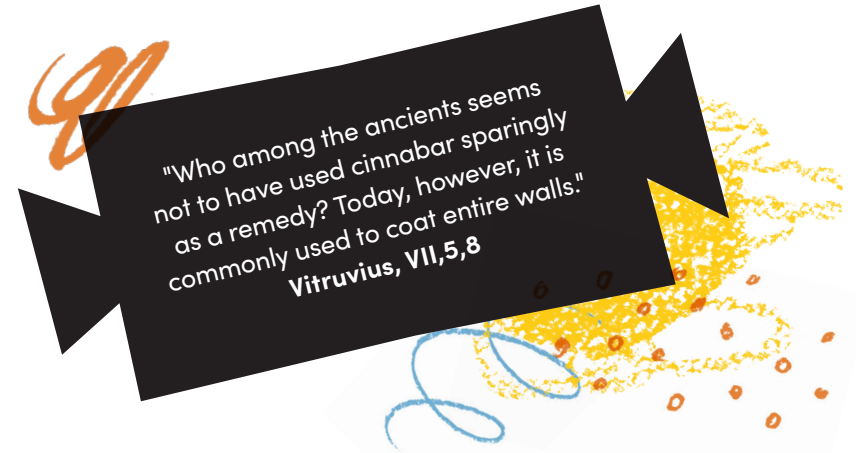
2

- 1 Detail of a wall painting from Insula 39, Augusta Raurica
- 2 A wall painting in the Augusta Raurica commercial buildings

Read this quote from the architect Vitruvius about using cinnabar as a wall paint.



QUIS ENIM ANTIQUORUM NON UTI MEDICAMENTO MINIO PARCE VIDETUR USUS ESSE? AT NUNC PASSIM PLERUMQUE TOTI PARIETES INDUCUNTUR.  
Vitruv, VII, V, 8, 337



"Who among the ancients seems not to have used cinnabar sparingly as a remedy? Today, however, it is commonly used to coat entire walls."  
Vitruvius, VII,5,8

But what colour is cinnabar anyway? Complete the exercise on the following pages to find out.



Answer:

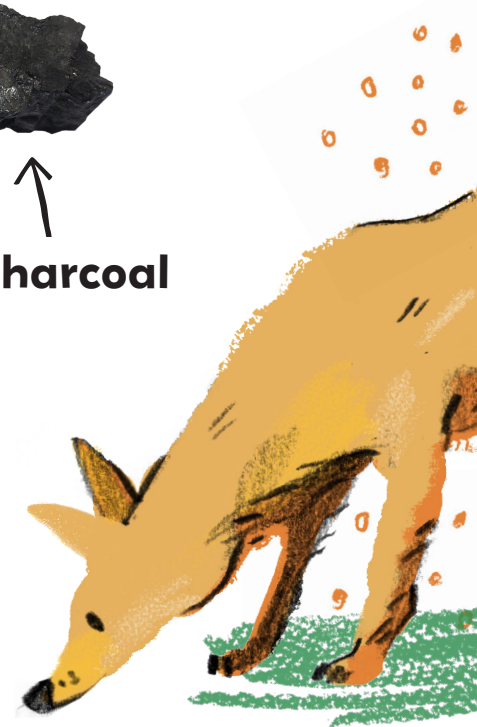
Cinnabar is a \_\_\_\_\_

and produces the colour \_\_\_\_\_



# Colour palette

The Romans had a wide range of colours to choose from. The dyes used to create these colours, also known as pigments, were found in nature and made from a variety of raw materials. Some were more common, others were rarer and more expensive.





**Find the right pigment(s)  
for the desired colour.  
Fill in the missing words.**



- Yellow is a common pigment found in soil. It is called \_\_\_\_\_ and is not very bright, it is more of a brownish colour.
- Red is found in reddish earth, known as \_\_\_\_\_. The mineral \_\_\_\_\_ produces a particularly intense red.
- Green was extracted from the gemstone \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ which occurs when copper weathers.
- Blue was available in many different shades. \_\_\_\_\_ was extremely popular. It was made from an Egyptian recipe of sand, lime and copper,

and shaped into small balls. However, blue could also be obtained from the crystal \_\_\_\_\_ or the precious stone \_\_\_\_\_.

