

Jacob Böhme and His World

Edited by
**Bo Andersson, Lucinda Martin,
Leigh T.I. Penman and Andrew Weeks**



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Jacob Böhme and His World

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Jacob Böhme writing; illustration from *Alle de theosoophsche of godwijze werken* (Amsterdam: Fredrik Vorster, 1686); Embassy of the Free Mind. Collection: Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, Amsterdam, UBN 1222. Printed with permission.

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Abbreviations of Jacob Böhme's Works

List of Abbreviations used for Böhme's Writings. (Unless otherwise designated, all writings are cited by their chapter and section numbers given in the 1730 edition and most other versions.)

A	<i>Morgen Röte im auffgang (Aurora)</i>
3P	<i>Von den Drey Principien Göttliches Wesens (On the Three Principles of Divine Being)</i>
3fL	<i>Vom dreyfachen Leben des Menschen (On the Threefold Life of Man)</i>
40Q	<i>Viertzig Fragen von der Seelen (Forty Questions on the Soul)</i>
MJC	<i>Von der Menschwerdung Jesu Christi (On the Human Genesis of Jesus Christ)</i>
6tP	<i>Von sechs theosophischen Puncten (Six Theosophical Points)</i>
6mP	<i>Kurtze Erklärung Sechs Mystischer Puncte (Six Mystical Points)</i>
GB	<i>Gründlicher Bericht von dem Irdischen und Himmlischen Mysterio (Mysterium Pansophicum)</i>
LZ	<i>Unterricht von den letzten Zeiten (Informatorium Novissimorum)</i>
SR	<i>De Signatura Rerum (Von der Geburt und Bezeichnung aller Wesen)</i>
SBT	<i>Schutzschriften wieder Balthasar Tilken (Tilke Apologies)</i>
BES	<i>Bedencken über Esaiä Stiefels Büchlein (Antistiefelius)</i>
GW	<i>Von der Gnaden-Wahl (On the Election of Grace)</i>
ChT	<i>Von Christi Testamenten (The Testaments of Christ)</i>
MM	<i>Mysterium Magnum</i>
Qth	<i>Betrachtung Göttlicher Offenbarung (Questiones theosophicae)</i>
TPr	<i>Tafeln von den Dreyen Principien Göttlicher Offenbarung (Tabulae principiorum)</i>
Clav	<i>Clavis, oder Schlüssel der vornehmsten Puncten und Wörter, welche in diesen Schriften gebraucht werden</i>
WCh	<i>Der Weg zu Christo (The Path to Christ)</i>
SGR	<i>Schutz-Rede wieder Gregorium Richter (Apologia contra Gregorium Richter)</i>
Ep.	<i>Theosophische Sendbriefe (Böhme's Letters)</i>

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Introduction: Jacob Böhme and His World

Andrew Weeks and Bo Andersson

There are mysteries that reward us not with closure but only with our search for solutions. The symbolism of the Holy Grail, the historical prototype for Dr. Faustus, or the founding purpose of the Rosicrucians may never be resolved to full satisfaction. They have become touchstones for separating minds according to their leanings, for pitting realists against believers, and empowering sceptics to perpetuate controversies on all sides. Yet the intractability of a mystery intensifies its allure and compels us to delve deeper into its historical origins.

Among the preeminent mysteries of literary history, the case of Jacob Böhme merits sober investigation. Böhme is famous as a German shoemaker and spiritual author. He is thought to have received divine insight in the year 1600 and to have drawn upon it to create an original and powerful literary corpus that influenced dissenters, poets, philosophers, and Pietists for centuries to come. But between the alleged source of inspiration and its fruition, a shift in focus deflects our attention. We can hardly afford to ignore the accounts of his mystical inspiration. They spun out an important strand of his influence. Yet few outside his circle could have become aware of his insights without the corpus of writings that he composed and allowed to circulate during the first decades of the seventeenth century. Without this literary production, there would be considerably less reason to occupy ourselves with Böhme, notwithstanding his captivating legend.

The problem is that the aura of his illumination is so engaging and his reputation as a mystic so beguiling that his legend outshines not only the literary corpus but also the world that nourished and informed it. His characterization as an illuminist abstracts his work from the conditions of its origin and obscures its foundations as a literary artefact. When his complex writings are subsumed under the headings of *mysticism* or *philosophia perennis* in order to call attention to his place in a tradition of spiritual and religious speculative works, this has the effect of de-historicizing and generalizing their content. Whether Böhme is bathed in the radiance of illuminism or absorbed in the spirituality of *philosophia perennis*, the necessity of contextually interpreting his work and its reception is obscured by the aura of an irretrievable experience known only from vague and inconsistent reports. The corpus is drafted to stand for the illumination, which means that it cannot stand for itself to be assessed on its own evidence and merits. Böhme's writings are too often ignored per se and too

rarely examined with the sort of critical scrutiny that evaluates literature and registers not only the brilliant and the good but also what is shoddy, makeshift, and perhaps derivative and unoriginal. Literature comes in many degrees of quality and originality. A prodigy is first and foremost a prodigy.

The purpose of this volume, which has its origin in a Görlitz conference, is to place Böhme within the historical framework without which no literary work can be understood in depth. By the same token, without understanding the literary corpus, its impact cannot be evaluated. The interconnections of text, corpus, context, and reception that are self-evident for literary studies contend with a still prevalent understanding of Böhme as an otherworldly mystic or exemplar of an ahistorical *philosophia perennis*. We prefer instead a metaphor taken from the preface of Böhme's inaugural work *Morgen Röte im aufgang* (*Aurora*). His corpus grew and evolved like his tree of knowledge. The tree is rooted in the ground of his contemporary world and nourished by its soil and by the climactic conditions of its historical era. Nurtured by the qualities of this soil and atmosphere, Böhme's corpus branches out and bears fruit in his numerous treatises. These are taken up by readers who digest and incorporate the qualities of the work in accordance with the evolving conditions of their times. In a word, his work is literature in the broadest sense of the term and must be understood as such. The objective of this volume is to extend the existing studies of Böhme's texts and contexts in order to facilitate future research. Our volume encompasses sections on the text-centered approach to his work, on key facets of his environment, and on aspects of his influence that highlight how posterity and reception have uncovered implicit aspects of precursors.

The following topics will be addressed in order to offer an overview of the text and context of research on Böhme. Bo Andersson and Andrew Weeks will introduce the hypothesis around which the conference was organized: the thesis that Böhme's work must be understood as literature in the broadest sense of the term insofar as it consists of writing that draws on sources (preeminently the Luther Bible) and employs devices shared with other modes of writing. Bo Andersson will discuss the linguistic and rhetorical structures in Böhme's writings. Ines Haaser will outline the historical panorama of Böhme's city and Leigh Penman the wider social and intellectual context of Upper Lusatia and Silesia. Other contributions will survey Böhme's relation to the "crisis of piety" (*Frömmigkeitskrise*) with particular attention accorded by Lucinda Martin to Görlitz Pastor Primarius Martin Moller and his controversy with Salomon Gessner and by Kristine Hannak to Johann Arndt. Other trends in Böhme's intellectual environment to be explored are Paracelsism by Urs Leo Gantenbein; Kabbalah by Gerold Necker; astrology and astronomy by Lutz Pannier; the dissenting writings of Johannes Staricius by Andrew Weeks; and Böhme's use and

knowledge of alchemy by Mike Zuber. Also explored are facets of the reception of the work that highlight its latent or secondary aspects. These include its philosophical standing (Cecilia Muratori), its relation to early or pre-Pietism (Tünde Karnitscher), and its early English translation (Ariel Hessayon). Finally, Lucinda Martin and Leigh Penman will list and briefly characterize some useful resources for Böhme scholarship and also point to important *desiderata* for further research.

...

There is so far no critical edition of Jacob Böhme's works. The authors of the volume have independently chosen texts editions and forms of reference to Böhme's writing, which are suitable for their purposes.

Jacob Böhme's Writings in the Context of His World

Andrew Weeks and Bo Andersson

We can introduce Böhme's voice and make a case for the coherence of our sections devoted to his work, world, and influence by considering what he wrote about his seminal illumination. Our purpose is not to deny the uniqueness or influence of his recorded experience, but rather to suggest that it can only be understood fully in context. His celebrated account in Chapter nineteen of his initial writing, the unfinished *Aurora* of 1612, allows the sympathetic reader to encounter the charm and sincerity of his authorial persona. Though the voice of the latter should not be mistaken for a record of unmediated experience, it presents for us the simple craftsman of peasant background whose troubled quest for answers to world-historical quandaries have led to an ecstatic revelation.

The chronology of Böhme's life and times is set out for the reader in an appendix. To sum up the background briefly, 1612 was a pivotal year for his life, for the history of his homeland, and for the intellectual history of the era. His first work coincided with the troubled Habsburg dynastic succession following the death of Emperor Rudolf II, and the emergence of a wave of dissenting publications. During the first half of the year, Böhme wrote out the 400-page incomplete manuscript called *Morgen Röte im auffgang*. We will designate it by its common title, *Aurora*. After this manuscript came to the attention of the pastor *primarius* of Görlitz, Gregor Richter, Böhme was reprimanded and made to desist from writing. He only resumed his authorial endeavor around the beginning of the Thirty Years' War, in 1617. From then until his death in 1624, he produced the treatises and letters that constitute the main body of his work. Though his mature work evolves, it adheres to the same theological concerns and uses refined versions of the same concepts. Since Böhme's evolution evolves from those same primal themes, his claim that everything resulted from a single inspiration is not in every sense implausible. Moreover, his situation evolved as well. Between 1612 and 1618, dynastic instability, confessional hostilities, and power politics led to the outbreak of war. His territory of Upper Lusatia bore the brunt of the first phase of the conflict. The period leading up to the war, as well as its early years, were characterized by feverish cultural and religious innovations in his region.

As with Böhme's metaphorical tree in *Aurora*, everything grows from a particular soil and changes in accordance with shifting conditions. His account of his seminal experience is formulaic in its portrayal of his psychological affects, but also revealing in its terminologies and expressive of the unique intellectual context to which he alludes. Guided by his perennial metaphor of growth, we can gain an inkling of the roots of his literary vision in the account of his key experience. In explaining what he calls its "seed," he alludes to controversies of a particular kind. He writes that certain bitter disputes had preceded his discovery of the momentous truth which had been concealed until then from humankind. These controversies were clearly theological, concerned with the location of the divine world or paradise. Yet they were no less concerned with astronomy and physics. Here is his account in the original German followed by an English translation:

[1] Der Rechte Himmel / welcher ist vnser Menschlicher eigner Himmel / da die Seele Hin ferdt wen sie vom leibe Scheided / vnd da Cristus vnser könig ist eingangen / vnd von dannen Hehr er von seinem vater kommen vnd geboren ist / vnd ein mensch in der Jungfrauen Marien leibe worden ist / Ist Bis anher den kindern der Menschen fast verborgen gewesen / vnd Haben Mancherley meinung gehabt / [2] Es Haben Sich auch die gelärten darumb gekratzt / mit vielen Seltzsamen schreiben / vnd sind einander In die Hahr gefallen / mit schmeihen vnd schenden / da durch den der Heilige Namen Gottes ist geschended / vnd seine glieder ver wundet / vnd sein tempel zur störed / vnd der Heilige Himmel mit diesem lestern vnd ahn feinden entheilged worden.

[3] Es Haben die Menschen I. vnd alle wegen gemeint / der Himmel Sey viel Hunderd / oder viel Tausend meilen von diesem Erd Boden / vnd Gott wonne alleine in dem selben Himmel / Es Haben auch wol Edliche phisicy sich vntterstanden die selbe Höhe zu messen / vnd gar Seltzsame ding Herfür Bracht /

[4] Zwar Ich Habe es selber für dieser meiner erkenntnis vnd offenbarunge Gottes dafür gehalten / das daß alleine der Rechte Himmel Sey / der sich mit einem runtten zirg Gantz licht Blo Hoch über den sternen schleust / In meinung Gott Habe alleine da Innen sein Sonderliches wesen / vnd Regire nur alleine In krafft seines Heiligen Geistes in dieser weld /

[1] The true heaven, which is our own human heaven, to which the soul travels when it departs from the body, which Christ our king entered, and from which he proceeded and was born of his father and became a human being in the body of the virgin Mary: the true heaven has been well concealed until now from the children of humankind, who have

entertained various opinions on the subject. [2] Indeed, in many outlandish writings scholars have assaulted one another over it, going at each other with ridicule and defamation so that the holy name of God was disgraced and his members injured, his temple destroyed, and the holy heaven profaned by hostility and abuse.

[3] People have always supposed that the heavens were many hundreds or thousands of miles from this earth and that God dwells alone there as in heaven. Moreover, certain physicists have undertaken to measure the distance to their heights, thereby arriving at many a bizarre conclusion.

[4] Indeed, prior to the knowledge and revelation I write of, I myself considered the true heaven to be nothing other than the one that closes us in with its round circle, bright blue and high above the stars. I was of the opinion that there and there alone God possessed his peculiar being, ruling by the power of his Holy Spirit in the world here below.

Aurora has the pitch-perfect tonal quality that results from a preternatural self-confidence and independence of mind. Yet it combines thematic elements which do not readily cohere for us. What could he have had in mind when he wrote in the context of theology that, "in many outlandish writings scholars have assaulted one another over [the true heaven or heavens]"? He claims only to know of these writings, not to have read them. Which writings might they have been?

The reader who undertakes to make sense of the situation Böhme describes is drawn into his struggle to make sense of his world. The essence of his and humankind's ignorance had evidently been a belief that the visible world coincided with the metaphysical one, so that heaven was *literally* above. The confusion is conditioned by ambiguity of language coupled with an archaic cosmology. The German word *Himmel* means "heaven" as well as "the heavens." It was possible to speak of the visible sky and the transcendent realm of celestial Paradise as if these two were the same. However, Böhme went beyond this naive equivocation by confounding astronomical with theological matters and presenting the resultant confusion both as personal malaise and world-historical threshold, both as an object of public debate and as an obstacle to a breakthrough destined to bestow upon him and his fellows an ultimate revealed truth. This neglected piece of the puzzle of his illumination should not be dismissed as naïveté. Here is how he continues:

[5] Als mihr aber dieses gar manchen Harten stoß gegeben Hatt / ohne zweiffel von dem Geiste / der da lust zu (Hatte) mihr Had gehabed / Bin Ich Endlich Gar in eine Harte Melancoley vnd Traurigkeit gerahten / Als

Ich ahn schawed die Grosse Tiffe dieser weld / Dar zu die Sonne vnd sternen / So wol die wolcken darzu Regen vnd schne / Vnd betracht in meinem Geiste die Gantze schepffung diser weld / [6] darinnen Ich den in allen dingen Böß und Gutt fandt / liebe vnd zorn / in den vnuernunfftigen Creaturen / Als in Holtz vnd steine vnd erde / vnd Elementen / So wol als in menschen vnd Thüren / [7] Dar zu betrachte Ich das kleine | füncklin des Menschen / was er doch gegen diesem Grossen wercke Himmels vnd erden für Gott mechte geacht sein / [8] Weil Ich aber befand / das in allen dingen Böses vnd Gutes war / In den Elementen so wol als in den Creaturen / vnd daß es In dieser weld dem Gottlosen so wol ginge als dem fromen / auch das die Barbarischen velcker die Besten lender Inne hetten / vnd das in das glücke noch wol mehr bey stünde als dem fromen / [9] ward Ich dero wegen Gantz Melancolisch / vnd hoch betriebed / vnd kunte mich keine schrifft Trösten / welche mihr doch fast wol bekant war / Darbey den gewislich der Teufel nicht wird gefeyred haben / welcher mihr den ofte Heidnische gedancken ein Bleuete / der Ich alhie verschweigen wiel.

[5] But after this had caused me many a sore blow, delivered no doubt by the spirit that had taken a liking to me, I at last fell into severe melancholy and sadness at the sight of the great depths of the world with its sun and stars, clouds, rain, and snow. I regarded in my spirit the great creation of this world. [6] In it, I found evil and good in all things, love and anger, in insensible creatures, in wood, stone, and earth, and the elements, as well as in humans and animals. [7] Moreover, I regarded the tiny little spark that is the human being and considered what it amounted to before God, set against this great work which is the heavens and earth. [8] I noticed that there was evil and good in all things, in elements and creatures, and that in this world the godless fared as well as the pious, and indeed that the barbaric peoples possessed the best lands, enjoying better luck than the pious. [9] This caused me to grow gravely melancholy and deeply troubled. No writing I encountered gave me any comfort. The devil surely without pause inspired me with heathenish thoughts about which I prefer to remain silent here.

The remoteness of the deity depressed him deeply. The passage evokes a symbolic scene in which the visible cosmic order has become oppressive. Heaven or the heavens appeared inaccessibly remote, thus alienating the human from the divine presence and God's grace from the lowly earth inhabited by the fallen creature. The discovery of fertile lands populated by the godless heathens of the New World challenged Böhme's Christian faith in God's grace

and providence. Melancholy was a common theme of his age. Here its specific opposite is the hope, engendered by religious reform, humanistic progress, or global exploration, which for Böhme has been cruelly disappointed.

Böhme was unwittingly echoing a scenario familiar to the reader of Montaigne's *Apology for Raymond Sebond* (1580): "This [human] creature knows and sees that he is lodged down here, bound and nailed to the dearest, most stagnant part of the universe, in the lowest story of the building, the farthest from the vault of heaven."¹ Böhme's knowledge of the French author is quite unlikely. Yet both were perturbed by the theological quarrels and religious wars of the late sixteenth century. Both assuredly knew that the tradition of nature theology was rooted in the assertion of the Apostle Paul in Romans 1:20, cited by Montaigne: "Ever since the creation of the world [God's] eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made." Studying visible nature in order to discern the invisible nature and intentions of God was a traditional intellectual approach, and not necessarily a mystical one. But why this association of astronomical measurement with the issue of Christ's presence up above or down below?

The preoccupation with measuring in miles the remoteness of God's celestial world, which is here set against an opposing recognition that God is ubiquitous down below, echoes a late sixteenth-century doctrinal dispute between Lutherans and Calvinists over Christ's real presence in the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper or Communion. The dispute was often conducted in Latin, but its German reverberations could be heard from pulpits in villages in the surrounding territories during Böhme's youth and journeyman years.² The last quarter of the sixteenth century had seen the publication of Lutheran anti-Calvinist polemics defending Christ's real physical presence in the bread and wine of the *Abendmahl* or Communion. Real presence was defended on the grounds that the trinitarian God, encompassing the physical humanity of Christ, is invisibly omnipresent in the world.

Such polemics were not without relevance for Böhme; for despite his irenic temperament, he was vehement in denouncing Calvin's doctrine of the "election of grace" and in ascribing to the elements of the Eucharist real

1 Michel de Montaigne, *An Apology for Raymond Sebond*, trans., ed. and intro. M.A. Screech (Middlesex: Penguin, 1987), 16.

2 This according to a polemic written against Pastor Martin Moller and the schools of Görlitz by Lutheran professor Salomon Gesner, *Christliche / Trewhertzige Warnung* (Wittenberg: Meißner, 1602), 51 ("Es werden Lutherische Dorfpfarrer gefunden / die ihre Pawren Lehren / das das der HERR Christus mit beiden Naturen / vnd also auch mit seinem wahren Leib vnd Blut im heiligen Nachtmahl gegenwertig sey / vnd stöltziglich andere / die Calvinischen nemlich / welches solches nit zu geben wollen vnd verdammen").

presence of Christ's invisible body, albeit in the special sense he gave to a particular notion of body. Lutheran theology was more readily accessible to Böhme than most other mystical literary sources could have been. There is reluctance to acknowledge that Lutheran doctrine was the source of his mystical sense of the omnipresence of God. Lutheranism in his time is inaccurately represented as a monolithic, draconian orthodoxy, hostile to every sort of creativity or dissent. Precluding the relevance of Lutheran doctrine on the grounds that Böhme was a non-doctrinal or heretical mystic is as ill-considered as denying the relevance of scholastic theology for Dante on the grounds that he was a poet and critical of the papacy, and hence not to be associated with a corrupt and repressive church. Despite his originality, Dante was indeed a medieval Catholic. It is no more inconceivable that Böhme could adhere passionately to Lutheran articles of faith and yet interpret them creatively, even while deviating or equivocating on other points; just as he could adhere vehemently to the doctrine of the Trinity, even while making irenic gestures toward "Jews, Turks, and heathens."

Aurora makes no direct reference to the Lutheran *Abendmahl* in assuring the reader that when Stephanus saw Christ seated at the right hand in heaven in Acts 7:55, this did not mean that the Son of God was not at the same time everywhere, as anyone can see who cares to: "[⁴⁸]Wen dem menschen seine augen nur er öffned würden / So Sehe er über al Gott in seinem Himmel / den der Himmel steht In der Inresten geburt. Dar zu da stephanus den Himmel Hatt offen gesehen / vnd den Herren Iesum zur rechten Gottes / da Hatt sich sein Geist nicht erst In den obern Himmel geschwungen / Sondern er Hatt durch gedrungen In die Inreste geburt / da ist der Himmel ahn allen enden" ("If our human eyes are opened, we see God everywhere in his heaven. Heaven abides in the innermost birth. When Stephanus saw the heavens open up and Lord Jesus at the right hand of God, it was not that his spirit flew up to the upper heavens. He penetrated the innermost birth in which the heavens abide everywhere"). Yet whether Christ is only seated at the right hand of God in heaven or is instead everywhere invisibly present as man and God and thus also in the elements of Communion was in his time a controversial question with profound implications for Böhme and his coreligionists. The question was debated in terms consonant with Böhme's linking of astronomical measurement with theology. The Lutheran theologian and co-author of the Formula of Concord, Andreas Musculus (1514–1581), thus fulminated against all those who relegated Christ to the right hand of God in heaven, denying his universal heavenly presence down below:

Nos contra remotis tam vanis & ineptis speculationibus in scripturae lumine ambulantes, dicimus: Deum coelum & terram implere, & coelum esse

*in quo habitare dicitur Deus, vbicunque Deus est. Est autem vbique, Ergo in nullo corporeo coelo, vel aliquo quopiam loco, extra & super omnes coelos, Deum collocari posse sum Scriptura dicimus & statuimus.*³

In opposition to the far-fetched, indeed vane and inept speculations, we who walk in the light of Scripture declare that, "God fills heaven and earth,"⁴ and that heaven is that in which God is said to reside, no matter where he is. He is indeed ubiquitous and therefore cannot be located in any corporeal heaven nor anywhere else outside and above all the heavens: this we say and affirm in accordance with Scripture.

In writing that Christ is everywhere, not "located in any corporeal heaven," Musculus was reviving a tactic applied by Brenz against Bullinger and before that by Luther against Zwingli: he was ridiculing the notion of Christ as commuting back and forth between heaven and earth by traveling from the heavens or empyrean where he was thought by some to be seated at the right hand of the Father, a journey which would have lasted far too long if the new astronomical measurements were to be believed. According to Otto Ritschl, the prohibitive distance to the heavens served a polemical purpose pioneered by Luther and given ironic emphasis by Brenz.

Wie nun schon Luther von diesem Standpunkt aus Zwinglis naiv sinnliche Vorstellung von dem räumlichen Aufenthalt der Menschheit Christi im Himmel kritisiert und verspottet hatte, so wandte sich auch Brenz gegen Bullingers Anischt, daß sich Christus lokal umgrenzt in dem höchsten Himmel, dem *coelum empyreum* befinde. ...Indem Brenz seinen Gegnern auf das von ihnen mit starker Überzeugung herangezogene Gebiet der Raum- und Zahlvorstellung folgte, wollte er sie durch seine mathematischen physikalischen Argumente lediglich ad absurdum führen...⁵

Just as Luther had in this way criticized and ridiculed Zwingli's naive sense-based conception of the spatial presence of the human nature of Christ in heaven, Brenz now refuted Bullinger's view of Christ as being locally circumscribed in the highest heaven, the *coelum empyreum*.... By

3 Andreas Musculus, *Refutatio necessitati physicae locationis, in corpore Christi clarificato et glorioso* ... (Frankfurt/Oder: Eichorn, 1575), 36, henceforth cited as Musculus, *Refutatio* by page.

4 In Jeremiah 23:24, God declares, "Do I not fill heaven and earth?" In Ephesians 1:23, Paul speaks of "the fullness of him who fills all in all." Musculus knows and cites the biblical supports for his declaration of divine ubiquity.

5 See Otto Ritschl, "Das orthodoxe Luthertum. Im Gegensatz zur reformierten Theologie und in der Auseinandersetzung mit dem Synkretismus," in *Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus*, vol. 4 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1927), 78.

pursuing the concept of space and quantity which they had marshaled with such conviction, [Brenz] merely intended to carry *ad absurdum* their own mathematical and physical proofs....

By the end of the century, astronomical measurement and the time involved in space travel were tactical components in the Lutheran defense of the ubiquitous God whose presence defies the strictures of the visible physical universe, as Musculus presents it:

*Sic credimus Filium hominis Deu[m] & Hominem, non ascendisse per orbis Planetarum, longi[s] itineribus, longa mora temporis confecta; physica motione, tandem venisse coelum fictitium, & corporeum Empyreum, sed concedisse ad dexteram Patris, quae non est circumscripta locorum spaciis, sed est ipsa omnipotentia & universa maiestatis Dei: ...vbicunque ergo est Deus Pater, cum sua virtute, omnipotentia & omnipresentia, ibi quoque est Filius Dei & virginis.*⁶

Thus do we believe that the son of man, who is both God and man, has not risen up through the spheres of the planets, arriving at the supposed heaven and physical empyrean by long journeys after a long delay of time, but rather has withdrawn to the right hand of the Father which is not circumscribed by place or space but is itself the omnipotence and universal majesty of God: ...thus, wherever God the Father is with his virtue, omnipotence, and omnipresence, there too is the Son of God and of the virgin.

The Lutheran doctrines of real presence and divine ubiquity implicated the structure of the cosmos and the measurable distance to the heavenly empyrean, much as Böhme's account of his seminal experience combine the disparate themes of theology and cosmogony. Both Böhme and the Lutheran polemicists argued that Christ is not relegated to a seat up above, as a literal understanding of heaven would have it. He is present everywhere as a manifestation of the omnipresent trinitarian deity. Böhme was possibly unaware of the heavy-handed irony of the Lutheran theologians whose polemics were intended to carry the argument of the opponents of real presence *ad absurdum*.

Another Lutheran theologian and co-author of the Formula of Concord, Nikolaus Selnecker (1530–1592), spelled out the proper way for Christians to conceive of God's omnipresence in terms reminiscent of Luther's polemic against Zwingli. Encountered out of context, Selnecker's terms would deserve to be called mystical as much as anything in Valentin Weigel or Nicholas of Cusa:

⁶ Musculus, *Refutatio*, [101], 34.

*Christiani fingunt diductionem, diffusionem, & expansionem humanae naturae, & corporis Christi in immensum & infinitum, vbi nec principium, nec medium, nec finis est, Vbiquitatem infiniti corporis, existentis in omnibus locis, & creaturis, coelo, igni, terra, mari, aëre, lapidibus, herbis, lignis, arboribus, graminibus, flosculis, conclavibus, cistis, elementis & etc.*⁷

Christians conceive of the dispersion, diffusion, and expansion of the human nature and body of Christ into the immense and infinite dimension, where there is neither beginning, middle, nor end: the ubiquity of his infinite body existing in all places, creatures, heaven, fire, earth, sea, air, stones, vegetation, wood, trees, grass, flowers, stalls, chests, elements, and so forth.

Böhme wrote in a similar vein that measuring the distance to God – a contemporary project familiar to him – was folly, since God is everywhere in earthly nature, “in all creatures, in vegetation and grass.” This real and, in an idiosyncratic sense, physical omnipresence of God might indeed have planted the seed for Böhme’s speculative theories. His intuition of divine omnipresence was potent enough to nourish every ramification of his mystical speculation. Since God is in all things – in nature, Scripture, and creature – each of these sources holds the key to every other mystery. Nature unlocks Scripture, which in turn discloses the mysteries of nature. The book of nature and the book of the human being reflect one another as macrocosm and microcosm. There were other popular treatises dealing with the doctrinal conflicts of Lutherans and Calvinists, for example Philipp Nicolai’s *Kurtzer Bericht vonn dem Caluinisten-Gott vnd jhrer Religion*, published by the *Faust Book* printer Johann Spieß in Frankfurt am Main in 1597.

Böhme’s work reveals a career-long obsession with visualizing, confirming, and interpreting the Lutheran doctrine of divine ubiquity. In Chapters thirteen and fourteen of *Vom dreyfachen Leben des Menschen* (1620), it is cited to verify the real presence of Christ’s body in the Communion through the medium of the “second principle” (as he now calls the “inner birth” of *Aurora*): “Denn derselbe Leib Christi ist allwesend und allgegenwärtig, er hält das andere Principium inne” (“For that same body of Christ is everywhere substantial and present; it occupies the second principle” – 13:14). The same context clarifies the social-ecclesiastic consequences of ubiquity. The priest or pastor is merely the servant of the congregation which holds the spiritual authority to admit and exclude from its community: “Denn die Gemeinde hat eine grosse Gewalt in Christo: Sie hat den Schlüssel auf und zuzuschliessen...” (“For the congregation

7 Nikolaus Selnecker, *Confutatio accusationum Sacramentariorum* (Leipzig: Johannes Rhambau, 1576), 28.

holds the great authority in Christ: it bears the key to open and close...” – 13:6). Ubiquity implies that the lowliest member possesses the same authority as the highest (13:6). The clerical and academic authoritarians are blamed for incessant theological quarrels and for the religious war now in progress. “Der Pfaffen-Teuffel” – the clerical devil – has blinded the lay folk, leading them into war and devastation (14:14). As understood by Böhme, the ubiquity doctrine confirms the “two kingdoms” of world and spirit expounded by Luther, as co-universal yet separate realms. Violating their separation is fatal: “Wenn aber 2 Dinge in einem sind, so ist schon Widerwärtigkeit und Streit” (“But when two things are in one, there is opposition and conflict” – 13:31; cf. 13:18). The conflict which results is nothing less than apocalyptic. These are corollaries of Böhme’s vision of divine ubiquity. Divine omnipresence becomes invested in numerous images and concepts, as if to confirm that all profusion and confusion are mysteriously reducible to the One.

Most remarkably of all, human and external nature contains keys to the hidden nature of God. Creation and creature conceal clues to the paradox of good and evil inherent in monotheism itself, to the problem of how to account for evil when God is both omnipotent and good, a problem that had troubled the author from the outset in *Aurora*. This was indeed an ancient problem that, in his naive hubris, Böhme was now confident of resolving with the aid of the Holy Spirit. Who would not be ecstatic at the prospect of solving all the deep mysteries of God and the world? This context allows us to make sense of Böhme’s ecstatic experience. It meant a release from spiritual crisis and a remedy for the malaise of his time. It meant nothing less than the end of time.

Böhme claimed that his breakthrough of 1600 was the seed of everything else. This can only be the case if what he intuited contained in some inchoate sense everything else. One clear line, perhaps the shortest, between his reported seminal experience and his entire evolving corpus leads through the Lutheran doctrine of divine ubiquity. Even Böhme’s inclination to write about three distinct “births” or “heavens” has a precedent in Lutheran doctrinal disputes. Why three and why are the words “birth” and “heaven” used almost interchangeably? Musculus had justified the mystically invisible omnipresence of God by citing the “third heaven” into which the Apostle Paul reported having been transported in 2 Corinthians 12:3–4: “*Paulus raptus in tertium coelum*” (“Paul was raptured into the third heaven”).⁸ Since Paul’s authority as an apostle originated with his having been reborn, Böhme can characterize what he calls the “third heaven” as a sphere of transforming rebirth. Moreover, as *Aurora* states, all things arise and are born from God (1:6). Paul had been “educated”

⁸ Musculus, *Refutatio*, 34.

about the hidden ubiquity of God, attested Musculus, "*non in Academia Aristotelica, sed in schola tertij coeli*" ("not in the Aristotelian Academy but in the school of the third heaven").⁹ Paul was a proper terminological source and role model for a God-taught layman. It might not comport with popular notions of Böhme's humility; but, when he alluded to a third birth or heaven, he was asserting a virtually apostolic authority.

Does this interpretation of Böhme's illumination reductively impute doctrinal content to an experience which was irreducibly personal and ineffable? Let us consider the continuing account of the experienced breakthrough:

[¹⁰] Als Ich aber in solcher Tribsal / Meinen Geist / den Ich wenig vnd
nichtes verstund was er waß / Ernstlich in Gott er Hub / als mit einem
Grossen sturm / vnd mein gantz Hertze vnd gemütte / Sampt allen and-
ern gedanken vnd willen sich alles darein schluß / ohne nach lassen /
mit der liebe vnd Barmhertzigkeit Gottes zu ringen / vnd nicht nach zu
lassen er segned mich den / das ist / er erleuchte mich den mit feinem
Heiligen Geiste / da mitte Ich seinen willen mechte ver stehen / vnd
meiner Trawrigkeit loß werden / So Brach der Geist durch / [¹¹] Als Ich
aber in meinem ahn gesetzten eiffer / also Harte wider Gott vnd aller Hel-
len Porten stürmete / als weren meiner kreffte noch mehr ver Handen / In
willens das leben daran zu setzen / welches freilich nicht mein vermögen
were gewesen / ohne des Geistes Gottes bey stant / Als Balde nach edli-
chen Harten stürmen / ist mein Geist durch der Hellen Porten durch ge-
brochen / Biß in die Inreste geburt der Gottheit / vnd alda mit liebe vmb-
fangen worden / wie ein Breutigam seine liebe Brautt / [¹²] Was aber für
ein triumphfieren in dem Geiste gewesen sey / kahn Ich nicht schreiben /
oder Reden / Es lest sich auch mit nichtes ver gleichen / Als nur mit deme /
wo mitten im Tode daß leben geboren wird / vnd ver gleicht sich der auff
erstehung von den Totten /

[¹³] In Diesem lichte hatt mein Geist als Balde durch alles gesehen / vnd
ahn allen Creaturen / So wol ahn krautt vnd Gras Gott er kend / wer der
sey / vnd wie der Sey / vnd was sein willen sey / [¹⁴] Weil Ich aber nicht
als Balde die tiffen geburten Gottes in ihrem wesen kontte fassen / vnd
in meiner ver nunfft begreifen / So Hatt sichs wol zwelff Jahr ver zogen /
Ehe mihr ist der rechte verstant gegeben worden / Vnd ist gangen / wie
mit einem Iungen Baume / den man in die erde Plantzed / der ist Erstlich
Iung vnd zarte / vnd Hatt ein freundlich ahn sehen / Sonderlich wen er
sich zum gewechse wol ahn lest / Er treged aber nicht als Balde früchte /

9 Musculus, *Refutatio*, 16.

vnd ob er gleich Blüed / So fallen sie doch abe / Es gehed auch mancher kalter wind frost vnd schne darüber / Ehe er er wechst vnd frucht treged / [15] Also ist diesem Geiste auch gangen / Das Erste feuer was nur ein Samen / aber nicht ein Immer beharlich licht / Es ist Sind¹⁰ der zeit Mancher kalter wind drüber gangen / Aber der willen ist Nie ver loschen / [16] Es Hatt sich dieser Baum auch offte ver sucht ob er mechte frucht tragen / vnd sich mit Blüen er zeiged / Aber die Blued ist von dem Baume ab geschlagen worden / Bis auff dato / da stehed er in seiner ersten frucht im gewexsse /

[17] *Von Diesem lichte / Habe Ich nun meine erkenntnis.*

[10] But when, in this deeply troubled state, I lifted up my spirit, which I understood not, earnestly toward God in firm assault, resolving my entire heart and mind with all its thoughts and impulses toward the one purpose of wrestling ceaselessly with the love and mercy of God: at that point he blessed me, that is, illuminated me, with his Holy Spirit, so that I might understand his will and be rid of my sadness: at that point, the spirit broke through. [11] For when, with collected zeal, I assailed God and the gates of hell so brashly, as if my powers had been greater than they were, determined to risk my very life attempting what in reality I could not have attained unaided by the spirit of God, at last, after several firm assaults, my spirit broke through the gates of hell and into the innermost birth of the divinity, there to be embraced by love as a bridegroom embraces his beloved bride. [12] As for my exultation of spirit, I cannot convey it in writing or speech. There is no comparison except when life is born in the midst of death or with the resurrection from the dead.

[13] In this light my spirit soon saw through everything, recognizing God in all creatures, in vegetation and grass; I recognized who he is and how he persists, and what is his intention.

In this light, my determination also grew with the greatest urgency to describe the being of God. [14] But since I could not so soon grasp and comprehend with my reason the deep births of God in their being, twelve years went by before the true understanding was granted to me. It came about the way a young tree that you have planted in the earth is at first young and tender and of an amicable appearance, especially when it begins to grow. But it does not bear fruit at first. Though it blossoms, its flowers fall off. Many a cold wind, frost, and snow pass over it before it grows to bear fruit. [15] So it was with the spirit of which I speak: the first

10 Böhme's hand-written "Es ist Sind der zeit" was later edited convincingly to: "es ist seit der Zeit" (1730).

fire was but a seed; but it was not an ever abiding light. Since that first time, many a cold wind has passed over it. But the will was never extinguished. [16] The tree often did try to bring forth fruit by blossoming; but the blossoms were struck from the tree. This lasted to this very time: now it stands at last in the first fruit of its maturation. [17] *It is from this light that I take my knowledge.*

After this key experience, which is said to have taken place in 1600, twelve years prior to the hand-dated *Aurora* of 1612, the author made repeated efforts to convey its meaning. Virtually every image or turn of phrase he employed to express his illumination could have originated in proximate sources that were not inherently mystical. There are terms which refer to psychological affects, such as his feeling of "severe melancholy and sadness," or his sense of being "deeply troubled," or his subsequent determination and elation, and there are non-affective nouns, such as the heaven[s], birth and rebirth, the light, the spirit, and hell. Awareness of Böhme's archaic piety and unique understanding of the Bible, which veers between spiritualism and a kind of hyper-literalism, helps us understand his sense of having been infected by the devil with "heathenish thoughts" and of "lifting up his spirit" to God. Little of this would have to qualify as mysticism in a strong sense of the term.

But what about the most vivid, concrete, and idiosyncratic aspects of Böhme's account? He tells of storming the "gates of hell" and of a physical wrestling with or against God, "in firm assault ... toward the one purpose of wrestling ceaselessly with the love and mercy of God." This struggle culminates in his receiving the blessing which is his illumination: "at that point he blessed me, that is, illuminated me, with his Holy Spirit." This coincides with the dawn which is the title and central motif of *Aurora*. It is also the "breakthrough" in which he is embraced by divine love, as the bride by her celestial bridegroom. These images are startlingly dramatic and unconventional. A struggle "against" God seems to border on the irreligious. Yet his terminological sources are the Bible. The image of the author struggling with God until a blessing is received at daybreak comes from Genesis 32:26. That is where Böhme's namesake Jacob had struggled with the angel of God who pleaded with him: "Laß mich gehen, denn die Morgenröte bricht an. Aber er antwortete: Ich lasse dich nicht, du segnest mich denn" ("Let me go for the day is breaking.' But Jacob said, 'I will not let you go unless you bless me'"). The "gates of hell" are cited in Matthew 16:18, "auf diesen Felsen will ich bauen meine Gemeinde, und die Pforten der Hölle sollen sie nicht überwältigen" ("on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it"). The image implies that God's own are the ones storming the "gates of hell." The bridegroom and the bride

celebrating a celestial wedding, an image favored by Böhme, have their prototype in Matthew 22 and 25. Biblical motifs need not preclude strong personal affects. The authority of the biblical word should have intensified the believer's feelings. The same surely applies to the impersonal words of the liturgy and church hymns. Yet commonplaces should not be mistaken for unique, spontaneous, or unmediated psychological descriptions of mystical experience. Though the above passages might epitomize our notion of mystical spontaneity, we would have difficulty separating the mystical from the religious commonplace. "Illumination" can be a mystical term. Here it simply anticipates and validates what follows. What follows is not as far outside the scope of received theology and biblicism as it seems.

Böhme's sudden liberation from his melancholy resonates with us. It seems to dramatize our own notional surmounting of depression. The reference to resurrection from the dead strikes a note of spiritual exultation. Yet it also enconces his spiritual elation in the framework of a conventional Lutheran piety enunciated in doctrines, sermons, biblical references, and church hymns. The third point of Luther's *Sermon on Preparing to Die* (*Ein Sermon von der Bereitung zum Sterben*, 1519) compares the death and rebirth of the faithful to the birth of an infant out of a maternal womb narrow as our own world, into the more dimensional eternal world. Our point is not that Böhme necessarily knew and drew upon this particular sermon, but rather that non-mystical sources for his images and terms were readily available. Non-mystical sources could have configured the author's peculiar melding of "births" and "worlds," as well as his image of "breakthrough" (*Durchbruch*).

Böhme records an immediate intuition of the omnipresence of God in nature: "In this light my spirit soon saw through everything, recognizing God in all creatures, in vegetation and grass." Yet we can compare Böhme's mystical words to those of another voice: "Die Göttliche gewalt ... ist unbegreiflich und unmeslich, ausser und uber alles, das da ist und sein kan. Widderumb mus sie an allen orten wesentlich und gegenwertig sein, auch ynn dem geringesten bawmblat" ("The divine power is incomprehensible and immeasurable, beyond and above everything that exists and can be; but conversely, it is everywhere substantial and present, even in the tiniest leaf of a tree"). These words make the same point: God is everywhere. They are not from Eckhart or Cusanus, but from Luther's treatise on Communion of 1527.¹¹ Böhme differs from Luther, however, in refusing to accept that the omnipresent God of the great reformer is "a supernatural, unknowable being that is at the same time

11 Daß diese Wort Christi "Das ist mein leib" noch fest stehen, Martin Luther, *Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (cited as WA by volume, page, and line), 23:133–134.26–9.

in each tiny seed whole and complete, yet at the same time in all and above all and outside of all creatures" ("ein ubernatürlich unerforschlich wesen, das zu gleich yinn eym iglichen körnlein gantz und gar und dennoch ynn allen und uber allen und ausser allen Creaturn sey").¹²

Böhme's writing and thought reflect a number of important themes from Lutheran theology. He stresses the ubiquitous presence of God and strongly attacks the Calvinist doctrines of predestination and the origin of evil. His discussions of these difficult theological issues are conducted in an extremely creative way, resulting in a unique amalgamation of theological and natural philosophical dimensions of thought. Böhme's strong indebtedness to certain Lutheran perspectives does not mean, however, that he was accepted by contemporary Lutheran theologians. As already mentioned, his manuscript of the *Aurora* came to the attention of the pastor *primarius* of Görlitz, Gregor Richter; the book was confiscated by the city authorities in 1613 and Böhme made to desist from writing. After the publication of Böhme's devotional book *Der Weg zu Christo* at the turn of the year 1623/1624, Richter attacked Böhme relentlessly in a printed publication, and there followed an intense polemical exchange between Böhme and Richter. Both contrahents claimed that their opponent was an instrument of the Devil.¹³ An important question is how Richter's severe rage against Böhme can be explained, since Böhme seems to have viewed himself as a good adherent to Lutheranism. There were, however, two (connected) central points in Böhme's thinking and in his view of himself, which were clearly not acceptable to a theologian of the Lutheran church. These were Böhme's claim of divine authority for his thought and his view of history.

Böhme claims in his writings to have received all his knowledge of God and nature by immediate divine revelation. The beginning of the nineteenth chapter of the *Aurora*, quoted above, contains the most famous account of the process, which allegedly led to this knowledge. Böhme's claim to authority can be called *epistemic*; it is founded on personal insight. Reverend Richter, on the other hand, claims *administrative* authority. He is an ordained minister of the Lutheran church; in his capacity of the Görlitz pastor *primarius* he holds an ecclesiastical office. As the holder of such an office, he represents and proclaims theological truth; the persecution of heretics is also one of his duties. Böhme's claim of having received total knowledge of God and nature in a direct divine

¹² *Vom Abendmahl Christi, Bekenntnis* (1528), in WA 26:339-34-36.

¹³ For a discussion of this polemical exchange, see Bo Andersson, "Jacob Böhmes polemischer Konflikt mit Gregorius Richter," in *Offenbarung und Episteme: Zur europäischen Wirkung Jakob Böhmes im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Wilhelm Kühlmann and Friedrich Vollhardt, Frühe Neuzeit, 173 (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2012), 33-46.

revelation qualifies him in Richter's eyes as a dangerous opponent of church and society. According to church doctrine, divine revelation is completed by the writing down of the Bible; new revelation does not occur any more. The only possible originator of a knowledge presented with such claims would be the Devil. This is a point, which Richter clearly alludes to, when he calls Böhme's books "enthusiastic" and "fanatic." These are derogatory designations, indicating devilish inspiration, leading to the disturbance of religious truth and peace.

Connected to Böhme's claim of divine authority for his philosophical and theological ideas is also a specific perspective on history, where the world is reaching its final stage. According to Böhme and many other radical theologians of the Early Modern Era, this will lead to a profound insight into the hidden truths of God and nature and to great changes; a final, general reformation of church and society will take place. The Rosicrucian movement is an interesting contemporary parallel to Böhme's ideas. In his preface to the *Aurora*, an allegory of history, utilizing the image of a splendid tree, growing in a garden of delight, Böhme depicts Luther as a "twig near the root," whereas he regards himself as "a little green branch," which "grew upon the root of the Noble Tree."¹⁴ Luther is in this allegory close to the root of the splendid tree, close to the foundation of insight and knowledge, but Böhme himself is even closer; he grows directly upon the root, he has immediate access to the final truth of God and nature. Luther has restored the pure doctrine of the Gospel and initiated church reform; Böhme's knowledge at the end of time surpasses all knowledge of God and nature that ever went before; there is now hope for the total reformation of the world. Böhme's view of history and his claim to hold a unique historical position was, of course, an extreme provocation. For a loyal servant of the church like Gregorius Richter Böhme's ideas could only lead to disorder: religious chaos and social upheaval. His severe attacks on Böhme must be seen from this perspective.

Böhme assures us that he had "recognized who [God] is and how he persists, and what is his intention." Knowledge of God granted on divine authority can scarcely be denied a mystical status. But when we delve into the terminology of mystical revelation, we find for the most part elements extracted from non-mystical sources, such as astronomy or astrology, alchemy, or Paracelsian nature theory. Even such exotic tropes as Böhme's incorporation of the scheme of a seven-fold alchemical purification into his trinitarian theology is not without biblical precedent (see Psalm 12:6). His seven source-spirits are explained in *Aurora* as correlatives of the qualities of planetary astrology. His later writings introduce a vast array of new terms, some of which are used in

14 Böhme, *Aurora*, Preface, 62, 67.

new and idiosyncratic ways. We cannot trace them all back to specific sources; but we can recognize the network of intellectually engaged individuals in whose circles Böhme moved; and we can appreciate the rich intellectual and spiritual climate of his time and its preoccupations with devotion, alchemy, astronomy or astrology, and Kabbalah. These are among the key objectives of this volume.

...

To recognize that what Böhme left us is indeed literature – not a spontaneous account of a personal experience – is to challenge a view disseminated by a preeminent study of mysticism and spirituality as psychological experience, William James's *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902). Believers in the authenticity and immediacy of mystical experience persist even after scholars of the Bible have for the most part acknowledged that its canonical books are a compilation from various historical contexts, and that its allusions which appear to invoke personal experience often repeat the *topoi* of tradition. Unless we are willing to treat the writings of the mystics no less as a literature which speaks to us from and of particular historical contexts, we risk turning such writings into our equivalent of the “external word” that Böhme and his fellow dissenters rightly regarded as a form of authoritarian tyranny. We risk turning mysticism into an idol set up by us, onto which we project the authority we cannot or do not dare claim openly for ourselves.

Yet when we historicize mysticism and treat it simply as literature, we invite the question of its trans-historical or contemporary significance. Why should we study mysticism if it has little to say to secular readers? As Böhme's allegory of the tree of knowledge suggests, not only the inherent qualities of the fruit, but even the situation and moral existence of its recipients matter. Arguably, we are entering into an historical stage which can best reveal the latent significance of Böhme's vision.

The watershed that separates us from his vision is that of modern science. Natural science instructs us that the universe is not composed of moral or sentient forces. Assessed in the light of scientific knowledge, our moral humanity – our good and evil affects and actions – is meaningless. Our inner life is an evanescent wraith confronted with the infinite objective workings of a universe which cares nothing for our fears and hopes. As Böhme wrote of his sense of insignificance prior to his illumination: we are nothing but, “the tiny little spark ... set against this great work which is the heavens and earth.” Even our social world is governed by laws which are indifferent to what we call good or evil. For example, greed which appears immoral in the individual might be

the driving force of an economy that benefits many. Restraint, though laudable in the individual, may be the undoing of society by bringing economic misfortune to the many. Since the Enlightenment, we have tended more and more to regard our moral life as a purely subjective realm, disassociated from nature, from the functioning of society, and even from the machinelike workings of body and brain.

Böhme's archaic vision can remind us of a *moralized nature* which is again becoming manifest in our world. Greed, hatred, and selfishness can despoil nature, no less than in Böhme's vision of a paradise despoiled by greed and envy, where the embodied powers of human vice, minions of Satan, follow their prince in his rebellion against the temperate order and transform a beautiful world into a living hell. This moralized vision of nature, we now see, bears a key truth after all, though in a sense that could hardly have been anticipated by Böhme, since it took the magnifying potential of modern technology and global capitalism to reveal its valid kernel. Empowered by technology and magnified billionfold, our inner life is capable of infecting and despoiling the balanced order of nature itself.

If we need reasons for the immediate relevance of his vision, this should suffice for a start. Böhme can be read as a Dante of the hell which is self-inflicted by our unreflective insatiability. His voice can be heard as a mystical moralist of our eleventh-hour need for self-knowledge. His writings can be researched for clues to the mystery which we are to ourselves. His visionary imagination can be consulted for symbols and intuitions of a new life, which is urgently needed though as yet quite unknown to us.

1 Chronology of the Life, Writings, and Times of Jacob Böhme

Life and writings	Historical events and developments
Born 1575 in Alt Seidenberg, Upper Lusatia, near Görlitz.	Publication of Paracelsus' <i>Volumen medicinae paramirum</i> , mixing natural and divine causation; 3rd edition of <i>Theatrum Diabolorum</i> , a Lutheran compendium of satanic influences, reflects polar mentality.
Ca. 1594, Böhme's journeyman years end, this is likely the date he moved to Görlitz. He has an intense religious experience.	Saxon Lutheran authorities persecute theological "errors" in Upper Lusatia, yet diverse tendencies persist there.

Life and writings	Historical events and developments
1599, Böhme acquires citizenship in Görlitz, a shoemaker's workshop and house; marries Katharina Kuntschmann.	A period of intense conflict between Lutheran adherents of the Formula of Concord and adherents of Melanchthon or Calvin climaxes in 1601 in the execution of Nikolaus Krell in Dresden and inquests against Pastor Martin Moller in Görlitz, lasting until Moller's death in 1606.
1600, his first child is born; probable year of an experienced illumination which becomes the basis of <i>Aurora</i> written out 12 years later. After tentative efforts, Böhme succeeds in writing a long but incomplete version of <i>Aurora</i> mainly in the first half of 1612.	The Protestant Union is founded in 1608, the Catholic League in 1609, leading to militarization of confessional conflicts. Emperor Rudolf II cedes power to his brother Matthias in 1611, dies in January, 1612. A six-month interregnum follows. Hope for assurance of tolerance is in vain.
After lending the <i>Aurora</i> manuscript to Karl Ender, copies are circulated. In March, 1613, Böhme sells his shop. In July, 1613, he is jailed, questioned, and forbidden to write. From then on, pursues his living with small-scale commerce involving frequent travels.	The ten-year period 1608–1618 witnesses the emergence of many spiritual, mystical, and dissenting publications, notably Johann Arndt's full <i>Four Books of True Christianity</i> (1610), the Rosicrucian manifestoes (1614, 1616), Paracelsian and Weigelian works, as he well as Akiva Horowitz' kabbalistic <i>Shefa Tal</i> (Abundance of Dew, 1612).
Between sometime in 1617 and mid 1619, Böhme is at work on his <i>Three Principles of Divine Being</i> in defiance of his ban. He is encouraged by aristocratic and educated supporters. The book ends with appeals to remain calm and shun the rising spirit of war and persecution.	The Reformation Jubilee of 1617 increases confessional tensions. The Defenestration of Prague in May, 1618, makes religious war inevitable. In July, 1619, Görlitz pledges support to the rebel Bohemian Confederation. On October 31, 1619, Böhme witnesses the ceremonial entrance of the elected Calvinist king Friedrich I into Prague.

Life and writings	Historical events and developments
1620 is Böhme's most productive year. He completes three longer works (<i>The Threefold Life of Man</i>, <i>40 Questions on the Soul</i>, and <i>The Human Genesis of Christ</i>) and no fewer substantial shorter ones.	1620 is the year in which the early, Bohemian phase of the Thirty Years' war comes to a climactic conclusion. Görlitz' neighboring city of Bautzen falls to the Saxon ally of the emperor in October. Prague is taken in November.
In the years 1621–22, Böhme's high authorial output continues. It now includes extensive interactions with the ideas of other lay participants in a democratized theological debate. Böhme's idiosyncratic writings are irenic, but clearly opposed to what the author sees as the Calvinist core doctrine of the "election of grace."	The last vestiges of the defeated Calvinist-led Bohemian Confederation are routed from Görlitz and the city occupied by Saxon forces early in 1621. In June, 1621, the adherents of the defeated Confederation are publicly executed in Prague. Upper Lusatia is spared the worst reprisals since it has been forfeited to the Lutheran Saxon ally of the triumphant Catholic emperor.
Major new writings are completed: <i>Signatura Rerum</i> (1622), <i>Von der Gnaden-Wahl</i> (1623), <i>von Christi Testamenten</i> (1623), and <i>Mysterium Magnum</i> (1623). Böhme's contacts with theological lay interlocutors elicit substantial epistolary work.	The status of Upper Lusatia continues in a confessional-political limbo under the firm but legally unresolved rule of coreligionist Saxony. Meanwhile, reports of widespread and catastrophic conflict reach Görlitz and are echoed in Böhme's letters. Hardships and anxiety, but also hope, result from war.
In his final year, 1624, Böhme allows his work to circulate in print. He is attacked by Pastor Richter in Görlitz, encouraged by the city council to leave town, and stayed for lengthy periods with supporters in Dresden and Silesia. Beset by public outrage, he succumbs to illness on November 15, exhausted but unbowed.	The major works associated with 1624 are <i>Der Weg zu Christo</i> (a short version of which is printed in that year) and the defiant response to Richter, addressed to the Görlitz city council, the <i>Schutz-Rede wieder Gregorium Richter</i>.

The Rhetoric of Presence: Reflections on Jacob Böhme's Writing

Bo Andersson

1 Introduction

Jacob Böhme is one of the most successful writers in history. The influence of his works has been enormous. In the seventeenth century, he had a number of enthusiastic followers in Germany, The Netherlands, and Britain.¹ German romantic poets, prominent examples are Tieck and Novalis, were deeply impressed and influenced by Böhme's vision of reality. The same is true for important romantic-idealistic philosophers such as Friedrich Schlegel, Schelling, and Franz von Baader.² Hegel and Marx appreciated Böhme as a dialectical thinker.³ As the nineteenth century proceeded, he became an important figure in the

- 1 For discussions of the early reception, see Theodor Harmsen (ed.), *Jacob Böhmes Weg in die Welt: Zur Geschichte der Handschriftensammlung, Übersetzungen und Editionen von Abraham Willemsz van Beyerland*, Pimander, 16 (Amsterdam: In de Pelikaan / Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: frommann-holzboog, 2007); and Wilhelm Kühlmann and Friedrich Vollhardt (eds), *Offenbarung und Episteme: Zur europäischen Wirkung Jakob Böhmes im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, Frühe Neuzeit, 173 (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2012). For Britain, see Ariel Hessayon, "Jacob Boehme's writings during the English revolution and afterwards: Their publication, dissemination, and influence," in *An introduction to Jacob Boehme: Four centuries of thought and reception*, ed. Ariel Hessayon and Sarah Apetrei (New York and London: Routledge, 2013), 77–97.
- 2 See, for example, Paola Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme: Theosophy – Hagiography – Literature* (Montreal & Kingston, London, and Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999); Robert F. Brown, *The Later Philosophy of Schelling: The Influence of Boehme on the Works of 1809–1815* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1977); and Kristine Hannak, "Boehme and German romanticism," in *An Introduction to Jacob Boehme* ed. Hessayon and Apetrei (2013), 162–179. For Böhme and Franz von Baader, see, for example, Pierre Deghaye, "Baader und Böhme: Der anthropologische Standpunkt," in *Die Philosophie, Theologie und Gnosis Franz von Baaders: Spekulatives Denken zwischen Aufklärung, Restauration und Romantik*, ed. Peter Koslowski, Philosophische Theologie, 3 (Wien: Passagen-Verlag, 1993), 243–272.
- 3 See Glenn Alexander Magee, "Hegel's reception of Jacob Boehme," in *An Introduction to Jacob Boehme* ed. Hessayon and Apetrei, 244–262; and – most recently – Cecilia Muratori, *The First German Philosopher: The Mysticism of Jakob Böhme as Interpreted by Hegel*, transl. Richard Dixon and Raphaëlle Burns, International Archives of the History of Ideas, 217 (Dordrecht, Heidelberg, New York, London: Springer, 2016) and her contribution to the present volume.

theosophical movement; later he also influenced abstract art.⁴ In right-wing political thought in the first half of the twentieth century, Böhme was claimed to present a truly Germanic world-view originating in his Nordic soul.⁵ In the GDR, he belonged – as an early pioneer of dialectical thought – to the national philosophical heritage.⁶ In 1995, to mention a contemporary Swedish example, the author Torgny Lindgren published a novel, entitled *Hummelhonung* – the English translation appeared under the title *Sweetness*.⁷ In Lindgren's novel, Böhman dialectics manifests itself in the all-absorbing conflict between two hostile brothers living in a desolate area in northern Sweden.⁸ Another novel by Lindgren – *Klingsor* – was published in 2014; its main character is a painter, who tries to depict the inner reality of everyday objects in accordance with Böhme's (and Paracelsus') doctrine of signatures.⁹ Many more examples of Böhme's great influence on philosophy, religion, and literature could be added without any difficulty.

Böhme's impact on his contemporaries and later generations is a remarkable fact considering the great difficulty of his texts. "Boehme is difficult" wrote the Canadian literary theorist Northrop Frye,¹⁰ and I am convinced that

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- 4 Harriet Watts, "Arp, Kandinsky, and the legacy of Jakob Böhme," in *The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting 1890–1985*, ed. Maurice Tuchman (New York: Abbeville Press, 1986), 239–255.
 - 5 See Sibylle Rusterholz, "Jacob Böhme im Spiegel totalitären Denkens: Hans Alfred Grunskys nationalsozialistische Sicht des *Philosophus teutonicus*," in *Mystik und Totalitarismus*, ed. Günther Bonheim and Thomas Regehly (Berlin: Weißensee-Verlag, 2013), 91–116.
 - 6 See, for example, the contributions in *Protokollband: Jakob-Böhme-Symposium Görlitz 1974, 15. und 16. November: Veranstaltet vom Rat der Stadt Görlitz und vom Zentralinstitut für Philosophie der Akademie der Wissenschaften der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*, Schriftenreihe des Ratsarchivs der Stadt Görlitz, 8 (Görlitz: Rat der Stadt Görlitz, 1977), and Siegfried Wollgast, *Philosophie in Deutschland zwischen Reformation und Aufklärung 1550–1650* (Berlin [DDR]: Akademie-Verlag, 1988), 677–740.
 - 7 Torgny Lindgren, *Hummelhonung* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1995); *Sweetness*, trans. Tom Geddes (London: Harvill, 2000).
 - 8 The relevance of Böhme for Lindgren's novel is mentioned in Anders Tyrberg, "Torgny Lindgren – En ironiker som skriver legender," in *Röster om Torgny Lindgren: ABF-seminarium 8 november 2003* (Stockholm: ABF, 2005), 7–21, and Magnus Nilsson, *Mångtydighetens klarhet: Om ironier hos Torgny Lindgren från Skolbagateller till Hummelhonung*, Acta Wexionensia, 42 (Växjö: Växjö University Press, 2004), 235–238. The topic would, however, deserve a more in-depth study.
 - 9 It is very interesting to notice that an English novel dealing with the doctrine of signatures was published in the same year: Elizabeth Gilbert: *The Signature of all Things* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014). The two works must be totally independent of each other. I am grateful to Andrew Weeks for calling my attention to Gilbert's novel.
 - 10 Northrop Frye, *Words with Power: Being a Second Study of The Bible and Literature*, ed. Michael Dolzani, Collected works by Northrop Frye, 26 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 246. – According to Hans Grunsky, Böhme's texts are some of the most difficult

all Böhme readers and Böhme scholars will promptly agree. In his lectures on the history of philosophy, Hegel calls Böhme's mode of expression "barbarian"; at the same time, however, he emphasizes the depth of Böhme's dialectical thought. Many other assessments of Böhme's works claim this basic incongruity of thought and expression. Very common – besides "barbarian" – is to characterize Böhme's writing as "chaotic"; the positive counterpart to this epithet is "poetic". In Alexandre Koyré's voluminous monograph on Böhme, we learn, for example, that the object of his study is in fact a "barbarian"; Böhme's language, on the other hand, "is a poetic language".¹¹

Against the background of the numerous judgments designating Böhme's texts as "chaotic" and extremely hard to understand – I have quoted just a few¹² – the following question immediately arises: Why are there so many readers, who are fascinated by these difficult texts and who are willing to put in great time and effort in trying to comprehend them? The various historical contexts are important, of course; Böhme means something entirely different to a Pietist around 1700, a Romantic poet around 1800, an abstract painter around 1900, and a reader interested in esoteric thought around the year 2000. But I am convinced that there are some very special traits in Böhme's texts contributing to the intense, in many cases enthusiastic reception of his works. In this essay, I will argue that a major explanation for so many readers' profound interest in Böhme can be found in his very special kind of writing. He creates texts, where the author, the reader, and the world are strongly present; we can follow the development of his thought in every detail. This rhetoric of presence is a central aspect of Böhme's works.

In the following, I will concentrate on Böhme's *Aurora*. Before I turn to the concept of the rhetoric of presence and an analysis of Böhme's way of writing, I would like to give a short contextual background to his first work.

2 Böhme's *Aurora* – Some Contextual Factors

Böhme's *Aurora* bears the main title: *Morgen Röte im auffgang. | Daß ist | Die wurzel. oder mutter der PHILO | SOPHIA. ASTROLOGIA. vnd. THE | OLOGIA.*

in literature and intellectual history (Hans Grunsky, *Jacob Böhme*, 2nd edition [Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: frommann-holzboog, 1983], 9).

11 Alexandre Koyré, *La Philosophie de Jacob Boehme*, 2nd edition (Paris: Vrin, 1979), 503, xv.

12 For a more extended discussion, see Bo Andersson, *Jacob Böhmes Denken in Bildern: Eine kognitionslinguistisch orientierte Analyse der Wirklichkeitskonstruktion in der Morgen Röte im auffgang* (1612) (Tübingen and Basel: Francke, 2007), 1–10.

*Auß Rechtem Grunde. (Morning Glow Ascending. That is. The Root or Mother of PHILOSOPHIA, ASTROLOGIA, and THEOLOGIA, on the True Foundation).*¹³ Böhme's autograph – now in the Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel¹⁴ – seems to have been written during the first six months of 1612 and is signed on Tuesday after Pentecost, 1612.¹⁵ The title of the book indicates the enormous pretensions of the author. It contains not just Philosophy, Astrology, and Theology, but furthermore their “root or mother”, their “true foundation”. Böhme frequently claims in the *Aurora* that his text is based on the total knowledge of God and Nature, which has been revealed uniquely to him. The formulation “Morgen Röte im auffgang” – “Morning Glow Ascending” refers to the eschatological character of this revelation. The *Aurora* is the dawning, which uncovers all hidden truth at the End of Time.

It is very important to keep in mind that the first decades of the seventeenth century were an extremely turbulent historical period. To many people the end of the world was imminent, and great changes in religion and society were hoped for – and feared.¹⁶ Nothing gives a better impression of early seventeenth century mentality than the sensation caused by the Rosicrucian manifestoes. The two treatises *Fama fraternitatis R.C.* and *Confessio fraternitatis R.C.*, which pointed to the existence of a secret society, the Rosicrucian Brotherhood, were published in 1614 and 1615 respectively, but had previously circulated in manuscript.¹⁷ The question of the authorship has been hotly debated, but it now seems most likely that the manifestoes were written by the

13 Böhme's *Aurora* is quoted according to the translation by Andrew Weeks: Jacob Böhme, *Aurora (Morgen Röte im auffgang, 1612) and Ein gründlicher Bericht or A Fundamental Report (Mysterium Pansophicum, 1620): With a Translation, Introduction, and Commentary by Andrew Weeks [...]*, Aries Book Series, 16 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013). – References will be given to chapter and section.

14 Sign. Cod. Guelf. 62 Noviss. 4°.

15 For an analysis of the title page of the *Aurora*, see Andersson, *Denken in Bildern*, 353–359. For an interesting discussion of the genesis of the *Aurora* manuscript, see Günter Bonheim, “Zur Entstehung und Verbreitung der *Aurora*”, in *Morgenröte im Aufgang: Beiträge einer Tagung zum 400. Jahrestag der Entstehung von Böhmes Erstschrift*, ed. Günther Bonheim and Thomas Reghly, Böhme-Studien, 4 (Berlin: Weißensee Verlag, 2017), 17–49. For a short description of Böhme's original manuscript and the early manuscript copies of the *Aurora*, see Jacob Böhme: *Verzeichnis der Handschriften und frühen Abschriften: 1934 durch Werner Buddecke erstmals herausgegeben*, ed. Matthias Wenzel, Schriftenreihe der Städtischen Sammlungen für Geschichte und Kultur Görlitz, N.F. 32 (Görlitz: Oberlausitzische Bibliothek der Wissenschaften, 2000), 2–4, 30–33.

16 A good overview is still: Robin Bruce Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis: Apocalypticism in the Wake of the Lutheran Reformation* (Stanford: Stanford University press, 1988).

17 The most recent edition is: Johann Valentin Andreae, *Rosenkreutzerschriften*, ed., trans, and comm. Roland Edighoffer, Johann Valentin Andreae, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 3 (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: frommann-holzboog, 2010).

Württemberg theologian Johann Valentin Andreae in the years 1607–1609 in close collaboration with a small circle of Tübingen friends.¹⁸ The treatises describe the biography of Christian Rosenkreuz (1378–1484), the mythical founder of the fictitious Rosicrucian Brotherhood, and give a presentation of the ideas of the society. The manifestoes definitely hit the nerve of the time; hundreds of books, taking a stand for or against the Rosicrucians, were published.¹⁹

The *Fama* and the *Confessio* predict imminent changes in religion and society. The *Confessio* clearly points to the restauration at the End of Time of the secret knowledge of Man and Nature, which Adam lost in the fall:

We ought therefore here to observe well, and make it known to everyone, that God hath certainly and most assuredly concluded to send and grant to the world before her end, which presently thereupon shall ensue, such a truth, light, life and glory, as the first man Adam had, which he lost in Paradise, after which his successors were put and driven, with him, to misery. Wherefore there shall cease all servitude, falsehood, lies, and darkness, which by little and little, with the great world's revolution, was crept into all arts, works, and governments of men, and have darkened the most part of them.²⁰

The manifestoes, interestingly, also contain the metaphor of the rising sun. In the *Fama*, the following passage can be found:

- 18 See, for example, Richard van Dülmen, *Die Utopie einer christlichen Gesellschaft: Johann Valentin Andreae (1586–1654)*, Part 1, Kultur und Gesellschaft, 2,1 (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, 1978), 43–112; Carlos Gilly's introduction in *Fama Fraternitatis: Das Urmanifest der Rosenkreuzer Bruderschaft zum ersten Mal nach den Manuskripten bearbeitet, die vor dem Erstdruck von 1614 entstanden sind durch Pleun van der Kooij. Mit einer Einführung über die Entstehung und Überlieferung der Manifeste der Rosenkreuzer von Carlos Gilly* (Haarlem: Rozekruis Pers, 1998); Martin Brecht, *Johann Valentin Andreae 1586–1654: Eine Biographie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), 65–92. – Interesting discussions of Rosicrucian images can be found in: *Divine Wisdom – Divine Nature: The Messages of the Rosicrucian Manifestoes in the Visual Language of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Cis van Heertum and José Bouman, Asclepius, 4 (Amsterdam: In de Pelikaan, 2014).
- 19 See Carlos Gilly, "Die Rosenkreuzer als europäisches Phänomen im 17. Jahrhundert und die verschlungenen Pfade der Forschung," in *Rosenkreuz als europäisches Phänomen im 17. Jahrhundert* (Amsterdam: In de Pelikaan, 2002), 9–58, 20, n. 2. Between 1610–1660 approximately 700 publications appeared. For a well-documented discussion of this reception, see Carlos Guilly, *Cimelia rhodostraurotica: Die Rosenkreuzer im Spiegel der zwischen 1610 und 1660 entstandenen Handschriften und Drucke. Ausstellung der Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica Amsterdam und der Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel*. 2nd ed. (Amsterdam: In de Pelikaan, 1995).
- 20 *Confessio Fraternitatis R.C.*, English translation in Frances A. Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* (St Albans: Paladin, 1975), 301–302.

Howbeit we know after a time there will now be a general reformation, both of divine and human things, according to our desire, and the expectation of others. For it is fitting, that before the rising of the sun, there should appear and break forth Aurora, or some clearness, or divine light in the sky.²¹

A very important figure in the Rosicrucian manifestoes is Paracelsus. Healing is one of the central duties of the Rosicrucian brothers and the name of the famous Renaissance doctor, theologian, and natural philosopher is mentioned a number of times in the treatises. In the reception of the Rosicrucian ideas, Paracelsus in some circles obtained the status of a prophet; it is further expected that new prophets will arise, who will help disseminate the truth of Paracelsus and God.²² One of the most important propagators of the Rosicrucian message from this perspective is Adam Haslmayr, who was very actively involved in the spread of the early manuscripts and published the first printed response to the society.²³ Haslmayr is expecting the period of the “Gloria Dei intacta” and the beginning of the “Liberty of the Gospel”, which will lead to a situation, where all religions and sects will come together and seek religious truth.²⁴ He apparently envisions a situation, where confessional differences are suspended – a truly utopian idea in the early seventeenth century, which experienced an intensification of religious conflict, leading to the outbreak of the Thirty Years’ War. This trans-confessional interpretation was, however, not the only one. The Lutheran traits in the Rosicrucian manifestoes can hardly be over looked. There are, for example, explicit references to Luther’s

21 Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, 294. The German text reads: “[...] ist es doch nicht unbilllich, daß, ehe die Sonne auffgehet, sie zuvor ein hell oder dunkel Liecht in den Himmel bringt [...]” (Andreae, *Rosenkreuzerschriften*, 158. Cf. *Confessio*: “What before times hath been seen, heard, and smelt, now finally shall be spoken and uttered forth, when the World shall awake out of her heavy and drowsy sleep, and with an open heart, bare-head, and bare-foot, shall meet the new arising Sun” (Yates, *The Rosicrucian enlightenment* [1975], 303).

22 See Carlos Gilly, “‘Theophrasta Sancta’: Der Paracelsismus als Religion im Streit mit den offiziellen Kirchen,” In *Analecta Paracelsica: Studien zum Nachleben Theophrast von Hohenheims im deutschen Kulturgebiet der frühen Neuzeit*, Heidelberger Studien zur Naturkunde der frühen Neuzeit, 4 (Stuttgart; Franz Steiner, 1994), 425–488 and the chapter by Urs Leo Gantenbein in this volume.

23 Haslmayr’s response was printed in 1612, two years before the publication of the *Fama*. The title of the work is: *Antwort An die lobwürdige Brüderschafft der Theosophie(n) von RosenCreutz [...]*, reprinted in Carlos Gilly, *Adam Haslmayr: Der erste Verkünder der Manifeste der Rosenkreuzer*, Pimander 5 (Amsterdam: In de Pelikaan, 1994), 69–80. Haslmayr paid a very high price for his involvement in the field of heterodox ideas. He spent four and a half years as a galley-slave in the Mediterranean (1612–1617).

24 Gilly, *Adam Haslmayr*, 193.

reformation.²⁵ Christian Rosenkreuz dies in 1484, the year after Luther's birth. At the beginning of the seventeenth century two new stars appeared in the constellations Cyrgus and Serpentarius, indicating great changes in the knowledge of nature. The appearance in 1604 of the star in the constellation of Serpentarius coincided with the discovery and opening of the tomb of Christian Rosenkreuz. 120 years after Christian Rosenkreuz' death and approximately the same number of years after Luther's birth, time is apparently ripe for the continuation of Luther's reformation. This "general reformation, both of divine and human things" – as quoted above from the *Fama* – will effect not just religion, but also have a thorough impact on politics and all of society.

There was an intense reception of Böhme's works in Rosicrucian circles;²⁶ attempts have also been made to view his thinking in connection with the ideas of the brotherhood.²⁷ I am, however, not mainly interested in any mediate or immediate links between Böhme and the propagators of the Rosicrucian cause. My focus is instead on the general context. In what way does Böhme's manuscript of the *Aurora*, which was completed, albeit as a fragment, in 1612, reflect the same kind of ideas, hopes, and expectations as the Rosicrucian manifestoes, which were circulating in manuscript at the same time?

Böhme's *Aurora* and the Rosicrucian treatises (including their early reception, for example by Haslmayer and others) have four very interesting traits in common. Expected are:

- The uncovering of all hidden truth at the End of Time
- The sending of prophets, to whom the ultimate knowledge of God and Nature will be revealed

25 For example: "But that also every Christian may know of what religion and belief we are, we confess to have the knowledge of Jesus Christ (as the same now in these last days, and chiefly in Germany, most clear and pure is professed [...])" (Yates, *Rosicrucian enlightenment*, 294). – For a strict Lutheran interpretation of the Rosicrucian manifestoes, see Volkhard Wels, *Manifestationen des Geistes: Frömmigkeit, Spiritualismus und Dichtung in der Frühen Neuzeit*, Berliner Mittelalter- und Frühneuzeitforschung, 17 (Göttingen: V & R unipress, 2014), 233–291.

26 Important intermediaries are Balthasar Walther and Paul Nagel. For discussions of these connections, see Leigh T.I. Penman, "Böhme's Student and Mentor: The Liegnitz Physician Balthasar Walther c. 1558–c. 1630)," in *Offenbarung und Episteme: Zur europäischen Wirkung Jakob Böhmes im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Wilhelm Kühlmann and Friedrich Vollhardt, Frühe Neuzeit, 173 (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2012), 47–65; and Leigh T.I. Penman, "Climbing Jacob's Ladder: Crisis, Chiliasm, and Transcendence in the Thought of Paul Nagel (1624), a Lutheran Dissident during the Time of the Thirty Years' War," *Intellectual History Review* 20 (2010), 201–226.

27 See Will-Erich Peuckert, *Das Rosenkreutz*, 2nd edition, ed. Rolf Christian Zimmermann (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1973), *passim*; and Jan-Erik Ebbestad Hansen, *Jacob Böhme: Liv – Tenkning – Idéhistoriske forutsetninger*, Diss. (Oslo: Universitetet i Oslo, 1978), 467–482.

- The continuation and perfection of the Lutheran reformation
- A situation of religious tolerance

In the text of the *Aurora*, there are a great number of references to the special and privileged position of its author in universal history. Böhme claims that the total knowledge of God and Nature has been revealed to him. This insight into ultimate reality has been hidden since Adam's fall, but is now – in and by Böhme – fully uncovered at the End of Time. In the *Aurora*, he constantly makes the point about the unique status of his knowledge.²⁸ A very clear example of such a statement can be found in the concluding remarks of the ninth chapter:

All of this has been revealed in this way to no one else from the beginning of the world. But since God wills it, I let it be and I attend to whatever God wants. For the ways he works are for the most part hidden from me. But by and by the spirit will delve even into the most exalted depths.²⁹

Böhme's unique position in universal history is also made clear in the preface to the *Aurora*, where he uses the description of the growth of a tree as an allegory for the course of history. Important historical events are seen as stages in the development of the tree: the Flood, the appearance of the prophets, Christ, the decline of the Church, the rise of Islam, the appearance of Luther, and finally the sending of Jacob Böhme.³⁰ Already at the beginning of the allegory we are told that "when the tree grows old and its branches wither so that the sap can no longer rise up high, many green little twigs sprout out on the trunk below and finally upon the root, thereby transforming the old tree".³¹ At the end of the allegory, when the tree enters its old age, two such green little twigs appear. About the first one Böhme writes:

*However, in the evening the mercy of God was stirred [...]: there grew then a twig near the root upon the splendid tree and the twig turned green; and to it was given the sap of the tree and it spoke with human tongue and showed to everyone the splendid tree; and its voice resounded abroad in many lands.*³²

28 See Bo Andersson, "Du Solst wissen es ist aus keinem stein gesogen": Studien zu Jacob Böhmes *Aurora* oder Morgen Röte im auffgang, Stockholmer germanistische Forschungen 33 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1986), *passim*.

29 Böhme, *Aurora*, 9: 48.

30 For a thorough analysis of Böhme's preface, see Andersson, *Denken in Bildern*, 386–389.

31 Böhme, *Aurora*, Preface: 7.

32 Böhme, *Aurora*, Preface: 53 (*italics in the translation*).

This “twig near the root” is, of course, Martin Luther and the spreading of the Reformation. The positive effects of Luther’s renewal of Church and theology declined rapidly, however; when the “Noble and sacred tree” had been revealed to all people, the result was conflict and strive “over the root of the great tree”. The devil stirred up fruitless quarrels among the theologians, “so that each thought he had a firm grip on the root and the others should look to and listen to him and accord him honor”,³³ The lay people got aggrieved and confused, and the conditions of religion and morals turned disastrous. At this moment in history the turning point occurs. At the very end; there is light:

For a little green branch grew upon the root of the Noble Tree and drew the sap and life from the root; and it received the spirit of the tree and it transfigured the Noble Tree in its glorious power and might, as well as the nature in which it had grown. And just as this happened, both gates were opened in nature; knowledge of both qualities, evil and good, and the Heavenly Jerusalem were revealed as well as the realm of hell, indeed to all people on earth; and the light and voice resounded to the four winds.³⁴

Böhme is claiming a unique role for his own person in the drama of universal history, when he refers to himself as “a little green branch”, which “grew upon the root of the Noble Tree”. The growing of this final branch opens the gates of nature and all knowledge is revealed. In the tree allegory and also in many other passages of the *Aurora*, Böhme is striving to convince the reader that his text presents a unique revelation, the total and final knowledge of God and Nature, which will be made known to the world at the End of Time. By describing himself and his knowledge as a branch “upon the root”, which surpasses the earlier branch “near the root” (Luther) in status and insight, Böhme sees himself in relation to Luther’s reformation, which he will now bring to its ultimate perfection. Böhme appears in the *Aurora* in the role of the prophet, who claims to have been called to reveal all truth of God and Nature and the final destiny of the world. Important is, as I will argue in more detail below, that Böhme appears in a rhetorical role, which gives the author of the text ultimate authority.

There were many attacks on the Rosicrucian manifestoes from Lutheran theologians – in spite of their references to Luther and the Reformation – as well as from Catholics and Calvinists. Many mystically inclined readers on the other hand were very positive and seem to have regarded the society as a

33 Böhme, *Aurora*, Preface: 62.

34 Böhme, *Aurora*, Preface: 67–68.

defender of religious tolerance.³⁵ This view was also clearly advocated by some of the society's first propagators.³⁶ In Böhme's *Aurora* we also find this interesting combination of a continued Lutheran Reformation and religious tolerance.³⁷ Böhme's tolerance is of an extreme kind for the seventeenth century, since it does not apply just to believers of different Christian denominations, but to the adherents of other religions as well. Böhme writes:

Truly, there is but one God. If only the cover is removed from your eyes so you see and know, then all your brothers shall see and know as well, be they Christians or Jews, Turks or heathens. Or do you suppose that God is only the God of Christians?³⁸

All human beings are anthropologically equal and have the same potential for spiritual regeneration and rebirth.³⁹ When all mankind can see and know Böhme's truth and knowledge, all humans will be brothers in God.

Great changes in religion and society were – as we have seen – expected at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Many circles were waiting for the final revelation of hidden truths. In this situation of hopes and fears the Rosicrucian manifestoes caused sensational interest. There is no reason to seek for any direct influence of these texts on Böhme, but we can assume that the manifestoes and Böhme's *Aurora* reflect the same kind of ideas current in the historical context. In his *Aurora*, Böhme's frequently claims that his work presents the total knowledge of God and Nature, which has been revealed uniquely to him at the End of Time. This knowledge will lead to the perfection of the Lutheran reformation. At the same time, he also advocates an extreme form of extended religious tolerance. Böhme has definitely no small pretensions as a religious and philosophical thinker, claiming that his *Aurora* presents the unique final truth about God and Nature. Here the question immediately arises: How could Böhme be so successful, how could he find so many enthusiastic followers, when communicating ideas of this kind? What is indeed so very persuasive about the *Aurora*? In the following, I will argue in detail that Böhme's great success as a writer is closely connected to one very special textual trait of the *Aurora*: its rhetoric of presence.

35 For the different kinds of reception, see Gilly, *Cimelia rhodostraurotica* (1995).

36 An important representative is Haslmayr. I referred to his trans-confessional ideas above.

37 In the analysis of Böhme's view of space and the origin of evil, we will see Böhme's attempt to advocate a Lutheran perspective.

38 Böhme, *Aurora*, 11:34.

39 For an illuminating discussion, see Kristine Hannak, "Glaubensstreit und Liebesethik: Jacob Böhmes Reflexion von Juden, Christen, 'Türcken' und Heiden in der *Aurora*," in *Morgenröte im Aufgang*, ed. Bonheim and Regehly, 51–74.

3 The Rhetoric of Presence

In the recent decades, literary and cultural studies have experienced a number of different “turns.”⁴⁰ The rhetoric of presence can be seen as a development from the so-called Performative Turn. The concept of the performative was established by J.L. Austin in his famous lectures: *How to do things with words*.⁴¹ Austin was mostly interested in performative speech acts, a specific kind of utterances such as “I declare this meeting open”, where the utterance does not just describe a reality, but also changes the social reality it is describing. In post-structural philosophy, literary analysis, and gender theory, the idea of the performative was transferred to a more general level.⁴² Jonathan Culler claimed, for example, that literary discourse can in itself be characterized as performative, since the literary utterance does not refer to a prior state of affairs, but *creates* the state of affairs it refers to. It brings, for instance, characters and their actions into being.⁴³ Judith Butler coined the term Gender performativity for the reiterated acting, which produces the effect of gender on the body. The gendered body has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality.⁴⁴

Most interesting theoretical and empirical research on performativity has been conducted within the interdisciplinary Berlin project “Kulturen des

40 For an overview, see Doris Bachmann-Medick, *Cultural turns: Neuorientierungen in den Kulturwissenschaften*, 3rd edition (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2009).

41 John Langshaw Austin, *How to do Things with Words: The William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University in 1955*, ed. J.O. Urmson and Maria Sbisa, 2nd edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

42 For central texts, see the German anthology *Performanz: Zwischen Sprachphilosophie und Kulturwissenschaften*, ed. Uwe Wirth (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2002). – Good English introductions to performance and performativity are, for example: Marvin Carlsson, *Performance: A Critical Introduction*, 2nd edition (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), James Loxley, *Performativity* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), *The Performance Studies Reader*, ed. Henry Bial, 2nd edition (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), introductions in German are: *Theorien des Performativen: Sprache – Wissen – Praxis: Eine kritische Bestandaufnahme*, ed. Klaus W. Hempfer and Jörg Volbers (Bielefeld: transcript, 2011); Hans Rudolf Velten, “Performativitätsforschung,” in *Methodengeschichte der Germanistik*, ed. Jost Schneider (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2009), 549–571; and Erika Fischer-Lichte, *Performativität: Eine Einführung* (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2012).

43 Jonathan Culler, “Philosophy and Literature: The Fortunes of the Performative,” *Poetics Today* 21 (2000), 503–519; 505.

44 Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York and London: Routledge, 2007), 185. See also Judith Butler and Athena Athanasiou, *Dispossession: The Performative in the Political* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013).

Performativen".⁴⁵ In a seminal article on text and performance, printed in one of the project's early publications, Irmgard Maassen made an important distinction between "Text in der Performanz" and "Performanz im Text".⁴⁶ "Text in der Performanz" – functional performativity – refers, in its most interesting aspect, to the processes and effects which a text unfolds at the interface with its receptors. The acting of a play on the stage or the reading of a text – silent or aloud – qualifies as a performance of this functional kind. The reversed concept, "Performanz im Text" – structural performativity – points to performative strategies in the text itself.

Maassen presents the following list of specific performative text strategies:

- **Dialogization** ("Dialogisierungen")
- **The simulation of corporeality, perceptibility, and presence, using the means of language** ("die Simulation von Körperlichkeit, Sinnlichkeit und Präsenz mit sprachlichen Mitteln")
- **The simulation of oral communicative situations** ("das Fingieren von oralen Kommunikationssituationen")
- **The steering of perspective** ("das Regime der Blicke")
- **Fictions of authentication** ("Authentisierungsfiktionen")
- **Self-fashioning and addressee-fashioning** ("*self-fashioning*"⁴⁷ und Adressaten-*fashioning*")
- **Perfunctory creation and undermining of social role models; potential for the creative reinterpretation of social and cultural scripts** ("spielerisches Entwerfen und Unterminieren von sozialen Rollenmodellen: das Potential für creative Neuinterpretation im Akt der Iteration von sozialen und kulturellen 'Skripten'")⁴⁸

45 The project was founded in 1999. Important publications are: *Theorien des Performativen*, ed. Erika Fischer-Lichte and Christoph Wulf, *Paragrana: Internationale Zeitschrift für Historische Anthropologie* 10:1 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2001); *Praktiken des Performativen*, ed. Erika Fischer-Lichte and Christoph Wulf, *Paragrana: Internationale Zeitschrift für Historische Anthropologie* 13:1 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2004); and Fischer-Lichte, *Performativität* (2012).

46 Irmgard Maassen, "Text und/als/in der Performanz in der frühen Neuzeit: Thesen und Überlegungen (mit einem Appendix von Manfred Pfister: Skalierung von Performativität)," in *Theorien des Performativen* (2001), 285–302, 289 ff. – Cf. also Hans Rudolf Velten, "Performativität a) Ältere deutsche Literatur," in *Germanistik als Kulturwissenschaft: Eine Einführung in neue Theoriekonzepte*, ed. Claudia Benthien and Hans Rudolf Velten (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2002), 217–242.

47 The term *self-fashioning* is, of course, taken from Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1980). Greenblatt (p. 87) points, for example, to the performative mode of Montaigne's essays (and Hamlet's soliloquies).

48 Maassen, "Text und/als/in der Performanz", 291.

In the following, I will structure my discussion of the performative text strategies in Böhme's *Aurora* according to the pragmatic dimensions of the text. I take Karl Bühler's famous organon model (see Figure 2.1) as my point of departure.

To Bühler, the language sign is "a *symbol* by virtue of its coordination to objects and states of affairs, a *symptom* [...] by virtue of its dependence on the sender, whose inner states it expresses, and a *signal* by virtue of its appeal to the hearer, whose inner or outer behavior it directs as do other communicative signs".⁴⁹ For a rhetorical theory of communication it is important to keep in mind, however, that the text does not refer to anything that is given beforehand, but must instead be seen as a construction, which presents the sender, the receiver, and the world in such a way that it contributes to the ultimate

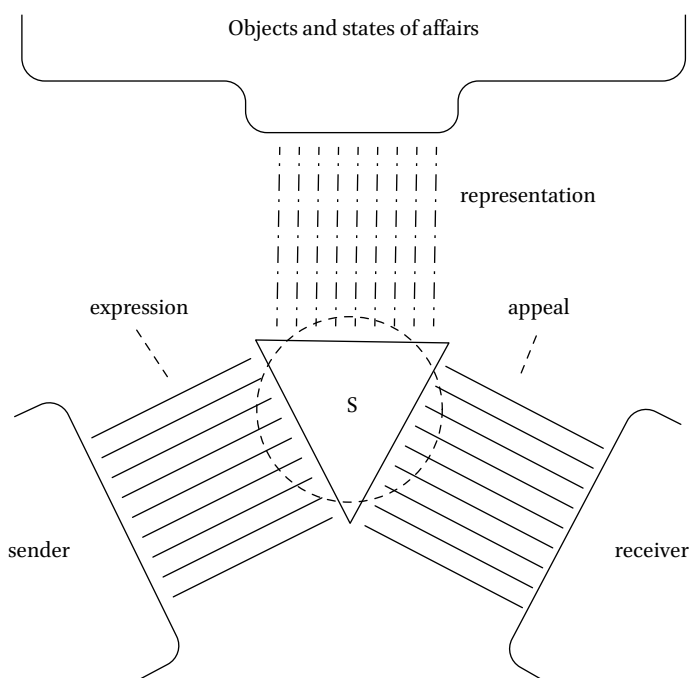


FIGURE 2.1 Karl Bühler, *Theory of Language: The Representational Function of Language*, trans. Donald Fraser Goodwin (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2011), 35 (<https://www.benjamins.com/catalog/z.164>). Printed with permission.
KARL BÜHLER'S ORGANON MODEL.

49 Bühler, *Theory of Language*, 35.

goal of the text: the persuasion of the hearer.⁵⁰ Rhetorically important performative text strategies can therefore refer to all three pragmatic dimensions of communication.

4 Böhme's Rhetorical Self-Fashioning

In rhetorical theory we learn that the creation of credibility is an important, perhaps the most important task of the orator.⁵¹

In the *Aurora*, Böhme appears already on the title page in a text role of great authority, when he claims to be in the possession of the total knowledge of God and Nature, which will be revealed at the End of Time. The tree allegory of the preface contains another clear indication of his special position in universal history. There are, however, not just these two examples; Böhme constantly indicates that his *Aurora* contains a vision of ultimate reality based on his own personal experience of God and the hidden forces of Nature. This is a very important rhetorical strategy. Böhme in his *Aurora* utilizes the role of the prophet, which gives him an authority, which is practically unsurpassable.⁵²

Practically every secondary work on Böhme contains a discussion of the nineteenth chapter of the *Aurora*, which presents the famous account of a life-changing spiritual breakthrough, narrated by the rhetorical "I" of the text. In the following discussion of Böhme's rhetorical self-fashioning, I will call this rhetorical "I" "Böhme" (in quotation marks). It is very important to point out from the start that it is extremely difficult to draw any immediate autobiographical conclusions about the real person Jacob Böhme from this

50 Bühler, in contrast, sees the "Umfeld" of the signs as objectively existing.

51 For a discussion, see Andersson, *Du Solst wissen*, 31 ff.

52 Böhme's claim of prophethood is a text event; his statements must not be interpreted as immediate biographical statements. For a different view, see Ernst Benz, *Der Prophet Jakob Böhme: Eine Studie über den Typus nachreformatorisches Prophetentums*, Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur [Mainz], Abhandlungen der geistes- und sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse, volume 1959:3 (Mainz: Verlag der Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur / Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1959). – For a recent discussion of early modern prophecy in a Lutheran context, see Jürgen Beyer, *Lay Prophets in Lutheran Europe (c. 1550–1700)*, Brill's Series in Church History and Religious Culture 74 (Leiden: Brill, 2017). Böhme is – surprisingly – not included in the volume, the reason given is that he is allegedly one of the prophets who left the Lutheran church (p. 12, n. 34). This is a misunderstanding; Böhme was a member of the Lutheran church until his death in November 1624.

rhetorical, inner-textual "I" ("Böhme"). The question of the relationship between the experience of the author and the text of the *Aurora* has been much debated in Böhme scholarship.⁵³

In the nineteenth chapter of the *Aurora*, "Böhme", the rhetorical, innertextual "I", describes his great melancholy and sadness. This existential anxiety resulted from "Böhme's" acquaintance with the new astronomic worldview and the discovery that evil and good can be found in all of creation. Regarding astronomy, the melancholy and sadness was probably less the consequence of the theory of the heliocentric system, but more of a chock caused by the insight into the enormous dimensions of the universe. "Böhme" regarded "the tiny little spark that is the human being and considered what it amounted to before God, set against this great work which is the heavens and earth."⁵⁴ How could a small, insignificant human being relate to God in endless space? "Böhme" grew "gravely melancholy and deeply troubled".⁵⁵

The spiritual breakthrough comes as a solution:

But when, in this deeply troubled state, I lifted up my spirit, which I understood not, earnestly toward God in firm assault, resolving my entire heart and mind with all its thoughts and impulses toward the one purpose of wrestling ceaselessly with the love and mercy of God: at that point he blessed me, that is, illuminated me, with his Holy Spirit, so that I might understand his will and be rid of my sadness: at that point, the spirit broke through. For when, with collected zeal, I assailed God and the gates of hell so brashly, as if my powers had been greater than they were, determined to risk my very life attempting what in reality I could not have attained unaided by the spirit of God, at last, after several firm assaults, my spirit broke through the gates of hell and into the innermost birth of the divinity, there to be embraced by love as a bridegroom embraces his beloved bride.⁵⁶

"Böhme" struggles like another well-known Jacob; there is a definite allusion to Jacob's wrestling with an angel until daybreak, demanding the angel's blessing

53 See, for example, Alois M. Haas, "Erfahrung und Sprache in Böhmes *Aurora*," in *Gott, Natur und Mensch in der Sicht Jacob Böhmes und seiner Rezeption*, ed. Jan Garewicz and Alois M. Haas, *Wolfenbütteler Arbeiten zur Barockforschung* 24 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1994), 1–21.

54 Böhme, *Aurora*, 19:7.

55 Böhme, *Aurora*, 19:8.

56 Böhme, *Aurora*, 19:10–11.

(Gen. 26). There are also other interesting texts from the sixteenth century, giving Jacob's struggle the allegorical meaning of the victory of faith.⁵⁷

The result of "Böhme's" struggle is total insight: "In this light my spirit soon saw through everything, recognizing God in all creatures, in vegetation and grass; I recognized who he is and how he persists, and what is his intention".⁵⁸ Nature became transparent; "Böhme" could experience God here and now. In the light of this experience, his determination also grew to describe the being of God. This was a long and complicated process; "Böhme" struggled with his writing for twelve years.⁵⁹ The relationship between insight, writing, and the final text of the *Aurora* is described in the following way:

*It is from this light that I take my knowledge. And from it I also derive my resolve and drive. I intend to write out my knowledge in accordance with my gifts, letting God have his way. Even if in doing so I infuriate the world, the devil, and the gates of hell, I intend to find out what God has in mind.*⁶⁰

The words here printed in italics are the only ones in the description of the spiritual breakthrough, which are written in spaced-out letters in Böhme's manuscript. This is no surprise, since they contain the most important statement not just of the chapter, but of the entire *Aurora*: the knowledge presented in the book has its origin in the immediate experience of God. "Böhme" also indicates that the text of the book itself is the result of divine inspiration and divine control of the writing process.

The claim that "Böhme's" entire knowledge of God and Nature has its foundation in an inner experience of divine reality is extremely important for the authority of the rhetorical "I" of the *Aurora*. The technique itself is, however, not Böhme's invention. References to the author's experience of the divine have an important tradition in the sixteenth century and can be found, for example, in texts by Luther, Thomas Müntzer, Sebastian Franck, Valentin Weigel, and Paracelsus.⁶¹ In Valentin Weigel's *Der gülden Griff* (1578), there is a detailed narration of the experience of an inner-textual "I", following the pattern of spiritual despair, struggle, and breakthrough, resulting in total knowledge.⁶² The rhetorical function of such narrations in Weigel's work and in other texts

57 See Andersson, *Du Solst wissen*, 67.

58 Böhme, *Aurora*, 19:13.

59 For a discussion of the twelve years, see Andersson, *Du Solst wissen*, 215, n. 144.

60 Böhme, *Aurora*, 19:17 (italics in the translation).

61 For a discussion, see Andersson, *Du Solst wissen*, 50–62.

62 For a short analysis, see Andersson, *Du Solst wissen*, 59–60.

from the sixteenth century is the same as in Böhme's *Aurora*; they are designed to establish the authority of the writer and to make his truth-claims plausible. Compared to his predecessors, however, Böhme stands out in one very central respect. References to spiritual experience(s) are usually sparse, we find them very often in prefaces; Böhme, on the other hand, uses them abundantly in his *Aurora*. This has probably two reasons: Firstly, Böhme – the simple cobbler – has no other source of establishing his authority than referring to the transcendent foundation of his knowledge. Therefore, this technique is extremely important to him. Secondly, Böhme has apparent difficulties to organize a long text. He seems to view the chapters of the *Aurora* as separate mini-texts and often refers to the foundation of all his knowledge at the beginning and/or in the conclusions of the chapters. In one of the chapter prefaces we find, for example, the following elaboration on the knowledge of the rhetorical "I":

What I write here is not without knowledge, but if you should mock these things, motivated by the devil, as an Epicurean and overfed devil's sow, if you should object that this fool did not ascend into heaven to see or hear these things, that they are fanciful tales, if so, then I intend, by the power of my knowledge, to cite and summon you before the solemn court of God. And though in body I am too powerless to bring you to it, the one from whom I have my knowledge is powerful enough to cast you into the abyss of hell.⁶³

A similar remark can be found towards the end of the 23rd chapter:

I have not arrived at my opinions or come to this labor or knowledge by way of my own reason or determined will. Nor have I sought this kind of knowledge. Nor did I know anything about it. I have only sought the heart of God in order to hide from the storms of the devil. But when I came to it, this great and difficult task was laid upon me: to reveal and announce to the world the Great Day of the Lord and, since people are so covetous of the root of the tree, to show them what the entire tree consists of, in order to demonstrate that this is the Dawn of Day which God in his council has long since resolved. Amen.⁶⁴

In these quotations from the *Aurora*, the rhetorical "I" of the author is strongly present. When reading Böhme's first work, it is important to keep in mind that

63 Böhme, *Aurora*, 5:15–16.

64 Böhme, *Aurora*, 23:84–85.

references to the spiritual experience(s) of an inner-textual "I" belonged to the philosophical and theological discourse of the time. I have already mentioned some sixteenth century authors. But statements referring to spiritual experience(s) also have a very important rhetorical function, since they are central for establishing the authority of the philosophical and theological writer. When Böhme writes about despair, struggle, and breakthrough we have, for example, reason to believe that he is stylizing an inner-textual "I" according to a traditional pattern, which will make the spiritual insight he is claiming maximally probable. We are very likely dealing with rhetorical self-fashioning. This is, however, not a conclusion which would imply that Jacob Böhme had no religious experience(s).⁶⁵ What is here called in question is the view that Böhme's statements about the "I" of the text can be taken at their face value, as immediate biographical statements.⁶⁶ It is very difficult to believe that all the content of Böhme's works is the immediate reflection of one major spiritual experience, that all the knowledge, which his books contain, was present in one specific moment.⁶⁷ More likely would be to hypothesize a creative breakthrough with some kind of diffuse insight, which functioned as a point of departure for the extremely intense philosophical and theological speculation, which he later developed in his many works.⁶⁸ This interpretation also seems likely in view of research on mysticism, religious psychology, and the process of writing.⁶⁹ The question if such a creative breakthrough had a metaphysical correlate or not, must, however, be left to the reader's own reflection and judgment.

