

Design and Concept:
Bernd Wißner / Ute Haidar

English translation by Katharina Maier

With texts by
Gisela Mahnkopf and Hans Frei (History)
Sabine Sünwoldt (Museum Schwabmünchen)
Werner Platteder (Nature Park "Augsburg – Westliche Wälder")
Max Stumböck (ReAL West)

Photos by Angelika Prem, Beatrice Schubert,
Bernd Wißner, Marcus Merk and others.
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AUGSBURGER LAND

A Guide



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Lech-Schmutter-Valley

Allmannshofen	Ellgau
Kühlenthal	Ehingen
Westendorf	Nordendorf
Meitingen	Thierhaupten
Biberbach	Langweid
Gablingen	Gersthofen

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The Swabian Holzwinkel

Altenmünster	Emersacker
Weiden	Heretsried
Adelsried	Bonstetten

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The Reischenau

Dinkelscherben	Kutzenhausen
Horgau	Ustersbach
	Zusmarshausen

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Schmutter Valley and Bismarck Tower

Diedorf	Neusäß
Aystetten	Stadtbergen

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The Stauden Region

Langenneufnach	Walkertshofen
Mittelneufnach	Fischach
Mickhausen	Scherstetten
Gessertshausen	Anhauser Tal

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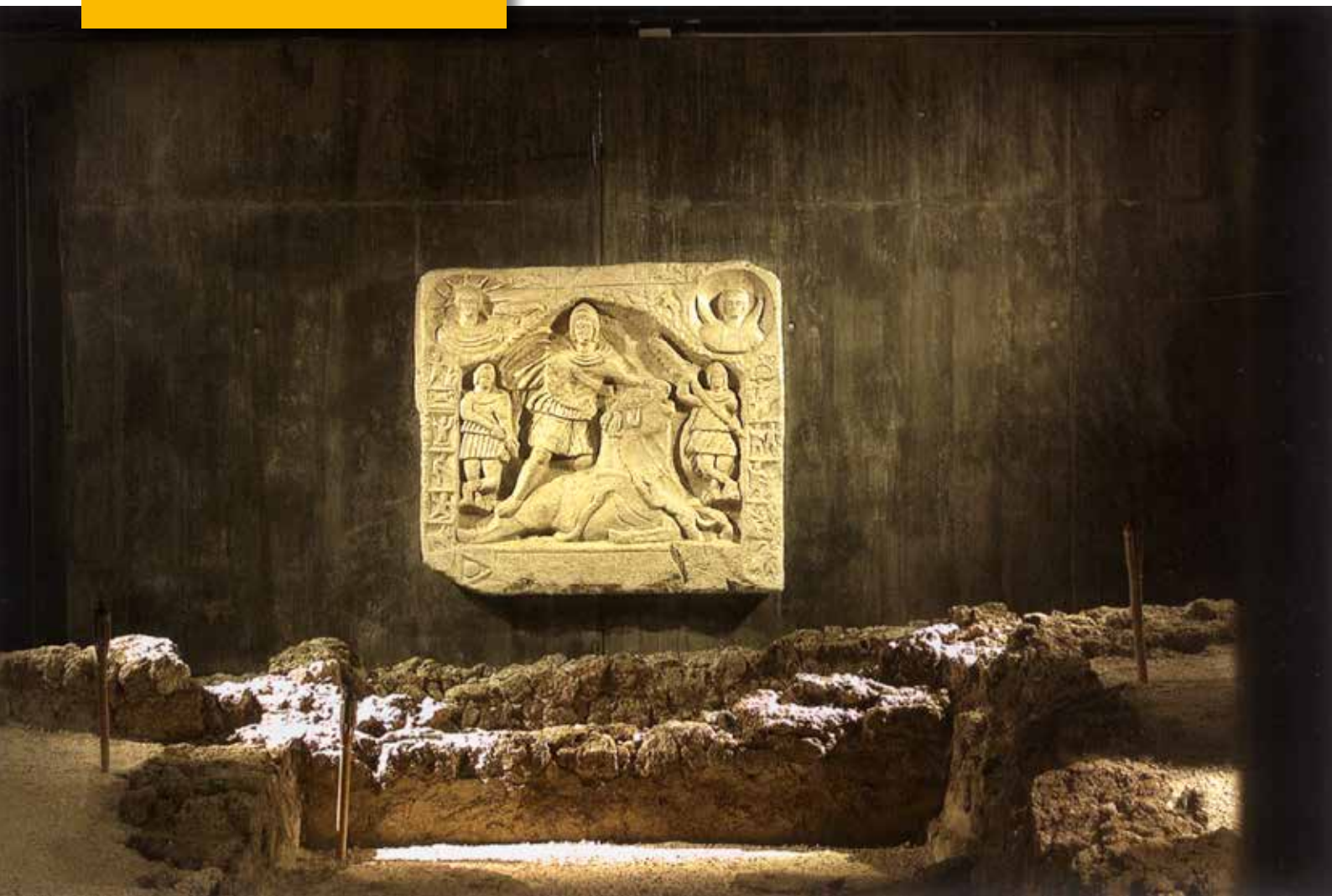


