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The Moselle valley, which owes its wealth to the fact that it lies near the water and the fertility of its soil, has been inhabited even prior to Roman times. A first settlement was located on the hill called „Buergruef“ (castle moat) behind the Chapel of the Holy Cross and along side the Roman Road linking Trier to Luxembourg.

Some centuries later the Counts of Luxembourg chose an important strategic spot to fortify their territories against the mighty Archbishop of Trier. This spot was „Grevenmacher in the valley“, first mentioned in the 7th century as „Machara“ and „Machera“, where the main roads between Luxembourg and Trier and Luxembourg and Diedenhofen (Thionville) met. It is here, where a protective fortress arose, probably under Count Henry V, the Blond, son of the mighty Countess Ermesinde. He gave freedom to Grevenmacher in 1252. This fortress was dismantled in 1688.

Over the centuries, this friendly town on the Moselle was often destroyed and burnt down, but little by little it developed into a modern cantonal capital. Bearing the name ‘Grevenmacher’ since 1769, this town of 5000 inhabitants can be described as a forwardlooking administrative and commercial centre which is very proud of its past. It invites you to discover these vestiges of ancient times through a charming tour inside the old fortifications.

Let’s start our tour through Grevenmacher near the old **castle tower** (1). This tower, which has been the **belfry** of the former decanal Church, now Parish Church, is dedicated to St. Laurent (since 1782), and worth a visit. The former watchtower and fortreststower (26m high with walls 1,50 - 1,80m thick), was originally surrounded by a moat and is situated right in the centre of the old fortress.



At the beginning of the attractive pedestrian zone you will discover a famous bronze statue, created by the Luxembourgish artist Wil Lofy. It shows a legendary figure of Grevenmacher: a wandering blind minstrel and fiddler, called „**Blannen Theis**“ (2) (Mathias Schou 1747-1824) together with his faithful dog.

As you go through the pedestrian zone, past many attractive shops, you come to the main crossroads, where formerly the roads from Trier, Diedenhofen and Luxembourg joined. It’s called „**Prosteneek**“ (3) (i.e. Prost’s corner, a well-

known family of tradesmen). The monument of the „Messengers“ on top of the fountain was made by Guy Charlier from Trier from a watercolour by the Moselle painter J.P. Beckius. These messengers invite you to the traditional wine-market which takes place every Thursday after Easter.

Staying in the charming pedestrian zone, turn left into the „rue de Trèves“ where you will go past some very old noble houses. Stop at the end of the pedestrian zone in front of the grand **Peter von Osburg House** (4), with the town’s coat of arms on the outside staircase. At the beginning of the 15th century the nobleman Peter von Osburg donated all his wealth to the town of Grevenmacher and founded one of the first almshouses in Luxembourg. Today this noble building where the nuns of Christian Teaching were living until 1980, and where temporarily there were classrooms, is now the home of the regional music school ( “Regional Maacher Museksschoul”).

Next to the „Peter von Osburg House“ there was the „**Gateway to Trier**“ (5), one of the four entrances to the almost square fortress walls (250 x 280m). This gateway was pulled down in 1812 only..

Through the „Peter von Osburg street“, you come to the **market place**, built after the big fire of 1822, when 147 houses, 80 stables and 39 barns were destroyed. The head of the Roman God Bacchus reminds us that in the old days there were wine cellars here.


Across the market place, with the **town hall** (6) on your right, you reach the upper part of the „grand-rue“ (main street), where formerly markets took place. Here, between the fortress tower, the count’s house and the townhall stood the market cross, symbol of the right to organize markets on, conferred to the town by Duke Wenzel I in 1357. In those times, the judges passed sentence under what formed the arcades of the townhall. Today, the public library is in the former townhall building.

Four narrow lanes on the right bear witness to the fact that the town and the fortress were planned. Going along the „**Kofferschmattsgässel**“ (7) (lane of the coppersmiths), where you can see the successful restoration of the old town, you reach the „**Schaackegässel**“ (8) (named as many other streets after the inhabitant of the first house or after a famous person having lived there) and come back to the main street.

Here, on the left, at house number 21, is the birth place of the well known Luxembourgish painter **Frantz Seimetz** (1858-1934 ). The city of Grevenmacher owns a great number of paintings and drawings of this world traveler.

There, where the street turns left, in the direction of Luxembourg, you arrive in front of an old building, that has partly kept its original look: the former „**Hotel**

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**de Luxembourg**“ (9). This was the stopping place for the stage-coach connecting Grevenmacher to Luxembourg, Echternach and Trier, up until 1924. On the left-hand side there were the barns and the stables; next to them the dean’s house built in 1708.

Don’t forget to have a look at the picturesque lane with the stone arcades to the right of the “Hôtel de Ville”. The wine growers and cartwrights who lived here were well-known throughout the Moselle valley.

Go down the „**rue de l’Hôpital**“ (hospital street). On the right you can see the buildings of the Franciscan nuns (an orphanage, a hospital, an old people’s home as well as a day care centre for the elderly). Since 1869 the Sisters of Mercy have provided countless services for the education of children and care for the elderly in this place. In the interest of urban development, these buildings were later replaced by an underground car park and social housing.



Where the „rue de l’Hopital“ joins the „rue des Remparts“ you can see the remains of the northern corner tower of the fortress, not far from the „Munschecker Gateway“. This old tower has the popular name of „**Huelen Zant**“ (10) (Hollow Tooth). Further down, next to the tower, the site called **‘in the Mill’**, the „Rouderbach“ stream once moved the millwheels and provided jobs to a lot of people. Not far from here, to the left of the „Remparts Lane“ you will discover a narrow, secret passage, called the „Gängelchen“ which led through the city walls and over the moat to the „rue Ste. Catherine“ (St. Catherine’s street). This moat probably surrounded the fortified walls and was supplied by two streams, the „Rouderbaach“ and the „Gehaansbaach“.

