

# STORIED WALLS OF HISTORY:

## The Frankfurt Carmelite Monastery

### Ausstellung

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## Plate 1:

### Introduction

#### **Storied walls of history. The Frankfurt Carmelite Monastery**

I'm joining a monastery! Perhaps this sentence has crossed all of our minds and has done so for very different reasons: perhaps to escape the stresses of everyday life. Or to do good for others. Or to devote oneself entirely to one's religious faith. The history of the Frankfurt Carmelite Monastery is as multifaceted as these motives are diverse.

The first thing we associate with a monastery is a series of buildings inhabited and populated by monks or nuns. The Frankfurt Carmelite Monastery has existed for almost eight centuries and served as a site of worship, a final resting place, and, for almost 550 years, as a site for festive occasions.

Over the past two centuries, the premises have been used for a wide array of purposes: as a warehouse, as barracks, as a school, as a fire station, as an artists' studio, as a concert hall, as an exhibition space, a theatre stage, as office space, as a workshop, as a pub, an art stage, a city archive, and as a museum. The time of the monks is long gone. Yet, the name and architecture of the monastery are a lasting reminder of its faithful inhabitants.

The walls of the Carmelite Monastery are full of history and stories. Three dozen people tell us these stories from their points of view; they tell us about their personal connection to the Carmelite Monastery. Most of them have long since died, and so these texts are an interpretation of how the monastery might have affected them. You will certainly notice the 13 panels of questions featuring motifs from the liturgical vestments of the Carmelite Monastery. Please feel free to pick them up and test your knowledge. The answers may be found on the back of each panel.

The monastery is and was a place of constant structural change. So, please feel free to explore the former state of the monastery in the centre of the room. Immerse yourself in times gone by and in the stories as well as the history of the Carmelite Monastery!

## Plate 2:

### **Founding the order**

*Albert of Jerusalem, bishop and saint*

Hello, esteemed guests. Would you like to know what role I played in the founding of the Order of the Carmelites? It was between 1204 and 1214, when I, as Patriarch of Jerusalem, acted as “supreme shepherd” in the “Holy Land.” Around 1209, a group of hermit monks asked to be provided with a written religious rule. They lived in secluded cells and caves in the Carmel Mountains.

Their daily routine consisted of prayer and labour. I supplied them with a religious rule that prohibited private property, the consumption of meat, and prescribed a period of silence throughout the day.

They informed me that, according to their religious tradition, Berthold of Calabria had founded the order in 1156 on Mount Carmel in the north of the country. The Carmelites, who had come from Europe and modelled themselves on the prophet Elijah, had settled and founded a monastery there, at the foot of the mountain range, around the year 1150.

### **Expulsion and rescue**

*Louis IX, King of France*

I led two crusades, but I was unable to prevent the Saracens from conquering my territory and destroying the monastery at the foot of Mount Carmel in the year 1263. Owing to my piety, my contemporaries also called me the “Monk King”. So, I’m certain you’re not surprised that I brought eight Carmelite monks with me to Europe aboard my ship in 1248. Christians were facing danger in the Carmel Mountains at the time, and most of the approximately 7000 hermits had already left for Central Europe between 1238 and 1240.

Jörg Ratgeb would capture the embarkation of the monks three centuries later in his monumental mural in the refectory of the Carmelite Monastery. Having arrived safely in Paris, the rescued monks departed to establish settlements east of the Rhine. Settlements are recorded in Cologne in 1256/58, followed shortly afterwards by Würzburg and Frankfurt. The Frankfurt chronicle of the order, however, dates the foundation of the monastery to 1246, which means that monks must have arrived in Frankfurt prior to my rescue.

### **A new start in Europe**

*Pope Innocent IV*

After the Carmelites returned to Europe, in 1247 I saw to the softening of the order’s rules, which had been confirmed by my predecessor Honorius III in 1226. I granted the Carmelites the privileges of a mendicant order and adapted their rule to European conditions. This permitted the convents to settle in cities, where they could dedicate themselves to pastoral care.

From then on, these mendicant monks were known as the “Order of the Brothers of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel.” In Frankfurt, they built and expanded their church and monastery near the western city wall.

## Plate 3:

### **First choir consecrations**

*Christian of Mühlhausen, Bishop of the Diocese of Samland and Mainz*

When I visited the Carmelites in 1290, their monastery consisted only of the Church of St. Mary – an unadorned, plain hall with a simple pitched roof. The church was surrounded by smaller buildings and farmhouses. Other areas were used agriculturally. The Carmelites also cultivated gardens on Alte Mainzer Gasse and initially, they lived in one of the existing houses.

Do you want to know the purpose of my visit? I consecrated the choir extension of the Carmelite church with its two altars and burial place. The first consecration of the Carmelite church by my fellow bishop Theodoric of Verona in 1270 is documentary evidence of the Carmelite settlement in Frankfurt. Like me 20 years later, he consecrated an altar for the church's patron saint, Mary, as well as a burial ground. Both granted a 40-day indulgence to anyone who visited the altar to Mary or who helped the monks expand the church and monastery.

I cannot report on a magnificent church building. Originally, St. Mary's was a rectangular hall made of calcium-silicate, 22 metres long and 10 metres wide. When I consecrated the unvaulted rectangular choir in 1290, the church had already been extended by 17 metres to the east and, at 12 metres it was slightly higher than the oldest part of the church. The believers sat in the nave, while the choir was reserved for the monks.

### **Pious patrician families**

*Heinrich von Ortenberg, Carmelite friar*

Nice of you to join us at mass. Oh, you know Johann von Holzhausen? Yes, I was his confessor. We Carmelites have a lot to thank him for. After his death in 1424, his testamentary donation allowed us to raise the choir, install new windows and install a late Gothic net vault, and to have the choir vault painted with motifs from the Concert of Angels.

Numerous patrician families, including the von Holzhausen family, donated money to us. The Glauburg, Marburg, Frosch, Weiß and Stalburg families were among them. In return, we granted them the right to burial in the choir or chapels, in family graves or crypts. Take a look at the family's coats of arms on the walls, at the keystones and graves. They are a reminder of their donations.

### **Construction of the monastery church of St. Mary**

*Margarete Dohrn-Ihmig, archaeologist*

Would you like to hear about my research? With pleasure! The Carmelites were diligent builders between the years 1250 and 1520. There is evidence of 13 major extensions and renovations. However, the monks did not develop a coherent building plan.

They integrated their church into the existing buildings and extended the complex bit by bit over the following centuries.

### **Plate 3**

Between the years 1300 and 1430, the monks added a polygonal choir, a sacristy to the south of the choir, and a transept with low, early Gothic roofs to the core of the current nave and the choir consecrated in 1290. The window reveals and the walls were already painted in colour at this time. Donations from the families of Frankfurt enabled further extensions between 1430 and 1510. Around 1450, the Carmelites widened the southern transept and constructed vaulted altars over this part of the building and the western chapel, which was constructed at the same time and completed in 1468. This was followed by an extension of the nave to the west with a sloping façade and the vaulting of the entire nave by 1478.

