

**A Comparison  
of the Public Relation and the Museum  
Educational Service of museums in  
Hungary and Germany**

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Dear Sir or Madam

I am very pleased to welcome you today to my presentation on the public relations and the museum educational service in German and Hungarian museums. But before getting started please allow me to introduce myself since some of you might see me for the first time. My name is Kathrin Eberhard and I am studying Archaeological Sciences at the University of Freiburg which is located at the southwesternmost tip of Germany. During the course of my studies I was able to collect practical experiences in different museums and eventually started doing guided tours as a freelancer for the Archaeological Museum Colombischlössle in Freiburg. Before coming to Hungary I finished my bachelor thesis titled "Clothes on terra sigillata. A comparison of Italian and South Gaulish terra sigillata punches". From next winter on I am going to study the masters programme "Archaeology of the Roman provinces". Having finished the bachelor degree course I decided to spend some months abroad. The close ties between Professor Hans-Ulrich Nuber and Doctor Paula Zsidi gave me the chance to go to the Aquincum Museum for period of three month and have a closer look at the workflow in an archaeological museum in Hungary. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them both for their efforts allowing me to work as a trainee at the BTM Aquincum Museum.

## **Structure of the presentation**

1. Abstract about the Public Relations and Museum Educational Service in Hungarian museums
2. Illustrated general view of the Public Relations and Museum Educational Service in German museums
3. Comparing the Public Relations and Museum Educational Service in Hungary and Germany

# 1. Abstract about the Public Relations and Museum Educational Service in Hungarian museums

The public relations of Hungarian museums mainly focus on communicating with press representatives and the advertising of the museum as an institution. With press representatives the museums' PR members arrange interviews especially with regard to main events such as new exhibitions, which can be broadcasted on radio or TV programs. Furthermore staff members write short reports about the particular event or topic to be published in newspapers or journals later on. Although people can hereby be informed about the latest going-ons in museums, online advertising or handing out flyers or posters shall allure people in particular (Fig. 1). For this reason flyers are sent to e. g. schools or retirement homes to inform about potentially interesting events. In addition emails are sent via mailing lists which have expanded over the years.



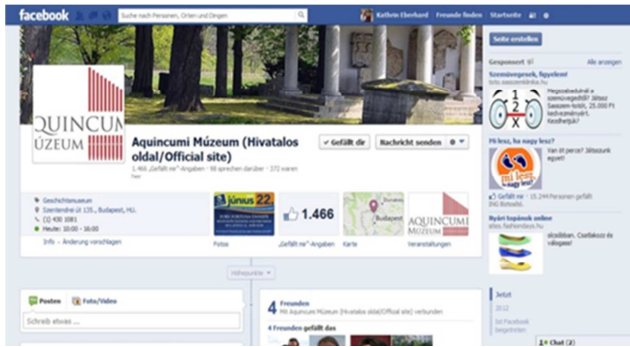
**Fig. 1: Flyer of the BTM Aquincum Museum and the Floralia.** Source: K.E.

But still, the most important location for promotion in Hungary is the internet. Almost all museums are present in social media like Facebook, where latest news about exhibitions, events and accordingly photos from this events or archaeological objects are frequently published (Fig. 3). The museums' homepages are mostly kept up to date and bilingual or even trilingual (Fig. 4). Since advertising in traditional media such as TV, radio or regular newspapers is quite expensive in Hungarian local museums rather make use of free newspapers, journals or online newspapers (Fig. 5). The museum educational service is mainly responsible for guided tours through the permanent and temporary exhibitions. The service also looks

Posters of new exhibitions can be seen in most local traffic stations. The participation in competitions such as the "Museum of the Year" or the museum fair *Múzeumok Majálisa* gives the individual museums even more public attention (Fig. 2).



**Fig. 2: The information stand of the BTM Aquincum Museum at the *Múzeumok Majálisa*.** Source: K.E.



**Fig. 3: Profile of the BTM Aquincum Museum on Facebook.**

Source: K.E.



