

Chapter 4: The Roman Empire

Section 1: The Augustan Principate

By Dallin Hardy

■ Augustus

- 27 B.C.-14 A.D.
- Rome's First Emperor
- Title give by the Senate
 - "Revered One"



Administration



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The Army and Defense

- Battle of Teutoburg Forest
 - 9 A.D.
 - Rome attempted to take Germania
 - 3 Legions
 - Varus



The Battle That Saved the West

Arminius ("Hermann the Liberator") and his German warriors crushed three Roman legions in the Teutoburg Forest – and in so doing redirected the course of history.

With a deafening war cry, the German warriors leaped over the earthworks and charged the Roman ranks. "For the first time in their lives," writes historian Peter Wells, "they saw Roman legionaries ... powerless and helpless."



Rome invades Germany

by John Eidsmoe

September, 9 A.D., Kalkriese Hill, northern Germany: the Germanic warriors waited in grim silence. Three Roman legions, commanded by General Publius Quintilius Varus, advanced across the Rhine into Anglo-Saxon territory. The Romans hoped to expand Roman power, Roman law, and Roman culture. The Germans hoped to preserve their Teutonic laws and institutions and their way of life.

Probably neither side realized that the Battle of Teutoburg Forest would decide the course of Western law and Western civilization for millennia to come.

And now, in the year 2009, the 2,000th anniversary of the battle, very few Americans have even heard of the battle, and fewer still understand its significance.

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Contestants and Stakes

The ancestors of these German warriors had lived in these fields and forests for centuries untold, possibly arriving with the great Indo-European migrations around 2000 B.C. They farmed and hunted, living in rural compounds consisting of several homes, usually occupied by relatives, with other compounds or villages a few miles away. They worshipped their pagan gods, like Wotan (Odin) and Donnar (Thor), who represented forces of nature, and they lived by the old Teutonic virtues: keeping one's word, valor in battle, loyalty to family and community, and hospitality to strangers.

And they lived under the ancient Teutonic common law. The Germans practiced a highly decentralized form of government, with law based on custom and administered by a local council (*witan*) composed of all free men, who served both as a law-making body and as a jury for civil and criminal cases.¹

But Rome threatened to change that. They, too, were a Western people, who probably came to Italy during the same Indo-European migrations. At one time

Rome was a republic, governed by the *Senatus Populus Que Romanus* (Senate of the People of Rome, or *SPQR*) under the Law of the Twelve Tables. But in the century before the birth of Christ, the Roman republic gradually gave way to the empire. Power became centralized in Rome, and the Senate was reduced to a figurehead, rubber-stamping the emperor's edicts.

And the Roman Empire was gradually expanding northward. Around 50 B.C., Julius Caesar decided to subdue Gaul (France). The various Celtic tribes united under a chieftain named Vercingetorix; they fought bravely, but their ferocity was no match for the discipline of the Roman legions.

Rome then turned its attention to Germany. Some of the southern German tribes, those south and west of the Rhine, succumbed to Roman rule. But those east of the Rhine, and especially those of Saxony, resisted.

As these Germanic warriors waited for battle, they knew they were facing the wrath of the most powerful army the world had ever seen. The Roman army was divided into 28 legions, each consisting of approximately 5,000 soldiers. The legionnaires were exceptionally well-disciplined, and they were in superb physical condition. In addition to 70-80 pounds of armor and weapons, each soldier marched carrying a 40-pound pack. Their primary weapons were spears, but they also used the *gladius*, a short two-edged sword that was well suited for thrusting, slashing,

¹ It is unclear at what point in history the Germans developed this Teutonic common law. Some believe it existed even before the Indo-European migrations, while others believe it did not take shape until after the Anglo-Saxon settlement of the British Isles. This author believes the Teutonic common law was largely developed at least before the Battle of Teutoburg Forest.



Battle of Teutoburg Forest

■ Results

- Romans
 - Massacred
- “Varus, give me back my legions!”
 - Augustus



Religion and Morality

- Roman Family Values
 - Diminished
 - Augustus
 - Sought to legislate morality



■ Religious Reform

■ Augustus

- Sought to dignify
 - Formal Roman Religion
 - Through
 - Building temples
 - Reviving old cults
 - Invigorating priestly colleges



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- Death of Augustus
 - 14 A.D.
 - “Did you like the performance?”
 - Last words of
 - Caesar Augustus



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