Two chapel extensions were added to the east wall of the transept: first the Sebastian Chapel, consecrated in 1482, and then the Anna Chapel, completed in 1494. In a final phase of construction, a narrow chapel section was built in the west of the transept after 1510. The church building now considerably exceeded the dimensions of a simple monastery church, and the extensions to the church had come to an end.

## Plate 4:

### **Extension of the monastery**

*Rumold von Laupach, prior*

Let us wander through the rooms and marvel at this vastness! My predecessors as priors had pushed the expansion of the monastery. Between 1422 and 1443, Peter of Frankfurt, known as Pierre Spitznagel, had the church extended and the older sections raised. After 1450 and under the aegis of his successors, we Carmelites constructed an organ loft, vaulted the transept and began building the cloister to the north of the church. We were finally able to consecrate the church in 1462.

During my tenure as prior between 1474 and 1496, we succeeded in expanding the property and extending the cloister. We were delighted with the new library in 1477 and the new passageway at Ellenbogengässchen in 1494. We were most pleased with the completion of the cloister in 1490. However, constructions continued in the north and east. Beginning in 1490, further new buildings were added on Karmelitergasse.

### **The completed monastery**

*Haman von Fleckenboel, prior*

Are you marvelling at our monastery? We have been working on it for more than two and a half centuries, and today, in 1520, I am finally able to show you the completed premises. Patricians and brotherhoods have gifted us substantial donations, with which we have financed not only the buildings of the new monastery but also Jörg Ratgeb's artistic designs. From 1460 onwards, my predecessors and I stepped up the expansion of the monastery wing in particular. 60 years later, we are now able to practise our faith in the cloister and make use of the prior's building to the north, on Münzgasse, which includes the prior's residence, administration offices, and the monastic library. Our monastery holds 45 beds, which may be used by us monks as well as our guests.

But our pride and joy is the refectory, our summer dining hall. Above the connecting door to the chapter house, an inscription, the portrait of a saint, and trade goods refer to the mural's donors: the Brotherhood of St. Anne, without whom none of this would have been possible. In the winter, we're dining in the adjoining chapter house. As you can see, our order has been experiencing a religious and economic heyday since the beginning of the 16th century.

Let us pay a visit to our monastic school. One of my brothers gives academic lectures here as a lector, while another teaches Latin in his role as preceptor. In our small Latin school, they are educating future monks. This is followed by an education at the provincial level and at university, mainly in Cologne. Public schooling in Frankfurt, on the other hand, is provided by the cathedral school and the other monastic schools, which largely cover the demand.

## Plate 4

### Fateful negligence

*Johannes Bachusius, prior*

I have been the cause of a bitter blow to the Carmelites. I had only been the monastery's prior for a year when, in 1638, my negligence caused major damage to the building. I forgot to extinguish a wax taper in my cell and caused a major fire that destroyed large parts of the monastery. I lost my life, and some of my brothers died of smoke inhalation.

The fire also spread to rooms that were rented out to booksellers. The monastery had to compensate for the damage to the burnt books, which totalled several thousand Reichsthalers. But we Carmelites did not lose heart. The great willingness of the faithful to make donations allowed for the reconstruction of the monastery between 1644 and 1658.

## Plate 5:

### **Wealth enables magnificent murals**

*Jörg Ratgeb, painter and leader in the German Peasants' War*

Have you already had a chance to admire the murals in the cloister and refectory of the monastery? Together with my assistants, I first created the mural "Adoration of the Magi" in 1514/15 for the burial place for Claus Stalburg and his wife Margarethe of the Rhine in the cloister. One of my journeymen – his name was Jörg or Jerg Glasser from Bamberg – was buried in the cloister in 1516. I depicted the then mayor, Stalburg, as one of the three adoring kings, on a par with Emperor Maximilian.

Jörg Ratgeb is my name, but Jerg is a common variant of my Christian name. I am from Schwäbisch Gmünd. The Carmelites probably chose me, because they admired the work I completed in 1513 in the Carmelite Monastery of Hirschhorn am Neckar.

The monks approached me in 1515 and commissioned me to continue painting the cloister and, in 1517, the 30-metre-wide mural in the refectory. My journeymen and I completed the latter that same year. The Brotherhood of St. Anne donated the entire mural, which comprises the life stories of the prophets Elijah and Elisha, as well as the history of the Carmelite order in four sections. The murals in the cloister were completed in 1521. If you take a look at the proportions of the people and animals, you can make out the different painters and their techniques. The cycle in the cloister comprised 40 sections. I erected them in identical ways and separated them by architectural elements: I placed a scene from the New Testament at the centre of each section and placed two events from the Old Testament next to it. I modelled this after the *Biblia Pauperum*, one of the most widely read books of the Middle Ages. However, I repeatedly broke the pattern, linked the scenes synoptically to make the stories more vivid and realistic. The thematic organisation was in the hands of the Carmelite Monastery's prior, Haman von Fleckenboel, and his theological advisors.

A few years later, I supported the deposed Duke Ulrich of Württemberg and the rebellious peasants at the siege of Stuttgart during the German Peasants' War in 1525. As a member of the council of war, I organised the peasant army by pamphleteering. The following year, I was taken prisoner by Georg Truchsess zu Waldburg. After interrogation and horrific torture, I died by quartering on the market square in Pforzheim. However, large parts of my work can still be seen today on the ground floor of the monastery.

### **Foundations and coats of arms from the Frankfurt families**

*Claus Stalburg, businessman and councillor*

Have you noticed the many coats of arms from the Frankfurt families? Along with the gravestones and inscriptions in the cloister, refectory, and Carmelite church, they still remind us of the families and donors of Jörg Ratgeb's murals. They financed the monastery's extension and decoration. I was one of the benefactors.

My large fortune earned me the nickname Claus Stalburg "the Rich". Around 1500, my merchant business made me the wealthiest citizen of Frankfurt. I not only wanted myself and my wife to be buried in the cloister, but for my burial place, I donated an opulent wall painting depicting the "Adoration of the Magi". My donation encouraged other families of Frankfurt to follow suit and to decorate the cloister with works of art.

## Plate 6:

### **Locals found a brotherhood**

*Ludwig zum Paradies, city councillor and mayor*

I had close ties to Frankfurt and to the Carmelites. Like the important merchant brotherhoods, we also wanted to do charitable work in Frankfurt. So, in 1479, together with Johann Gelthus von Oppenheim and the knight Gernant von Schwalbach the Elder, who was captain of the town militia in Frankfurt, I founded the Brotherhood of St. George.

Our brotherhood consisted primarily of locals or knights connected to Frankfurt through their offices. The convent allowed us to participate in the good works of the monastery and the order. These included prayers, fasting, night vigils, mortifications, wanderings, sermons and punishments, the right to burial in the monastery, and the permission to hold masses for our members.

