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No settlement can exist without water. So the provision of a water supply is one of the first steps to be taken when one is established. Depending on where the water was to be found, one way to obtain it was by digging wells, fed by groundwater or seepage. It is no longer possible to say exactly how many wells there were in Schaffhausen, nor where they were. For example, 13 wells have been found in excavations at the site of the Allerheiligen monastery, founded in 1049, and more on private land. In addition, springs in the neighbourhood were tapped, and the first fountains built. Recent archaeological digs have also revealed a conduit for water in the Vordergasse, made of large hollow bricks and dating from around 1100, which probably makes it one of the oldest mediaeval water conduits in Switzerland. At the beginning of the 16th century there were 15 public fountains, and a hundred years later twice as many.



The "Fischmarktbrunnen", demolished in 1840, used to stand opposite the church of St Johann. It was erected in 1515 and was the first stone fountain in the old city of Schaffhausen

The fountains were not only an important water supply network, but also a social meeting point, where housewives and maidservants met and exchanged news

every day when they went to fetch water or do the washing. Carters and herdsman added to the hustle and bustle when they came to water their animals.

There were strict rules to ensure that the water in the trough remained clean. Clothes and dishes had to be washed in side troughs, known as "sudelbrünnlein", next to the main one, and nothing could be stood in the main trough, and certainly no waste water emptied into it. Since animals were very susceptible to disease, only healthy ones were allowed to drink straight out of the trough. Bathing in it was punishable by a fine. At times of plague special emergency regulations came into force.

In the years 1515 to 1524 fundamental changes were made to what until then had been wooden fountains. No fewer than six of the most important ones were demolished at this time and rebuilt in stone with decorated pillars and statues. This might have been because there were some gifted artists staying in the city at that time, and ornately decorated fountains were also being built in other Swiss cities at the beginning of the 16th century. Over the years some of the figures from the fountains have changed location, some of them even several times.

Today the public fountains no longer play such a central role in the water supply, but they are an attractive part of the townscape. In order to preserve these monuments in the long term, the fountains are restored every ten years or so.



The walk starts at the biggest fountain:

### The "Landsknechtbrunnen" (Mercenary Fountain)

This fountain is also known as the four-spout fountain, or the "Metzgerbrunnen" (Butcher Fountain), because the meat market used to be held on the *Fronwagplatz*.

When the fountains were rebuilt in the early 16th century, the city's largest one was of course included. It is designed in early Renaissance style and was built in 1524 as the last of the series. Over the years it has undergone a number of restorations; the dates of most important are recorded on the column. Various components have been replaced with faithful copies after being badly damaged by weathering. The original statue is in the Museum zu Allerheiligen. The copy standing here today was turned round 180 degrees and set up so that it faces down the Fronwagplatz rather than towards the Tanne as it used to.

The column stands on a round plinth in the middle of the ten-cornered basin. Bands divide the shaft into several different sections. The four spouts emerge from the mouths of rams' heads with intertwining horns. There are three more sections; the middle one is fluted, and the other two decorated with leaves and other ornamentation. The capital is richly decorated with acanthus leaves. The base of the statue bears the date 1524 and the inviting words "KER IN, KER IN, BIS

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WOHLGEMUTH, ICH SCHENK DIR IN AN GELD UND GUT" ("Come in, be of good cheer, I will pour you out money and goods").

The mercenary is wearing a uniform typical of the early Renaissance. According to legend, he is a portrait of the man who, by a cunning trick, enabled the city to purchase the "Zur Tanne" house opposite.

### **The demolition of the "Zur Tanne" house**

According to one chronicle this is how the demolition came about: on a visit to Schaffhausen in November 1611 the house's owner, the Count of Sulz, paid a visit to a tavern, where he was soon joined by several of the prominent personalities of the city. They suggested to the count, who by this time was somewhat befuddled, that he should sell his house "Zur Tanne" to the city, since it was already rather rickety. Scarcely had the deal been agreed than the citizens were informed and given permission to take possession of anything in the house that they could carry away with them. They got down to work at twilight. When at last the banquet came to an end the following evening, the count found only a heap of rubble on the spot, and rode on, shaking his head. The statue on the fountain is said to have been dedicated as a result to the citizen who arranged the deal.

We continue our walk down the *Vordergasse*, and after about 60 metres turn right to make a brief detour into the *Rathausbogen*.

