

Pilgrimage Church Maria Bickesheim

The pilgrimage church of Maria Bickesheim is at the top of the list of landmark buildings in Durmersheim. It has also been mentioned as a special sight on the motorway for a few years now.

Its history goes back a long way. It stands at a prominent point on the edge of the Hochgestad, where Roman roads crossed from Weißenburg in Alsace to Pforzheim and from Basel/Straßburg to Ladenburg/Mainz.

The fragment of a Roman four-god stone found in the foundations of the old Durmersheim church (from 1473) (since 1830 walled into the parish church of St. Dionys) as well as coin finds indicate a Roman settlement, perhaps near this crossing of important Roman military roads.

One route led up along the Gestade quarry completely through Durmersheim and still exists today in the village partly as the "Roman road" known to us. In 1932, during the construction of the water pipe in this street, pavement remains from Roman times were found, which presumably date from 100 AD. Another Roman road led from Bietigheim across the Hardtwald. Remains of this road can still be seen today in the Hardtwald at Bruchhausener Weg (near the shooting range). In addition, a cross connection came from Weißenburg, which led via Bickesheim into the Hardtwald and then in the direction of Ettlingen.

It can be assumed that at this strategic crossroads, where today the pilgrimage church stands, there was a path marking or even a Roman sanctuary. In Christian times such places often developed into a chapel or church.

This was probably the case in this place, where the expansion of a chapel into an early Gothic church was promoted by the margraves of Baden as early as 1250.

Inside the pilgrimage church, the pulpit column contains the oldest representation of a Baden coat of arms from 1280, which was attached on the occasion of the marriage of Margrave Rudolf I of Baden to Cunegonda of Eberstein.

The centre of the Marian devotion is the 13th century picture of grace.

In the Katharinenchor, Bickesheim also offers beautiful, well-preserved frescoes from the 13th and 14th centuries, which are counted among the most valuable on the Upper Rhine.

Early on, the church became an attraction for many pilgrims from the surrounding villages. The pilgrimage itself was first mentioned in 1318.

After in 1920 first 5 Fathers of the Redemptorist Order came to Bickesheim, the monastery Bickesheim was built in 1925/1926 at today's Pilgerstraße. The

Redemptorists looked after the pilgrimage church Maria Bickesheim and supported the pastoral care in the neighbouring communities. The monastery was dissolved in 2010. Today it houses the clearing office of the Catholic parishes of the deaneries of Karlsruhe and Rastatt.

A current church guide and a flyer with a description of the frescoes are available at the small sales counter at the northern side entrance.