

**The Culture of Memory and the Role of Archaeology:
A Case Study of the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest and the Kalkriese Archaeological Site**

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Dedication and Thanks

To my professor and advisor, Dr. Julia Hell: Thank you for teaching CLCIV 350 Classical Topics: German Culture and the Memory of Ancient Rome in the 2016 winter semester at the University of Michigan. The readings and discussions in that course, especially Heinrich von Kleist's *Die Hermannsschlacht*, inspired me to research more into the figure of Hermann/Arminius. Thank you for your guidance throughout this entire process, for always asking me to think deeper, for challenging me to consider the connections between Germany, Rome, and memory work and for assisting me in finding the connection I was searching for between Arminius and archaeology.

To my professor, Dr. Kerstin Barndt: It is because of you that this project even exists. Thank you for encouraging me to write this thesis, for helping me to become a better writer, scholar, and researcher, and for aiding me in securing funding to travel to the Museum and Park Kalkriese. Without your support and guidance this project would never have been written.

To the entire team at the Museum and Park Kalkriese, especially Dr. Stefan Burmeister and Dr. Heidrun Derks: Thank you for being so welcoming and allowing me to tour your museum and park. You provided me with valuable publications, texts, and newspaper articles I would not have otherwise had access to and were patient with my fumbling transitions between English and German. Thank you for hosting me for three days, allowing me to ask you all my questions, and for supporting the research project of an American college student. My visit to Kalkriese aided in contextualizing my project and gave it the momentum it needed, thank you.

To my friends, Sarah, Jeremy, Dana, and Filip: Thank you for always asking me how my thesis project was progressing and for always patiently sitting through the long-winded frustrated response that would follow. Thank you for celebrating my accomplishments with me and comforting me when I struggled. Your support and encouragement is very much appreciated.

And finally, to my family, who have always supported me in every way possible: Mutti, Vati, and Douglas, thank you. Thank you for always supporting me and going out of your way to make my dreams come true. Thank you for always encouraging my love of learning and for making my intentions of attending the University of Michigan a reality. I am who I am today because of you. I love you.

Introduction: Kalkriese – More Than Just a Museum

“Come with us to the Roman world - there's so much to discover”: Saalburg Roman Fort

The Saalburg Roman Castle and Archaeology Park, located over 300 kilometers south of the Museum and Park Kalkriese, was originally a Roman military fort which served the former frontier of the Roman Empire, the Limes. First constructed in the first century CE, the fort was rebuilt in the late 19th century to reflect how it would have looked during its final phase of Roman use. Much of the fort has been fully reconstructed, including the walls, gates, assembly hall, provisions store, and two of the barracks buildings. Saalburg invites the visitor to experience the Roman past as they claim it happened, plainly stating their intention in their introductory flyer: “Come with us to the Roman world - there's so much to discover.”¹

In his text *On the Use and Abuse of History for Life*, Nietzsche describes three methods of history: antiquarian, monumental, and critical.² The Saalburg castle evokes the antiquarian and monumental methods through its reconstruction. The antiquarian method focuses on preserving, honoring, and revering the past while the monumental method places an emphasis on the great actions of the past, including wars won by generals and the construction of buildings. The Saalburg is a further example for the practice of monumental history, as at the opening ceremony of the restored fort, the German Emperor Kaiser Wilhelm rode at the head of the triumphal procession. He claimed the Roman Empire to be a model for his Kaiserreich with its newly acquired colonies.³ The past had once been great, therefore the present, his Kaiserreich, could be great as well.

¹ “Saalburg Roman Fort Museum.”

² For more information, see Nietzsche.

³ “Germany: Saalburg.”

Saalburg preserves, honors, and reveres the past by reconstructing the fort, placing an emphasis on the buildings themselves, what the Romans did at this site, and what the Germans hoped to achieve, submerging the present-day visitor in that history. Traditional museums and sites like the Saalburg want the visitors to "experience" the past, to make the past present for them.

The Museum and Park Kalkriese exists in opposition to this action of complete reconstruction. I will show in this thesis that at Kalkriese, the curators and archaeologists present the history, artifacts, and work regarding the Roman-Germanic past very differently than at Saalburg, in a way that is a conscious, self-reflexive engagement with the past.

Kalkriese brings in a different perspective than the Saalburg by focusing on the archaeological object and the archaeological process. In contrast to the Saalburg, the Museum and Park Kalkriese is not used for monumental purposes. However, its curators and archaeologists do link their work to efforts to establish a foundation for Europe. This battle did not only influence Germany, but it was a battle which influenced the greater course of European history. While Kaiser Wilhelm wanted his visitors to see the analogy between the ancient Roman Empire and his modern German Empire, the curators and archaeologists at Kalkriese shift the attention from the site being important for the German nation, to a location having importance for the European Union.

The team at Kalkriese no longer wants to revere the myth of Arminius/Hermann and the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest, also referred to as the Varusschlacht, a myth which has existed in Germany since the rediscovery of the Roman texts which described the battle in the 15th century. Instead, they aim to foreground the methods of archaeology and the archaeologists' labor at Kalkriese. Saalburg remembers the Roman presence in Germany by recreation; Kalkriese turns

visitors into archaeologists. Archaeology, I will thus argue, plays a large role in helping to remember the past. Further, archaeology is a process that produces artifacts *and* archaeology is a way of thinking about the past. In addition, there is a history in Germany of using archaeology to remember and interpret the past.

The Role of Archaeology in Remembering the Past: Mommsen and 1989

The Museum and Park Kalkriese is, as the name implies, a museum and a park, but it is more than that. It is an archaeological site, a place of research, of discovering, tracing and hypothesizing. But what is the role of archaeology in remembering the past? For one, archaeology has been important in Germany for more than a century. There is a history in Germany of using archaeology for working through questions and debates of “German” national identity. Archaeological sites, such as Kalkriese, are used for thinking about German national identity.

Germany unified politically and administratively into one nation in January of 1871. Historian Theodor Mommsen quickly emerged onto the scene to create a German heritage and national identity from history.

“Two months after the establishment of the German empire in 1871, the distinguished Roman historian Theodor Mommsen made an explicit connection between Arminius’s fight for freedom against Roman domination and the unification of Germany in his own time. In a lecture presented that year about Augustus’ policy in Germany, Mommsen referred to the Battle of the Teutoburg forest as a turning-point in world history.”⁴

⁴ Wells, 35.

However, while Mommsen made these claims as early as 1871, it was not until 1885 that he published his text *Die Örtlichkeit der Varusschlacht*, which claimed the Barenau – the old name for Kalkriese – was the true site of the battle.⁵

Mommsen continued his work with history, archaeology, and heritage with the Reichs-Limeskommission.⁶ Under his direction, the Reichs-Limeskommission was founded in 1892 to investigate the course the Obergermanisch-Raetische Limes took. This frontier, a 500-kilometer-long section of the former boundary of the Roman Empire which stretched between the Danube and the Rhine rivers, featured approximately 900 watchtowers and 120 forts,⁷ one of which is the Saalburg fort. The border had been created in order for the Roman Empire to control traffic, manage the movement of people, trade goods, and to better enact taxes. The goal of the commission was to research the entirety of the Obergermanisch-Raetische Limes including the locations of the Roman fortifications built in association with it. This was the first institution formed to conduct a historical project since the 1871 unification. The work of the Reichs-Limeskommission has been considered one of the pioneering works in the field of provincial Roman archaeology.⁸ Archaeology in the 19th century was not as open to discussing or interacting with the public. In contrast to the methods of “community and public archaeology” in the past decade, in Mommsen’s work, his style was more of ‘this is what the history and archaeology means for Germany as a nation and German heritage now.’

Archaeology again played a role between 1989-1990, during the reunification of Germany. The wall had fallen and the two pieces of Germany were rejoined – once again

⁵ For more information, see Mommsen.

⁶ “Reichs-Limeskommission.”

⁷ “Upper German-Raetian Limes | Antonine Wall.”

⁸ “Reichs-Limeskommission.”

the German people needed to discover their joint German heritage. Coincidentally, archaeological work at Kalkriese officially began in 1989 with the digging of exploratory trenches. And what better place to search for – or perhaps, better research this heritage than at the battle field where a coalition of Germanic tribes defeated three legions from the mighty Roman Empire?

The Battle of the Teutoburg Forest

In the fall of 9 CE, three Roman legions, led by General Publius Quinctilius Varus, were marching through the northern European wilderness in what would become Germany.⁹ Along their march, due to the rough terrain, lack of easily maneuverable paths, and violent wind and rain, the line of Roman legionnaires, local auxiliary troops, camp followers, and baggage train stretched between 15 and 20 kilometers long. They were forced to travel around the Kalkrieser Berg (mountain) and through a narrow bottle-necked passage at most a kilometer wide. The area was marshy and wet, restricting movement and providing treacherous footing. It would have been just as impossible to turn the marching train around as it was to keep moving forward. Suddenly, the Roman army was ambushed by a coalition of Germanic tribes. Caught off guard, the Romans suffered between 15,000 - 20,000 casualties, with the high-ranking officers taking their own lives. Rome never used the legion numbers seventeen, eighteen, or nineteen again. General Varus, before falling on his own sword, realized he had trusted the wrong man.

⁹ For more information on the battle, see Harnecker, 19-21; Murdoch; Wells; and Wolters.

Arminius, originally a prince of the Germanic Cherusci tribe, had been sent as a child to Rome as tribute from his father. He spent his childhood in Rome, rising to the rank of Equestrian in the Roman army and learning the ways of the Roman military. Importantly, Varus trusted him and thought Arminius to be dedicated to the Roman cause.

As the seasons were changing, Varus ordered his troops to march to their winter camp, Xanten. Arminius suggested a detour, one that would enable Varus and the troops to quell a local uprising. Segestes, also of the Cherusci tribe, a loyal ally of the Romans, warned Varus to not trust Arminius. However, Varus allowed Arminius to go ahead of the Roman marching line, to supposedly rally together his Cheruscan tribesmen to support the Romans. While Arminius rallied together his tribesmen, it was not for the cause Varus was expecting.

Arminius knew the methods of the Roman army, and knew not to engage them in open battle. Instead, he waited until they were stuck, spread out in the bottleneck between the Kalkrieser Berg and the Great Bog, prepared with a coalition of Germanic tribes to ambush the Roman legions.

It is unclear what Arminius' intentions were, how long the battle lasted or over how much land the battle occurred. However, the consensus is an assault which lasted three to four days with battle debris having been found across a stretch of land almost 24 kilometers long. Much of the information we have today regarding the battle comes from four authors writing from the first through third centuries CE. Frustratingly, their accounts do not tell the whole story and leave many gaps, the most important gap being that none of the authors mention the exact location of the ambush. It is the

archaeological excavations and artifacts which have helped to fill the holes and helped pinpoint the location of the Battle of Teutoburg Forest. Archaeology fills a crucial role in completing the battle narrative of the Varusschlacht. Because of archaeology and the work of archaeologists on site, Kalkriese, Germany, the location of the Museum and Park Kalkriese, has been named the location of the Varusschlacht.

Archaeology and Education at Kalkriese

Archaeology is a process and a way of thinking, but it is often seen as too academic and closed-minded, sometimes turning away interested members of the public due to its jargon and inability to tell stories for the non-academic community. The Museum and Park Kalkriese is attempting to involve the community and the public in the archaeological process and way of thinking, inviting them to interact with archaeology and history. A visitor at Kalkriese has the opportunity to be personally involved in many ways.

In an article in 1998, Gilmore and Pine describe an experience as having four experience economy realms – education, entertainment, escapism, and aesthetics.¹⁰ I argue that the Museum and Park Kalkriese offers opportunities which can be categorized in all four of the Gilmore and Pine realms. A museum, in its traditional role, is a keeper of culture, a source of information, and a locale of research. How is Kalkriese more than this? In this thesis want to introduce my own category in addition to these four: archaeological investigation.

¹⁰ Gilmore and Pine.

Before I further discuss Kalkriese and the role of archaeology, I want to mention the research trip I took to the Museum and Park Kalkriese in January of 2017. I was awarded an Honors International Travel Grant through the University of Michigan's Honors Department which enabled me to travel to Osnabrück,

Germany for a week. My trip allowed me to

walk the battle field and park, view the museum on site, participate in private and public tours of the exhibits, interview

Kalkriese museum curators, and visit the artifact archive. In addition, I was able to

collect and read invaluable press releases, newspaper articles, archaeological

catalogues, and museum publications and pamphlets. This research expedition allowed

me to better understand the role that

archaeology plays in memory work at

Kalkriese. Traveling to the Museum and

Park Kalkriese was a vital part of writing this thesis.



Top: View of a portion of the battlefield and park
Bottom: The tour guide of the public tour I joined in on explains the history of the Varusschlacht
Photos taken by author

An important feature of Kalkriese is what Gilmore and Pink define as the aesthetic dimension of the museum goers' experience, i.e., the overall atmosphere and mood, acknowledging the museum's use of physical space, color, lighting, means of directing the visitor, and methods of simulating interest. The key here is the architecture of the buildings and the park's overall design: The museum building is made of glass and orange painted steel,

resulting in an open air, modern feel. As I will mention more in a following chapter, the architects worked with the archaeologists and curators at Kalkriese to create a structure that subordinates itself to the park and landscape surrounding it. The permanent exhibit has a clear path through the sections, beginning by describing the ways of life for Romans and the Germanic tribes in the first century CE and ending the tour on top of the 40-meter-tall tower.



The approach to the museum tower; Photo taken by author

The park below features the three pavilions of seeing, hearing, and asking, which stimulates the visitor's interest and has the "Roman Pathway" to guide them through the battlefield. However, the atmosphere and mood changes throughout the year. During the larger events, such as "Die Römer- und Germanentage" and the "Oster-Leuchten," thousands of people attend, thereby positively influencing the overall atmosphere and mood. In the winter months, the museum receives fewer visitors, resulting in a somber and quiet mood throughout the museum and park, as I experienced, while the summer months encourages families and groups to explore the park.

Returning to Gilmore and Pine's experience economy realms – education, entertainment, escapism, and aesthetics – various aspects of Kalkriese fulfill all four. There are elements of education, entertainment, escapism, and aesthetics in the many different activities and events at and facets of the Museum and Park Kalkriese. However, for the purpose of this thesis, the education realm is most important. In an article about museum studies, Radder and Han expand on Gilmore and Pine's work, defining the education realm as experiences which are

“opportunities for awareness and learning.”¹¹ The education realm encourages visitors to use an archaeologist’s way of thinking and working, emphasizing the need to excavate and uncover the past. The educational practices that I will study are: historical recreations, exhibits, guided tours, audio guides, archaeological digs arranged for visitors, lectures, and participation programs. These events allow the visitors to think about the process of uncovering the past, mimicking how archaeologists learn about the past.

Every two years, Kalkriese hosts “Die Römer- und Germanentage,” a weekend of a historical reenactments of the battle; the site also has a permanent exhibit year-round as well as a special temporary exhibit for a portion of the year, gives guided tours, and has audio guides for visitors to use. In 2017, Kalkriese will also allow visitors to participate in an archaeological dig (this, and the other educational practices I have mentioned, will be explained in more detail later in the thesis) and a new project will have its results published on a blog as well as a website database for the public to access. There are also frequent lectures on a myriad of topics as well as participation programs, where participants can make their own coins or jewelry, all of which are open to the public.¹² With the many educational events, opportunities, and activities at Kalkriese, no two people will have the same experience, which encourages them to return again and again to the museum and park. In addition, their return involves them in the archaeological experience.

Overall, Kalkriese is a site that is not solely a museum. It is an archaeological dig site which is accompanied by a museum. The nature of the site, with the emphasis on archaeology, allows for a much different experience at Kalkriese than at another museum. However, whatever

¹¹ Radder and Han, 457.

¹² “Osterferienprogramm »Eine Truhe Voll Denare«, 20.04.2017 | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land.”; “Sommerferienprogramm Kupferdraht 30.7.2015 | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land.”

experiences the visitor gains from the site and accompanying events, the visitor been allowed to participate in the archaeological process, way of thinking, and investigation, actions normally reserved for the archaeologists themselves.

Summary of Chapters

The Museum and Park Kalkriese is a site that emphasizes the archaeological process and way of thinking, while simultaneously turning visitors into archaeologists as they explore the museum and park. Kalkriese combines different realms of experiences into the site, museum, events, and activities and highlights archaeology as the central idea. In this thesis, I will show how important archaeology is to memory work and what role archaeology plays at Kalkriese.

Chapter one, “The Shape of Memory: Archaeology, Museum, and Exhibitions at Kalkriese,” comments on the connection between archaeology, the architecture of the Kalkriese museum, and the temporary and permanent exhibitions at the Museum and Park Kalkriese. The chapter chronicles the archaeological work that has been done at Kalkriese, explains how the site was discovered, analyzes the construction of the museum, and describes the permanent and temporary exhibitions displayed throughout the years. This brings us back to the role of archaeology, memory, and nation mentioned above.

Chapter two, “IMPERIUM, KONFLIKT, MYTHOS – 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht,” describes the various events and exhibitions which comprised the 2000-year anniversary celebration of the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest. Three museums in Germany – Kalkriese, Detmold, and Haltern, locations which had connections with the Varusschlacht – displayed exhibitions telling different parts of the battle narrative.

Chapter three, “Kalkriese and the Public,” inspects the reenactments occurring at Kalkriese as well as the Victoria, an archaeological experiment which was conducted in 2008. In addition, the site is evaluated from my perspective as an archaeologist and I bring in the public and community archaeology work Kalkriese conducts.

Overall, this thesis will analyze and show how important archaeology is to the memory work being done at the Museum and Park Kalkriese.

Chapter One: The Shape of Memory: Archaeology, Museum, and Exhibitions at Kalkriese

Introduction: Discoveries 1987 – 1988

“In 1998, German archaeologists made a shocking pronouncement: after ten years of research and excavations, the location of one of the most important events in Germany history – in many respects, the birthplace of the German nation – was no longer in doubt.” – Tony Clunn¹³

The location mentioned in Clunn’s quote was an agricultural parcel of land known as Kalkriese, near the modern-day city of Osnabrück in Lower Saxony, Germany. However, this was not the first time Kalkriese had been mentioned in the search for the Varusschlacht battlefield. After the rediscovery of the works of Tacitus in the 15th century, the search for the battlefield began, resulting in almost 700 theories regarding its location.¹⁴ One of which, published by Theodor Mommsen, a 19th century German scholar, claimed that Barenau – the old name for Kalkriese – was the true site.¹⁵ By analyzing the Roman coin collection belonging to the local von Bar family, Mommsen concludes, “Meines Erachtens gehören die in und bei Barenau gefundenen Münzen zu dem Nachlass der im Jahre 9 n. Chr. im Venner Moore zu Grunde gegangenen Armee des Varus.”¹⁶ However, as his theory was based solely on the gold and silver coins, whose origins were debated and were not the expected small change Roman soldiers would carry, and his theory featured no military evidence, the theory was disregarded by the scholarly community. Unfortunately, the von Bar family coin collection went missing during the Second World War and only a handful of new coins appeared at Kalkriese, resulting in

¹³ Clunn, 1.

¹⁴ Clunn, xx; Schlüter, “Die archäologischen Untersuchungen in der Kalkrieser-Niewedder Senke.”, 14-5.; for more on the influence of Tacitus’ works see: Lee and McLelland.

¹⁵ Clunn, xv-xvi.; Harnecker and Tolksdorf-Lienemann, 1.; Harnecker, Joachim. *Arminius, Varus and the Battlefield at Kalkriese: An Introduction to the Archaeological Investigations and Their Results.*, 31.; Schlüter, “Die archäologischen Untersuchungen in der Kalkrieser-Niewedder Senke.”, 17.