### **Merchant brotherhood hands over relic of saint**

*Rumold von Laupach, prior*

I was the Carmelite Monastery's prior for two decades between 1474 and 1496. I will never forget the presentation of a relic of St. Anne in 1493, when the Brotherhood of St. Anne acquired the arm bones of its patron saint and displayed them in a silver shrine in the chapel.

Recognised by the Pope in 1481, the Brotherhood of St. Anne consisted of around 4000 local and foreign merchants, mainly from Switzerland, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands. They visited Frankfurt regularly for the Easter and autumn fairs, and we Carmelites read a daily mass for the members, which included a number of women. This was made possible by a donation of 850 guilders from the merchant Joannes Gijllis in 1487. We also owe the mural in the refectory to our wealthiest brotherhood.

I enjoyed visiting St. Anne's Chapel, consecrated in 1494, with its magnificent altar completed in 1496. A contract concluded in 1501 allowed the brotherhood to bury its members in the chapel and granted them chapel access for devotions whenever they pleased. At the same time, our monastery church received a quarter of the brotherhood's income.

We granted similar privileges to the Brotherhood of St. Nicholas, which was founded by Dutch merchants in 1484. The brotherhood had its own chapel in the church's choir, where we monks held daily mass for the members. At Easter, two of my brothers heard confessions. We buried the deceased in the chapel upon request.

I remained deeply attached to the Brotherhood of St. Anne, and in 1496, I was buried on the south wall of their chapel under the ceiling which was painted with medicinal plants.

## Plate 7

### Daily life in the monastery

*Hermann von Neuß, prior*

Do you want to know what life was like in the monastery? As the Carmelite Monastery's prior from 1364 to 1369, I can tell you all about it. Like my successors, I was elected prior by the convent through a democratic majority of votes. As prior, I led the monastic community like an abbot. Our lives were characterised by the renunciation of property and chastity. In keeping with our origins as hermits, we also lived in separate cells in the Carmelite Monastery. We came together as a community at daily mass and at the weekly chapter of faults. Here, offences against the rules of the order were proclaimed before the monks. Like pilgrimages or processions, the chapter of faults was one of the pious exercises, and it served to expiate sins.

Yet, even during my lifetime, some brothers neglected the order's rules with regard to choir prayer, silence, and seclusion. A softened rule of the order loosened the cell constraints and permitted the consumption of meat. The odd friar no longer took seriously the vow of poverty. The privileges of priests with university degrees particularly increased. These relaxations ultimately led to a countermovement in the 15th century, which was supported by the monastery: the movement orientated itself more towards the origins of the mendicant orders, which raised the Carmelites' reputation among the laity and increased the civic will to donate.

We enjoyed great popularity among the people and were respected for our spirituality and devotion to Mary. Look at the many graves, tombstones, and inscriptions. Patrician families and brotherhoods, but also ordinary citizens of Frankfurt, made many donations and other gifts to us – and chose to be buried in the Carmelite monastery.

### A consequential visit

*Giordano Bruno, priest, poet, monk, philosopher, astronomer*

In June 1590, I visited to Frankfurt to have my manuscript – the 1000 pages of my so-called “Frankfurt Trilogy” – printed by my publisher Johann Wechel. He had promised me accommodations, but on 2 July 1590 Frankfurt's city council prohibited me to stay overnight in any citizen's house. Since publishers of the 16th century did not pay any fees to authors, but instead supplied them with free copies of their works and free accommodation, Wechsel approached the Carmelites. They were happy to provide me with shelter in the monastery.

They certainly didn't do it out of pure hospitality. After all, guests had to pay for overnight stays in the monastery's rooms. Although I wasn't religious, I was able to concentrate on my writing in the halls, and I wandered about, while pondering ideas. I stayed in the Carmelite Monastery for several months and published my work “De triplici minimo et mensura” (On the Threefold Minimum and Measure) on the occasion of the Easter fair in 1591.

I departed Frankfurt at the beginning of 1591 and, after a short stay in Zurich, returned in the summer of the same year to print three more works I had written in the Carmelite Monastery on the occasion of the autumn fair of 1591.

## **Plate 7**

But instead of staying at the monastery, this time I made a fatal decision. At the invitation of the Venetian nobleman Giovanni Mocenigo, I travelled to Venice, where he betrayed me to the Inquisition in 1592. After a trial that lasted many years, the Inquisition found me guilty of heresy and practising magic, because my cosmological ideas were based on the infinity of space and the possibility of life on other planets. In my work, I ruled out the afterlife, the Last Judgement and creation. If only I had stayed in Frankfurt! Instead, I was executed at the stake in 1600.

## Plate 8

### Friction and Reformation

*Charles V, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire and King of Spain*

Life in the monastery was not without friction and conflict. Time and again, the monastery walls were impacted by wars, disputes between monarchs and the papacy, as well as the city council of Frankfurt. During the Reformation, the Carmelites turned to me for help after the city council tried to force the monastery to hand over the jewels of the Brotherhood of St. Anne in 1529. I granted them my protection on 14 October 1530 and confirmed their privileges.

These were hard times for me as Emperor and for the Carmelites as Catholics. The city council and large sections of the citizenry followed Luther's teachings. From 1524 onwards, the brotherhoods withdrew themselves along with their property. Even I, as Emperor, could not prevent Frankfurt from introducing the Reformation by referendum in 1533. Although the Carmelite Monastery was spared from plundering, benefactors turned away from the monastery or changed their wills, which had previously favoured the monastery, because no Catholic services were permitted to take place until May 1535. The only remaining sources of income were the letting of the cellars and granaries to traders and wine merchants, as well as the hosting mostly Dutch travellers to the fair. The common people also stayed away from the monastery. For the next 100 years, the Carmelites only looked after a small parish.

Despite the period of my protection, the uncertain times and the fears of plundering prompted the convent's unanimous vote to sell its jewels for 800 guilders in 1536. The only items that remained in Frankfurt were a large cross, the monstrance with the relics of St. Anne, the high altar, and a few chalices.

Unlike in other monasteries, the Frankfurt order did not disband in the wake of the Reformation. This was likely owed to the provincial leadership in Cologne, which constantly sent outside members to Frankfurt, relocated parts of their education here, and dispatched qualified priors. The province of the monastic order – as well as the order in its entirety – held on to the location of Frankfurt because of the fairs and their importance.

The conflicts with the city council persisted. In 1531, Frankfurt joined the Schmalkaldic League, an alliance against my religious policy. During the Schmalkaldic War in 1546, the council forced all monasteries and convents to relinquish all liturgical inventory to the heavily indebted city. Sick people were also cared for in the monastery during the war. In contrast to other cities, at least the city council did not touch the Catholic monasteries and collegiate churches. I finally succeeded in breaking up the alliance in 1547.

As a result, relations between the Catholic monastery and the Lutheran city council normalised. The refectory in particular – the largest and most festive hall in all of Frankfurt at the time – served as the venue for banquets, such as those held in 1582, or for meetings of the Electoral and Upper Rhenish Circles.

