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Ancient Studies and the Changing Face of Urbanism. The History of Science and Current Perspectives in Dialogue

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Ancient Studies and the Changing Face of Urbanism. The History of Science and Current Perspectives in Dialogue

Research on urban space has a long tradition in classical studies. Current research of ancient urban spaces continues on in this tradition. It is essential to determine the position of research history in order to define the prospects of current urban studies in a more differentiated way: only those who are conversant with the history-of-science determination of their respective fields are able, intuitively and critically, to put innovative approaches and methods to the test. Based on the projects of the research group C-6, the various threads of history-of-science developments will be outlined and the current approaches defined in the context of constant re-orientation and new orientation of classical urban studies.

History of science; urban studies; plurimedia-specificity; transformation; own logic; perception; multivalency.

1 Introduction: Setting up research history: A chance for developing further questions[1]

Research on urban space has a long tradition in the fields of research history. Over time, the content, problems, methods and approaches have constantly changed. Four different factors effected these changes: 1) Shifts in perception and use of urban spaces over the ages, in which contemporary experience reciprocally impacted and reshaped the respective perspectives on urban spaces; 2) general changes and new orientation in research of urban spaces within the leading disciplines of the humanities, cultural studies and social sciences, which in turn influenced choice of topics and approaches in ancient studies, constantly opening up new perspectives and replacing or modifying others; 3) tapping new potential in research by intensifying and discovering new interdisciplinary dialogue based on reorientation toward new problems or a more conscious and critical reflection of methodical approaches; and finally 4) urban studies' intrinsic dynamics – be it of the kind that is specific to classical studies, be it in the general context of the humanities, cultural studies, and social sciences – that constantly determine urban research anew.

For elucidating discussions we would like to also thank Lukas Bossert, Alexander Doms, Domenico Esposito, Virginia Fabrizi, Zbigniew T. Fiema, Armin Müller, Yannick Spies, and Jan Stenger.

1 The following contribution with its intentional essay style is designed to complement the planned workshop *Standort Stadt – Alte und neue Positionen der Stadtforschung in den Altertumswissenschaften (Urban Sites—Old and New Positions in Classicla Urban Studies)* (10/17-18/2014). The overview presented here on research group C-6's positioning in the history of science will be explained in more detail in the input of the workshop. Correspondingly, in the following, literary references will be kept to a minimum, so as not overly anticipate what will be in the pending publication for the workshop.

The various projects of the Topoi research group C-6, which are investigating the various phenomena of material and literary constructions of urban space under the term of 'cityscaping,' are part of this tradition of research history and its constant transformation.[2] All of its projects strive to research urban spaces from innovative viewpoints and through the novel opportunities opened up by new research methods. At the same time, all of them are anchored in the traditions of their respective fields of the history of science – and are marked by the determination resulting out of them, regardless of whether it involves stimuli or demarcation. We define the position of research history as a vital prerequisite for being able to explore the opportunities, the challenges, and the limits involved *in individual cases* of urban research of antiquity. It is equally necessary for the ongoing utilization of the opportunities opened up by interdisciplinary dialogue for finding new approaches and optimizing methodical analysis. Only those who are conversant with the determination of their field through its research history are able to, intuitively and critically, put innovative approaches and methods to the test. In keeping with an exemplary research history in current classical urban studies and based on the examples of the various projects of the research groups, we aim at outlining the various threads of history-of-science developments in the following. In addition, we will be localizing the current approaches for classical urban studies against the backdrop of constant reorientation and new orientation.

2 The phases of urban research in classical studies

The city in antiquity is a long-established topic within classical studies. The first major incentives cropped up in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Initially various approaches were adopted, motivated by the diverse interests of the respective academic disciplines and how they were defined. On the part of early history research, the focus was primarily on the juristic definition of what an 'ancient city' was, as well as how civil formations were organized in political, administrative, and social structures. Archeology laid the emphasis of its research differently: because of the excavations of significant urban spaces (e.g. Forum Romanum in Rome, the Acropolis of Athens) and entire cities (z. B. Pompeii, Priene), the study of ancient cities initially concentrated on selective analyses of individual architectural findings and ancient 'art' (sculpture, wall paintings etc.). Interest was thus not directed at the city in its entirety and as a whole, but on the various supposed 'genres of art' represented therein. Such a positivistic approach hardly made a contribution to the discourses taking place in the other fields of classical studies, that is, discourses on the social aspects or the historico-political structure of urban communities – selectively, the use of topography was mentioned positivistically in the literature (especially in commentaries); in particular the Attic drama provided a basis for addressing the relationship of text and *polis*, but appropriating the city through literature was a blind spot in interpretation.

In comparison to these beginnings, the situation in urban studies is very different today. The problems addressed in relation to urban spaces today have become fundamentally more multifaceted. This is because the perspective has shifted to that of social spaces, which are seen as effecting meaning and identity and dynamically reflecting the complexity of parallel experiences. The latter can diverge significantly in regard to me-

2 On the concept of 'cityscaping,' in as much as it concerns the representation of architectural space in literature and film, see the introduction in Fuhrer, Mundt, and Stenger 2015 (forthcoming); for the prospects and challenges in the research of material construction of architectural space: Muth 2014, 285–294. On the resistance and cultural persistence in regard to Christian attempts at urban shaping: Tiersch 2012, 393–415; on the analysis of cities as appropriation achievements of various actors: Frey and Koch 2011.

dia and content. Therefore, it is only logical that the disciplines involved can only find answers in dialogue with one another. If we comprehend the city as a dynamic result of the actions of a society within a space – and not as the static creation of a constant material spatial structure – then the consequence is an interaction between the configuration and the experience of a space, which can only be grasped in its material shape and in how it is reflected on, directly and indirectly, in literature. This approach is pursued by the disciplines participating in the 'spatial turn'. They investigate the inherent order of spatial configurations in order to, ideally, formulate how past cultures defined how they perceived and experienced antiquity in cities. In a process oscillating between action and perception, real, material, human-shaped space repeatedly creates new urban climates in the eyes of those involved. These create new discourses and shape mentalities – and the new discourses and mentalities, in turn, create the basis on which the concrete perceptions and actions of historical persons were first realized.

3 New stimuli from the changing experience of interaction with respective contemporary urban spaces: Reorientation and new orientation

How we currently experience and perceive our urban spaces today, both consciously and unconsciously, inevitably determine the problems we probe in classical studies when investigating ancient urban spaces. The shifts that occur over time in dealing with respective currently 'modern' cities have repeatedly brought about profound, sometimes drastic new orientation and re-orientation in classical urban studies.

This is clearly demonstrated in the research of public space. Archeological research on cities has always paid close attention to public and political space in ancient cities. Correspondingly, it sees research of public space as a mirror that is especially significant for the problems and methods of its respectively current research – and thereby reveals how the field of archaeological urban studies constantly finds new paths of orientation in the history of the sciences. In this process, scholarly interest is, again and again, dependent on our respective treatment of public spaces in today's (European) cities. Research on the Forum Romanum in ancient Rome can illustrate this in a very palpable way:

As the Forum Romanum (Fig. 1) was excavated at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries as a square, this was done in a period when views of public spaces in contemporary cities were changing fundamentally: they were increasingly no longer being used in a multi-functional way as they formerly had been and were, more and more, becoming backdrops (which in part were newly defined by adding monuments) for representational purposes and for symbolically shaping identity. From then on, they fulfilled almost the sole purpose of being thoroughfares for traffic and pedestrians. Ultimately modern city planning brought about the demise of public space. Squares and plazas in cities became interesting practically only for the goals of tourism. They noticeably no longer played an essential part in molding the future of urban life, or only in a much reduced way. Archeological research on the Forum reflected this increased disinterest in public spaces and lack of practical values in regard to the functional necessity of public squares and plazas: Where research went beyond purely topographical identification and architectonic reconstruction and attempted to interpret the planning of spaces historically, then the focus was on political representation and establishing cultural or historical identity – and not on the functional use of the space. The symbolic potential of what could be visually comprehended seemed to be an essential key for historical understanding. And, correspondingly, researchers inquired into political representation of the elite and the emperors, or into establishing identity by the presence

of the past: in keeping with own experiences we comprehend squares and plazas primarily from the viewpoint of tourism.

Fig. 1 | Digital reconstruction of the ancient Forum Romanum, early 3 CE.

However, since the nineteen-nineties and increasingly in the twenty-first century, a shift is taking place in city planning as well as in the historicocultural and sociological approach of urban studies and is thus bringing public space back into the limelight. Instead of a crisis, there is even talk of the transformation or even of a renaissance of public space in our cities. At the same time, functional interests are coming to the fore. The contemporary public is currently caught in the process of rediscovering squares and plazas, especially their multifunctional potential and multivalence – not least in their 'rediscovery' of key spaces for political demonstrations, as we recently experienced in the stunning examples of Tahrir Square in Cairo or Maidan Nezalezhnosti, the central square in Kiev. The new orientation in current urban research and perception finds an echo in the corresponding new orientation in the study of ancient public spaces, with a small delay. Lines of investigation are increasingly directed at the concrete utilization of the squares and plazas. Thus the Forum Romanum is no longer primarily investigated as a space for political representation but as a site that was utilized in manifold ways – and the material-architectural design is analyzed mainly from the perspective of a pragmatic use of the area. The project of C-6-1, *Raumnutzung und Raumbeanspruchung. Zur Multivalenz des öffentlichen Raumes im antiken Rom* (The use of and demands on space: on the multivalence of public space in ancient Rome) (Susanne Muth, Ulrike Wulf-Rheidt, Hauke Ziemssen, Armin Müller, Lukas Bossert) consciously adheres to this new orientation (as a time-specific outcome of developments in scientific history) in archeological research and the study of urban architectural history. It is analyzing the material design and transformation of the Forum Romanum as well as other public locations in Rome (e.g. Circus Maximus, Imperial Palace) and the fora in other cities of Roman Italy from the perspective of a multivalent utilization.[3]

3 For more information on the approach adopted by the project of a more complex scrutiny of architectural space: Muth2014a, especially 285–294, 303–315. – Specificially on the Forum Romanum: Muth 2014, 294–329; Muth and Schulze 2014. For a more detailed account of the use of the space of the Imperial

A differentiated view comprising multifarious viewpoints is an additional result of the reorientation in perception of modern cities. Thus research no longer adopts a single dominating and seemingly typical view of cities and their spaces as defined by those persons, social groups, and customary activities, whom urban space caters to in its makeup and usage. Instead it has refocused its interest to various and often very divergent perceptions adopted by the various groups responding to urban spaces (amongst others, this includes also fringe groups that largely, in the organization and use of space, reject the perception targeted by the status quo).

