

The Roman estate (villa rustica) of Straubing-Alburg

In order to ensure the supply of the forts and camp villages along the Limes, numerous estates were built in their hinterland. Their surplus production included agriculture, cattle breeding, vegetable and fruit cultivation. The centre of each farm was the main building. Depending on the size of the farm, there were also stables, storehouses, sheds and other buildings for processing the agricultural products. There was always a bathroom for the inhabitants, either free-standing or integrated into the main building. The farmyard area was surrounded by a wall, a fence or a hedge.

Of the numerous farmsteads in the hinterland of the fort site of Sorviodurum (Straubing), the Alburg villa is the best researched. Large parts of the main building have been excavated, and numerous cellars in its vicinity indicate the existence of other buildings. Although due to the good soils the villa rustica was certainly specialised in agriculture, several kilns prove the production of bricks. The courtyard area of about 1.5 ha and the representative main building speak for a stately agricultural enterprise. It was built at the end of the 1st century AD and used until the 3rd century.

The main building depicted in the model belongs to the type of so-called "risalit villa". On the north front of the building are two corner risalites connected by an open portico and flanking a terrace. (Risalites are parts of a building that protrude slightly at the full height of the structure. Here the parts to the left and right of the green space). Through the portico one enters an open courtyard with a water basin and cistern. Several rooms are grouped around the courtyard. The main entrance to the villa is on the plainly designed south front. Wall paintings and underfloor heating found during the excavations attest to a comfortable interior.

The world-famous "Roman treasure" was discovered in the courtyard area in 1950. This is a hoard of parade armour, weapons, statuettes, tools and equipment. The most impressive pieces are the parade armour with its face helmets, greaves and head protection plates for the horses. The pieces were possibly worn in battle, at tournament-like equestrian games and on festive occasions. The Straubing find is the most extensive complex of this type of armour to date. The parade armour - as well as a large model of the Alburg villa - can be seen in the Gäubodenmuseum Straubing.