German pubcaster ZDF has two main slots for history programming on its network: its docustrand ‘Terra X’ and ZDF History. Kristina Hollstein, director of acquisitions and coproductions, documentaries for ZDF Enterprises, tells realscreen the network tends to focus on history with a German angle. Such recent titles include Myths of West and East Germany from Dokuvista and History of the Stasi from Febuar Film.

While maintaining a spotlight on Germany’s past, ZDF also explores historical topics of international interest, often in coproduction with international partners for projects to be shopped globally by ZDF Enterprises.

Projects that fit that bill include America’s True Discoverers from Peter Prestel Filmproduktion, which explores who may have set foot in the New World before Columbus; History of Drugs; History of Forensic Medicine; Exodus: History of the Jews from Interscience; and Chariot Race, an international coproduction with Lion TV detailing chariot races of antique times.

ZDF’s digital channel is also commissioning international series. A major project currently underway is the 10-part series Rise and Fall of the Nazis. This series will be available in 2020 and is a coproduction with ZDF Enterprises.

Hollstein notes there is a need for modern history programming covering the final decades of the last century. To that end, historical biographies of internationally known figures are also of interest to ZDF. Hollstein says the pubcaster is currently working on a film on world renowned boxer and activist Muhammad Ali.

Meanwhile, Great Crimes in Antiquity, billed as a true crime-meets-archaeology series, uses modern forensic methods to tackle spectacular cases occurring during the Egyptian, Roman, Aztec and Chinese Empires. The program is slated for 2019.