

## Rom und die Provinzen

Rudolf Aßkamp and Tobias Esch (editors), **Imperium. Varus und seine Zeit. Beiträge zum internationalen Kolloquium des LWL-Römermuseums am 28. und 29. April 2008 in Münster.** Veröffentlichungen der Altkommision für Westfalen, Landschaftsverband Westfalen-Lippe, volume 18. Publisher Aschendorff, Münster 2010. 246 pages, 136 figures, 5 tables.

Since 1987, the name of Publius Quinctilius Varus has become familiar internationally to European archaeologists, as well as to ancient historians, and to many millions of people all over the world who have read articles and books and seen television programs about the extraordinary finds from the Kalkriese battlefield and the story of its background. Before that discovery a quarter of a century ago, the name of Varus was little known outside of the field of Roman history.

Varus's role in the story of the »Battle of the Teutoburg Forest«, as it has been called after Tacitus's use of the term »saltus teutoburgensis« (though as we know now, it did not take place in the area now known as the »Teutoburg Forest«), has been largely that of scapegoat, as Werner Eck notes in this new volume. Varus's contemporary Velleius Paterculus criticized him severely, and the accounts by Tacitus and Dio Cassius portray him as a rather hapless victim of the devious subterfuges of Arminius and of the difficult topographical and climatic conditions of northern Germany. But as this book demonstrates, there is much more to Varus's life story than his falling into a trap set for him by Arminius and the subsequent near annihilation of his troops and, a few years later, Rome's giving up of plans to conquer the lands east of the lower Rhine.

This attractive new book explores Varus's career and places it and him into a wider historical, geographical, and cultural context. It originated in an international conference held in 2008 in Münster, organized on the occasion of the two thousand year anniversary of the great battle. The volume is organized into four sections. The first is comprised of three papers about Varus and his career and about Arminius's status with respect to Roman law. In the second section, five papers deal with the archaeological evidence pertaining to Roman military activity in Europe, first in connection with the Pannonian Revolt of A. D. 6–9, then with the Alpine campaigns of 15 B. C. and with Roman bases on the lower Rhine and occu-

pation of the territory on the east bank of the river. The third section includes five papers that deal with other regions in which Varus spent parts of his career. They concern the cities of Lepcis Magna (now in Libya), Nikopolis (Greece), Zeugma (Turkey), and Caesarea Maritima (Israel), and one presents an overview of Augustus's interactions with the Parthians. The fourth section has four papers dealing with the art and architecture of the period, with specific attention to the Ara Pacis, wall paintings in the Villa della Farnesina in Rome, and Tivoli.

One of the strengths of this book is the interdisciplinary approach to its examination of the history and archaeology of the years that Varus was active. Among the disciplines represented by the seventeen papers are prehistoric archaeology, provincial Roman archaeology, Classical archaeology, art history, architectural history, ancient history, epigraphy, numismatics, and legal history. The focus of my discussion here will be on the papers in the first two sections.

The principal aspects of Varus's career have been summarized elsewhere – his connections to the powerful families in Rome, his administrative posts, including his overseas assignments, and his catastrophic defeat at the hands of Arminius and his troops. Here Werner Eck presents a succinct summary of Varus's background and career, making clear what we know as fact and what we can only surmise because of lack of detailed documentation. He brings into the discussion a lead disk from Dangstetten, the site of a Roman military base on the upper Rhine in the community of Küssaberg, Landkreis Waldshut, that indicates that Varus was legate of the nineteenth Legion. This important piece of evidence, discussed further in a paper by Nuber (see below), suggests that Varus participated in the military campaign led by Tiberius and Drusus that resulted in the conquest of the lands south of the upper Danube in the year 15 B. C. This evidence indicates a long association of Varus with the nineteenth Legion, from 16 or 15 B. C. until his death and the demise of that legion in A. D. 9.

The major archaeological discoveries that have been made at Kalkriese since 1987 through extensive systematic excavations have provided a unique picture of a Roman period battlefield in Europe, in all its complexity. Very rarely do we have such detailed archaeological information about a historically documented battlefield. In light of the data from Kalkriese, Ivan

Radman-Livaja and Marko Dizdar's paper on archaeological evidence pertaining to the Pannonian Revolt, recorded in texts during the years 6–9 A. D., is of special interest for broadening our understanding of the character of military conflicts during this period. According to our understanding of the historical record, this revolt drew Roman legions away from the efforts led by Tiberius and Sentius Saturninus to conquer lands east of the Rhine, and brought them to Pannonia and Dalmatia to quell the uprisings, which threatened not only these lands recently acquired by Rome, but Roman Italy itself. Modern speculation suggests that Arminius may have participated in the Roman military's putting down of the revolt and been inspired by what he experienced there. Radman-Livaja and Dizdar review a number of sites and individual finds that may provide direct archaeological evidence for the revolt and for the Roman response to it. A large military base at Obrežje on the border of Slovenia and Croatia may have been used as a supply center. Roman helmets from this period have been recovered from the Sava River at a number of different locations. Other weapons, including pila, swords, and daggers from Sisak may have been associated with the conflict. Numerous excellent illustrations of the objects described accompany the text of this paper.