**Fig. 4: Homepage of the BTM Aquincum Museum.**

Source: K.E.

after the interior of the exhibitions and organises events or special days of action. Guided tours for adults or school children are offered through the exhibitions in Hungarian, English, German or French for 45 minutes. In addition school classes can book museum 60min lessons, where pupils can playfully approach mythological, and literary or everyday life topics (Fig. 6).

Furthermore participants can learn how to fight like gladiators or hunt a treasure in the ruin garden by finding answers to questions about Roman or

archaeological topics. Furthermore Roman wall paintings, mosaics and stuccowork can be recreated and copies of archaeological objects manufactured in a specially designated room (Fig. 7).



**Fig. 5: Newspaper article in the Metropol (17 May 2013) about the competition “Museum of the year” and interview with Dr. Paula Zsidi.**

Source: K.E.



**Fig. 6: Museum lesson with mythological scene in the playground.** Source: Aquincum museum



**Fig. 7: Learning how to fight like gladiators – Another type of museum lesson.** Source: Aquincum museum



**Fig. 8: Museum's catalogue.** Source: K.E.

**Fig. 9: The new virtual store in the BTM Aquincum Museum.**

Source: Aquincum museum

For other visitors it is possible to have a multi-lingual audio guided tour through the exhibitions. Sometimes audio guides are specifically designed for children. If more information about the exhibitions is wanted visitors can buy special catalogues, which are sometimes also in English (Fig. 8).

To explain rather difficult scientific issues some areas in exhibitions are designed hands-on for children. As an eye-catcher a lot of museums now have touch-pad monitors or virtual games on computers to attract young people (Fig. 9). Many Hungarian museums have monitors with films and photos installed or objects with barcodes to scan with one's smartphone. With this modern media visitors can acquire



**Fig. 10: The new reconstructed Painter's House of the BTM Aquincum Museum.**

Source: Aquincum museum

more information about objects for which they take an interest in particular. For Hungarian museums with ruin gardens it is getting more important to reconstruct the buildings with the original height and



**Fig. 11: The AntiCafé with an interesting presentation about botany for retired people.**

Source: K.E.

with a true to original interior decoration which gives visitors a much better impression of how ancient buildings might have looked like (Fig. 10). Since this reconstructions are very expensive they are largely financed with subsidies from the European Union (EU).

For school classes, retired persons and women with infants the museum educational service organises special days of action on which retired persons can attend to interesting presentation about literary or botanical topics for instance (Fig. 11). During summer holidays camps are realised where children can experience Roman life.

Very important for the museum's visitor statistics are big events which take place a few times the year round. On these occasions actors and craftsmen in the BTM Aquincum Museum re-enact scenes of everyday Roman life or sell products aligned to the topic of the event (Fig. 12). In addition to that some areas are specifically designated for children to perform handicrafts and

produce objects themselves. Organising such events usually needs much effort on the part of the museum's staff.



**Fig. 12: The so-called *Floralia* spring festival of the museum with fighting re-enactment groups.** Source: K.E.

## 2. Illustrated general view of the Public Relations and Museum Educational Service in German museums

In German museums public relations are very important, because only with a good and diversified advertising strategy it is possible to allure more visitors to the museum. Therefore many museums employ a special assistant that is exclusively responsible for this sector.

Maintaining contact to journalists and being responsible for the museum's advertising are their primary fields of activity. Especially prior to events these employees arrange interview dates or write short reports which are subsequently published in local newspapers (Fig. 13).



**Fig. 13: Advertising of new attractions in the Federseemuseum Bad Buchau.**

Source: Federseemuseum Bad Buchau

Local TV and radio broadcasting stations usually air relevant advertising in their event survey or cultural news (Fig. 14).



**Fig. 14: Advertising of different exhibitions in the Limesmuseum Aalen on the local TV channel SWR and on the radio station SWR4.**

Source: SWR



Particularly through the event survey on radio broadcasts young people are allured to the museum events in question.