## Plate 8

### War and reconciliation

#### *Gustav Adolf II, King of Sweden*

Despite his victory in the Schmalkaldic War, Emperor Charles V could not bring peace to the warring religious factions. The Thirty Years' War broke out in 1618. The initial religious war turned into a territorial struggle for supremacy in Europe. As the King of Sweden, I fought together with France against the Catholic opponents from Spain, Bavaria, and the Holy Roman Empire.

The year after I invaded Frankfurt in 1631, I donated the monasteries and church estates I had confiscated to the city council of Frankfurt. Perhaps I was not entirely altruistic. In return, the city waived payment for its military supplies and a loan of 100.000 Reichsthalers. The Carmelites had to leave the monastery and the town in 1633.

On 28 August 1633, Heinrich Tettelbach preached the first Lutheran sermon in the Carmelite Church. From then on, the refectory served as a venue for banquets, feasts, and dances, although all of this was short-lived. After Emperor Ferdinand II signed a peace treaty with the Elector of Saxony, the Carmelites were able to return to their ancestral monastery in 1635, and our Swedish troops withdrew from Sachsenhausen.

## Plate 9

### **At the family grave**

*Bettina von Arnim, poet*

“Here I find the depth of loneliness, and the people I meet here [...] are surely there to commemorate their dead. Here is the crypt where my father and mother are interred, along with my [...] brothers and sisters. There is one coffin on top of another. When I come to this church here, when I pass this crypt here, I fold my hands. And my prayer is complete.” This is how I commemorated my parents, Peter Anton and Maximiliane Brentano, as well as my seven siblings who were buried in the Carmelite Church in 1807.

You will certainly remember me from the 5 Deutsche Mark banknote and as the poet Bettina von Arnim. But I was born Bettina Brentano, and so, I often stood at the family crypt on the north wall of the choir and before my family’s ledger stones in the floor, where our coat of arms was adorned with a snake and a lion.

After two difficult centuries, the Carmelite Monastery experienced a second golden age in the mid-17th century thanks to religious peace and numerous donations from Catholic benefactors. The first economic blessing came from an image of the Virgin Mary brought by Carmelite monks who had fled from Speyer to Frankfurt in 1689. In addition to new mass stipends, more funerals were held in the monastery, including those of high-ranking personalities. The patrician families were now replaced by Catholic princes and counts, bishops and aristocrats, particularly the Princes of Thurn und Taxis, who enabled a number of construction projects. Further contributions were made by the city’s wealthy Catholic merchants Bögener, Brotzler, Buchler, Lindt, as well as my merchant family Brentano, who had emigrated from Italy. Our compatriots Guaita, Belli, and Allesina made donations as well. My family acquired a burial vault in the choir in 1701 and frequently made contributions to fund church furnishings and memorial masses for the dead.

### **Second peak phase enabled by foundations**

*Eugen Alexander, Prince of Thurn and Taxis*

As a devout Catholic, I donated large sums of money to the Carmelites out of conviction. This permitted the monastery to supply the Carmelite Church with a new, baroque interior at the beginning of the 18th century. The remodelling began with the installation of six new side altars between 1690 and 1703, followed by the purchase of a new high altar in 1707, and the installation of two new confessionals in 1708. I contributed 425 guilders to the financing of a monstrance for the new high altar. The remaining 112 guilders required for the purchase were raised by other donors.

In 1709, the convent also acquired a new organ with my donations, and extensively renovated the church, monastery, and chapels between 1710 and 1713. In order to protect the precious Ratgeb paintings, the monks decided to install windows in the cloister in 1711, and in 1712/13, they chose to have the paintings cleaned up and restored.

In 1713, repairs were made to the sacristy and the chapels of St. Sebastian and St. Barbara. In addition, two new precious altars were built, and a 300 kg brass chandelier was hung in the centre of

## Plate 9

the church. The last addition was a rectory in the south-east corner of the monastery grounds in 1783. Compared to earlier centuries, monastery life was rather quiet. The Carmelites mainly focussed on their religious and pastoral practices.

### Monastery becomes storage room

*Carl Theodor von Dalberg, archbishop and Prince Primate*

I put an end to monastic life. Napoleon had all monasteries and convents dissolved, and he used their assets to compensate the princes for their territorial losses to France. The Carmelite monks were also forced to leave the monastery by 10 February 1803. The secular possessions now became the property of the city of Frankfurt. However, due to renovations on St. Leonard's Church, the believers continued to celebrate Catholic masses in the Carmelite church until 1809.

On my orders – from 1806 to 1813 I ruled as Prince Primate over Frankfurt and the Confederated States of the Rhine – the interior was dismantled, and after 1809, the church was converted into a warehouse comprising four depots. The church and choir, the sacristy, St. Anne's Chapel and St. Sebastian's Chapel were subdivided, while suspended ceilings were installed. The floors were uneven because of the graves, and so the ground had to be levelled. The mural in the refectory was whitewashed over, the monastic library was transferred to the municipal library and the monastic archive was transferred to the municipal archive. The "Geistliche Güter-Administration" (Religious Property Administration) received 1.258 guilders annually for renting out the church property that it oversaw.

The following years were characterised by renovations on the monastery. In order to improve the incidence of light, the valuable stained-glass windows were removed in 1812 and replaced by new windows with simple, white Bohemian glass. In 1833, the ridge turret was dilapidated and had to be demolished, and the roof was fully rebuilt in 1836. In 1840, the parlour – the two-storey porch on the corner of Karmeliter/Alte Mainzer Gasse – was demolished, followed by the sacristy in 1855. In place of the sacristy and in the former cemetery, a five-storey customs warehouse was built. The Sebastian Chapel had already been demolished in 1844 to make room for a two-and-a-half-storey residential building for the warehouse manager. For an entire century, the Carmelite Church was hidden behind these two buildings and was used as a warehouse for the main tax office until 1866.

## Plate 10

### **New use as barracks, school, and fire brigade**

*Otto Donner von Richter, art historian and history painter*

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Jörg Ratgeb's work had already been forgotten. It is thanks to my research that Ratgeb's authorship was proven in 1882, and that the artist was subsequently rescued from oblivion. I made copies of his murals for posterity. I coated the originals with water or linseed oil. This caused irreparable damage to the artworks, but in my defence, I wish to say that I assumed the paintings were already irretrievably lost when the Carmelite School moved in.

In 1882, the refectory was divided into three classrooms, a corridor, and a teacher's lounge. The room's floor was raised by 1,20 metres to accommodate the Carmelite school, and the south wall was broken through to make room for new windows. The wall paintings, which had been whitewashed over since around 1803, were lost in those places where the windows were installed. Overall, the monastery presented a picture of progressive decay in the eyes of many contemporaries around 1900. Further classrooms were housed in the prior's building. After the school moved out, a rescue station had been located in the refectory since 1927. The former vestibule (today's foyer) served as a workshop for the fire brigade.

