

**WSPÓŁCZESNE
OBLICZA
PRZESZŁOŚCI**

WSPÓŁCZESNE OBLICZA PRZESZŁOŚCI

Redakcja

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The faces of Arminius: The Battle of Teutoburg Forest in the German public¹

Abstract: In 9 AD, the Cheruscan Arminius led a coalition of Germanic warriors to victory over the Romans. In contrast to the various values, symbols, and myths ascribed to the battle, current researchers de-emphasise the impact this defeat had on the Roman retreat from the Germanic territories east of the Rhine six years later. Various values, symbols and myths were attributed to the so-called “German Hermann” in the history of reception. Since the late 1960s, especially in the course of student movements, he has lost his political significance (with the exception of the extreme right). A monument dedicated to Hermann was erected in 1875 near Detmold as a symbol of national victory, but is today preserved as a national peace memorial.

In research history, several hundred locations have been taken into account as the site of Varus’ defeat. In 1989, the remains of a major battle from the early 1st century AD were excavated north of Osnabrück, in Kalkriese. In consequence, the location of the battlefield, a specific research subject, was heavily discussed in public, illustrating the value of the (remote) past for local/regional policy, identity, and patriotism. But despite being called a “German national hero”, Arminius is of little importance outside of south Lower-Saxony and east Westphalia-Lippe.

The name “Hermann” was developed as a trademark which was used within the tourist industry, and which also advertised local products and services. The Hermann Monument in the so-called “Land of Hermann” and the Museum in Kalkriese in the “Varus region” are popular destinations, illustrating the impact of archaeology on the economy. In 2009, the 2000th anniversary of the Teutoburg Forest battle, the inter-state collective concept “Imperium Conflict Myth. 2000 Years Varus Battle” was developed. The central activity, a cooperative exhibition, was supported by an international cultural programme.

Keywords: North-west Germany, battle of Teutoburg Forest AD 9, reception of Germanic history, exploitation and instrumentalisation of the past, anniversary of a remote event, economic and tourist impact

Abstrakt: W 9 r. n.e. wódz Cherusków Arminiusz poprowadził koalicję wojowników germańskich do zwycięstwa nad Rzymianami. Wbrew tradycji współcześni badacze umniejszają wpływ tej porażki na wycofanie się Rzymian 6 lat później z terytoriów germańskich, położonych na wschód od Renu. W historii recepcji tego wydarzenia tak zwanemu „germańskiemu Hermannowi” przypisano były różne wartości, symbole oraz mity. Szczególnie od lat 60. XX w., przede wszystkim na skutek działalności ruchów studenckich, stracił on jednak polityczne znaczenie (za wyjątkiem ugrupowań skrajnej prawicy). Pomnik wystawiony ku czci

¹For their help and discussion, I would like to thank S. von Schnurbein, H.-U. Voß, Th. Schierl, and Ch. Rummel.

Hermann został ukończony w roku 1875 i ustawiony w pobliżu Detmold jako symbol narodowego zwycięstwa, chociaż obecnie uznawany jest za narodowy pomnik pokoju.

W historii badań jako miejsce klęski Warusa pod uwagę brano kilkaset miejsc. W roku 1989 w miejscowości Kalkriese na północ od Osnabrück odkryto pozostałości pola bitewnego datowanego na początek I w. n.e. W konsekwencji, lokalizacja miejsca bitwy, będąca przedmiotem badań, wywołała szeroką debatę publiczną, ilustrując znaczenie (odległej) przeszłości dla lokalnej/regionalnej polityki, tożsamości i patriotyzmu. Należy jednak zaznaczyć, iż pomimo miana „niemieckiego bohatera narodowego” postać Arminiusza ma niewielkie znaczenie poza rejonem południowej Dolnej Saksonii i wschodniej Westfalii-Lippe.

Z nazwy „Hermann” uczyniono znak towarowy, wykorzystywany w przemyśle turystycznym i reklamujący również lokalne wyroby i usługi. Pomnik Hermanna w tak zwanej „Krainie Hermanna” oraz Muzeum w Kalkriese w „regionie Warusa” stanowią popularne cele wycieczek, stanowiąc przykład wpływu archeologii na ekonomię. W roku 2009, w związku z przypadającą w tym czasie dwutysięczną rocznicą bitwy w Lesie Teutoburskim, rozwinięto wspólny dla krajów związkowych projekt „Imperium Konflikt Mit. 2000 lat bitwy Warusa”. Główny element tego projektu, wspólna wystawa, został wsparty przez międzynarodowy program kulturalny.

Słowa kluczowe: północno-zachodnie Niemcy, bitwa w Lesie Teutoburskim w 9 r. n.e., postrzeżenie historii germańskiej, wykorzystywanie i instrumentalizacja przeszłości, rocznica wydarzenia z odległej przeszłości, wpływ ekonomii i turystyki

... drawn by historians and archaeologists

Arminius (ca. 19/16 BC — 21 AD), a noble and victorious warrior of the Germanic tribe of the Cherusci, is widely regarded as a German folk hero². This paper aims to present him as a remote persona that has provided various meanings, values, symbols, and myths to German societies over the last 500 years (fig. 1). As contemporary source material disregards his private and political motivation, his actions can be, and have been, exploited in various ways. As such, the following constitutes an overview on the history of reception, and deals with the question if, in which fields, and to what extent Arminius is of importance to modern Germans.

During the reign of Augustus (27 BC — 14 AD), the Romans successfully conquered the Germanic territories east of the Rhine, today's north-west Germany. From the late second decade BC onwards, the area was controlled and organised by Roman military, administration and economy, and was raised “almost to the status of a tributary province” (Vell. 2,97,4). During this period, Arminius made his career in the Roman army as a leader of a Germanic auxiliary unit. In 9 AD however, he turned against the Romans, and led a rebellion of a Germanic coalition. Through his strategic knowledge and experience in Roman warfare, his alliance fought victoriously against three Roman legions and auxiliaries (all in all approximately 20,000 Roman soldiers) under the leadership of Publius Quinctilius Varus (47/46 BC — 9 AD) in the battle of the Teutoburg Forest which is named with reference to Tacitus (Tac. Ann. 1,6)³. As

² Arminius is listed in the English Wikipedia as a German folk hero (accompanied by Siegfried and figures of regional importance) and is regarded as an important native-born Northrhine-Westphalian (Press release 2010).

³ “[...] The troops were then marched to the furthest frontier of the Bructeri, and all the country between the rivers Amisia and Luppia was ravaged, not far from the forest of Teutoburgium, where the remains of Varus and his legions were said to lie unburied”.



Fig. 1. Arminius' various faces (1543–2009). 1st row: Brosamer A., 1543 (Mythos 2009, 168, fig. 4); de Vries S., 1616 (Kaufmann 1994, 58, fig. 17); Anonym, ca 1618 (Mythos 2009, 171, fig. 8); Tischbein J. H., 1758 (Mythos 2009, 335 fig. 210). 2nd row: Ruß K., 1818 (Mythos 2009, 150, fig. 1); Lindenschmidt W. the Elder, ca 1840 (Mythos 2009 363, fig. 288); Gehrts J., 1884 (Mythos 2009, 364, fig. 290); event poster, 1909 (Mythos 2009, 357, fig. 282). 3rd row: magazine, 1928 (Mythos 2009, 383, fig. 350); event poster, 1937 (Mythos 2009, 203, fig. 2); photo on set, 1959 (Bendikowski 2008a, fig. 53); photo on set, 1982 (Kösters 2009a, 194). 4th row: film poster 1994/1995 (<http://www.westfaelische-geschichte.de/med1064>); statue (photo N. Schücker); „Stern” magazine, cover picture (Kruse K. 2009. *Besser als ihr Ruf*, „Stern” Bd. XLIV cover picture); Hermann Monument, 2009 (http://www.hermann2009.de/fileadmin/user_upload/downloads_09/06_SER/Programmheft_IKP_2009.pdf). 5th row: photo on set, 2009 (<http://www.theater-senftenberg.de/de/spielplan/repertoire/die-hermannsschlacht-christian-dietrich-grabbe.html>); film poster, 2009 (ZDF); Zwermann, 2009 (http://www.zwermann.info/Resourcen/zwermann_S1-4_1600x1200.jpg); cup, 2009 (<http://www.lippeladen.de>)