¹⁶ Mommsen, 46.

scholars forgetting about Mommsen's theory of Kalkriese as the location of the battle; at least until the end of the 20th century.

In 1987, archaeology at Kalkriese was picked up by Tony Clunn, a major in the British Army and amateur archaeologist. Attached to the Royal Tank Regiment in Osnabrück, Clunn found a hobby in archaeology. Curious about the story of the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest, and having read Mommsen's theory, Clunn approached Dr. Professor Wolfgang Schlüter, the then chief archaeologist of the Osnabrück region and member of the Department for Preservation of Archaeological Monuments (DPAM), asking if he could search for Roman artifacts in the area.¹⁷ With Schlüter's permission, Clunn and his metal detector quickly found 161 denarii from the time of the Roman Republic and Augustus, simply by meticulously walking across agricultural fields.¹⁸ These coins are the most valuable finds regarding the dating of the site. To date, all the coins found at Kalkriese date back to the late 1st century BCE and very early 1st century CE during the Roman Republic and the reign of Emperor Augustus. Some feature the profile of Emperor Augustus Caesar, with the stamps of Imperator – IMP – or Augustus – AVC – on them.¹⁹ The reverse of some coins depict images of Gaius and Lucius, the designated successors of Augustus; these coins were minted between 2 BCE and 1 CE. Other coins are stamped with Varus' mint mark – VAR – or with Gaius Numonius Vala's, a legate of Varus, stamp – C.VAL – both of which had to have been minted during the governorship of Varus in the years 7 – 9 CE.²⁰ And most importantly, currently none found were minted after 9 CE, the year of the battle.²¹

¹⁷ Clunn, xv.

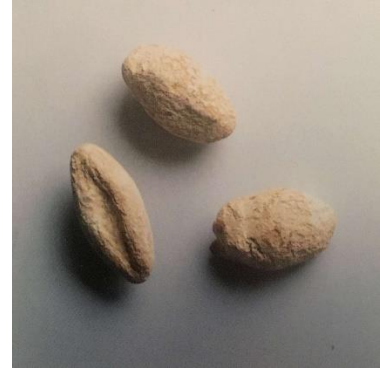
¹⁸ Clunn, 10-11.; Schlüter, "Die archäologischen Untersuchungen.", 19-20.; Wilbers-Rost. "Hinterhalt Zwischen Berg und Moor", 73.

¹⁹ Moosbauer and Wilbers-Rost, "Kalkriese und die Varusschlacht.", *2000 Jahre Varusschlacht: Konflikt.*, 62.

²⁰ Moosbauer and Wilbers-Rost, "Kalkriese und die Varusschlacht.", *2000 Jahre Varusschlacht: Konflikt.*, 62

²¹ "Finds and Findings | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land." For more on coins see: Berger's *Kalkriese 1* and Berger's chapter „Die Römischen Münzen von Kalkriese” in *Varusschlacht im Osnabrücker Land: Museum und Park Kalkriese*.

However, the coins alone could not determine if Kalkriese was the battlefield or not. It was not until Clunn found three Roman lead slingshots in 1988 that the archaeologists of the Osnabrück region took a real interest.²² The slingshots were the final proof that the Roman military was in the region in some form, whereas the coins could have belonged to the Germanic people and been acquired through trade.



The lead slingshots found by Clunn; length of the piece in the bottom left: 3.7 cm long; Photo from Wilbers-Rost, “Hinterhalt Zwischen Berg und Moor,” 73.

The Start of Archaeological Work

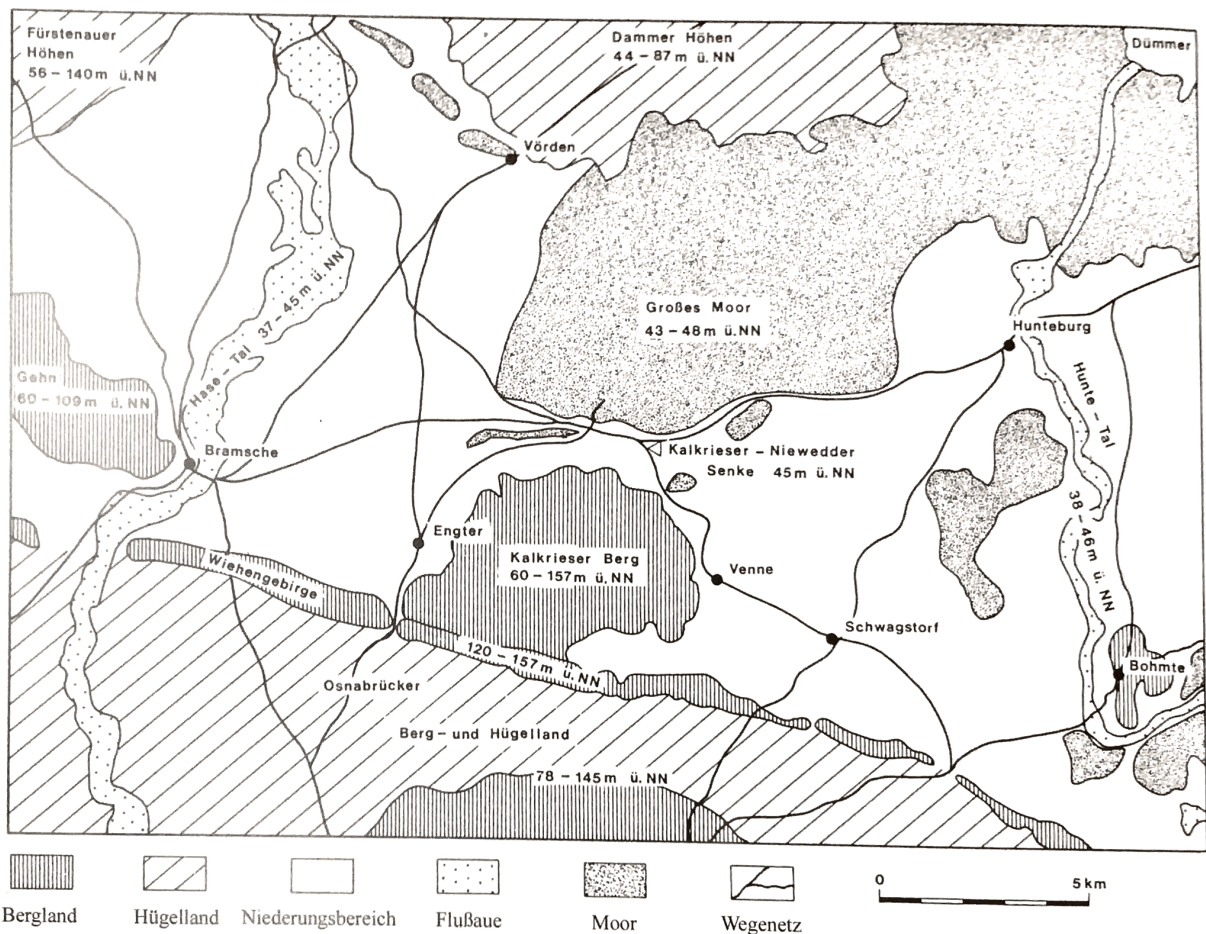
The first official steps were a systematic search of the Kalkriese-Niewedde Depression (also referred to as the Kalkriese-Niewedde Bowl), an area stretching 6 kilometers in a northwest – southeast direction between the Great Bog to the north and the Kalkriese Hill to the south (see figure on next page), led by the DPAM. Encouraged by the results, Schlüter, his work sponsored by the Landschaftsverband Osnabrück, led the excavation of exploratory slit trenches in the Oberesch field (the center of the battlefield) in 1989.²³ Despite the finds uncovered by these trenches, it was not until 1990 that the idea that a battle had occurred at Kalkriese was confirmed. Remains of a rampart, a 12 to 15-meter-wide and 30-centimeter-high discoloration in the ground was uncovered, which would originally have been 5 meters wide and 1.5-2 meters high.²⁴ Historically, this rampart is what the Germanic tribes hid behind, waiting to ambush the

²² Clunn, 26; Harnecker, 34.; Franzius, “Die römischen Funde aus Kalkriese.”, 129-31.; Wilbers-Rost. “Hinterhalt Zwischen Berg und Moor“, 73.

²³ Berger, VIII; Clunn, xvii; Clunn, 58.; Harnecker, 35.; Wilbers-Rost. “Hinterhalt Zwischen Berg und Moor“, 73.

²⁴ Harnecker, 71.

Romans as they marched through the 1 kilometer wide bottleneck of the valley, their line stretched out thinly across miles due to the intense winds and rains and the marshy and difficult to traverse terrain.²⁵ Upon excavating part of the rampart, a silver Roman cavalry mask and a pioneer axe were uncovered;²⁶ large, significant finds which continued to suggest Kalkriese playing a part in a battle narrative.



Geographical layout of the area; Photo from Harnecker and Tolksdorf-Lienemann, 4.

²⁵ Dio, Cassius. "Roman History." In *Arminius, Varus and the Battlefield at Kalkriese*. 18-23.

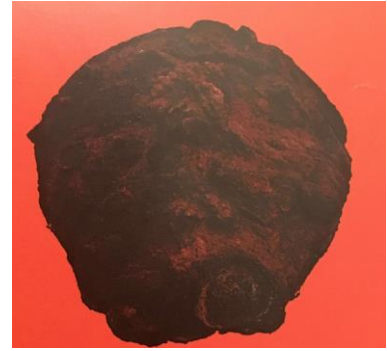
²⁶ Clunn, 71. Harnecker. *Arminius, Varus and the Battlefield at Kalkriese.*, 38.; Franzius, "Die römischen Funde aus Kalkriese.", 131-5.; Wilbers-Rost. "Hinterhalt Zwischen Berg und Moor", 73.

The Mask

The cavalry mask, a face mask which attached to a helmet and worn in battle and during parades by cavalrymen, is considered one of the most exceptional finds at the site. At the end of 1989, the team opened a 180-meter-long and 5-meter-wide trench in the Oberesch portion of the site, the seventh trench of the excavations.²⁷ It was here that the excavators found a large

lump of corroded iron,²⁸ displaying no distinguishing features. The lump was taken immediately to the restoration workshop at the Osnabrück Kulturgeschichtliches Museum, where painstaking work slowly uncovered the face underneath. The face mask was originally covered in a layer of silver, which someone had stripped during the post-battle plundering of the battlefield or time had worn away, except for a few remnants.²⁹

The mask is 17.1 centimeters tall, 16.2 centimeters wide at its widest point, and is approximately 8.6 centimeters deep.³⁰ It features a small, flat forehead, small eye-slits which are fashioned for the easy action of looking down, and a large nose with a strong nasal bridge and large nostril



The Mask before restoration;
Photo from Hanel and Willer,
119



The mask as catalogued in *Kalkriese 4*;
showing the front, side, and top views
and two fragments; Photo from
Harnecker and Franzius, Tafel 9

²⁷ Harnecker, 35-8.

²⁸ Hanel and Willer, 119.

²⁹ Harnecker and Franzius., 8.

³⁰ Hanel and Willer, 120.

openings.³¹ The upper lip, due to corrosion, was difficult to fully reconstruct, but the lower lip was not as damaged. Furthermore, the lips have only a small gap between them and the entire mouth has a downturned angle to it, while the jawline is narrow and the chin is not very prominent,³² giving the mask a distinct narrow look to it.

On the iron portion of the mask, there are three holes in the middle of the forehead above the nose, as well as two more holes on either side – one above each eyebrow and one in each top corner. A complete, functioning mask included a hinge plate stretched across the top of the mask on the front, with individual smaller plates on the back of the mask at each hole, which supported the rivet pins.³³ The hinge plate was connected to one central hinge, which enabled the mask to be fastened to the helmet and opened upwards to reveal the Roman cavalryman's face. To keep the mask in place and from swinging upwards, there are additional holes on either side of the chin.³⁴ In addition, the mask shows a few signs of repairs, one of which can be seen on the back of the mask, where a repair plate was riveted to the front of the mask,³⁵ as well as signs of stress, displaying scratches from battle, wear from being buried for almost 2000 years, and an area on the left forehead of the mask where the copper alloy perimeter has been pulled back, possibly indicating the intent of a plunderer trying to remove the silver layer.³⁶

³¹ Franzius, "Die römischen Funde aus Kalkriese.", 131-4.

³² Franzius, "Die römischen Funde aus Kalkriese.", 131-4.

³³ Hanel and Willer, 120.

³⁴ Hanel and Willer, 120; Formerly, these holes were for rivets used for the attachment of leather straps, with which the mask could be secured to both the helmet and the helmet's protective cheek flaps. The silver layer, 0.2 to 0.3 millimeters thick, was then bonded to the iron, hiding the fastening elements. Lastly, a two-piece U-shaped copper alloy perimeter, 0.45 centimeters thick, 1.5 centimeters wide, and each piece 24 centimeters long, was fastened to the edges of the silver surface through six additional holes and six 2-millimeter-thick rivets³⁴

³⁵ See Hanel and Willer, 121.

³⁶ Hanel and Willer, 121.

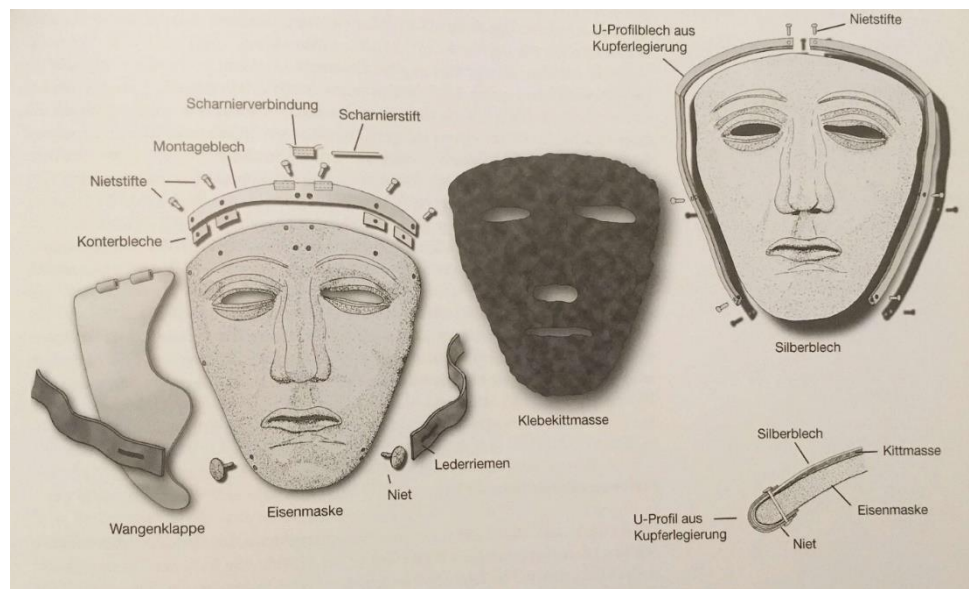
The mask was first excavated in the winter of 1989-1990 and attempts at restoration soon followed. Ten years later, the mask was reworked, reflecting advancements in computer tomography and radiography. This led to new discoveries regarding the surface of the mask and allowed for further restoration on areas which were still corroded or hidden under the restoration techniques used previously.³⁷



The mask during the first restoration; Photo from Hanel and Willer, 119.

The Kalkriese mask has since become an internationally renowned trademark of Kalkriese and the Osnabrück region³⁸ and, with its narrow facial features, has since become the eponymous mask for the Kalkriese type of masks.³⁹ According to the current state of research, the Kalkriese Mask is the oldest of its type, originally a part of a rider's helmet from the early

first century CE and would most likely have been used both in parades as part of the grandiosity of the event as well as for protection in battle.⁴⁰



Schematic construction of the mask; Photo from Hanel and Willer, 125.

³⁷ Hanel and Willer, 120.

³⁸ "Mission Statement | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land."

³⁹ Moosbauer und Wilbers-Rost, 59.

⁴⁰ Fanzius, 134.

First Displays and First Signs of Osteological Remains

The first display of finds from Kalkriese was arranged by Schlüter in 1990 and was presented at the Osnabrück Kulturgeschichtliches Museum, featuring a small selection of restored artifacts, including the cavalry mask and pioneer axe.⁴¹ Although a small display, onlookers flocked to the museum, curious about the research occurring at this previously unknown site in northern Germany.

Work continued at the site, and it was not until 1992 that significant skeletal finds were uncovered.⁴² A complete skeleton of a mule was found under a section of collapsed rampart. Utilized as a draft animal in the Roman army, the mule was still wearing parts of its metal harness and was surrounded with bits of the bridle, pieces of iron chain, and a bronze pendant.⁴³ Shortly after, another mule skeleton was found, this one with a bell, stuffed with organic material – perhaps to silence its ringing as the Roman army marched – around its neck.⁴⁴ The remains of mules continue to prove the presence of the Roman army in the area. In the ancient world, donkeys, one parent of mules, were native to the land around the Mediterranean.⁴⁵ The presence of mules in the northern European wilderness would have been unusual without the presence of the Roman army as well. The teeth of one of the mules were preserved well enough to allow an analysis of the enamel, proving that the animal had grazed on grass growing in a Mediterranean climate shortly before its death.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Clunn, 72-3.

⁴² Rost and Wilbers-Rost, “Fragmente eines römischen Zugtieres mit Resten der Anschirrung.”, 199.

⁴³ Wilbers-Rost. “Hinterhalt Zwischen Berg und Moor”, 81.

⁴⁴ “Finds and Findings | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land.”; “Natural Sciences | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land.”

⁴⁵ Harnecker, 78.

⁴⁶ Harnecker, 78.; “Natural Sciences | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land.”

The number of total finds soon increased, and in 1993, a traveling exhibition, “Kalkriese – Römer im Osnabrücker Land,” a collection of the finds from the first three years of excavations at Kalkriese, was created and toured Germany.⁴⁷ Alongside the traveling displays, a catalogue was published – *Kalkriese – Römer im Osnabrücker Land: Archäologische Forschungen zur Varusschlacht* – providing background information for the traveling displays, looking at the subjects from various viewpoints.⁴⁸ Schlüter wanted as many people as possible to see the artefacts and understand the results of the excavation project to 1993 and insisted on a traveling display with an accompanying catalogue, hoping to collect the funds needed to further the excavations.⁴⁹

Following this tour, and the collection of the desired funds, the next great archaeological discovery was a large pit, the first of many, containing skeletal remains of both human and animal origin in 1994.⁵⁰ There were not complete bodies; the bones were from many different men – between the ages of 25 and 45 and several had obvious battle cuts – and animals presumed to have traveled with the Roman military.⁵¹ With the bones laying haphazardly around, and not buried in a recognized order, archaeologists questioned if this was a pit that Germanicus and his men had dug in 15 or 16 CE when they returned to the battlefield.⁵² Kalkriese archaeologist Susan Wilbers-Rost writes that zoologists and anthropologists at Kalkriese believe the bones to have lain on the surface of the battlefield for anywhere from two to ten years before being

⁴⁷ Harnecker, 9.; For more on the Roman finds from Kalkriese during the first three years of excavation see: Franzius, “Die römischen Funde aus Kalkriese.”, 107-182.

⁴⁸ Harnecker, 9.; See: Schlüter et al.

⁴⁹ For more information, see Clunn, 153-5.

⁵⁰ Clunn, 325.; Harnecker. *Arminius, Varus and the Battlefield at Kalkriese.*, 77-78.; Wilbers-Rost. “Hinterhalt Zwischen Berg und Moor”, 81-82.

⁵¹ Harnecker, 78-9.; “Natural Sciences | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land.”; Wilbers-Rost. “Hinterhalt Zwischen Berg und Moor”, 82.