The rhetorical "I" of the *Aurora* does not create presence just by references to spiritual insight and experience(s), but also by frequent pointing to the low social status of its author. This is a very important argument, since it can be used for making plausible that the simple cobbler Jacob Böhme has been chosen as God's special tool of revelation. According to the text of the *Aurora*, a special revelatory principle can be found in history. Böhme claims that the Holy Spirit does not care for the high and mighty. He writes:

Who was Abel? A shepherd. Who were Enoch and Noah? Simple folk. Who was Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob? Herders of livestock, that is what they were. Who was Moses, the dear man of God? A herdsman. Who was

65 Cf. Andersson, *Du Solst wissen*, 83 f., 216, n. 155; Andersson, *Denken in Bildern*, 149–158.

66 This very often the case. For one very clear example, see Ernst Benz, *Der Prophet Jacob Boehme* (1959).

67 For a discussion, see Andersson, *Du Solst wissen*, 79–84.

68 In Andersson, *Denken in Bildern*, 149–158, I discuss the possible content(s) of such a diffuse insight.

69 See Andersson, *Denken in Bildern*.

David when he was summoned by the mouth of the Lord? A shepherd. Who were the prophets, great and small? Common, trifling little people. Some of them mere peasants and shepherds who were the world's door-mats. They were considered fools, even though they performed wonders and signs. For even then the world only looked to the high and mighty, and the Holy Spirit was no more than its footstool. For the arrogant devil has always wanted to be a king of this world. So how did our king Jesus Christus come into this world? Poor and in great sorrow and misery, without a place to lay his head. Who were his apostles? Poor, despised, unlearned fisher folk. Who was it that believed their sermons? The poor, pitiful little people. The high and learned Pharisees assisted the henchmen of Christ, crying out, "*Crucifige! Crucifige!*" Who has at all times stood most firmly with the church of Christ? The poor disdained little people that lets its blood be shed for Christ's sake. Who falsified the true, pure Christian doctrine, always standing in opposition to it? The Pharisee scholars, popes, cardinals, bishops, and big shots. Why did the world follow them? For the simple reason that they had a high standing and strutted before the world. That is the corrupt human nature. Who was it that swept out of the church in Germany the pope's avarice, idolatry, scheming and deceit? A poor, despised monk. By what sort of power? By the might of God the father and by the power of God the Holy Spirit. What is it that still remains concealed? Is it the true teaching of Christ? Indeed it is not. It is rather the *philosophia* and the deep ground of God, the celestial joy, the revelation of the creation of the angels, the revelation of the frightful fall of the devil which gave rise to evil, the creation of this world, the deep ground and secret of the human being and of all creatures in this world, the Day of Judgment and transformation of this world, and the mystery of the resurrection of the dead and of eternal life. All of this will rise up in the depths in great simplicity. Why will it not emerge in the heights or in the arts? So that no one can boast of having done it.⁷⁰

In the form of a proof from induction, Böhme argues that people of low social status have always been chosen by God: the patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles, but also Luther ("a poor, despised monk"). The rhetorical "I" of the text is another example of this general principle, but he is also the culmination of history; the final knowledge of all secrets "will rise up in the depths in great simplicity". Interesting is how "Böhme" views his work as the continuation and culmination of the Lutheran reformation: The true teaching of Christ is not hidden anymore, but the deep secrets of God and Nature are still to be

70 Böhme, *Aurora*, 9:3–9 (italics in the translation).

revealed.⁷¹ The *Aurora* contains this knowledge, which comes exclusively from God. Böhme's claim of simplicity is very important for his argumentation; he is trying to make plausible that the *Aurora* presents knowledge revealed immediately from God with no additions by the human mind. What could have been added to this, the highest knowledge, by a simple, unlearned craftsman?

There are a number of references to the lack of education and the low social status of the author of the *Aurora*. At the same time, however, we find references to books and reading:

I have read the writings of many exalted masters in the hope of finding in them the ground and true depth. But I have found nothing there but a half-dead spirit which is fearful of health and unable to find its way out of great weakness to full strength.⁷²

The question immediately arises: How uneducated is Jacob Böhme? In the *Aurora*, there are discussions of the heliocentric worldview and endless space.⁷³ It turns out that Böhme is also familiar with the *similia-similibus*-principle of Paracelsian medical therapy and even knows about the intense discussion between Lutherans and Calvinists over the issues of the origin of evil and of God's omnipresence in the world.⁷⁴ A person in the early seventeenth century who writes a text, which displays this kind of intellectual knowledge, is hardly to be regarded as simple and uneducated. It becomes very obvious that Böhme creates a special kind of rhetorical "I" in his *Aurora*, which is designed to make it likely that God has revealed himself especially to him. God reveals himself to plain and simple folks; I am one of them. This religious authority is hardly possible to surpass.

5 Addressee-Fashioning

In the *Aurora*, the reader is frequently addressed and made present. There are hundreds of reader apostrophes; the utterance: "At this point, I intend to

⁷¹ Another example is the tree allegory of the preface analyzed above.

⁷² Böhme, *Aurora*, 10:27.

⁷³ "The sun has its own royal locus and does not stray from the place in which it came into being, as some people think, and even some astrologers write" (*Aurora*, 25:60). The idea of endless space is important, as we have seen, in the narration of the spiritual breakthrough in the nineteenth chapter of the *Aurora*.

⁷⁴ *Aurora* 21:111f. contains a clear reference to the Paracelsian *similia-similibus*-principle. Calvin is the only non-Biblical name mentioned in the text of the *Aurora*: "You must not think like Johannes Calvus or Calvinus, that the body of Christ is not an omnipotent being, and that it does not encompass more than the locus it occupies" (*Aurora*, 20:76).

offer *you* an analogy in nature in order to indicate to *you* how the Holy Being abides in the Holy Trinity”, is just one of many examples.⁷⁵ Böhme also utilizes the rhetorical technique of the *procatalepsis*, a rhetorical figure of speech, in which the speaker raises an objection to his own argumentation from the listener/reader and then immediately refutes it. A very good example for this strategy can be found in the 24th chapter of the *Aurora*, where Böhme writes about God and the stars:

Now you might say: therefore, the stars are God after all,
And should be honored and worshipped as such.

This is as far as the wise heathens came. With their keen understanding, they surpassed our philosophers by far. But the true door of knowledge remained hidden from them.

Look! The stars have been incorporated out of God. But you must understand the distinction: they are not the heart or the gentle pure divinity which one must honor and worship as God.⁷⁶

Besides apostrophe and *procatalepsis*, Böhme uses also another very interesting rhetorical strategy regarding the reader: he refers to the ineffability of language. He writes, for example, that the celestial trees and bushes perpetually bear fruit, “blossoming so beautifully and growing in the divine power so joyously that I cannot convey it in speech or writing. I can only stammer like a child learning to speak. I cannot express it as the spirit presents it to me”.⁷⁷ This means that the insights into the mysteries of God and Nature cannot be transmitted in and by a text; this knowledge cannot be fully formulated in language. But a text such as the *Aurora* can still have an important function; it gives the reader an orientation about his/her inner self, about the hidden depths of every human being.⁷⁸ When the reader has made the same spiritual experience as the “I” of the *Aurora*, s/he will be able to understand what is written, because s/he will then be able to recognize from experience what the text is about. Böhme writes:

How should there not be love and joy when in the midst of death life is born. And amidst darkness light. Do you ask, how can that be? Yes, if my spirit were seated in your heart and poured forth into it, your body

⁷⁵ Böhme, *Aurora*, 3:18 (my italics).

⁷⁶ Böhme, *Aurora*, 24:29–31 (italics in the translation).

⁷⁷ Böhme, *Aurora*, 4:13.

⁷⁸ For a detailed discussion of Böhme's concept of communication, see Andersson, *Denken in Bildern*, 72–106.

would see and grasp this. But there is no other way I can bring it to your mind. You could not comprehend or understand it unless the Holy Spirit were to kindle your soul so that this light should shine in your own heart. Then the light would be born in you as in God and it would ascend in your stringent and bitter qualities, in your sweet water, to exult as in God. When that happens, you will understand my book, not before.⁷⁹

This kind of addressee-fashioning is rhetorically very effective, since it immunizes the author of the text against all criticism. The author is not to blame, if the reader has not made the spiritual experience which will make the understanding of the text possible. But the revelation from God to the rhetorical, inner-textual "I" is apparently still to be regarded as being historically unique. From Böhme's argumentation can be inferred that the spiritual experience of the reader is apparently meant to be just a confirmation of the unsurpassable insights into the mysteries of God and Nature, which have been revealed to the "I" of the *Aurora*.

In Böhme's *Aurora*, there is an ongoing dialogue between the textual "I" and the reader as constructed within the text. I have presented some examples: apostrophe, *procatalepsis*, and the idea that spiritual insight, similar to "Böhme's", is required for text understanding. The strong presence of the implied reader is interesting from a rhetorical point of view, since it is a strategy aiming at navigating the real reader into a position, where s/he can be made to accept and embrace the view of God and the world presented in Böhme's text.

6 World-Fashioning

Two essays, which present two entirely different perspectives on Böhme's philosophical writing, were published in 2013 in the volume *An Introduction to Jacob Boehme: Four Centuries of Thought and Reception*. The two essays are by Arthur Versluis and Bruce B. Janz.⁸⁰

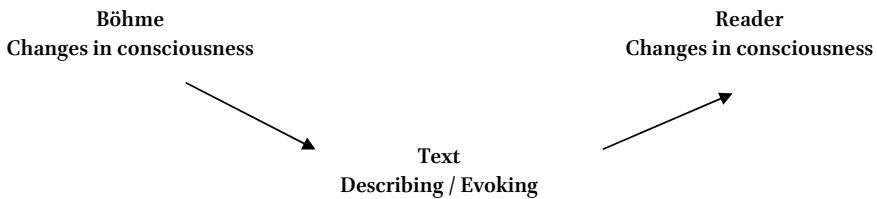
The aim of Versluis' contribution is to present and discuss different attempts of placing Böhme in the tradition of Western Esotericism. The final section of his paper also contains reflections on what Versluis calls a "functional" analysis of Böhme's work. By this kind of analysis, he means the way Böhme's writing "encodes and discloses secret knowledge and/or gnosis".⁸¹ Böhme's text is

79 Böhme, *Aurora*, 9:21.

80 Arthur Versluis, "The Place of Jacob Boehme in Western Esotericism", and Bruce B. Janz, "Conclusion: Why Boehme Matters Today" in *An Introduction to Jacob Boehme* ed. Hessayon and Apetrei, 263–278, and 279–293.

81 Versluis, "The place of Jacob Boehme", 272.

labeled “initiatory”; it largely consists in “spiritual guidance”. In some sense at least, Versluis writes, the reader has to accept the text “as at least provisionally real, as describing, let us say hypothetically, an actual inner process and set of experiences”.⁸² This “hypothetical” approach to Böhme requires to a minimum the assumption that the text is “reflecting and, to some extent, itself embodying or evoking particular changes in consciousness”.⁸³ Versluis’ view of Böhme’s writing is apparently based on a model of esoteric communication of the following kind, where the text reflects inner processes of the author and – as an “initiatory document”, offering “spiritual guidance” – can lead to analogical changes in the reader’s consciousness:



Böhme experienced changes in consciousness, he described these changes in his texts, and the texts evoke the same or similar changes in the consciousness of the reader.

This process of communication is apparently an immediate one, which seems to take place without the author’s or reader’s deliberate reflection. Versluis points out that a reading of Böhme’s work as “initiatory documents” has to accept the possibility of changes in consciousness not accessible to “discursive thought or analysis”.⁸⁴

Bruce B. Janz’ contribution to the *Introduction to Boehme* carries the title: “Why Boehme Matters Today”, and applies an entirely different perspective on the philosopher’s writing. Janz emphasizes Böhme’s creative strategies in forming philosophical concepts. He admits that he, when he at first began looking at Böhme’s work, had been led to believe that Böhme was “undisciplined, erratic, and that his use of words and concepts was inconsistent”.⁸⁵ Janz was soon to discover, however, that Böhme “was doing something new and creative every time he appropriated a term or concept” from his intellectual context; he was guided by a creative impulse to develop concepts in an experimental way. This “experimental creativity,” which is far from the image of the undisciplined and

82 Versluis, “The place of Jacob Boehme”, 283.

83 Versluis, “The place of Jacob Boehme”, 273.

84 Versluis, “The place of Jacob Boehme”, 274.

85 Janz, “Why Boehme Matters Today”, 284.

erratic writer, is exactly, according to Janz, what makes Böhme interesting to us today. Böhme “gives us a model, and a reason, for creative thinking”.⁸⁶ The attempt of creating and developing adequate concepts is what always keeps the creative momentum alive. An important modern parallel to Böhme’s creative process, Janz means to identify in the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze.

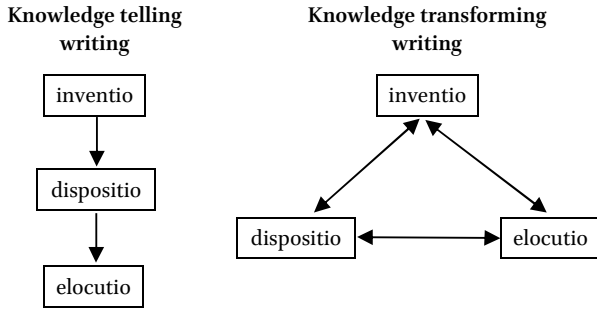
Arthur Versluis and Bruce B. Janz present, as we can see, two diametrically opposed views on Böhme’s writing. Versluis finds in Böhme’s work the immediate reflection and description of the changes in the author’s consciousness, which is possibly not accessible to discursive thought and analysis. Janz, on the other hand, emphasizes Böhme’s experimental creativity, his conscious, struggling, disciplined endeavor to create and develop the adequate concepts for his thought. In the following, I will present my view of Böhme’s writing, based on an analysis of his first work, the *Aurora*. My view has definite affinities with Janz’ perspective; I am also very impressed by Böhme’s experimental creativity and I also share the opinion that he is an extremely original thinker. But I am convinced that many other philosophers throughout history have struggled in a similar way to Böhme in their attempts of finding the most adequate concept for their understanding of reality. So, contrary to Janz, I do not think that Böhme’s way of creative thinking is in itself essentially unique. But there is a crucial difference between Böhme and other philosophers. We cannot follow the thought processes which led, for example, to Kant’s concept of knowledge, Hegel’s concept of dialectics, or Heidegger’s concept of *Dasein* in the texts of these philosophers. Their works present the solutions to philosophical problems, the final result of their thought. Böhme’s texts are entirely different. He uses writing as his means of transforming knowledge and gaining insight and the texts, as we know and read them, immediately reflect this on-going process of thought. There are many creative thinkers in the history of philosophy. But Jacob Böhme seems to be unique in one specific respect. In his texts, we can follow the thinking of a great philosopher more or less on-line.

7 Böhme’s Heuristic-Epistemic Writing

Current writing research makes the distinction between two ideal-typical forms of writing: knowledge telling and knowledge transforming writing.⁸⁷ They are both based on a rhetorical model of text production:

86 Janz, “Why Boehme Matters Today”, 284–285, 292

87 For a discussion, see Andersson, *Denken in Bildern*, 127–149, with further references.



The difference is that knowledge telling writing conceptualizes its object in a linear fashion; the process of text production proceeds through the stages *inventio* – *dispositio* – *elocutio*. Thoughts are found, organized, and clothed in appropriate words. Knowledge transforming writing can also be described within the framework of the rhetorical model of text production, but the process is here not viewed as being linear but dialectic. From writing research we know that most writers revise their texts constantly; formulations also have an impact on their cognitive content. In the final version of the text, however, this laborious process of text production is not supposed to be noticeable. The text will appear as if it reached its final form without constant revisions and hard work. The final product of text production is not expected to provide any information about its own genesis.

As I have already indicated, Jacob Böhme's texts differ crucially from those of other philosophers. Böhme's texts do not just present solutions to philosophical problems. Instead, they reflect the author's processes of thinking, the way he uses writing for transforming knowledge and reaching conclusions. Böhme's writing is problem-oriented. He discusses different aspects of a specific problem and formulates a temporary solution. But then he – often abruptly – changes the perspective, brings in new aspects, revises the earlier results of his thinking, and finds a new solution. Due to the constant change of perspective, Böhme's texts are very difficult to grasp and we know as Böhme readers that we often ask ourselves – with increasing frustration: What does he actually mean? But this is the price we have to pay as readers for the unique opportunity of following the dynamic thought of one of the most original and interesting thinkers in the history of philosophy. This is another important aspect of Böhme's rhetoric of presence.

In the following, I would like to discuss two specific examples of Böhme's writing. They concern two philosophical problems, which are both at the very center at his thought: the problem of God in space and the problem of the origin of evil.

8 Writing about the Problem of Space

In the famous description in the nineteenth chapter of the *Aurora*, which was discussed earlier, the I of the text refers to his earlier view that God dwells only in a distant heaven. In a great light, he claims to have experienced God as an omnipresent being, his spirit saw “through everything, recognizing God in all creatures, in vegetation and grass”.⁸⁸ There is no surprise that the question of space and divine omnipresence is a central topic of Böhme’s first book.

In the seventh chapter of the *Aurora*, Böhme discusses fundamental issues of God’s presence in the universe. There was a great general interest in this question among contemporary thinkers. But the more specific background of Böhme’s argumentation is the polemical theological debate between Lutherans and Calvinists regarding Christ’s real presence in the Lord’s Supper and the connected assertion of the omnipresence of the triune Deity. Böhme adheres to the Lutheran, anti-Calvinist position on this central theological issue, but his discussion problematizes the concept of God in space in very intricate ways.⁸⁹

The first 35 sections of the seventh chapter of the *Aurora*, contains a detailed discussion of the space of the angelical kingdoms. The arrangement of the text is the following:

1. *exordium* (1–3)
2. *narratio* (4–5)
3. *digressio*, Apostrophe of the reader (6)
4. *argumentatio*, problematizing of space (7–10)
5. *propositio* (9–10)
6. *digressio*, the author’s knowledge (11)
7. *anticipatio* (12–14)
8. *(sub)propositio* (15)
9. *argumentatio*, problematizing of philosophical thinking in metaphors (16–31)
10. *conclusio* (32–25)

As we can see, there is a basic rhetorical outline of this section according to the principles of rhetorical text disposition: *exordium* – *narratio* – *propositio* – *argumentatio* – *conclusio* (*peroratio*). This structure is broken up by digressions.

⁸⁸ Böhme, *Aurora*, 19:13.

⁸⁹ Luther and Böhme is a very complex issue, which I will not discuss further. For different perspectives, see Heinrich Bornkamm, *Luther und Böhme*, Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte, 2 (Bonn: Weber, 1925), Eberhard H. Pälz, “Jacob Böhmes Hermeneutik, Geschichtsverständnis und Sozialethik,” Habilitationsschrift (Universität Jena, 1961), and Ferdinand van Ingen, *Jacob Böhme in seiner Zeit* (Stuttgart: frommann-holzboog, 2015), *passim*.

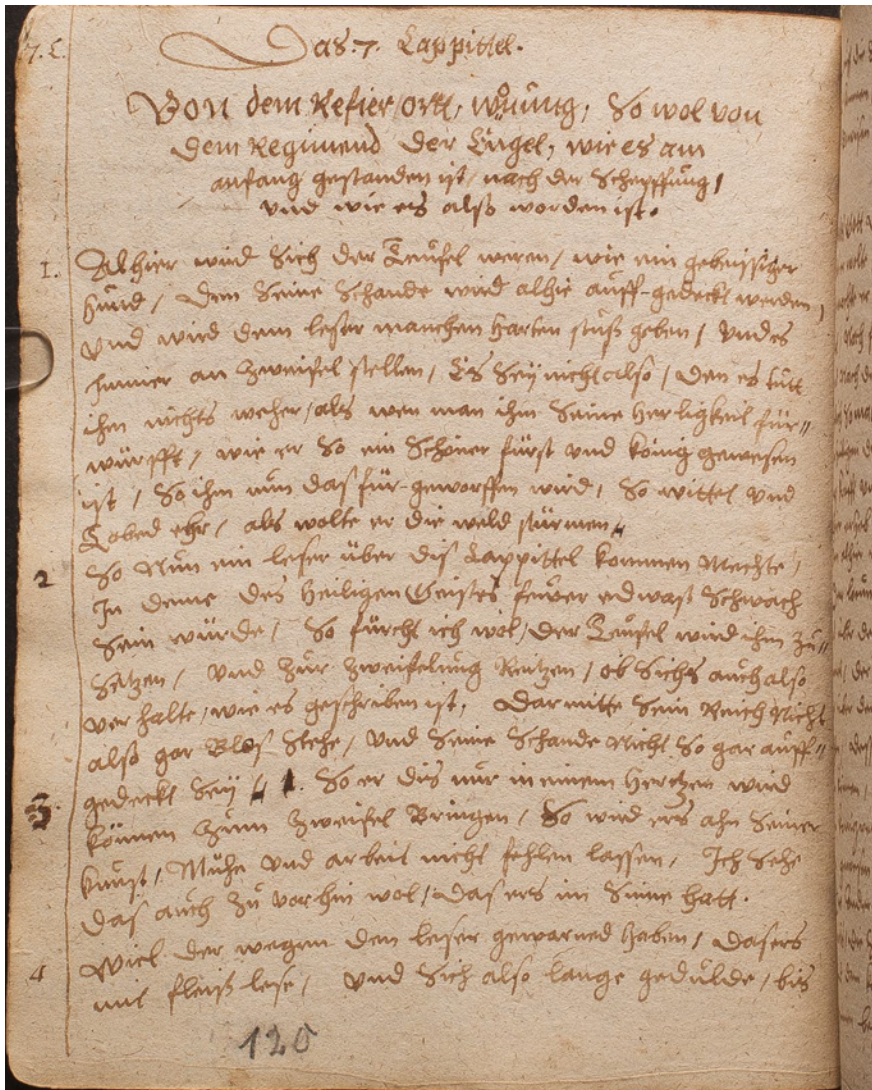


FIGURE 2.2 Jacob Böhme, *Morgen Rote im auffgang*, Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel, Sign. Cod. Guelf. 62 Noviss. 4°, fol. 120. Printed with permission.

THE FIRST PAGE OF THE SEVENTH CHAPTER OF THE *AURORA* IN BÖHME'S MANUSCRIPT.

Interesting is also the fact that Böhme contradicts himself several times. The (sub)propositio in section 15, for example, actually confirms the objection raised in the anticipatio in section 12. The introduction to the seventh chapter of the *Aurora* is a very good example of Böhme's philosophical writing. He addresses one aspect of a problem at the time and he constantly changes the perspective.

Böhme's discussion of the spatial aspects of the angelical kingdoms is extremely complex.⁹⁰ Interesting is that he is well oriented in the contemporary discussion on the issue of divine presence. In his writings on the Lord's Supper, Luther distinguishes three concepts of presence in space:

1. *Circumscriptive esse in loco* ("begreiflich" – local presence: beer in a barrel)
2. *Definitive esse in loco* ("unbegreiflich" – illocal presence: the soul in the body)
3. *Repletive presence* ("übernatürlich" – the general ubiquity of God)

In contrast to a theologian of late scholasticism such as Gabriel Biel, Luther claims that the repletive presence of God is not confined just to the "godly" aspects of God, but also applies to the body of Christ. In the following, I would like to discuss just one text passage, where Böhme presents different conceptualizations of the presence of the triune Deity in space. He wants to state the omnipresence of God, but, at the same time, he also wants to make a qualitative difference in God's presence. It is very interesting to follow in the text, how Böhme navigates towards a solution. Characteristic for his heuristic-epistemic writing is that he finds this solution in an image.

In his discussion, Böhme starts by problematizing the use of three-dimensional images in order to grasp the inner processes of God. He writes:

If one were to say that the Son of God is an image which is finite ["abmeslich"] like the sun, then only in that place where the sun is would there be three persons, and beyond only his splendor that would proceed from the Son. And if beyond the Son the father were singular, the power of the father which would be far removed from the son would not give birth to the Son and Holy Spirit beyond the angelic gates, and the father would not be an allmighty being beyond the locus of the Son. Moreover, the father too would have to be a finite ["ab meslich"] being.⁹¹

In the form of an objection, Böhme formulates the consequences of a perspective, which would view God as being present only at one specific location. Only there, the Father would give birth to the Son. Outside of this specific location, this innertrinitarian process would not take place. God would then be a finite being, whose omnipotence and power would not reach beyond a specific point. Böhme's formulates the absurd view of a God with limited power, being localized at just one specific point in space.

⁹⁰ For a detailed analysis, see Andersson, *Denken in Bildern*, 191–216.

⁹¹ Böhme, *Aurora*, 7:28.

As an answer to this objection, Böhme presents the following rejection:

But this is not how it is. The father instead gives birth everywhere to the Son out of all his forces, and the Holy Spirit proceeds everywhere from the father and the Son and is one single God in one being with three distinct persons.

We have a likeness of this in a precious gold stone which has not been separated. First of all, we have the material, which is the salitter and marcurius. This is the mother or stone in its entirety, which gives birth throughout itself to the gold; and in the gold resides the glorious potency of the stone. The salitter and the marcurius signify the father, the gold the Son, and the potency the Holy Spirit. In the same manner, we have the threesome in the Holy Trinity, except that in it, all is active and emanating.⁹²

Böhme refers, of course, to Paracelsian natural philosophy and its fundamental concepts of “salitter” and “mercury”.⁹³ “Salitter” and “marcurius” are the mother or stone in its entirety and they give birth to “gold” “throughout” the “gold stone”. This is an analogy to the Father, giving birth “everywhere” to the Son. In his earlier objection, Böhme presented the view that God is present in a local way, that the Father gives birth to the Son at just one specific point in space. In his rejection, he very clearly states that God is omnipresent in a homogenous universe, that the innertrinitarian processes of God take place everywhere. Here, he is definitely recurring on the concept of repletive presence, describing the ubiquity of God.

In the next paragraph, however, this concept of a homogenous “everywhere”, God’s repletive presence, is problematized. Böhme now presents a different concept of God in space, where all locations are equal, but some locations apparently are more equal than others. Böhme is trying to find a way, which can make God present in space in both a local and a repletive way. He writes:

In gold ore one finds perhaps in one spot a point where there is more and finer gold than in another, notwithstanding that there is gold throughout the stone.

92 Böhme, *Aurora* 7: 29–30.

93 Cf. Andrew Weeks, “Jacob Boehme’s Divine Substance ‘Salitter’: Its Nature, Origin, and Relationship to Seventeenth Century Scientific Theories,” *British Journal of the History of Science* 22 (1989), 53–61.

So it is too that the locus or place amidst the angelic gates is a dear and blessed one to the father, where his Son and heart are born most precious, and from which the Holy Spirit proceeds most precious.

With that you have the true explanation of this mystery.⁹⁴

Although there is gold throughout a gold ore, Böhme also claims that there is a precious location, where you can find more and finer gold than anywhere else. Similarly, the Son of God is born everywhere, but there is a privileged location in the angelic kingdoms – the middle – for the most precious birth of the Son of God and the most precious proceeding of the Holy Spirit. This is where the respective archangels are born. God is, on the one hand, a dimension homogeneously present in space according to a concept of repletive presence. But God is at the same time also present at privileged locations, which must be interpreted as a local or illocal presence. This discussion of repletive vs. local or illocal presence, which is central to the introduction to the seventh chapter of the *Aurora*, is an excellent example of Böhme's way of using writing for the elucidation of important philosophical and theological problems from various, successive perspectives. But his discussion of the different aspects of divine presence also has a definite goal. In his writing, Böhme is aiming at a solution, a synthesis, which he then presents in the form of a concise image. In a gold ore, gold is born everywhere, but in the gold ore, there are also qualitative differences. The same holds for divine presence. In the quoted text, Böhme is navigating towards a solution. He finds it in an image, which can make his view of the simultaneous presence of God according to two different concepts of divine presence comprehensible and convincing to the reader. "With that you have the true explanation of this mystery", he states with satisfaction at the end. Böhme has found a solution in and by writing.

It is very interesting to compare Böhme's discussion of space with another discussion of this topic in a contemporary publication, the 1st chapter of Valentin Weigel's *Vom Ort der Welt* (*On the Place of the World*). This work was written in 1576, circulated in manuscript, and was printed for the first time in 1614.⁹⁵ In the right margin, I have indicated the rhetorical *dispositio* of the chapter:

94 Böhme, *Aurora*, 7: 31–32.

95 See the preface by the editor to the recent edition: Valentin Weigel, *Vom Ort der Welt, Scholasterium christianum*, ed. Horst Pfefferl, Valentin Weigel, *Sämtliche Schriften*, Neue Edition, 10 (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: frommann-holzboog, 2014).

CHAPTER ONE

That it is useful for each human being to consider
 upon what sort of foundation the world stands
 so that it may not fall

propositio

Although this visible world, composed as it is of heavens and earth, stands in accordance with its external aspect in no place, within nothing, in the infinite expanse or depths (for the world hovers within itself), nonetheless, place can be regarded here and there, as to where each country, city, or human being is situated, stands, and moves. And inasmuch as the human being has been made from the clump of earth of this world and has been placed into the middle of this world, in order to dwell within it until his appointed time, it is appropriate for him to regard and contemplate his place and fatherland, in which he has his home in such time; [that is,] in accordance with his mortal body [only], so that he might be forewarned that he has no permanent place in this world. He must soon depart and leave this world, [because] he belongs in another fatherland that is eternal and in heaven, for which he was created in the beginning. The human being was made of two parts in the beginning, [but he was made] so that he would be and remain not two but one human being, of flesh and spirit, of body and soul. In accordance with his body he needs a place or location in this time, whether on land or on the sea, and [he] must be in one place and cannot discern the [true] place of his abode; yet in accordance with the spirit, he is in need of no place, for the spirit possesses no place [and] occupies no space [and] does not admit of being enclosed or locked into any place. Whoever considers and properly understands these things strives to walk in accordance with the spirit in Christ [and] to remain in the kingdom of God, so that he may at last leave behind this narrow and pitiful wretchedness and come to his Father in heaven in the eternal expanse. For he sees clearly with what drudgery his mortal body transports itself from one place to another; how it is driven hither and yonder by men and by beasts, by hunger and thirst, by heat and cold, through day and night, summer and winter; and how it is at last entirely consumed by death and reduced to nothing. Yet, so that the location of our wretched body may be contemplated, [in order] that this should admonish us of our true fatherland in heaven, we shall begin below with the circumference of the earth and consider in which part of the world we are at home. Moreover, so that this may be facilitated, we shall have recourse to the upper spheres, the heavens with their circles, by means of which are shown, displayed, calculated, and measured the longitude and latitude and thickness of the earth together with the sea; moreover, [we shall consider] where the ascendant lies and in which part of earth lie Africa, Europe, Asia, and America. From such contemplation much that is useful [and] necessary for the mortal body can be found. Thus shall you see, you potentates and kings on earth, how slight and weak is your regime measured against other kings, and how it is nothing at all against the eternal kingdom of Christ.

*confirmatio**conclusio*

Likewise, you theologians, you who willfully serve Antichrist, shall recognize your error: [You shall see] how the kingdom of heaven may not be bound to places, persons, gestures, or external ceremonies but rather stands freely, in spirit and faith, not bound here nor there (Luke 17:[23]). Moreover, it shall be clearly shown in this contemplation what paradise is and where heaven and hell are situated; how the fall of an angelic or a human creature could occur, not in accordance with place or with substance but rather in accordance with will or accident. Moreover, one shall see how it had been prior to the creation of the world, and how it happens now that the world cannot fall, and how it shall again become after the destruction of the world.

refutatio

Such and similar items of knowledge will show you that in that [other] world we must have invisible, spiritual, celestial, supernatural bodies that are in no need of an external place or reservation, neither of air nor light of the sun nor of anything natural, but rather it [the body] must be celestial and angelic, so that we might also dwell with God in ourselves upon the eternal expanse, where no end is to be found or seen or imagined in eternity, neither below nor behind nor in front of oneself.⁹⁶

peroratio

Weigel had an academic degree from the University of Leipzig.⁹⁷ Rhetorical theory and practice was central to any academic study program at the time.⁹⁸ There are also testimonies that he was brilliant preacher.⁹⁹ (That he was also a radical theologian was not publicly known until after his death in 1588.) We can see how carefully he has structured his text according to the principles of rhetorical *dispositio: propositio – confirmatio – conclusio – refutatio – peroratio*.

Interesting is also to compare the beginning of the second chapter of *Vom Ort der Welt* with Böhme's discussion of space in the seventh chapter of the *Aurora*. Weigel starts his chapter the following way:

An egg [is] composed of yolk and albumen. The yolk is situated in the middle of the albumen and touches no side but instead hovers in the middle; so is our world like an egg.¹⁰⁰

96 Valentin Weigel, *Selected Spiritual Writings*, ed. and introd. Andrew Weeks (New York and Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 2003), 68–69.

97 For Weigel's intellectual biography, see Andrew Weeks, *Valentin Weigel (1533–1588): German Religious Dissenter, Speculative Theorist, and Advocate of Tolerance* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000).

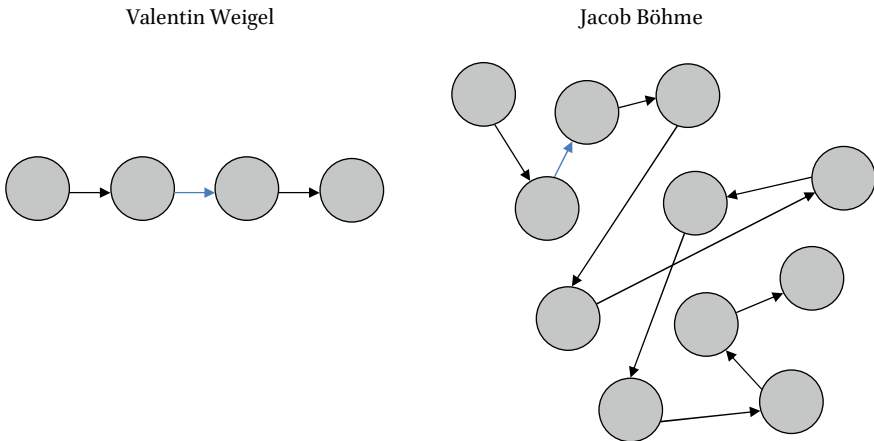
98 See Wilfried Barner, *Barockrhetorik: Untersuchungen zu ihren geschichtlichen Grundlagen*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2002).

99 See Siegfried Wollgast, "Valentin Weigel in der deutschen Philosophiegeschichte", in Valentin Weigel, *Ausgewählte Werke*, ed. Siegfried Wollgast (Berlin (DDR): Union Verlag, 1977), 17–164, 39. Wollgast's source is J.G. Reicheus, *Vitam fata et scripta Valentini Weigelii* [...] (Wittenbergae, 1721).

100 Valentin Weigel, *Selected Spiritual Writings*, 70.

Weigel first presents a concrete image: the egg yolk in an egg, which then forms the base for his discussion of the world in space. This makes the text very easy to follow. A graphic illustration in the chapter also makes the point. Böhme, on the other hand, struggles, as we have seen, to grasp the presence of God in space in intensive writing and first at the end of the chapter he presents a suitable image: the birth of gold in a gold ore. Their ways of structuring writing are totally opposite. Weigel's text is a very clear example of knowledge telling writing in contrast to Böhme's writing, which is knowledge transforming.

Weigel's and Böhme's way of building texts can be depicted as follows:



Weigel's writing reflects years of rhetorical training in institutions of higher education. Böhme, on the other hand, had experienced very little formal schooling. What he knows about rhetoric and text structuring he must have acquired through imitation of contemporary texts. Böhme is very skilled at finding arguments and using rhetorical devices, but – at least in most parts of the *Aurora* – he has obvious difficulties of text structuring.¹⁰¹ This is an ability much harder to learn by imitation than the employment of elements of rhetorical text production at the micro level.¹⁰² We have to be careful,

101 The exceptions are the prefaces – to the whole work and many of the chapters – and the accusing speeches in the Devil's process (see below).

102 For a more elaborated discussion, see Bo Andersson, "Bildungssoziologische Aspekte der rhetorischen *dispositio*: Valentin Weigel und Jacob Böhme," *Studier i modern språkväsen* n.s. 10 (1993), 6–22. Interesting are the parallels to Böhme in early modern female writing. Women were, of course, also excluded from higher formal education and must normally have learned rhetorical skills from imitation. See Bo Andersson, "Anna von Medem (1613–1674): Ideengeschichtliche und rhetorische Bemerkungen zu einer vergessenen kurländischen Autorin der Frühen Neuzeit," *Der Gingkobaum: Germanistisches Jahrbuch für Nordeuropa, Estland, Lettland und Litauen* 12 (1993), 57–86.

however; Böhme's text might be harder to grasp, but, instead, we get the unique opportunity to follow the intellectual processes of one of the most important philosophers of the Western tradition. The following illustration is taken from an early Dutch edition of Böhme's works. I can just agree with Andrew Weeks'



FIGURE 2.3 Jacob Böhme writing; illustration from *Alle de theosoophsche of godwijze werken* (Amsterdam: Fredrik Vorster, 1686; Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica Amsterdam, UBN 1222)

Note: I would like to thank José Bouman, Curator at the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, for providing me with this illustration. – For a very interesting discussion author's desks and workrooms – “scenes of writing”, see Bodo Plachta, “episches Hausgerät”, *Text – Material – Medium: Zur Relevanz editorischer Dokumentationen für die literaturwissenschaftliche Interpretation*, ed. Wolfgang Lukas, Rüdiger Nutt-Kofoth, and Madleen Podewski, Beihefte zu *editio*, 37 (Berlin and Boston: de Gruyter, 2014), 289–303.

verbal description of this picture: "His [Böhme's] writing has certain artisan-like qualities". It is "as if he were hammering out his ideas from a verbal material, widening, altering, and shaping them".¹⁰³

9 The Devil's Process in the *Aurora*

A very original example of Böhme's writing can be found in the Chapters 14–16 in the *Aurora*. In the thirteenth chapter of his first book, Böhme describes the fall of the devil.¹⁰⁴ The following chapters contain a detailed argumentation regarding Lucifer's guilt.¹⁰⁵ Böhme is eager to prove that the devil has to take sole responsibility for his own rebellion; God is in no way to blame for the origin of evil.

Böhme has chosen a very interesting and rhetorically difficult literary form for his treatment of the theodicy problem.¹⁰⁶ He conducts his discussion as a process against the devil in a court of law. The devil is a very popular figure in the literature of the sixteenth century. One can just refer to the *Faust Book* of 1587 and to the so-called *Teufelsliteratur*.¹⁰⁷ But there were also contemporary dramas in the form of court proceedings, where the devil appears.¹⁰⁸ There

103 Andrew Weeks, *Boehme: An Intellectual Biography of the Seventeenth-Century Philosopher and Mystic* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 13.

104 Böhme discusses the Trinity in the third chapter of the *Aurora* and the fall of the devil in the thirteenth. This is a very interesting case of global text structuring according to number symbolism.

105 There is a very intense 17th century European discussion of Angelology and Demonology. For a recent treatment of the topic, see Joad Raymond, *Milton's Angels: The Early-modern Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

106 The term *theodicy* did not exist at Böhme's time; it was coined by Leibniz in the last years of the 17th century. See Martin Schneider, *Das Weltbild des 17. Jahrhunderts: Philosophisches Denken zwischen Reformation und Aufklärung* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2004), 221.

107 For the *Faust Book* of 1587 in its historical context, see J.M. van der Laan and Andrew Weeks (eds.), *The Faustian Century: German Literature and Culture in the Age of Luther and Faust*. Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2013); for the devil's literature: Keith L. Roos, *The Devil in 16th Century German Literature: The Teufelsbücher*, Europäische Hochschulschriften, Reihe I, Deutsche Literatur und Germanistik, 68 (Bern: Peter Lang, 1972). For a very interesting discussion of the devil in early modern times, which also takes the political context into consideration, see the chapter "Satanic Literature and Tragic Culture; 1550–1650" in Robert Muchembled, *A History of the Devil: From the Middle Ages to the Present* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003), 108–147.

108 See, for example, Hugo Bekker, "The Lucifer Motif in the German Drama of the Sixteenth Century," *Monatshefte für den deutschen Unterricht, deutsche Sprache und Literatur* 51 (1959), 237–247. See also: Friedrich Wilhelm Strothmann, *Die Gerichtsverhandlung*

he plays the role of the claimant, demanding his right to fallen mankind.¹⁰⁹ At the end of the court proceedings, the Son of God declares, however, that he is willing to satisfy and atone the wrath of God the Father. Therefore Adam and Eve can be redeemed. The claim of the devil is rejected and he is sent back to hell. The court proceedings in these dramas are conducted according to civil law; the decision to be made is who – heaven or hell – has the right to a certain property: mankind. In Böhme's devil's process, on the other hand, we encounter a trial according to criminal law. The I of the text accuses the devil for his fall and takes the role of prosecutor. The legal set-up here reflects a trial type which developed in the early modern time: the accusatory process.¹¹⁰ Certain severe crimes, for example, insurrection and the breaking of the common peace, could be prosecuted by any citizen. Lucifer's rebellion against God would, of course, qualify as the epitome of such a crime.¹¹¹

als literarisches Motiv in der deutschen Literatur des ausgehenden Mittelalters, Deutsche Arbeiten der Universität Köln, 2 (Jena: Diedrichs, 1930), and Almut Agnes Meyer, *Heilsgewißheit und Endzeiterwartung im deutschen Drama des 16. Jahrhunderts: Untersuchungen über die Beziehungen zwischen geistlichem Spiel, bildender Kunst und den Wandlungen des Zeitgeistes im lutherischen Raum*. Heidelberger Forschungen, 18 (Heidelberg: Winter 1976).

109 One of the most interesting texts of this kind can be found in a legal handbook, the early editions of Ulrich Tengler's *Laienspiegel* (first edition in 1509). For a discussion, see the contributions to *Ulrich Tenglers Laienspiegel: Ein Rechtsbuch zwischen Humanismus und Hexenwahn*, ed. Andreas Deutsch, Akademiekonferenzen, 11 (Heidelberg: Winter, 2011).

110 See the discussion in Thorsten Guthke, *Die Herausbildung der Strafklage: Exemplarische Studien anhand deutscher, französischer und flämischer Quellen*. Konflikt, Verbrechen und Sanktion in der Gesellschaft Alteuropas, Fallstudien, 8 (Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau, 2009), 110–121.

111 It is a fascinating question how Böhme could find information on legal matters and court proceedings. One very interesting contemporary handbook, a volume of 850 folio pages, was published in 1600 by the Nuremberg lawyer Jacob Ayer. The book informs about all the details of a the civil case according to Roman law and uses throughout the process of Hell claiming its alleged rights to fallen mankind as its illustration. The advocate of Hell is the devil Belial, who is viewed as Hell's most skilled rhetorician. See Jacob Ayer, *Historischer Processus IVRIS. In welchem sich Lucifer vber Jesum / darumb daß er jhm die Hellen zerstürt / eingenommen / die Gefangene darauß erlöst / vnd hingegen jhnen Lucifern gefangen vnd gebunden habe / auff das aller heftigest beklaget* [...] (Franckfort am Mayn: Melchior Hartmann / In Verlegung Nicolai Bassæi, M. DC.) (Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Sign 4 J.pract. 254 x; <http://daten.digital-sammlungen.de/~db/0002/bsb00022929/images/> [29-April-2015]). It has to be pointed out, however, that all the proceedings in Ayer's handbook are conducted in writing, not orally as in Böhme's process. – We know that Jacob Böhme's father and grandfather were lay judges at the local court of his native village Altseidenberg. Perhaps, he received basic information on the form of the court process from his immediate family. – Ferdinand van Ingen refers to a work by Philipp Kegelius in his discussion of the fall of the angels in the thought of Jacob Böhme and claims that the Lutheran theologian Philipp Kegelius also uses the form of the trial in a work from

Lucifer is made extremely present in Böhme's trial. At the outset, he is described in the following way:

Now, King Lucifer, pull that hat down over your eyes so you don't see how the celestial crown will be pulled off your head! You can rule no longer in heaven. Stand still for us a bit. We want to see you as you were before. What a lively bride you are! Could you perhaps cleanse away the filth of your whorishness to become beautiful again? We intend to describe your good breeding and virtue a bit.

*Advance, you philosopher and advocate of King Lucifer. Step forward and praise him while he is still wearing the crown. For we intend to conduct criminal proceedings against him. If you win the case, you will retain the right to have him as your king. If not, he should be sent down to hell, and someone else receive his royal crown, one who governs better than he.*¹¹²

This is a rhetorically very efficient description of the accused party, aiming at demonstrating the guilt of the devil already from the outset. The fact that Lucifer is so ashamed of himself is, of course, a strong indication of his guilt. Striking is at the same time that this description is very hard to visualize. How can Lucifer be told to pull his hat down over his eyes, so he cannot see that his celestial crown will be pulled off his head? How can he be wearing a hat and a crown at the same time? Böhme is a philosopher, who thinks in images,¹¹³ but here he has obviously combined two visual images without realizing that they are actually not compatible.

In Böhme's devil's process, Lucifer is formally the accused party. But the trial is indeed a discussion of God's responsibility for the origin of evil. Like every

approximately the same time as the *Aurora*. See Ferdinand van Ingen, "Engelsturz: Zu einem Sinnkomplex bei Jacob Böhme", *Literaturgeschichte als Profession. Festschrift für Dietrich Jöns*, ed. Hartmut Laufhütte and Jürgen Landwehr (Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 1993), 41–61, 59, n. 11. The work by Kegelius is a treatise of the Last Judgment, but does, however, not contain any dramatic sections which could have functioned as a model for Böhme. See Philipp Kegelius, *Geistlich MalefitzRecht/ Welches der gerechte Richter Jesus Christus in seiner letzten Zukunfft vnd Jüngsten Gericht / vber alle Menschen halten / vnd was er den frommen für vnaußsprechliche belohnungen / dagegen den Gottlosen für erschreckliche straffen ankündigen werde*. [...] Leipzig / Jn Henning Grosen des Eltern Druckerey verfertigt. [1611]. (SLUB Dresden, Sign. Theol.ev.asc. 1446; http://digital.slub-dresden.de/fileadmin/data/367217783/367217783_tif/jpegs/367217783.pdf [18-May-2017]).

112 Böhme, *Aurora*, 141–2 (italics in the translation). For interesting discussions of the devilish kingdom as the mirror image of early modern royal absolutism, see Muchembled, *History of the Devil*, 26–27. Christ will take over Lucifer's role as the king of this world.

113 This is the main point in Andersson, *Denken in Bildern* (2007).

other philosopher trying to solve the theodicy problem, Böhme must take the following, logically inconsistent statements as his point of departure:¹¹⁴

- God is omnipotent
- God is omniscient
- God is good
- There is evil in the world

The choice of the court trial as the textual form for the discussion of the origin of evil results, however, in an additional interesting complication. The accused party in the trial is Lucifer, but the real religious and philosophical problem is the justification of God. The rational form of the trial prohibits the solution that God's responsibility for the origin of evil is a mystery of faith, which might, for example, be revealed to humans eschatologically, in a future existence, where they will have the privilege to see God face to face. A fair trial requires a rational verdict, a reasonable solution here and now, not a reference to a hidden mystery. The literary form of the devil's process introduces the very modern criteria of intelligibility into the discussion of the theodicy problem.¹¹⁵ Around 1610, at the time when we can assume that Böhme worked intensively on his *Aurora* manuscript, there was an intense discussion between Socinians, Lutherans and Calvinists regarding the concept of God and there are definite parallels in Böhme's rational pursuit of the problem of God and evil and the position advocated by the Socinians.¹¹⁶ I will return to this interesting affinity at the end of the discussion.

Lucifer is in Böhme's devil's process in a very difficult position from a legal standpoint. He knows, of course, that he cannot deny his rebellion and its results, he can also hardly argue that his deed should be classified differently. His only line of defense is the *remotio*, the strategy of transferring guilt (*translatio culpa*) to someone else, in this case to God.¹¹⁷ The goal of the prosecutor in Böhme's devil's process is therefore to forestall any kind of defense of the

114 For recent discussions of the problem of evil, see, for example, Daniel Speak, *The Problem of Evil* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015), and Ingolf U. Dalferth, *Malum: Theologische Hermeneutik des Bösen* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010). – Still very important for all discussion of the problem of evil is John L. Mackie, "Evil and Omnipotence," *Mind* 64 (1955), 200–212.

115 The criteria of the intelligibility of God has been much debated in recent treatments of the theodicy problem, following the discussion in Hans Jonas, "The Concept of God after Auschwitz: A Jewish Voice," *The Journal of Religion* 67 (1987), 1–13, esp. 9–10.

116 For an overview of the provocative nature of Socinian thought about the concept of God around 1610, see Sascha Salatowsky, "Die Entlastung Gottes: Sozzini, Vorstius und die Folgen ihrer Theologie," in *Ideengeschichte um 1600: Konstellationen zwischen Schulmetaphysik, Konfessionalisierung und hermetischer Spekulation*, ed. Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann and Friedrich Vollhardt, *Problemata*, 158 (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: frommann-holzboog, 2017), 231–265.

117 For a discussion of this strategy, see Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik: Eine Grundlegung der Literaturwissenschaft*, 2 vols., 2nd ed. (München: Hueber, 1973),

following kind: Why didn't God stop Lucifer, if he could have foreseen and prevented his rebellion or overcome it at an early stage? Wouldn't such a neglect make God at least partially responsible for the origin of evil?

Böhme conducts his discussion of the theodicy problem within the framework of his philosophy of the seven qualities (source spirits).¹¹⁸ The rhetorical I of the text first accuses Lucifer of his fall and he then summons him before a criminal court, where accusatory speeches are held against each one of the seven qualities of the devil. In the following, I will concentrate on the first general accusation of Lucifer, where some possible arguments of the defense are anticipated and refuted. After this general accusation follows the devil's citation to court.

In the first accusatory speech against Lucifer, Böhme definitely has a rhetorical structure in mind. It is divided into two main parts: *narratio* (14:4–26) and *refutatio* (14:27–36). In the *narratio*, he gives a detailed background to his case and starts the following way:

When the royal body of Lucifer was put together, the light in Lucifer was kindled in that same hour. As soon as his source spirits began to assert and generate themselves in the construction of the body, as was their natural right, the flash of life ascended in his heart in the sweet water and the royal body became complete. The spirit in his heart proceeded from the light by way of his mouth into the heart of God. He was then an extraordinarily beautiful prince and king, dear and pleasing to the divine being. He was received with great joy. [...] At that point the royal body was instantaneously glorified, abiding as a king of God in unfathomable clarity, surpassing the entire heavenly host.¹¹⁹

The source spirits began their work as required by natural law ("natural right"). In a bright and illuminating flash, they were infected the way a fire is ignited. The source spirits were frightened by the ruthless clarity and at once they became "overly exultant, insolently proud, and all too joyous, and were motivated to strive for a higher birth". If only they had remained in their place, they would not have been harmed by the exalted light. But they did not, despite the fact

§ 183. Another line of argumentation would be to question the right of the court to conduct a process of this kind. For Böhme's discussion and refutation of his point, see Andersson, *Du Solst wissen*, 168–169.

118 For a thorough treatment of the seven qualities (source spirits), see Andersson, *Denken in Bildern*, 423–450. For a somewhat different perspective, see Bo Andersson, "Jacob Böhme als Netzwerkdenker: Die Lehre von den sieben Quellgeistern in der *Morgen Röte im aufgang*," in *Morgenröte im Aufgang*, ed. Bonheim and Regehlly, 75–97.

119 Böhme, *Aurora*, 14:4.

that “they indeed knew what was right by God and nature and how they should behave”.¹²⁰ There is, of course, no positive law in the realm of the angels, but the source spirits clearly knew from divine and natural law about their inferior position in God’s order. The prosecutor is trying to prevent every argumentation claiming that God’s ruling was not known.

When the source spirits discovered how bright they were shining, they became proud and thought they were brighter than the Son of God. They knew very well “that they were not the entire God but only a portion thereof. They also knew how far their full powers extended. But they were no longer content with what they had: they wanted to rise up higher than the entire divinity”; Lucifer sought to become “the lord of divinity with no other lord beside him”.¹²¹

As far as the intention of Lucifer and his source spirits is concerned, Böhme in his role as prosecutor is very careful to point out that they are to be held solely responsible for their course of action: “For the source spirits had no external impulse. The impulse to pride arose in the corpus in the counsel of the seven source spirits. They agreed that they alone wanted to be God”.¹²² The prosecutor is trying to rule out every kind of defense by the strategy of *remotio*. No one can be blamed but Lucifer himself and his seven source spirits.

At the end of the *narratio*, the stringent and bitter qualities, as well as the qualities heat and sound are accused of having murdered their mother, the sweet water, by their rebellion: “Love turned into an enmity”.¹²³ The whole corpus formed itself into a black and dark devil. The German word for devil – “Teufel” – reflects this transition: “The very word ‘*Teu*’ has its origin in the harsh rattling or resounding, and the word ‘*fel*’ takes its origin from the fall. This is why Lord Lucifer is called ‘devil’ [“Teufel”] and no longer ‘cherub’ or ‘seraphim’”.¹²⁴

The second part of the accusatory speech against Lucifer contains the refutation of possible defenses, aiming at making God responsible or partly responsible for the devil’s fall. Böhme uses the rhetorical technique of the

¹²⁰ Böhme, *Aurora*, 14:6–7.

¹²¹ Böhme, *Aurora*, 14:14–15.

¹²² Böhme, *Aurora*, 14:17

¹²³ Böhme, *Aurora*, 14:25.

¹²⁴ Böhme, *Aurora*, 14:26 (italics in the translation). For an early modern person this is definitely not just a play with words. One can read the essence of a thing or a person from the name. See Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 495–500, esp. 499.

procatalepsis; he raises possible objections and then refutes them.¹²⁵ He starts his argumentation by asking the question: “*Someone might object here by inquiring whether God* could not have prevented the pride of Lucifer so that he would desist from his arrogance. This is a subtle question: all the advocates of the devil avail themselves of it”.¹²⁶ Several different aspects of this general objection are then discussed. How could Lucifer have had such power that he could not be overcome by gentleness and love? The answer is that he actually had such power; he “made up a great part of the divinity and indeed was from the very core”.¹²⁷ Already at this point, God’s omnipotence is slightly questioned. Another question is: Why could God not illuminate his heart so Lucifer would do penance? – The answer is: Lucifer did not want to recognize any other light. The prosecutor further asks: Did all the angels really fall at the same time? – The answer is that they did: “As the master commanded, so his subjects obeyed”.¹²⁸ Böhme otherwise strongly defends the doctrine of Free Will, but this principle does not apply to angels.¹²⁹ They obey their archangel like human subjects are required to follow their absolute ruler.¹³⁰

The most interesting objection in the accusation of Lucifer regards God’s omniscience, here in the form of divine prescience:

Now you might ask whether the whole God did not know before the time of creation that it would go this way [that Lucifer and his angels would fall].

The answer is no. For if God had known it before the creation of the angels, it would have been an eternal intentional will, and therefore all of this would not have been an enmity against God.¹³¹

If God had been prescient and had known about the future fall of Lucifer without trying to prevent it; this would have made him responsible for the origin

¹²⁵ For this rhetorical technique, see Lausberg, *Handbuch*, § 855.

¹²⁶ Böhme, *Aurora*, 14:27 (italics in the translation).

¹²⁷ Böhme, *Aurora*, 14:31.

¹²⁸ Böhme, *Aurora*, 14:33.

¹²⁹ For a short recent discussion, see Filips Defoort, “Jacob Boehme (1575–1624) on Predestination, Providence and Free Will,” in *Fate, Providence and Moral Responsibility in Ancient, Medieval and Early Modern Thought: Studies in Honour of Carlos Steel*, ed Pieter d’Hoine and Gerd van Ruiel, *Ancient and Medieval Philosophy: De Wulf-Mansion Centre*, ser I, 49 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2014), 677–695.

¹³⁰ For parallels in the early modern view of the angelic and earthly kingdoms, see Muchembled, *A History of the Devil*, 23.

¹³¹ Böhme, *Aurora*, 14:35–36.

of evil. The prosecutor Böhme is extremely anxious to avoid any conclusion of this kind. This forces him to deny divine foreknowledge.

Böhme's argumentation leads him, however, not just to give up divine prescience (omniscience), but also God's omnipotence. In the following accusatory speech against the first source spirit, the stringent quality, he discusses this difficult objection. He writes:

Now you might ask, couldn't God have opposed him [Lucifer] in this so that it would not come so far?

Well now, you dear, blind human being. This was not a man or animal up against God. It was God against God, a strong one against another strong one. And how should God have opposed him? Endearing love would hardly have worked. Lucifer disdained that and wanted to be God himself. Should God have resisted him with anger, which is what eventually had to happen? Then God would have had to ignite himself in his qualities in the salitter in which King Lucifer abided in order to oppose him with forceful zeal. It was through this conflict that this kingdom became so dark, devastated, and as evil as it is, so that another creation had to follow it.¹³²

Böhme here attempts to save God from the accusation that he should have prevented the emergence of evil by overcoming the devil before evil had actually originated. In this argumentation, Böhme strictly speaking becomes a dualist: "It was God against God, a strong one against another strong one". This argument might save God morally, but it definitely denies his omnipotence. An explanation for the wrath of God is also presented to the reader: "Endearing love would hardly have worked". Therefore, God had later every right to ignite himself with anger in order to oppose the devil "in forceful zeal". God's wrath is the justified reaction of someone who has been challenged by an opponent, who cannot be subjugated in any other way.

Every discussion of the theodicy problem has, as already mentioned, to consider the following four statements about God and the world, which seem logically inconsistent: God is omnipotent – God is omniscient – God is good – There is evil in the world. In his devil's process in the *Aurora*, Böhme's argumentation leads him to give up two of these. He renounces both God's omniscience (prescience) as well as his omnipotence. This is a striking contradiction to the predicates of God the Father, which Böhme formulates in the third chapter of the *Aurora*: "He [God the father] is rather an all powerful, all wise, all knowing,

¹³² Böhme, *Aurora*, 14:72f.

all seeing, all hearing, all smelling, all feeling, all tasting God".¹³³ Interesting is to notice that Böhme later felt the need to clarify his text regarding divine prescience and Lucifer's fall. In the printed editions of the *Aurora*, there are some very interesting additions by Böhme to the original manuscript.¹³⁴ Here, he has added the following remark about God's knowledge of Lucifer's fall: "This is explained in the second and third books; God knew it according to his wrath, but not according to his love, from which God is called a God".¹³⁵ This "dualistic" view – God of wrath, God of love – seems, however, just to add a new complication to the problem of divine foreknowledge.

In his devil's process, Böhme has very obvious theological opponents in mind. In the contemporary intellectual context, we find the most intense Lutheran polemics against the Calvinist view on divine providence and predestination, which, according to the Lutherans, makes God the author of sin and evil.¹³⁶ The Calvinists are definitely the opponents, the fictitious defenders of Lucifer, in Böhme's process against the devil. As noticed before, he also takes a Lutheran stand against Calvinism in his discussion of God's presence in space. I will, however, not elaborate further on Böhme's anti-Calvinist polemics. One can notice, however, that this polemics leads him to a theological and philosophical position regarding divine omnipotence and omniscience, which no Lutheran theologian would embrace.¹³⁷ In fact, Böhme's idea of God shows very obvious parallels to the concept of God developed by the Socinians. In 1609, for example, *Praelectiones theologicae*, a posthumous work by Fausto Sozzini, was printed in Polish Raków, the center of Socinian publication; in this tract he attacked the Calvinist doctrine of predestination and claimed that it led to contradictions in the concept of God.¹³⁸ The Socinians questioned the doctrines of divine omnipotence and prescience and strongly advocated human free will.¹³⁹ Regarding his views in the *Aurora*, Böhme's position has

133 Böhme, *Aurora*, 3:11.

134 Böhme's additions can be found in his *Aurora* manuscript (fol. 352^v–357^r). See Jacob Böhme: *Verzeichnis der Handschriften*, 3.

135 Jacob Böhme, *Aurora, oder Morgenröthe im Aufgang*, ed Will-Erich Peuckert, Jacob Böhme, *Sämtliche Schriften*, 1 (Stuttgart: Fromman, 1955), addition to 14:36.

136 See Andersson, *Du Solst wissen*, 183–185.

137 For a discussion, see Rune Söderlund, *Ex Praevisa Fide: Zum Verständnis der Prädestinationslehre in der lutherischen Orthodoxie*, *Arbeiten zur Geschichte und Theologie des Luthertums*, N.F. 3 (Hannover: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1983).

138 In 1608, one of the central doctrinal documents of the Socinians, the *Racovian Catechism*, was published in a German translation.

139 See Salatowsky, "Die Entlastung Gottes" (2017). For a detailed discussion of the Socinian concept of God, see Otto Fock, *Der Socinianismus nach seiner Stellung in der Gesamtentwicklung des christlichen Geistes, nach seinem historischen Verlauf und nach seinem Lehrbegriff* (Kiel: Carl Schröder & Co., 1847), 414–503.

definite affinities to the following teachings, which according to Leibniz' *Theodicy* (1709) was proposed by philosophers such as the Socinians and the Reformed theologian Conrad Vorstius, who was seen as one of their adherents:

Even though there were no co-operation by God in evil actions, one could not help finding difficulty in the fact that he foresees them and that, being able to prevent them through his omnipotence, he yet permits them. This is why some philosophers and even some theologians have rather chosen to deny to God any knowledge of the detail of things and, above all, of future events, than to admit what they believed repellent to his goodness. The Socinians and Conrad Vorstius lean towards that side [...].¹⁴⁰

In his later works, Böhme attempts, however, to reconcile free will with divine prescience.¹⁴¹

Regarding the question of Böhme's rhetoric of presence, I would finally like to emphasize the difference between the kind of writing dominating in the devil's process and the kind to be found in his treatment of divine presence, which I analyzed earlier. In his discussion of the dimensions of space, Böhme utilizes writing in a heuristic-epistemic way for the elucidation of an important philosophical and theological problem from various, successive angles, finally reaching a solution – in and by writing – in the image of the birth of gold in a gold ore. We are as readers present in his intellectual workshop and can follow his thinking on-line. In the devil's process, Böhme is also aiming for a solution by writing, but the circumstances are different. We find here another kind of presence, it consists of the readers' presence at Lucifer's trial. The accused party is elaborately described and we can follow the prosecutor's legal argumentation in every detail. But in the Lucifer trial, there is no room for open-ended elaborations towards the solution of a philosophical problem. Instead, the logic of the literary form determines the argumentation and its goal – God's innocence – is given already from the beginning. Böhme actually paints himself into an argumentative corner. In order to save God from

¹⁴⁰ Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Theodicy; Essays on the Goodness of God, the Freedom of Man and the Origin of Evil*, transl. E.M. Huggard (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952), 58. – It would be very interesting to further explore the influences of Socinianism on Böhme's intellectual context.

¹⁴¹ See Defoort, "Jacob Boehme (1575–1624) on Predestination", 692–695. Defoort, however, does not elaborate on the differences between the *Aurora* and Böhme's later works. The development of Böhme's thought on the origin of evil and free will would be a very rewarding topic for an extensive and detailed study.

being the author of evil within the logic of the devil's process, Böhme has to give up both God's omnipotence and his omniscience. This is a very problematic theological position, which also contradicts his concept of God in other parts of the work. Luther can write, for example, that there is no answer to the question why God permits evil; humans must accept that evil pleases God and might lead to the strengthening of the believer; the origin of evil is a mystery of faith.¹⁴² A reference to evil as a mystery of faith has, however, no place in a rational discussion, where God's innocence regarding evil is at stake in a court of law. The intelligibility of God is one of the preconditions for Böhme's reasoning.

In his devil's process, Böhme cannot refrain from following the strong rational and logical form of argumentation, which he has chosen for his discussion. The devil's process in the *Aurora* turns out to be a very striking example of the power of literary form and the argumentative logic of writing over philosophical and theological thought. The trial form leads Böhme to a line of rational argumentation which anticipates the Enlightenment.¹⁴³

10 Conclusion

Jacob Böhme is a very interesting philosophical writer, who has exerted tremendous influence on subsequent thought. Most readers would testify that his texts are a great challenge for understanding. Historical distance and the complexity of Böhme's thought are important factors, which contribute to the difficulty of the texts, but his works also immediately reflect a special kind of writing. This writing definitely contributes to the difficulty of the texts, but it is also an important part of Böhme's rhetoric of presence, which I think is a strongly contributing factor for the interest in his works. This presence can be seen in all three pragmatic dimensions of the text: author, reader, and world.

¹⁴² For the origin of evil as a mystery of faith, see, for example, Herbert Olsson, *Schöpfung, Vernunft und Gesetz in Luthers Theologie*, Studia Doctrinae Christianae Upsaliensia, 10 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1971), 319. Cf. also Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 161–178, and Hans-Martin Barth, *Der Teufel und Jesus Christus in der Theologie Martin Luthers*, Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte, 19 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967).

¹⁴³ For a good discussion of God and evil in the 17th century, see Schneider, *Das Weltbild des 17. Jahrhunderts*, 204–234. Cf. the discussion of Pierre Bayle's views in Daniel Pickering Walker, *The Decline of Hell: Seventeenth-century Discussions of Eternal Torment* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964), 196. – Böhme's view on tolerance can also be seen as such an anticipation, see Hannak, "Glaubensstreit und Liebesethik", 72.

The rhetoric of presence is strongly connected to the structural performativity of texts. In my discussion of the Rhetoric of Presence above, I referred to an important article by Irmgard Maassen, who identified seven different performative text strategies. They can all be found in Böhme's *Aurora*:

- **Dialogization:** In Böhme's text, there is a constant dialogue. Opinions of different opponents are expressed in the text and refuted. These opposing opinions are, for example, the questioning of Böhme's authority as an unlearned author and the Calvinist views on the problem of space and the origin of evil.
- **The simulation of corporeality, perceptibility, and presence, using the means of language.** The rhetorical I and the reader of Böhme's *Aurora* are strongly present in the text. This also applies to Lucifer in the devil's process. The I of the text very frequently refers to his own person; the most famous passage is the description of the spiritual breakthrough in the nineteenth chapter of the *Aurora*. The same is true for the implied reader, who is constantly present and addressed.
- **The simulation of oral communicative situations.** There is a constant ongoing dialogue between the I of the text and the implied reader. The devil's processes is a fictive oral trial.
- **The steering of perspective.** In the *Aurora*, the I of the text is constantly present, giving his special perspective on himself, the reader, and the world.
- **Fictions of authentication.** For rhetorical texts, I would here prefer the term *Strategies of authentication*. Böhme's *Aurora* is carefully designed according to the principles of rhetorical *ethos*. In his text, Böhme utilizes different techniques of self-presentation, in order to make it likely that his work contains the ultimate knowledge of God and Nature at the End of Time. His special technique of heuristic-epistemic writing, where the reader can follow the thought processes as the text is being produced, is another important text strategy which effects authenticity.
- **Self-fashioning and addressee-fashioning.** In the *Aurora*, the rhetorical I constantly fashions himself in such a way that it supports the claim that he has written a book containing the ultimate knowledge of God and Nature. He presents himself, for example, as being simple and unlearned, in order to support the idea that all his knowledge has been given to him solely by God. As it turns out in the text, however, the author is well oriented about the contemporary intellectual discussion and therefore hardly as simple and ignorant as he repeatedly claims himself. – The *Aurora* contains a text role for the reader, designed to make him or her accept the text's philosophical and theological perspective.

- **Perfunctory creation and undermining of social role models; potential for the creative reinterpretation of social and cultural scripts.** The construction of the rhetorical I is a definitive attempt to question social role models regarding the question who has access to divine knowledge.

In my discussion of the *Aurora*, I have drawn particular attention to one very interesting aspect of Böhme's rhetoric of presence: his special technique of using writing for solving problems. He elucidates different, successive perspectives of a problem, finds a temporary solution, questions this solution, changes the perspective, brings in new aspects, revises the results of his thinking, and finds a new solution. Böhme's treatment of the problem of God's presence in space at the beginning of the seventh chapter of the *Aurora* is a very good example of this kind of writing. The devil's process in the chapters 14–16 of the same book shows another interesting aspect of his writing and thinking. Here, the chosen literary form with its logic of legal argumentation governs Böhme's reasoning in his attempt to solve the problem of the origin of evil and leads him to very radical solutions, anticipating the Enlightenment.

Many philosophers probably utilize writing as a means of problem-solving in a way similar to Böhme in his discussion of God's presence in space in the *Aurora*, but then it definitely belongs to the early stages of text production; in the final text, the heuristic-epistemic aspect of writing is not discernible anymore. Böhme's *Aurora* is different in this respect, since the actual processes of problem-solving by writing are directly observable in the text. Böhme's use of writing makes the writer strongly present and gives the reader the unique opportunity to gain insight into the intellectual workshop of one of the most creative and influential philosophers in history and follow his thought processes more or less on-line.

The notion of Jacob Böhme, the intuitive writer, whose texts immediately reflect spiritual experiences and changes in consciousness not accessible to rational thought, has to be replaced by the idea of Jacob Böhme, the reasoning philosopher. This is the only approach, which can do full justice to the originality and great intellectual depth of one of the most important thinkers in the Western tradition.

11 **Excursus: The First Chapter of Böhme's *The Election of Grace* (1623)**

In this paper I have given an analysis of central aspects of Böhme's writing in the *Aurora*. In a short excursus I would like to turn briefly to the question of whether there is a development of Böhme's writing in his later works. I will not

be able to explore this idea further, but I will suggest that there is such a development. This topic would, however, deserve a book-length study.

Böhme's *The Election of Grace*, written in 1623, is his major treatment of the problem of predestination. His main concern is to demonstrate that there is a sole will of God, that there is no original division between a God of wrath and a God of mercy. In the first chapter of the work, he presents his concept of the *Ungrund* and how triune God develops from the ultimate abyss beyond every distinction.¹⁴⁴

The first chapter of *The Election of Grace* follows a very clear structure. It starts with the formulation of the main problem, based on three quotations from writings by Moses: "I the Lord thy God am but One Onely God; thou shalt honour no other Gods besides me" (Exod. 20:2, 3), "The Lord our God is an angry jealous God, and a Consuming Fire" (Deut. 4:24), and "God is a merciful God" (Deut. 4:31).¹⁴⁵ This sets the frame for the following discussion: Is there a basic contradiction in God?

Böhme's answer is that the statements found in Moses do not contradict each other:

3. These seem to be Contrary, in that he calleth himself an Angry God and a Consuming Fire; and then also a Flame of Love, which can be nothing but onely *God*, otherwise he were not God, viz. the Onely God.
4. For Men cannot say of God, that he is this or that evil or Good, which hath *distinction* in itself, so he is in himself *Naturlesse*, is also *Affectionlesse* and *Creaturelesse*.
5. He hath no inclination to anything, for there is nothing *before him* to which he should incline, neither Evil or Good.
6. He is in himself the Abyesse, without any Will at all: in respect of Nature and Creature, he is as an Eternal Nothing: there is in him *no* passion or pain in him; nor any thing that can either tend to him or deviate from him.
7. He is the One Onely Being Essence or Substance, and there is nothing either before him or after him, whereof or *wherein* he could frame of grasp a Will to himself.

¹⁴⁴ For a short, but thorough discussion of the first chapter of the *Election of Grace*, see Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann, "Das Geheimnis des Anfangs: Einige spekulative Betrachtungen im Hinblick auf Böhme," in *Gott, Natur und Mensch in der Sicht Jacob Böhmes und seiner Rezeption*, ed. Garewicz and Haas, 113–128.

¹⁴⁵ Jacob Behme, *Concerning the Election OF Grace Or Of Gods Will towards Man. Commonly called Predestination*. [...] [Translated by John Sparrow]. London: Printed by John Streater for Giles Calvert and John Allen, 1655. Early English Books Online: Wing / B 3398.

8. He hath also nothing that can *Generate* him, or give to him. He is the *Nothing and All things* [Ungrund]; and is one onely Will, in which lyeth the world and the whole Creation.¹⁴⁶

The “Ungrund”, which comprises “Nothing and All things”, is a totality beyond every distinction. At this basic level, God is just a primordial will, longing to manifest and know himself. There is no good or evil whatsoever, to which he could incline; no distinctions can be made.

In the first chapter of *The Election of Grace*, Böhme initially formulates the problem of a contradiction in God. The first part of the chapter contains a detailed discussion of this problem, from which I quoted the first statements. At the end of the chapter, he refutes possible objections, and finally he concludes and summarizes his main points. The first chapter of *The Election of Grace* shows an entirely different character compared to Böhme’s heuristic-epistemic writing in the *Aurora*; his reasoning is of a different kind. The rhetorical I is just sparsely present, and the discussion progresses from one point to the other without leaps and changes of perspective; Böhme develops just one single line of thought. Böhme’s writing in *The Election of Grace* can be characterized as knowledge telling; the chapter has a structure very similar to the text by Valentin Weigel, which I discussed above. This is hardly surprising, considering the fact that Böhme had already written about his concept of *Ungrund* (translated by John Sparrow as “Nothing and All things”) in previous works, such as *Mysterium Magnum* (first part, completed in 1622) and *De Signatura Rerum* (1622).¹⁴⁷ In *The Election of Grace*, Böhme is not attempting to find a solution in and by writing. He is presenting important aspects of his concept of God to the reader, which he has developed previously in writing and thought.

It is very interesting to notice that a late work by Böhme such as *The Election of Grace* (1623) seems to differ from his *Aurora* (1612) in important textual aspects. It would be a most important topic for further research to explore if, how, and why Böhme – in his creative reasoning about central and difficult philosophical problems – utilizes various kinds of writing in different works.

¹⁴⁶ Behme, *Election of Grace*, 1:3–7. (italics in the translation). The numbering of the sections in Sparrow’s translations does not agree with Böhme’s original.

¹⁴⁷ Jacob Böhme, *Mysterium Magnum* [Part 1], Jacob Böhme, *Sämtliche Schriften: Faksimile-Neudruck der Ausgabe von 1730 in Elf Bänden*, 7, ed. Will-Erich Peuckert (Stuttgart: frommann-holzboog, 1958), and Jacob Böhme, *De Signatura Rerum*, Jacob Böhme, *Werke*, ed. Ferdinand van Ingen (Frankfurt/M: Deutscher Klassiker-Verlag, 2009), 507–792.

The City of Görlitz during Jacob Böhme's Lifetime

Ines Haaser (Anders)



FIGURE 3.1 Josef Metzker and Georg Scharffenbergk, *Abcontrafeitung der Stadt Goerlitz im 1565 Jar* (1566), Woodcut in 12 parts, Kulturhistorisches Museum Görlitz. Printed with permission.

PANORAMA OF THE CITY OF GÖRLITZ (1565)

We can be sure of several important facts. On April 24, 1599, Jacob Böhme was accorded the rights of a citizen of Görlitz. No lesser hand than that of Mayor Bartholomäus Scultetus entered his name in the registry and noted the payment of 240 groschen as a fee.¹ Since a master craftsman could be expected to earn approximately thirty groschen per month, this amount was substantial though not exorbitant. By 1599, Böhme had been in the city long enough to acquire a shoemaker's business, a house, and a wife who happened to be the daughter of a master butcher Kuntzschmann.²

We also know with considerable certainty how the city looked during Böhme's lifetime. We know this on the one hand from sources in the well-preserved city archive that inform us about the social structures and on the other from a panorama (*Abcontrafeitung*) of the city which sets out before us the most important buildings, as well as the vital urban industries and institutions. This panorama of the city from the year 1565 was the work of two Görlitz craftsmen, the goldsmith Joseph Metzker and the illustrator Georg Scharffenbergk.³ It offers a view of the city thirty years before Böhme's arrival.

1 Ratsarchiv Görlitz, Bürgerrechtslisten der Stadt Görlitz 1515–1601, Varia 40, unfoliated.

2 Ernst-Heinz Lemper, *Jakob Böhme: Leben und Werk* (Berlin: Union Verlag, 1976), 52.

3 An excellent description of the great urban panorama is: Martin Reuther, "Metzker-Scharffenbergs' Abcontrafeitung der Stadt Görlitz im 1565 Jahr im Spiegel stadtgeschichtlicher Betrachtungen," in *Heimatkunde und Landesgeschichte: Zum 65. Geburtstag von Rudolf Lehmann* (Weimar: Böhlau, 1958), 52–90.

This was during a period circumscribed by two key turning points in the history of Upper Lusatia: at the start of this period is the year 1547, when Görlitz and the other Lutheran cities of the territory were punished with severe economic and political sanctions (*Pönfall*)⁴ for failing to support their Catholic emperor in the Schmalkaldic War of 1546–47. The end of this period came with their temporary transfer to the rule of Lutheran Electoral Saxony as a forfeit of war in 1623 (once again for supporting the wrong side, this time in the initial phase of the Thirty Years' War), followed by their permanent transfer in the Peace of Prague in 1635.⁵

In 1526, Upper Lusatia, a crownland of the Kingdom of Bohemia, became subject, through a dynastic shift, to the Habsburg Empire, the leading Catholic power of Europe whose emperor also wore the Bohemian crown. King Ferdinand I of Bohemia (1503–1564), Emperor as of 1558, had visited Görlitz in 1538⁶ and had expressed his benevolence toward the city and its people. At the sight of the celebration of his ceremonial reception, he is said to have exclaimed, "You are all my sons!"⁷ A Catholic mass was conducted in the Church of St. Peter, even though the city council had officially embraced the Reformation in 1525.

As a Bohemian crownland, Upper Lusatia had followed a special path of development.⁸ The king administered it by means of his officials; and the absence of a residing ruler strengthened the powers of the Upper Lusatian cities which belonged to a League of Six Cities founded in 1346. In the sixteenth century, special rights appeared to be an obstacle to the ascendant prerogatives of the Habsburg dynasty. The Schmalkaldic War pitted Protestant German territories against Catholic overlords, the Habsburg King of Bohemia Ferdinand I and Emperor Charles V. The Upper Lusatian cities, though Protestant, were

4 650 *Jahre Oberlausitzer Sechsstädtebund 1346–1996*. 4. Symposium der Geschichtskommission der Euroregion NEISSE (Zittau, Bad Muskau: Oettel, 1997) and Thomas Binder (Ed.), 666 *Jahre Sechsstädtebund* (Görlitz, Zittau: Oettel, 2012), Friedrich Pietsch, "Görlitz im Pönfall," *Neues Lausitzisches Magazin* 111(1935), 51–141.

5 Alexander Schunka, "Die Oberlausitz zwischen Prager Frieden und Wiener Kongress (1635–1815)," *Geschichte der Oberlausitz: Herrschaft, Gesellschaft und Kultur vom Mittelalter bis zum Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig: Universitätsverlag, 2004), 143–146.

6 Theodor Neumann, "Mag. Johannes Hasse Burgermeisters zu Görlitz Goerlitzer Ratsannalen," *Scriptores rerum Lusaticarum*, Neue Folge 4. Bd. (Görlitz: Selbstverlag der Gesellschaft und in Commission der Remerschen Buchhandlung, 1870), 367–379.

7 Richard Jecht, *Fürstliche Besuche in Görlitz* (Görlitz: Kommissionsverlag P.W. Sattig, 1893), 45.

8 Norbert Kersken, "Die Oberlausitz von der Gründung des Sechsstädtebundes bis zum Übergang an das Kurfürstentum Sachsen (1346–1635)," *Geschichte der Oberlausitz: Herrschaft, Gesellschaft und Kultur vom Mittelalter bis zum Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig: Universitätsverlag, 2004), 99–142.

under obligation to support their Catholic ruler during the war. After they withdrew the troops they had raised for this purpose shortly before the decisive Battle of Mühlberg, the king seized the opportunity to conduct the punitive proceedings known as the *Pönfall* against the Upper Lusatian cities. The city of Görlitz forfeited its entire landed property with all rights and privileges. The city was required to pay the steep penalty of 100,000 imperial guilders while forfeiting all weapons.⁹ Only gradually did Görlitz and the other cities recover from their economic and political disaster. Görlitz had to go deep into debt in order to reclaim the 30,000-hectare Görlitz Heath in 1557 for its exploitation and ownership. This was one of the largest landed properties held by a German city, comparable to the holdings of the imperial city of Nuremberg. Görlitz was also able to reclaim its right to freely elect city council members and administer its police force.¹⁰ Lost once and for all was the city's high jurisdiction over capital crimes. Moreover, Görlitz was required to pay a tax in beer in perpetuity.

The city council introduced various measures in order to stimulate the economic growth of its community of roughly 9,000.¹¹ The city divided the landed properties of its adjacent outer precincts into small parcels and garden plots and sold them at a solid profit for use by a growing population.¹² Among the promotional efforts, the contract given to Metzker and Scharffenbergk for an urban panorama made sense as a marketing strategy. The two carried out their contract by creating a panorama out of twelve separate plates of wood, measuring 2.36 meters in length and 55 centimeters in height.¹³ We know of similarly dimensioned panoramas only for the cities of Erfurt, Lübeck, and Cologne. Their illustrious company was deliberately sought by Görlitz. At trade

9 Kamenzer Geschichtsverein e.V. (Ed.), *Der Pönfall der Oberlausitzer Sechsstädte. 1547–1997*. Beiträge der Herbsttagung der Oberlausitzischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Görlitz e.V., Kamenz 24.–26. Oktober 1997 (Kamenz 1999), Lars Behrisch, *Städtische Obrigkeit und soziale Kontrolle Görlitz 1450–1600* (Epfendorf/Neckar: Bibliotheca-Academica-Verlag, 2005). Calculated at a rate of 24 groschen to the plain taler, this would have amounted to a sum of around 1.6 million groschen, a very considerable penalty indeed.

10 Steffen Menzel, "Der Wiedererwerb der Herrschaft Penzig durch die Stadt Görlitz nach dem Pönfall," *Neues Lausitzisches Magazin* N.F. 7 (2004), 101–109.

11 Martin Reuther, *Abcontraftung*, 53.

12 Richard Jecht, *Geschichte der Stadt Görlitz*, 1. Bd. (2. Halbband) (Görlitz: Hoffmann & Reiber, 1927–1934.), 578, 590, 593, 596, 610.

13 The wooden plates have been preserved in the Kulturhistorisches Museum in Görlitz. Based on records of the city council, we know that Georg Scharffenbergk received 100 talers on January 26, 1565. Ratsarchiv Görlitz, *Einname vnd Schuldbuch 1564 1561–1566*, Bl. 176a und b.

fairs and commercial negotiations, the panorama could offer evidence that the city and its merchant class were potent trade partners.

1 Trade Routes

It was no accident that the artists chose to portray the city from the east. Even today this angle is especially impressive. St. Peter's Church rises up, tall and majestic, from a cliff over the west bank of the Neisse. From the east, the most important trade route arrives here at the city. It is the Via Regia. It led from Ukraine via Cracow through all of Europe as far west as Santiago de Compostella in Spain. Görlitz stood at the intersection of the Via Regia and the north-south trade route connecting Prague to the Baltic, a road that had existed from around 1220. Even after four centuries, the crossing of these two routes dominated life in the city.

The merchants' wagons, usually drawn by teams of four horses, can be seen on the panorama passing over the Neisse Bridge into the city, to be inspected at that point by urban customs officials. At the Neisse Gate, toll was to be paid for the transported commodities.¹⁴



FIGURE 3.2 Josef Metzker and Georg Scharffenbergk, *Abcontraftung der Stadt Goerlitz im 1565 Jar* (1566), Woodcut in 12 parts, Kulturhistorisches Museum Görlitz. Printed with permission.

MERCHANT'S WAGON ON THE NEIßE BRIDGE

14 Ines Anders, "Die via regia und die Anfänge der Stadt Görlitz," *via regia. 800 Jahre Bewegung und Begegnung, Katalog 3: Sächsische Landesaussstellung* (Dresden: Sandstein, 2011), 44–47.

2 The Landeskronen

The Landeskronen peak rises up symbolically within the panorama. This was the Görlitzers' domestic summit at 420 meters above sea level.

Then as now, it is an imposing point of reference. Approaching from any direction, the merchant, driver, or journeyman knew upon sighting it that within hours he would arrive in Görlitz. From 1440 on, its promontory was owned by the city.

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, robber knights had been a dangerous nuisance to the city. In order to combat them, Upper Lusatia had sought and obtained permission from the Bohemian king to form their own League of Six Cities in 1346. Outlaw attacks were vigorously repulsed and the castles of the outlaw knights razed. The Landeskronen and its castle, however, were acquired



FIGURE 3.3 Josef Metzker and Georg Scharffenbergk, *Abcontrafteitung der Stadt Goerlitz im 1565 Jar* (1566), Woodcut in 12 parts, Kulturhistorisches Museum Görlitz. Printed with permission.

THE LANDESKRONE

by the city by peaceful purchase from the owners, the sons of Hans von Sagan. Without hesitation, the city council authorized the castle's destruction.¹⁵

The sparse forestation on the slopes points to the use of its reserves of wood by the urban population. The two figures on the Landeskronen suggest that the people were wont to climb it as a lookout point. Despite this, the inclusion of the Landeskronen was hardly a matter of romanticism. Urban possession of the mountain indicated the relative standing of the league cities with respect to a hostile nobility. Unfortunately, the balance of power would be reversed after 1547 in favor of the nobility in consequence of the *Pönfall*.

The village of Biesnitz at the foot of the Landeskronen had been acquired by the city of Görlitz already in 1345, though it was later sold again. The village consisted entirely of small half-timbered houses with straw roofs. Every parcel of land was thoroughly cultivated. The suburbs had a rural appearance. They included the so-called Frauenvorstadt (suburb of Our Lady) adjoining the Frauenturm or Tower of Our Lady; the Nicholas suburb near the Church of St. Nicholas; and the Neisse suburb on the east bank of the river. No less than a third of the city's official population lived outside its fortified walls. Garden plots helped sustain a resident's family and yielded surpluses for market sale. Precinct names such as The Far Garden (Der Ferngarten) are a reminder of these rural conditions.

3 The Bridge

The Neisse Bridge not only made it possible to reach the other bank with dry feet; it was an important economic factor for commerce and industry. Its good state of repair was decisive for trade. The city council made perpetual inspections including the planks that were lowered into the river to protect the bridge from rapid currents and driving ice in winter. The city fire of 1525 damaged the bridgeway across the Neisse. During the years 1545 to 1547, the bridge was furnished with a new roof, paved anew, and provided with a carved gutter at half span.¹⁶ On the east bank, a gate and the Hospital Tower (Spittelurm) secured the approach.

It was in close proximity to the Neisse Bridge that Jacob Böhme acquired his first house on August 31, 1599, at the price of 300 marks, with half that amount

15 Richard Jecht, *Geschichte der Stadt Görlitz*, 1. Bd. (1. Halbband) (Görlitz: Hoffmann & Reiber 1922–1926) 173–175.

16 Ines Anders, "Zur Geschichte der Görlitzer Altstadtbrücke," *Denkmalpflege in Görlitz* 13 (2004), 30–34.

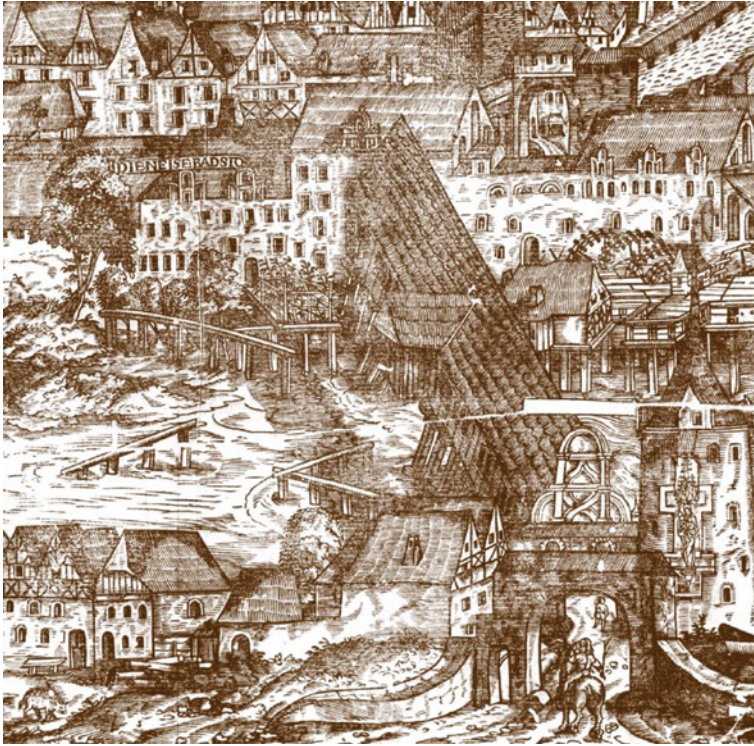


FIGURE 3.4 Josef Metzker and Georg Scharffenbergk, *Abcontraftung der Stadt Goerlitz im 1565 Jar* (1566), Woodcut in 12 parts, Kulturhistorisches Museum Görlitz. Printed with permission.

THE NEISSE BRIDGE

paid in cash.¹⁷ His second and larger residence purchased in 1610 stood at the other side of the bridge, conveniently located on the *Via Regia*.

4 City Fortifications

The city is secured by fortifications visible as the right-hand bulwark on the panorama. The fortifications consist of four large city towers, a double city wall, five large round bastions, and thirty smaller towers. The fortifications had attained their maximum extent by the end of the sixteenth century.¹⁸ To emphasize the city's defensibility and security, the artists exaggerated the proportions of the

¹⁷ Lemper, *Jakob Böhme*, 53.

¹⁸ Ines Anders, *Die via regia*, 44–47.



FIGURE 3.5 Josef Metzker and Georg Scharffenbergk, *Abcontrafeitung der Stadt Goerlitz im 1565 Jar* (1566), Woodcut in 12 parts, Kulturhistorisches Museum Görlitz. Printed with permission.

FORTIFICATIONS OF GÖRLITZ

fortifications. They also integrated portions that would not have been visible from the east, notably the great round bastion before the Budyssin (Bautzen) Gate, known today as the *Kaisertrutz*, or Emperor's Bastion. It had been constructed in collaborative effort by the citizens of Görlitz after 1490 in order to secure the western access to the city on the Via Regia. Its walls were a manifest sign of the wealth of the city and its citizens. The tower sentinels of Görlitz kept lookout for enemies and arson from the high vantage of the city gates and from the Reichenbach and Thick Towers, the Nicholas Tower, and the Neisse Tower. On the Lower Market, the unusual and imposing roof constructions of gables in the new Renaissance style exhibit the influence of the latest architectural styles and testify to the artistic awareness of the burghers.

5 Sharpshooters' Companies

It was above all the citizens themselves who were responsible for the security of the city. The acquisition of citizenship brought with it the duty of taking part in its defense. The citizen was expected to keep a crossbow or musket at home and obliged to practice using it at regular intervals. To this end, two sharpshooters' companies had been established. They are mentioned for the first time in 1377. The musketeers trained in their shooting gallery on the Neisse. The archers shot their crossbows at birds on the terrain which is now the City Park.¹⁹ The commander of the city, usually a member of the lesser nobility, supervised

¹⁹ Richard Jecht, *Aus der Geschichte der Görlitzer Schützengesellschaft* (Görlitz: Hugo Kretschmer, 1914).

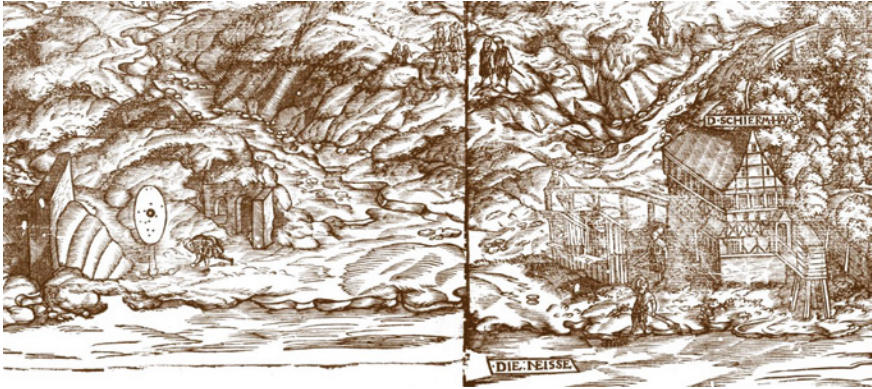


FIGURE 3.6 Josef Metzker and Georg Scharffenbergk, *Abcontrafteitung der Stadt Goerlitz im 1565 Jar* (1566), Woodcut in 12 parts, Kulturhistorisches Museum Görlitz. Printed with permission.

THE SHARPSHOOTERS' COMPANIES

the organization of defenses. In the period around 1600, however, the city preferred to rely on paid and trained military personnel. The activities of the sharpshooters' companies were by this time becoming a leisure activity. After the sharpshooters' companies held their festivals, the participants all dined together. Skill and status were at stake. The sharpshooter king was accorded life-long respect.²⁰ There is no record of Jacob Böhme's having been in attendance.

6 Industry and Commerce

Metzker and Scharffenbergk made their presentation of the economic branches of activity a priority in their panorama. The dominant activity in Görlitz was the wool textile industry. This was the local craft par excellence, an export industry which had contributed to the rise of Görlitz in the High Middle Ages. Its zenith around 1500 was long past,²¹ yet even in the middle of the sixteenth century, there were still 256 weavers of wool who produced approximately 24,000 units of cloth measuring thirteen meters in length by one meter in breadth.

²⁰ Respectful comments about the fathers of pupils are found in the lists of pupils of the Görlitz Gymnasium Augustum. See Gustav Sieg, *Alphabetisches Verzeichnis der Schüler des Gymnasium Augustum 1580 bis 1648* (this is a manuscript in the Oberlausitzischer Bibliothek der Wissenschaften).

²¹ Peter Wenzel, "Zur Entwicklung der Görlitzer Wolltuchweberei im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert," *Görlitzer Magazin* 17 (2004), 53–60.



FIGURE 3.7 Josef Metzker and Georg Scharffenbergk, *Abcontraftung der Stadt Goerlitz im 1565 Jar* (1566), Woodcut in 12 parts, Kulturhistorisches Museum Görlitz. Printed with permission.

INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL LIFE

The commercial relations of the Görlitz merchants extended west and south to Augsburg, Regensburg, and Ulm and beyond German lands to Hungary, Poland, and Russia, accessed by way of mercantile houses in Breslau, Cracow, and Posen. In the previous generation, merchants like Hans Frenzel, also known as the Wealthy (1463–1526), had earned yearly profits of between 7,000 and 11,000 talers.²² After 1570, a catastrophic decline in textile production set in. A major cause was the advance of the Ottoman armies which excluded Görlitz textiles from Balkan markets. At the same time, the introduction of indigo for dying from overseas altered the mode of production. Woad stockpiling privileges were of consequence. The competition from West European and Polish textiles had grown enormously. By the yearly cycle ending in 1593, textile production in Görlitz had declined to 2,300 units. Production recovered slowly, but it never flourished again as it had at the beginning of the century.

We possess some precise figures for the Görlitz craft industries for the year 1600.²³ There were twenty-five guilds with approximately 800 master craftsmen between them. Of that number 179 were textile weavers. Alongside the masters there were numerous other employees and day laborers working for the guild. They took the textiles to the Neisse for dying and rinsing. They processed it in the fulling tub in order to shrink and thicken it; and they fitted it, still damp, onto the frame to be tensed for the drying process.

22 Peter Wenzel, "Zur Wirtschafts- und Sozialstruktur der Sechsstadt Görlitz im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert," *650 Jahre Oberlausitzer Sechsstädtebund* (Muskau: Gunter Oettel, 1997), 77–99.

23 Ratsarchiv Görlitz, Rep. II S. 291 Nr. 98 (unfoliated).



FIGURE 3.8 Josef Metzker and Georg Scharffenbergk, *Abcontraftung der Stadt Goerlitz im 1565 Jar* (1566), Woodcut in 12 parts, Kulturhistorisches Museum Görlitz. Printed with permission.

TEXTILE PRODUCTION

The frames were surrounded by a half-timbered wall, located at the Hirschwinkel during the period around 1600. Even the equipment for tensing the product can be recognized on the woodcut panorama. Am Hirschwinkel is a street near the Nicholas Church approximately 100 meters in length, now residential.

The mills, dependent on water power, were concentrated along the Neisse. Clearly visible on the panorama is a four-wheeled mill. The mills ground cereals and powered the textile milling operation. The Neisse was also where the tanners lived and worked since they required water for rinsing hides. One whole street took its name from the tanners, called *Hother*. In the year 1600, there were fifty-two tanners who bleached and softened leather for finer purposes such as gloves and finer shoes (*Weißgerber*) and forty-eight who prepared it for tougher uses such as the leather for boots or ordinary shoes (*Rotgerber*).²⁴ Local and external sources provided the raw materials. The master tanners of Görlitz traveled to the great markets at Frankfurt an der Oder, Breslau (Wrocław), Gnesen (Gniezno), and Posen (Poznań) to acquire hides. But they were also procured from the city's own surroundings, though we are

24 Peter Wenzel, "Zur Sozialökonomischen Struktur der vorstädtischen Hothergasse: Eine Handwerkergerasse im Mittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit," *Görlitzer Magazin* 22 (2009), 37–44.

not certain in what quantity. The tannery mills were the pond mill between Lunitz and the Nicholas Moat, as well as the four- and three-wheeled mills. The tannery production supplied the leather-working trades of the shoemakers, furriers, and purse-makers.

Gateways on the north and south ends secured the *Hothergasse* or Tanners' Lane against intruders, since it lay outside the city walls. The peculiar construction of the tanners' houses is easily recognizable on the city panorama. Böhme had especially fraught relations with the guild of the tanners. In 1612, he was officially warned and fined the tidy sum of seventy-two groschen for illicitly procuring and tanning leather.²⁵ In doing so, he violated the prerogatives of another guild. The affair itself and Böhme's role in it are somewhat obscure.

Around 1600, linen weaving gained in importance. In the Middle Ages, it was an industry that produced only for the local market. In the sixteenth century, this began to change. The proud number of sixty-seven master weavers indicated that it had now become an export industry.²⁶ Beer was another export commodity of the city. The surrounding 200 villages were supplied by Görlitz brewers. The brewers had no guild of their own. They migrated with their brewing equipment from one property to another. Breweries of various capacities were located along the main thoroughfares of the city, the Lower Market, the Peter's Street, and the Neisse Street. The term "brewing yard" or *Brauhof* refers to the right to brew and serve beer in specified quantities. The brewing itself was done five, seven, or nine times per year in backhouses, whereupon the people came to purchase the beer in bulk and to drink it on the spot, the poorer folk in the entrance hall and the finer sort in the ceremonial halls. Since the proprietors were not allowed to brew as a trade, the Görlitz merchants were usually the owners of these breweries.²⁷ The right to brew was among the demands raised by the artisans of Görlitz during their insurrections. The brewing itself was done by brewery workers who transported their equipment from property to property. The brew was prepared in a copper kettle with a volume of around 8,000 liters and then stored in kegs for at least two weeks, the time varying in accordance with the kind of beer brewed.