This has led to opening up important and new perspectives in research on ancient Rome. Whereas, for a long period, the (archeological and philological) focus of classical studies lay on structuring space in a monumental way to express power and for representative purposes, recent research hones in on other aspects of the perception of urban spaces too, taking the many diverse details of everyday urban life into consideration too – thus engaging also with the social classes that did not belong to the Roman elite and its spaces. The project *Die Stadt von unten – urbs satirica (Cities from the Angle of the Low Genres – urbs satirica)* (C-6-6: Ulrich Schmitzer) has taken up this alternative way of studying urban spaces.[4] Instead of looking into literary sources that thematically engage with monumental Rome, this project targets the investigation of perspectives in literature that palpably echo everyday experience or simulate it in literary kinds. Even if these everyday perceptions of the non-elite in Rome can only be grasped in the mode of literary fracture, it is in this medium only that we can uncover multifaceted insights into the various levels of perception of spaces of one and the same city. Just as we find in the case of study of modern cities, the example of ancient Rome reveals, too, that a whole range of notions about the city existed alongside one another – thus literary discourse does not outline the homogenous image of a city and instead a variety of cities on one and the same site.

Research on the Roman imperial period and the cities of late antiquity is constructed similarly in our various projects (e.g. C-6-3 [Claudia Tiersch, Alexander Doms], C-6-5 [Therese Fuhrer, Felix Mundt, Yannick Spies]). The special focus is on the target group of the Christians and their specific view of the ancient pagan city. This involves comprehending a social group that evolves into the quantitively largest among the citizenry in the cities of late antiquity after starting out as an inconsequential fringe group of Roman society. Here the special dynamics in the changing faces of group-specific views of cities can be explored via the transformation of social groups.

4 Shifts of interest in research in classical studies: Increased rejection of normative basic structures

As described above, classical urban studies has continually adopted new approaches and reformulated its mode of inquiry. Correspondingly there has been a constant shift in its main area of interest. The understanding of cities as social spaces had a major impact on a realignment of urban research. This notion of urban space became established, especially in the nineteen-seventies through to the nineteen-nineties in classical urban studies, due to the dominating influence of the writings of Henri Lefebvre and Michel Foucault. Promoted by the simultaneous interest in research of ancient cities that inquired into more general historical problems, at the time one began to consistently analyze the phenomenon of ancient cities or different urban spaces under overarching structural aspects, in particular. The goal was to trace down normative patterns, which in turn allowed the

Palace on the Palatine in the Flavian Period, see Wulf-Rheidt 2012b. On the Italian fora: Etxebarria Akaiturri 2008; Lackner 2008.

4 For in-depth accounts of the project: Schmitzer 2001; Schmitzer 2012.

further discussion about material testimonies of ancient cities as evidence for political, social, religious, economic, and history-of-mentality structures. Static notions of a normatively functioning Greek or Roman city and of deviant perceptions of urban spaces through the various ethnic and religious groups had an impact on modes of inquiry and diverted attention to the findings. Recent research is now starting to clearly demonstrate that this process hindered the equally necessary scrutiny of idiosyncrasies, complexities and dynamics, which had likewise shaped the individual findings in cities.

Research on Petra, the ancient capital of the Nabataeans, lucidly shows how far-reaching the basic understanding of ancient cities can change (Fig. 2–5). This poses the subject of study of the project *Stadtplanung und -entwicklung in Jordanien (City Planning and Urban Development in Jordan (4 BCE – 4 CE.)* (C-6-2: Stephan G. Schmid, Zbigniew T. Fiema).[5] Scholarly interest zeroed in on the city soon after it was officially rediscovered by Johann Ludwig Burckhardt, alias Sheikh Ibrahim, in 1812. This early research was first dominated by a kind of traveling research or academic tourism, and, already in the late nineteenth century, the first elementary scholarly undertakings began. They were initially devoted to a thorough and systematic evaluation of the situation and inventory of the most important or visible monuments. Precisely this setup determined, for a long period of time, (actually, with a few exceptions, until today) that the facades in the escarpments were and are the main concern. The repercussions of this ultimately unfortunate configuration were not essentially alleviated by the fact that already Burckhardt had postulated that the remains of smaller buildings visible everywhere were houses. The remains of private houses that have been uncovered again and again since the nineteen-thirties should also have been a stimulus for a change in thinking. The houses were both free-standing and hewn into the rocks. Thus Avraham Negev could, in his overall view of Nabataean archaeology in the 1980s, write practically without contradiction that Petra had not been a normal city in terms of Greek and Roman urbanism and had been, instead, a city of the dead and the gods, with at most also the occasional abode of a priest here and there.

The first scholarly approach that consciously and actively questioned the status quo on this issue and demanded that it be rethought, began in 1988 with the excavations of the University of Basel, which targeted the study of Nabataean residential architecture. The unearthing of several Nabataean houses as well as the reexamination of older findings put a different light on Petra, providing a much more logical picture of the city for classical archaeology. Suddenly archaeologists saw private housing everywhere, and new models of the city suggesting the distribution of living quarters were quick on the scene. In the meantime, new excavations and renewed scrutiny of older findings have uncovered large and certainly not private constructions. But despite an interpretation of Petra as a 'normal' city flaunting a conflation of typically oriental characteristics (a strong emphasis on a main axis, an agora missing at the city center etc.) and typically Mediterranean characteristics (colonnaded streets) nothing has really changed. The expectations of scholarly interpretation are too oriented towards adhering to overarching and structuring approaches.

In the framework of the project C-6-2, the complex of Petra's city center will be scrutinized anew. An initial evaluation of what we have to go on already strongly suggests that Petra again evades all attempts of being typecast to a certain standard. In consideration of the respective epochs, an analysis of the areas that can be verified as not having been built for private use as well as those that probably were also not privately used, suggests that, during the Nabataean culture (1 BCE – 1 CE) there could only have been a few residential buildings in Petra's city center. Even if we take into consideration that several of the caves were parts of residential buildings and the fact that – as was recently proven – burial complexes were used multifunctionally, we are still faced with a striking imbalance

5 In-depth accounts of the project: Schmid 2012; Fiema 2012b; Fiema 2012a.

Fig. 2 | View from the west over the basin in which Petra is situated. In the background the modern settlement of Wadi Musa (1) on the site of the ancient settlement of al-Gaia as well as the Shara Mountains (2) with fresh-water springs and sentry towers. Highlighted in the area of the city are: the watercourses, the royal reception and banquette hall (3), what is presumed to be the Basileia (4), and the Lion-Griffen-Temple (5).

when we compare the generous dimensions and prominent situations of temples, gardens, representative sites for public use and for public functions such as receiving official guests etc. with those areas in which it can be verified that residential buildings once existed (Fig. 5). As a consequence of these new observations, we see two options of interpretation in view of a preliminary working hypothesis for our investigations in this project: 1) Petra is to be comprehended as a royal city in the true sense of the word: According to this interpretation, Petra – or the area we define as 'Petra' today – is, as an ancient agglomeration, to be treated primarily as a showcase for the Nabataean royal dynasty. Alongside the buildings that fulfilled the functions of royal representation, the royal palaces and the temples, there were also a few other building complexes in the city center, but a large part of the infrastructure, the houses of the 'normal' populace, the places of production etc. must have been outside this area, e.g. where the modern town of Wadi Musa is now, where archaeological finds support this hypothesis. 2) In the north-eastern part of the city of Petra, which has been intensively investigated and surveyed since 2011 and where, from 2015 onwards, excavations are to take place as well, we expect to find key elements of the Basileia of the Nabataean kings (Fig. 1). Interestingly, the working hypothesis we are following here resembles, at least to a certain extent, the approaches adopted in the nineteen-seventies and the nineteen-eighties, which underscored Petra's special status. We will, however, no longer be speaking of a necropolis and a city of the gods, in keeping with Avraham Negev, but rather of a city of kings or royal city. The general uneasiness about comprehending Petra as a 'normal' city has been readopted, however, through a differentiated consideration of concrete findings.

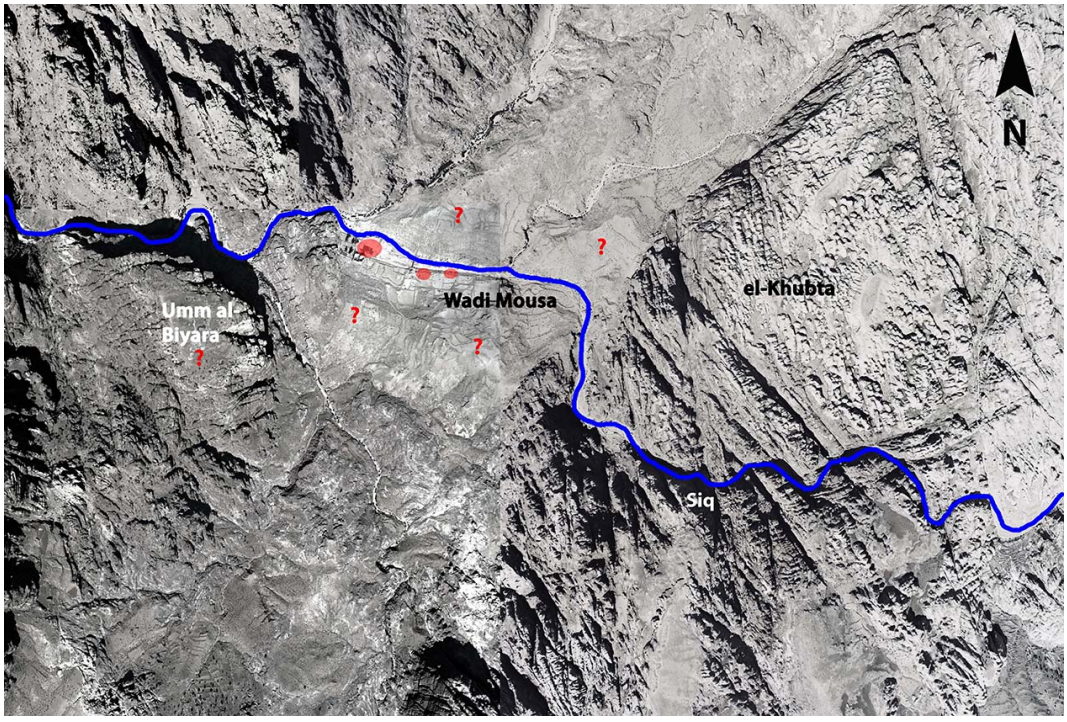

Fig. 3 | Aerial view of the basin in which Petra lies with a schematic representation of the traces of Hellenistic settlement. It is conspicuous that what has been secured of the remains is very close to where Wadi Musa is situated.