no collective Germanic identity and policy existed at that time, however, Arminius could not be considered as the leader of a general uprising; indeed, not even were the Cherusci themselves in agreement over his actions. In 16 AD, he was betrayed by his father-in-law Segestes, who handed Thusnelda, his pregnant daughter and Arminius' wife, over to the Romans. Finally in 21 AD, Arminius was murdered by opponents from within his own tribe. According to Roman sources he sought more power than was acceptable for Germanic societies. After the major defeat in 9 AD, Roman operations east of the Rhine were cut off temporarily but continued as soon as the military had been reorganised. Although the Germanic tribes east of the Rhine were never fully defeated in the following years, the emperor Tiberius (14–37 AD) stopped the campaigns and gave up the emerging province in 17 AD — after a period of about thirty years. This change in policy was motivated by various domestic issues within the Empire, rather than being a delayed consequence of the Germanic victory in 9 AD (Wiegels 2007; Bendikowski 2008, 13–126; Wolters 2008; 2009; Imperium 2009; Konflikt 2009; Moosbauer 2009; Weidner *et al.* 2009)⁴.

The archaeological remains of the Augustan period in today's north-west Germany are well known, including a number of Roman forts, and even an emerging civil town. Several hundred places have been taken into consideration as the site of Varus' defeat. In 1989, a chance discovery in Kalkriese, north of the modern town of Osnabrück, identified the site of a major battle from the early 1st century AD, which can be connected to the event of 9 AD with the utmost probability, according to the standards of our discipline. Large scale excavations are still continuing. In spite of the archaeological evidence, the discussion regarding the location of the Teutoburg Forest battlefield is ongoing. It could also be argued that the very discovery of Kalkriese caused the debate to be renewed not only amongst academics — but also in politics, and the public (fig. 2; Bemmann 2002, 262; Kehne 2003; Varusschlacht 2006; Bendikowski 2008, 218–232; Wiegels 2008b; Wolters 2008, 150–201; Berke 2009, 136–138; Kösters 2009a, 255–258; Weidner *et al.* 2009; annex 8).

... drawn from the 16th to the 19th century

Modern reception on Arminius started in the period of Humanism soon after the rediscovery of Tacitus' (approx. 58–120 AD) *Annales* in the monastery of Corvey in 1505/1507 AD. Characterised as “assuredly ... the deliverer of Germany” (Tac. Ann. II,88), the Cheruscan soon attracted the interest of German Renaissance humanists and Protestant reformers. Their work provided the basis for an emerging German national consciousness. Some interpretations of consequence can be traced to this early period (Kaufmann 1994, 46–60; Kloft 1995; Ridé 1995; Roloff 1995; Dörner 1996, 80; Bemmann 2002, 103–134; Mertens 2004, 96–100; Bendikowski 2008, 129–138; Wiegels 2008a, 30–33; 2009, 25–26; Wolters 2008, 178–181; 2009b, 8–10; Berke 2009, 135;

⁴Arminius as a historic figure: Callies, Beck, Kuhn 1973; Callies 1975; Kehne 2009; Weidner *et al.* 2009.

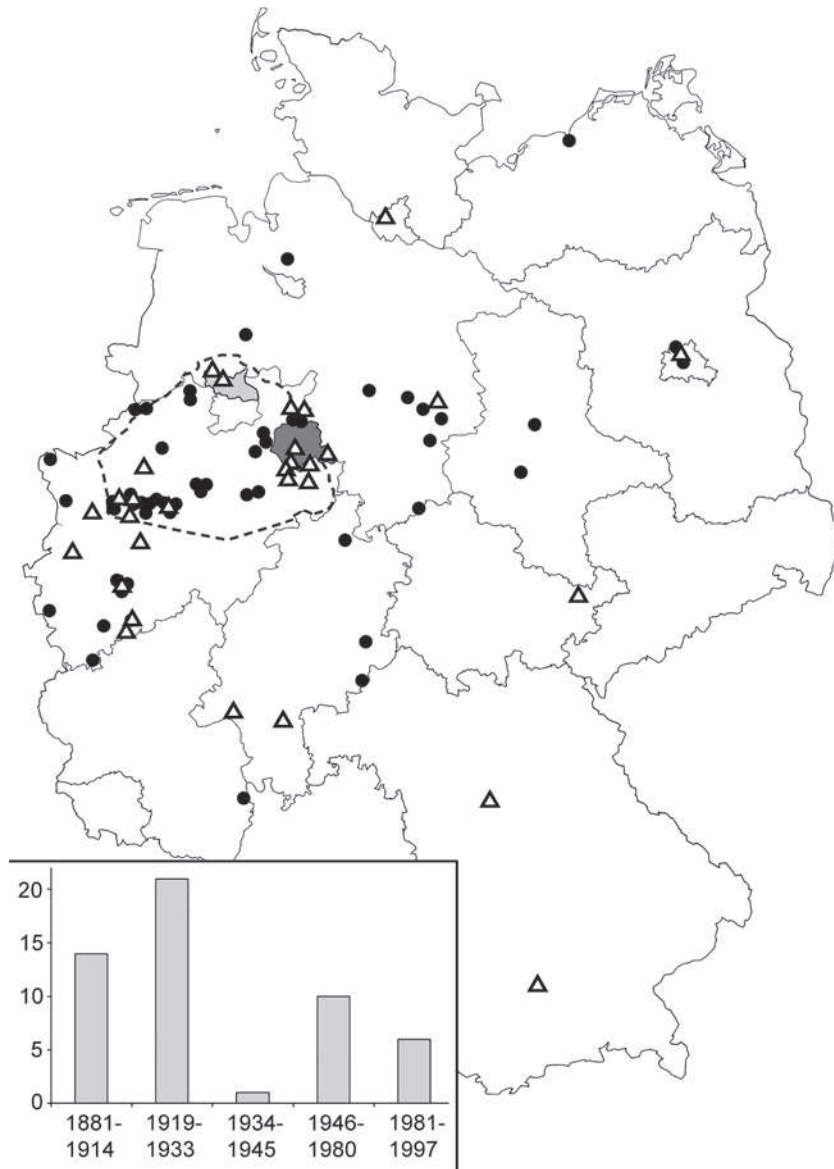


Fig. 2. AD 9 and regional identity, dashed line: area, in which the battlefield was mostly assumed, light grey: “Varus region” in Lower-Saxony, dark grey: “Land of Hermann”, Teutoburg Forest, Lippe region. Streets (triangle) and sport clubs (circle) named after “Arminius” centre upon North Rhine-Westphalia, graph: founding years of clubs. Based on a wikipedia de map; for references cf. <http://www.klicktel.de/postleitzahlen>; annex 1

Hutter 2009; Kösters 2009a, 33–73; 207–212; 2009c, 1; Mythos 2009, 326–330; Ottomeyer 2009, 145–148; Weidner *et al.* 2009; Haude 2010): (1) The positive evaluation of Arminius as the first defender of his country based on Tacitus, e.g., by Ulrich von Hutten (1488–1523); (2) The re-naming as German Hermann, initially most probably by the Bavarian historian Johannes Aventin/Johannes Turmair (1477–1534) or the Protestant reformer Martin Luther (1483–1546); (3) The imaginative but historically and archaeologically unfounded representation. Simon de Vries' (1580–1628) engraving from 1616 is said to be the oldest illustration of a Germanic noble with a winged helmet, an attribute which later became inseparably linked with Arminius⁵; (4) The location of the Teutoburg Forest battlefield by Philipp Melanchthon (1497–1560) in the Osning Hills, in the region of East Westphalia-Lippe. In 1616, the area was even renamed as “Teutoburger Wald”. Before the archaeological excavations in Kalkriese, Melanchthon's localisation was the most accepted one through research history.

