



Echoes of the past

Following the discovery of ancient foundations during construction works in 1977, the Nuremberg branch of the Bayerisches Landesamt für Denkmalpflege (Bavarian State Office for Historic Preservation) undertook an exploratory investigation. As the complete building was exposed by the excavations undertaken in course of that year, it soon became clear that the archaeological remains were in an exceptionally fine state of preservation. It was therefore decided to preserve the site as a historic monument. The bath house was conserved and restored in the early 1980s and covered over beneath a protective shell. Today, Weissenburg's Roman Baths are among the best preserved and most important ancient bath house complexes in Southern Germany.

The finds discovered during the excavation – including jewellery, hairpins, fragments of pottery and glass, and many others – are on display in the RömerMuseum.

Since 2012 the new reception area is presented as the »Gateway to Roman Weissenburg«. The information display wall with its larger-than-life graphics, orthophotos and informative descriptions, and the films entitled »Macht, Pracht und Untergang« (»Power, Splendour and Doom «) and »Paraderüstungen der römischen Reiterei« (»Parade Armour of the Roman Cavalry«) bring Roman history vividly to life!



Roman Baths

Am Römerbad 17a
T: +49 (0)9141 907 127

Opening season: March 15th to November 15th
daily from 10.00 – 17.00

Entry: – Adults €4 Concessions €2,50
– Family ticket €8

Guided tours and workshops for school parties and groups of children are available by prior agreement from March 15th to November 15th from 09.00. Other arrangements may be made by telephone.

Guided tours: Tourist-Info, T: +49 (0)9141 907 124;
Workshops: Museen Weissenburg, T: +49 (0)9141 907 189

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Weissenburg Roman Baths



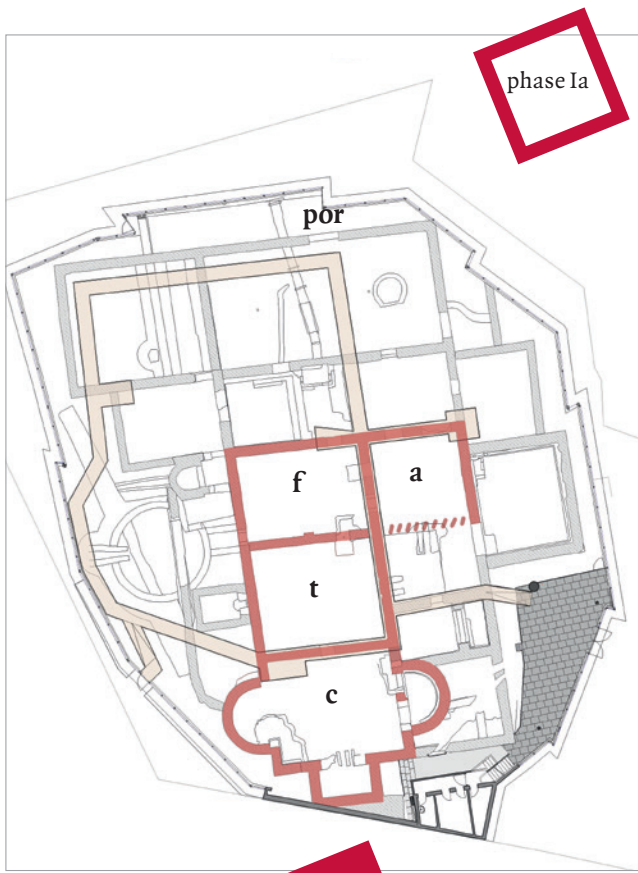
Bene lava – Enjoy your bath!

The importance of a visit to the bath house in everyday Roman life is a matter of written record. A good bath was virtually indispensable to the Roman quality of life, which is evident not just from the archaeological remains of the lavish architecture and sumptuous décor of the bath houses, but also from contemporary texts.

