The Roman Baths

Discovered in 1977 and open to the public since 1983, the Roman Baths are a civilian bathhouse built by the military. The complex history of their construction can be divided into three main phases. The first building was erected around 100 AD; the baths then underwent a series of alterations and extensions until their destruction in the Marcomannic Wars (around 174/175), after which the bathhouse was completely rebuilt, only to be finally abandoned after the Alemannic incursions of the mid 3rd Century. The bathhouses of the ancient world can be considered as communal meeting places at which pleasure was mixed with purpose, where relaxation, sports and games combined with creature comforts, such as eating and drinking. Undoubtedly, these were also ideal places to exchange news, opinions, gossip and rumour.

The Vicus (the Civilian Settlement)

It is no longer possible to reconstruct a detailed plan of the vicus of Biriciana, since a large part of it has been lost beneath new developments. Only to the south east of the Roman Baths, on the site of the present coach park, has it been possible to investigate the vicus in detail. During a two-stage excavation in 1987/88 evidence of a crowded settlement was found. Two large stone buildings, which possibly played an important role, were found to have been built on the site of four adjacent timber-frame long houses (approx. 50 x 11.5 m) which had probably been destroyed by fire. The outline drawn on the parking area is that of the northern building which was excavated in full. Somewhat further to the south east, another stone building was also exposed (the cellar of which has been reconstructed). Five deep wells that have been excavated (two reconstructed) are also likely to be associated with the stone buildings. The finds indicate that the site was most probably occupied by ironworkers.

Present knowledge leads us to suspect that a settlement comprising several thousand inhabitants once ringed the Fort. To the east, the vicus may have extended as far as the modern railway line, with a building identified as a mansio marking its western limit. To the south the settlement probably extended well beyond the present-day Gunzenhausener Straße. Evidence of pottery production argues in favour of a more extensive industrial area (out of the railway station), probably including a brick and tile works.
The Roman place name Biriciana was recorded in the Tabula Peutingeriana (a medieval copy of a post-classical road map). It’s Biriciana was recorded in the Tabula Peutingeriana (a medieval copy of a post-classical road map). It’s certainty until the early 19th century, when the Roman place name (vicus) have also been excavated and studied over more than 100 years of research. The Roman Baths discovered in 1979 by a gardener laying out an asparagus bed, has formed the centrepiece of the display. The find comprises 246 objects, including 17 statuettes of gods which are of unique quality and condition, as well as statues, sacred vessels, household goods, pieces of parade armour, finely worked metal fittings and various figurines. The treasure is likely to have been hidden during the incursions by the Alemanni in the mid-3rd c. AD. Following the acquisition of the Weissenburg Roman treasure by the Archäologische Staatssammlung München in 1980, the museum was created and opened in 1983. Since then the treasure, which was discovered in 1979 by a gardener laying out an asparagus bed, has formed the centrepiece of the display. The find comprises 246 objects, including 17 statuettes of gods which are of unique quality and condition, as well as statues, sacred vessels, household goods, pieces of parade armour, finely worked metal fittings and various figurines. The treasure is likely to have been hidden during the incursions by the Alemanni in the mid-3rd c. AD. In addition to the treasure, the RömerMuseum also has a range of exhibits reflecting both military and civilian life along the Roman frontier. The display depicting the land beyond the Limes shows visitors life outside the Roman Empire at the time of the Roman occupation of Raetia. The Museum displays Germanic and Roman finds side by side in order to provide a direct comparison between the different cultures.

In 2005, the Oberegermanisch-Rätische Limes (known in Biriciana as the Devil’s Wall) was recognized by UNESCO as part of the transnational Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site. The Biriciana Limes Information Centre was established in 2005 as a national information and communication centre, and is situated on the ground floor of the RömerMuseum in Weißenburg. It has since become popular with visitors as the ideal starting point for tours of the Roman Empire. The RömerMuseum was created and opened in 1983. Since then the Roman Empire at the time of the Roman occupation of Raetia. The Museum displays Germanic and Roman finds side by side in order to provide a direct comparison between the different cultures.

The earliest fort at Biriciana covered roughly 1.8 ha and consisted of a wooden palisade and curtilar embankment, which dates from around 50 AD, when the Roman Empire was defining its borders. The task of the garrison at this strategically important site was to secure the newly conquered territory north of the Danube. In the mid-2nd Century, the wood and turf fort was replaced by an almost square stone fort covering 1.3 ha. The fort and the vicus (civilian settlement) were then destroyed in 253/254 during the Alemannic incursions. The fort was garrisoned for a short time.

The RömerMuseum