In the 17th and 18th centuries Arminius was thought of as a tragic and heroic noble savage in theatre and opera. The topic was first received by French artists, and later taken over by Germans. Baroque narrations focus on his behaviour as a gracious monarch, and the relations within his dynasty, such as in the novel “Noble commander Arminius” by Daniel Casper von Lohenstein (1635–1683) or “Herrmann. A tragedy” by Johann Elias Schlegel (1719–1749). Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock (1724–1803) published a trilogy in an assumed phrasing of Germanic battle songs. Literary work was taken up by visual artists, for example Johann Heinrich Tischbein the Elder (1722–1789) or Angelika Kauffmann (1741–1807)⁶. By the end of the 18th century, a specific appearance and certain regional, patriotic, heroic and moral values had been linked to Arminius, which in turn allowed the exploitation of “Hermann” for various issues (von Lohenstein 1689–1690; Schlegel 1743 [1767]; Klopstock 1769; 1784; 1787 [2009]; Dzwonek, Zimmermann 1975; Forchert 1975; Kaufmann 1994, 56–67; Barbon, Plachta 1995; Krebs 1995; Spellerberg 1995; Dörner 1996, 81–82; Bemmann 2002, 135–173; Bendikowski 2008, 138–146; Wiegels 2008a, 33–37; 2009, 26; Wolters 2008, 181–185; Kösters 2009a, 75–176; 2009b; 2009c, 2–3; Mythos 2009, 331–344; Weidner *et al.* 2009; Haude 2010).

At the time, the idea of national identity was developed across Europe, especially in the course of the Napoleonic Wars (1803–1815). As a result of the Congress of Vienna in 1814/1815 the so-called German Confederation was founded, a league of sovereign states. Disagreement with restoration politics in the following years led to liberal movements demanding German unity and civil liberties. As a consequence of the failure of the revolutions in the German states in 1848, the idea of national unity was

⁵Cf. fig. 1, top row: De Fries' engraving pictures an anonymous Germanic noble. Contemporary illustrations show Arminius in period, and imaginative clothing (Mythos 2009, 168–171 fig. 4, 5, 7, 8; 326–328 no. 167.172.175.180). In 1689 von Sandrart (1630–1708) was the first to take over the winged helmet for Arminius, an attribute assigned to Hermes, messenger of the gods, whose name sounds similar to Hermann.

⁶Tischbein J.H.W. 1758 “Der Triumph Hermanns nach seinem Sieg über Varus”, oil on canvas, Bad Pyrmont; Kaufmann A. 1785 “Hermann nach der Schlacht”, oil on canvas, Innsbruck (Mythos 2009, 335 no. 210, 336 no. 213).

temporarily abandoned. In the 1860s the North German Federation was established as a state alliance under the leadership of the Kingdom of Prussia. Chancellor Otto von Bismarck's (1815–1898) policy led to the Franco-Prussian War, which ended with the unification of German states and the declaration of the German Empire in 1871.

The “Battle of Nations” at Leipzig in 1813, when Napoleon (1769–1821) was decisively defeated, was compared to Arminius' victory in 9 AD by contemporaries. General opinion holds that both events resulted in national liberation; therefore they were regarded as symbols of German identity and unity. Numerous writers took up the subject of Hermann battle, linking it to contemporary policy, for example Heinrich von Kleist (1777–1811) and Christian Grabbe (1801–1836). This interpretation is furthermore clearly expressed in an illustration by Karl Russ (1779–1843) “Hermann frees Germania”. At the same time, the Romantic landscape painter Casper David Friedrich (1774–1840) dealt with this topic in a different medium.⁷ In the period of romanticism and nationalism, the Germans began to orientate themselves toward Germanic antiquity. Bourgeois and patriotic societies carried out research on the precise location of the Teutoburg battlefield. The assumed Germanic identity was taken as a source of national pride, collective identity and morality (von Kleist 1821; Grabbe 1836; Kaufmann 1994, 67; Ehrlich 1995; Seeba 1995, 357–361; Wittkowski 1995; Dörner 1996, 86–121, 205–224; Mellies 2001, 41, 54–55 fig. 9.10; Bemann 2002, 175–208; Bendikowski 2008, 146–156; Wiegels 2008a, 37–39; Wolters 2008, 186–187; Born 2009, 10–11; Emig 2009; Hiller von Gaertringen 2009a; Kipper 2009; Kösters 2009a, 180–334; 2009c, 3–4; Mythos 2009, 345–350; Tatter 2009; Weidner *et al.* 2009; Haude 2010).

In 1808 for example, Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814) highlighted the national importance of the battle in the Teutoburg Forest: “It is they whom we must thank — we, the immediate heirs of their soil, their language, and their way of thinking — for being Germans still, for being still borne along on the stream of original and independent life. It is they whom we must thank for everything that we have been as a nation since those days” (Fichte 1808, 144). Besides this national enthusiasm, there were also some ironic and critical comments. Joseph Victor von Scheffel (1826–1886) reported humorously in the patriotic *Commercium* song “When the Romans got cheeky” and Heinrich Heine (1797–1856) sneered in 1844: “This is the forest of Teutoburg [...] The classic morass where Varus stuck. [...] The German nation triumphed here, And rose from the mud victorious” (Heine 1844, caput 11 — Woesler 1995; von Scheffel 1847; Bemann 2002, 208–211; Bendikowski 2008, 155–156; Wiegels 2008a, 42; Kösters 2009a, 220–234; Mythos 2009, 345–353).

In the same time the idea of a monument dedicated to Hermann, which had existed for a while, was put into action according to the plans of Ernst von Bandel

⁷Ruß K. 1813 “Hermann zersprengt die Ketten von Germania”, etching, Nürnberg (Mythos 2009, 150 fig. 1; 345 no. 234); Friedrich C.D. 1912, “Grabmale alter Helden (Gräber gefallener Freiheitskrieger, Grab des Arminius)”, oil on canvas, Hamburg (Kösters 2009a, 202); idem around 1813 “Felsental (Grab des Arminius)”, oil on canvas, Bremen (Kösters 2009a, 203).

