

Temporary exhibition

MONEY. POWER. FAITH

The Reformation and economic life

8 September to 26 November 2017
in the Confessional Building of the European Hansemuseum

Third temporary exhibition in the European Hansemuseum – At the end of the Reformation Year the focus is on the economic aspects of the schism – Interactive exhibition design combines infographics, touchscreens and selected exhibits – History returns to the place of the original events

Lübeck, 7 September 2017 – A low murmuring greets visitors to the Confessional Building of the European Hansemuseum. It is the Lord's Prayer being said in Latin – a sound that was an inseparable part of this place 500 years ago. The Confessional Building of the former St. Mary Magdalene Friary was where the Dominican friars heard the confessions of Lübeck citizens. At the same time, they were involved in the business of indulgences. Money was a vital factor in the sale of indulgences in the early 16th century. Whereas the faithful wanted to buy themselves absolution from their sins, the Roman Catholic Church and many princes rubbed their hands at the thought of the vast proceeds. So Luther's censure of the Church also contained an allegation of fraud.

The third temporary exhibition, "Money. Power. Faith" at the European Hansemuseum, which was realised jointly with the historian Dr Tillmann Bendikowski from Medienagentur Geschichte, examines the economic aspects of the schism, so illuminating an area of European history that has seen little research to date. Infographics, two touchscreens and selected exhibits, partly from the St. Annen-Museum Lübeck, are used to illustrate the consequences of the Reformation for the economy and trade in Europe.

When the Reformation began it also sparked an argument about the Church's valuable property: who did the religious houses and all the Church's other real estate belong to? What should become of the church treasures? In Germany especially this developed into a bitter dispute between the Protestant and Catholic camps – since a great deal of money was at stake.

One particular exhibit also makes a specific connection to Lübeck: a gilded monstrance from the period around 1500 is testimony to the treatment of church property in the Hanseatic city – it only escaped the destruction of the Lübeck church treasures because it was made of copper.

Apart from such digressions on the history of Lübeck, the exhibition takes a European perspective, because the continent experienced many reformations and religious refugees were soon a European reality. In their turn these forced migrations changed the world of business – immigrants brought technical know-how to their new homelands; some rulers chose an intelligent immigration policy for economic reasons, others pulled up the drawbridge. But beyond these economic aspects, the schism marked the beginning of religious tolerance in Europe. There were practical reasons for this: the more tolerant a country was, the better for its economic development. It is an insight that is more topical today than ever. As part of the interactive design of the exhibition, it finishes by asking questions of the visitors. By answering the nine questions they have the opportunity to share their personal opinion of the Reformation and of the connection between money and faith today.

An extensive programme of accompanying activities continues the museum's look at the anniversary of the Reformation. Guided tours are also on offer for the first time for this temporary exhibition and can be booked in advance by groups. Entrance to the exhibition costs €5 (concessions €2.50) and combined tickets for the permanent exhibition and the Castle Friary are available at special rates. The catalogue to the exhibition has space for visitors' own notes and can be purchased for €13.80 in the museum shop.

The exhibition is sponsored by:

by resolution of the German Bundestag



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The exhibition is taking place as part of:

Luther 2017 – 500 years of Reformation

Press information

This press release and pictures of the exhibition are available in our media area at www.hansemuseum.eu. We will be happy to arrange background briefings and interviews on request. For information about these and all other matters please call us on +(49) 451 80 90 99 18 or send an email to presse@hansemuseum.eu.

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