

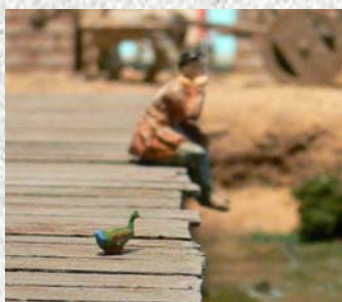
COLONIA ▽ ULPIA ▽ TRAIANA

ROMAN ▽ HARBOR ▽ WITH ▽ MERCHANT ▽ SHIP

STEPHAN ▽ BERRY



There are lots of plastic figures out there, and there are lots of ship models as well – but it is quite rare to have them both really fitting together, same era and same scale. For the ancient era, there is a small number of galleys available, but here I present a project with a civilian ship – which is even rarer to find – in a harbor.





Trade across the ancient Mediterranean had its peak during the late Roman Republic and the early Empire; this is impressively illustrated by the large numbers of shipwrecks from that era. However, civilian ships are generally underrepresented in the world of ship modeling, and those from antiquity in particular: renown companies such as Krick or Artesania Latina do not offer ancient Greek or Roman merchant ships at all, and I have never been able to locate the one that has allegedly been produced by AER Moldova at any retailer. So it was clearly a must-have when Fuhrmann Figuren offered a resin model (KF Ant 001). The lower part of the hull of such a ship was covered with lead, which acquired a black appearance due to corrosion.