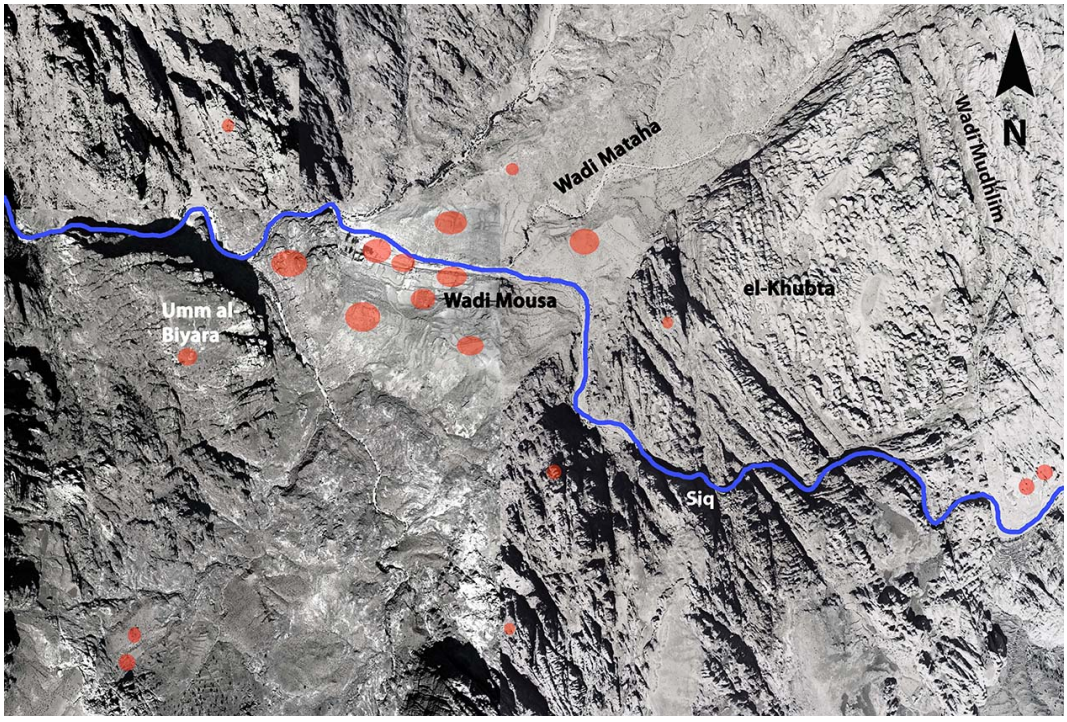

Fig. 4 | Aerial view of the basin in which Petra is situated with a schematic representation of traces of settlement dating back to about 100 BCE.

The project *Bathing Culture and the Development of Urban Space: Case Study Pompeii* (C-6-8: Monika Trümper, Domenico Esposito) palpably demonstrates to what extent research

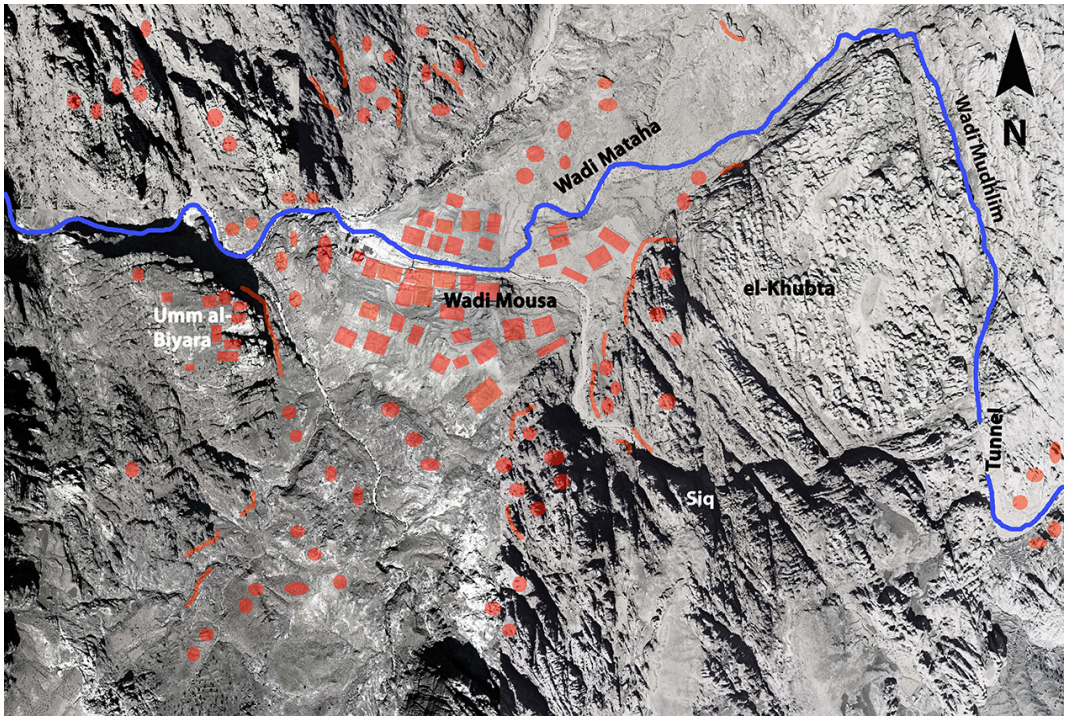

Fig. 5 | Aerial view of the basin in which Petra is situated with a schematic representation of traces of settlement dating back to the beginning of the Common Era.

and historical interpretation of urban spaces in ancient times can be fundamentally realigned over generations, and how much current research can profit from the critical reflection of the former, strongly structuralist-oriented search for normative evaluations of city and urban spaces.[6] Even though it already was recognized and became widespread knowledge in the nineteenth century that public baths and bathing culture played a significant role in ancient cities, especially in Rome, it took a long time before this knowledge became evident in related research, regardless of whether it was the positivistic and systematic study of archaeological findings or even in the studies following a socio-cultural and historical approach. The German academic tradition with its strong focus on architectural and engineering research has, since the nineteen-twenties, produced a whole series of publications containing solid research on individual buildings or building complexes and their specific technical features (such as hypocaust systems), as well as addressing especially typological problems. Despite this, in 1988, Janet DeLaine could still rightly observe that, in her programmatic article on the state of research on Roman baths that "the study of Roman baths has long been sadly – and strangely neglected", that because of their undisputed significance in the Roman world "ancient historians and classical archaeologists alike ought to find them irresistible."[7] Since 1988 the state of research has improved substantially in many regards. However, baths never really became fashionable as a focus of research, and study of them never followed contemporary interests and approaches in the same measure as can be found in the study of other media, monuments, and subjects of classical archaeology since the nineteen-seventies – and this is still the case today. In comparison, for example, research on Greek and Roman houses, following considerable input in the late nineteen-seventies and eighties, underwent a boom especially

6 Recent seminal volumes on ancient baths: DeLaine and Johnston 1999; Kreiner and Letzner 2012; Lucore 2013; Coarelli, Battaglini, and Tsiolis Coarelli (forthcoming).

7 Quotes: DeLaine 1988, 11.

in the nineteen-nineties and was advanced by interdisciplinary and culturocomparative approaches, theories, and methods. It is not easy to say what the reasons are for this general lack of interest and a certain intellectual wasteland and standoffishness in bath research. DeLaine presumed in 1988 that baths were just too conventional and common. And additionally, their function and use appeared to be clearly identifiable and analyses of them did – and still do – not seem to be intellectually challenging, in contrast to the function and use of ancient houses. In particular in regard to whether normative predetermined patterns existed in how ancient cities functioned, it seemed sufficient to acknowledge the existence of bathhouses as well as their general cultural significance in order to integrate bathing culture in more advanced analyses of urbanism.

The study of baths did, however, profit both from contemporary incentives as well as current approaches and research trends in a number of ways. 1) Gender research has sensitized our scrutiny in regard to usage, whether by both genders or gender-specific (which has always been a fascinating aspect), and social interaction between the sexes. At the same time it is important to inquire into whether those using the baths came from different social backgrounds and included various age groups. 2) Because baths often count as symbols of Roman culture and represent their civilized status and the high standards of their technological achievements, they do play a certain role in studies on Romanization and cultural exchange in the different regions of the Roman world. Additionally, research looks into local idiosyncrasies, or into the perception and appropriation of 'Roman' bathing culture. 3) Closely related to the item above is the debated (and actually outdated or obsolete) inquiry into the 'genesis' of Roman bathing culture and into genuine Roman contributions to the ancient world. On the other hand, we have the position in which, formulated more positively and from a more modern viewpoint, Roman baths were integrated in the overarching discussion of bath development in the ancient Mediterranean world, where the target is not to investigate specific 'ethnic-related' achievements but to question the old dichotomies (such as Greeks = art and culture; Romans = technological and engineering feats). In fact, research focuses mainly on the general development of the bathing culture of antiquity as a reflection and product of highly diverse cultural, social, and economic factors: technological innovations such as social systems and collective practices (such as attitudes to bodies, nudity, notions of beauty, hygiene, recreation, leisure time, pleasure, socializing etc.).

All these stimuli stem from the overarching approaches of a structural nature, which must not inevitably lead to the differentiated scrutiny of ancient bathing culture. Such approaches nevertheless open up new possibilities for research on ancient baths, if they succeed in honing their mode of inquiry toward bathing culture and its complex and dynamic processes more closely again. The basic requirement for this is, however, that we first of all investigate individual baths in regard to their respective, specifically historical singularity much more carefully than has hitherto been customary. Instead of immediate and overarching interpretations following general structural approaches, every advanced interpretation requires that each of the diverse surviving bathing complexes be analyzed individually in a differentiated way in keeping with the standards of solid basic research. Taking this as a foundation, it is possible to zero in on interesting and new perspectives on the problems of urbanistic context, everyday perception in the past, as well as spatial investigation and the physical and social purposes of baths. The potential in such a differentiated analysis of baths in their relation to the complex and dynamic processes involved in the construction of urban space is to be plumbed via a selection of examples from Pompeii (Fig. 6–8).

