



DENKMAL- UND GESCHICHTSVEREIN BONN-RECHTSRHEINISCH e. V.

**Roman monument
on the Rhine dam near Schwarzhemdorf / Gensem
On the occasion of the unveiling on 21 May 1989**

I. Occasion

The city of Bonn traces its 2000th anniversary, which it celebrates in 1989, back to its Roman past. Specifically, it associates it with the Roman general N. C. Drusus, who set up a camp in Bonn around 11 B.C. and also built a bridge over the Rhine. and also built a bridge over the Rhine from BONNA (Bonn) to GESONIA (Gensem, district of Schwarzhemdorf). This, at least, was reported around 115 AD by the Roman writer A. L. Florus, whose historiographical works were not universally acclaimed. However, Bonn's Roman past Roman past of Bonn goes back further. For as early as 53 BC, the famous G. J. Caesar records the the borders of the Roman Empire as far as the Rhine; since then the right bank of the Rhine has also belonged to the secured Roman military territory. Today's Bonn-Beuel area remains Roman until it is taken over by the Franks 450 to 500 years later the Franks took possession of it.

While the city of Bonn is celebrating its 2000th anniversary with a year-long cycle of events, the Denkmal- und Geschichtsverein Bonn-Rechtsrheinisch e. V. (Bonn-Rhine Monuments and History Society) is highlighting this exceptional anniversary clearly and permanently anniversary clearly and permanently for the future: in the form of a Roman monument, it sets a "sign of remembrance".

II. Idea and message of the monument

If indeed "the mighty personality of G. J. Caesar stands at the beginning of the Roman epoch in the Rhineland (Ennen/Höroidt, Vom Römerkastell zur Bundeshauptstadt), then nothing could be more obvious than to refer to him in a monument. than to refer to him in a monument.

We know from Caesar himself that he repeatedly undertook advances across the Rhine into free Germania and, among other things, built two fixed (wooden) bridges for this purpose. Until the 20th century century, it was assumed that Bonn had been the starting point for Caesar's war campaigns on the right bank of the Rhine and thus for his bridge-building. for Caesar's bridge-building. In recent decades, on the other hand, the assumption has grown stronger, that the bridges were built in the Neuwied Basin. Recently, however, experts have experts are once again in favour of Bonn.

In 1898, during the construction of the Bonn-Beuel Rhine Bridge (today the Kennedy Bridge), a statue of Caesar was erected on the Bonn side. a statue of Caesar was erected on the Bonn side of the bridge, a seated figure on an archway above the steps leading down to the Rhine promenade (today the opera Opera area). Its inscription designated Caesar as the first person to build a bridge in Bonn (primus imposuit pontem flumini). The work was probably carried out by Brasche according to a design by Bruno Möhring, the design architect of the bridge. of the bridge. This statue of Caesar is thus a piece of Bonn tradition. After the Rhine bridge was blown up, the sculpture, quite damaged, initially ended up in the municipal building yard, where it was finally located by the Bonn-Rechtsrheinisch e. V. Monument and History Society. After thorough restoration, including the completion of the completely lost part of the head, the statue was head section, it was moved to the garden courtyard of the Mehlemschen Haus in September 1982 in accordance with a resolution of the Beuel district council. the garden courtyard of the Mehlemsche Haus, the restoration of which had been completed in 1979 had been completed.

However, this installation was deliberately intended to be provisional until a place could be found where the statue could develop a better effect. This - the present location - then came about as if by magic, when, in view of the 2000th anniversary, the association began to think about the Roman origins of the right bank of the Rhine. the right bank of the Rhine. In the course of the city-wide campaign of the Bonn history societies aimed at the anniversary celebration "in every place a historical deed!" (which as such had again been initiated by the association), the following was then



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the idea of a) erecting a monument to commemorate the "2000 years of Bonn on both sides of the Rhine" and b) incorporating the statue of Caesar.

III Form and shape of the monument

The sculpture, carved from yellow sandstone, depicts a life-size Roman commander in a ruler's pose, sitting on a military chair, holding an engineering plan for the construction of a bridge. On the back is the inscription:

C. IVL. CAESAR FLVMINI PONTEM PRIMVS IMPOSVIT A. A. CHR. N. LV.

(G[ajus]. Jul[ius] Caesar was the first to build a bridge over the river in the year before Chr[isti's birth] 55).