Previously, Austrian federal troops had been quartered in the Carmelite Monastery since 1848, and they had used the refectory as a dormitory. While they arranged themselves with the existing structural conditions, the northern cloister in particular suffered from quartering Prussian soldiers, the 1st Hessian Infantry Regiment No. 81. From 1866 to 1881, the military ruthlessly remodelled the monastery to suit its needs, whitewashed over the north wall of the cloister, and created windows in the existing walls for a stable in the north-east corner. Large areas of the cloister were used as kitchens and dormitories. Because of the cramped conditions, parts of the regiment also lodged in private houses until they moved to the newly completed Gutleut barracks in the spring of 1881. After the military departed, the cloister was used by the customs authorities from 1882, as was the Carmelite Church. They had a passageway cut into the south walls of the cloister to connect the building to the other storage rooms. As a result, the "Adoration of the Magi" was irretrievably lost. When the east wall and parts of the south wall of the cloister were demolished and rebuilt, the depictions of the Last Judgement, the Descent from the Cross, and the Entombment were also destroyed. Storerooms and offices were built in the cloister, new doorways were created, and stairs were erected – even in the monastery garden.

A decade later, the customs warehouses disappeared from the cloister. From 1896 onwards, workshops and stables for the fire brigade were located here. From 1909 to 1936, the former customs warehouses in the church were used to store stage sets for the municipal theatre company.

## Plate 11

### **Saving the monastery from demolition**

*Aida Stukering, actress*

You may know me as Greta Garbo's German voice in "Mata Hari". But you probably didn't know that I lived in the Carmelite Monastery in the 1920s. At that time, I acted in the Eichendorff play "Die Freier" on the stage in Frankfurt. The performances in Frankfurt were my springboard to the stages in Berlin and Vienna and for a short trip to Hollywood.

My neighbours in the monastery were civil servants and firemen as well as numerous artists, such as the musician Rudolph Hindemith, the painter Rudolph Heinisch, the sculptor Benno Elkan and the art historian Walter Karl Zülch. We lived and worked in the 18 artists' studios that had been set up above the cloister, in the former monks' cells, in 1923/24. There were also at least seven flats in the attic above the cloister.

In the 1920s, the "Bund tätiger Altstadtfreunde" (Association of Friends of the Old Town) was able to prevent the imminent demolition of the monastery. Ten years earlier, in 1912, the monastery's fate seemed sealed, when the decision was made to extend the Großer Hirschgraben to the river Main. However, the First World War and its consequences prevented the monastery's demolition. After the end of the war, there emerged a new understanding of the monastery grounds' importance.

### **Restorations and National Socialist cultural policy**

*Theodor Derlam, architect and municipal building surveyor*

Under my management, extensive restorations were carried out on the monastery from 1922 to 1943. We began repairing the monastery's outer walls in 1923 and constructed flats and studios. By 1925, we had removed constructions such as sheds, stables, and staircases in the cloister, and we were able to restore the centre to its former state. During the course of this work, we also discovered the whitewashed murals on the south side of the refectory in 1927, which were restored in 1937/38.

Comprehensive restoration of the church for exhibitions and concerts continued between 1934 to 1936; funds from the "Altstadtlotterie" (the lottery to preserve the old town) made this possible. The partitioning walls that had been installed for storage purposes were now removed. Construction workers restored the original ceilings and walls. Representatives of the Nazi regime celebrated the rededication of the church in 1935.

In addition, the warehouse to the south-east and the former storekeeper's house were demolished in 1936. We decided not to restore the former buildings there (St Sebastian's Chapel, parlour and sacristy), because the demolition was linked to the programme to restore the old town and thus also to air protection. The Carmelite Church was a top project of the greatest importance – the demolition of the warehouse was also aimed at creating sufficient space for the twelve neighbouring houses. The former storehouse's cellar vaults remained, and they were converted into an air-raid shelter for 575 people.

## **Plate 11**

In 1936, the building authority began clearing out the rescue station, which had moved into the refectory in 1927. The first step was to break out the wooden floor, which had been installed in 1882 for the Carmelite School. The Ratgeb painting was irretrievably lost, since the wall had been broken open to create entrances to the rescue station and windows in the teachers' lounge. In the course of the restoration work, which lasted until 1937, the collapsed walls were removed, the old Gothic windows were reconstructed, the paintings on the window reveals and the round pillars were uncovered, and the mural was cleaned.

## Plate 12

### Medieval architecture and National Socialism

*Jakob Sprenger, Gauleiter of the Nazi Party*

The restoration of the Carmelite Church and the refectory was part of the Nazi's cultural policy. I also made this clear in a letter from 1935: "I am quite certainly of the opinion that the group of buildings of the former Carmelite Monastery is suitable for accommodating local culture and lively folklore and thus also for serving National Socialist cultural activities. There are already plans in place to establish a museum of local history in the Carmelite Monastery, especially a museum of ancestral heritage."

I was therefore also in favour of Lord Mayor Friedrich Krebs approving the use of the refectory in 1936 for the exhibition of outstanding pieces of craftsmanship by German journeymen and masters. We National Socialists regarded the refectory as a particular jewel of medieval craftsmanship. From then on, the exhibitions in the Carmelite Monastery were part of the Nazi's cultural policy. First, in 1937, the Nazi Party Office of Racial Policy organised the exhibition „Das deutsche Antlitz im Spiegel der Jahrhunderte“ (The German Face Across the Centuries). This was followed by the exhibition "Das Theater im Freien" (The Open-Air Theatre) on the occasion of the Römerberg Festival from 1 July to 31 August 1937. The exhibition dealt with the history of open-air theatre promoted by the National Socialists, took a look at its international manifestations and ended with the section "Die Freilichtbühne im neuen Deutschland" (The open-air theatre in the new Germany).

### Destruction and reconstruction

*Theodor Derlam, architect and municipal building surveyor*

We had barely completed our renovation work in 1943 when the Carmelite Monastery was largely destroyed in the bombing raid of 22 March 1944. All the roofs were lost, the nave of the church was burnt out and the Gothic vaults of the choir and side chapels were in danger of collapsing. Fortunately, the south wall in the refectory and the north wall in the cloister were preserved. However, the entire monastery was now exposed to the wind and the rain.

After 1945, cultural monuments were initially given low priority during reconstruction due to the prevailing housing shortage. So, the monastery remained in ruins, but full of life. The garden was used by the municipal theatre from 1946 to 1960 as a venue for open-air productions. It was not until 1951 that we were able to begin renovating the monastery again: We supported the preserved vaults in a makeshift manner and provided the choir and nave with an emergency roof. In 1955, the monastery buildings were reconstructed, which took two years. We also demolished the prior's building in front of the monastery. In 1957 and 1959, the Ratgeb paintings were restored, which took all of ten years.

After the reconstruction of the premises was finished in 1959, various institutions moved in: a department of the social welfare office in the north wing, the "Künstlerkeller" (artists' cellar) in the vaulted basement and the theatre "DIE SCHMIERE" in the west cellar, as well as the city archives in the south wing.