The Lech-Wertach-Valley

Bobingen	Wehringen
Großaitingen	Schwabmünchen
Hilttenfingen	Langerringen
Königsbrunn	Oberottmarshausen
Kleinaitingen	Graben
Untermeitingen	Klosterlechfeld

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The Mithraeum of Königsbrunn is the only cultic site of its kind still existing in the erstwhile Roman province of Raetia. In the eyes of his followers, Mithras was the Ruler of Worlds, governing the universe from without. In this marble relief he is shown in Persian garb as the victorious bull-slayer. When Christianity was made state religion in the 4th century, the Mithras cult came to an end.



District History Vestiges of Time

based on works by Gisela Mahnkopf and Hans Frei



Well-preserved rampart of a Celtic entrenchment near Reutern (Welden)

Preconditions for settlement in the Augsburg Land were set over the course of the last 2.5 million years. Various Ice Ages shaped the landscapes, leaving behind fertile land fit for settling on the terraces as well as less favourable, gravelly elevations. It was not until the last Ice Age that the two valleys emerged where, today, we have Lech and Wertach meandering through the land. Conditions for human habitation finally arose when climate got warmer. Human presence can be attested to as early as the Mesolithic, namely from around 8000 BC onwards, due to finds of small lithic flint tools at, for instance, Gablingen. Some 2000 years later, at the dawn of the Neolithic, hunters settled down and became farmers. The lightly wooded, loess-covered terraces between Wertach and Lech were very well suited for the way they cultivated the land. A distinctive regional characteristic for the Neolithic are ornate bell-shaped cups, artefacts of the so-called Bell Beaker

culture. The latter was already less oriented towards farming and even used metals like copper and gold. Around 2200 BC came the invention of bronze, owing to the discovery that copper would turn into a much harder metal when adding tin. The world was forever changed. Farmers and hunters were joined by craftsmen and traders who travelled the entirety



of Europe. The Lech Valley counts among the most important archaeological areas in the alpine upland for that period in particular. This is illustrated, for instance, by bronze parts belonging to a cart (photo) found at a burial site near Oberottmarshausen. The following era, too, owes its name to a metal: iron, used to produce weapons,

armour and tools from ca. 1000 BC onwards. Iron, ironworking and salt trade became the new foundation for a booming economy and commerce that reached out as far as the entire Mediterranean world. The affluent upper class had a high level of civilisation and lived in fortified hilltop settlements, like on the Ham(m)elberg hill near Hammel, amidst small villages whose economy was still based on husbandry. A group of barrows called "Hexenberg" ("witch's hill") that is situated on the Wertach plain between Bobingen and Wehringen yielded important finds from this period: traces of a 6x4 m wooden burial chamber with a set of cookery with 22 vessels, weapons and parts of a horse's harness. Both scope and craftsmanship of the finds indicate that a person of quite some wealth was buried there. The people who populated the area during the last centuries before the turn of eras are recorded by name and belonged to the Celtic tribe of the Vindelici. Characteristic for their culture are impressive quadrangular rampart-and-moat complexes, also known as viereckschanze (Celtic entrenchment). Integrated into the structure of one or more settlements, they possibly constituted the centre of the respective settling area. Only a few among these entrenchments are thought to have been exclusively used as cultic sites. Rather, they probably mostly constituted fortified manors, estates or focal points of settlement structures. There are seven discernible viereckschanzen left in the district, e. g. the well-preserved Brennbург near Fischach or the Welden rampart.