(1800–1876)⁸. The memorial, a circular sandstone building with an armed copper statue of Arminius wearing a winged helmet and raising a sword, was erected at the “Grotenburg”, south of the town of Detmold in the Lippe region. Construction began on the basis of private funds in 1838 and the foundation stone was laid in 1841. Work progressed very slowly, Karl Marx (1818–1883) scoffed: “The thing is as long in the making as Germany itself” (Marx 1867)⁹. The monument was finally completed after the foundation of the German Empire with the help of substantial funds from Prussia, and ceremonially unveiled in the presence of Emperor Wilhelm I in 1875. The opening was a huge event with 20,000 to 30,000 participants, reflecting the economic impact of the monument even in those days. Its power of attraction is drawn from the various values connected to it. The estimation as a symbol of a united German nation is expressed in the inscription on the sword: “Germany’s unity my strength — My strength Germany’s power”¹⁰. Wilhelm I was compared to Arminius in terms of the leading role in the unification process: “As the Cherusian prince led the ancestors, Emperor Wilhelm guides us”¹¹, “He who united long-parted tribes with a strong hand, He who victoriously overcame French power and perfidy, He who led long-lost sons to the German Empire, He is the equal of Arminius, the saviour”¹². This reflects the impact of the monument as a victory memorial as well as an anti-French attitude: “Only because the German people had been corrupted by French ideas and made powerless by division was Napoleon Bonaparte, Emperor of the French, able to subjugate Germany and this with the help of Germans. Then at last, in 1813, all German tribes, out of shame, gathered around the sword held aloft by Prussia to fight for the freedom of their native land”¹³. Furthermore, the monument was instrumentalised in the so-called “culture struggle”, Bismarck’s secularisation policy between 1871 and 1878. In the conflict over the separation of church and state, the Roman defeat became a symbol of agitation against the Catholic Church in Rome and the Catholic regions of Prussia (Schmidt 1975; Unverfehrt 1975; Veddelar 1975, 167–173; Kaufmann 1994, 68; Seeba 1995, 356–358; Dörner 1996, 121–201; Wolfrum 1999, 127–128; Barmeyer 2001; Mellies 2001; 2009a; 2009c; Bemmann 2002, 212–235; Knauer 2007; Bendikowski 2008, 156–230; Wiegels 2008a, 39–44; Wolters 2008, 188–193; Born 2009, 11; Jakob 2009, 34–37; Kösters 2009a, 234–247; 2009c, 4; Mythos 2009, 352–374; Ruppert 2009, 3–4; Weidner *et al.* 2009; Haude 2010; annex 3).

The end of the 19th century saw the rise of an interpretation of the events of AD 9 that would have far-reaching and devastating effects, in particular the equation of contemporary enemies (both internal and external) with the Romans. Under the impression of the fractured German states, Hermann became a national hero and symbol

⁸ Some 20 years later, German immigrants constructed the “Hermann Heights Monument” in New Ulm, Minnesota, USA, the so-called “Hermann the German”.

⁹ Interruption of work in 1846, restart in 1862, when the North German Confederation had been established.

¹⁰ English translation: information board.

¹¹ Extract of an anonymous poem (1875), cited in Haude 2010.

¹² Inscription on the monument with regard to Wilhelm I, translated on the information board.

¹³ Inscription the monument, translated on the information board.

of national unity and collective German identity, an idea that had not existed before. This ideological occupation was associated with a nostalgic glorification of the victorious Germanic period, to which Germans could trace themselves. History was understood as a continuous development from the battle of Teutoburg Forest to the Napoleonic Wars and the foundation of the German Empire. The topoi used by Roman authors to describe Germans or barbarians in general became national virtues and values. With Bandel's statue and the Hermann Monument as a whole, the image of Arminius was created and was widely recognised. It was used in illustrations to allude to the various attributes given to the Cheruscan (Losemann 1995, 419; Dörner 1996, 83–84, 143–201; Bendikowski 2008, 147–185; 2009a, 20; Wolters 2008, 188–193; Born 2009, 11; Jakob 2009, 33–34; Kösters 2009 a, 19–32; 259–273; 2009 c, 3–4; Mellies 2009a, 225–228; Wiegels 2009, 26–27; Haude 2010)¹⁴.

... drawn in the 20th century

In 1909, the 1,900th anniversary of Arminius' victory was celebrated with a public festival. Ceremonies held at the Hermann Monument confirmed the assumed unity of Germanic ancestors and modern Germans and romanticised images of Germanic daily life and of war. The programme in the prevailing taste included speeches, theatre, music, and gymnastic performances. The highlight was the "Great Convoy of Germans", all in all 900 participants dressed as Germans, 200 horses and draught animals, who paraded through Detmold twice (Veddeler 1975, 173–176; Losemann 1994, 32–34; 1995, 420–421; Mellies 2001, 48; 2009b, 263–265; Bemann 2002, 241–245; Bendikowski 2008, 181–182; Wiegels 2008 a, 46–47; Wolters 2008, 193–194; Born 2009, 11; Jakob 2009, 37–38; Kösters 2009a, 248–254; Mythos 2009, 358–359; Ruppert 2009; Weidner *et al.* 2009; Haude 2010)¹⁵. Arminius' popularity in these years is well reflected in the number of sport clubs founded under his name (fig. 2).

On the eve of, and during, the First World War, the cult of Arminius experienced a more radical instrumentalisation. The Cheruscan was used as an heroic national symbol to increase war fever e.g., by martial phrases on postcards "We are fighting under Hermann's sign until all our enemies pale!" (Seeba 1995, 358; Dörner 1996, 219–25; Bendikowski 2008, 184–187; Born 2009, 11; Kösters 2009a, 273; Mellies 2009c, 17; Mythos 2009, 376–377; Haude 2010)¹⁶.

During the Weimar Republic (1919–1933) Arminius and the Hermann Monument retained their role as national symbols exploited by nationalistic opponents of democracy. Against the background of the German defeat in World War I, the victorious Cheruscan was seen as a shining but tragic example. Together with Siegfried of the Nibelung saga, he was a successful warrior, ultimately murdered by opponents within his own tribe. This picture was used to illustrate the so-called "Stab-in-the-back

¹⁴For the French point of view on Arminius cf. von Ungern-Sternberg 2008; for contemporary art Bemann 2002, 236–241; Mythos 2009, 276–277, 366–369.

¹⁵Cf. Bendikowski 2008, 180; Mellies 2009b, 263 for events before 1909.

¹⁶Cited in Mythos 2009, 376 no. 316.



Fig. 3. “2000 years Varus battle”: the exhibition “Imperium Conflict Myth” and the international cultural programme. Right: http://www.hermann2009.de/fileadmin/user_upload/downloads_09/06_SER/Programmheft_IKP_2009.pdf; left: http://www.lwl.org/2000jahrevarusschlacht/SERVICE/Touristische_Informationenbroschuere.pdf

legend”, a popular conspiracy theory by antidemocrats, who blamed the socialists, amongst others, for the German defeat in the First World War and claimed that the German army was unbeaten in war, but betrayed at home (Dörner 1996, 226–252; Bendikowski 2008, 187–195; 2009b, 10–11; Wolters 2008, 193–197; Born 2009, 11; Jakob 2009, 38–39; Kösters 2009a, 287–293; 2009c, 5; Mellies 2009, 17–18; Mythos 2009, 378–379; Ruppert 2009, 3; Weidner *et al.* 2009; Haude 2010)¹⁷.

Another propaganda issue was clearly expressed at the launch ceremony of the first film adaptation, a silent movie, shot during the “Occupation of the Ruhr” (1923–1925) by French and Belgian troops that was the result of the failure of the Weimar Republic

¹⁷ Already in 1909, Arminius was compared to Siegfried, as stated e.g., on a postcard: “Armin — German Siegfried. Delivered Germania out of the burden of Romans”, cf. Wiegels 2009, 24 fig. 4.

to pay World War I reparations (Losemann 1994, 35; 1995, 423; Hermannsschlacht 1995; Stern, Tode 2005, 120, 122, 126; Mythos 2009, 379; Ruppert 2009, 8; Weidner *et al.* 2009; annex 9). The historical equation was made to give a hopeful example, well explained at the launch: “Then the day of revenge will come, when we push back the deadly enemy from Saar and Rhine — then we will burst the chains of slavery and be free as our ancestors”(Jakob 2009, 13).

In the 1920s and in particular in 1925, in connection with the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the construction of Hermann Monument, several patriotic and nationalistic speeches as well as paramilitary meetings took place at the site. The highlight of the celebrations was the so-called “Hermann race”; 130,000 runners from all over the Germany participated in a three-day relay in 1925. In this demonstration of national unity, it was more of a political than sporting event (Veddeler 1975, 176–180; Losemann 1995, 422–423; Dörner 1996, 249–252; Wolfrum 1999, 167; Mellies 2001, 48–49; 2009b, 266–268; Bemmann 2002, 247–249; Bendikowski 2008, 189–192; 2009b, 10–11; Wiegels 2008a, 47–48; Wolters 2008, 196–197; Althoff 2009; Kösters 2009 a, 294–302; Mythos 2009, 379–381; Weidner *et al.* 2009; Haude 2010).