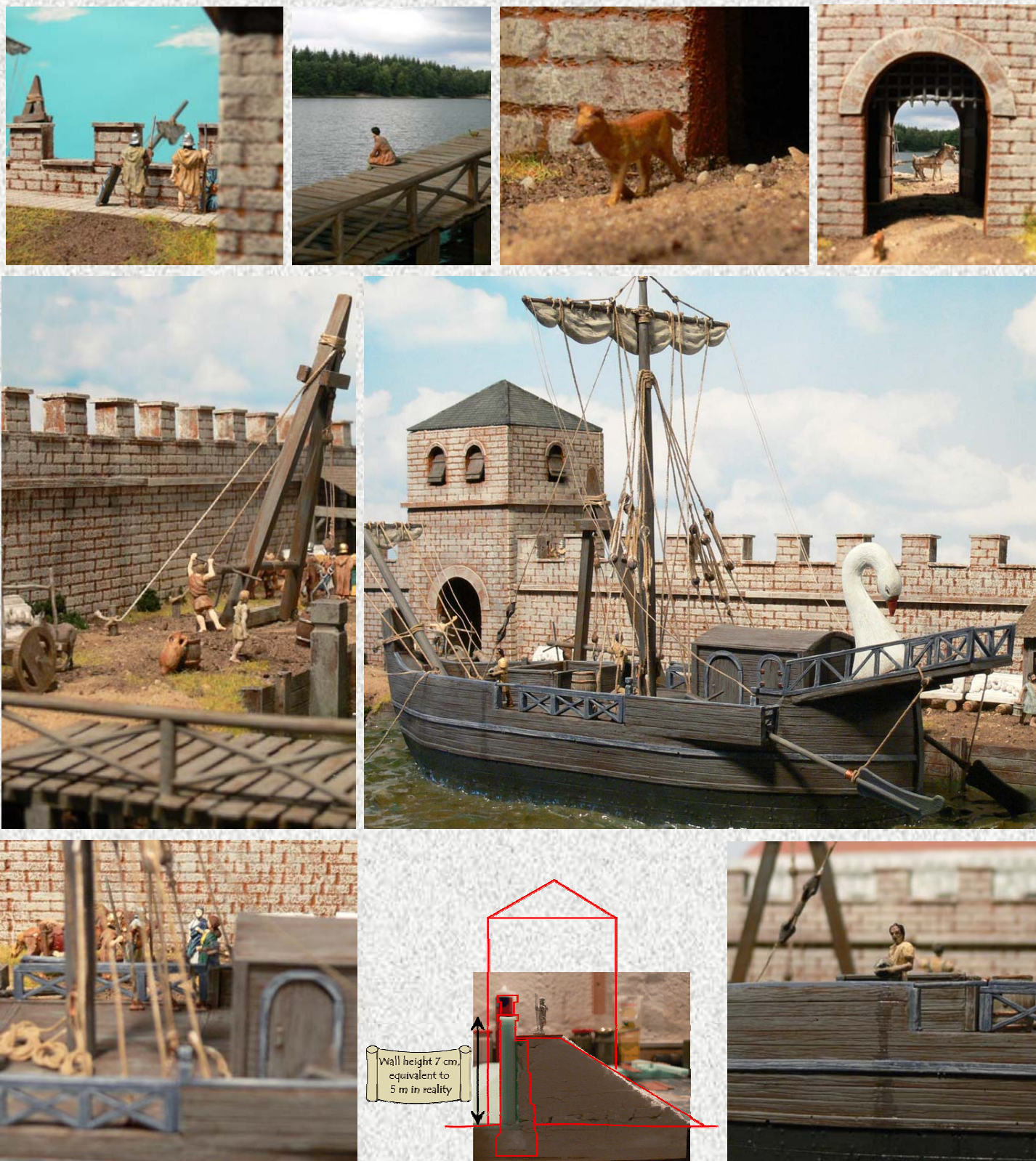




The harbor has the Roman city Colonia Ulpia Traiana (CUT) of the 2nd century AD as its real-life counterpart. It is the modern city of Xanten, located in Northern Germany at the lower Rhine. In Roman times it was part of the province Germania inferior. The colonia was surrounded by a city wall with two major gates at the main road and a number of towers. Those towers facing the harbor at an arm of the river also had gates to facilitate transport.



The reconstructed defensive system of the city looks very impressive in the archaeological park at Xanten. However, it was more a question of prestige rather than military necessity that the Colonia Ulpia Traiana had this wall circuit: After the settlement had been elevated to the prestigious status of a Colonia, there simply had to be a wall!



A picture of the wall and rampart, superimposed with the archaeological reconstruction of the ancient situation (red lines), shows the dimensions. An important compression of dimensions concerns the width of the area between river and wall: In reality it would be up to 35 meters, yielding about 50 cm “dead space“ in a 1/72 diorama. I have reduced this to about 10 cm (or 7 m in reality), which I consider acceptable, as long as the overall impression of the ancient harbor can be preserved. Wall and tower are constructed from Selitrac, a sort of polystyrene.



The wooden mole is scratch-built, with a railing from the fence set by Italeri 6141. The crane is completely scratch-built. Other parts used are: Art Miniaturen JS 72/0072 Römische Legionäre stehend mit Umhang, 0073 Römische Legionäre in Tunika sitzend, 0074 Römische Auxilliar-Kavallerie abgesessen, 0091 Tonwaren, Artesania Latina 8212 Kleines Ruderboot, FG A/ÄF/21 Lastenträger Sack tragend, driver from H&T 8139 Celtic Chariot, Hecker & Goros KSHG 237 Römische Zivilisten, Ingo Gohlke Maultiere Set I, cart from Pegasus 7051 California Mission Indians, dog and mule from Pegasus 7052 Farm Animals. The terrain and the water surface have been shaped using plaster, the water look is achieved by painting the plaster in olive with a thick layer of clear, glossy varnish.





COLONIA ULPIA TRAIANA



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Further reading:

Müller M., Schalles H.-J. and Zieling N. (2008) *Colonia Ulpia Traiana. Xanten und sein Umland in römischer Zeit*. Landschaftsverband Rheinland / Philip von Zabern, Mainz.

Precht G. (1983) The town walls and defensive systems of Xanten - Colonia Ulpia Traiana. In: Maloney J. and Hobley B. (eds.) *Roman urban defences in the west*. Council for British Archaeology, Research Report 51, London, pp 29-39.

Bockius R. (2007) *Schiffahrt und Schiffbau in der Antike*. Theiss, Stuttgart.

<http://www.apx.lvr.de/english/>

<http://xanten.afg.hs-anhalt.de/desk30.html>

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