⁵² Wilbers-Rost. “Hinterhalt Zwischen Berg und Moor”, 82; See: Tacitus’ *Annals*.

buried.⁵³ In addition, only a few Roman finds and weapons were present in the mass grave, emphasizing the idea of the Germanic tribes plundering the battlefield following the battle.⁵⁴ Over the years, seven more of these mixed bone mass graves have been found, some containing battle-wounded human skulls, further confirming Kalkriese as a battlefield.⁵⁵

First Publications and a New Museum

In 1996, the first official site publication, entitled *Kalkriese I*, a collection and analysis of all the coins found at Kalkriese, from the coins belonging to the von Bar family to the ones found until the middle of 1995, was published.⁵⁶ The text, written by Frank Berger, a numismatist at the Kestner-Museum Hannover from 1985 until 1997 and an expert on Roman and early coinage, presents lists of, photos of the obverse and reverse of, and interpretations of a few hundred coins.⁵⁷ Since coins were the first artifacts which pointed to Kalkriese, it is logical that the first publication focused solely on the coins.

After ten years of official work, a plan to build a museum and archaeological park, dedicated solely to the Roman finds at Kalkriese, were developed in 1997.⁵⁸ The goals and future for the Kalkriese Project were reviewed – a location was needed to ensure the proper storage and study of the thousands of finds from the site.⁵⁹ To find this location, the land on which the museum was to be built needed to be surveyed. While examining this land, more stretches of the

⁵³ Wilbers-Rost. “Hinterhalt Zwischen Berg und Moor”, 82.

⁵⁴ Crossland.; “Finds and Findings | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land.”; Wilbers-Rost. “Hinterhalt Zwischen Berg und Moor“, 82.

⁵⁵ Clunn, 330.; Crossland.; Wilbers-Rost. “Hinterhalt Zwischen Berg und Moor”, 82.

⁵⁶ Berger, *Kalkriese*.

⁵⁷ See: Berger.

⁵⁸ Clunn, 152-157; Clunn, 330.

⁵⁹ Clunn, 330.

rampart, as well as another mule skeleton, were discovered.⁶⁰ Once the land survey was completed, the construction of the “Museum and Park Kalkriese” began in 1999, creating a tourist attraction and research institution for the Osnabrück region. The museum was completed just one year later, thanks to the sponsorship of the Stiftung der Sparkassen im Landkreis Osnabrück, the Niedersächsische Sparkassenstiftung, and the Landkreis Osnabrück. The museum then officially opened on April 21, 2002.⁶¹

The museum has a unique form. I will argue that this museum transforms the goals of the archaeologists and curators at Kalkriese, as well as the nature of the site, into an architectural style. The architecture of the museum has been nominated for and won many prizes and awards. Designed by Swiss Architects Anette Gigon and Mike Guyer with landscape architects Rainer Zulauf, Lukas Schweingruber, and André Seippel,⁶² the building is often described as a structure that



subordinates itself to the park and landscape surrounding it. It is a simple, modern-

Above: The Museum; Photo from “Architecture | Museum | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land.”

Right: A section of the “Roman Path”, looking back at the pavilion of seeing and the museum tower; Photo by author



⁶⁰ “Excavations in Kalkriese | Archaeology | The Varus Battle | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land.”

⁶¹ “The sponsors – with commitment and foresight | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land.”

⁶² Derks, *Museum Pamphlet*, 7.

looking, russet colored steel building with a 40-meter-tall tower offering a view of the battlefield.⁶³ The steel, designed to give the idea of rusting metal, is a reference to the archaeology and the archaeological finds on site – when metal finds are excavated, they are corroded and rusted.⁶⁴ The main portion of the building, the non-tower section, is built up on stilts, not dug into the ground. While the land on which the museum was to be built was excavated and surveyed, the symbolism of not digging major foundations down into the earth, is not lost on the viewer. Surrounding the building and leading out across the park is the “Roman Path”, a haphazard looking pathway made of steel sheets which have rusted due to exposure. The path symbolizes the route scholars believe the Romans took from the east through the bottleneck between the Kalkriese Hill and the Great Moor.

The park also features three pavilions: one of seeing, one of hearing, and one of asking. Built in the same style as the museum – russet colored, box-like, and modern – each invites the visitor inside to engage with the battlefield as it exists today; to look across the grassy field, to listen to the sounds of the German countryside, and to ask questions. The architects’ idea was simple and straightforward – a modernist museum whose architecture emphasized “Interpretation statt pseudohistorischer Rekonstruktion.“ That is, they would not create a replica of a Roman

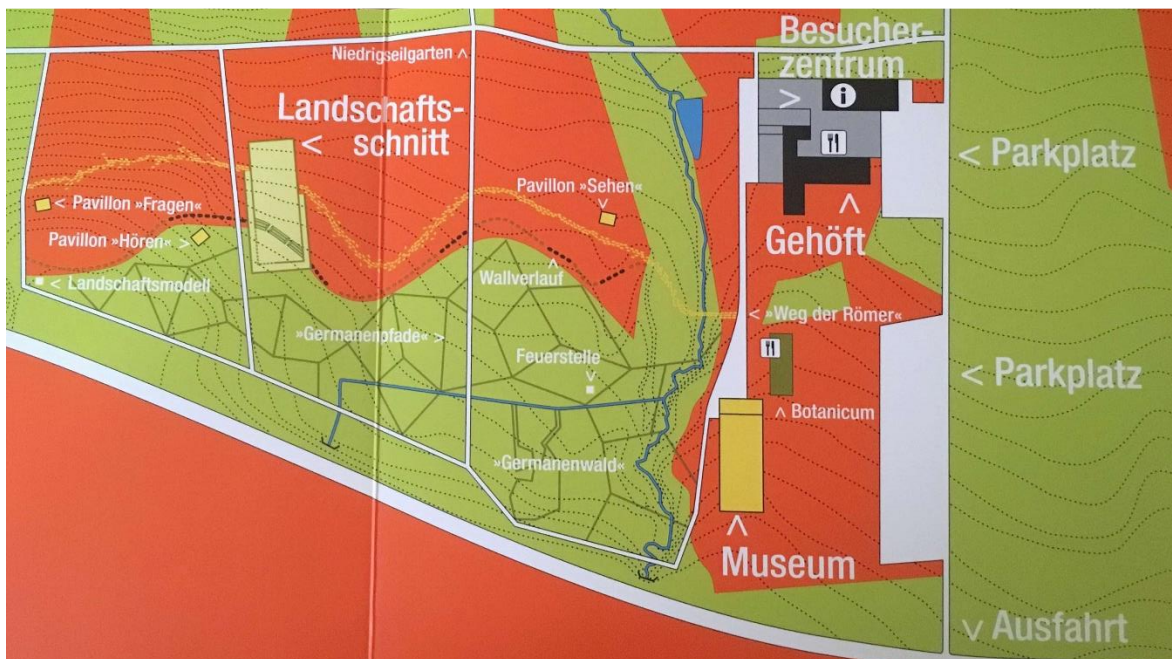


From left to right: Pavilions of seeing, hearing, and asking; Photos taken by author

⁶³ “Architecture | Museum | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land.”

⁶⁴ Derks, *Museum Pamphlet*, 7.

style, monumental building. With this stylistic choice, the architects wanted to achieve “abstraction”, and not “representation” or an “empathetic” relationship to the Roman and Germanic past.⁶⁵ Pseudo-historic reconstruction in any form, for example a reconstruction of the battlefield or the architecture of a large, monumental museum building, would have interfered with their overall approach instead of allowing for personal interpretation. They did not want to impose ideas on the visitors, such as how the battle happened, what the battlefield looked like, and how the battle should be remembered.



Map and layout of the Museum and Park Kalkriese; Photo from Derks, back cover.

There is, however, a section of the park which features a reconstructed rampart. At first glance, the park looks vast and empty, with only the three above mentioned russet pavilions to fill portions of the landscape and a forest, the *Germanenwald*, to the south. However, upon closer inspection, a russet colored fence in the middle of the field, enclosing a small section of

⁶⁵ Derks, 7

land catches the viewer's eye. Here, at the so-called *Landschaftsschnitt*, the ground has been taken down to the level it would have been at during the early first century CE. At one end is a section of plant growth, an area which becomes swampy during times of rain, creating a small moor lake supposed to imitate the ones common to the region during the time of Arminius and Varus.⁶⁶ The other end features a reconstructed rampart made of sand, dirt, strips of sod and woven branches and twigs for camouflage, using results from archaeological and soil science work for the construction and dimensions of the rampart. The reconstructed section is not large, only two dozen or so meters long and a couple meters thick, with a wooden arch in the center. The rampart is not overwhelming, just large enough to give an idea of a small section of the defense system constructed by the Germanic tribes and how it would have blended into the forest behind.

In sum, the designers sought to create open spaces, both inside and outside, which did



Top: View of the park from the tower. The enclosed portion on the left side is the “Landschaftsschnitt.” Middle: Looking over the fence surrounding the “Landschaftsschnitt” at the reconstructed rampart. Bottom: View of the reconstructed rampart from the trees where the Germanic tribes would have been. All photos taken by author.

⁶⁶ For more see: Guyer and Gigon. “Museum und Park Kalkries: Architektur und Landschaftsarkitektur.”

not seek to reduce the distance between the event and the present and did not try to be authentic, rather hoping to construct places to allow for the formation of ideas, thoughts, and reflections about the battle, culture, and history.⁶⁷ They sought to leave a gap between the past and the present, leaving the past in an incomplete and fragmentary state, not imposing any ideas on the visitor.

What I have been discussing here, raises a question: how do these architects relate to the work of the archaeologists at Kalkriese? Archaeologists are specialists in detective work, uncovering the past, excavating history, analyzing the presented material, and hypothesizing how the pieces fit together in the past. The architects at Kalkriese translated these activities of excavating, uncovering, tracing, and hypothesizing into a new architectural style; a style which resulted in the Museum and Park Kalkriese.

The First Permanent Exhibit: Mr. Stahnke

The first permanent exhibition, which ran from April 2002 through 2009, allowed the visitor to conduct a “search for evidence” alongside the fictitious investigator Mr. Stahnke. The search focused on the discovery of Kalkriese as the location of the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest battlefield and followed a “criminalistics search for clues and a scientific process based on circumstantial evidence.”⁶⁸ Mr. Stahnke directed the visitor by asking questions, commenting and speculating about aspects of the museum, and encouraging the visitors to actively participate in the investigations. The first stop of the tour was in the library, introducing the idea that too

⁶⁷ Derks, *Museum Pamphlet*, 7.

⁶⁸ “Exhibitions in Retrospect | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land.”

many clues are worse than none, especially when considering the 700 battlefield location theories. But Mr. Stahnke insisted that one more new idea would not be terrible and proceeded to tell an anecdote of him as Clunn finding the site and beginning to excavate. He comments that the skulls, bones, and fragmentary other material provide vital archaeological evidence. They also prove that the battle took place by the Kalkriese Hill 2000 years prior.⁶⁹

With the first question of what really happened at Kalkriese answered, Mr. Stahnke moves on to a second question: “How was Arminius remembered? A hero? Traitor? Emancipator?” The visitor was then shown a short film, Claus Peymann’s production of *Die Hermannsschlacht* by Heinrich von Kleist, which only served to present interesting and contentious answers. *Die Hermannsschlacht* is a drama consisting of five acts, written in 1808 after the Prussian defeat by the French Napoleon I.⁷⁰ It is speculated that Kleist wrote the play as a call for the Prussians to resist the advancements of the French, equating the Prussians with the Germanic tribes and the French with the Romans. And by naming the play *Die Hermannsschlacht*, Kleist made the battle site into a location representing the birthplace of the German nation. Following the film, Mr. Stahnke continued to lead the visitor through the exhibit’s 600 square meters, displaying more than 3,000 archaeological artifacts.⁷¹

In 2005, this exhibit won the European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage in the archaeological sites category. The award honored the museum’s successful merging of science, architecture, landscape, exhibition concept and an engaging, accessible presentation into an

⁶⁹ “Exhibitions in Retrospect | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land.”

⁷⁰ For more information see: Kleist, *The Battle of Herrmann: A Drama*.

⁷¹ “Exhibitions in Retrospect | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land.”

exciting and thought provoking display. The Europa Nostra Laudatio complemented the exhibit, praising it,

“for the didactic and innovative interpretation of an antique battlefield which decisively influenced the course of European history, and for the preservation and decoding of its minute traces via interdisciplinary scientific research.”⁷²

The first permanent museum exhibit presented a lot of exciting material for the visitor to explore and discover. The visitor was able to investigate the material and artifacts on site at the Kalkriese battlefield rather than at a traveling exhibition. This new permanent exhibit and museum allowed visitors to view the landscape first-hand and, with the help of Mr. Stahnke, conduct detective work to arrive at their own conclusions. Instead of telling the visitors to the exhibit that they will see “the birthplace of the German nation,” Stahnke makes the visitors aware of the work of the archaeologists at Kalkriese, and ultimately, of the uncertainty regarding the course of the ancient battle.

The Visitor Center and Special Exhibitions

After the opening of the museum, special exhibits, on display for short periods of time, were presented next to the permanent exhibitions. These displays allowed the museum to tell stories and present artifacts from locations and periods of history other than 9 CE at Kalkriese. They also enabled the museum to tell other stories from Kalkriese that would not have fit well with what was presented in the permanent displays. From 2002 to 2007, these special exhibits

⁷² “Exhibitions in Retrospect | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land.”

were shown in the park, in the lounge, and in the tower, and were often tight for space. As a solution, the visitor center was constructed in 2009, and the upper floor was designated as the presentation space for future special exhibitions, beginning with “KONFLIKT” in 2009.⁷³



The Visitor Center; Photo from “The Visitor Centre | Park | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land.”

Called “Ein passender Raum für jeden Anlass,”⁷⁴ the visitor center was built in the same modern, simple style as the museum building. The long rectangular building is faced with bricks of the same russet color as the museum instead of steel, offering spaces for seminars, conferences, celebrations, and special exhibitions of various sizes within, allowing for up to 400 visitors in the spaces. The ground floor is a large foyer, featuring the museum shop, the ticket counter and a room named after Tony Clunn which is suitable for events and lectures. This foyer can also easily be created into a large reception space for galas. The upper floor, measuring 500 square meters, can be split up into five different rooms, depending on the size of the special exhibitions and the events going on, allowing for great flexibility as to the events which can take place here.⁷⁵

⁷³ “Exhibitions in Retrospect | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land.”

⁷⁴ “Tagungs- Und Besucherzentrum | Tagen | Offer | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land.”

⁷⁵ Derks, 3.; “Tagungs- Und Besucherzentrum | Tagen | Offer | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land.”

Let me now take you through the special exhibitions. Of the twelve special exhibits created from 2003 – 2017, two focused on historians, two on Rome, three on Kalkriese and the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest, four on deep history, and one on archaeological research.

The first special exhibit shown in the visitor center occurred in 2003 and focused on the life of historian Theodor Mommsen, the original proponent of Kalkriese as the battlefield location. Remembering the 100th anniversary of his death, the display examined the renowned historian's accomplishments and achievements, including the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1902. The museum presented the information in an unusual fashion, on ten desks for the visitors to explore.⁷⁶

The second exhibit explored the field of archaeology: fifteen years of archaeological research at Kalkriese was celebrated with a special exhibition in 2005. The exhibition was spread out throughout three floors of the museum's tower and across the park. In the tower, eleven points of interest explained an overview of research results, the most important discoveries and artifacts, and the story of the development of the museum and park. In the park, there were seventeen locals of interest which investigated the question of "what is archaeology?" They explored the history of archaeological research, explaining how archaeological methods have evolved and improved, and which techniques are in use at Kalkriese.⁷⁷

Another writer and historian, Cornelius Tacitus (55–120 CE), was the focus of the next display. From April 23, 2007 through the end of October 2008, the museum presented a special exhibit called "Ink, Texts, Tacitus." This display highlighted the ancient literary sources and

⁷⁶ "Exhibitions in Retrospect | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land."

⁷⁷ "Exhibitions in Retrospect | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land."

authors, particularly Tacitus, that described and documented the battle. The exhibit also covered the cultural history of writing and of books.⁷⁸

In 2009, after seven years, the museum curated a new permanent exhibition. The time of searching for clues and gathering evidence, at least in the museum, was over. Research had been conducted at Kalkriese for 20 years, it was time to present the newest research results on the Varusschlacht.⁷⁹ This exhibit focused on evaluating and reconstructing the artifacts and research done, displaying both new finds as well as original artifacts. Many different questions are analyzed in this exhibit, such as:

“What were the Romans looking for in Germania? What adversaries did they encounter? Why did it come to the Battle? And what would Varus and Arminius have said to each other, if they had met once again after the Battle?...What does the Varus Battle have to say to us still nowadays?”⁸⁰

Still on display in 2017, the museum seeks to answer these questions, and more, in this permanent exhibition.

Accompanying the new permanent exhibition was the special exhibit “KONFLIKT” which was on display from May 15, 2009 – January 10, 2010 as a part of the 2000-year anniversary celebrations; I will describe the 2000-year anniversary celebrations in more detail in the next chapter. This was the first special exhibit presented in the new visitor’s center and the larger space allowed for a better, more in depth display than the previous special exhibits.⁸¹

⁷⁸ “Varusschlacht im Osnabrücker Land - Museum und Park Kalkriese: Permanent Exhibition”

⁷⁹ “Varusschlacht im Osnabrücker Land - Museum und Park Kalkriese: Permanent Exhibition”

⁸⁰ “Varusschlacht im Osnabrücker Land - Museum und Park Kalkriese: Permanent Exhibition”

⁸¹ “Varusschlacht im Osnabrücker Land - Museum und Park Kalkriese: Permanent Exhibition”

The Battle of the Teutoburg Forest again played a central role in the next special temporary exhibit. On display from March 7 through July 11, 2010 and entitled “Marcus Caelius – Death in the Varus Battle,” the exhibit highlighted Marcus Caelius, the senior centurion of the 18th Legion which was defeated in the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest. His cenotaph is the only proven archaeological evidence of a testimony to a victim of the battle. Found near Xanten, Germany in 1620, the partially preserved inscription reads:

“To Marcus Caelius, son of Titus, of the Lemonian voting tribe, from Bologna, (first) centurion of the eighteenth legion; 53½ years old. He fell in the War of Varus. The bones (of his freedmen) may be interred here. Publius Caelius, son of Titus, of the Lemonian voting tribe, his brother, erected (this monument).”⁸²

However, his bones were not found, leaving his story still a mystery.⁸³ The tombstone can now be found in the Rheinisches Landesmuseum in Bonn.

The next special exhibit, called “Heaven on Earth – the Secret of the Nebra Sky Disk,” broke away from the Kalkriese theme, instead focusing on events from before the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest. This traveling exhibit, on display from November 20, 2010 until April 10, 2011, was organized by Saxony-Anhalt’s Office for the Preservation of Historical Monuments and the State Museum for Ancient History in Halle, and presented the world view of people who walked the earth almost 4,000 years ago. The centerpiece was the Nebra Sky Disk. The bronze disk, covered in blue-green patina and inlaid with gold symbols depicting either a sun or a full moon, a lunar crescent, and round stars, is the oldest concrete depiction of the cosmos worldwide, and one of the most important and unique finds of the 20th century. In total, the

⁸² Schalles et al., 9.

