A TIME-DEEP MAPPING OF ANTON-WILHELM-AMO-STRASSE 40/41

This time-deep mapping project presents seven possible trajectories, whose stories each articulate the production of space within and around Anton-Wilhelm-Amo-Straβe 40/41. Starting from the current state of the building that today hosts the IfEE, the mapping unfolds only some of the multiple spatio-temporal narratives that speak of the building's complex historical evolution and interaction with the immediate urban surroundings and events as well as its embeddedness within Berlin's urban development. The ground floor of the IfEE and its adjacent built and unbuilt spaces thus emerge as a living archive of numerous influences that are inscribed in the very material of the property's buildings, soil, voids and in-between areas.

Looking more closely, the inscriptions become traceable. Understood as spatio-temporal contexts, they help to capture some of the political, social and economic conditions that have led to the spatialisation of governmental decisions; processes of appropriation; changes in use and ownership; acts of resistance; destruction; transformation; and many other events.

At the centre of the mapping lies the current state of the building, conceived as an arrangement of interwoven architectural fragments, each shaped by different historical periods and socio-political contexts. From this point, trajectories unfold, reaching back in time and to distant places. The further they extend from the present, the deeper they dive into the layered histories that operate at varying scales.

These trajectories refer in parts to dominant historical narratives but most of all aim to uncover less visible, overwritten or forgotten processes that continue to shape the production of space at today's Anton-Wilhelm-Amo-Straβe 40/41.

SPATIO-TEMPORAL TRAJECTORIES

FROM THE BASTION TO THE SLOPING OUTER WALL

Where the moat of Berlin-Cölln's fortress once ran, alongside the Jäger-Bastion, one of the fortress's thirteen historical bastions, a building today hosting the Institut für Europäische Ethnologie (IfEE) at Anton-Wilhelm-Amo-Straβe 40/41 now stands. In its time, the fortress offered little real protection to the city because it was already outdated as it was being constructed. To this day, we still find traces of the moat and bastion's jagged layout: a diagonal wall at the western end of the building, which was located at the end of the street, reflects this historical geometry. This wall stands on the only non-rectangular property on the perimeter block between Anton-Wilhelm-Amo-Straβe and Taubenstraβe, both part of the city's baroque Friedrichstadt district extension. The property's boundary, along with the sloping wall of the institute's study room and seminar halls above it, run diagonal to the street, reminiscent of two overlapping systems of order: Berlin-Cölln's polygonal fortress city to the IfEE's east and Friedrichstadt's grid-like layout to the west.

FROM THE MOAT AND GRÜNER GRABEN TO THE CELLAR VAULT

The western fortress moat, which runs between the Jäger-Bastion's jagged remains and the city's baroque expansion of the Friedrichstadt grid, was reduced to a now buried canal-like ditch called the Grüner Graben. As an artificial branch of the Spree river, the moat separated Friedrichstadt from the medieval city located within the fortress. Today, the Grüner Graben runs diagonally beneath the IfEE's foyer, as evidenced by the remains of the vault in the basement below the classicist colonnades that line the building entrance. In 2023, the foyer was reopened as the Amo Salon, which, since 2024, is accessible through a new barrier-free entrance hall, formerly the delivery gate.

FROM THE HUGUENOT SOAP BOILERS TO THEIR VANISHED COURTYARD SITE

A soap boiler family from Metz, early residents of the city's newly built Friedrichstadt district expansion, once settled at the location of today's IfEE courtyard. They erected an L-shaped two-story building oriented along the Grüner Graben, with a soap boiler workshop and stairs running down to the Grüner Graben. As displaced French Huguenots, they were welcomed to the sandy and economically- and resource-poor region of Brandenburg as skilled migrants and new settlers, brought in to populate the new and sparsely developed Friedrichstadt. There are no physical traces of the family's lives to be found in the IfEE's courtyard today, but must have settled in the area where the tree today gives shade to the bike parking area.

FROM A WOODEN BRIDGE TO ANTON-WILHELM-AMO-STRASSE

The street called Anton-Wilhelm-Amo-Straβe today historically served as one of the main connection roads between Friedrichswerder, a district of the medieval double city Berlin-Cölln, and the newly developed city extension Friedrichstadt. The street originally crossed the Grüner Graben using a wooden bridge. The crossing was later upgraded to a stone bridge with two adjacent monumental classicist colonnades with small shops and restaurants behind them. M*-Straβe, the street's former name (here and throughout, the full name is redacted due to colonial and racist associations), was recently renamed Anton-Wilhelm-Amo-Straβe in reference to Anton Wilhelm Amo, a philosopher of African descent who taught in Wittenberg, Halle, and Jena. The renaming is a long-awaited event for many engaged in the decolonisation of symbols in public space, such as place names and statues. Soon, the street sign with its new name will be positioned at the corner of the IfEE building where the street joints Hausvogteiplatz.