Research of urbanism of the nineteen-seventies through to the nineteen-nineties, with its stronger emphasis on overarching, structural perspectives, often adopted the dichotomy as a heuristic hypothesis, so that, by way of contrast, it could obtain general insights into normative basic structures in the ways ancient cities and urban spaces functioned. As

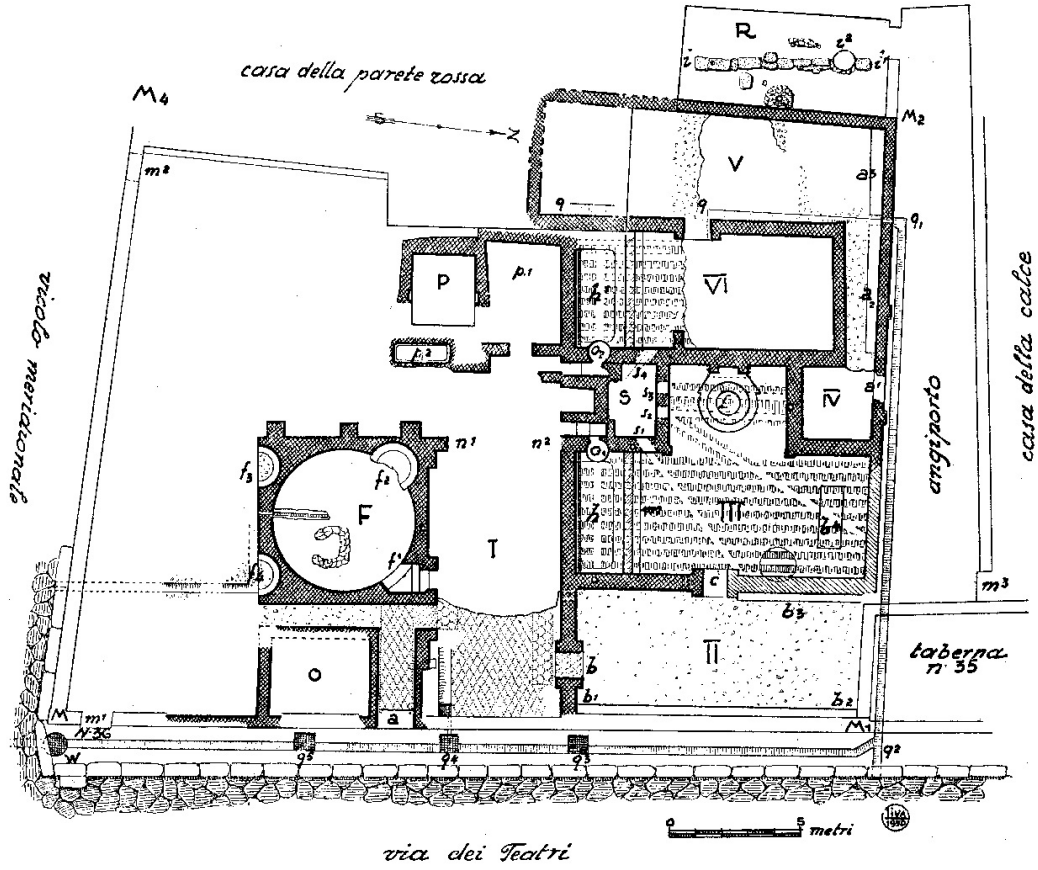

Fig. 6 | Pompeii, Republican Thermae (VIII 5, 36), plan.

we have just touched on, it seemed that, in research on bathing culture in antiquity, a dichotomous construction of Greek and Roman cultures was an approach that brought results for a better understanding of the genesis of ancient bathing culture. Perspectives that have been adopted by recent research on baths, however, reveal that such dichotomies distort our view of the complex processes of change and appropriation in individual cases. The same is true for research on the cities of late antiquity. The comparison of pagans and Christians as two contrary groups as far as their activities went was a generally accepted notion for a long time in this case, whereby their respective views, use, and construction of urban spaces clearly pursued different goals. For a long time, such a perspective was a barrier for an urbanistic comprehension of the cities of late antiquity as well as for the historical interpretation of society in late antiquity in its reception and construction of urban spaces. The three research projects on the Christian cities of late antiquity – *Christliche Stadtdiskurse. Die Stadt als Bild und Argument in patristischen Texten des 2.–5. Jhs. n. Chr.* (Christian Urban Discourses: the City as Image and Argument in Patristic Writings from 2 to 5 CE (C-6-3: Claudia Tiersch, Alexander Doms), *Intellectual Spaces in Narratives of the City: Rome and Carthage in the Roman Empire and Late Antiquity* (C-6-5: Therese Fuhrer, Felix Mundt, Yannick Spies), and *Antiochia: Rhetorische Modellierungen einer Metropole der Spätantike* (Antioch: Rhetorical Modeling of Metropoles in Late Antiquity) (C-6-4: Jan Stenger) – exploit novel ways of arriving at a differentiated view here too.[8] Not

8 Thus they take the differentiated investigation of the forms of monotheistic and polytheistic piety of late antiquity into account, which prevails at latest since Cameron 2011. – On the false premise of a dichotomy between Christians and pagans: Rebillard 2012. First insights point to the fact that the

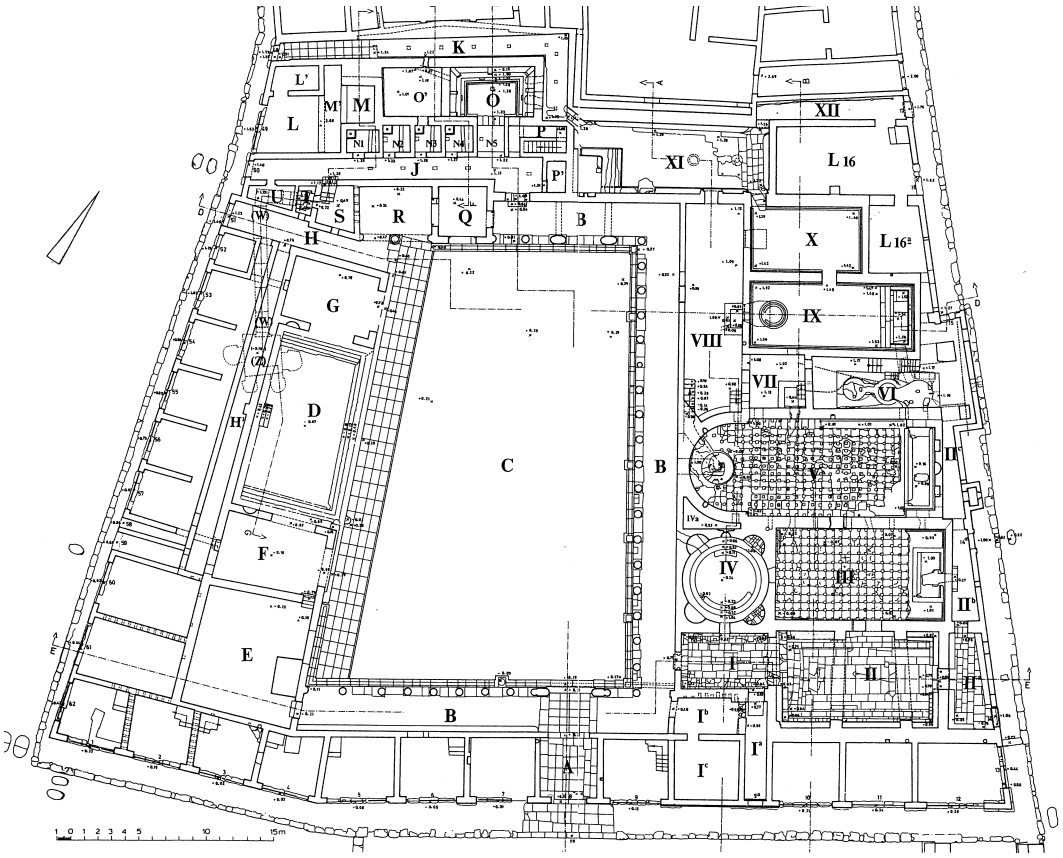

Fig. 7 | Pompeii, Stabian Baths (VII 1, 8.14-17.48-51), plan.

only the ways in which Christians dealt with their urban space in regard to reception, participation in formation and transformation, but also how urban space was treated in literary discourse by Christian and pagan authors palpably illustrates that dichotomous explanatory models do not do sufficient justice to explaining what in reality are much more complex processes in perception and appropriation on the part of both Christians and pagans. The strongly dualistic picture of the world that we find in earlier research – the division of late antiquity into Christians and pagans – is outdated. Current interests focus more on the gray areas, on the intermediate phases and overlapping.

5 Inherent logic and inherent dynamic – multivalence and transformation: A new interest in complex and dynamic phenomena

Within the scientific history of classical studies, the approaches that were adopted to fathom the basic structural phenomena and normative predetermined patterns provided an important step in being able to utilize preliminary individual, separate findings and observations – despite their respective individual characteristics – for overarching issues. This made it possible to interpret findings as evidence for more far-reaching inquiry into cultural, social and mentality history, which was a key concern especially from the

Christians, regardless of all their demands of isolation, were strongly shaped by conditions of urban space in antiquity; on this topic see Tiersch 2014, 34–51.

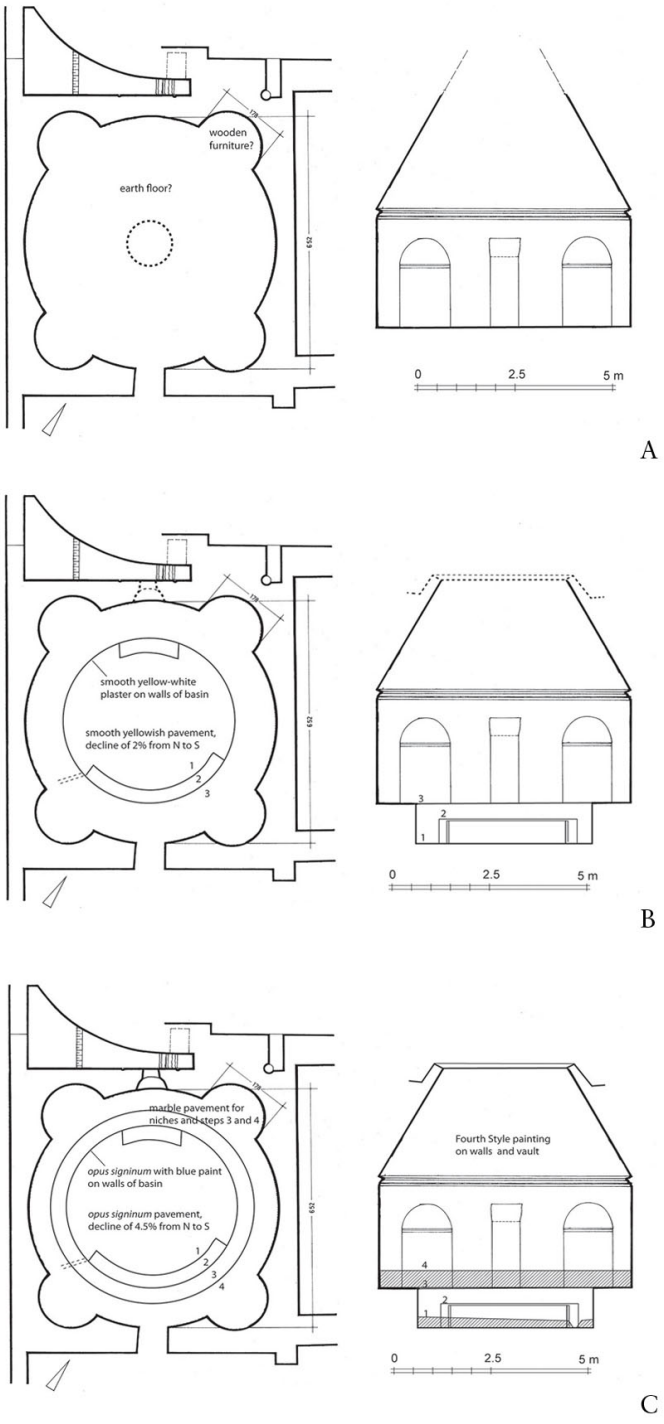

Fig. 8 | 8A-C: Pompeii, Stabian Baths (VII 1, 8.14-17.48-51), reconstruction of the phases of construction of the laconicum IV.

nineteen-seventies through to the nineteen-nineties. Even though this might have been an important step at the time, currently we are increasingly faced with the problems involved in the historical comprehension of the discussed findings and evidence that resulted from them. As already mentioned a number of times, the shift in paradigms from the search for normative predetermined patterns to describing dynamic processes and complex situations has diverted the focus of classical urban studies increasingly toward conceptions such as having a 'logic of its own' and a 'dynamic of its own' as well as 'multivalence' and 'transformation.'