⁸³ For more information see Schalles et al.

traveling exhibition featured sixteen points of interest, which conveyed the religious beliefs, customs, arts and crafts, and trade relations of the people who lived around 1600 BCE.⁸⁴

Half a year later, on September 17, 2011, the special exhibit “Stone Age Massacre: Crime Site Talheim” opened and ran through January 8, 2012, exploring a time-period much different than the one in which the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest occurred. Under the theme of ‘examining together,’ the exhibit presented a story line of a Mr. S. from Talheim, who discovered 34 human skeletons in his garden in 1983, and called in a coalition of archaeologists, anthropologists, and coroners to investigate. The museum visitor was taken 7,000 years into the past and shown the latest research results from the Talheim crime site as well as what the day to day life of someone in the Neolithic Period would have been, in order to answer the most important question: what had happened at Talheim?⁸⁵

The next special exhibition, “Gladiators – Death and Triumph at the Colosseum,” returned to Roman history in the first century CE. This was the first special exhibit that focused on Rome rather than the Germanic frontier. The exhibit was short, beginning on June 8, 2013 and only running through October 13, 2013, but highlighted the typical life of a gladiator and explained the fighting culture encouraged by the Colosseum in Rome. The visitor was taken back to sometime between 70 and 80 CE, when the Colosseum was erected and the first staging of gladiator fights occurred there. The guest learned who the gladiators were, who they fought against, what rules they had to follow, and what weapons were allowed, as well what influence the Colosseum held during the time of the Roman Empire as well as its long-lasting effects until

⁸⁴ “A Heaven on Earth – The Secrete of the Nebra Sky Disk Exhibitions in Retrospect | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land.”

⁸⁵ “Stone Age Massace. Crime Site Talheim | Exhibitions in Retrospect | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land.

today. One of the highlights of the temporary exhibit was a gladiator's helmet and leg guard. Fewer than ten gladiatorial helmets worldwide have been found, and Kalkriese was fortunate enough to host such a display.⁸⁶

In 2014, the special exhibit took the visitor to the land of Ancient Egypt. From May 10 to October 5, in "Mummies – Journey to Immortality," Kalkriese displayed 80 original expositions from the Egyptian Museum in Florence, Italy, and introduced the viewer to the Ancient Egyptian concept of the afterlife. The exhibit explored what has been learned about everyday life, religious values, and burials in Ancient Egypt from the magnificent tombs and pyramids, with special emphasis on the processes of embalming and mummification.⁸⁷

The next special exhibit focused once again on Germany. Entitled "I Germanicus! General – Priest – Superstar," Kalkriese dedicated the display to Germanicus, the commander-in-chief, after Varus, of the troops on the frontier, sent to handle the problem with the Germanic tribes and to successfully conquer Germania. From June 20 through November 1, 2015, the exhibit followed Germanicus' revenge campaign, highlighting the personality and family connections of the next Emperor of Rome. Featuring loans from the Louvre and the British Museum as well as finds from Kalkriese itself, the artifacts presented the only known archaeological evidence of Germanicus' field trains. The exhibit was accompanied by a program of lectures and a scientific symposium, where archaeologists from Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and the Netherlands discussed problems and strategies for future research.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ "Gladiators – Death and Triumph at the Colosseum | Exhibitions in Retrospect | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land."

⁸⁷ "Mummies – Journey into Immortality | Exhibitions in Retrospect | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land."

⁸⁸ "I Germanicus! General – Priest – Superstar | Exhibitions in Retrospect | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land."

“Gefahr auf See – Piraten in der Antike”⁸⁹, the next special exhibit, looked at how ancient pirates dominated the Mediterranean region from 2000 BCE until the pirate wars led by Gnaeus Pompey Magnus, a Roman, around 70 BCE. From April 23 through October 3, 2016, 130 artifacts from collections from Florence, Naples, Turin, Sicilian cities, and other Italian cities were on display in Kalkriese. Included in these artifacts was a battering ram of an ancient pirate ship. The exhibit examined many famous figures: King Minos, the Minoans on Crete, and their enormous sea power in the second millennium BCE; Odysseus, the hero – or pirate? – of Homer’s *Odyssey*; the Greek god Dionysus who was abducted by Etruscan pirates; and the Corinthian Baron Arion of Lesbos, a singer and poet abducted by pirates after competing in a singing competition in Sicily. Lastly, the exhibit focused on how Gnaeus Pompey Magnus stopped the pirates ravaging the Mediterranean Sea, enabling the Romans to finally call the Mediterranean *mare nostrum* or ‘our sea.’

The most recent special exhibit began on November 11, 2016 and finished on January 15, 2017. The exhibit, called “Neues Gold aus Kalkriese”, shows the history of eight gold coins which had been found in the summer of 2016, telling the history of coins and their worth 2000 years ago, how and why they ended up at Kalkriese, and what the discovery of the coins means for research today.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Lüddemann.

⁹⁰ “Ausstellung Neues Gold aus Kalkriese | Museum | Varusschlacht im Osnabrücker Land”

Archaeological Work After 2002

While much of the Kalkriese Team's focus in 2002 had been on the construction and opening of the "Museum and Park Kalkriese" and the creation of the first permanent exhibition, archaeological work was still underway. More of the pits with mixed skeletal remains were found in 2003 and 2004, beneath which were more Roman preserved artifacts, including two gold and one silver coins.⁹¹ 2004, 2007 and 2008 saw the publication of the archaeological reports *Kalkriese 2*, *Kalkriese 3*, and *Kalkriese 4* respectively.⁹² *Kalkriese 2* covers the explorations into initial archaeological and soil science work in the Kalkriese-Niewedde Depression, describing methods used, the geological area of the work and its history, listing finds, and offering analysis and explanations. The third edition is a report about the first 15 years of archaeological work conducted at Kalkriese and catalogues the archaeological findings, mass graves, human remains, and further work with soil study. The fourth lists Roman finds from the graves at the Oberesch section of the site collected between 1989 – 1994 and in 1999, in the trenches numbered 1 – 22, and ends with 45 plates with illustrations at a 2:3 scale.

The soil conditions at Kalkriese have always been important when considering archaeology at the site. Hundreds of years of Plaggen agriculture – a method of fertilizing the fields with manure saturated sod pieces – had created an approximately 1-meter-thick layer of soil in the Kalkriese region since the Middle Ages.⁹³ These layers of sod had helped to preserve

⁹¹ "Excavations in Kalkriese | Archaeology | The Varus Battle | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land."

⁹² Harnecker, Joachim, and Georgia Franzius. *Kalkriese 4: Katalog der römischen Funde vom Oberesch*. Mainz am Rhein: Von Zabern, 2008. Print.; Harnecker, Joachim, and Eva Tolksdorf-Lienemann. *Kalkriese 2: Sondierungen in der Kalkrieser-Niewedder Senke: Archäologie und Bodenkunde*. Mainz am Rhein: Von Zabern, 2004. Print.; Wilbers-Rost, Susanne. *Kalkriese 3: interdisziplinäre Untersuchungen auf dem Oberesch in Kalkriese: archäologische Befunde und naturwissenschaftliche Begleituntersuchungen*. Mainz am Rhein: P. von Zabern, 2007. Print.

⁹³ "Natural Sciences | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land."

the historical layers of soil below, largely preventing the artifacts from being disturbed by more modern, larger agricultural machines which plow the soil. Based off soil surveys and core samples, soil scientists at the University of Oldenburg have been able to partially reconstruct what the Oberesch section of the site looked like in the early first century CE.⁹⁴ However, due to the sandy soil, botanical remains are rare at Kalkriese, making the discovery of the mule bell with organic material stored inside a valuable find.

Current soil science work, conducted by scientists from the University of Osnabrück, is focusing on investigating the impact of soil erosion on the Kalkriese Hill and how this soil can be distinguished from the soil used in Plaggen agriculture. Other work, using magnetic scans, allows researchers to detect pits, ditches, wall fragments, and other irregularities in the soil below the surface to identify possible structures or burial sites.⁹⁵ While this work is useful, the soil in the Oberesch region makes interpreting magnetic scans difficult, meaning that excavations are needed to formulate more accurate ideas of what happened in 9 CE.⁹⁶

The next major event in the archaeological timeline was in 2009: the “2000 Jahre Varusschlacht” celebration, which I focus on in chapter two. Following the public events, two new excavation sections were dug and research was continued. In addition, *Kalkriese 5* and *Kalkriese 6* were published and a new permanent exhibition at the museum, which is no longer about archaeological searches and discoveries, but about evaluations and explanations, was created.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ “Natural Sciences | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land.”

⁹⁵ “Natural Sciences | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land.”

⁹⁶ For more on soil science conducted at Kalkriese, see: Harnecker and Tolksdorf-Lienemann. *Kalkriese 2*; Wilbers-Rost, *Kalkriese 3*.

⁹⁷ Harnecker, Joachim and Dorothea Mylo. *Kalkriese 5: Die römischen Funde vom Oberesch die Schnitte 23 bis 39; auf der Grundlage der Vorarbeiten von Dorothea Mylo*. Darmstadt; Mainz: von Zabern, 2011. Print.;

Kalkriese 5, published in 2011, continued the work from *Kalkriese 4*, presenting finds from the Oberesch section of the site from trenches 23 – 39, which were excavated from 1994 – 2004. The spectrum of objects excavated and catalogued offered a representative picture of what the Roman troops in Kalkriese carried with them as they marched. The finds are presented with references to *Kalkriese 3*, and when used together, the two catalogues can examine the finds and findings in their archaeological contexts.⁹⁸ *Kalkriese 6*, published in 2012, attempts to evaluate the site Kalkriese-Oberesch as an ancient battleground based on existing finds and findings and methodological points of view. The catalogue is not just a presentation of finds and findings from the Oberesch portion of the site from 2005 – 2009, but seeks to critically evaluate them by referring to the five previous publications.⁹⁹

During this time, a new extensive archaeological project – “Conflict Landscape” – explored the Germanic settlement structures which existed in the first century BCE before the battle, hoping to add new perspectives to the Kalkriese battlefield investigations.¹⁰⁰ Between 2011 and 2013, researchers, funded by the German Research Foundation, examined the location and density of Germanic settlements, the agricultural land that was farmed, and routes used for movement which the Romans had to rely on as they moved into Germania. These settlements had first been discovered in the 1990s during Kalkriese excavations, bringing into debate if the Roman artifacts also found there were collected and reworked spoils of war. The examinations, conducted in the Venne Forest, near the Dröge farm, and on the edge of the moor, resulted in

“Museum | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land.”; Rost, Achim, and Susanne Wilbers-Rost. *Kalkriese 6: die Verteilung der Kleinfunde auf dem Oberesch in Kalkriese: Kartierung und Interpretation der römischen Militaria unter Einbeziehung der Befunde*. 2012. Print.

⁹⁸ Harnecker and Mylo, *Kalkriese 5*, Vorwort.

⁹⁹ Rost and Wilbers-Rost. *Kalkriese 6*, Vorwort.

¹⁰⁰ “The Conflict Landscape | Archaeology | Varus Battle | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land.”

new insights into the shape of Germanic longhouses in this period and styles of local ceramics, and concluded that no Germanic settlement existed at Kalkriese in 9 CE.¹⁰¹ Researchers also concluded that the Roman army most likely used the trails, which the Germanic tribes had constructed to connect settlements and agricultural fields, to travel through the region before the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest. This project resulted in many new important findings, but there is still more work to be done.

Conclusion: Archaeology, Museum, and Exhibitions at Kalkriese

On the museum website “Varusschlacht im Osnabrücker Land: Museum und Park Kalkriese”, the archaeologists at Kalkriese write that

“in spite of more than 25 years of investigations, we are only still at the beginning of the Kalkriese research project – a project that for the first time in modern archaeology gives us the opportunity to examine an antique battlefield with the latest research methods.”¹⁰²

The Museum and Park Kalkriese is an important tourist attraction for the Osnabrück region. More importantly, it is a research institution for efforts excavating ancient battlefields, developing new archaeological techniques, and uncovering the history of what happened in 9 CE during the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest. The discovery of the site was an interesting one, stretching back to the 1800s with Theodor Mommsen, and resurfacing in the late 1980s thanks to a British army officer with an interest in archaeology and Roman history. To date, more than 1000 Roman coins and more than 5000 Roman military artifacts have been found¹⁰³, but more still exists to be discovered

¹⁰¹ “The Conflict Landscape | Archaeology | Varus Battle | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land.”

¹⁰² “The Conflict Landscape | Archaeology | Varus Battle | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land.”

¹⁰³ Wilbers-Rost. “Hinterhalt Zwischen Berg und Moor”, 73.

in the soil at Kalkriese, and the archaeologists are prepared and eager to conduct this work.

There is a connection between the archaeology, the museum architecture, and the many exhibitions at the Museum and Park Kalkriese. The detective work of the first stages of archaeology influences the architecture of the museum as well as the layout of the exhibits. Throughout this chapter I aimed to highlight the importance of archaeology for memory and it shapes the style of the museum and the exhibits at Kalkriese. Without archaeologists, there would be no memory culture at Kalkriese.

Chapter Two: IMPERIUM, KONFLIKT, MYTHOS – 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht

Critical Overview of the Museum and Park Kalkriese

Throughout this thesis, I will discuss how the Museum and Park Kalkriese has been attempting a self-reflexive endeavor and has been critical of its own work. Archaeologists and historians are not fully certain as to what happened at Kalkriese, and the curators, archaeologists, and architects attempted to portray that in the presentation of artifacts, arrangement of exhibits, construction of the museum buildings, and layout of the park. But how successful are they in achieving their goal?

First off, I will discuss the architecture of the museum buildings. The main museum building is often described as a structure that subordinates itself to the park and landscape surrounding it. It is a simple, modern-looking, russet colored steel building with a 40-meter tall tower offering a view of the battlefield. The steel, designed to give the idea of rusting metal, is a reference to the archaeology and the archaeological finds on site – when metal finds are excavated, they are corroded and rusted. However, with its orange hue and 40-meter tall tower, this building in no way subordinates itself to the landscape, instead, it dominates the scene. Upon arrival to the site, this orange, steel construction is the first object that catches your eye.

But while it is large and orange, the modern construction of the building is very important. The museum building was not designed to be a monumental Roman type structure, rather it was created as a frame to house artifacts, present exhibits, and tell the story of Kalkriese. If the design had been monumental and Roman inspired, it would have been out of place in a location meant to critically and analytically think about the past. In addition, it would have

dominated and greatly influenced the opinions of the visitors as they attempted to draw their own conclusions.

One can easily see the reasoning behind the design and construction of the main museum building, as well as the visitor center which was built using the same ideas and goals. The buildings were not to be overly imposing on the experience of the visitor, and while the buildings are imposing due to their size and orange color, they are not imposing as a revered recreation of a Roman style monument.

Second is the layout of the park. The park is mainly open, allowing the visitor to freely wander around the grassy plain, and if they so choose, to follow the “Roman Path.” The border of the central battlefield is lined with trees, suggesting how the Germanic tribes could have hid and ambushed the marching Roman legionnaires. The trees also aid in separating the battlefield from the modern world. To get from the museum to the field, the visitor must follow the “Roman Path” through a small grove of trees, or find a dirt path which crosses through the “Germanenwald.” Either way, the visitor passes through rows of trees, which cancel out noises from the nearby roads and separates the individual physically from the museum buildings.

There are four constructions on the field: the three pavilions and the “Landschaftsschnitt.” The three pavilions are constructed in the same modern, orange steel as the museum buildings. Due to their smaller size, they are less imposing than the 40-meter-tall museum tower structure. However, their existence reminds the visitor that they are still in the present and have their own conclusions about the past to make. Being named “seeing,” “hearing,” and “asking,” the guest is prompted on how to view the field upon entering each pavilion.

The pavilions are simply constructed. The pavilion of seeing is dark, the only light shining into the cube comes from a large prism, which offers a view onto the field. The field you see through the prism is the one that exists today. There are no recreated images of the battle presented to the visitor, encouraging them to utilize what they have learned walking through the exhibits to create their own idea of how the battlefield would have looked 2000 years ago.

The pavilion of hearing is topped with a large ‘ear trumpet,’ which helps amplify sounds for the listener. However, the listener today does not hear sounds of battle or marching soldiers. The ‘ear trumpet’ can be turned and directed towards different parts of the park, but the only sounds that one can hear today are those of birds, the trees, other visitors on the field, and possibly traffic on the nearby roads. Again, the visitor must utilize their own understanding of the battle to think about what sounds they could have heard here 2000 years ago.

Lastly, is the pavilion of asking. Unfortunately, it was closed during my visit to Kalkriese in January of 2017 for repairs, so I was unable to tour it. However, the pavilion is supposed to be one which encourages the guest to question the reasons for war and why war seems to always be omnipresent and again encourages the visitor to create their own conclusions about the Varusschlacht and war in general.

The three pavilions are constructed in the same style as the museum, and while they stand out on the landscape, they are not monumental or imposing. They enable the guest to think about what the battlefield could have looked and sounded like during the conflict and do not force any ideas upon the viewer. And they aid in making the empty field more interactive, turning an unfilled space into one which inspires thought and contemplation about the past.

The last construction in the park is the “Landschaftsschnitt.” Here, the ground has been taken down to the level it would have been at during the early first century CE. At one end is a

section of plant growth, an area which becomes swampy during times of rain, creating a small moor lake. The other end features a reconstructed rampart made of sand, dirt, strips of sod and woven branches and twigs for camouflage. The reconstructed rampart is not large, only two dozen or so meters long and a couple meters thick, with a wooden arch in the center. The rampart is not overwhelming, just large enough to give an idea of a small section of the defense system constructed by the Germanic tribes and how it would have blended into the forest behind.

The “Landschaftsschnitt” helps to show the difference in soil levels as well as environments between today and 9 CE. This is the one place on the battlefield which contains an element of reconstruction, but the rampart is recreated only partially and using information the archaeologists and soil scientists have excavated and researched. The partial reconstruction of the rampart helps the visitor to create their own ideas about the battle. Without it, the visitor would be lost while exploring the now empty field. The dozen meters of rampart allow the visitor to piece together a picture for themselves regarding the layout of the space in 9 CE. But most importantly, it is only a partial reconstruction, not a feature dominating the scene and interfering with the visitor thinking for themselves.

Overall, the structures on the battlefield do not seek to reduce the distance between the event and the present and do not try to be authentic. Instead, the four constructions hope to create spaces to allow for the formation of ideas, thoughts, and reflections about the battle, culture, and history. They seek to leave a gap between the past and the present, leaving the past in an incomplete and fragmentary state, not imposing any ideas on the visitor.

Third is the visitor center and temporary exhibition space. When I visited the Museum and Park Kalkriese in January of 2017, the museum was finishing its special exhibit “Neues Gold aus Kalkriese.” In the summer of 2016, archaeologists excavated eight gold coins from the time

of Augustus. They were minted around the turn of the first century in Lyon. The obverse side shows the head of Emperor Augustus, with the imperial princes Gaius and Lucius Caesar on the reverse. Between the two Caesars are shields as well as lances and religious implements. These coins, a lucky find archaeologists say, further point to the theory that Kalkriese is the Varusschlacht battlefield location. This is because of two factors, the mint date of the coins and the belief that, because of the wealth of these coins and how close each coin was located in the soil to the others, a high-ranking official in the Roman army would have been carrying these coins.

The exhibition itself was small, taking up only one out of the three possible sections of the upper floor of the visitor center. The exhibit walked visitors through the excavation process of the eight coins, discussed other coin finds at the site to show how important these coin finds were, and in the center displayed the eight coins in an arrangement where a visitor could walk around and see both sides of each coin. There was also a digital memory matching game, where visitors could try to match images of the coins with their other halves as well as a large puzzle with ten or so pieces which when completed formed one of the coins. There was also a section that discussed salary and how money worked in the Roman Empire (i.e. how many sestertius’



Left: Director of the Museum Dr. Heidrun Derks, District Administrator Dr. Michael Lübbersmann and Managing Director Dr. Joseph Rottmann discuss the display of the gold coins.

Right: What money could buy you in the Roman Empire

Photos from: Team Pressestelle. "Ausstellung „Neues Gold Aus Kalkriese“ ab 12. November 2016.

equaled a denarius, how many denarii equaled an aureus and how much a soldier would have been paid) and a display of how much items and goods would have cost in the Roman Empire.

