



The diorama shows a scene from everyday life in the Roman province Germania superior with two buildings which were typical for religious worship in that province. The first is a Jupiter-giant-column, named after the figure group on its top: A mounted Jupiter, carrying a bundle of flashes, is riding over the giant.







The second structure is a temple of a particular plan, which is called in German archaeology a “gallorömischer Umgangstempel”; I have been unable to locate the correct English translation. Outside the temple there is an altar. In the classical tradition of Greece and Rome, the temple was merely the house for the God, while the crucial rites took place in the open air. The precise structure of this temple type here is unknown, as are the particular rites that were performed. But it seems clear that there was a mixture of Roman and indigenous (Germanic and Celtic) traditions, that gave rise to the need for a special ambulatory (the German “Umgang”).







The Latin *templum* is usually translated as “temple” etc. in modern languages, and it is quite obviously the source of these modern words. However, the building which houses one or more gods in itself was called *aedes* in Latin (meaning simply “building”), while *templum* refers to the whole sacred area, which was typically enclosed by a wall. My *templum* here looks rather cramped and small, and it is certainly not a grand affair such as the Capitol in Rome or the Parthenon in Athens. The derelict state of the walls fits well this not so very impressive provincial sanctuary.





The column is scratch-built, with the figure group being composed of plastic figures from Zvezda, HäT and Caesar; the column is a resin cast from Torsten Burgdorf, and the base is from Menta Modellbau. An example from real life, although without the ensemble at the top, can be seen, for instance, in Mainz (Roman Mogontiacum):



The temple is scratch-built too. The altar is from Atlantic 1508 "Greek Life in the Acropolis", one of the most versatile sets ever produced. However, I did not use the priest from this set, rather, I preferred the druid from HäT with his nice and dramatic pose. The walls are from Italeri, the well is from Torsten Burgdorf. Additional figures are from Art Miniaturen, Fine Scale Factory and Atlantic.







The street is made from plaster casts, and the vehicle is the “carpentum” from Odemars. It is not a very realistic kit, but I tend to be tolerant with respect to accuracy in this case, because civilian transport for the ancient era is generally neglected in the modeling world. Thus even a less-than-perfect accuracy should be welcome. However, it is also an awkward and badly constructed model. Made from soft plastic, gluing and trimming are inherently more difficult than for hard plastic or resin models. Moreover, the fit of some of the parts is terrible: It looks like somebody made a master, which then was broken into irregular pieces to make the mould. And the horses have neither a base nor a clever mechanism to fix them to the yoke, so getting cart and horses together is really a chore.







Further reading:  
Archäologisches Landesmuseum Baden-Württemberg (2005) *Imperium Romanum: Roms Provinzen an Neckar, Rhein und Donau*, Esslingen am Neckar.

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