

# Late Antique Cities in the Rhineland: A Comparative Study of Trier and Cologne in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries

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## Abstract

This thesis exploits a range of textual, archaeological, and epigraphic sources to offer a comparative, inter-disciplinary study of Trier and Cologne in the fourth and fifth centuries. In the fourth century, the Rhineland was one of the foremost political and military hubs of the Western Roman Empire; Trier played host to the imperial court and Gallic praetorian prefecture, while the provincial capital of Cologne was a major base for the defence of the Rhine frontier. By the early fifth century, the institutions of central government were removed from Trier, and the Rhineland suffered from numerous barbarian attacks. This thesis begins by contextualising developments in Trier and Cologne in light of these political changes, focusing particularly upon the respective roles of barbarian agency and imperial decision-making in bringing them about. The systematic analysis of the impact of Christianisation on the cities that follows encompasses the nature of episcopal authority, the construction of churches, the emergence of saint cults, and the development of the epigraphic habit, and considers how far the new imperial religion was a vehicle for continuity, which helped Trier and Cologne to retain some of their importance into the post-Roman period. It draws upon documentary evidence provided by Christian writers and archaeological evidence recovered from numerous church sites to assess the extent to which the two cities were affected by the fifth-century barbarian attacks. Finally, an investigation of the topographical development of Trier and Cologne provides important indications of how far their built environments reflected political and social changes, and of the extent to which urban space was transformed or abandoned. This study therefore sheds light on Trier and Cologne specifically, but also looks to situate this evidence in the context of wider debates about urbanism, Christianisation, and the fall of the West.

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## List of Abbreviations

<i>AA SS</i>	<i>Acta Sanctorum</i>
<i>ANF</i>	<i>The Ante-Nicene Fathers</i>
<i>BHL</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina Antiquae et Mediae Aetatis</i>
<i>CIL XIII</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum XIII</i>
<i>Collectio Avellana</i>	<i>Epistulae Imperatorum Pontificum aliorum inde ab a. CCCLXVII usque ad a. DLIII Datae: Avellana quae dicitur Collectio</i>
<i>CSEL</i>	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i>
<i>CCSL</i>	<i>Corpus Christianorum Series Latina</i>
<i>ILCV</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres</i>
<i>MGH</i>	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica</i>
_____ <i>AA</i>	<i>Auctores Antiquissimi</i>
_____ <i>Conc.</i>	<i>Concilia</i>
_____ <i>DD</i>	<i>Diplomata</i>
_____ <i>Epp.</i>	<i>Epistulae</i>
_____ <i>SS</i>	<i>Scriptores</i>
_____ <i>SSRM</i>	<i>Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum</i>
<i>NPNF</i>	<i>A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church</i>
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologia Latina</i> [electronic database edition]
<i>PLRE</i>	<i>Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire</i>
<i>RICG</i>	<i>Recueil des Inscriptions Chrétiennes de la Gaule antérieures à la Renaissance Carolingienne</i>

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## Preface

The seeds for this PhD thesis were sown in the second year of my undergraduate degree at the University of Sheffield, when, in the course of completing a module on the ‘Fall of the Roman Empire in the West’, I received my first introduction to many of the issues I address here. Thereafter, following a short foray into modern history, my Master of Arts degree, also at this university, provided me with an opportunity to lay some of the groundwork for this project, through the completion of a dissertation on early Christian Trier. Throughout the course of my undergraduate and postgraduate studies, but particularly during the completion of this PhD thesis, my supervisor, Dr Simon Loseby, has been a constant source of support, advice, and guidance. I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to him, since without his encouragement and expertise, this project would not have been possible.

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