This special exhibition was created and displayed within five months of excavating the coins, recognizing and distinguishing the skill and speed of the archaeologists, conservationists, and curators at Kalkriese to put an exhibit together so quickly. Unfortunately, the display was only up for two months, as the museum normally does not feature a special exhibition in the winter due to the lower attendance rates, preferring instead to showcase their special exhibits in the spring through fall. It was a small exhibit, only filling the one room, as the focus point was the eight small coins. Unlike the construction of the museum building and the pavilions, there was less emphasis here on letting the visitor come to their own conclusions.

The exhibit told the visitor how the coins were found, what the symbols stamped onto the obverse and reverse of the coins mean, and what the importance of them being gold aurei coins is. The coins were an extraordinary find, providing valuable dating information for the battlefield at Kalkriese, but they were presented in such a way that it is difficult for the visitor to take away any other ideas than the ones the museum wants them to. The only question the exhibit indirectly asked was if the coin finds influenced if the visitor thought Kalkriese was the location of the Varusschlacht. But it is difficult to come away with any other idea than yes. While the coins are analyzed for various factors, there is little evidence in the exhibit for any counterarguments suggesting they do not mean this is the battlefield location.

Fourth is the permanent exhibition in the museum, which has been on display since 2009. The exhibit begins by walking through a short hallway with lenticular printed images lining the walls. The images initially appear to be a group of Roman legionaries marching on the right and a forest scene on the left. But as the viewer advances through the hallway, Germanic tribesmen

seem to pop out from behind trees, appearing and disappearing based on the viewer's angle. And at the end of the hallway is an enlarged replica of the famous Kalkriese cavalry mask, welcoming the visitor to the exhibition.

The exhibit is divided into six sections, "Römer und Germanen," "Arminius und Varus," "Das Rätsel," "Fundplatz Kalkriese," "die Indizien," and the museum tower. Portions of the exhibit are interactive, encouraging the visitor to open drawers to further explore, and there are models showing how the two different societies worked, what their villages and military forts looked like, and how the individuals dressed. One of the most interesting features, the Kugelmodell, is in the "Fundplatz Kalkriese"



The Kugelmodell; Photo by author

section. What appears to be a simple long white box becomes a model for imaging how the Roman legions could have been trapped in the bottleneck of the valley with a push of a button. With marbles representing the Roman legionnaires, a few hundred are released at once. They are forced into a bottleneck, where obstacles and holes claim the marbles, leaving only a handful of silver marbles to survive.

Throughout the exhibit, facts on the artifacts and coins found on site and in the neighboring area are investigated, locations and categories of finds are plotted on a map of the site, and the sciences behind the soil studies concentrating on the rampart and the anthropology conducted per the osteological remains are presented. This is supposed to be a place for presenting all the evidence so that the viewer is able form possible answers to the many mysteries and questions the battlefield presents.

Nowhere in the permanent exhibit does it say, ‘this is the definitive location of the Varusschlacht,’ leaving it slightly open for interpretation. The exhibit presents the research the archaeologists are working with and explains what the research can possibly mean. In a way, this is like “Die Römer- und Germanentage” (a weekend of historical reenactments which will be covered in chapter three): a presentation of options, artifacts, research, and possibilities that is then narrated by the accompanying text panels. However, what is of note is that these text panels do not actually state any questions – they merely relay information for the visitor. This self-reflexive endeavor is interesting for the visitor, but from the viewpoint of an archaeologist, it has its limitations.

This critical overview of the Museum and Park Kalkriese analyzes Kalkriese as it was in early 2017. The site has been evolving and growing since the museum first opened in 2002. However, 2009 was a special year for the Museum and Park Kalkriese, as it was both the 2000-year anniversary of the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest and the 20-year anniversary of official archaeological work conducted on site. To honor the events, the Museum and Park helped to organize a special exhibition project for the year 2009. The project, entitled “IMPERIUM, KONFLIKT, MYTHOS – 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht,”¹⁰⁴ was spread out across three locations in Germany: Kalkriese, Haltern, and Detmold. This decision to include the three sites was to highlight different aspects of the events and main characters at three sites important to the Varusschlacht story as well as relations between the Germanic tribes and the Roman Empire.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Westfälisches Römermuseum Haltern. et al.

¹⁰⁵ Website Imperium Konflikt Mythos - 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht – Ausstellungsprojekt.

IMPERIUM, KONFLIKT, MYTHOS – 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht

“Wie konnte es aber zu diesem Desaster für das Imperium auf dem Höhepunkt seiner Macht kommen? Wer war der Cheruskerfürst Arminius, der den gestandenen Feldherren Varus auf so hinterhältige Weise verraten hatte? Wie konnte ein junger Germane, Offizier in römischen Diensten, eine Supermacht in die Knie zwingen? Und wie wurde er zu einem deutschen Nationalhelden? Und schließlich: Welche weltpolitischen Folgen hatte die Niederlage für die Geschichte Europas und Deutschlands? Genau 2000 Jahre nach der auch als die **Schlacht im Teutoburger Wald** bekannten Niederlage der Römer, werden in einem imposanten Ausstellungsprojekt der breiten Öffentlichkeit Antworten auf diese Fragen gegeben.”¹⁰⁶

As mentioned above, 2009 was a special year for the Museum and Park Kalkriese. It was both the 2000-year anniversary of the Varusschlacht and the 20-year anniversary of official archaeological work conducted at Kalkriese. Furthermore, the event partnered with two other German museums, expanding the project from one that just impacted Kalkriese, to a project involving more of Germany. The project later expanded into a European one.

The patrons of the joint 12 million Euro “IMPERIUM, KONFLIKT, MYTHOS – 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht” project were Dr. Angela Merkel, the Federal Chancellor of Germany since 2005, Professor Dr. Hans-Gert Pöttering, the President of the European Parliament January 2007 – July 2009, and Dr. Jürgen Rüttgers and Christian Wulff, the Prime Ministers of North Rhine-Westphalia from 2005 - 2010 and Lower Saxony from 2003 – 2010 respectively.¹⁰⁷ While the patronage of all these individuals was important, it was that of Dr. Pöttering which transformed the project from one involving only Germany, to a European project. After becoming a patron of the exhibits, Dr. Pöttering wrote in the exhibitions catalogue that, "das Projekt lenkt die

¹⁰⁶ Website Imperium Konflikt Mythos - 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht – Ausstellungsprojekt.

¹⁰⁷ Abkamp and LWL-Römermuseum, 2.; Tafertshofer, 1.; Website Imperium Konflikt Mythos - 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht – Ausstellungsprojekt.

Aufmerksamkeit eines breiten Publikums auf die Varusschlacht – ein nicht nur herausragendes deutsches, sondern europäisches kulturgeschichtliches Ereignis.”¹⁰⁸ Moreover, he was promoting the importance of this project as early as 2007, saying in a press release, “I should like to expressly support [this] project, which will direct the attention of the public at large to an outstanding European cultural-historical event and significantly contribute to historical, cultural, and political education.”¹⁰⁹ Dr. Wolfgang Kirsch, Director of the LWL-Römermuseum, further emphasized “the European dimension of the project.”¹¹⁰ Dr. Pöttering’s interest in “IMPERIUM, KONFLIKT, MYTHOS – 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht” gave the project the support it needed to better document the European aspect of the project. The results of the Varusschlacht, these patrons emphasized, impacted not only the Germanic tribes and the future of Germany, but was a turning point in European history as well. The 2009 anniversary events thus created the memory of the past event for a European present.



Promotional poster for the three exhibits; Photo from “2000 Jahre Varusschlacht: Gesamtmotiv Plakat.”

¹⁰⁸ Aßkamp and LWL-Römermuseum, 13.

¹⁰⁹ Press Release: 2000 Years Varus Battle, 1.

¹¹⁰ Press Release: 2000 Years Varus Battle, 1.

IMPERIUM

Intriguingly, the first exhibition of the 2000-year anniversary focused on the Roman Empire itself. The temporary “IMPERIUM” exhibition at Haltern am See at the Seestadthalle und LWL-Römermuseum dealt with the Roman General Varus and his background and examined the Roman Empire itself, which was at the height of its power and culture in the first century CE.¹¹¹ Haltern was chosen because it was once the Roman administrative and military center east of the Rhine river for the planned Germania province and the region where the 19th legion was stationed.¹¹² From May 16 – October 11, 2009, the exhibition at Haltern was fortunate to display more than 300 pieces from international museums such as the Louvre, the British Museum, and the Vatican.¹¹³ The pieces were arranged into sections illustrating the art, culture, military strength, and propaganda of the Roman Empire during the time of Emperor Augustus.¹¹⁴ The exhibit also focused on the life of Publius Quinctilius Varus, the fateful general of the three Roman legions which perished in the battle, following his life from his birth, through his many military and political feats, up to the battle. In addition, the display highlighted the life of Roman soldiers who served the Roman Empire.¹¹⁵ In sum, busts of Roman men and women, drinking vessels with images of mythology and sport, fragments of inscriptions, statues featuring figures of war and victory, a myriad of coins, weapons, examples of white and colorful marble used for construction, fragments of frescoes, and

¹¹¹ Aßkamp and LWL-Römermuseum.; Tafertshofer et al., 2.

¹¹² Website Imperium Konflikt Mythos - 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht – Ausstellungsorte.

¹¹³ Aßkamp and LWL-Römermuseum, 217-400.; Tafertshofer et al., 2.

¹¹⁴ Aßkamp and LWL-Römermuseum.; Website Imperium Konflikt Mythos - 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht – Ausstellungsprojekt – Imperium.

¹¹⁵ Aßkamp and LWL-Römermuseum.; Website Imperium Konflikt Mythos - 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht – Ausstellungsprojekt – Imperium.

much more,¹¹⁶ filled the space. They helped the viewer explore questions such as: How did Rome develop from a village on seven hills into a world power in the “Golden Age”? How did this gigantic empire function? What was life like for a Roman legionary at Haltern? And who really was General Varus?¹¹⁷

IMPERIUM – Guided Tours

To help open the exhibit at the Seestadthalle und LWL-Römermuseum in Haltern up to the public, nine different guided tours for all age levels were offered.¹¹⁸ In “Licht und Schatten über Rom,” school children were given a tour of Roman history, and could decide for themselves whether the gods, the emperor, or the military generals were the cause for the times of light and darkness in the Roman Empire. Another tour directed at school children, “Legionäre verschwunden,” focused on a search for eight missing Roman Legionaries who should have been marching with the three Legions to the Varusschlacht. Other tours, “Erfolgreicher Feldherr gesucht!” and “Varus, eine Bilderbuchkarriere,” allowed school children as well as adults to investigate the military generals, Varus and others, who oversaw the Roman missions around the Empire and the Mediterranean. “Schnellkurs IMPERIUM” looked at Augustus’ political life as Emperor, “Für eine Handvoll Denare” explored the lives the Roman legionaries and how they spent their money, as they were to bear the expense for food, clothing, and weapons themselves, and “Stippvisite Außenposten” demonstrated how the Roman legionaries at

¹¹⁶ Aßkamp and LWL-Römermuseum, 217-400.

¹¹⁷ Tafertshofer et al., 2-5.

¹¹⁸ Website Imperium Konflikt Mythos - 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht – Führungen – Imperium.

Haltern received supplies and promoted Roman rule. Lastly, there were two tours for adults. In “Julia, Enkelin des Augustus,” Julia, having been exiled from Rome in 8 CE, described the real character of her power-hungry grandfather and in “Fenestela, Veteran der 19. Legion,” a veteran reminisces on his 25 years of service in the Roman army and his time fighting under General Varus. At the end of the tours directed at children, the students had to opportunity to make sundials, make standards, stamp the initials of a commander onto 2-cent coins, or mint a coin featuring a portrait of Augustus. In addition to the visual and aural aspects of the guided tours, physical construction acts and souvenirs added to the experience.¹¹⁹

IMPERIUM - Varus und seine Zeit Colloquium

As a precursor to the “IMPERIUM” exhibit, on the 28th and 29th of April 2008, the LWL-Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte in Münster hosted a scientific colloquium, “IMPERIUM: Varus und seine Zeit.”¹²⁰ Organized by the LWL-Römermuseum in Haltern am See with the Seminar für Alte Geschichte and the Institut für Klassische und Frühchristliche Archäologie and the Archäologisches Museum of the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster, the aim of the symposium was to unite the many different facets of Classical Studies to explore the current research being conducted into the Augustan Era of the Roman Empire. The overall goal of the event was to highlight the cultural and historical context of the world General

¹¹⁹ Website Imperium Konflikt Mythos - 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht – Führungen – Imperium.

¹²⁰ Website Imperium Konflikt Mythos - 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht – Ausstellungsprojekt – Imperium.

Varus was living in.¹²¹ The lectures focused on topics such as Augustan wall painting, the criminal liability of Arminius according to the Roman Law, Augustan architecture, Publius Quinctilius Varus, Augustan military camps, and the occupation of Germania as explored through numismatic evidence and connected the topics of the “IMPERIUM” exhibit with current research being conducted into the Augustan age of Rome.

MYTHOS

The city of Detmold is near the Hermannsdenkmal – a 53-meter-tall monument depicting Arminius (a name Germanized to Hermann) – which has dominated the landscape on the Grotenburg, a wooded hill, since 1875. Here was the “MYTHOS” exhibition.¹²² Detmold was once widely considered to be the location of the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest and even today, some scholars still believe Detmold, rather than Kalkriese, to be the actual battle site. In addition, the forest near Detmold was even renamed to *Teutoburger Wald* in the 17th century,¹²³ designating the region as an important piece in the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest narrative. The “MYTHOS” exhibition, which ran from May 16 - October 26, 2009 at the Lippisches Landesmuseum Detmold, presented the various myths around Arminius/Hermann, the Germanic peoples, and the story of the Varusschlacht from ancient times to today, and featured around 900

¹²¹ All the lectures were published in the series “Veröffentlichungen der Altertumskommission für Westfalen” of the Landschaftsverband Westfalen-Lippe in 2009 - Website Imperium Konflikt Mythos - 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht – Ausstellungsprojekt – Imperium.

¹²² Tafertshofer et al., 10.; Website Imperium Konflikt Mythos - 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht – Ausstellungsprojekt – Mythos.; Website Imperium Konflikt Mythos - 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht – Ausstellungsorte.

¹²³ Lee and McLelland, 342.

pieces from international museums.¹²⁴ The overarching theme revolved around the effects the Varusschlacht and Arminius/Hermann had on European and German history, asking questions such as: What do we know from the Romans about the Germanic tribes and how did they really live? Were they in truth the barbarians the Romans depicted them as? And how and why have artists, poets, musicians, historians, and archaeologists been concerned with this event for centuries?

Arminius had two influential “lives”; the first in the first century CE when he united the Germanic tribes to ambush the Romans, halting the Roman push across the Rhine river. The “MYTHOS” exhibit focused on what I will call the second “life” of Arminius. However, I also want to briefly emphasize the first life of Arminius in antiquity. Following the event in 9 CE, the memory of Arminius was kept alive through Roman and Greek written records. The Romans and Greeks were very good at keeping written records of historical events, although the records were not entirely accurate and were often filled with propaganda.¹²⁵ First, there were three brief mentions of the battle. The Roman poet Ovid references Arminius in his poem “Sorrrows” composed in 10 CE, around the same time, Marcus Manilius briefly describes the suddenness and treachery of the battle in his poem “Astronomica,” and in 18 CE, Strabo, a Greek geographer, discusses general Quinctilius Varus being destroyed by the formerly trusted Cherusci in his *Geographica*.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Tafertshofer et al., 10; Treude and Lippisches Landesmuseum Detmold.; Website Imperium Konflikt Mythos - 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht – Ausstellungsprojekt – Mythos.

¹²⁵ Wells, 16.

¹²⁶ Wells, 37-38.

However, it is four different authors who describe the battle narrative in their histories, which provide most of the textual evidence for the battle, which scholars have analyzed throughout the search for the battlefield. The first was Velleius Paterculus (19 BCE – 31 CE) in his *Compendium of Roman History*, which covered the period from the end of the Trojan War to the death of Livia in 29 CE.¹²⁷ Of the four Roman authors, only Velleius Paterculus was a contemporary of the events, and it is said that he may have known General Varus personally. The second author is Publius Cornelius Tacitus (55 – 120 CE). In his text, *Annals*, a history of the Roman Empire from the reign of Tiberius (14 CE) to the reign of Nero (68 CE), Tacitus briefly describes the battle, focusing mainly on the return of Germanicus to the battlefield six years after the battle to bury the bones of the three Roman legions.¹²⁸ Tacitus is the author who described the area of the battle as *saltus Teutoburgensis*,¹²⁹ which is generally agreed upon to mean the Teutoburg Forest, though there is still debate on the exact meaning of *saltus*.¹³⁰ The third author is Lucius Annaeus Florus (74 – 130 CE), who wrote *Epitome of Roman History*.¹³¹ His account is mainly a restatement of the important points argued by Paterculus, but the description of how the Germanic tribes attacked and whether the Romans were marching or in a temporary camp, differs from other accounts.¹³² Cassius Dio (155 – 235 CE), a Greek, is the fourth, with his *Roman History*, which consisted of 80 volumes on the history of Ancient Rome from the arrival of Aeneas in Italy until 229 CE.¹³³ Living from

¹²⁷ Paterculus, II: CXVII – CXX.; Wells, 38-39.

¹²⁸ Tacitus, I: LIX – LXII.; Wells, 42 – 43.

¹²⁹ Tacitus, I: LX.; Wells, 33.

¹³⁰ Oppitz.; Wiegels and Woesler.; Wolters, 162-164.

¹³¹ Florus, 2: 30.; Wells, 41 – 42.

¹³² Florus, 2: 30.; Wells, 42.

¹³³ Wells, 39 – 41.

the mid-second – early third century CE, Dio was the furthest removed from the actual event. However, his text provides a description of circumstances prefacing the battle as well as the most detailed account of the actions.¹³⁴ While each source is important, all four record the battle differently, sometimes with the accounts even contradicting each other, making it difficult to be certain through the ancient texts what really happened during the battle, how long it lasted, and where it took place. However, in the Middle Ages, the four sources were lost, leading to the Varusschlacht and Arminius being forgotten, thus ending his first “life”. It was not until the 15th century that the ancient histories surrounding the battle, the first of which being Tacitus’ *Annals*, were rediscovered. It was after the rediscovery of Tacitus’ *Annals* that Arminius’ second “life” began.

The Romans themselves thus kept the memory of Arminius alive. As Karl Galinsky mentions, the Romans had their memory practices, practices which created a community memory culture. Galinsky discusses memory, forgetting, and cultural memory in his introduction to *Memoria Romana*, emphasizing “memory studies are a dynamic and lively work in progress, continuously acquiring new layers and, in fact, arguing about its own definitions.”¹³⁵ Another important and relevant point he makes is that “in order...to remember anything, one has to forget: but what is forgotten need not necessarily be lost forever.”¹³⁶ The ancient histories surrounding the battle were lost until the 15th century, when Tacitus’ *Annals* was rediscovered.¹³⁷ Since then, the forgotten battle has been brought back to life and through the

¹³⁴ Wells, 39.

¹³⁵ Galinsky, 3.

¹³⁶ Galinsky, 3.

¹³⁷ Lee, and McLelland, xxviii.

archaeological work at Kalkriese, remembered and historicized and has been constantly acquiring new layers.