## **Plate 12**

The western part of the building formerly in the centre now housed rehearsal, dressing, and archival rooms for the municipal theatre on the ground floor. From 1957, the professional association of visual artists had their rooms above it. The association was given office space, two artists' studios, exhibition space in the western stairwell, three smaller rooms under the roof, a room for its printing press, and a hall to be used for drawing lessons and exhibits. The association exhibited contemporary Hessian art and turned the monastery into a regular "House of the Arts". Thus, it once again served as an exhibition space.

## Plate 13

### **A theatre in ruins in the Karmeliterhof**

*Else Knott, actress*

After 1945, the Carmelite monastery lay in ruins. But between 1946 and 1960, performances of plays, operas, and operettas thrilled audiences in the former Carmelite Garden. It was a delight to perform on the stage outside, even with a supporting role in a play such as in Shakespeare's "The Comedy of Errors". My good friend, Karl Luley, was also there in 1950, in the role of the goldsmith Angelo. The programme consisted mainly of classics.

The theatre location was first used on 19 April 1946 with a performance of Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night", which was directed by Robert Michal. I took on the role of the housemaid Maria. I was joined on stage amidst the ruins by Hannelore Hinkel, Otto Rouvel, Martin Held and Richard Münch. The atmosphere of the monastery with its wild vines and the actors who incorporated the pillars and window parapets into the play allowed us momentarily to forget the dreary everyday life after the war, which was marked by hunger, survival, and reconstruction.

From then on, audiences in the Karmeliterhof experienced a broad spectrum of performances, ranging from serious opera to classical operetta, from high drama to comic farce. Some of the staged plays – "Nathan the Wise", "Katharina Knie" and "Lysistrata" – were met with excellent reviews in the press, and the excellent performances long remained in the audience's minds.

### **Successful productions**

*Karl Luley, actor*

The year 1951 went down in history as the great monastery season: Richard Weichert's staging of Carl Zuckmayer's "Katharina Knie" marked the first time that a modern play was put on in the monastery. Weichert utilised the vastness of the monastery garden and even brought a real caravan onto the stage. The highlight was Weichert's idea to span a rope across the garden and have a group of tightrope walkers perform their tricks above the audience. I took on the role of Father Knie in the play, in which I struggled with my daughter's decision to leave our travelling circus company.

In 1951, the productions remained modern. Heinrich Koch also transferred Aristophanes' comedy "Lysistrata" – with Lola Müthel in the lead role – into the modern age. In the following year, in 1952, Koch also directed "Turandot", based on Gozzi and Franz von Suppé's operetta "Boccaccio".

### **Luckless jousting**

*Klausjürgen Wussow, actor and television doctor*

Admit it, you loved me as Professor Brinkmann in the TV series "Schwarzwaldklinik". But who knew Klausjürgen Wussow in 1953? That year, I was on stage in the Carmelite Garden in the role of the knight Flammberg in "Das Käthchen von Heilbronn". Unfortunately, Ernst Legal's production as a great historical chivalry play met with little enthusiasm. After my participation in "The Phantom Lady", I turned to other roles after 1954.

## Plate 13

Due to the renovation work on the monastery, the performances were suspended until 1956 anyway. At the same time, the charming atmosphere amid the ruins and the former feeling of involuntary closeness to nature with its wild greenery, which I had experienced there, was lost.

### Challenges of the later years

*Heinrich Koch, theatre director*

I always saw the Carmelite Monastery as a special venue and as a treasure, which theatre makers could draw on creatively. But looking back, the great era of theatre in the monastery came to an end after the break brought on by the renovation. Even the première of Werner Egk's comedy "Das Zauberbett" (The Magic Bed) in 1956 was not very well received.

In contrast to earlier years, the lack of funds for the stage sets became a challenge for us. The inventions of modern theatre also pushed open-air productions to their limits. In 1956, Hofmannsthal's "Das Salzburger große Welttheater" (The Great World Theatre of Salzburg), Shakespeare's "As You Like It" in 1957 and a revival of Werner Egk's "Das Zauberbett" in 1958 were produced. This was followed in 1959 by Rostand's romantic comedy "Cyrano de Bergerac", for which the Frankfurt Oscar winner, Hein Heckroth, designed the sets and costumes.

The final production was Calderon's "The Mayor of Zalamea" in 1960. The constant noise of aeroplanes overhead and the unpredictable weather often made the performances difficult endeavours. However, a far greater problem was the dwindling audience interest, which had started to decline by the mid-1950s. The ruinous charm had faded and had become merely ordinary. In addition, there were many artistic blunders. This led to the decision to close the stage in the monastery in 1961.

## Plate 14

### DIE SCHMIERE

*Rudolf Rolfs, writer and comedian*

It was 1950. My first day in Frankfurt. I had never been to this city before, but I had a firm plan to start my own theatre here. Its name was to be DIE SCHMIERE, and it was to be labelled “the worst theatre in the world.” I chose the name “Schmiere” not only because it is a German slang term for a simple, itinerant theatre, but also because I wanted the association with the expression “to stand on guard” (from the Hebrew *smira*, guard).

I put on the first performances in a small, leaky cellar in the “Steinerne Haus” in Braubachstraße, where, for several years, our five-member ensemble performed by candlelight in front of a maximum of 40 people, until DIE SCHMIERE moved to the cellar of the Carmelite Monastery in 1959. It is located there until this day.

Regnault Seiffarth was an economist, and his father insisted that he pursue a “serious” profession. However, for the 4<sup>th</sup> premiere of the SCHMIERE in 1951 and following my constant entreaties, he decided to join the company under the pseudonym Regnault Nonsens. He was in charge of the musical accompaniment on the accordion and piano, and he became my congenial stage partner, who not only played the much-loved “brash Frankfurter” on the SCHMIERE stage in the basement of the Carmelite Monastery, but also took on many serious roles.

Kurt Halbritter joined us that same year. At the time, he was a young cartoonist for a news magazine. He drew posters and many other things for me, and he decorated the theatre space (both in Braubachstraße and later in the Carmelite Monastery) with frescoes that can still be admired in the SCHMIERE cellar today.

Offstage, I was also very active politically, and I gave impassioned speeches – sometimes in front of thousands of people. For example, I actively supported many Easter marches, demonstrated in favour of the right to asylum, supported conscientious objectors, spoke out against the Emergency Acts and in favour of press freedom, and so on and so forth. By the 1950s, I began regularly publishing books, novels and pamphlets; I self-published and sold over a million copies of my works. The programme I created for the SCHMIERE was extremely successful for many years. Works such as **“Dornröschen im Mistbeet” (Sleeping Beauty in the dung bed)**, **“Die tote Ratte in der Limonadenflasche” (The dead rat in the lemonade bottle)** and **“Sie sind ein Ferkel, Exzellenz” (You’re a piglet, Your Excellency)** were extremely long-running, and I became one of the most frequently performed authors in the German language (alongside Goethe). Regnault and I left the stage after 11.154 performances with our show **“Rolfs & Nonsens räumen das Lager” (Clearing the warehouse with Rolfs & Nonsens)**. The Carmelite Monastery had housed us for many decades and had become a creative home for us.