25 Lemper, *Jakob Böhme*, 55–57.

26 Cornelia Wenzel, "Beiträge zur Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte der Stadt Görlitz im 17. Jahrhundert," *Schriftenreihe des Ratsarchivs der Stadt Görlitz* 17 (1994).

27 Katja Lindenau, "Brauen und Herrschen: Die Görlitzer Braubürger als städtische Elite im Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit" (Leipzig: Universitätsverlag, 2007), in *Schriften zur sächsischen Geschichte und Volkskunde*, 22.

Katja Lindenau, "Meltzen, breuen und schencken sein burgerlich narung: Das Görlitzer Brau- und Gastgewerbe in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit," *Die Oberlausitz im frühneuzeitlichen Mitteleuropa* (Leipzig: Verlag der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2007), 458–478.

7 The City Hall

One particular shape rises up out of the silhouette of the city: the city hall stands for the maintenance of law and order. It accentuates the legitimate authority of the Görlitz city council. From the fourteenth century on, the city was allowed to choose the members of the magistracy by free election. As it happened, however, the chosen ones were invariably from the privileged families, usually merchants with brewing rights. Through marriage, their families had grown closer. A certain mobility came about toward the end of the sixteenth century, when the educated began to enter the ranks of the privileged. Most famously, this is the case with Bartholomäus Scultetus (1540–1614). In addition to the office of mayor, which rotated every four years, there were also seven lay jurists and eleven council members overseeing the administration of the city. Craftsmen were not allowed into the council, though two representatives of the guilds were permitted to observe the proceedings.

In the course of the centuries, the building of the city hall received numerous structural changes and additions.²⁸ The panorama reveals the coat of arms



FIGURE 3.9

Josef Metzker and Georg Scharffenbergk, *Abcontrafteitung der Stadt Goerlitz im 1565 Jar* (1566), Woodcut in 12 parts, Kulturhistorisches Museum Görlitz. Printed with permission.

THE CITY HALL

28 Siegfried Hoche, Dietmar Ridder, *Das Rathaus der Stadt Görlitz – ein baugeschichtlicher Rundgang*, Görlitz 2004.

of the Hungarian and Bohemian King Matthias Corvinus (1443–1490). Next to it is the unusually magnificent entrance to what is called the royal chamber, which then as now is the seat of the mayor. When Böhme was summoned there for questioning in connection with the confiscation of his manuscript of *Morgenröte im Aufgang*, he was led into the small council meeting chamber which has been preserved to this day in something close to its original appearance.²⁹

8 Renaissance

The singular beauty of the city was the achievement of the city master builders, most notably Wendel Roskopf the Elder (ca. 1480–1549).³⁰ After the fire of 1525, which destroyed nearly 200 houses, many edifices were rebuilt in the new Renaissance style. The remote eminence behind the introduction of this new architecture into Görlitz was Roskopf's teacher, the Bohemian territorial master builder Benedikt Ried (1454–1534). He was the architect of the Vladislav Hall of Hradčany Castle in Prague. From Prague, he disseminated the new Italianate style. Burgher prosperity was the precondition of a rapid reconstruction of the city which proved to be finer and more magnificent than ever before.

The burghers owed their capital for re-building to a number of sources. There were the taxes paid by residents. There was the income from the city hall winery which sold and served wine to 200 villages. Other revenues came from the salt trade, in bulk or retail, and from the sale of grain and flour. Since the council stockpiled grain in order to counteract bad harvests and control prices in times of inflation, it also sold these stores for revenue. The largest source of income, however, came from the economically feudal operation of forty-nine villages and portions of villages owned by the city.³¹ The most important of these revenues resulted from the ownership of the Görlitz Heath. This huge property rendered the city creditworthy by serving as collateral in its financial transactions. And yet despite its traditional economic advantages, the city found itself in the red for horrendous sums of amortization during Böhme's lifetime up until the Thirty Years' War. The causes were the debts incurred after the *Pönfall* for the purpose of re-acquiring the city's forfeited heath and villages.

²⁹ Lemper, *Jakob Böhme*, 63–68.

³⁰ Maritta Iseler, *Bauwesen und Architektur der Stadt Görlitz. Repräsentationsformen an der Schwelle der Frühen Neuzeit* Neues Lausitzisches Magazin Beiheft 13 (Bernstadt: Via Regia, 2014).

³¹ Steffen Menzel, *Wiedererwerb*, 102.

9 The Churches

Metzker and Scharffenbergk included all the churches of Görlitz, even if they were not visible from the east. The Church of St. Nicholas, the city's oldest, had been built around 1150 as a place of worship for the merchants' settlement.

With the passing of time, it had lost its importance. By 1600, vegetation was sprouting on its roof. Its gothic restructuring had remained unfinished.³² By now it served as a church for funerals. In November, 1624, Böhme himself would be buried there in the presence of the Görlitz master shoemakers and his own family, friends, and admirers.

Behind the Church of Saint Nicholas, the Church of the Holy Cross is visible. It forms part of the ensemble of the Holy Tomb in Görlitz, a monument originating in the inspiration of George Emmerich and in the contributions made by a large cohort of citizens of the city.³³ The local monument is modeled on the Holy

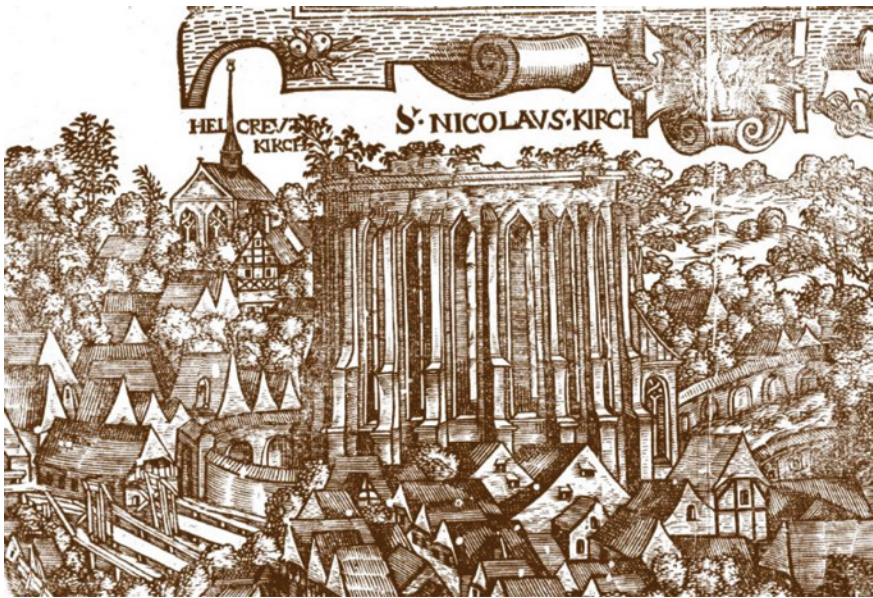


FIGURE 3.10 Josef Metzker and Georg Scharffenbergk, *Abcontraftung der Stadt Goerlitz im 1565 Jar* (1566), Woodcut in 12 parts, Kulturhistorisches Museum Görlitz. Printed with permission.

THE CHURCH OF ST. NICHOLAS

32 Richard Jecht, *Geschichte der Stadt Görlitz*, 1. Bd. 2. Halbband 746–751.

33 Ines Anders and Marius Winzeler, *Lausitzer Jerusalem* (Görlitz: Oettel, 2005); and Christian Speer, *Städtische Eliten in Görlitz zwischen 1300 und 1550*, Hallesche Beiträge zur Geschichte des Mittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit 8 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2011), 83–106.

Tomb in Jerusalem as depicted in the travel account of Bernard von Breydenbach (1440–1497), *Peregrinatio in Terram Sanctam*, published in 1485 in Mainz. Success was limited. Even before the Reformation, the attraction of Görlitz as a pilgrimage site was in decline. The ensemble of the Holy Tomb was maintained and refurbished by the children and grandchildren of Emmerich who had commemorative stones set in place for their ancestors. Surprisingly, in the eighteenth century, the Holy Tomb would once again become a magnet for tourists.

Also standing upon ground outside the city walls is the Church of Our Lady, erected for penance on the road to Prague in the middle of the fourteenth century. It was an important site in Görlitz for the adoration of the Virgin Mary during the late Middle Ages.³⁴



FIGURE 3.11 Josef Metzker and Georg Scharffenbergk, *Abcontrafteitung der Stadt Goerlitz im 1565 Jar* (1566), Woodcut in 12 parts, Kulturhistorisches Museum Görlitz. Printed with permission.

THE CHURCH OF OUR LADY

34 Ernst-Heinz Lemper, *Görlitz. Eine historische Topographie* (Görlitz, Zittau: Oettel 2001), 54–56; and Stefanie Fink und Kai Wenzel, “Die spätmittelalterliche Ausstattung der Görlitzer Frauenkirche,” *Görlitzer Magazin* 23 (2010), 17–34.

In 1600, a cemetery surrounding the church was guarded by a wall and bastion. In mid nineteenth century, the cemetery was removed and some of the graves transferred to the new metropolitan cemetery.

Mention should also be made of the private church of one Görlitz burgher, the Church of St. Anne. With the financial support of his fellow citizens and particularly the women of the city, after difficult negotiations with the city council, Hans Frenzel the Wealthy had it completed in 1512 and took responsibility for the maintenance of six priests.³⁵ The chapel and priests were under the authority of the Görlitz clergy and the bishop of Meissen, while the building and its altars were the private property of Hans Frenzel. Ironically, in only a few years the Frenzels would be among the earliest of the distinguished families of Görlitz to embrace the Reformation.

10 The Reformation and the Church of St. Peter

The citizens of the Upper Lusatian League of Six Cities were the driving force behind the decision to embrace the Reformation. More than most, those of the lower classes declared their adherence to the movement. The council members were more reluctant. A plague epidemic in the year 1521 inadvertently accentuated the chief doctrine of the Reformation by confirming that all hope lay in faith rather than in the works that had brought no relief from epidemic death. The official date for the adoption of the Reformation is 1525. It was in the crypt of the Church of St. Peter, known as the Chapel of St. George, that the Evangelical Communion was celebrated for the first time on April 30 of that year.³⁶ For good reason, the Church of St. Peter dominates the entire right half of the woodcut panorama.

The dean of the Cathedral Chapter of St. Peter in Bautzen exercised an extraordinary role in the early days of the Reformation with the result that peace between the confessions prevailed for centuries in Upper Lusatia.³⁷ The monasteries of St. Marienthal, St. Marienstern, the convent of the Magdalenes in Lauban, and the Cathedral Chapter in Bautzen remained in the hands of the Church, with the result that the population of the villages attached to them remained loyal to the Catholic faith in an otherwise Protestant Upper Lusatia.

35 Ernst-Heinz Lemper, *Görlitz*, 63–65; Christian Speer, *Städtische Eliten*, 106–127.

36 Christian Speer, *Städtische Eliten*, 363–391.

37 Karlheinz Blaschke and Siegfried Seifert, "Reformation und Konfessionalisierung in der Oberlausitz," *Welt – Macht – Geist: Das Haus Habsburg und die Oberlausitz 1526–1635* (Görlitz: Oettel, 2002), 121–128.

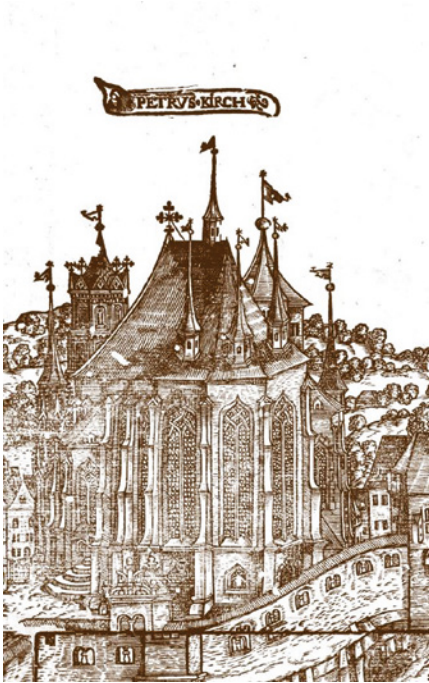


FIGURE 3.12

Josef Metzker and Georg Scharffenbergk, *Abcontrafeitung der Stadt Goerlitz im 1565 Jar* (1566), Woodcut in 12 parts, Kulturhistorisches Museum Görlitz. Printed with permission.

THE CHURCH OF ST. PETER

Peaceful coexistence of the two confessions was the work of one man: Johann Leisentritt (1577–1586). As the Catholic administrator of Bautzen, he undertook to install the Catholic, as well as Lutheran, clergy in office.³⁸ The anomalous situation of a crownland of the Kingdom of Bohemia, coupled with the absence of an officiating territorial ruler, allowed for a modicum of religious tolerance. For example, adherents of Schwenckfeldian doctrines were able to maintain themselves in the villages of the Görlitz Heath. Even within the higher circles of Görlitz society, there were followers of Schwenckfeld. Members of the Schütze and Hofmann families were considered Schwenckfelders.³⁹

38 Siegfried Seifert, "Domdekan Johann Leisentritt als Apostolischer Administrator und Kaiserlicher Generalkommissar in Religionssachen," in *Die Oberlausitz im frühneuzeitlichen Mitteleuropa: Beziehungen – Strukturen – Prozesse* (Leipzig: Verlag der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2007), *Quellen und Forschungen zur sächsischen Geschichte*. 30, 174–190 und Siegfried Seifert, *Johann Leisentritt 1527–1586: Zum vierhundertsten Todestag* (Leipzig: St. Benno, 1987).

39 Lemper, *Jakob Böhme*, 125–130 und Margit Kempgen, "Die Schwenckfelder: Eine kurze Einführung," *Musik- und Konfessionskulturen in der Oberlausitz der Frühen Neuzeit* (Görlitz: Oettel, 2013), 49–52.

The Görlitz city council enjoyed the prerogative of naming the pastor. The city's *pastor primarius* supervised the remaining clergymen. Martin Moller (1547–1606) was the chief pastor in 1600. His sermons may have stimulated the inner life of Böhme, perhaps even encouraging and giving sustenance to his mystical inclinations.⁴⁰ Moller was an intellectually impressive figure, an important scholar and author, though unfortunately for him the compatibility of his free-ranging thought with Calvinism caused him to come under suspicion as a so-called Crypto-Calvinist.

In 1592 and 1602, delegations from the Görlitz church establishment, city council, and Gymnasium were summoned to Bautzen to defend and justify themselves before the Catholic administrator, Georg Leisentritt. He was a relative of the deceased Johann Leisentritt. In 1592, the Görlitzer got off easy by declaring their loyal Lutheran persuasion. In 1602, they were less fortunate. Moller was challenged by the theologian Salomon Gessner⁴¹ (1559–1605). Their bitter controversy went on until the death of Gessner, who was soon followed by Moller.

In 1606, the council chose as his successor a man perhaps less likely to be suspected of encouraging heresy: Gregor Richter (1560–1624). It was Richter who challenged the orthodoxy of Böhme. After becoming aware of his writing, Richter summoned him to the rectory. Böhme had to swear to write no more. As we know from his later altercation with Richter in 1624, there would be no softening to the pastor's denunciation.

The Church of St. Peter was not only a place for sermons. It was also a space for urban assemblies, proclamations, and declarations in the name of council, king, or country. Up until the fire that devastated the city in 1691, it was equipped with no less than thirty-six altars. Its artistic furnishings had not been despoiled by iconoclastic riots. Attending church, Böhme was therefore confronted with an interior unchanged from the Middle Ages. Only minor structural alterations in support of Protestant worship were undertaken by Scultetus in 1590 and 1596. After the structure had been reinforced by the council's master builder Jonas Roskopf and its interior whitewashed, portraits of Martin Luther and Philipp Melanchthon were acquired. They are still preserved in the vestry.⁴²

40 Elke Axmacher, *Praxis Evangeliorum: Theologie und Frömmigkeit bei Martin Moller (1547–1606)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989).

41 Salomon Gesner, *Gründliche Widerlegung der Calvinischen Apologiae Martini Molleri, des vornehmsten Predigers zu Görlitz* (Wittenberg, 1602).

42 Stefan Bürger and Marius Winzeler, *Die Stadtkirche St. Peter und Paul in Görlitz* (Dössel: Janos Stekowics, 2006), 99–108.

11 The Cloister

In the Franciscan Cloister, which was built in 1234 outside the city gates, the Reformation undertook major changes. By 1542, only ten of the monks remained who had been sixty in number. In 1564, the cloister was officially handed over to the territorial rulers with instructions that a school was to be instituted in its rooms, which the city proceeded to do. The school of the city council, which had been transformed into a Latin school in the abandoned sexton's quarters in Krebsgasse 7,⁴³ now became a humanistic Gymnasium. In coming years, its fortunes soared. The school was a center of education and culture in Upper Lusatia and beyond.



FIGURE 3.13 Josef Metzker and Georg Scharffenbergk, *Abcon-
trafeitung der Stadt Goerlitz im 1565 Jar* (1566),
Woodcut in 12 parts, Kulturhistorisches Museum
Görlitz. Printed with permission.

THE CLOISTER

43 Another school was established on this spot after 1573, a general grammar school for boys with four teachers. See Richard Jecht, *Geschichte der Stadt Görlitz*, 1. Bd. 2. Halbband 480.

The first rector made for an auspicious beginning. The council succeeded in winning over the Wittenberg professor and onetime university rector, Petrus Vincentius (1519–1581). He served as rector of the new school from 1565 to 1569. In that capacity, he saw to it that a modern curriculum and faculty were instituted.⁴⁴ Unfortunately, since the council insisted on interfering in the affairs of the school, Vincentius was not retained for long; but many pupils were attracted to the school by his good reputation and that of his successors. He was succeeded by Joachim Meister (1532–1587), rector from 1569 until 1584, Laurentius Ludovicus (1536–1594), rector from 1569 until 1594, Martin Mylius (1452–1611), rector from 1594 until 1608, and Caspar Dornavius (1577–1632), rector from 1608 until 1615. Young people came to the school not only from the Upper Lusatian cities but from nearby Silesia and Northern Bohemia. The sons of the nobility attended the Görlitz school before studying at a university or pursuing some other advancement. In 1590, there were 600 pupils.⁴⁵

12 Printers

In 1565, the Görlitz city council set up a printing operation in the old school building. Its purpose was to print the humanistic writings of the rectors as well as schoolbooks for the Gymnasium. The Görlitz physician Dr. Thomas Fritsch (1524–1601) recommended his brother Ambrosius Fritsch (1523–1593), a Leipzig printer, to run the operation. The impressive mastery of the printer immediately secured his reputation.⁴⁶ The publications circulated widely. An especially productive cooperation between Fritsch and Bartholomäus Scultetus ushered into print the mayor's cartographical works. The co-creator of the panorama, Georg Scharffenbergk used his skills as a silhouette-maker in creating illustrations for the books of Scultetus.

44 Petrus Vincentius, *Disciplina et Doctrina* (Görlitz: Fritsch, 1566); for literature on Vincentius, see Joachim Bahlcke, "Das Görlitzer Gymnasium Augustum. Entwicklung, Struktur und regionale Ausstrahlung einer höheren Schule im konfessionellen Zeitalter," *Die Oberlausitz im frühneuzeitlichen Mitteleuropa. Beziehungen – Strukturen – Prozesse* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2007), 289–310, Hartmut Freytag, "Petrus Vincentius. Über den ersten Rektor der Lateinschule in Görlitz (1565–1569) – vor allem aus seiner Zeit als Schulmann in Lübeck (1549–1557)" *Görlitzer Magazin* 12 (1998), 52–59.

45 Martin Holý, "Das Gymnasium in Görlitz und Böhmen 1565–1620," Supplement on Bildung und Gelehrsamkeit in der frühneuzeitlichen Oberlausitz, *Neues Lausitzisches Magazin*, Beiheft 9 (2011), 25–34.

46 Gustav Sieg, "Zur Geschichte des Buchdrucks in Görlitz vor 1565," *Neues Lausitzisches Magazin* 111 (1935), 173–180, Gustav Adolph Koehler, "Zur Geschichte der Buchdruckerei in Görlitz," *Neues Lausitzisches Magazin* 35 (1859), 34–56.



FIGURE 3.14

Josef Metzker and Georg Scharffenbergk, *Abcontrafteitung der Stadt Goerlitz im 1565 Jar* (1566), Woodcut in 12 parts, Kulturhistorisches Museum Görlitz. Printed with permission.

THE GÖRLITZ PRINTING OFFICE

Fritsch was succeeded by his erstwhile apprentice Johannes Rhambau (ca. 1565–1634), who married one of Fritsch's daughters and bought the printing operation and the bookshop that went with it. It was Rhambau who is known to have printed the only work by Böhme published during his lifetime, *Der Weg zu Christo*, around the beginning of his final year 1624. Sigismund von Schweinichen (1590–1664) took the initiative and financed the printing.⁴⁷

An elite circle of rectors, scholars, teachers, and other men of education dominated the cultural life of Görlitz: there were clergymen, physicians, and council members associated with Scultetus who was the most famous and significant citizen, known far beyond the confines of his city.⁴⁸

Scultetus was the guiding spirit for decades in the spheres of politics, culture, and above all science and scholarship. He hailed from the outer precinct on the Rabenberg and shared his talent for mathematics with his older brother Zacharias, the architect of the great sun dial on the City Council Apothecary facing the Lower Market. Beginning in 1557, Bartholomäus studied mathematics and astronomy in Wittenberg and in 1559 in Leipzig with Professor Johann Humelius (1518–1562) with whom he cooperated to produce a map of the

47 Lemper, *Jacob Böhme*, 86–96.

48 Martin Reuther, "Der Görlitzer Bürgermeister, Mathematiker, Astronom und Kartograph Bartholomäus Scultetus (1540–1614)," *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Technischen Hochschule Dresden* 5 (1955/56), 1133–1161, Ernst Koch, "Moskowiter in der Oberlausitz und Bartholomäus Scultetus. Kulturbilder aus der zweiten Hälfte des xvi. Jahrhunderts," *Neues Lausitzisches Magazin* 83 (1907), 1–90, 84; (1908), 41–109; 85 (1909), 255–290; 86 (1910), 1–80.



FIGURE 3.15 Bartholomäus Scultetus, Woodcut,
Kulturhistorisches Museum Görlitz.
Printed with permission.
BARTHOLOMÄUS SCULTETUS
(1540–1614)

territories of Meissen and Upper Lusatia. Scultetus served as the executor of the deceased Homelius in publishing the Meissen map of 1568. As a student, Scultetus met the Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe (1546–1601), with whom he remained bound in life-long friendship.

In 1567, Scultetus returned to Upper Lusatia. He earned his living by producing sun dials and horoscopes, an endeavor that acquainted him with the worthies of Görlitz society, including the provincial governor of Upper Lusatia, Count Joachim von Schlick (in office 1562–1572). In 1570, the council offered him a position as a professor of mathematics at the Gymnasium, but it was only his marriage to the bookdealer Winckler's widow, a woman fourteen years his senior, that elevated him into the circle of council members in 1578. He acquired brewing rights when the brewing yard at Petergasse 3 came into his possession. After making himself indispensable to the city council, he became an official member and was elected mayor no less than six times. He was

esteemed not only for fastidiousness in keeping city and brewing registries, but no less so for his scientific achievements. His book on the production of sundials became a bestseller.⁴⁹ The copy presented to the Saxon Elector Prince August (1526–1586; elector after 1553) was valued enough to be bound in leather for the elector's personal library.

Scultetus put science before bigotry. In the framework of his links with the Catholic Church through the Bautzen administrator Johann Leisentritt and the Catholic scholars Christoph Clavius (1538–1612) and Johannes Possevin, S.J. (died 1611), Scultetus helped carry out the calculations needed for the papal calendar reform of Pope Gregory XIII (1502–1585). Only the determined intervention of Scultetus brought about a quick introduction of the reform in Upper Lusatia in 1584. In contrast, it was only in 1700 that the neighboring territory of Saxony adopted a modern calculation of time. Scultetus' knowledge and interests extended beyond mathematics and astronomy. In pursuit of the new medicine of Paracelsus, he oversaw in 1575 the publication of a treatise on plague by the famous and controversial medical theorist.⁵⁰

Scultetus undertook seven surveying expeditions through Upper Lusatia in the years 1581 to 1585. His goal was the completion of a more precise map than the one published in 1568. In 1593, the new map was printed in Görlitz.

Scultetus' map indicates the linguistic border between the German- and Sorbic-speaking populations of the territory. Original printings and printer's blocks have been preserved in the Culture-Historical Museum and the Upper Lusatian Library in Görlitz. Scultetus's reputation extended as far as the court of the Russian Czar Ivan IV (1530–1584). A Russian delegation visited Görlitz and attempted to attract the cartographer to Russia. The czar's death brought an end to such prospects.

No monograph has been dedicated to Scultetus, nor has his possible influence on Böhme been investigated. Numerous manuscript sources disappeared in the chaos of the Second World War. Only now some of them are becoming accessible again in Polish archives and libraries. Among the losses are his records of the plague. The lists that Scultetus made of all who died of plague in the years 1585–86 together with their addresses are among the earliest known records offering insight into connections between epidemic disease and the social structure of a city.⁵¹ Of further interest is the contact that Scultetus cultivated with the great astronomer Johannes Kepler (1571–1630). Kepler visited

49 Bartholomäus Scultetus, *De Gnomonice de Solaris* (Görlitz: Fritsch, 1572).

50 *Vom Ursprung der Pestilentz und ihren zufallenden Kranckheiten* (Basel: Peter Perna, 1575).

51 Richard Jecht, "Die Pest in Görlitz 1585/86," *Neues Lausitzisches Magazin* 109 (1933), 142–148.



FIGURE 3.16 Bartholomäus Scultetus' map of Upper Lusatia (1593), Woodcut, Kulturhistorisches Museum Görlitz. Printed with permission.
BARTHOLOMÄUS SCULTETUS' MAP OF UPPER LUSATIA (1593)

him in the spring of 1607. Another guest in his house was the Cabbalist and physician, Dr. Balthasar Walter (1558–ca. 1630), a promoter and friend of Böhme.

Scultetus was the center of the society known as the *Convivium Musicum*. Prominent citizens of Görlitz and guests from farther away came together regularly in order to make music and to eat, drink, and converse as a group.⁵² In 1613, only one year after Scultetus' death, this society of the educated dissolved. Its exclusive circle had never included the master shoemaker Böhme, though membership extended to one of his relatives, the brother of his mother-in-law, Joseph Bartsch, the senior member of the butchers' guild. The membership lists encompass physicians, apothecaries, teachers, pastors, and council members. The urban world of Böhme was intimate, hierarchical, and tied by various

52 Max Gondolatsch, "Der Personenkreis um das Görlitzer Convivium und Collegium Musicum im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert," *Neues Lausitzisches Magazin* 112 (1936), 76–135 and also Thomas Napp, "Convivium und Collegium Musicum im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert," *Neues Lausitzisches Mag Abstand!!* *azin* Neue Folge 7 (2004), 87.

trade routes, personal contacts, and economic and intellectual interactions to the larger world.

13 The Jewish Absence in Görlitz

One element is significantly missing in the panorama of Görlitz. Since 1395, Jewish life had been suspended. We can assume that Jews had played a significant role in the rise of the city since its founding. The oldest urban record contains numerous references to the Jewish bathhouse, temple court, and school.⁵³ As many as fifteen family names testify to the size of the community. Even a special Jewish oath has been preserved from the early fourteenth century.⁵⁴

The coexistence of Jews and Christians was shattered by the plague epidemic that swept Europe in mid-century. The Jews of Görlitz were among the many expelled in consequence. Their properties accrued to the Bohemian king and were distributed to local burghers. Thus, in 1350, the synagogue was transferred to Cunrad the apothecary and his heirs.⁵⁵ Some expelled families evidently resettled in Breslau (Wrocław).⁵⁶ After 1384, Jewish names are again recorded in Görlitz, reflecting the tolerant influence of Upper Lusatian governor Beneš von der Dubá (Landvogt, 1369–1389) who had arranged for Jewish settlement in Bautzen. Between 1383 and 1386, no fewer than fifteen Jews bought houses in Görlitz, indicating a major resettlement. Sadly, when Beneš was replaced in 1389, an even more drastic phase in the Upper Lusatian policy toward Jews began. The territorial nobility, the Görlitz town council, and Duke Johann of Bohemia (1370–1396, Duke of Görlitz from 1376–1396)⁵⁷ reconfirmed the expulsion. The mayor and council secured a document from Prague, forbidding Jewish permanent residence. Jewish houses and properties were confiscated.⁵⁸ Even after these measures, a few families were able to resettle and buy houses

53 See Siegfried Hoche, „Geschichte der Görlitzer Juden im Mittelalter“, *Die Juden von Görlitz. Beiträge zur jüdischen Geschichte der Stadt Görlitz* (Görlitz: Verlag Gunter Oettel, 2013), 25–34, here 26.

54 Siegfried Hoche, *Geschichte der Görlitzer Juden im Mittelalter*, 27.

55 Erhard Hartstock, „Geduldet, angesehen und verfolgt: Aus der Geschichte der Juden in der Oberlausitz“, *Juden in der Oberlausitz. Mit Beiträgen von Erhard Hartstock, Roland Otto, Hans-Eberhardt Kaulfürst, André Bockholt und Katrin Griebel* (Bautzen: Lusatia Verlag, 1998), 10.

56 Siegfried Hoche, *Geschichte der Görlitzer Juden im Mittelalter*, 28.

57 Über das Görlitzer Herzogtum siehe: Richard Gelbe, „Herzog Johann von Görlitz“, *Neues Lausitzisches Magazin* 59 (1883), 1–201.

58 Siegfried Hoche, *Geschichte der Görlitzer Juden im Mittelalter*, 29.

in the city in 1391.⁵⁹ The ducal court in Görlitz was evidently in need of the liquidity provided by Jewish moneylenders. But in 1395, the city acquired a so-called Jewish privilege,⁶⁰ giving the council the power to expel the Jews in perpetuity.⁶¹ This put an end to the Jewish presence in Görlitz until 1847, when the new Prussian administration allowed them to settle again in the city.

In 1433, during the Hussite Wars, the city council again obtained permission from Emperor Sigismund for twelve Jewish families. This time, however, none took advantage of it,⁶² though their presence would have benefited Jews and gentiles alike. According to the commercial records, the merchants of Görlitz relied on credit from Jewish moneylenders.⁶³ What exclusion meant in practice can be inferred from the *Diarium Consulare* of Mayor Paul Schneider. Any Jew passing through Görlitz was required to stay with the master furrier Hansen and could do so only from Wednesday night until Thursday morning for a fee of two groschen. The master furrier would accompany his Jewish guests on their appointed rounds and report on their activities to the mayor. Otherwise nothing short of conversion opened the doors of Görlitz to the Jews who had formerly resided in the city.⁶⁴

This is the remote historical background of an incident involving Mayor Scultetus in the year 1585. The famous Jewish scholar, Rabbi Löw (Jehuda ben Bezal' el Löw, who was born between 1512 und 1525 and died in 1609), paused in Görlitz en route from Prague to Poland. He stayed in the Blue Lion Inn located at 22 Upper Market. There he received a visit from the mayor. It is thought that Scultetus, mindful of the recent Gregorian calendar reform, solicited information on the calculation of the Jewish calendar.⁶⁵ In any event, this is one of the few known records of a Jewish visitor to the city during the sixteenth century.

59 Siegfried Hoche, *Geschichte der Görlitzer Juden im Mittelalter*, 31.

60 Urkunde vom 21. September 1395, cited in Siegfried Hoche, *Geschichte der Görlitzer Juden im Mittelalter*, 31.

61 Siegfried Hoche, *Geschichte der Görlitzer Juden im Mittelalter*, 31.

62 Ratsarchiv Görlitz, Urkunde vom 27. November 1433, Basel, Selecta 275/218, cited in Siegfried Hoche, *Geschichte der Görlitzer Juden im Mittelalter*, 33.

63 Siegfried Hoche, *Geschichte der Görlitzer Juden im Mittelalter*, 33. Even now the sources invite further research.

64 In 1510 two such baptisms are recorded, in 1534 three, in 1721 six, in 1724 fourteen, and in 1733 twenty-four. Siegfried Hoche, *Geschichte der Görlitzer Juden im Mittelalter*, 33 (no source cited).

65 Ernst Koch, „Moskowiter in der Oberlausitz,“ *Neues Lausitzisches Magazin* 84 (1908), 88.

14 **The End of an Epoch**

But now we come to the feverish end of this epoch. Böhme's most productive period as an author begins in 1618, just as the political events in Bohemia are coming to a tragic climax. He breaks his promise to the clergy of Görlitz and begins his final years of intensive writing. When he dies in the autumn of 1624, no one could have guessed that the war would last a full thirty years, or that the city would be drawn into the ongoing warfare, once in 1633 and again in 1641. The city would suffer the quartering of troops, epidemic death by plague and typhus, and serious economic losses. Nearly all the landmarks are still recognizable in the city today, but they stare at us out of the panorama created by Metzker and Scharffenbergk from a long vanished world.

Jacob Böhme and His Networks

Leigh T.I. Penman

On 25 March 1624, Jacob Böhme was summoned before the city council of Görlitz in Upper Lusatia to answer accusations of religious heterodoxy levelled by Gregor Richter (1560–1624), the chief pastor in Görlitz, prompted by complaints from Abraham Friese (1570–1627), head pastor in the city of Liegnitz (Legnica). In his written defence, Böhme emphasized that although the circulation and uptake of his writings had caused some controversy, his works were well received, even encouraged, by ‘many learned men such as pastors, physicians, nobles and dukes, yea even princes.’¹ In a subsequent letter Böhme claimed to know ‘several hundred persons’ ready to defend his writings and doctrines from calumny.² Despite these indications that Böhme possessed a broad support base, the city council, weary of fomenting a damaging religious controversy, recommend that Böhme remove himself from the city, however briefly, until the dispute simmered down. Böhme himself took solace in the fact that no explicit order had been given for him to depart Görlitz into exile: he took the statement of the council merely as a ‘warning.’³

Although Böhme claimed that great men and women read his books, although he likely had friends on the council and hundreds more ready to defend him, they could not save him from political expediency. After his audience with the council, Böhme was insulted by a group of Richter’s followers, and later, in the summer of 1624, the windows of his house were shattered by a stone-throwing mob.⁴ Yet although powerless to halt his persecution, Böhme must indeed have had many supporters both in Görlitz and abroad. His enemies

1 Unless otherwise indicated, Böhme’s works are cited according to Jacob Böhme, *Sämtliche Schriften*, ed. by Will-Erich Peuckert. 11 vols. (Stuttgart: Friedrich Frommans Verlag, Günther Holzboog, 1955–1961). This edition will be cited as SS, followed by the volume and page numbers. An exception is provided when citing Böhme’s letters (printed in SS vol. 9), where I refer to the epistle number and the paragraph, in order to ease reference for readers with access to different editions of the epistles. The quote is from Böhme’s petition to the Görlitz City Council, Epistle 54.8. (3 April 1624).

2 Ep. 58.1 (Böhme to Martin Moser? 6 May 1624).

3 Ep. 53.14 (Böhme to Johann Sigismund von Schweinichen, 6 April 1624).

4 Ep. 53.15; Ep. 64.8 (Böhme to Tobias Kober, 13 June 1624).

confirm as much: Gregor Richter himself implored the people of Görlitz to 'protect themselves' from the cobbler's disciples, 'be they nobles or doctors, tailors, men or women,' and complained of Böhme's reception throughout Silesia (*Elysias etiam fœdasti dogmate terras*).⁵

Despite these hints concerning Böhme's possession of substantial followings at several levels of society, we possess very little idea of who these people were and how many persons populated Böhme's networks of friends and opponents. Furthermore, we are also largely in the dark concerning what roles they might have played in influencing and shaping his world. Yet their importance can hardly be denied. They are the people who read Böhme's works, who prepared scribal copies of them, who distributed them among yet other friends, and who had them printed. They are the people who – as in cases like Gregor Richter, Balthasar Tielckau von Hochkirch, Paul Kaym, Esajas Stiefel, or Balthasar Walther – also shaped the very subject matter of Böhme's works. While other contributions to this volume explore specific instances of movements, personalities, or debates which helped to shape Böhme's world, the present article takes a slightly different approach to the problem of how we might fill out the blank spaces of Böhme's life. Building on a tradition of contextual archival research in Böhme studies reaching back to the nineteenth century, it has three major aims.⁶ First, it provides a brief statistical and geographical summary of what is known concerning the participants in Böhme's epistolary and interpersonal networks, based mainly on data

5 Gregor Richter, *Iudicium* (Görlitz: Johann Rhambau, 1624): 'Discipulumque ejus, quisquis sit, Nobilis, aut sit Doctor, seu Sartor, Vir Mulierve, cave.' On Böhme's conflict with Richter, see further Bo Andersson, 'Jacob Böhmes polemischer Konflikt mit Gregorius Richter,' in *Offenbarung und Episteme. Zur europäischen Wirkung Jacob Böhmes im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*. Wilhelm Kühlmann & Friedrich Vollhardt, eds. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 33–46.

6 Hermann Adolph Fechner, *Jacob Böhme: sein Leben und seine Schriften, mit Benutzung handschriftlicher Quellen dargestellt* (Görlitz: Oberlausitzischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften, 1857); Richard Jecht, 'Die Lebensumstände Jakob Böhmes,' in *Jakob Böhme. Gedenkgabe der Stadt Görlitz zu seinem 300jährigen Todestag* (Görlitz: Magistrat der Stadt Görlitz, 1924), 7–75; Ernst-Heinz Lemper, 'Voraussetzungen zur Beurteilung des Erfahrungs- und Schaffensumfelds Jakob Böhmes,' in: *Gott, Natur und Mensch in der Sicht Jakob Böhmes und seiner Rezeption*, Jan Garewicz & Alois Haas, eds. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1994), 41–69; Carlos Gilly, 'Wege der Verbreitung von Jacob Böhmes Schriften in Deutschland und den Niederlanden,' in *Jacob Böhmes Weg in die Welt. Zur Geschichte der Handschriftensammlung, Übersetzungen und Editionen von Abraham Willemsz van Beyerland*, Theodor Harmsen, ed. (Amsterdam: In de Pelikaan, 2007), 71–99; Ferdinand van Ingen, *Jacob Böhme in seiner Zeit* (Stuttgart-Bad Canstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 2015). See also Leigh T.I. Penman, 'Böhme's Intellectual Networks and the Heterodox Milieu of his Theosophy,' in *An Introduction to Jacob Böhme. Four Centuries of Thought and Reception*, Ariel Hessayon and Sarah Apetrei, eds. (London: Routledge, 2014), 57–76.

in Böhme's extant epistles. Second, it points to several circumstances that help illuminate the pre-existing religious, scientific, cultural, and intellectual forces which shaped Böhme's world, especially in Görlitz. Third, it points to some of the different ways that Böhme's work was read and received by its audiences, and how this reception fed back into Böhme's own thought.

The kinds of evidence available to document the arguments pursued in this article – mostly letters, wills, book dedications, and similar – are more suggestive than conclusive. Nevertheless, this article is an attempt to sketch a more complete picture of the world of an individual and to suggest further directions in which new documentary discoveries could potentially be made. Such discoveries shed light on not only Böhme's thought, but also on seventeenth-century cryptoradical religious cultures more generally. The research underpinning it is part of a broader project to collect and order prosopographical data concerning figures mentioned in connection with Böhme, albeit foremost his epistles, between 1575 and ca. 1630. This information is intended to inform a series of shorter studies, as well as, ultimately, a scholarly edition of Böhme's letters.⁷ So far, the research has led to the discovery of several entirely new items of Böhme's correspondence, as well as uncovering a host of biographical information concerning influential figures within Böhme's networks, many of whom were previously known by their names alone.

That Böhme is a philosophical figure of transcendent historical significance is beyond doubt, and the uniqueness of his oeuvre is remarkable by any measure. A study concentrating on those who comprised Böhme's networks in no way diminishes his exceptionality, but does contextualise it. It is my contention that Böhme as a historical figure is all the richer when seen as part of a network of persons who dealt with, and were inspired by, theosophical ideas. For however Böhme may appear to modern observers gazing back at the past from the vantage point of the twenty-first century, he appeared very differently to his friends and followers. The letters of two early readers and copyists, the Torgau chiliast Paul Nagel (1575–1624) to the physician Arnold Kerner (ca.1585–after 1627) in Leipzig, offer a prime example. They did not consider Böhme a genius who stood apart from the throng of contemporary self-proclaimed

7 Some results have already been published as Leigh T.I. Penman, 'Statt "Briefe Böhmes an ..." nun eine erste "Korrespondenz mit ...". Nachricht von der Entdeckung zweier Briefe Paul Kayms an Jacob Böhme.' In: *Morgenröte im Aufgang. Beiträge einer Tagung zum 400. Jahrestag der Entstehung von Jacob Böhmes Erstschrift*. Günther Bonheim and Thomas Reghly, eds. (Berlin: Weißensee Verlag, 2017), 197–208; Leigh T.I. Penman, 'The Broken Tradition: Uncovering Errors in the Correspondence of Jacob Böhme,' *Aries. Journal for the Study of Western Esotericism* 18 (2018): 96–125.

prophets, seers, wise-men, pretenders, visionaries, and men of God, but as only one of several members of their networks interested in theosophical Christianity, competing for the attention, support, and allegiance of contemporaries.⁸ It is to these networks that we first turn.

1 Böhme's Networks: a Brief Sketch

Our greatest source of information concerning Böhme and his network of followers, supporters, and opponents is his correspondence, often referred to as 'Sendschreiben' or 'Sendbriefe.' These terms, which are seventeenth-century synonyms for 'open letters,' are misnomers. The vast majority of Böhme's letters were not written for the information or edification of a community of people, but simply the addressee. However, as contemporary readers of Böhme's works began to realise the value of the letters as explanatory aides for his longer writings, several began to be circulated – sometimes in excerpts, often with names and dates deleted – as 'Sendbriefe.' There are presently eighty-four genuine pieces of Böhme's correspondence known to be extant, all written between 1618 and 1624. The majority of these, eighty-one letters, consist of Böhme's outgoing correspondence; at present, only three letters written to Böhme himself have been identified.⁹ Forty-one of the outgoing epistles are preserved as autographs, while the remaining thirty-seven letters exist only in the form of scribal copies.¹⁰ The content of one letter is known only in the form of a short abstract of its contents prepared by an early copyist. Two additional letters are only extant in printed form. Although Böhme claimed to have 'several hundred' followers, the extant letters are addressed to around thirty-six different individuals, the vast majority of whom lived in Upper Lusatia and Lower Silesia.¹¹

Within Böhme's writings, there are approximately eighty distinct contemporaries of the theosopher mentioned by name or by title; almost all of these in his correspondence. Evidence from other contemporary or near-contemporary sources brings the total number of names connected with Böhme during

8 Kerner's correspondence with Nagel is preserved in Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek, Ms o 356.

9 See further Penman, 'Statt "Böhmes Briefe an..."', 197–208.

10 Several further epistolary items, including at least one contemporary *dubium*, are also known but not included in this survey.

11 The number of recipients cannot be stated with precision, given the survival of more than ten letters without any indication of the addressee.

his lifetime to around 150 distinct, identifiable individuals. While a handful of these persons were simply business acquaintances of Böhme, or persons largely incidental to the drama of his life and work, such as letter carriers or intermediaries, the majority were Böhme's supporters or opponents; personalities able to impress themselves upon and shape Böhme's work, whether positively or negatively.

In geographical terms, Böhme's network was not particularly widespread. A continuously-updated map of the location of Böhme's correspondents, supporters, and opponents otherwise mentioned in his letters and in other contemporary documents has been made available online.¹² Almost all figures, friends and foes, lived within a radius of ca. 180 kilometres of Böhme's home in Görlitz. In other words, virtually all of those known to Böhme could be reached on foot within at most five days. Some participants in Böhme's networks, however, found themselves in more distant locations, like Lüneburg and Lübeck in northern Germany, Troppau (Opava) in Upper Silesia, and even as far afield as Vilnius in Lithuania.

Many of these personalities became aware of Böhme through his tracts or the 'missionary' activity of agents and intermediaries like the wandering Paracelsian physician Balthasar Walther (1558–ca.1630) or the copyist Christian Bernhard (d. 1649) of Sagan (Żagań).¹³ It was Walther, for example, who after November 1623 won adherents in northern Germany to Böhme's cause, among them Johann Staricius (ca. 1580–1628), the Lübeck patrician Leonhard Elver (ca. 1601?–1649), the widow of the Lüneburg pastor Paul Gesner (1588–1622), and perhaps also the Hamburg scholar Joachim Morsius (1594–ca.1644).¹⁴ The majority of other figures came into contact with Böhme either by reading scribal copies of his writings, or by post, following recommendations from trusted intermediaries.¹⁵ Thus, while Böhme's networks may have been

12 See <http://tinyurl.com/boehmemap>. Also available at: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1bfuYuFjeKjSYnt6BgsIMzYfdJHI&usp=sharing>.

13 On Walther see Leigh T.I. Penman, "Ein Liebhaber des Mysterii, und ein großer Wanderer desselben." Toward the Life of Balthasar Walther, a Wandering Paracelsian Physician,' *Sudhoffs Archiv* 94/1 (2010): 73–99; Penman, 'Walther, Balthasar,' in *Killy Literaturlexikon*, 2nd ed., eds. Wilhelm Kühlmann et al. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), vol. 12, 129–131.

14 Morsius is often identified as the addressee of Böhme's ep. 55, yet there exists no definitive evidence to document this assertion, and in my opinion the letter itself might have been written to any of several readers of Böhme's works in Lübeck. See further Heinrich Schneider, *Joachim Morsius und sein Kreis* (Lübeck: Quitzlow, 1929), 42; Will-Erich Peuckert, *Die Rosenkreutzer. Zur Geschichte einer Reformation* (Jena: Diederichs, 1928), 288–289, 423.

15 Concerning Böhme's strategies for building his network, see Tünde Beatrix Karnitscher, 'Zur Entstehung und Erweiterung der Rezipientenkreise um Jakob Böhme (1575–1624),'

relatively widespread, connections between nodes within the networks were often bound across these distances by pre-existing relations of trust.

2 Cultures of Knowledge in Böhme's Görlitz

But Böhme's story begins in Görlitz, which lay at the crossroads of the *via regia*, the largest trading highway in central Europe, with the Zittau *Jacobsweg*, a major road which led south to the imperial capital in Prague, and north, ultimately to the trading ports of the Baltic sea.¹⁶ At the time, Görlitz was a major city. Boasting nearly 10,000 inhabitants by 1600, it was smaller than nearby Dresden (ca. 14,000 inhabitants) and slightly larger than Liegnitz (ca. 8,000 inhabitants). It boasted an imperial woad staple, which made it a centre for dying and cloth-making. Görlitz was a key commercial location and a comparatively wealthy city.

Görlitz also boasted a booming intellectual culture. In 1565 the Görlitz *Gymnasium Augustum* was established by order of the city council, bringing an educational institution capable of providing university-level instruction to the city, and with it the creation of a cadre of local humanistic elite.¹⁷ With a curriculum erected on strong Melancthonian foundations, it became an attractive destination for students from surrounding territories – including Lower Silesia, Bohemia, and Moravia – but also for students of varying confessions. Görlitz also possessed a small but influential elite who were allegedly adherents of 'Schwenckfeldianism' including three families with representatives on the city council: the Hoffmanns, the Schützes, and the Enders von Sercha.¹⁸

Neues Lausitzisches Magazin 138 (2016): 51–68.

16 See further Ines Haaser's contribution to the present volume. I examine Böhme's Görlitz in greater detail in Leigh T.I. Penman, 'The Fire World: An Intellectual Geography of Jacob Böhme's Upper Lusatia,' in: *Intellectual Geography: Comparative Studies, 1500–1750*. Howard Hotson and Kat Hill, eds. *Forthcoming*.

17 For an account of the impact of the Gymnasium both in Görlitz and abroad see Ines Anders and Mattias Francke, *Denkfabrik 1600: Das Gymnasium Augustum und das Görlitzer Geistesleben* (Zittau: Günther Oettel, 2015); Joachim Bahlcke, 'Das Görlitzer Gymnasium Augustum. Entwicklung, Struktur und regionale Ausstrahlung einer höheren Schule im konfessionellen Zeitalter,' in: *Die Oberlausitz im frühneuzeitlichen Mitteleuropa*. Joachim Bahlcke, ed. (Leipzig: Verlag der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, 2007), 289–310.

18 A history based on now lost documentary sources is preserved in Wrocław, Biblioteka Uniwersytecka, AKC 1947/70 (ii): Christian Knauth, 'Historia Schwenckfeldianismi in Lusatia Sup. D.i. Gründlich historischer Bericht, was es mit denen Schwenckfeldern in Ober Lausitz besonders in Görlitz ... gehabt,' pp. 135–394.

Famously, the scientific and medical culture in Görlitz was to some extent defined by Paracelsian medicine and philosophy.¹⁹ In light of recent research it is enough here to mention the lasting influence of the eight-time mayor of Görlitz, Bartholomaeus Scultetus (1540–1614), who traded Paracelsian and magical writings with the aforementioned Balthasar Walther,²⁰ as well as the physician Abraham Behem (d. 1599), a brother-in-law of Scultetus and correspondent of the Zschopau pastor and cryptoradical theorist Valentin Weigel (1553–1588).²¹ Additionally, Görlitz was also fortunate enough to possess a series of chief pastors who were intellectually active, contributing further to the lively and literary atmosphere of the town. Most prominently there was Martin Moller the Elder (1547–1606), who served as *pastor primarius* between 1600 and 1606.²² Alongside Philip Nicolai (1556–1608) and Johann Arndt (1555–1621), Moller was one of the major figures in the so-called *Frömmigkeitswende* (devotional turn) in Lutheran confessional culture at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Moller's works, in particular his *Mysterium Magnum* (1595) and *Praxis evangelicorum* (1601), promoted a meditative spiritual approach to practical piety and may have influenced Böhme's own literary productions.²³ According to a report by the Görlitz historian Christian Knauthe (1706–1784), Moller hosted a

- 19 A foundational account is provided by Ernst-Heinz Lemper, 'Görlitz und der Paracelsismus,' *Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 18 (1970): 347–360. See further the material in Wilhelm Kühlmann and Joachim Telle, eds., *Der Frühparacelsismus (Corpus Paracelsisticum)*, 3 vols. (Tübingen/Berlin: Niemeyer/de Gruyter, 2001–13), vol. 3, 43–94, 525–543.
- 20 On Scultetus see Martin Reuther, 'Der Görlitzer Bürgermeister, Mathematiker, Astronom und Kartograph Bartholomäus Scultetus (1540–1614) und seine Zeit,' *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Technischen Hochschule Dresden* 5/6 (1955–56), 1133–1161; Ernst-Heinz Lemper, 'Anfänge akademischer Sozietäten in Görlitz und Bartholomäus Scultetus (1540–1614),' in *Europäische Sozietätsbewegungen und demokratische Tradition*, Klaus Garber & Heinz Wismann, eds. 2 vols. (Tübingen: Siebeck, 1996), 1152–1178.
- 21 Further on Behem, who was recognised throughout Lusatia and Saxony as a Paracelsian physician, see Karl von Weber, *Anna Churfürstin zu Sachsen, Ein Lebens- und Sittenbild aus dem sechzehnten Jahrhundert*, (Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1865), 481. A volume of Behem's chymical papers is preserved in Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Cod. Voss. Chym. F.18, and an additional copy of the same manuscript is located in London, British Library, MS Sloane 830. For basic data on Behem see Max Gondolatsch, 'Der Personenkreis um das Görlitzer Convivium und Collegium Musicum im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert,' *Neues lausitzisches Magazin* 112 (1936), pp. 76–155 at 101; Lemper, 'Görlitz und der Paracelsismus'; Ernst-Heinz Lemper, 'Paracelsisches Gedankengut im Werk Jakob Böhmes,' *Manuskripte – Thesen – Informationen* 5/1 (1994), 9–15; Behem's extant letter to Weigel is reproduced and analysed in Kühlmann and Telle, eds. *Corpus Paracelsisticum*, vol. 3, 525–543.
- 22 Elke Axmacher, *Praxis Evangelicorum. Theologie und Frömmigkeit bei Martin Moller (1547–1606)*. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989).
- 23 See further Lucinda Martin, 'Martin Moller and the "Crisis of Piety" of Jacob Böhme's Time,' in the present volume.

small conventicle (*Hauß-Convent*) which met regularly at his home to discuss prayer, matters of personal devotion, the soul's welfare, and practical Christianity. Böhme may well have attended.²⁴ Moller's successor, Gregor Richter, was a dedicated Melanchthonian and strident opponent of Böhme's unlettered heretical recidivism. Early in his career he authored two separate versions of a Melanchthonian encyclopaedia, intended for use as a textbook in the *Gymnasium Augustum*, and after 1606 issued a series of academic compilations, entitled *Axiomata*, devoted to diverse subjects, including history, politics, and political economy.²⁵

It has often been something of a puzzle for Böhme researchers to explain how this unlettered man could have come into contact with any of these cultural streams which circulated and perhaps even defined the mental worlds of Görlitz and its surrounds. But in light of his networks, perhaps the question should be turned on its head: how could Böhme *not* be aware of the various influences all about him? Today, Görlitz is a somewhat isolated town on the German/Polish border, and thus it is easy for historians to imagine a figure working in isolation. But in Böhme's own time, it was the centre of a dynamic world: a place famed for its culture and economic and intellectual influence.

A glance at some of those figures from Görlitz whom we know by name and who populated Böhme's network demonstrates his contact with all levels of local society. Among Böhme's Görlitz friends we can count the Paracelsian physicians Valentin Tschirness (1585–1626), Tobias Kober (1587–1625), and the civic physician Gregor Schön (1573–1633).²⁶ We should recall that Balthasar Walther

24 Wroclaw, BU, Akc. 1947/70 (iii), 430 (Christian Knauth, 'Bibliotheca Böhmistica,' ca. 1780).

25 Joseph F. Freedman, 'The "Melanchthonian Encyclopedia" [*Judicia florentis scholae Melanchthonis* (1592)/*CRISEIS Melanchthonianae* (1597)] of Gregor Richter (1560–1624),' *Fragmenta Melanchthoniana. Band 3. Melanchthons Wirkung in der europäischen Bildungsgeschichte*. Günter Frank & Sebastian Lalla, eds. (Ubstadt-Weiher: Verlag Regionalkultur, 2007), 105–141. Freedman also provides a good bibliography of Richter's works. A balanced account of Richter's career, superbly contextualised, is provided by Werner Heimbach, 'Das Urteil des Görlitzer Oberpfarrers Richter über Jakob Böhme,' *Herbergen der Christenheit* 9 (1973/74), 97–151.

26 Tschirness is only mentioned in Böhme's epistles obliquely, as one of the possible addressees of Ep. 28 (dated 6 July 1624), a letter which in my opinion is almost certainly to Christian Steinberg in Fürstenwalde. It is presently unknown how Tschirness's name came into connection with Böhme, but he was certainly a medical licentiate who dwelled in Görlitz; see Martin Mylius, 'Annales Gorlicenses,' in Christoph Manlius, ed., *Scriptores rerum Lusaticarum antike & recentiores ... tomi primi ... pars altera quae fata et historiam particularem inclytæ civitatis Gorlicensis* (Leipzig & Bautzen: David Richter, 1719), 77: '21 Oct [1613] D. Dethardus Horstius Comes Palatinus creavit in ædibus relictae viduæ Consultit. Viri Andr. Schepsii ... Valentinum vero Tschirnischium Gorl. Medicinæ Licentiatum.' On

was intimately connected to the Görlitz medical milieu. All of these figures possessed interests which had deep roots in Görlitz's cultural fabric: Walther had indeed also helped to shape it.

One famous institution with which Böhme's name has not previously been brought into connection is the *Gymnasium Augustum*, and yet it is apparent that by 1624 his works were being read by a cadre of students and instructors at the institution. Böhme knew Martin Moller the younger (1586–1649) – son of the former *pastor primarius* in Görlitz – in addition to the instructors Friedrich Rhenisch (1596–1632) and Paul Gebhardt (1590–1658).²⁷ Moller eventually served as an executor of Böhme's estate following the latter's death in 1624. Another figure associated with the Gymnasium who also read Böhme's works was Johannes Gsell (fl. 1612–1628) of Straßburg, the private tutor of the young Bohemian noble Karl von Zierotin (after 1604–bef. 1632). In 1625 Gsell befriended the Moravian pedagogue Jan Amos Comenius (1592–1670), and likely discussed with him Böhme's works in addition to the prophecies of Christoph Kotter (1585–1647).²⁸ Böhme's work, in other words, was being read and discussed favourably at one of the most significant institutes of higher education in central Europe.

Kober see Christian Knauth, *Die Ehre des Koberischen Geschlechts in Darstellung gelehrter und berühmter Kober seit 300. Jahren* (Görlitz: Fickelscherer, 1777), 11. Concerning Schön and his adherence to Böhme's doctrines, see Christian Becmann, *Exercitationes theologicae* (Amsterdam, 1643), 434: 'Anno 1625 Ehrenfried Hegenitius; & inprimis G[regor] Schonius Gorliti medius in literis ad nos propria manu exaratis testantur: Behmium legiste libros Tauleri, Thomæ de Kempis, Paracelsi & Weigelii: *Schoni*us, inquam, qui sutori huic ad invidiam usque adhæserat.'

27 For Böhme's references to the three instructors as friends and supporters, see Ep. 63.12 (Böhme to Tobias Kober, 31 May 1624) and Ep. 53.19 (Böhme to Johann Sigismund von Schweinichen, 6 April 1624). On Moller, see *Ars Funebris, Memoriae ... Dn. M. Martini Molleri ... in Gorlicensi Scholâ ... Rectore* (Görlitz: Martin Hermann, 1649). In my opinion Gebhardt was the addressee of Böhme's Ep. 59 of ca. 6 April 1624. He was also the author of a series of extracts of Böhme's writings, 'Appendix Zu dem Tractât der Der Drey PRINCIPIEN Göttliches Wesens gehörig. 2. Vom Dreyfachen Leben aus des Autoris Schriften durch Paul Gebhard gezogen,' preserved in Wrocław BU, Akc 1975/263, pp. 73–96. Biographical accounts of all three men can be found in the valuable manuscript by Gustav Sieg, 'Alphabetisches Verzeichnis der Schuler der Gymnasium Augustum Gorlicense, 1580–1648,' Görlitz, OLBdW, MS L XI 142, fols. 89r (Gebhardt); 215r (Moller); 268v (Rhenisch).

28 For Böhme and Gsell, see Ep. 62.9 (Böhme to Tobias Kober, May 1624): 'Wo ferne mein Weib nicht hätte meine Apologia von dem Praeceptor des jungen Herrn von Scheratin beim Schneider Lihnen wieder empfangen, dem ich sie hinterlassen habe ...'. On Comenius, Gsell and Zierotin, see František Hrubý, *Ladislav Velen z Žerotína* (Prague: Historický Klub v Praze, 1930), 157–158, 165, 186; Milada Blekastad, *Comenius. Versuch eines Umrisses von Leben, Werk und Schicksal des Jan Amos Komenský* (Oslo & Prague: Universitetsforlaget, 1969), 94, 101, 121–123.

Among the local gentry Böhme also counted friends. Karl Ender von Sercha (1579–1624) in Leopoldshain (Łagów) and his half-brother, Michael Ender von Sercha (1590–1637) in Hirschberg (Jelenia Góra), both of whom owned residences in Görlitz, were scions of one of the ‘Schwenckfeldian’ families of the town that had come to prominence in the late sixteenth-century.²⁹ Another noble who spent a great deal of time in Görlitz on account of his business interests was Kaspar von Fürstenau (1572–1649). Even before he first encountered Böhme and his writings in 1622 or 1623, Fürstenau had taken ‘pleasure in reading Weigelian and other profound writings concerning the *homo interior*, along with the writings of the brotherhood of the Rosy Cross, and also engaged in alchemical studies (*secretiora Studia*).’³⁰ Fürstenau was, in other words, already interested in theosophical materials before encountering Böhme. In 1624 Böhme himself wrote of his adherents in Lower Silesia that they

take their Christianity very seriously, based on following Christ: and these people read many good books, which lead to the correct foundations [of faith]. I was not the first to teach them the imitation of Christ, for they had had it beforehand, and they rejoice that God pours out such a high understanding to simple people in these last days, which is indeed a godly wonder.³¹

The case of Fürstenau and other friends and patrons makes clear that Böhme was not the only person in or around Görlitz whose interests encompassed

29 The term ‘Schwenckfelder’ is used advisedly, as in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the term was often used to designate a variety of cryptoheterodox forms of Christianity, and not strictly the doctrines of Kaspar Schwenckfeld von Ossig. On the presence of the Ender von Sercha family in Görlitz, and their responsibility for ‘Schwenckfeldian’ doctrines, see Knauthe, ‘Historia Schwenckfeldianismi.’

30 Christoph Richter, *Firmum ac indissolubile amoris vinculum ... Bey Bestattung Des ... H. Caspars von Fürstenaw ... Welcher Anno 1649, den 4 Februarii ... sanfft in HERRN entschlaffen ...* (Görlitz: Martin Hermann, [1649]), sig. h3v: ‘Den[n] er zur selbigen Zeit sich belieben lassen/ etwas in Weigelianische[n] und andern dergleichen tieffsinigen Schrifftten/ so auff den *interiorem hominem* gehn/ wie auch der *Fratrum Rosæ Crucis*, zu lessen/ und etliche *secretiora Studia* zu tractiren.’

31 Böhme, SS, vol.3, p. 392: ‘Man findet ia itzo in Schlesien viel trefflicher gelehrter, gottfürchtiger Männer, die wohl weiter sehen, als der Herr Primarius, denen ihr Christenthum recht Ernst ist, welche auf die Nachfolge Christi gehen; dieselben lesen viele gute Bücher, welche den rechten Grund führen. Sie haben die Nachfolge Christi nicht erst von mir gelernet, sondern vorhin gehabt, und erfreuen sich aber darüber, daß Gott so hohe Erkenntniß zu dieser letzten Zeit auch in einfältige Leute ausgieße, welches ja ein Wunder Gottes ist.’

theosophical doctrines, nor was he their only possible source. A prominent example of another contemporary and local figure spreading knowledge allegedly derived from angelic intelligences was Christoph Kotter, a tanner born in Langenau bei Görlitz (Dłużyna), but since 1615 a citizen of Sprottau (Szprotawa). From 1616 on Kotter experienced a series of sensational angelic visions which were promulgated in Görlitz and elsewhere. Among Kotter's supporters we can count the Görlitz *pastor primarius* Gregor Richter, who upon learning of Kotter's visions, preached about their veracity from the pulpit.³² Kotter furthermore belonged to Böhme's circle of friends, and attended Böhme on his deathbed.³³ All of this indicates that Böhme's own interests were not uncommon in the period and could evidently be discovered in the minds and mouths of persons in and around Görlitz.

One of the overlooked reservoirs of this cryptoradicalism was the bookshop and printery of Johann Rhambau (1563–1634). Originally of Leipzig, Rhambau married into the family of Ambrosius Fritsch (1523–1593), a known Schwenckfeldian as well as printer and bookseller in Görlitz.³⁴ Rhambau took over Fritsch's business in 1595, and by the late 1610s, his shop in Görlitz had become one of the most significant in central Europe for the sale of cryptoheterodox printed literature.³⁵ Thus Böhme could offer to supply a friend in 1619 with an exemplar of Pseudo-Weigel's *Dritter Theil des Gnothi Seautons* (1618) from

32 See the account of Gottfried Glich von Miltitz, preserved in Zittau, Christian Weise Bibliothek, Ms A27, concerning events in 1619: '... hierauf hat er [sc. Kotter] es [sc. his visionary message] zum ersten dem Primario und Obersten Prediger zu Görlitz, Herrn Gregorio Richter offenbaret, so wohl E.E. Rathe daselbst, ist auch von der Canzel solches zu man[n]igliches Wißenschaft abgekündigt: und man[n]iglich zue Buße ermahnet worden.' Böhme, as a member of Richter's congregation, almost certainly learnt of Kotter's prophecies from Richter.

33 See Tobias Kober, 'Umständlicher Bericht,' in SS, vol. 10, 41; Jana Hubková, 'Úděl proroka – případ Kryštof Kotter. K objevu nejstaršího dochovaného tisku Kotterova proroctví,' in *Korunní země v dějinách českého státu. IV, Náboženský život a církevní poměry v zemích koruny české ve 14.–17. století*. (Prague: Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Karlovy v Praze: Casablanca, 2009), pp. 626–640.

34 Knauth, 'Historia Schwenckfeldianismi', 237–251 which indicates that Fritsch was involved in the printing and selling of cryptoradical books in Görlitz. See further E. Thiel, 'Ambrosius Fritsch in Görlitz und seine Drucke (1565–1595),' *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens* 6 (1966), 1325–1370.

35 An example of the contemporary repute of the bookshop is the interest of Karel d.Ä von Zerotin, who, in a letter to Johann Gsell in Görlitz of 21 August 1624, wrote: 'Endlich bitt ich euch, ihr wollet auch bei den Buchführen umbsehen, ob diese Bücher vorhanden. Zu Prag ist nichts, man kann auch nichts von dannen bekommen.' See František Hrubý, *Étudiants tchèques aux écoles protestantes de l'Europe occidentale à la fin du 16e et au début du 17e siècle: Documents* (Brno: Universita J.E. Purkyně, 1970), 296.

Rhambau's shop, and he had likely acquired Weigel's *Kirchen oder Hauspostille* (1617) from the same source.³⁶ Rhambau himself additionally undertook the printing of a variety of cryptoradical works, including Böhme's own *Weg zu Christo* (1624) and Rosicrucian pamphlets. Rhambau himself may well have harboured sympathies for spiritualist religion: he carried letters for members of the sect of Esajas Stiefel and was personally known to Balthasar Walther.³⁷ As the above survey has suggested, Görlitz was home to cultures of spiritualist Protestantism which both pre-dated and existed independently of Böhme. His interaction with all of these streams helped to shape his thinking on a variety of subjects.

3 Böhme's *Elysium*

When the city council requested Böhme to leave Görlitz in March 1624, Gregor Richter bid farewell to his opponent in the classic style of his century, with a deprecatory verse (*Spottgedicht*):

GORLICIUM tandem te, Sutor, pellit ab urbe:
Et jubet ire illàc, quâ tua scripta valent.

The city of Görlitz drives you away, cobbler,
And orders you to go to that place where your works are esteemed.³⁸

A glance at the distribution map of Böhme's followers (see the URL at footnote 12, above) indicates that the majority of those who esteemed his works could be found in the villages and towns of the neighbouring territory of Lower Silesia.³⁹ No fewer than fifty-eight of the personalities we can connect to Böhme either lived in or came from this territory. This requires some explanation. Why was it that Böhme's work found its most fertile ground in Upper Lusatia and Lower Silesia, and not, for example, Bohemia, Brandenburg, or Saxony? Setting aside the vicissitudes of the survival of material evidence, the most obvious answer is geographical. Böhme's contacts largely dwelled in towns clustered

36 Ep. 9.14 (Böhme to Christian Bernhard, 12 September 1620); Ep. 12.59–60 (Böhme to Kaspar Lindner, 15 August 1621).

37 See Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek, Ms o 356, 60r (letter of Johann Rehefeldt to Arnold Kerner, 13 August 1622), discussing Rhambau's transport of letters and books for Walther.

38 Gregor Richter, *Judicium Gregorii Richteri Gorlicii ... de Fanaticis Sutoris Enthusiastici Libris ...* (Görlitz: Rhambau, 1624), reprinted in Jecht, 'Lebensumstände,' p. 72.

39 See <http://tinyurl.com/boehmemap>.

along the *via regia*, which ran from Görlitz, through Lauban (Lubań), Liegnitz, and Breslau (Wrocław).⁴⁰ This is not unexpected, because commercial and intellectual power often went hand in hand in this period. Furthermore, it reinforces the generally 'hand-to-hand' nature of the distribution of scribal copies of Böhme's works before his death in 1624. The networks of distribution were simultaneously networks of trust and of shared religious interests. As Böhme's letters demonstrate, his tracts often came to the attention of persons by way of having previously been entrusted to third parties. Yet the horizons of Böhme's world, and that of his network, were also to some extent defined by the channels and highways of the commercial world.

Another factor which conditioned the spread of Böhme's writings, and thereby the extent of his network in Lower Silesia, were political and religious factors.⁴¹ Like Upper Lusatia, Lower Silesia was a Bohemian crownland, subject to the administration of the imperial Kingdom of Bohemia, which had its capital in Prague. While an abstract imperial administration was nominally responsible for the fiscal affairs of the patchwork of principalities administered through an imperial college, the various secular noble courts, estates, residences, independent cities, dukedoms, principalities, and other political entities which made up the territory were largely responsible for their own affairs, including religious matters. This situation meant that Lutherans, Calvinists, Catholics, Schwenkfelders, and others were largely free to rub shoulders and pursue their own matters. While this occasionally resulted in tension and conflict, the situation was generally workable. Freedom of religion within the territory was furthermore guaranteed by imperial mandate. With no state church or administrative body responsible for religious affairs, Lower Silesia was an area especially ripe for the spread and reception of cryptoradical religious ideas, such as Böhme's.

Compounding the religious freedom in Lower Silesia was the political confusion of the period. In 1618 the Bohemian Revolt initiated a conflict which would eventually become the Thirty Years' War. In 1620 the estates of Bohemia elected the Calvinist Friedrich V (1596–1632) of the Palatinate to the kingship of the territory, a position that had traditionally been filled by members of the Habsburg monarchy. When Friedrich was overthrown by imperial forces at the Battle of White Mountain on 8 November 1620, having ruled for only a winter,

40 On the history of this important commercial highway, see Winfried Müller and Swen Steinberg, eds. *Menschen unterwegs. Die Via Regia und ihre Akteure. Essayband zur 3. Sächsischen Landesausstellung* (Dresden: Sandstein Verlag, 2011).

41 For the following paragraph see the discussions in Gustav Koffmane, *Die religiösen Bewegungen in der evangelischen Kirche Schlesiens während des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Breslau: Selbstverlag des Herausgebers, 1880); Siegfried Wollgast, 'Morphologie schlesischer Religiosität in der Frühen Neuzeit,' in: *Kulturgeschichte Schlesiens in der Frühen Neuzeit*. Klaus Garber, ed. 2 vols. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2005), vol. 1, pp. 113–190.

authorities in Lower Silesia and Upper Lusatia felt – rightfully, as it turns out – that their independence, particularly in matters of religious freedom, was under threat. Promulgated after mid-1621, Böhme’s increasingly insistent message of a coming age of spiritual peace and the defeat of the forces of Babylon resonated with readers and admirers throughout Lusatia and Silesia, probably on account of the confluence of circumstances.

4 Contemporaries Reading Böhme – Böhme Reading Contemporaries

Against this background it is not difficult to see how and why Bohme found an audience. Or rather *audiences*. For Böhme’s work was decidedly complex, confusing, and complicated. Its significance, outside of its persistent call for the reader to experience rebirth in the spirit, to cast off the old Adam, to renounce the fleshly world of Babylon and approach Christ directly and piously, was notoriously difficult to unravel. This much is not only attested by Böhme’s works themselves, but also by the reactions of his earliest readers, who in their letters often wrote to the Görlitzer asking for clarification or explanation of this or that concept in his works.⁴² As such, Böhme’s difficult corpus of writings could be read in a variety of different ways, and all manner of readings and meanings could be read into them. What were the possibilities? One could read Böhme’s works in the sense of meditative or contemplative ‘interior’ Christianity. One could read the theosopher’s works as giving advice concerning true Christian practice. Others of Böhme’s works could be read for their prophetic value. With his ongoing project to chart the cosmogony and structure of our world, Böhme’s speculations could even be appreciated by readers primarily interested in natural philosophy. There was therefore Böhme the prophet. There was the *Philosophus Teutonicus*, the master of the vernacular language, who could be identified as part of a broader movement to promote the German language within the Holy Roman Empire. And of course there were numerous possibilities beyond these. In the paragraphs that follow, I want to point to a couple of examples which demonstrate the reception and reading of Böhme’s works within different milieux by contemporaries.

Firstly, there is devotional literature. That Böhme himself was concerned with Christian practice, including prayer, penance, and devotional activities, can hardly be questioned. Among his tracts are several pieces devoted to questions of practical Christianity, and in the religious confusion of the period, their appeal to potential readers is self-evident. Böhme’s former pastor, Martin

42 Certainly this is the tenor of Paul Kaym’s letters to Böhme. See Penman, ‘Statt “Briefe Böhmes an ...”’.

Moller the Elder, was a widely-read author of devotional works, and Johann Arndt's *Vier Bücher vom Wahren Christenthumb* (1606–1610) was amongst the most read works of the seventeenth century. The only book of Böhme's to be printed during his lifetime was a selection of devotional writings issued at the beginning of 1624 under the title *Der Weg zu Christo*, which was printed in Görlitz by Rhambau.⁴³ It was this work which triggered an invitation for Böhme to come to Dresden in the summer of 1624, where Böhme made contact with powerful supporters at the Electoral Saxon court. Another connection to contemporary readers and authors of devotional literature comes in the form of one of Böhme's patrons, Rosina Specht (1580–1639), sister of Karl and Michael Ender von Sercha. In a letter of 1622, Böhme greeted her as a 'co-sister in the Lord' (*mitschwester im Herrn*), which is to say, a true supporter of Böhme's theosophical Christianity.⁴⁴ But Specht was also a patron of another major contemporary author of devotional literature, the Fraustadt pastor Valerius Herberger (1562–1627).⁴⁵ For Johann Sigismund von Schweinichen, who was publisher of *Der Weg zu Christo*, and presumably also for Specht, the chief value of Böhme's works lay in its practical, devotional, qualities. The same may well have gone for Sigismund von Rechenberg the Younger (d. 1642) in Purschkau (Przybysów), who was a copyist of Böhme's writings as well as a supporter of Herberger.⁴⁶

Others read Böhme in a prophetic sense, as a man whose divine speech could interpret and give shape to the present, and perhaps even predict the course of future events. And in a time when such great political and religious confusion reigned, it is hardly surprising that Böhme's cryptic expressions were read in this manner. The clearest example of this is in Böhme's letter of 20 February 1623 to an unknown recipient, probably Adam von Schweinichen (1581–1643), in which the Görlitzer explicates and predicts the current course of

43 Böhme's devotional works include the texts collected in his *Der Weg zu Christo* (No Place [Görlitz]: No Printer [Johann Rhambau], 1622 [i.e. 1624], as well as his unfinished 'Gebetbüchlein auff alle tage in der wochen' (1624), reprinted in Buddecke, ed., *Jacob Böhme: Die Urschriften*, vol. 2 (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Friedrich Fromman Verlag (Günther Holzboog), 1966), 303–332.

44 Ep. 73.5 (Böhme to Karl Ender von Sercha, 1622).

45 Specht was the dedicatee of Herberger, *Der Zwelffte Theil Magnalium Dei ... In welchem die Geheimniß von JESU Christo durch das Büchlin Ruth gesucht werden ...* (Leipzig: Schürers Erben, 1618).

46 Rechenberg is mentioned in unpublished passages of Böhme's Ep. 45 (to Christian Bernhard, 13 October 1623) and Ep. 49 (to the same, 27 December 1623). See Buddecke, ed. *Die Urschriften*, 376, 379. Rechenberg, along with his brother Wolfgang, was the dedicatee of Herberger, *Horoscopia Passionis Domini. Passionszeiger. Auf's neue gedruckt.* (Leipzig: Schürer, 1611), sig. A5r.

political events with reference to a veritable bestiary of heraldic symbolism.⁴⁷ Several of the figures in Böhme's networks also laid claim to prophecy. The Torgau chiliast Paul Nagel, mentioned on three occasions in Böhme's correspondence, created a baroque prophetic system which anticipated the delivery of the world from trouble and chaos shortly after the great conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in 1623.⁴⁸ The aforementioned Christoph Kotter of Sprottau, on the other hand, turned his prophetic talents to envisioning a restitution of Friedrich V to the Bohemian throne following the defeat at White Mountain. The antinomian sectarians Ezechiel Meth (d. 1640) and Esajas Stiefel (1561–1627), based in Thuringia, became strident opponents of Böhme, as his theosophical ideas proved inimical to their own unfolding vision of a coming earthly paradise.⁴⁹ Böhme himself encouraged his followers to develop their piety and also to become prophets. One reader, Kaspar von Fürstenau in Lissa, experienced a spiritual awakening in early 1623.⁵⁰ Another noble supporter, Johann Sigismund von Schweinichen (1591–1664) of Schweinhaus (Swiny) in Silesia experienced visions. In April 1624 Böhme recognised Schweinichen as possessing a 'God-given heavenly talent,' and bade him to provide insight into Böhme's own affairs by means of that which 'God gives him to recognise.'⁵¹ In other words, Böhme encouraged the development of his readers, and sought to learn from them in turn. The relationships were multidimensional.

A concrete example of the multidimensional influence of a reader on Böhme's own thought derives from the year 1620. In May of that year Böhme was contacted by Paul Kaym (ca.1571–1635), an imperial and ducal toll collector in Liegnitz, who was desperate to secure Böhme's opinion on a work of biblical chronology he had recently read – Nicolaus Hartprecht's *Tuba Temporis* (1620) – which implied that the text of the Bible was filled with falsehoods.⁵²

47 Ep. 41, postscriptum. This letter is traditionally thought to have been addressed to Abraham von Franckenberg, but both the extant manuscript tradition and content of the letter (including one witness with the addressee indicated as 'A.V.S.') makes it likely that it was instead addressed to Adam von Schweinichen, the elder half-brother of Johann Siegismund. See further Penman, 'The Broken Tradition,' 23–24.

48 On Nagel, see Leigh T.I. Penman, 'Climbing Jacob's Ladder. Crisis and Transcendence in the Thought of Paul Nagel (†1624), a Lutheran Dissident during the Time of the Thirty Years' War,' *Intellectual History Review* 20/2 (2010), 201–226, with further references therein.

49 On Stiefel and Meth, see the brilliant work by Ulman Weiß, *Die Lebenswelten des Esajas Stiefel oder vom Umgang mit Dissidenten* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2007).

50 See Ep. 44 (Böhme to Karl Ender von Sercha, 7 May 1623).

51 Ep. 53.1, 53.17.

52 See Kaym's letters to Böhme of 20 July and 13 October 1620, preserved as scribal copies in London, British Library, MS Sloane 2702, 163r–168v. The contours of the debate are

For Kaym, who as a fiscal official knew nothing of scholarly biblical criticism, such discoveries threatened to corrupt his faith in Christian doctrine. Böhme's counsel that Kaym reject profane *historia* – such as chronological investigations – and concentrate more on matters of the spirit could only partially allay Kaym's concerns.⁵³ A 1626 tract authored by Kaym maintained his expectations of a coming felicitous age on earth. Ultimately it was Böhme who, with his increasingly frequent declarations of a coming golden age from May 1621 onwards, moved ever closer to Kaym's position rather than vice versa.⁵⁴ For Böhme, there was not necessarily a contradiction here, given that he justified his own chiliastic turn with reference to a visionary, divinely inspired experience.⁵⁵ Böhme's transition to a chiliastic position was likely not only influenced by Kaym. Other members of his network, such as Paul Nagel and Christoph Kotter, also promoted similar optimistic eschatologies, but we might think of the Rosicrucian manifestoes as well. In other words, Böhme was but one visionary, one prophet, one chiliast, among a host of others in his networks.

Related to Böhme's popularity as an author of devotional literature and the recognition of his prophetic claims was his authority to pronounce on other religious matters. This led to significant controversies, both with other sectarians like Stiefel as well as guardians of Lutheran orthodoxy such as the pastors Gregor Richter in Görlitz, Abraham Friese in Liegnitz, Valentin Griesßmann (d. 1639) in Wähilitz, and the deacon Peter Widmann (1596–1634) in Lauban. Nevertheless, while Böhme found opponents among local Lutheran divines he also found allies. Thus Caspar Räthel (1569–1629), pastor in Zödel north of Görlitz, and Georg Weigel (ca. 1573–ca.1628), pastor in Zölling (Solniki), were responsible for the circulation of scribal copies of Böhme's works and provided the theosopher with food and sustenance.⁵⁶ In Lauban, the trainee pastor

summarised in Penman, 'Statt "Briefe Böhmes an ..."', 200–201. See further Nicolaus Hartprecht, *Tuba Temporis, Oder Warhafftige, Unfeilbare ZeitRechnung* (Erfurt: Birckner, 1620).

53 See Böhme's response to Kaym, Ep. 8.4.

54 See Kaym's tracts preserved in Copenhagen, Kongelige Bibliotek, Ms. Thott 2° 39.

55 For Böhme's declarations concerning a coming golden age, see Ep. 13.2 to Christian Bernhard in Sagan, dated 8 June 1621, where Böhme speaks of a coming *aureum saeculum*, and Ep. 58.13 (8 May 1624, to Martin Moser in Goldberg?), where Böhme appears to align this expectation with that of a 'neue Reformation' on account of a visionary experience.

56 Räthel is mentioned as a copyist in Ep. 44.2 (Böhme to Karl Ender von Sercha, 7 May 1623); Weigel is mentioned in Ep. I (Böhme to Balthasar Walther, 12 October 1620); Ep. 67.1 (Böhme to Christian Bernhard, 11 November 1620); Ep. 33.6 (Böhme to Bernhard, after 6 October 1621); Ep. 69.6 (Böhme to Bernhard, 11 May 1622). Böhme also corresponded with Weigel, but evidently the two men fell out concerning an unknown matter, possibly related to Böhme's teachings. Räthel was also known to the Sprottau visionary Christoph Kotter, see: Anon., *Zwey wunder Tractätlein/ Deren das Erste begreiffet Englische Erscheinungen vnd Reden Christoph Köttern / Weißgerbern zur Sprottau in der Schlesien ...* (No Place:

Salomon Schröter (d. 1642) was both a friend and supporter of Böhme's doctrines before converting to Catholicism in 1628.⁵⁷

Theological controversies were not exclusively the concern of churchmen. Several lay persons also read Böhme's works with an eye to solving theological controversies. Although Kaym provides the most striking example, another significant lay interlocutor was Balthasar Tielckau von Hochkirch (fl. 1596–1629). Tielckau is none other than the mysterious Balthasar Tilcken (also Tilecke), a notorious critic of Böhme's *Aurora* and of Böhme's opinions of predestination. Tielckau was a minor Silesian noble and former fiscal official of Parchwitz (Parowiche) who dwelled in the village of Nieder-Girsdorf (Miłochów) near Schweidnitz (Świdnica) from 1596.⁵⁸ After 1618, he became the brother in law of another of Böhme's correspondents, the physician Jonas Daniel Koschwitz in Striegau (Strzegom) (ca. 1584–1632). For Tielckau and others, Böhme's opinions on salvation, and consequently human nature, became a flashpoint for debate, and the subject of at least two disputations between Böhme and his followers; the first in 1621, and another shortly after Christmas 1622. In these exchanges, both in person and later in his apologetic writings, Böhme's status as a prophet clashed with his lay knowledge of theology, and in the second meeting he managed to misrepresent his teachings on the election of grace to such a degree that he was accused of supporting Flaccianism, or a doctrine of the total depravity of human nature, by the Jauer (Jawor) city physician Christoph

No Printer, 1632), 36: 'Deß Morgens/ den 11. Aug. [1622] gehet er [Kotter] hinüber biß gen Zottel zum Pfarrern/ vnd helt sich da vber Nacht.'

57 Schröter is mentioned in this capacity by the physician and sectarian Christoph Wiefner (ca. 1600–1661), 'Wahrhaftige Relation Herrn Cornelii [sic] Weißners ... An Herrn G.R. van Beyerland in Amsterdam ... 21 February 1651.' In Böhme, *Sämmtliche Schriften*, x, 32–40 at 32–33.

58 Also Tielcke, Tilkau, Tielckaw, Thielckaw, Tileck, Tilke, Tilcke, Tilike, Thielicke, Thilike, Thilcke, Tileck, Tilike, Tilecken, Tileken, Tylcke, Tölcke[n], etc. The diversity of contemporary spellings of Tielckau's name has almost certainly hindered his historical identification. Aside from his debate with Böhme, Tielckau was also the author of *Extract, Oder Summarischer Außzug: Der Acten vnnd Handlung zwischen Balthasarn Tilckaw/ vnnd Denen Seydlitzern zu Schmehwitz* (N.p., 1615), which published documents concerning a dispute that Tielckau was engaged with as a representative of the financial interests of Johann Bernard von Fünfkirchen. Tielckau's occupation as *Quaestor* and his early career in Parchwitz is attested to in a pamphlet celebrating his marriage: *Elegantis iudicii viro, Dn. Baldassari Tilecav. Illvstris ditionis Parchvicensis Quaestori Sponso et lectiss. virginii Lydomillae Dn. Heinrich Pfortneri in Vveissenrodavv inclyta Reip. Svidnicensis. Proconsvlis filiae, Sponsae haec Q. Epavlia Honoris et Amoris ergo ...* (Liegnitz: Typis Sartorianis, 1596). An exemplar is preserved in Wrocław BU, sign: 424078. Christian Rung, *Notitia historicorum et historiae gentis Silesiacae, Pars 1.* (Breslau: Impensis Guilielmi Theophili Kornii, 1775), 235, described Tielckau as a jurist ('Jctum') but there is presently no evidence to suggest that he was formally trained as a legal practitioner.

Schöbel (1576–1633).⁵⁹ The debates on predestination forced Böhme to sharpen and collect his thoughts on the subject for benefit of Tielckau as well as others, which resulted in his influential work *Von der Gnadenwahl* (completed 8 February 1623). More strikingly, the 1622 meeting represented a key moment in Böhme's mission in another way: henceforth he refused to engage in oral discussions, instead choosing to articulate his position through written works.⁶⁰

Another way in which members of Böhme's networks engaged with his work was within the context of natural philosophy. It is well known that Böhme was a heliocentrist, in a time in which other members of his network – for example Paul Nagel – adhered to the Tychonic world system. Böhme's work also claimed to locate human existence within the cosmic drama, one defined by good and evil. It is hardly surprising, then, that Böhme attracted readers interested in natural philosophy, given that his own religious insights depended so heavily on insights gleaned from the new sciences themselves.⁶¹ While we have already heard of the Paracelsian medical – and perhaps also theological – culture in Görlitz, several of his supporters and readers engaged in practical chymical activities. Fürstenau possessed a laboratory at his property at the village of Lissa (Lasów), immediately north of Görlitz.⁶² Böhme himself attempted to interpret the secrets of alchemical symbolism in the sense of a seven-year-long personal awakening for Koschwitz in Striegau; a matter examined in detail in Mike A. Zuber's contribution to the present volume.⁶³ There are still other contacts: Balthasar Walther was reputed to have dabbled in alchemical practice, so too the Imperial Count Palatine Johann Rothe (d. 1640?) in Görlitz, and the Sprottau physician Adam Brux (1572–1639).⁶⁴ One of Böhme's most prominent later supporters was Benedikt Hinckelmann (1588–1659) of Geringswalde. Hinckelmann studied at Leipzig University before finding

59 See further Penman, 'The Broken Tradition,' 109–111.

60 See further the contribution of Tünde Beatrix Karnitscher to the present volume.

61 This is the thesis of Russell Hvolbeck, 'Seventeenth Century Dialogues: Jacob Boehme and the New Sciences,' Unpublished PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1984.

62 Knauthe, 'Bibliotheca Boehmistica,' Wrocław BU, Akc 1947/70(iii), 433; Knauthe 'Geschichte der Medicin in Ober-Lausitz,' Wrocław BU, Akc 1947/94, 153v.

63 See Ep. 15 (Böhme to Koschwitz, [ca. 20 February 1623]). Koschwitz trained in medicine in Wittenberg under Daniel Sennert, before establishing a medical practise in his native Striegau. Within Böhme literature, both primary and secondary, his first name is found in the corrupted form 'Johann.' See Penman, 'Broken Tradition,' 103; *Matrikel Wittenberg, Jungere Reihe, Teil 1*, p. 1, 23 Oct 1602: 'Ionas Daniel Coschwik Stregensis Silesius.'

64 On Brux, who was possibly the addressee of Böhme's letter of 17 January 1624, see Rita Sturlese, 'Die Gedächtniskunst zwischen Bruno und Leibniz. Die mnemotechnischen Schriften des Adam Brux, Arzt und Paracelsianer,' *Sudhoffs Archiv* 78 (1994): 192–219. Brux also dedicated his *Pilulae Sine quibus esse non vult* (Leipzig: Schur, 1631) to Kaspar von Fürstenau.

employment in the laboratories of Rudolf II in Prague.⁶⁵ Following Rudolf's death, in 1612 he attended the court of Archduke Maximilian in Innsbruck as a chymist and mine inspector before being appointed in 1622, as court 'destillateur' to the elector of Saxony, Johann Georg I in Dresden.⁶⁶ It was probably Hinckelmann who introduced Böhme to the alchemical text *Wasserstein der Weissen* (1619), which Böhme subsequently recommended to Christian Steinberg (ca. 1568–in or after 1624) in Fürstenwalde, Brandenburg, in July 1624.⁶⁷

Finally, there were others who encountered Böhme and seemed to have appreciated his linguistic innovations and abilities. Rumours circulated shortly after his death that Böhme could understand any language, including Latin and French. Yet by his own admission, Böhme had no real working knowledge of these languages, and his major ability which attracted the admiration of his followers were his efforts to express his Godly *Talent* in his native

65 *Jüngere Matrikel Leipzig*, vol. 1, p. 193 (Summer 1604); concerning Hinckelmann's employment at the imperial court between 1607 and 1612, see Vienna, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Hofkammerarchiv, Hoffinanz 599 Expedit (Prag), fol. 118v; Vienna, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Allgemeines Hofkammerarchiv, Alte Hofkammer, Niederösterreichische Kammer, Rote Nr. 188 [Oct–Dec 1612: Doc. no. 16851], unpaginated. On the basis of a manuscript remark in Wolfenbüttel, HAB 67 novis. 4^o, 114v: 'Er ist mit einem Strick bey einem vom Adel in Bett erwürgt worden,' Hinckelmann was previously thought to have been murdered in or around 1642. This notice, however, refers not to Hinckelmann but instead to Heinrich Prunius (ca. 1602–1644), the prominent copyist of Böhme's works, who was murdered in Bürgel in Thuringia in 1644 while serving as *Sprachmeister* to Georg Albert von Meußbach (1611–1652). See further the letter of Prunius to Michel le Blon (22 September 1642; HAB 67 novis. 4^o 110v), and Hans Basil von Gleichenstein, *Bvrgelinensis abbatiae Primitiae Oder Kurtze Historische Beschreibung Der vormahligen berühmten Abtey- und Closter-Burgelin* (Jena: Johann Adolph Müllern, 1729), 181: '1644. ist der Sprachmeister in der sogenandten Müntze zu Stadt-Bürgel ermordet, dessen Körper an einem Stricke über die Mauer hinunter gelassen, und auff den Georgenberg in ein neues Grab gescharret, und der Thäter, Hanß Stummel, wunderbarlicher weise entdecket, auch darauf enthauptet worden, nebst Adam Treuern, der die Weiden darzu geflochten.'

66 I was recently able to locate copies of Hinckelmann's *Leichenpredigt* in the Christian Weise Bibliothek in Zittau and in the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel, which furnishes key biographical data, and furthermore allows us to correct the previously accepted date of Hinckelmann's death (ca. 1642). See Daniel Schneider, *Gläubiger Christen Hertzens-Freude ... Bei ansehnlicher Leichbestattung Des weiland ... Hochgeachten Herrn Benedicti Hinckelmanns/ Churfürstl. Durchl. zu Sachsen [et]c. Geheimden Chymici, und Fürstl. Schöningischer Frauen Wittwen/ [et]c. wolbestalten Leib-Medici. Welcher im Jahr 1659 ... im 72. Jahr seines Alters sanfft und selig ... eingeschlaffen ...* (Dresden: Bergen, 1662). The HAB exemplar has now been digitized and is available at: <<http://digilib.hab.de/drucke/lpr-stolberg-12098/start.htm>>.

67 Ep. 28 (Böhme to Steinberg, ca. 6 July 1624). See further Mike Zuber's contribution to this volume.

tongue.⁶⁸ This made his works accessible not only to the learned, but also to literate commoners. Although Böhme is most often seen by scholars within religious or philosophical frameworks, there are some surprising connections within his network which link him to figures more closely associated with the history of German baroque literature. One of the most unexpected, though diffuse, connections emerges from the interest of the Zittau physicians Johann Hartig (1573–1632) and Johann Moller (1565–1624) in Böhme's work. Moller and Hartig were brothers-in-law, both having married daughters of the Striegau Paracelsian physician Johannes Montanus Scultetus (1531–1604). Although Hartig and Moller appear to have first encountered Böhme and his writings in early May of 1624 – that is to say, only a few months before the Görlitzer's death – they admired his work, and contributed money toward his Dresden sojourn.⁶⁹ Thirty years before their encounter with Böhme, however, as young medical students, Hartig and Moller served briefly as tutors to Johann Valentin Andreae (1586–1654).⁷⁰ Andreae would go on to at least co-author the Rosicrucian manifestos, as well as found a society for the promotion of the German language.⁷¹

The example of Böhme's distant connection to Andreae, one of the most important figures in German literary history of the seventeenth century, is more one of happenstance than of substance, but it does suggest something of the curiously interwoven histories and personal stories of the period which enmeshed Böhme in broader contexts. But there is another, more immediate connection between Böhme and the contemporary scholarly movement to

68 For an example of the legends of Böhme being able to understand all languages, see Ehrenfried Hegenicht to Anonymous, 21 February 1669 in Böhme, SS, vol. x, 56: 'So wuste er (Jacob Böhm) auch alles, ob wir gleich Lateinisch oder Frantzosisch redeten, was wir geredet hatten: Sagte auch, wir mochten redder in was für Sprachen wir wolten, Er würde es dennoch verstehen, und dieses vermittelst der Natur-Sprache, welche er könnte, &c.' But Böhme himself wrote that he had problems understanding foreign languages, especially Latin: 'Ich auch wegen ihrer lateinischen Zungen an seinem Grunde, denselben zu erfassen, verhindert ward.' (Ep. 41.2; Böhme to Adam von Schweinichen, 20 February 1623).

69 Ep. 61.13 (Böhme to Tobias Kober, 15 May 1624).

70 On Hartig and Moller as tutors see Andreae, 'Johannis Ludovici Andreae Praecox Maturitas' (1614), in *Johann Valentin Andreae Gesammelte Schriften*, Frank Böhling, ed. (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 2011), vol. 2, pp. 110–113: 'Itaque conducendus ad hanc unam rem erat, qui certè aptissimus contigit Johannes Hartigius, Silesius, juvenis eruditissimus, hoc uno in nos injurius, quod felicissimam institutionem abruptit. Amicum etiam & eruditionis socium junctum habebat Johannem Mollerum conterraneum, quod Medicinae uterque pariter, hic praxin etiam, qua pater in Naturae examine, hoc taedioso tempore unicè delectabatur.'

71 Concerning Andreae's creation of innovative linguistic societies, see Richard van Dülmen, *Die Utopie einer christlichen Gesellschaft. Johann Valentin Andreae (1586–1654)*. (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann Holzboog, 1978).

promote German as a language of discourse and expression. This is by means of Friedrich von Kreckwitz (ca. 1597–1627), a minor noble in Dankowitz (Danowice) in Lower Silesia, a village just south of Groß Glogau (Głogów). Kreckwitz, cousin to the previously-mentioned Sigismund von Rechenberg, is named as a scribal copyist in Böhme's letters after November 1622. He was also a friend of the rector of the Gymnasium Schönaichianum in Beuthen an der Oder (Bytom Odrzański), Caspar Dornau (1577–1631), having been his student in Görlitz.⁷² Several years before Kreckwitz began copying – and presumably promoting – Böhme's works, a young student in Beuthen an der Oder dedicated to him a short pamphlet which would become one of the foundation texts of modern German literature, entitled *Aristarchus sive de contemptu linguae teutonicae* (1617).⁷³ The author of this work was the Bunzlau poet Martin Opitz (1597–1639). While there is no evidence to suggest that Opitz himself knew of Böhme or his works, the connection of the two figures through Kreckwitz provides evidence of Böhme's hitherto unobserved proximity to the contemporary literary world, in particular those concerned with the promotion of the German language. This circumstance is particularly interesting in light of Böhme's epithet *Teutonicus*, which he used in his correspondence to shield his identity from his opponents, and that would ultimately be refashioned by followers into the grandiose title *Philosophus Teutonicus*, thus distracting from its potential literary resonance.⁷⁴

5 Conclusions

This paper has attempted to provide some insight into the extent and nature of the networks of the Görlitz theosopher Jacob Böhme and of the world which he inhabited. Such an examination not only provides new information which can be readily incorporated into future biographical studies of Böhme. It also

72 See Böhme's Ep. 32.2–3 (to Christian Bernhard, 12 November 1622); Ep. 72.3 (28 October 1623) Kreckwitz was the addressee of Böhme's Ep. 38 (19 February 1623). See further Robert Seidel, *Späthumanismus in Schlesien: Caspar Dornau (1577–1631). Leben und Werk* (Tübingen: Max Niemayer Verlag, 1994), 52, 252, 348, 352; Caspar Dornau, *Encomium Scarabæi ad Fridericum à Kreckwitz Equit. Siles.* (Hanau: Wechsel, 1617).

73 Martin Opitz, *Aristarchus sive de contemptu linguae teutonicae* (Beuthen an der Oder: Johann Dörffer, [1617]). Opitz also wrote at least one poetic piece which he dedicated to Kreckwitz; see Martin Opitz, *Silvarum Libri III.* (Frankfurt: Müllerus, 1631), 15.

74 Abraham von Franckenberg, 'Leben Böhm's,' in Böhme, SS, vol. 10, 15 indicates that this title was bestowed upon him by Balthasar Walther. On the history of the terminology 'philosophus teutonicus,' see further Leigh T.I. Penman, 'Ein Liebhaber des Mysterii,' 74, 89; Lucinda Martin, 'Jacob Böhme at University: The Historiographic Exile of a Seventeenth-Century Philosopher,' *Aries* 18 (2018): 3–20 at 14.

helps to identify new contexts in which Böhme's life and works may be (re)-considered. Careful prosopographical research has revealed not only some hitherto unknown readers and copyists of Böhme (for example Sigismund von Rechenberg, Adam von Schweinichen, the pastor Georg Weigel), but also new sources (scribal copies of the letters of Paul Kaym to Böhme), and biographical details concerning individuals previously known by name only within Böhme scholarship (such as Balthasar Tielckau von Hochkirch, and the mysterious 'Krägwitz,' now revealed as Friedrich von Kreckwitz). These findings in turn reveal the surprising contexts in which Böhme's work was received and in which it may well have been conceived.