The “MYTHOS” exhibit focused on Arminius’ second “life”, which featured him in artwork, literature – mainly plays and poems – and monuments, such as the Hermannsdenkmal.¹³⁸ During this time, he was Germanized. That is, he was given his German name of Hermann, was utilized as an identification figure during the Napoleonic wars to inspire the Germanic people to defeat the French, the 19th century version of the Romans who were trying to conquer their Germanic land, and was adapted again by the Nazis leading up the second World War as propaganda for racial purity. The “MYTHOS” exhibit displays the 500 years of this second “life” Arminius has lived, showing his emergence from the Cherusian prince who had turned on the Romans to his transformation into a Germanized figure often used for propaganda.¹³⁹ The pieces on display were “Träger von Geschichte(n) und Botschaften, die erforscht, geordnet und kontextualisiert werden wollen.”¹⁴⁰ In his opening remarks to the section describing the pieces in the exhibition, Ulrich Hermanns writes that

“heute würde sich kaum noch jemand an die Varusschlacht und den siegreichen Cheruskerfürsten Arminius Hermann erinnern, wäre das historische Ereignis nicht zu einem Mythos und Arminius nicht zu einer der wichtigsten Leit- und Symbolfiguren der Deutschen geworden.”¹⁴¹

If Arminius had not been forgotten and re-remembered, as Galinsky argues “in order...to remember anything, one has to forget”, and never transformed into a myth and used

¹³⁸ Website Imperium Konflikt Mythos - 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht – Ausstellungsprojekt – Mythos.

¹³⁹ Website Imperium Konflikt Mythos - 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht – Ausstellungsprojekt – Mythos.

¹⁴⁰ Hermanns, 274.

¹⁴¹ Hermanns, 275.

throughout the past 500 years as propaganda and a figure in art, literature, and music, it is possible that no one would remember the Varusschlacht or Arminius.

The “MYTHOS” exhibit displayed many paintings featuring Arminius, Varus, and the battle, copies of ancient texts, a bust of a Roman sometimes assumed to be Arminius, and images of Arminius as portrayed in opera and theater, as a hero during the Napoleonic wars, by the Hermannsdenkmal, and as propaganda by the Nazis. The exhibit also highlighted the fact that “der Mythos lebt weiter...” and that images of and references to Arminius can still be seen today. One such example is the DSC Arminia Bielefeld German soccer club.

MYTHOS- Guided Tours

As in Haltern, the Lippisches Landesmuseum Detmold offered nine guided tours.¹⁴² Four of the tours, aimed at school children, also offered hands-on, physical interaction and involvement. “Dem Mythos auf der Spur” looked at what the Roman authors wrote about the Germanic tribes, allowing the students to “track own myth with spade, brush, and bucket, and as “archaeologists,” carry out their own excavations to determine the truth about the tribes. In “Komm, wir lassen Mythen platzen!,” school children encountered various myths and ended their tour with a balloon competition, in “Welch ein Barbarenleben?!,” visitors learned about the Germanic tribes, the “barbarians to the north,” and were able to play dress up in Germanic tribal attire, and in “Biete Sockel, suche Helden!,” guests discussed the different heroic images Arminius had been

¹⁴² Website Imperium Konflikt Mythos - 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht – Führungen – Mythos.

turned into, ending with a portion where the students could erect a monument in honor of their own personal heroes.

The other five guided tours were aimed towards older students as well as adults. The myths and quotations propagated by the Romans concerning the Germanic tribes are again compared with the archaeological record in “Die Germanen: Mythos und Wahrheit.” How Thusnelda, Arminius’ wife, because known as “Tussi” was explored in “Tussirecherche,” and the second “life” of Arminius is presented in the tours “Arminius: Ein Mythos macht Geschichte” and “Mit Hermann in der Unterwelt und Thusnelda im siebten Himmel.” Lastly, the story of the Varusschlacht is investigated from its origins to modern times in “2000 Jahre Mythos Varusschlacht.” These guided tours allowed visitors of all ages to interact with and question the presented material and the exhibit.¹⁴³

KONFLIKT

The third exhibit, “KONFLIKT,” took place in the newly constructed visitor's center at the Museum and Park Kalkriese, the battlefield where scholars believe three Roman legions were defeated by a coalition of Germanic tribes. This exhibit questioned "why war?" and spotlighted the causes and consequences of military conflicts in the Germanic world from a Germanic perspective. Highlighting the first through fifth centuries CE, the exhibit focused mainly on the period of time after 16 CE when Rome’s expansion policy east of the Rhine had ended.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ Website Imperium Konflikt Mythos - 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht – Führungen – Mythos.

¹⁴⁴ Tafertshofer et al., 6.; Website Imperium Konflikt Mythos - 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht – Ausstellungsprojekt – Konflikt.

The exhibit which took place from May 15, 2009 – January 10, 2010¹⁴⁵ was divided into three case studies, called “conflict zones.”¹⁴⁶ The first zone highlighted the Marcomannic Wars, a series of conflicts emphasizing the problems the Roman empire faced against its neighbors and enemies. Of note in the zone was the King’s Grave of Musov, now a location in the Czech Republic, whose grave goods and form of burial illustrate how the Germanic elite were able to combine their way of life with a Roman one. The extent of the often violent and intense inner-Germanic tribal conflicts from the second through fifth centuries CE were demonstrated in the second zone, featuring more than 500 items from Illerup in Denmark, which were preserved after the winners of a battle deposited the belongings of the defeated enemy in a bog.¹⁴⁷ The third zone, “Storm,” presented the Alamannic Treasure of Neupotz, a treasure with more than 1000 pieces. This zone demonstrated the extent of Germanic plundering into Roman territory, and concluded by describing how constant attacks by the Germanic tribes aided in the decline of the Roman Empire. In total, the zones featured topics including: the Germanic warrior, the Germanic mercenary in the Roman army, the Marcomannic Wars, conflicts in the west Baltic Sea area, the political situation in the third century around the Rhein and Limes rivers, war and ritual, and the Germanic elites. Together, the zones traced the path the Germanic tribes embarked upon as they gained power in the Roman world, answering questions like, how did the Germanic tribes, the “barbarians,” defeat the Romans in conflicts? And after the Romans retreated past the Rhine, why did the tribes continue to launch multiple attacks against a superior enemy? Using weapons, jewelry, bones, fragments of inscriptions, coins, vessels, grave goods, and a variety of

¹⁴⁵ Website Imperium Konflikt Mythos - 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht – Ausstellungsorte.

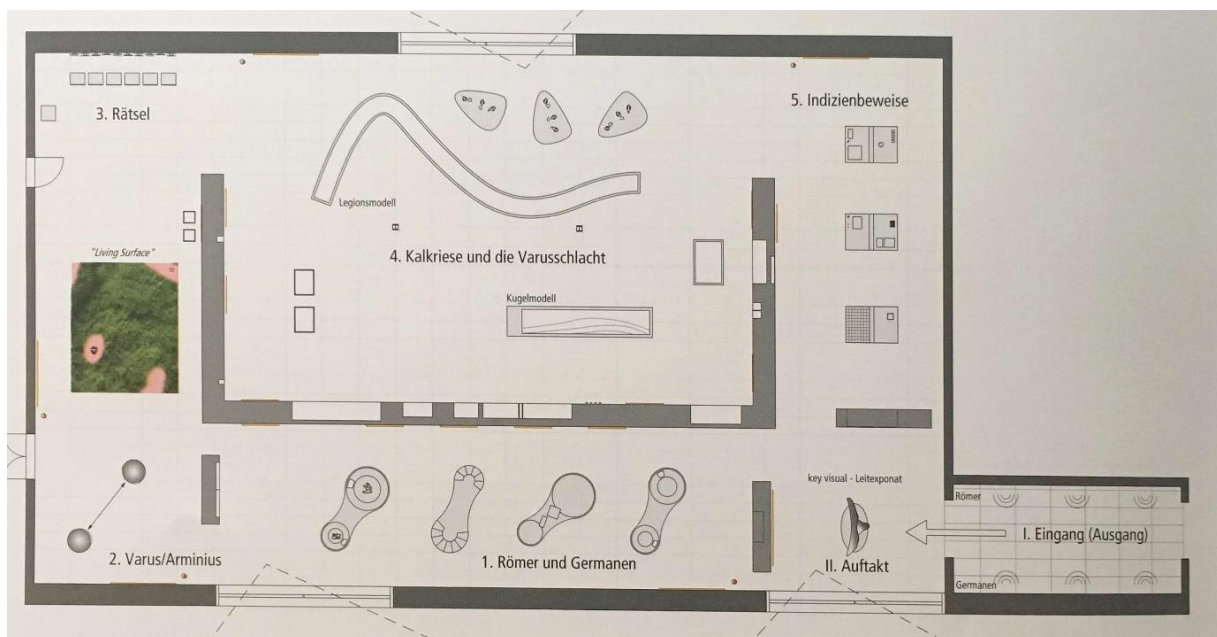
¹⁴⁶ Tafertshofer et al., 7.

¹⁴⁷ Tafertshofer et al., 8.

metal articles, the exhibit explored how and why the Germanic tribes were ultimately successful against the Roman Empire, by looking at Germanic society and culture.¹⁴⁸

KONFLIKT – Permanent Exhibit at Kalkriese

Alongside the temporary “KONFLIKT” exhibit at Kalkriese was the newly redone permanent exhibit as well,¹⁴⁹ which is still on display as of 2017. This exhibit attempts to figure out what exactly happened here 2000 years ago, while presenting the newest research results on the Varusschlacht.

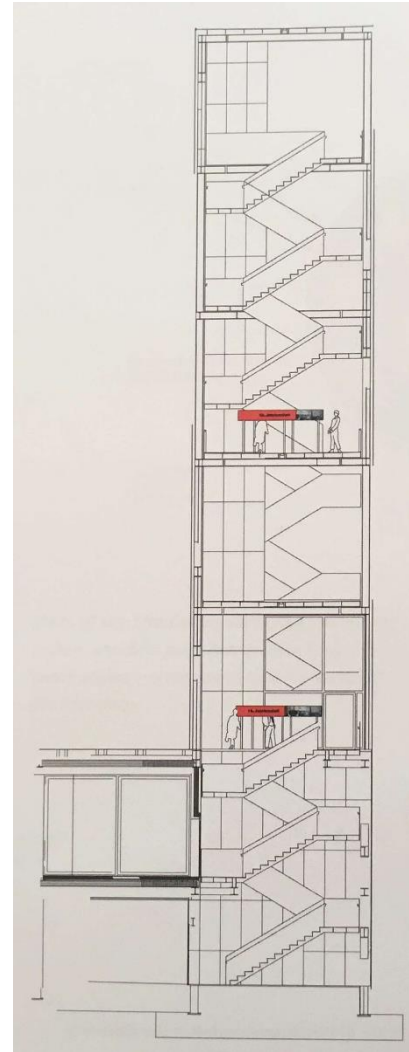


Floorplan of the 2009 Permanent Exhibit; Photo from Derks et al., “Und Keine Fragen Offen.”, 244.

¹⁴⁸ Tafertshofer et al., 8.; Website Imperium Konflikt Mythos - 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht – Ausstellungsprojekt – Konflikt.

¹⁴⁹ Website Imperium Konflikt Mythos - 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht – Ausstellungsprojekt – Konflikt.

The exhibit is divided into six sections, the first of which, “Römer und Germanen,” presents who the Romans and Germanic tribes were and how both groups lived their daily lives. The second, called “Arminius und Varus,” narrows in on the Varusschlacht itself, asking who Publius Quinctilius Varus and Arminius were. The second section continues, asking what intents of the two leaders were, presenting the viewer with three possible dialogues between the two as they could have occurred after the battle. The rediscovery of the Varusschlacht, the multiple theories as to the location of the battlefield, and the beginning of archaeology at Kalkriese are featured in the third section, “Das Rätsel.” This section highlights a hoard of Roman coins, the three lead slingshots found by British army Major and amateur archaeologist Tony Clunn, and the mystery of the Varusschlacht location. The fourth section, “Fundplatz Kalkriese,” presents a handful of finds from the site, analyzing and evaluating the evidence the earth has produced and what they mean for the battle narrative. Finally, the fifth section, appropriately termed “die Indizien,” is a place for presenting all the evidence so that the viewer is able form possible answers to the many mysteries and questions the presents.



Plan of the museum tower highlighting the three platforms and flights of stairs; Photo from Derks et al., “Und Keine Fragen Offen.”, 248.

Here, facts on the coins found on site and in the neighboring area are investigated, noting that none date past 9 CE, locations and categories of finds are plotted on a map of the site, and the sciences behind the soil studies concentrating on the rampart and the anthropology conducted

per the osteological remains, of which analysis of mule tooth enamel results in data dating the animal's time of death to the fall months, are presented. The final chapter takes the viewer up the 40-meter-tall tower, which has three platforms. The first two, through pictures, depict the path Arminius took as he was Germanized into Hermann and how the Varusschlacht was altered and used as a tool for propaganda and became a national myth, with the third platform presenting the overlook to the battlefield, where informational boards describe what geographical features lie in each cardinal direction.

Twenty years of research culminate in this permanent exhibit, with the focus shifting from looking for new clues, as in the previous permanent exhibit, to evaluating the evidence the archaeologists already have. New finds are investigated and analyzed, such as the teeth of a mule which can reveal the movements of Roman troops, and presented alongside the earlier discovered artifacts, which are constantly being re-evaluated.¹⁵⁰

KONFLIKT – Guided Tours

Seventeen different guided tours help visitors experience the two exhibits as well as gain an overall view of the Varusschlacht and the archaeological research done at the site.¹⁵¹

“Kalkriese ... total,” “Führung durch die neue Dauerausstellung zur Varusschlacht,” “Kalkriese Komfort,” and “Familienführung” allowed groups of all ages to explore the whole narrative at Kalkriese. Other tours had an emphasis on the “KONFLIKT” exhibit, such as “Führung durch die Ausstellung KONFLIKT,” “Führung Kalkriese total ... und Führung durch die Ausstellung

¹⁵⁰ Website Imperium Konflikt Mythos - 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht – Ausstellungsprojekt – Konflikt.

¹⁵¹ Website Imperium Konflikt Mythos - 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht – Führungen – Konflikt.

KONFLIKT,” and “Führung durch die neue Dauerausstellung und Führung durch die Ausstellung KONFLIKT.” Two tours focused on conflicts and war, “Einführung in die Welt der Germanen” and “Kalkriese: Auf den Spuren von Römern und Germanen,” and two explored the lives of the two groups 2000 years ago, “Nicht nur Schlacht und Kriege - Das Leben der Römer und Germanen vor 2000 Jahren,” and “Geschichten erzählen – Geschichte erleben.”

The last collection of tours had an element of hands-on participation and experimenting. In “Glücksbringer aus Kalkriese,” students learned about Germanic tribal talismans made from horn and fashioned their own versions, in “Ein feuriges Erlebnis” students learned how to make fire without lighters and matches, in “Kochen wie die Römer” and “Germanische Mahlzeit an der Feuerstelle” students learned what food was available to the groups and prepared and ate a meal at an open fire, and in “Bewegt auf Römerspuren” and “Archäologie für Kinder,” younger school children learned teambuilding as well as experimented in adventures of the movements of “laufen, balancieren, springen, hangeln, rutschen, schwingen,” etc. and were able to conduct their own small archaeological excavation, respectively.¹⁵²

KONFLIKT - Awards

While the public had many opportunities to view, experience, and admire the “KONFLIKT” exhibit, two awards panels acknowledged and acclaimed the design of the special exhibition. In 2009, the designers of the exhibit – the team from neo.studio Berlin with Moritz Schneider and Tobias Neumann – were awarded the ‘red dot communication design’ award. Hosted by the Design Zentrum Nordrhein Westfalen, the award recognizes a variety of creative

¹⁵² Website Imperium Konflikt Mythos - 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht – Führungen – Konflikt.

minds, focusing on those individuals, groups, and companies with strong communication campaigns. The next year, the “KONFLIKT” exhibit was granted recognition through the Art Directors Club für Deutschland in 2010 in the category “Kommunikation in Raum.” The Art Directors Club für Deutschland is a club which “views itself as a benchmark of creative excellence and honors outstanding works of communication.”¹⁵³ Both awards acknowledged the combined work of the architects and designers of the exhibit, the team from neo.studio Berlin, and the work of the curators and archaeologists at Kalkriese, which resulted in an exhibit worthy of international recognition.

"Nicht nur ein herausragendes deutsches, sondern europäisches kulturgeschichtliches Ereignis"¹⁵⁴

The Varusschlacht was an important and significant event, not only a German one, but European as well. The battlefield is a memorial site for the tens of thousands of Romans and members of Germanic tribes who perished there. It is the spot where the momentum of history shifted, cutting short the expansion plans of the Roman Empire and a location for a founding myth for the Germanic peoples. More precisely, all three sites – Kalkriese, Detmold, and Haltern – are important to the battle narrative.

As Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany, stated in the three-volume catalog, *2000 Jahre Varusschlacht. IMPERIUM, KONFLIKT, MYTHOS*, the exhibitions “beleuchten in drei Themenschwerpunkten sowohl Hintergründe und Verlauf als auch die weitreichenden Folgen

¹⁵³ Christoph. “The Art Directors Club of Germany.”

¹⁵⁴ Pöttering, “Grußwort,” 13.

und nicht zuletzt die Mythologisierung dieser Schlacht.”¹⁵⁵ She continues to say that “immer mehr Menschen spüren: Geschichte, Traditionen und Erfahrungen sind ein wichtiger Teil unserer nationalen und kulturellen Identität.”¹⁵⁶ This is an identity based on memory and history, which has been continuously reforming and reconstructing itself since the reunification of Germany, which coincidentally occurred during the early years of archaeology at Kalkriese.

Archaeology plays a crucial role in uncovering the past, forming this identity, and preserving heritage. The act of exposing and unearthing the past expands our understanding of past events. Archaeology is the evidence of history, as artifacts and earthen remains reveal much about a group of people. In addition, archaeology is about humankind and is for the public. It is necessary for the public to have access to the work of archaeologists. In order for the work of the archaeologists to have any long-lasting impact, the public needs an interaction with the past. Archaeologists seek knowledge and understanding. They do so by excavating, hypothesizing, and discussing. The archaeologists at Kalkriese, as well as the archaeologists at the other two museums in addition to the three exhibit curators, wanted the visitors to “IMPERIUM, KONFLIKT, MYTHOS – 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht” to help them in this discussion process. Working together, archaeologists, curators, and visitors, they were able to interact with and brainstorm theories about the past, thereby aiding to create a cultural identity with the archaeological record and the past.

Dr. Jürgen Rüttgers, the Prime Minister of North Rhine-Westphalia from 2005 – 2010, mentions history, saying,

„an diesen Ausstellungen erkennen wir auch, was es heißt, von Geschichte lernen zu können. Wer das möchte, kann es auf die klassische Art tun und Geschichte

¹⁵⁵ Merkel, “Grußwort,” 12.

¹⁵⁶ Merkel, “Grußwort,” 12.

„lernen“: Namen, Zahlen, Orte und Datierung sind auf dem Stand aktueller Forschung aufbereitet und präsentiert. Wir können aber auch unser methodisches Auge schulen, indem wir vieles über das Verhältnis und die wechselnden Beziehungen zweier ganz unterschiedlicher kultureller Identitäten zueinander erfahren.“¹⁵⁷

Learning about history is important, and there are multiple ways to do so; fortunately, the exhibits at the three museums offered different methods of learning history. Through the method of using their “methodological eye,” the visitor is interpreting and analyzing the history and the relationships between the Germanic tribes and the Romans. Through this method, history is not being just lectured to them, the visitor is playing a central role in understanding what happened. They are filling a role in a physical medium of memory, as the visitors are doing the labor necessary to make connections and are actively participating in the act.

Furthermore, learning about the evolving relationship between two different cultural identities, the Roman Empire and the Germanic tribes, is important. It may be cliché, but those who do not learn from the past are doomed to repeat it. The Germanic tribes and the Roman Empire were unable to reconcile their cultural differences and define borders, peacefully. Instead, they fought and thousands lost their lives. With the political climate in Europe, and around the world, growing more unstable regarding political ideals and religious and cultural differences for the past few decades, we should all learn from history and attempt to solve our issues peacefully, before lives are lost.