### The fountain in the Rathausbogen

The small drinking fountain in the *Rathausbogen* is the successor of two previous larger fountains. The original Silberbrunnen (Silver Fountain) or Rathausbrunnen (Town Hall Fountain) stood in the *Vordergasse*, between the town hall and the house called "Zum silbernen Brunnen" which adjoined it to the east. On its column stood the statue of the Moor, whom we shall meet again on the Fronwagplatz at the end of this walk. As the amount of traffic increased, the fountain soon became a hindrance and a nuisance. An incident in 1834, when a man was run over by a cart, was the final straw which led to the demolition of the fountain. It was replaced in 1853 by a narrow iron trough placed up against the town hall, with two spouts coming straight out of the façade. The statue of the Moor was put into store. But the fountain at the town hall did not stay there for long. It was removed in 1896 when the façade was renovated, on condition that a replacement should be installed in the Rathausbogen.





**The fountain in front of the church of St Johann**

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The location and the fountain itself are relatively recent in comparison with the other fountains. It was inaugurated in 1841 as a substitute for the "Fischmarktbrunnen" (Fish Market Fountain) that had been removed the previous year. The oval, bowl-shaped basin is divided into two. In the middle, on a square plinth, is a column with four spouts. The shaft is fluted, and the capital is decorated with two rows of simple leaf ornamentation.

For many years there was nothing on top of the column. Then in 2007 a ball was placed there.

Its predecessor, the "Fischmarktbrunnen", was sited on the opposite side of the *Vordergasse*. It was built in 1515 and is considered to have been the earliest stone fountain in Schaffhausen's old city. Old illustrations show it with an octagonal basin, and on its west side a column with a statue on top. In 1840 it met the same fate as the "Rathausbrunnen": it too was regarded as an obstruction and removed. In a way the "Fischmarktbrunnen" is still there on the Platz, which we will see later on our walk.

### The "Tellenbrunnen" (Tell Fountain)

The "Tellenbrunnen" was originally known as the "Schuhmacherbrunnen" (Cobblers' Fountain) because of its location in front of the former guild house of the cobblers, the house now known as "Zur Granate".

The column bears the date 1522, and the trough, 1632. The statue was made in 1682 by Lorenz Schreiber, who was also responsible for the splendid portals of the "Schmiedstube" and the house "Zum Sittich" (61 and 43 Vordergasse). The statue was probably donated to the city by Schreiber, a native of Basel, in thanks for having been granted citizenship of Schaffhausen without having to pay for it. The original is in the Museum zu Allerheiligen. A first copy made in 1889 fell into the basin "with a terrible crash" in 1927 as the result of a fierce storm, and was badly damaged. It was replaced by a replica.

On the east side of the octagonal basin is a column divided into two parts. There are two masks on the shaft, from which the spouts emerge. The upper part of the column is fluted, and crowned by an overhanging capital decorated with leaves and scrolls. The statue is dressed in a uniform dating from the time of the establishment of Switzerland (around the late 13th century) and his left hand rests on a shield bearing the city's coat of arms. It is a matter of debate whether this figure is indeed supposed to be William Tell. One theory is that the weapon in his right hand, with its scroll decorations, cannot possibly be a cross-bow, since its stock tapers to-





wards the bottom. Then there is the fact that position of the hand is not consistent with the use of such a weapon, which is not being grasped, but carried on the open palm with the fingers only slightly bent. This is how the arquebus was held, so the obvious conclusion is that the statue originally represented an arquebusier and was only later made into Tell.

But this theory is contradicted by a remark in council minutes from 1660: "On the Schwertbrunnen the sculptor Lorentz Schreiber shall make a statue representing William Tell." It remains open whether this statue was indeed made and stood originally on the "Schwertbrunnen" (Sword Fountain), which is today the "Mohrenbrunnen" (Moor Fountain). So there is no definitive answer as to whether the statue was always supposed to be Tell, or whether it was only later made into him.



Oriel and doorway by Lorentz Schreiber at the "Zum Sittich" house

We now branch off into the *Brunnen-gasse*, and a short way down it turn left into the *Ampelngasse*. At the end we turn left into the *Pfarrhofgasse*, which leads us to the *Kirchhofplatz*. We leave this on its

north side, going down the *Pfrundhausgasse*. Then we turn left into the *Repfergasse*, and a few steps further on we reach the fountain on the *Platz*.

### The fountain on the Platz

References in the city accounts indicate that a first fountain was probably built on the *Platz* in 1596. There is no evidence as to what it might have looked like. After fierce debate involving a number of specialist associations at the beginning of the 1920s, it was finally decided that the new fountain should be designed along the lines of the “Fischmarktbrunnen” (Fish Market Fountain) that had been demolished. For the reconstruction of the statue a competition was launched among the artists of Schaffhausen, who used photos of the old fountain to support their drafts.