Although Böhme has emerged from his networks as *the* towering figure, it is worth noting that – like his contemporary William Shakespeare (1564–1616) – this prominence is at least partly a function of his reception history.⁷⁵ That is to say, the fact that Böhme is still being studied is not only due to the inherent characteristics of his works, but their historical significance to past readers and writers.⁷⁶ Without the efforts of manuscript copyists in Saxony, Silesia and Upper Lusatia, Böhme's works would never have made their way to Amsterdam and into print. Without coming into print, his works would never have been available to commentators like William Blake (1757–1827) or Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831), whose reputations have added weight to Böhme's own. This process has not only ensured Böhme's survival, as it were, it has also led to a reification of Böhme from his historical surrounds, an estrangement from those contexts in which he is most explicable and, in many ways, most significant. As I hope to have shown in this essay, Böhme was part of a complex world. His works, mission, and to some extent his existence as a prophet and author, was anticipated, accompanied, and informed by the strivings of a variety of figures, some of whom – like Christoph Kotter, Martin Opitz, Paul Nagel, or Martin Moller – continue to attract scholarly attention today. While it is no longer possible to reconstruct all of the 'several hundred' persons that Böhme claimed to have populated his network when he advertised his successes to the Görlitz City Council in 1624, we can at least make a start with the 150 or so individuals that can presently be identified. Although much research needs to be done, these individuals, I suggest, belong to, and enrich, any portrait of Böhme and his endeavours.

75 See Jack Lynch, *Becoming Shakespeare: The Unlikely Afterlife that Turned a Provincial Playwright into the Bard* (London: Walker Books, 2007).

76 As Martin, 'Jacob Böhme at University,' 3–20 points out, this is a reception history which has occurred largely outside the universities.

Martin Moller (1547–1606) and the “Crisis of Piety” of Jacob Böhme’s Time

Lucinda Martin

1 Introduction

On 3 May 1624 the Görlitz pastor Gregor Richter – known today as the opponent of Jacob Böhme – presided over the funeral of a local woman of some prominence, Dorothea Glich von Milziz.¹ Richter had become *pastor primarius* in Görlitz in 1606 when his predecessor, Martin Moller, died.² Yet Richter’s funeral sermon for Dorothea Glich reveals that Moller’s writings continued to play a central role in the devotional practice of readers like Glich.³ In fact, Moller’s texts, Glich’s use of them, and Richter’s later reaction to Böhme are all threads in a tapestry of religious dispute and discourse that weave the background for Böhme’s activity.

Dorothea Glich, who had been sickly her entire life, died at the young age of 23. In his funeral sermon for Glich, Gregor Richter describes her intense piety. He claims she knew the Bible so well that she could hold her own in discussions with educated theologians.⁴ Richter declares that Glich had learned the “right fundament of inner, true Christianity” in particular from Johann Arndt, Thomas à Kempis and Martin Moller. According to Richter, Glich had read Moller’s *Sterbekunst* or “*Art of Dying*” on a Christian’s preparation for death until she knew it nearly by heart.⁵ Richter recounts that, on her death

1 Dorothea Glich von Milziz, née Wendler (1600–1624) was married to Gottfried von Glich und Milziz (1582–1630), an attorney (*Syndikus*) and imperial official (*Kaiserlicher Rath*). The spelling of the names varies in documents: Glych, Miltzich.

2 On Richter (1560–1624) see Werner Heimbach, “Das Urteil des Görlitzer Oberpfarrers Richter über Jacob Böhme,” in *Herbergen der Christenheit 1973 / 74: Jahrbuch für deutsche Kirchengeschichte*, 97–152.

3 Gregor Richter, *Kurtze und Einfältige Leich-Predigt / Bey Volckreicher Versammlung zu Görlitz in der Kirchen / zu Unser lieben Frawen genandt / den 3. Maii † gethan / Zu einem Ehrlichen Christlichen Gedächtniß / Der Edlen / Viel-Ehren Tugendreichen Frawen Dorotheae Glichen / gebornen Wendlerin / Des Edlen / Gestrengen / Ehrenvesten / Hoch- und Wolbenambten Herrn Gottfried von Glich und Milziz [...]*, (Görlitz: Rhambau 1624).

4 Richter, *Leich-Predigt*, D iv (r) – D iv (v).

5 Richter, *Leich-Predigt*, D iv (r); Martin Moller, *MANUALE DE PRAEPARATIONE AD MORTEM, Heilsame und sehr nützliche Betrachtung / Wie ein Mensch Christlich leben / und seliglich sterben sol [...]* (Jena: pub. Esaiae Fellgibels / print. Samuel Krebsen, 1662) [Görlitz, 1593].

bed, Glich had asked others to read aloud to her from Moller's books, especially the *Sterbekunst*, and that during her last illness she experienced visions of angels, Christ and the Holy Ghost on at least five occasions.⁶

Richter relates that Glich helped plan her own funeral. She chose the songs and the sermon's theme and even approved its final text. The funeral sermon centers on God's words to Moses at the Red Sea, "Why do you cry out to me?" (Ex 14: 13–15). As Richter explains, "Since he [Moses] could speak no words, praying rather only in his heart and with his thoughts."⁷ This same example, and others that Richter mentions, come directly from yet another Moller text that Glich was familiar with, Moller's *Meditationes Sanctorum Patrum*, a selection of translated texts from Augustine, Bernhard and Tauler.⁸ In the introduction to *Meditationes*, Moller explains how God hears the silent cries of those suffering pangs of conscience, pain of the body, childbearing, fear of death, or those who must flee fires, floods or war. Such cries "go out from the Holy Ghost, which dwells in your heart and speaks for you from your heart in unutterable sighs." Moller advises readers that if they cannot pray aloud, they should sigh as Moses did, and if they cannot sigh, they should cry silently like Hannah (1 Sam 1:9–19).⁹

Gregor Richter's funeral sermon for Dorothea Glich reveals how people were using Moller's texts and also illustrates vividly that Jacob Böhme's contemporaries believed themselves to be living in a time of great crisis. In his *Meditationes*, a text dear to Dorothea Glich, Moller writes: "there are many in these last burdened, troubling times [...] and sometimes because of great misery and lament [they] [...] can bring not a single word out of the heart and over the lips."¹⁰

In histories of the Early Modern period, references to "crisis" are ubiquitous. This essay and the one in this volume by Kristine Hannak on Johann Arndt treat two devotional authors who were contemporaries of Böhme. Moller and Arndt both experienced a crisis that they hoped to help alleviate through their writings. Although their sources and tenor are quite different, Moller and Arndt shared a rejection of theological argumentation, an emphasis on regular

6 Richter, *Leich-Predigt*, E iii (r) – F i (r).

7 Richter, *Leich-Predigt*, A i (v); E iii (r).

8 Martin Moller, *Meditationes Sanctorum Patrum. Das ist Schöne / Andächtige Gebet / tröstliche Sprüche / gottselige Gedancken / trewe Bußvermahnungen / hertzliche Dancksagungen / und allerley nützliche Übungen des Glaubens / Aus den heiligen Altvätern: [...] zusammen getragen und verdeutschet [...]*, Vol 1. (Lüneburg: Stern, 1654) [First edition: Görlitz: 1584].

9 Moller, *Meditationes*, vol. 1, v i (v) – v ii (r): That is, they "gehen aus dem heiligen Geist / der in deinem Herten wohnet / und aus deinem Herten dich vertritt / mit solchen Seufftzen / die unaußsprechlich sind."

10 Moller, *Meditationes*, vol. 1, vi (r).

believers, and a belief that inner prayer and meditation could heal the ills of church and society – all factors that can help us to understand Jacob Böhme in his own context.

2 “Crisis” in the Early Modern World

Historians refer to the turbulent social, economic and political changes of the Early Modern period as a time of “general crisis,” especially for the seventeenth century, but beginning as early as the Reformation.¹¹ There is a massive body of research on the “general crisis,” but it was Hartmut Lehmann who integrated the theory into discussions about the development of new forms of religiosity in the Early Modern period. Lehmann has maintained that the era’s wars, plagues, natural disasters and rapid economic changes led to a mentality of fear that prompted devotional authors such as Moller and Arndt to produce a literature of comfort.¹²

It was yet another historian, Winfred Zeller, who first postulated the “new piety” that Lehmann referred to in his own “crisis” explanation. Zeller, however, conceived not of a general crisis, but rather of a “crisis of piety” in German Lutheranism in the late sixteenth century.¹³ Zeller held that Philipp Nicolai, Johann Arndt and other theologians resolved this “crisis of piety” by opening orthodox Lutheranism to elements of spiritualism.

Similarly, the church historian Erich Beyreuther identified a “crisis in faith” caused by what he called “cheap grace” (*billige Gnade*), characterized by perfunctory church attendance and a lack of inner conviction.¹⁴ For Beyreuther, Schwenkfeld and Weigel were the first harbingers of this crisis in faith caused by Luther’s emphasis on grace.

The literary scholar and comparatist Klára Erdei proposes yet another crisis, a “crisis of salvation certainty” growing out of the fifteenth century’s increase

11 Geoffrey Parker and Lesley M. Smith, eds., *The General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978); Monika Hagenmaier and Sabine Holtz, eds., *Krisenbewußtsein und Krisenbewältigung in der Frühen Neuzeit: Crisis in Early Modern Europe* (Frankfurt a.M.: Lang, 1992).

12 Hartmut Lehmann, *Das Zeitalter des Absolutismus: Gottesgnadentum und Kriegsnot* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1980), esp. 105–113.

13 Winfried Zeller, ed., *Der Protestantismus des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Bremen: Schünemann, 1962). See also: Zeller, “Die ‘alternde Welt’ und die ‘Morgenröte im Aufgang’: Zum Begriff der ‘Frömmigkeitskrise’ in der Kirchengeschichte,” in: Zeller (Bernd Jaspert, ed.), *Theologie und Frömmigkeit: Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Marburg: Elwert, 1978), 1–13.

14 Beyreuther saw this crisis as the precursor to Pietism. Erich Beyreuther, *Geschichte des Pietismus* (Stuttgart: Steinkopf, 1978).

in individuality.¹⁵ The need for individual religious experience and assurance of salvation were not fulfilled by a distant and discredited church. Erdei understands Luther himself as a symptom, rather than a cause, of this crisis. The Reformation seemed to be a solution for a while, but the crisis soon reasserted itself. Erdei regards Weigel, Schwenkfeld, and Böhme as the first critics of a wide-spread dissatisfaction. Thus, Beyreuther and Zeller see a crisis caused by Lutherans assuming that they were saved no matter what, while Erdei postulates the opposite: a crisis caused by a lack of certainty about being saved.

In her theological study of Martin Moller, Elke Axmacher casts doubt on Zeller's "crisis of piety" and his resulting "new piety" thesis by showing that literary efforts to battle some kind of problem were present much earlier than Zeller supposes, at least a half century before Arndt in the prayer books of Musculus, in Tauler and in Thomas à Kempis. Axmacher detects a "crisis in Lutheran word theology" arising from the gap between an assurance of salvation on one hand and the individual's experience as a sinner on the other hand.¹⁶ According to Axmacher, the abstract notion of justification was simply too complicated for the laity; Weigel and Moller offer two different answers to the problem, each urging believers to inner piety in different ways.¹⁷

The church historian Udo Sträter disputes parts of all these theories. Regarding the "general crisis" theory, he asks how there could possibly have been one homogenous "mentality" in all of German-speaking Protestantism over such a long period.¹⁸ Sträter complains of a lack of research on ordinary people, who blended traditional beliefs in magic and ghosts with different versions of official Christianity. He admits that Erdei's "crisis of salvation" theory works for Calvinists, who because of predestination lived in fear for their souls, but he points out that the theory cannot apply to Lutherans, who actually suffered from the opposite problem – one of indifference, since they were assured of salvation, regardless of their behavior.¹⁹ Sträter observes that, thanks mainly to legal edicts, churches were packed in the generations following the Reformation. Yet pastors lamented that parishioners were not moved by these services. Sermons went in one ear and out the other. Sträter thus advances yet further

15 Klára Erdei, *Auf dem Wege zu sich selbst: Die Meditation im 16. Jahrhundert: Eine funktionsanalytische Gattungsbeschreibung*, (Wiesbaden: Harrossowitz, 1990).

16 Elke Axmacher, *Praxis Evangeliorum: Theologie und Frömmigkeit bei Martin Moller (1547–1606)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), 314–318.

17 Axmacher, *Praxis*, esp. 307–309.

18 Udo Sträter, *Meditation und Kirchenreform in der lutherischen Kirche des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995), 16–30. Compare Sträter's insightful discussion of the various crisis theories (30–34).

19 Sträter, *Meditation*, 22–24.

“crises” to understand the period: a “crisis of the sermon” and a “crisis of the church.”²⁰

What can we conclude from this forest of crisis theories? Historians do not agree about the origins of the problem, whether its roots lie in existential fears or in religious uncertainty, or in some combination of factors. Yet most seem sure that there was some sort of “crisis.”

Indeed, contemporaries themselves were aware of a condition of crisis. Devotional writings from the period confirm aspects of all the crisis theories that historians have identified. Nicolai refers to the “misery” of the period, and Arndt states that it was “Godlessness” that motivated him to write his “Books of True Christianity.”²¹ Similar concerns, conditioned by chiliasm, motivated Martin Moller to write. He offers instruction in prayer and meditation to those who have been suffering “in these last difficult times [...] in great need and fear.”²² He criticizes the general lack of piety in the populace as well as the behavior of bickering theologians who seem more concerned with theological arguments than with the well-being of their flock. He witnesses preachers who are not worthy of their office and parishioners who rely on God’s grace to live a life of decadence, since they are assured salvation – the problem of “cheap grace.”²³

Nicolai, Arnd and Moller all decry wretched living conditions and see them as a sign of the end times, but Moller does not interpret these deplorable conditions as the origin of the problem. Rather, he traces the roots of hardship

20 Sträter, *Meditation*, 30–33. In contrast, Martin Brecht does not see in Moller or other devotional authors a crisis of the church (Martin Brecht, “Neue Frömmigkeit und Gemeindesituation bei Martin Moller,” in Hagenmaier and Holtz: 217–230, here 229). Another author, Markus Matthias, argues that there was no “crisis” *per se*, but only certain developments in theology. He sees Zeller’s talk of “Frömmigkeit” as a veiled – and anachronistic – criticism of the institutional church that relies more on contemporary issues than those of the Early Modern period (Markus Matthias, “Gab es eine Frömmigkeitskrise um 1600?” in *Frömmigkeit oder Theologie*, ed. Hans Otte and Hans Schneider [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007], 27–44).

21 For example, written after the plague in Unna in Westphalia: Philipp Nicolai, *Frewden Spiegel deß ewigen Lebens. Das ist: Gründtliche Beschreibung deß herrlichen Wesens im ewigen Leben [...]* Allen betrübten Christen / so in diesem Jammerthal / das Elendt auff mancherley Wege bauwen müssen / zu seligem und lebendigem Trost zusammen gefasset [...] (Frankfurt a. M.: Johann Spies, 1599). Available on-line: <http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/>; Johann Arndt, *Sechs Bücher Vom Wahren Christenthum; Nebst desselben Paradies-Gärtlein [...]*. Vol. 1. (Magdeburg: print. Joachim Böck / pub. Johan Francke, 1610), 2: “Solch gotlos Wesen hat mir zu diesem Büchlein Ursach geben” (Available on-line at: <http://www.deutschestextarchiv.de/>).

22 Moller, *Meditationes*, vol. 1, vi (r).

23 “Tut es allein die Gnade Jesu Christi, daß ich selig werde, so will ich tun, was mich gelüset.” (Cited in Brecht, “Frömmigkeit,” 228).

back to human agency: pride, overconsumption, greed and a plethora of other sins have aroused God's anger against sinners. In one sermon, Moller [Fig. 5.1] tells his parishioners, "We have earned the wrath of God, and with our sins summoned the sword, hunger and pestilence." He concludes by urging his congregation to celebrate "die Fastnacht, nicht die Faßnacht" – the "night of fasting, not the night of the beer keg."²⁴



FIGURE 5.1 Portrait of *Pastor primarius* Martin Moller, oil on wood.
COURTESY OF THE INNENSTADTGEMEINDE GÖRLITZ

24 Martin Moller, *Praxis Evangeliorum, Das ist: Einfältige / nützliche Erklärung und Betrachtung Der Evangelium / Auf alle Sonn- Fest- und Apostel-Tage [...]*, (Lüneburg: Stern, 1723 [1601]), 233–235 (sermon for Estomihi).

3 Moller’s “*Praxis Evangeliorum*”

Whatever lay at the roots of the period’s “crisis” – existential fears, confessional polemics or some combination of factors – Martin Moller seems to have addressed it with his wildly popular devotional books for a general lay public. He wrote eleven texts, but three of these works went into at least 42 editions, and translations into Latin and other European languages proliferated.²⁵

One of Moller’s most popular works, a collection of sermons, carried the title, *Praxis Evangeliorum*, but for Moller, the central “practice of the gospel” was not preaching, but meditation. He thus translated and published patristic and medieval contemplative literature and encouraged laity to integrate it into their devotions. Moller thought that by internalizing Biblical imagery through meditation, believers would be strengthened in their faith and in turn improve the Church.

In fact, Moller was just one of a series of Lutheran clergymen who were convinced that the solution to the church’s malaise lay in motivating regular believers to practice meditation during private worship. In the sixteenth century, Andreas Musculus, Martin Moller, Philipp Kegel and Philipp Nicolai all made attempts to reclaim an older Christian tradition of meditation to fill what they perceived as a great need. They published devotionals drawing not only on patristic and medieval works, but also on writings by contemporary Catholic authors, including counter-Reformation texts.²⁶ The interest in older mystical literature is evidenced by the many available editions of Augustine, often bound together with other classic meditation texts, such as those of Bernhard von Clairvaux. Beginning in 1589, the Lutheran Heinrich Rätel arranged for German translations of some of these texts, at least one of which was printed in Görlitz.²⁷

25 On the translations see Axmacher, *Praxis*, 25. The most published works were his *Manuale de praeparatione ad mortem*, and his *Praxis Evangeliorum*, both cited above, and his *Soliloquia de passione Jesu Christi: Wie ein jeder Christen Mensch das allerheyligste Leyden vnd Sterben vnsers HERRN Jesu Christi / in seinem Herten bey sich selbst betrachten / Allerley schöne Lehren / vnd heylsamen Trost darauß schöpfen* [...], (Görlitz: Fritsch, 1595 [1587]).

26 Paul Althaus d.A., *Forschungen zur Evangelischen Gebetsliteratur*, (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1927). Catholics also drew on Lutheran literature. Althaus sees this as an “exchange” (*Forschungen*, 81), while Koch believes that both were simply continuing a tradition with common roots. Traugott Koch, *Die Entstehung der lutherischen Frömmigkeit. Die Rezeption pseud-augustinischer Gebetstexte in der Revision früher lutherischen Autoren (Andreas Musculus, Martin Moller, Philipp Kegel, Philipp Nicolai)* [Waltrop: Hartmut Spenner, 2004], 11–14.

27 *Manuale D. Augustini: Handtbüchlein / S. Augustini* [...] *Vom Wort Gottes / oder von der Beschawligkeit Christi* [...], (Görlitz: Fritsch, 1589). See also: *Die liebe Alte andacht. SAVGVSTINI Bischoffs zu Hyppon* [...] *Buch: SOLILOQVIORVM ANIMAE AD DEVM. Das ist / Geheime*

Battles against Catholicism, monasticism, synergism and perfectionism as well as “fanatics” (*Schwärmer*) had all made meditation suspect, despite the fact that it had been a central practice of Christianity from its beginnings through to the time of Luther.²⁸ In fact, Martin Luther valued and practiced meditation throughout his life, despite the fact that the church bearing his name has repeatedly purged the practice.²⁹

Modern-day Lutheran church historians have spilled much ink over the question whether this resurgent interest in meditation in the sixteenth century amounts to a “backslide” into Catholicism or “pollution” by a “foreign” element, the dreaded “mystical” with its connotations of uncontrollable dogma and fanatical sects.³⁰ Some have grudgingly excused the use of these texts because they served needs in a specifically Lutheran context.³¹ Nervous church historians have tried out various alternatives to the term “mysticism” such as “pious theology” and “interiority.”³² Of course, meditation is a complicated phenomenon with a rich history that has been understood and practiced in many different ways. To understand it, it is necessary to study it in specific historical contexts.

For Moller, meditation involves a kind of deep prayer in which God looks into the “Herzensgrund” of a supplicant. The prayer need not be spoken aloud; indeed Moller is against the mindless repetition of formulaic prayers.³³ Yet Moller goes beyond mere earnest prayer by stressing the role of the Holy

andechtige Gespräch / und innige unterredungen Christlicher Seelen mit Gott [...]. Verdeutschet: Durch Heinrich Räteln zu Sagen / in NiederSchlesien, (Wittenberg: Hans Harmans, 1589); *Meditationes, Soliloquia und Manuale S. Augustini [...]. Allen frommen Christen, jederzeit nützlich und dienstlich zugebrauchen, durch Heinrich Rätell, kurtz für seinem seligen ende, übers. und verb.*, (Frankfurt a. O.: Friderich Hattman, 1600).

28 The synergism debates after 1557 centered on the question whether humans could contribute to their own salvation. Melancthon believed they could, while Luther stressed “faith alone.”

29 Martin Nicol, *Meditation bei Luther* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991 [1984]).

30 Althaus long set the tone for researchers. He saw the reception of older mystical literature in the sixteenth century as the “Eindringen eines fremden Elements” and the beginning of a decline in Lutheranism (*Forschungen*, 61). Similarly, see Wilhelm Koepp, *Johann Arndt: Eine Untersuchung über die Mystik im Luthertum*, (Berlin: Trowitzsch, 1912); Albrecht Ritschl, *Geschichte des Pietismus*, Vol. 2 (Bonn: Marcus, 1886), 1–93.

31 Zeller, as above, and Edmund Weber, *Johann Arndts Vier Bücher vom wahren Christentum als Beitrag zur protestantischen Irenik des 17. Jahrhunderts [...]*, (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1978 [1969]).

32 Compare Axmacher, *Praxis*, 13–14, 18ff; she reviews alternatives such as “intensive piety,” and “mysticism in the broader and narrower senses,” before settling on “theology of piety.” Koch rejects a strict “unio mystico” in favor of “devotion to God” (“Zuwendung zu Gott”) [Koch, *Entstehung*].

33 That is, prayers that are “zuklappert unnd zuplappert.” *Meditationes*, vol. 1, v ii (v).

Ghost in the believer. While church historians have been interested in distinguishing between Protestant and Catholic practices and between Lutheran and Calvinist practices, Moller hoped that he was avoiding such distinctions by returning to the core practices of the Early Church. Indeed, the confessional battles of the period were surely one stimulus for a variety of authors to turn to meditation and early Christian texts in an effort to return to a less divisive Christianity.

Whatever the motivations may have been and whatever different understandings of the “mystical” may have existed, non-confessional research has shown that Early Modern contemplative literature was extremely popular, international and trans-confessional. Meditation was omnipresent in the literary and visual arts and was very popular among the general public.³⁴

Martin Moller was one of the earliest and most important proponents of this revival of Christian meditation. He has been called the most important medium of mysticism from the primitive church and Middle Ages to modern Protestantism. As a writer, he is a transitional figure. He is recognized as one of the founders of Lutheran devotional literature and an important writer of religious songs who influenced Buxtehude and Bach. Johann Arndt took a Moller text as the model for his *Paradiesgärtlein*. Not only Arndt – who is unthinkable without Moller – but also Andreas Gryphius, Paul Gerhardt and others used Moller’s texts as templates for their own writings.³⁵

Although Lutheran church historians have worried about Moller’s interest in Catholic authors, Moller’s brand of “mysticism” did not urge readers into withdrawal and seclusion. Rather it had a social component. Moller created a turn in the use of meditation by conceiving of it not just as a literary genre or a way for individuals to get close to God, but also as a means of reform for Christianity and society in general.³⁶ Moller recognized the limits of a weekly sermon in activating the laity and thus wrote texts for people to use outside the church house.

The Protestant Reformation had encouraged private piety, and over the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries informal household worship services became commonplace. In these services, the entire family, sometimes together with servants or friends, would gather to pray, sing hymns and read the Bible or devotional texts. Such home worship services allowed men – and in particular,

34 Erdei compares texts from the Lutheran, Calvinist and Catholic traditions (Erdei, *Auf dem Wege*).

35 Axmacher, *Praxis*, 14–17; Brecht, “Frömmigkeit,” 219.

36 Sträter understands the surge in meditative literature as part of an inner-Lutheran discussion about church reform (*Meditation*, 7–8).

women – a personal way to express their religious beliefs and also provided an outlet for creativity. Publishers began to print hymnals intended especially for home use (*Hausgesangbücher*), and these collections soon developed into yet another new genre, the house worship book (*Hausandachtsbuch*), which included not only songs, but also devotional texts. Whereas traditional devotional books had aided the individual's contemplation and prayer, these new books served corporate worship in the home.

Much of Moller's writing can be understood in the context of the new genre of household worship books. In his *Meditationes*, he writes that his devotions are meant for daily use and that they can be used for private worship in the church or in the home.³⁷ Early Modern funeral sermons attest that Moller's texts were often read aloud by laity.³⁸ In his *Sterbekunst*, Moller outlines the reasons why it is important for laity to have their own instruction manual for carrying out tasks that pastors usually completed: "How often does it happen that someone finds himself in a foreign land where he can find no proper preacher? [...] that during a time of the plague no minister is present because they have all died [and] [...] that some have thirsted for teaching, comfort and instruction?" In such dire times, Moller offers, "Then he can give himself comfort or through others around him who can read from this simple little book."³⁹

This passage embodies the various "crises" referred to above, not only an existential crisis occasioned by war, plague and poverty, but also a crisis of faith and of the church. Good pastors were not always available, but faithful laity – equipped with devotional aids – could minister to one another. This supports Sträter's thesis of a "crisis of the sermon" and a "crisis of the church" in the period, yet one might ask whether the antidote – meditative literature – also helped to feed these crises, since such books enabled laity, in a pinch, to make do without a pastor. The influence of lay meditation and laity-led worship on the development of individualization (and in general on a pluralization of attitudes) are topics that need further research.

At any rate, Moller evidently realized that his recommendations might ruffle feathers. In the introduction to his *Sterbekunst* he pleads that theologians not judge him too harshly, since he has not written it for them but for the simple folk.⁴⁰ Books for private devotions had a long history, but Martin Moller is one of the primary founders of a Protestant tradition in which laity made use of

37 Moller, *Meditationes*, vol. 1, Biii (r).

38 Axmacher, *Praxis*, 16–17.

39 Moller, *Manuale de praeparatione ad mortem*, E iiii (v).

40 Moller, *Manuale de praeparatione ad mortem*, E iiii (r).

meditation, not just for individual piety, but also as a social practice – an innovation that would certainly have an impact on Jacob Böhme.

4 Moller's Confessional Landscape

Martin Moller was born in Saxony in 1547 into a poor farming family. Despite his humble origins, he was able to attend some school in Wittenberg, the traditional center of German Lutheranism. The patronage of Johann Wells, a member of the Görlitz city council in neighboring Upper Lusatia, permitted Moller to attend the humanist *Gymnasium* in Görlitz.⁴¹

Moller apparently distinguished himself at the *Gymnasium*, because officials soon named him to serve as *Cantor* in a local village. Moller rose through the ranks, working in various lay positions in the church, and in 1575, the magistrates of Sprottau in the nearby territory of Lower Silesia called him as a lay pastor, citing his “diligent preaching.”⁴² This appointment brought with it an automatic ordination, although Moller had not studied at a university.

Moller would spend 25 years as pastor in Sprottau and some historians suspect that he may have been accused of Crypto-Calvinism while there.⁴³ They cite in particular the preface to his *Sterbekunst* in which Moller refers to the trouble he had in the beginning at Sprottau “as a foreigner.”⁴⁴ In any case, residents of Sprottau were familiar with religious difference. The church that Moller preached in was a so-called *Simultan-Kirche*, used by both Protestants and Catholics. Perhaps this experience colored Moller's attitudes, since he became known for his vehement rejection of theological debate.

Although Moller possessed no degree in theology, in 1600 the city council named him chief pastor at the *Peter- und Paulskirche* in Görlitz. In general, the council preferred to appoint lay pastors to maintain a certain superiority of civic over church authority. Moreover, the city council felt secure in naming one of its own to the post, since Moller had attended the *Gymnasium* at Görlitz and was known to be a follower of the teachings of Philipp Melancthon, whose ideas formed the basis for the school's curriculum.

41 For a more detailed biography, see Axmacher, *Praxis*, 21–31. How Moller knew Wells is unknown.

42 Samuel Großer, *Lausitzische Merckwürdigkeiten*, 111. Teil, *Von Kirchen-Sachen*, (Leipzig and Budißin: David Richter, 1714), 57.

43 Axmacher reviews these untraceable reports (*Praxis*, 23–24).

44 Moller remarks the support of three nobles from the house of Náchern sustained him (Moller, *Manuale de praeparatione ad mortem* [...]. E v [r]).

Melanchthon had been Martin Luther's strongest ally during the Reformation and as such was his heir apparent. Yet in the first post-Reformation generation, some Lutherans came to believe that Melanchthon had betrayed Luther's true creed to appease Calvinists. Melanchthon's phrasing made Christ present "with the bread" instead of "in the bread," thus papering over the theological difference between Lutherans and Calvinists – the difference between a real presence in the host and a merely symbolic one.

Differences of opinion had existed within Lutheranism during Luther's lifetime, but it was only after his death that these led to bitter conflict, polemics and persecution. Those in the tradition of Philip Melanchthon, called "Philippists," felt a kinship with the Protestantism of Zwingli and Calvin, while those adhering more closely to Luther were called "Gnesio-Lutherans," because they saw themselves as the "pure" or "original" Lutherans.⁴⁵ In the 1570s, these self-described Lutheran purists published catechisms that attempted to undo the compromises of the past and expunge Melanchthon's influence. At the same time, Philippists published texts that were ostensibly "Lutheran," but which sounded more and more Calvinist.⁴⁶

Over time, Lutheran purists began to lump together Calvinists, Crypto-Calvinists and Lutherans who did not toe the doctrinal line. The Philippist tradition stressed humanist Biblical scholarship and the study of languages, so that some university faculties and *Gymnasia* came to be dominated by Philippists. Doctrinal battles raged. The situation exploded into the political arena in the Saxon territories, the "home" so to speak of Luther's (and Melanchthon's) Reformation, but also an area where rival princes were fighting for political domination. Prince Elect August of Saxony had pastors, professors and students interrogated to insure proper teaching, and he tried to prohibit the printing and sale of Philippist literature (which continued underground).⁴⁷ In 1574 things escalated when August discovered that close friends and members of his own court were Philippists (the prince should have realized this earlier, but did not really understand the theological differences). August imprisoned numerous individuals; others were executed or tortured to death. Caspar Peucer, Philipp Melanchthon's own son-in-law and a professor at Wittenberg in Saxony was sentenced to life in prison as a so-called "Crypto-Calvinist" but was freed after serving 12 years of the sentence.

45 James Arne Nestingen, "Gnesio-Lutherans," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, ed. Hans J. Hillerbrand. Vol. 2, (New York / Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996): 177–180.

46 Gustav Wustmann, "Geschichte der heimlichen Calvinisten (Kryptocalvinisten) in Leipzig: 1574 bis 1593," in *Neujahrsblätter der Bibliothek und des Archivs der Stadt Leipzig*, 1905 (1), (Leipzig: Hirschfeld, 1905), 1–94, here 1–5.

47 Wustmann, "Kryptocalvinisten," 21–33.

In 1566 Prince Elect August ordered theologians to draft a new statement of faith that would reaffirm a “pure” version of Lutheranism. In 1577 the Formula of Concord – the final section of the Lutheran *Corpus Doctrinae* – was completed. August required Saxon pastors to sign it, but in other Protestant lands the reception was mixed. Only two-thirds of Lutheran clergy and rulers in the Holy Roman Empire signed the document, so that the doctrinal wars continued unabated. Not only were there regional, political differences, but over time a spectrum of theological views on issues had emerged that cannot be reduced to only two or even three camps. A range of positions on the role of free will, the relationship of church and state and the sacraments, among other issues, divided Lutheran purists, Philippists and Calvinists into further groupings. For decades after the Formula of Concord was signed, polemical debates continued as Protestants tried to balance a new confessional plurality with the desire to find a binding common statement of faith.⁴⁸

In 1586 August of Saxony died, but in the following generation the conflict took on new dimensions as different social ranks took sides. In Leipzig, the citizenry (*Bürger*) petitioned the city council to clamp down on Calvinist conventicles and to rid the schools and churches of secret Calvinists. They also accused the council itself of harboring Calvinist sentiments.⁴⁹ In 1592 a mob raged through the streets of Leipzig crying out the names of suspected Calvinists. They looted the home of a Calvinist businessman from Switzerland and a well-to-do artist from the Netherlands.⁵⁰

Martin Moller, who hailed from Saxony, was in the prime of his career when the “Crypto-Calvinism” affair blew up. Saxony was the “next door neighbor” of Lusatia and Silesia, the territories where Martin Moller and Jacob Böhme spent most of their lives. In contrast to Saxony, where Protestants reigned, these lands were under the rule of the Catholic Hapsburgs. Protestants in Lusatia and Silesia were allowed to keep their churches, but Lutheran pastors were technically under the charge of a Catholic overseer in Bautzen. This meant that there was no church superintendent or bishop to enforce dogma in the churches and

48 Irene Dingel, *Concordia controversa: Die öffentlichen Diskussionen um das lutherische Konkordienwerk am Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts*, (Heidelberg: Gütersloh, 1996). For example, some Gnesio-Lutherans are referred to in scholarship as “Flacians” – after Matthias Flacius (Illyricus), a leading theologian and polemicist; others are called “adiaphorists” for their stands on matters of Biblical indifference. There were Philippists who shared certain views with Lutherans and others who were closer to Calvinists. These involved theological debates go beyond the bounds of this essay.

49 Wustmann, “Kryptocalvinisten,” 59–60.

50 Adolf Weinhaus and Heinrich von Ryssel, respectively (Wustmann, “Kryptocalvinisten,” 62–69).

schools of the region, a fact that allowed religious variety to thrive. Yet the constant threat that the ruling Hapsburgs might decide to enforce Catholicism pressured Protestants in the region to present a united front.

Although the Hapsburgs governed Lusatia, they did not impose Catholicism in the region, because the *Kaiser* depended on local aristocrats for money to defend against the Turks. In contrast to many other territories, where the Reformation was pushed through by nobles who stood to gain from it, the Reformation in Upper Lusatia grew up from below, from the people. The Reformation thus advanced further in some towns than in others. The Catholic Church retained some control over the regulation of marriage in the region and certain Catholic ceremonies such as “soul masses” continued to be performed in Protestant congregations. A contemporary of Böhme, Abraham Scultetus, wrote a history of the transition from a purely Catholic Germany to one of mixed confessions.⁵¹ He detailed how, in the early years of the Reformation, pastors abolished many of the ritual practices of the past, but retained others.⁵² Some questions were left to the discretion of believers. Scultetus relates how on 23 April 1525, the Görlitz pastor announced that parishioners could decide for themselves whether to take the communion “in both forms” or whether to have Latin or German spoken at their children’s baptisms.⁵³

Lacking supervision, pastors in the region’s Protestant churches preached a range of doctrinal views. Although Lutheran purists repeatedly tried to stamp out vestiges of both Catholic and Philippist tendencies, it was in the interests of the landed nobility in Upper Lusatia to protect freedom of conscience and all the views being espoused, so long as they did not lead to violent rebellion.⁵⁴

51 *Historischer Bericht Wie die Kirchen-reformation in Teutschlandt vor hundert jahren angangen [...] Jetzo aber verteutscht Durch REINHARDUM Guolsium Lichensem*, (Heidelberg: Bey Johann Lancellot / In verlegung Jonae Rosen zu Franckfurt, 1618).

52 Abraham Scultetus (1566–1624) – not to be confused with Bartholomäus Scultetus – was also a product of the Görlitz *Gymnasium* and its famous teacher, Ludovicus. Scultetus provides yet more evidence for the role of the school as a “Trojan horse” for Calvinism (discussed below). In 1595 Scultetus became *Hofprediger* for the Calvinist “*Winterkönig*,” Friedrich v of the Pfalz. It was Abraham Scultetus – with the approval of Friedrich v – who on 21–28 December 1619 ordered and oversaw the “cleansing” of the St. Veitsdom in Prague of its “idols,” (*Götzenbilder*) including the famous *Marienalter* of Lucas Cranach, d.J. ([Anon.], *Extract eines schreibens / welches auß Prag / einem bekandten freundt / wegen zerstörung der Thumbkirchen daselbsten / alles zur trewhertzigen warning / und Erinnerung in offnen truck geben [...]*, [n. pl.: n. pub., 1620]).

53 Abraham Scultetus, *Historischer Bericht*, 230–231. The pastor was Magister Frantz Rotbart / Rupert of Görlitz.

54 Ernst-Heinz Lemper, “Voraussetzungen zur Beurteilung des Erfahrungs- und Schaffensumfelds Jacob Böhmes,” in *Gott, Natur und Mensch in der Sicht Jacob Böhmes und seiner Rezeption*. Eds. Jan Garewicz and Alois Maria Haas, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1994), 43–44.

This soon made the area a haven for those with nonconformist views fleeing neighboring regions, not only Protestants fleeing Hapsburg lands, but also Philippists and Crypto-Calvinists fleeing Saxony and a wide variety of other dissenters who were not tolerated elsewhere. Many of these dissenters found refuge on the estates of landed nobles.

Thus Upper Lusatia and Silesia had extensive experience dealing with religious and intellectual diversity. This led to repeated clashes, but also to a certain level of tolerance – if not acceptance – of those with other views. Contemporaries were familiar with a wide range of Lutheranism, Philippism, secret (and not so secret) Calvinism and Catholicism, but people also came into contact with Schwenkfelder, radical apocalyptic prophets, mystical spiritualists, Socinians, and Anabaptists, not to mention the persistence of folk beliefs in magic and spirit possession. Leading citizens of Görlitz were interested in Paracelsian medicine, astrology as prognostication, kabbala, alchemy and other speculative systems. Because of a deeply ingrained humanist tradition in the region, Protestants read from many traditions. They freely combined different thought systems without respect to later disciplinary understandings of what constitutes “religion” or “science,” picking and choosing those texts that in some way spoke to their condition.

5 Moller’s “Crypto-Calvinism”

Lusatia and Silesia were strongholds of Philippism, a tradition that emphasized a lack of theological argumentation. Yet there were tensions between Philippists and Lutheran purists that simmered just below the surface and these broke out occasionally. As early as 1566 charges of Crypto-Calvinism drove Görlitz’s head pastor, Samuel Jauch, out of office and the rectors of the *Gymnasium* repeatedly faced accusations.⁵⁵

In 1601 the Wittenberg professor Salomon Gesner published a text in which he accused not only Martin Moller, but also the Görlitz *Gymnasium*, churches and city council of spreading Calvinism.⁵⁶ In the text, Gesner claims that he has seen lecture notes from students at the *Gymnasium* recording the teaching

55 Deutsches Biographisches Archiv; <https://wbis.degruyter.com/biographic-document/D428-712-3>

56 Salomon Gesner, *Christliche / Trewhertzige Warnung An die Löblichen Stände / Stedte / unnd Gemeinen in Schlesien / das sie sich für einreissenden Calvinischen und Sacramentirischen Irthumben mit allem vleiß und Christlichem Eyffer hütten und vorsehen wollen [...]*, (Wittenberg, Wolfgang Meißnern / In Verlegung Clemens Bergers, 1602). Weeks’ review of the Protestant conflicts around 1600 is useful. Andrew Weeks, *Boehme. An Intellectual Biography of the Seventeenth-Century Philosopher and Mystic* (SUNY Press: Albany, 1991), 20–26.

that Lutherans make communion into idolatry by “praying” to the bread.⁵⁷ He then points to a text published by the school’s rector, Martin Mylius, in which the author refers to communion wine as merely “standing for” the blood of Christ.⁵⁸ Gesner alleges that passages from yet another text can be found in the students’ notes and he attributes that anonymously published book to a former rector of the school, Laurentius Ludovicus.⁵⁹ According to Gesner, the book wrongly interprets Melanchthon and associates correct Lutheran doctrines with “heresies” of the second century. Indeed, Ludovicus’ published lectures do make such arguments, without specifically mentioning contemporary Lutherans.⁶⁰ As a final piece of evidence, Gesner proffers a text by the school’s co-rector, Joachim Meister, which Gesner believes is hostile to “true Lutherans.” In the text, Meister complains about certain country pastors (meaning Lutherans), who condemn those with different beliefs (i.e. Philippists and Calvinists).⁶¹ Gesner points out that in all these texts, the authors emphasize that high officials attend their lectures or share their views.⁶² For Gesner, this shows just how systematic the efforts to impose Calvinism are. He brings other examples from across Silesia to demonstrate how, “this one poisoned school at Görlitz has done irreparable harm and heaped the land with Calvinist disciples [...] like a Trojan horse.”⁶³

57 Gesner, *Warnung*, [xvii (r)]. Note: The *Vorrede* is partly unpaginated and partly incorrectly paginated. I attempt to impose the correct pagination.

58 Gesner, *Warnung*, [xviii (r)]; Mylius, *HORTVS PHILOSOPHICVS CONSITVS STVDIO M. MARTINI MYLII GORLICENSIS*, (Görlitz: Rhambau, 1597), 61: “Vino, id est, sanguine suo in cruce, profuso, sicut in verbis Coenae Domini, Vinum, sanguinem Christi *significat*” (my emphasis). Perhaps indicating affinities, one edition of Moller’s *Sterbekunst* (Görlitz, Rhambau, 1601) was published bound with Mylius’ own death manual: *Sterbenßkunst / Gefasset in Schöne außßerlesene Exempel / etlicher frommen Christen [...]*, (Görlitz: Rhambau, 1586).

59 Gesner, *Warnung*, 32–49; [Anon.], *DOCTRINA SCHOLAE MELANCHTHONIS DE FILIO DIE; COLLECTA & scriptis & vocibus publici florentis scholae Melanchthonis [...]*, ([Zerbst]: Bonaventura Faber, 1589 [1569]).

60 Gesner, *Warnung*, 32–33; Laurentius Ludovico, *Doctrina ET CERTAMINA SYNODI EPHESINAE: Recitatin SCHOLA GORLICENSI [...]*, (Görlitz, Fritsch, 1583).

61 Gesner, *Warnung*, 52–53; Joachim Meister, *Oratio DE EVTYCHE ET EIVS ERRORIS SECTORIBVS AB ORIGINE EIVS SECTAE SVB THEODOSIO [...]*, (Görlitz: Fritsch, 1583). Here the passage Gesner means: “Ideò etiam reperiuntur, qui secundum vtramq naturam Christum praesentem in coena, agricolas suos docent. & magno alio supercilio condemnant,” (R2 [r]).

62 Gesner, *Warnung*, 53–54; For example, Meister’s introduction begins, “Magnifico et amplissimo, nobilissimo que eqviti, domino ioachimo à Berge, Herndorfio, &c. Sacrae Caes. Maiest. À Consiliis secretiorib. Domino & Patrono colendo suo, &c [...],” (Meister, *Oratio DE EVTYCHE*, unpag. intro.).

63 Gesner, *Warnung*, 69–70: “dennoch die einige vergifftete Schule zu Görlitz unwiederbringlichen schaden gethan / und das Land mit Calvinischen discipulen uberheuffet

As if all this were not bad enough, Gesner continues, the “Calvinist poison” has also infiltrated the pulpit in Görlitz as the chief pastor’s new book, *Praxis Evangeliorum*, makes clear. Gesner quotes out of Martin Moller’s printed sermons to prove that the Görlitz *primarius* regarded the Lutheran-Calvinist distinction as a matter of names, rather than of substance. In particular he finds evidence in Moller’s sermons for two main “Calvinist” arguments – first, that communion was a merely symbolic act, and second, that Christ can have only “one nature” and be in only one place at a time, meaning that He could neither be present in communion bread, nor any other physical place except “to the right hand of God.”⁶⁴

Apparently, many preachers in the region did not understand these theological subtleties, because Gesner calls on pastors to familiarize themselves so that they can preach against the heresy of Calvinism.⁶⁵ He insists that a particular problem is the education of young nobles who are infected and then tolerate or further spread such doctrines.⁶⁶ Gesner enjoins rulers and especially the *Kaiser* to take action, arguing that treaties in the region allow only for Lutherans and Catholics – not Calvinists.⁶⁷

Moller responded by publishing a defense of his writings in which he established that his texts adhere to the Augsburg Confession and to both of Luther’s catechisms. In his *Apologia*, Moller repeatedly invokes Luther’s own interpretations and those of Melancthon and Augustine.⁶⁸ He examines the instances of “Calvinism” that Gesner has cited in his writings, but quotes the Augsburg Confession in both German and Latin to confirm that he has not transgressed doctrine.⁶⁹ Moller admits that he avoids using “sectirischen Namen” since there is only one church in God’s eyes, and he quotes Paul who told early Christians not to divide themselves into factions with different names, but simply to call themselves followers of Christ (1 Cor 1:10–13). As an example of differing but acceptable practice among Christians, Moller mentions a group of “Anabaptists” who had recently gained the respect of the public with

habe. Denn gleich wie aus dem einigem höltzern Pferd / welches die Griechen listiger weise gebawet hatten [...].”

64 Gesner, *Warnung*, 54–68.

65 Gesner, *Warnung*, 196–197.

66 Gesner, *Warnung*, 228–229.

67 Gesner, *Warnung*, 74–75, 141–165, 202–203, 212.

68 Martin Moller, *Kurtze APOLOGIA und Verantwortung etlicher wenig Lehr und Troststücke / so von Doctore Salomone Gesnero, Professore zu Wittenberg / in dem new außgegangen Buche / Praxis Evangeliorum genandt / angefeindet und verdächug (sp!) gehalten werden*, (Görlitz: Rhambau, 1602).

69 Moller, *APOLOGIA*, Dii (v) – Diii (r).

their strict lifestyle. He describes how they broke bread among themselves before eating, a practice that Moller likens to that of Jesus' Last Supper.⁷⁰ It is not clear which Anabaptist group Moller had in mind, but contemporaries would certainly have understood this as a Calvinist interpretation of Jesus' instructions regarding communion. For Calvinists, the breaking of bread was the central *symbolic* act of communion, meant to remind believers of Christ's broken body. Lutherans on the other hand emphasized the eating of the host – Christ's real body. In this way, Moller does not disavow Calvinism, but instead affirms that he is in-line with official Lutheran doctrines – doctrines penned by Melanchthon.

The problem for Lutheran purists like Gesner was that they dared not go too far in criticizing Melanchthon. Many of Melanchthon's writings had originated as attempts to mediate between different streams of Protestants, and Martin Luther had approved these compromises. It was in fact Lutheran purists like Gesner who went beyond official doctrine when they rejected concessions that Luther himself had accepted. To complicate matters, Melanchthon's views had developed over time, so that in his later years, his writings went well beyond the original Lutheran consensus. Yet Melanchthon's prestige among theologians was so great that those who hoped to impose a stricter adherence to Luther's words spoke only of "misinterpretations" of Melanchthon and labelled their Philippist co-religionists as "Calvinists."

The conflict between Gesner and Moller intensified when Gesner published yet another text refuting Moller's *Apologia*.⁷¹ In his *Widerlegung*, Gesner claims that the whole affair had begun with a private exchange. According to Gesner, Moller had written him a letter defending his views as permissible within Lutheranism and asking Gesner not to include Moller's name in his anti-Calvinist book. A correspondence ensued, but unhappy with the result, Gesner decided to request expert opinions (*Gutachten*) from four university faculties on Moller's views.⁷²

Officials began hearings against Moller in 1602, but before any ruling could be made, both Gesner and Moller died, so that the case was never settled. Was Moller a "Crypto-Calvinist?" The four university theological faculties asked to

70 Moller, *APOLOGIA*, Fii (v) – Fiii (r); Gesner, *Warnung*, 55; Moller refers simply to "Wiedertäufer."

71 Salomon Gesner, *Gründliche und außführliche widerlegung / Der nichtigen und gantz Calvinischen Apologiae Martini Molleri [...]* Neben eingefürten Christlichen und wolgegründeten Censuren, etlicher in reinen / wohlbestelleten und weitberühmten Universiteten, Ehrwürdiger Theologischer Faculteten [...], (Wittenberg: Wolff Meißner / In Verlegung Clemens Bergers-Buchs, 1602).

72 Gesner, *Widerlegung*, 8–13.

tender expert opinions on Moller’s teachings – those at Leipzig, Jena, Rostock and Tübingen – all agreed that Moller held “Calvinist” views.⁷³ Moller understood himself as a loyal Lutheran, yet he adhered strongly to the teachings of Melanchthon. He and many others saw no “betrayal” in this; they simply believed that Melanchthon had systematized Luther’s principles.

Moller was embedded in a Philippist-Calvinist network of teachers, churchmen, city councilors and other learned individuals. The Görlitz *Gymnasium* that he attended was firmly rooted in this tradition and there is substantial evidence that the school really was a “Trojan horse” for Crypto-Calvinism in the region.⁷⁴ The Görlitz city council approved Moller’s *Apologia* defending himself against Gesner’s charges. This is not surprising since Gesner did not limit his attack to Moller, but also harshly criticized the *Gymnasium* and the city council for corrupting the young and turning them against the Lutheran Church.⁷⁵ Furthermore, many of Moller’s writings – although meant for lay devotion – would have been understood by contemporaries as volleys in the Crypto-Calvinist debates. Moller’s translations of certain patristic texts into German were surely strategic, since they seemed to “prove” a Philippist / Calvinist understanding of the difference between divine and human nature.⁷⁶

These bitter theological battles – and especially the persecution and execution of Philippists in Saxony – prompted some to wonder what the Reformation had achieved. While most Protestants agreed with its aims, the reality seemed to be that the Lutheran Church was more interested in enforcing its dogma than in fostering Luther’s ideal of “Christian freedom.” This was certainly a question that concerned Martin Moller, whose entire career was overshadowed by these conflicts. Moller continued to serve as *Hauptpastor* in Görlitz until he died in 1606, still under indictment.⁷⁷ Reflecting Moller’s position in contemporary religious debates, a chronicle from the period records that he was “mourned by many, but also hated by many.”⁷⁸

73 The Gutachten are all dated July 1602. The faculties also saw aspects of Arianism in Moller’s thought. Gesner, *Wiederlegung*, bi (v) – 7.

74 Axmacher, *Praxis*, 65–66.

75 Gesner, *Warnung*, 53–54. Compare Axmacher, *Praxis*, 67.

76 For example, his translation of the dialogues of Theodoret of Kyros: *Dialogi THEORDO-RETI: Drey Schöne Gespräche / Von vereinigung und unterscheidt (sp!) beyder Naturen in der einigen Person Jesu Christi [...]*, (Görlitz: Rhambau, [1582]).

77 At the age of 58, Moller went blind, as his most important portrait attests. See Fig. 5.1 above.

78 Brückner cites out of the “geschriebenen Annalibus Gorl. Tom VI. P. 245”; Christian Daniel Brückner, *Leben und Schriften weyl. Tit. deb. HERRN Martin Mollers, Hochverordneten Pastoris Primarii an der S.S. Peter- und Pauli-Kirche in Görlitz*, (Görlitz: Fickelscherer [Johann Friedrich], 1768), 5–6.

6 Moller and Böhme

The traditional depiction of Moller survives in an anonymous text put together by followers of Jacob Böhme. The writing presents Moller and Böhme as allies in a time of religious crisis and records that Böhme was taught by three pious pastors at the Church of Sts. Peter and Paul in Görlitz. According to the document, the third pastor, Moller, was a “blessed tool” who “helped to kindle the holy fire in our dear man.” The text presents Moller as one who carried out his duties as best he could within the bounds of a church that followed the “letter” more than the spirit.⁷⁹ Böhme was a member of Martin Moller’s congregation for six years, during which time the two men and their families were apparently friendly with one another. In a letter written from Dresden on the Friday after Pentecost 1624, Böhme sends greetings to “Herrn Martin Moller,” that is, Martin Moller the Younger, the son of Böhme’s pastor.⁸⁰ A more profound association, if true, is the assertion by some scholars that Böhme may have participated in conventicles led by Moller.⁸¹ Since Philippists in nearby Saxony met in conventicles, such a development is certainly possible.⁸² It would also coincide with Moller’s interest in laity-led worship. The notion appears to stem from an unpublished manuscript by Christian Knauth. The eighteenth-century Görlitz historian writes of gatherings instituted by the “pious servant Martin Mollerus” in which people came together to discuss spiritual matters and to encourage one another in Christianity. Knauth does not specifically say that Böhme attended such meetings, but that is certainly the implication, especially because Knauth claims that officials warned Böhme’s son not to hold any suspicious “Hauß-Konvente” but instead to lead a quiet and still life.⁸³

79 That is: “Martin Moller [...] ein gesegnetes Werkzeug [...] der unsers teuren Mannes heiliges Feuer nach seiner Gabe treulich mit aufblasen helfen...” in *De vita et scriptis J.B., Das ist historischer Bericht [...] Mehrere Merkwürdigkeiten von J.B. Person / Gaben und Schriften*, in *Theosophia revelata: Das ist: Alle Göttliche Schriften des Gottseligen und Hocherleuchteten Deutschen Theosophi Jacob Böhmens*, [ed., Johann Otto Glüsing], (Hamburg: Holle, 1715), 58.

80 For Böhme’s texts, I cite the chapter and paragraph numbers. Unless otherwise stated, I rely on the third *Gesamtausgabe*: Böhme, *Theosophia Revelata* [...]. Ed. Johann Wilhelm Überfeld. (pub. Amsterdam / print. Leipzig: 1730), here: *Theosophische Sendbriefe*, letter 63:12 (letter to Tobias Kober, page 243). There are a number of other hints of connections between the two families, but I was unable to trace these reports back to reliable sources.

81 For example, August Tholuck, *Lebenszeugen der lutherischen Kirche aus allen Ständen vor und während der Zeit des Dreißigjährigen Krieges*, (Berlin: Wiegandt & Grieben, 1859), 424.

82 Wustmann, “Kryptocalvinisten,” 59–69.

83 “Nun kommt 1600 der redlicher Knecht Gottes Martin Mollerus als Ober-Prediger nach Görlitz, u der geschehen neue Ereignissen [...] Es erstunden auch sonderlich in den letzten Jahren [i.e. before 1606] Hauß=Convente, da die Leute zusammen kamen, von ihre

Yet other historians think that Knauth's writings are not sufficient evidence that Moller held conventicles or that Böhme attended them.⁸⁴ They suspect that Böhme's purported attendance at a Mollerian conventicle may be based merely on affinities between the two men – an emphasis on inner experience, private devotions and a rejection of theological argumentation. Christian Knauth, who possessed a huge library, including original manuscripts from Böhme and his circle, was privy to many sources that no longer exist, and it seems unlikely that Knauth would have invented the story. Still, Knauth's writings can only be as reliable as his sources and we don't know what these were, since his library burned in 1754. Unfortunately it was only after the fire that Knauth wrote down some of what he remembered having read about Böhme in the ruined documents.⁸⁵

Supporting the hypothesis of a close relationship between Moller and Böhme is the fact that Moller was popular among Böhme's followers, including Rosicrucians, Weigelians and Schwenkfelder.⁸⁶ This reflects not only shared attitudes but also shared paths of transmission. Although Moller's writings were

Selen u Umständen redeten, zum Ernst in Christenthum, sich ermunterten in brüderlichen liebe bestraffen, und noch den Umständen trösteten, und dies geschahe alles in Ordnung, u ohne Verachtung u Versäumung des öffentl[ichen] Gottes dienstes, indem man nirgends weder in actus publicis des Rath Hauses, noch in denen Analisten nicht das geringste davon findet, daß es Unruhe gemacht hätte. Und nachdem bey dem Rede und begräbnis Boehmii, durch bezeigen des Primarii Aufsehen mochte, so wurde von l[öblichen] Rathe denen Söhnen J.B. angedeutet, keine verdächtige Hauß=Konvente zuhegen, sondern ein geruhiges u stilles Leben zu fuhren.” Christian Knauth, “Bibliotheca Boehmistica,” ca. 1780. MS in Wroclaw, Biblioteka Uniwersytecka, Sig.: Akc. 1947 / 70 (iii), 430. I thank Leigh Penman for access to his notes on the MS.

84 See, for example, the local historians Richard Jecht and Felix Voigt in *Jacob Böhme: Gedenkgabe der Stadt Görlitz zu seinem 300jährigen Todestage*, Richard Jecht, ed., (Görlitz: Selbstverlag des Magistrats der Stadt, 1924), 27, 87.

85 Regarded as the first to treat Lusatia and especially its minority Sorbs in a modern way, Knauth became interested in local history during his school days at the *Gymnasium* in Görlitz. Already in these early years, Knauth gained access to the most important libraries of the region. More importantly, as a teenager he began attending book auctions to acquire everything he could. For little money, he was able to obtain entire collections from church libraries in Görlitz and the surrounding area. Still a *Gymnasium* pupil, he was able to amass over 1000 books as well as hand-written accounts. Unfortunately, Knauth's collection burned in 1754. Knauth subsequently composed the passage in the footnote above, perhaps in an effort to recapture some of what was lost. After the fire, Knauth quickly rebuilt his collection, again buying up entire libraries at auction. Friedrich Pollack, *Die Entdeckung des Fremden. Wahrnehmung und Darstellung der Lausitzer Sorben im gelehrten Schrifttum des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts*, (Sorbisches Institut: Bautzen, 2012), 88–93.

86 Axmacher, *Praxis*, 159.

not censored, they were controversial and apparently travelled the same routes as the underground literature of forbidden groups and authors. In this way, those with suspicious viewpoints were linked by the necessity of secrecy.⁸⁷

It is likely that Moller and Böhme were being read by the same private groups of educated readers, formed not only to discuss religion but also for an exchange on professional issues or common interests. Such meetings could look back on a rich tradition in the region of combining religious dissidence and anti-clericalism with forms of sociability such as reading circles and private worship groups.

Furthermore, both Böhme and Moller were popular among the Silesian and Lusatian nobility. In the preface to one of his texts, Moller refers to the ruling class as “Götter,” “gods,” and says that their greatest responsibility is the protection of the church. Moller and Böhme were probably protected and assisted by some of the same noble families who saw it in their interest to protect all religious views.⁸⁸ An investigation of Moller’s social contacts at least has the potential to reveal more about Böhme’s networks.

Aside from any friendship bonds between Böhme and Moller, Böhme’s critique of the official churches as “Zankhäuser” must have been conditioned by the attacks on his pastor. In *Aurora*, penned in 1612, Böhme recalls his philosophical activity having begun 12 years before, that is, around 1600, the year Moller took up his position in Görlitz.⁸⁹ After Saxony cracked down on Crypto-Calvinism in 1591, Upper Lusatia was pressured in 1592 into interrogating its own pastors and teachers. New proceedings at the turn of the century targeted Moller, among others.⁹⁰ Böhme likely perceived this harassment of his pastor and friend as part of a contemporary “crisis.” Böhme’s later complaints about

87 As late as 1683 the Lutheran Orthodoxy could still complain that books by Moller, Abraham Scultetus and others were being peddled as “Lutheran,” when they were in fact either “fanatical” works or else Calvinist “wolves in sheep’s clothing.” The work shows that even much later, Moller’s writings remained popular and controversial: Conrad Tiburtius Rango, *Christliche / wolgemeinte / wolgegründete Warnung / An das Hochlöbliche Königreich Schweden / und dazu behörige Provinzien*, [...] *Der tückischen / und tückischer weise bißher eingeschobenen / und recommendirten / theils Calvinischen / theils Fanatischen Bücher / als ABRAHAM SCULTETI, und MARTINI MOLLERI Evangelien-Postill* [...], (Wittenberg: Christian Schrödter, 1683), esp. A ii (r–v).

88 Axmacher, *Praxis*, 149.

89 *Aurora*, 19:14. Böhme later confirms this date in a letter to Caspar Lindner from 1621 (*Sendbriefe*, 12:10).

90 Böhme’s future opponent, Gregor Richter, was also questioned as a potential “Calvinist.” Richter was deeply connected to Philippist networks in the region and even taught at the Görlitz *Gymnasium* for a time (Heimbach, “Urteil,” 98, 106–110, 126–128).

Lutheran “pharisees” surely referred not just to Gregor Richter’s attacks on Böhme but also to the widespread policing of those with dissenting views.⁹¹

Both Moller and Böhme privileged faith over the utterances of “Schriftgelehrten,” yet paradoxically both men became celebrated authors. Moller was proud that he had attained a humanist education despite his poor background, and Böhme certainly valued the insights of the natural philosophy of his day. Yet both men claimed to speak for and to the “simple folk.” Böhme could not abide “the mighty know-it-alls” (“die hohen und sich selbst Wissenden”), and Moller railed in his sermons against false teachers who could speak many languages and boasted of titles, but who set bad examples in their own lives.⁹² In their writings, both men distinguished between the “children of God” and “children of the world” and the “church of walls” and “true Christianity.”

Böhme even adopted one of Moller’s linguistic idiosyncrasies. When he preached, Moller addressed himself directly to the souls of his congregation – “liebe Seele!”⁹³ This form of address was a hallmark of Moller that other authors commented upon.⁹⁴ In his *Weg zu Christo*, which can be seen as a devotional, Böhme addresses his readers in the same way.⁹⁵ Not only does he sometimes refer to his reader as “Liebe Seele,” but he also depicts “conversations” between divine Wisdom and the soul of the praying supplicant in which “Sophia” addresses the supplicant as “Liebe Seele” as well.⁹⁶ In its intent and structure, *Weg zu Christo* bears many similarities to Moller’s devotionals. Although Böhme’s theosophical language would have been foreign to the much more traditional Moller, both men aim to teach readers how to pray. Both provide examples of prayers to be used in specific circumstances and both are concerned with a divine connection in the soul.⁹⁷

In contrast to Moller, who was entrenched in the Philippist camp, Jacob Böhme held a range of views. For example, he took a Philippist/Calvinist stand

91 Böhme, *Sendbriefe* 64:8–11.

92 Lemper, “Voraussetzungen,” 66; Brecht, “Frömmigkeit,” 224–225.

93 Compare Brecht, “Frömmigkeit,” 225–226.

94 Rango, *Warnung*, 18–19.

95 Böhme, *Der Weg zu Christo / Verfasset in neun Büchlein [...]*, (Amsterdam: [n. pub.], 1682 [1624]) [ed., Johann Georg Gichtel]. See for example, 18.

96 Böhme, *Der Weg zu Christo*, 22, 29, 30ff. Bo Andersson has pointed out other linguistic parallels between Moller and Böhme: Bo Andersson, “Du Solst wissen es ist aus keinem stein gesogen:” *Studien zu Jacob Böhmes Aurora oder Morgen Röte im auffgang*, (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1986), 15–30.

97 There are many other connections between the texts of Moller and Böhme, not least that they both penned a *Mysterium Magnum*. Comparative studies between the two could be fruitful, yet such an analysis would go beyond the bounds of this essay.

on Rebirth. “Faith alone” did not suffice; believers had to strive for it.⁹⁸ Yet Böhme’s understanding of communion was likely closer to that of Lutheran purists. Mixing beliefs and practices from different confessions was typical for the region. Böhme lived in a city that blended different traditions and during his *Wanderjahre* through the villages of the broader region, he must have experienced yet other hybrid practices.

The Crypto-Calvinist battles of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries constituted *the* religious conflict of Böhme’s time, yet his reaction was not to choose one or the other side. Instead, Böhme turned to contemplation and to writing. When Gregor Richter attacked Böhme, it was less for unorthodox views than for Böhme’s usurping of churchly authority. Unlike Moller, who urged laity to private worship and provided them with the materials to do so, Richter could not tolerate a shoemaker interpreting the Scriptures.⁹⁹

Moller’s response to the “crisis” or “crises” of his time surely paved the way for Böhme’s own response. As soon as he arrived in Görlitz, Moller began to encourage meditation and to emphasize lay authority, perhaps even through conventicles. Moller, who was apparently friendly with Böhme, soon found himself under theological attack. These events occurred around 1600, the date that Böhme mentions as the beginning of his writing activity. All of this provokes the question: If Moller’s intent was pedagogical, and if his texts constitute do-it-yourself manuals for the arts of contemplation, as this essay has argued, can we not also ask: To what extent was Böhme’s vision a result of Moller’s instruction?

98 The issue of the individual’s role in salvation was a central one for Böhme, especially in his *Gnadenwahl*, where he criticizes both Calvinist predestination and Lutheran justification as wrongheaded. The best treatment of the problem can be found in: Jan Rohls, “Gnadenwahl und Freiheit,” in: *Grund und Ungrund: Der Kosmos des mystischen Philosophen Jacob Böhme*, Eds. Claudia Brink and Lucinda Martin, (Dresden: Sandstein, 2017), 50–67.

99 Richter, like Moller, adhered to the teachings of Melancthon, but in contrast to Moller, Richter believed in a strict division between governance in the home, the political realm and the church. He was also incensed at Böhme’s language. For Richter, impure language led to impure doctrine (Heimbach, “Urteil,” esp. 98, 104–105, 114–115).

Johann Arndt (1555–1621) and the “Crisis of Piety” of Jacob Böhme’s Time

Kristine Hannak

Johann Arndt’s *Four Books of true Christianity* (1605–1610) are certainly one of the most prominent reflections of the early modern crisis of piety as well as one of most successful texts of the era. Translated into most European languages and published in more than 200 editions until the late eighteenth century, they were widely read across a range of Christian denominations. In the year 1615, an edition was published in Calvinist Zurich; in 1617 a Czech edition came out in Prague; Dutch editions were printed from 1631 on in the Netherlands. But not only that: When the Lutheran theologian Paul Anton visited the library of the Jesuits in Madrid at the end of the seventeenth century, his hosts presented him with a Latin book bearing neither a title nor the name of the author. Anton recognized the volume that had been recommended to him as one of the finest works of Christian asceticism as Arndt’s *Four Books*.¹ The arch-Protestant devotional text had even managed to sneak into the library of the Jesuits!

Written with irenic intentions, Arndt’s *Four Books* share many sources with Böhme and provide an important reference for a number of Böhme’s motifs. They were also popular with Böhme’s readers, as a letter from Balthasar Mentzer indicates. Mentzer complained to Arndt in 1620 that many Schwenckfelders were reading Arndt’s books and even boasting that Arndt shared their beliefs.² Yet in contrast to Böhme’s theosophist writings, Arndt’s texts are carefully placed within a Lutheran framework. Moreover, in contrast to Martin Moller, Arndt was not part of the local scene in Görlitz.³ Nonetheless, certain affinities indicate that both Arndt and Böhme engaged with similar themes in a supra-regional crisis of piety that was conditioned on the one hand by Lutherans’ failure to overcome doctrinal disputes and on the other hand by the poisonous relationship between Lutherans, “Philippist” Lutherans and

1 Hans Schneider, “Arndt-Rezeption im Täuferum,” *Der fremde Arndt: Studien zu Leben, Werk und Wirkung Johann Arndts (1555–1621)* ed. Hans Schneider (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2006), 247–256, 247.

2 Schneider, “Arndt-Rezeption im Täuferum,” 247.

3 On the crisis of piety in general and on Martin Moller in particular see Lucinda Martin’s article in this volume.

Calvinists. Indeed, the fact that both men were very successful as authors, yet saw themselves confronted with harsh theological criticism, hints at their popular appeal for readers in a time of disorientation and deep spiritual need.⁴

1 Johann Arndt (1555–1621): Biography

Johann Arndt was born on 27 December 1555 as the first child of Anna and Jakob Arndt, a pastor in Ballenstedt in Anhalt.⁵ He studied in Helmstedt, Wittenberg, Strasbourg and Basel. In Basel he spent two years (1577–1579) as a student of medicine with professor Theodor Zwinger (1533–1588) who, though once critical of the works of Paracelsus (1493–1541), had become a convinced teacher of Paracelsian medicine. In a letter to Zwinger dated 2 September 1579, Arndt expresses his deep sympathy and gratitude for Zwinger's work. In warm words he praises the latter's appreciation of the "new athlete of medicine" – Paracelsus. He further lauds Zwinger as a role model for Christians, putting the pious ideal of living Christian virtues into practice, thus following Christ.⁶ In 1583 Arndt became a pastor in Badeborn, in Anhalt, where he signed the Anhaltian Confession of the Lord's Supper. In 1589/90 Calvinist tendencies and discussions about a "Second Reformation" came up in Anhalt, which was not part of the Lutheran regions that had accepted the *Formula of Concord*. Arndt refused to remove the artwork from his church and to stop the practice of exorcism in baptism, which were both now considered offenses against the strict Calvinist concept of simplicity. A few days after declaring his refusal, Arndt was deposed from office and exiled from the territory.

From 1590 until 1599 Arndt worked as a pastor in Quedlinburg and then moved to Braunschweig, where he stayed until 1609. During this period, he published his most important works. In 1597 and in 1605 he edited the late medieval *Theologia deutsch*. It had been praised by Luther himself as a true Christian teaching before the reformer later distanced himself from mystical literature.⁷ In a programmatic preface, Arndt writes that the book's main theme is the path for human reunion with God, equivalent to the new birth

4 The "fundamental religious need," which was intimately linked to a harsh criticism of the moral failure of church office holders, has a long tradition going back to the early Reformation. Hans-Jürgen Goertz, "Anticlericalism" in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, vol. 1, ed. Hans J. Hillerbrand (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 46–51.

5 Here and the following Hans Schneider, "Zeittafel zur Biographie Johann Arndts", in: *Der fremde Arndt*, ed. Schneider, 257–264.

6 For a reprint of the letter, see Hans Schneider, "Johann Arndts Studienzeit," in *Der fremde Arndt*, ed. Schneider, 83–129, here 126–127.

7 Luther wrote in his own preface to the *Theologia deutsch* that he had never read anything apart from the Bible and Augustin that taught him more about God, Christ, human

or the enlightenment by the Holy Spirit. He sees this as the goal and end of all theology – “finis totius Theologiae.”⁸ In Arndt’s tract criticizing the Calvinist abolition of images, the *Ikonographia* (1597), he mentions a few unpublished works *De antiqua philosophia* and *De magis ex oriente* that hint at his interest in the ancient “wisdom of the Magi,” a wisdom taught by the Holy Spirit, which he contrasts with the uninspired religious quarrels of his contemporaries.⁹

A possible source for this interest is Heinrich Khunrath (ca 1560–1605), who had also studied in Basel and corresponded with Arndt. Khunrath’s main work, the *Amphitheatrum Sapientiae aeternae* (1595) is a work on theosophical alchemy that criticizes the contemporary theological quarrels in the name of Divine Wisdom, *Ruach Hhochmah-el*, and claims the analogy of alchemy with Christian salvation.¹⁰ Khunrath is especially important to Arndt, because he systematized Paracelsus’ writings in a way Arndt found useful. Before Khunrath’s death in 1605 two handwritten copies of his *Amphitheatrum* were made, one of them by Johann Friedrich Jung, editor of the Rosicrucian text *Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosencreutz*. To his copy of the Khunrath text, Jung added an anonymous comment from Arndt entitled the *Iudicium and kurtzer Bericht über die vier Figuren des Grossen Amphitheatri*.¹¹ For the second edition of the *Amphitheatrum* in 1609, Arndt further added an anonymous *Oratio theosophica*, in which he expresses his sympathy for the theosophy proclaimed by Khunrath.¹² Both Khunrath and Paracelsus stress the priority of practice, piety and God’s revelation in nature mirrored in the signatures of things in contrast

beings and all things than the *Theologia deutsch*. Defending himself against criticism from Wittenberg, he even presented his own theology as a continuation of such true, old Christian teachings. Luther, WA 1, 378–379.

- 8 “[...] how man should be united with God which is man’s perfection and finis totius Theologiae. Everything comes down to this unity, because this reunion with God is the new creature, the new birth, faith, Christ within us through faith, Christ’s life within us, [...] the enlightenment by the Holy Spirit, the kingdom of God within us, this is all the same.” Preface to the *Theologia deutsch*, 1, 15, quoted in Hermann Geyer, *Verborgene Weisheit: Johann Arndts “Vier Bücher vom wahren Christentum” als Programm einer spiritualistisch-hermetischen Theologie*, 2 vols. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2001), here vol. 1, 173. The translation as all the following translations (except of Böhme’s *Aurora*) is my own. See also Hans Schneider, “Johann Arndt und die Mystik,” in *Der fremde Arndt*, ed. Schneider, 216–246, 218.
- 9 Arndt, *Ikonographia* (Halberstadt 1597), 33 r, quoted in Hans Schneider, “Johann Arndts ‘verschollene’ Frühschriften,” in *Der fremde Arndt*, ed. Schneider, 156–196, 160.
- 10 Hanns-Peter Neumann, *Natura Sagax: Die geistige Natur. Zum Zusammenhang von Naturphilosophie und Mystik in der frühen Neuzeit am Beispiel Johann Arndts* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2004), 150.
- 11 Neumann, *Natura Sagax*, 144.
- 12 Neumann, *Natura Sagax*, 165.

to theological debates – issues that would also become crucial to both Arndt and Böhme.

In 1605 Arndt published the first edition of the first *Book of True Christianity* in Frankfurt, which, however, met with harsh criticism. In a letter to his friend Johann Gerhard dated 20 June 1606, Arndt complains about “severe persecutions” and accusations of heresy.¹³ Eager to refute these accusations, he sent reworked versions to Gerhard and to the theology faculty in Jena, hoping to get their certificate of approval. The reworked texts came out in 1606 and 1607, and in 1610 the first complete edition of all *Four Books of true Christianity* was published in Magdeburg.¹⁴ In these books Arndt advocated pious Christian practices to give comfort and direction in everyday life. He claimed that it was not enough to follow orthodox doctrine, but that the Reformation should be completed by a reformation of life inspired by the *Imitatio Christi*.

From 1609–1611 Arndt lived in Eisleben before becoming superintendent in Celle, a position that he held until his death in 1621. In 1612 he published another very influential devotional book, his *Paradiesgärtlein aller christlicher Tugenden*.¹⁵ Arndt lived to see the success of his books in translations and new editions as well as the bitter criticism and theological attacks they suffered. Their orthodoxy was questioned more than once. In regard to his own orthodoxy, Arndt remained ambiguous and was perceived as such by his readers. In 1618 his books were recommended in a reprint of a text by the spiritualist Valentin Weigel (1533–1588), *Soli Deo Gloria*. Johann Valentin Andreae (1586–1654), who had distanced himself as a pastor from his early Rosicrucian writings, dedicated his utopian novel *Christianopolis* (1619) to Arndt.¹⁶ In 1621 Arndt’s *Four Books* appeared together with Martin Moller’s *Praxis Evangeliorum* and a whole list of Paracelsian, alchemical, mystical and highly speculative titles on a Rosicrucian set of book recommendations.¹⁷ In Görlitz, too, Arndt was popular: Böhme’s disciple Johann Rothe (ca 1580–1640) was known to be a reader of the writings of Tauler and Arndt.¹⁸

13 Schneider, „Zeittafel zur Biographie Johann Arndts,” 260.

14 Weber explains the context of Arndt’s reworked editions as political struggles in Braunschweig, not as theological attacks. Edmund Weber, *Johann Arndts Vier Bücher vom wahren Christentum als Beitrag zur protestantischen Irenik des 17. Jahrhunderts: Eine quellenkritische Untersuchung* (Marburg: N.G. Elwert Verlag, 1969), 4–10.

15 Garden of Paradise of all Christian virtues.

16 Schneider, „Zeittafel zur Biographie Johann Arndts,” 263.

17 Geyer, *Verborgene Weisheit*, I, 11.

18 Ernst-Heinz Lemper, “Voraussetzungen zur Beurteilung des Erfahrungs- und Schaffensumfelds Jacob Böhmes,” in *Gott, Mensch und Natur in der Sicht Jacob Böhmes und seiner Rezeption*, ed. Jan Garewicz and Alois Maria Haas. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1994), 42–69, 67.

Once confronted with his stance towards Valentin Weigel, Arndt's answer sheds light on his attitudes toward orthodoxy, heterodox literature and censorship: In the *Second Book of True Christianity* Arndt had integrated reworked parts of Weigel's *Book of Prayer* (1612) which was not published until two years after Arndt's *Four Books* came out, so it was obvious that Arndt must have had access to a manuscript. Prince August of Anhalt, who sympathized with Paracelsus, Weigel, and the Rosicrucians, accused Arndt of adorning himself with Weigel's feathers but toning them down in order to pass censorship. Arndt responded that his appropriation of Weigel's text was the only way to get it printed and that he rejoiced to see how “the rose had grown under the thorny spines”¹⁹ Nevertheless, when he was confronted with the accusation of Weigelianism by the Wittenberg professor of theology Wolfgang Franz in 1620, Arndt distanced himself publicly from Weigel and declared he had quoted the *Book of Prayer* unaware of its authorship.²⁰ Hovering between orthodox piety, mysticism and contemplation of God in nature, Arndt's books and his plea for a practical and simple Christian life remained immensely popular with readers in orthodox and heterodox circles and became a preeminent influence on Pietism.

2 Intention, Sources and Structure of Arndt's *Four Books of True Christianity*: Criticising the “Mauerkirche” – the Church of Walls

Struggling to survive between the Catholic Counter Reformation and Calvinism, the Lutheran Church feared Radicals, Crypto-Calvinists, and real or supposed heretics within its own ranks. By sharpening its dogmatic profile and enforcing adherence to doctrines, when necessary by persecution, it created a situation that valued confessional correctness and polemical assertions of the “true faith.” From his earliest writings, Johann Arndt criticizes theological polemics as the devil's work, leading believers astray from a Christian life. Thus as early as the preface of his edition of the *Theologia Deutsch* in 1597, Arndt writes: “Denn es helfen keine Bücher zur Erhaltung reiner Lere / wo das Leben nicht taugt”²¹ – Christian doctrine will not keep true Christianity alive, only a lived faith can achieve that. Arndt regrets that Christ's example is threatened

19 “[Er] freute [...] sich, dass die Rosa under den Spinis gewachsen wehre.” Quoted in Neumann, *Natura Sagax*, 203. Arndt likely means the plant spine acanthus.

20 For a detailed analysis of Arndt and Weigel, see Neumann, *Natura Sagax*, 200–233, and Geyer, *Verborgene Weisheit*, I, 230–242.

21 Arndt, Preface to the *Theologia Deutsch*, quoted in: Weber, *Johann Arndts Vier Bücher*, 39.

by innumerable books produced by a clerical orthodoxy that busies itself with neoscholastic definitions and theological polemics. Pointing to the model of the first Christian congregations, Arndt insists that a good life must precede adherence to pure doctrine, not vice versa.²² In the introduction to the *First Book of True Christianity*, Arndt takes his criticism even further. He speaks of the abuse of the gospel by those who claim to speak Christ's words but are unable to lead a Christian life,²³ And he mocks those who intend to be Christ's ministers but not his followers.²⁴ Arndt portrays the theology of his day as "mere science" and "wordplay,"²⁵ which he contrasts to a concept of theology as everyday practice, penitence, and piety. A few years later Böhme would use the same terms in criticizing the theological quarrels of his time. Furthermore, Arndt goes on to explain that the intention behind his books is to show simple believers what true Christianity is, namely an instruction in the living, active faith that manifests itself in the fruits of justice and beatitudes in God:

Such godless conditions have led me to write this small book so that simple believers may see what true Christianity consists in, namely in manifesting itself in true, living and active faith, in righteous blessings in God, in the fruits of justice. We bear Christ's name so that we not only believe in Christ, but so that we also live in Christ [...].²⁶

Arndt's address to the "Einfältigen," simple believers is a motif that would be picked up by Böhme – who called himself the "philosophus der Einfältigen" – "the philosopher of the simple." And Arndt's phrase that we should not only believe in Christ but live in Christ is a spiritualist topos that hints at sources Arndt found valuable for instruction in the living faith.²⁷

²² Weber, *Johann Arndts Vier Bücher*, 38–39.

²³ Johann Arndt, *Vier Bücher vom wahren Christenthumb* / Die erste Gesamtausgabe (1610), ed. Johann Anselm Staiger (Hildesheim: Olms, 2007), Book 1, [5].

²⁴ Arndt, *Vier Bücher*, 1, [9].

²⁵ Arndt, *Vier Bücher*, 1, [7].

²⁶ "Solch Gottloß Wesen / hat mir zu diesem Büchlein Ursach geben / damit die Einfeltigen sehen möchten / worin das ware Christenthumb stehe, nemlich in Erweisung des waren lebendigen thetigen Glaubens / durch rechtschaffene Gottseligkeit / durch Früchte der Gerechtigkeit / Wie wir darumb nach Christi Namen genennet seyn / dz wir nicht allein an Christum gleuben / sondern auch in Christo leben sollen." Arndt, *Vier Bücher*, 1, [6].

²⁷ For a detailed analysis of Arndt's spiritualist criticism, see Geyer, *Verborgene Weisheit*, Vol. 1, 79–139.

3 Sources and Context

Beginning with Arndt's first publications, the 1597 edition of the *Theologia Deutsch* and the *Ikonographia*, (1596),²⁸ a treatise on the value of religious images despite Calvinist aniconism, Arndt stresses the value of mystical literature as well as of the “ancient philosophy” of the Egyptians and Persians as a remedy to contemporary theological struggles. In the *Ikonographia* he quotes Paracelsus' *Liber de Imaginibus* without, however, giving the author's name,²⁹ and he calls the *signatura rerum*, the alphabet of nature, a “true philosophy and physics.” Arndt scolds contemporary theology as a science of dead letters and paper books and contrasts it to the art of recognizing God in the living book of nature which has been inscribed by God's very finger.³⁰ During his studies with Theodor Zwinger in Basel – a city of books and printers in the sixteenth century – Arndt not only became a fervent adherent of Paracelsus, but also had access to the complete works of Marsilio Ficino (1576), Giovanni Pico's hermetic texts (1572/73), the complete works of Agrippa von Nettesheim (published in Basel in 1578), and one of the most prominent compendiums of Renaissance magic, the anonymous *Arbatel. De magia veterum*.³¹ As Carlos Gilly has observed, this book is highly significant, because it introduced the terms “theosophy” and “anthroposophy” into European intellectual history precisely in Basel in 1575 as synonyms for good magic.³² Heinrich Khunrath (ca. 1560–1605), also close to Zwinger, used the term *theosophia* as a synonym for the *philosophia adepta* of Paracelsus in his *Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae* (1595) as well as in his correspondence with Arndt. Arndt quotes Khunrath's *Amphitheatrum* as a wonderful work (“herrliches und wunderbares Werk”) in his *Ikonographia*, and

28 For a detailed chronology of Arndt's biography and publications see Schneider, “Zeittafel zur Biographie Johann Arndts,” 257–264.

29 For a detailed analysis of Arndt's sources see Weber, *Johann Arndts Vier Bücher* (1969).

30 “Viel rümen sich jtzo der Philosophie / und haben doch das Alphabet der Natur und wahren Philosophi und Physic nihe gelernet. Diese ding sindt in gutem wissen gewesen / bey den alten Egiptischen und persischen Philosophis und Medicis / davon auch noch Festigia zufinden in Platone / in Timaeo / in Cratylo und anderswo / welcher es von den Egiptischen Philosophis erlernet hat. Nun aber mehrenteil verloschen / weil man nicht aus der natur / als aus Gottes lebendigem Buche / welches Gott mit seinem allmechtigen Finger selbst geschrieben / sondern aus Pappiernen Büchern / und todten Buchstaben die Natur erkünden will / welches die alten Philosophi nicht gethan.” Arndt. *Ikonographia*, quoted in: Schneider. “Johann Arndts ‘verschollene’ Frühschriften,” 160.

31 Neumann, *Natura sagax*, 45.

32 Hans Schneider, “Johann Arndts Studienzeit,” 83–134, 100–107. Carlos Gilly, “Zwischen Erfahrung und Spekulation. Theodor Zwinger und die religiöse und kulturelle Krise seiner Zeit,” *Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 77 (1977), 57–137, here 88.

he uses the terms *theosophi* and *theodidacti* in his own correspondence when discussing his *Third Book of True Christianity* dealing with the inner man.³³

While the influence of Paracelsus is especially strong in the *Fourth Book*,³⁴ Arndt's interest in the medieval mystics appears even more prominent in his promotion of the exemplary life of Christ as an antidote for the religious uncertainty of his time. Arndt edited the anonymous *Theologia deutsch* in 1597 and again in 1605 together with the *Imitatio Christi* of Thomas á Kempis. Arndt praises the treatise for its instruction in an older, rougher German language ("in einer alten groben deutschen Sprache") on how to transform Christ's teachings into life; or how Christ should live and Adam should die within us.³⁵ This phrase from the *Theologia deutsch* is not only a *locus communis* in spiritualist discourse, it also recurs as a central motif in the *Four Books* and would be elaborated further by Böhme who not only dwells intensely on the topos of Adam's death and Christ's life within us, but also stresses the value of his mother tongue. A further, highly appreciated, authority in Arndt's *Third Book* is Johannes Tauler (ca. 1300–1361). Arndt worked with the edition of Tauler printed in Basel in 1521/22 of which one-third of the material came from anonymous sermons by Meister Eckhart. Arndt quotes 44 sermons by Tauler, eight of which are actually Meister Eckhart's. Tauler's influence on the *Third Book* is so prominent that Lucas Osia-nder (1571–1638), in a fierce attack, criticized Arndt's concept of "True Christianity" as actually being "Taulerism."³⁶ Some of the most famous and infamous anonymous citations in the *Four Books* are excerpts from Valentin Weigel's *Book of Prayer* (*Gebetbüchlein*) and his *Informatorium*. Since Weigel wrote his *Book of Prayer* in 1575 but it was only printed in 1612, it is evident that Arndt had worked with a manuscript circulating among spiritualists.³⁷

Arndt's own project of the *Four Books of True Christianity* was profoundly influenced by these same sources. Yet Arndt took great care to place his books in a Lutheran framework. However, the main objective that plays out variously in the *Four Books* is the restoration of the *imago dei* in every human being:

The core of Christianity consists in the restoration of God's image in man and in the elimination of Satan's image. [...] The entirety of Christian life on earth is and should be nothing other than the restoration of God's

33 He uses the terms in a letter to Johann Gerhard 29 January 1608. Cited in Schneider, "Johann Arndts Studienzeit," 104.

34 Weber, *Johann Arndts Vier Bücher*, 108–167, Hans Schneider, "Johann Arndt als Paracelsist," in *Der fremde Arndt*, ed. Schneider, 135–155.

35 Geyer, *Verborgene Weisheit*, Vol. 1, 173.

36 Weber, *Johann Arndts Vier Bücher*, 77/78.

37 Weber, *Johann Arndts Vier Bücher*, 71/72.

image in every faithful human being, so that they constantly live in the new birth and diminish the old birth on a daily basis. And this has to begin now in this life, in the life to come it will be taken to perfection.³⁸

The striving for the new birth and the restoration of the *imago dei* has to happen in this life, in the here and now, and cannot be replaced by any other creed or ritual – this argument is identical with Valentin Weigel's earlier and with Jacob Böhme's later argument. Arndt's *Four Books* stress various aspects of this goal. In a programmatic preface to the third book, Arndt explains that the structure of the first three books reflects the traditional three stages of mystical life – penitence, illumination, reunion – and at the same time the stages of childhood, adolescence, and maturity of every human being. They can thus be read as a practical companion to spiritual adolescence. The traditional metaphor of the *libri dei*, books written by God, is elaborated to *liber scripturae* / Book of scripture (Book One), *liber vitae* / Book of the Imitatio Christi (Book Two), *liber conscientiae* / Book of the heart as the inner man (Book Three). The fourth book, the *liber naturae* / Book of nature, was added because Arndt wanted to show how scripture, Christ, humans, and the whole of nature come from the same source of life which is God.³⁹

Thus the *Four Books* aim to instruct readers in “True Christianity” in the context of theological quarrels and religious insecurity. True Christianity means the true *Imitatio Christi* in everyday life. Although Arndt took great care to stress that this had to happen through faith – *sola fide* – his books legitimized the search for God not only in people's own hearts but also in nature. In a letter written in 1612, Arndt explained the purpose of his writing: to bring the light of grace and the light of nature together – “lumen gratiae et naturae coniungere.”⁴⁰ What Arndt had laid out in his *Four Books* as a guide for his fellow believers in 1610 was soon taken up and developed further by a lay author and shoemaker in Görlitz.

38 “Das gantze Christenthumb stehet in der wider Auffrichtung des Bildes GOTTes im Menschen / unnd in der Austilgung des Bildes des Satans.[...] Denn das gantze Christliche Leben auff Erden ist und muß nichts anders seyn / den eine Auffrichtung des Ebenbildes GOTTes in einem gläubigen Menschen / also daß er stets in der newen Geburt lebe / unnd die alte Geburt täglich in ihm dempffe unnd tödte: Unnd das muß hie in diesem Leben angefangen werden / in jenem Leben aber wird's vollkommen werden.” Arndt, *Vier Bücher*, I, 446 / 447.

39 Arndt, *Vier Bücher*, III 3, Preface pp. [3]–[5].

40 Quoted in: Sibylle Rusterholz, “Zum Verhältnis von ‘liber scripturae’ und ‘liber naturae’ bei Jacob Böhme,” in *Gott, Natur und Mensch in der Sicht Jacob Böhmes und seiner Rezeption*, ed. Garewicz und Haas, 129–146, here 144–146.

4 Lines from Arndt to Böhme: Jacob's ladder – Mystical Anthropology and the Practice of Meditation

If our philosophers and doctors had not played on the fiddle of arrogance but on the violins of the apostles, there would be a different kind of awareness and philosophy in this world now. [...] I cannot speak their sophisticated language, but I am content with my gift since I am a philosopher of the simple.⁴¹

These are the proud and self-confident words of a lay person who claims the right to speak for the "Einfältigen" – the simple. Böhme picks up the harsh criticism of theological polemics uttered, for example, by Arndt, but with some important differences. In fact, both share the same discourse, probably the same sources, and definitely the same theological and anthropological objective: the restoration of the *imago dei*. However, where Arndt still concedes that theological disputes may have their rightful place side by side with the integration of the *Imitatio Christi* into everyday life,⁴² Böhme casts concessions to clerical interests aside and condemns theological strife as an expression of the dark principle.⁴³ In this way, we find many aspects in which Böhme transgresses limits that Arndt still respects, although both are surely moving in the same direction.

The full title of Arndt's *Third Book*, "on the inner man," reads "How God has laid His greatest treasure, his kingdom, into the human heart as a treasure hidden in a field: As a divine light of the soul and how we are to awaken and seek it."⁴⁴ The motif of the kingdom of heaven hidden in the depth of the soul is a topos absorbed from Tauler and the *Theologia Deutsch*. It differs, however, from the anthropology of the *Formula of Concord*, which stresses the depth of original sin, the total corruption of the heart and therefore human inability to contribute anything to the process of spiritual redemption.⁴⁵ Yet this topos was omnipresent in contemporary spiritualist literature by Sebastian Franck, Caspar von Schwenckfeld and Valentin Weigel, all of whom claimed this topos as genuinely Lutheran by hinting at Luther's own sympathy for Tauler as a young man. The concept of the hidden treasure in the soul links this anthropological

41 Böhme, *Aurora*, 18:80.

42 Arndt, *Vier Bücher*, I, 114–117.

43 Böhme, *Aurora*, 22:55.

44 "Wie GOtt den höchsten Schatz: Sein Reich in des Menschen Hertz geleet hat / als einen verborgenen Schatz im Acker: Als ein Göttliches Liecht der Seelen / und wie dasselbe in uns zu erwecken und zu suchen" (Arndt, *Vier Bücher*, 111, Title page).

45 Konkordienformel, in: *Unser Glaube: Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche*. 5th ed. Gütersloh 1986, 781.

concept of human agency in redemption to the practical literature of meditation, for meditation – in contemporary discourse: “resting in the Sabbath of the heart” – is seen as the way to the hidden kingdom of God.⁴⁶

A comparison between Arndt’s *Third Book* with Weigel’s earlier *Informatorium* and Böhme’s later *Aurora* shows some subtle differences within the same discourse. For Weigel, prayer and meditation are literally “Jacob’s ladder” on which the human soul may “climb” to God, transcending mortal existence.⁴⁷ He interprets key concepts of the Bible such as Jacob’s ladder or the key of David exclusively as metaphors describing the way to the hidden treasure within the human soul. Weigel takes care to explain the philosophical and the pragmatic context, and his explanations bear strong affinities to Böhme’s later philosophy of nature: The spiritual and the physical world are not separate, but within each other, therefore the spiritual world is not distant, but only withdrawn from our everyday senses. Hinting at contemporary confusion and theological quarrels, Weigel encourages his readers not to worry about worshipping God only in certain places – one might add “churches” – since God is everywhere. However, since God is everywhere, everyone can find Him by using Jacob’s ladder. Through the practice of meditation, each can access the kingdom of heaven within one’s own heart.⁴⁸

Johann Arndt, who knew the *Informatorium* in manuscript, does not mention Weigel by name, but praises Tauler in connection with the concept of the inner treasure.⁴⁹ He designs the entire *Third Book* around the idea of that the kingdom of heaven is a hidden treasure in the human heart⁵⁰ and stresses that this treasure can be found by faith alone. For Arndt, faith – the Lutheran *sola fide* – is the path that leads to the treasure, and at the same time faith is what allows the Sabbath of the heart.⁵¹ Therefore, faith ushers in the new birth, but redemption lies ultimately in the hands of God: In a metaphor, that seems to foreshadow the title of Böhme’s first book, Arndt writes:

Faith is God’s work in us, and the new birth is a divine, supernatural event. Your children are born like the dew from dawn. (“wie der Taw / auß der Morgenröthe”).⁵²

46 Geyer, *Verborgene Weisheit*, Vol. I, 166.

47 Weigel, Valentin: *Informatorium* (1578). In: *Valentin Weigel: Sämtliche Schriften*, ed. Horst Pfefferl, vol. 11 (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt 2007), 24.

48 Weigel, *Informatorium*, 14.

49 Arndt, *Vier Bücher*, III, 5.

50 Arndt, *Vier Bücher*, III, [5–6].

51 Arndt, *Vier Bücher*, III, 24.

52 “[D]er glaub ist Gottes Werk in uns / und die Neue Geburt ist ein Göttlich uber Natürlich Werck. Deine Kinder werden Geboren / wie der Taw / auß der Morgenröthe.” Arndt, *Vier Bücher*, III, 30.

While Arndt puts faith and the new birth into the hands of God as a work of grace, Böhme underscores in his first book *Morgenröthe im auffgang* the *practical* implications of the concept of the kingdom within. Like Weigel, Böhme refers to the metaphor of Jacob's ladder:

But to me Jacob's ladder has been revealed: on it I have climbed into heaven to receive the wares that I have on offer. Whoever would follow me should see to it not to be drunk. He must be armed with the sword of the spirit. For it is necessary to scale an awesome depth. [...] ⁵³

In a lengthy paragraph, Böhme discusses his journey to the inner kingdom in terms of his own experiences. He speaks of dangers, despair, and a struggle with the devil, and he does so to encourage others on the same path: "I do not write this to praise myself, but in order that you might not despair if you go through this too."⁵⁴

The differences between Arndt, Weigel and Böhme are visible, although clearly, they are all writing in the same context: Weigel's philosophical treatise prepares the ground by stressing God's ubiquity, and thus hidden presence, in everyone's heart. Weigel also names the practice of meditation as the way to the hidden treasure, but he remains primarily on the level of philosophical explanation. Arndt's adaption of Tauler popularizes this idea and domesticizes it at the same time, for on the one hand, it encourages believers to meditate upon Christ's presence within themselves, but on the other he puts the effects of this meditation – the new birth – into the hands of God as a work of grace. By stressing the new birth as a result of faith and as a work of grace, Arndt could integrate a crucial mystical and spiritualist concept into the Lutheran concepts of *sola fide et sola gratia*. However, while this concept remained largely a topos in Arndt, Böhme's interpretation of it suggested that it was a living reality. Even more: Böhme's texts seem to fulfill the promise that God reveals Himself to the simple believers, "Einfältigen," who take the path that Weigel had explained philosophically and Arndt had declared as Christian piety. Thus, Böhme went beyond placing the responsibility for the *Imitatio Christi* into the hands of believers. In claiming the authority to speak as a lay person on spiritual matters, Böhme was implicitly arguing that "Jacob's ladder" was available to all.

⁵³ Böhme, *Aurora*, 13:20.

⁵⁴ Böhme, *Aurora*, 13:23.

5 Comfort and Devotion in Contemplating Nature

In contrast to most early modern theologians, both Arndt and Böhme assign nature a relatively important role. Both are known to have been deeply influenced by Paracelsus. Again we can observe how Arndt integrates Paracelsian concepts into his *Fourth Book*, concepts that Böhme would further elaborate.

When he refers in his *Fourth Book* to the concept of an invisible light flowing through all creatures, Arndt takes a quote from Marsilio Ficino’s translation of Pseudo-Dionysios Aeropagita’s *De mystica Theologia* (1496), without, however, attributing the quote.⁵⁵ According to Arndt, Christians should look at creation with the eyes of the spirit to see God the creator in it.⁵⁶ Arndt also identifies the innermost quality of the invisible light with God’s eternal wisdom. He focuses on this spiritual quality within the creatures identifying God’s life-giving power with the word:

Here we hear what our life and the life of all creatures is, namely God’s breath, which is God’s spirit and life-giving and life-preserving force that is in all things. Just as the Book of Wisdom says: You lover of life, your eternal spirit is in everything which is your preserving life-giving force [...] And this very life-giving force of God is the Word through which God created everything. This word that God has spoken has not vanished and neither has it been a mere sound, but is has become the life of all creatures. So it has not left God’s creation but stayed with it.⁵⁷

By identifying God’s word with the life-giving force in nature, Arndt transgresses the boundary between heaven and earth to conceive of a panentheism that prepares the ground for Böhme’s concept of the *verbum fiat*, eternally speaking creation into being. For Böhme, the entire cosmos thus becomes transparent for God’s presence: All creatures are literally “God’s strings in the omnipresent

55 Arndt, *Vier Bücher*, IV, 3–4.

56 Arndt, *Vier Bücher*, IV, 3.

57 “Hie hören wir / was unser unnd aller Creaturen Leben ist / nemlich GOTTes Othem / das ist GOTTes Geist / unnd Lebendigmachende unnd erhaltende Krafft / die in allen dingen ist. Wie das Buch der Weisheit spricht: Du Liebhaber des Lebens / unnd dein unvergenglicher Geist ist an allem / das ist / deine erhaltende lebendigmachende Krafft [...] Und eben diese lebendigmachende Krafft GOTTes ist das Wort / dadurch Gott alles geschaffen hat. Diß Wort / so GOTT geredt hat / ist nicht verschwunden / oder ein blosser Schall gewesen / sondern ist das Leben worden aller Creaturen / also daß es von den geschöpffen GOTTes nicht gewichen / sondern dabey geblieben.” Arndt, *Vier Bücher*, IV, 189. Book of Wisdom, 11,26 / 12,1.

speaking word; they are placed all together in the great harmony of his everlasting speaking word."⁵⁸

The notion of the Word as the ubiquitous, invisible source of creation differs from the traditional concept of the Word as performative speech act at a singular point in time. It differs as well from the traditional identification with the Holy Scriptures, which implied that the Word could be experienced by believers only when reading the gospel or listening to sermons – *ab extra*.⁵⁹ To the contrary, Böhme's interpretation suggests that the presence of the Word was not only everywhere – in church, but also in nature for those who had the eyes to see it – but also that the whole of creation had its share in the divine presence – without being divine in itself.⁶⁰ In fact, Böhme's theosophy ultimately leaves behind the orthodox concept of the *creatio ex nihilo* that keeps creator and creation at a distance. Böhme develops instead a concept of creation as *creatio ex se* – creation out of nothing except God. In the *Aurora* (1612) he writes:

Or do you suppose that he [God, K.H.] has departed from his seat, where he has been from all eternity during the creation of the world? Oh no! That cannot be. Not even if he wanted to do so, for He himself is everything. As little as any organ of the body might secede from it, no more than that could God be divided.⁶¹

As Böhme explains in the *Mysterium Magnum* (1623), the visible world is a parable and an allegory of the invisible world, yet the invisible world is hidden in the visible one like the soul in the body. Therefore, the concealed God is actually near, through and in everything.⁶² Ultimately, Böhme's vision assigns creation a role that emphasizes the insubstantiality of the created world and, at the same time, ennobles it despite its contradictions and the fragility of human existence. In his vision, the entire creation becomes a mirror in which the divine spirit reveals itself in order to recognize itself in all its abundance.