- White can be made from \_\_\_\_\_
- Black is produced from \_\_\_\_\_
- Purple was highly prized because it was extracted from a large number of \_\_\_\_\_ from the Mediterranean Sea. This colour was often worn only by high-ranking politicians and the Roman \*emperor.
- Pink was created by mixing red pigments with lime. This meant that the colour components sometimes had to be blended.
- \_\_\_\_\_ was used for extremely special places. This metal was extremely valuable and only used sparingly.

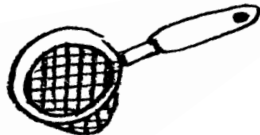




# Paint components

Paint is made up of different components depending on the type and production, but two are always present: the pigment and the binder. The pigment is a bright powder that gives the paint its colour. The binder ensures that the paint adheres to the chosen surface. We can use this knowledge to make our own paint easily!

## Material



### For the pigments:

- Natural materials (soil, sand, etc.)
- Empty jam jars (airtight containers)
- Finest possible sieve
- Hand/spice mortar

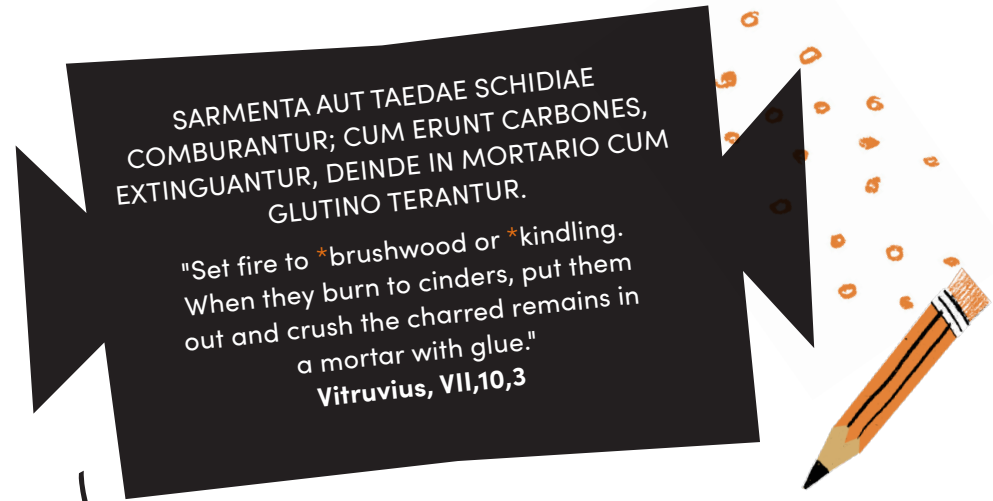
### For the binder:

- 1 tablespoon of flour
- Water
- Small bowl
- Fork



### To paint:

- Newspaper/colour palette/simple plate
- Sugar paper/stiff drawing paper
- Water glass
- Teaspoon
- Brush



What colour does this make?





Method

## Collect your pigments and leave them to dry.

First, you need to collect soil, sand or clay from nature. Look for the colours you can find in the soil: black forest or potting soil, beige sand, yellowish clay or even red riverbank brick. In a dry area, lay out large sheets of newspaper or similar as a base and then place your natural materials on top. Leave overnight until completely dry.



## Sieve the pigments:

Your colour powder needs to be as fine as possible so that it will spread easily on the paper. First, sieve the soil to remove stones, leaves, and sticks. Fill a mortar with tablespoonfuls of soil and crush it as finely as possible. Strain the mixture into a container (jam jar). Repeat until your colour powder feels as fine as flour. The finer your powder, the more opaque the colours will be on the paper!



## Make the binder:

You can't paint with just powder, you need a binder! This ensures that the paint adheres to the paper. To make it, mix a tablespoon of flour with about 20 ml of lukewarm water in a small bowl and stir vigorously with a fork until even the small lumps are gone. The paste should have roughly the same consistency as melted chocolate.