The column of the fountain was copied from the original, which at that time was displayed on top of the Munot.

The column stands on a round plinth. The shaft is divided into three by gold bands, with two spouts in the middle section. The two masks represent two well-known Schaffhausen figures. The one on the left is a portrait of Otto Vogler (1877–1925), who had a reputation as a successful architect, and apparently as a hard drinker. The other figure is the editor Dr Eugen Müller (1858–1928), a driving force behind the reconstruction of the statue on the fountain. The capital is decorated by acanthus leaves. The inscription “QVID NON MORTA-





LIA PECTORA COGIS AVRI SACRA FAMES!" was also taken from the "Fischmarktbrunnen". The line comes from the Roman poet Virgil (Aeneid III, 56/57): "To what crime do you not drive the hearts of men, accursed hunger for gold?!" We leave the Platz via the narrow *Karstgässchen* and return via the *Vorstadt* to the *Fronwagplatz*, where the "Mohrenbrunnen" concludes our walk.

### The "Mohrenbrunnen" (Moor Fountain)

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At the site of what is now the bank building, there once stood the tavern "Zum Schwert", which gave the fountain its original name of "Schwertbrunnen" (Sword Fountain). A council decision of 1535 is on record, ordering the wooden fountain to be replaced by one in stone. According to the date on it, the column of the fountain had already been built by 1520. Whether there was a statue on it, and what it might have looked like, we do not know. The column was replaced in 1888 and stands on the north side of the ten-cornered basin. Up each of the six edges of the column run rounded mouldings resembling branches, which intersect about half way up, forming pointed frames on each of the sides. The upper spaces thus created are decorated with bunches of fruit, masks and the figure of a boy, rounded off with late Gothic stone filigree ornamentation. Beneath the intersecting branches are two male masks, holding the two water-spouts in their mouths. The statue of the Moor has crowned the column since



1838; until four years before that it had stood on the "Rathausbrunnen". In 1922 the figure was replaced by a replica, and the original removed to the Museum zu Allerheiligen. It is dressed in elegant early Renaissance costume and corresponds to the normal depiction of the Three Kings at that time. The two eagles on the shield were probably added in the 17th century.

### **Where the water in Schaffhausen's fountains comes from**

#### **The spring in the Mühlental**

In view of the vital importance of clean water, the spring in the Mühlental was a real stroke of luck for the city. It lies on the western side of the valley that runs south to north, immediately north of what used to be the two administrative buildings of the Georg Fischer company, about 850 metres from the entrance to the town via the Löwengässchen. It is impossible now to say exactly when the spring was first discovered and tapped. It was mentioned by the chronicler Laurenz von Waldkirch (1699–1759), who wrote of it being renovated in 1315. From this it can be deduced that the spring, with a debit of some 1000 to 1200 litres of water per minute, must have been tapped at least as far back as the Middle Ages. For his part, Johann Jakob Rüeger mentions in his chronicle of 1600 the well house, which at that time provided about 30 public and private fountains with clear drinking water. He too has

only positive things to say about the spring and urges people to "give unceasing thanks to God for it".

The water was delivered to the city from the well house through a system of bored wooden pipes known as "teuchel". These were probably made of Scots pine or fir and required a high degree of skill to produce, starting with the selection of suitable trunks. The trunk would be clamped to hold it steady, and the centre bored out with a special tool, the "teuchelnepper", a kind of auger. Before they were used, or in order to store them, the "teuchel" were laid down in ponds to stop the trunks splitting. The pipeline itself ran in a trench parallel to the Durach brook and reached the city at the old "Engelbrechtstor", at the Löwengässchen. It often happened that the water level fell dangerously low in years of poor rainfall. The first thing done in such a case was to take the private fountains out of the network. Since the troughs of the fountains were also an emergency reservoir for fire fighting, it was strictly forbidden at such times to take water from them. Sometimes the opposite occurred: some of the "teuchel" would be swept away when the Durach overflowed its banks, and the people of Schaffhausen had to manage without the much appreciated spring water until the pipeline had been repaired.

In the middle of the 19th century the wooden pipes were replaced by metal ones. Until the high pressure water supply system came into operation in 1885, drawing

mainly on reservoirs of ground water, the spring in the Mühlental remained the city's main source of supply, and the population was heavily dependent on it. There is documented evidence of various restorations, which indicate how conscientiously the well house was looked after and the care that was taken to ensure that as little water as possible got lost through seepage. As the Mühlental became increasingly industrialised, the well house became more and more of an obstacle for traffic. In October 1941 it was demolished and replaced by a new underground water collection chamber. This facility still supplies 12 public and three private fountains in the old city.