But most advertising is made by sharing out flyers to schools, kindergartens or cultural institutions such as other museums (Fig. 15). In addition e-mails are sent via mailing lists to schools or to members of the circle of friends of the museum.



Furthermore posters in public spaces in the neighbourhood may attract further visitors (Fig. 16).

The museum's homepage is mostly up to date and advertises events in German and usually in English as well. Especially museums located close to the border have their homepages in other languages such as French or Dutch.



**Fig. 15: Different flyers from the Federseemuseum Bad Buchau and the Archaeological Park Xanten advertising events or new exhibitions.**

Source: Federseemuseum Bad Buchau&APX Xanten

Since the museum's homepage is often administrated by the concerning cities' management it is only retrievable via the individual city's homepage (Fig. 17). Not many German museums do yet have a designated page in social network services like Facebook or others.



**Fig. 16: Poster besides the street to advertise the roman festival in the Archaeological Park in Xanten.**

Source: APX Xanten

The reason for this is that the museum's staff does often not have experiences with social network services and does not know how to manage and make use of these new media. Only museums with a rather young staff or with relations to somebody experienced in this field have a profile on Facebook. On their profiles museums announce the latest events but are still reluctant uploading photos since it is not yet clear how Facebook is going to deal with the digital copyright of the uploaded data (Fig. 18).

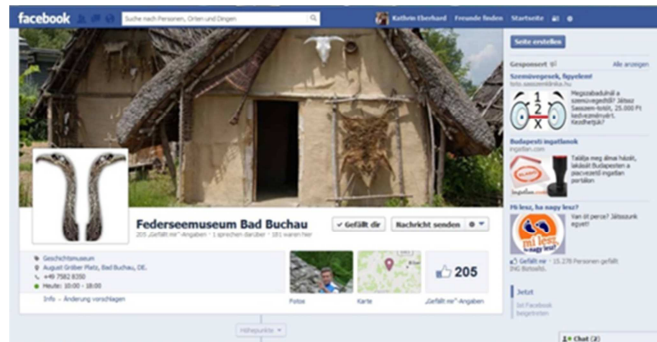


**Fig. 17: Homepage of the Limesmuseum Aalen linked to the city homepage.**

Source: K.E.

The educational service in German museums is essentially responsible for guided tours through exhibitions. In addition the educational service looks after the exhibitions, organises events and days of action in the museum.

Guided tours are offered for school classes, kindergarten groups, adults and senior groups. In most museums



**Fig. 18: Facebook profile of the Federseemuseum Bad Buchau.**

Source: K.E.



**Fig. 19: Advertising for the “Day of Encounter” in the Archaeological Park Xanten, a day with special guided tours for the handicapped.**

Source: APX Xanten

as their special assistants (Fig. 19). Having taken part in a regular guided tour school classes do have the opportunity to book an ensuing museum lesson. These lessons can also be booked as a children’s birthday celebration event where participants



**Fig, 20: Writing tablets with wax, mosaics and leather round mills with gamepieces from museum lessons.**

Source: APX Xanten&K.E.

seize the main subject by crafting.

Roman museums mostly prefer to offer the do-it-yourself crafting of writing tablets with wax and a stylus, mosaics and the round Roman version of Merels along with gaming pieces (Fig. 20).

In addition the Limesmuseum Aalen (Baden-Wuerttemberg) offers Roman coin-minting,