In the election campaign of 1933, the Nazi party used Hermann as a symbolic figure in the Lippe region only. Kleist’s and Grabbe’s plays “Hermann battle” regained popularity; several other novels on this topic were published. Between 1933 and 1945 regional demonstrations and party meetings took place at the memorial; the battle of 9 AD was included in a sequence of wall tapestries prepared for Adolf Hitler’s New Reich Chancellery. Again, postcards were printed with political messages such as “where once Germans’ leader freed German land from the enemy, Hitler’s victorious flags float in the new era powerfully” (Weidner *et al.* 2009). However, Arminius did not play such an important role as one might expect under the Nazi regime. As contemporary sources are silent in this respect, several reasons have been discussed in research literature. The most probable amongst these is that Hermann, a rebel against the ruling state power, was unsuitable as a model because he was ultimately murdered by members of his own tribe (Losemann 1994, 35–38; 1995, 424–428; Seeba 1995, 362–364; Dörner 1996, 252–254; Mellies 2001, 44–53; 2009b, 268–270; 2009c, 18–19; Bemmann 2002, 208; 250–254; Stern, Tode 2005, 130; Bendikowski 2008, 196–203; 2009b, 11; Wolters 2008, 197–198; Born 2009, 11–12; Hiller von Gaertringen 2009b; Jakob 2009, 39–41; Kösters 2009a, 219–220; 303–324; Mythos 2009, 349–350, 384–386; Ruppert 2009, 3; Weidner *et al.* 2009; Wiegels 2009, 26–27).

Nevertheless, as a result of Germanophile propaganda in Nazi Germany, Arminius’ position needed reevaluation. In the post-war period, we have to distinguish between an Eastern and a Western interpretation, both of which have certain commonalities.

In the German Democratic Republic (GDR), heavily influenced by Friedrich Engels’ “On the Early History of the Germans”, the Varus battle was seen as a Germanic struggle for freedom against the exploitative Roman slave-owning society. In 1957, Kleist’s “Hermann Battle” was directed with a certain political message against the Western world: “1. Rome: is America to us. 2. The German people, divided, stirred up against each other by Rome, and incited to fratricidal war: that is the German West and the German East; and especially the German workers in West and East. [...]”

3. Forgiving and forgetting among the defrauded and misled German brothers and Hermann — this is how we want to behave when German unity is hard won”¹⁸ (Engels 1881/1882; Krüger 1986; Dörner 1996, 258–260; Bendikowski 2008, 204–208; 2009b, 8–13; Born 2009, 12; Mellies 2009c, 19).

In West Germany, the Hermann Monument remained a focal point. In 1950, the celebration of 75 years since the construction of the Hermann Monument was deliberately peaceful and organised “in the interest of tourism”¹⁹. A memorial stone was placed with the inscription: “On the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Hermann Memorial, German men and woman pledge themselves unanimously to the unification of peoples through peace” (cited in Mellies 2009b, 271). From today’s point of view, some accordance is evident in the phrasing as well as the type of the events organised in this context (e.g., a parade, a rally, a regional trade fair), particularly so as the site was consciously chosen for a meeting of 20,000 German expellees (Veddeler 1975, 180–182; Dörner 1996, 256–257; Mellies 2001, 48; 2009b, 270–272; 2009c, 19; Bendikowski 2008, 208–209; Jakob 2009, 41–42; Weidner *et al.* 2009; annex 3). Between 1954 and 1957, the German Liberal Party (FDP) commemorated the former Day of German Unity at the Hermann Monument (remembering the suppression of the uprising in the GDR in 1953). The programme was reminiscent of former events: a Protestant church service was followed by a ceremony including torchlight parades and nationalistic speeches, given by, for example, Thomas Dehler (1897–1967) the party chairman at the time. He suggested that the struggle for unity and freedom were the tragic theme of German history, which appears as an attempt to downplay contemporary war guilt. Due to the anti-Catholic statements made by Dehler — but probably also because of the site, connected to Bismarck’s culture struggle policy — the Archbishop of Paderborn prohibited Catholic clergy from participating in such celebrations. Nevertheless, they attracted up to 20,000 visitors (Wolfrum 1999, 124–134; Bendikowski 2008, 209–212, fig. 51; Born 2009, 12; Mellies 2009b, 271–272)²⁰.

In the late 1960s, and in the course of contemporary student movements, the Detmold monument lost its political significance. Critical discussions started in historical research, initiated by Dieter Timpe (*1931), who described Arminius not as the head of a liberation movement but as leader of a Germanic auxiliary unit in mutiny, and Thomas Nipperdey (1927–1992), who addressed the issue of the instrumentalisation of the Hermann Monument (Nipperdey 1968; Timpe 1970; 1973). The painter Anselm Kiefer (*1945) dealt with the event of 9 AD, linking it to German patriotism and National Socialism²¹. In 1982, Claus Peymann was the first to perform Kleist’s “Hermann Battle” in a West German theatre after World War II. His expressive interpretation focuses on the destructiveness of war, according to “Theatre is better than

¹⁸ Programme 1957 (“Begleitheft der Deutschen Festspiele”) cited in Dörner (1996, 261).

¹⁹ “Festschrift 1950” cited in Wiegels (2008a, 48).

²⁰ See Wolfrum (1999, 124–249) for various similar events in these years.

²¹ Kiefer A. 1976 “Varus”, oil and acryl on canvas, Eindhoven; 1977 “Hermannsschlacht”, oil and acryl on canvas, Darmstadt; “Wege der Weltweisheit: Hermannsschlacht”, oil on woodcut on paper mounted on canvas, New York (cf. Mythos 2009, 388 no. 368); 1980/1981 “Teutoburger Wald (Wege der Weltweisheit)”, oil and woodcut on paper laid down on canvas.

war”²². The loss of political significance was complete in 1975, when the centenary of the completion of the Hermann Monument was celebrated with a scientific commemorative volume instead of a large-scale political event. It is also apparent in the way ancient history is presented in school books. Some volumes picture the Hermann monument as an illustration of an important remote person, but refrain from introducing him as a positive role model (Stier 1972; Engelbert 1975; Nipperdey 1975; Losemann 1994, 38–41; 1995, 428–432; Seeba 1994, 71; 1995, 356; Dörner 1996, 256–264; Mellies 2001, 45–52; 2009b, 272; Bemann 2002, 190–261; Sénécheau 2007; Bendikowski 2008, 212–216; Riemenschneider 2008; Wiegels 2008a, 30–31; 2009, 28; Wolters 2008, 198–199, 209–210; Jakob 2009, 42; Kehne 2009, 110–111; Kösters 2009c, 6; Mythos 2009, 348; Weidner *et al.* 2009; annex 2).

Even in connection with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, Hermann did not achieve any particular profile. As the historian Tillmann Bendikowski (*1965) emphasised, this was the first event in German history connected with national unity during which Arminius did not figure. This might be due to the remote location of his monument in the Lippe region — a long way from the intra-German border as the centre of important events and significant pictures suitable for TV. However, the number of visitors at Hermann Monument rose distinctly in this year, probably due to the fact that Arminius was a positive role model in GDR and was well known to its citizens (fig. 4; Bemann 2002, 258; Bendikowski 2008, 216–218; Born 2009, 12).