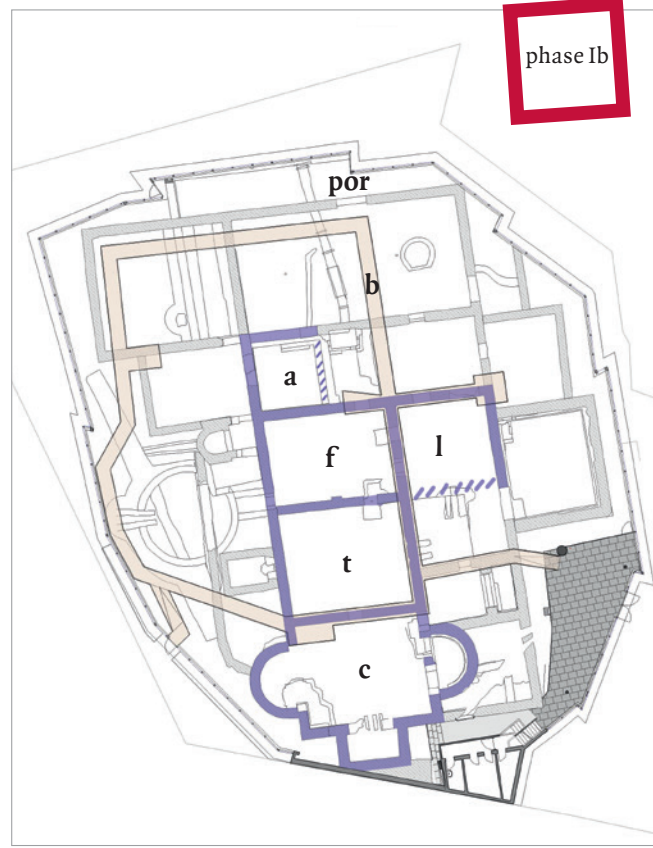
As ancient sources tell us, the social aspect associated with a visit to the bath was as important as the daily routines of cleansing and personal hygiene, and much time was spent in sports, ball and board games, private conversations and business discussions, politics, as well as eating and drinking. The various rooms that comprised a public bath house offered ample space for all these activities, but the bath house was not always a haven of peace, as contemporaries such as the Roman poet and philosopher Lucius Annaeus Seneca relate.

»a variety of noises reverberates about my ears! When your strenuous gentleman, for example, is exercising ... when he is working hard, or else pretends to be working hard, I can hear him grunt; and whenever he releases his imprisoned breath, I can hear him panting in wheezy and high-pitched tones. Or perhaps I notice some lazy fellow, ... and hear the crack of the pummeling hand on his shoulder, varying in sound according as the hand is laid on flat or hollow.

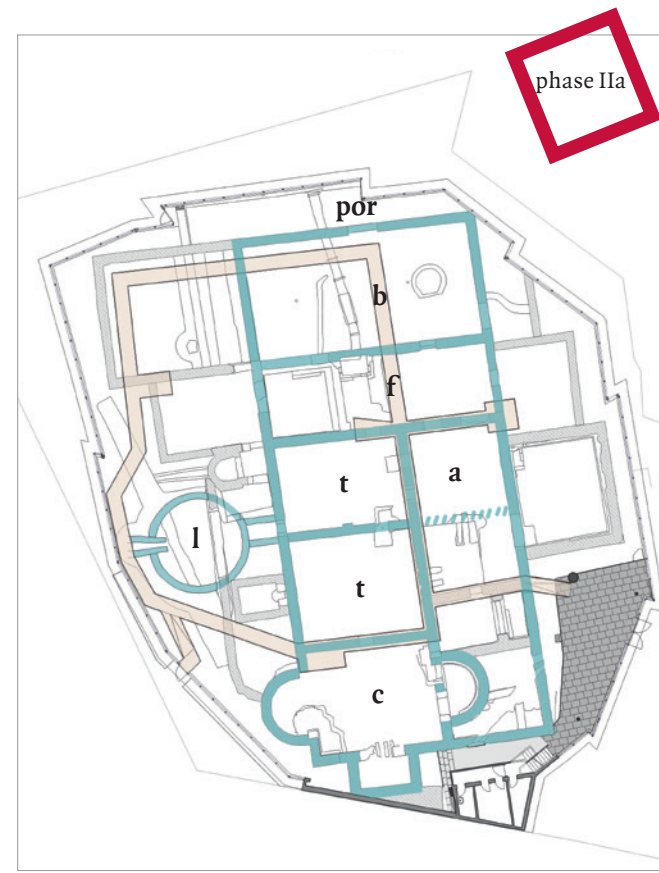
Then, perhaps, a professional comes along, shouting out the score; that is the finishing touch. Add to this the arresting of an occasional roysterer or pickpocket, the racket of the man who always likes to hear his own voice in the bathroom, or the enthusiast who plunges into the swimming-tank with unconscionable noise and splashing. Besides all those ... the hair-plucker with his penetrating, shrill voice, for purposes of advertisement, continually giving it vent and never holding his tongue except when he is plucking the armpits and making his victim yell instead.» (Seneca, epistulae 56, 1–2)