## Mix the paint:

Heap the pigments onto a large, flat plate or palette. Add a small teaspoon of binder to each pile of pigment and mix thoroughly. Your homemade, 100% natural earth paints are now ready! Whether you use a wide brush or just your fingers, there are no limits to your creativity, and you can start painting right away. Don't forget to let your artwork dry thoroughly.





# Glossary

\***Emperor:** Supreme Roman statesman and ruler.

\***Consecration stone:** A stone erected for a god with an inscription. Often used to thank the god for fulfilling a request.

\***Gladiator fights and animal hunts:** Gladiators were trained fighters, typically slaves, who competed against each other as part of a public spectacle. There were also some Roman citizens who volunteered to become gladiators, as victorious gladiators were very popular with the spectators and were celebrated in much the same way as today's super-athletes. However, there was always the possibility of someone being killed during the fights. The Romans also liked to present animals as fighting opponents in the arena, often importing them from distant regions as they were considered even more special than.

\***Fumatorium:** A chamber filled with smoke from an open fire. Meat products were hung here for a long period of time, as the smoking process prolonged the shelf life of the goods.

\***Mercury:** The Roman god of commerce. In Roman mythology, he also served as a messenger for the

other gods. He was usually depicted by the Romans wearing winged shoes and a winged helmet or hat, often with a purse. In Greek mythology, which has many parallels with Roman mythology, Hermes is the equivalent of Mercury.

\***Roma:** Personification of the city of Rome, worshipped as a goddess.

\***Sacred Site:** A place of religious significance where religious acts took place. It was often in a geographically prominent location and may have had a temple.

\***Pompeii:** A city inhabited by the Romans in the Gulf of Naples in Italy. It was buried by the eruption of the Vesuvius volcano in 79 AD.

\***Brushwood:** Thin branches of wood.

\***Kindling:** Square or flat split pieces of wood, which may vary in length.



## Competencies according to Curriculum LP21 (BL):

- NMG 8.2.c  
Die Schülerinnen und Schüler können die unterschiedliche Nutzung von Räumen durch Menschen erschliessen, vergleichen und einschätzen und über Beziehungen von Menschen zu Räumen nachdenken.
- NMG 9.2.  
Die Schülerinnen und Schüler können Dauer und Wandel bei sich sowie in der eigenen Lebenswelt und Umgebung erschliessen.
- NMG 9.3.  
Die Schülerinnen und Schüler können verstehen, wie Geschichte aus Vergangenheit rekonstruiert wird.
- NMG 9.4.  
Die Schülerinnen und Schüler können Geschichte und Geschichten voneinander unterscheiden.

## Suitable activities at Augusta Raurica:

- Besuch des Römerhauses (Link)
- Führung durch Augusta Raurica (Link)

## Links

- Antike Tischkultur: Römischer Wandschmuck (Link)
- Liebighaus Skulpturensammlung: Bunte Götter – die Farben der Antike (Link)
- Biotopia Naturkundemuseum Bayern: Lab@Home

- Thomas Seilnacht: Lexikon der Farbstoffe und Pigmente (Link)

## Literature

- L. Berger, «Führer durch Augusta Raurica»
- B. Pfäffli, Archäologischer Führer durch Augst/ Kaiseraugst 6, «Kurzführer Augusta Raurica»
- C. Fensterbusch (Übersetzung), «Vitruv, Zehn Bücher über Architektur» (5. Auflage 1991)
- N. Welter, «Untersuchungen von Pigmenten in römischer Wandmalerei und antiken Gläsern», Dissertation an der Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg (2008)
- T. Seilnacht, «Pigmente und Bindemittel. Farbrezepte» (2018)
- T. Hufschmid / L. Tissot-Jordan, «Amphorenträger im Treppenhaus. Zur Architektur und Wanddekoration der Gebäude in Insula 39 von Augusta Raurica», Forschungen in Augst 49 (2013)
- J. Bossart / P. Koch / A. Lawrence / S. Straumann / I. Winet / P.-A. Schwarz, «Zur Einwohnerzahl von Augusta Raurica», in: Jahresber. Augst u. Kaiseraugst 27 (2006) 67–108



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Eidgenössisches Departement des Innern EDI  
Bundesamt für Kultur BAK



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