¹⁵⁷ Rüttgers, “Grußwort,” 14.

In addition, the whole idea and purpose of the 2009 events was summed up by Hans-Gert Pöttering, the President of the European Parliament from 2007 – 2009, noting in his Greetings that,

“dieser dreibändig Katalog greift die Erkenntnisse zur Varusschlacht auf und bereitet wissenschaftliche Ergebnisse zu den Themen „IMPERIUM,“ „KONFLIKT,“ und „MYTHOS“ auf und bietet einen Blick auf die Schlacht auf heutiger Sicht. Damit leistet dieses Werk auch einen Beitrag zur kulturgeschichtlichen Aufarbeitung der Varusschlacht und zeigt dem Leser den Wert, den uns Europäerinnen und Europäer die Europäische Union bietet.“¹⁵⁸

Mr. Pöttering correctly understands the goals the curators, archaeologists, and editors had when designing and organizing the exhibitions and catalogues – to present the material in a way that interests visitors of all ages, to display the battle through the latest scientific and archaeological research, to allow the visitors to question and formulate their own interpretations, and to explore the impact the Varusschlacht had not only on Germany, but on the whole of Europe. The results of the Varusschlacht impacted not only the Germanic tribes and the future of Germany, but was also a turning point in European. The 2009 anniversary thus created the memory of the past event for a European present, allowing the visitor to look 2000 years into the past with a modern viewpoint.

Conclusion: Museums, Archaeology, and History

Graham Black, a professor of Museum Management and Interpretation at Nottingham Trent University, opens a journal article on museums, memory, and history,

¹⁵⁸ Pöttering, “Grußwort,” 13.

by writing, “museums have a commitment not only to collect, conserve, and document material evidence of the past, but also to make it publicly accessible.”¹⁵⁹ In 2009, the three German museums I have discussed fulfilled this commitment to the public by displaying exhibitions on topics relevant to the Varusschlacht. These exhibitions featured artifacts from the Kalkriese archaeology site as well as from international museum collections. By displaying these pieces of archaeology from other museums, such as the Louvre, the British Museum, and the Vatican, the European role of this battle as a cultural-history event was emphasized.

The Varusschlacht battlefield is the spot where the momentum of history shifted, cutting short the expansion plans of the Roman Empire and is a location for a founding myth for the Germanic peoples. The present is influenced by the result of the Varusschlacht, as Europe would arguably be very different today if the battle had not resulted in a Roman defeat. And looking at „die Schlacht auf heutiger Sicht,¹⁶⁰ forms different hypothesizes about the event. The results of the Varusschlacht impacted not only the Germanic tribes and the future of Germany, but was a turning point in European history as well. The 2009 anniversary events thus created the memory of the past event for a European present.

Archaeology is at the center of this narrative, as archaeology plays a vital role in uncovering the past. Without archaeology, none of the three exhibits could have been possible, as artifacts were the foundation of the displays. All three exhibits started as a collection of artifacts which the curators arranged to create dialogue and help form hypothesizes about the past. These ancient artifacts invite the viewers to ask questions, such as how they were made,

¹⁵⁹ Black, 415.

¹⁶⁰ Pöttering, “Grußwort,” 13.

what their meaning was, what their original use was, and who used them. Furthermore, archaeology, the act of exposing, unearthing, and displaying the past, expands our understanding of past events. Additionally, the past influences the present and the past is formed by present perceptions. The exhibitions at Haltern, Detmold, and Kalkriese allowed visitors to view a myriad of artifacts, to question, formulate, and discuss their own interpretations, to experience guided tours, and, as will be discussed in the next chapter, to participate in an experimental archaeology project, the Victoria.

Chapter Three: Kalkriese and the Public

The Victoria: A Reconstruction of a Roman Ship

On May 30th, 2008, before the “IMPERIUM, KONFLIKT, MYTHOS – 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht” event began, a wooden replica of a first century CE Roman river battle ship, sailed around the Outer Alster Lake in Hamburg, Germany. The culmination of a 15-month-long project, the ship was christened the “Victoria.”¹⁶¹ The goal of the project, a joint endeavor by the University of Hamburg, the “Jugend in Arbeit” Hamburg e.V. shipyard, the Landschaftsverband Westfalen-Lippe, the Museum and Park Kalkriese, the Landesverband Lippe, and the Kries Lippe, was to build a ship as close to the archaeological and historical sources as possible.¹⁶² The Victoria was to be a large floating ambassador announcing the upcoming 2009 “IMPERIUM, KONFLIKT, MYTHOS – 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht” exhibitions, a year before the activities and events began at the three museum locations. However, the ship also served a research function, an archaeological experiment; before this time, it was unknown how this type of ship performed and how maneuverable it was.¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ Press Release: A Roman Ship on the Outer Alster Lake in Hamburg, 1.; Press Release: History You Can Touch, 1.

¹⁶² Press Release: A Roman Ship on the Outer Alster Lake in Hamburg, 1.; Press Release: History You Can Touch, 1.

¹⁶³ Press Release: A Roman Ship on the Outer Alster Lake in Hamburg, 1.; Press Release: History You Can Touch, 1.; Schäfer, “Über das Projekt.”



The Victoria on one of her first test sails;
Photo from Aßkamp and Schäfer, 101.

The design plans for the Victoria came from two wooden Roman ships found in 1986 in an archaeological trial-trench approximately 50 meters west of the Roman fort of Oberstimm near Ingolstadt, Germany.¹⁶⁴ The two ships were excavated and conserved in 1994 and are now on display at the Keltisch-Römischen Museum in Manching, Germany.¹⁶⁵ Dating to the late first century CE, some 90 years after the Varusschlacht, these ships are most likely not identical to the ones used by the Romans leading up the battle, but they are certainly similar. These two ships, Oberstimm 1 and 2, served as the model for the construction of the Victoria. While they are not preserved in completeness, the dimensions and overall appearance of a ship of this type can be determined from what has been excavated. As for the actual model, archaeologists at the

¹⁶⁴ Schäfer and Schmidt, “Historischer Hintergrund.”; Website Imperium Konflikt Mythos – Victoria.

¹⁶⁵ Aßkamp and Schäfer, 21.; Press Release: Victoria, 2.; Schäfer and Schmidt, “Historischer Hintergrund”.

Museum für Antike Schifffahrt in Mainz, Germany studied the two ships and created a model for the constructors of the Victoria to follow.¹⁶⁶

A team of two boatbuilders from the “Jugend in Arbeit” shipyard and three apprentices there plus seventeen students from the University of Hamburg began their work in January of 2007, laying down the keel.¹⁶⁷ Fifteen months later, on March 31, 2008, their constructed ship was afloat for the first time. The 250,000 Euro project resulted in a large, and expensive, research and publicity tool.¹⁶⁸ In the time of the Romans, the ship would have been primarily constructed of oak, but the Victoria project used a combination of lumber – oak for the frame, larch for the planking and mast, and spruce for the oars – all wood from the Landesverband Lippe forests.¹⁶⁹ In addition to the wood, iron nails, tar, linseed oil, and sealing were used to strengthen, protect, and construct the ship. Attempting to be historically accurate and embodying antiquarian historians, the students and shipbuilders employed mortise-and-tenon construction techniques, just as the Romans would have done when forming their ships.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁶ Aßkamp and Schäfer, 46.; Press Release: A Roman Ship on the Outer Alster Lake in Hamburg, 1.; Press Release: History You Can Touch, 1., Schäfer and Schmidt, “Historischer Hintergrund.”

¹⁶⁷ Press Release: History You Can Touch, 1.

¹⁶⁸ Press Release: A Roman Ship on the Outer Alster Lake in Hamburg, 2.; Press Release: Victoria, 7.

¹⁶⁹ Aßkamp and Schäfer, 44.

¹⁷⁰ Press Release: A Roman Ship on the Outer Alster Lake in Hamburg, 2.; Press Release: History You Can Touch, 3.; The Victoria is 16 meters long, 3 meters wide, 9 meters tall with the mast, weighs 3 tons, can travel up to 6 knots (11 km/h), and has space for 22 crew, including oarsmen, a helmsman, and a captain. (Press Release: Victoria, 6.; Website Imperium Konflikt Mythos – Victoria.)

Below: A student fastens wooden nails into planks during construction; Photo from Aßkamp and Schäfer, 57.

Right: Wearing imitation Roman tunics and shoes, a group practices sailing the Victoria; Photo from Aßkamp and Schäfer, 123.



Once she was complete, the ship was taken to the Ratzeburg Lake in Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, where she was tested on the waters for four weeks. Following the tests, the students and boatbuilders sailed the ship back to the shipyard in Hamburg via the Elbe-Lübeck-Canal and the Elbe, a 150-kilometer journey which took them three days to complete.¹⁷¹ Following the tests, results of the ship's construction, speed, and maneuverability were published in 2008 by Rudolf Asskamp and Christoph Schäfer, in a volume entitled *Projekt Römerschiff – Nachbau und Erprobung für die Ausstellung IMPERIUM KONFLIKT MYTHOS – 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht*.¹⁷²

Having been tested, published on, and now named, the Victoria was ready to assume her duties as ambassador for the “IMPERIUM KONFLIKT MYTHOS” events. Over the next year,

¹⁷¹ Press Release: A Roman Ship on the Outer Alster Lake in Hamburg, 2.

¹⁷² Aßkamp and Schäfer; Press Release: A Roman Ship on the Outer Alster Lake in Hamburg, 2.; Website Imperium Konflikt Mythos – Victoria.

she made stops in various cities across Germany, including Hamburg-Harburg, Mainz, Rheine, Westphalia, Xanten, Nijmwegen, Bonn, Minden, Magdeburg, Ingolstadt, Hannover, Haltern/Dorsten, Detmold, and Kalkriese.¹⁷³ At port, visitors could film, photograph, and tour the ship, meet the captain, learn about the upcoming 2009 anniversary events, and join the crew, taking the Victoria out for a sail.¹⁷⁴ While the Victoria was an effective advertising exploit, she was also very expensive. In addition to the costs of construction, there were costs for transport from city to city. Due to the length of the tour, there was no permanent crew and the ship was moved by semi-truck across land.¹⁷⁵ However, while expensive, in an interview with curator Heidrun Derks from the Museum and Park Kalkriese, she emphasized the important fact that it was a large group effort which resulted in an ambassador for the 2009 events as well as data through the archaeological experiment of testing how the ship sailed; an expensive project which served an important purpose.¹⁷⁶

Furthermore, this Victoria project employed a variety of memory media. The project began with an act of archaeology; a physical medium at the core of memory work, excavating and conserving the Roman river ships. As the idea of the Victoria as a physical medium evolved into reconstruction, the Victoria was labeled the “Botschafterin der Vergangenheit.”¹⁷⁷ The Victoria was an ambassador for the past, and was “history you can touch.” When the students, apprentices, and boatbuilders gathered to construct the Victoria, their labor was part of the

¹⁷³ Press Release: A Roman Ship on the Outer Alster Lake in Hamburg, 2.; Press Release: History You Can Touch, 1.

¹⁷⁴ Interview with Heidrun Derks.

¹⁷⁵ Other expenses included marketing materials and press releases for every stop, to announce the dates in port, hours open, events taking place on board the ship, and so forth, as well as upkeep and preservation of the wooden ship.

¹⁷⁶ Interview with Heidrun Derks.

¹⁷⁷ Press Release: Victoria, 1.

physical medium for memory work: they had completed an action similar to the way it would have been done 2000 years prior, thus remembering actions from the past.¹⁷⁸ Once work was complete, the students became the crew, conducting tests for speed, acceleration, and maneuverability of the ship. As the group dressed up in the attire of Romans, they again completed an action similar to the way it would have been done 2000 years prior. Doing so, they adopted a theatrical medium for memory work in addition to the physical one. They were sailing the ship, playing their role as Romans, and putting on a spectacle for those watching, who also had the opportunity to try and interact with and sail the ship, thus being a part of the theatrical and physical media.

Archaeology, I thus maintain, played an important role throughout the whole project. Archaeology formed the foundation for the venture, since it was the archaeological excavations at Oberstimm which found and then later unearthed, the ancient ships which inspired the reconstruction. Then archaeologists at the Museum für Antike Schifffahrt built a model for the assembly. Next, when the students were testing the ship, they were participating in an archaeological experiment. Lastly, archaeology also played a role during the production of the *Projekt Römerschiff – Nachbau und Erprobung* publication. Acts of archaeology were involved throughout the entire construction of the Victoria.

Unfortunately, the ship is not currently serving a purpose. She is sitting in the Haltern See near the museum there, possibly being left to rot.¹⁷⁹ Being entirely made of wood, the Victoria needs a lot of attention to preserve her. Is she passing from memory into oblivion? The

¹⁷⁸ With the exception of modern technology such as circular saws and electric drills, for more information see: Press Release: History You Can Touch, 3.

¹⁷⁹ Interview with Heidrun Derks.

Varusschlacht was once forgotten and later remembered, perhaps the ship will follow a similar story line and will one day be remembered again.

Reenactments and Lights at Kalkriese

The IMPERIUM, KONFLIKT, MYTHOS – 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht project began with an act of archaeology, incorporating theatrical and physical media of memory work throughout the construction and sailing of the Victoria Roman battle ship. Different forms of memory work continued during the project, most notably highlighted in battle reenactments at Kalkriese, the location of the “KONFLIKT” exhibit. These battle reenactments are a critical, analytical look at the past that incorporates thinking about the archaeological evidence available at Kalkriese and translates that evidence into a story.

How did the Germanic tribes and Roman legionaries live in the first century CE? From June 11 –14, 2009, the Museum and Park Kalkriese sponsored “Die Römer- und Germanentage,” which provided the audience with an insight, using the medium of performance, into the battle 2000 years ago. The project also enabled the spectators to experience the everyday life, craftsmanship, arts and military drills of the Romans and the Germanic tribes.¹⁸⁰ Approximately four hundred performers, around 150 Germanic reenactors and 250 Roman legionnaire impersonators, from eight European countries showcased “Roman” and “Germanic” people camping in the Kalkriese park.¹⁸¹ In addition to watching the reenactments, children could participate in hands-on activities, such as shooting a bow and arrow, forging iron, forming beads,

¹⁸⁰ Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung.; Tafertshofer et al., 9.

¹⁸¹ “Wie vor 2000 Jahren,” *Vlother Anzeiher*.

making cords and bands from linden leaves, dressing like a legionnaire, and shooting a tennis ball from a Roman catapult.¹⁸² While these activities were geared towards children, visitors of all ages were invited to simply observe the various forms of memory work on display. Guided tours through both camps showed off many features of the daily lives of the two groups: a lay out of a Roman camp with rows of tents allowed the visitor to wander through the rows, observing the Roman impersonators make wine, ointments, and cosmetics, getting a glimpse at how the Roman legionaries slept and lived; military exercises presented how the Romans marched and fought; the Germanic camp showed them cooking, making pottery, and weaving; sections in both camps suggested what medical care techniques and medicines were available; and the clothing of the reenactors showed off the attire and equipment of the two groups, from helmets down to sandals.¹⁸³

A highlight of the four days was the daily reenactment of battle scenes. Each day, at 2:30pm in front of a reconstructed rampart, the 400 performers gathered to present various movements the two groups could have taken throughout the course of the battle. Leigh Clemons describes battle reenactments overall as “enactments of history...their



A Roman Legionnaire conducts a military drill during “Die Römer- und Germanentage”; photo from “Römer- Und Germanentage | Museum | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land.”

¹⁸² “Friedliches Treffen der Römer und Germanen, “Osnabrücker Nachrichten.; “Zu Gast Bei Römer Und Germanen,” Weser Kurier.

¹⁸³ “Varusschlacht Wird Nachgespielt.” Oberhessische Presse.

purpose is twofold: to entertain audiences...and to educate these same audiences about the history of the war and the living conditions of the soldiers who fought in it.”¹⁸⁴ However, authenticity is always an issue. Kalkriese attempted to address the issue of authenticity in its battle reenactment by not presenting an official Varusschlacht battle reenactment per se. Rather, the spectacle was a demonstration of opportunities, an example of how tricky the situation was, and a presentation



Top: A battle reenactment scene at the rampart in 2011
Bottom: A Germanic tribesman reenactor helps children through military drills
Photos from Michael Hehmann – Binder, “Antike Zum Anfassen: 20000 Besucher Erleben Die Römer- Und Germanentage in Kalkriese.”

of possible consequences of the actions each side could have taken. Historian and self-declared experimental archaeologist Dr. Marcus Junkelmann moderated and commented the presentation. Asking “what if the Roman army did this, the Germanic peoples could have done this,” he explained every action and result of tactical movements and decisions. Kalkriese curator Heidrun Derks emphasized the fact that it was not an official reenactment of the battle itself, as archaeologists and historians do not know exactly the course of action the battle took, making it

¹⁸⁴ Clemons, 10.

impossible to recreate it. Furthermore, “the enactment of history through battle reenacting takes the participant and the audience through not only the event itself but also the process of representing that event.”¹⁸⁵ Thus, every person present played some role in the activities which involved the visitors in the project’s memory work. In the case of Kalkriese, the “reenactment” combined physical and theatrical media of memory into an event which was careful to present possibilities, not absolutes, to allow the audience to again draw their own conclusions about the course of the battle.

After 2009, the Museum and Park Kalkriese continued to host “Die Römer- und Germanentage” on odd years on the weekend of the Pentecost. However, only 2009 featured the narrated battle reenactments in the form as presented by Junkelmann;



A row of Roman tents from a 2003 “Römer- und Germanentage”; Photo from Vermaat, “Kalkriese - Roman Days, Saturday and Sunday 7-8th June 2003.”

the other years since depict Roman legionnaires and Germanic tribesmen and women in their respective camps. As in 2009, visitors today can purchase goods, sample food, and participate in events and children’s programs.

However, “Die Römer- und Germanentage” did not originate in 2009; this event had been taking place at Kalkriese every other year since 1993.¹⁸⁶ However, due to the celebratory 2009 events, “Die Römer- und Germanentage” received much more publicity than usual and has now

¹⁸⁵ Clemons, 18.

¹⁸⁶ Flöring.

become a well-known staple event at Kalkriese. As a matter of fact, this event has become “Germany’s largest” of the sort.¹⁸⁷ As I mentioned above, after 2009, the Museum and Park Kalkriese continued to host “Die Römer- und Germanentage” on odd years on the weekend of the Pentecost. Every year has featured a variation on the narrated battle reenactments while continuing to depict Roman legionnaires and Germanic tribesmen and women in their respective camps. As in 2009, visitors can purchase goods, sample food, and participate in events and children’s programs. “In Kalkriese wird die bunte Kultur der Antike authentisch nacherlebbar”¹⁸⁸ and the public has the ability to be immersed in and interact with these past cultures and see what life may have been like in the early first century CE.

On even years, the Museum and Park Kalkriese hosts “Oster-Leuchten” on the evening of Easter Sunday. By combining fireworks, light projections, lasers, and pyrotechnics, the sky above the park is illuminated in a spectacular open air event. Proceeding the light show are family-oriented programs, events, tours of exhibits, and entertainment shows, encouraging families and individuals who might not normally visit a museum or archaeological site to explore the museum and park before the night’s events. There is an accompanying theme with each “Oster-Leuchten” event. In 2010, the theme, “Himmel über Kalkriese,” focused on themes surrounding the Varusschlacht, and in 2012, the themes were “Boden Zauber” und "Entdecker Lust.” In 2014, the theme was “Im Land der



The 2016 “Oster-Leuchten” Show; photo from “Oster-Leuchten 2016 | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land.”

¹⁸⁷ Flöring.

¹⁸⁸ Flöring.

