

English summary

The emperor Trajan and his building programme in Rome

The preconditions and significance of the urban landscape of Rome as it was designed in the reign of the emperor Trajan (98-117) for the city and its inhabitants

The primary question that this thesis seeks to answer is what were the preconditions and the significance for the city and its inhabitants of the urban landscape of Rome, as it was ordered and designed in the reign of Trajan. After an introductory chapter, the answer to this is sought by addressing the following points: the historical facts of Trajan's life and reign (the background to his building programme), his financial situation, the analysis of the urban landscape in the time of Trajan in relationship to that of his predecessors and successors, and the consequences of the new urban landscape for the general public. The object of this research into a period of antiquity is to analyse the urban landscape, as developed by Trajan, and the conditions for its realisation, taking into consideration both building activity (the building process) and the ensemble of buildings themselves (the result). In so doing, use is made of modern concepts of urban planning and development.

Chapter 1 gives an elaboration of the aims and questions dealt with in this thesis, concerning one of the important duties of the Roman emperor – the organisation and realisation of public space in Rome. The somewhat scarce sources are considered. The *Panegyricus* of Pliny the Younger and the work of the historian Cassius Dio give the most information about the life and works of Trajan; inscriptions and coins also form sources for this research. A small number of monographs on Trajan have been published, although there are numerous books and articles that deal with parts of Trajan's building policy, and there have been recent excavations in the area. The results of these excavations have not been the subject of unambiguous interpretation, so that in considering the forum accounts in particular, a number of variables must be borne in mind. However, there are scarcely any studies of Trajan's finances, the approach to his urban landscape as a whole, and above all, there is a lack of studies dealing with how this was perceived. The present research fills this hiatus.

Chapter 2 explores the background to Trajan's building programme. A picture emerges of an emperor who, while not being an exceptional general, managed to convey a convincing impression of a great military leader. In his *Panegyricus*, Pliny the Younger took the lead in this: only in Dio's work can we find any sense of criticism, and this is directed at the Parthian wars. It is impossible to know exactly why Nerva adopted Trajan. The following factors certainly played a role: he was governor of the province Germania Superior – one of the most important military centres at that time – he was loyal to Domitian and his army, he was part of various networks and above all, related to the Flavians. There is also the image of Trajan as a socially responsible emperor, based on his initiation of *alimenta*, which is the provision of food for children of the province of Italia. How far he was truly concerned with this target group and whether he established this as a political measure is open to question. On the basis of the available sources, the positive image of Trajan – one that has existed to the present day and is also found in academic studies – must be viewed with caution.

From chapter 3 it appears that the financial situation under Domitian (and also Nerva) was not as poor as those who wanted to denigrate Domitian would have us believe. It is true that there was a commission installed in order to subject finance to critical examination. At the start of Trajan's reign, the financial situation was not without its problems and consequently Trajan followed a balanced financial policy, even though he was forced to devalue the coinage in 99 (*aureus*) and in 107 (*denarius*) twice. An overview of the Emperor's income and expenditure shows that his large-scale building programme was carried out at a time when his standard expenditure for *congiaria* and *donativa* were, for the most part, behind him as was the one-off investment in *alimenta*. At that point there was no additional military expenditure due to war; it would also have been easier to collect taxes during time of peace. In those years the building costs formed almost 10% of imperial expenditure. The booty from Dacia was not, as has always been thought, a necessary precondition for this building programme. There is not the slightest evidence of the sale of this booty, nor for an increase in gold production in the mines. Moreover, the currency was devalued immediately following the Dacian wars. The financial conditions for Trajan's building programme lie in the fact that the costs were always spread over the various budgets depending on the military and political situation. That the treasury was not inexhaustible can also be demonstrated by the fact that on his succession, Hadrian abandoned the newly annexed territories probably because they cost more than they contributed.

