

The Christoph Merian Foundation as civic patron

*Dr Alexander Ressos, TEP
Attorney-at-Law (Switzerland), Solicitor (Hong Kong),
Solicitor (England & Wales)*

The largest civic patron of Basel is the Christoph Merian Foundation, whose origin in the bequest of Christoph Merian and Margaretha Merian-Burckhardt Parts C and E have described.¹ Its cultural role can be summarised briefly. Under its statutes and the will of its founder, it devotes a share of its income to culture, which it supports through grants, through its own publishing house, the Christoph Merian Verlag, and through projects in the city.² The foundation also runs or supports institutions for artists, among them studio and residency programmes, and has contributed to the development of the Dreispitz as a district of culture and education.³

The governance of the foundation by a commission of the civic community gives it an unusual status between public and private. It is independent of the cantonal budget, yet its purposes are tied to the city. This position allows it to support projects that the canton cannot fund for political reasons or that private donors find too local. The foundation therefore fills a space that is characteristic of Basel, occupied by a patronage that stands between state cultural policy and the private passion of a single collector.

1 Notes

1. On the Christoph Merian Foundation, see Part C, Chapter II, and Part E, Chapter V. To be verified. ↩
2. On the cultural activities of the Christoph Merian Stiftung, including the Christoph Merian Verlag and its cultural funding, see the annual reports of the foundation. To be verified. ↩

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3. On the role of the Christoph Merian Stiftung as owner of most of the land of the Dreispitz and its development as a district for culture and education, including the Campus der Künste of the FHNW, see the publications of the foundation. To be verified. ↩

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