The Vindelici were overcome by the Romans in 15 BC, when the latter crossed the Alps with their armies to conquer the land beyond. The Romans built a military camp at the confluence of Lech and Wertach, which would later be known as "Augusta Vindelicum" and develop into the capital of the Roman province of Raetia,



Fine arrow heads were hewn from flint.



Bronze spear head



Metals like gold and copper were processed as early as the Stone Age.

Bell Beaker from a woman's grave in Markt (Biberbach)



a huge territory north of the Alps comprising the entire area between Rhine and Lech. An important role fell to the network of roads, following the courses of river valleys in particular. The Via Claudia connected the province capital to Upper Italy, with the route from Augsburg to Kempten on Lake Constance being of similar importance. The Lech, which was then navigable, provided a connection to the Danube waterways network, facilitating the transport of heavy goods like natural stone from the Jura Mountains. Zusmarshausen and the potter village of Schwabmünchen evolved into ribbon-built villages along the road. Their booming crafts and trades didn't come to a halt until the Alemannic raids of the 3rd century. A particular gem from the period was found at Königsbrunn, a cultic site dedicated to the God Mithras (Mithraeum). A replica is nowadays open to the public.



Convent complex in Oberschönenfeld



Bilder: Naturparkverein



The Naturpark-Haus or naturepark house with its special exhibitions and the permanent exhibition "Natur und Mensch im Naturpark" ("nature and people in the nature park") is a place of discovery.

Cultures Times Six: Convent Oberschönenfeld

Nestled into the Schwarzach Valley, on the way from Gessertshausen to Waldberg, lies the oldest existing Cistercian abbey in Germany: the convent of Oberschönenfeld. The complex has become a destination of transregional appeal and a cultural hub, remarkably combining a diverse event programme with quiet contemplation. Between 1984 and 2003, the administrative district of Swabia and the local district Augsburgur Land established a folklore museum in the erstwhile outbuildings, the "Schwäbisches Volkskundemuseum Oberschönenfeld". The ostensive permanent exhibit examines rural life and work in the Swabian part of Bavaria and showcases the convent's history. A separate building houses the "Swabian Gallery" with works by regional artists. The convent sisters are known for their parament embroidery, their art and book store and their renowned breadshop.

Wedded to Oberschönenfeld are the cloister garden, the cosy inn "Klosterstüble" and the completely furnished Staudenhaus (photo), the last thatched house in the district. It was supposed to be demolished in 1974 but instead purchased by the "Heimatverein für den Landkreis Augsburg e. V.". A club for maintenance of local traditions, the buyers decided to re-erect the house at Oberschönenfeld to preserve it for prosperity, as, up until the turn of the century, this type of architec-

ture had dominated the villagescapes of the Stauden region. Diagonally across the Swabian Gallery lies the Naturpark-Haus of the nature park "Augsburg – Westli-

che Wälder e. V.", housing a fascinating permanent exhibit on natural history.

www.abtei-oberschoenenfeld.de

www.schwaebisches-volkskundemuseum.de



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Barbara Magg/SVO



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Marcus Merk

1. Swabian Gallery
2. Visitor Centre
3. Museum Garden
4. Inn "Klosterstüble"
5. Naturpark-Haus ("nature park house"; left)
6. Staudenhaus ("Stauden house"; above)