The statue, 1.65 metres high, is one part of the monument, which itself consists of two parts. The other part is a plinth pillar on which the statue rests, also made of yellow sandstone, 2.25 metres high. Thus, the entire monument reaches a height of almost four metres. The idea and justification for the monument and the site of its erection came from Carl J. Bachem, the managing director of the Monument and History Society; he also planned the entire design. The stonemasonry work - a gift from the Bonn Stonemasons' Guild to 2000-year-old Bonn - was carried out by Hermann Büchel (Ückesdorf), Wolfgang Naundorf (Beuel) and Nobis & Lancier (Poppelsdorf). The cost of materials was borne by the City of Bonn.

IV Location

A monument that refers to the Rhine as the link between the Roman military areas on both sides should logically be located on the Rhine itself. If it can also serve as a reminder of the "historical problems" of the first Bonn-Beuel bridges, then its location should, if possible, also mark the original bridge site.

Even in prehistoric times, a road coming from the Siegerland ran along the Sieg and reached the Rhine on the flood-free low terrace via Vilich (Stiftsstraße) near Schwarzrheindorf. There must have been a ford right here in primeval times, the only one in the entire Bonn area. Small islands and numerous shallows provided the necessary conditions for crossing the river. No other location would have been geologically or technically more suitable for the construction of a permanent bridge.

Opposite the Bonn Roman camp, on the right bank of the Rhine, was a very early settlement, which lives on today in Gensem/Schwarzrheindorf. The double church is the chapel of the former Carolingian royal castle, which in turn follows a Roman base (whose shape and function are still not precisely known despite a large number of archaeological finds). The Gensem/Schwarzrheindorf Arnoldstrasse continues in a straight line in Bonn's Augustusring. Until the Middle Ages, the only Rhine ferry in our area operated here.

Even many centuries later, the names of both streets reminded us of this, as they were both called "Fährgasse". The memorial now stands on this axis, approximately halfway between the double church and the riverbed - on the flood embankment that has crossed the medieval route since 1926. This point, which is also topographically prominent, is undoubtedly not only historically the optimal location, but also topographically the ideal place to make the monument visible from afar.

V. A memorial as a sign of remembrance

The Roman monument should fulfil a fivefold commemorative function:

1. it is to remind of the important Rhine ford between Bonn and Gensem, which already existed in prehistoric times and was intensified in Roman times.
2. it is to remind us that the Rhine was already conquered by Caesar as a Roman border area more than 2000 years ago (around 55/53 BC); the right side of the Rhine was also Roman military territory since then.



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3. to refer to the first written mention of Bonn and Gensem on the right bank of the Rhine by Florus, which proves that both sides of the Rhine were already connected 2000 years ago.
4. to draw attention to the fact that for centuries historians have disputed who built Bonn's first fixed bridge over the Rhine (Drusus around 11 BC or Caesar as early as 53 BC, or neither of them).
5. In the future, too, it will bear witness to the fact that the city of Bonn (united with Beuel since 1969) celebrated its 2000th anniversary in 1989, on both sides of the Rhine.

VI. Textual information on the monument

Information about the monument, its foundation and erection is provided in two ways:

The words: > 2000 years of Bonn < are carved into the stone pedestal.

On an adjacent pedestal there is a plate with the following text:

Around 53 BC, the Roman general Gajus Julius Caesar advances to the Middle and Lower Rhine. The area of Bonn on the left bank of the Rhine becomes part of the Roman Empire for about 500 years. The right bank of the Rhine is also part of the secured Roman military terrain. As Caesar himself reports, he twice built permanent bridges over the Rhine. However, he does not name the exact places. When the predecessor of the Kennedy Bridge was built in 1898, it was believed that Caesar had built one of the bridges in Bonn. This is why this statue of Caesar was erected on the bridge ramp on the Bonn side. The inscription of the time can still be found on its back:

C. IVL. CAESAR
FLVMINI PONTEM PRIMVS
IMPOSVIT
A. A. CHR. N. LV.

G[ajus]. Jul[ius] Cäsar
was the first
a bridge over the river
in the year before Chr[isti's birth] 55.

After the destruction of the bridge in 1945, the statue was temporarily moved to the park of the Mehlemschen Haus in Beueler Rheinaustraße in 1983, close to its former place. According to the report by the Roman writer L. A. Florus, a bridge was built by the general Drusus in the Bonn area around 11 BC.

It can be assumed that this took place in the area of the east-west connection between the Siegerland and the Meuse region, which had already been used in prehistoric times. This was exactly where the bridge ran.

This monument, which was erected on the occasion of the 2000th anniversary of the city of Bonn on 21 May 1989 by the Bonn Monument and History Society, is intended to commemorate the connection between the two banks of the river since the times of G. J. Caesar.

*Denkmal- und Geschichtsverein Bonn-Rechtsrheinisch e. V.
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