⁵⁸ Böhme, *Mysterium Magnum*, 8:31.

⁵⁹ Geyer, *Verborgene Weisheit*, Vol. II, 240.

⁶⁰ For a concise overview of Böhme's concept of creation, see Sibylle Rusterholz, "§2. Jacob Böhme und seine Anhänger," in *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie*. Vol. 4: *Das Heilige Römische Reich Deutscher Nation. Nord- und Ostmitteleuropa*, ed. Helmut Holzhey und Wilhelm Schmitdt-Biggemann unter Mitarbeit von Vilem Mudroch (Basel: Schwabe & Co AG Verlag, 2001), 61–142, here 74–78.

⁶¹ Böhme, *Aurora*, 22, 48.

⁶² Böhme, *Mysterium Magnum*, Vorrede: 1.

Therefore the entire celestial body is nothing other than the exhaled forces of the inner fiery, dark and light world, of the great spirit of divine revelation, and it is only a manifestation in which the great divine spirit can see and enjoy itself in mortal.⁶³

Although Böhme's concept of the *verbum fiat* is much bolder than Arndt's, both men give similar answers to the question: Why was the concept of the Word as omnipresent source of creation available to all attractive for contemporaries? Their answers are intimately linked to the spiritual need expressed in the crisis of piety: The concept offers practical comfort to believers. Arndt asks the rhetorical question:

How should God forget those who live by his force and breath? In God live, breathe and exist all human beings. Therefore, it is impossible that God should forget a single one of them. He holds and carries everything through his powerful Word.⁶⁴

Furthermore, we have comfort because God holds and reigns over everything now and forever. [...] Thus he holds and protects us in the midst of our enemies just as David testifies in the Psalms.⁶⁵

The notion that God cannot forget a single one of his creatures because it is ontologically impossible becomes central to Böhme who, in contrast to Arndt, was not only open to the new cosmology of heliocentrism, but also clearly contextualizes the idea of God's ubiquity in his criticism of traditional clerical teachings:

One might now ask, out of what sort of material power did the grass, vegetation, and trees arise? What sort of substance and event took place with this creation?

The simple-minded one [...] persists in imagining that God only dwells above the blue heavens of the stars, ruling in this world by his spirit that

63 Böhme, *Mysterium Magnum*, 7:19.

64 Wie solt doch Gott dessen vergessen können / der in ihm Lebet / Webet / und ist / der von Gottes Krafft und Othem lebet? In Gott aber Leben / Weben unnd sein alle Menschen. Darumb ist nicht möglich / das GOTT eines Menschen soll vergessen. [...] Er helt und tregt alles durch sein krefftiges Wort. Arndt, *Vier Bücher*, IV, 185.

65 Ferner haben wir den Trost / weil GOTT alles gegenwertig alles erhelt unnd regieret [...] So erhelt Er uns / und behütet uns mitten unter unsern Feinden / wie es David in den Psalmen bezeuget. Arndt, *Vier Bücher*, IV, 195.

travels out from him. His corpus is not here on earth and not present in the earth. I have read opinions of this sort in the books and writings of the doctors. This is why there have arisen so many opinions and so much quarreling among the learned.⁶⁶

Look, you uncomprehending fellow! I intend to show you the true ground of the divinity. If this entire being is not God, then you are not God's image. [...] For you are created out of him and live within him, and that same God constantly gives you out of himself power and blessings, food and drink. Moreover, all your knowledge abides in this God, and when you die, you will be buried in this God.⁶⁷

For Böhme, this concept of nature provides not only practical comfort, but it also empowers laity like himself to emancipate themselves from the theological quarrels of their time. When God reveals himself in nature and in the human heart, then nature and meditation can teach those who are willing how to experience God's presence. Consequently, Böhme calls nature his teacher (*Lehrmeisterin*) which taught him, the unlearned craftsman, more than he could have ever learned with scholars:

I have not studied or learned their arts, nor do I know how to work with their measuring compass, but I am not concerned about this. [...] I have no need of their formula and way of doing things, all the less since I have not learned what I know from them. I have another schoolmaster, which is all of nature. From that very totality of nature with its innate generations, I have studied and mastered my *philosophia*, *astrologia* and *theologia*, not from human beings nor by way of human beings.⁶⁸

Böhme's late *Theosophical Letters* reflect the political threat implied by such a stance, and they also they point to the reasons why Arndt carefully dissimulated his sympathies for Paracelsus, Khunrath's theosophy or the ancient philosophy of the "magi." Fiercely attacked as a foe of the church, the clergy and the sacraments, Böhme more than once had to justify himself, emphasizing that he had never wanted to destroy the church, but that he, as a lay person, simply wanted to testify to what he had come to know by contemplation and

66 Böhme, *Aurora*, 21:58.

67 Böhme, *Aurora*, 23:4.

68 Böhme, *Aurora*, 22, 10–11. The awareness that the knowledge of nature is immediate and avoids social hierarchies links Böhme to Weigel and Paracelsus. Andrew Weeks, "Radical Reformation and the Anticipation of Modernism in Jacob Böhme's Time," in *An Introduction to Jacob Böhme. Four Centuries of Thought and Reception*, ed. Ariel Hessayon and Sarah Apetrei (New York and London: Routledge, 2014), 38–56, here 43–44.

to assist others on their path.⁶⁹ In the context of his time, that was enough to be perceived as a threat to the church's monopoly and an attack on the authority of the clergy.

6 Piety, Heterodoxy and Human Freedom

Underlying the accusations of heresy that swirled around Arndt's and especially Böhme's writings was an anthropology that stressed human freedom and thus implicitly questioned the assumptions of the *Formula of Concord*.⁷⁰ As discourses of heterodoxy and heresy in fact indicate power struggles,⁷¹ it is helpful to compare Arndt's and Böhme's texts to the *Formula of Concord* which specified precisely which ideas were to be considered as pure doctrine and which ideas were to be condemned as false. According to the *Formula of Concord*, pure doctrine had to emphasize the total corruption of human nature (Article 1), the bondage of the will (Article 2) and the total reliance on justification and redemption through faith in Christ (Article 3). It opposed “Pelagian errors” such as the belief in a remaining shred of goodness in human nature that could be capable of contributing anything in spiritual matters (Article 1), in the belief that humans could convert to God out of their own will without grace (Article 2) and in the idea that love, not faith alone could justify humans before God (Article 3).⁷²

Emerging from the theological conflicts of the late sixteenth century, these doctrines grew not only out of academic debates among the various theological parties, but also out of controversies involving lay authors. A prominent critical voice appreciated by both Arndt and Böhme, Paracelsus, outlined how a massive authority conflict could function as the social backdrop to theological doctrines that denied humans any capacity to contribute to their own redemption. In his *De vita beata*, a collection of treatises on how to live a blessed life, Paracelsus sharply accuses the clergy of silencing laity like himself and denying them even the status of being Christian if they dare to listen to anybody else but to them.⁷³ Against the foil of his bitter criticism of contemporary corruption and

69 Böhme, *Theosophische Sendbriefe*, 54: 17–18, as well as 55: 8–10.

70 See also Andrew Weeks, *Böhme. An Intellectual Biography of the Seventeenth Century Philosopher and Mystic* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 47, 175–176.

71 Michael Titzmann, “Religiöse Abweichung in der Frühen Neuzeit: Relevanz – Formen – Kontexte,” in *Heterodoxie in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Hartmut Laufhütte und Michael Titzmann (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2006), 5–118, here 17–19.

72 Konkordienformel, 774–795.

73 Paracelsus quotes his opponents with the words: “You as a lay person, as a farmer, as a simple man, you may not talk about things concerning the gospel, but you have to listen

theological strife, Paracelsus sketches a vision of the true Christian life and of a “perpetual religion” (*de religione perpetua*), characterized by virtues like mercy, inspired teaching, atonement, forgiveness, peace, unity and a wise use of the powers of nature. The path that Paracelsus describes is the *Imitatio Christi*.⁷⁴

In the early seventeenth century, Arndt and Böhme position themselves within a similar arena of conflict. Readers’ reactions to their texts indicate that both advocated a “piety” that transgressed the doctrines of the *Formula of Concord*. Thus writings by both men easily found their way into the hands of those from different confessional backgrounds, as the great success of Arndt’s *Four Books* indicates.

In his *Fourth Book* regarding nature Arndt elaborately discusses love. He asserts that the existence of all creatures constantly reminds humans to love God (Chapter 15). The first love belongs to God, but it is the source of love to fellow human beings (Chapter 22). Each should love his fellow human being as himself and this love honors and betters us (Chapter 24). The first characteristic of love is its ability to unite the lover with the beloved and to transform the lover into the beloved (Chapter 28). This idea is linked to the discourse of white magic as Marsilio Ficino explained it in *De amore* (1469), a commentary on Plato’s *Symposion*, which states that all powers of magic consist in love.⁷⁵ Arndt explains that humans can be transformed by their love depending on what they set their heart on, on base, earthly, human or divine matters:

Therefore humans can be transformed by love in a noble or in a base thing [...] Since it is also obvious that love can transform the will, yet every transformation is directed to a nobler or a baser state, we should not give our love to a minor thing but only to the best, the highest and noblest which is God alone. [...] Thus our will and our love should be transformed in God.⁷⁶

to us what we tell you. You have to stay with that and you may neither read anybody else nor listen to anybody else but only to us.” / “Du als ein lai, als ein baur, als ein gemein mann, sollt von den dingen nit reden, was die heilig geschrift antrifft, sonder uns zuhören, was wir dir sagen; dabei bleiben und kein anderen sollt zu hören oder lesen, dann allein uns.” Paracelsus. *Theologische Werke 1: Vita beata – Vom seligen Leben*, ed. Urs Leo Gantenbein unter Mitarbeit von Michael Baumann und Detlef Roth (New York and Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008), 129.

74 Paracelsus, *Vita beata*, 131–141, 302–319. The idea of the *Imitatio Christi* is central for Paracelsus. Gantenbein, “Einleitung,” 25.

75 Marsilio Ficino, *Über die Liebe oder Platons Gastmahl*. Lateinisch-Deutsch (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag), 1994, 242/243. For an extensive overview over the discourses of magic and alchemy in their relationship to Early Modern mysticism see Hans-Georg Kemper, *Deutsche Lyrik der Frühen Neuzeit*. vol. 3: *Barock-Mystik* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1988), 101–135.

76 Arndt, *Vier Bücher*, IV, 295–296.

Subtly, Arndt's explanations contradict the anthropology of the *Formula of Concord* in various ways, yet the most important one is the implied necessity of the freedom of the will. Without the freedom of choice to set one's love on God or on earthly matters, the whole line of argumentation would be pointless. The love of God and of one's fellow human beings – for Christ the highest of all commandments – cannot be installed *ab extra*, but they can be practiced in daily efforts by individuals who faithfully choose to live a life of piety, forgiveness and mercy or, in the terminology of the time, to kill their old Adam in the *Imitatio Christi* on a daily basis. The transformative power of love also adds a new aspect to the dogma of the total corruption of human nature. Although Arndt does not hesitate to stress that human beings are corrupt through and through, he encourages believers to trust that their faith can open up the concealed depth of the soul in which God has laid the lost blessing:

So that He [God] should justify man from the inside out, from the innermost depth of the soul just as man is poisoned in the innermost powers of the soul by satan.⁷⁷

Here, Arndt's anthropology and soteriology differ substantially from that of the *Formula of Concord*.⁷⁸

Compendiums of heresies of the late seventeenth century such as Daniel Ehregott Colberg's *Das Platonisch-hermetisches Christenthum* (1691) call the idea of essential grace a heresy.⁷⁹ In this sense, the difference between Arndt and Böhme is not a fundamental one, but only a gradual one. Böhme is more explicit in assigning the free will a key role in the cosmic drama of fall and separation and in the individual processes of redemption and reunion. Beyond that, Böhme is more open in referring to discourses of magic and alchemy than Arndt. When Böhme calls Christ a tincture that touches and transforms our whole being, he basically describes an alchemical process. Christ as tincture has to awaken the presently dead soul to its lost longing for God, which will inspire the soul to give love again, to attract love again and finally to transform man's whole being into the lost heavenly creature. Böhme openly calls this the

77 Arndt, *Vier Bücher*, Book II, 34.

78 So also Geyer, *Verborgene Weisheit*, II, 371.

79 Ehre Gott Daniel Colberg, *Das Platonisch-hermetisches [!] Christenthum /Begreifend die Historische Erzählung vom Ursprung und vielerley Secten der heutigen Fanatischen Theologie, unterm Namen der Paracelsisten/ Weigelianer / Rosencreutzer / Quäcker / Böhmiſten / Wiedertäufer / Bourignisten / Labadisten / und Quietisten* (Franckfurt und Leipzig 1690 [Part 2: 1691]), vol 1, 109. Colberg's analysis is extremely useful to understand the different historical influences, conflicts and discourses of heresy.

process of a magus.⁸⁰ And where Arndt stresses faith as the power that ushers in the process of regeneration, Böhme urges his readers to firmly set their imagination in Christ in order to attract him with their uttermost longing.⁸¹ Thus, he explains, Christ's incarnation will repeat itself in believers who will be born again in Christ and even become Christ.⁸² In both cases, the authors talk about an individual choice to direct the powers of the soul. In a late, private letter (1623), Böhme speaks of a "bizarre acceptance of grace by somebody else's merits,"⁸³ thus openly mocking the theological mainstream for its denial of individual responsibility in spiritual matters.

In yet another letter to a friend, Böhme explains that the greatest wisdom is not far from us and need not be sought in distant places. Rather, she stands at the door to our soul, knocking, waiting to be let in.⁸⁴ The door, however, can only be opened individually by those who choose to do so. Therefore, Böhme links even his most elaborate explanations about cosmology, creation, time and eternity to practical advice on how to live in the world – a battleground of the forces of light and darkness.⁸⁵ Consequently, the experience of God's love is also set out for those who choose to live a life of love:

God longs for humanity, because humanity is God's image that He created according to his entire being, in which He wants to see and to recognize himself, and He also lives in humans. What do we therefore seek? [...] If we but seek and love one another, then we love God. What we do to one another, we do to God. Whoever seeks and finds his brother or sister has sought and found God. We are all in Him, one body with many limbs [...] And this is God's miracle: Before the dawn of the world, we were discerned in his Wisdom, and He created us into being so that there could be play within Himself.⁸⁶

Arndt and Böhme not only instruct their fellow Christians in piety, but they also provide a theological basis for the assertion of human freedom and

80 Jacob Böhme, *De signatura rerum*, in Jacob Böhme, *Werke*, ed. Ferdinand van Ingen (Frankfurt: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1997), 582, 586–587. Colberg also hints at alchemy as a source of what he calls a misuse of the gospel. Colberg, *Das Platonisch-hermetisches Christentum*, vol 1, 118.

81 For Böhme imagination is the key concept, not only for the cosmic fall of Adam, but especially for the individual process of regeneration. See also Kemper, *Barock-Mystik*, 142–147.

82 Böhme, *Von der Menschwerdung Jesu Christi*, 12:17

83 Böhme, *Theosophische Sendbriefe*, 46:6.

84 Böhme, *Theosophische Sendbriefe*, 55:7.

85 Weeks, "Radical Reformation," 52/53.

86 Böhme, *Vom dreifachen Leben des Menschen*, 11: 106.

individual authority before God in a time of crisis and theological strife. They entrust lay people, the “simple,” with the capacity – and the responsibility – to follow in Christ’s footsteps. They teach them to be aware where they set their faith, because this has consequences for their salvation. In doing so, they point to the Bible, Christ, nature and to the human heart as places to seek God, not to the questionable authority of bickering clergymen.

Thus, the concerns about “heresy” that were already present in Paracelsus’ writings persist in discourses of piety in the seventeenth century. These discourses point to conflicts about the authority of the individual conscience and human freedom.

7 Conclusion

Both Böhme and Arndt aim at providing comfort and encouragement to their fellow Christians during a time of crisis and confusion regarding “true Christianity.” Both men point to the contemplation of nature and the human soul as a path to the invisible, but omnipresent God. When both insist on the restoration of the *imago dei* as the core of “true Christianity,” they distance themselves from theological polemic and stress the importance of the *Imitatio Christi* that can be lived by everyone. Thus both share a non-hierarchical understanding of the Christian life. Yet the two differ in the degree of adherence to current Lutheran dogma. While Arndt remains ambiguous about the extent to which rebirth, as a transfiguration of existence is a work *sola gratia*, Böhme explicitly encourages his fellow believers to strive for the new birth as the goal of human existence. He never implies that rebirth can be achieved without divine assistance, but compared to Arndt and especially to the *Formula of Concord* he stresses human freedom and responsibility in the *Imitatio Christi* to prepare the ground for God’s grace. Moreover, where Arndt carefully positions himself within the borders of Christianity, Böhme takes the idea of God’s ubiquity and personal responsibility to a point where he can include even “Jews, Turks and Heathens,” who live a life according to Christ’s principles, into a universal Christendom:

Truly, there is but one God. If only the cover is removed from your eyes so you see and know, then all your brothers shall see and know as well, be they Christians or Jews, Turks or heathens.⁸⁷

87 Böhme, *Aurora*, 11:34. See also Weeks, *Böhme*, 47.

The New Adam: Jacob Böhme and the Theology of Paracelsus (1493/94–1541)

Urs Leo Gantenbein

Elsewhere in this volume,¹ reference has been made to Winfried Zeller's concept of the "crisis of piety" (*Frömmigkeitskrise*), said to have developed around 1600.² This concept implies that the narrow religious atmosphere of a hardening theological orthodoxy, whether Catholic, Calvinist, or Lutheran, was mainly concerned with the defense of its own teachings against all opponents. This gave rise to a vacuum in the sphere of lived religion. Believers became alienated from their authentic spiritual feelings by the dominance of rigid dogmatic norms. What they therefore longed for was a teaching which might provide consolation and guidance through devotion to God, indeed a teaching that might perhaps offer a mystically experienced union with the deity. This may help explain how in the first two decades of the seventeenth century so many independent thinkers sought new modes of religious expression in their publications. Other contributors to this volume have discussed Johann Arndt (1555–1621), whose four books *Vom wahren Christentum* (1605–1610) became a religious bestseller, as well as Martin Moller (1547–1606), who was for a time Böhme's pastor in Görlitz. Both men conform to Zeller's crisis concept which stresses experience over doctrinal polemic. Notably, however, even the Lutheran theologian Philipp Nicolai (1556–1608), a harsh polemicist against Calvinism, published writings that gave voice to a mystical piety.³

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- 1 I wish to express my thanks to Andrew Weeks for the continuing fruitful discussions, his many helpful comments, and the English translation in parts of my text.
 - 2 Winfried Zeller, "Lutherische Lebenszeugen. Gestalten und Gestalt lutherischer Frömmigkeit". *Evangelisches und orthodoxes Christentum in Begegnung und Auseinandersetzung*, ed. E. Benz and L.A. Zander, (Hamburg: Agentur des Rauhen Hauses, 1952), 180–202. For a further discussion see the chapter "Zur Frömmigkeitskrise des 17. Jahrhunderts" by Johannes Wallmann. *Pietismus-Studien. Gesammelte Aufsätze II* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 118–133; and the criticism by Markus Matthias, "Gab es eine Frömmigkeitskrise um 1600?", *Frömmigkeit oder Theologie. Johann Arndt und die "Vier Bücher vom wahren Christentum"*, ed. Hans Otte and Hans Schneider, Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2007, 27–42.
 - 3 For example *Frewden Spiegel des ewigen Lebens* (Frankfurt/Main: Johann Spieß, 1599) or *Von Christo Jesu dem Bawm des Lebens vnd seinen edlen Früchten* (Hamburg: Philip von Ohr, 1607).

This period also saw the flourishing of ever bolder alchemical speculations on God and the world, such as Heinrich Khunrath's *Amphitheatrum Sapientiae Aeternae* (1595) or Michael Maier's *Atalanta fugiens* (1618), and the anonymous manifestos *Fama Fraternitatis* (1614) and *Confessio Fraternitatis* (1615) which laid the cornerstone of the Rosicrucian phenomenon. During this same period, the posthumously circulated or printed theological writings of Paracelsus and Valentin Weigel found their way into the mix of discussion and controversy. Since our main purpose here is to suggest how Paracelsus and his theological writings infiltrated and pervaded Böhme's intellectual environment, we will do well to begin by recounting in general terms the origin and thrust of Paracelsus' theological work which had originated a century earlier. We will then trace the ramified arteries through which his influence was transmitted so that it became pervasive in Böhme's surroundings.

The following overview of the theological work of Theophrastus von Hohenheim (1493/94–1541), called Paracelsus, combines chronology with content in order to suggest how his views developed and might have appealed to Weigel, Arndt, and Böhme. Roughly half of his theological writings have never been edited or printed.⁴

Paracelsus turned early to theology. A prolog written in 1540 appears to look back on twenty years of such engagement.⁵ Accordingly, it would have begun as early as 1520 during the inaugural phase of the Reformation. Luther's writings of that year circulated widely and were deeply influential. *The Letter to the German Nobility* (*An den christlichen Adel teutscher Nation*, 1520) was sweepingly programmatic. Citing 1 Corinthians 12, the reformer declares the priesthood of all baptized Christians ("Dan alle Christen sein wahrhaftig geystlichs stands, unnd ist unter yhn kein unterscheyd"),⁶ thereby implicitly authorizing lay people to perform sacerdotal duties and address theological questions.

The earliest extant dated works of Paracelsus are from 1524, a year in which he was attempting to settle as a physician in Salzburg. Characteristically, the writings in question are devoted to theology and articulate original views on fundamental issues of the Reformation. On August 15, he concludes his *Buch von Maria der Jungfrauen*. Later, a revised version of this tract was circulated which was given the title *Libellus de Virgine Sancta Theotoca*.⁷ In it, Paracelsus

4 The pending theological works will be edited in the *Neue Paracelsus-Edition*, Berlin, New York: De Gruyter (abbreviated *NPE*), see www.paracelsus.uzh.ch. Already published is vol. 1: *Vita Beata – Vom seligen Leben*, 2008.

5 *NPE* 1:5–6; 127.

6 Martin Luther, *Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 6 (Weimar: Hermann Böhlau, 1888), 407.

7 Wrocław University Library, Cod. Rhed. 333. The text will be edited in *NPE* 5. For a brief description of the Salzburg writings see Urs Leo Gantenbein, "Von der Natur zur Übernatur:

contradicts the contemporaneous efforts of the Reformation to diminish the divine status of Maria as the mother of Jesus. The Mother of the Son of God is nothing less than an eternal “celestial queen” (*himmlische Königin*) who has existed from the very beginning of creation as a consort of the divine Father.

On September 8, Paracelsus completes the *Liber de Sancta Trinitate*, concerning the origination of the Holy Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.⁸ Initially God was alone. Then he created out of himself a “goddess” (*Göttin*), as Eve would be fashioned out of Adam. With his celestial queen, God then generates the Son and, together with the Son, the Holy Spirit. To avoid turning the Trinity into a quaternity, the author stresses that the “eternal woman” has no other role but generation of the Son, all other things being carried out by the canonical Trinity. These bold trinitarian speculations anticipate Böhme’s intense reflections on the generation of the divine being. To be sure, Böhme’s theogony takes place outside of time in the realm of eternity. Eternity, however, is omnipresent within time. The individual attempts of Paracelsus and Böhme to accommodate a female role within the divine being are in either case startling. Moreover, even the earliest Paracelsian writings on the Trinity draw the distinction between “the light of nature” and “the light of the Holy Spirit”. The former discloses the secrets of nature, while the latter teaches a higher, eternal wisdom. The doctrine of the “two lights” – essentially two accesses to authority and truth – shapes the parameters of speculation for both Paracelsus and Böhme, if at times in divergent ways.

Another work of this same early phase addresses the more practical concerns of the Reformation: *De Septem Punctis Idolatriae Christianae* (*Seven Points of Christian Idolatry*). It probably originated in late 1524.⁹ It proclaims an inner spiritual church of the heart as opposed to the superficial “stone church” – an opposition shared by many dissenters. The treatise rejects an external ritualized religion with its worship services and public prayers, its summons to fast, its self-serving almsgiving, and its pilgrimages and monasticism.

Around this time, in March 1525, a letter is addressed by Paracelsus from Salzburg to the Wittenberg reformers Luther, Melanchthon, and Pomeranus (Bugenhagen). There is no consensus among scholars whether this letter to the Wittenberg theologians is authentic or written by later Paracelsians to

Heil und Heilung bei Paracelsus”, *Manuskripte, Thesen, Informationen*, ed. Deutsche Bombastus-Gesellschaft E.V. 34 (2016), 15–34, here 19–20.

8 The *Liber de Sancta Trinitate* is edited in Theophrast von Hohenheim genannt Paracelsus, *Theologische und religionsphilosophische Schriften*, ed. Kurt Goldammer (abbreviated *GE*), vol. 3 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1986), 233–266. See Gantenbein, “Von der Natur zur Übernatur”, 20–21.

9 *GE* 3:1–57; Gantenbein, “Von der Natur zur Übernatur”, 21–22.

legitimate their idol before the Lutheran orthodoxy; but there are some strong arguments for authenticity, which I concur with.¹⁰ The letter itself certainly had an impact on the early reception of Paracelsus. It announces his intention to write nearly fifty commentaries on various books of the Bible. As a sample, it encloses his commentary on the first five chapters of the Gospel according to Matthew.¹¹ (Indeed, the planned eight volumes with theological works in the New Paracelsus Edition will consist mainly of Bible commentaries composed in the spirit of the Protestant precept of *sola scriptura*.)

Additional undated theological writings may also pertain to the early Salzburg phase. Recurrent references to forthcoming “paramirische schriften” may refer to a larger project of which the *Opus Paramirum* and perhaps also some theological writings of the early 1530s are the final outgrowth.¹² Similar references to the “paramirischen geschriften”¹³ as sources of deeper elucidation are voiced in his eucharistic treatise *Liber de Sacramento Corporis Christi, einzunehmen zu der Seligkeit*.¹⁴ Although I was previously inclined to assign these writing to the time around 1530, I now favor the juncture around 1525.¹⁵ The plethora of dated writings and of others likely to stem from the Salzburg phase reveals Paracelsus as a thinker intensely engaged with the early Reformation, one whose theological views continued to evolve in the course of his life. Even without a formal education in theology, Paracelsus claims his place among the influential radical reformers.¹⁶

10 See the discussion in *NPE* 1:11, footnote 42.

11 The letter to the Wittenberg theologians and the Matthew commentary will be edited in *NPE* 2. See also Gantenbein, “Von der Natur zur Übernatur”, 22.

12 On the rather mysterious “paramiran writings” and their circumstances see the elaborate remarks in *ETW* 5–6, 9–10, 14–15, 63, 288, and Andrew Weeks, “Paracelsus, Verkünder und Querulant”, *Nova Acta Paracelsica N.F.* 27 (2016), 91–124, here 105–111.

13 *NPE* 1:508.

14 It is among the *Fünf Traktate zur Seligkeit* in *NPE* 1:479–527, which address themselves to the issues of contrition, baptism, the Eucharist, and justification in accordance with Romans, a key point of Reformation discourse which Paracelsus favors; as well as the controversy over images.

15 *NPE* 1:83. The eucharistic concept in the *Liber de Sacramento Corporis Christi* is rudimentary compared to the more refined concept in a writing which can be more securely associated with the 1530 juncture: *Liber de Coena Domini an Pabst Clemens VII*.

16 See e.g. Hartmut Rudolph, “Theophrast von Hohenheim (Paracelsus). Arzt und Apostel der neuen Kreatur”, *Radikale Reformatoren. 21 biographische Skizzen von Thomas Müntzer bis Paracelsus*, ed. Hans-Jürgen Goertz (München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1978), 231–242; George Huntston Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 3rd edition, *Sixteenth Century Essays & Studies*, 15 (Kirkville, MO: Truman State University Press, 1992), 305–309, 457–459, 773–775; Andrew Weeks, *Paracelsus. Speculative Theory and the Crisis of the Early Reformation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 98–99; Wolf-Dieter Hauschild,

Amid the chaos and violence of the Peasant War that encompassed Salzburg in 1525, he fled the city. After a sojourn in Strasbourg, he arrived in Basel in 1527 in order to accept a position as the official city physician, combined with a medical lectureship at the university.¹⁷ It was only here that he made his well-known debut as a vehement reformer of medicine. He intended to disregard ancient and medieval authorities, especially Aristotle, in order to put medicine and the philosophy of nature on a new foundation based on practical experience. Similarly, Luther had rejected the authority of Aristotle and the rigid dogmas of medieval scholasticism within the bloated authority of the church. All were to be replaced by the more immediate authority of the Bible (*sola scriptura*) and of salvation by faith alone (*sola fide*), which lay within the experience of the individual believer. In principle, Paracelsus intended to achieve the same sort of objective in medicine by dispensing with the canonical authorities and embracing individual experience against all external impositions. Within the trajectory of his career, temporal precedence lies with the Salzburg theological writings, which say nothing about medicine. It seems then that he transferred the reformers' principles to medicine. With good reason, he was known as a "Lutherus medicorum".¹⁸

Quarrels with students and city officials caused Paracelsus to flee Basel within a year. Without a permanent residence, he orbited through the South German territories, convinced that his reforming efforts had been deeply misunderstood. He wrote and tried to publish new medical treatises but was further frustrated by a prohibition to publish issued in Nuremberg. In and after Basel, it is perhaps possible, though probably inaccurate, to see Paracelsus as a medical reformer with an auxiliary interest in theology. However, the next decade brings a clear shift in focus. In the sense of his pledge to the Wittenberg reformers there is a renewal of theological effort. As Weeks has shown in his

Lehrbuch der Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte, vol. 2 (Gütersloh: Christian Kaiser/ Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1999), 84–85; *NPE* 1:5–13.

17 Regarding Paracelsus's Basel period see above all Robert-Henri Blaser, *Paracelsus in Basel* (Muttentz and Basel: St. Arbogast Verlag, 1979).

18 *ETW* 68, footnote b, 90–91. Already the Zurich town physician Christoph Clouser called Paracelsus in 1531 "der artzeten Luther" (Luther of the physicians), see his treatise on uroscopy *Das die betrachtung des menschenn Harns on anderen bericht vnnütz ... syge* (Zurich 1531), fol. Bij". See further Leigh T.I. Penman, "Paraluther: Explaining an Unexpected Portrait of Paracelsus in Andreas Hartmann's Curriculum Vitae Lutheri (1601)", *Religion, the Supernatural, and Visual Culture in Early Modern Europe: an album amicorum for Charles Zika*, ed. Jennifer Spinks and Dagmar Eichberger. *Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions*, 191 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015), 161–184. For a general statement of this approach, see Weeks, *Paracelsus* (1997), 1–17.

edition and translation of *Essential Theoretical Writings*, the medical writings of 1530–31 are informed by theological allusions and ideas.

By thorough effort, he completed in 1530 his Commentary on Psalms.¹⁹ Though only half of this commentary is extant, even this fragment excels as the largest single work of his that has survived. As Young Jae Choi has shown in his comprehensive analysis of the Psalm Commentary,²⁰ assertions throughout make it possible to assess the state of theological development during this period. Prominent among his views is the central importance of faith within salvational history.²¹ Faith refers solely to trust in Christ, not to any auxiliaries such as signs, wonders, or works of the saints. Faith accrues to the human being as a gift accorded to him by the wisdom of God which is in turn the source of all knowledge. Faith should increase and rise up in relation to God. Salvation and the attainment of bliss are therefore concerned only with Christ, his atoning death on the cross and the granting of his blood and flesh. God the Father could not have effected salvation on his own, since for this the Son was needed. In consequence of this emphasis, the entire Psalm Commentary is strewn with references to the Last Supper or Eucharist. This is characteristic for the ensuing years. The seed of Adam from God the Father must be vanquished in human rebirth by the seed of Christ or *Limbus Christi* if salvation is to be attained.²²

In the same year 1530, Paracelsus finished a long, coherent work on the Eucharist. It was rhetorically addressed to Pope Clement VII, whose pontificate lasted from 1523 until 1534.²³ For the first time, Paracelsus summarizes the main points of his doctrine as it would be registered by posterity; and he elucidates them with the relevant scriptural texts.²⁴ In the human being, there are

19 The Psalter commentary is edited in *GE*, vols. 4–6. The preface of the fourth and last part of the commentary is dated July 19, 1530, see *GE* 5:125.

20 Young Jae Choi, *Die Reflexion der Seligkeit. Der Psalmenkommentar des Paracelsus* (Inaugural dissertation: Ruhr-Universität, Bochum, 2012).

21 See Choi, 96–105.

22 Choi, 35–46, 142–146.

23 A copy of the work is included in the Görlitz manuscript which will be discussed below: *Vom Nachtmal Christi ad Clementem VII.*, Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel, Cod. Extrav. 160 4° (abbreviated as *W*₁), fol. 1^r–17^r. The year 1530 is mentioned on fol. 2^r. The text will be edited in *NPE* 6. A transcription in modernized language is Paracelsus, *Das Mahl des Herrn und Auslegung des Vaterunsers*, ed. Gerhard J. Deggeller (Dornach: Verlag am Goetheanum, 1993).

24 Regarding Paracelsus's important writings on the Eucharist see Michael Bunnens, *Die Abendmahlsschriften und das medizinisch-naturphilosophische Werk des Paracelsus* (Inaugural dissertation: Humboldt-Universität, Berlin, 1961); Hartmut Rudolph, "Hohenheim's Anthropology in the Light of his Writings on the Eucharist", *Paracelsus. The Man and his Reputation. His Ideas and their Transformation*, ed. Ole Peter Grell. Studies in the History of Christian Thought, 85 (Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill, 1998), 187–206; Nikolaus Czifra,

two creatures, a mortal and an eternal one. The first is from Adam as he was created when God the Father made him from a clump of clay with the word *fiat* ("let there be") and blew his spirit into him in Genesis 2:7. The seed of Adam reproduced itself from generation to generation, but never had what is needed for bliss and eternal life. To this end, God the Son would have to be born from above as a human being and give his body and blood through his death on the cross. The physician Paracelsus could not, in the manner of certain Spiritualists, imagine the resurrected body as purely spiritual, but indeed only as no less physical than the earthly body: "Therefore, you should know that in the resurrection it is not Adam's flesh that will rise up, but rather the new body. For God intends human beings to be physical in heaven. The body will become sacred, not the spirit or soul, which will already belong to God and have passed to him" (Drumb wissent, Jn der aufferstehng wird nit Adams fleisch aufferstehen, sondern der neue leib, vnd nit geist oder Seel allein. Dann Gott wil die Menschen leiblich Jm himmel haben, vnd der leib wird heilig, nit der Geist vnd Seel, dann sie vorhin sein Gottes vnd zu Gott faren – *W*, 3^r). The new body also needs its own nourishment, which is the flesh and blood of Christ granted in the Last Supper. In place of the word of creation, *fiat*, there now comes Christ's invitation in Matthew 26:26: *accipite* (take and eat): "Through the word *fiat*, the clay became Adam. For him then, Christus took the bread and for the earthly element of flesh his own body. Therefore, in place of his clay there is his body, and his word *accipite*, etc. is the *fiat*" (Durch das wort FIAT ward aus dem leyden Adam: Also für den, hat Christus das brott genommen, vnd für das Jrdische Elementische fleisch seinen leib, Also, das sein leib ann stat des leyemens da ist, vnd sein wort Accipite etc. ist das Fiat – *W*, fol. 4^v).

Accordingly, the new body emerges parallel to the old Adamic one. In heaven as on earth, there is a need for food and drink, for God's will prevails everywhere. The kingdom of God accordingly begins already on earth. This opens up a thematic sphere that will preoccupy Paracelsus in his later cycle of writings on the *Vita Beata* or true Christian life that is to be led in preparation and as a precondition for the eternal life in heaven after death. As the Psalm Commentary had already stated, it is only faith that can lead to the salvation of rebirth: "Faith is both father and mother of this birth, the Son is Christ. Hence we must come to it by faith alone" (Der Glaube ist Vater vnd Mutter dieser geburt, der Sohn ist Christus: Drumb müssen wir allein durch den glauben darzu kommen – *W*, fol. 4^v).

Paracelsus' Abendmahlschriften. Überlieferung und Kontext (Inaugural dissertation: Universität Salzburg, 2014).

Once again, Paracelsus attempts at the beginning of the 1530s to settle in a city, the Eastern Swiss commercial center of St. Gallen. Here he composes the compendious, medical-theoretical *Opus Paramirum* (1531). Among its topics, it treats of the three principles and the invisible diseases that affect the spirit.²⁵ He dedicates it to the physician, reformer, and mayor of St. Gallen Joachim von Watt (1484–1551), known as Vadianus, who is, like Paracelsus, a physician concerned also with Reformation issues. Again frustrated, Paracelsus seems intent on abandoning medicine. He withdraws to the hills of the Appenzell region in East Switzerland, to rededicate himself to theological concerns. Parallel to the Psalms Commentary, there arises around 1532 a comprehensive, verse-by-verse commentary on the full Gospel according to Matthew.²⁶ It has been handed down in several distinct subsequent versions.²⁷ It offers a unique opportunity to assess Hohenheim's ideas and theological emphases in relation to the Gospels. At the same time, the physician and nature philosopher reveals himself in interpreting events and assertions of the Gospels.²⁸ For example, the gifts born by the holy three kings in Matthew 2:11 are discussed with their medical application. Incense drives away evil spirits and myrrh serves as a drink for stimulating breast milk which protects the infant from worms and putrefaction. Special attention is given to the normally unhealable ailments of leprosy, lameness, the driving out of demons, and the awakening of the dead. The ability of Jesus and the Apostles to effect such remedies by the power of the new creature alludes to the advent of a new, apostolic medicine: "These three things – curing the leprous, raising the dead, and driving out devils – were never subject to the old medicine. Thus they signify a new, perfect medicine without earthly apothecaries; celestial and not earthly" (*Dise drey stuck seindt der alltenn artzney nie vnnderworffenn gesein: alß aussetzig gesund machenn, dottenn lebendig machen vnnd deuffell außstreybenn. darumb ist do ain Newe vollkommen Artzney onn die yrdisch Appoteckhenn, himlisch vnnd nitt yrdisch*).²⁹

Moreover, of supreme importance for his theology is the teaching of the two descents, the one of the old *limbus* from Adam and the other of the new saving *limbus* from Christ. This is taken up with reference to the enumeration

25 For an English translation and commentary see *ETW* 297–937.

26 The year 1532 is mentioned in the *Vorredt vber die vier Euangelisten* (preface to the four evangelists), Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg, Cod. Pal. Germ. 476, fol. 1^r.

27 The Matthew commentaries will be edited in *NPE*, vols. 2–4.

28 See Urs Leo Gantenbein, "Gesundheit und Krankheit in den Matthäus-Kommentaren des Paracelsus", *Salzburger Beiträge zur Paracelsusforschung* 34 (2000), 47–72.

29 Commentary to Matthew 10:8, *First Commentary to St. Matthew*, Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg, Cod. Pal. Germ. 26, fol. 93^v. See also Gantenbein, "Gesundheit und Krankheit", 68–70.

of Old Testament generations (Mt 1). Not only baptism with water but the true baptism with the Holy Spirit is important, as are the Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes; the symbols of the salt of the earth and of the light of the world (Mt 5), the Lord's Prayer (Mt 6), the encouragement to prayer, and the warning against false prophets (Mt 7). Of key import are the commissioning of the Apostles and institution of their rules of conduct (Mt 10); the parables of the sower; of weeds and wheat; of the mustard seed, and the sourdough (Mt 13); Peter's recognition that Jesus is the Son of God and his receipt of the keys to heaven (Mt 16); the transfiguration of Christ (Mt 17); the dictum that many are called but few chosen (Mt 20); the resurrection of the dead and the exaltation of the love of God and one's neighbor (Mt 22); the condemnation of the scribes and Pharisees (Mt 23), and the annunciation of the end of times with its false prophets and false Christs (Mt 24).

These emphases also intimate to us which parts of the Gospel had a special appeal to Paracelsus in light of his reversals from Basel to St. Gallen and beyond. He understood his mission as divinely granted in medicine as well as theology. Like the Apostles, he was a man of simple origin, ridiculed and persecuted by the scribes and Pharisees, finding no response in the academic medicine and theology of his day. Like them, he was compelled to take up his cross. The identification must have nurtured him in his nadir after St. Gallen.

These were years in which Paracelsus increasingly turned to his *Liber de Vita Beata*, his book of the blessed life.³⁰ It consists of a cycle of essays, complete in themselves and covering various aspects of an ideal Christian life leading to bliss in the afterlife. One of these short treatises bears the year date 1533, which may mark the time when Paracelsus was mostly focused on the *Vita Beata*.³¹ As in the Psalms Commentary, the right conduct of life makes it possible to achieve sanctity or bliss already in the earthly life. Only this guarantees continuation after death. This was the thematic sphere that preoccupied Paracelsus for over half of his life, from around 1520 until 1540. Having been detained by other projects, he now at last found the opportunity to give the essays an overall order, only to be prevented from doing so by his illness and death. In consequence, we have inherited the writings in a loose order, though their reconstruction with a certain plausibility was possible in the first volume of the NPE.³² The importance of the *Liber de Vita Beata* for its author is demonstrated by the fact that it contains the essence of his theology.³³ Put simply,

30 The reconstruction of the *Liber de Vita Beata* is edited in NPE 1.

31 NPE 1:377, 717.

32 See my remarks in NPE 1:78–81.

33 For a brief overview of the various essays of the *Liber de Vita Beata* see the summaries in NPE 1:87–103.

the blessed life is Christocentric, following Christ to the utmost consequence whether in the social or the spiritual realm. Soteriologically, Christ is the highest good. Faith in him effects rebirth and leads to bliss. It is to be attained, not by those who live in pleasure, wealth, or passivity, but only by those who take up the cross, following him and suffering in his name (Mt 10:38). The objective is to follow in Christ's footsteps through love (1 Pet 2:21) in order to gain heaven. The kingdom of God resides in love, than which nothing is more blessed. Hence, the blessed life or *Vita Beata* consists of carrying Christ forward and maintaining him in one's heart. The rectification of sins occurs through fervent and faithful devotion to God:

No matter how great the sins upon us [...] we should cry out to God from the depth of our heart. When we do and do it with our very being God will cast his eyes upon us and forget about all our sins. [...]

(Und ob wir groß sünd uf uns haben [...] sollen wir aus der tiefe unsers herzens schreien zu gott. Und so wir mit ernst schreien und mit ganzem grund, so wird er sein augen gegen uns wenden und wird aller unser sünd vergessen – NPE 1:419).

No one should think or know any differently than that when we die in the Lord beneath his cross, a lost sheep has been found at which the entire celestial horde rejoices that the sheep finds its way to them. [...] That is the lost sheep that has been regained for eternal bliss.

(Dann wir alle sollen nichts anders gedenken und wissen, dann so wir also im herrn sterben unter seim kreuz, dass do ein verloren schaf gefunden ist worden, über das sich das ganz himmlisch hör erfreut, dass das schaf zu ihnen kommen ist [...] Das ist das verlorn schaf, das wiedergefunden ist worden in die ewige seligkeit – NPE 1:421).

The Paracelsian Eucharist resides in the doctrine of the new creature. This is woven decisively into the thinking of the *Vita Beata* writings. The human being has two bodies, one earthly and one eternal, the latter requiring the nourishment of the Gospel. Only those who eat of Christ's flesh and drink of his blood will be resurrected on Judgment Day (John 6:54). Whoever is born again from God attains to an eternal chiliastic kingdom without death or disease, where eternal peace and joy prevail. There, human beings will be resurrected in a new, glorified body. Since Salzburg, 1524, his ecclesiology has continued to implicate an inner church of the spirit. Now it becomes the foundation of the new creature. The old creature has been superseded. The new one has been initiated with Jesus Christ so that there are now in effect two churches: the outer one of stone and the inner temple of the heart where we are to pray and apply what has been learned. Every human being is a temple and priest in whom

God resides, unbound to any particular place, be it Jerusalem or a mountain. If the heart is ready for it, God will grant the knowledge of the new light. For the blessed life, the teaching of the Gospel is augmented by a key social component which is oriented to the instructions of the Sermon on the Mount.

A Christian society must be founded on faith, love, and hope (1 Cor 13:13). All human beings are equal and should be encountered at the same level. This leads to an ethics of labor. Authentic labor should only strive for the necessities of life without greed or egoism. For the kingdom of heaven is for the poor, not for the rich. The greatest possible wealth lies in serving one's fellows by sharing superfluity. Everyone has received a gift for the purpose of assisting one's fellows. However, the true gift from God lies in bearing one's own cross. In the school of God, we must learn to ask him only for what is necessary; anything else is received in vain. In his *Vita Beata* writings, Paracelsus sketches a social utopia with the four spiritual offices of apostles, prophets, teachers, and disciples. The worldly order of gifts and estates consists of peasants, craftsmen, scholars, and governing officers. One can say in sum that the treatises of the *Liber de Vita Beata* cover all possible aspects of the true Christian life: an introduction to the theme, a Christian ethics, the issue of the true church, rectification of sins, and the path to the blessed life. In his concluding sentence the author insists resolutely that the state of bliss begins already in the earthly life. After death, it cannot be recovered: "So let everyone open up his eyes here on earth, so that he achieves bliss here on earth; for whatever has not been initiated here has been neglected and will be turned over to eternal death" (Darum so tue ein jeglicher sein augen uf hie uf erden, dass er hie uf erden selig werd. Dann was hie nit den anfang nimmt, dasselbig ist versaumt und dem ewigen tod überantwort – *NPE* 1:474).

Presumably parallel to the *Liber de Vita Beata*, Paracelsus worked on an additional summary of his doctrine of the new creature which he called *Philosophia de Limbo Æterno* (*The Philosophy of the Eternal Limbus*). The eternal *Limbus* is the seed that Christ brought into the world.³⁴ In accordance with the *Liber de Vita Beata*, the conclusion of the *Philosophia* bears the same date, 1533.³⁵ This new philosophy was intended to explain all the spiritual aspects of creation, beginning at the point where the natural philosophy that originated from Adam leaves off. Expanding the concept of 1530 meant for Pope Clemens VII, the preface now projects a 21-point outline touching on every aspect of the new *Philosophia*, in particular the derivation of the eternal *Limbus* from

34 The reconstructed *Liber de Limbo Æterno* will be edited in *NPE* 6.

35 *W*, fol. 62^r.

the Gospels, from John, the Pauline epistles, the Psalms, and the prophets, as well as from natural philosophy. The doctrine of resurrection was to be elucidated in order to show how the Eucharist should be treated practically. It is unlikely that Paracelsus completed all 21 books of the *Philosophia*.³⁶ They are at least not extant. Several treatises of the *Philosophia* were published by Johannes Staricius in 1618 and will receive further attention below. It is notable that Paracelsus often produced alternative versions of his theological and medical treatises. We must bear in mind his mobile life style, his limited ability to transport his materials, which might therefore have been left with hosts, and his inclination to revisit and modify themes previously treated.

After his extensive preoccupations with Psalms, Matthew, the Eucharist, and the *Vita Beata* cycle, a period of renewed medical activity sets in in the mid 1530s, beginning with a small work describing the Eastern Swiss spa Bad Pfäfers in 1535, followed by the only major success of his lifetime, the publication of the *Great Surgery* (*Große Wundarznei*, 1536).

Hoping for recognition, he completes a collection of medical writings for the government of the Austrian province of Carinthia (which unfortunately reneged on its promise to have them printed). The writings cover the diseases of the stone (*tartarus*), a sweeping attack on the old medicine, and seven “defenses” of his own life and new medicine.³⁷ Also from the late 1530s stems another large-scale writing, perhaps his most mysterious of all. In this, his *Astronomia Magna* or *Philosophia Sagax der großen und kleinen Welt*, we are presented with a magical-theological understanding of the world, an extension of his religiously framed philosophy of nature. As Bunnars demonstrated, *Astronomia Magna* is an all-encompassing system of God, the human being, and the world. In it, theology, anthropology, nature philosophy, and magic are woven into a single conglomeration, as will arguably be the case also with Böhme.³⁸ The key points of Paracelsus’ “hermetic” world are united here: the relation of above and below, the well-worn concepts of macro- and microcosm, the familiar two lights, the doctrine of the soul, the repeated teaching of the new creature, and much more besides.³⁹

There are other extant theological treatises: three cycles of so-called “Sermones” can be ascribed to the year 1540. These sermons or treatises include

36 See the remarks in Czifra, 147.

37 *The Book of Tartaric Diseases, The Seven Defenses, The Labyrinth of the Erring Physicians*.

38 Bunnars, 161–188.

39 See also Dane T. Daniel, *Paracelsus’ Astronomia Magna (1537/38): Bible-Based Science and the Religious Roots of the Scientific Revolution*, (Inaugural dissertation: Indiana University, Bloomington, 2003).

the *Sermones de Antichristo*, meaning the false prophets,⁴⁰ the *Sermones in Incantatores*, concerning broadly the themes of magic in the New Testament, and the *Sermones in Pseudodoctores*, meaning, not physicians but false theologians. On the whole, the “sermons” invoke an end-time mood. Their dating is in need of further research, since in language and theme they are reminiscent of the Salzburg writings of 1524. Whatever their date, it is clear they attest to a career-spanning engagement with theology, one that equals, if not overshadows, Paracelsus’s concern with medicine.

The reception and dissemination of Paracelsus’s medical and theological printed books and manuscripts has received much attention from scholars. Of particular interest here are the ten years prior to the Thirty Years’ War when Paracelsus’s theology is revived, initially as a component of Valentin Weigel’s posthumously printed works, but ultimately in the first major appearances under his own name in 1618. This is the time of the *Frömmigkeitskrise*, but also one of heightened intellectual exchange and worsening political and confessional tensions. The decade encompasses Böhme’s *Morgen Röte im auffgang* (*Aurora*, 1612) and the launch of his mature writing phase in 1618. Because Böhme knew, or claimed to know, one primary experience of illumination from which all his writings followed, it is easy to place him in the separate category of the mystic, while leaving Paracelsus in the realm of practical experience and medicine. However, the distinction is illusory, first because scholars have long questioned the notion that everything in Böhme followed from one moment of illumination, and second, because Paracelsus himself recognized even in his mature medical theory divine illumination as the only credible source of truth. The time was ripe for inspired theological-metaphysical theories offering prospects of exposing the secret bonds between God, the heavens, and nature.

Perhaps more than any other, Paracelsus promised to point the way in this quest, or at least to provide the foundation for further speculations. By 1600, nearly all of his surviving medical, nature philosophical, and magical writings were in print either as single editions or voluminous collected works. Some of Paracelsus’s hotly debated notions had long since found their way into the mainstream and been adapted to common knowledge, as for example the concept of the three constituting principles, sulfur, mercury, and salt, the external signature signaling the inner nature of things, or the *mysterium magnum*, known in Görlitz from a controversy over the *Philosophia ad Athenienses*. Yet, most of the theological works had never seen print. They were copied and

40 For a description of the *Sermones de Antichristo* see Urs Leo Gantenbein, “Leben, Tod und Jenseits bei Paracelsus”, *Gutes Leben und guter Tod von der Spätantike bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Theophrastus Paracelsus Studien, 4 (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2012), 157–194, here 187–194.

passed around in dissenting circles. Through such avenues, the heterodox pastors Weigel and Arndt came to know and embrace the theological views of Paracelsus.

Paracelsian thought was well received in the geographical region of Upper Lusatia, including the cities of Bautzen and Görlitz, and of Lower Silesia where Böhme also circulated. The subject has already been studied⁴¹ in numerous biographies of alchemists and followers of Paracelsus and Böhme.⁴² The most important event in the history of Paracelsus studies was the edition of his collected works by Johannes Huser (ca. 1545–1597). Without Huser's effort, many of the writings of Paracelsus would have been lost, or they would have come down to us for the most part only in very corrupted or abbreviated versions. In his editorial endeavors, Huser exerted an expertise that approached modern standards. It was his intention to present a comprehensive and authentic edition of all that Paracelsus had written. He therefore collected the most extensive set of autographs and copies of Paracelsian writings ever known. This collection was situated in Huser's place of residence, the Lower Silesian city of Glogau some 120 kilometers from Görlitz. The fruit of his efforts was the Basel 1589 to 1591 edition of Paracelsus's medical, natural philosophic and magical writings in ten tomes. Another tome with the surgical writings following posthumously in 1605. Though extensive in itself, the Huser edition comprises only half of Paracelsus's complete works. The other half consists of the theological

41 Ernst Koch, "Moskowiter in der Oberlausitz und M. Bartholomäus Scultetus in Görlitz", *Neues Lausitzisches Magazin*, (1907), 1–90; 84 (1908), 41–109; 85 (1909), 255–290; 86 (1910), 1–80; Ernst-Heinz Lemper, "Görlitz und der Paracelsismus", *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 18 (1970), 347–360; Kurt Goldammer, "Aus der Werkstatt der Paracelsisten des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts", *Theophrast von Hohenheim genannt Paracelsus, Theologische und religionsphilosophische Schriften, Supplement*, ed. Kurt Goldammer (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1973), xxix–lxiv; Joachim Telle, "Jakob Böhme unter deutschen Alchemikern der frühen Neuzeit", *Offenbarung und Episteme. Zur europäischen Wirkung Jakob Böhmes im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Wilhelm Kühlmann and Friedrich Vollhardt (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2012), 165–182; Leigh T.I. Penman, "Böhme's Intellectual Networks and the Heterodox Milieu of His Theosophy, 1600–1624", *An Introduction to Jacob Boeme: Four Centuries of Thought and Reception*, ed. Ariel Hessayon and Sarah Apetrei (New York: Routledge, 2014), 57–76; Sibylle Rusterholz, "Jacob Böhme im Licht seiner Gegner und Anhänger", *Offenbarung und Episteme. Zur europäischen Wirkung Jakob Böhmes im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Wilhelm Kühlmann and Friedrich Vollhardt (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2012), 7–25; Weeks, *Böhme*, 13–34.

42 For biographies of the Görlitz circle of Paracelsians see the following works: Wilhelm Kühlmann, Joachim Telle, *Der Frühparacelsismus*, vol. 1 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2001), vol. 2 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2004), vol. 3/1 (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2013), abbreviated as *CP* 1–3; Julian Paulus, "Alchemie und Paracelsismus um 1600. Siebzig Porträts", *Analecta Paracelsica*, ed. Joachim Telle, Heidelberger Studien zur Naturkunde der frühen Neuzeit, 4 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1994), 335–406.

writings which Huser originally intended to include. The main reason why he did not lies in the fact that Paracelsus's theology was brimming with heretical and anticlerical statements objectionable not only to Catholics, but no less to the Protestant orthodoxy. Only a small part of the theological writings ever saw print. The rest circulated as manuscript copies.

Huser was not a Silesian himself.⁴³ He was born around 1545 in the city of Waldkirch in the Breisgau region which is situated in the uttermost Southwest of Germany. He studied medicine in Freiburg in Breisgau and at the University of Basel where he matriculated in 1563 and 1564. This was exactly the time when Adam von Bodenstein (1528–1577) as a member of the Basel medical faculty had started to edit and print Paracelsian tracts.⁴⁴ During his lifetime, only very few of Paracelsus's writings had been printed. The waves of interest started some twenty years after his death, in 1560, when Bodenstein emerged with the Basel print of *De Vita Longa* of Paracelsus, a first item in a long series. Because of the great dissent among his Basel colleagues between conventional Galenic medicine and the new medicine based on Paracelsus, Bodenstein was expelled from the medical faculty in 1564. Huser during his stay in Basel in exactly that time was confronted with the Paracelsian thought which later was to become his life task. In Basel, Huser had met two fellow students who were the presumed stimulus to his later move to Silesia. Like Huser, they had inscribed themselves in Basel in the years 1563 und 1564: Abraham Behem (1540–1614) of Görlitz and Georg Marquard of Glogau.⁴⁵ Some years later, they belonged to the circle of Paracelsians around the influential Görlitz mathematician and mayor Bartholomäus Scultetus (1540–1614).⁴⁶ In his later years, Behem came in contact with the heterodox pastor Valentin Weigel. During their stay in Switzerland, Behem and Marquard visited the Zurich polymath Conrad Gesner (1516–1565), who in his *Liber amicorum*, his visitors' book, described them as followers of Paracelsus.⁴⁷ In their search for manuscripts by Paracelsus, Huser and Marquard roamed in 1566 through South Germany in the company of another Silesian Paracelsian, Balthasar Flöter (1518–1569).⁴⁸ They were obviously

43 For Huser's biography see Joachim Telle, "Johann Huser in seinen Briefen. Zum schlesischen Paracelsismus im 16. Jahrhundert", *Parerga Paracelsica*, ed. Joachim Telle, Heidelberger Studien zur Naturkunde der frühen Neuzeit, 3 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1991), 159–248; *CP* 2, 412–414; *CP* 3, 799–844.

44 On Bodenstein see *CP* 1, 104–110, and Walther Killy, *Literaturlexikon*, 13 vols., ed. Wilhelm Kühlmann, 2nd. edition (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008), here vol. 2, 45–46.

45 Hans Georg Wackernagel, *Die Matrikel der Universität Basel*, vol. 2 (Basel: Verlag der Universitätsbibliothek, 1956), 149; on Behem and his letter to Weigel see *CP* 3, 525–543.

46 Telle, "Johann Huser in seinen Briefen", 162; on Scultetus see below.

47 Richard J. Durling, "Conrad Gesner's 'Liber amicorum' 1555–1565", *Gesnerus* 22 (1965), 134–159 here 142, 153.

48 On Flöter see *CP* 2, 584–586.

successful, for in 1567 Flöter published three Paracelsus printings in Cologne.⁴⁹ At the latest in 1575, Huser settled in Glogau as a practicing physician. This was where he prepared his great Paracelsus edition which remains the most authoritative to this day.

In the first volume of his edition, Huser thanks the men who helped him in collecting the various works of Paracelsus from all over.⁵⁰ Half of this group was from Görlitz and Lower Silesia, namely the physicians Johannes Montanus (1531–1604)⁵¹ from Hirschberg, Franz Kretschmeir (died after 1603)⁵² from Sagan and the two Görlitz citizens Bartholomäus Scultetus and Johannes Hiller (1549/50–1598).⁵³ Foremost, Huser thanks Johannes Montanus who was a physician in Hirschberg, a Silesian town some 70 kilometers away from Görlitz. He calls Montanus his “beloved preceptor”, so we can assume that Huser owed him much. Montanus had gathered a huge collection of Paracelsian writings, though nothing of it has remained. Unlike Huser, who wanted to present Paracelsian tracts as closely as possible to their original, unabridged form, Montanus preferred summarizing the circuitous language of Paracelsus, omitting what appeared redundant.

Before turning our attention to the Görlitz circle of Paracelsians around Scultetus, we need to give a brief description of three Paracelsus manuscripts which originated in Görlitz.⁵⁴ We don’t know the scribes and their whereabouts: we can only assume that in some way they were in contact with Montanus. The earliest of these copies was written in 1564, and in fact it comprises the earliest collection of tracts with theological writings which has come down to us at all. This manuscript is preserved in the Upper Lusatian Library of Sciences.⁵⁵ Sudhoff has described the manuscript in his critical survey of the Paracelsus manuscripts discovered by 1899.⁵⁶ Striking is the fact that the numbering of the pages doesn’t start with one, but with 153, and continues to 412. The extant manuscript thus constitutes a second part of a collection of which the first is

49 Karl Sudhoff, *Versuch einer Kritik der Echtheit der Paracelsischen Schriften. I. Theil. Die unter Hohenheim’s Namen erschienenen Druckschriften* (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1894), 130–138, Nr. 85–87.

50 Paracelsus, *Bücher vnd Schrifften*, ed. Johann Huser, vol. 1 (Basel: Conrad Waldkirch, 1589), fol. B2^v.

51 On Montanus see Telle, “Johann Huser in seinen Briefen”, 216–219; *CP* 2, 239–241.

52 On Kretschmeir see Telle, “Johann Huser in seinen Briefen”, 212–214; *CP* 3, 393–395.

53 On Hiller see Telle, “Johann Huser in seinen Briefen”, 209–210; *CP* 3, 43–47.

54 The Görlitz manuscripts are also mentioned by Arlene Miller-Guinsburg, “Von Paracelsus zu Böhme: Auf dem Wege zu neuen Bestandsaufnahmen in der Beeinflussung Böhmens durch Paracelsus”, *Salzburger Beiträge zur Paracelsusforschung* 21 (1980), 96–118.

55 Oberlausitzische Bibliothek der Wissenschaften, Görlitz, Cod. Th. VI. 146, 4^o.

56 Karl Sudhoff, *Versuch einer Kritik der Echtheit der Paracelsischen Schriften. II. Theil. Paracelsische Handschriften* (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1899), 233–271.

lost. The manuscript contains a famous drawing of a standing Paracelsus leaning on his sword. The castle in the background shows the date as 1567. Clearly, the image is a later addition, probably on the occasion of the binding of the loose manuscript pages.

The content is divided into two sections. The first comprises the letter of 1525 from Paracelsus to Luther, Melanchthon and Pomeranus, annexed to the lengthy interpretation of the first five sections of the Gospel of Matthew, which are already discussed above. It is this version contained in the Görlitz manuscript which will be included in *NPE* 2. The second section of the manuscript is composed of 21 tracts announced in the table of contents as *Philosophiae Magnae Partes*, that is, parts of a great philosophy with mostly theological and magical content.⁵⁷ A particular feature of these 21 tracts is that they are all abbreviated versions. A further indication that the Görlitz manuscript consists of one part of a larger concept with the rest lost can be deduced from the fact that its 21 tracts are numbered from 30 to 50 leaving out the numbers one to 29.

The next Paracelsus manuscript written in Görlitz is now preserved at the Herzog August Library in Wolfenbüttel.⁵⁸ It was written in 1567 and contains the same woodcut of the standing Paracelsus as in the Görlitz manuscript, a strong indication that both manuscripts passed through the same hands. The manuscript contains 19 treatises on the Eucharist, the earliest extant copies of each. They consist for the most part of abridged versions. There is also a collection of writings on the Eucharist by Paracelsus in the Staricius printing of 1618, to which Böhme might possibly have had access.⁵⁹ This important early print publication which we will examine below contains treatises also found in the Görlitz manuscripts, three from the Görlitz one and seven from the Wolfenbüttel, but they belong to a different thread of transmission.

Finally, in this series of three early Paracelsus manuscripts originating in Görlitz, there is one now preserved in Munich.⁶⁰ It is a manuscript written in 1617 which was copied from a manuscript based on a Görlitz manuscript of 1567. This Munich manuscript conveys a writing on the Virgin Mary, namely the *Libellus de Virgine Sancta Theotoca*, an abridged version of the original Salzburg *Buch von Maria der Jungfrauen* mentioned above. To sum up, then, the three treatises written and handled in Görlitz around 1567 are clearly interrelated and offer testimony of an early community of Paracelsians situated in Görlitz. They contain writings on the Eucharist and the *Vita Beata*,

57 On the notion of "Philosophia magna" see *NPE* 1, 70–72.

58 *W*, see the description in Sudhoff, *Handschriften*, 271–295; Czifra, 49–51.

59 See the article of Andrew Weeks in this book.

60 Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, München, cgm 4416; Sudhoff, *Handschriften*, 295–298.

those subjects most central to Paracelsus's theology. We do not know whether Böhme glimpsed these manuscripts, which were at least partly lodged in his city, or whether the transmission was effected by the Staricius printing or some other means. In any case, as we shall see, Böhme seems to have been informed about their contents.

There is another important Silesian manuscript which must be mentioned in this context. The Breslau-Wrocław library preserved a Paracelsus codex in folio which Karl Sudhoff considered to be one of the most important.⁶¹ The manuscript was written 1588 to 1589 in Silesian Harpersdorf, which by then harbored an eminent Schwenkfelder community. As a compilation, the codex spans practically the entire scope of Paracelsian theology. There are interpretations of the Gospels and the Psalms, treatises on Mary, on the *Vita Beata*, on matrimony and other topics, but it contains no writings on the Eucharist. Most items of this vast collection are extracts, much in the style of Silesian Paracelsus reception. Unfortunately, the manuscript was lost after the bombing of Dresden under mysterious circumstances.⁶² Leigh Penman has tracked down a Lübeck codex which is closely related to the lost Breslau codex and written at the same location and in the same time. With some certainty, Penman argues that the writer of the Harpersdorf codex is identical with the Paracelsian physician Balthasar Walther (c.1558–c.1631) who was in close contact with Böhme.⁶³ Marginal notations show that Walther had relied on the collections of Scultetus. For Böhme, Walther and the Harpersdorf codex could have been important sources of Paracelsian theological thought.

The date 1567 is remarkable in another context, too. It marks the year when Bartholomäus Scultetus (1540–1614) returns to his hometown in order to earn his livelihood.⁶⁴ Other contributions to this volume by Ines Haaser and Lutz Pannier describe his career as a mathematician, astronomer, cartographer, and mayor, his influence in Görlitz, and his contacts with Tycho Brahe and Johannes Kepler. Alongside his other achievements, he was very much interested

61 Wrocław University Library, Cod. Rhed. 334 2°

62 See the remarks in *NPE* 1, 51.

63 See Leigh T.I. Penman, "Ein Liebhaber des Mysterii, und großer Verwandter desselben." Toward the life of Balthasar Walther: Kabbalist, Alchemist and Wandering Paracelsian Physician, *Sudhoffs Archiv* 94 (2010), 73–99, here 76–82; see also Leigh T.I. Penman, "Böhme's Student and Mentor: the Liegnitz Physician Balthasar Walther (c.1558–c.1630)", *Offenbarung und Episteme. Zur europäischen Wirkung Jakob Böhmes im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Wilhelm Kühlmann and Friedrich Vollhardt (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2012), 47–65; Killy 12, 129–131.

64 On Scultetus see among many other sources Telle, "Johann Huser in seinen Briefen", 224–228; *CP* 2, 705–728; Killy 10, 705.

in Paracelsus. As mentioned above, Scultetus belongs to the men thanked by Huser in his introduction for contributing writings from Paracelsus. Scultetus must have had a collection of such items. Ernst Koch transcribed all the entries from Scultetus's diaries which dealt with Paracelsian matters.⁶⁵ In respect to the long time period covering almost twenty-five years beginning in 1568, Koch could find relatively few entries on Paracelsus, only fourteen. There is no question that Scultetus played an important role, especially in Görlitz, but on the whole Huser and Montanus were far more groundbreaking.

On October 16, 1568, Scultetus reports in his diary that he is working together with the Paracelsian physician Franz Kretschmeir from the Silesian town of Sagan⁶⁶ to transcribe the *Archidoxis* of Paracelsus, which constitutes a work on medical alchemy. On December 2, Kretschmeir departs for Nuremberg where he meets Marquard and Behem in order to discuss with them their results concerning the *Archidoxes*.⁶⁷ Marquard and Behem, we recall, were the two Basel fellow students of Huser who went on tour to find Paracelsus manuscripts. It is clear that Görlitz harbored an intricate network of followers of Paracelsus who were trying to gather as much new material as possible. On July 20, 1569, the Silesian Paracelsist Adam Schröter (c. 1515–c. 1572) came to Scultetus, bringing the first printing of the *Archidoxis* he had arranged in Cracow.⁶⁸ There is a hint that Scultetus had promoted a later printing of the *Archidoxes*, namely the 1570 and 1572 Basel edition by the publisher Peter Perna. The 1572 contains at full length the *Tractatus Primus Philosophiae de Tempore*, a Paracelsian treatise on time which Scultetus had included in his perpetual prognostication.⁶⁹ Soon after Schröter's arrival in Görlitz, Scultetus travels with him to Glogau to visit Marquard, who has apparently returned from his studies in Switzerland and Southern Germany.

In 1570 there is a setback for the Paracelsian doctors of Görlitz. The "*Collegium medicorum sectae Paracelsi*" was summoned before the city council to

65 Koch 1907, 75–76.

66 Diaries October 16th 1568: "egi pactum cum Fr. Kretschmer Sag. de transcribendis Archidoxis", Koch 1907, 75; on the Archidoxis of Paracelsus see Udo Benzenhöfer, "Zur Archidoxis-Schrift des Paracelsus", *Nova Acta Paracelsica N.F.* 19 (2005), 105–124.

67 Diaries December 2nd 1568: "mane abiit Franciscus Kretschmer Noribergam qui admisit ut Archidoxas communicarem G. Marquardo et A. Behme", Koch 1907, 75.

68 Diaries July 20th 1569: "convenerunt me Gorlicii Marc. Ambrosius Niss. et Adamus Schröter Silesius secum ferentes Archidoxas Theophrasti impressas Cracoviae et alia ejusmodi", Koch 1907, 75; on Adam Schröter see Killy 11, 181–182; *CP* 3, 95–100.

69 Katharina Biegger, "Paracelsische Theologica im katholischen Gesangbuch Johann Leisentrits von 1567, *Parerga Paracelsica*, ed. Joachim Telle, Heidelberger Studien zur Naturkunde der frühen Neuzeit, 3 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1991), 105–119, here 114, footnote 39.

be questioned about their practice and religion.⁷⁰ Scultetus writes down their names: Abraham Behem, Georg Roth, Johannes Hiller, Franz Kretschmeir and Martinus Schmidt. Apparently their community had already reached an impressive number. The stimulus of official concern was a book recently published in Görlitz by the Zittau doctor Bartholomäus Reusner (1532–1572):⁷¹ *Ein kurtze Erklerung vnd Christliche widerlegung/ Der vnerhörten Gottesleserungen vnd Lügen/ welche Paracelsus in den dreyen Büchern “Philosophiae ad Athenienses” hat wider Gott/ sein Wort/ vnd die löbliche Kunst der Artzney außgeschüttet* (Görlitz 1570) (*A Short Declaration and Christian Refutation of the Unheard-Of Blasphemies and Lies Which Paracelsus in his Three Books “Philosophy to the Athenians” Has Spilled over God, His Word, and the Laudable Art of Medicine*). We do not know much about Reusner. Born in Lemberg, he was a physician in Breslau who later took on the post of town physician of Zittau. He died at the early age of 42. The *Philosophia ad Athenienses* was first printed 1564 in Cologne.⁷² In a Neoplatonic mode, the treatise proposes a theory of creation based on the four elements. The *Philosophia* does not represent with certainty an authentic writing of Paracelsus, and if authentic, then it would presumably be abridged and corrupted. For Reusner the teachings of Paracelsus embodied the very “source of evil” (fol. A2^r). He set out to refute the creation theory of the *Philosophia ad Athenienses* on orthodox theological grounds.

We can see how widely Paracelsus's thought and writings were disseminated, even across confessional lines, by casting a glance at the Catholic dean of the Bautzen cathedral, Johannes Leisentritt (1527–1586).⁷³ Bautzen was the historical capital of Upper Lusatia. Its cathedral of St. Peter constituted Germany's first so-called “simultaneous church”, where Catholics and Protestants celebrated service alike. Leisentritt held the post of an episcopal administrator for both Lower and Upper Lusatia for both the imperial territories. As such, he was the official head of both Catholics and Protestants in Lusatia. While he administered over Lutherans with a gentle hand, he supported the Habsburg policy of re-Catholicizing sovereign territories. In 1567 he published an important hymn-book in German, *Geistliche Lieder vnd Psalmen*, as a means for popularizing the Catholic service.

In order to impart a devotional character to his book, Leisentritt interspersed the music and lyrics with several uplifting religious comments on the

⁷⁰ Koch 1907, 75.

⁷¹ On Bartholomäus Reusner see Johann Heinrich Zedler, *Grosses Universal Lexicon Aller Wissenschaften und Künste*, vol. 31 (Halle, Leipzig: Johann Heinrich Zedler, 1742), 961–962.

⁷² Sudhoff, *Druckschriften*, 101–104.

⁷³ On Leisentritt see Killy 7, 316.

church holidays and the occasions on which the hymns were to be sung. Katharina Biegger has shown that in three instances Leisentritt substantially drew upon theological texts of Paracelsus.⁷⁴ Thus, to give the reader an impression of what could happen after death, Leisentritt refers to the *Sermo de Purgatorio* of Paracelsus. The dean included in his paragraph on the Virgin Mary extracts from Paracelsus's treatise *De Invocatione Beatae Mariae Virginis* and on the saints some pages from Paracelsus' treatise *De Genealogia Christi*. A third lengthy Paracelsus citation is found in Leisentritt's religious instruction on the Holy Trinity. He resorts to the tract *Sermo de Sancta Trinitate*, though this was immediately replaced in a subsequent edition. In the further editions of this popular hymn-book, the Paracelsus material was gradually omitted.

We can conclude that Leisentritt had access to the manuscript sources of Paracelsian theological writings. There was a longstanding friendship between Scultetus and Leisentritt, to whom the former even dedicated several publications including in 1569 a prognostication and in 1571 a perpetual calendar of church holidays⁷⁵ which especially interested Leisentritt.⁷⁶ Again in 1572, Scultetus dedicates to Leisentritt a perpetual prognostication on the course of the weather.⁷⁷ In it, he includes a passage from Paracelsus's discourse on time, the *Tractatus Primus Philosophiae, Von Vnterscheidt der Zeit*. Paracelsus had become a currency that could be traded across confessional boundaries.

In part because of the confessional polarization, the period around 1600 favored the flowering of a heterodox-speculative Christianity. Theological writings which had previously circulated in manuscript began finding their way into print. Weigel had already demonstrated a lively interest in the Paracelsian theology, reflecting it to a degree in his own work.⁷⁸

When such writings sought a print outlet, they often found it in Frankfurt am Main with Lucas Jennis. Jennis disseminated Paracelsus in the compendium

74 Katharina Biegger, "De invocatione beatae Mariae virginis": Paracelsus und die Marienverehrung. *Kosmosophie*, 6 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1990), 135–140; Biegger, "Paracelsische Theologica".

75 *Calendarium Ecclesiasticum & HOROSCOPVM PERPETVVM. Ein ewigwerender Calender*. Görlitz 1571.

76 Koch 1907, 67.

77 *Prognosticon meteorographicum perpetuum. Ein ewigwerend Prognosticon/ Von aller Witterung in der Luft vnd den Wercken der andern Element*. Görlitz 1572.

78 Weigel held a copy of Paracelsus's letter to the Wittenberg theologians as well as the commentary on the first five chapters of Matthew. See Horst Pfefferl, "Valentin Weigel und Paracelsus", *Salzburger Beiträge zur Paracelsusforschung* 26 (1988), 77–95. For an account of the tradition of the Weigelian writings see Horst Pfefferl, *Die Überlieferung der Schriften Valentin Weigels* (Inaugural dissertation: Philipps-Universität, Marburg/ Lahn, 1991).

Philosophia Mystica (1618),⁷⁹ which incorporates the commentary on Daniel and a writing *De Poenitentii* along with writings by or attributed to Weigel. The *Libellus Theosophiae* (1618) includes the Paracelsian *Sermo de Purgatorio*.⁸⁰ Jennis also brought out purely Paracelsian volumes: the *Commentatio Theophrasti Paracelsi in Epistolam S. Judae Apostoli* (1618),⁸¹ a commentary on the Epistle of Jude, and the *Liber Sermonum in Antichristos et Pseudoprophetas* (1619),⁸² a cycle of sermons mentioned above. Important for the reception of Paracelsus in a mystical sense was the printing of the *Vita-Beata*-text, *Aufliegung [...] Über die Wort Sursum Corda* (1619). It not only sums up the teaching of the new creature but calls for everlasting mystical kinship with God.⁸³ More will be said about it below. The last mentioned three works appeared together as *Drey underscheydene Tractätlein* (1619) and would presumably have stirred up interest and controversy.⁸⁴ Jennis, it should be said, was also the leader in printing alchemistic texts. His authors included the illustrious Michael Maier,

79 *Philosophia Mystica* : Darinn begriffen Eilff unterschiedene Theologico-Philosophische/ doch teutsche Tractätlein/ zum theil auß Theophrasti Paracelsi, zum theil auch M. Valentini Weigelii, ... bißhero verborgenen manuscriptis der Theosophischen Warheit liebhabern ; An itzo in zweyen Theilen ... in offenen Truck gegeben (Newstadt [Frankfurt/Main] : Lucas Jennis, 1618).

80 *Libellus Theosophiae* De Veris Reliquiis Seu Semine Dei In Nobis Post Lapsus Relicto, Quo Sancti Patres Et Prophetæ in tantos viros excreverunt: Das ist: Ein Büchlein der göttlichen Weißheit von dem wahren Heilighumb/ oder von dem in uns nach dem Fall überbliebenen Sahmen Gottes/ durch welchen die H. Vätter und Propheten zu solchen Männern sind erwachsen/ dadurch noch täglichs Kinder Gottes geboren werden : zu dem Ende in Truck gegeben/ daß wir das in uns verborgenen Perlein suchen unnd erkennen lehren (Newstadt [Frankfurt/Main] : Jennis, 1618).

81 *Commentatio Theophrasti Paracelsi in Epistolam S. Judae Apostoli* das ist Ein Außlegung Theophrasti über die Epistel des heiligen Apostels Judæ : Darinn erstlich die kenzeichen eines Rechten Apostels Christi angedeutet/ hernach aber nach einhalt des texts schöne Merckzeichen so wol der unglaubigen Antichristen/ als der wahren glaubigen gotteskindern verzeichnet werden. beyde die gottlosen ihrer finsternus zuüberzeugen als die Frommen in dem wahren liecht zubekreffigen in offenen truck geben (Franckfurt/Main : Jennis, 1618).

82 *Liber Sermonum in Antichristos et Pseudoprophetas Veteris & Novi Testamenti*. Das ist: Ein Büchlein wider die Antichristen/ Falsche Propheten unnd Lehrer so wohl altes/ als neues Testaments/ Philippi Theophrasti Paracelsi, ab Hohenheim : Scriptus ab ipso Salisburgi Anno 1540 (Frankfurt/Main : Jennis, 1619).

83 *Aufliegung oder Bericht Theophrasti Paracelsi Über die Wort: Sursum Corda*: Das ist: Wie man sein Hertz alle zeit zu Gott erheben soll (Frankfurt/Main: Jennis, 1619).

84 *Drey underscheydene Tractätlein* Philippi Theophrasti Paracelsi ab Hohenheim : Als 1 Commentatio über die Epistolam Judæ. 2 Sermones in Antichristum. 3 Über die Wort: Sursum corda. Deren das erste/ die rechte wahre Apostolische Fußstapffen zeigt/ daran ein wahrer Christ erkennet mag werden. Das ander den Widerchrist mit seinen Merckzeichen und Farben abmahlet. Das dritte/ wie wir allezeit unsere Hertzen übersich zu

Johannes Daniel Mylius and Daniel Stolcius. He published Johann Ambrosius Siebmacher's *Wasserstein der Weysen* (1619), an alchemical treatise expressly recommended by Böhme.⁸⁵

However, the weightiest Paracelsian theological work was ushered into print by Johannes Staricius (c. 1580–after 1626).⁸⁶ His printer was Johann Francke of Magdeburg. The title of the work is *Philosophia de Limbo, Aeterno Perpetuoque Homine Novo Secundae Creationis ex Jesu Christo Dei Filio* (1618).⁸⁷ There is a substantial preface by Staricius. Francke had also brought out such classics of mysticism as the *Theologia Germanica* und Thomas a Kempis' *Imitatio Christi* (1605) and was the printer of Johann Arndt's *Vier Bücher vom wahren Christenthumb* (1610).

Staricius' Preface to the *Philosophia de Limbo* defends Paracelsus as a physician and philosopher of nature against aspersions. He heaps praise upon the "Bruderschafft deß Rosen Creutzes" and characterizes himself as an advocate of practical alchemy and a believer in the Philosopher's Stone. He is familiar with the method for preparing *aurum potable* of Benedict Figulus, a man also favorably disposed toward the Rosicrucian idea.⁸⁸ Although Staricius was avidly absorbed in broader interests and pursuits, he was thoroughly aware of the significance of Paracelsus's theological writings:

Therefore, gentle Christian reader, you should know that it is true and certain that this same Paracelsus wrote much more in theology than ever in philosophy, medicine, and the other sciences and arts, without it appearing in print. I know of a place where his theological books in folio would nearly fill an entire cart.

(Darneben Christmilter Leser/ wisse das vor wahrhafft vnd gewiß/ das eben dieser Paracelsus in Theologia viel vielmehr geschrieben/ dann jemals Philosophia, Medicina vnd andern wissenschafften oder Künsten in oder ohne Druck gesehen worden. Jch weiß einen ort/ da seiner Theologischen Bücher/ alle in folio bald ein gantzer Karren voll zufinden – PL Vorrede).

Gott erheben/ und was droben ist/ suchen sollen/ und nit was hieunden auff der Erden (Frankfurt/Main: Jennis, 1619).

85 Ep. 28.14, see Jacob Böhme, *Sämtliche Schriften*, ed. Will-Erich Peuckert, 11 vols. (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1958), abbreviated as *B*, here *B* 9:104².

86 On Staricius see Killy 11, 181–182, and the contribution of Andrew Weeks in this book.

87 *Philosophia De Limbo, Aeterno Perpetuoque Homine Novo Secundae creationis ex Jesu Christo Dei Filio*. Des Edlen/ Hochthewren Philosophi ... Aurelii Philippi Theophrasti Paracelsi ab Hohenhaim, ed. Johannes Staricius (Magdeburg: Francke, 1618), in the following abbreviated as *PL*.

88 See Joachim Telle, "Benedictus Figulus: Zu Leben und Werk eines deutschen Paracelsisten", *Medizinhistorisches Journal* 22 (1987), 303–326.

Staricius names so many specific Paracelsian writings he intends to bring out next that both his familiarity with the corpus and his boldness in embracing its radicalism are irrefutable.

As for the content of his *Philosophia de Limbo*, it consists of the 1525 letter to the Wittenberg theologians, several writings on the Eucharist from distinct periods, and, in its main part, writings corresponding to the plan discussed above for a *Philosophia de Limbo Aeterno* in 21 chapters. This is of course the title he chose, though the print and manuscripts do not fully match.⁸⁹ The Preface of the *Philosophia* is the *Prologus et Initium voluminis Limbi Aeterni*, one of Paracelsus' key writings insofar as it closes the gap between nature philosophy and mystical theology. Its purpose is to demonstrate why the physician must turn to theology in drawing the final consequence from the observation of nature. Any philosopher of nature is forced to conclude that nature is perishable, transient, and subject to all manner of depredations. In order not to lose heart, he therefore turns to the eternal, which leads to the "true philosophy" (*rechte philosophia*). One must transcend the light of nature in order to regard the eternal light and attain eternal life. The light of nature exposes human sins, but faith reveals the eternal light in the human being leading to the eternal body. This light is none other than Christ in whom the "immortal philosophy" (*untödliche Philosophie*) takes its beginning. The ancient philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, and Pliny were concerned with transient things but they did not know the true cornerstone of wisdom. The *Prologus* goes on to expound the central parallelism of Adam created out of clay and nourished by the earth, and the new *Limbus* which comes from above with Christ.

Next, Paracelsus divides his eternal philosophy into three areas: concerning the body of eternal life; concerning the "son of perdition and damnation with whom contamination of the eternal body should be avoided" (*Sohn der Verlierung und verdammnuß/ auff das sich der ewige Leib mit demselbigen nicht beflecke*), namely Satan and the powers of darkness; and third, concerning the blessed life of earth, that is the *Vita Beata*. After this in the order of the contents comes a relatively rudimentary writing on the Eucharist, the *Libell vom Sacrament Corporis Christi einzunehmen zur Seligkeit*.⁹⁰ It discusses the sacrament in the context of relevant passages of the New and Old Testaments; but it does not discuss the doctrine of the two kinds of *Limbus* with

89 Czifra, 60, thinks that the compilation the texts on the Eucharist as they are serialized in the Staricius print do not stem from himself because exactly the same order is found in two Salzburg and Vatican manuscripts (Salzburg Museum, Ms. 840, and Bibliotheca Vaticana, Cod. Reg. 1344). However, since these manuscripts were written down at about the same time as the print it may well be that they had been copied from the latter.

90 This tract is identical with the *Liber de Sacramento Corporis Christi* edited in NPE 1, see p. 169.

their distinct nourishments. Paracelsus cites various passages of the New Testament relevant to salvation including the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:3–11). In the Old Testament, he asserts, these would have been commandments. In the New, the believer follows them of himself. For they are in reality the fruits of salvation. Salvation by faith and baptism has as its consequence the love of God and one's neighbor, from which in turn works flow as the fruits of the blessed being. Since baptism entails rebirth (Jn 3:5), every human being has two fathers: from the one he is born into the world, from the flesh and blood of the other he is born into heaven. Notably, Paracelsus stresses recurrently that the blood and flesh of Christ in the Eucharist is "visible, material, substantial, and not in the spirit" (sichtlich/ materialisch/ substantialisch vnd nit im Geist – PL 18). Given the time in which he wrote, this was tantamount to an advocacy of Luther's teaching of the real presence of Christ in the bread and wine of Communion.

The next chapter again corresponds to a treatise in the *Philosophia de Limbo* that had been conceived in 1533. In manuscripts, the chapter is entitled *De Coena Domini ex cap. vi. Johannis*. The chapter offers an extensive commentary on John 6, contextualizing the doctrine of the *Limbus* within it. He addresses the feeding of the multitude by the multiplication of bread and fish, to which Jesus links his teaching of the bread of life that comes from heaven and grants eternal life. Whoever eats his flesh and drinks his blood will receive eternal life and be awakened on Judgment Day (Jn 6:54). However, this will occur in two phases. When the trumpet sounds and wakes the dead, they will first rise up in their Adamic bodies (1 Cor 15:52), before being resurrected. In the Judgment, Christ will then decide who is equipped for eternal life and who for damnation:

The pipe and trumpet merely say, Arise, you dead, that is, Rise up from the grave and from your sleep and come to Judgment. No one will be awakened except the flesh of Adam, that is, what comes from him will be aroused, and in this flesh we will arise from sleep on the Day of Judgment; but we will not yet be resurrected. For resurrection and rising up are different things. As for the first, all will rise up in Adam in the perishable body, as if we had not died. [...] The Son of GOD will come to Judgment and decide for whom resurrection is to be. As he judges, those for eternal life will be separated and those for eternal damnation will be separated. Those destined for eternal life will be resurrected with Christ into eternal life; the others who are not will descend into damnation.

(Die Pfeiffe vnd Posaune allein sagt/ stehet auff jhr Toden/ das ist/ stehet auff vom Todt/ grabe vnnd schlafe/ vnd kommet an das Gericht. Da wird niemand erwecket/ allein das Fleisch Adae/ das ist/ was auß Adam

ist/ das wird da erwecket werden/ vnd im selbigen Fleisch werden wir auffstehen an dem Jüngsten Tag vom Schlaff/ aber nicht aufferstehen: Dann Aufferstehen/ vnd auffstehen sein zweyerley: Zum ersten/ also werden wir alle auffstehen in Adam im tödlichen Leibe/ als weren wir nicht gestorben [...] So wird der Sohn GOTTES zu Gericht kommen/ vnnd da vrtheilen/ vor dem vnnd die Aufferstehung sein wird: So er nun richt/ so werden die/ So zum Ewigen Leben/ besonder gestellet/ die zur Verdammuß auch besonder: Die nun zum Ewigen Leben versehen/ dieselbige werden aufferstehen mit Christo in das Ewige Leben/ Die andere die nicht dasselbige sein/ werden in das ewige Verdammuß fallen – PL 22).

Not only are we reminded of the apocalyptic trumpet calls in Böhme. Weigel seems to have had this very passage in mind in his sermon from the *Kirch Oder Hauspostill* printed in 1617. There, too, rising and resurrection are distinct:

These are two different things, rising and resurrection, in accordance with the interpretation of Theophrastus. All human beings, good and evil, will rise up to Judgment; but the faithful ones will come to the right hand for resurrection to celestial life, while the faithless will come to the left hand and rise up to eternal damnation.

(Es ist zweyerley erstehen vnd aufferstehen/ nach Theophrastischer Außlegung/ alle Menschen gute vnd böse/ werden erstehen zum Gerichte/ aber die Gleubigen kommen zur rechten Hand vnd haben die Aufferstehung zum himmlischen Leben/ die Vngleubigen kommen zur lincken Hand vnd erstehen zum ewigen Verdamnis.)⁹¹

This distinction is correlated with Paracelsus' doctrine of the twofold body of which only the celestial one participates in heaven, having been nourished by the bread that descended from heaven (Jn 6:50–51). Through this teaching referenced to the Gospel of John, Paracelsus was able to elevate his hermetic nature philosophy to a celestial philosophy. Just as his medical theory makes much of the alchemy of nourishment and digestion, his understanding of the Eucharist does the same: "Thus [Christ] should have blood and flesh and be bread [and] give himself to be eaten as bread, and the second Adam [Christ] should be the father of the new creature that kills the old Adam and lives eternally" (Jtem [Christus] sol auch Blut vnd Fleisch haben/ vnd ein Brodt sein/

⁹¹ Valentin Weigel, *Kirch Oder Hauspostill* (Newenstadt: Johann Knuber, 1617), 266². See Pfefferl, "Valentin Weigel und Paracelsus", 86.

sich selbst wie ein Brod zu essen geben/ vnd sol der ander Adam sein der Vater der Newen Creatur/ der den alten Adam tödet/ vnd er ewig lebet – PL 28).

Staricius' edition of the *Philosophia de Limbo* continues with Paracelsus' *De Coena Domini ex cap. 1. 3. 4. Johannis Evangelistae* with its additional commentaries on John, presumably from around 1533. In further elaborating the teaching of the new creature, Paracelsus emphasizes that he holds the Gospel of John in the highest esteem, as indeed Böhme did at this very time. The fourth gospel, according to Paracelsus, is full of the Holy Spirit, for which reason one must read its prolog with its doctrine of the logos with "great understanding" (großem Verstand – PL 46). Paracelsus affirms in accordance with traditional iconography that John was an "eagle" higher than whom none could climb, for John ascended to the point of our rebirth. The "Word" of John 1:1 is the word of creation, i.e., the *fiat* which purifies us, restores the dead, and drives out the devil and all illnesses. Christ is the word, the light, and the celestial flesh from above. To those that accept him in the new birth, he gives the power to be children of God (Jn 1:12).

In elucidating Nicodemus' words in John 3, Paracelsus finds yet another confirmation of the physicality of salvation. When Christ answers Nicodemus that the new birth is attained by baptism with water and spirit (Jn 3:5), Paracelsus affirms that the true baptism comes from above and is therefore the mother of the new birth. Just as Christ was conceived by Mary, we are conceived by the water. The "father" is the Spirit that lends us flesh and blood from above, to complete the process of rebirth. Baptism, as the divine "word", is "material". Completing his strategy of interpreting every suitable passage with reference to rebirth and the Eucharist, Paracelsus interprets Christ's words that "no one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven" (Jn 3:13), as follows. The human being consists of an earthly body and a soul imparted by God. Though the soul is from above, it is not a complete human being, since it lacks in itself the flesh and blood of the new creature's celestial physicality.

These commentaries on John survey the essential Eucharistic teaching of the mature Paracelsus. Staricius added to them another work associated with his concept of 1533, *De Coena Domini ex Caeteris Evangelii Auctoritatibus*: it augments the theme with material from the four Gospels. The next item, *Coena Domini Declaratio*, however, follows a different concept:⁹² it is a more

92 There is a brief description and transcription of the Leiden Codex by Dane Thor Daniel, "Paracelsus on the Lord's Supper : 'Coena Dominj nostrj Jhesu Christj Declaratio' : a transcription of the Leiden Codex Voss. Chym. Fol. 24, f. 12r–29v", *Nova Acta Paracelsica N.F.* 16 (2002), 107–139; Dane Thor Daniel, "Paracelsus' 'Declaratio' on the Lord's Supper : a summary with remarks on the term 'limbus'", *Nova Acta Paracelsica N.F.* 16 (2002), 141–162.

extensive and complete eucharistic work based on the four Gospels and 1 Corinthians. It bears no date but presumably came into being between 1530 and 1533. Rebirth is necessary for the soul's salvation, but the concept of the *Limbus* is here only alluded to.

Another chapter in Staricius, the *Declaratio Super Dictum Lucae Cap. 1 v. 35*, is in a broad sense devoted to the Virgin Mary, but it is possibly inauthentic, having been handed down in none of the early manuscripts. In Luke 1:35 the angel announces to Mary that the Holy Spirit will come over her and from her will be born the Son of God. Quite untypical for authentic Paracelsian theology is the consistent use of alchemical terminology such as *prima materia*, *compositum magnum*, *arcanum aeternum*, *tinctura Christi*, and the three *laboranten* (the Most Exalted, the Power of the same, and the Spirit). Even if it was inauthentic, the writing could have had its influence. Staricius completes his compilation with various commentaries on prayer: on the Lord's Prayer, the *Ave Maria*, the *Magnificat*, and the *Nunc dimittis*. Above all significant for us is the capacity of Staricius' *Philosophia de Limbo* to disseminate knowledge of Paracelsus' understanding of the Eucharist, a theme of immense importance for Böhme at this very time.

A work printed a year later by Lucas Jennis merits discussion on account of its mystical relevance: the *Liber de Sursum Corda*. It appears as a part of the reconstructed *Liber de Vita Beata* in NPE 1. The words *sursum corda* mark a dramatic moment in the Eucharistic Prayer of the Roman Liturgy, when the priest raises his hands and eyes to invoke the presence of Christ.

Paracelsus took this in reference to the true invocation to seek an *inner* connection with Christ and the divine wisdom. From God, all things, natural as well as supernatural, can be sought in prayer. In Paradise, Adam disposed over all wisdom. But after his expulsion, the arts and all knowledge had to be made manifest again to the human beings. From the very beginning, the Holy Spirit was the bearer of inspiration. Since the Son of God was born to bring a new creature of flesh and blood from above, not only is he who lives in the new flesh assured of bliss; indeed, all arts, wisdom, and cleverness are at his disposal when he lifts up his heart to where the true school stands: "Thus it is proper, since all our blessed wisdom, reason, art, knowledge, etc. comes completely from above, that we elevate our hearts toward God and hasten to come into the true school" (Also ist nun billich, so unser selige weisheit, vernunft, kunst, wissen etc. alles von oben herab kommt [...] dass wir unser herzen hinauf gegen gott heben und lupfen, uf dass wir in die recht schul kommen – NPE 1:467).

At this point, Paracelsus avails himself of the image of Jacob's Ladder, a mystical metaphor for a direct connection with God found also in chapter nineteen of Böhme's *Aurora*. In his dream, Jacob sees the heavens open up and the angels ascending and descending on a ladder (Gen 28:11). The same

image is used by the Gospel of John in reference to Christ (Jn 1:51). Paracelsus concludes that, when the believer raises his heart properly toward God, he reveals himself from above to the seeker (*NPE* 1:468). This intimate higher dialog can be continuous; for when it links the human heart to God, there descends ever a new angel “from one moment to the next” (von einem augenblick zum andern – *NPE* 1:468) to inspire the believer and guide his everyday actions “without cessation” (ohn unterlass – *NPE* 1:469), doing so attentively, daily, and even in sleep.

There is a tradition of studies of Paracelsus and Böhme. Already in 1882, Adolf von Harless noted the significance of alchemical and Paracelsian ideas.⁹³ In 1980, Arlene Miller-Guinsburg recognized the kinship of their doctrines of the Trinity, and in particular the role of Mary, both as a celestial queen and as a primal *matrix* of creation, both in Paracelsus and in Böhme’s *Sophia*.⁹⁴ Weeks has argued for numerous other relationships in his biography of 1991 and his edition and translation of *Aurora* (2013), as well as in other articles:⁹⁵ the points of relationship include the *Tria Prima*, sidereal spirit, the *Limbus*, the signatures of things, the power of imagination, the concept of the *mysterium magnum*, and additional philosophical and cosmological notions. Though only Böhme is acknowledged as a mystic, both he and Paracelsus seek an immediate experience of God, transcending given limits and dogmas. Both recognize the “two churches”. In Böhme’s *Menschwerdung Jesu Christi* (1620), the true church is subject to no law: Christ is the temple into which one must enter, since the church of stone cannot renew the human being (*B* 4:102¹/13.3). Other writings confirm this sense by condemning the established churches as a “Babylon” of hypocrisy.

Like Paracelsus, Böhme insists that the heart is the true church and place of worship (*B* 4:135³/6.16). And like the author of the *Vita Beata*, Böhme summons believers to a simple life of love of God and neighbor: “The kingdom of God must come in us, and God’s will be fulfilled in us, in order that we serve him properly: when we love him with all our heart, soul, and powers, and our neighbor as ourselves, this is the complete divine worship that he accepts from

93 Adolf von Harless, *Jacob Böhme und die Alchymisten. Ein Beitrag zum Verständniß J. Böhme’s* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs’sche Buchhandlung, 1882).

94 Miller-Guinsburg, “Von Paracelsus zu Böhme”.

95 Weeks, *Böhme*; Andrew Weeks, “Böhme, Paracelsus und die Quellen der Metaphysik des Willens”, *Philosophien des Willens. Böhme, Schelling, Schopenhauer*, ed. Günther Bonheim and Thomas Regehly, *Böhme-Studien*, 2 (Berlin: Weißensee Verlag, 2008), 19–30; Jacob Böhme, *Aurora (Morgen Röte im auffgang, 1612) and Ein gründlicher Bericht or A Fundamental Report (Mysterium Pansophicum, 1620)*, with a Translation, Introduction, and Commentary by Andrew Weeks and Günther Bonheim in collaboration with Michael Spang as editor of *Gründlicher Bericht* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2013).

us" (Gottes Reich muß in uns kommen, und sein Wille in uns geschehen, so dienen wir Jhm recht: wann wir Jhn lieben von gantzem Hertzen, Seele und allen Kräften, und unsern Nächsten als uns selber, das ist der gantze Gottesdienst, den Er von uns aufnimt – *B* 4:157¹/7.17).