Hans Ulrich Nuber writes about the strategies that the Roman leaders employed in the campaign of 15 B. C. Although the campaign is well documented in the written sources, as well as in epigraphic evidence such as the victory monument at La Turbie with the inscribed names of nearly fifty identifiable peoples conquered, we still lack detailed information about the identity of the leaders and of their soldiers. Nuber focuses on the base at Dangstetten, excavated between 1967 and 1988. The chronology of the site determined by coins and pottery indicates Roman presence between 20 and 8 B. C. Analysis of epigraphic evidence suggests a narrower date, around 16–13 B. C., and documents the presence of the nineteenth Legion. Of special importance is a lead disk 3.6 centimeters in diameter with a hole in the center, perhaps to be suspended as a pendant. The inscription on one side names Varus as legate of the nineteenth Legion and strongly suggests that he and the legion were based at Dangstetten and that therefore he led a contingent of troops in the Alpine campaign of 15 B. C.

In his paper on the Alpine campaign of 15 B. C., Werner Zanier provides an overview of what we know from historical and archaeological evidence, focusing on the site of Döttenbichl but bringing a number of other important sites into the discussion. The textual sources do not name the legions involved in the campaign, but epigraphic evidence indicates the numbers of four legions – the third, tenth, twelfth, and nineteenth. At Döttenbichl more than one thousand metal objects from that time have been recovered and studied. Zanier interprets them as offerings that were deposited on a sanctuary site that covered some 180 by 160 meters. His analysis distinguishes objects from

two different cultural spheres – local and Roman. Belonging to the first category are different kinds of personal ornaments of metal and glass beads, as well as tools and weapons. Associated with the Roman military are boot nails, helmet parts, daggers, catapult bolt points, arrowheads, and coins. Three catapult bolt points are stamped with the inscription »LEG XIX«, providing strong evidence for the presence of the nineteenth Legion. Zanier suggests that the Roman materials were lost in the course of a battle on or near the site and that local people collected them and deposited them at this sanctuary. He makes an interesting comparison with the assemblage of Roman material recovered at Kalkriese. At Döttenbichl, the weaponry is dominated by weapons propelled from a distance – over four hundred arrowheads and fifteen catapult bolt points. At Kalkriese, defensive weapons and soldiers' personal equipment are abundant – parts of helmets, body armor, and shields, along with harness gear for horses, yoke attachments, soldiers' fibulae, and attachments from military belts. The difference between these weapon assemblages may reflect what is left behind when an army is victorious in a battle, and what is left behind when it loses. Zanier makes clear that the deposit at Döttenbichl cannot be dated precisely. The objects indicate a date around 15 B. C., but the exact year cannot be confirmed.

Zanier goes on to review archaeological evidence from several other sites that have been brought into discussion with the Alpine campaign of 15 B. C. For some sites, evidence seems to indicate a likely association with the campaign, others seem doubtful. The sites considered are a fortified hilltop settlement at Schwarzach-Goldegg in the Pongau south of Salzburg in Austria, a hill settlement at Uttendorf-Steinbühel in the Pinzgau to the southwest of Salzburg, and the gorge of Crap Ses south of Chur in Canton Graubünden in Switzerland.

In his review of current understanding of Roman bases on the lower Rhine during the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius, Michael Gechter makes the suggestion that when Varus was defeated by Arminius in A. D. 9, the defeated army did not consist of three entire legions and accompanying auxiliary troops, but only of parts of legions. The majority of the troops belonging to the legions were at their bases, not on campaign with Varus. If further research supports this suggestion, substantial rethinking about the battle, its progress, and its results will be required.

Reinhard Wolters reviews the numismatic evidence for Roman occupation of lands east of the Rhine. Literary sources provide the basic outline of the history of Roman activity in the region, and during the past two decades, abundant archaeological discoveries have been made at a number of different sites. With all of the recent work conducted in this area, somewhat puzzling is the lack of sites that clearly date to the period A. D. 10–16. Future research will no doubt clarify the situation with the Roman military during those years.

This book is a major contribution to our understanding of a critical period in Roman history and in the historical and cultural development of temperate Europe - roughly 20 B. C. to A. D. 20. During these four decades Augustus greatly changed the course of Rome's growth and expansion, Rome accomplished new conquests north of the Alps but also found itself stopped in its attempts to expand eastward beyond the lower Rhine. For communities within temperate Europe, these decades witnessed the expansion of Rome to the upper Danube, the buildup of military bases along the west bank of the Rhine, the expansion of Roman military presence along the Lippe, and finally the defeat of Rome's attempt to accomplish the conquest of the region between the lower Rhine and the Elbe.

The detailed discussions of the archaeological evidence pertaining to the identity of troops at Dangstetten, to Roman military bases that played roles in the campaign of 15 B. C., and to evidence relating to the Pannonian Revolt, are especially important to archaeologists and historians whose work focuses on interactions between the Roman military and the communities inhabiting the lands north of the Alps. The interplay between evidence from archaeology and that from texts is especially interesting in many of these papers. They provide much food for thought for the question, how do we know what we know, and in what ways might we expand that knowledge?

Throughout the book, maps, plans, and photographs are abundant and of excellent quality. They provide important visual documentation to complement the highly informative texts.

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