

AUGUST 17TH 2026

9 AM – 5 PM

CENTRE CHARLEMAGNE
KATSCHHOF 1
AACHEN

WHY HAS GERMANY RULED OVER THE WORLD OF DRESSAGE FOR THE LAST 50 YEARS?

On horseback, from Charlemagne to CHIO Aachen

CONFERENCE ORGANISED BY LA BIBLIOTHEQUE MONDIALE DU CHEVAL

Website : <https://labibliothequemondialeducheval.org/>

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PROGRAMME FOR THE CONFERENCE HELD BY LA BIBLIOTHÈQUE MONDIALE DU CHEVAL, IN AACHEN, ON AUGUST 17TH 2026.

9.00 am Opening

Word of introduction from **Frank POHLE**, Director of the Charlemagne Centre in Aachen.

Word of introduction from **Pascal BULÉON**, Director of La Bibliothèque Mondiale du Cheval.

Brief introduction by **Stefanie PETERS**, President of CHIO Aachen.

09.15 am Stefanie PETERS, President, & Frank KEMPERMAN, Vice-President of the Aachen-Laurensberger Rennverein: The history of a ‘Monument’, the CHIO Aachen equestrian event.

How the CHIO Aachen became, in a century (since 1924), the world’s biggest equestrian sporting event. A retrospective illustrated with meaningful documents (photos, videos) prepared by Dr Doris Beaujean.

10.00 am Coffee Break

10.30 am Expert panel

Why has Germany ruled over the world of dressage for the last fifty years?

What is its responsibility nowadays and for the future of the discipline?

A key session of the conference led by:

Kyra KYRKLUND, Finnish international dressage champion and Olympic Medalist based in Great Britain, qualified riding instructor who graduated from the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, collaborating with the National Equestrian Centres at Flyinge and Strömsholm. Following a distinguished sporting career (finalist at the 1990 World Championship in Stockholm), Kyra has coached riders from many nations, riding in both the German and the Spanish tradition. Her ultimately ‘neutral’ perspective, given her experience and her objective view of the discipline’s evolution and its leading figures, will ensure that, throughout the session, she will deliver a ‘test’ on a par with the very best performance in the discipline!

Followed by contributions on the following topics:

-History

By Dr **Britta SCHÖFFMANN**, who has obtained the Goldene Reitabzeichen, an award granted by the German Equestrian Federation for certain successes. She is a former dressage rider (Grand Prix level) and dressage judge. Nowadays, she is a world famous book author and dressage trainer. Her presentation will aim to outline and understand the historical roots of German horsemanship, which have contributed to—or even founded—the German theory of modern dressage, and to explain its success and international development.

-Ethics

By Professor **Sabine DÖRING**, Research Professor at the Walter Eucken Institute and the Institute of Advanced Studies in Freiburg, and former State Secretary. She will explore the ethical reasons underpinning the interest and success of German riders and their entourage in the discipline of dressage. She will also discuss recent developments in this field and their impact on the future.

-Economics

By **Dirk WILLEM ROSIE**, Dutch journalist and publisher (Télex du Cheval). The aim will be to demonstrate that equestrian sports in Germany must be understood and regarded as a genuine industry involving 10,000 businesses and worth €6.7 billion in 2024, within which dressage is a highly profitable niche, developed rapidly and efficiently over the past 50 years by a small, highly active community eager to ensure its commercial success.

-Politics

Monica THEODORESCU, a former international dressage rider and renowned trainer like her father before her, and **Bernard MAUREL**, former director of the French Haras Nationaux (National Stud Farms) and dressage judge. The two specialists will examine the ‘political’ manoeuvring between dressage professionals, represented by their National Federation, and the International Equestrian Federation (FEI), which Germany is said to have practised effectively throughout this half-century to ensure that developments best suited its horses and riders. A ‘debate’ that will focus on specific aspects regarding the way the rules have evolved.

Closing of the morning session with a message from **Diana AL SHAER, Chair of the FEI Dressage Committee.**

12.30 pm Lunch break

2.00 pm Dr Ulrich Johannes SCHNEIDER, FORMER DIRECTOR OF THE LEIPZIG UNIVERSITY LIBRARY.

An overview of German libraries and public and private collections on horses by Dr Ulrich Johannes Schneider, former director of the University Library in Leipzig, which is regarded as housing one of the richest collections in this field not only in Germany but also worldwide. We will hear about its history, how it operates, and the treasures it harbours.

Followed by Pearce GROOVER: *presenting some of the rarest German equestrian books from the prestigious collection of Émile Hermès*

3.00 pm Mario GENNERO

a study of a special 17th-century book (1672).

Mario GENNERO is a renowned Latin scholar with a passion for Italian treatises on horses from the 13th to the 15th century, who recently published a remarkable work on the subject: *Antologia della letteratura equestre italiana*. For this lecture, he will present a book which sparked controversy when it was first published: *Neuer Tractat von der Reith Kunst in zwey Haupt Theil*, by Georges Simon Winter d’Adlersfluegel, published in Germany and in German, but also in French and Latin. Surprise!

3.30 pm Coffee break

4.00 pm Frank POHLE, DIRECTOR OF THE CHARLEMAGNE CENTRE IN AACHEN

Charlemagne on horseback: contemporary perceptions and archaeological and historical observations on the Carolingian cavalry

During his long life, Charlemagne travelled tens of thousands of kilometres, most of them on horseback. Rumour has it that it was Charlemagne’s horse which, during a hunting party in the forest, re-discovered the thermal springs of Aachen, thereby giving impetus to a new settlement of the area – although that story belongs to the realm of legends. There is, however, an equestrian statue showing Charlemagne on horseback. According to illustrations and accounts, his contemporaries literally felt the ground shaking under the hooves of the Carolingian Cavalry. But what do archaeologists have to say on the matter? How should we picture a mounted soldier in the year 800?

5.00 pm End of the conference