Chapter 4 consists of an analysis of the urban landscape as it took shape under Trajan. It opens with an explanation of the terms and concepts, as used in this chapter. The most important of these are urban landscape, ground plan, public, semi-public and private domains. Central to Trajan's urban landscape are his baths, markets and forum. They are considered as a suite of buildings principally in the area originally delineated by the fourth century BCE Servian wall. The emperor's building programme is thereby contrasted to that of his predecessors and successors (the period Augustus – Maxentius, 27 BCE - 312 CE) with regard to the following points: intervention in the various aspects of the ground plan, the position of the buildings, the type of buildings and their associated functions. From this analysis it appears that even though Trajan targeted only one of the central districts of the city, his intervention there was far-reaching. He altered the geographical structure by excavating a hill and extending the amount of public space in that district. He also greatly changed the occupation of public space in the centre of Rome and extended the functions and activities of the areas concerned. This distinguishes Trajan from his predecessors and successors whose interventions in these matters were only partial. Moreover, Trajan's interventions were to last throughout antiquity. With regard to building types he followed Vespasian and continued along the lines set out by Augustus, although he distinguished himself from the latter by the form of his imagery. While Augustus still relied on mythology to justify imperial rule, Trajan directed all attention to himself, making himself the centre of his building programme. We can speak of an *Überhöhung* of power.

In chapter 5 the consequences and advantages for the public of Trajan's building programme are examined using various themes. Theories borrowed from the modern discipline of urban planning serve as a means of examining the impact of the building programme. The most important theories are attractiveness, identification with the landscape, aesthetics, and attribution of significance. The building programme created jobs for some tens of thousands of people, the high point being roughly

between 104 and 113, during the actual construction of the buildings when skilled and unskilled builders were at work every day. As soon as the buildings were completed there was work in maintenance and administration. There was more and more varied employment than before in the districts in which Trajan built. He also altered the traffic routes and as a consequence, there were new opportunities for movement within the city. In particular the markets, in which a street system was embedded, and the forum played an important role because they were, in fact, a cross-roads between Campus Martius, Forum Romanum, the imperial fora and *Subura*. Trajan's forum, perhaps as the only one of the imperial fora, had a monumental main entrance through which the pedestrian could reach not only this forum, but also the whole monumental area beyond it. The accessibility of buildings in the centre was increased, as were the connections. For private use there were now more routes to choose from, but trade also benefitted; quicker routes increased contacts. The utility value – the direct practicality – was to be seen chiefly in the diversity. The markets and the forum had complementary functions and confirmed the planning and administrative entity of both complexes. The new arrangement of functions gave the economy and administration of the city an enormous boost. Identification with the urban landscape was improved due to its numerous uses. People continuously found themselves in buildings that referred to events that were of importance for the whole community. They were made to feel part of the successes of the Dacian wars and of Trajan himself, who was made the focus of attention. In this way he linked these functions to himself personally. The uniqueness of the buildings gave residents and visitors a sense of the aesthetic. This was due to the form of the buildings, but also to their situation and relation to historical events. The authors of antiquity placed Trajan's buildings among the most conspicuous constructions of Rome. They praised the beauty and craftsmanship, and paid particular attention to the column, which could be climbed. Trajan's building programme offered a unique architectural experience because for the first time it was possible to view the area of the imperial fora and the buildings themselves from a higher level, from the platform of the column or the upper floors of the markets. The overall view was dependent on the height of the surrounding buildings. People's attribution of significance, which already existed during the building process due to employment opportunities, was confirmed because the buildings with their appearance and multi-functionality offered something for everyone. The strength of Trajan's building programme is demonstrated by the fact that the buildings remained in use for centuries. Furthermore, they served as a model for other building works in later times and changing contexts.

The research leads to the conclusion that the preconditions and significance of Trajan's urban landscape lie in a combination of factors. Trajan ensured stability and succeeded in presenting a convincing picture of himself as a military leader and did so in a straightforward image aimed at various levels of the population. In this way they felt as if they were addressed directly and were involved in his successes. As a result, Trajan's frequent absences and less successful undertakings did not weigh heavily in the scale. The large-scale building programme was possible due to a balanced financial policy. With the realisation of a large-scale utilitarian programme, which was judged positively in the writings of antiquity, residents and visitors could participate in an historic environment while going about their day-to-day activities. The part of the city in which Trajan's building was concentrated, which could be seen as the political heart of the city, was made more attractive to a

broader public and was thus more urban than before. It became an integral part of the city and served for centuries in a continually changing social context.

The thesis concludes with an epilogue entitled 'A modern parallel: Napoleon III, builder of Paris'. Just as Trajan did, builders after him realised meaningful building programmes with far-reaching consequences. The epilogue demonstrates in a nutshell the sort of material dealt with in this thesis and which factors and preconditions play a role in the forming and perception of the urban landscape. It is a timeless subject. This modern parallel was chosen because Paris is well-known and with one's own eyes one can still see what was achieved by Napoleon III.