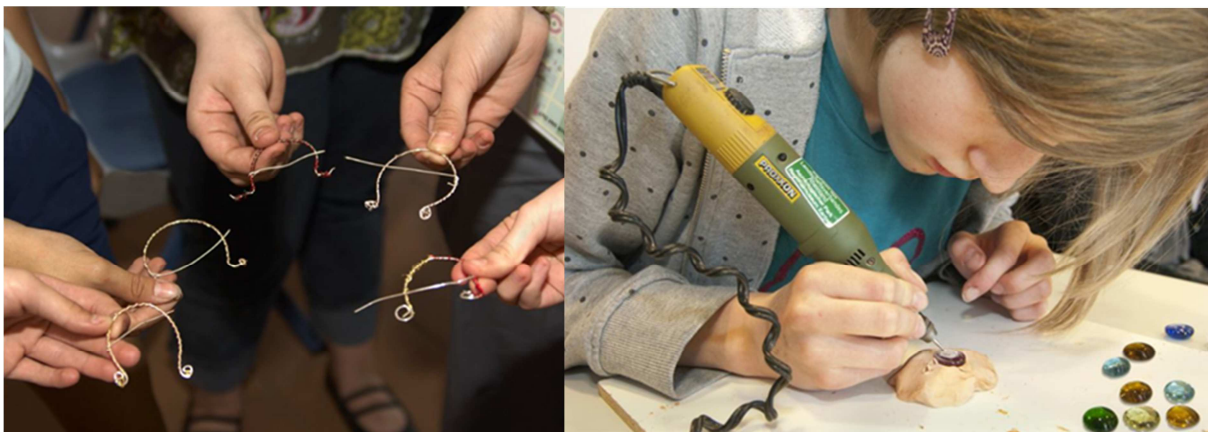
jewellery making with self-made glass beads, perfumery as well as plaster-casting of objects (Fig. 21).

At the Archaeological Museum Konstanz (Baden-Wuerttemberg) children can cook a meal based on the recipes passed down by the Roman author Apicius. At the already above-mentioned Archaeological Park Xanten children are invited to craft name plates (*tabulae ansatae*), medals (*phalerae*) of



**Fig. 21: Roman coins, object copies and filament necklaces with glass pearls from museum lessons.**

Source: K.E.



**Fig. 22: In the Archaeological Park Xanten it is possible to create filament fibula or cameo made of glass nuggets.**

Source: APX Xanten

brass sheet, to bend a Roman fibula of silver filament or even to cut out a glass cameo (Fig. 22).

Most museums offer children to dress up as Roman civilians or military personnel (Fig. 23). Introducing archaeological procedures and methods to children has become widely popular in German museum education. In a customised environment the Federseemuseum in Bad Buchau (Baden-Wuerttemberg) for instance gives children the opportunity to dig up objects the museum's staff intentionally buried beforehand (Fig. 24). To complete their necessary excavation report the participants

have to examine dendrochronological, botanical and bone tables or to compare their findings with typological tables, which were especially designed for their purpose. For this kind of activity there is a special area outside. The usual museum lessons take place in rooms with tables, benches and shelves for the materials.

These museum lessons are very popular and are usually booked in addition to guided tours. The German school system has field trips regularly appointed at the beginning and at the end of each school year. On these occasions classes are called upon to visit museums, nature parks or zoos. The expenses for these trips are usually shared by the class. If parents cannot afford



**Fig. 24: "Excavation lesson" in the Federseemuseum Bad Buchau.**

Source: Federseemuseum Bad Buchau



**Fig. 23: Children trying on Roman civil or military clothes in the Limesmuseum Aalen and in the Archaeological Park Xanten.**

Source: APX Xanten&Limesmuseum Aalen

such a trip

for their child an aid fond bears the costs in this case ensuring that all children can

join the trip.

In the Limesmuseum Aalen it is also possible for teachers to lend a museum suitcase with replicates and original objects in it. In addition

teachers can furthermore obtain exercises, questionnaires and information booklets (Fig. 25).

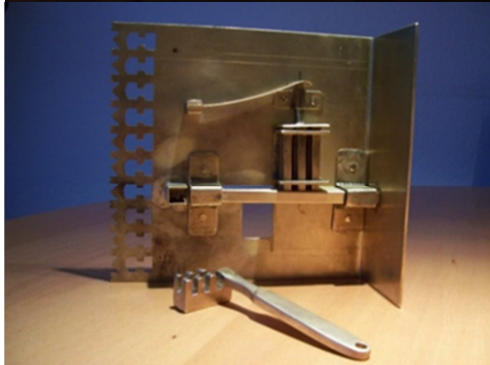
For other visitors as well as for children audio guides are offered in different languages. Visitors can obtain further information about the museum's programme from flyers. For teachers special flyers about the different museum lessons are available. If visitors want to have special information about the exhibitions they can buy the museum catalogues about the permanent or the temporary exhibition. Only in bigger museums these catalogues are available in English as well.