Contemporary art on the convent grounds



Through road B2 near Westendorf

On the Move Infrastructure

The district and its municipal partners offer roughly 70 000 citizens an appealing alternative to private transport by way of the linked transport system AVV (Augsburger Verkehrsverbund). 7 regional train lines, 132 regional buses, 19 city buses and 5 tram lines make the region accessible. Ever since the AVV was introduced, rural transport has incessantly been improved upon. To better develop the countryside, the district spends 600 000 euros on supplementary bus lines per year, in addition to the 8.7 million allotted to the AVV. Central junction is Augsburg main station which is being optimized as part of the mobility hub project "Mobilitätsdrehscheibe" estimated to be completed in 2022. The six-lane Autobahn 8 Munich – Augsburg provides an ideal east-west connection, while the north-south connection is covered by the four-lane through roads Bundesstraße 2 and 17 as well as the Autobahn 8 with the Autobahn 96 towards Lindau.

Particularly worthy of note is the district-owned cycle network. The accompanying bicycle traffic concept was thought out in cooperation with the Allgemeiner Deutscher Fahrradclub (ADFC, i. e. "public German cyclists' club") in 2009 and is currently being further developed until the end of 2018. Focus is on everyday cy-

cle traffic so that district residents will not necessarily need their car to explore their home region. The objective is to extend the interconnected web of bike paths in order to facilitate everyday trips – for example to school, work or for leisure. The concept is going to feature a catalogue of measures indicating the future of the district's cycle network. At the time being, more than 1400 kilometres of biking trails traverse Augsburg Land.