FROM THE BRIDGE COLONNADE TO THE BALCONY

After the Grüner Graben was built over, the classicist colonnades that ran alongside the bridge were preserved and today mark the facades of the IfEE on the north side of the street and of the Ministry of Justice on the south side. While the other five colonnades that were installed along bridges crossing the Berlin-Cölln fortress moat were destroyed a century later or moved to other locations, the colonnades on Anton-Wilhelm-Amo-Straβe are the only ones that remained at their original location. Over time, two larger buildings were erected behind the colonnades on the northern side of the street and replaced the little shops and restaurants. After the Second World War, the northern colonnades were integrated into the main entrance facade of the newly constructed institute building for solid-state research belonging to the renamed Humboldt University. Today, through a re-arrangement project initiated by the Amo Collective Berlin, along with the IfEE, and the working groups CafEE and Collective Acess, the small outdoor space between the colonnades and the former foyer can be used by the IfEE as a balcony facing the street.

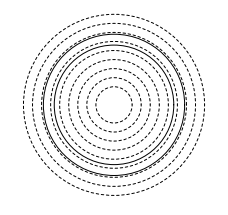
FROM A RESIDENTIAL BUILDING TO THE RELICS OF A MANUFACTURING HOUSE

Today's building at Anton-Wilhelm-Amo-Straβe 40/41 was designed and built after the Second World War as an additional location for Humboldt University. The neo-classical building was the first construction on the site that had a central entrance placed right behind the middle of the monumental colonnades. It replaced two older buildings, which were both located behind the colonnades. One of the older buildings was a clothing manufacturing house with a modern floorplan and neo-baroque facades, developed by a Jewish firm. Both these older buildings were heavily damaged in the Second World War, with only the colonnades intact. Despite the stark differences in geometry between the damaged business building's large, open spaces and the new building's strictly symmetrical layout of smaller spaces for teaching and research activities, significant parts of the old building were integrated into the new one. The IfEE was thus designed according to and built on the ruined remains of the business building, which, in turn, was built after the demolition of a previously existing residential building.

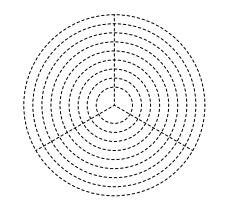
FROM THE BASTION TO THE TRIANGULAR FRONT YARD

The fortress's Jäger-Bastion, which gave shape to the moat and Grüner Graben, was later developed as a bourgeois square bridging the old Friedrichswerder neighbourhood, with its irregular street layout, and the new Friedrichstadt district, with its rectangular street layout. The square was named Hausvogteiplatz and is, still visible today, characterised by the triangular shape of the bastion. After the Second World War, the western edge of the square was reshaped, shifting from its alignment with the diagonal side of the former bastion towards the rectangular layout of Friedrichstadt. This created a triangular area on the square that gives the impression of being public property but is in fact a part of the Humboldt University, along with the other buildings at the corners of Anton-Wilhem-Amo-Straβe and Taubenstraβe.

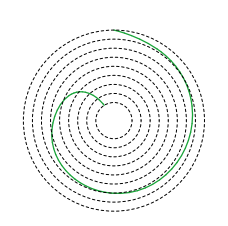
NAVIGATION THROUGH TIME-SPACE



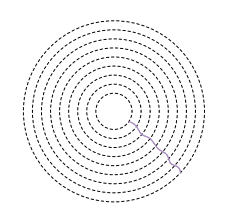
The layout of the map is based on circles contextualizing specific spatio-temporal moments that can be dated by year. For example, when they densify around a certain period, the circles reference moments that express larger urban developments. The chronology runs from outer circles towards the centre, with the inner most circle representing the year 2024, the date the map was produced. The further we move outwards, the deeper we delve into past histories, all of which have different spatio-temporal characteristics that are traced as trajectories.



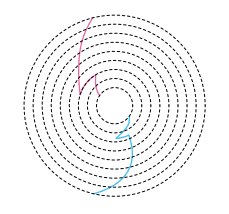
At the centre of this mapping is the building's current state, from which the trajectories of different stories unfold. The circular layout of the map is divided in sections, each relating to a different scale level: there is the scale level of the earth and continents in the upper section, the city and its infrastructure on the right, street and square in the lower section and the architectural scale level in the left-hand sections. This allows to develop the trajectories through temporal and spatial continuities and discontinuities, thereby revealing relations between different events and built structures.



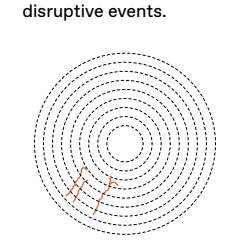
The trajectory of this story follows a continuous, even, space-time development, without significant leaps and disruptions. Its trajectory runs through different scales, from a relatively large to a relatively small.