As a result of the archaeological discoveries in Kalkriese in the late 1980s, the Teutoburg Forest battle became a popular subject, widely discussed amongst the German public. As the event had been connected to the Lippe region since the humanist period, the new discoveries meant the loss of regional identity, which its inhabitants found difficult to accept. A veritable “Battle about the battlefield” arose in public and in politics and was discussed heavily in publications, newspapers and on the internet. A criminal charge was even filed against the Museum of Kalkriese because of an economic subsidy fraud. This was dismissed as the district Osnabrück announced that it supported research on a Roman-Germanic battlefield, and not the results of an excavation (see annex 8).

Besides this historical and (regional) political discussion, the Hermann battle and the Monument achieved more entertaining and tourist aspects. In the 1960s a low budget sword-and-sandal film was produced as a German-Italian cooperation, followed by a satirical interpretation in the 1990s. Currently, two monumental epic films are in production in the US and in Germany (Dörner 1996, 256; Bemann 2002, 262; Stern, Tode 2005, 120–130; Weidner *et al.* 2009; annex 9). The so-called “Hermann race” is an annually organised sports event, attracting around 7,000 athletes. Despite bearing the same name as the relay in 1925, any connection was denied by Wolfgang Schlüter, one of the initiators: “We didn’t even know this [...] Although it was a mass event [...], no one got in touch with us when we organised our first ‘Hermannslauf’ in 1972. Probably nobody wanted to remember those days” (cited

²²Theatre poster cited in Bendikowski (2008, fig. 55).

in Althoff 2009)²³. In 1999, the Hermann monument was included in the Guinness Book of Records, as it was dressed in the world's largest football shirt for three weeks. This was an event arranged by the football club based in Bielefeld, founded at the beginning of the 20th century under the name of the Cheruscan, "Arminia Bielefeld". In 2006, when the FIFA World Cup was held in Germany, the Hermann Memorial was dressed up again, but this time in a huge model railway, at the so-called "Miniatur Wunderland" in Hamburg (Detmold 1999; Bendikowski 2008, fig. 56; Mythos 2009, 389).

... drawn in 2009

Today the Hermann Monument is the most popular destination in the region of East Westphalia-Lippe, and ranks 14th in the top twenty of German sights. It is held by the "Foundation for Monuments" (Denkmal-Stiftung), which is an institution of the "Lippe National Association" (Landesverband Lippe), and preserved "for the German people as a memorial of unity and of peace in remembrance of the terrible World Wars"²⁴. "Hermann" became a trademark that has been used for 1.5 years to advertise tourism in the Lippe region. The so-called "Hermann office" is part of the "Lippe Tourismus & Marketing AG", a privately (51%) and publicly (49%) funded company, the aim of which is to support economy, tourism, education, and culture. The "Land of Hermann" offers a public footpath, the so-called "Hermann trail" through the "Hermann heights" to attract visitors. The same economic benefit — on a smaller scale — is drawn in the "Varus region" north of Osnabrück around Kalkriese. Regional shops, museums and providers advertise local products and services with the name of the Cheruscan, such as "Hermannic bread", "the powerful pleasure", that "tastes like Hermann". Some play with the history ironically, such as the "Zwermann"/"Gnomann" — a garden gnome (*Gartenzwerg*) in the shape of the Hermann Monument, "weather- and shatter-proof like all freedom fighters" (see fig. 1; Schmidt 1975; Dörner 1996, 256–257; Positionspapier 2006; Zitscher, Huxoll, Maring 2007, 25–31; Bendikowski 2008, 213, 230; Wolters 2008, 200–201; Hauff 2009; Mythos 2009, 389; Hermannsdenkmal 2010; annexes 1–7).

Several authors have pointed out that the different celebrations linked to the Varus' battle or the Hermann monument very clearly reflect respective contemporary German society. Following our enquiry, we have to consider the anniversary year of 2009²⁵. 2000 years after the battle of Teutoburg Forest, Arminius was present in public on TV

²³In more recent past relay races to the Hermann Monument took place, such as in 1959, with an attendance of 5,000 (Wolfrum 1999, 167).

²⁴Quotation from "Statutes of the Hermann Monument foundation" (annex 3). In 2009, the former "Trust of the monument of Hermann" (Hermannsdenkmal-Stiftung) was associated with the administration of the nearby rock formation "Externsteine".

²⁵For the anniversaries in 2000 (125 years of Hermann Memorial as well as the 200th birthday of E. von Bandel) cf. Bünemann 2001; Bemann 2002, 262–264; Wiegels 2008a, 49; Mellies 2009b, 272.

and the radio²⁶, on the internet as well as in printed media. New edited publications range from historical novels to specialist books aimed at the public and researchers, including nearly 25,000 articles in newspapers and magazines. Some volumes even made the German bestseller list²⁷. Several international research meetings took place, as well as public and scientific lectures and exhibitions. A special stamp was also issued (Bendikowski 2008b; Born 2009, 12; Häusler 2009a; Weidner *et al.* 2009; Cramme 2010; Haude 2010; annexes 1–7).

Institutions in charge of East Westphalia-Lippe and south Lower Saxony agreed on the inter-state collective concept “Imperium Conflict Myth. 2000 Years Varus Battle” (see fig. 3), including numerous events for the public and researchers, corporate marketing and presence in the media and internet (Zitscher, Huxoll, Maring 2007; Treude, Derks, Aßkamp 2009, 16–17; Zelle 2009)²⁸. With regards to German history, a deliberately European dimension was given to the official programme. Illustrations depict the Hermann Monument in a romantic and peaceful way, at sundown or in the snow. The phrasing “Varusschlacht” dissociates the project from former Germanophile presentations, but it is also a more neutral expression to link the two regions, the “Land of Hermann” and the surrounding area of Osnabrück.

The central activity was a cooperative exhibition at three authentic locations in Lower Saxony and North Rhine-Westphalia. Presentations in Haltern (the site of a Roman fort), and Kalkriese (the assumed battlefield of 9 AD) covered the topics history and culture of the Roman “empire” and various Roman-Germanic “conflict”(s). Detmold Museum, close to the Hermann Monument, dealt with Germanic culture and focused on the historical resonance and exploitation of the Hermann myth. The Chancellor of Germany, the Prime Ministers of Lower Saxony and North Rhine-Westphalia, as well as the President of the European Parliament acted as patrons of the project. About 7500 objects on loan from international museums were integrated in a multimedia concept with new media and touchable interactive elements. Illustrations of Germanic life were distanced consciously from former times, e.g., by using a comic style, alienated video projections or lenticular printing with 3D and motion effects. The designers of the exhibition “Conflict” have been honoured with the “red dot communication design award 2009”. The overall costs amounted to about 12 million Euro. Between May and October, the exhibitions attracted the expected number of 450,000 visitors, the optional combined ticket for all three exhibitions as well as the exhibition catalogues of a combined 1,200 pages needed to be reprinted. Special books for children were available. Audio guides, guided tours and costumed guided tours for all ages allowed easy access to the exhibitions.

In addition, the already mentioned “Hermann office” developed an international cultural programme focusing on the Lippe region (see fig. 3). The aim is to produce

²⁶ About 100 television and 250 radio broadcastings.

²⁷ This is no recent development, for the relation between political events, anniversaries in connection with Hermann and literature about Hermann cf. Mellies 2001, 54–55 fig. 1.

²⁸ North Rhine-Westphalia: “Landschaftsverband Westfalen-Lippe” and “Landesverband Lippe” (Regional Associations). “Kreis Lippe” (District), Lower Saxony: “Varusschlacht im Osnabrücker Land GmbH — Museum und Park Kalkriese”.

