

## Roman watchtower

From the 1st century AD onwards, the Roman legions had fixed troop locations in the peripheral provinces to protect the borders of the Roman Empire. More than half of the approximately 30 legions were stationed on the northern border of the empire from the mouth of the Rhine to the Danube. The section of the border between Rheinbrohl (Koblenz-Bonn area) and Kelheim on the Danube was considered particularly vulnerable. Therefore, from 85 AD onwards, a fortification, the so-called Limes, secured this section. The older parts of the Limes consisted of a palisade fence, a ditch and a rampart. In other places, a wall almost 3 m high and 1 m thick formed the border.

A lot of observation posts were built along the 548 km long "Upper Germanic-Rhaetian Limes". The older wooden towers were replaced by stone watchtowers in the middle of the 2nd century AD. The ruins of their foundations are often still preserved and can be visited. Today, these excavations and the reliefs on Trajan's Column in Rome allow an approximately original reconstruction of the stone forts.

An example of a reconstructed Limes watchtower can be seen at the Saalburg near Frankfurt. The tower platform was reached via ladders that could be quickly pulled up in the event of an attack. In the course of time, settlements developed near the watchtowers. Many place names still recall their Roman origins today.

A similar border fortification to the Limes, the so-called Hadrian's Wall, was built in Britain, where Emperor Hadrian (117-138 AD) had the north of the country sealed off.