The museum's staffs wants to make exhibitions more attractive for children, by creating special areas where children learn to understand the scientific topics hands-on. Usually they create stations that attract the different senses such as smelling, hearing or tasting. In this regard the Archaeological Museum Colombischlössle in Freiburg for example encourages visitors to weigh their personal belongings on a Roman dial balance or to have a try opening a Roman lock with a sliding key (Fig. 26).



**Fig. 25: The museum suitcase from the Limesmuseum Aalen with replicates and original objects for schools.**

Source: Limesmuseum Aalen



**Fig. 27: A roman dial balance and a pin lock, which the visitors can test in some German museums.**

Source: FRISIVS-F Rekonstruktionen

Showcases with coins or cameos on display are usually equipped with magnifying glasses to give visitors the chance to have a closer look at the small objects. In addition reconstructed Roman clothing, such as tunics, chain armour, helmets and bucklers are on display as hands-on objects. Increasingly modern media such as monitors showing pictures and short films find their way

into exhibitions. Very popular in German museums are for instance projectors which highlight city models in different colours. By pushing buttons visitors can decide which construction phase or which buildings he or she wants to have highlighted. At the same time the projection of reconstructed faces of historic - for example Bronze Age - individuals on 3D plastic

heads has become immensely popular (Fig. 28).

Bigger exhibitions encourage visitors to obtain further information about certain issues or objects from touch-pad monitors arranged as eye-catchers along the course of the exhibition. Since the necessary hardware and software as well as the

maintenance are highly expensive smaller museums usually need financial support by the European Union (EU) in this regard.

Though establishing media devices and QR-codes for smartphones is considered to be very modern and trend-setting critics warn against transforming museums into theme parks such as “Disneyland”.

Popular among German museums, especially among

those outside an urban environment are reconstructions. As far as possible they attach importance to true reconstructions. The Limesmuseum Aalen for example partially reconstructed a cavalry barrack on site and the Federseemuseum Bad Buchau reconstructed 12 Neolithic to Bronze Age houses made of loam, wood and tree bark (Fig. 29). Visitors can roam these houses and get an impression of ancient housing and living. It is also possible to book museum lessons or celebrate children’s birthdays in these buildings. Museums within a modern urban environment try to give visitors an impression of life by displaying



**Fig. 28: A projector highlight white 3D models (examples of the company ArcTron).**

Source: ArCTron&Federseemuseum Bad Buchau

dioramas or animated area models (Fig. 30). The museum educational service has to organise events and days of action as well. Most of the days of action are on Sundays or on holidays when parents have spare time to go to the museum with their children. In the



Federseemuseum Bad Buchau or the Archaeological Park Xanten it is possible on these days to create something convenient to

**Fig. 29: Reconstructed buildings in the Limesmuseums Aalen and in the Federseemuseum Bad Buchau.**

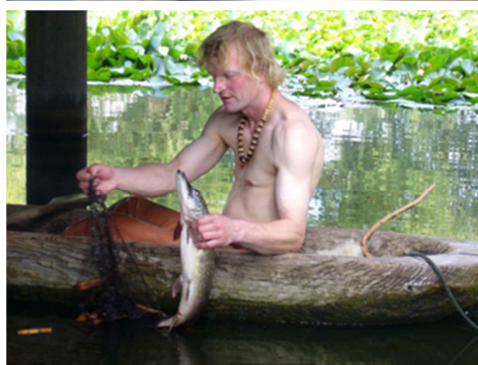
Source: Limesmuseum Aalen&Federseemuseum Bad Buchau

the topic of the day. Sometimes the museum invites craftsmen to present their reconstructions and explain how to produce it. Or there are scientific specialists giving presentations about a certain topics such as dendrochronological methods for example. During school holidays often summer camps with a special motto take place on the museum premises. At the Federseemuseum Bad Buchau for example a fisherman explains ancient methods of fishing for a day (Fig. 31). On other days children can try their skills in crafting or join the excavation museum lesson already mentioned above.