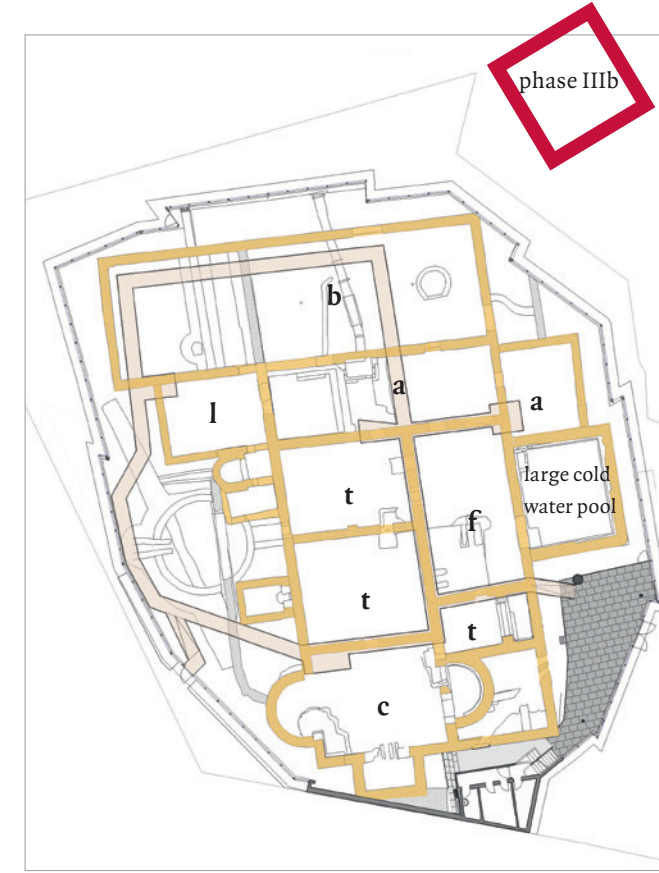
phase Ia



phase Ib



phase IIa



phase IIIb

Building phase I

The original bath house was constructed to the west of the Fort in the late 1st / early 2nd Century AD. It comprised two complexes: a square stone bathing area that was entered via a timber-built changing room (*apodyterium*, a) and a *palaestra* with porticus (courtyard surrounded by timber colonnade, por). The bathing area itself consisted of the following rooms: the *frigidarium* (cold bath, f), *tepidarium* (warm bath, t) and *caldarium* (hot bath, c).

In a subsequent minor stage of development (Phase Ib), the *apodyterium* was replaced by a *laconicum* (sweat room, l) and a new *apodyterium* (a) was constructed to the north. The *palaestra* was converted into a roofed »sports hall« (*basilica*, b) with porticus (por), of which nothing now remains.

Building phase II

Following various minor alterations, the entire structure was enlarged around the mid-2nd Century AD and rebuilt entirely in stone. The *frigidarium* (f) was moved to the northern side to make room for a second *tepidarium* (t) and a circular sweat room (*laconicum*, l) on the western side of the building. The *apodyterium* (a) returned to the location it had occupied in the first phase of development (Ia).

Coins found on site point to a catastrophic fire sometime after 167/168 AD, leading to the supposition that the bath house was burned down during the Marcomannic Wars.

This building phase served as a basis for the »Pracht« (»Splendour«) sequence in the film »Macht, Pracht und Untergang« (»Power, Splendour and Doom«) which is shown in the reception building, as well as providing the template for the model of the bath house in the foyer of the protective shell.

Building phase III

Sometime after 180 AD, the baths were rebuilt on a larger and more sumptuous scale, with the central rooms and bathing pools clad in Solnhofen marble panels. The porticus gave way to an enlarged *basilica* (b). The *frigidarium* (f) was relocated on the eastern side and extended with the addition of a large cold water pool. As in Building phase Ib, the *apodyterium* (a) was moved to the northern side and enlarged. A new, small *tepidarium* (t) was installed between the southern *tepidarium* and the *frigidarium*. The former circular *laconicum* (dating from Building phase II) was abandoned and rebuilt further to the north as a square structure (l). Adjacent to this on the southern side, a room was constructed with a cold water pool which is now preserved in reconstructed form.

This impressive bath house was subsequently destroyed in the mid 3rd Century AD, probably at the time the Alemanni invaded Roman territory and forced the Romans to withdraw back to the Danube.

Construction history

Owing to the lack of material evidence, it has not as yet been possible to compile a detailed history of the baths' construction. Excavations of the Weissenburg Roman Baths nevertheless show that the building complex was altered or enlarged on several occasions, and the development of the buildings can essentially be divided into three main phases.