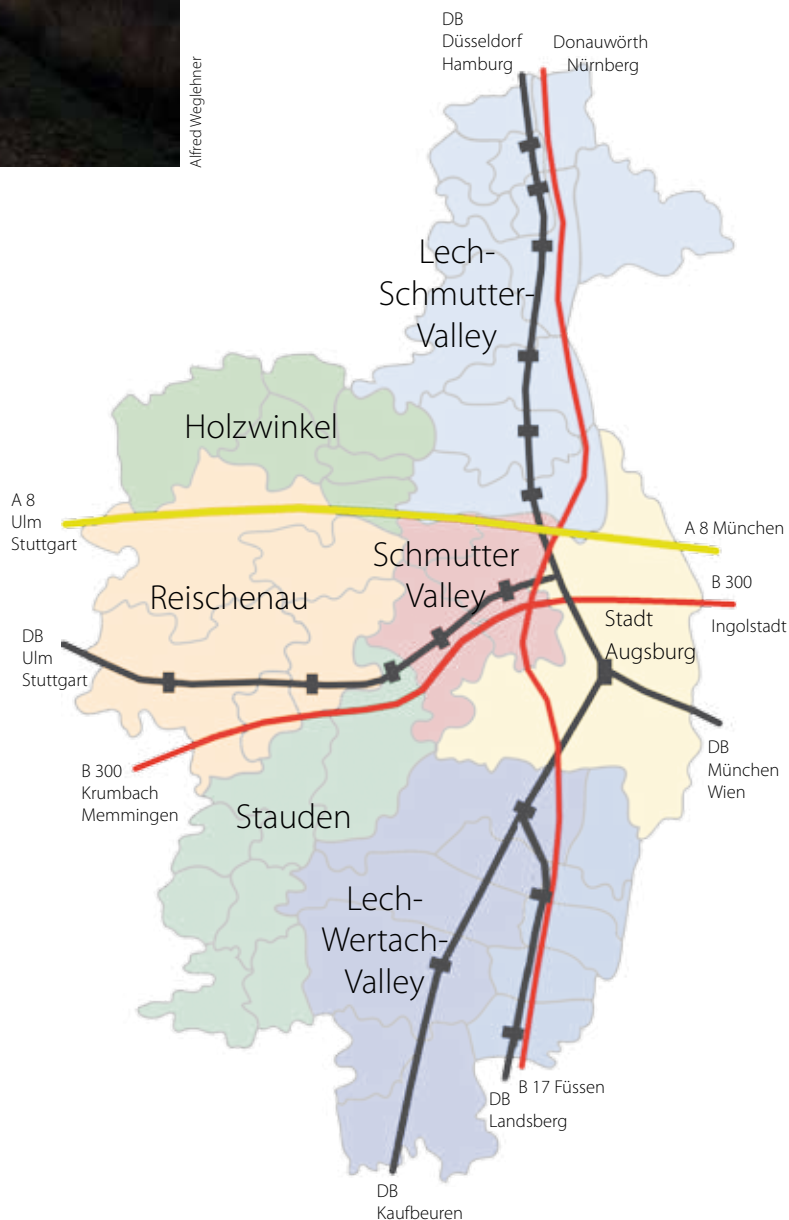
Alfred Leinfelder

Landscapes, Regions and their Municipalities

The district is home to circa 250000 people living in 46 towns, market towns and municipalities, a large share of which are located in the nature park "Westliche Wälder". The latter is sought out by many locals as well as non-resident vacationers. The villages in the Stauden region are particularly popular. The Lech forms the eastern district border, with the exception of Thierhaupten on its eastern bank. Plenty of places are situated beside rivers or brooks like the Zusam, Schmutter, Wertach, Singold or Neufnach. Many municipalities throughout the district are rural, with industry in between.



Alfred Weglehner



The Lech-Schmutter-Valley

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Gablingen is home to one of the best pre-served Fugger castles in the district. It was built in the early 16th century.



Gablingen

Gablingen and its boroughs Gablingen-Siedlung, Holzhausen, Lützelburg and Mutterhofen have 4850 inhabitants overall. It was founded ca. 500 and first documented in 1144. The Fuggers who held the land from 1527 to 1806 shaped Gablingen to a major extent. Remanences of their time come in shape of a hunting chateau and the beautiful neighbouring parish church St. Martin with a well-known stork nest on top of its tower. The Gablingen crest shows the Schmutter, the chateau and a lily in the Fugger colours yellow and blue. The borough Lützelburg stems from a clearing of woodland in ca. 1100. The forest is of huge economic impor-

tance for the area. Under the simple moniker "Holz", i. e. wood, it is part of many place names, e. g. "Holzhausen" or "St. Nikolas im Holz" ("St. Nikolas in the woods"). The latter is a former Augustinian cloister in Muttershofen dating from 1150. The Gablingen Archaeology Museum exhibits finds from the Stone Age up to the early Middle Ages. There are also an open-air stage, a motocross club, a hostel for nature lovers (Naturfreundehaus) and 30 clubs and societies, including several riding and music clubs. A volunteer centre for dedicated citizens opened in 2010.

www.gablingen.de

Storks on top of the St. Martin's church tower in Gablingen



The modern municipal hall of Gablingen





Gersthofen

The early rural Gersthofen developed out of an Alemannic village which harked back to the 600s. The crest colours red and white denote the erstwhile landholders, the cathedral chapel of Augsburg. Cogwheel and river, meanwhile, stand for the industrialisation and the Lech. The settlement was first documented in 969 as "Gerfredeshoua", i. e. "at Gerfred's farms". The boroughs Hirblingen and Batzenhofen are located in the Schmutter Valley, while Edenbergen and Rettenberg lie in hilly woodland. Today's Gersthofen is an important venue for industry and has a population of 20 400. Chemical companies, manufacturers of fireworks and synthetics as well as trading companies have settled here, benefiting from Lech water and the proximity of the autobahn A 8 and through road B 2. A former water tower houses the world's only balloon museum, also used for a plethora of events (see p. 23). In 1999, Gersthofen



The town park boasts many works of art, including a bronze statue by renowned sculptor Marlene Neubauer-Woerner.



Artist Christel Lechner created the concrete statue "Der Denker" ("The Thinker") at the entrance to the Ballonmuseum.

caused a nation-wide sensation when the town gave out 100 DM to every citizen, sharing in the prior year's profits of five million DM. Gersthofen caters to recreational needs with its sport arena, indoor pool, municipal library, the water park Gerfriedswelle, the City-Center and the civic centre with its varied programme. www.gersthofen.de



The conspicuous erstwhile water tower is home to the Ballonmuseum.



The town hall lies at the heart of Gersthofen, vis-à-vis the popular City-Center.



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