



The State Museum of Prehistory in Halle

Two Centuries of Premium Archaeology in the Heart of Central Europe.

The State Museum of Prehistory is embedded in the venerable University City of Halle (Saale), Central Germany's intellectual center, just 95 miles southwest of Berlin. Its origins can be traced back to 1817 when Central German antiquarians banded together, systematically collecting prehistoric artifacts during the patriotic surge after the Napoleonic wars. In 1882 the museum itself was founded to collect and present finds from Central Germany. Nowadays, as a department of the State Office for Heritage Management and Archaeology Saxony-Anhalt, it acts as the exclusive repository for artifacts excavated and found in Saxony-Anhalt. Thus the museum's vast and growing collection with over 12 million objects includes prime finds from almost all of Central Germany and beyond.

The Museum Building

An Architectural Monument Shaping the Future for Central Germany's Past.

The imposing museum building was inspired by Germany's oldest freestanding building, the Roman Porta Nigra city gate in Trier, and built by the famous expressionist architect Wilhelm Kreis in 1911. It was the first German museum building expressly meant to house and exhibit a prehistoric collection. The museum's portal opens into a vast hall surrounded by three tiers of galleries offering ca. 3,100 square meters of optimally acclimatised exhibition space hosting the permanent exhibition and special exhibitions. It also contains a popular museum shop, a café and a lecture hall. A modern state-of-the-art annexe houses one of Germany's most sophisticated archaeological conservation and research laboratories. The vast collections lie in a separate 15,000 square meter large storage facility. Additionally, the attendant State Office for Heritage Management and Archaeology hosts one of Central Europe's largest archaeological libraries, together with an archive of international rank.

The Permanent Exhibition

Work in Progress on a Dramatic Introduction to Central Germany's Ancient Heritage.

After a complete renovation of the museum building some years ago, a new start was made by a young team of archaeological experts, designers, didactic specialists and scientific consultants. The last decade has seen the progressive opening of one epoch after another, beginning with the first evidence of hominids in Central Germany 370,000 years ago. The museum's vast collections allow us to give a fascinating account of our distant past, richly illustrated by finds which include state-of-the-art exhibits gleaned from contemporary excavations imbedded in a dynamic and compelling setting. The most impressive artifact is the renowned Bronze Age Nebra Sky Disc, now included in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register, but of course we have so much more to show including bones and artifacts from a Homo erectus camp, the burial of a Mesolithic female shaman, impressive Neolithic ancestral monuments and incredibly rich princely tombs from the Bronze and Germanic periods. In the future, the permanent exhibition will also include historic relics such as the artifacts from Martin Luther's childhood home and remains of the bloody battles of the Thirty Years' War.

Special Exhibitions

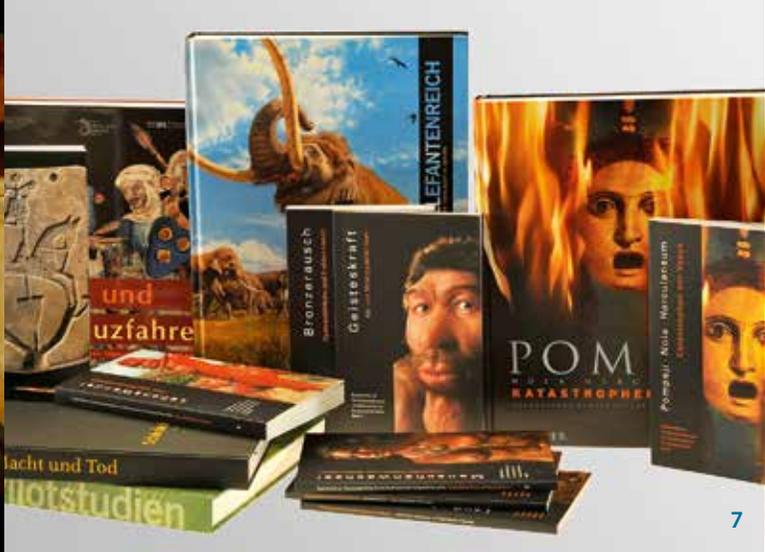
World Archaeology Hosted in Halle.

Our special exhibitions allow us to reap the benefits of the intensive international contacts which have characterized the policies of our house since its beginnings. Major exhibitions which were designed by our staff in cooperation with experts from their countries of origin and accompanied by comprehensive catalogues and congress reports have featured Arctic prehistory, ancient Peruvian civilisations, as well as "Saladin and the Crusaders", and most recently "Pompeii - Nola - Herculaneum. Disasters at Mount Vesuvius". Along with our permanent exhibition these shows have made our house Halle's major tourist attraction.

1 Finds from the Bronze Age princely grave at Leubingen with original 19th century documentation | 2 View into the museum's atrium during the opening of the exhibition "Land of the Elephants" | 3 Exhibition hall with the Eulau "trptych": three ca. 4,600 years old Neolithic family burials excavated near the village of Eulau | 4 Exhibition hall with Neolithic "axe cascade" | 5 View into the atrium during the exhibition "Pompeii - Nola - Herculaneum"



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Travelling Exhibitions

Central German Archaeology Visits the World.

