

**IMPERIUM KONFLIKT MYTHOS**  
2000 JAHRE | VARUSSCHLACHT®

## Press Release

### History You Can Touch: Historical Roman Ship Sets Sail This Spring

Hamburg, 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008

2000 years after the historically important Varus Battle, also known as the “Battle of the Teutoburg Forest”, a Roman ship will sail the Lippe and Ems. The big difference: the 16 m long and 3 m wide ship will not be sailing to war. Instead, in the summer it will be going on a peaceful journey taking months. During its journey on the Danube, Rhine, Lippe, Ems and Weser the Roman ship will be announcing a special exhibition project: “IMPERIUM KONFLIKT MYTH. 2000 Years Varus Battle”.

#### Project Partners

The partners in this exhibition project are the Landschaftsverband (LWL), the Varusschlacht im Osnabrücker Land GmbH – Museum und Park Kalkriese, the Landesverband Lippe as well as the Kreis Lippe.

Under this title three museums at original sites, in Haltern am See (Westphalia), Kalkriese (Lower Saxony) and Detmold (Kreis Lippe) are spotlighting various facets of the historic event in the year 9 AD.

The partners co-operating in this exhibition project “IMPERIUM KONFLIKT MYTH. 2000 Years Varus Battle”, the University of Hamburg as well as the shipyard, Jugend in Arbeit e.V., financed the shipbuilding project costing over 200.000 Euro.

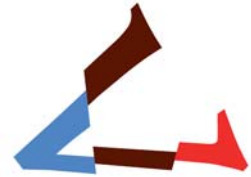
#### The Timetable

The day on which the wooden ship, weighing four tons, sets off to fulfil its mission, is approaching fast. The naming of the ship will take place on 30<sup>th</sup> May. Beforehand the warship will prove its seaworthiness and manoeuvrability. In the summer the ship will be anchoring e.g. in Rheine (11.-13.07), Nijmwegen (22.-24.08.) and Bonn (29.-31.08.). Further stops are planned for, amongst other places, Magdeburg, Mainz, Ingolstadt and Hanover, too.

A start was made on building the ship in January 2007, when the keel was laid in the Harburg shipyard of Jugend in Arbeit e.V. “On board ship”: scientists and

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„IMPERIUM KONFLIKT MYTHOS. 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht“ ist ein Ausstellungsprojekt im Jahre 2009 getragen von:



students of the Department of Ancient History as well as the LWL-Römermuseum in Haltern am See. Two boatbuilders, 17 students and three boatbuilding apprentices from the shipyard Jugend in Arbeit e.V. worked for 15 months on constructing the ship. Two Roman shipwrecks, which were discovered in 1986 in the vicinity of the legionary camp at Oberstimm, not far from Ingolstadt, and raised in 1994, served as models for the reconstruction.

“The finds, which guide our work, do originate from around 100 AD; however, the design of military ships of this size would hardly have been different at Varus’s time,” states the Hamburg expert, Prof. Dr. Christoph Schäfer. The wrecks are the best preserved Roman shipwrecks yet found.

Schäfer is the head of a group of historians who, together with the LWL-Römermuseum in Haltern am See, have reconstructed the Roman ship full-scale. “We have been joined by an experienced seadog, whom not only his passion for sailing predestines for the project”, comments Museum Director Dr. Rudolf Asskamp, alluding to Schäfer’s contribution to the reconstruction of an ancient warship in Regensburg.

### **Archaeological Experiment**

The performance and manoeuvrability of such ships is not known. This will be ascertained in an archaeological experiment. In this fashion the project will help to gain scientific information. The construction of this type of ship from the early imperial period is intended to fill a gap in experimental nautical archaeology.

Tests on the Ratzeburg Lake in mid-April will provide information on speeds and acceleration characteristics. The speeds attained will allow the calculation of distances which these Roman ships of 2000 years ago could cover in a day. The manoeuvrability of the vessel will be tested, with 20 oarsmen and under sail. “We want to know how hard on the wind you can go with this ship”, explains Schäfer.

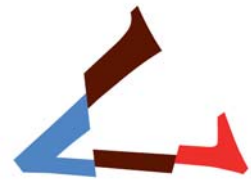
Apart from this the historians and archaeologists want to find out how long it takes until the crew of this kind of warship is seaworthy. The team of scientists are expecting new information from the answers to these questions concerning the establishment of Roman rule on Germanic areas.

The Museum of Ancient Shipping in Mainz supplied the basic archaeological studies for the building of the ship and made a model available, so providing the builders at the Harburg shipyard with a guide for their work. The materials for building the ship came from Lippe: this includes the oak wood for the frames and

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700 lathed wooden pegs, which hold the ship together. In addition larch wood for planking and mast as well as spruce wood for the oars, The Landesverband Lippe supplied the wood from its 16'000 ha of forest property.

Today's builders used the same mortise-and-tenon method of construction as the Romans did 2000 years ago. However, circular saws and electric drills were not available at that ancient time. "Happily we can use modern aids alongside ancient technology for this reconstruction; the construction of the body, however, corresponds exactly to ancient procedures", says Schäfer.

Further information: [www.imperium-konflikt-mythos.de](http://www.imperium-konflikt-mythos.de)

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