**Fig. 30: Museums without an outdoor area often present ancient life by dioramas or animated area models to visitors.**

Source: Archäologisches Museum Colombischlössle&Limesmuseum Aalen



Of course these events are very important for visitor statistics of the individual museums. In this case it is eminent to have good weather. Usually for these events the museum invites craftsmen and re-enactment groups. The craftsmen sell products adapted to the topic of the event and the re-enactment groups fight show-battles and describe their clothing, equipment and weapons. The most famous Roman events in Germany are the International Roman Days in Aalen and the big Roman Festival in Xanten which take place every two or three years (Fig. 32). Small and medium sized museums also have their events once or even more often during the year (Fig. 33).

**Fig. 31: Craftsmen and specialists entertain children on days of action.**

Source: APX Xanten&Federseemuseum Bad Buchau

To organise these very complex events the all staff and the most of the freelancers necessarily have to assist.



**Fig. 33: Posters and pictures from events in the Federseemuseum Bad Buchau and in the Archaeological Museum Colombischlössle, Freiburg.**

Source: Archäologisches Museum Colombischlössle&Federseemuseum Bad Buchau



**Fig. 32: Poster of the “International Days Of Romans” in Aalen and the amphitheater while the Roman Festival in Xanten.**

Source: Limesmuseum Aalen&APX Xanten



### **3. Comparing the public relations and the museum educational service in Hungary and Germany**

Regarding working routine and didactic priorities a comparison of the public relations and museum educational service in Hungary and Germany reveals many similarities as well as differences.

In both countries the museum educational services focus mainly on guiding visitors through the concerned exhibitions and offering educational lessons on relevant topics for groups (e. g. school classes) in particular. Since these lessons mainly target children and adolescents they usually comprise re-enacting play-like scenes or recreating ancient handicraft and its products. Whereas there is a tendency to the use of cheaper materials for this purpose in Hungarian museums, most of their German counterparts lay a focus on using good quality and therefore more costly materials instead. As a result the majority of German institutions is hardly able to offer greater numbers of lessons and cover a comprehensive range of different topics at the same time. Due to the comparatively tight financial budget that Hungarian museums face their staff is in need of creative strategies to provide an attractive educational programme maintaining a high standard and keeping the associated cost on a tolerable level. A challenge the educational service at German museums is not so much familiar with.

Museums in both countries offer action days for their visitors. In Hungary these days do not take place on a regular basis but are usually customised to different potential target groups such as retired people, women with children or school classes. This is a practice German museums could take as an example since action days take place here more often but are usually not bound to a certain subject. Organising such events takes a huge effort. This indicates the importance for museums in both countries to draw visitors. For German and Hungarian museums it appears modern and trend-setting to equip their exhibitions with interactive media to draw young people's attraction in particular. In Hungarian museums devices like touchpad monitors or computer games are common in new exhibitions. Especially for small museums it is usually difficult to finance such technical devices. Moreover there are critical voices warning against an excessive use of interactive media which might transform museums into theme parks at worst. In both countries exhibitions offer the possibility for children to understand difficult subject-matters hands-on. Also in this case it seems that colleagues at Hungarian museum are creative to invent new attractive hands-on areas for the children.

The range of task for the public relation departments in museums in Hungary and Germany is very similar and comprehends contact to journalists and advertising. One of the main differences between them is that both departements are strongly linked in Hungary. Here staff members of the educational service are responsible for the public relation as well. As opposed to this these two departments are separated in German museums and staff members have a well-defined range of tasks. For museums in both countries it is important to maintain contact to the media and keep

them informed about the latest news, events and going-ons. For advertising museums send flyers to schools, use circular email or put up posters.

