

IMPERIUM KONFLIKT MYTHOS
2000 JAHRE | VARUSSCHLACHT®

Background Information for the Media

Exhibition Project IMPERIUM KONFLIKT MYTH. 2000 Years Varus Battle

Haltern/ Kalkriese/ Detmold, 6th March 2008

An event in German and European history is heading for an important anniversary: 2009 marks the 2000th anniversary of the Varus Battle, also known as the “Battle in the Teutoburg Forest”. This unique exhibition project “IMPERIUM KONFLIKT MYTH. 2000 Years Varus Battle” at the three places, Haltern am See, Kalkriese and Detmold, is dedicated to this event. It will deal with the happenings of 9 AD in three museums at three original sites, to focus German and European public attention once again on this event of world-historical importance. As a contribution to historical and political education, visitors to the exhibitions will be informed about the subject in a graphic and emotionally attractive fashion by the use of world-class exhibits.

With these exhibits the ambitious exhibition project, organised by museums in two Länder, will present to the general public the background, the latest research on the Varus Battle as well as the way in which the events, traditionally known as the “Battle in the Teutoburg Forest”, have been perceived and mythologized over the centuries.

The exhibition project “IMPERIUM KONFLIKT MYTH. 2000 Years Varus Battle” will guide its visitors to the roots of German history, analyse and interrogate the bases of cultural and national identity as well as combine politics, art and history.

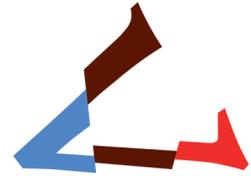
A Co-operative Venture

Museums and organisations in two Länder are co-operating in this venture. Lower Saxony and North-Rhine Westphalia are preparing this event together. The LWL-Römermuseum in Haltern am See, the Varusschlacht im Osnabrücker Land GmbH – Museum und Park Kalkriese – and the Lippisches Landesmuseum Detmold are each staging one part of this vastly varied complex.

The partners in this co-operative venture are the Landschaftsverband Westfalen-Lippe (LWL) for the exhibition location IMPERIUM, the Varusschlacht im Osnabrücker Land GmbH – Museum und Park Kalkriese for the exhibition location CONFLICT and the Landesverband Lippe and the Kreis Lippe for the exhibition location MYTH.

www.imperium-konflikt-mythos.de

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



Patrons

Four prominent personalities from contemporary history have assumed the patronage for this unique exhibition project: the Federal German Chancellor, Dr. Angela Merkel, the President of the European Parliament, Prof. Dr. Hans-Gert Pöttering as well as the Prime Ministers of the participating Länder, Lower Saxony and North-Rhine-Westphalia, Christian Wulff and Dr. Jürgen Rüttgers.

The Historical Events

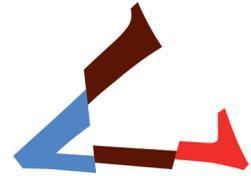
The year 9 AD is the point of departure.

The Roman commander, Publius Quinctilius Varus, had been ordered by Emperor Augustus to prepare the area to the east of the Rhine for its future as the Roman provinces of Germania and to introduce new administrative structures, tax laws and legal system. However, on their march from their summer camp on the Weser to their winter quarters, Varus and his three legions were lured into an ambush by Germanic tribesmen and destroyed. This defeat with all of its consequences, inflicted by allegedly inferior and uncivilised barbarians under the leadership of the Cherusian prince, Arminius, shook the Imperium Romanum at the height of its power. Rome abandoned all of its bases to the east of the Rhine.

The situation which had been so radically changed by the battle had a defining influence on the further course of European history. Whilst Rome maintained its presence to the west of the Rhine in the following centuries and continued to exert its dynamic influence, Germania to the east of the Rhine evaded Roman rule and civilisation. For their part more and more Germanic tribesmen infiltrated the Imperium as mercenaries, traders and plunderers. In the end at the time of the migration of the peoples whole Germanic tribes overran the Rhine frontier and brought about the fall of the Roman empire for good. On its territory numerous states of Germanic origin came into being which have shaped the face of Europe until this very day.

The Original Sites

Three places in Germany are closely connected with the events of the year 9 AD. Haltern am See, Kalkriese and Detmold. Each of the museums in their three places is spot-lighting as aspect of this battle and its history in its own exhibition with the co-operative exhibition project "IMPERIUM CONFLICT MYTH. 2000 Years Varus Battle".