Böhme's interpretation of Jacob's Ladder in his *Mysterium Magnum* (1623) reveals certain parallels to the *Liber de Sursum Corda*. For him, too, the Ladder is a symbol of the direct communication with God which continues without cessation. Moreover, the Ladder symbolizes Christ. The ascending and descending angels represent "the eternal word of God with the power of heaven" (*B* 8:586) that descends into those who seek it. In this way, heaven is unlocked, since the angels gladly come down to console the children of God: "And [the human beings see very well that the LORD stands at the summit of this Ladder, as with Jacob; and that he calls without cessation to the children of Christ, consoling them that they should climb up, and that he would not abandon them, but rather come and bless them" (Und [die Menschen] sehen gar schön, wie der HErr oben auf dieser Leiter [...] stehet, wie bey Jacob; und den Kindern Christi ohne Unterlaß ruffet und sie tröstet, daß sie sollen nur getrost darauf steigen, Er wolle sie nicht verlassen, sondern zu ihnen kommen und sie segnen – *B* 8:588).

Perhaps the greatest area of kinship linking Paracelsus to Böhme is the dual emphasis on the doctrine of the Eucharist and that of rebirth, doctrines that are programmatically linked in Paracelsus. While Böhme barely touches on rebirth and the Eucharist in *Aurora* (1612), his next work which coincided with the publication of the *Philosophia de Limbo*, namely *Von den Drey Principien Göttliches Wesens* (1618), renders both teachings central and contextualizes them within his larger scheme of salvational history. The fall from Paradise leaves the human being vulnerable and subject to human birth (*B* 2:20). He is saved from this condition when Christ inducts him into rebirth, making of him a new creature equal to the prelapsarian one.

Böhme avows that many books and speeches talk about the fall and rebirth; but the theologians know these only as an *Historia*. The theologians therefore do everything in their power to prevent deeper research into the being of God (21). In this, Böhme expresses the frustration of his generation. He goes on to develop his doctrine of rebirth in accordance with the Gospel of John (3:5). Chapters 22 and 23 are devoted entirely to the theme of rebirth and the Eucharist. We encounter the Paracelsian notion of an eternal "*Limbus* of God" (ewigen Limbus Gottes), which forms an eternal band through which the divinity manifest itself in eternity (377).

Like Paracelsus, Böhme also recognizes that the corporeality of the new human being requires a particular celestial nourishment in accordance with John 6:55 ("my flesh is the true nourishment, my blood the true drink" – 390): "The

bare divinity is the soul's nourishment; and the body of Christ that [...] of the new human being; and if the new human being remains faithfully in the body of Jesus Christ, the noble pearl of the light of God is granted him so that he can see the Noble Virgin of the Wisdom of God" (Die blosse Gottheit ist der Seelen Speise, und der Leib Christi ist des neuen Menschen [...] Speise. Der Leib und das Blut JESU Christi speiset den neuen Menschen: und so der neue Mensch treu bleibet im Leibe JESU Christi, so wird ihm die edle Perle des Lichts GOTTes gegeben, daß er kann sehen die Edle Jungfrau der Weisheit GOTTes – 415). This framework, original yet oriented at root to Paracelsus, is carried into all subsequent writings of Böhme. An interesting variant is found in the *Menschwerdung Jesu Christi* (1620), where rebirth occurs "in the imagination" (*blos in der Imagination*) when we enter with our will into God's will, surrendering to him completely, which is tantamount to faith (B 4:88¹). In Paracelsus, imagination plays an important role through the process of impression,⁹⁶ but it is not equated to faith.

Alchemy with its language and imagery also plays an important role in Böhme, which could have its origins either in Paracelsus or other sources. When the Matthew Commentaries and the Eucharistic writings – if not the whole of Paracelsus' writings – have been edited and made accessible, many more connections are certain to come to the fore in Böhme and other authors of the age.

Without claiming specific influences, we can offer here a preliminary summary of the most general themes that Paracelsus shares with Böhme: 1. a dual, correlative preoccupation with nature and theology, whereby the distinction is either surmounted by a strong parallelism, as in Paracelsus's doctrine of the "two creatures" with their two "bodies", or dissolved within the mysterious unity of nature and God, as in Böhme's theosophy; 2. a preoccupation with the Last Supper which implicates the Eucharistic flesh and blood in the parallelism or latent unity of nature and divinity; and 3. a heterodox interest in how God becomes God and the world the world. With regard to the theogony or development of the Trinity, which is perhaps their most sensational shared theme, Paracelsus' parallelism is superseded by Böhme's mystical unity, when the Görlitzer reveals that theogony, cosmogony, and human birth and rebirth are aspects of one and the same eternal process.⁹⁷ Böhme both echoes and transcends Paracelsus.

96 See e.g. *ETW* 22.

97 On their interrelation, see Andrew Weeks, *Boehme: An Intellectual Biography of the Seventeenth-Century Philosopher and Mystic* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 98–105.

“Out of Himself, to Himself”: The Kabbalah of Jacob Böhme

Gerold Necker

1 Introduction

Whenever Gershom Scholem referred to Jacob Böhme, in particular in his essay on kabbalistic ideas about language, he did so in a surprisingly natural and self-evident manner, without discussing Böhme's work at length. Scholem included the dissenting German Protestant in a long chain of “all mystics for all time,” whose common denominator was “the symbolic nature of language.”¹ Though it is highly questionable whether esotericism or kabbalah can be characterized by symbolization alone, it is nevertheless “a recurrent phenomenon in mystical literature in general.”² Jacob Böhme's works are most inspiring in this respect. They show a lyrical leaning to figurative speech³ that had a considerable impact on the relationship between German language and the understanding of religion in the age of Romanticism.⁴ The possible sources of Böhme's “theosophy” – a term that Scholem applies to kabbalistic speculation about God's inner life and its “pulsation” within creation⁵ – have been sought first in those German mystical works of his time, which Böhme was able to

1 Gershom Scholem, “The Name of God and the Linguistic of the Kabbalah,” *Diogenes* 79 (1972), 60.

2 Moshe Idel, *Absorbing Perfections: Kabbalah and Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2002), 275.

3 Cf. Ariel Hessayon and Sarah Apetrei, “Introduction. Boehme's Legacy in Perspective,” in *An Introduction to Jacob Boehme. Four Centuries of Thought and Reception*, ed. Ariel Hessayon and Sarah Apetrei (New York: Routledge, 2014), 1f.

4 Cf. Dirk von Petersdorff, *Mysterienrede: Zum Selbstverständnis romantischer Intellektueller* (Berlin: de Gruyter), 1996, 197f. See also, both Kristine Hannak, “Boehme and Romanticism,” and Hessayon and Apetrei, *Introduction*, 162–179, all of whom pinpoint in particular Boehme's influence on Novalis. Concerning Hölderlin's poetic inspiration from Böhme, cf. Hans Dieter Zimmermann, “Kabbalistische Einflüsse bei Friedrich Hölderlin?” in *Kabbala und die Literatur der Romantik: Zwischen Magie und Trope*, ed. Eveline Goodman-Thau, Gert Mattenklot, and Christoph Schulte (Berlin: de Gruyter 1999), 223–234.

5 Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken, 1967), 206: “Theosophists in this sense were Jacob Boehme and William Blake.”

read,⁶ and second in oral conversations, most notably, as has been reported time and again, with his learned friend Balthasar Walther.⁷ Few of these conversations can be reconstructed, but one possible link is Walther's knowledge of Johannes Reuchlin's *De arte cabbalistica*, which he certainly shared with Böhme.⁸ In addition, one has to take into account that Walther apparently annotated some of Böhme's works before they were edited, though it will hardly be possible to find out exactly what he "changed, added, and struck out."⁹

Despite Gershom Scholem's repeated statements that Böhme's affinities to kabbalah are outstanding among Christian mystics, no modern researcher has made a convincing attempt to elucidate the relationship between Böhme's work and specific Jewish esoteric texts and teachings.¹⁰ Scholem notes in

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- 6 Cf. Gottlieb Friedrich Otto, *Lexikon der seit dem fünfzehenden Jahrhunderte verstorbenen und jeztlebenden Oberlausizischen Schriftsteller* (Görlitz: Anton 21806), vol. 1, 101: "Er las die Schwenkfeldischen und damahls [sic] mystischen theologischen Schiften." Boehme was not able to read Latin, "let alone Hebrew," cf. Leigh T.I. Penman, "A Second Christian Rosencreuz? Jakob Böhme's Disciple Balthasar Walther (1558–c.1630) and the Kabbalah, with a Bibliography of Walther's Printed Works," *Western Esotericism*, ed. Tore Ahlbäck (Åbo/Turku: Donner Institute in Religious and Cultural History, 2008), 156.
- 7 See, *Supplementband zu J.G. Otto's Lexikon der Oberlausitzischen Schriftsteller und Künstler*, ed. Johann Daniel Schulze (Görlitz: Zobel, 1821), 31: "Viel Antheil an seinen Schriften soll D. Med. Balth. Walther gehabt haben, der in Glogau lebte u. dort geboren war, und, nachdem er mehrere deutsche Universitäten besucht, in den Bergwerken zu Ungarn die Chymie stark getrieben hatte, sich lange am Hofe des Fürsten der Moldau u. Wallachei, Michael, aufhielt, wo er dessen Thaten beschrieb, darauf 6 Jahre lang in Syrien, Egypten, Arabien etc. reisete u. die in der Chymie, Magie u. Cabbala erfahrensten Leute aufsuchte." Additional sources (Abraham von Franckenberg) are quoted and analyzed by Penman, "A Second Chistian Rosencreuz," 156f.
- 8 Cf. Abraham von Franckenberg, *De Vita et Scriptis Jacobi Böhmii*, in *Jacob Böhme, Sämtliche Schriften*, ed. Will-Erich Peuckert, 11 vol. (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1942–1992), vol. 10, 91f., quoted *in extenso* by Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann, *Geschichte der christlichen Kabbala 1600–1660* (Stuttgart Bad-Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog), 2013, vol. 2, 195f. Cf. also Penman, "A Second Christian Rosencreuz," 155f. (with English translation).
- 9 Cf. *Supplementband zu J.G. Otto's Lexikon*, 31: "Bei seiner Rückkehr nach Schlesien wurde er mit B. durch dessen dasige Verehrer bekannt, lebte 3 Monate in dessen Hause, verehrte ihn sehr und legte ihm den Namen Teutonicus Philosophus bei. Er blieb ihm stets in Briefwechsel, u. als er Direkt. des Churfürstl. Laboratorii chymici in Dresden war, schickte ihm B. seine Schriften zu, an denen er Vieles änderte, zusetzte und wegstrich."
- 10 An early exception was Robert T. Llewellyn, "Jakob Boehmes Kosmogonie in ihrer Beziehung zur Kabbala," *Antaios* 5 (1964), 237–250; he identifies the *Sefirah*, "wisdom," with Böhme's Sophia, which is for Böhme "das Aushauchen Gottes," and, Llewellyn suggests, a translation of the term "Ruach Elohim" (247). Sybille Rusterholz, "Elemente der Kabbala bei Jacob Böhme," *Mystik und Schriftkommentierung* ed. Günther Bonheim and Petra Kattner. Böhme-Studien 1 (Berlin: Weißensee, 2007), 26f., quotes two short statements from Gikatilla's *Gates of Light*. Her observations concerning (Jewish) kabbalah do not deviate from Scholem's insights. However, the following note should be corrected,

particular that Böhme's "doctrine of the origins of evil [...] bears all the traits of Kabbalistic thought," his "Christian metaphors" notwithstanding.¹¹ Scholem thus – almost enthusiastically – adopted Böhme's concept of "Ungrund" in his German translation of some extracts from the classical work of medieval kabbalah, *Sefer ha-Zohar* ("the Book of Splendor").¹² He suggested that "Ungrund" was in fact Böhme's translation of the kabbalistic neologism *En Sof* (lit. "no end," God's infiniteness), which, he suggests, Böhme may have "encountered during the years of his mystical reading."¹³ In contrast to rather arbitrary "parallels," "affinities," and the like, which researchers on Böhme have readily postulated without including original Hebrew sources, relying instead on Scholem's work,¹⁴ Andreas Kilcher has reached a negative conclusion in the

cf. 41f.: "Die Deutung einzelner Buchstabenteile [emphasis by Rusterholz] kennt die jüdische Kabbala (mit Ausnahme des Jod) nicht." Cf., by contrast, e.g. Jacob ben Jacob ha-Kohen's *Perush ha-Otiot* ("Explanation of the Letters"). It would have been helpful to consider kabbalistic meanings of "eye" (cf. e.g. Zohar 111, 129b–130a), not only to emphasize a wrongly placed *Ayin* instead of *Aleph* in Riccius' translation *Portae lucis* (cf. Rusterholz, "Elemente," 28). At any rate, Riccius quoted Hebrew words to verify his translations, not to put forth additional symbols that only those fluent in Hebrew could grasp. Eventually, at the end of the printing process of the present article, I learned that Elliot R. Wolfson devotes an essay to Böhme and kabbalah.

11 Scholem, *Major Trends*, 237.

12 Cf. Gershom Scholem, *Geheimnisse der Schöpfung: Ein Kapitel aus dem Buche Sohar* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp 1992), 30f.

13 Cf. Scholem, *Geheimnisse*, 31: "Ja, es könnte sein, daß 'Ungrund' bei Boehme als Übersetzung aus dem Wort *En Sof* gebildet ist, das in den Jahren seiner mystischen Lektüre zu ihm drang."

14 Cf. e.g. John Schultz, *Jakob Böhme und die Kabbalah: eine vergleichende Werkanalyse* (Frankfurt/Main: Lang, 1993); this dissertation may not lack interesting insights, but the explanations of kabbalistic teachings in regard to Böhme's work are often unfounded or simply wrong (cf. 128, where the *sefirah Tiferet* is characterized as "Angstqual," or 81, the misapprehended conception of *tsimtsum*). By contrast, Friedrich Häussermann, "Theologia Emblematica: Kabbalistische und alchemistische Symbolik bei Fr. Chr. Oetinger und deren Analogien bei Jakob Böhme," *Blätter für württembergische Kirchengeschichte* (1968/69) 207–346, and (1972) 71–112, followed exactly Scholem's exposition. Despite his ingenious presentation, Häussermann admits that he cannot prove Böhme's dependency on kabbalistic literature (except for the tenth *sefirah*, see below, note 122). Thus he writes that Böhme drew on alchemical and kabbalistic symbolism to the extent that both belong to "einer der alchemistischen und der kabbalistischen gemeinsamen archetypischen Grundlage," and alchemy conveyed kabbalistic concepts in Böhme's times (214f.). Another notable exception is Ernst Benz, who met Scholem at the famous Eranos conferences. Yet in his early book, *Der vollkommene Mensch nach Jakob Böhme*, Benz does not even hint at a connection to Jewish kabbalah. The study was published in 1937, the year he was appointed as Professor for Church History and German Mysticism in Marburg; in the same year he joined the NSDAP.

context of his historical search for kabbalistic patterns of a perfect language.¹⁵ Only Böhme's understanding of the magical aspect of the divine names, in particular the Tetragramm, can be linked *expressis verbis* to Reuchlin's concept of kabbalah.¹⁶

Most recently, Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann summarized his research on the kabbalistic meaning of Böhme's concepts in the context of what he enumerated as central "topoi": the divine language of creation, to be identified with the "heavenly Sophia," and the self-unfolding "Ungrund" in combination with speculations on the Holy Trinity and the seven "Qualitäten" or "Quellgründe" (also "Quellgeister"); the latter being possibly Böhme's original contribution and "further development" of the ten *sefirot* in the Jewish kabbalah,¹⁷ which differentiates between seven lower and three upper manifestations within the divinity. Yet Böhme's knowledge of such concepts may be also traced back, according to Schmidt-Biggemann, to Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite as well as to the medieval *Liber de Causis*; and he adds that techniques like the permutation of Hebrew letters, number speculation, or other methods of "kabbalistic exegesis" are completely missing in Böhme's thought.¹⁸ Even their accurate Christian adaption, first and foremost in Pistorius' *Ars Cabalistica*, printed in Basel, 1587, left "keine deutlichen terminologischen Spuren oder topischen Parallelen" in Böhme's work.¹⁹ In any case, Schmidt-Biggemann is quoting from the editor's additions in *De vita et scriptis Jacobi Böhmii*, printed in 1730 which claims that Böhme's strange interpretation of Ex 34:1 derives from kabbalistic sources. Böhme believed that Moses had received the law the second time, not on two tables of stone but inscribed on a globe.²⁰ According to the editor

15 Cf. Andreas B. Kilcher, *Die Sprachtheorie der Kabbala als ästhetisches Paradigma: Die Konstruktion einer ästhetischen Kabbala seit der Frühen Neuzeit* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1998), 152: "Eine mögliche Rezeption der Sprachtheorie der Kabbala bei Böhme kann jedoch nicht an 'kongenialen Ideen,' sondern nur an einem expliziten Begriff der Kabbala einsichtig werden."

16 Cf. Kilcher, *Sprachtheorie*, 187f., referring to Böhme's explications in *Theosophische Fragen oder: 177 Fragen von Göttlicher Offenbarung* (1624). Scholem had already pointed to this source as a key to understanding Böhme's view of kabbalistic wisdom as a "Koordinierung von Magie und Kabbala," one which Pico della Mirandola had initiated, cf. Gershom Scholem, "Alchemie und Kabbala," *Judaica* 4, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1984), 122.

17 Schmidt-Biggemann, *Geschichte*, 194f.

18 However, methods like *gematria*, *notarikon* or *temurah* are not per se "kabbalistic" (in fact they belong to rabbinic hermeneutical techniques), but often used in kabbalistic literature.

19 Schmidt-Biggemann, *Geschichte*, 195.

20 Penman, "A Second Christian Rosenkreuz," 155, notes that Böhme indeed wrote "on a globe," while the editor of the 1730 edition paraphrased (wrongly): "on two globes."

of the 1730 edition of Böhme's collected theosophical works, Böhme's understanding arose from a conversation with Balthasar Walther, who had read in Reuchlin's *De arte cabbalistica* (which is included in Pistorius' *Ars cabbalistica*) that the law was written with letters of black fire on the back of a white fiery sphere ("daß Gott sein Gesetz zuerst mit schwarzen feurigen zerstreuten Buchstaben, auf den Rücken einer Weissen feurigen Kugel, geschrieben"). Furthermore, Nahmanides (the great Spanish authority in *halakhah* and kabbalah, 1194–1270) had made the same assertion, and the two Christian kabbalists Paulus Ricius (1480–1541) and Archangelus de Burgo Novo (16th century) would attest this, too.²¹ Therefore, not Böhme, but Walther read the books on Christian kabbalah.²²

Böhme nevertheless relied heavily on works of Paracelsus, Heinrich Khunrath, and perhaps Johann Arndt.²³ As a consequence, Böhme's "Naturphilosophie" was saturated with Alchemie. Schmidt-Biggemann presents Böhme as a unique observer of natural processes, whose spiritual dimensions are bound to (Christian) kabbalah in a rather loose way, and whose affinity to the school of Paracelsus lurks through his intentionally new terminology with a strong convergence to alchemical concepts. However, in his chapter on "Böhme als Kabbalist," Schmidt-Biggemann discusses the question of possible parallels to Jewish kabbalah, concluding that Böhme's work at least puts forward God's (Hebrew) name as the very essence of language, though Böhme takes neither Hebrew letters nor the Hebrew Torah into consideration; in addition, the seven lower *sefirot* are not fully compatible with Böhme's "Quellgeister," and the kabbalistic concept of *Adam Qadmon* is missing, according to Schmidt-Biggemann.²⁴

A more revealing approach was tested by Bo Andersson, who not only draws attention to the differences between Böhme's early work (*Aurora*) and his later

21 Cf. Schmidt-Biggemann, *Geschichte*, 196f., n. 10.

22 Cf. also Penman, "A Second Christian Rosenkreuz," 166f. Penman argues that Walther's influence can be discerned in Böhme's "graphic entitled 'God's wonder-eye of eternity [...]' that Böhme also named the 'philosophical globe' (*philosophische Kugel*). However, in the context of Böhme's *Mysterium Magnum*, the "Kugel" corresponds to the second "Adam (Christum), der den ersten solte wiederbringen, und sein Gesetze wieder in seine Kugel des Herzens." Nevertheless, "the immaterial qualities of God's love" incorporated in this graphic seem to point in the same direction, that is, to the heart of Christ. Rusterholz stresses the influence of Abraham von Franckenberg in Böhme's late work (Rusterholz, "Elemente," 38f.).

23 Cf. Schmidt-Biggemann, *Geschichte*, 196.

24 Cf. Schmidt-Biggemann, *Geschichte*, 222, 234. It should be added that the concept of *Adam Qadmon* has its own history, from its emergence within the writings of the so-called *lyyun-circle*, up to its new understanding within Lurianic kabbalah.

writings and systematizations, but also links Böhme's "Netzwerkdenken" to the thought of Ramon Llull, Nicolaus Cusanus, and the Jewish kabbalah.²⁵ Andersson picks up Scholem's suggestions, and explains the dialectical dynamics of the "Quellgeister,"²⁶ the origin of evil being a special case: God's wrath ("zornige Schärfe") may gain independence within the circular structure of the Quellgeister, but only Lucifer actualizes the potential evil. In other words, wrathful severity, at first hidden within the sharp qualities, appears as the projecting force of evil, after the harmonic interplay of the seven qualities was disturbed. Andersson compares this idea to the kabbalistic concept of a "dendriform network," which also includes a quality that can be called the potentiality of evil, namely the power of (severe) judgment, whose separate manifestation counteracts the balance within the godhead and constitutes the origin of evil.²⁷

However, one should ask whether this tie to kabbalistic explanations of the origin of evil, based on characteristics of the fifth *sefirah* in the kabbalistic system, is really sufficient to attribute kabbalistic sources to Böhme's writing. If indeed there is reason to assume that among the colorful scholars living during or shortly after the reign of Rudolf II (1552–1612), some Jewish converts transferred their knowledge of kabbalah to the Christian world,²⁸ then an examination of the concept of God in the accessible Hebrew kabbalistic sources of that time should be taken into consideration.²⁹ In the following, I would like to discuss some relevant developments in the kabbalistic tradition in Europe at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and to consider in particular the

25 Cf. Bo Andersson, "Jacob Böhme als Netzwerkdenker: Die Lehre von den sieben Quellgeistern in der *Morgen Röte im aufgang*," in *Morgenröte im Aufgang: Beiträge einer Tagung zum 400. Jahrestag der Entstehung von Böhmes Erstschrift*, ed. Günther Bonheim and Thomas Regehly, Böhme-Studien, 4 (Berlin: Weißensee Verlag, 2017), 75–97.

26 Cf. also Bo Andersson, "*Du Solst wissen es ist aus keinem stein gesogen*": Studien zu Jacob Böhmes *Aurora oder Morgen Röte im aufgang*. Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis. Stockholmer Germanistische Forschungen 33 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1986), 163.

27 This was at least one aspect in kabbalistic sources; for additional explanations see Gershom Scholem, *Kabbalah* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1988), 122–128. Already Häussermann, "Theologia Emblematika," pointed to how Böhme and the kabbalah resolved the issue of the origin of evil: "der Ausbruch der göttlichen Feuernatur aus dem Gleichgewicht mit der Lichtseite seines Wesens, nach Böhme veranlaßt durch die Empörung Luzifers, nach der Kabbala durch das Übergewicht von Gottes strafender Gerechtigkeit über seine Barmherzigkeit," 212.

28 Robert John Eston Evans, *Rudolf II and His World: a Study in Intellectual History 1576–1612* (Oxford UP, 1973, corr. Paperback ed. Thames and Hudson, 1997), 241.

29 Cf. Evans, *Rudolf II*, 242: "The Cabala of Horowitz and other Safedists has elements that were later elaborated by Jakob Boehme, and it is entirely possible that the Lusatian mystic absorbed the influence during his visits to Bohemia."

suggestion of Andrew Weeks that Böhme's view of a "divine, world-creating contraction" may be compared with the kabbalistic concept of *tsimtsum*.³⁰

Before beginning this "spiritual journey," a realistic sketch of communal life in Prague, the vivid center of the Habsburg Empire, is required to set the stage. The population of Prague's Jewish quarter, surrounded by the Old Town, increased through the end of the sixteenth century up to 5000 inhabitants, and despite the community's economic and cultural prosperity, the thread of expulsion was always present.³¹ The welfare and growth of the Jewish community depended essentially on good relations to the imperial court of Rudolf II. To be sure, it was neither Rudolf's all-embracing interest in occult sciences, nor his recognition of Jewish expertise in such wisdom, that led to a peaceful coexistence between Christians and Jews. The crown rather looked for financial profit from the wealthy Jewish community leader Mordecai Meisel, in the form of taxes and loans during Meisel's lifetime and through the confiscation of his riches after his death in 1601.³² On the other hand, through connections to the court, Jewish intellectuals had access to new scientific knowledge in areas such as astronomy and alchemy that Rudolf II promoted. Social advancement was even possible, although it sometimes had to be preceded by conversion. Famous scholars such as the Christian kabbalist Johann Pistorius, frequented the court, as did figures nearly forgotten today, such as the Jewish alchemist Mardochaeus de Nelle.³³ The "arcane aura" of the court³⁴ grew up within an inter-confessional public sphere. The Bohemian capital blossomed

30 Andrew Weeks, *Boehme: An intellectual Biography of the Seventeenth-Century Philosopher and Mystic* (New York: UP, 1991) 232, n. 23; cf. also the introduction by Andrew Weeks in Jacob Böhme, *Aurora (Morgen Röte im aufgang, 1612) and Ein gründlicher Bericht or A Fundamental Report (Mysterium Pansophicum, 1620)*, ed. Andrew Weeks and Günther Bonheim in collaboration with Michael Spang as editor of *Gründlicher Bericht* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 44. I would like to thank Andrew Weeks for drawing my attention to this question.

31 Cf. Hillel J. Kieval, "Jewish Prague, Christian Prague, and the Castle in the City's 'Golden Age,'" *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 18 (2011) 204–207.

32 This was despite Rudolf's well-known respect for the famous Jewish community leader Judah Loew ben Betsalel [acronym Maharal: *morenu ha-rav Rabbi Liwa*, "our teacher, the master R. Loew"] of Prague (c. 1525–1609). Cf. Kieval, "Jewish Prague" (212f.), who argues that even "the meeting of the Maharal and Rudolf" was set up by Meisel, who acted as the "intermediary" and "maintained very close contact with the court and the nobility." As for the "mysterious, sealed, and hidden" content of Maharal's dialogue with the king (this characterization according to the Jewish astronomer and historian David Gans), Kieval suggests only such topics as "*aggadah* and Jewish Philosophy, the relationship between God and the Jewish people, exile, and redemption."

33 Cf. Daniel Jütte, *Das Zeitalter des Geheimnisses: Juden Christen und die Ökonomie des Geheimen (1400–1800)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2012), 251–254.

34 Cf. Jütte, *Zeitalter*, 251: "Am Prager Hof finden sich Juden besonders in jenen Stellungen, die von einer dezidiert arkanen Aura geprägt waren."

as an international center of attraction for tradesmen, intellectual adventurers, and artists, especially from Northern Italy.³⁵ Among the great variety of ethnic and religious minorities in Prague, the Dutch Calvinist members of the mystical “House of Love” community, stand out in particular for their eschatological interest and piety.³⁶ At least one testimony dating from 1595 documents the transfer of astro-magical traditions into the vernacular in these times. A Czech translation of the “Book of [the angel] Razi’el” – which is actually an anthology of different esoteric sources – was apparently not intended for learned circles, but for those not fluent in either Latin or Hebrew.³⁷ Somehow that transfer also appears to have reached the Christian minority originating “from the border regions of Bohemia and Moravia in the neighborhood of the German territorial states, from the predominantly German-speaking Silesian and Lusatia.”³⁸ At any rate, the scholarly activity at the heart of the Habsburg Empire reveals both an elitist interest in occult sciences and their diffused reception, including Hebrew sources.³⁹ Around 1600 conspicuous editions in the Hebrew manuscript tradition of *Sefer Razi’el* began appearing,⁴⁰ and it would come as no surprise if it turned out that the Christian court at Prague stimulated this work.⁴¹ One innovation in the textual arrangements during this last period of redaction activity on *Sefer Razi’el* may provide a hint: the magic texts from late antiquity are combined with early Spanish kabbalah in respect to God’s holy names.⁴²

35 Cf. Jaroslav Pánek, “An Emperor at the Prague Castle: Cosmopolitan Society, Politics and Culture in Bohemia during Rudolf 11’s Reign,” *Rabbinic Theology and Jewish Intellectual History: The Great Rabbi Loew of Prague*, ed. Meir Seidler (Routledge, 2013), 19.

36 Cf. Pánek, “Emperor,” 20.

37 Cf. *Sefer ha-Razim I und II, Band 2: Einleitung, Übersetzung und Kommentar*, ed. Bill Rebigier and Peter Schäfer (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009) 17f., 104, and 118–125 for the Christian reception of *Sefer Razi’el* (referring to German translations in early modern times). The Czech version was translated from the medieval Latin *Liber Razielis*; the translator and/or copyist was Johannes Polentarius. However, Rebigier and Schäfer are cautious concerning the relation to the court of Rudolf 11.

38 Pánek, “Emperor,” 21.

39 Evans, *Rudolf 11.*, 238.

40 Cf. Bill Rebigier, “Zur Redaktionsgeschichte des ‘Sefer Razi’el ha-Mal’akh,’” *Frankfurter Judaistische Beiträge* 32 (2005), 1–22; cf. also Reimund Leicht, *Astrologumena Judaica. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der astrologischen Literatur der Juden* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2006) 207–217.

41 The oldest manuscript with similar content to the first edition, *Sefer Razi’el ha-Mal’akh*, Amsterdam 1701, is dated 1612 (MS Uppsala, University Library, hebr. 29); cf. Rebigier, “Redaktionsgeschichte,” 15f. Rebigier emphasizes the Jewish interest in the Medieval Latin version (*Liber Razielis*), an anthology with seven parts, which was translated into Hebrew as well.

42 Cf. Rebigier, “Redaktionsgeschichte,” 13; 18. The redactor(s) of MS Cambridge, University Library, Add. 445, dated 1603, adapted in *Sefer Razi’el* for the first time texts from Azri’el of

During this same period, another remarkable development occurred within the Jewish world: the new pedagogical views of Judah Loew ben Betsalel (c. 1525–1609) challenged traditional educational practices.⁴³ At first, kabbalah did not become the focus of attention, since the Maharal – as Judah Loew ben Betsalel was better known – did not propagate mystical ideas by using relevant kabbalistic terminology in his prolific work. Nonetheless, kabbalistic ideas were able to assert themselves during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Issachar Baer of Kremnitz, the correspondent of Solomon Shlomel Dresnitz, whose letters gave a valuable report of the Lurianic circles in Galilee,⁴⁴ had a number of his Hebrew books printed in Prague between 1609 and 1611.⁴⁵ He focused on *Sefer ha-Zohar* and wrote one of the first dictionaries to this comprehensive work, an anthology of Zoharic homilies, and a concise summary.⁴⁶ In this way, kabbalistic issues could be studied by beginners, although kabbalah still did not find its way into educational institutions (*yeshivot*).⁴⁷

Out of the preceding sketch of the historical situation in early modern Central Europe, three main discourses emerge as sources for the occult wisdom prevalent in Jacob Böhme's early years: first, the scientific search for (secret) knowledge at the court of Rudolf II.; second, the interactions of religious minorities with differing theological views; and third, the ongoing dissemination of kabbalistic teaching within the Jewish community itself.

2 Aspects of the Kabbalah in Central Europe as Reflected in *Shefa Tal* (1612)

To begin with, Jewish Kabbalists expressed their ideas often by means of the figurative language found in Rabbinic literature. One of the richest sources in

Gerona and his disciple Abraham ben Alexander of Cologne, with interpretations of the Hebrew letters and the Tetragramm, whereby they link the *sefirot* with human organs and intellectual faculties.

43 Cf. the survey by David B. Ruderman, *Jewish Thought and Scientific Discovery in Early Modern Europe* (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1999), 63–68.

44 The letter written to Baer should be dated (according to Meir Benayahu) to *Heshwan*, 25th, 5368 (November 15, 1607), cf. Joseph Avivi, *Kabbala Luriana* (Hebr.), (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi), 2008, vol. 1, 38.

45 Cf. Andrea Gondos, *Kabbala in Print: Literary Strategies of Popular Mysticism in Early Modernity* (PhD diss., University of Montreal: <http://spectrum.library.concordia.ca/977951/>, 2013), 211.

46 Cf. Gondos, *Kabbala in Print*, 294. *Sefer ha-Zohar* (The Book of Splendor) was printed first in Mantua 1558–60, and Cremona 1559, many other editions followed (a third edition was published in Lublin 1624).

47 Cf. Jacob Katz, *Tradition and Crisis: Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages*, trans. Bernard Dov Cooperman (New York: Schocken, 1993) 191–194.

such literature was the Midrash to the Song of Songs. It includes important sayings such as, “the Torah existed two thousand years before the creation of the world,”⁴⁸ or, the Torah was “written with black fire on white fire,” or, the two tables of the law given at Mount Sinai had been “hewn out from the globe of the sun.”⁴⁹ Such statements appear in many kabbalistic sources, most prominently in Naḥmanides’ commentary to the Torah,⁵⁰ and also in a kabbalistic manuscript used by Johannes Reuchlin.⁵¹ Around 1600, the state of kabbalistic affairs began to change notably, especially because of the development of Northern Italy into a center of kabbalistic activity. The region soon became the first important area for the European reception of the Kabbala from Safed, its distributor ring and multiplier, as well as a hotbed for crossing the kabbalistic systems of Moshe Cordovero (1522–1570) and Isaac Luria (1534–1572). The towering figure in these circles was Menahem Azaryah da Fano (1548–1620), himself a student of Israel Saruq, who probably got to know Luria personally for a time.⁵² Saruq arrived in Venice at the close of the sixteenth century and

48 This Talmudic tradition was very wide-spread. Philipp Melanchthon relates it to the name “kabbalah”: “Zweitausend Jahre Leere, zweitausend Jahre Gesetz, zweitausend Jahre des Messias. Man nennt diesen Ausspruch Kabbala,” quoted in Gerold Necker, *Humanistische Kabbala im Barock: Leben und Werk des Abraham Cohen de Herrera* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 51. Jacob Böhme knew this tradition from the books of Paul Kaym, and refers to it in his letter dated 19 November 1620, cf. Peuckert, *Jacob Böhme, Sämtliche Schriften. Informatorium Novissimorum*, vol. 5, 408. In a letter to Christian Bernhard, Böhme refers to the commonly known biblical point of reference for this rabbinic calculation, Ps 90, 4; cf. Peuckert, *Jacob Böhme, Sämtliche Schriften. Epistolae Theosophiae*, vol. 9, 17.

49 Cf. Song of Songs Rabba 5, 11 (with a parallel in the Babylonian Talmud, tractate Sanhedrin 97a), and 5,14 (actually “sphere of the sun,” *galgal ha-ḥama*).

50 Cf. Naḥmanides’ introduction to his commentary on the Torah, where he states that “the Torah is written with black fire on white fire” (ed. Chayyim Chavel [Jerusalem: Mosad ha-Rav Kook], 1959, vol. 1, 7).

51 Cf. Moshe Idel, “Introduction to the Bison Book Edition,” in *Johann Reuchlin: On the Art of the Kabbalah. De Arte Cabalistica*, trans. Martin and Sarah Goodman (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), xvi–xix. Idel modified Scholem’s claim that MS New York, Halberstamm 444 (now MS New York, JTS 1887), was Reuchlin’s source: despite some “discrepancies, which may indicate that another codex had informed Reuchlin’s studies of Kabbalah, the content of the Halberstamm codex is very helpful in identifying sources for important segments of Reuchlin’s book” (xvii). As to the quotation in question, only the last part is found in Naḥmanides’ commentary; the first part hints rather at the Midrash Song of Songs Rabba, as explained above: “Primo nanque, ut asserunt cabalaei, deus legem suam in globum igneum conscripsit per ignem fuscum super ignem candidum,” Johannes Reuchlin, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 11, 1: *De arte cabalistica libri tres. Die Kabbalistik*, ed. Widu-Wolfgang Ehlers, Hans-Gert Roloff, and Peter Schäfer, Hebrew text ed. Reimund Leicht (Stuttgart-Bad Canstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 2010), 444.

52 Cf. Ronit Meroz, “The Saruk School of Kabbalists: A New Historical Interpretation,” (Hebr.) *Shalem* 7 (2002), 175f.

undertook several journeys as far as Poland in order to preach his version of Lurianic Kabbalah. About the same time, a unique kabbalistic tradition was established by the Horowitz-family in Prague, most notably by Shabtai Sheftel ben Akiva Horowitz (1565–1619), the author of *Shefa Tal* (“abundance of dew”), which was published in 1612 in Hanau near Frankfurt.⁵³ It was the first printed book that included an innovative conceptualization of *tsimtsum*, God’s so-called self-contraction for the purpose of creation; one narrative, based partly on Moshe Cordovero’s understanding, shows also some points of contact with the Lurianic teachings of *tsimtsum*:

When the simple Will, He shall be praised, emerged to create worlds – so that He may have kings, noblemen, chiefs, and servants, which are ranks below Him, He shall be praised, but not ranks within His essence, so that He can reveal them His divinity and His magnitude, and rule over them and govern them like a king, who governs his people – it was necessary to confine (*tsimtsem*, lit.: to contract) Himself, as it were, like the Rabbis of blessed memory said: “He concentrated [*tsimtsem*] His presence [his *Shekhinah*] between the two bars of the ark.” Similarly, before the creation of the world, He confined Himself within His essence, as it were, out of Himself, to Himself, and within Himself (*me-’atsmo el ’atsmo u-ve-tokh ’atsmo*), and vacated a free place within His essence, as it were, into which emanation can be emanated, (namely) his (sefirotic) powers, spreading from him, and (the worlds of) creation, formation, and action can be created thereunder, and these are not (to be identified with) His essence, but are His kings, noblemen, and servants.⁵⁴

53 Shabbetai Sheftel ben Akiva Horowitz, *Shefa Tal*, Hanau: Hans Jacopa Hena 1612. The members of the Horowitz family played a prominent role in the European Jewish communities of their time. Shabtai Sheftel Horowitz worked as a physician, but his uncle Isaiah ben Abraham ha-Levi Horowitz was most distinguished, as one of the leading figures in Prague following the era of the Maharal. After the death of his wife in 1620, he traveled to Jerusalem, where he completed his major work, *Shne Luhot ha-Brit* (“The two tablets of the covenant”), cf. Eugene Newman, *Life and Teachings of Isaiah Horowitz* (London: Newman, 1972).

54 *Shefa Tal*, fol. 28c (all translations, except where otherwise specified, are mine). There are some mistakes in the pagination of the first print, Hanau 1612; therefore the quotations are given according to continuous counting. The Rabbinic meaning of the saying “He concentrated his presence between the two bars of the ark” (cf. Midrash Tanhuma, *wayiqahel* 7) is discussed by Ephraim E. Urbach, *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1975), vol. 1, 48–51; cf. also Bracha Sack, *Shomer ha-Pardes: The Kabbalist Rabbi Shabbetai Sheftel Horowitz of Prague* (Hebr.), (Beer Sheva: Ben-Gurion University, 2002), 123, n. 86. Concerning the four worlds (*Atsilut*, *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*), cf. Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 119.

To be sure, Horowitz' understanding of *tsimtsum* differs somewhat from the explications found in Hayyim Vital's work.⁵⁵ Yet what matters here is the concept of a motion within *En Sof*, which results in a self-restriction, and at the same time ensures the continuing presence of holiness, that is, the light of *En Sof*, which converges in the starting "point" (*nequdah*) of the emanation, the first *sefirah Keter* ("crown"), which is called "primordial air" (*awir qadmon*), because the letter *Yod* (the first letter of the Tetragramm)⁵⁶ was situated in the centre of the surrounding "light" (*or*),⁵⁷ thus changing the word *אור* (*or*) into *אוריר* (*awir*).⁵⁸ The peculiar phrase illustrating the first motion, "out of Himself, to Himself," appears in a similar context in the first chapter of Menahem Azaryah da Fano's *Yonat Elem*,⁵⁹ and in some texts belonging to the

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- 55 Cf. Sack, *Shomer ha-Pardes*, 123–136; cf. also the bibliographical notes, 119 (re Boaz Huss). For a detailed survey of kabbalistic teachings of *tsimtsum* in the first half of the seventeenth century see Moshe Idel, "Conceptualizations of *Tzimtsum* in Baroque Italy," *The Value of the Particular: Lessons from Judaism and the Modern Jewish Experience: Festschrift for Steven T. Katz on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. by Michael Zank and Ingrid Anderson (Leiden: Brill, 2015) 28–54.
- 56 Horowitz distinguishes between the letter *Yod* in men's perspective, resembling the second *sefirah*, wisdom (the first discernible stage of God's self-revelation), and the three parts of the form of the letter *Yod*, (upper tip, body, lower tip), resembling the three stages of the unknowable Godhead: *En Sof*, *tehiru*, and *Keter*, cf. *Shefa Tal*, fol. 29a, and Sack, *Shomer ha-Pardes*, p. 130.
- 57 According to Lurianic Kabbalah, *tsimtsum* means the retraction or withdrawal of *En Sof* from a location, which then is called *tehiru*, signifying a kind of vacuum, but containing traces of the light of *En Sof*, called *reshimu* (the source of evil after the "breaking of the vessels"), being left in the void after the process of withdrawal. Horowitz highlights the literal Zoharic meaning of the Aramaic term *tehiru*, "luster," and in consequence identifies in some way *tehiru* with *reshimu*: "the light of the essence of *En Sof*, He may be praised, being within *reshimu*, which is called 'luster (*tehiru*) on high' (*Zohar* I, 15a), maintains and sustains the *reshimu*, which is *tehiru* insofar as He confines (*tsimtsem*) his light within the *reshimu*, and the *reshimu* endures (only) on the part of the confinement (*tsimtsum*) of His light within it," (*Shefa Tal*, fol.28c–28d), for otherwise it would return to *En Sof*. This vital function of *reshimu* is likened to the soul, which revives the body, and is known to be stronger in fact outside the body.
- 58 In Israel Saruq's version of Lurianic *tsimtsum* the letter *Yod* emerging between the letters *Waw* and *Resh* (in the word "light") signifies the *reshimu* within "the free space" (*ha-maqom ha-panui*), which appeared after the folding of the divine garment (the bottom half was folded up). Due to the intensity of the surrounding light of *En Sof* the *reshimu* took on the shape of "a small sphere [or globe], namely like a small point," cf. *Drush ha-Malbush ve-ha-Tsamtsum* (Jerusalem: [s.n.], 2001) 13.
- 59 Cf. *Sefer ma'amre ha-Rama mi-Pano*, (Jerusalem: Yismah Lev-Torat Moshe, 1997), 1 and 128 (*mahadura batra*). This work, "the silent dove" (according to Psalm 56, 1), is part of his kabbalistic treatise, *asarah ma'amarot* ("the ten sayings"), of which three parts were printed in Venice, 1597, whereas *Yonat Elem*, the fourth treatise, was printed first in Amsterdam, 1648.

Saruq-school of thought. Moshe Cordovero coined the phrase with the intention to highlight God's unique unity,⁶⁰ not only concerning the *En Sof* itself, but also in connection with the world of emanation adhering to it, whereby the Tetragramm constitutes the "space of expansion" of *En Sof*, thus indicating the immediate proximity of the *Sefirot* to their source.⁶¹ In line with this, the phrase "out of Himself, to Himself" emphasizes God's independence, self-sufficiency, and sovereignty, before, as well as during, the emanation process: all beings, and reality as a whole, are "rooted in wisdom" (the second *sefirah*), and they emerge "like (diurnal) pollution, when the male ejaculates drops out of himself to himself";⁶² and this procreation "without the partnership of male and female" – which is only a spiritual act – results in the power of severe "strength" (*din*).⁶³ It is nonetheless an act of satisfaction and "delight" (*sha'ashu'a*).⁶⁴ However, until the people of Israel dedicate themselves to the study of Torah, God's love is not returned, and in this respect the "delight" is nothing but strong desire.⁶⁵

Considering the aggadic background of Cordovero's concept of *sha'ashu'a*,⁶⁶ the Saruq-school describes the initial act of creation as a joyful linguistic movement resulting in the primordial Torah: "First of all you should know that when the Holy One took delight in himself, meaning that he was rejoicing and delighting, just like a human being, as it were, so the Holy One, out of joy [...] – as is written (Psalm 104,31): *The Lord shall rejoice in his works* [...] – a spark came to be, and out of that movement, according to the spark, the Torah was created."⁶⁷ What is more, the creation within God Himself can be imagined as birth: "*En Sof* shakes Himself, and splits off, flashes from within into within, and this shaking is called delight, and from this delight, from parting Himself

60 An interesting gnostic parallel was mentioned by Scholem, *Major Trends*, 264; cf. now: *The Books of Jeu and The Untitled Text in the Bruce Codex*, ed. Carl Schmidt, trans. Violet Macdermot (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 103 [88] and 313 [275].

61 Cf. Bracha Sack, *The Kabbalah of Rabbi Moshe Cordovero* (Hebr.), (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1995), 72f. Cordovero uses the phrase in particular in his *Sefer Elima*, cf. Joseph Ben-Shlomo, *The Mystical Theology of Moses Cordovero* (Hebr.), (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1986), 62f.

62 Moshe Cordovero, *Sefer Elima Rabbati* (Lemberg: [s.n.], 1881), fol. 59a.

63 Cordovero, *Elima Rabbati*, fol. 104a–104b (characterized also as "redness" [*odem*], the color referring to "judgment", which is related to the "kings of Edom" [Gen 36,31]).

64 Cf. Ben-Shlomo, *Mystical Theology*, 60f. Actually one has to differentiate between various stages, cf. Sack, *Cordovero*, 24, 73, 141, and 144.

65 Cf. Sack, *Cordovero*, 150–176.

66 Cf. Genesis Rabba 1, 1 (interpreting Prv 8, 30).

67 Cf. *Limmude Atzilut*, (Muncacs: Samuel Kahn, 1897), fol. 3a. The texts of this anthology are attributed to Israel Saruq.

to Himself, the power of limiting inscription was born from Him, and this is the potential of the Torah (*torah be-khoah*).⁶⁸ Therefore, the primordial Torah is still a Torah *in potentia*, a kind of projecting force, which appears to be also the secret root of God's judgment, since every judgment – in kabbalistic terms symbolizing the potential source of evil – implies limitation. What is generally referred to as *tsimtsum*, namely the “withdrawal” of *En Sof*, has to be understood as limitation.⁶⁹

The sexual metaphor for solitary procreation in the context of the phrase “from Himself to Himself” was not taken up in *Shefa Tal*. Instead, Horowitz describes this movement as an act of God's becoming aware of Himself,⁷⁰ being as intensive as a blow from a hammer, thereby emitting a spark, the starting “point” of emanation.⁷¹ He illustrates this event by the parable of the sun and the mirror:

When the light of the sun impinged on a polished mirror, another light is resumed (lit. renewed) and revealed from the sharpened mirror in front of the sun. But the resumed light does not have such a high order of magnitude as the first light, which struck the mirror. In the same way, as it were, *En Sof*, He may be praised – who is entirely light, and all worlds are full of his light, without free space to create the worlds therein – struck Himself, as it were, from Himself to Himself in such a way that he made room to create the worlds within (Himself). And from this blow on Himself “a light flared up.”⁷²

Horowitz uses these concepts for his interpretation of the first sentence in the “Book of Splendor”,⁷³ significant here is his translation of the famous Aramaic

68 *Limmude Atzilut*, fol. 21d.

69 This is no contradiction to the two (paradoxical) principle meanings of *tsimtsum* as understood by the kabbalists in early modern times: an act of revelation, and at the same time an act of concealment; cf. Moshe Idel, “On the Concept of Zimzum in Kabbalah and its Research,” (Hebr.) *Lurianic Kabbalah* (Hebr.), ed. Rachel Elior and Yehuda Liebes (Jerusalem: Magnes), 59–112.

70 In medieval Jewish philosophy, God's self-awareness is explicitly linked to *sha'ashu'a*, cf. Sack, *Cordovero*, 144 and 173f.

71 Cf. Sack, *Shomer ha-Pardes*, 133.

72 *Shefa Tal*, fol. 52b; for the Aramaic quotation at the end cf. Zohar I, 43b, and Zohar II, 126b (Matt, *Zohar*, vol. 4, [Stanford UP, 2009], 187f., translates in this context “shone a single radiance”). The parable and its relation to the Kabbalah of Joseph Karo are discussed by Ben-Shlomo, *Mystical Theology*, 256–264.

73 Cf. *Zohar* I, 15a: “*In the beginning* – at the head of potency of the King, He engraved engravings in luster on high. A spark of impenetrable darkness flashed within the concealed of the concealed, from the head of Infinity [...].” (Daniel Matt, *The Zohar. Pritzker Edition*, 8 vol. [Stanford UP, 2004–2014], vol. 1, 107f).

term *botsina di-qardinuta* ("a spark of impenetrable darkness") as "sulfuric candle" (*ner shel gafrit*).⁷⁴ Thus, Horowitz reaches the point where the eternal movement "from Himself to Himself" ends up in a well-known alchemical substance.⁷⁵ Although Paracelsus' classification of the three principles, mercury, sulfur, and salt was current, this was irrelevant to Horowitz. Yet he did incorporate a lengthy passage with alchemical foundations of his kabbalistic views into *Shefa Tal*.⁷⁶ Two aspects are remarkable: first, the four elements (of which man's body is composed) refer not only to the four metals (gold, silver, copper, and iron), but also to the seven lower *Sefirot*, which are comprised of the four exponents *Hesed*, *Din*, *Tiferet*, and *Malkhut*. Horowitz adapted this linkage from the *Zohar*.⁷⁷ Second, he established this quadripartite model also as a fundamental principle in the hierarchy of the four worlds (emanation, creation, formation, action),⁷⁸ which structures the entire world together with the ongoing process of *tsimtsum*,⁷⁹ down to the lowest point in the chain of being.

74 *Shefa Tal*, fol. 29c; Horowitz mentions also the alternative reading, *qadrinuta*, "blackness," to be understood as a light as bright as the sun and therefore impossible to look at. Apparently Horowitz adapted the explanation given in Cordovero's *Pardes Rimmonim* IV, 7. The association with sulfur was deduced from interpretations of "gopher wood" in Gen 6,14; cf. Yehuda Liebes, *Sections of the Zohar Lexicon* (Hebr.), (PhD diss., Hebrew University of Jerusalem: <http://pluto.huji.ac.il/~liebes/zohar/prakim.doc>, 1977), 171.

75 The details of this process can be summarized as follows: by way of *tsimtsum* the immeasurable, all-encompassing light of *En Sof* focuses in the "luster on high" (*tehiru ila'a*); the *tsimtsum* of the light of *En Sof* persists in its *reshimu* ("impression"), which is compared to the secret of the soul. This aspect mediates (lit. is engraved, according to *Zohar* 1,15a, and alluding to the terminology in *Sefer Yetsirah* §1, recalling the "engraving" of the letters of the Torah given at Mount Sinai) between the emanating cause and the first emanated effect, and in consequence the light of *Keter* is bound to the light of *En Sof* "like the light of the flame, which is attached to a candle made of sulfur" (*Shefa Tal*, fol. 30a, alluding to the image of the flame bound to the burning coal in *Sefer Yetsirah* §6).

76 Cf. *Shefa Tal*, fol. 36c–37b; cf. Gershom Scholem, "Alchemie und Kabbala," *Judaica* 4, ed. by Rolf Tiedemann, Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1984, 68f.

77 Cf. Matt, *Zohar*, vol. 4, 84f. (*Zohar* II, 23b–24a); these four correspond with the biblical patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and King David. They are called the "mystery of the supernal holy chariot."

78 The main problem of the opposing ranking of silver and gold in alchemical and kabbalistic teachings was solved by Horowitz' explanation that a process of "blending" (*hitmazgut*) operates within the different stages. For instance, the quality of the element fire, which corresponds with gold, and actually belongs to the fifth *sefirah* *Din*, prevails over the element water in the fourth *sefirah* *Hesed*, thus being on top of the four "administrating" *sefirot* (*Hesed*, *Din*, *Tiferet*, *Malkhut*). Cf. Sack, *Shomer ha-Pardes*, 150.

79 The two aspects are presented in two abbreviations: the four worlds of אבדא (atzilut, beriah, yetsirah, asyah), and the process of רשמו (reshimu, haqiqu, hatsivu, 'asyah, "impression, engraving, carving, action"); the similarity (and difference) of this concept to Cordovero's understanding is explained by Sack, *Shomer ha-Pardes*, 149.

Eventually, the spiritual roots of the four elements⁸⁰ are laid out in the four letters of the Tetragramm, beginning with *Yod* as spring water, and concluding with the second *He* as root for earth, symbolizing the *sefirah Malkhut*, which is linked here to *Hokhmah*, and associated with androgyny.⁸¹

3 A Re-Invention of Kabbalistic Speech?

Turning now to Jacob Böhme's view of the mystical "shape of the Godhead,"⁸² the question presents itself whether elements from the discourses of contemporary Jewish kabbalists are somehow manifest in Böhme's terminology and imagination? Böhme's first statement concerning the beginning of all is a mythological one: "The divinity gave birth to itself gently and lovingly. It configured itself in images which incorporated themselves in accordance with the source spirits [Quellgeister] in their self-regeneration, interplay, and ascent ... First of all is the tart quality which is perpetually born from the other six qualities. It is in itself hard, cold, sharp like salt [...] This tart, sharp quality contracts and contains in the divine body the forms and images, drying them out so that they persist."⁸³ Here, the "contraction" is the result of sharpness, which causes a kind of flinching, the first quality. Then follows the second quality, "sweet water" or gentleness, "pressed out of the tart quality"; the third quality, "bitterness," arising "from the fire in the water" by causing "activation" ("Beweglichkeit"), which brings out "fire," the fourth quality. Thereupon, "the light emerges." Nothing is said about a necessary free "place." Rather, there is a "depth," wherein "God himself does not know what he is. For he knows no beginning and nothing like himself, nor any end."⁸⁴ After describing the

80 These are summarized in the abbreviation ARM'A (*esh, ruah, mayim, 'afar*, "fire, wind, water, dust").

81 Cf. *Shefa Tal*, fol. 37c: *Hesed* is rooted in *Hokhmah*, referring to the letter *Yod*, the "secret root of the element water"; *Gevurah (Din)* is rooted in *Binah*, referring to the letter *He*, the "secret root of the element fire"; *Tiferet* is rooted in the "hidden *Da'at*, which ascends to *Keter*," referring to the letter *Waw*, the root of the element air; *Malkhut*, referring to the second *He*, is (also) rooted in *Hokhmah*, "in the secret of the bride of Moses, the bride in the house of her father [cf. Babylonian Talmud, tractate *Ketubbot* 71b], in the mystery of *Waw Dalet* [...] the mystery of *du-partsufim* [lit. 'two faces', i.e. male and female combined]," the "secret of the root of the element earth."

82 Cf. Peuckert, *Jacob Böhme, Sämtliche Schriften. De triplici vita hominis, oder vom Dreyfachen Leben des Menschen* (1620), vol. 3, 30: "So will ich euch [...] die Gestalt der Gottheit zeigen, daß ihr [...] verstehen lernet das ewige Gute, und auch das ewige Böse."

83 Weeks and Bonheim, *Aurora*, 679–681.

84 Weeks and Bonheim, *Aurora*, 681.

seven qualities of God's shape, Böhme concludes: "For the birth of God is like a wheel,"⁸⁵ and eternal like his "light," which is "the prototype of the Son."⁸⁶ At first, one is struck by the dominating harshness of the opening, yet the appearance of "light" changes the character of the following three "births."⁸⁷ The "wheel" unites the opposing powers, thus operating in a way that indicates a connection of this image to the beginning of *Sefer Yetsirah*.⁸⁸

Though the seven qualities are not to be understood as a sequence with a chronological order, but with each containing all of the others,⁸⁹ there is a first cause: God's unity, which fills all and everything. Böhme draws on a number of passages for his concept of the infinity of God: Dtn 6:4, "the Lord our God is one Lord;"⁹⁰ the doxological formula in Romans 11:36, "For of Him, and through him, and to him are all things [to whom be glory forever];"⁹¹ Jer 23:24, which

85 Weeks and Bonheim, *Aurora*, 697.

86 Weeks and Bonheim, *Aurora*, 685, n. 3.

87 The fifth birth (concerning light) activates the "new force," the sixth one (sound) is identified with the Holy Spirit, whereas the seventh birth (nature) signifies the unity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; cf. Weeks and Bonheim, *Aurora*, 687.

88 The characteristics related to the *Sefer Yetsirah*, the main (pre-kabbalistic) reference text of the kabbalists (besides the Bible), are the following: fire issues from water (§14), and the rotating wheel (of the Hebrew letters as the source of being; the Hebrew *galgal* means also "sphere") effects good and evil, pleasure and pain (§18). The image and context of the wheel in Ezekiel (Böhme quotes occasionally 1:15 and 25) acted also as a model in *Sefer Yetsirah*, cf. the "burning coal" in §6 and Ez 1:13, and the quotation of Ez 1:14 in §8, where it is stated that the appearance of the *sefirot* "is like the sight of lightening, and their end? – they have no limit," A. Peter Hayman, *Sefer Yesira: Edition, Translation and Text-Critical Commentary* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2004), 74 and 78.

89 Cf. Weeks and Bonheim, *Aurora*, 299: "For each spirit in the seven spirits of God is pregnant with all seven and they are all in one another like a single spirit." In *Shefa Tal*, fol. 1d, the same conception is quite typically applied to the *sefirot*: "and the potency (or power, force) of all is in (each) one, and the potency of (each) one is in all."

90 Cf. Peuckert, *Jacob Böhme, Sämtliche Schriften. Clavis oder Schlüssel, das ist Eine Erklärung der vornehmsten Puncten und Wörter, welche in diesen Schriften gebraucht werden* (1624), vol. 9, 79: "Der Herr unser Gott ist ein einiger Gott". A kabbalistic interpretation influenced by Trinitarian speculation (which in turn could be used by Christian kabbalists) is to be found in *Zohar* 11, 43b, cf. Isaiah Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar* (Oxford: UP, 1989), vol. 3, 973: "Here are three names. How can they be one? Even though we say 'one' [in the *Shema*] how can they be one? It is through a vision of the holy spirit that [the mystery of their unity] becomes known, and they [appear] in the vision of the closed eye, so that it is known that these three are 'one.'" Cf. also Matt, *Zohar*, vol. 1, 113, n. 37 (to *Zohar* 1, 15b).

91 Cf. Peuckert, *Jacob Böhme, Sämtliche Schriften. Clavis*, vol. 9, 79: "Von ihm, durch Ihn und in Ihm sind alle Dinge." Romans 11:33–36 belongs to the liturgy of the Sunday Trinitatis. The formula recalls the doxology at the end of the Eucharistic prayer ("per ipsum, et cum ipso, et in ipso, est tibi Deo Patri omnipotenti in unitate Spiritus Sancti omnis honor et Gloria per Omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen").

he renders “Bin nicht Ichs, der alle Dinge erfüllet?”;⁹² and John 1:3, referring to the divine Word of creation. Böhme thus states: “He is the eternal (unchangeable) unity without limit [...] ungrounded, without end, (time) nor place, and He, God, is one, or the eternal Good, which is beyond expression.”⁹³ This is exactly what kabbalists indicate before the so-called “withdrawal” (*tsimtsum*) of *En Sof*, regardless whether their interpretation follows mainly Cordovero’s or Vital’s view (or a combination of both).⁹⁴

According to Böhme, the concept of the Trinity, included in this unity, goes ahead with the will of the Father, which is characterized by a first movement motivated by “hunger” or “desire.”⁹⁵ He associates this motion with “schuf” (“created,” cf. Gen 1:1), as well as with “fiat,”⁹⁶ which is actually the Latin term for “let there be [light],” (cf. Gen 1:3). However, Böhme’s explanation points at the eternal “Word” (Joh 1:1), and he describes the motion as both “contraction” and phonetic realization,⁹⁷ or an eternal birth-giving and act of speaking.⁹⁸ At the same time, Böhme calls the motion a kind of self-awareness,⁹⁹ and a

92 Instead of “Do not I fill heaven and earth?” In *Zohar* I, 68a the personal pronoun (“I”) in this quotation is related to God’s glory (referring to the *sefirah Malkhut* in kabbalistic symbolism). In the Midrash Genesis Rabba, this biblical quotation serves as context for the explanation of the confined *Shekhinah*, which is likened to the reflection in a mirror (cf. Urbach, *The Sages*, 48).

93 Peuckert, *Jacob Böhme, Sämtliche Schriften. Clavis*, vol. 9, 79: “Er ist die Ewige und unermeßliche (unwandelbare) Einheit [...] es ist alda kein Grund, Ziel, (Zeit) noch Stätte, und ist der einige Gott, oder das ewige Gut, das man nicht aussprechen kann.”

94 A similar terminology concerning God’s transcendence is used in kabbalistic texts from the very beginning (likewise in Jewish philosophical thought), in particular the adequate Hebrew words for “Ziel” and “Stätte,” *takhlit* and *maqom*, cf. *The Book Bahir. An Edition Based on the Earliest Manuscripts* (Hebr.), ed. Daniel Abrams (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 1994), 187 (§103). Shabbtai Sheftel Horowitz, in particular, stresses the transcendent state of the Supreme Being that cannot be named and remains unchangeable (cf. Sack, *Shomer ha-Pardes*, 141).

95 Cf. Peuckert, *Jacob Böhme, Sämtliche Schriften. Mysterium Magnum, oder Erklärung über Das Erste Buch Mosis* (1623), vol. 7, 12: “Denn das Nichts hungert nach dem Etwas, und der Hunger ist die Begierde, als das erste Verbum Fiat.”

96 Cf. Peuckert, *Jacob Böhme, Sämtliche Schriften. Mysterium Magnum*, vo. 7, 13.

97 Cf. Weeks and Bonheim, *Aurora*, 528f.

98 In the context of the creation of the angels, Böhme states: “Das wortt schuff / mustu verstehen / Als wen man spreche zu Sammen zihen [...] Als sich der Gantze Gott bewege / So zog die Herbe qualitet den Salitter der Natur zu sammen” – “You must understand that, with the word ‘made,’ it is as if one were speaking a contraction [...] when the entire divinity moved: this was how the stringet quality drew the salitter of nature together,” Weeks and Bonheim, *Aurora*, 338f., and n. 1.

99 Cf. Peuckert, *Jacob Böhme, Sämtliche Schriften. Mysterium Magnum*, vo. 7, 11: “So dann dasselbige ewige Gut nicht mag ein unempfindlich Wesen seyn, (denn es wäre ihme nicht also selber offenbar) so führet sich in sich selber in ein Lust ein, zu seinem Selbst-Schauen oder Sehen, was es sey, in welcher Lust die Weisheit stehet.”

joyful reflection in the mirror of his "wisdom."¹⁰⁰ How could this very movement then result in "Angst"?¹⁰¹ Because "in the beginning of this world the motion (Bewegnis) is the *Separator*, the dividing force (Scheider)," and because God's "will" takes nature on, "indem er die scharfe Bewegnis empfindet (he becomes aware of the emotion caused by the sharp motion)." Again, Böhme introduces the image of the "turning wheel":

This motion is in itself like a turning wheel; actually there is no such turning but in the qualities (Eigenschaften), for the desire sires in itself, and the motion breaks out of itself; and so the will, being in this anguish (Angst), can neither get inwards nor outwards and yet is drawn both out of itself and into itself. Therefore, his shape remains, wanting to get into itself and out of itself, that is, over itself and under itself, and yet cannot go anywhere, but is an anguish, and the true foundation of hell, and of God's anger, for this anguish is in the dark sharp motion. This is why the sulphuric spirit together with the sulphuric matter arose in the creation of the world, and the sulphuric spirit is the natural life of the earthly and elementary creatures.¹⁰²

100 Cf. Ernst Benz, "Der Prophet Jakob Böhme. Eine Studie über den Typus nachreformatorischen Prophetentums," in *Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse*, ed. Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1959), 80: "Die Sophia, die himmlische Weisheit, ist die erste Gestalt, in der sich der transzendente, verborgene, unfäliche Gott als faßbare Form und als Bild seiner selbst spiegelt und darstellt [...] Sie ist die 'Leiblichkeit Gottes' und 'der Behälter Gottes', [...] 'der Spiegel Gottes', in dem sich Gott selbst betrachtet und in dem sich das Auge Gottes und das erhellte Auge des Menschen begegnen."

101 "Angst" would be a possible German translation (though in modern research "Furcht" is preferred) of one of the nomenclatures of the fifth *sefirah*: *Paḥad* – the kabbalistic concept is related to Gen 31:42, which Martin Luther translated "Schrecken Isaaks," probably inspiring Böhme's "Schrack." Böhme's creative writing includes in such contexts also the term "strenges Recht" ("severe strength" or "judgment", cf. Peuckert, *Jacob Böhme, Sämtliche Schriften. De triplici vita hominis*, vol. 3, 35), which fits very well to another name of the same *sefirah*: *Din*.

102 Peuckert, *Jacob Böhme, Sämtliche Schriften. Clavis*, vol. 9, 88 ("Diese Bewegnis ist in sich gleich einem drehenden Rade; doch nicht, daß ein solch Drehen sey, sondern also ists in den Eigenschaften, denn die Begierde zeucht in sich, und die Bewegnis dringet aus sich; so kann der Wille in solcher Angst, weder in sich noch aus sich, und wird doch aus sich und in sich gezogen, also bleibt seine Gestalt, welche in sich und aus sich will, das ist über sich und unter sich, und kann doch nirgend hin, sondern ist eine Angst und das wahre Fundament der Höllen und Gottes Zorn, dann die Angst stehet in der finstern scharfen Bewegnis. Aus diesem Grunde ist der Schöpfung der Welt der Schwefel-Geist samt der Materia der Sulphurischen Art entstanden, welcher Schwefel-Geist das natürliche Leben der irdischen und elementischen Kreaturen ist").

After reaching the first alchemical point, which – quite less surprisingly than in *Shefa Tal*¹⁰³ – is assigned in his system to sulphur, Böhme continues with a reference, not to Paracelsus, but to the ancient Philosophers, who already knew about the three founding principles of nature – sulphur, mercury, and salt. Yet only a spiritual conception of the three corresponds to the phenomenon of divine (self-)revelation which Böhme describes as a contracting, birth-giving process of desire, as well as a movement breaking out in form-giving separation, and on the other hand – in contrast to this “life of the spirit” – as the life of nature, “which is directed outside itself and proceeds for itself,”¹⁰⁴ forced by fear (“Angst”).

It is evident that, in the beginning, the inner process of the “spiritual life [...] recognized as God,”¹⁰⁵ casts forth “from Himself to Himself,” or “out of itself into itself.”¹⁰⁶ Similar to the kabbalistic sources in Böhme’s time, this process is described as the first motion of the divine “will,”¹⁰⁷ resulting in a shift from being without a place to having found a place,¹⁰⁸ but only as far as revelation is concerned – though indeed this place “within Himself” was necessary for the revelation of the “Ungrund.”¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, this revelation includes the joyful love-play and the release of fear, both being incorporated in God’s Sophia (“wisdom”).¹¹⁰ The first aspect is rooted in Hellenistic wisdom literature, which

103 A striking example of a deliberate amalgamation of alchemical concepts can be found in the fragments of the lost Hebrew treatise *Esh metsaref*, composed probably at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Its author equates on one occasion the first three *Sefirot* with sulphur, mercury, and salt (cf. Peter J. Forshaw, “Cabala Chymica or Chemia Cabalistica – Early Modern Alchemists and Cabala,” *Ambix* 60,4 [2013], 387).

104 Spang, *Gründlicher Bericht*, 802f.

105 Spang, *Gründlicher Bericht*, 798f.

106 In Hebrew there is no neuter, but the phrase *mi-atmo el atmo* may be translated also “from itself into itself,” because it refers to the unknown divinity.

107 There is of course a difference in accentuation: what can be said about *En Sof* in this context is that “the will (appearing as creating force, and in this respect similar to desire) arouses (lit. ascended) to create” (which is necessarily part of his perfection), whereas Böhme’s “Ungrund” is correlated with “Sucht,” derived from the German verb “suchen,” cf. Spang, *Gründlicher Bericht*, 796–801.

108 Cf. Spang, *Gründlicher Bericht*, 798f.: “eine Stätte seiner Wohnung (a place of abode).”

109 The theology of Cusanus, whose concept of *coincidentia oppositorum* fits e.g. to Azriel of Gerona’s terminology concerning *En Sof*, [cf. Gershom Scholem, *Origins of the Kabbalah*, ed. R.J. Zwi Werblowsky (Princeton: UP, 1987), 312f.], may be likened with good reason to Böhme’s theosophy, cf. Schmidt-Biggemann, *Geschichte*, 200–202. But Cusanus’ model of “explicatio” does not do justice to the concept of “contraction” as found in Böhme’s texts, nor to the kabbalistic views of *tsimtsum* (an exception may be the term *qippul*, “folding,” describing God’s “withdrawal” in the context of the theory of *malbush* in the Saruq-school of thought).

110 Cf. Peuckert, *Jacob Böhme, Sämtliche Schriften. De tribus principiis, oder Beschreibung der Drey Principien Göttlichen Wesens*, vol. 2, 192.

found its way into rabbinic theology,¹¹¹ and was adapted by kabbalists.¹¹² The second aspect, Böhme's "separation," has a counterpart in the kabbalistic understanding of limitation as the potential source of evil, being essential for the very beginning of God's self-revelation. Next, the whole universe took shape through the limiting of "withdrawals," one following the other, according to the emanation of the *sefirot*;¹¹³ the concept of *tsimtsum* thus being as inherent in the kabbalistic hierarchy of creation as the hard and bitter quality within Böhme's world. Even the aspect of androgyny, a basic characteristic of the kabbalistic shape of the godhead, is reminiscent of Böhme's images of "wisdom," which gives birth only by means of the intrinsic, male, procreative power.¹¹⁴ On the other hand, Böhme's Sophia is decisively female, recalling some rabbinic metaphors for the *Shekhinah* or the Torah¹¹⁵ that kabbalists identify especially in the third and tenth *sefirah* (*Binah* and *Malkhut*).¹¹⁶ As for the relation between language, letters, and God's name, Böhme could easily adapt the rendering of Alpha and Omega, which are mentioned in Rev 22:13 (referring to Christ as the beginning and end), with the letters A and O (instead of Z), because it was common in bible translations. Böhme considered it important that the vowels A and O figure prominently in God's name *Adonai*, which he called "das Aushauchen des Göttlichen Worts durch die Weisheit" (wisdom's exhaling of the divine word),¹¹⁷ which contains the qualities of nature.¹¹⁸ In kabbalistic

111 Cf. Urbach, *The Sages*, 198f.

112 Cf. Scholem, *Origins*, 92f., and 184f.

113 Cf. *Shefa Tal*, fol. 75b.

114 Cf. Ernst Benz, *Der vollkommene Mensch nach Jakob Böhme* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer), 1937, 23; cf. also Llewellyn, "Kosmogonie," 247 (but one has to add that an alleged gnostic background for "wisdom," when related to Sophia, can be found also in the Book *Bahir*, cf. Scholem, *Origins*, 93).

115 Cf. Urbach, *The Sages*, 37–65.

116 Among those related to Böhme's work are: "spouse," "bride," "mirror," "mother," "earth," "water," "eye," "house," and "vessel." The seventh quality as "receptacle," and on the other hand its unity with the first one, recalls the symbolic explanations of the tenth *sefirah* (which is the seventh of the lower *sefirot*, and corresponds as *atarah*, "diadem," to the supreme "crown") in kabbalistic texts. However, this whole terminology highlights, first and foremost, the figurative potential in Böhme's style. The implications of bride and groom, namely sexual intercourse, are not fully developed. Yet Peuckert maintains at least for Böhme's "middle period" a strong tendency toward "das Sexuelle zielende Gedankengänge," which is definitely an important characteristic of many a kabbalistic work, in particular of the *Zohar* (Peuckert, introduction to *Jacob Böhme, Sämtliche Schriften, De tribus principijs*, vol. 2, 15).

117 Cf. Peuckert, *Jacob Böhme, Sämtliche Schriften. Tabulae Principiorum, oder Tafeln von den Dreyen Principien Göttlicher Offenbarung*, vol. 9, 58.

118 Agreeing with Llewellyn (above n. 10), I would suggest that the "Spirit of God," in Hebrew, *ruah Elohim*, (Gen 1:2; *Sefer Yetsirah* §10), served as a model for Böhme's "Aushauchen." I base this on two things firstly, Khunrath's interpretation of the "breath of God," which

interpretations this name commonly refers to the *sefirah Malkhut*, like the accusative particle *et* (אֶת the first and last letter, symbolizing the Hebrew alphabet as a whole) in Gen 1:1.¹¹⁹ Böhme's explication of the six single letters of the transcribed name, in particular the first one of *Adonai*, "A," which he constructs by repeating the graphic form of the letter "I" (double tilted and horizontal) three times,¹²⁰ sounds like an echo of the elaborated list of divine names as deduced from the spelling of the Tetragramm in Lurianic kabbalah. In such a context, the author of *Shefa Tal* explained the graphic form of the letter *Aleph* as being built of the three letters belonging to the spelling of the letter *Yod* (יוד: *Yod*, *Waw*, and *Dalet*), namely *Waw* (ו) as the backslash (\) in the middle of the *Aleph*, a miniaturized *Dalet* (ד) as the "foot" on the left part of the *Aleph* (to appear like an "L" when rotated 180°), and of course a little letter *Yod* on the right upper half.¹²¹

One of the main departures from kabbalistic symbolism in Böhme's figuration of the female concept is his pointed emphasis on virginity, instead of on a possible turn to the demonic realm, to which the *Shekhinah* is forced by separation from her divine bridegroom (*Tiferet*). Of course, Böhme devotes himself in no way to (kabbalistic) interpretations of Israel being in exile. By contrast, he refers to "King Lucifer," stemming from the seventh quality,¹²² and to the Christian tradition of his fall due to pride.¹²³ The domain of the

gave "all earthly things [...] their forms or *signatura*," being "described as 'Nature itself,'" [Hereward Tilton, "Of Ether and Colloidal Gold: The Making of a Philosophers' Stone," *Esoterica* 9 (2007), 99]; and second, the kabbalistic identification of "nature" with "Elohim" (both words have the same numerical value), referring to the divine powers of judgment [cf. e.g. Cordovero, *Pardes Rimmonim* 17,4]. Yet Cordovero defines wonders, the exceptions in "nature," as rooted in divine love – in contrast to Böhme [cf. Peuckert, *Jacob Böhme, Sämtliche Schriften. De electione gratiae, oder Von der Gnadenwahl*, vol. 6, 203f.]. For the origins of this tradition cf. Moshe Idel, "Deus Sive Natura – the Metamorphosis of a Dictum from Maimonides to Spinoza," *Maimonides and the Science*, ed. Robert S. Cohen and Hillel Levine (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2000), 87–110.

119 Cf. e.g. Zohar I, 15b; the Tetragramm (the name forbidden to be pronounced) is read *Adonai*, but its letters refer to the *sefirah Tiferet*, cf. Matt, *Zohar*, vol. 1, p. 112f.

120 Cf. Peuckert, *Jacob Böhme, Sämtliche Schriften. Tabulae Principiorum*, vol. 9, 59.

121 Cf. *Shefa Tal*, fol. 69c (cf. also fol. 68c).

122 Cf. Weeks and Bonheim, *Aurora*, 471. Häussermann, "Theologia Emblematika," 290, is convinced that Böhme's "Jungfrau der Qual" (in the first answer of *40 Fragen von der Seele*), as the self-reflection of the fierce flash, delivers an exact image of the Gnostic "lower Sophia" and the "demonic *Shekhinah*" that is described in Zohar I, 223a,b. But even if one would concede that Böhme introduced – only here, by the way – a female equivalent to the kabbalistic *sitra ahra* (lit. the "other side"), which is responsible for evil – Böhme's description lacks entirely the horrific aspects of the zoharic she-devil (with scratching nails and terrifying hair), who also appears as "harlot," quite in contrast to the "virgin."

123 Cf. Anderson, *Studien*, 149–187, and also Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann, "Jakob Böhme und die Kabbala," *Christliche Kabbala*, ed. Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann (Ostfildern: Thorbecke, 2003), 173f.

kabbalistic equivalent, Samael, "the servant, who rebelled against his Lord,"¹²⁴ the "evil inclination" and "angel of death," is restricted to the "world of formation" – as for *Shefa Tal*, all three upper worlds are entire holy¹²⁵ – but the final redemption will include the powers of evil, and bring them back to their divine root. The divine name *El* signifies a former angelic existence, as opposed to the other letters in Samael's name, which reveal the meaning "poison" (*sam*).¹²⁶ Apparently, Horowitz took up a well-known statement by the Italian kabbalist Abraham Galante (d. 1560): "There will be no total annihilation of the shells (*qelippot*). The Holy One, He may be blessed, will detach this bitter and hard side from the world, only the good and sweet part will remain, by way of tempering the bitterness of the (evil forces) outside, until they enter the innermost sanctity."¹²⁷ Böhme's soteriology offers no redemption for Lucifer himself, though the implications of his divine origin suggest such a possibility. At least Böhme's terminology concerning the evil forces is once more in line with kabbalistic concepts like those in *Shefa Tal*: they are characterized by bitterness and severity, the material shell, the poison of sin, and death.

4 Epilogue

No single study can solve the riddle of Jacob Böhme's sources, in particular when it comes to how Jewish kabbalistic concepts and beliefs entered Böhme's thought. The wide range of kabbalistic schools, systems, and authors complicate such a pursuit. For this reason, an analysis of Böhme's writings

¹²⁴ Cf. Sack, *Shomer ha-Pardes*, p. 213; Samael seduces men to rebel against God as he did. The potential of the evil inclination is rooted in the feminine aspect of the divine, i.e. especially the third, fifth, and tenth *sefirah* (while the third refers to the Tetragramm vocalized as *Elohim* [e.g. Dtn 3:24], the fifth is named *Elohim*, which is understood as "judge" or "master of all forces," and the last *sefirah* – also correlated to *Elohim* – is called *Adonai*, "Lord," which is how the Tetragramm is commonly read).

¹²⁵ Cf. Sack, *Shomer ha-Pardes*, 212f. Cf. also Joseph Dan, "No Evil Descends From Heaven': Sixteenth-Century Jewish Concepts of Evil," *Jewish Mysticism: The Modern Period* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1999), vol. 3, 329–348. As for Cordovero, Dan maintains that evil does not exist in the divine realm, but only in the material world, by way of "the force of the nature of creation" (335). Dan emphasizes that a divine source for evil cannot even be postulated (340); however, in his popular ethical treatise, "Palmtree of Deborah," Cordovero advocates the possibility of the return of (temporary) earthly evil into the good of the divine realm (342f.). For a short outline of other kabbalistic views on the origin and destiny of evil, see Moshe Hallamish, *An Introduction to the Kabbalah*, trans. Rurh Bar-Ilan and Ora Wiskind-Elper (New York: UP, 1999) 167–182.

¹²⁶ Cf. *Shefa Tal*, fol. 76b.

¹²⁷ Cf. the Hebrew text quoted by Sack, *Shomer ha-Pardes*, 219; in the following, Galante exemplifies this by the two parts constituting the name Samael: the poison (*sam*) will be disabled from his divine part (*el*).

should not be restricted to a search for kabbalistic “topoi.” The crucial question should be rather how kabbalistic issues were communicated in Böhme’s time. The kabbalistic works in print during Böhme’s lifetime can serve as a starting point for such an investigation, because they document the wide reception of certain concepts and the interest in them. Shabbtai Sheftel Horowitz’ *Shefa Tal* is a historically significant example.¹²⁸ His approach includes the Lurianic feature of *tsimtsum*, yet in a basically Cordoveran perspective. Though written for the traditionally educated Jewish reader, core topics – especially when worded memorably – may have reached a broader audience. It is reasonable to assume that material in these texts was imparted, learnt, and communicated, possibly in conversations with non-Jews. However, until researchers have reconstructed more details of Jacob Böhme’s networks, his creative appropriations of such oral information remain the only available evidence. The bottleneck of Christian esoteric-kabbalistic traditions alone does not suffice, not even for Böhme’s very first script, *Aurora*. Since it is not difficult to imagine Böhme exchanging views with like-minded people as far as Latin sources are concerned,¹²⁹ his dialog with partners acquainted with Jewish mysticism should be regarded in a similar way, even if we lack concrete evidence of such discussions. Böhme’s texts are the result of an apprehension of the divinity at a time plagued by religious warfare, the persecution of alleged heresy, and the challenges of new scientific discoveries. Inspired by this atmosphere, Böhme may have heard Jewish kabbalistic ideas discussed, not only in private conversations with Balthasar Walther, but with others. These ideas may have become mixed with yet other ideas in non-systematic ways – a theory that could help to explain Böhme’s creative writing in the symbolic (and at times exhausting) style of Hebrew kabbalistic works, which is quite different from the treatises of Christian kabbalists. Therefore, a work like *Shefa Tal* can illustrate the contemporary Jewish line of thought, not in order to postulate dependency, but just to record how and to what extent Böhme’s German concepts are related by terminology and figuration. The outcome of this is neither a Jewish kabbalah nor a Christian one, but the kabbalah of Jacob Böhme.

128 *Shefa Tal* remained an exceptional kabbalistic book. Marvin J. Heller, *The Seventeenth Century Hebrew Book: An Abridged Thesaurus* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), vol. 1, 295, even calls it a “popular introductory work,” which was reprinted several times.

129 Cf. Ariel Hessayon, “‘The Teutonicks Writings’: Translating Jacob Boehme into English and Welsh,” *Esoterica* 9 (2007), 134.

Jacob Böhme, Johannes Staricius (ca. 1580–??), and the Culture of Dissent

Andrew Weeks

The classic overview of Jacob Böhme's age is R.J.W. Evans' *Rudolf II and His World*, an intellectual history of Bohemia and its crown lands during the reign of the Hapsburg emperor and Bohemian king who resided in Prague. Since the Rudolfine reign (1576–1612) coincided with the formative first thirty-six years of Böhme's life, the shoemaker-mystic can be understood as the lowliest of many like-minded seekers whose scattered cohorts included artists, astronomers, alchemists, kabbalists, physicians, the learned, members of the nobility, and even the emperor himself, whom Evans imagines as a figure in Jan Amos Comenius' allegory of *The Labyrinth of the World and the Paradise of the Heart* (1631). Perturbed by confessional conflicts and the disunity they engendered, writes Evans, "Received religion was Rudolf's Labyrinth, and his attempts to penetrate through it to spiritual security, form part of an international pattern in the later sixteenth century."¹ Vexed by irreconcilable religious disputes, troubled spirits engaged in speculation in order to exit the labyrinths of their world. Since even the most solemn concerns were echoed in fashion and artifice, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish seriousness from play. The allure of mystery made concealment an attractive investment, the puzzle a popular yet portentous exercise. *Atalanta Fugiens* (1618), the "multimedia book" (Peter Forshaw) of fifty emblems by the physician, alchemist, composer, and erstwhile court councilor of Rudolf II, Michael Maier, captures the spirit with its artistic virtuosity and somber insinuations. Maier incorporated alchemy, ancient myth, astronomy, geometry, music, bestiary, and colors into what might now seem an erudite parlor game. Modern readers more readily recognize scientific purpose in another puzzle project. The hypothesis of Johannes Kepler's *Mysterium Cosmographicum* (1596) would decipher the solar system as a compilation of the five perfect solid figures from Plato's *Timaios*.

This was an age with a distinctive culture for which we have no adequate name. Terms such as *Mannerism* or *Baroque* suffer from disciplinary

¹ R.J.W. Evans, *Rudolf II and His World: A Study in Intellectual History 1576–1612* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973), 83.

parochialism and fail to do justice to the complete spectrum of impulses and beliefs that interests us here. The coherent aspects of the Rudolfine Age are distorted when one takes the anachronistic approach of reclaiming Kepler for the Enlightenment and consigning Maier or Böhme to archaic obscurity. Emblems, rebuses, symbols, enigmas, and conspiracies conditioned the stirrings which Frances A. Yates called *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*. The *Zeitgeist* intensified the appeal of the *Theophrastia Sancta* which Carlos Gilly linked to the Tirolian Adam Haslmayr and his network of sympathizers.² It is not easy to offer a common denominator for an age so universal in its aspirations and so peculiarly devoted to the quest for a secret essence of things which was supposed to resolve all mysteries at once. The Rudolfine Age is enigmatic to us because it took so seriously its own capacity to resolve the coordinated mysteries of all being.

Böhme was thus only one voice in the greater chorus discordantly crying out for harmony. As the humblest on a scale of speculative spirits extending from the emperor through humanists and nobles down to his person, he could nonetheless qualify as the last made first by the miracle of his divine inspiration. In order to clarify his relation to the culture of his period, we do well to consider the neglected figure of Johannes Staricius. Much is obscure about him, but we do know that he frequented similar circles and professed the same principles as the former shoemaker who was a few years senior yet beneath the station of a man of refinement, a professed poet laureate to whom a doctor's title is ascribed. The more audacious and better educated – yet less talented – Staricius propagated the same currents of dissent embodied in Paracelsus, Weigel, and the mystical tradition, though without the flair and originality of his humble contemporary. Above all, he wrote or published writings thematically related to Böhme's, yet did so slightly beforehand in the same era and region. If as a publicist Staricius was bold and persistent, as a writer he was flamboyant, lacking in subtlety, and incapable of adhering to a subterfuge or remaining faithful as an imitator. He comes across as an impatient Young Turk in an era of rapid and perilous transition. What counts most for us is that by tipping his cards, he allows us to compare the authorial strategies of two kindred players in the same deeply serious intellectual game of their age. It is certain that by 1624 the two men were in contact, and likely that they knew of one another earlier. The genesis of their acquaintance and degree of their interaction needs clarification.

2 Carlos Gilly, *Adam Haslmayr: Der erste Verkünder der Manifeste der Rosenkreuzer*. Pimander: Texts and Studies published by the Bibliotheca Hermetica (Amsterdam: In de Pelikaan, 1994).

Helmut Möller, an ethnographer and student of Will Erich Peuckert, has compiled much of the information available on Staricius.³ As the son of a land-owning burgher and a professor's daughter, he immatriculated at the University of Wittenberg in 1599. Counting back from this date, Möller estimates his birth year around 1580 (*HM* 22–23). A fire that destroyed the *Rathaus* of his birthplace, Schkeuditz near Leipzig, makes it difficult to obtain more exact information. Nothing is known about his time as a student in Wittenberg. In 1607, he registered at the University of Rostock, but the outcome of his studies there is again unknown (*HM* 24).

Staricius next entered the record as a publicist with eclectic interests. In 1609, he published a collection of *Lieder* under his own name. Möller has established that several of its songs were from the work of the English composer Thomas Morley, who died in 1602. Möller also notes that one of the appropriated songs had been plagiarized in turn by Morley from an Italian composer (*HM* 30). Staricius also claimed to be a court organist and to hold the title of *poeta coronatus*. A second sensationalistic publication of the year 1615 is called *HeldenSchatz* or *Treasury of Heroes*. It is a compendium of natural magic for martial purposes. It instructs the reader on how to make one's opponent's rapier shatter; how to treat wounds and enhance one's martial strength (*HM* 14–18). Its tricks were ridiculed by some at the time, though not by all. Möller takes sardonic pleasure in René Descartes' having credulously repeated one of the anecdotes from the *HeldenSchatz* in 1618: a drum covered with sheep's hide falls mute when another covered with wolf's hide resounds (*HM* 5). The Young Turk appears to match the profile of an impetuous young opportunist of the kind that thrives on chaos and great expectations. But this is hardly his whole story. A second, more serious profile overshadows the first.

Before writing off Staricius as an opportunistic war profiteer, we need to recall the status of martial prowess in his time, its association with the nobility, and the variety of wars and conflicts, including the ever-present threat of Ottoman aggression. We also need to consider another worldly publication which points toward a different set of interests which were as sober and civic-minded as the *HeldenSchatz* appears naively opportunistic. In 1618, Staricius, who was by now in his mid to late thirties, published a short pamphlet entitled *Discursus Politicus, Oder Rätliches Bedencken Von der notwendigen und wichtigen Frag/ und Bescheid: Ob es Heylsam unnd nutzlich sey im heiligen Römischen Reich Teutscher Nation / Uniones und Bündnussen auffzurichten/ Einzugehen unnd zuschlissen*. It bears the initials: I.S.N.P.P.C. This was his

3 Helmut Möller, *Staricius und sein HeldenSchatz: Episoden eines Akademikerlebens* (Göttingen: Selbstverlag, 2003). Cited hereafter as *HM* by page.

standard abbreviation for *Johannes Staricius, Notarius Publicus et Poeta Coronatus*. The twenty-page pamphlet condemns both the Catholic and Protestant military-political unions for threatening the Holy Roman Empire with civil war. It calls for perpetuating the sixty-year religious peace and unity of the empire. The concerns are secular and in a sense conservative. The *Discursus* attempts to undertake a sober assessment of the European situation. It harmonizes with other voices of the time in warning against religious war and in bemoaning the destruction it might cause. Other warning voices were those of Kepler, Matthias Bernegger, and Martin Opitz.

In addition to his secular productions, a larger set of daring religious ones made Staricius relevant as an ally or rival to Böhme and his circle.⁴ I have argued elsewhere that among Böhme's formative influences were the theology

4 The following is a bibliography of works by Weigel or edited by Staricius under his name cited in this paper:

Valentin Weigel. [GG] *Der güldene Griff: alle Ding ohne Irrthumb zu erkennen, vielen Hochgelährten unbekandt, und doch allen Menschen nothwendig zu wissen*. Halle: Christopherus Bismarck for J. Krusicke, 1613.

[AN] *Vom Alten vnd Newen Jerusalem Das ist, Das alle Gleubige Beydes im Alten vnd Newen Testament mit jhren Füßen stehen müssen in den Thoren Jerusalem, das ist in der Stadt Gottes wandeln vnnnd nicht darneben*. Durch M[agister]. V[alentin]. VV[eigel]. Halle: Krusicke, 1619

[DT] *Dritter Theil Deß GNÖTHI SEAVTON oder COGNOSCE TEIPSUM genandt*. Newstadt, 1618.

[MT] *Moise tabernaculum cum suis tribus partibus Zum [Gnōthi seauton] Führende, Ausz Rechten Apostolischen Fundament tractirt vnnnd erkleret [sic] Durch M. Valentinum VVeigelium*. Newstatt, J. Knuber 1618.

[KB] *Kurtzer Bericht Vom Wege vnd Weise alle Ding zuerkennen, Das die Erkenntnüss oder das Vrtheil herkomme von dem Vrtheiler vnd Erkennen, vnd nicht von deme das da gevrtheilet oder erkandt wird, Vnd wie der Glaube ausz dem Ge- [sic] Gehör komme, Beschrieben durch M. Valentinum Weigelium*. Newenstadt, J. Knuber 1618.

[LD] *Libellus disputatorius. Das ist Ein Disputation-Büchlein, Spöttlicher Weyse Schamroth zu machen, vnd zu widerlegen alle Disputanten vnd gelehrten, die wider dasz Liecht der Natur Studieren, vnd de vero modo cognoscendi nichts wissen. Beschriben durch M. Valentinum Weigelium*. Newenstadt, J. Knuber 1618.

[BM] *De bono et malo in homine. Das Gott allein gut sey, Creatur aber gutes vnd böses in jhr trage, vnd wie Gott alle ding beschliesse Böses vnd Gutes. Beschrieben Durch M[agister]. V[alentin]. VV[eigel]. [Halle, Krusicke?] 1619.*

[TW] *Theologia VVeigelij. Das ist: Offentliche Glaubens Bekändtnüss desz Weyland Ehrwürdigen ... M[agistri]. Valentini Weigelij ... schriftlichen verfasst vnd hinterlassen*. Newstatt, J. Knuber 1618.

[PL] *Philosophia de Limbo, Æterno Perpetuoque Homine Novo Secvnda Creationis ex Iesu Christo DEI Filio. Deß Edlen / Hoch=thewren Philosophi ter maximi vnnnd beyder Liechter Naturae & Gratiae getrewen Doctoris Aurelij Philippi Theophrasti ab Hohenhaim / utriusque Medicinae facillè Principis Allen Studiosis Luminum Gratiae & Naturae zu nutz vnd gutem publicirt Durch Joannem Staricium, Lips. Misn. Notar. Publ. & Poëtam Coronatum*. Magdeburg: Johan [sic] Francken, 1618.

and nature philosophy of Paracelsus (1493 or 1494–1541)⁵ and the inner spiritual dynamic of Valentin Weigel (1533–1588).⁶ Both figures were experiencing a revival. Works by Paracelsus were studied and edited in and around Görlitz. Valentin Weigel had died without publishing anything but a single funeral eulogy. From 1609 on, writings either by him or attributed to him began appearing in print. We have only limited information about the motives and individuals behind this. Weigel's sons, his pastoral successor Benedikt Biedermann, and his erstwhile cantor Christoph Weickhart are known or thought to have copied, imitated, and circulated authentic as well as inauthentic writings under Weigel's name. We know that from 1609 on a rising wave of Weigelian and Paracelsian publications appeared. It increased until 1618, then dropped sharply in 1619. Staricius soon emerged as a linchpin in this operation. The sequence of publications and real or fictitious places and publishers has been reconstructed by Horst Pfefferl:⁷

1609	Weigel. <i>De vita beata</i>	Halle. Erasmus Hynitz
1612	Weigel. <i>Ein schön Gebetbüchlein</i>	Halle. Christophorus Bißmarck (in Verlegung Joachim Krusicke)
1613	Weigel. <i>Vom Ort der Welt</i> (2 printings)	Halle. Christophorus Bißmarck (in Verlegung Joachim Krusicken)
	Weigel. <i>Der güldene Griff</i>	Halle. Christophorus Bißmarck (in Verlegung Joachim Krusicke)
1614	Weigel. <i>Dialogus de Christianismo</i>	Halle.
1614/15	Weigel. <i>Vom Ort der Welt</i>	Halle.
1615	Weigel. <i>Gnothi seauton</i>	Newenstatt
1616	Weigel. <i>Der güldene Griff</i> (2 printings)	Newenstatt
1616	Weigel. <i>Dialogus de Christianismo</i>	Newenstatt
1616	Weigel. <i>Informatorium</i>	Newenstatt
1617	Weigel. <i>Ein schön Gebetbüchlein</i>	Newenstatt
1617	Weigel. <i>Kirchen- oder Hauspostille</i>	Newenstatt

5 See Jacob Boehme, *Aurora (Morgen Röte im auffgang, 1612) and Fundamental Report (Gründlicher Bericht, Mysterium Pansophicum, 1620)*, ed. and trans. Andrew Weeks and Günter Bonheim (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 32–37.

6 See Weeks, *Aurora* (2013), 143, 179, 213, 733, 775, 777.

7 Horst Pfefferl, *Die Überlieferung der Schriften Valentin Weigels (Teildruck)*. Inaugural-Dissertation, Marburg/Lahn, 1991.

- 1618 This year saw the publication of no fewer than eighteen “Weigelian” works of which six (*Ein schön Gebetbüchlein*, *Gnothi seauton*, *Dialogus de Christianismo*, *Soli Deo Gloria*, *Kirchen- oder Hauspostille*, and *Zwei schöne Büchlein*) were largely authentic. Pfefferl has evaluated the remainder as compilations or forgeries. From 1615 through 1618, all works either claimed to originate in the unknown city of Newenstadt or no place was given.

The Weigelian publications mark an antiwar counterpoint set against the gradually approaching hostilities. The eventful decade from 1609 to 1619 saw the founding and consolidation of the Protestant and Catholic alliances against which Staricius warned in his *Discursus Politicus*. Worsening crises led to the outbreak of the Thirty Years’ War. This was the decade of the Rosicrucian writings that burst onto the scene between 1614 and 1616, and of a new subversive interest in Paracelsian theology affiliated with *Theophrastia Sancta*. Johann Arndt’s *Four Books of True Christianity* appeared in print. There were no less sensational developments in Kabbalah, alchemy, and astronomy as well.

Böhme and Staricius were borne along on this tidal current. Both imagined that they could affect or calm it. After 1613, the silenced author of *Morgen Röte im auffgang* passed through a period of incubation followed by his mature work between 1618 and 1624. We can gauge his development by comparing his early and later writings. We know less about Staricius, but based on what little we do know, we can infer a change of orientation for him as well. Both the *echt* and *unecht* Weigelian works he published are antiauthoritarian and antiwar. If there was a certain shift in his outlook from his martial-spirited and sensationalist *HeldenSchatz* of 1615, the change of heart coincided with a fervent embrace of the antiauthoritarian spirit of Weigel. In 1618, we find him defending the competence of the peasant or *Handwerker* in matters of faith and conscience and protesting confessional disputes and war (LD 7, 36–37).⁸ Much may remain uncertain about his motives in publishing Weigel; but we do know that in principle he spoke for the layperson and against the conflict-engendering clergy. The problem for dissenting intellectuals of the period was how to do so effectively and authoritatively.

The initial center for the Weigelian publications was Halle. The first five listed works appeared there, printed by Christophorus Bißmarck for Joachim Krusicken. From 1615 on, the place of publication was anonymous, designated as Newenstadt. Although it is possible that the location of publication was

8 See note four for the abbreviations of Weigelian works cited.

shifted to a real Neustadt an der Weinstraße, according to Penman, it is more likely that the name is a decoy, referring to a “new city,” the locus of reform, or even the New Jerusalem.