5.1 A logic and dynamic of its own

The new interpretation of the city of Petra as a 'city of kings' or 'royal city' refers to a specific situation that called forth special challenges and solutions in urbanistic modeling of urban space. These solutions can only be found by investigating the city's own specific logic, as is being done by the project concerned (C-6-2).[9] For project C-6-1 too – in its research of public spaces in Rome and in Roman cities – having an own logic and dynamic, as is being currently generally addressed in urban research, is proving to be a pivotal key for a differentiated analysis of the urban spaces in question: The respective geographic and historical disposition formed the various spaces of public and political communication, such as the Forum Romanum, the Palatine or the Circus Maximus, each in its different way. A historically differentiated interpretation can only succeed, however, if we also consider the diachronic transformation in our observations of the respective constituent logic of each of these spaces and the corresponding dynamic that arises in each case.[10] How bathing culture was constituted in ancient times in the different stages of its development and characteristics, as is being scrutinized in project C-6-8,[11] is not possible without a differentiated analysis of the respective bath complexes, for example, in their concrete urbanistic or regional context and the prevailing urban preferences and socio-cultural standards that were to be found at the respective locations. Here too we find the formation of own respective historical logic and diachronically determined inherent dynamic, without which it we could not come to a new historical understanding of ancient bathing culture. Also for the study of the cities of late antiquity and the occupation thereof by Christian communities, the inquiry into the specific logic of each of these cities proves to be a key point of departure, as project C-6-3 has palpably shown with its exemplary research of Gaza, Alexandria, and Antioch.[12]

Inquiring into a specifically urban logic brings valuable insights to light in those cases, too, where the authors of antiquity have addressed the topic themselves. The project *Auf der Suche nach dem Charakter einer Stadt: Kyzikos in der Kaiserzeit (In Search of the Character of a City: Cyzicos during the Roman Empire)* (C-6-9: Felix Mundt, Eva Winter) tackles this line of investigation.[13] Aelius Aristides praised the beauty of the city Cyzicos due to its size. This perception of the city was largely due to the fact that the largest peripteral temple in Asia Minor was rebuilt there after the earthquake in 160 CE. Cyriac of Ancona, too, determined how research views the city right up to the present. Still today we know nothing about any further material changes made to the appearance of the city. Aristides praised the city too. He transposed the supra-regional view of the gargantuan temple construction onto the city itself – without focusing on this individual building in his observations. Only through the collaboration of philological and archaeological research are we able to realize that the traditional perception of the city of Cyzicos is primarily due to the perception of an individual piece of architecture; the logic specific to the building, which Aristides ascribed to it, determines perception of the city.

9 For more information on this topic: Schmid 2012; Fiema 2012b; Fiema 2012a.

10 On the individual logic and individual dynamic of the Forum Romanum: Muth 2014, 316–320; see also Muth 2012a; Muth 2012b, especially 24–31. For more detailed information on the Palatine: Wulf-Rheidt 2012a. Most recent literature on the development of Italian fora: Etxebarria Akaiturri 2008; Lackner 2008.

11 On the approach of the project: Lucore 2013; Trümper 2009; Trümper 2010; Trümper 2012, Trümper 2013a; Trümper 2013b; Tsiolis 2013.

12 First results on this: Tiersch 2008; Tiersch 2012.

13 Seminal studies on this topic: Winter and Schulz 1990; on the current state of the excavations: Koçhan and Meral 2013; on the panegyric of Aelius Aristeides: Behr 1981, 98–106 and 379–382, Heinze 1995.

5.2 Multivalence

Returning to a differentiated investigation of individual cities and urban spaces and their respective specific characteristics also has the result of sensitizing us more strongly to the multivalence intrinsic to different spaces. Even if, in particular, the respective functions dominate how individual urban spaces are used and perceived (or at least these aspects are pivotal for our historical investigation and are therefore defined as leading factors for interpretation), the experience of urban space in ancient times was ultimately determined by a more complex spectrum of utilization and requirements. Precisely when we study the forms of material construction of spaces and literary treatment of experiencing urban spaces, we must consider the multivalence of spaces more strongly than we have previously done.

As long as urban spaces are defined in terms of abstract and structural criteria, it suffices if we operate by specifically classifying the spaces in a general way. This mode of definition is to be applied in our inquiry into the material and literary construction of urban spaces. Along these lines, the Forum would appear to be a site for political communication and representation, the Circus a site for entertainment and representation, thermae as the sites of a sophisticated bathing culture. Even if such definitions undoubtedly cover key aspects of the function of the said sites, each one could be used in many different ways, which likewise shaped how they were utilized and perceived. Only the aggregate of all these things produces an equally abstract and simple definition possible. Hence, we must especially consider multivalence in the research of public spaces in ancient Rome, because it is pivotal for further historical interpretation thereof.[14] Not only was the Circus Maximus an entertainment and representation site, but it was also a political space (Fig. 9). And on the other hand, the Forum Romanum (Fig. 1) was not simply and purely a political and representational space. It evolved into such a location because it was home to many different activities that offered modes of communication and representation in various ways and thereby constantly renegotiated discourses on power and representation anew: religious processions, triumphal processions, appointment of officials, accession of rulers, public speeches, elections, trials, reception of foreign envoys, conducting public games, erecting honorific statues, funeral processions and commemorating the dead, political conflicts and riots, public executions, regulation of access to the site, simple perambulation, individual socializing and communication, traversing the area of the site etc. We can comprehend the architecture of urban spaces as a mirror for realizing the actions and usage profiles for which it was initially made. It can thus be interpreted as a testimony to its utilization. If we decide to pursue this approach, we must concretely focus on the requirements and demands of the site concerned in order to properly evaluate the way it was designed: How were spaces designed and what were the fittings, for example, for the various situations in which public speeches took place and their prospects for visual and acoustic communication? What possibilities did they have to regulate and control activities in a space, could one simply traverse it or use it as a meeting place? And how were temporal simultaneous and consecutive modes of usage organized, how were hierarchies in usage guaranteed or even implemented? We can only adequately grasp the multivalence of urban space by concretely investigating the material disposition and arrangement of sites in light of the various (in part very pragmatic) demands and requirements of usage.

This approach proves to be equally central to the project *Öffentlichkeitskulturen der mittelalterlichen Stadt nördlich der Alpen (Public Cultures in Medieval Cities North of the Alps)*

14 Hierzu und zum Folgenden ausführlicher am Beispiel des Forum Romanum: Muth 2014, 303–315; am Beispiel der politischen Dimension der Fassade des Kaiserpalastes zum Circus Maximus Beste, Thaler, and Wulf-Rheidt 2013, 87–91.

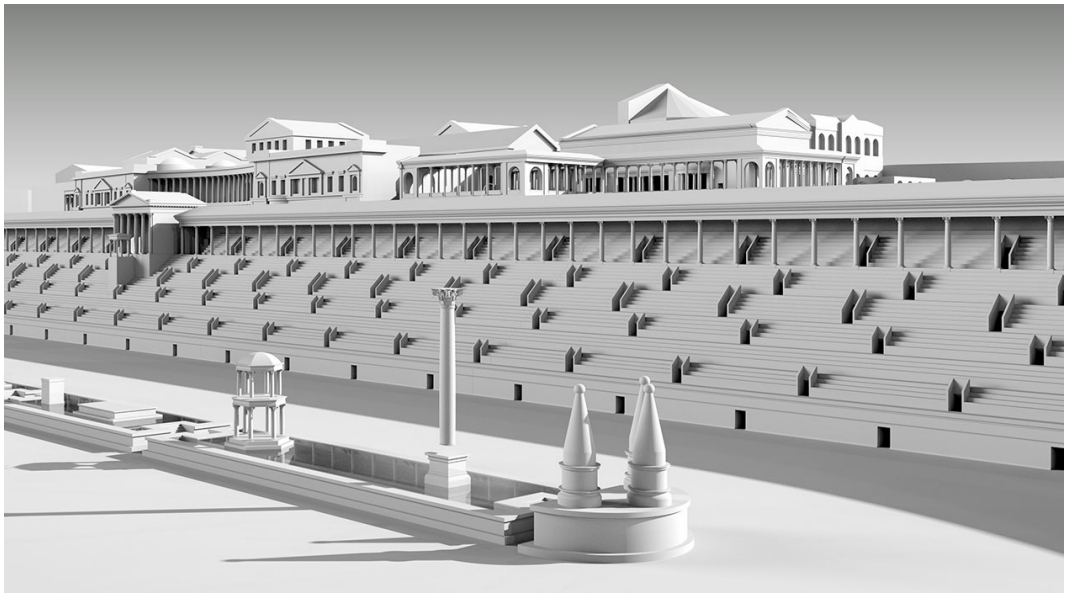

Fig. 9 | Reconstruction of the Circus Maximus and the semantically charged façade of the Imperial Palace from the beginning of 2 CE.

(C-6-7: Christian Freigang),[15] which at the same time can comparatistically augment observations on ancient Rome (C-6-1). The public or concurrent public cultures were not so much constituted on institutionally regulated and internalized competences in the medieval cities of Central Europe – like in the cities of ancient Rome – but were based on the pluri-media shaping of perception and options for perception. There was a certain relation between the multifarious media deployed for such purposes and the social and physical sites where they are employed. At the same time, such relations diverged time and again according to the respective performative activation of the media. They changed over time and were perceived differently according to social strata, which constituted an important factor in shaping and transforming public culture and the architectural structures of urban planning – a factor that has, as yet, hardly been considered in research. This can be demonstrated in the formation of Römer Square as the central public square of the imperial capital Frankfurt am Main: its roots go back to the end of the fourteenth century, and it was developed parallel to the marginalization of the Jewish community and its expulsion from urban public space.[16] As well as serving as a market place, Römer Square provided the framework for multifarious rituals and for performatively staging information networks, such as putting on Passion plays and tournaments, providing the availability of upscale locations for the patrician class etc. The old trading offices around Römer Square not only supplied a distinctive façade framing the square but also an additional zone that could be entered, especially during fairs. Thus they provided secondary premises in which visitors entered urban spheres that were largely molded by the patrician class. Some of the buildings had striking facades. Together with certain house signs, which even found an echo in the names of family dynasties, the ensemble comprised *branded architecture* that was dynamically associated with the performances on the public stage: Passion plays defined a Christian identity that was clearly anti-Semitic, fairs and market activities communal prosperity – especially the youth of the patrician

15 The seminal literature on this topic: Boockmann 1986; Seiler 1994; Haverkamp 1998; Haverkamp 2002; Albrecht 2010; in particular: Freigang 2005; Freigang 2009.

