

sammlung druckwerk

Acquisition of a collection of pop-up books by Deutsches Buch- und Schriftmuseum (German Book and Type Museum) in Leipzig

Under the (translated) heading → [Turning pages in 3D - Unique kinetic books from the Hartung Collection](#), the Deutsches Buch- und Schriftmuseum in Leipzig (DBSM) (German Book and Type Museum) in Leipzig, which is part of the German National Library, announced in February of this year that more than 4,200 pop-up books ... a collection with a unique character had been acquired.

At first glance, this is good news: the appeal of these books, the diverse designs, the growing interest of the public, which is increasingly finding expression in scholarly studies, all speak in favour of due museum attention. However, the DBSM's announcement failed to mention that behind the 'increase' lies a purchase, the price of which, as far as we know, is considerable - the DBSM refuses to provide details on this. Anyway, it is the taxpayer who pays for this; the benefits and economic efficiency of such an acquisition must therefore be convincingly justifiable and coherently embedded in the museum concept of the DBSM. From the point of view of the druckwerk collection, however, there are doubts about this.

The acquired collection has a high proportion of publications from the German-speaking world, so overlaps with the holdings already available in the German National Library overlaps will be inevitable. Moreover, pop-up books and their relatives have been represented in German academic libraries for some time in large numbers and in representative variety. The collections donated by private individuals are of great importance in this respect. For example, the Bavarian State Library with the Lorenz Collection and the International Youth Library in Munich with the Ulla Kluekmann Collection and other libraries (also through their own acquisitions such as the Berlin State Library), but also toy museums such as Nuremberg or Soltau are well equipped. Across libraries, the stock in Germany is in good shape.

Against this background, the purchase of a large collection - which, contrary to the statement of the DBSM, is not unique and also not the largest in the German-speaking world - appears to be rather a wrong and, in addition, expensive decision. From the museum's point of view, the goal should be the exemplary documentation of a subject, in this case oriented towards features typical of the design and the history of development. It would therefore have made more sense to build up a sample collection of two to three hundred titles with the help of expert external advice, using the existing stock and the targeted purchase of foreign titles. An optimized result under these aspects can be achieved with a fraction of the amount spent now! And even if libraries are reluctant to do so, the acquisition of donations is helpful.

The purchase is also questionable from the point of view of the sammlung druckwerk, since the funds are presumably lacking elsewhere. Since 2010 (!), the successive sale of the foreign-language Loewensohn archive has been taking place by antiquarians; unique specimen copies of this publishing house, which is so eminently important for the history of German publishing, have been irretrievably lost for an overview. The same applies to the original drafts of the Fliegende Blätter of the J. F. Schreiber publishing house; the complete archive was recently hawked here via an online platform and is no longer accessible to the general public. The German National Library and the German Book and Type Museum have not become involved here.