The authentic and inauthentic books share the same physical features. In fact, the works published in 1618 look rather like a planned series. The title pages are bordered by the same vine-like vignette or bead-like ornament and often by both. The same beaded line also appeared on the title page of *Discursus Politicus*. The print type is usually, though not always, indistinguishable. The Weigelian works have this same appearance, as does the first published Paracelsian theological work, *Philosophia de Limbo*, which came out in 1618 but bore the imprint of Johann Francke, Magdeburg. *Philosophia de Limbo* was extensively prefaced by Staricius. He evidently had connections and perhaps employment prospects in Magdeburg. Several dedications are to church officials or nobles of the city.⁹ The dedications look like the tactic of an employment seeker. He may or may not have been naïve in supposing that the content of

9 Here is an overview of the dedications in the pseudo-Weigelian writings prefaced by Staricius:

1. *Dritter Theil Deß GNOTHI SEAVTON* (1618):
 - a. Wohlgelehrten Herrn Georgio Possio Lemgovienzi, I.V. Candidato.
2. *Vom Wege vnd Weise alle Ding zu erkennen* (1618):
 - a. Joachim von LVOERITZ/ Stiffts S. Sebastiani in Magdeburgk / wohlverordneten Decano
 - b. Adamo von Döberitz
 - c. Joachim Bernhardt von Tannenbergk Stiffts S. Nicolai, dasselbsten Canonici, meinen Herrn, Patronen und Förderern
3. *Moise Tabernaculum* (1618) ist gewidmet:
 - a. Herrn Christoff von Hünicke /
 - b. Dem Dechant Wolfgang SpitzNaß /
 - c. Camerario Christoff von Ghören / vnd
 - d. Thesaurario Joachim Bernhardt von Rohr Scholastico vnd Probstn S. Nicolai Stifft Kirchen. Der Primat ErztBischofflichen Kirchen zu Magdeburg Praelaten vnnd Domherren, meinen Gnädigen Herren / großgünstigen Patronen vnd mächtigen Förderern.
4. *Libellus Disputatorius* (1618):
 - a. Conrado von Börstell / Fürstlichen Anhaltischen geheim Landt : vnd Cammer=Rath / auch Ober Hauptmann Bernbürgischen Theilß / vnd Erbesessen zu Gusten vnd Flatzkaw etc.
 - b. dem wol Edlen / Gestrengen vnd Ehrenvesten Levin von Börstel / Fürstlichen Anhaltischen Landt Rath / etc.
 - c. Ernesto von Börstelln ... Gebrüdern vnd respective Erbsassen zu Wester Egeln / etc.

According to Birthe von Nieden of the Forschungsstelle für Personalschriften in Marburg: „Adam von Döberitz war Herr auf Liezau und Dom-Dechant zu Brandenburg und verheiratet mit Maria Magdalena von Büнау. Wolfgang von Spitznaß war ‚Subsenior und Camerarius der PrimatErtzBischöfflichen Kirchen zu Magdeburg‘ und ‚Erbseßesse uff Nedelitz unnd Brachwitz,‘ außerdem Domherr in Magdeburg. Er starb am 24. Februar 1625 und wurde am 5. April in der Domkirche in Magdeburg beigesetzt. Verheiratet war er mit Maria Elisabeth von Wurmb.“

the dedicated works would endear him to established figures. Others in his time regarded the drift toward religious war with foreboding.

Because Staricius attributed inauthentic works to Weigel, there is an impulse to discount his importance or to regard his activities as an inconsequential quirk. To view him in this way is to take a very narrow view of his effect. Even if we accept every coincidence and pretention that might limit his role, we are left with the prefaces bearing his initials as *prima facie* evidence that he was a serious player in the dissemination of Weigel and Paracelsus during the second decade of the seventeenth century. If Paracelsus and Weigel are important authors, we can hardly disdain the man who spread knowledge of their work for doing so at a key juncture. From his prefaces in the disputed Weigelian or Paracelsian works, we can evaluate his understanding of authors whose writings are relevant to Böhme's. Staricius was a less inspired, less original *Doppelgänger* of Böhme, but as a publicist of the print medium, he was certainly more audacious than the Görlitzer. With singular determination, Staricius made it his mission to disseminate and interpret writings of Paracelsus and Weigel, a precondition for Böhme's synthesis. Whether Staricius was a conduit, an ally, an influence, or a competitor, his publishing endeavors remain of interest in themselves. They also flesh out the milieu in which Böhme lived and perhaps even reveal promptings that elicited some of his writings.

The first two works bearing Staricius' mark at the end of their prefaces are dated January 20, 1618, and entitled *Libellus Disputatorius* and *Kurtzer Bericht vom Wege und Weise alle Ding zuerkennen*. The Defenestration of Prague took place on May 23, four months later; however, by all accounts this was a period of sectarian polarization fomented not least of all by the Reformation Jubilee of 1617. This widely celebrated anniversary inspired dangerous rhetoric on both sides of the confessional divide.¹⁰

After a preface that insists that the two lights of nature and grace are united in the human being, the *Libellus Disputatorius* transitions from its initial

10 See Johannes Burkhardt, *Das Reformationsjahrhundert. Deutsche Geschichte zwischen Medienrevolution und Institutionsbildung (1517–1617)* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2002), 200. On the celebratory flurry of broadsheets and publications marking the first centenary of Luther's 95 Theses in 1617, Burkhardt comments, „Ungewollt haben solche Blätter ... sogar selbst die Kriegsbereitschaft erhöht.“ In his *Der Dreißigjährige Krieg* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1992), 130, Burkhardt spells this thesis out with greater emphasis. The initiation of hostilities in 1618 was preceded by a battle of commemorations in 1617, on the Protestant side celebrating the 95 Theses and on the Catholic side a papal crusade against heresies: „Der ‚geistige Raufhandel‘ um das Jubiläum ... hat offenkundig auf beiden Seiten vorhandene Animositäten und Aggressionen gebündelt, die konfessionell motivierte Kampfbereitschaft erhöht und eine konfessionelle Lesart der ersten Kriegssphase begünstigt.“

conciliatory note to ever sharper and more pointed diatribes against the learned, the public parties in litigation, and the advocates of war. The preface begins by citing Plato's *Timaios* to the effect that the natural world is the epistolary message of God the Father to humankind. Böhme's *Aurora* had pursued roughly the same synthesis by seeking a common "root" of philosophy, astronomy, and theology, as its subtitle announced, and he had likewise done so in order to oppose the quarreling and warmongering of the theologians.

According to the preface of the *Libellus Disputatorius*, the two lights of nature and grace are so firmly fixed and united in us, associated with the creator word or *Fiat* and the incarnate Word of the Son, that the simple student of truth need only look within (das freylich der Einfältige Studiosus veritatis, in sich selbstens Gottes wunderhand leichtsamb vermercken mag – LD Aij^r). Böhme takes the same approach of looking within. *Von den Drey Principien Göttliches Wesens* of 1619 is much richer and subtler than the *Libellus*; but it is written in a kindred spirit. The subsequent writings, notably *Viertzig Fragen von der Seelen* (*Forty Questions on the Soul*), are even more introspective. The "wise heathens," as both authors call the pagan philosophers, had understood nature but not the true God. The convergence of diverse sources of knowledge – of nature, Scripture, and creature or of inner and outer – intends to presage and justify the reconciliation of warring parties and creeds.

At the outset of the *Libellus Disputatorius*, Weigel is introduced as the opponent of all the abuse, ambition, selfishness, and arrogance embodied in the distorters of Scripture (LD *Vorrede vi*). The work begins with what appears very much like an authentic Weigelian discourse: knowledge does not come from the book but rather from human understanding. Armed with this insight, a simple unlearned fellow can outsmart the scholars and false teachers of Scripture. This was Weigel's signature argument. It would have provided a militant justification for Böhme's existence as an author. Roughly the first third of the *Libellus Disputatorius* reads not at all unlike Weigel.

The second third is less convincing. The topical focus turns to alchemy and medicine. These were of scant interest to Weigel. Yet if this middle section is an emendation, it is a perceptive one in the spirit of Weigel's appropriation of Paracelsus documented by Pfefferl.¹¹ Just as the truth lies within us, so do, by implication, healing powers lie within the medicinal herbs and metals (LD 21–22). The *Libellus* formulates a Weigelian critique of an authoritarian education that imparts lessons without true understanding. It amends and simplifies Weigel's critique of jurisprudence by resorting to analogy. Just as the prophets

11 See Horst Pfefferl, „Valentin Weigel und Paracelsus,“ in *Paracelsus und sein dämonengläubiges Jahrhundert*, Salzburger Beiträge zur Paracelsusforschung, Folge 26 (1988), 77–95.

must be interpreted through the Gospel, civil law must be interpreted through Christ.

The final third of the *Libellus* makes no pretense of being by Weigel. He is cited in the third person and recommended for further reading. The concluding sections concentrate the exposition into a set of principles applicable to the immediate present. The first (*De Litigando in Foro*) is against litigation or quarreling over temporal goods; the second (*De non gerendis bellis*) against war, especially when it is speciously justified by Old Testament precedent. Finally, there are some dicta challenging the authority of magistrates in matters of war and defending the principle of *imitatio Christi*.

The tract ends, true to the spirit of the time, with a riddle. If Adam's fall from grace has *harmed* all posterity, will Adam's faith invested in the seed of woman (den verheissenen Weibes Samen), therefore *assist* all posterity? As in Böhme, the symbol of the promised "seed of woman" is said to trod on and crush the head of the serpent in Genesis 3:15¹² (LD 45). The woman and her seed, who is the *Schlangen-Treter* or enemy of the serpent, ameliorate the finality of the loss of grace by intimating an eternally present figure of Christ and by ascribing an exalted role to woman. The mercy embodied in Christ is always present, not least in woman. The role of woman with respect to the *Schlangen-Treter* blossoms for Böhme in the Noble Virgin of Divine Wisdom, the alchemical "tincture," the "lily," the "pearl," as well as other symbols of the eternal love that ameliorates the anger of God.¹³ In Böhme, these riddles reward a knowledge of biblical lore. The multiplication of symbols for the same referent suggests that behind the many the divine One always lies concealed, which is to say that if only it were recognized as such, it might reconcile all disunity and dispute. The *Libellus Disputatorius* is a thoroughly contentious work written against contention. As its title makes clear, it is a manual for disputing with disputants. It is in essence a polemic against authoritarianism. It is also an appeal to reconcile all the admissible sources of authority. Moreover, it extends its

12 [God says in the Luther Bible]: "Vnd Jch will Feindschaft setzen zwischen Dir vnd dem Weibe / vnd zwischen deinem Samen vnd jrem Samen / Der selb sol dir den Kopff zutretten / Vnd Du wirst Jn in die Versen stechen."

13 See Register über alle Theosophischen Schriften Jacob Böhm's, in vol. 11, Jacob Böhme, *Sämtliche Schriften. Faksimile-Neudruck der Ausgabe von 1730 in elf Bänden*, ed. Will-Erich Peucert (Stuttgart: Frommanns Verlag, 1960), 313 (Weibes-Same), 316–317 (Schlangen-Treter). See also Böhme, *Von den drey Principien Göttliches Wesens in Schriften*, vol. 2, 344–345 ("Da ist das Wort oder der Schlangen-Treter im neuen wider-gebornen Element in Habels Seele m *Centro* ... und hat der Schlangen (das ist dem Reich der Grimmigkeit) den Kopf seiner Macht zertreten ... und der armen Seelen angezündetes Feuer in der Liebe ersticket; und ist alhier das erste Werck versucht worden, wie es denn GOTT Adam und Hevā also verhieß").

implicit legitimation to the lowliest truth-seeker of the time. There is no strong evidence, however, that it was a source for Böhme's work prior to their alleged encounter or afterward; or that Böhme influenced Staricius. An assumption that there was no direct influence only suggests that their shared themes must have been in widespread currency.

A second, shorter Wegelian extract is dated January 20: *Kurtzer Bericht vom Wege und Weise alle Ding zuerkennen*. It is dry and condensed. Of its 26 pages, six are title and preface. Staricius flaunts learned anecdotes from the history of ancient philosophy in order to demonstrate that worldly wisdom is foolish. There is an apparent contradiction between this and the above-mentioned preface extolling ancient wisdom; but the contradiction is relative insofar as that wisdom had not been entirely worldly. It had been biblically sanctioned by a reference to Romans 1:19.

What seems quite obvious in the preface by Staricius is his patent employment-seeking. The work characterizes itself as, "a small sign of my willing inclination to serve, observe, and display cordial affection ... requesting that it be gratefully accepted and that I may be commanded at any time to assiduous services" (ein klein Zeichen meiner Dienstbegierigen Inclination, observantz vnnd Hertzens Affection ... bittend / solches großgünstig auff vnd anzunehmen / vnd mich denselben zu geflissenen Diensten jederzeit befohlen zu seyn – KB *Vorrede*). We can call this opportunism or naiveté if we like. Adam Haslmayr for one was no less naïve in proffering a Rosicrucian-Paracelsian defense to Arch Duke Maximilian of Tirol, an error that cost him four and a half years as a galley slave.¹⁴

Two more of the Weigelian titles of 1618 were signed by Staricius: the so-called *Dritter Theil deß Gnothi seauton* and *Moise Tabernaculum*. Both display dedications and lengthy signed prefaces. The second invokes the symbolic image of the three-part tabernacle which has a sacred correspondence to the triune structures of the natural and human worlds (MT Biiij^v), a notion essential for Paracelsus, Weigel, and Böhme, as well as Staricius.

The *Dritter Theil deß Gnothi seauton* begins by elevating self-knowledge to the dignity of the oldest knowledge of all, and therefore the deepest and truest: "All wise people from the beginning of the world have known nothing but themselves" (Alle Weisen von Anfang der Welt / haben nichts anders

¹⁴ See Gilly, *Haslmayr*: The Tirolian responded on much the same authority as Staricius by rejecting all sects, Protestant and Catholic, in favor of Paracelsian-Rosicrucian true Christian faith, a response to the confessional quarreling („Gezenknus“) of the period (40). Haslmayr's proffering of his defence either testifies to his naivete, or to the potential appeal of esoteric and alchemical theories to rulers such as Rudolf or Maximilian.

gestudiret vnnd erkandt / als nur sich selber – DT Aij^v). This self-knowledge, as the world's oldest, knew the tripartite human nature and the two lights of nature and of grace. It attained both to heavenly and earthly wisdom. Accordingly, the tract urges the publication of Paracelsus' theological writings (DT 7). One might expect it to recognize the knowledge of pristine Adam as well; but after the apotheosis of self-knowledge which conforms to Böhme's evolving thought in 1618, the tract abruptly turns to Paul Lautensack's prophecies and the numerological disquisition on the Apocalypse by a certain Petrus Loriottus. According to the *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, this was the name of a mid-sixteenth-century law professor in Leipzig who had tried to remain neutral between Lutherans and Calvinists but had fallen into "*monstrosas in Theologia opiniones*" (evidently chiliastic ones) and then returned to his native France.¹⁵

Tract after pseudo-Weigelian tract, here are the salient themes with respect to which Staricius and Böhme coincided with one another and with Weigel: 1. The *Libellus Disputatorius* (dated 20 January 1618) recognizes the two lights (zwey Liechter – LD 12, 14) and defends the common, unlearned man (der gemeine Mann oder Bawer – LD 7) against the universities (LD 14) with their culture of conflict (rechten / zancken / hadern / kriegern – LD 36–37). 2. The *Kurtzer Bericht Vom Wege vnd Weise alle Ding zuerkennen* (also dated 20 January 1618) assigns blame to the learned clergy for having caused the present crisis by darkening the inner testimony (wie eine schreckliche Verführung ist vnter den Gelehrten der Theologen / daß sie vns das jnnere Zeugnuß also verdunckeln – KB, unnumbered p. 18). 3. *Vom Alten vnd Newen Jerusalem* (1618) is against war and quarreling. It confirms that eternity is concealed in time and time in eternity, heaven in earth and earth in heaven (die Ewigkeit ist in der Zeit / vnnd die Zeit in der Ewigkeit / der Himmel ist in der Erden / vnd die Erde im Himmel / einer liegt im andern verborgen – ANJ Aij^v) and that the old creature remains in the new one, as darkness within light (Die Alte Creatur bleibt in der Newen / wie ein Finsterniß im Liecht – ANJ Aij^r). 4. *Moise tabernaculum cum suis tribus partibus* (1618) asserts that the entire universe is threefold, just as the human being is body, soul, and spirit, with each dwelling in the other (das gantze Vniuersum ist dreyfach ... Also ist auch der Mensch dreyfach / Leib / Seele/ Geist / vnd wohnet je eines im andern – MT Bii^j^v). 5. The *Dritter Theil Deß Gnothi Seavton* (1618) confirms a tripartite anthropology in the two lights of nature and grace (drey theilen / Leib / Seel vnd Geist ... In beyden Liechtern der Natur vnd gnaden – DT Aij^v). 6. The *Theologia Weigelij* (1618) writes that daily experience teaches us that contraries are necessary for

15 See "Loriottus," *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 19 (Berlin: Duncke & Humblot, 1884), 198–199.

the perfection of things (Auß der täglichen Erfahrung in der Zeit erkennen wir das die *contraria* nothwendig seynd *ad perfectionem rerum* – TW 15). 7. *De bono et malo in homine* (1619), in its German subtitle, instructs that only God is good, while the creature bears both good and evil within and that God encompasses all things (Daß Gott allein gut sey / Creatur aber gutes und böses in jhr trage / vnd wie Gott alle Ding beschliesse / beyde / böses vnd gutes).

Of all these works, none is more ambitious, more mysterious yet revealing, than the relatively substantial *Theologia Weigelii*. It champions Weigel without claiming his authorship. While dismissing the “simple-minded theologian” and all “worldly scholars” (dem Einfältigen Theologo ... alle Weltgelehrten – TW 7), the tract launches the great dialectic proposition that the “perfection of the world” is bound up with contraries. Their contemplation transposes us from the visible to the invisible realm, from the temporal to the eternal, and indeed from letter to spirit (*Perfectio Mundi consistit in contrarijs* ... Darumb aber bezeuget die tägliche Erfahrung solche *contraria* in der zeitlichen Welt / auff daß wir vns sollen erheben bey Leibesleben / auß den sichtbaren zu den vnsichtbaren / auß der Zeit zur Ewigkeit ... auß dem Buchstaben zum Geist – TW 6 [Bijr]). Reminiscent of Böhme’s nature mysticism, the contraries include such elemental qualities as summer and winter, dryness and moisture, heat and cold, joy and sorrow (TW 15).

In 1618, Staricius also published the Paracelsian theological compendium, *Philosophia de Limbo, Æterno Perpetuoque Homine Novo Secunda creationis Iesu Christo*, more voluminous than these short works, with a 20-page preface signed on January 27, only a week after the first two Weigel works of 1618. One of the published Paracelsian theological works anticipated a characteristic late theme of Böhme’s, the notion that all things are constituted as the word of creation combining Genesis 1 with John 1. As the Paracelsian defense of real presence in Communion (*De Coena Domini ex ... Cap. Johannis Evangelistae*) published by Staricius says: “for all things are only one word: the human being is a word; what is the first materia but *Verbum*? The sun is a word: what is the material of all creatures? A word: the word creates the body” (dan alle ding sein nur ein Wort: Der Mensch ist ein Wort: was ist die erste materi / als allein *Verbum*? Die Sonne ist ein Wort: was ist die erste materi aller Creaturen? Ein Wort: das Wort macht nu den Leib – PL 48). Staricius endeavored with an air of urgency. He claimed that Paracelsian theology had been ignored until the recent emergence of the laudable Rosicrucian fraternity. This suggests that his editorial haste may well have been spurred on by the Rosicrucian wave and his desire to take his place in its vanguard. Was he competing against or seeking common cause with Böhme?

Böhme likewise worked with a sense of urgency, if with greater confidence in the carrying power of his own voice. Paracelsian nature speculation and

nature theology, combined with the introspective themes of Weigel, rounded out with the Rudolfine striving for synthesis and the love of riddle-solving, were complementary aspects of Böhme's vision. Though his work is more creative and original than that of the prescient but superficial Staricius, it is not unusual to find superficial and profound treatments of the same theme. Dante's *Inferno* had been anticipated by artless visions of various medieval visitors to Hell. Staricius and Böhme share elaborate versions of the two lights of nature and grace. The core of nature, for either, is united with a truth within. The testimony of the Gospel had been anticipated or confirmed, both men believed, by the philosophy of nature. All creation is triune, like its Creator; and like the creature, it is made in God's image. Divine wisdom in nature is a secret awaiting revelation, accessible to the simple lay person, the craft-worker, or peasant. The convergence of all truths militates against the threat of war and authoritarianism. Staricius and Böhme had been informed by the same authors, inspired by the same ideas, and driven by very similar motivations.¹⁶

Staricius and Böhme both defended the validity of divine inspiration: everyone should pray for guidance by the Holy Spirit to understand Scripture. To press home his point, Staricius poses this riddle: "Guess: a white field with black seed and many a one passes without knowing what lies therein" (Rath was ist das/ Ein weisser Acker vnd schwartze Saat/ mancher Mann fürüber gaht/ vnd

16 See also Siegfried Wollgast, *Philosophie in Deutschland zwischen Reformation und Aufklärung 1550–1650* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1988), 345 („Wir werden J. Staricius als Herausgeber von Weigelischen, Pseudoweigelischen, echten und unechten paracelsischen Schriften kennenlernen (Kap. IX). Auch rosenkreuzerische Bücher hat er herausgegeben. Ihn treffen wir Weihachten 1622 bei einer grossen Disputation, an der Tschesch, Franckenberg, Hans Siegismund von Schweinichen, Koschwitz aus Striegau und Böhme beteiligt sind. Johann Staricius wird von Böhme in seinem Brief vom 3. 7. 1621 zusammen mit Tilke und J. Koschwitz als Teilnehmer an einem Gespräch genannt und noch einmal in einem Sendbrief vom 20. 2. 1623. Böhme hat sich von Staricius eindeutig abgegrenzt, ebenso von Stiefel und Meth, während er viele Weigelsche Gedanken übernahm. Hier liegt noch ein weites Forschungsfeld.“) See also 435 („1623 wurden [Morsius] und Leonhard Elver, ein enger Freund von Jungius, zu Lübeck mit Johann Staricius und dem Glogauer Arzt Balthasar Walter bekannt. Diese wiederum wiesen Morsius auf J. Böhme und A. von Franckenberg hin... 1624 finden wir Morsius in Schweden, danach in Niedersachsen, vorwiegend aber in Hamburg.“), 513 („Nach Sudhoff hat Staricius 1623 bzw. 1624 auch zwei Schriften Paracelsi in Magdeburg bei J. Francke herausgegeben. Staricius war ein vielseitig gebildeter Mann. Jurist und Poet, Alchemist und Paracelsist, Mystiker und vielleicht auch Rosenkreuzer – so steht er inmitten der geistigen Strömungen seiner Zeit. Über Staricius wird eine Beziehung zwischen Böhme und Weigel hergestellt“). Wollgast raises the question of the purpose of the dedications („um dem Werk größere Verbreitung zu sichern?“ – 523). He mentions Staricius' having published Karlstadt's work under Weigel's name in 1618 (635). Wollgast also observes that Staricius played a controversial role in stirring up interest in B's work in northern Germany, hardly the work of a bitter opponent.

weiß nicht was darinnen staht – *KB* ij^r). The black seed in the white field is presumably the letter on the page which does not yield its harvest of spirit except to those who seek, namely the divinely inspired and guided reader. If this field was crudely cultivated by Staricius, it had been sown by him to yield the same fruits as Böhme's more brilliant productions. In pragmatic terms, both were against war and for the lay folk. Self-knowledge was the key for either. In theoretical terms, both asserted the unity of the two lights of nature and grace; and both held that eternity is in time and time in eternity. Both recognized the human and cosmic trichotomy. The coherence of the realms of spirit and nature revealed to either author the divine omnipresence in the world, with the corollary that in God there are contradictions or contraries. Taken out of context, their affinities are so strong that one could regard Böhme as a follower of Staricius or vice versa, or perhaps both as prescient seers.

The earliest possible evidence for Böhme's awareness of Staricius is in a letter to Christian Bernhard of 12 September 1620. The author has promised to procure for his friend after the Leipzig book fair two books, one a New Testament and the other the "third part *Gnoti se auton*" (*JB* 9:29, ep. 9:14). Assuming that Böhme knew of Staricius' role, this suggests that he thought Staricius' work was worth engaging with. Next comes the problematic evidence of ep. 15. In the edition of 1730, this letter is dated July 3, 1621, but it was almost certainly written on February 19/20 1623.¹⁷ It indicates that the two men had met, but that the meeting had not gone well. At the residence of Johann Theodor von Tschesch, according to the 1730 version of the letter, they engaged in a "*Disputat*" involving Jonas Daniel Koschwitz, Abraham von Franckenberg, and other participants. The event ended in discord. It would seem that Böhme felt Staricius had voiced judgments that reflected poorly on the latter's spiritual maturity. Staricius is said to have cast aspersions on Böhme, referring to him as a "Flacian" and accusing the Görlitzer of teaching some other path to salvation than through Christ. Böhme is stung to the quick, vigorously denying the aspersions. He writes that his interlocutor should rather seek truth and strive to overcome his own blindness (9:62–63; ep. 15:3, 4, 7). Clearly, these letters document a painful encounter with educated rivals. What they do not document is an encounter with Staricius. The researches of Leigh Penman have established with a high degree of certainty that the identification of the conversation partner identified in ep. 15 as Staricius rests on an indefensible editorial emendation.¹⁸ What is certain is that by 1624 the two men enjoyed

17 Leigh Penman, "The Broken Tradition. Uncovering Errors in the Correspondence of Jacob Böhme," *Aries* 18 (2018), 96–125 at 104–107.

18 Penman, "The Broken Tradition," 109–111.

an amiable association. In Böhme's communications to Christian Bernhard on April 4 and May 5, 1624, Staricius appears as a familiar party involved in the pursuit of common objectives.¹⁹

The key to Böhme's affinity with Staricius surely lies in the broad Rudolfine climate of speculation in which both took part. Various channels might have brought Weigel and Paracelsus to the attention of both men. Other possible sources mentioned by contributors to our conference include Heinrich Khunrath, Johann Arndt, Bartolomäus Scultetus, and Abraham Behem (d. 1599). Behem was a Görlitzer who had corresponded with Weigel. The physicians of Görlitz were involved with Paracelsism, as was Scultetus. Staricius shared much with Böhme without claiming a private mystical source of inspiration. If two authors treat similar ideas and share a similar worldview and inventory of themes, yet one claims that everything is directly from God and the other boasts of literary sources, we are compelled to examine their respective circumstances. Their shared themes reveal Böhme as a gifted writer in competition with others pursuing the same objectives and working with the same materials. Nothing could be more remote from reality than his claim that everything he wrote came from a unique private inspiration. This might be more plausible if he had preceded Staricius, but in fact the younger rival had been disseminating similarly themed writings slightly earlier.

Perhaps their most important commonality is that neither Böhme nor Staricius appears to have been frivolous. Both made sincere truth claims in their writings or publications. The question for us is what such claims meant in writings which contained nothing like the doctrinal and empirical evidence of early modern theology or science. It is intellectually lazy to classify their writings as devotional tracts anticipating Pietism. This ignores their extensive speculative content unrelated to purely devotional aims. Their assertions of truth reflected the general despair of achieving certainty and the desperate will to discover new avenues for attaining it. By comparing Staricius and Böhme, we can see how they embodied a similar approach to truth. Though they both

19 Penman, "The Broken Tradition," 110 note 44. See Werner Buddecke (ed.), Jakob Böhme, *Die Urschriften*, vol. 2 (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1966), p. 381, ep. 51 ("Vnser Herr Balzer walter ist zu L[übeck] beim Herren Johan S[taricio]/ einem vor nehmen Medico hat mir erst für 3 tagen geschriben/ so ihr auff l[übeck] kehmet / ihr würdet ihme lieb vnd angenehm sein / vnd würde euch ohne allen zweiffel wol helffen befördern/ weil er mit vielen für nehmen leutten bekant ist. vnd dise schriften selbiger ortte mehr geliebet werden als bey vns") and p. 385 ep. 57 ("An Herrn Johan Staricio habe ich euch alhie einen föderungs Briff mitte gegeben / vnd euch ihme gar wol Acomodiret / ob ihr euch wollet bey ihme auff halten / oder zu etwas brauchen lassen / ihr werdet geneigten willen von ihme vnd andern empfaßen / den er wirt euch schon bey andern helffen befördern wie ich ihn den also gebehten habe / welchs H. walter auch thun wirt"). My thanks to Leigh Penman for his invaluable help in clarifying this issue.

grappled with the legacies of Paracelsus and Weigel and defended the authority of the unlearned lay person, only Böhme was able to offer a compelling theory of knowledge of lasting influence. Though both undertook to discern a coherent significance and relevance in the same tenets and sources, only he could craft an effective synthesis, while Staricius merely pieced together one eclectic makeshift after another.

One result of the frustrations of their age was an epistemological shift toward coherence as the criterion of truth. Modern epistemologists talk about two theories of truth: the correspondence and the coherence theories. Truth as correspondence is pursued by the empirical scientist who assesses hypotheses based on experimental data, by the theologian who seeks proofs in the Bible, or by the humanist who examines documents to test propositions about history. From Lorenzo Valla's refutation of the Donation of Constantine to the editorial, exegetic, and theological achievements of Erasmus and Luther, this method of seeking objective proofs to correspond to or contradict a thesis or proposition was the revolutionary spearhead of early modern progress. But by the end of the sixteenth century, this approach had led to an impasse. Scriptural empiricism had proven itself a powerful instrument for cutting away undocumented assertions and unscriptural doctrines, but applying it to the creation of a new edifice of doctrine or philosophy was like attempting to build a house with only a knife as a tool.

The second approach held a no less ancient appeal: the argument from coherence. Events of the Gospels are related to those of the Hebrew Bible as type to antitype. Their perceived relation verifies truth in a manner unlike empirical correspondence. Gospel events claim truth, not because of what we commonly regard as evidence, but because they fall into a pattern of prefiguration and fulfillment. The Apostle Paul and the Gospels manifestly assert this approach. Any thorough Bible commentary offers example after example of the typologies that link the Old and New Testaments. The typologies could entail proceeding from the Jewish to the gentile world or from the visible to the spiritual realm. Paul preaches in order to convert the Athenians by claiming that he knows the true identity of the "unknown god" to whom they have erected an altar (Acts 17:23–28). The question arises whether new, non-Jewish Christians should be circumcised? It is resolved by declaring baptism the new spiritual circumcision (Rom 2:29). The traditional believer reading the Bible could pursue certainty by resolving what amounts to puzzles of allusion.

The patterns of coherence extend beyond Scripture to creation. The inevitable assumption of a coherence between the Old and New Testaments, important to both Paracelsus and Böhme, forges a synthesis from the "Let there be" (*Fiat*) of Genesis 1 and the Word of the Gospel of John ("In the beginning was the Word..."). Taken together, these two "beginnings" suggest that creation was

a process of expression: nature and creature are “spoken words” uttered by the speaking creator Word of God. As the Paracelsian treatise published by Staricius in 1618 put it: “for all things are only one word: the human being is a word; what is the first materia but Verbum? The sun is a word: what is the material of all creatures? A word: the word creates the body” (dan alle ding sein nur ein Wort: Der Mensch ist ein Wort: was ist die erste materi / als allein Verbum? Die Sonne ist ein Wort: was ist die erste materi aller Creaturen? Ein Wort: das Wort macht nu den Leib – PL 48).

The universal coherence extends from the diachronic refiguration to the synchronic patterns in nature, from theology to philosophy, and from the external to the internal. Saint Augustine sought to incorporate philosophical truths into the revealed truth of Christian doctrine by discerning the Trinity in the inner human being: theology could be confirmed through self-knowledge. During the Middle Ages, the authority of coherence had nourished scholastic philosophy and a traditional lore. Medieval theologians recognized “vestiges of the Trinity” in nature. The natural macrocosm formed a coherent pattern with the human microcosm; the outer world with the inner. Staricius and Böhme were devoted to these patterns of coherence among the many objects of faith, speculation, and experience. As *Moise tabernaculum cum suis tribus partibus* stated: “the whole universe is threefold ... Thus also is the human being threefold, body, soul, and spirit, each within the other” (MT Bii^v). The universal pattern of coherence implicated an invisible realm concealed behind the unlike likenesses of nature and of the human being – a divine order of forces present in the natural and human worlds.

Since the coherence of the speaking word with the spoken word made nature into a second Bible, the Book of Nature offered advantages to those without learned authority. The postulated coherence of nature with religion was accessible to anyone with an intuition akin to the riddle-solving familiar to common people everywhere. Since the doctrinal theologies of Luther and Calvin had led to a “Babel” of competing doctrines, the epistemological alternative of coherence reasserted itself in the revived fascination with symbol and mystery. Even beyond the fashionable puzzles popular in the high culture of Prague, the art of the puzzle conferred authority on the uneducated by shifting access to truth away from book learning to inspired intuition. If the patterns were open to interpretation, so much the better. Multiple interpretations could evoke a mysterious transcendent realm of unity.

Paracelsus and Weigel were sources who partook of and anticipated the preoccupation with mystery and paradox. Divine signatures were part of medieval Christian lore revived by Paracelsus and eagerly taken up by contemporaries from Khunrath to Oswald Croll. Paracelsus had written of the inner, spirit-like

forces in nature. His *Labyrinthus medicorum errantium* or *Labyrinth of errant medical doctors* (1537/38) attributed his medical theory to the illumination of the Holy Spirit, making God the key to the labyrinth. Weigel elaborated the kindred notion that the inner spirit is the layperson's source of certainty.²⁰ Nature, in his view, unfolded from an invisible "inner" divine reality, as if creation were a puzzle devised by God to be resolved by the believer. The encompassing "place of the world," declares his work of that title, is paradoxically no place at all. Divinity lies within, creating everything out of itself, just as truth arises from within the inspired believer so that all things are in all. The awakened layperson need not bow to any external higher spiritual authority. Paracelsus and Weigel both emphasized the triune structures in nature and the human being. The pivotal point of their impact on Böhme was their conviction that the light of nature and the light of the spirit or grace both had a divine source.

In his earliest work, Böhme alluded to the Weigelian riddle of the "place of the world."²¹ Later, the inner and outer worlds are interwoven ever more intricately. Divine power and truth emerge from within and inform all nature, much as the Lutheran doctrine of the *Abendmahl* recognizes an invisible omnipresent God known intimately to the believer. Staricius, the kindred spirit whose motives paralleled those of the Görlitzer, observed in his pseudo-Weigelian *Dritter Theil Deß Gnothi Seavton*, that tripartite structures prevail in the two

20 Compare these two passages, the first from Weeks, *Aurora* (2013), 140–143; and the second from *Der güldene Griff*, in volume eight of Horst Pfefferl's edition of Valentin Weigel, *Sämtliche Schriften* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, 1997), 10: (1) „Aus den krefftten Gottes ist worden der Himmel / aus dem Himmel sind worden die sternen / Aus den sternen sint worden die Elementa / Aus den Elementen ist worden die Erde vnd die Creaturen / Also hat alles seinen anfang / Biß auff die Engel vnd Teufel Die sint für der scheppfung Himmels vnd der sternen vnd erden / aus der selben krafft worden / daraus Himel vnd sternen vnd Erde worden ist“; (2) „gott besitzet alle Dinge in ihm selber, Also schuff er auch die engel, das sie alles in ihnen selbest haben; Aus den wassern kamen herfür die 4 elementa vnnd astra, aus den elementen vnndt astris, kamen herfür die Corpora, aus den Cörpern wuchsen wuchsen herfür die fruchte ... vnnd bleibt eins in dem andern.“ Böhme is no less committed to the idea that this succession shows that all things are in all, and therefore the divine spirit in the human being.

21 See Weeks, *Aurora* (2013), 176–179 („Der locum oder der ortt vnd Raum dieser weld / Sampt dem Creaturlichen Himmel den wir mit augen Sehen“), 213 („Der locum vnd ortt diser weld / die Tiffe der erden vnd über der erden biß an Himmel / So wol der erschaffene Himmel / der aus dem mittel des wassers ist gemacht worden der über den sternen schwebet / den wir mit vnsern augen Sehen / Diser raum vnd ortt alles zu Sammen ist ein königreich gewesen / vnd lucifer ist der könig darinnen gewesen / für Seiner ver stosung“). The visionary outlook expressed in the term „der locu[s] diser weld“ is essential to the state of mind described by Böhme with reference to his conversion experience in Ch. 19 of *Aurora*.

lights of nature and grace (“drey theilen / Leib / Seel vnd Geist ... In beyden Liechtern der Natur vnd gnaden” – DT Aij^v). Böhme drew upon Paracelsus and Weigel to arrive at an epistemological principle to justify the shift of authority from scholars and clergy to the inspired lay folk. Though complex in formulation, his authority was largely that of an intuition based on self-knowledge and projection of an intuited inner life in all other beings

One of Böhme's most impressive writings can be read in reference to an intellectual context shared with Staricius: *De Signatura Rerum* (*Von der Geburt und Bezeichnung aller Wesen*). It is unusual for Böhme that *Signatura Rerum* addresses in its extended subtitles the themes of medicine (Wie die äussere Cur des Leibes, aus der Kranckheit, durch seine Gleichheit wieder in das erste Wesen müsse geführet werden) and alchemy. The philosophers' stone is compared to the cornerstone of wisdom, to Christ whose curative power is eternal (Darbey Gleichniß-weise der Stein der Weisen, zur zeitlichen Cur, mit dem heiligen Eckstein der Weisheit, Christo, zur ewigen Cur der neuen Wiedergeburt, eingeführet wird). The stone introduces fallen Adam “in die *Transmutation Christi*” (6 11:56/155).

The author of *Aurora* was no stranger to the mixture of alchemy and theology compiled in Staricius' *Libellus Disputatorius* or the preface to his Paracelsian *Philosophia de Limbo Aeterno*. *Signatura Rerum* follows Paracelsian medicine in stating that “the physician resides in the equality of each thing” (der Arzt in der Gleichheit eines ieden Dinges stehe – 6 2:3/9); and it obeys Böhme's own inclination to treat medical alchemy as an allegory of the soul's redemption. He announces that “we will show you the revelation of God through nature” (wir zeigen euch die Offenbarung der Gottheit durch die Natur – 6 3:2/18). Since “all things are born from a single mother” (so gehen alle Dinge aus einer Einigen Mutter – 6 4:1/29), all bear a deep likeness: the seven planets correspond to the seven metals, which in turn arise from the seven eternal forms or spirits that craft all things (6 4:16, 15/32). The universal order by virtue of which all things, temporal or eternal, material or spiritual, bear likeness to one another is cited in the Book of Wisdom 11:20: “you have arranged all things by measure and number and weight” (Also sind alle Ding in Zahl, Maß und Gewichte nach der ewigen Gebärung eingeschlossen, Sap. 11:22). Wisdom imbues nature with coherence. The likeness of the terrestrial to the celestial nature, however, is always transient, for God has cursed the earth after the disobedience of the first human beings. And “yet the divine power breaks through and tinctures the external realm; for God spoke: “The seed of woman shall crush the head of the snake” (alleine die Göttliche Kraft dringet durch, und tingiret das Aeussere, dann Gott sprach: Des Weibes Same soll der Schlangen den Kopf zertreten; Gen. 3:15).

As with Michael Maier, the interweaving of allusions includes references to symbolic colors, bestial creatures, and the resonances and harmonies of

music. Chapter eleven compresses many of these allusions into an anticlerical response to the “Pharisees” whose practice is not to be followed: “Not as the pastors of Babel do, who ride over [the poor Christians] as fat, rich masters, desiring to be lords over the mother [church] and to strive in lust for honor and fat bellies and live in strife” (Nicht wie die Pfaffen zu Babel thun, welche als die fetten reichen Herrn über sie reiten, und wollen Herren über die Mutter seyn, und nur Ehre und fette Bäuche in Wollust suchen, und im Zank leben – 6 11:59/155–156). Opposed to them is the truth, manifest in the signatures of things, that “all stem from a single root, and have the One Will, except that the one color does not gleam like the other” (sind doch nur alle aus einer Wurtzel, und haben alle Einen Willen, nur daß eine Farbe nicht gleisset wie die andere – 6 11:59/156). The parties of strife are the bestiary mob that flees from its mother: “they are the wolves, lions, and bears, as well as foxes and fleeting hares, that flee from their mother and abandon her” (sie sind Wölfe, Löwen und Bären, auch Füchse und flüchtige Hasen, die da von der Mutter fliehen und sie verlassen – 6 11:61/156). As light mirrors and redeems darkness, chaos and conflict are transmuted into divine harmony: “Everything that flees in nature torments itself ... Everything that makes fear and conflict in nature, makes pure joy in God; for the entire celestial host is wholly directed toward one harmony; each angelic kingdom to its particular instrument; but all to one another in the One Music, all in the single love resonance of God” (Alles was in der Natur läuft, das quälet sich.... Alles was in der Natur Angst und Streit machet, daß machet in GOtt eitel Freude, dann das gantze Himmels-Heer ist alles in eine Harmonie gerichtet: Ein iedes Königreich der Engel in ein sonderlich Instrument, aber alles in einander in Eine *Musica*, alles in dem einigen Liebe-Hall GOTTes – 6 15:52/229).

In the system of alchemical allusions, the first division of the word “divides itself into two qualities, into joy and sorrow, into light and darkness; for it makes two worlds, a dark fire-world in stringency, and a luminous fire-world in the joy of freedom” (scheidet sich in zwo Eigenschaften, als in Freud und Leid, in Licht und Finsterniß, dann es macht zwo Welten, als eine finstere Feuer-Welt in der Strengheit, und eine lichte Feuer-Welt in der Lust der Freyheit – 6 2:13/12). The world-generating word, which divides itself between the dark fire-world and that light which is the joy of freedom, is again a gloss on the coherence of Genesis 1 and John 1. The equation of the light with freedom, as “the single cause of the fire’s radiating” (die einige Ursache, daß das Feuer scheint – 6 2:13/12), responds to the Calvinist doctrine of the election of grace (predestination) attributed to Tilke, a doctrine which Böhme intended to rebut by making the light of freedom essential both to the Creator and to the creation in the divine likeness.

The divine light of freedom manifests itself in the beautiful colors and forms of nature that free themselves, if only temporarily, from the contracted

stringent darkness of death. With his knowledge of nature and alchemical art, the *magus* guides the process which cures the eternal soul. Much of this could be read in the context of Staricius and Tilke: the thematic virtuosity of the work, its insistence on an abiding grace manifest in nature itself (“the seed of woman”), its assertion of human freedom, and its alchemically encoded confirmation that Christ is the true path to salvation. All these points refute the aspersions cast by his rivals, or perhaps only perceived by Böhme in his failure to communicate his views in the presence of his better educated fellow dissenters.

But the thesis of Böhme’s *Signatura Rerum* conveyed in its title also transcends the personal context and testifies to the depth and originality which enabled the humble author to formulate a principle of knowledge for a Weigelian anticlerical tradition that he echoed with increasing stridency during the first years of the religious war. The first chapter of *Signatura Rerum* begins with a serene assertion: “Everything that is said about God without knowledge of the *signature* is mute and without understanding; for it comes from an historical illusion, from the mouth of another, whereby the spirit is mute without knowledge: however, if the spirit reveals the signature, then one understands the mouth of the other; one understands further how the spirit has revealed itself from the essence through the *principle* in the sound of the voice” (Alles was von GOtt geredet, geschrieben oder gelehret wird, ohne die Erkenntnis der Signatur, dass ist stumm und ohne Verstand, dann es kommt nur aus einem historischen Wahn, von einem andern Mund, daran der Geist ohne Erkenntniß stumm ist: So ihm aber der Geist die Signatur eröffnet, so verstehet er des andern Mund, und verstehet ferner, wie sich der Geist aus der Essentz durchs *Principium* im Hall mit der Stimme hat offenbaret – 6 1:1 3–4).

The final clause requires a gloss in order to explain the significance of the signature: “one understands further how the spirit has revealed itself from the essence through the *principium* in the sound of the voice.” “Essence” entails the ever constant and ever modulated pattern of qualities, of desire, fear, frustration, insight, and love, which Böhme postulates as the inner life of God, nature, and the human creature. “Principle” expresses the transcendent dimensions of the pattern and of the being that it engenders. While the specifics are complex and arcane from our vantage, the heart of the matter lies in Böhme’s method of projecting from self-knowledge and the manifestations of nature to the inner divine life of the world. Empathy with the inner life of nature and the shaping effects of environment are accessed in the “signatures of things.” Intuition answers the authoritarianism that commanded credence of hearsay and demanded obedience to the Lutheran doctrine of *fides ex auditu*, “faith from hearing.”

All true understanding requires sympathy: "For though I see that someone speaks, teaches, and writes about God, and though I hear and read it, nothing is yet comprehensible to me: yet if his sound and the spirit of his signature and formation enters my formation, and inscribes his in mine, only then do I understand properly, whether it be spoken or written: only if he has the hammer that can strike my bell" (Dann daß ich sehe, daß einer von GOtt redet, lehret und schreibet, und gleich dasselbe höre und lese, ist mirs noch nicht genug verstanden: so aber sein Hall, und sein Geist aus seiner Signatur und Gestältniß, in meine Gestältniß eingehet, und bezeichnet seine Gestältniß in meine, so mag ich ihn in rechtem Grunde verstehen, es sey geredet oder geschrieben, so er den Hammer hat, der meine Glocken schlagen kan – 6 1:2/4). The metaphor of resonance is revealing: all true knowledge consists of empathetic understanding.

This could stand in reply to Staricius and Böhme's other educated interlocutors; but above all it is written against the partisan scholars of Scripture whose literalism had escalated into the "fire-world" and Babel of the Thirty Years' War: "Their origin is from Babel where they fight, quarrel, and bite on account of the letters; each one wants to be master of the letters, to array them at will, for one's own honor and for the pleasure of this world" (Ihr Herkommen ist aus Babel, da man zancket, greinet, und da man um die Buchstaben beisset, ein jeder will Herr über die Buchstaben seyn, und sie setzen wie er will, nur ihme zu Ehren, und zur Wollust dieser Welt – 6 11:62/156).

Looking backward, Böhme's doctrine of the signatures is the culmination of a tradition of strident antiauthoritarianism directed at the clergy and the learned. Looking forward from Böhme, no lesser thinker than Arthur Schopenhauer would come to recognize the depth and significance of Böhme's concept of the signatures of things. Despite his university education, Schopenhauer's work and much of his development as a thinker took him outside of and set him in opposition to the university. He championed intuition (*Anschauung*) against Hegelian abstraction. He encountered Böhme's work during his own formative period as a philosopher. Sensing in Böhme a kindred spirit, Schopenhauer embraced the epistemology of intuition and with it the empathetic understanding of an inner life consisting of the manifestations of a world-engendering will, mirrored by an understanding becalmed through renunciation and sensitive to the beautiful forms of nature in *The World as Will and Representation* of 1818/19.²²

22 Andrew Weeks, "Schopenhauer und Böhme," *Schopenhauer Jahrbuch* 73 (1992), 7–17.

The Science of the Stars in Jacob Böhme's World

Lutz Pannier

From his house which is still standing on the right bank of the Neisse River, Jacob Böhme was in a position to observe the changing seasons which affected the river in dramatic and at times drastic ways. On the opposite bank, the Church of St. Peter rises up so impressively toward the heavens that the eye scarcely notices the dwarfed edifice clinging to the city wall below. This structure acquired the reputation among the people of Görlitz as the so-called *Observatorium Sculteti*.¹ It is possible that this was where Bartholomäus Scultetus conducted astronomical observations. If so, his activities would have been within sight of Böhme who was well aware of astronomy in the culture of his city. When Böhme strolled across the bridge and through the Neisse Gate into the city, he could see on the left the house of the merchant Hans Heinze with the famous biblical scenes on its facade and, straight ahead, the tower of the City Hall, with its clock representing the phases of the moon. Up ahead, the church tower of the *Gymnasium Augustum* stood out. Arriving at the shoemaker's workshop on what is now the Lower Market Square, an astronomical sundial dominates the entire scene. This architectural arrangement might possibly have engendered an unsettling tension between the natural sky and spiritual heaven.

Unsurprisingly, Görlitz, like other Renaissance metropolises, flaunted its status by means of an impressive clock ensemble. Since a mechanical clock made it possible to regulate public life more efficiently, it served practical purposes while at the same time demonstrating the intellectual capacity of the city. The Görlitz school, the *Gymnasium Augustum*, was assuredly a center of Upper Lusatian culture. Substantial numbers of pupils were inculcated every year with a fine liberal arts education preparing them for advanced study in Wittenberg and Leipzig. Many teachers had graduated from those universities, carrying with them the educational ideals of Melanchthon back to Görlitz. The teachers were known in educational circles and integrated within the local community. Often they had to supplement their meager salary by accepting offices in the urban or church administration. Graduates of the *Gymnasium*

1 Richard Jecht, *Geschichte der Stadt Görlitz*, Vol. 1, Halbband 2 (Görlitz: Hoffmann & Reiber, 1922–1926), 531.

Augustum commonly returned after attending university. Even if they didn't return, they remained in contact with their home city. Through its educated citizenry, Görlitz was connected with imperial Prague and papal Rome. When the local elite held its monthly meetings of the *Convivium Musicum*, singing in concert, engaging in poetry, and discussing the sciences, we can safely assume that one of their most prominent themes was astronomy. It was in a state of revolutionary transition on the cusp of its modern scientific status.

An astronomer can do nothing more than observe celestial events. By the very nature of the science, experimentation is impossible. From the observed data, hypotheses concerning the true conditions of nature are deduced. If it happens that the methods and precision of observation are improved, or if new and unknown objects appear in the sky, the results are the elaboration of a new and more comprehensive theory encompassing the old theory newly refined. Already in antiquity, astronomy included the heliocentric concepts of Philolaos and Aristarchus and the geocentric one of Aristotle and Ptolemy. The latter became established. Within the confines of the given precision of measurement, it allowed for the closest possible correspondence between theory and observation. The geocentric concept could also be adapted to the physics of Aristotle, which posited that everything heavy (water, earth) falls toward the center of the world and everything light (fire, air) rises. If everything falls to earth, then it follows that earth must possess the form of a sphere. The sphere and circle are ideal forms, and therefore divine ones. This was the physical theory of the earthly, sublunary sphere. The theory for the supralunary realm recognized a system of divine spheres, surrounded by the ether and superior in its properties to those of earthly physics.

The cosmos figured as the divine order and ornamentation of the universe. Or so it seemed. In practice, Ptolemaic astronomy could never make good on its ideal claims. It required makeshift constructions, eccentric circles and layered epicycles, in order to encompass all the phenomena of celestial motion with a sufficient degree of exactitude. The Ptolemaic system did not measure up to the advancing precision of observation. Copernicus (1473–1543) had no revolutionary aspirations of the kind we ascribe to him now. He merely wanted to restore harmony to the cosmos. He pursued his goal by transforming a metaphysical heliocentrism, which understood the sun to be the center of the good and the intellectual light, into an astronomical heliocentrism.² This new heliocentric concept surpassed the geocentric one in terms of simplicity, but not in terms of precision.

2 Jürgen Hamel, *Geschichte der Astronomie* (Berlin: Birkhäuser-Verlag, 1998), 125.

It was the intention of Copernicus to retain the principle of perfect circular motion. Hence, he also had to keep the Ptolemaic epicycles. Decisive for astronomical verification was the proof of the parallax of the fixed stars. If the earth revolves around the sun, then in the course of a year it must be possible to measure the changing angles in reference to the fixed stars. At the time, this could not be done, as Copernicus had to concede. His explanation that the fixed stars are too remote to establish the parallax by the available means makes sense today, but it did not seem plausible to astronomers at that time. Though today we are accustomed to incomprehensibly vast dimensions in every direction, in the Renaissance the cosmos was still easy to survey. Great empty spaces made no sense at the time, much less did a vacuum. God could hardly have created senseless space. In consequence, one conceived of the planetary spheres as neatly encapsulated inside one another, the outside of the one contiguous with the inside of the next higher one. If the sphere of the fixed stars was assumed to be immensely distant, the planetary spheres would have to be disproportionately voluminous. In order to avoid the attendant dilemmas, there arose a preference, especially at the University of Wittenberg, for viewing the system of Copernicus less as a representation of the cosmos than as a mathematical method for calculating planetary phenomena. The Wittenberg approach was discussed in lectures and employed in compiling calendars for the purposes of astronomical or astrological calculations, while ignoring the implication that Copernicus had intended his system as a representation of the cosmos. The image of the cosmos was not a problem for astronomy. It was a problem reserved for physics.

Combining the two disciplines of astronomy and physics was the revolutionary achievement of Johannes Kepler (1571–1630). Like many others in his time, including Böhme, Kepler was in search of a model to harmonize the world. After various struggles, he succeeded in banishing the Aristotelian cosmology of the celestial spheres. We need to be aware of the path he followed and then to consider the ways in which his career traversed Böhme's world. Between 1609 and 1619, Kepler evaluated the more precise measurements achieved by Tycho Brahe (1546–1601) and published laws positing that the planets followed elliptical paths with various velocities. Brahe had perfected the art of celestial measurement to the maximum degree attainable without the telescope. His observations of the comet of 1577 had achieved a high precision, establishing its supralunary path and thereby casting doubt on the Aristotelian spheres. Brahe postulated his own model of the world, with a stationary earth at the center, orbited by the moon and by a sun around which the other planets in turn orbited. Tragically, it was not until ten years after his death that the telescope became available, allowing Galileo Galilei (1564–1642) to make discoveries which finished off the Aristotelian model: craters on the

moon cast shifting shadows; there were changing sun spots; the illumination of Venus shifted; Jupiter had four moons; and the Milky Way a great number of additional stars, all of which contributed to Galileo's resolute affirmation of the new heliocentric cosmology.

Kepler embarked on this sea change: he developed an even better telescope and, on the basis of more precise observations, transformed cosmology fundamentally. It remained for Isaac Newton³ (1643–1727) to establish the centrifugal and centripetal forces acting between bodies and to complete the triumph of celestial physics by establishing the law of gravity. Of course, in Böhme's time, much was still in flux. Kepler entered new territory by extending terrestrial mechanics to the supralunary realm. He postulated a force acting between the sun and planets which he called *gravitas* and hoped to explain with reference to magnetism. This was a bold step. His teacher Michael Maestlin (1550–1631) and even Galilei warned him against childish pursuits.⁴ Kepler regarded his *gravitas* not as an abstract mechanical force, but rather as the exertion of will of the most perfect spirits. Kepler was also a theologian. He considered his profession of astronomy to be a divine dispensation, a calling to serve as a priest of the Book of Nature in quest of the causes at work in creation.⁵ His belief in celestial spirits that effect order through exertions of will and his sense of mission in researching the creation allow us to see him as a distant kin of Böhme. Their kinship can provide access to certain aspects of the mental world of their age. But first we have to consider the degree to which the world of the shoemaker-mystic intersected and overlapped with that of the astronomer-mathematician in more concrete terms.

To contemplate the historic clock of the Lower Market is like contemplating celestial motions. We can safely assume that Böhme did so, and that it contributed to the respect he voiced for scientific measurement. No one can miss the two sundials that cover, counting the adjacent fields of text, approximately 1.25 by 3.2 meters on the facade of the corner house on the north side of the Lower Market. They illustrate the observation of solar motion. Since these sundials are the equivalent of texts which were perhaps nearly as familiar to Böhme as the Bible, we do well to attend closely to them.

3 See Eric Achermann, "Fromme Irrlehren: Zur Böhme-Rezeption bei More, Newton and Leibniz," in *Offenbarung und Episteme*, ed. Wilhelm Kühlmann and Friedrich Vollhardt (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2012), 346–361.

4 Walter Gerlach, *Johannes Kepler und die Copernicanische Wende* (Nova Acta Leopoldina, Neue Folge 210, Vol. 37/10) (Halle/Saale: Deutsche Akademie der Naturforscher Leopoldina, 1987), 9–10.

5 Fritz Krafft, "Johannes Kepler – der eigentliche Erneuerer der Astronomie," in *Astronomie und Raumfahrt* 50:2 (Seelze: Friedrich Verlag 2013), 35–36.

Since the earth rotates from West to East every twenty-four hours, the sun rises in the East and goes down in the West, which is its apparent diurnal motion. Along with this diurnal rotation, the sun also effects an annual apparent motion caused by the annual revolution around the sun. Since the axis of the earth's rotation always tilts in the same direction, with the North Pole pointing in the direction of the Pole Star, an observer on earth is confronted with diurnal paths of the sun of varying lengths.

Standing in front of the south wall of the house, one notices on the left the western marked surface labeled *Solarium* (Fig. 10.1) and on the right the eastern one labeled *Arachne* (Fig. 10.2). Between the two, an inscription announces "*Scultetus invenit 1550.*" This refers to the maker, Zacharias Scultetus (1530–1560), the older brother of Bartholomeus Scultetus.⁶ Above the marked surface, the shadow-casting stylus or rod juts out of the wall, its terminal ball marking the end point of the shadow cast by the rod. In the *Solarium*, the rod was oriented in accordance with the celestial North Pole in the vicinity of the Pole Star. This made it possible to read the equinoctial hours by the full shadow length, much as by the hands of a clock. It will help to know what the two sundials convey, since these were texts confronting Böhme.⁷

Dial of Solarium

The equatorial line: The projection of the celestial equator on the wall runs as a green-white bar which is almost horizontal across the marked surface.

The meridian line: The line is a vertical, black-white bar. When the sun is to the south, it is 12 noon true solar time: the shadow then falls upon this line and its tip indicates on the black and white fields the length of the day's sunlight on the series of numbers to the right and the length of the night on the series of numbers to the left.

Modern "half clock" hours (the green lines radiating downward): On the lower side of the equatorial line there are green numbers from eight to twelve and one to four. The corresponding hour lines pass them in the same color. The twelve together mark the vertical meridian line. The direction of the shadow coincides with the corresponding hour line and makes it possible to read the quarter hours on the green-white fields of the equatorial line. These hours correspond to the system that is in use today.

6 Walter Zimmermann, "Die Sonnenuhr an der Ratsapotheke in Görlitz," *Neues Lausitzisches Magazin* 111 (1935), 145.

7 Lutz Pannier, "Historische Sonnenuhren in Görlitz" (Part 1) *Görlitzer Magazin* 12 (1998), 70–85 and Part 2, *Görlitzer Magazin* 16 (2003), 66–77.

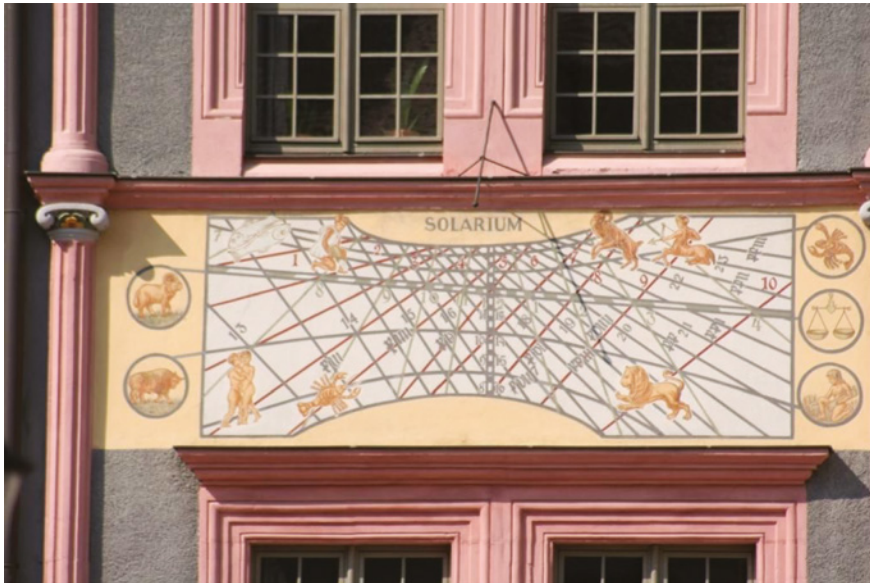


FIGURE 10.1 *Solarium*.
PHOTOGRAPH BY THE AUTHOR.

The zodiacal lines (the horizontal curved black lines): The tip of the shadow points to the current position of the sun within the zodiac and runs to the start of summer on the lower equatorial line to the start of winter on the upper equatorial line. The associated figures mark the astrological zodiacal signs and do not match the constellations as such.

The Italian (or Bohemian or Silesian) “whole clock,” hours (the slanting black straight lines): These indicate the hours that have elapsed from the previous sunset. The lines run from the upper left to the lower right and are labeled with black Arabic numerals from 13 to 23. Between them are parallel lines marked with Gothic ciphers that denote the number of hours that have passed since the previous dusk.

The Babylonian hours (slanting red straight lines), count the hours that have passed since sunrise. The red brown lines run from the lower left to the upper right and are marked in Arabic ciphers of the same color from one to ten.

Dial of Arachne

Azimuth (the red, vertical straight lines): Marked at intervals of five degrees and designated every ten degrees on the upper border of the clock-face, these indicate the horizontal angle of the sun measured in a southerly direction.

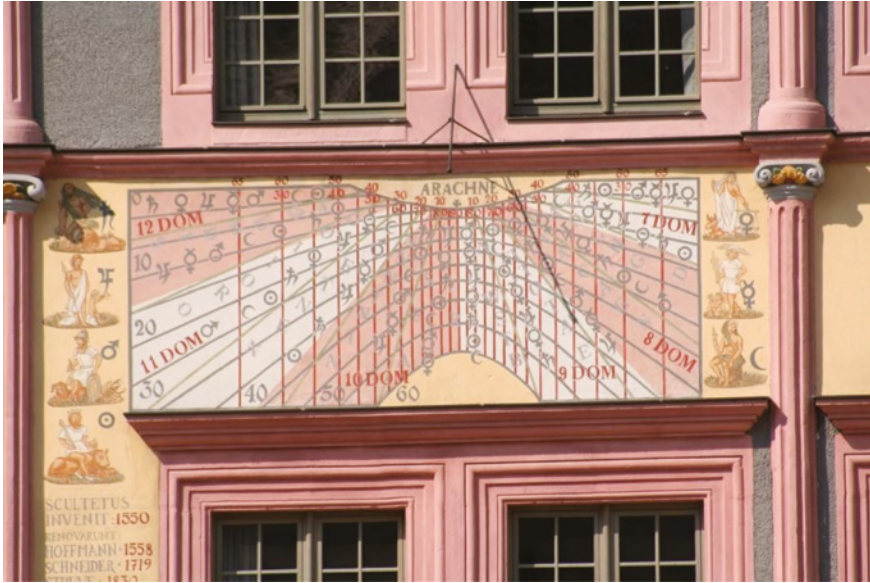


FIGURE 10.2 *Arachne*.
PHOTOGRAPH BY THE AUTHOR.

A small black cross denotes the south line and stands for the zero degree on the upper range of ciphers, or ninety degrees on the lower range of ciphers.

Altitude (the black, hyperbolic branches opening downward): The altitudinal lines, likewise marked in intervals of five degrees and designated every ten degrees, indicate the angle of the sun toward the horizon. On the left half of the clock-face, the corresponding black numbers from 60 degrees at the bottom to zero degrees at the top are easily recognized.

The celestial houses (alternating red and white surfaces), *the planetary hours* (green straight lines); *the regents of the hours* (the planetary symbols with the days of the week): all these constitute the astrological content of *Arachne*. What is shown is the celestial house in which the sun momentarily finds itself. By way of the planetary symbol and weekday column, the momentarily ruling hourly “regent” can be ascertained. On the far right a Latin text explains the content of *Arachne*. There is, however, an error in the second line, where “*oscendunt*” should be “*ostendunt*.”

On the Lower Market the tower of the city hall stands out with its two great rotary clocks (Fig. 10.3). The upper clock-face points us to the early form of the “whole clock”: the great clock hand rotates once every 24 hours counting from sundown or dusk. The small clock hand shows the momentary phase of the moon and corresponding age of the moon, i.e., the number of days after the new



FIGURE 10.3 The Görlitz City Hall Clocks.
PHOTOGRAPH BY THE AUTHOR.

moon. The lower clock-face is the “half clock.” At the time it was created, there was not yet the minute hand which we take for granted. Instead, a small hand indicated the quarters of the hour. The full clock had distinct disadvantages: if one wanted to strike each hour the corresponding number of times, the clock had to strike 300 times each day, which entailed an enormous mechanical

burden. Moreover, after several days the full clock had to be readjusted to the respective sunset. The timing for noon would vary considerably. For this reason, there was a transition to the half clock on which the hand progressed from midnight to midnight twice around a 12-hour clock face. In Upper Lusatia, the transition took place in 1584 under the auspices of Bartholomäus Scultetus. In Görlitz, he changed the clocks on May 30, and adjusted the mechanism so that the upper clock also counted the hours from midnight on. The sundials set the standard for the rotary clocks.⁸ A similar, though less elaborate, sun clock by Bartholomäus Scultetus has survived on the Church of St. Peter (*Peterskirche*). On its south side, on the right next to the staircase portal, a rod juts out at a slant from the buttress. This is the shadow-maker of a vertical sundial, the only preserved one fashioned by Bartholomäus Scultetus. The marked surface has been seriously eroded by weather and awaits restoration. However, the documentation for it is strong. Scultetus himself wrote: "On the fourth of July, 1567 I arranged and completed the *solarium* on the outer church buttress *ad meridiem* with the *horis a meridiano et occasu solis*, as well as the *tropicis lineis*, the lengths of the days and ember-days."⁹

The facades described here are an architectural source material that documents the extensive scientific-astronomical activities going on in Böhme's surroundings. Those who carried out the activities also left written documents that have been preserved in the city hall archive and in the Upper Lusatian Library of Sciences in Görlitz. The material is too extensive to be presented here. What is important is our awareness of the transitional state of astronomy at that time as it informed public and private activities in Böhme's city. The sundials of the Lower Market remind us of the Zacharias Scultetus whose role is certified by the words, "*Scultetus invenit 1550.*" Little information about him is found in the respective literature. The word "*invenit*" testifies to the fact that he was the intellectual author of the chronometric work. His skills were presumably both theoretical and practical. At the age of 20, he transferred his model from paper onto the wall and saw to its color scheme. He was born on January 19, 1530, in the quarter of Rabenberg on the East bank of the Neisse. He attended school in Görlitz and studied in Leipzig. Teaching in Görlitz, he was valued for linguistic expertise and as a mathematician and specialist in the sundials that were then considered a cost-efficient and practical alternative to the expensive mechanical clocks and printed calendars in the awkward folio

8 Tino Fröde and Lutz Pannier, "Die Einführung der Halben Uhr in der Oberlausitz 1584," *Neues Lausitzisches Magazin* 134 (2012), 47–56.

9 Heinrich Gottlob Gräve, "Barth. Scultetus, Bürgermeister zu Görlitz," *Neues Lausitzisches Magazin* 3 (1824), 489.

editions. He died in 1530 without achieving the full life of a scholar granted to his brother.

Bartholomäus or Barthel was born on May 15, 1540, the youngest son of Ursula Eichler and Martin Schulz (the German equivalent of Scultetus) in the same locale. He learned reading and writing in the city school, followed by his attendance of the Görlitz Latin school. He also received instruction from his older brother in Latin, mathematics, and the science of sundials. In 1557, he enrolled at the University of Wittenberg, where he may have heard lectures by Melanchthon (1497–1560). An essential influence, however, was almost certainly exerted on Bartholomäus by Caspar Peucer (1525–1602). Born in the Upper Lusatian city of Bautzen, Peucer enrolled in 1543 in Wittenberg, where he studied medicine, mathematics, and astronomy. He obtained the master's degree in 1545 and married Melanchthon's youngest daughter in 1550. Erasmus Reinhold, who died of plague in 1553, was an influence on Peucer. Reinhold's chair in higher mathematics was passed on to the pupil. Peucer's subsequent lectures were based on his work on geodesy, *De dimensione terrae* (1550), and on his work on astronomy, *Elementa doctrinae de circulis coelestibus* (1551). He carried forth the Wittenberg tradition, inaugurated by Reinhold and Melanchthon, of a limited acceptance of the Copernican system, a position adopted by Scultetus as well during his studies.¹⁰

In 1559, Scultetus continued his studies in Leipzig, residing at the house of the mathematics professor Johannes Hommel (1518–1562). Hommel worked in the construction of instruments, cartography, and gnomonics, collaborating with Valentin Thau (1531–1575), who took over Hommel's chair after he died. In 1564, Thau was commissioned to design surveyors' wagons for surveying the territory and to have them built, an activity in which Scultetus was presumably also involved. From 1562 until 1565, Tycho Brahe pursued astronomical studies in Leipzig, learning from Hommel and Scultetus about the transversal division of instruments for goniometry. As a result, Brahe and Scultetus formed a friendship that would last a lifetime. Unfortunately, of their extensive correspondence, only five letters from Brahe survive. These offer interesting insights into the routine problems of a scientist in that era.¹¹ One of Brahe's fellow students was Paul Wittich (1546–1586), who studied in Leipzig from 1563 until 1566 and later worked for a while with Brahe at his observatory. Wittich also visited Scultetus in Görlitz where they undertook measurements to ascertain

10 Jürgen Hamel, "Caspar Peucer als Astronom – ein Gelehrter zwischen den Zeiten," *Zwischen Katheder, Thron und Kerker: Leben und Werk des Humanisten Caspar Peucer 1525–1602* (Bautzen: Domowina-Verlag 2002), 50–55.

11 Hamel, "Caspar Peucer," 50–55.

the latitude of the city.¹² On February 24, 1564, Scultetus acquired his master's degree in Wittenberg, after which he continued his studies and also lectured at Leipzig. No permanent position at the university was granted. Even if this was a disappointment, he would be well served in Görlitz not only by his studies and experience, but by the contacts he had made at university.

In 1567, Scultetus returned to his home city. At first he stayed with his brother Abraham, who had inherited the paternal estate. Possibly he earned his living at first by producing sundials and horoscopes. The latter would have been in demand since in Böhme's era they played an important role in public life. On April 9, 1567, he observed the solar eclipse, an event documented in 1568 in his *Phänomenon Novilunii Ecliptici* which was combined with a *Prognosticon Novilunii Ecliptici* for the next three years. This must have earned him a respectable honorarium from the city council.

The Renaissance gave rise to the almanachs or so-called writing calendars (*Schreibkalender*). In 1568, Scultetus initiated the printing of a yearly *Almanach und Schreibkalender*, which he continued until 1608. In German, they contained references to natural phenomena as well as astrologically relevant celestial events, deriving from them favorable occasions for everyday activities such as phlebotomy, bathing, cutting one's hair, marrying, sowing, hunting, fishing, and the like. Astronomical occurrences were calculated both in accordance with the geocentric and the heliocentric principles: the reader was encouraged to observe the events and test which of the dates proved more accurate. After changing the timekeeping and reforming the calendar in 1584, times were provided in both the whole and the half clock system, as well as in the Julian and Gregorian calendars. There were also notes on the Hebrew, Armenian, and Old German calendars. Reference was made to events in world history and sacred chronology. Moreover, space was provided for writing personal notes. Scultetus used these for diary entries in the copies he owned. It seems safe to assume that Böhme would have used such calendars for everyday purposes and in the interest of learning. In the seventeenth century, the calendars became more specialized for areas of knowledge and circles of readers.

In 1568, Scultetus was at last able to complete the map begun in Leipzig of the Margravate of Meissen, which he published in 1569 with Ambrosius Fritsch in Görlitz as the "Meissnian and Lusatian Territorial Map." The cartography makes use of the preparatory work of Johann Hommel. It charts the territories from Gotha to Naumburg on the Bober and from Wittenberg to Prague. For Upper Lusatia itself, Scultetus intended to produce a more detailed map. In 1569, he made his first attempt to promote the idea to the Upper Lusatian

12 Ernst Koch, "Moskowiter in der Oberlausitz und Bartholomäus Scultetus. Kulturbilder aus der zweiten Hälfte des xvi. Jahrhunderts," *Neues Lausitzisches Magazin* 86 (1910), 55.

estates. It was only in 1581 that he at last received the commission. He carried it out by 1583 after making seven surveying expeditions through the territory. In 1593, the *Mappa Lusatia Superior* was printed. The map is oriented toward the south and replete with information on towns and villages differentiated by size, as well as rivers, mountains, and even the language boundaries between Slavic-speaking Sorbs and Germans. The maps were printed again by Fritsch in Görlitz and are on view in three sections in the Cultural-Historical Museum in Görlitz.

In April, 1570, Scultetus married the widow Agnes Thiel (née Winckler), thereby becoming the owner of the house at Petersstraße 4, where he lived until his death. On July 31, 1572, however, Agnes died, a private tragedy that Scultetus recorded in his calendar. In accordance with the customs and necessities of the time, he married Helene Röber the following year. With his new wife, he seems to have enjoyed a happy marriage that gave birth to three daughters and three sons. From 1570, he taught at the Görlitz Gymnasium, first giving instruction in arithmetic and geometry to the lower classes and later grammar and astronomy as well to the higher ones. Beginning with geometry, he taught the basics of the motions of celestial bodies, as well as the principles of surveying. The academic preparatory schools known as *Gymnasien* that typically developed out of Latin schools were intellectual and cultural centers of the cities. Accordingly, the teachers of the Görlitz *Augustum* were a decisive influence on the intellectual climate of the city. The need for textbooks required printers whose employees had a command of Latin; and their capacity in turn allowed publication of scientific works. Ambrosius Fritsch (1523–1593) and his successor Johannes Rhambau (1565–1634) made Görlitz a publishing center.¹³ Most works by Scultetus were printed in the city. An exception was the plague tract that he edited, a work attributed to Paracelsus, *Vom Ursprung der Pestilenz*, which Scultetus published in Basel in 1575 together with his own summaries and concordances. Since he only taught minor courses at the Gymnasium, he had sufficient time for his scientific work. As he became more involved in city administration, he set aside his teaching in 1584. His political and administrative activities are discussed elsewhere in this volume.

What is of greatest interest to us here is the persistent and public nature of Scultetus's scientific activities. He noted on May 9, 1572, that he had installed a sundial in the courtyard of his house. Unfortunately fires and architectural alterations have destroyed it.¹⁴ In 1572, he also published his textbook on sundials, *Gnomonice de solaribus, sive doctrina practica tertiae partis astronomiae*. A

13 Ines Anders and Matthias Franke, *Denkfabrik 1600 – Das Gymnasium Augustum und das Görlitzer Geistesleben* (Görlitz: Verlag Gunter Oettel 2015).

14 Ernst Koch, "Scultetica," *Neues Lausitzisches Magazin* 96 (1916), 46.

copy has been preserved in the Upper Lusatian Library of Sciences. It contains the only extant portrait of Scultetus. The foreword remembers to thank his two teachers, his brother Zacharias and his university professor Johannes Hommel. The book contains practical and geometrical instructions for the construction of various kinds of sundials. It remained authoritative for decades, with an edition that can be dated as late as Amsterdam, 1670.

Unusually bright comets were known as Great Comets. One had appeared in the daylight sky in November 1577 to be viewed accordingly by many observers. In 1578, the rector of the Görlitz Gymnasium, Joachim Meister (1532–1587), published with the house of Fritsch his observation of the comet: *Descriptio Cometes Qui apparuit Anno Christi MDCLXXVII*. In 1618–19, Böhme would have an opportunity to observe another Great Comet. A Görlitz Paracelsist by the name of Franz Wendler (1569–1621) published a short report including an astrological section with Rhambau in 1619: *Methodus Cometae Practica*.

Scultetus observed the Great Comet of 1577 from November 10 until January 13, 1578, from the city hall tower. His measurements convinced him of the validity of the customary understanding of comets as sublunary phenomena that emitted poisonous vapors capable of exerting an immediate impact on terrestrial life. In 1578, he published his observations together with his astrological speculations in the papers entitled *Descriptio cometae anno 1577 apparentis* and *Des grossen wunderbaren Cometen [...] im 1577. Jahr*. He then sent the Latin version to his friend Tycho Brahe. Brahe wrote back and thanked Scultetus on October 12, 1581. In his letter, he described his fundamentally improved instruments and the more precise measurements they permitted. They had allowed Brahe to ascertain that the parallax of the comet was clearly smaller than that of the moon. Accordingly, the comet could only be in the *supralunary* realm. This implied that it had penetrated the planetary spheres in which people had once believed, and that it could hardly influence earthly life by means of noxious vapors. Potentially, this amounted to an enormous paradigm shift. Brahe sent a copy of his work, *De Mundi Aetherei Recentioribus Phaenomenis*, with a personal dedication to Scultetus. The book took up the faulty comet measurements made by Scultetus. As a mathematician and astronomer, Scultetus accepted the scientific facts and acknowledged the limits of his instruments. This might be the reason why we have no subsequent observational reports from him. He seems to have shifted attention to historiographic studies and the astronomy of calendars which were more theoretical than observational. In this regard, it should be added that it makes no sense to call the dwarf edifice on the city wall an observatory. Its low windows would not have allowed a comprehensive celestial view. A superior view can only be obtained of the eastern horizon, which would have made the house suitable for working on

the astronomy of calendars; however, further research would be needed to determine whether Scultetus actually observed the rising of the sun and moon from this vantage.

Nothing reveals the public profile of the science of the stars in Böhme's time better than the issue of the calendar reform. Our calendar follows the tropical solar year, which is approximately 365 days, five hours, and 11 minutes in length. The Julian calendar, with its fixed four-year leap year increments, had lasted 365 days and six hours. In the year 325, the Council of Nicea had established the beginning of spring as March 21. Easter Sunday was to follow the first full moon of spring. Since the Julian calendar year was too long, the astronomical beginning of spring had been displaced to March 11. Pope Gregory XIII (1502–1585) convened a calendar commission in Rome under the direction of Christoph Clavius (1537–1612) in order to reform the existing Julian calendar. The key to reform was dropping at one time ten days in order to compensate for the accumulated discrepancy, and then not treating full centuries which are not divisible by 400 (such as 1700, 1800, or 1900) as leap years, since the consistent adherence to leap years had made the calendar year 11 seconds longer than the astronomical year. In addition, there were adjustments for determining Easter.

In mid-September, 1582, the pope informed the German emperor Rudolf II (reigned 1552–1612) by way of a papal legate that the ruler was expected to carry out the reform in Germany as well. Rudolf set January 1584 as the date by which the reform would be instituted in his territories. The going was slow. There were no practical instructions for implementation; and though well-conceived, the reform was controversial on all sides. Its critics complained of its compromises and demanded a calendar that would be as astronomically precise as possible, above all in calculating the phases of the moon. The purposes of the compromises had been to accommodate Easter within the annual liturgy, since liturgy and saints' days ordered public life more thoroughly than now. Worst of all, many Protestants suspected a papal intrigue which would mandate the omission of ten saints' days. These, according to popular belief, had an impact on the weather and hence on the vital circumstances of the peasants. On a single Sunday, three masses were to be read. Beyond the ideological problems, there was too little practical information for implementation. The reform could only be carried out in a timely fashion where pragmatic astronomers were on call.

For more than ten years, Scultetus studied the necessity of the reform. In 1571, he published his *Calendarium Ecclesiasticum & Horoscopvm Pertetvrm. Ein ewigwerender Calender*. Its purpose was the calculation of church feast days. In 1575, he composed a manuscript entitled "*Ephemeris annorum mundanorum solaris*." In it, he explained the mean solar year and compared various ways of

calculating of times with one another. He showed his work to Johann Leisetrith (1527–1586) of the Bautzen cathedral chapter, who then sent it on to papal legate in Prague. Scultetus spent time in Prague in preparatory discussions and consulted with the legate in Görlitz. Looking back later, Christoph Clavius recounted in the foreword of his *Novi Calendarii Romani Apologia* (Rome 1588) that he had learned from Scultetus, to whom he then sent a copy. It is preserved in the Upper Lusatian Library, with interesting marginal notations.

Another Upper Lusatian involved in the reform was the Lauban native, the mathematician and astronomer, Paulus Fabricius (1529–1589), a professor at the University of Vienna who became a member of the Imperial Calendar Commission in 1578. Like Scultetus, he published writing calendars which juxtaposed the old and new calendar dates. Upper Lusatia was inclined toward a progressive response to the changes. On December 10, 1583, Emperor Rudolf II mandated that the territory was to carry out the reform so that January 6, 1584, would be followed by January 17. Görlitz, Löbau, Bautzen, and Kamenz carried out the change on time. Elsewhere, there were questions, requests for more information, and delays, so that it was not until May 10 that all of Upper Lusatia had converted to the new system.¹⁵

Chronology made it possible and even necessary to consult with those of other faiths. When the Prague Rabbi Juda Löw came to Görlitz in 1585, Scultetus called on him on March 6, in the Inn at the Blue Lion in order to request instruction in Jewish chronology. On April 15, 1600, there was another discussion in the house of Scultetus.¹⁶ The purpose of the meeting is evident from the disk calculator developed by Scultetus for converting 12 different styles of calendar. A fragment of it is on display in the Upper Lusatian Library. The life of Jesus was a concern. A manuscript written in 1580, *Diarium Humanitatis Domini Nostri Iesu Christi in Terris*, went into print in the same year. In German translation, it was printed under the title *Diarium Humanitatis Iesu* in 1600 by Eichorn in Frankfurt an der Oder. To the day, the events are calculated in various systems of chronology. Scultetus followed this work with a manuscript on the Acts of the Apostles called *Diarium apostolicum*.

From April 26 until May 1, 1607, Johannes Kepler sojourned in Görlitz. He visited Scultetus in the Peterstraße. The circumstances of this visit shed light on the learned of Görlitz who surrounded Scultetus. From 1592, the Görlitz physician Dr. Bartholomäus Schwalbe (1551–1605) had resided in Prague. A close friend of Scultetus, Schwalbe did not sever his connections with Görlitz. At his behest, Kepler wrote to Scultetus on February 20, 1605, and reported on

15 Tino Fröde, "Zur Einführung des Gregorianischen Kalenders in der Oberlausitz," *Neues Lausitzisches Magazin* 129 (2007), 17–28.

16 Koch, "Scultetica," 28.

the nova in the serpent-bearer (Ophiuchus).¹⁷ Already in 1572, Brahe had been observing this phenomenon closely. Oddly, Scultetus seems to have made no relevant observations, a fact which had already surprised Brahe. Kepler, however, was acutely interested in so-called new stars. Their appearance in the supralunary realm stood in contradiction to Aristotelian physics. He was pursuing the question whether the star of Bethlehem might have been a nova of this kind. It seems probable that this would have been the theme of conversation with Kepler on the evening of April 26, 1607, in the house of Scultetus, though unfortunately no records of their discussion exist. No doubt they would have discussed the deceased Brahe and his observations, which Kepler was evaluating in Prague. Kepler had already deduced two laws from the orbit of Mars which had not yet been published. Scultetus, we know, tended more to the Tychoonian system than to the Copernican. Kepler's study of *gravitas* should have interested Scultetus as a matter of natural philosophy. The astrologer Kepler conceived of the natural influences of the stars on human beings by virtue of natural properties (light, color, or magnetism). He sought physical explanations for astrological relationships. For example, the astrological effects of the moon could be explained by virtue of moisture. We can assume that Scultetus shared these interests.

During his stay in Görlitz, Kepler also visited Gregorius Eichler (1562–1611). Eichler was a teacher at the Görlitz Gymnasium and also active as a pastor. He, too, published writing calendars, wrote horoscopes, and conducted astronomical studies. Kepler brought Eichler's son Viktorin with him as an assistant back to Prague to assist with tasks preparatory to the publication of his *Astronomia Nova*. Unfortunately, Viktorin fell ill. On January 1, 1608, Eichler wrote to Kepler asking him to send his son back home. He enclosed a reflection on the comet of 1607, which we know as Halley's Comet. Kepler responded on January 24. He complained that Eichler had asserted incorrectly that he, Kepler, was of the opinion that comets were sublunary phenomena. What is important for us is the ease and frequency with which connections were maintained between Prague and Görlitz. The rector of the Görlitz Gymnasium, Caspar Dornavius (1577–1632), wrote on January 25, 1609, to his friend Kepler of the surprising differences of opinion in the exact science of astronomy, given that Eichler could regard comets as burning air, while Scultetus and Brahe positioned them more in the realm of the constellations.¹⁸ This suggests that, unlike Georg Eichler, Scultetus was capable of embarking upon the incipient paradigm shift. Scultetus died on June 21, 1614. Not only had his work dominated astronomy in Görlitz during Böhme's era. Around him and through him, other actors emerge

17 Koch, "Moskowiter in der Oberlausitz," 58–59.

18 Koch, "Moskowiter in der Oberlausitz," 59–60.

from darkness to illuminate the complexities of astrological-astronomical thinking during their period.

We can summarize the ways in which the circles of the astronomers were manifest in Böhme's world. First of all, a relatively sophisticated lay awareness of and participation in celestial measurement was made possible for everyone in Görlitz through the intricate and scientifically grounded sundials and clocks that dominated public spaces. In the private sphere, the popular writing calendars put the contrasting Julian and Gregorian systems, as well as contrasting predictions based on the geocentric and heliocentric models, in the possession of the curious minded, while encouraging them to become involved in the cosmological transition by comparing alternate sets of data.

A dramatic confrontation with the relevance of astronomy to social and religious life was effected by the epoch-making calendar reform of 1584, which was certainly within living memory of Böhme and his fellow citizens of Görlitz. If anywhere, the calendar reform should have remained controversial among the Lutheran rural folk from among whom he hailed. Given the intensity of Protestant opposition, we might think of the controversies over evolution in our time as parallel to the "losing" of ten calendar days in 1584 and to the necessity of coming to terms with the new, counterintuitive world view, about which rumors circulated in Görlitz. It is therefore noteworthy that a sense of respect for the new science is evidenced in Böhme's first work. The author who is of rural background ridicules those who fail to see his revelation as equivalent to "the peasant looking for the horse he is mounted on."¹⁹ In nearly the same breath, he confesses his grudging respect for the knowledge of the learned:

I have not studied or learned their arts, nor do I know how to work with their measuring compass, but I am not so concerned about this. There remains so much for them to learn that many a one will not fathom and comprehend it in a lifetime [...]. I do not disdain the formula of their *philosophia*, *astrologia*, or *theologia* at all. I consider that they rest for the most part on proper grounds, and I will indeed endeavor to follow their formula. For I must truly confess that their formula is my schoolmaster; and I have taken my start and first knowledge from it. (A 649)

Though accompanied by an asseveration that he knows what he knows from God alone, Böhme's grudging and contradictory respect for a new science

19 Jacob Böhme, Jacob Böhme, *Aurora (Morgen Röte im auffgang, 1612) and Ein gründlicher Bericht or A Fundamental Report (Mysterium Pansophicum, 1620): With a Translation, Introduction, and Commentary by Andrew Weeks [...]*, Aries Book Series, 16 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), 650–651. Subsequent references refer to A.

which uses the “measuring compass” culminates in a clear affirmation of the new solar system, one that is perhaps shaky in its details, yet unequivocal in its tendency: “The sun has its own royal locus and does not stray from the place in which it first came into being [...]. The earth turns and courses with the other planets as in a wheel around the sun, as do the other planets under the sun, except for Saturn and Jupiter which cannot do so on account of their broad orbit and great height, since they stand high above the sun” (A 743). With these words, Böhme emerged from the shadows of the learned and took his stand with the new model of the cosmos. In the course of *Aurora*, the author makes the transition from a religious and symbolic heliocentrism to an implicitly factual and scientific one.

We noted above that, absent the Newtonian understanding of gravity, Kepler had recourse to perfect spirits which ordered the cosmos. Böhme's nature is likewise informed by divine spirits which, in Chapter 25 of *Aurora*, are associated with planetary astrology. This of course does not prove that he was influenced by Kepler; but at the very least, they both confronted the same problem, though with vastly different levels of expertise. Given that the old *machina mundi*, with its solid, easily visualized spheres, was no longer tenable, what could possibly hold all things in place and make the world turn properly, thereby maintaining all the motions and processes that depended on the predictable working of the cosmos? At the very least, both men were compelled to accept invisible occult forces at work everywhere. Böhme was sufficiently familiar with the contemplation of the heavens that Günther Bonheim is not far-fetched in suggesting that the author may have anticipated and offered a solution to the problem of how the sky could be dark if there are infinite or limitless stars.²⁰

Finally, one additional aspect of the public culture of astronomy in Görlitz merits reflection here: the sundials and writing calendars that juxtaposed alternate chronologies such as the Babylonian, Jewish, Christian, Julian, or Gregorian, implicitly suggested that the alternate belief systems which they reflected could be harmonized in the light of the new sciences. To Böhme, his dawning new revelation meant that all the conflicts of his time would be reconciled in the embrace of a final all-encompassing truth, an aurora shining forth from nature.

20 Günther Bonheim, „ward ich des wegen Gantz Melancholisch‘ Jacob Böhmes ‚Heidnische gedanken‘ bei Betrachtung des Himmels und der Astronomie seiner Zeit,“ *Euphorion* 91 (1997), 109.

Jacob Böhme and Alchemy: A Transmutation in Three Stages

Mike A. Zuber

Already during his lifetime, Jacob Böhme found himself criticized for his reliance on alchemical terminology. The Thuringian antinomian Esaias Stiefel (1561–1627) distanced his own thoroughly heterodox and antinomian doctrine of *Christificatio* from ‘the kabbalistic, Rosicrucian, J. Bohemian-Brethren manner’ in which the theosopher construed spiritual rebirth as an alchemical transmutation.¹ Subsequently, while alchemists came to scour Böhme’s writings for hidden clues that would aid their laboratory pursuit of the philosophers’ stone,² self-professed guardians of orthodoxy were much more likely to raise objections in the vein of Stiefel’s.³ The quest for Böhme’s alchemical sources thus has its origin in polemical accusations made by a radical rival and orthodox heresy-hunters. Mostly stripped of the original intent to discredit the

* I would like to express my gratitude to Bo Andersson and Andrew Weeks for welcoming a junior contributor at the Görlitz conference back in 2014. Peter J. Forshaw, Wouter J. Hanegraaff, and Lucinda Martin gave feedback on various earlier or alternative texts in which I grappled with the subject. Special thanks go to Leigh Penman for invaluable support and generously shared information on Böhme and his letters.

1 Jacob Böhme, ‘*Apologia*, Betreffend Die Vollkommenheit des Menschen,’ in *Bedencken über Esaiæ Stiefels Büchlein* (Amsterdam: 1682), 33–170, on 151 (*Anti-Stiefelius II* [= AS2], 325). ‘Cabalistischer, Theophrastischer, Rosencreutzischer, J. Böhmischen Bruder Art’. When quoting Böhme’s works, I rely on the most accurate text obtainable, introduce an abbreviation for each work, and indicate the corresponding chapter and paragraph in the standard 1730 edition; for a reprint, see Jacob Böhme, *Sämtliche Schriften: Faksimile-Neudruck der Ausgabe von 1730 in elf Bänden*, ed. Will-Erich Peuckert, 11 vols. (Stuttgart: frommann-holzboog, 1955–61). I have normalized the use of *u/v* – *i/j* and replaced virgules by commas. On Stiefel, see Ulman Weiß, *Die Lebenswelten des Esajas Stiefel oder Vom Umgang mit Dissidenten* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2007).

2 Joachim Telle, ‘Jakob Böhme unter den deutschen Alchemikern der frühen Neuzeit,’ in *Offenbarung und Episteme: Zur europäischen Wirkung Jakob Böhmes im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Wilhelm Kühlmann and Friedrich Vollhardt (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), 165–182.

3 E.g. Christian Becman, ‘*Exercitatio XXII. In qua ... candide judicatur de Jacobi Behmii libris*,’ in *Exercitationes theologicae* (Amsterdam: Apud Joannem Janssonium, 1643), 419–459, on 434–441; Erasmus Francisci, *Gegen-Stral Der Morgenröte/ Christlicher und Schriftmässiger Warheit/ Wider das Stern-gleissende Irrlicht Der Absondrung von der Kirchen und den Sacramenten* (Nürnberg: In Verlegung Wolfgang Moritz Endters, 1685), 746–752.

Görlitz theosopher, the scholarly consensus (which, in effect, goes back to the nineteenth century) holds that alchemy had a significant impact on the writings of Böhme.⁴ And yet, somewhat irritatingly, there is also general agreement that Böhme's use of alchemical terminology has little to do with laboratory work.⁵

It may perhaps be attributed to this tension that there have been few studies on the subject that venture beyond broad statements. From folklorist and historian of magic Will-Erich Peuckert (1895–1969) to literary scholar Ferdinand van Ingen, scholars have largely contented themselves with emphasizing the inscrutability of Böhme's alchemical language. When attempting to elucidate it nonetheless, they have mostly relied on the *Wasserstein der Weysen* (1607; 1st ed. 1619), which is the only alchemical text Böhme ever mentioned explicitly.⁶ I shall argue that this approach is untenable in view of the fact that Böhme's engagement with the *Wasserstein* is only documented in a letter from 1624 which has been heretofore erroneously dated to 1622. Alternatively, Böhme has been juxtaposed with the renowned alchemist Heinrich Khunrath (1560–1605), whom Antoine Faivre called a 'proto-theosopher'.⁷ In addition, Wilhelm

4 The first full-length study on the subject was published in 1870 and re-issued twelve years later: G.C. Adolf von Harleß, *Jacob Böhme und die Alchymisten: Ein Beitrag zum Verständniß J. Böhme's*, 2nd, expanded ed. (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1882).

5 E.g. F. Sherwood Taylor, *The Alchemists: Founders of Modern Chemistry* (New York: Arno Press, 1974), 227–228. One notable exception to the rule is Lawrence M. Principe and Andrew Weeks, 'Jacob Boehme's Divine Substance *Salitter*: Its Nature, Origin, and Relationship to Seventeenth Century Scientific Theories,' *British Journal for the History of Science* 22, no. 1 (1989), 53–61. See also Principe's entry in Claus Priesner and Karin Figala, eds., *Alchemie: Lexikon einer hermetischen Wissenschaft* (München: Beck, 1998), s.v. 'Boehme, Jakob'.

6 Particularly Ferdinand van Ingen's commentary is remarkable for the extent to which it draws on the *Wasserstein*: Jacob Böhme, *Werke: Morgenröte. De signatura rerum*, ed. Ferdinand van Ingen (Frankfurt a.M.: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1997), e.g. 805, 807, 931, 994, 999, 1065–66, 1073, 1077, 1084, 1087–89, and 1109. See also Ferdinand van Ingen, *Jacob Böhme in seiner Zeit* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: frommann-holzboog, 2015), 150–154. For earlier instances, see e.g. Harleß, *Jacob Böhme und die Alchymisten*, 38–39, n. 1 (cont.); Will-Erich Peuckert, *Das Leben Jakob Böhmes* (Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1924), 57 and 164–170; Erich Worbs, 'Gib der Erde des Himmels Speise: Jakob Böhmes rätselvolles Verhältnis zur Alchimie,' *Schlesien* 8 (1963), 196–200.

7 Antoine Faivre, *Theosophy, Imagination, Tradition: Studies in Western Esotericism*, trans. Christine Rhone (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 6–7. See also Hans Schmiedehausen, 'Alchemie und Theosophie: Jakob Böhmes Denken und ein Kupferstich aus einem Werk des Paracelsisten Heinrich Khunrath,' in *Die Morgenröte bricht an: Jakob Böhme, naturnaher Mystiker und Theosoph*, ed. Martin Leiche (Karlsruhe: Herrenalber Forum, 1999), 76–99. For more on Khunrath, see the work of Peter J. Forshaw, e.g. 'Subliming Spirits: Physical-Chemistry and Theo-Alchemy in the Works of Heinrich Khunrath (1560–1605),' in *Mystical Metal of Gold: Essays on Alchemy and Renaissance Culture*, ed. Stanton J. Linden (New York: AMS Press, 2007), 255–275.

Ganzenmüller (1882–1955) speculated that the theosopher could have known the controversial *Liber Trinitatis* (1410–19), which circulated in Görlitz during the sixteenth century, yet there is little to go on in this regard.⁸ Beyond the opacity of Böhme's own works, the subject of alchemy and alchemical Paracelsianism around 1600 are themselves immensely complex areas of research. However, in the wake of the 'New Historiography of Alchemy', pioneered by William R. Newman and Lawrence M. Principe since the 1990s,⁹ and the indefatigable work of Joachim Telle (1939–2013) and Wilhelm Kühlmann on the *Corpus Paracelsisticum*,¹⁰ we are now in a much better position to assess the contours of alchemy within, and its impact on, the theosopher's writings.

The present chapter outlines how Böhme's engagement with alchemy developed from the *Aurora* of 1612 to his 1624 sojourn in Dresden towards the end of his life. I argue that it is crucial to note the biographical context and chronological development of his *œuvre* to gain an understanding of the place and significance of alchemy within it. There are three distinct stages of Böhme's engagement with alchemy. These amount to a gradual process, at the end of which the theosopher almost saw himself transmuted into an alchemist managing fire and furnace. The first stage of Böhme's alchemical progress is inscribed within his earliest book, *Aurora* (1612). In this work there was as yet very little that clearly harks back to transmutational alchemy. In fact, Böhme most emphatically did not want to be mistaken for an alchemist. Nonetheless, he argued that, based on his theosophical insights, he also had a certain knowledge of metallurgical processes. The second stage unfolded from 1618/19 onwards and is both intimately connected to, and documented in, Böhme's extant correspondence. Following the unauthorized scribal publication and subsequent dissemination of his *Aurora*, Böhme gradually established contact

8 W. Ganzenmüller, 'Das Buch der heiligen Dreifaltigkeit: Eine Deutsche Alchemie aus dem Anfang des 15. Jahrhunderts,' in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Technologie und der Alchemie* (Weinheim: Verlag Chemie, 1956), 231–272, on 271. Telle notes that the Görlitz alchemist Georg Klet wrote dismissively of the *Liber Trinitatis* around 1500; Joachim Telle, *Alchemie und Poesie: Deutsche Alchemikerdichtungen des 15. bis 17. Jahrhunderts*, 2 vols. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013), vol. 1, 509–510, n. 125.

9 Eirenaeus Philaethes and Carl Jung, 'Revue d'histoire des sciences 49, no. 2–3 (1996), 159–188; William R. Newman and Lawrence M. Principe, 'Alchemy vs. Chemistry: The Etymological Origins of a Historiographical Mistake,' *Early Science and Medicine* 3, no. 1 (1998), 32–65; Lawrence M. Principe and William R. Newman, 'Some Problems with the Historiography of Alchemy,' in *Secrets of Nature: Astrology and Alchemy in Early Modern Europe*, ed. William R. Newman and Anthony Grafton (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001), 385–431.

10 Wilhelm Kühlmann and Joachim Telle, eds., *Der Frühparacelsismus (Corpus Paracelsisticum)*, 3 vols. (Tübingen/Berlin: Niemeyer/de Gruyter, 2001–13).

with an intricate network, which included several alchemists, Paracelsians, physicians, and others who were interested in natural philosophy. These contacts allowed Böhme to develop a greater familiarity with alchemical terminology, which became a marked feature of his major later works. This trajectory famously culminated in *Signatura rerum* (1622; 1st German ed. 1634). Within Böhme's correspondence, there are striking indications that serious practitioners heeded his advice on their alchemical pursuits. Yet despite this and the great increase in alchemical language, Böhme appears to have remained mostly ignorant of laboratory alchemy and its literature until the last year of his life. This is the third and final stage of Böhme's alchemical transmutation. Only while spending six weeks in Dresden during the spring and summer of 1624 did he engage with alchemical literature more actively and look forward to being introduced to laboratory practice. The structure of this chapter follows these developments.