One Subject – Three Original Sites – Three Exhibitions

The Roman military installations at Haltern are amongst the best researched of the Imperium Romanum in the Augustan period. Some of the troops who perished in the Varus Battle were stationed here. The IMPERIUM exhibition of the LWL-Römermuseum in Haltern am See has, as its subject, art and culture, war and peace as well as propaganda at the time of Emperor Augustus. It provides a key to understanding the way in which Publius Quinctilius Varus, the Roman commander defeated in the battle of 9 AD, who gave his name to that battle, thought and acted.

In Kalkriese archaeological excavations have been carried out and complemented by scientific research since 1989. More than 6000 archaeological finds – coins, bones, military objects and a wall built by Germanic tribesmen – document an ambush by them and the tragic defeat of a Roman army. The Varusschlacht im Osnabrücker Land GmbH – Museum und Park Kalkriese – will present the most modern research into the ancient battlefield. The CONFLICT-exhibition will focus on questions as to the cause, function and consequences of military conflicts for the Germanic world 2000 years ago.

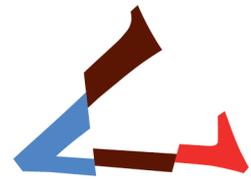
In Detmold an imposing monument was erected in 1875 to the victorious Germanic commander, Arminius: the Hermann Monument. It stands for a myth which has occupied artists, poets, musicians as well as historians and archaeologists and shaped the German search for national identity. The MYTH-exhibition of the Lippisches Landesmuseum Detmold ranges from Roman historiography to modern research and demonstrates what effect the battle had on European history.

Scientific Steering Body

The work of elaborating the scientific concepts for the exhibitions is in the hands of three teams of archaeologists and historians, which began work at the three exhibition locations, Haltern am See, Kalkriese and Detmold in 2004. In this fashion the latest research on the subject of the “Varusschlacht” will be presented in 2009, on the solid foundations provided by scientific advisory committees made up of internationally renowned experts.

Research Projects and Congress

The exhibition project is the occasion, too, for scientific colloquiums and research projects (e.g. archaeological, numismatic and scientific studies), which supported in Lower Saxony by the Volkswagen Foundation, in North-Rhine



Westphalia equally by the Land, the Landschaftsverband Westfalen-Lippe (LWL) and the Landesverband Lippe (LVL) and the Kreis Lippe.

The scientific programme, which runs parallel to the exhibitions, will culminate in 2009 in a central, interdisciplinary congress, to be held in Göttingen in co-operation with the University of Göttingen. Scientists from all parts of the world will come to Osnabrück for the congress "Rome – Imperium between Resistance and Integration" from 14th – 18th September 2009.

Roman Ship on its Journey

The project "Roman ship" is a cohesive element. The background: archaeologists have discovered boathouses from the Augustus period on the Lippe at Haltern (Kreis Recklinghausen, North-Rhine Westphalia), the location of the LWL-Römermuseum. We know how the ships of the Roman fleet in the 1st century AD were built from two wrecks from this period found near Oberstimm on the Danube. However, the nautical characteristics of these ships are unknown, An archaeological experiment is intended to provide information. That is why at the moment a Roman ship of the kind which used to sail the rivers of Germania 2000 years ago is being reconstructed at a shipyard at Hamburg-Harburg.

This is being financed by the co-operative exhibition project. The reconstructed ship will provide scientific information and will be investigated as far as its construction and performance, its speed, the characteristics of the square sail on the nine meter high mast or the manoeuvrability of the vessel are concerned. 20 oarsmen will man the approximately 16 meter long ship, with its weight of 2,5 tons.

At the same time the Roman ship is an advertisement. On a tour through Germany in 2008 and 2009 the ship will draw public attention to the exhibition project. Thus, for example, this year the ship will visit Hamburg (29th-31st June), Rheine (11th-13th Juli) and Bonn (29th-31st August); further visits are being planned or are under discussion for 2008 to, amongst other places, Magdeburg, Cologne, Breissach (Baden), Ingolstadt, Mainz, Neuss and Nijmegen (NL).

A Special Stamp

The German Post Office (Deutsche Post) will issue a special stamp, commemorating the 200th anniversary of the Varus Battle, in 2009.