16 Cf. http://www.altfrankfurt.com/roemer/Ansichten/HausRoemer/pic/Roemer1867.jpg (visited on 10/11/2016).

class took part in the tournaments, which were reserved for the aristocracy. Only if we take the interwovenness of all the temporary uses and their various requirements into consideration and how the complex architectural design and organization of the square was atuned to meet all the demands, do we have hope reconstructing Römer Square as a major testimony to the development and transformation of public structures in medieval cities.

5.3 Transformation processes

Regarded synchronically, how the complexity of urban realities is articulated in multivalent phenomena is mirrored, from a diachronic viewpoint, in transformation processes. Therefore all the projects must inquire into dynamic processes of transformation insofar as these changes in built-up urban spaces or literary treatment of urban semantics take place over a certain time span. In regard to the projects on material cityscaping, the characteristics and development of ancient thermae, the diachronic transformations of the city of Petra (Figs. 3–5), or individual urban spaces such as the Forum Romanum in Rome (Figs. 1 and 13) are, time and again, subject to processes of a complex transformation.[17]

The question of transformation is especially pivotal in those areas of research that have long been discussed from the perspective of cultural change. In classical urban studies, the evolution from ancient to late ancient city is for certain one of the most important case studies, and a typical example as far as research history goes. The aforementioned projects *Christliche Stadtdiskurse. Die Stadt als Bild und Argument in patristischen Texten des 2.–5. Jhs. n. Chr. (Christian Urban Discourses: the City as Image and Argument in Patristic Writings from 2 to 5 CE)* (C-6-3: Claudia Tiersch, Alexander Doms) and *Intellectual Spaces in Narratives of the City: Rome and Carthage in the Roman Empire and Late Antiquity* (C-6-5: Therese Fuhrer, Felix Mundt, Yannick Spies) are therefore addressing the topic of transformation processes in the cities of (late) antiquity in a correspondingly systematic way. In contrast to much of the previous research, which based its approaches on rather simplified models of cultural change, both projects strive to analyze structures of transformation processes in all their complexity. The focus is on literary construction and semanticization of urban spaces in the writings of Christian and pagan authors of the later Roman Empire and late antiquity. A targeted comparison of literary or discursive appropriation of urban spaces by Christian authors, on the one hand, and pagan authors, on the other, leads us directly to the critical revision of one of the core tenets of hitherto research: that the two groups dealt with organized urban spaces in contrary ways in the shape of reciprocal rejection and appropriation. Until now, one of the key explanatory models for the transformation of ancient and late ancient cities lies in this presumed static dichotomy of urban customs and practices between pagans and Christians. However, both projects demonstrate to what extent differentiated viewpoints lead to different, complex results.

Project C-6-3 investigates the semantics of Christian urban spaces, i.e. verbal images, categories, and interpretation of meaning, which the early Christians linked with the topic 'city,' and tellingly begins with a research gap.[18] The fact we have a desideratum before us here seems at first glance surprising, as life and thought among the Christians of the Roman Empire are traditionally among ancient history's research foci. However, at the same time, we here find one of the central problems, revealing insights into research history: hitherto interest focused mainly on the relationship between Christians and the

17 On the diachronic transformation of the city of Petra: Schmid 2012; Fiema 2012b; Fiema 2012a – On the diachronic changes of the Forum Romanum in Rome: Muth 2012a; Muth 2012b; Muth 2014, especially 297–303; Digitales Forum Romanum n.d.

18 For more information on this topic see Stahl 2011, 81; Bedon 2002.

Roman state as a history of self-marginalization, persecution, and gradual rapprochement. It was not until recent research guided our interest more toward the fact that living in an urban space shaped the world in which the people of antiquity lived much more strongly than the Roman Empire and its structures did, and this was as true for Christians as it was for non-Christians. This leads us to ask how Christians reacted to urban spaces as places to live and places that shaped identity, how they responded to them, how they participated in shaping and transforming them. Even though the earliest records testify to an enduring aloofness on the part of the early Christians, recent research (e.g. on Milan and Gaza) has painted a more differentiated picture thereof. It has even found explicit evidence verbalized by theologians about the attractiveness of cities, who otherwise repeatedly demanded of members of their parishes that they maintain a physical and mental distance from cities. This seemingly contradictory behavior shifts our attention to the complex mechanisms of such processes: which processes could we determine, whereby cities had a normative influence on Christians or changed their attitudes during the Roman Empire that means, even with one of its most marginalized groups.

By classifying urban development as the process of actively influencing very diverse groups and individuals, we can establish corresponding guiding questions that lead us to a new and differentiated view of the 'genesis' of the transformed cities of late antiquity for the project. This influence takes place in permanent interaction between normative and cultural characteristics or functional needs. What values do patristic writings uphold in regard to cities, and do shifts occur in them as a result of increased integration of Christian communities in cities? Additionally we must ask, what kind of practices or normative patterns of behavior in dealing with urban life resulted from shifts in values?

On the whole, the writings that have been studied refer to an exciting interaction between diachronic shifts and elements that continue on the same as before, in which the semantics of the city as a living and experiential space were recognizably readjusted. Thus the original polemics of patrician writings were directed against ancient cities being oriented toward earthly existence at a religious level. Christians were required to distance themselves entirely from complex, highly integrative structures, whether games, festivals, the clothing of the Roman magistrates or the influence of political institutions. As was often asserted, especially the fact that the Christian *leges* were incompatible with the 'pagan' environment, points to theologians' endeavors to construct two entirely different systems of meaning – one being oriented toward the restrictions and vanities of mortal life, while only the Christian system of meaning kept tabs on the hereafter and thereby on the true world.[19] Linked to this is the insight that Christianity always operated in this world in urban settings and never developed anti-urban conceptions, and additionally never produced its own urban models. Rather, its theological models were strongly oriented toward the example of 'New Jerusalem,' which extolled the triumph over the limitations and dysfunctionality of real-life cities as motivation. The conscious denial of worldly structures thus thwarted establishing alternatives.[20] Due to the lack of alternative models as well as ancient cities being attractive places for Christians to live in too, and not least due to the growing integration of Christian communities, it seems plausible that the fundamental, original semantic distance since 3 or 4 CE made way for more differentiated patterns of interpretation. This led to cities being connoted more positively, for example, as fertile and probation environments for a Christian way of life, as places that provided security and social welfare. And cities were used more often in sermons as symbols for elucidating abstract phenomena such as the Church or the soul.[21]

19 On this topic see Tiersch 2014, 39–41.
20 On this topic see Markschies 2000, 310.
21 On this topic see Tiersch 2014, 43–46.

6 Plurimedia dimensions of urban spaces: The diversity of spatial indicators

The investigation of the concrete multivalence in the use of urban spaces logically shifts the focus more strongly on the plurimedia character of the material arrangement of spaces. Instead of concentrating alone on visually perceptible media (architecture, images, inscriptions), which primarily are bearers of information pertaining to symbolic representation and formulation of identity, from now on other modes of spatial perception have become equally relevant – such as acoustics, smells, concrete actions of rituals etc. Adopting the viewpoint of perceiving urban spaces as constituted or structured by a plurality of media is growing increasingly important because of a new orientation in research approaches. Previous study was narrowed down to symbolic representation practices, and as a consequence thereof, tended to investigate less (and primarily visual) media. In contrast to the earlier understanding of space, which was primarily static, the current approach fosters a new comprehension for dynamic processes in the organization and perception of urban spaces in their multivalent dimensions.

This perspective on the plurimedia qualities of urban spaces is of key importance especially for the two projects that are examining the organization of public spaces in the cities of ancient Rome and the Middle Ages (C-6-1 and C-6-7). In investigating the public spaces of the Roman city in its multivalence (C-6-1: Susanne Muth, Ulrike Wulf-Rheidt, Hauke Ziemssen, Armin Müller, Lukas Bossert), it is necessary that the specifically (pluri)media potential of the constructed space and its (pluri)media own logic be considered, as for example, in the case of the Forum Romanum or the Circus Maximus in Rome.[22] The media functions of urban spaces are fundamentally based on the combination of visual, auditory, tactile, and olfactory senses as well as kinesthesia. The visual manifestations of architectural forms or aesthetic, decoration with pictures and inscriptions, as well as the supply of auditory stimuli evoke discourses and ambiences, thereby constituting self and social perception. Architecture, in shaping the space for movement, influences what catches our attention in a space and how we move in it, hence affecting also our actions, behavior, and our emotions. Tactually perceptible materiality, as well as acoustic and olfactory stimuli ultimately evoke discourses, emotions, and ambiences. Therefore the efficacy and impact of architectural spaces draw sustenance from highly diverse factors – and so do the various aspects we can take into consideration when investigating them in their historical dimensions. In the ancient urban spaces that are being examined within the project, especially issues concerning acoustics appear promising. This is because they can be made accessible to scrutiny – basing this on materially comprehensible situations that can be reconstructed. For example, which acoustic options were available at the Forum Romanum (Fig. 10; see also Fig. 13) as a central space of political and public communication? How well or poorly could the gathered citizens hear the speakers on the platforms – and to what extent did interventions in the architectural design lead to an improvement in the acoustics of the space (in the sense of optimizing the desired acoustic communication and simultaneously reducing undesired acoustic effects)? On the other hand, which acoustic options for communication were available to the emperors when they made an appearance at the Circus Maximus (Fig. 11), likewise a central space of communication between rulers and citizens? And how did very different factors influence or counteract perception thereof, factors such as ambience, smells, climatic conditions etc., all of which were part of the events at the Circus and all of which had an impact on how the actions and activities within the space were perceived? And which options of acoustic

22 For more information on this approach: Muth 2014, passim, especially 285–294. Concretely in the example of acoustics of the Forum Romanum: Muth 2014, 304–310; Muth and Schulze 2014; Digitales Forum Romanum n.d.

communication were available at the fora of Roman colonial cities in Republican and Early Imperial Italy? Research of public urban spaces that includes a stronger emphasis on taking their acoustic qualities into account opens up new insights into the complex ways these spaces functioned and necessitates the (sometimes even far-reaching) modification of the hitherto historical interpretation of these spaces as far as their material design is concerned and their diachronic transformation.