There are only differences regarding advertising on the internet: While Hungarian museums usually maintain an internet presence as well as a separate homepage in social networks the internet presences of most German are linked on the homepage of the city they are located. Not many German museums maintain a homepage on Facebook since the museum's staff still lacks of experiences with social networks. Furthermore many institutions of the humanistic sector in Germany are very sceptical towards a presence in social networks due to copyright related questions e. g. on Facebook.

While advertising in public newspapers, on TV or on radio is very expensive in Hungary it is common to scatter museum related news and information this way in Germany. Competitions like the "Museum of the Year" competition in Hungary or museum fairs like the *Múzeumok Majálisa* are not well-known in Germany but generate greater publicity and give museums the chance to present themselves on a larger scale.

Last but not least I want to say that it was very important for me to see how similar the museums in Hungary and Germany are. But as seen there are differences in some fields and there I think we can both learn from each other.

I would like thank everybody in the museum for supporting me in my traineeship at the BTM Aquincum Museum, especially Zoltán Havas and Nóra Zöhls, who helped me a lot and always answered all my questions.

### **Further reading**

Ade/ Hoppe/ Willmy/ Sieber-Seitz 2012

Dorothee Ade/ Thomas Hoppe/ Andreas Willmy/ Karin Siebert-Seitz, Kelten selbst erleben. Kleidung, Spiel und Speisen – selbst gemacht und ausprobiert (Stuttgart 2012).

Gehrke/ Sénécheau 2010

Hans-Joachim Gehrke/ Miriam Sénécheau (Hg.), Geschichte, Archäologie, Öffentlichkeit. Für einen neuen Dialog zwischen Wissenschaft und Medien. Standpunkte aus Forschung und Praxis. Historische Lebenswelten in populären Wissenskulturen, History in Popular Cultures, 4 (Bielefeld 2010).

Schwartz/ Peteranderl 2012

Juliane Schwartz/ Florian Peteranderl, Germanen selbst erleben. Kleidung, Schmuck und Speisen – selbst gemacht und ausprobiert (Stuttgart 2012).

Schwartz/ Wudy 2010

Juliane Schwartz/ Ermeldinde Wudy, Römer selbst erleben. Kleidung, Spiel und Speisen – selbst gemacht und ausprobiert (Stuttgart 2010).

Seeberger 2002

Friedrich Seeberger, Steinzeit selbst erleben. Waffen, Schmuck und Instrumente – nachgebaut und ausprobiert (Stuttgart 2002).

### **Further links**

Archäologisches Museum Colombischlössle, Freiburg

<http://www.freiburg.de/pb/,Lde/237910.html>

(Last accessed 21.07.2013, 11:06pm)

Archäologisches Museum Konstanz

<http://www.konstanz.alm-bw.de/>

(Last accessed 21.07.2013, 11:01pm)

Archäologischer Park Xanten

<http://www.apx.lvr.de/>

(Last accessed 21.07.2013, 11:03pm)

ArCTron 3D – Expertise in Three dimensions

<http://www.arctron.de/de/>

(Last accessed 21.07.2013, 23:08pm)

BTM Aquincum Museum

<http://www.aquincum.hu/>

(Last accessed 21.07.2013, 11:16pm)

Federseemuseum Bad Buchau

<http://www.federseemuseum.de/>

(Last accessed 21.07.2013, 11:00pm)

FRISIVS – F Living history

Archaeological reconstructions and model building

<http://www.frisius-f.de/>

(Last accessed 21.07.2013, 11:12pm)

Limesmuseum Aalen

[http://www.museen-aalen.de/sixcms/detail.php?id=13372&\\_bereich=1599](http://www.museen-aalen.de/sixcms/detail.php?id=13372&_bereich=1599)

(Last accessed 21.07.2013, 10:59pm)

Südwestrundfunk (SWR)

<http://www.swr.de/>

(Last accessed 21.07.2013, 11:15pm)