

Background Information, Leipzig, 05/2020

## **FROM AND FOR LEIPZIG**

### **On the history and self-concept of the Museum of City History Leipzig**

After various temporary homes, the collections of the museum, which evolved on the initiative of Leipzig citizens involved with the Leipzig history association - established in 1867, found a permanent home at the Old Town Hall in 1909. This site survived massive war damage as well as political and ideological exploitation during both German dictatorships. Following the opening of the new building (Haus Böttchergässchen) in 2004, the museum (which is operated by the city) now has a flexible special exhibition area. This has enabled the museum's transition to a modern structure shaped by various working fields, such as documentation, education and communication. While the branch museums are linked via the director's office and the museum's central administration, a foundation established specifically for this in 2012 is responsible for the reconstruction, preservation and day-to-day operation of the Monument to the Battle of the Nations.

The museum's collections comprise around 600,000 items from all genres of material, written and graphical records. These include items from the collection fields of city and state history, everyday culture/folklore, arts/crafts, graphic arts, music and theatre history, numismatics and militaria as well as pre- and early history/archaeology. The photographic library with 150,000 exhibits, the library comprising roughly 140,000 items and the sports history collection with its 85,000 items are of special importance.

The museum has always enjoyed a close connection with the citizens of the city who are particularly dedicated to it. To this day, the association supporting the museum, the Hieronymus-Lotter-Gesellschaft, as well as the associations supporting the Monument to the Battle of the Nations and the Sports Museum and the partnerships with numerous civic associations and historical culture initiatives form the backbone of the museum's successful and sustainable work.

The museum sees itself as a classical cultural history institution which emphasises, in particular, professional expertise in all of its departments as well as progressive digital collection documentation within the meaning of the ICOM criteria and the guidelines of the German Museum Association, (Deutscher Museumsbund). The Museum of City History focuses its research, collection and educational activities on Leipzig history from the beginnings to the contemporary period. City history museums are particularly suited to providing a comprehensive overview over the entirety of cultural history records and city life and, in the process, combining various topics and approaches based on items from their own collections. The museum's vision and approach are characterised by lively instruction, critical approaches highlighting different perspectives as well as participatory integration into the city's society.

The museum's future will be shaped by challenges hinging on the change in habits of perception during the digital age, in addition to the question of "continuing our collections for tomorrow". So, the focus will be on combining the traditional strengths and tasks of the museum – for example with a central depository and contemporary forms of publication and education along with corresponding spaces – with an expansion into the virtual world.

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