## Plate 14

### Reinvention and further development

*Effi B. Rolfs, head of DIE SCHMIERE from 1990 until today*

I became an actress in 1984, when I first trod the boards in the basement of the Carmelite Monastery's west wing to take on various roles in the show "You're a piglet, Your Excellency!". For five more instructive years, I worked with my father, Rudolf Rolfs, and Regnauld Nonsens, and I acted in various other shows, until the "the two old men" of the SCHMIERE planned to retire.

When my father began a lengthy and unsuccessful search for a successor in 1989, I presented him with my ideas. I relied on a young, new team, without any big names, and in 1990, the generation change came about with the aid of Sabine Hübner (now active in the USA), Matthias Stich (still my highly valued partner in the SCHMIERE), Klaus Teßnow (†2011), and myself, when we put on the show "Achtung! Schnecke läuft Amok!" (Beware! Snail running amok!). The show coincided with the fall of the Berlin Wall.

The young team of the SCHMIERE was quickly greeted enthusiastically, and we worked hard to offer a small repertoire of different titles by 1991. We also expanded our ensemble, and soon we were able to put on shows in Frankfurt and abroad simultaneously. DIE SCHMIERE, which was still unsubsidised at the time, was now also able to perform in town halls and community centres in German-speaking countries. This enabled us to be financially independent and to cope with the daily challenges in the basement of the Carmelite Monastery, while offering the lowest possible ticket prices. We succeeded in establishing the "new" SCHMIERE theatre without breaking with its tradition.

Countless colleagues shared the stage with us in the monastery basement. They came and went over the course of the many seasons and productions. With at least one annual production of our own, we shed light on everyday German life in our well-known satirical style, while maintaining the tradition of the bizarre SCHMIERE titles: "Tragen Sie ihn links oder rechts?" (Do you hang left or right?), "Happy End mit Flaschenpfand" (Happy ending with bottle deposit), "Endlich nackt!" (Naked at last!) or "Beim Verbeugen umgefallen" (Fell over while taking a bow).

As theatre director, I enjoyed performing in my "own house" from day one, although of course I didn't own the Carmelite Monastery, let alone the SCHMIERE basement – we are merely tenants there. But the monastery quickly became a home base. As in my childhood, I spent much more time here with my ensemble than at home. We worked, thought, and produced virtually around the clock. Maintaining a theatre and producing original plays exclusively is very demanding. We're still at it today. Break a leg!

DIE SCHMIERE, located in the basement of the Carmelite Monastery, is a very special kind of cultural institution: where else can you sit on a sofa in the front row? In what other theatre are the chairs brought in by the audience members themselves? Going to the bathroom, you have to pass across the stage past our legendary cardboard curtain, and meeting the performers is an everyday occurrence in the SCHMIERE. Art exhibitions are regularly put on in the back rooms – and there is ample opportunity for relaxed small talk. Why don't you come down to the catacombs and pay us a visit?

## Plate 15

### **Künstlerkeller – theatre, art and pub in the basement of the Carmelite Monastery**

*Antonia „Toni“ Weigand, proprietress*

Come on in! I'm Toni – the proprietress and tenant of the Künstlerkeller. I opened my restaurant in the old cellars of the Carmelite Monastery in 1959. For 27 years I entertained and cooked for actors, artists, journalists, politicians, city celebrities, and other prominent guests.

The first steps were quite taxing. In the beginning, only those who knew the area found their way to the vaults, as one initially had to pass through a small gate in the monastery wall on Karmelitergasse. Only later did guests reach the basement from Seckbacher Gasse via the courtyard of the monastery. In 1946, I moved to Frankfurt from the town of Freigericht in the Hessian provinces, and I quickly became enthusiastic about cultural organisations and pubs. I needed a lot of help to open the Künstlerkeller. I borrowed money to buy chairs and tables; artist friends graced the walls with their works; the city and private theatres provided furnishings from their collections, such as a plush sofa and an upright piano. Right away, my restaurant had a cosy feel. In the decades that followed, the furniture remained an eclectic mix, and the heating pipes were painted in bright colours. Anyone in the 1960s who wanted to see the stars of stage and screen in Frankfurt – not only in the theatre and the cinema but in private – had to visit the underground vaults of the Carmelite Monastery after the shows in the new Schauspielhaus on Theaterplatz, which had only just been built in 1963. Fortunately, the Künstlerkeller became an institution known throughout the city. Insiders simply called it “Bei Toni” – at Toni's.

In the 1970s, for instance, you could find Liza Minnelli sitting in my pub; she liked to stop by for a nightcap after her big performances in the Festhalle. She knew she would not be recognized – or at least not disturbed. One of the regulars was Karlheinz Böhm. In an interview, the actor, who once played Emperor “Franz” in the “Sissi” films alongside Romy Schneider, revealed that he had become politicised in my artists' cellar after conversations with Joschka Fischer, among others, and that he finally made the decision to change his life and found the “Menschen für Menschen” charity in 1981. Likewise, city politicians were drawn to my cellar: Hilmar Hoffmann, Head of the Department of Culture from 1970 to 1990, organised an open regulars' table every Friday during his first years in office, to listen to the concerns, needs, and the enthusiasm of Frankfurt's artists over a beer. In the 2000s, Frankfurt's Green Party held its political Ash Wednesday meeting at the Künstlerkeller. I had already had to give up my beloved Künstlerkeller in 1986 for health reasons. After a brief interlude, Erwin Schlochhoff, who had started as a waiter in 1986, took over. He continued to run the establishment for over 20 years. Finally, the cultural centre faced insolvency and had to close in March 2007.

## Plate 16

### **Restoration of the Ratgeb murals**

*Barbara Jachacz and Hanna Markowska, restorers*

Ratgeb's murals are no longer in their original condition. The monks had them restored as early as the 18th century, followed by further measures in the 1920s, 1930s and 1950s.

Much has been irretrievably lost. Together with our team of restorers from Warsaw, we have been trying to save the Ratgeb paintings since 1980. We succeeded in doing so by means of a fine system of dots that form a whole in the eye of the beholder to shape a full surface that largely restores the original form. We also added missing sections and completed the work in 1986.

We worked in the cloister, which had been fitted with windows again since 1976. A year earlier, the city council had come to the same decision as the monks had in 1711 to provide better protection from the weather. Between 1975 and 1977, the refectory was also given a new floor, while the ceilings and windows were restored as well.

### **Carmelite monastery as an exhibition space**

*Hein Heckroth, set designer and painter*

I have always been impressed by the rooms of the Carmelite Monastery featuring Ratgeb's murals. For several decades, hundreds of curators have used the cloister, the refectory, the foyer and, in the course of the remodelling work, the newly designed dormitory as venues for countless exhibitions. I myself was permitted to exhibit my paintings here in 1961.

The first exhibition in 1957 was a show of 200 works by Frankfurt artists, which included paintings, graphics, sculptures, and handicrafts. From then on, the Carmelite Monastery served as a house of art, where artists from Frankfurt exhibited their works and had studio space at their disposal.