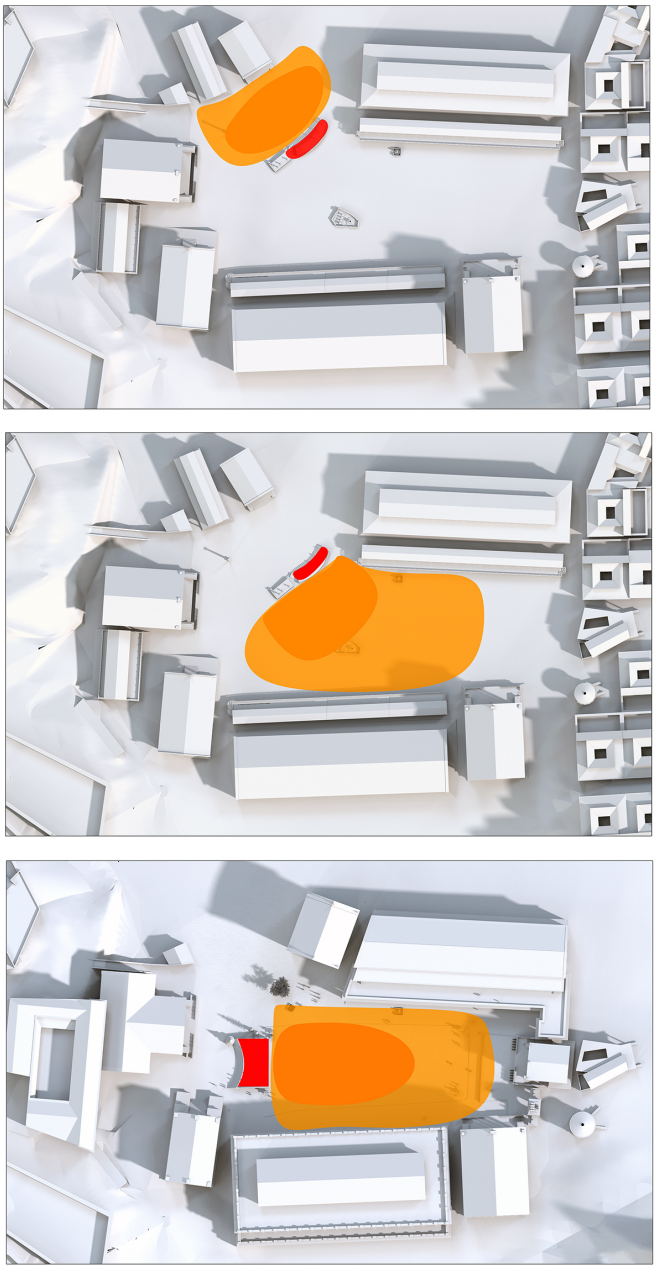

Fig. 10 | Forum Romanum, changes in the position of the rostrum (red) and the meeting place of the citizens who made up the audience (orange); top: before mid-2 BCE; middle: after mid-2 BCE.; bottom: from late 1 BCE.

Research of the acoustic design of spaces has provided a special opportunity for understanding medieval cities too, as project C-6-7 (Christian Freigang) palpably demonstrates. Over the last decade, research on the structures of the public sphere in medieval cities has intensively investigated the mechanisms of the symbolic communication that

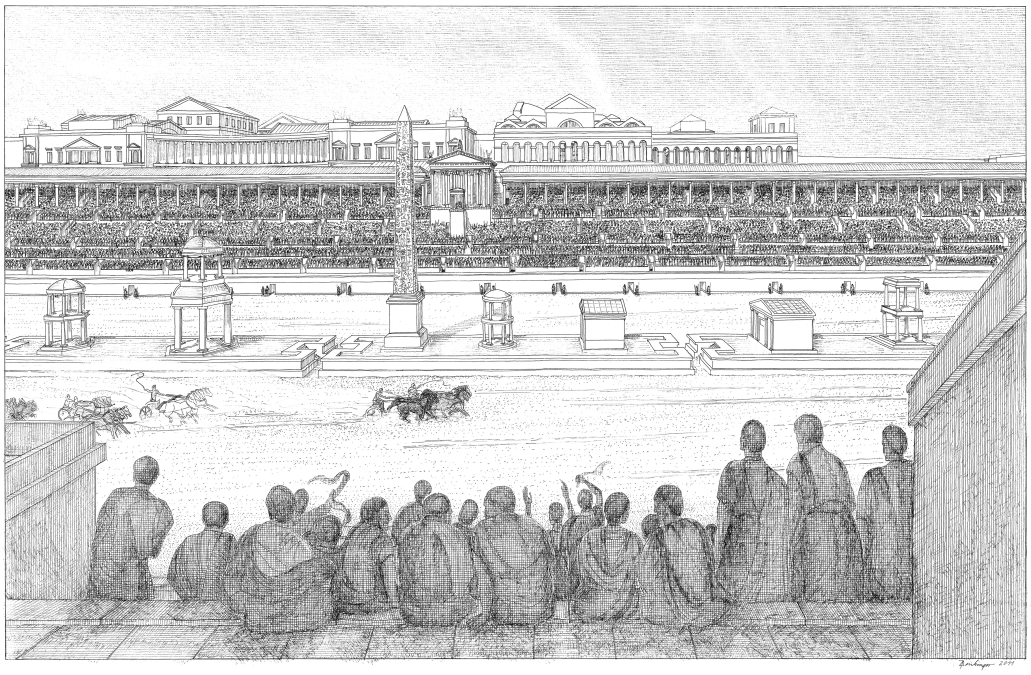

Fig. 11 | Reconstruction of the Circus Maximus during the Flavian Dynasty (end of 1 CE) as a plurimedia-perceivable space.

was effective at the time. The focus was especially on ritualized activities (tournaments, pageants, liturgical games, trials et al.) and on visual representation by means of buildings (town halls, city gates etc.), monuments (Braunschweig Lion, statues of Roland) and other public images.[23] However, acoustic spatial indicators played a key role alongside such visual signals—as well as, to a lesser degree, tactile (pavement) and olfactory (the smell of building material, incense, excrement) indicators – but they have not been systematically investigated as yet.[24]

The prospects opened up by this new perspective on things can be illustrated in the case of the imperial capital during the late Middle Ages, Frankfurt am Main. The formation of Römer Square provides an important testimony to the development and transformation of the structures of the public sphere and of architectural urban planning.[25] As described above, apart from its function as the space for the city market, it provided the framework for a great diversity of rituals and performatively staged information networks. Performative ritual acts and visual representation through architecture and images were the media for this public negotiation of reciprocal rivalry and communal identity, whereby above all the loud ringing of the bells created overarching temporal structures and constituted spatial hierarchies. The bell, an acoustic token of divine power, brought about law and order in temporal and also partly spatiotopographic terms. Thus we find in Frankfurt remarkable parallels between the development of Römer Square as a stage for patrician presence and, to the east, the construction of a new parish tower for the collegiate church St. Bartholomew's (today called Frankfurt Cathedral). Building began

23 For a more detailed account: Boockmann 1986; Seiler 1994; Haverkamp 1998; Haverkamp 2002; Albrecht 2010.

24 On this topic see especially Haverkamp 1998; Haverkamp 2002. Numerous individual studies on campanology exist (in Jahrbuch für Glockenkunde, et al.), but all are basically monographs.

25 Cf. http://www.altfrankfurt.com/roemer/Ansichten/HausRoemer/pic/Roemer1867.jpg (visited on 10/11/2016).

Fig. 12 | Frankfurt, former collegiate church St. Bartholomew's, tower (1415–1514 or 1867).

in 1415, and the tower became the supporting structure for many large bells for the abbey and the city council (Fig. 12). The acoustic space filled by the sound of the bells as well as the technology and shape of the tower are closely related: the volume and the height at which the bells made their ringing audible throughout the entire city, acoustically defining it, so to speak. They are especially effective in the space of Römer Square, which can be seen, if we exaggerate, as the auditorium of the cathedral bells. The conspicuous and boldly designed structure of the tower emphasizes the characteristic of the bells as divine signals, as it were, but it also generally elevates the city's prestige, marking out its central space so that it can also be seen in the distance. In view of this multi-layered context, also historical transformations of bell shapes, of their sounds and usage, appear to have been generally highly significant for the spatial structuring of medieval communes. Evidence proves that around 1200, radical changes were made in urban planning (more squares were built), the architecture (significance of facades that in part featured figures), and also in the acoustics (new tonal structure and volume etc.) The tonal and signal structure correlate with the spatial disposition of urban structures (boundaries, open spaces etc.), a correlation that has not been researched in much depth. Therefore the project targets the investigation of these correlations using the examples of well-researched cities, such as Cologne, Nuremberg, and Frankfurt am Main, and based on knowledge of the cities derived from urban archaeology, the autopsy of their building histories, and campanology, as well as analyzing written sources (chronicles, ringing arrangements).

7 The variety of perception: Real and abstract urban spaces between divergence and dialogue

The fact that urban spaces are increasingly being scrutinized from the angle of their plurimedia profiles and their corresponding plurimedia own logic is awakening a new interest in how cities are perceived. For a long time studying the perception of urban spaces concentrated primarily on the perception of spatially mediated discourses about political power and social order. This meant that research especially examined these aspects as conveyed by the visual media of architecture, imagery, and inscriptions. However, recent research has turned its attention to the variety and dynamics of the multifarious layers in the perception of space, in compliance with the new understanding of urban space as complex, functioning, media-specific space. In this connection, we are not only interested in the perception of identity-establishing discourses about power, social value worlds, and political representation of the ruling authorities and social groups. The focus is also on other forms of perception that have more to do with everyday use of space and do not necessarily correspond with the kinds of perception that the material design of an urban space was primarily intended for. As a result, a variety of complex and partly also divergent images of space supplant specific perceptions of space, and can, only in their totality, define the perception of urban space.

Depending on whether the material or the literary construction of urban spaces is the point of departure, different approaches are opened up for research on the perception of urban spaces. The virtual simulation of perceptual options as a new and viable approach for studying real, materially formed spaces may prove a promising source of information. Therefore the various projects looking into real, constructed urban spaces are pursuing this line of research, for example the projects C-6-1 and C-6-7, and examining digital reconstructions of visual and acoustic perception of urban spaces (Fig. 13, see also above Figs. 1, 9 and 11).[26] By adopting this mode of research – even if in this case it is by no means possible to come really close to simulating concrete forms of historical perception – it is possible to plumb the qualities of spatial impact in their basic structures and provide the opportunity of comprehending it more precisely.