Of course we also design exhibitions featuring aspects of Central Germany's past, which integrate the finds and features discovered in Saxony-Anhalt into their wider cultural context with particular emphasis on applying and displaying the results of innovative research trends and multidisciplinary technologies. After a successful run in Halle we like to take these shows abroad in order to demonstrate the wealth of our region's archaeology which is becoming an increasingly important factor for the state's tourist industry. The exhibition about the Nebra Sky Disc and prehistoric Europe 3,600 years ago "The Forged Sky" was shown in Denmark, Austria and Switzerland. Other successful travelling exhibitions were "Finding Luther – Archaeologists on the Reformer's Trail", "Land of the Elephants – A Fossil World in Europe" and "Pompeii - Nola - Herculaneum. Disasters at Mount Vesuvius".

6 View into the exhibition "Finding Luther" | 7 A selection of our publications | 8 Exhibition hall with the renowned Nebra Sky Disc under a rotating Bronze Age sky | 9 An Ante-Neanderthal, modelled after Rodin's Thinker

Our Mission

Exhibitions - Research - Publicity and Publication.

Our mission is a holistic one which is anchored in the fact that the State Museum is imbedded in Saxony-Anhalt's State Office for Heritage Management and Archaeology, one of the leading archaeological research institutions in Central Europe. Thus we not only can offer our general public the latest discoveries from our many excavations but also the results of cutting edge research. Our platforms include not only special exhibits and highlights in the museum itself but also travelling shows in and beyond the borders of our state. We regularly host and publish the proceedings of international conferences and have been a prime mover introducing scientific methods, particularly palaeogenetics, into German archaeology. The evidence for the world's first known nuclear family, excavated in Eulau and exhibited in our museum, by means of palaeogenetic analyses was included into the TIME's Top 10 Scientific Discoveries of 2008. Moreover, our publications department produces a wide range of popular and scholarly publications as well as periodicals. We are increasingly branching out into digital media making information available on our homepage as well as facebook and twitter and are making our own video productions.



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Landesmuseum für Vorgeschichte Halle / State Museum of Prehistory

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Director and State
Archaeologist:
Prof. Dr. Harald Meller

Museum's Department Head:
Dr. Bernd Zich

Head of Public Relations:
Dr. Alfred Reichenberger



Opening hours

Tue - Fri: 9 am – 5 pm | Sat, Sun, Holidays: 10 am – 6 pm
Closed on Mondays

Guided tours following advance notification
Ms Monika Bode: +49 (0) 345 / 52 47 -361

Visit also the other stations of the "Himmelswege"
tourist trail: www.himmelswege.de

You can find us on...

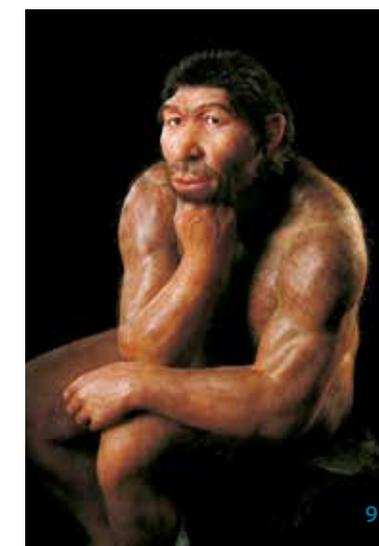


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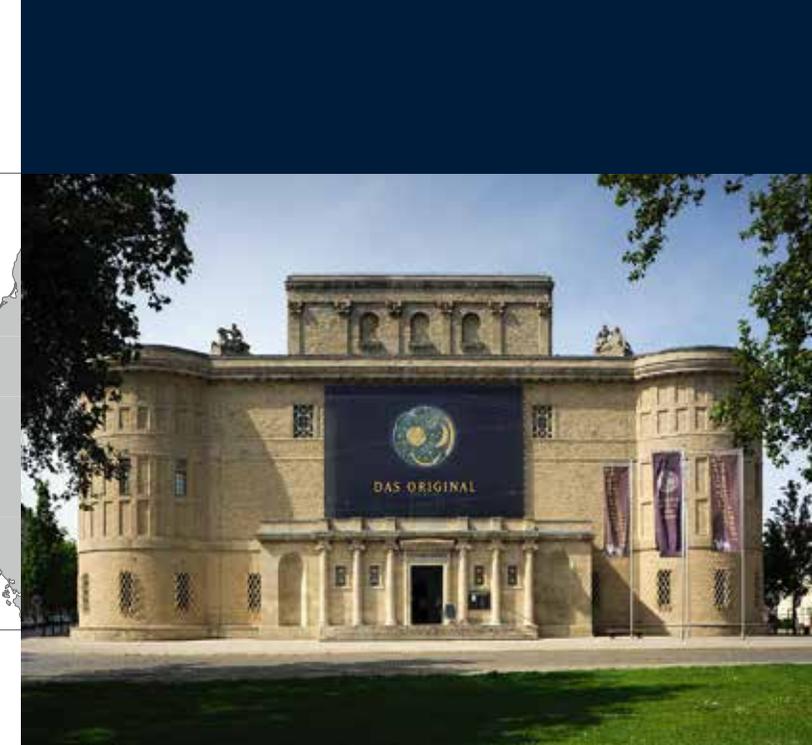


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The State Museum of Prehistory in Halle, Germany An Archaeological Treasury