The trajectory of this story focusses on one scale level in spatio-temporal continuity.



The trajectories of these stories hardly show any changes in scale, but spatio-temporal leaps caused by disruptive events.



The trajectory of these stories describe spatio-temporally limited phenomena that emerge and endure without spatio-temporal leaps.

At the site of the Jäger-Bastion, (...)

The image descriptions appear in connection with a drawing that records an associated spatio-temporal phase in plan form.

Philippe Sarre, the son of Pierre Sarre and an ancestor of (...)

Their texts explain essential spatio-temporal features, while the footnotes refer to the source of the plan on which each respective drawing is based.

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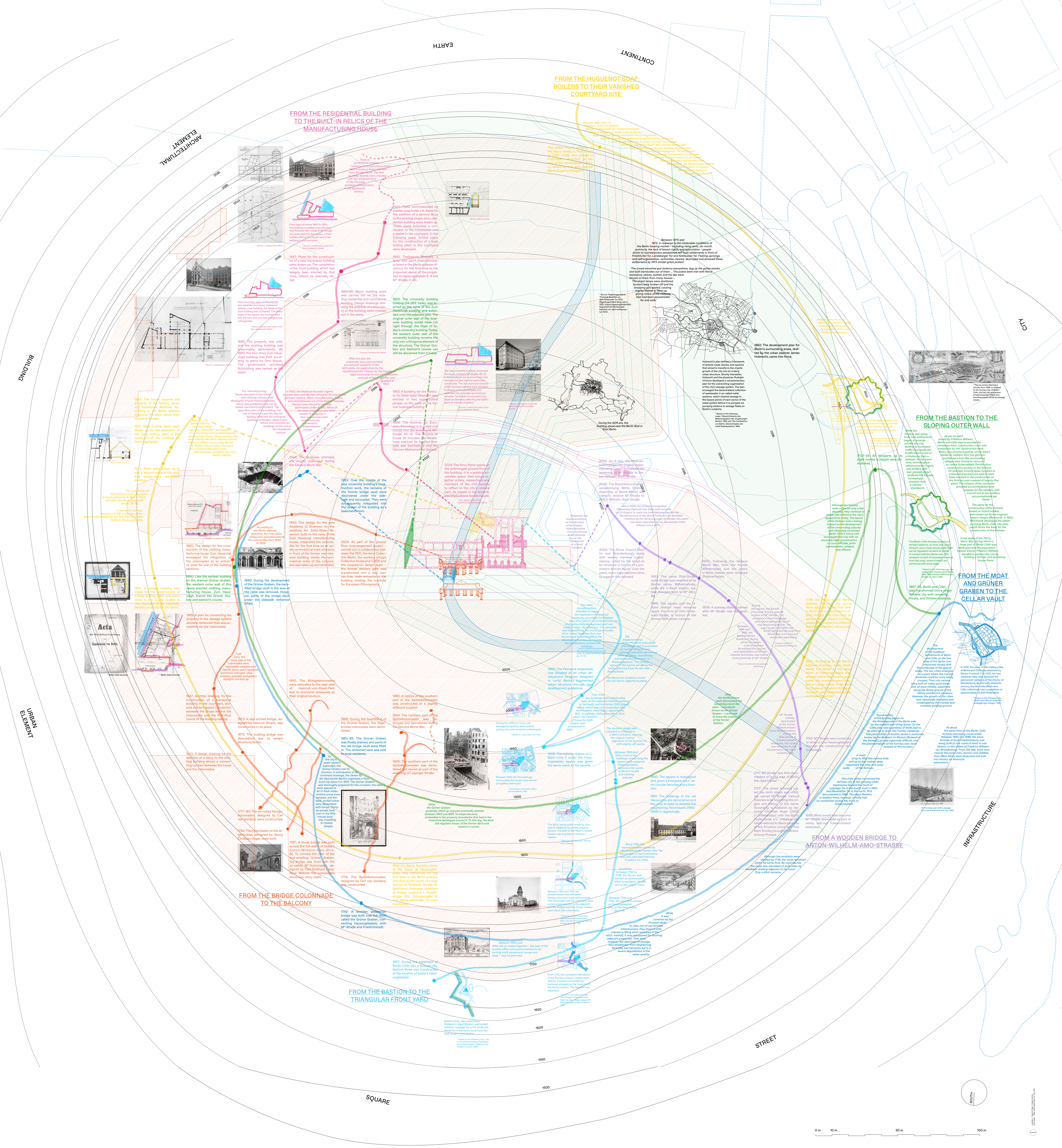
EARTH
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