International artists were always included, such as in the overview of the artistic scene in France and the Federal Republic of Germany during the "biennale 57 – junge Malerei, junge Plastik" (biennial 57 – young painting, young sculpture) or in 1959 with the exhibition "Beitrag der Russen zur modernen Kunst" (Russian contributions to modern art). Depending on the zeitgeist and the political situation, international art from Israel, South and Central America, or Eastern Europe took centre stage. There was always something for everyone: for those who are enthusiastic about art, history, painting, sculpture, humour, architecture, urban planning or science, as well as for all those interested in the most pressing challenges of the time. Architectural exhibitions such as "Schulen für unsere Kinder" (Schools for our children) in 1958 showed the progress and planning in the school sector. In the following years, design proposals were taken into account for exhibitions during the 1970 ideas competition for the layout of the Zeil pedestrian area, or in the designs presented by international architects for a musical theatre in Frankfurt in 1990.

## Plate 17

### **Art meets history**

*Renate Sautermeister, artist*

The exhibition tradition at the Carmelite Monastery continues into the 21st century. In 2016/17, my works adorned the foyer in the exhibition called “Farbsuggestionen” (Colour Suggestions). Painting, sculpture, drawings, arts and crafts, film and photography, as well as the work of the independent art scene took centre stage well into the 1990s. The Office for Science, Art and Public Education, the Museum of Arts and Crafts, and the Berufsverband Bildender Künstlerinnen & Künstler Frankfurt (BKK, Professional Association of Visual Artists Frankfurt) were responsible for this. In addition, the BKK established the series “Free Frankfurt Art Exhibitions” in the mid-1980s which featured music, interventions, and performances.

Graduates of the Städelschule also regularly exhibited their work in the monastery. In 1990, a large special exhibition in the refectory and dormitory honoured Chlodwig Poth, following on from the satirical exhibition on the “Neue Frankfurter Schule” (New Frankfurt School) in 1989.

Since the 1980s, the range has been expanded through historical exhibitions and scientific archaeological shows on the “Treasures of the Avars”, ancient portraits from Yugoslavia, the Neolithic Age in Hungary, and Roman burial rituals. In 1985, a Ratgeb exhibit at the Historical Museum provided plenty of food for discussion, particularly regarding the question of how much prior knowledge museum visitors should be expected to have. Naturally, the city archive also put on numerous exhibitions about the history of Frankfurt. In addition to the large number of special exhibitions in the Carmelite Monastery, Ratgeb’s murals remain the focal point, which is why a separate permanent exhibition is dedicated to the murals.

### **Archive in the monastery**

*Wolfgang Klötzer, historian and archivist*

After the Second World War, the Carmelite Monastery also served as a new home for the city archives. The temporary accommodation of our institution ended on 14 May 1959 when we moved into premises in the south wing of the monastery.

My predecessor and colleague Dietrich Andernacht managed to take over rooms previously used by the Social Welfare Office in what are now the north wing and former centre wing of the monastery. As a result, the Frankfurt branch of the German Federal Archives moved into the southern rooms previously used by the city archives in 1967; that year, the new reading room was established in the same rooms.

In the following years, the expansion and remodelling of the monastery continued. In 1969, we set up a special collections chamber on the west side of the cloister for storing the most valuable documents. On my initiative, a three-storey magazine was built below street level in front of the monastery during the construction of the underground railway. When it was set up and put into operation in 1972, many archival documents from the external warehouses could now be stored on site.

## Plate 17

### Revival of the Carmelite Church

*Josef Kleihues, architect*

When I came to Frankfurt, the Carmelite Church with its makeshift roofs had been lying in ruins for decades and had served as a storage area for stone monuments. Fortunately, the city council decided to rebuild it in 1979 for the Museum of Prehistory and Early History. In the architectural competition that followed, I was awarded the contract to design the building for today's Archaeological Museum. The museum resided in the Holzhausenschlösschen from 1953 until it moved to the Carmelite Church. The institution, which was spun off from the Historical Museum in 1937 as the Museum of Local Prehistory and Early History, began showing archaeological exhibitions there again in 1954. It is often overlooked that archaeological preservation and excavations are also part of the museum's remit. Before my building experts got started, excavations inside the church in 1981/82 and 1985 in the transept provided valuable information on the building history of the monastery.

The reconstruction and extension of the Carmelite church was carried out according to my plans between 1987 and 1989. I added a modern new building in dark red and light yellow sandstone to the west and east of the transept. I based this colour scheme on the typical red sandstone of the Lower Main region. Whenever possible, I had existing parts of the church reconstructed. We replaced the destroyed historic vaults above the nave with a modern roof. Columns in the west wing are a reminder of the destruction. The museum was finally opened to the public inside the reconstructed church walls with a celebration on 28 June 1989.

## Plate 18

### **The memory of the city**

*Evelyn Brockhoff, art historian and director of the Institute for the History of Frankfurt*

Is there a better place for the “memory of the city” than Frankfurt’s only surviving medieval monastery? This former clerical site exudes history. I have had the honour of managing the city archive as deputy director since 1996 and as director between 2004 and 2021. Together with my predecessor Dieter Rebentisch, we completed the transformation of this institution from a city archive to an institute for city history. In addition to traditional archival tasks such as collecting, cataloguing, and preserving, the institute has also been dedicated to passing on the city’s history in the form of exhibitions, guided tours, lectures, symposia, workshops, and publications.

In 1998, a new concept was adopted to allocate the refectory, cloister, and dormitory to the institute; in addition, the Frankfurt branch of the German Federal Archives in the south wing moved out in 2000. After the institute was also given a new external storeroom in Borsigalle in 2006, the buildings were completely refurbished. The entire building technology of the monastery (with the exception of the church) was modernised, a new reading room, event space, and all the necessary infrastructure were set up; facades and roofs were renewed; building security was upgraded for modern exhibition operations; the underground storeroom and special collections were completely renovated; and the Ratgeb murals were restored.

For the past 25 years, the Institute for the History of Frankfurt and the Archaeological Museum Frankfurt have together formed the “Zentrum der Frankfurter Historie” (Centre for Frankfurt History) under the roof of the Carmelite Monastery. They have succeeded in opening the beautiful monastery complex to the general public. The unique Carmelite Monastery, now almost 800 years old, is more alive than ever.

### **The future of the Carmelite Monastery**

In 2023 and 2024, the monastery will undergo another phase of renovation. The Crespo Foundation is modernizing the building located to the west of the Carmelite Monastery for its own purposes. The old car park will disappear to make way for event spaces. The monastery will also have new neighbours. They will expand the range of events on offer and contribute a new story to the Carmelite Monastery.

The walls of the monastery are enlivened by guests and visitors. And that’s why we need YOU: What should the Carmelite Monastery look like in the future? Which events should take centre stage? Would you like a café or a new artists’ cellar on the premises? Should the monastery garden be revitalised, or should it continue to serve as a place of tranquillity? How do you envision an archive 3.0 or a museum in the year 2025? Please write down your ideas and wishes on a Post-it note and stick it on the board.

Thank you very much!