Coming close to a historical perception of urban spaces can be achieved much more directly via a second method, which has proved successful in classical urban studies: on the basis of literary constructions of urban spaces. Accordingly, several projects are focusing on the literary forms of cityscaping: *Die Stadt von unten – urbs satirica* (Cities From the Angle of the Low Genres – Urbs Satirica) (C-6-6: Ulrich Schmitzer), *Intellectual Spaces in Narratives of the City: Rome and Carthage in the Roman Empire und Late Antiquity* (C-6-5; Therese Fuhrer, Felix Mundt, Yannick Spies), *Antiochia: Rhetorische Modellierungen einer Metropole in der Spätantike (Antioch: Rhetorical Modeling of Metropoles in Late Antiquity)* (C-6-4: Jan Stenger), and *Raumrepräsentationen außerhalb Roms in der dritten Dekade des Livius (Spatial Representation Outside Rome in the Third Decade of Livy)* (Virginia Fabrizi). These projects certainly clearly demonstrate how nuanced our approach to probing literary texts has to be in regard to investigating possible perceptual responses to real urban spaces. They likewise have made us keenly aware of how carefully we must discuss the aspect of gaining knowledge about reconstructible spatial perception. Ultimately, it can only be grasped in more or less drastic literary fracture. First and foremost, testimonies to literary construction of urban spaces appear to be constructions with own values and having laws unto themselves. The real spaces of ancient cities provided necessary stimuli, however writings do not present exact depictions. Despite this fact, literary texts, too, prove to be perceptual reflections of urban spaces (a perception that operates at multifarious

26 For a more detailed account see: Muth and Schulze 2014; Digitales Forum Romanum n.d.

Fig. 13 | Digital reconstruction of the Late Republican Forum Romanum, late 2 CE; view from Comitium onto the Forum.

levels and in literatury writings only evidenced in the shape of fracture). In turn, literary perception of urban space must remain in constant dialogue with the knowledge we have acquired through the research of actual sites.

The various projects discuss in detail literary construction of urban spaces from different angles. The project C-6-6 (Ulrich Schmitzer) demonstrates, with the example of Rome, how divergent traditional literary images of Rome are, and how nuanced we must consider the various strategies of appropriation in literary construction of urban spaces.[27] From the Renaissance onwards, philology has pursued principally two paths in its study of the literature of classical antiquity in reference to the city of Rome: 1) Commentaries explained the factual basis of the writings in a (proto-)positivistic way. 2) Catalogues or anthologies compiled excerpts that were either strung together or were interlinked by means of explanatory texts. In the process, lacunae in the texts were filled with other writings or paraphrases, occasionally without mentioning the fact. The question of whether such lacunae were due to factual, political, or genre-specific reasons, which could prove to be fertile sources of information if interpreted correctly, was not asked. At a structural level it is significant that little has changed in this disposition, as far as passages on the ancient city of Rome are concerned, way far into the 20th century if not even into the early 21st century. The usual approach, especially in German philology, often comprised and often comprises identification of the monuments named in the texts and, as the case may be, establishing their relevance for their ideological environment (e.g. the epochs of Augustus or Domitian). Also in this regard, research in effect contributes mainly to empirical knowledge of Rome. This is also true for the philological attempts at reconstruction of 'everyday life in ancient Rome' based on epigrams and elegies. Here too, text is primarily used as a source for factual information. Hence we have at our disposal an inventory, compiled over a long period, of existing topographical references in Latin literature. Only a few exemplary studies exist at present for the appropriation achievements of literature and of constructions of space, and the same is true for the

27 For more detailed information see Schmitzer 2012.

mutual relation between city and text. Scholarship is still far removed from systematically studying this.

At this point recent research is effecting a fundamental change in perspective – and gain of knowledge. We can now interpret the relevant, familiar literature anew in our investigation of ancient writings that have to do with the city of Rome, with an emphasis on the autonomy and inherent individual characteristics of these literary texts. This has been made possible by exploiting the observations on other examples of literary constructions of space – i.e. as explored in the context of the 'spatial turn' by various philologies not belonging to classical studies, and which probed new approaches for interpreting spatial concepts in fiction. The study of how Rome is represented in the medium of non-monumental writings (elegies, epigrams, bucolics etc.), that is, in literature that adopts the angle of everyday life to zero in on Rome (or the literary simulation thereof). Research via these literary genres enables us to demonstrate that the chosen approach leads to a conflation of site and text as the guiding principle interpretation and to a greater wealth of different views of Rome. From the historical perspective and in the medium of literary fracture, we find that these literary kinds confirm, as premised by modern urban sociology, that there is no single, homogenous city also in the case of ancient writings, and instead various cities in one and the same territory.

Project C-6-5 (Therese Fuhrer, Felix Mundt, Yannick Spies) is researching the literary construction of urban *Denkräume* or 'frameworks of thought' based on the examples of the ancient cities Rome and Carthage at the time of the Roman Empire and late antiquity and likewise focuses on the different images of cities and the correlation between material and abstract, non-material space.[28] In this project too, the long-familiar and relevant writings will be discussed and interpreted according to a shift in the philological approach and from the current interdisciplinary angles. It is telling that also in this comparative scrutiny of texts relevant to both the great metropoles, they were the significant anchor points in the Denkräume or framework of thoughts with leading intellectual actors of late antiquity. Thus the primary value of these texts is not that of sources of information for reconstructing real historical urban spaces and how they were used. Indeed, only since around 1800 are we acquainted with authors who, before the act of writing, for a period surrendered themselves to the individual logic of a city or a specific urban space as man-about-town, allowing or even wishing that the city guide their pens, so to speak, so that they becomes the voice of the city as they perceive and experience it. Rather, ancient authors in particular – prior to modernity – selected individual characteristics (buildings, routes, waterways) of a city that were compatible with the intention behind their literary escapades, and arranged and shaped them at will. Taking a historical urban space and remodeling it in compliance with a didactic conception, as was developed by theoreticians of literary ekphrasis as early as 1 CE, can be found above all in Augustine – for both Rome and Carthage.[29] It was St Augustine in particular who reflected on the misleading power of mental images that were based on either sensory impressions, narratives, or unbridled imagination, and includes mental images of urban spaces explicitly in this critique. Following Augustine, a physician who lived in both Rome and Carthage, Gennadius, saw in a prophetic vision with the eyes of the spirit a *civitas* of the Blessed in which there was still something like the 'right' and the 'left', that is, still abided to a spatial conception, but had no buildings or objects that one could compare with things on earth. However, already at a first glance, the description is an abstraction that has its roots in concrete space. It can be related back to real-world spaces and can only be interpreted by

28 On the term *Denkraum* (framework of thought) from the area of *Konstellationsforschung* (constellation analysis) see Fuhrer 2012, 357–358.

29 On Augustine and Rome see Fuhrer 2013, Bettetini 2012. On Augustine in the context of North Africa and Carthage see, in addition to the relevant literature, Claude Lepelley's contributions in Fux et al. 2003.

taking recourse to them. Thus we place the dispute between Augustine and Maximus on the statues of the gods at the Forum of Madauros in a historical context thanks to the excellent appraisal of the archaeological and epigraphic findings in North African cities. In Augustine's *Confessions*, too, Rome is not only a symbolically connoted space but also the concrete site of (Manichaean and Pelagian) heterodoxy, and, for Augustine, the Rome of 410 is the place of churches and the graves of martyrs, which alone provided effective protection, albeit not in the shape of stones one upon the other but as symbols that lead the way to eternity.

This poses a special challenge with the opportunities and prospects it holds in store for us, which the project seeks to delve into and tap in an innovative way: regardless of how abstract and detached from real space it seems when literature constructs urban spaces, what we find therein always bears the stamp of real urban spaces and is thus formed by confrontation with real spaces, even if this is denied. Correspondingly, one of the targets of the project is to link non-material, abstract spaces or *Denkräume* (frameworks of thought) to the historical, architectural reality of material spaces. What is to be investigated is how authors or groups of literary players – in their correspondence, for example – operated with spatial models or spatial metaphors that were inspired by real architectural spaces and how, on the other hand, possibly the structures of such immaterial spaces were rediscovered.

Fig. 14 | View of the current state of archaeological findings of the Temple of Hadrian at Cyzicos.

The project *Auf der Suche nach dem Charakter einer Stadt: Kyzikos in der Kaiserzeit (In Search of the Character of a City: Cyzicos during the Roman Empire)* (C-6-9: Felix Mundt, Eva Winter) is finally taking up the challenge of scrutinizing the reciprocal nature of determining spatial perception (of real and abstract space). One of the recurrent problems facing interdisciplinary research groups in their study of ancient cities is the synthesis of archaeological

findings and literary sources and inscriptions.[30] Due to the fragmentary nature of the surviving material reality, it is especially difficult for classical studies to reconstruct the contexts of urban life and find out what that 'certain something' was from the remains of architectural structures that once made a particular city different to all others in the eyes of contemporaries. But we encounter the difficulties of this task, too, in the ancient texts that specifically target a description praising the characteristic appearance, the special advantages of a place, in short, the 'essence' of a city. Where we see a confusion of stones and material remains, was also for the visitor in ancient times a maze of streets, squares, and buildings, and the city's structure and uniqueness was hard to comprehend. Aelius Aristides, who alongside his famous *Panathenaicus* and *Encomium of Rome*, left behind a whole series of panegyrics of Asia Minor's cities. In them, he tellingly used visual tropes of familiar things such as a shield (Athens), a boat (Temple of Hadrian in Cyzicos), or the human body (Smyrna) to present to the imagination of his audience a readily recognizable image of its city and, at the same time, evoked the idea of its harmony of proportion or the unity of the whole with the parts. It goes without saying that it is only with a large stretch of the imagination that we can relate to such images of cities as having anything at all to do with the surviving architectural and archaeological reality of the cities concerned. Based on the study of the city of Cyzicos, the prospects and limits of such reciprocal analyses will be programmatically explored. It has still not been attempted to consolidate the numerous findings, evidence, and textual information with due regard to the still-today highly specific local topography, the latter of which first made this approach possible. As this is now being realized, the focus shall not be so much to comment on the archaeological evidence with the support of the texts or *vice versa* (which is usually the case in such combined media studies). Rather, the goal of such a decidedly innovative approach is, by interdisciplinary collaboration, to comprehend the specific individual logic of a city, which the separate disciplines alone do not succeed in doing.

8 Conclusion

To ascertain the positions of research history opens up two forward-looking perspectives and is seen as a necessity by the individual projects of the research group C-6: the multiplicity of discourses related to ancient cities make it fundamentally more difficult to position oneself in the history of science. Exemplary presentations by projects covering different epochs and cultural spaces will make access for individual studies considerably easier in the future. Secondly, this makes apparent that current approaches in research on cities can only find answers in direct interdisciplinary dialogue. Only in this way is it possible, for ancient cities, to convincingly grasp and formulate the interaction between real space, spheres of action, and the *Denkraum* or 'framework of thought' of literature projected by both archaeological, material sources, and literary ones.

30 Research on Cyzicos concentrates almost solely on the Temple of Hadrian (the key literature on this topic: Winter and Schulz 1990, on the current status of the excavations: Koçhan and Meral 2013 with earlier literature). His reconstruction is based on Cyriac of Ancona's illustrated travelogue – which is today still the authoritative source – as well as on Ael. Arist. *Or.* 27 (on the latter, see Behr 1981, 98–106 and 379–382 as well as Heinze 1995).

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