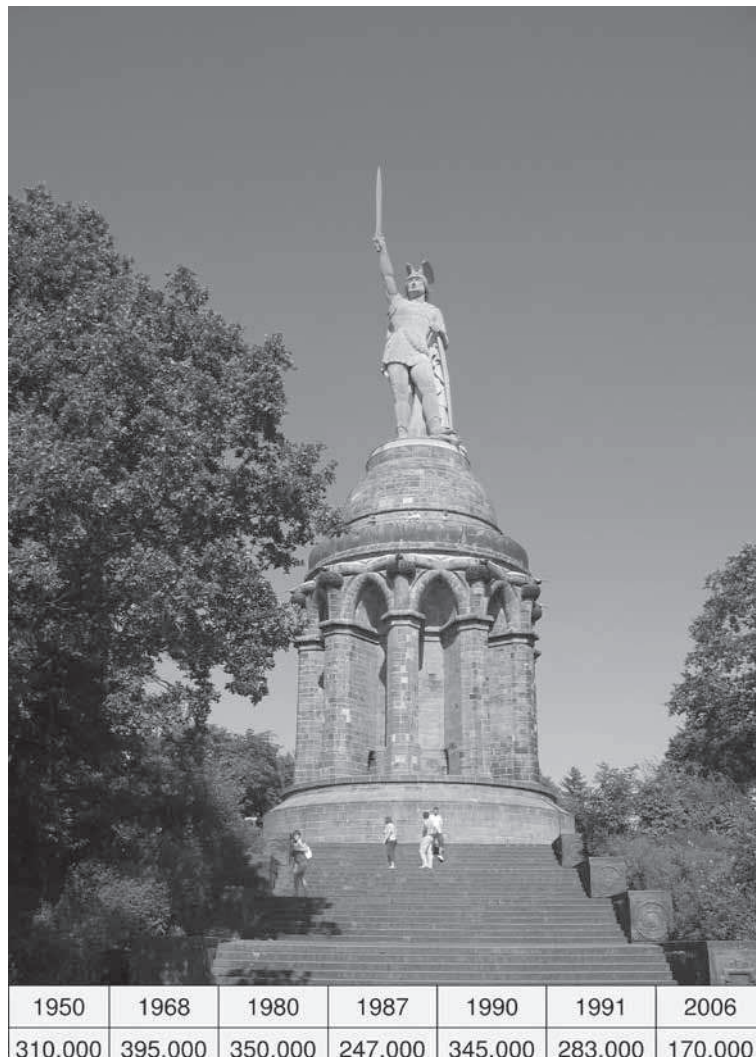


Fig. 4. Hermann Monument in vicinity to Detmold, Lippe region. Annually number of ascents. The number of visitors might be four or five times more. photo Th. Schultz, Frankfurt; references: Jakob 2009, 42; <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-44448577.html>; <http://www.westfaelische-geschichte.de/med499>; <http://www.wz-newsline.de/?redid=136488>.

an image effect for the economy, tourism and culture in the “Land of Hermann” zone by realising targeted marketing, compelling public relations and advertising activities. All projects have been drawn up with a view to containing medium and long term development potentials, and having a lasting effect. More precisely, the programme includes a wide range of events for all ages: concerts from classical music to punk, theatre performances (e.g., interpretations of Kleist’s and Grabbe’s texts) and cinema, contemporary art activities and projects (e.g., “Turning Roman Army Standards into

Peace Symbols”), workshops, re-enactment festivals, and some special events (such as public weddings for international couples at the Hermann Monument) as well as the “traditionally” organised parade through Detmold — this time an international event with 800 costumed participants from 18 countries which attracted up to 40,000 visitors (Zitscher, Huxoll, Maring 2007; Wiegels 2008a, 28–30; Hermanns 2009; Schneider, Neumann 2009; Treude, Derks, Aßkamp 2009; Weidner *et al.* 2009; Zelle 2009; annexes 1–2).

The reception history of Arminius and the Teutoburg Forest battle covered a wide range of interpretations on the basis of comparing past and present — a common destiny suffered by other national heroes all over Europe. The end of World War II, and the historical analyses in the late 1960s meant an important break in the increasing instrumentalisation for nationalistic matters which is clearly illustrated in the contrasting values attributed to the Hermann Monument, built as a sign for national victory, now preserved as a national peace memorial.

This raises the key issue whether Arminius is of relevance to contemporary Germans. Today, the Cheruscan is a contributor of local identity in the “Land of Herman”, as well as in the “Varus region”. Despite this, he is of less importance outside southern Lower-Saxony and East Westphalia-Lippe, which is illustrated in the frequency of streets names referring to Arminius (see fig. 2). The distribution of sports clubs bearing his name shows that this relation — in addition to supra-regional policy issues — already existed at the end of the 19th century. Taking account of the facts that ancient sources locate the Germanic tribe of the Cherusci in this area and national unity — the source of Hermann’s enormous popularity — existed neither in the Germanic period nor before 1871, it should be no surprise that his popularity remains significant in the area discussed. Other regions created their own (local) heroes, for example Klaus Störtebeker on the Baltic sea, who is likewise irrelevant in the south of Germany.

Arminius’ status led to his use in advertising, mostly for regional products and offers. This economic effect has been connected to the monument for quite a long time, good examples are the “Arminius” and “Hermann cakes”, products of the C. Pecher bakery in Detmold, sold as part of the 1900th anniversary of the Teutoburg battle (Festschrift 1909).

During 2009 in particular, various approaches to the battle of 9 AD were offered. The exhibitions “Imperium Conflict Myth” and the culture programme were well received. Entertaining presentations, new media and effective events attracted visitors or customers of all ages. Besides the traditional aims of collecting, preserving and increasing knowledge, museums offered entertaining and commercial events. Public outreach is gaining more and more in importance.

The question of the location of the battlefield is a specific research subject to be answered with archaeological and historical methods. Intense public discussion draws attention to the impact of archaeology on regional policy, its effect on economy and tourism, regional identity and local patriotism.

New media are of increasing importance to the process of distributing knowledge about the past. Information flows rapidly, especially on the internet. Besides serious

and/or well-presented information there are simplifying, old-fashioned, dubious or even tendentious interpretations. With regard to the confusing mass of information, it is often difficult to classify. Some headlines serve the old-fashioned prejudices of linking Germanic people and a German nation to produce easy and focused headlines, for example by characterising the event of 9 AD as the “Germans’ birth”, or Arminius as “commander from the swamps”, “who invented Germany” — some of them merely to raise readers’ attention, others through conviction. The discussion is continued in various and extensive online fora. Opinions expressed are often alarmingly unreflected and patriotic as well as full of historical mistakes. The anniversary was taken up in the far right for agitating propaganda issues. Right-wing extremists agitate along the lines of “Hermann battle: 2000 years of fighting against foreign infiltration — for national self-determination”, Antifascists are encouraged to “Romanise Nazis away”²⁹. But besides these extreme positions, the “Che Rusker” is of no political importance and more of a label that plays with the similarity of the name of the Cherusci and the major figure of the Cuban Revolution Che Guevara (1928–1967) than a political symbol (see fig. 1) (Losemann 1994, 38–41; 1995, 428–432; Stern, Tode 2005, 132–135; Bendikowski 2009a; Häusler 2009a; 2009b; Lohmann, Raabe 2009; Mellies 2009b, 272; 2009c, 19; Ottomeyer 2009, 140–141; Raabe 2009; annexes 1–5).

The historian and archaeologist Rainer Wiegels (*1940) evaluates the meaning of the Varus battle as a disillusion, as “it seems that the historical effect in the course of reception, and by means of instrumentalisation since early modern times, was wider than the impact in its actual, ancient context” (Wiegels 2008a, 28). With regard to 2009, we can add that the economic value — an aspect that has existed at least since the unveiling of the Hermann Monument in 1875 — has never been of such importance. Without doubt, this is the most healthy and delicious interpretation at all times — clearly expressed at the Grotenburg Restaurant, which offers Schnitzel “Cheruscan” as well as “Toscana”, served with French fries (Stern, Tode 2005, 132–135; Bendikowski 2008, 232–234; 2009 a, 19; Kehne 2009, 111; Weidner *et al.* 2009; Wiegels 2009, 28; annexes 3).