Before going back to the „rue de l’Hôpital“, have a look on the right at the retirement home which was inaugurated in 2010. There used to be **gardens** which formerly belonged to the wealthy **family of „de Baxeras“** (11). In 1900, the Franciscan Sisters of Mercy bought these gardens, in which you can see the probably best preserved remainders of the old fortification, among others the gateway to Munschecker (also known as ‘Porte d’Echternach’).

Look for the „rue des Bastions“ near the end of the „rue de l’Hopital“ on the right. At the beginning of this lane, in a rather dark corner, there was the only **public washing place** inside the fortification, called the „**Kundel**“ (12). Un-

fortunately nothing of it remains. Since March 2010 you can visit as replica of the ‘Kundel’ (12a) in a neighbouring barn.

In an open air gallery ‘Tuurgass’ (12b) set up in 2013 by the city of Grevenmacher big illustrated boards will give you further information on major events in the history of Grevenmacher.

The ‘rue des Bastions’ which is embedded between high walls leads to the „rue de Luxembourg“ to the place where the **Luxembourg gateway** (13) was situated. „**Sous l’Arc**“ (14) (under the Arch) is the passage on the opposite side of the street, where you can leave the area of the former fortress. After the small bridge leading over the „Johannisbach“, you can see not only the remains of a thoroughly restored tower of the city walls, but also the moat surrounding the walls.

It is worth climbing the steps across the street, to come to the „**Kräizerberreg**“ (the Mount of the Holy Cross). Since 1956 this place has become the monument in memory of war victims as you can read on a stone down the hill. Since 2015, the **‘Chapel of the Holy Cross’** (15) with its furniture as well as the staircase and the Chemin de Croix benefit from the national protection. This spot has been for centuries the landmark of the Moselle town, the legendary „Chapel of the Holy Cross“ (15) with its big stone crucifix in the centre. Have a look inside the chapel built in 1737 in its present shape.

From this vantage point you can enjoy a picturesque view of the town, with the Primary School constructed in 1921 (recently extended and refurbished), with the „Lycee Technique Joseph Bech“ (a Technical College built in 1969 now called ‘Maacher Lycée’ and also extended a few years ago; the oldest co-operative wine cellars of the Luxembourgish Moselle, founded in 1921 and which subsequently joined the „Vinsmoselle“ in 1966; the „Bernard-Massar“ wine cellars, also founded in 1921. In these wine cellars you can do wine tastings of superior quality wines coming from local wine yards such as ‘Pietert’, ‘Fels’ Groäerd’ or ‘Paradäis’.

Grevenmacher also houses a butterfly farm (the only one in Luxembourg), a campsite, an openair swimming pool, a sport complex „op Flohr“, a sports and cultural centre, ‘the Kulturhuf’ with the exhibition of the card game ‘Jean Dieudonné’, the museum of printing and the Cinémaacher, the promenade along the river with its playground, and the lock of the canalised Moselle (1964). In addition, the pleasure boat ‘MS Princesse Marie-Astrid’ has its landing stage in the capital of the Moselle.

Go back the same way to the city old town walls to continue the tour. Back into the „rue de Luxembourg“, we walk for a while towards the centre and

reach the „**Syr**“ (16) on our right. This picturesque, narrow lane shows us that space inside the fortifications was very limited; the narrow houses partly lean against the old fortress walls. Even nowadays this is still a popular pattern for painters as it has partially kept its original appearance. During the years 2012/2013, with the help of the state, the city of Grevenmacher was able to restore the second tower of the west side of the fortress, part of the city walls including two arches, part of the rampart wall as well as an arrowslit (16a). Behind the tower you will find a small vegetable garden and a public herb garden created in 2016/2017.



We cross the „rue de l’Eglise“, where a remarkable Renaissance building with its outstanding staircase-tower can be seen. It is called the „**Zinntscheier**“, the former barn, where the farmers and wine growers had to deliver the ninth(!) part of their harvest for the Count of Luxembourg. Recent excavations have shown that the current 17th. Century building is not the first title barn in the spot. Through the „lower Syr“, we come to the **fourth gateway to Thionville** (17). Today you will find in this same spot the National Savings Bank (BCEE), whose round shape resembles a fortress tower. In 1959, while excavating the foundations of this new building, an interesting stone with vestiges relating to superstitious and religious beliefs was discovered. The local historian Jos. Hurt describes these findings in a book (Geisterabwehr bei unseren Vorfahren).

Go along this building with the new Moselle bridge on your right. The first bridge was constructed in 1880 and was destroyed in 1944, together with many other buildings turmoil due to the World War II. Since 1955 the new bridge unites once again people and countries. Enter the „rue des Tisserands“ (18) (weaver’s street) where in the old days the craftsmen had installed their looms.

This narrow lane, just as the parallel street „Stued“, turning in direction Moselle, provides evidence that busy craftsmen contributed to the prosperity of this friendly little town.

Halfway down you will then come to the „rue Victor Prost“. Turn left into the „Prosteneek“, where your cultural tour will end in the heart of this Moselle town. Why not enjoy the hospitality of Grevenmacher with a glass of local sparkling wine and discover the good cheerfulness of the people of the Moselle ...



# GREVENMACHER

A TOUR THROUGH THE CULTURE AND HISTORY OF AN OLD FORTIFIED TOWN

ENGLISH