Pharaonen,”¹⁸⁹ and was a precursor to the special exhibit “Mummies – Journey to Immortality.” Most recently, in 2016, to coincide with the upcoming special exhibit “Gefahr auf See – Piraten in der Antike,” the “Oster-Leuchten” featured pirate inspired musical themes and images.¹⁹⁰ It is unclear to me how the “Oster-Leuchten” event began, but the evening is a unique combination of history, hands-on activities, tours of the permanent exhibit at Kalkriese, and entertaining shows, fireworks, and light displays.

By holding these yearly events, the Museum and Park Kalkriese is able to interact with the community and the public on a large scale. “Die Römer- und Germanentage” bring in visitors and reenactors from around Europe, more than 20,000 people on some years,¹⁹¹ to Bramsche-Kalkriese, Germany. „So wird Geschichte lebendig.... Dieses Format hat sich absolut bewährt. Die Römer- und Germanentage leben von dem Miteinander der Darsteller mit den Besuchern,” says Joseph Rottmann, managing director of Varusschlacht-GmbH, which organizes the event, in an interview with the Osnabrücker Zeitung in 2011.¹⁹² He continues in another article in 2015, saying that the event is „ein Fest für alle Altersgruppen, ein Fest für die, die gerne zuschauen, ebenso wie für jene, die gerne mitmachen.”¹⁹³ The “Oster-Leuchten” has the ability to appeal to a different audience, one which might not otherwise visit museums and archaeology sites. Yet the event draws a crowd, hoping to entice the visitors to return to further explore the park, museum, and archaeology and history at Kalkriese. With a wide variety of activities, “die Römer- und Germanentage” and the “Oster-Leuchten” have something for everyone.

¹⁸⁹ Balks, “Feuer Und Farben Beim Osterleuchten in Kalkriese.”

¹⁹⁰ “Oster-Leuchten 2016 | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land.”

¹⁹¹ Binder.

¹⁹² Binder.

¹⁹³ Balks, “Römer- Und Germanentage in Kalkriese an Pfingsten.”

Erforschen versus Erleben

In the introduction to this thesis, I discussed the Saalburg Roman Castle and Archaeological Park. I mentioned its uses as antiquarian as well as monumental histories. The fort has been completely restored to how it would have looked in Roman times. By creating a replica of a Roman fort, with replicas of Roman shrines and recreated village houses, along the Limes, the Saalburg site is emphasizing an ‘erleben’ method of presenting history. The Saalburg Informational Flyer describes the site, saying

“On your trip to the Roman past, you will directly experience Roman architecture. In the great hall of the Principia - the headquarters building - you can almost hear the clatter of hobnailed sandals on the stone floor and the sound of shouted commands. In the reconstructed workshops and cookshop in the Fabrica, it is as though the Roman craftsmen just interrupted their work. Fascinating excavation finds, models and replicas illustrate the daily lives of the soldiers and the civilians who lived in the village outside the fort. At many special events, modern Romans present clothing, military equipment, tools and household activities – inviting you to join in.”

With its emphasis on ‘erleben,’ at Saalburg a visitor can “experience the culture and daily life of the Romans. Here, visitors do not have to judge the materials and artifacts presented before them, they can simply be entertained and taken on a journey to the past. The Museum and Park Kalkriese, in contrast, draws attention to ‘erforschen’ as the basis for the narrative construction of history, emphasizing the role archaeology plays on site. This process of research at Kalkriese remains open and can be contested. In other words, the museum draws attention to its own construction on the basis of fragments, just like an archeological dig. Not all scholars yet agree that Kalkriese is the location of the Varusschlacht and there is still debate about what exactly happened at Kalkriese over 2000 years ago, placing archaeology in the center of these debates.

Although Kalkriese hosts “Die Römer- und Germanentage” every two years and occasionally presents special role playing events in the exhibitions – such as “Die Abenteuer des Sklaven Syrakus,”¹⁹⁴ which allowed visitors into the park after normal hours to interact with Syracuse’s ghost and role play along with the ghost – and these events essentially present the ‘erleben’ model to the visitors, the focus of the site is still on ‘erforschen.’ The basis of the park, the architecture of the museum buildings, and the exhibits, all of which encourage the visitor to think like an archaeologist, places emphasis on ‘erforschen,’ and more importantly, on the actual archaeological work being conducted on site.

Evaluation of Kalkriese from the view of an Archaeologist

In this thesis, I have described the history of archaeological work at Kalkriese, the layout of the museum and park, the various permanent and temporary exhibitions that have graced the museum and visitor center, the reenactments which occur on site, and the 2009 “IMPERIUM, KONFLIKT, MYTHOS – 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht” events. Now let me say a few things about Kalkriese from the viewpoint of an archaeologist.

First, in the 25 years of archaeological excavations at Kalkriese, over 6,000 artifacts have been excavated. However, only a few dozen artifacts are on display. This limits the impact the actual archaeological work can have on the visitor. The archaeologists have uncovered thousands of artifacts, but so few are on display. This is acceptable for someone who does not know the history of the work done at Kalkriese, but for someone who is interested in studying the artifacts, it is disappointing.

¹⁹⁴ Sklave Syrakus, 29.04.2017 | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land.”

Second, likewise, one concern is how geared towards children the permanent exhibit is. There are interactive portions, models, and figures showing how the individuals dressed, which are engaging and informative for children or those not having much knowledge of the Germanic and Roman ways of life. However, for knowledgeable individuals, the exhibit is lacking, with the presented text panels not going very in depth and with the absence of physical artifacts.

Third, while the research is presented to the visitor, someone not familiar with the material or the sciences behind them could struggle to draw any conclusions from them. It is one thing to present information to an audience, but if the audience does not know how to properly analyze and understand the data, it is a useless practice.

Fourth, there are pieces of evidence and ideas the archaeologists consider when suggesting this is the location of the battle which do not appear in the exhibit. One example is in their presentation of Roman military finds. An illustrator aided the visitor by drawing Roman soldiers, having them appearing to be wearing or using the artifacts which had been found on site. However, one bit of information not mentioned anywhere is that the ‘spielsteine’ and the mobile grill which are shown in the display are unusual battlefield finds. Items such as these would have been left at camp, unless of course the soldiers who owned these items were on the march, moving to a new camp, such as the soldiers who perished during the Varusschlacht. If the museum



Display of finds relating to Roman soldiers;
Photo taken by author

sincerely hopes to present the material and evidence before the visitor to allow them to create their own hypotheses about Kalkriese, they should be presented with as much information as possible. While a bit of information such as this, that soldiers did not always carry their game pieces or mobile grills, is another hypothesis from the archaeologists, it is easier for a visitor who is less educated in the research done at site to understand this than it is to understand data from osteological remains.

Another piece of information not mentioned involves the bell that once hung around the neck of a mule. The importance of the organic material which had been stuffed inside the bell, possibly to silence its ringing as the Roman army marched, is not mentioned. Also, the bell, which seems to be an important find, as it helped to date the season to autumn, is crammed in a case with other artifacts and no special attention is devoted to it.

Fifth is that since the museum's focus is on the archaeology, without any prior knowledge, the visitor would have only a vague idea who Varus and Arminius were. Their section, "Arminius und Varus," focuses on them after the battle, holding three imaginary conversations after the battle has already happened. The exhibit does not go into any detail about their characters, background, or motivations, which could provide the visitor with valuable information when forming their own thoughts about the battle.

Lastly, continuing this idea of the museum's focus on archaeology, there is little mention of what the battle has meant over the years and how Arminius has been manipulated as a figure for various propagandistic purposes. Arminius was a popular figure in German history, having been used and repurposed for various reasons for over two centuries, but the museum glances over this in favor of focusing more on the archaeology. There are the two platforms in the museum tower which mention some of these points, but they are mainly images of enlarged

scholarly articles from the early 20th century. These two platforms can also be easily passed over, as there is an elevator which can take the visitor from the main floor to the top of the tower.

Museum design is extremely difficult, and the Museum and Park Kalkriese attempted to experiment. They wanted to allow the visitors to add their own voice to the debate surrounding the Varusschlacht and the more than 700 theories regarding the battlefield location. The curators and archaeologists at Kalkriese were hesitant in providing too much information or overly influencing the opinions of the visitors. And perhaps they were too hesitant, as the result is flawed. The museum architecture and the layout of the park achieves their goal of creating spaces to allow for the formation of ideas, thoughts, and reflections about the battle, culture, and history; seeking to leave a gap between the past and the present, leaving the past in an incomplete and fragmentary state, not imposing any ideas on the visitor. However, it is inside the museum where the archaeologists and curators struggle to achieve their goal. There is a lack of physical artifacts and missing pieces of information and evidence, leaving the knowledgeable visitor wanting more. In contrast, a visitor unknowledgeable regarding the differences between the Germanic tribes and the Romans, the history of the battle, and the history of archaeology at Kalkriese would have enough to view to provide a basic understanding of the history of the battle and the work being conducted at Kalkriese.

While the permanent exhibit struggles, the Museum and Park Kalkriese makes up for it in other ways. Guided tours and audio tours help to fill in gaps of information, lectures and participation events allow visitors to interact with scholars and interact with material, “Die Römer- und Germanentage” give the visitors an opportunity of ‘erleben,’ the “Oster-Leuchten” are entertaining, the many publications help educate interested visitors, and the park is a wonderful creation which enables visitors to consider the past from the present. This permanent

exhibit has been up for eight years now – the first permanent exhibit was up for seven – and it attempts to create a self-reflexive experience which allows the visitor to hypothesize their own theories and experiments with how to do so. But I feel the museum got too caught up in not wanting to be a national monument and not forcing ideas onto the visitors that they neglected one of the main features of archaeology. Archaeology allows the public to view actual artifacts and material remains of the past. At the same time, archaeology also provides context for the artifacts, helping the public to understand the possible uses for the objects and reasons for their existence. The Museum and Park Kalkriese is lacking in the presentation of artifacts, for even if the pieces are fragmentary, seeing the fragmentary, incomplete artifacts help the public see what real archaeology is about and what actual evidence archaeologists are working with to try to solve the puzzle of what happened at Kalkriese 2000 years ago.

The Heart of Kalkriese: Archaeology and the Public

Let me conclude by returning to the field of archaeology. Kalkriese conducts a certain subset of archaeology which is becoming known as public or community archaeology. This is the practice of presenting archaeological research, data, and hypotheses to the public.¹⁹⁵ Public and community archaeology desires to involve members of the public and its community in its work, through such opportunities as publications, exhibits, lectures, websites, and excavations. As I have discussed, the Museum and Park Kalkriese offers a myriad of opportunities for the public to be involved in the work which continues to be done at Kalkriese. And in 2017,

¹⁹⁵ Hirst.

Kalkriese is beginning two projects which will enhance their connection with public and community archaeology.

In recent years, Kalkriese has been hosting an event called “Tag der Offenen Grabung” a few times a year. The first days, in 2015 and 2016, allowed visitors to interact with the site archaeologists and excavation technicians.¹⁹⁶ Visitors could ask their questions to the excavators themselves and learn about the work of the archaeological team on an excavation. In addition, visitors were able to gain insights into the methods used and new discoveries found at Kalkriese. However, in April of 2017, visitors will be allowed to participate in a dig on site themselves.¹⁹⁷ The new “Grabungs Camp Kalkriese” will allow participants to step-by-step perform an excavation and become an archaeologist – “Hier schaut ihr den Archäologen nicht nur über die Schulter, sondern schlüpft selbst in die Rolle des Forschers!”¹⁹⁸ The museum website describes the event as, “als Team arbeitet ihr in einem Grabungsschnitt an originalgetreuen Rekonstruktionen römischer und germanischer Befunde.”¹⁹⁹ While this sounds like participants, from the ages of 6-99, will not be digging new trenches, instead digging in a reconstructed camp, this “Tag der Offenen Grabung” is opening the physical work of archaeologists up to the public.

In an attempt to further open up archaeology to the public, starting in 2017, the Museum and Park Kalkriese is undertaking a new research project called “Kalkreise als Ort des Varusschlacht? – Eine anhaltende Kontroverse.”²⁰⁰ This three-year project “befasst sich mit Untersuchungen zur kulturhistorischen Kontextualisierung der archäologischen Funde des

¹⁹⁶ “Tag Der Offenen Grabung 05.06.2016 | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land.”

¹⁹⁷ “Tag Der Offenen Grabung 23.04.2017 | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land.”

¹⁹⁸ “Tag Der Offenen Grabung 23.04.2017 | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land.”

¹⁹⁹ “Tag Der Offenen Grabung 23.04.2017 | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land.”

²⁰⁰ “Project Research in the Museum | Research | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land.”

antiken Schlachtfelds von Kalkriese.”²⁰¹ Working with many disciplines and a variety of researchers, the project hopes to evaluate the historical context of Kalkriese’s collection of archaeological finds.

Currently, the project features four modules: the first revisits the cultural and historical classification of the finds from Kalkriese, the second looks at a possible metallurgical fingerprint left by the Roman legions, and the third and fourth will examine unusual discoveries: the numerous glass eye finds and the perplexing folded metal strips. Throughout the project, the public will be kept informed regarding its development through a research blog, a website, and a web-based database every step of the way. This project will then culminate in a planned special exhibition in 2020 to formally present the results to the public. Through this project, the Museum and Park Kalkriese is furthering its engagement in public and community archaeology, this time in a new, large scale research project.

Conclusion: Interacting with Archaeology as it Happens

The Museum and Park Kalkriese is striving to involve the public and community in many ways: guided tours and audio tours help educate, lectures and participation events allow visitors to interact with scholars and interact with material, “Die Römer- und Germanentage” give the visitors an opportunity of ‘erleben,’ the “Oster-Leuchten” are entertaining, the Victoria was an archaeological experiment the public could interact with, the many publications help inform interested visitors, and the park is a wonderful creation which enables visitors to consider the

²⁰¹ “Project Research in the Museum | Research | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land.”

past from the present. And the museum continues to expand and increase its efforts in public and community archaeology.

By offering these new opportunities to participate in a dig and to follow the current archaeological research, Kalkriese is inviting the public to interact with archaeology and history as it happens. These events are in addition to the usual publications, exhibits, lectures, professional excavations, and museum website normally conducted at Kalkriese. The Museum and Park is advancing in its public and community archaeology role, attempting to engage with the public as much as possible. Kalkriese is a project of public and community archaeology, as it involves the public in a myriad of ways at the site of the Varusschlacht, making them understand that it is a site that is important to them – a site that they need to think about. Most importantly, the Museum and Park Kalkriese is not like the Saalburg Roman Fort, which was created as a Roman replica and a monument, but is a site with a European dimension that seeks to engage with the community and to make them think.

Conclusion: Memory and the Role of Archaeology at Kalkriese

The Museum and Park Kalkriese is a site that emphasizes the archaeological process and way of thinking, while simultaneously turning visitors into archaeologists as they explore the museum and park. Kalkriese combines different experiences into the park, museum, events, and activities it hosts. Throughout, the site highlights archaeology as the central idea. In this thesis, I have shown how important archaeology is to memory work and what role archaeology plays at Kalkriese.

Kalkriese is a research institution for efforts excavating ancient battlefields, developing new archaeological techniques, and uncovering the history of what happened in 9 CE during the Varusschlacht. The discovery of the site was an interesting one, stretching back to the 1800s with Theodor Mommsen, and resurfacing in the late 1980s thanks to a British army officer with an interest in archaeology and Roman history. To date, more than 1000 Roman coins and more than 5000 Roman military artifacts have been found, but more still exists to be discovered in the soil at Kalkriese, and the archaeologists are prepared and eager to conduct this work.

There is a connection between the archaeology, the museum architecture, and the many exhibitions at the Museum and Park Kalkriese. The detective work of the first stages of archaeology influences the architecture of the museum as well as the layout of the exhibits. Throughout this project, I highlighted the importance of archaeology for memory and how it shapes the style of the museum and the exhibits at Kalkriese. Without archaeologists, there would be no memory culture at Kalkriese.

Archaeology is central to this battle and this site. It is because of the archaeological remains, i.e. the coins, slingshots, cavalry mask, bones, and weapon fragments, that we have any idea where the battle could have taken place. The written Roman records are unclear as to where

exactly the battle occurred. It is due to the work of Theodor Mommsen, Tony Clunn, and the first archaeologists, who analyzed the coins, found the lead slingshots, and excavated the cavalry mask, human and animal bone, and weapon fragments, that a more definitive location for the Varusschlacht was able to be claimed. Further, archaeology is also central to memory, as archaeological sites, such as Kalkriese, are used for thinking about German national identity.

Kalkriese, Haltern, and Detmold fulfilled their commitment to the public to collect, conserve, and document material evidence of the past by displaying exhibitions on topics relevant to the Varusschlacht. The exhibitions featured artifacts from the Kalkriese archaeology site as well as from international museum collections. By displaying these pieces of archaeology from other museums, such as the Louvre, the British Museum, and the Vatican, the European role of this battle as a cultural-history event was emphasized. The exhibitions in 2009 allowed visitors to view artifacts, to question, formulate, and discuss their own interpretations, to experience guided tours, and to participate in an experimental archaeology project, the Victoria.

Kalkriese continues this centrality of archaeology into the experience it creates for its visitors. The curators and archaeologists wanted to present the material in a way that interests visitors of all ages, to display the battle through the latest scientific and archaeological research, to allow the visitors to question and formulate their own interpretations, and to explore the impact the Varusschlacht had not only on Germany, but on the whole of Europe.

Additionally, Kalkriese conducts a certain subset of archaeology which is becoming known as public or community archaeology – the practice of presenting archaeological research, data, and hypotheses to the public. Public and community archaeology desires to involve members of the public and its community in its work, through such opportunities as publications,

exhibits, lectures, websites, and excavations. Kalkriese is inviting the public to interact with archaeology and history as it happens, attempting to engage with the public as much as possible in its public and community archaeology role.

Kalkriese brings in a different perspective than the Saalburg Roman Fort by focusing on the archaeological object and the archaeological process. In contrast to the Saalburg, the Museum and Park Kalkriese is not used for monumental purposes. However, the curators and archaeologists at Kalkriese do link their work to efforts to establish a foundation for Europe. The Museum and Park Kalkriese is a site with a European dimension that seeks to engage with the community and to make them think. The results of the Varusschlacht impacted not only the Germanic tribes and the future of Germany, but was also a turning point in European history. The work at the Museum and Park Kalkriese thus creates a memory of this past event for a European present, allowing the visitor to look 2000 years into the past with a modern viewpoint and through the lens of an archaeologist.

The Museum and Park Kalkriese Mission Statement:

We wish to foster this research and contribute more scientific results: with a systematic, interdisciplinary and ground-breaking approach. We wish to be an open-minded place for research that always allows for discussion.

We wish to safeguard this cultural heritage, preserve and protect the archaeological finds with all required care and expertise in order to preserve this archaeological monument for future generations.

It is our goal to be a museum for everybody. To this end, the research results and the history of the Varus Battle are made available to a broad public – vividly, event- and action-oriented, informative and entertaining.

We wish to fuel our visitors' interest in history, archaeology and the natural sciences – with precise, analytical and adequate information that is also entertaining and accessible. Our exhibitions, events, performances and join-in events serve to convey the meaning of this cultural heritage to our visitors.

Outside of school, we wish to be a site of education and hands-on experiences for young visitors and offer them playful, action- and event-oriented learning experiences. We aim at conveying regional on-site education leading to sustainable development.

We wish to offer all our visitors a high-quality experience – free of barriers, as comfortable as possible, meeting the target group, service-oriented. They all shall have fond memories of their visit.

Museum und Park Kalkriese – its financiers and employees – will treat this cultural heritage site responsibly, based on the code of ethics for museums as stipulated by ICOM (The International Council of Museums) We work: As a team. In collaboration with other institutions. With the public.²⁰²

²⁰² “Mission Statement | Über Uns | Service | Varusschlacht Im Osnabrücker Land.”

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