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Nina Schücker

OBLICZA ARMINIUSZA: BITWA W LESIE TEUTOBURSKIM W ODBIORZE NIEMIECKIEJ OPINII PUBLICZNEJ (streszczenie)

Za panowania Augusta Rzymianie przekształcili terytoria germańskie leżące na wschód od Renu, stanowiące obecnie obszar północno-zachodnich Niemiec, „niemalże w prowincję trybutarną”. W roku 9 n.e. Arminiusz, arystokrata z plemienia Cherusków, rozpoczął powstanie przeciwko Rzymianom. W bitwie w Lesie Teutońskim poprowadził on koalicję wojowników germańskich do spektakularnego zwycięstwa nad trzema rzymskimi legionami oraz ich sojusznikami, dowodzonymi przez namiestnika Germanii Publiusza Kwintyliusza Warusa. Rzym wkrótce zrekompensował sobie straty militarne, niemniej jednak cesarz Tyberiusz porzucił powstającą prowincję w 17 r. n. e. Współcześni badacze umniejszają wpływ tej bitwy na decyzję Rzymian o wycofaniu się z prowincji i tłumaczą ten fakt raczej poprzez wskazywanie na rolę różnych czynników wewnątrz Imperium Rzymskiego. Pozostaje to w sprzeczności do różnych wartości, symboli oraz mitów przypisywanych temu wydarzeniu przez społeczeństwo niemieckie na podstawie charakterystyki Arminiusza („niewątpliwego wybawiciela Germanii”), dokonanej przez Tacyta.

Nowożytna recepcja bitwy w Lesie Teutońskim rozpoczęła się wkrótce po ponownym odkryciu pism Tacyta w pierwszej dekadzie XVI w., w okresie humanizmu. W końcu XVIII w. Arminiuszowi i wydarzeniom z 9 roku n.e. zostały przypisane określone atrybuty związane z patriotyzmem („niemiecki Hermann”), heroizmem („pierwszy obrońca swojego kraju”) i wartościami moralnymi (wspaniały i tragiczny

władca/dzikus), a także pewne specyficzne cechy regionalne (lokalizacja miejsca bitwy, szczególnie w regionie wschodniej Westfalii-Lippe na obszarze ponownie określonym jako „Las Teutoburski”). W wieku XIX, gdy w Europie upowszechniały się idee narodowe, Hermann stał się symbolem niemieckiej jedności narodowej, która nie istniała przed 1871 r., wspólnej niemieckiej tożsamości oraz przykładem zwycięstwa w walce przeciwko wrogom (zarówno zewnętrznym, jak i wewnętrznym). Wszystko to wiązało się z nostalgiczną gloryfikacją epoki germańskiej, z której — zdaniem Niemców — bezpośrednio się oni wywodzili. Wszystkie te cechy zostały zilustrowane w pomniku poświęconym Hermannowi w pobliżu miasta Detmold, który po prawie czterdziestoletnim okresie budowy został ceremonialnie odsłonięty w 1875 r. Statua Arminiusza unoszącego w górę miecz i noszącego na głowie hełm ze skrzydłami stała się powszechnie znanym symbolem, uosabiającym różne atrybuty związane z Cheruskami.

W przededniu oraz w trakcie trwania I wojny światowej i w okresie Republiki Weimarskiej (1919–1933) instrumentalne wykorzystywanie tego symbolu stało się jeszcze bardziej radykalne i ewidentne. Arminiusz i pomnik Hermanna były używane przez nacjonalistycznych przeciwników demokracji na potrzeby agitacji przeciw zewnętrznym i wewnętrznym wrogom. Pomimo germanofilskiej propagandy obecnej w nazistowskich Niemczech bitwa w Lesie Teutoburskim nie miała jednak w tym okresie zbyt dużego znaczenia. Po II wojnie światowej w dalszym ciągu odwoływano się do symboliki związanej z bitwą w Lesie Teutoburskim. W NRD wydarzenie to było przedstawiane jako walka o wolność wymierzona w oparte na wyzysku i posiadające niewolników społeczeństwo oraz jako model relacji ze światem zachodnim. Pomnik Hermanna, znajdujący się w RFN, z jednej strony był świadomie eksponowany jako atrakcja turystyczna. Zbudowany pierwotnie jako symbol narodowego zwycięstwa jest obecnie utrzymywany z publicznych pieniędzy jako narodowy pomnik pokoju. Z drugiej natomiast strony w sposób przemyślany stanowił miejsce organizacji kilku wydarzeń politycznych, związanych z narodem niemieckim. Jednakże w końcu lat 60. XX w., szczególnie w związku z rozwojem ruchu studenckiego, stracił on swoje znaczenie polityczne aż do roku 1989. Nawet jednak wówczas nie pojawiał się on w mediach w związku z kontekstem ponownego zjednoczenia Niemiec.

W historii badań nad zagadnieniem brano pod uwagę kilkaset lokalizacji miejsca klęski Warusa. W roku 1989 w Kalkrise na północ od Osnabrück odkryto pozostałości pola bitewnego datowanego na początek I w. n.e., które to miejsce może być w najbardziej prawdopodobny sposób powiązane z wydarzeniem z 9 r. n.e. W konsekwencji sama lokalizacja miejsca bitwy, stanowiąca przedmiot badań, wywołała szeroką debatę publiczną, ilustrując znaczenie (odległej) przeszłości dla lokalnej/regionalnej tożsamości i patriotyzmu. Należy jednak zaznaczyć, że pomimo miana „niemieckiego bohatera narodowego” postać Arminiusza nie ma większego znaczenia poza terenem południowej Dolnej Saksonii i wschodniej Westfalii-Lippe, czyli obszarem, na którym starożytne źródła pozwalają umiejscowić Cherusków.

Z nazwy „Hermann” uczyniono znak towarowy, wykorzystywany w przemyśle turystycznym i reklamujący również lokalne wyroby i usługi. Pomnik Hermanna w tak zwanej „Krainie Hermanna” oraz Muzeum w Kalkrise w „Regionie Warusa” stanowią popularne cele wycieczek, będąc przykładem wpływu archeologii na ekonomię i turystykę tego obszaru, co samo w sobie od dawna już stanowi dobrze znane zjawisko.

W roku 2009, w związku z przypadającą wówczas dwutysięczną rocznicą bitwy w Lesie Teutoburskim, we wschodniej Westfalii-Lippe i południowej Dolnej Saksonii rozpoczęto realizację projektu kulturalnego „Imperium Konflikt Mit. 2000 lat bitwy Warusa”, opartego na wzajemnej współpracy pomiędzy krajami związkowymi. Główny element tego projektu stanowiła wspólna wystawa prezentowana w trzech miejscach na terenie Dolnej Saksonii i północnej Nadrenii-Westfalii, którą odwiedziło 450 000 osób. Zwiedzających we wszystkich grupach wiekowych przyciągnęły ciekawe prezentacje oferujące rozrywkę, zastosowanie nowych mediów oraz inne różne atrakcyjne imprezy. Dodatkowo „biuro Hermanna” opracowało międzynarodowy program kulturalny, który miał na celu stworzenie efektywnego wizerunku poprzez działania marketingowe, reklamowe i z zakresu *public relations* na potrzeby ekonomii, turystyki i kultury.

Zagadnienie było obecne w różnych mediach: telewizji, radio, Internecie oraz w prasie. Obok poważnych i/lub dobrze zaprezentowanych informacji, pojawiły się też interpretacje uproszczone, przestarzałe, wątpliwe lub nawet tendencyjne. Rocznicą została również wykorzystana dla celów propagandowych przez organizacje skrajnie prawicowe. Pomimo to „Che Rusker” stanowi obecnie raczej etykietę aniżeli symbol polityczny.

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