1 'You Should Not Take Me for an Alchemist': Alchemy in Böhme's *Aurora*

The most pertinent passage regarding alchemy in Böhme's *Aurora* is found in its twenty-second chapter, in a section titled 'Concerning the metals in the earth'.¹¹ There, Böhme described a process for the purification of gold in seven stages. Already in the late seventeenth century, the anonymous compiler of *Idea chemiae Böhmiianæ adeptæ* (1690) praised this particular passage as containing 'great light and instruction towards the great work of the philosophical *opus*'.¹² Peuckert has argued that the passage is not primarily alchemical, emphasizing instead the difference between metallurgy and alchemy, purification and transmutation.¹³ On this reading, Böhme merely described a process of metallurgical purification. While Peuckert's observation is astute, one might add that many early-modern alchemists would have viewed purification and transmutation as points situated on a continuum, rather than as fundamentally contrasting procedures. All metals tended towards perfection,

11 Jacob Böhme, *Aurora (Morgen Röte im auffgang, 1612) and Fundamental Report (Gründlicher Bericht, Mysterium Pansophicum, 1620)*, ed. & trans. Andrew Weeks and Günther Bonheim (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 668/9 (*Aurora* [= A] 22: 84). 'Von Den Methalen In der Erden.'

12 Anonymous, *Idea chemiae Böhmiianæ adeptæ, Das ist: Ein Kurtzer Abriß Der Bereitung des Steins der Weisen/ Nach Anleitung deß Jacobi Böhm* (Amsterdam, 1690), 60. 'Grosses Licht und Unterweisung zu dem grossen Wercke deß Operis Philosophici'. See also Anonymous, *Metallurgia Böhmiiana, Das ist: Eine Beschreibung der Metallen/ ... Nach deß Jacobi Böhmii Philosophi Teutonici principiis. In dreyen Theilen abgefasst* (Amsterdam, 1695).

13 Peuckert, *Das Leben Jakob Böhm*, 57.

which would be attained in gold; given enough time, they would all reach this state. Whether alchemists laboriously purified gold or instantaneously transmuted a lesser metal, in both cases they believed themselves to be merely accelerating the ordinary course of nature.

Unlike Peuckert, Ferdinand van Ingen has pointed out that Böhme may have drawn on transmutational alchemy in this passage on the purification of gold. The seven steps he described can be read as alluding to an equal number of stages in the alchemical work, a conception not uncommon during this period.¹⁴ If Böhme's evocation of alchemy and the seven stages already suggests some measure of familiarity with alchemy, his idiosyncratic use of the term 'Salitter', which occurs many times throughout *Aurora*, can be contextualized more precisely. 'Salitter' was Böhme's rendering of *sal niter*, a substance which played a significant role in alchemical writings around 1600. While the *Novum lumen chymicum* (1604) by the Polish alchemist Michael Sendivogius (1566–1636) was an important work in this context, Böhme's appropriation of the term had greater affinity to the conception propagated by the French Paracelsian Joseph du Chesne (1544–1609), also known as Quercetanus.¹⁵ When writing his *Aurora*, Böhme was thus at least vaguely familiar with transmutational alchemy and current trends in its literature.

Nonetheless, at the end of the metallurgical passage, Böhme emphatically distanced himself from practising laboratory alchemy: '*You should not take me for an alchemist.*'¹⁶ Yet even as he professed ignorance and inexperience, Böhme indicated that his wisdom could nevertheless provide pointers for success in actual alchemical practice. He continued as follows:

For I write only in the knowledge of the spirit and not from experience, though I could indicate a few things here regarding the number of days and the choice of hours for preparing such things. For gold cannot be made in a single day: an entire moon is needed. But it is not my intention

14 Van Ingen lists the seven stages, as presented by Leonhard Thurneisser, in Böhme, *Werke*, 998–999. For another example, see Leigh T.I. Penman, ed., *Cabala: Mirror of Art and Nature. Editio trilingua: A Critical Edition of the German and Latin Editions 1615–1616, Published by Stephan Michelspacher in Augsburg, together with an Annotated English Translation* (Seattle: Ouroboros Press, 2015), pl. 3 ('Mittel: Coniunction') and the remarks on 50–51. See also Psalm 12: 6.

15 Principe and Weeks, 'Jacob Boehme's Divine Substance'; Böhme, *Aurora*, 34–35. In the former paper, the assumption that Alexander Seton was the author of the *Novum lumen chymicum* is mistaken; see Rafał T. Prinke, 'The Twelfth Adept: Michael Sendivogius in Rudolfs Prague,' in *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment Revisited*, ed. Ralph White (Hudson: Lindisfarne Books, 1999), 143–192.

16 Böhme, *Aurora*, 674/5 (A 22: 105). '*Du darfst mich darumb für keinen Alchimisten Halten.*' The emphases are Böhme's and Weeks's, respectively.

to try my hand at that. I would not know how to work with fire, nor do I know the colors of the source spirits in their outer birth: which are two among great shortcomings. I know them after another human being who does not abide in the realm of palpability.¹⁷

The cryptic final sentence most likely refers to Christ,¹⁸ whose life would later provide the blueprint for the theosopher's most extensive discussion of alchemy in *Signatura rerum*, composed some ten years later.

Böhme held that his insight into alchemy derived from the fact that he had access to the divine realm through Christ who lived in him. In addition, the theosopher claimed that he could offer astrological pointers for choosing the most propitious time of day for undertaking certain alchemical operations.¹⁹ In *Aurora* Böhme consistently approached his subject – the mineral or metallic realm of nature – on the basis of analogy and correspondence not only with the vegetable realm but also, and more importantly, with the divine world. He particularly emphasized the latter: 'But in the realm of the dead palpability gold or silver are but a dark stone compared to the root of the celestial generation. I mention it here only so that you will know the origin of these things.'²⁰ The seven metals, particularly gold and silver, were dark reflections of the

17 Böhme, *Aurora*, 674/5 (A 22: 105–106). 'Den Ich schreibe alleine In erkenntnis des Geistes und nicht durch er fahrenheit, wie wol Ich zwar alhie edwas mehres ahn zeigen könnte, In wie viel tagen, und in welchen stunden Solche ding müssen Prepariret werden, Den man nicht Gold in einem tage Machen kahn, Sondern gehörd ein gantzer monden darzu, Es ist aber nicht mein für nemen, mich auff das zu ver suchen Sintemal Ich nicht weis mit dem feuer umb zu gehen, Auch So kenne Ich der quel Geister farben, in ihrer Eusersten geburt nicht, welches Grosser Mengel zwene sint, Sondern Ich kenne sie nach einem andern Menschen der nicht in der begreiffligkeit stehed.' The translation is Weeks's, adapted as follows: his rendering of the phrase regarding the shortcomings suggests that there were 'two great deficiencies' in 'the colors of the source spirits in their outer birth'. Instead, I take Böhme to refer to two great shortcomings of his own, which are (1) his lack of skill in working with fire and (2) his lack of knowledge regarding the colours of the source spirits in the physical world, i.e. the seven metals.

18 Weeks suggests this on the basis of 2 Corinthians 12: 2, where Paul describes his own visionary experience in the third person; Böhme, *Aurora*, 675, n. 11.

19 Böhme was probably thinking in terms of planetary rulership, which could link individual metals to seasons, months, days, or hours. For more on interactions between alchemy and astrology, see Peter J. Forshaw, 'Chemistry, that Starry Science': Early Modern Conjunctions of Astrology and Alchemy,' in *Sky and Symbol: Proceedings of the Ninth Annual Sophia Centre Conference, 2011*, ed. Nicholas Campion and Liz Greene (Lampeter: Sophia Centre Press, 2013), 143–184.

20 Böhme, *Aurora*, 668/9 (A 22: 85). 'Aber das Silber und Gold in der toten begreiffligkeit, ist nur ein fünster stein, kegen der wurzel, der Himlischen gebärung, Ich setze es nur darumb Hie Hehr, das du wissest, wo von es seinen ursprung Hatt'.

ongoing heavenly birth at its height, for which reason they were 'loved by human beings above all else in this world'.²¹

From Böhme's first discussion of alchemy, we can derive several important conclusions. In 1612 Böhme did not claim to have practised alchemy in the laboratory. Rather, he asserted that he knew about alchemy based on his theological insights into the divine world. Simultaneously, he insisted that practising alchemists could harness his wisdom for laboratory purposes. Although this may seem like a far-fetched claim, several of Böhme's associates took his approach very seriously.

2 'For the Noble Stone, *Lapis Philosophorum*, ... Lies Therein': Alchemy in Böhme's Correspondence and *Signatura Rerum*

Böhme's later works were written beginning in 1618/19 after several years of enforced silence. Back in 1613, the city council of Görlitz had confiscated his *Aurora* autograph and forbidden him to write again.²² Much like in the *Aurora* of 1612, Böhme continued to insist that he was a stranger to alchemical furnaces, although he had clearly become more familiar with alchemical concepts. The second stage of Böhme's alchemy unfolds throughout these later writings, and it is intimately connected to his network of contacts and correspondents, several of whom were practitioners of alchemy or Paracelsian medicine.²³ The intellectual stimuli the theosopher received from his network of associates are reflected in his increasing reliance on alchemical terminology. Conversely, letters in Böhme's correspondence document that his claim to divine revelation on matters alchemical proved convincing to at least some of his adherents, who turned to him for practical directions.

In addition to various references to the philosophical stone throughout Böhme's correspondence, there are three major discussions of alchemy in Epistles 10 (April/May 1620), 15 (ca. 20 February 1623), and 28 (ca. 25 May 1624).

21 Böhme, *Aurora*, 668/9 (A 22: 86). 'In diser weld vom Menschen, für alles andere gelibed'.

22 Ernst-Heinz Lemper, *Jakob Böhme: Leben und Werk* (Berlin: Union Verlag, 1976), 66–69 and 73–74. For a briefer account in English, see Ariel Hessayon, 'Boehme's Life and Times,' in *An Introduction to Jacob Boehme: Four Centuries of Thought and Reception*, ed. Ariel Hessayon and Sarah Apetrei (London: Routledge, 2014), 13–37, on 14–15.

23 Leigh T.I. Penman, 'Boehme's Intellectual Networks and the Heterodox Milieu of His Theosophy, 1600–1624,' in *An Introduction to Jacob Boehme: Four Centuries of Thought and Reception*, ed. Ariel Hessayon and Sarah Apetrei (London: Routledge, 2014), 57–76. See also Penman's contribution to this volume and the foundational paper by Ernst-Heinz Lemper, 'Görlitz und der Paracelsismus,' *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 18, no. 3 (1970), 347–360.

Two of these were misdated in early-modern editions of Böhme's Epistles, which has had significant ramifications for their interpretation and for understanding the development of Böhme's alchemical knowledge.²⁴ In the following, I explore what Epistles 10 and 15 can tell us about the theosopher's engagement with alchemy. The second of these letters relates to one of his best-known treatises, *Signatura rerum*, containing the most sustained and elaborate discussion of alchemy in Böhme's works. Since it was written in 1624, Epistle 28 needs to be seen in the context of Böhme's sojourn in Dresden and will be discussed in the following section.

In a letter written to the Silesian nobleman Abraham von Sommerfeld (d. 1651) in April or May 1620, Böhme assured his patron that 'all the metals of the earth ... could be brought to the highest degree, but only [by] the children of God's *magia*'.²⁵ In other words, the goals of transmutational alchemy could be accomplished exclusively by born-again believers. Simultaneously, the theosopher reiterated his basic stance on laboratory practice: 'I can well see the same [the transmutation of metals], yet it does not behove me to touch it, and I also do not have the art and skills for it; instead, I only present an open mystery: God will wake up workers for himself, no one should look for the work [of alchemy] with me.'²⁶ As in *Aurora*, Böhme emphasized that his knowledge derived from divine revelations while simultaneously professing ignorance regarding the practicalities of laboratory alchemy. Such references to alchemy in Böhme's correspondence are significant since they suggest that his contemporaries gave credence to his claim. It seems that even those among Böhme's contacts who practised alchemy or Paracelsian medicine took this approach seriously. As we have seen, much later in the seventeenth century, the anonymous compiler of the *Idea chemiae Böhmicanae adeptae* concurred and portrayed Böhme as a masterful alchemist.²⁷

This may at first seem somewhat puzzling, yet Böhme's theosophical or neo-Platonic epistemology was shared by many of his contemporaries. Their approach privileged invisible realities over visible ones, which were viewed as

24 On this issue, see Leigh Penman, 'The Broken Tradition: Uncovering Errors in the Correspondence of Jacob Böhme,' *Aries* 18, no. 1 (2018), 96–125.

25 The various editions only mention the year; the spring months are mentioned by Hans Grunsky, *Jacob Böhme*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: frommann-holzboog, 1984), 42–43.

26 Jacob Böhme, *Theosophische Send-Schreiben* (Amsterdam: Verlegt durch Henrico Betkio, 1658), 91 (*Epistolae Theosophicae* [= ET] 10: 42–43). 'Es können alle Metallen der Erden ... in den höchsten grad gebracht werden, aber nur [durch] die Kinder der *Magia* Gottes'; 'Ich sehe wol dasselbe, aber mir gebühret nicht dasselbe anzurühren, habe auch keine Kunst noch Handgriffe darzu, sondern stelle nur ein offen *Mysterium* dar, Gott wird ihme schon seine Arbeiter erwecken, bey mir suche niemand das Werck'.

27 Anonymous, *Idea chemiae Böhmicanae adeptae*, e.g. 57–58, 60, and 65.

inferior reflections. Philipp Döbner (1590–1662), a jurist and closet alchemist of Coburg, repeatedly used a quote from the *Aurei Velleris ... Libri tres* (1604) by the Antwerp alchemist Willem Mennens (1525–1608) to assert that ‘GOD created nothing in the spirit, truly invisibly, which would not be adumbrated visibly by some body, so that by the body of the passive shadow we can reach the hidden truth of the spirit’.²⁸ Similar epistemological assumptions underlie the 1599 letter (1st ed. 1670) which the famous devotional writer and secretive Paracelsian Johann Arndt (1555–1621) wrote to Erasmus Wolfart (fl. 1596–1609), an associate of Heinrich Khunrath.²⁹ Like earlier alchemical writers,³⁰ Arndt did not hesitate to project insights gained from the religious domain onto the quest for the philosophers’ stone.

Elsewhere in the same letter to Sommerfeld, Böhme advertised other writings of his, such as *De triplici vita* (1620; 1st ed. 1660) and *Quaestiones theosophicae* (1620; 1st ed. 1648). He used alchemical rhetoric to do so: ‘For the noble stone, *lapis philosophorum*, the foundation of all secrecy, lies therein’.³¹ At first glance, it would thus seem that Böhme considered his works to contain and communicate the greatest secret of transmutational alchemy. However, he had

28 Gotha, Thüringisches Landesarchiv – Staatsarchiv: GA, E XI, Nr. 87, f. 264v. ‘Nihil etiam creavit DEUS in spiritu, verum invisibiliter, quin idem in corpore aliquot adumbraverit visibiliter ut per corpus umbræ patientis perveniamus ad veritatem spiritus latentis.’ The same quote appears also on f. 291v. Comp. Guillaume Mennens, *Aurei velleris sive Sacrae Philosophiae Vatum Selectæ ac Unicae Mysteriorumque Dei, Naturæ, et Artis admirabilium, Libri tres* (Antwerp: Sumptibus Viduæ & Heredum Jo. Belleri, sub insigni Aquilæ Aureæ, 1604), 124.

29 Johann Arndt, *Das große Geheimniß der Menschwerdung des ewigen Worts. In einem Send-schreiben an seinen guten Freund Erasmum Wolfartum, Notar. Publ. Cæs. etc.* (n.p., 1676), 12. For a recent discussion of this letter, see Thomas Illg, *Ein anderer Mensch werden: Johann Arndts Verständnis der imitatio Christ als Anleitung zu einem wahren Christentum* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2011), 106–127. On Arndt’s engagement with Paracelsianism, see the chapters ‘Johann Arndts Studienzeit’ and ‘Johann Arndt als Paracelsist’ in Hans Schneider, *Der fremde Arndt: Studien zu Leben, Werk und Wirkung Johann Arndts (1555–1621)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 83–129 and 135–155. On Arndt’s posthumous reputation as an adept, see Joachim Telle, ‘Johann Arndt – ein alchemischer Lehrdichter? Bemerkungen zu Alexander von Suchtens *De lapide philosophorum* (1572),’ in *Strenae nataliciae: Neulateinische Studien. Wilhelm Kühlmann zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Hermann Wiegand (Heidelberg: Manutius Verlag, 2007), 231–246.

30 A famous example is Petrus Bonus’ *Margarita pretiosa novella* (1st ed. 1546); on this work, see Chiara Crisciani, ‘The Conception of Alchemy as Expressed in the *Pretiosa Margarita Novella* of Petrus Bonus of Ferrara,’ *Ambix* 20, no. 3 (1973), 165–181. See also Tara Nummedal, ed., ‘Special Issue: Alchemy and Religion in Christian Europe,’ *Ambix* 60, no. 4 (2013), 311–414.

31 Böhme, *Theosophische Send-Schreiben*, 83 (ET 10: 20). ‘Dan es lieget der edle Stein *Lapis Philosophorum*, der Grund aller Heimlichkeit darinnen’.

in mind something more sublime, of which laboratory alchemy was but a reflection. The very ambiguity of Böhme's statements reinforced his claim that theosophical and alchemical insights could be equated. Indeed, the theosopher productively used alchemical terminology to develop a distinct spiritual alchemy of rebirth throughout his later works.³² Arguably the most important presentation may be found in *Signatura rerum*, completed in February 1622. Böhme argued that his spiritual alchemy was not merely a playful allegory but instead took on an independent reality within his theosophical understanding of the world. He even told his readers to take him literally when he spoke of the 'Process of Christ' and transmutation: 'we do not want to write anything parabolically but clear as day'.³³ This highlights the fact that, within Böhme's work, spiritual alchemy became dominant, more real than laboratory alchemy.

Böhme clearly stated that laboratory alchemy was but a physical shadow of the divine alchemy of becoming and the spiritual alchemy of rebirth:

As the eternal birth [of the deity] is within itself, thus also is the process in the restoration after the Fall and thus also is the process of the wise with their philosophers' stone – there is not a dot of difference between them, for everything originated in the eternal birth, and everything must have its restoration in the same manner.³⁴

Böhme argued that the ongoing dynamism of the godhead was reflected both in God's steps towards the restoration of mankind's fallen state (on the individual level of spiritual rebirth as well as the cosmic one of salvation history) and the alchemist's operations towards the philosophers' stone. In so doing, Böhme seized upon, and considerably expanded, a fascinating element

32 By spiritual alchemy, I mean 'the practical pursuit of inward but physically real transmutation, understood as a reversal of the consequences of the Fall and a preparation for the resurrection of the dead at the Last Judgment'; Mike A. Zuber, *Spiritual Alchemy from the Age of Jacob Boehme to Mary Anne Atwood, 1600–1900* (PhD thesis, Universiteit van Amsterdam, 2017), 38; see also 110–161 on Böhme. Laboratory alchemy is equally practical and physical but chiefly involves chemical substances. Spiritual and laboratory alchemy are not mutually exclusive, as is often assumed; rather, in Böhme's as well as other cases, spiritual alchemy can promote interest in laboratory alchemy.

33 Böhme, *Werke*, 670 and 672 (*Signatura Rerum* [= SR] 11: title and 6). 'Proces Christi'; 'wir wollen alhie nichts parabolisch schreiben, sondern gantz Sonnenklar'.

34 Böhme, *Werke*, 600 (SR 7: 78). 'Wie die ewige Geburth in sich selber ist, also ist auch der Proces mit der wiederbringung nach dem Falle, und also ist auch der Proces der Weisen mit ihrem Steine *philosophorum*, es ist kein punct im unterscheid darzwischen, dann es ist alles auß der ewigen Geburth geurständet, und muß alles eine widerbringung auff einerley weiße haben.'

of earlier alchemical literature: the *lapis-Christus* analogy, which posits correspondences between the philosophers' stone and Christ's Incarnation.³⁵ In this sense, the widely disseminated *Rosarium philosophorum* (1st ed. 1550) culminated in its visual portrayal of the *lapis philosophorum* as the risen Christ.³⁶

According to *Signatura rerum*, Christ had to undergo many trials and even death in order to acquire the power to effectively tincture fallen humans. Böhme held that any aspiring adept would therefore do well to study the Incarnation of Christ before attempting to attain the philosophers' stone:

Thus it behoves the wise, who intends to seek, to contemplate the entire process of Christ's humanity, from its beginning in the body of his mother Mary, until his resurrection and Ascension; in this way, he will find Pentecost with the free spirit, whereby he may tincture, cure, and heal what is broken. We say this founded upon truth, as we have sublimely recognized.³⁷

Böhme elaborated and extended his discussion of alchemy in his fifteenth epistle, addressed to the Striegau physician Jonas Daniel Koschwitz (ca. 1584–1632). Wrongly dated to 3 July 1621 in early-modern editions, this letter was written 'on or around 20 February 1623', as Leigh Penman has now established.³⁸ The letter therefore postdates *Signatura rerum* and should be read as an amplification and elaboration of alchemical themes found therein.

The bulk of Epistle 15 concerns ongoing disputes concerning predestination among members of Böhme's network. However, Böhme then changes the topic to 'our secret agreement'.³⁹ In this passage, the theosopher counselled Koschwitz, informing him that he 'will have to remain patient for a considerable duration in the process under discussion', warning that it might only reach its end 'in the seventh year'.⁴⁰ What was the mysterious agreement or

35 C.G. Jung, *Psychologie und Alchemie*, 2nd ed. (Olten: Walter-Verlag, 1972), 'Die Lapis-Christus-Parallele,' 395–491.

36 Anonymous, *Rosarium philosophorum* (Frankfurt a.M.: Ex officina Cyriaci Jacobi, Mense Junio, 1550), f. a4r.

37 Böhme, *Werke*, 585 (SR 7: 35). 'So stehet nun dem Weisen der da suchen wil, zu, daß er den gantzen Proces mit der Menschheit Christi von seiner eröffnug in dem Leibe seiner Mutter Maria, biß zu seiner Aufferstehung und Himmelfart, betrachte, so wird er wol das Pfingstfest finden mit dem freyen Geiste, damit er mag tingiren, curiren, und heilen was zerbrochen ist: sagen wir mit Grund der Wahrheit, als wir hoch erkant haben.'

38 Penman, 'The Broken Tradition,' 102–108, on 107.

39 Böhme, *Theosophische Send-Schreiben*, 161 (ET 15: 10). 'Unser heimliche Abrede.'

40 Böhme, *Theosophische Send-Schreiben*, 161 (ET 15: 10). 'Werdet ihr euch müssen noch ziemliche weil in den bewusten process gedulden... im siebenden Jahr'.

process Böhme discussed with Koschwitz? As processes of laboratory alchemy sometimes required as many as forty years,⁴¹ it is unclear whether this refers to a lengthy experiment or to a spiritual transformation described in alchemical terms. For Koschwitz, there would have been no such uncertainty, but for us the ambiguity is difficult to resolve. Yet perhaps this very ambiguity can be viewed as Böhme's point: in effect, the attempt to make the philosophers' stone and the spiritual quest for regeneration blend into one. If someone such as Koschwitz wanted to be a successful adept, he would have to be born again; if somebody wanted to learn more about spiritual rebirth, he had to contemplate the alchemical work of metallic transmutation. According to Böhme, these two goals were inextricably linked.

In the exceedingly cryptic passage that follows, Böhme referred to the alchemical content of *Signatura rerum* and a diagram known as the 'Wheel of Nature' (*Rad naturæ*) included in *De triplici vita hominis*, an earlier work completed in 1620.⁴² As its name would suggest, the Wheel of Nature resembles a cosmological diagram in many ways (Fig. 11.1). Yet *De triplici vita* also describes it as applicable to the process of rebirth: 'In this manner, desire enters into itself towards the heart, which is God, as you can contemplate with such a figure [the Wheel of Nature], for rebirth also enters into itself to the heart of God'.⁴³ When Böhme wrote to Koschwitz regarding 'the first or second degree of the centre of nature', he had in mind the Wheel of Nature and its spiralling line moving inward towards the centre and eternity.⁴⁴ In a related passage in *Signatura rerum*, we read that 'Jupiter, ... upwards again upon the wheel below Saturn, ... is the third degree'.⁴⁵ Whereas the traditional cosmological scheme has Jupiter as the second planet, following immediately upon the outermost

41 For a telling anecdote on an experiment of twenty years ruined in the blink of an eye, see John C. Powers, *Inventing Chemistry: Herman Boerhaave and the Reform of the Chemical Arts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 170–171.

42 Wrocław, Biblioteka Uniwersytecka: Akc. 1975/271, f. 100r (*De Triplici Vita* [= TV] 9: 53).

43 Wrocław, BU: Akc. 1975/271, f. 100r/v (TV 9: 60). 'Also gehet das begehren in sich hienein nach dem hertzen, welches ist Gott, wie du kanst also mit Einer solchen figur nachdenken, dan die wider Geburt gehet auch in sich zu Gotteß Hertze.' Later Böhme exegetes, such as Johann Georg Gichtel and Dionysius Andreas Freher, adapted the diagram in this vein and developed anthropological figures that chart the process of spiritual rebirth; comp. Johann Georg Graber and Johann Georg Gichtel, *Eine kurtze Eröffnung und Anweisung Der dreyen Principien Und Welten Im Menschen. In unterschiedlichen Figuren vorgestellt* ([Amsterdam?], 1723); London, British Library: Add. MS 5788.

44 Böhme, *Theosophische Send-Schreiben*, 161 (ET 15: 10). '[Dem] ersten oder andern grad des Centri der Natur'.

45 Böhme, *Werke*, 553 (SR 4: 29). 'Jupiter, ... am Rade wieder auffwärts unterm Saturno, ... ist der dritte Grad'.



FIGURE 11.1 Wrocław, Biblioteka Uniwersytecka: Akc. 1975/271, f. 100r. This scribal copy of Böhme's *De triplici vita hominis* from 1628 contains one of the earliest extant versions of the Wheel of Nature.

planet Saturn, Boehme's spiralling diagram places the moon between them: the line descends from Saturn to the moon and then rises again to reach Jupiter, appearing below Saturn in the diagram.

Every planet or metal thus corresponded to one degree of the theosophico-alchemical process described by the Wheel of Nature, *Signatura rerum*, and Epistle 15. In the latter context, Böhme simply spoke of the 'six properties', reflecting his conviction that the planets and metals were different expressions of the same divine source spirits. Additionally, he relied at least somewhat on Koschwitz's prior knowledge of *Signatura rerum*. However, traditionally, and in most of the theosopher's writings as well, we would have to be dealing with seven planets or metals. Yet due to Böhme's heliocentric views,⁴⁶ the sun is not merely one planet among others but holds a special dignity: 'For each and every property among the six shapes of the spiritual life holds its own sun within itself, from the power and emergence of the light of nature, meaning the essential sun, and [they] have to be unlocked in the sequence of their birth and origin.'⁴⁷ At this stage, Böhme's theosophical scheme, as expressed in the Wheel of Nature, clashed with the traditional conception that would have been at the forefront of his correspondent's mind: 'First, Saturn's sun is unlocked by the key of the outer sun, so that one sees the divisiveness of nature. Secondly, Jupiter's sun so that one sees the powers like a tree in bloom, and you have come as far as this.'⁴⁸ For a practising alchemist, rather than a Böhmist theosopher, it would make sense to start experimenting on the least of the metals, lead and tin, and I would argue that Koschwitz indeed requested Böhme's advice for a laboratory process he had been working on.

On the basis of his theosophical insights and, it would seem, secret communications from other adepts, Böhme then proceeded to share with Koschwitz how he would have to proceed and what he could expect. Many statements and expressions implicitly hark back to *Signatura rerum* and its emphatic insistence that the philosophical work of alchemy corresponds to the process

46 Günther Bonheim, 'ward Ich dero wegen Gantz Melancolisch: Jacob Böhm's Heidnische gedanken bei Betrachtung des Himmels und die Astronomie seiner Zeit,' *Euphorion* 91, no. 1 (1997), 99–132; Livia Datteri Rasmussen, 'Jacob Böhme: doch ein Beispiel für den "heliozentrischen Chok"? Zur Interaktion von Naturwissenschaft, Theologie, Mystik und Literatur in der Frühen Neuzeit,' *Morgen-Blatz* 3 (1993), 189–205.

47 Böhme, *Theosophische Send-Schreiben*, 161 (ET 15: 11). 'Dan eine iede Eigenschaft unter den 6 Gestalten des Geistlebens hat eine sonderliche ☉ in sich, von gewalt und herkommen des Liechts der Natur, als der *Essentialischen* ☉en, und werden in Ordnung aufgeschlossen wie ihr Gebuhr und Urstand ist.'

48 Böhme, *Theosophische Send-Schreiben*, 161 (ET 15: 12). '1. Wird ☿ Sonne, durch den Schlüssel der äussern ☉ aufgeschlossen, daß man die schiedligkeit der Natur siehet. 2. ☿ Sonne, daß man die Kräfte als einen blühenden Baum siehet, und bis daher seydt ihr kommen.'

of Christ's Incarnation. Particularly Venus is important in this regard and first mentioned in the following stage: 'Thirdly', after unlocking 'Mars [iron] as the fire soul', 'the virgin Venus [copper] in her white gown appears'.⁴⁹ Yet she is sullied by Mars and 'covers herself with a cupreous gown, for Mars wants her as his own, but he defiles her in his malice, throwing earth and soot at her'.⁵⁰ This recalls a passage in *Signatura rerum*, according to which Venus 'takes the gown of Mars upon herself'.⁵¹ Venus and her changing attire closely reflect Jesus, who was forced to wear a white robe by Herod and a purple one by Pontius Pilate's soldiers: according to Böhme, 'the purple robe as well as the white robe were all false and only put on him in mockery'.⁵² In the laboratory work of alchemy, Venus played exactly the same role as Christ in the redemptive work of the Incarnation.

Indeed, Venus and Christ were closely linked for Böhme. In part, this can be explained due to their common association with love. As the theosopher stated in *Signatura rerum*, 'Lady Venus in her virginity ... signifies Christ's body, who humbled himself and revealed his love in our humanity'.⁵³ Just like Christ had suffered under the secular power of the Romans, the ecclesiastical authority of the Jews, and the temptations of the Devil, so Venus had to suffer under the 'three fierce shapes' of Saturn, Mercury, and Mars.⁵⁴ In alchemy, which corresponds to the redemptive work of Christ on the cross, 'love speaks thus: Today you will be in paradise (that is, in delight) with me, out of your fiery fear, that is, you will be transmuted in me. And here Venus receives the soul in the philosophical work'.⁵⁵ Indeed, Venus not only borrows the words Christ spoke to one of the criminals crucified alongside him, her suffering also initiates the critical phase of *nigredo*, the black stage of the alchemical *opus*:

49 Böhme, *Theosophische Send-Schreiben*, 161 (ET 15: 12). '3. Wird σ als die Δ Seele aufgeschlossen, so erscheinet Jungfrau ρ in ihrem weissen Kleide'. Comp. Böhme, *Werke*, 684 (SR 11: 43). 'Dann Venus ist Weiß'.

50 Böhme, *Theosophische Send-Schreiben*, 162 (ET 15: 13). 'Bedecket sich mit einem küpfernen Röcklein, dan σ wil sie für Eigenthumb haben, aber er besudelt sie sehr in seiner bößheit, und schmeisset Erde und ruß an sie'.

51 Böhme, *Werke*, 630 (SR 9: 27). 'Nimbt deß Martis Röcklein uber sich'.

52 Böhme, *Werke*, 680 (SR 11: 30). 'Das Purpurkleyd, so wol auch das weisse Kleyd war alles falsch, und ihme nur zu spott angezogen'. Comp. Luke 23: 11 (according to the Luther Bible); John 19: 2–3; Matthew 27: 28–29.

53 Böhme, *Werke*, 668 (SR 10: 76). 'Fraw Venus in ihrer Jungfrawschafft ... deutet Christi Leib an, der sich also gedemütiget, und seine Liebe in unser Menschheit offenbahret'. Comp. e.g. John 3: 16.

54 Böhme, *Werke*, 669 (SR 10: 79). 'Drey grimmen gestalten'.

55 Böhme, *Werke*, 686 (SR 11: 49). 'So spricht die Liebe: Du wirst heute mit mir auß deiner Feuerangst im Paradyß, als in frewden seyn, das ist, du solt in mir *transmutiret* werden: Und alhie krieget Venus die Seele im *philosophischen* werck'.

The thirst of Venus gives itself wholly into the poison so she would die; she wholly relinquishes her coveting life. Due to this, the great darkness arises in the philosophical work, so that the matter becomes as black as a raven. For Venus has handed over his [*sic*] life, ... as it can also be seen in Christ that the sun loses its splendour and a great darkness came to pass, against the ordinary course of nature.⁵⁶

In fact, in this passage the association between Venus and Christ is so close that Böhme's grammar slipped: as if they were one, he referred to the copper lady by a using male pronoun. In a similar vein, alchemists sometimes described Christ as a hermaphrodite.⁵⁷ For his part, Böhme viewed the restoration of prelapsarian androgyny as crucial to the redemptive work and the process of rebirth. The temporary severance of male and female had to be overcome so that humans could once again wholly reflect God's image and likeness.

Returning to the Koschwitz letter, the fourth stage of the process is associated with Mercury. Böhme promised Koschwitz that he would 'witness great marvels, how God created heaven and earth, as well as the foundation of all the four elements, and if you pay attention, you shall see your own spirit wrought out before you and see how the Word became man'.⁵⁸ In the next stage, the correspondence of Jesus and Venus is brought to bear again: 'The fifth key is the virgin Venus herself, as she unlocks God (meaning the sun), so that she submits her will ... to the murderers, ... then the artist thinks he has the new child, but it is yet far until the birth of the same'.⁵⁹ Again there are references to *Signatura rerum*. Throughout that work, Böhme insisted that the exaltation and death of Christ upon the cross was but one step in a process that culminated in Pentecost, 'when Saint Peter with his heavenly mercury tintured 3,000

56 Böhme, *Werke*, 694 (SR 11: 77). 'Venus durst gibet sich gantz dem Gifft ein, als stürbe sie, sie gibet ihr begehrend leben gantz auff, davon entstehet die grosse Finsternuß im *philosophischen* werck, daß die *materia* so schwartz wird, als eine Raabe, dann Venus hat sein leben übergeben, davon der glantz entstehet: wie auch bey Christo zu sehen ist, daß die Sonnen ihren schein verlohren, und eine grosse Finsternuß worden, wider den gemeynen lauff der Natur'.

57 Leah DeVun, 'The Jesus Hermaphrodite: Science and Sex Difference in Premodern Europe,' *Journal of the History of Ideas* 69, no. 2 (2008), 193–218.

58 Böhme, *Theosophische Send-Schreiben*, 162 (ET 15: 14). 'Grosse wunder sehen, wie Gott Himmel und Erden geschaffen hat, darzu den Grund aller 4 Elementen, und so ihr werdet acht haben, so werdet ihr euren *proprium genium* ausgewircket für euch sehen, und sehen wie das Wort ist Mensch worden'. It is difficult to translate *genius* in this context, but the main emphasis seems to lie on introspective insight.

59 Böhme, *Theosophische Send-Schreiben*, 163 (ET 15: 15). 'Der 5 Schlüssel ist Jungfrau ♀ selber, da sie ihr Gott als die ☉ aufschleust, daß sie ihren Willen ... den Mördern giebet, ... so meynet der Künstler, er habe das neue Kind, ist aber noch weit biß zur gebuhrt desselben.'

souls at once and released them from death'.⁶⁰ On this view, Christ's death on the cross was not the final stage, albeit an important one.

Having come as far as the crucifixion, the adept would likely rejoice at his progress in the laboratory, but Böhme cautioned that the new birth was not accomplished yet. The moon or silver had to follow next:

The sixth key is the moon; when the sun unlocks this one, each one of Mars, Jupiter, Saturn has to leave his will and lower their fleeting glory, for the sun in the moon takes them along into the Incarnation. Then the artist [alchemist] begins to mourn and thinks that he has lost, but his hope is not dashed, for the moon in its unlocked sun hungers after the true sun to such an extent, that he [the moon] violently draws her [the sun] into himself, is startled in his fierceness by this and dies to his own prerogative. Thus the virgin Venus grasps him and sinks into him with her love; due to this, Mars becomes alive in Jupiter and Saturn in this love ... and all the six properties submit their will to Venus, and Venus gives her will to the sun – there and then the life that stands in the temperature is born.⁶¹

Dying to her/his selfish will, Venus/Christ submits to the other properties, which in turn forces these to ultimately submit to Venus/Christ.

Traditionally, the moon (silver) and Venus (copper) are the female planets (or metals) while the sun (gold) is male. Yet due to the interference of his German native tongue, Böhme spoke of the moon as male and the sun as female. His mysterious 'language of nature' (*Natursprache*) and theosophical convictions can thus be seen to take precedence over widely accepted alchemical lore. But it is more important to note that Böhme took the analogy between laboratory alchemy and spiritual rebirth, between the *magnum opus* and the

60 Böhme, *Werke*, 591 (SR 7: 53). 'Da S. Petrus mit seinem himlischen *Mercurio* 3000 Seelen auff einmal *tingirte*, und auß dem tode auflösete'. See also 585 (SR 7: 35)

61 Böhme, *Theosophische Send-Schreiben*, 163 (ET 15: 16). 'Der 6 Schlüssel ist ☿ wan die Sonne diesen aufschleust, so muß ... ieder seinen willen verlassen, und ihren flüchtigen Pracht lassen sincken, dan die ☉ in ☿ nimmet sie in die Menschwerdung ein, da hebet der Künstler an zu trauren, und denckt er habe verlohren, aber seine Hofnung wird nicht zu schanden, dan der ☿ in seiner aufgeschlossenen ☉ ist also hungrig nach der rechten ☉, daß er sie mit gewalt in sich zeucht, davon in seinem Grimm erschrickt, und in seinem eigen Recht erstirbet, so ergreift ihn Jungfrau ♀ und ersinckt mit ihrer Liebe in ihn ein, davon wird ♂ im ♀ und ♀ in dieser Liebe lebendig, eines freudenreichen Lebens, und geben alle 6 Eigenschaften ihren Willen in ♀, und ♀ giebet ihren Willen der ☉, alda wird das Leben geböhren, das in der *Temperatur* stehet.'

Process of Christ, so literally that he strongly tended towards discussing both at once when his correspondents asked him about the one or the other.

3 'Now I Shall at Last Learn to Work in the Laboratory': Böhme's Sojourn in Dresden

Böhme styled himself as a divinely inspired prophet but also claimed to have 'read the writings of many exalted masters'.⁶² Although this statement has been interpreted as referring exclusively to adepts of the secret art, the only alchemical work Böhme mentioned by its title was the *Wasserstein der Weysen*, published in 1619 by Lucas Jennis (fl. 1590–1631) at Frankfurt.⁶³ In a recommendation that was to reverberate throughout the ages, Böhme wrote the following in Epistle 28: 'My sir, read the *Water-Stone of the Wise*, in which there is much truth, and clear [truth] on top of that, which is in print'.⁶⁴ This statement appeared in a letter dated to 1622 in early-modern editions, and due to this, several scholars have viewed the *Wasserstein* as crucial for Böhme's acquisition of alchemical terminology. The treatise known as the *Wasserstein der Weysen* had been authored by Johann Siebmacher (fl. 1607–18/21), a chymist of Nuremberg,⁶⁵ around 1607 and first appeared in print anonymously in 1619. Böhme may well have had access to the text after this date. Indeed, at first glance there seem to be indications that this was the case. For example, in his *Signatura rerum* Böhme repeatedly included statements along the lines of

62 Böhme, *Aurora*, 292/3 (A 10: 27). 'Viel Hoher Meister Schrifftten gelesen'. For a similar statement, see Jacob Böhme, *Beschreibung der drey Principien Göttliches Wesens* (Amsterdam: Bey Henrico Betkio, 1660), 129 (TP 10: 1).

63 For the reading of the masters as adepts, see Harleß, *Jacob Böhme und die Alchymisten*, 37–39. On Jennis and his output, see e.g. Andreas Deppermann, *Johann Jakob Schütz und die Anfänge des Pietismus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 10–14; Lucas Jennis, *Catalogus Omnium Librorum, Qui Ab Anno M. DC.XVI Maximæ partis sumptibus Lucæ Jennis, bibliopolæ Mæno-Francofurtensis sunt editi* (Frankfurt a.M.: Sumptibus Lucæ Jennis, 1622).

64 Böhme, *Theosophische Send-Schreiben*, 223 (ET 28: 14). 'Der Herr lese den Wasser-stein der Weisen, darinnen ist viel wahrheit, und dazu klahr, welches im Drucke ist'. The English translator of the *Wasserstein* explicitly mentioned Böhme's verdict when justifying his project; comp. John Harding, ed., *Paracelsus His Aurora, & Treasure of the Philosophers. As also The Water-Stone of The Wise Men* (London: Printed for Giles Calvert, and are to be sold at the Black Spred Eagle, at the West end of Pauls, 1659), f. A2v.

65 There is much confusion in scholarship regarding the author of the *Wasserstein*. I have argued for this attribution by following leads presented by Reinhard Breytmayer and Carlos Gilly; see Zuber, *Spiritual Alchemy*, 76–84.

‘Thus it also takes place in the philosophical work’.⁶⁶ A very similar formula occurs in the *Wasserstein der Weysen*, where we read: ‘Likewise in the philosophical work ...’⁶⁷ In addition, there are also other, more substantial parallels, specifically the *lapis-Christus* analogy, which features prominently in the *Wasserstein* and in Böhme’s *Signatura rerum*. On the surface, there would seem to be no problem with the view that the *Wasserstein* had a great impact on Böhme and specifically inspired his *Signatura rerum*.

However, Böhme’s Epistle 28 with its reference to the *Wasserstein* does not date to 1622. Whereas printed editions name the addressee as either Christian Steinberg (ca. 1581–in or after 1624) or Valentin Tschirness (fl. 1596–1617), one manuscript, preserved at the Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek Weimar, unambiguously records the text of Böhme’s address to ‘Mr Christian Steinberg, doctor of medicine, chymical practitioner, a very dear friend’ in Fürstenwalde.⁶⁸ While the Weimar manuscript also dates the letter to 1622, it contains additional text omitted from printed editions of Epistle 28. The suppressed portion undermines this date and shows that the letter must have been written in 1624 instead. Böhme dated it ‘at Dresden, the week after Pentecost’; moreover, in a closing paragraph suppressed for publication, he mentioned that he did not have access to any of his books ‘at the castle of Dresden ... apart from a treatise by myself, printed as *Von [wahrer] Buße* and *Von wahrer Gelassenheit*’.⁶⁹ This refers to the first edition of Böhme’s *Weg zu Christo*, printed at Görlitz towards the very end of 1623 and distributed early in 1624.⁷⁰ As Werner Buddecke (1887–1967) was the first to observe, the letter must therefore have been written

66 Böhme, *Werke*, 666 (SR 10: 70). ‘Also gehets auch im *Philosophischen* werck zu’. See also 679 (SR 11: 29) and *passim*.

67 E.g. Johann Siebmacher, *Wasserstein der Weysen/ Das ist/ Ein Chymisch Tractätlein/ darin der weg gezeiget/ die Materia genennet/ und der Proceß beschrieben wird/ zu dem hohen geheimnuß der Universal Tinctur zukommen/ vor diesem niemalen gesehen* (Frankfurt a.M.: Bey Lucas Jennis zufinden, 1619), 93. ‘Gleich wie in dem Philosophischen Werck’. Alternatively, the work is also identified as ‘chymical’ (*chimisch*) or ‘terrestrial’ (*irdisch*); see e.g. 92 and 127.

68 Werner Buddecke, ed., *Jacob Böhme: Die Urschriften* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann, 1963–66), vol. 2, 406. ‘Hern Christian Steinbergen der Medicin D. Chymico practico, mein ghar lieben freund’. Tschirness was an alchemist based in Görlitz who responded to the Rosicrucian manifestoes: Valentin Tschirness, *Schnelle Botschafft An die Philosophische Fraternitet vom Rosencreutz* (Görlitz: DrVCKts Iohann RhaMbaVV, 1616); *Assertio Oder Bestetigung der Fraternitet R.C. ... Item: Schnelle Botschafft/ an die Philosophische Fraternitet vom Rosen Creutz* (Danzig: Durch Andream Hünefeldt, 1617).

69 Buddecke, *Die Urschriften*, vol. 2, 406. ‘Geben in Dreßden die wochen nach Pffingsten’; ‘Zu Dreßden schloß ... Ohn ein Tractatlein von mir gedruckt Als von der Buß und wahren gelassenheit’.

70 Lemper, *Jacob Böhme*, 86–87.

towards the end of May 1624.⁷¹ The confusion among early copyists concerning the date might have stemmed from the fact that this publication so confidently named the year 1622 twice, even on its title page.⁷² Defying imperial mandates concerning print publication by putting 1622 instead of 1624, the eccentric Görlitz-based bookseller and printer Johann Rhambau (1563–1634) indicated the year during which Böhme had composed the treatises included in the *Weg zu Christo*, rather than the date of its print publication. While it is still possible that Böhme may have known the *Wasserstein* before 1624, making a case for this now requires conclusive new evidence.

In any event, the printing of the *Weg zu Christo* was crucial to inspiring the third and final stage of Böhme's alchemical progress. As the publication circulated, it prompted an invitation for Böhme to travel to the court of the Saxon elector in Dresden, in order to visit several notables who were fond of his writings. Closer to home, however, the daring step of publishing Böhme's writings drew the ire of Gregor Richter (1560–1624), the chief pastor of Görlitz who stoked up the mob against Böhme both in a pamphlet and from the pulpit. The Böhme family was thus exposed to the aggression of other residents.⁷³ Jacob had received the invitation to the court of Dresden before the whole affair erupted, but this also meant that his wife and children had to endure the brunt of it by themselves back in Görlitz.⁷⁴ When he was not conversing with notable courtiers and ministers, Böhme found time to browse local bookshops, observing that devotional and millenarian treatises were freely available: 'In Dresden, people openly sell ... good booklets on the new birth and the last age.'⁷⁵ In light of this, Böhme thought that the uproar which had greeted his primarily devotional *Weg zu Christo* in Görlitz merely made the city seem provincial, despite its humanist pretensions. Contrary to the recent suggestion of Ariane Bartkowski,⁷⁶ alchemy was clearly far from the only concern, nor the most prominent one, that occupied Böhme while he was in Dresden.

71 Buddecke, *Die Urschriften*, vol. 2, 476.

72 Jacob Böhme, *Der Weg zu Christo. In zweyen Büchlein. ... Gestellet Durch einen Liebhaber Gottes/ und der recht gründlichen warheit. Im Jahr des Herrn Christi M. DC. XXII.* [sic] ([Görlitz]: [Johann Rhambau], [1624]), title page and f. D11r.

73 Lemper, *Jakob Böhme*, 86–110. See also Helmut Obst, 'Zum "Verhör" Jakob Böhmes in Dresden,' *Pietismus und Neuzeit* 1 (1974), 25–31.

74 Comp. Buddecke, *Die Urschriften*, vol. 2, 384 and 391 (ET 53: 17 and 61: 12).

75 Buddecke, *Die Urschriften*, vol. 2, 388 (ET 62: 8). 'Man hat alhie zu dresden öffentlich ... gутten büchlein von der Neuen geburth, und dem letzten seculum feil'. For more on the specific books Böhme had in mind, see Penman, 'Boehme's Intellectual Networks,' 69–71.

76 Ariane Bartkowski, 'Jakob Böhme (1575–1624) und die Alchemie im Kontext seiner Reise nach Dresden im Jahr 1624,' *Görlitzer Magazin* 26 (2013), 46–57.

Böhme composed the letter mentioning the *Wasserstein* to Steinberg during the last week of May 1624. Will-Erich Peuckert has shown in exemplary detail that Böhme drew on the *Wasserstein* when writing his letter to Steinberg.⁷⁷ Indeed, Peuckert's findings on parallel passages between Epistle 28 and the *Wasserstein* strongly suggest that Böhme had Siebmacher's treatise in hand. It was therefore not part of any library he may have left behind in Görlitz. Böhme's short-lived engagement with the *Wasserstein* is thus only documented during the last months of his life. Most likely he had acquired Siebmacher's treatise while browsing at a Dresden bookstore. Alternatively, he could have consulted it in the library of his host, the court alchemist Benedict Hinckelmann (1588–1659).⁷⁸ The most important source on Hinckelmann's life is a printed obituary, which includes a biography. He was born on 23 February 1588 in the Saxon town of Geringswalde, situated halfway between Leipzig and Dresden. After schooling in Chemnitz, Altenburg, and Leipzig, Benedict's life took a defining turn: 'At the age of fifteen, he went to Prague and was promoted to the famous chymical laboratory of Emperor Rudolf II, ... where he remained for many years, until after the death of ... His Imperial Majesty'.⁷⁹ Melancholy Rudolf (r. 1576–1612) had a reputation as a patron of alchemy, attracting famous practitioners from all across Europe to his court, including John Dee (1527–1608/09), Oswald Croll (1563–1609), Michael Maier (1568–1622), and Martin Ruland the Younger (1569–1611), to name but a few.⁸⁰ Hinckelmann thus spent almost a

77 Peuckert, *Das Leben Jakob Böhm's*, 164–165. Based on the erroneous dating of the letter to 1622, Peuckert immediately proceeds to less convincing parallels between *Signatura rerum* and the *Wasserstein* on 165–167.

78 The dates are mentioned in his printed obituary: Daniel Schneider, *Gläubiger Christen Hertzens-Freude. ... Bey ansehnlicher Leichbestattung Des weiland Edlen/ Wol-Ehrenvesten und Hochgeachten Herrn Benedicti Hinckelmanns/ Churfürstl. Durchl. in Sachsen etc. Geheimden Chymici* (Dresden: Gedruckt durch Melchior Bergen/ Churfürstl. Sächs. Hoff-Buchdr., 1662), title page and f. E2v, resp. Hinckelmann did not die in 1642, as mistakenly mentioned in Theodor Harmsen, ed., *Jacob Böhm's Weg in die Welt: Zur Geschichte der Handschriftensammlung, Übersetzungen und Editionen von Abram Willemsz van Beyerland* (Amsterdam: In de Pelikaan, 2007), 53 and 468. For additional pointers, see also Leigh Penman's contribution to the present volume.

79 Schneider, *Gläubiger Christen Hertzens-Freude*, f. E3r/v. 'Im Funffzehenden Jahre seines Alters hat Er sich nacher Prage begeben, und ist alda in das berühmte *Laboratorium Chymicum*, Käysers *Rudolphi Secundi*, ... befördert worden, alda Er sich viel Jahr, biß nach ... Käyserlicher Majestät Absterben auffgehalten'.

80 Ivo Purš and Vladimír Karpenko, *Alchemy and Rudolf II: Exploring the Secrets of Nature in Central Europe in the 16th and 17th Centuries* (Prague: Artefactum, 2016); R.J.W. Evans, *Rudolf II and His World: A Study in Intellectual History 1576–1612* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), Ch. 6; Hugh Trevor-Roper, 'The Paracelsian Movement,' in *Renaissance Essays* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1985), 149–199, on 172 and 181–182. On the alchemists mentioned,

decade, from 1603 to 1612, working at the imperial laboratory while Rudolf's court was frequented by the greatest adepts of the age. Subsequently, he held the position of a 'secret chymist' at the court of Innsbruck under the Archduke of Austria, Maximilian III (1558–1618), and travelled widely throughout eastern Europe.⁸¹

Ultimately, as Counter-Reformation efforts became more intense, Hinckelmann sought leave to return to his native Saxony, in order to freely practise his Lutheran faith. In April 1620, Elector Johann Georg I of Saxony (r. 1611–56) installed him as his secret chymist at the court of Dresden, which post Hinckelmann held for an entire decade, until 1630.⁸² It is in this context that he acted as Böhme's host. In a fascinating letter only partially printed in early editions of the theosopher's correspondence, Böhme looked forward to being introduced to laboratory alchemy while staying in Dresden. On 15/25 May 1624 (that is, a few days before the letter to Steinberg), he wrote to an acquaintance back in Görlitz, the Paracelsian Tobias Kober (1587–1625), who had been copying Böhme's writings since July 1622 and subsequently, in November 1624, attended him on his deathbed: 'I shall write again as soon as possible how the situation develops here; now I shall at last learn to work in the laboratory, who knows what kind of a strange man I shall yet become, let's keep it strange, who knows where this'll end.'⁸³ During his stay at Hinckelmann's, Böhme considerably increased his familiarity with alchemy, and his engagement with the *Wasserstein* needs to be seen in this highly specific context.

Although his host was Böhme's junior by more than a dozen years, Hinckelmann's apprenticeship in Rudolfine Prague had rendered him a most qualified master for teaching the rudiments of laboratory alchemy to the theosopher. Unfortunately, we do not know how completely he succeeded in transmuting

see e.g. Jennifer M. Rampling, 'John Dee and the Alchemists: Practising and Promoting English Alchemy in the Holy Roman Empire,' *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 43 (2012), 498–508; Hereward Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix: Spiritual Alchemy and Rosicrucianism in the Work of Count Michael Maier (1569–1622)* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003); Owen Hannaway, *The Chemists and the Word: The Didactic Origins of Chemistry* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975); Vladimír Karpenko, 'Martin Rulands *Lexicon Alchemiae* im Kontext der chemischen Sprache und Systematik,' *Studia Rudolphina* 11 (2011), 102–26.

81 Schneider, *Gläubiger Christen Hertzens-Freude*, f. E3v. 'Geheimden Chymicum'.

82 Schneider, *Gläubiger Christen Hertzens-Freude*, f. E4r/v.

83 Buddecke, *Die Urschriften*, vol. 2, 391. 'Ich wil euch ehests wider schreiben, wie sichs wirt alhie verlauffen, ietzo sol ich erst lernen laboriren, wer weis was noch für ein selzem Man aus mir wirt werden, lassets doch also selzsam gehen, wer weis wo Nauß.' On 472, Buddecke notes that printed editions of this letter (ET, nr. 61) omit this revealing passage without exception.

Böhme into an actual alchemist. The mysterious art was not the only thing that occupied the theosopher while he was staying at Hinckelmann's. Böhme also began to compose the purely devotional *Gebeth Büchlein* (1624; 1st ed. 1642), which remained incomplete. This work survives as an autograph which Böhme left in Hinckelmann's care when he departed Dresden. On the title page, the court alchemist proudly noted that Böhme had written it at his house, yet the unfinished treatise is essentially devoid of alchemical content.⁸⁴ Nonetheless, if we consider the theosopher's tangible excitement at the prospect of being introduced to laboratory alchemy, we have clearly come a very long way from his emphatic attempt to distance himself from this enigmatic art twelve years earlier.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, I depart from previous scholarship on Böhme and alchemy in two important ways: first, by showing that Böhme's biography is crucial for understanding the development of his engagement with alchemy; second, by diminishing the influence commonly attributed to Siebmacher's *Wasserstein* in this regard. Although it is the only work of alchemy to which Böhme specifically referred, his familiarity with the *Wasserstein* is only documented for the final months of his life. The particulars mentioned in a suppressed paragraph, preserved in a Weimar manuscript, leave no doubt about this, although it is, of course, impossible to rule out conclusively that Böhme had previously encountered the *Wasserstein*.

The theosopher's alchemical progress can be divided into three distinct stages. In the *Aurora* of 1612, at the outset of his writing career, Böhme exhibited very little familiarity with alchemy and did not want to be associated too closely with that dubious art. Yet due to the scribal dissemination of this first work, he attracted the attention of noblemen, scholars, physicians, and Paracelsians. Soon he was embedded in a network of religious dissenters, many of whom were also interested in alchemy, practised it in the laboratory, or prepared medication based on the principles of Paracelsian iatrochemistry. In this context, Böhme gradually acquired greater familiarity with alchemical terminology. He made the most extensive use of this new register in a work completed in February 1622: his *Signatura rerum* described the central event of salvation history – Christ's Incarnation – as an alchemical process.

84 Buddecke, *Die Urschriften*, vol. 2, 446. Only a single word is distinctly alchemical: 'Tingiret' on 311.

Böhme's letter to Koschwitz, most likely written a year later (ca. 20 February 1623), revisited this theme and elaborated it further for the benefit of his correspondent. In 1624, while staying in Dresden as the guest of court alchemist Benedict Hinckelmann, Böhme read the *Wasserstein* and finally had the opportunity to engage with laboratory alchemy. The final stage thus almost saw the theosopher transmuted into an alchemist. Whatever this apprenticeship under Hinckelmann's tutelage entailed, Böhme would have considered himself excellently prepared based on his theosophical insights into the alchemy of salvation history and the new birth.

“A Philosopher Does Not Stand Still”: Legacies and Receptions of the “Philosophus Teutonicus”

Cecilia Muratori

1 Introduction: Is Böhme a Philosopher?

In Karl Philipp Moritz’s novel *Andreas Hartknopf* (1786), the character Hans Hagebuck is portrayed as being completely consumed by mystical enthusiasm and, more precisely, by an enthusiasm for Jacob Böhme. Hagebuck is described as an avid reader of Böhme’s works, which he takes with him on a journey, upon deciding to follow a divine call which prompted him to give up the profession he shared with Böhme – that of cobbler – and to start caring about the people’s heads, rather than their feet: “Hans Hagebuck tied his pack, put his Jacob Böhme in the pocket, and set off to Dessau.”¹ The scene is telling with regard to the status of Böhme’s thought in the second half of the eighteenth century: Böhme is presented as being, so to speak, in everyone’s pocket.

Despite the irony in Moritz’s approach, the fact that Böhme had a talismanic status around the end of the eighteenth century and especially among many writers of the *Romantik* generation is a noteworthy phenomenon that has received scholarly attention. A crucial aspect is that the pervasiveness of references to Böhme is in most cases not accompanied by a substantial reception

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1 Karl Philipp Moritz, *Andreas Hartkopf: Eine Allegorie* (Berlin: Unger, 1786), 22: “Hans Hagebuck schnürte also sein Bündel, steckte seinen Jakob Böhme in die Tasche, und wanderte auf Dessau zu.” Another example of this pervasiveness of references to Böhme in 18th-century literature is Klingemann’s *Nachtwachen*: I have discussed this in *The First German Philosopher: The Mysticism of Jakob Böhme as Interpreted by Hegel* (Berlin and New York: Springer, 2016), 1–9.

of his writings.² The rekindling of interest in Böhme from the late eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century certainly marks one of the most noteworthy "rediscoveries" of Böhme:³ but is Böhme rediscovered as a philosopher, or a literary writer, or rather – as Moritz's novel implies – only as a fashionable but rather under studied travel companion?

Böhme was remarkably and almost completely unknown at the same time, and this contrast emerges most starkly in his philosophical legacy, which is the focus of this essay: a hiatus seems to have opened between the rich afterlife of Böhme as the mystical enthusiast, and his scarcer philosophical success. This state of affairs has persisted until the present day, since with one notable exception – Alexandre Koyré's *La philosophie de Jacob Boehme* (1929) – Böhme has attracted very little attention from historians of philosophy.⁴ While the reception of Böhme has recently been at the centre of new studies,⁵ Böhme's own works are still little read, and since Koyré's remarkable, if quite chaotic work, there have been only a handful of attempts to deal directly with the content of his thought.

Yet direct engagement with the sources of Böhme's philosophical thought must be foundational to any attempt to assess the philosophical legacy. From this basis, the most important question to ask when dealing with his reception as a philosopher is: who read Böhme? Moreover, this leads to a second one, of equal importance but often neglected: who read which work(s) by Böhme? While the lack of reconstructions of Böhme's philosophy might have obscured the fact that this changed and evolved significantly from the first book, *Aurora*, to the late works, it becomes apparent when reading the writings chronologically that very important shifts occurred, first of all with regard to the terminology that he adapted and revised. Pursuing such questions can open the way

2 On this aspect see especially Paola Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme: Theosophy, Hagiography, Literature* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999).

3 As Andrew Weeks put it (*Boehme: An Intellectual Biography of the Seventeenth-Century Philosopher and Mystic* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991, xi): "Few writers are remembered more by their legend and less by the content of their writing than Jacob Boehme. Few have been rediscovered as often."

4 But see the important studies on Böhme by Massimo Luigi Bianchi, notably *Natura e sovran-natura nella filosofia tedesca della prima età moderna. Paracelsus, Weigel, Böhme* (Florence: Olschki, 2011).

5 See the following recent publications dealing with the reception of Böhme: Friedrich Vollhardt and Wilhelm Kühlmann (ed.), *Offenbarung und Episteme. Zur europäischen Wirkung Jakob Böhmes im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert* (De Gruyter: Berlin, 2012); Ariel Hessayon and Sarah Apetrei (ed.), *An Introduction to Jacob Boehme: Four Centuries of Thought and Reception* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

to reconstruct the philosophical legacy of Böhme. In particular, it enables the distinction between references that emerge from direct study of his works and those that do not; and it can help to explain the sometimes radical differences between the presentations of Böhme given by specific readers. Indeed, the diverse if problematic reception of his philosophy can be fully understood only by considering the foundation from which it developed: the full range of Böhme's works, and the often considerable differences between them, especially in terms of the vocabulary employed. Radically different interpretations of Böhme are often due to emphasis that readers placed on specific works, and hence on particular terms and concepts.

Viewing Böhme's own works as the essential starting point of any reconstruction of his philosophical legacy, the first part of this essay is dedicated to exploring what *philosophy* means for Böhme himself. I will bring to light Böhme's approach both to what he calls philosophy and to the characterization of the philosopher, asking whether Böhme defined himself as a philosopher, and what are for him the role and approach characteristic of a philosopher. An explanation of the term "philosophia" will serve to exemplify the development of Böhme's thought, especially through his constant reworking of his vocabulary. This development means that it is of primary importance to ask which specific works by Böhme are the basis of which philosophical presentations of him. From this standpoint I will consider, in the second part of the essay, case studies of philosophical interpretations of Böhme's works during one of the most lively and complex phases in the reception, the one which goes from the end of the eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century. In the conclusion I will then suggest how this approach might inform a study of Böhme as a philosopher and of his legacy.

2 Böhme's Understanding of Philosophy

The word *philosophia* is inscribed on the title page of *Aurora*, in the manuscript of his author: "Morning Glow Ascending. That is the Root or Mother of PHILOSOPHIA, ASTROLOGIA, AND THEOLOGIA".⁶ In the *Preface* Böhme explains

6 See Jacob Boehme, *Aurora (Morgen Röte im auffgang, 1612) and Fundamental Report (Gründlicher Bericht, Mystrium Pansophicum, 1620)*, ed. Andrew Weeks and Günther Bonheim (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 75 (a picture of the original title page is reproduced on 72). All quotations from *Aurora* are taken from this edition, which provides the readers with the original German text, as well as with an accurate English edition. It also contains a useful glossary of main concepts used by Böhme, belonging to the three areas of philosophy, astrology, and theology (pp. 13–44). On Böhme's use of the term *philosophia* see also Cecilia Muratori, "Böhme's

in more detail for which areas of knowledge the three sciences – philosophy, astrology and theology – stand. This explanation displays one of Böhme's typical approaches to the use, invention, and reinterpretation of words – words that are often taken from obvious sources, and yet employed in a completely new way.

At the centre of the *Preface to Aurora* is the grand metaphor of a tree, which on the one hand seems to sum up in its structure the entire world – the garden in which the tree stands means the world, the field means nature, the trunk the stars, the branches the elements, the fruits are the human beings –⁷ and on the other is at the centre of a story, in which the tree's varied modifications, such as growth or drying up as a result of being attacked (by worms, or by weather conditions), signify humanity's struggle between tending to God and falling prey to the Devil. Introducing this metaphor, Böhme writes: "I compare all of *Philosophia*, *Astrologia* and *Theologia* together with their mother to a splendid tree growing in a garden of delight."⁸ He then distinguishes more precisely what kind of knowledge derives from each of the three. The fact that *philosophia* is mentioned first suggests that it is the broadest category, and indeed Böhme explains that: "*Philosophia* [...] treats of the divine power: what God is; and of how it is that in the being of God, nature, stars, and elements are constituted; and of whence all things have their origin; of how the heavens and the earth are constituted; as well as of angels, human beings, and devils; of heaven and hell, and everything that is creatural; and finally of what the two qualities in nature consist: all of this upon a true foundation, in knowledge of the spirit, and the urging and under the sway of God."⁹

The explanation of the second science listed, *Astrologia*, is a typical instance of Böhme's re-interpretation of common terms: *Astrologia* – he points out – has nothing to do with the technical knowledge of the movements of celestial bodies. In fact, it doesn't even have much to do with the observation of the sky at all: "It is not my purpose to describe the course and location of all stars or their designations, or to discuss their annual conjunctions of oppositions or quadrants or that sort of thing, nor what it is that they effect in a year or a day."¹⁰ Rather, *Astrologia* appears to add to *philosophia* a more specific knowledge of the relationships between stars, elements, and creatures, and of the influences of the first two on the latter. Finally, the interpretation of the third,

philosophia," in *Grund und Ungrund: Der Kosmos des mystischen Philosophen Jacob Böhme*, ed. by Claudia Brink and Lucinda Martin (Dresden: Sandstein, 2017), 36–49.

7 Böhme, *Aurora* (*Morgen Röte im aufgang*, 1612), 78.

8 Böhme, *Aurora* (*Morgen Röte im aufgang*, 1612), 77.

9 Böhme, *Aurora* (*Morgen Röte im aufgang*, 1612), 105.

10 Böhme, *Aurora* (*Morgen Röte im aufgang*, 1612), 107.

theologia, reflects a key point in Böhme's view of the Divine and of nature, his insistence on the necessary role of contrast, of conflict, as the source of vitality. *Theologia* is here a sort of "art of war", as it deals with the frontal opposition of the reign of Christ with that of the Devil, and with man's oscillations between the two.¹¹

In *Aurora*, *philosophia* thus appears almost all-encompassing with regard to topics and aims: since *Aurora* sets out to present Böhme's understanding of the Divine being as it mirrors itself in its creation, in this sense it is intended to be a philosophical work. Yet, precisely the way in which the knowledge of nature is anchored within the knowledge of God – the latter ultimately depends on the former – suggests a more precise use of *philosophia* than this. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries *philosophia* was often used as a synonym for the alchemical study of nature.¹² The reference is not necessarily to the practical side of alchemy, such as the production of gold, but rather to a certain approach to the study of nature which originates from the belief in the deep interconnection of the higher and the lower, of the divine sphere with the terrestrial one.¹³ Paracelsus himself had ascribed a crucial role to philosophy,¹⁴ which he saw as deeply connected to his understanding of astronomy, a connection which resonates in Böhme's own coupling of *philosophia* and *astronomia*. In a fragment belonging to *Paragranum*, Paracelsus describes the area of competence and role of the philosopher is as follows: "The *philosopher* should grow in a twofold way: one from heaven and one from the earth, that is from firmament's sphere, so that he understands earth and water. Therefore he should be competent in both, [that is he should be able] to describe their nature: yet there is only one philosophy, but one is a philosopher, the other one an astronomer."¹⁵ Again, we

11 Böhme, *Aurora (Morgen Röte im auffgang, 1612)*, 107: "Theologia treats of the realm of Christ, of how it is constituted, how it is opposed to the realm of hell, how it also struggles and fights in nature with the realm of hell; how human beings can overcome the realm of hell through faith and the spirit in divine power in order to [...] achieve a victory in the battle."

12 See for instance Wilhelm Kühlmann and Joachim Telle (ed.), *Der Frühparacelsismus. Dritter Teil/2* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), 892 and 796.

13 See Weeks' comment on the definition of *philosophia* in Böhme, *Aurora (Morgen Röte im auffgang, 1612)*, 31: "*Philosophia* is theology and alchemy. Böhme's term refers to a natural philosophy that claims to observe nature directly, yet discovers in it mainly relationships of macrocosm and microcosm and of the signature of things."

14 Kühlmann and Telle, *Der Frühparacelsismus Dritter Teil/2*, 1071 "Paracelsus hatte der Alchemie einen hohen Rang eingeräumt; zusammen mit 'philosophia', 'astronomia', und 'virtus' bildete sie 'Grund' und Hauptsäule seiner Medicina reformata. Sie galt ihm als ein 'Modus praeparandi rerum medicinalium'".

15 Paracelsus, *Liber quatuor columnarum medicinae* (so-called *Paragranum fragment*, in: *Fünfter Theil der Bücher und Schrifften des Edlen Hochgelehrten und Bewehrten Philosophie und Medici Philippi Theophrastu Paracelsi genannt [...]* (Basel: Waldkirch, 1589), 161. On

see both a broader and a narrower conception of *philosophia*: in the narrow sense, the philosopher studies nature and his attention is directed to the earth, while the astronomer looks up to the sky; yet, in a broader sense of the word, *philosophia* encompasses the investigation of both worlds, the higher and the lower. In *Aurora* Böhme recurs to the same conception of philosophical approach – *philosophia* as strictly linked to *Naturkunde*, the exploration of the natural world – but emphasizes the fact that all knowledge has a divine origin: philosophy consists in investigating God's essence, but through the study of nature, as he puts it in *Aurora*.¹⁶

Despite understanding *philosophia* in this frame of reference, and despite the pervasive use of alchemical, Paracelsian language¹⁷ (including expressions like "lapis philosophorum", and "philosophische Kugel", philosophical sphere¹⁸), Böhme explicitly refuses to be classified as an alchemist: "You should not take me for an alchemist. For I write only in the knowledge of the spirit and not from experience",¹⁹ he writes in Chapter 22 of *Aurora*, insisting on the fact that his knowledge does not derive from practical dealing with metals, just like his dealing with *astrologia* does not involve any direct observations of the sky.

the understanding of philosophy and astronomy in this text see also Wilhelm Kühlmann and Joachim Telle (ed.), *Der Frühparacelsismus, Zweiter Teil*, (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2004), 661. Cf. also the discussion of *philosophia* in *Paragranum* in the selection of Paracelsus text translated by Andrew Weeks: Paracelsus, *Essential Theoretical Writings* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 131: "In order to further delineate the *philosophus*, let it be known that he is understood in two ways: one of the heavens, the other of the earth. [...] He is a *philosophus* who has knowledge of the Lower Sphere; he is an *astronomus* who knows of the Upper Sphere. And yet the two together embody a single sense and art." On Paracelsus' connection between philosophy, astronomy and alchemy and its reception see Kühlmann and Telle, *Der Frühparacelsismus Dritter Teil*/2, 1071 et seq.

16 Böhme, *Aurora* (*Morgen Röte im auffgang*, 1612), 130–131.

17 See especially a passage from *Forty Questions on the Soul* in which Böhme discusses the connection of *Philosophia* with *Astrologia* and *Astronomia*, and refers to a process of healing brought about by a *medicus*: "from *Magia* originates *Philosophia*, which founds *Magia* and searches within, and finds eternally *Astrologia*; and *Astrologia* looks again for its master and maker as *Astronomia*, *Sulphur* and *Mercurius*, which has a principle of its own, and in it is the third *Magia*, that is the *Medicus*, who searches for the one who divides and wants to heal him". (Jakob Böhme, *Psychologia Vera, oder Vierztyg Fragen Von der Seelen*, in *Theosophia revelata. Das ist: Alle Göttliche Schriften des Gottseligen und Hoherleuchteten Deutschen Theosophii Jacob Böhmens* [...] (s.l.: 1730), vol. 4, 48: Question 1, § 196).

18 I refer to the famous engraving titled *Die Philosophische Kugel* (The Philosophical Sphere), reproduced in the 1730 edition: the scheme can be seen as an attempt to explain the dynamics linking together the conception of the divine with the understanding of nature's vitality. It is not concerned with alchemy in the strict sense of the world, but the philosophical aspect of the representation consists precisely in elaborating this alchemical – that is to say: philosophical – link between God and nature (Böhme, *Psychologia Vera, oder Vierztyg Fragen Von der Seelen*, 51–52).

19 Böhme, *Aurora* (*Morgen Röte im auffgang*, 1612), 675.

In the same chapter of *Aurora*, Böhme praises the *philosophia* of the pagans, who in their knowledge of nature came right before God's countenance.²⁰ Yet he hastily adds that the pagans could not recognise it. Indeed in parallel to Böhme's use of the term *philosophia* to describe his approach to the study of God and of nature – this is what he also calls the “right philosophy”, “rechte Philosophia”²¹ – he employs the same term critically to stigmatise trust in reason (*Vernunft*) as the source of knowledge. This type of philosophy takes its origin from studying at schools, and from books – but since the true knowledge comes directly from God, Böhme regards it with suspicion.²² This attitude, moreover, explains the lack of direct reference to sources, which in turn makes it all the more difficult, but also all the more important, to attempt to read his works “in context”, placing him back within the cultural and literary background which remains unaddressed in Böhme's own works. From his letters we know, for instance, that he was not only interested in circulating his own texts, but that he recommended works by other authors, such as Valentin Weigel's *Gnothi seauton*: he even expressed the hope of obtaining certain books after the trade fair in Leipzig (the “Leipziger Messe”).²³ Despite his self-portrayal as a simple instrument of God's will, Böhme is thus at the centre of a very active network in which books are discussed and sought after.²⁴ An awareness of this context, and especially the frame in which his followers and readers located him, helps us overcome the sense of isolation and “uniqueness” that still hinders a proper analysis of his philosophy in its evolution.

Böhme's readers, right from the outset, have debated his sources, and a major point of controversy concerned the problem whether he took inspiration from other writers, or whether his one and only source was God, as he repeatedly claimed. One particularly clear example of an early questioning of this

20 Böhme, *Aurora (Morgen Röte im auffgang, 1612)*, 653: “After the patriarchs came the wise heathens who progressed even further in the understanding of nature. It must be said in truth that in their *philosophia* and knowledge they came before the very countenance of God without being able to see and recognize him.” See also p. 457. Cf. Alexandre Koyré, *La philosophie de Jacob Boehme* (Paris: Vrin, 1979), 81–84 and 96.

21 Böhme, *Aurora (Morgen Röte im auffgang, 1612)*, 569: “Your animate spirit must first of all infuse itself with the innermost birth in God and abide in the light to know the sidereal birth properly to have an open gate in all births. Otherwise you cannot write a sacred and true *philosophia*, but only lice and fleas, and you will be found out as a disdainer of God.”

22 See for instance Böhme, *Psychologia Vera, oder Viertzig Fragen Von der Seelen*, 80 (Question 10, § 1).

23 Jakob Böhme, *Theosophische Sendbriefe*, in *Theosophia revelata* (s.l.: 1730), vol. 21, 29 (Letter 9, to Christian Bernhard, § 14), and 50 (Letter 12, to Caspar Lindner, § 34).

24 See the comments on Weigel in Böhme, *Theosophische Sendbriefe*, 55–56 (Letter 12, to Caspar Lindner, §§ 59–60).

claim is Tobias Wagner's *Propemticum Judicium Theologicum de Scriptis Jacobi Boemi* (1679), in which the author points out that the Bible alone cannot possibly account for Böhme's knowledge in the areas of the study of nature and astrology: rather, he must have known works by Paracelsus, Schwenckfeld and Weigel.²⁵

Despite the fact that references to other "philosophers" are rare in Böhme's works, and that he takes particular care to underline that he is an outsider who does not value academic philosophical disputes, links connecting Böhme with broader philosophical traditions were indeed often drawn *by others*. The most striking example of indirect "philosophical interaction" of Böhme with philosophical traditions is probably Abraham von Franckenberg's work. Franckenberg is well known as the author of a biography of Böhme (or rather *biographies*, given the history of the text),²⁶ which emphasizes extraordinary and supernatural events in Böhme's life. In fact this biography became a sort of introduction to Böhme's works, because it was republished in all major editions, where it acted as a filter to approaching Böhme's thought.²⁷ Yet, as well as being the author of this famous "biography", Franckenberg was also the author of theological writings in their own right.²⁸

In *Oculus sidereus*, Franckenberg links Böhme's philosophy – so often considered to be completely disconnected from contemporary philosophical

25 Tobias Wagner, *Propemticum Judicium Theologicum de Scriptis Jacobi Boemi* [...] (Tübingen: Reis, 1679), 27–28: "Nec. 3 putandum est, eum plane sine mediis ad suam qualem-cunque cognitionem rerum divinarum & humanarum pervenisse, quod ad Theologica, tum Physica, Chymica, & Astrologica attinet. [...] Unde consequens est, non sola Biblia Sacra, sed & longe alia volumina adminiculavisse illum, quorum ne se ut sorex prodat, non ausit meminisse, nempe volumina Theophrasti, Schwenckfeldi, Weigelii, quorum in libris suis meminit, & aliorum ejus furfuris autorum, quos in succum & sanguinem vertit, eosque ut supra de Schwenckfeldio & Weigelio audivimus, singulari encomio ornat: Qui ergo illum pro immediate a Spiritu S. illuminato habeamus?"

26 See Carlos Gilly, "Zur Geschichte der Böhme-Biographien des Abraham von Franckenberg," in *Jacob Böhmes Weg in die Welt. Zur Geschichte der Handschriftensammlung, Übersetzungen und Editionen von Abraham Willemsz van Bayerland*, ed. Theodor Harmsen (Amsterdam: In de Pelikaan, 2007), 329–363.

27 I have considered this aspect in Cecilia Muratori, "'Tanta verborum confusione'. Die Rezeption von Franckenbergs Bericht durch Arnold und Mosheim", *Offenbarung und Episteme. Zur europäischen Wirkung Jakob Böhmes im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Friedrich Vollhardt and Wilhelm Kühlmann (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2012), 435–449.

28 Joachim Telle has addressed the question about the portrayal of Franckenberg as a mere follower of Böhme in his introduction of Franckenberg's correspondence: Abraham von Franckenberg, *Briefwechsel*, ed. Joachim Telle (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1995), especially 38.

debates on the international scale – to a broader context.²⁹ The work has a special focus on the controversial question of the relation between the sun and the earth, and it opens with a series of quotations that point to the topic of the earth's movement (including from Patrizi, Bruno and Copernicus).³⁰ In Chapter 10, Franckenberg emphasizes the ancient roots of the theory that the earth revolves around the sun, and mentions Pythagoras among many others. In this context, in which *philosophia* and *astronomia* are once again firmly linked together, enabling a transition from theology to natural philosophy,³¹ Böhme is then inserted in a list of new philosophers who embraced this heliocentric theory. Franckenberg names Böhme as a “follower of Copernicus” alongside many others including Bruno and Campanella, thus integrating Böhme in a philosophical network. As Andrew Weeks has noted, Böhme's cosmology is from the first work onwards heliocentric,³² and this makes it possible for Franckenberg to insert *Jacobus Teutonicus* in the most important contemporary natural-philosophical debate, next to Italian philosophers who were also being read and discussed in Germany at the time when Böhme wrote his works.³³

29 For a lucid analysis of Franckenberg's arguments in this text see Sibylle Rusterholz, “Abraham von Franckenbergs Verhältnis zu Jacob Böhme: Versuch einer Neubestimmung aufgrund kritischer Sichtung der Textgrundlagen,” *Kulturgeschichte Schlesien in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Klaus Garber (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2005), 205–41.

30 Abraham von Franckenberg, *Oculus Sidereus* [...] (Danzig: Georg Rhete, 1644).

31 See especially Franckenberg, *Oculus Sidereus*, § XI (without page numbers): “Weil dann im verwichenen *Seculo* mit Erklärerung des heiligen *EVANGELII*, zugleich die Freye Künste / und also auch di *Astronomia* oder Gestirnkunst in unßrem Aedlen (jetzt elenden) Deutschlande erneuret; und bißhero / von unterschiedenen hochbegabeten *Ingenjis*, je länger je höher und schärpffer *erspeculiret* und außgeführt worden: So ist vor andern auch der Gelährte Mann *NICOLAVS COPERNICUS* [...] gleichsam auffgewachet”. See also § XLIX on the separation between theology and astronomy with regard to their area of competence in relation to the discussion of heliocentrism.

32 Weeks, *Boehme: An Intellectual Biography*, 8, 54–55, 86; see also Böhme, *Aurora (Morgen Röte im auffgang, 1612)*, 225. On the symbolism of Böhme and Weigel's heliocentrism, see Andrew Weeks, *Valentin Weigel (1533–1588): German Religious Dissenter, Speculative Theorist, and Advocate of Tolerance* (Albany: SUNY, 2000), 178: “[...] from the beginning of Boehme's speculative development in *Aurora*, the symbolic world of nature is cosmologically heliocentric. This fact subtly concentrates all other differences into one pivotal point. Heliocentrism transposes the mysterious infinite depths of Weigel's God from the abyss surrounding the suspended cosmos into the spirit-filled depths of a natural world which does not hover miraculously only at its fringes: the earth rotates around the sun.”

33 Campanella's reception in 17th-century Germany is particularly important in this respect because it takes place within a network of people linked to the Rosicrucian publications (see Cecilia Muratori, “Utopie um 1600: Europa und die Welt in Tommaso Campanellas *Sonnenstaat*,” in *Ideengeschichte um 1600: Konstellationen zwischen Schulmetaphysik,*

Another example of such indirect philosophical interaction are Johann Angelius Werdenhagen's paratexts to a book in which he includes a Latin translation of Böhme's *Forty Questions on the Soul*.³⁴ Werdenhagen was also involved in the debate on the limits of philosophical enquiry in relation to theology and metaphysics, while cultivating his interests in alchemy and in Böhme's works. The texts surrounding his translation of Böhme are particularly noteworthy because they frame him within this varied context: the *dedicatio* and the *introductio* focus on the question "what is philosophy" in relation to faith; the following section presents a whole range of philosophical opinions on the nature of the soul, including those of Aristotle, Averroes, Seneca, Augustine, up to Luther and Böhme. In this way Werdenhagen locates Böhme's philosophy within a broader horizon, creating a web of indirect connections between his text and a series of philosophical positions regarding the conception of the soul that are not mentioned in Böhme's replies to the forty questions collected by Werdenhagen's friend Balthasar Walther.³⁵

The case of Werdenhagen raises the question from which I started: who read which works by Böhme? Werdenhagen bases his presentation of Böhme's *philosophia* on a specific text, *Forty Questions of the Soul*, dating from 1620, almost eight years after *Aurora*: a peculiar text with regard to its structure, its readership and especially its starting point, which is a series of questions on the soul that had been presented to Böhme. On the other hand, Franckenberg selects the specific connection between philosophy and astronomy – which, as we saw, is prominent in *Aurora* – in order to emphasise Böhme's Copernican legacy.³⁶ Franckenberg and Werdenhagen can be seen as the first generation of readers to have framed Böhme's thought in such ways: Böhme's philosophical

Konfessionalisierung und hermetischer Spekulation, ed. Friedrich Vollhardt and Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 2017), 113–141.

34 Johannes Angelius Werdenhagen, *Psychologia vera i.b.t. XL Quaestionibus explicata et rerum publicarum vero regimini ac earum maiestatico iuri applicata* (Amsterdam: Jansson, 1632), see especially the long *Introductio*. On Werdenhagen as translator of Böhme see Jost Eickmeyer, "Johann Angelius Werdenhagen (1581–1652) und seine *Psychologia Vera* [Jacobi] B[öhmi] T[eutonic] (1632)," *Offenbarung und Episteme*, 67–91.

35 On Walther's conversations with Böhme see Werdenhagen, *Psychologia Vera*, 64. It is interesting to note that while here Böhme is called "vir theosophicus" in *Introductio universalis in omnes respublicas sive politica generalis* (Amsterdam: Blaeu, 1632), Werdenhagen repeatedly refers to Böhme as *philosophus*. On Werdenhagen and Walther see Jost Eickmeyer, "Werdenhagen, Johann Angelius," *Killy Literaturlexikon* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008–2011), vol. 12, 301–304.

36 Another influential philosophical background in which Böhme's works have been framed is that of the Platonic tradition. But in this case too it proves difficult to identify specific sources of inspiration for Böhme. I discuss the question about Böhme's reception as a Platonist in Cecilia Muratori, "Platonic-Hermetic Jacob Böhme, or: Is Böhme a Platonist?,"

afterlives begin with these attempts to draw indirect connections and posit sources which are not mentioned by Böhme himself. But Böhme's *philosophia*, which he understood as a specific approach to the knowledge of nature and the divine, evolves from the first to the later works.

The main aspect that changes radically is the terminology employed by Böhme in order to express the relation of the divine with nature. The clearest instance of such a development are the modifications that are apparent when comparing his first attempt to record the content of his intuition in 1612–1613, and his second book, *Of the Three Principles of the Divine Essence*, written seven years later, which decisively broke the silence followed by the confiscation of the author's manuscript of *Aurora*. First of all, the second book is written for a readership, while the first one – Böhme insisted – was merely intended as a *Memorial* composed for himself. Further, between 1612 and 1619 Böhme broadened his knowledge of works by other authors, arguably alchemical literature in particular. In a letter he recommends for instance Siebmacher's *Wasserstein der Weisen* (published in 1619), in which we find a definition of alchemy that binds the spiritual side of the alchemical process with the knowledge of nature: Siebmacher, just like Böhme, declares himself uninterested in alchemy considered as a sophistical or practical art.³⁷

Reading sources such as this *Tractätlein* had an obvious effect: Böhme's second book uses a different terminology from the first, and the difference is not mere refinement. More radically, Böhme borrows terms from other sources in order to “translate” the content of his writings and so achieve what he hopes will be a clearer exposition. This process is particularly striking in the transition from *Aurora* to *The Three Principles*, the latter using for instance many more Latin words than the former. The use of terms deriving from alchemical literature has increased noticeably, and we find a series of words which Böhme had not yet employed in *Aurora*.

Böhme's use of alchemical terms has particularly puzzled his readers and interpreters: why does he use words like *Limbus*, *Tinctur*, or *Turba Philosophorum*,

in *Platonism and Modernity*, ed. by Anna Corrias, Guido Giglioni and Valery Rees (Leiden: Brill) (forthcoming).

37 Cf. Böhme, *Theosophische Sendbriefe*, 104 (Letter 29, to Christian Steinbergen, § 14). [Johannes Siebmacher], *Wasserstein der Weysen/ Das ist Ein Chymisch Tractätlein [...]* (Frankfurt: Lucas Jennis, 1619), 143–144: “Ich rede aber hier nur allein von der wahrhafften natur gemeß künstlichen *Alchimia*, die da fürnemblich under andern/ wie das böse unnd unreine von dem gueten unnd reinen zu erkennen unnd zu underscheiden sey/ lehret/ durch welche man also dann hernach der gebrestlichen unnd schadhafften Natur zu hülf kommen/ und rechte beforderung erzeigen kan [...]. Auff die andere Sophistische arg oder Alchymistische Kunst/ verstehe ich mich gar nichts/ begere sie auch nicht zu lernen.”

if he distances his work from that of "alchemists", insisting that even alchemical terms must not be understood by reference to literature dealing with the handling of metals, but rather only by following Böhme's own course of reasoning? In other words, why use such vocabulary if what he actually wants to express has nothing to do with the meaning of these terms in the works from which he has taken them? Even the title of Böhme's second book – *The Three Principles of the Divine Essence* – makes a clear allusion to Paracelsus;³⁸ and yet, the three principles at the centre of Böhme's work are not simply Paracelsus' three substances, *Sulphur*, *Mercurius* and *Sal*. This shift works almost as a red herring: Böhme points to Paracelsus, but goes beyond him. He states that the three principles are in the *Urkund*, thus displacing the three Paracelsian "things" right into the origin of everything, investing them with a radical metaphysical meaning: "Look, there are mainly three things in the origin [*Urkund*], from which every thing, spirit and life, movement and comprehensibility, has come forth."³⁹ *Urkund* is a new word, not present in *Aurora*, which could be rendered with "original state, original condition".⁴⁰ Another crucial terminological innovation which Böhme introduces later on is *Ungrund* (Un-ground): as we will see below, it is one of the most successful words from the point of view of Böhme's philosophical legacy.

The example of Böhme's adaptation of Paracelsian terminology in *Von den drey Principien* is only one striking instance of the shifts and modifications that occur in Böhme's works. Even if Koyré's view is accepted that Böhme's attempt at explaining his philosophy in clearer terms from the second book onwards failed miserably, because the integration of "foreign" terms lead to an even more confused presentation,⁴¹ it remains the case that Böhme's philosophy

38 See Koyré, *La philosophie de Jacob Boehme*, 177.

39 Jacob Böhme, *Von den drei Principien göttliches Wesen*, in *Theosophia revelata*, vol. 2, 10 (chap. 1, § 6): "Siehe, es sind vornehmlich drei Dinge im Urkund, daraus sind worden alle Dinge, Geist und Leben, Weben und Begreiflichkeit, als Sulphur, Mercurius und Sal." For the translation of *Weben* as *movement* (more precisely a movement of oscillation, backwards and forwards) see Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*. (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1854–1961), 16 vols. in 32 parts, see *sub voce*. Cf. also the translation in Jacob Böhme, *The second booke, concerning the three principles of the divine essence* [...], transl. by John Sparrow (London: Blunden, 1648), 2.

40 Koyré states that *Urkund* marks in fact the difference between *Aurora* and *The Three Principles* (see Koyré, *La philosophie de Jacob Boehme*, 174: "En effet, un problème nouveau se pose dans le *De Tribus Principiis*, problème que l'*Aurora* ignorait encore. C'est le problème de l'origine absolue de l'être, le problème de l'*Urkund*, source, racine, origine et germe de l'être en tant que tel."

41 Koyré, *La philosophie de Jacob Boehme*, for instance 176: "l'emploi d'expressions savantes comme *Matrix*, *Ether*, *Limbus*, *Element*, *Essentia*, *Quinta Essentia*, *Tinctur*, etc., produit

cannot be approached without bearing in mind this constant development. Böhme's *philosophia*, that is to say his attempt at explaining God's essence and nature's functioning at the same time, is a constant work-in-progress, not a fixed set of concepts. As Böhme himself put it: "A Philosopher does not stand still, until he has the centre of a thing": the development that is visible when comparing his works can thus be seen as the expression of this continuous striving towards grasping the "centre", the nucleus of his intuition, from which all of his writings originate.

In the case of Böhme, then, the question about the readers' access to and use of his books is even more pressing than it is when dealing with other cases of philosophical reception-histories. In order to understand the roots of (often opposed) judgements of Böhme as a philosopher, we must thus ask which, if any, book is the main point of reference in each instance. Which concepts and words are chosen as main tenets of Böhme's philosophy? On the basis of which presentation is Böhme included or excluded from the history of philosophy?

3 Böhme's Place in the "History of Philosophy"

Georg Christoph Lichtenberg famously remarked that Böhme's works can be seen as a picnic, to which the author contributes the words and the readers the meaning.⁴² This suggests that they constitute the very opposite of a structured philosophical system, or, for that matter, of any kind of coherent philosophical speculation.⁴³ The metaphor of the picnic implies rather arbitrariness in the association between words and concepts, an association essential to philosophical thought (and without which there can be no reconstruction and interpretation of that philosophy either).

une confusion indescriptible." Ultimately, Koyré (p. 175) judges the result as follows: "L'effort est méritoire et touchant. Il aboutit malheureusement à un résultat déplorable."

42 Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, *Sudelbücher*, in *Schriften und Briefe*, ed. Wolfgang Promies (München: Hanse, 1968–74), vol. 1, 363 (notebook E, 104): "[Jacob Böhms unsterbliche Werke sind] eine Art Pickenick, wobei der Verfasser die Worte (den Schall) und der Leser den Sinn stellt." On the obscurity of Böhme, ironically considered in parallel to the book of nature, see further notebook D, 159.

43 Of course the history of philosophy has itself an history, and the criteria for inclusion or exclusion within the history of philosophy (such as systematically structured thinking) are historical too. On this development and on the "persona" of the philosopher see Ian Hunter, "Die Geschichte der Philosophie und die Persona des Philosophen," in *Die Cambridge School der politischen Ideengeschichte*, ed. Martin Mulsow and Andreas Mahler (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2010), 241–283, especially 248–249.

Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century histories of philosophy frequently doubt or reject Böhme's status as a philosopher on precisely this basis: if Böhme's terminology is so polysemantic or even as erratic as the image of the picnic suggests, aren't attempts to "make sense" of his works within a coherent tradition doomed to failure? References to Böhme as the German philosopher – an epithet, that of "philosophus teutonicus", with which he himself signed some of his letters – are very common in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century literature. Yet his presentation seems to linger on the border between philosophy and religious mysticism, as for instance in the case of Rixner's *History of Philosophy*, which begins by stating that one of the fundamental tenets of Böhme's thought is "the impossibility of any philosophy without immediate divine illumination".⁴⁴

Böhme is placed within the history of (at least) German philosophy, stressing the "national status" of his work,⁴⁵ primarily by virtue of his linguistic coinages. But this inclusion quickly reveals itself to be *de facto* an exclusion, since attempts to discuss Böhme's works in detail are rare. It was in such a context that Tennemann in his monumental *History of Philosophy* characterized Böhme as an enthusiast (a *Schwärmer*), rather than a proper philosopher. Tennemann judges Böhme's "theosophical dreams" primarily on the basis of Franckenberg's biography, with its relations of prophetic and visionary episodes, rather than on Böhme's own statements.⁴⁶

The chapter on Böhme, which immediately precedes the one on Descartes, ends with this critical statement: "He received for a long time the reputation of German philosopher from numerous scholars, and he did not lack followers, apologists and admirers, even in the most recent times."⁴⁷ It is clear that

44 Thaddä Anselm Rixner, *Handbuch der Geschichte der Philosophie*, vol. 2 (Sulzbach: von Seidel, 1823), 272. Rixner dedicates minimal space to Böhme – whom he considers a theosopher – but does attempt to summarize his philosophy.

45 Weeks, *Boehme: An Intellectual Biography*, 129: "Böhme's increased output as a writer at the beginning of the Thirty Years' War raises questions about his status as a *Philosophus Teutonicus* and about the prophetic role that has been claimed for him. During the war, Boehme accepted this pseudonym from his supporters. Several of his letters are signed 'Teutonicus.' [...] In the Age of German Romanticism, the national status of Jacob Boehme was an elective affinity, untroubled by its own contradictions."

46 Indeed it is important to note that Tennemann only includes quotations from Böhme's first book, *Aurora*, apart from one from a short writing entitled *Six Mystical Points*. See Gottlieb Wilhelm Tennemann, *Geschichte der Philosophie*, vol. 10 (Leipzig: Barth, 1817), 183–197.

47 Tennemann, *Geschichte der Philosophie*, 197: "So erhielt sich auf lange Zeit das Ansehen des deutschen Philosophen, bei einer Anzahl von Gelehrten, und es fehlte ihm nicht an Nachfolgern, Apologeten und Lobpreisen selbst in den neuesten Zeiten."

for Tennemann Böhme does not in fact deserve to be called a philosopher at all. But we could ask on what foundation Tennemann constructs his presentation, as he seems to rely more heavily on Franckenberg's biography, than on Böhme's writings. The gap between the reputation and the actual study of Böhme comes to light even more radically in Tiedemann's *Spirit of Speculative Philosophy*, where Böhme is called "highly famous" (*hochberühmt*); yet the presentation by Tiedemann lacks any clear references to Böhme's works, which he considers impossibly obscure.⁴⁸

Even if Böhme is included in such histories of philosophy, often occupying a key position at the threshold of modern philosophy, we can observe the unfolding of a process which leads to the creation of two different "Jacob Böhmes": one, the enthusiast and the mystic, who started to enjoy a certain notoriety (mainly because of the success of Franckenberg's portrait), but generally only as a vague example of mystical inspiration, and with few direct references; and another one, the philosopher, whose writings still remained in the background.

Even one of Böhme's readers who did study his works and attempted to reconstruct the key arguments that he believed contributed decisively to the history of philosophy – that is Hegel – admitted in a letter to one of his students that he found it impossible to read Böhme's prose for a sustained period of time.⁴⁹ The question of method, with which the influential histories of philosophies just mentioned are concerned, emerges most powerfully in what is probably the most important history of philosophy with regard to the reception of Böhme, Hegel's *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. Hegel directly confronts the question: does Böhme not lack the systematic method and orderly presentation characteristic of philosophical writing?

Hegel places Böhme, coupled with Francis Bacon, at the roots of modern philosophy, leading up to the Cartesian turn. He addresses Böhme's status as a philosopher both through his reputation for "enthusiasm" and by referring to his unsystematic mode of expression.⁵⁰ In the lecture course of 1825–1826, Hegel mentions Böhme's afterlife as an enthusiast in these terms: "He was

48 Dieterich Tiedemann, *Geist der spekulativen Philosophie*, vol. 5 (Marburg: Akademische Buchhandlung, 1796), 525.

49 Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, in *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, ed. Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel, vol. 20 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1989), 97.

50 See on the contrast between form and content of Böhme's philosophy according to Hegel see Cecilia Muratori, "Der Zauber und die Eiche. Hegels Befreiung der philosophischen Sprache Jacob Böhmes," in *Morgenröte im Aufgang: Beiträge einer Tagung zum 400. Jahrestag der Entstehung von Böhmes Erstschrift*, ed. Günther Bonheim and Thomas Regehly, *Böhme-Studien*, 4 (Berlin: Weißensee Verlag, 2017), 167–193.

labeled an enthusiast, and only in more recent times he has been restored to honor, although on the other side he has also been accorded too much honor."⁵¹ But this honour did not extend to his philosophical afterlife, even if according to Hegel the epithet of "philosophus teutonicus" is fully justified by the fact that it was "through him that philosophy of a distinctive character first emerged in Germany."⁵²

For Hegel, Böhme is truly the "first German philosopher": he played a pivotal role in the development of philosophical thinking in German language, and is thus to be considered a philosopher, rather than an enthusiast, a "mystic", or a religious *Meister* – and we know how common this latter representation of Böhme was: "Sancte Jacobe Böhmi, ora pro nobis!", as Lichtenberg ironically put it.⁵³ But it is Böhme's mode of expression that makes the systematic reconstruction of his philosophy particularly problematic, and in fact Hegel argues that "it would be a delusion to undertake to give a consistent presentation and development of his views as far as concerns their particular expression. We cannot say much about Jacob Böhme's thoughts without employing his own mode and form of expression."⁵⁴ For Hegel, the challenge posed by treating Böhme as a philosopher is contained in these lines: the language he employs (including the extended use of images, metaphors and the apparently technical vocabulary reminiscent of alchemical literature)⁵⁵ is quite unsuitable to philosophical speculation, and yet Böhme is, in concept rather than form, a philosopher, and in fact a very important one with regard to the development of a philosophical tradition in German, despite the fact that he was for a long time praised for the wrong reasons, namely for his supposed "enthusiasm."

Hegel thus considers Böhme's language responsible for his borderline position: it is because of the way in which he created a new philosophical terminology that Hegel considers him the first German philosopher; but, his imaginative and

51 Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy 1825–6*, ed. Robert F. Brown, transl. R.F. Brown, J.M. Stewart, with the assistance of H.S. Harris, vol. 3: *Medieval and Modern Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2009), 93.

52 Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy 1825–6*, 95.

53 Lichtenberg, *Schriften und Briefe*, vol. 4, 789. The quotation is taken from a letter to Blumenbach about the possibility of transformations in nature, especially with regard to metals.

54 Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy 1825–6*, 96.

55 Bo Andersson has analysed in detail Böhme's language and the key role of images in *Jacob Böhmes Denken in Bildern. Eine kognitionslinguistisch orientierte Analyse der Wirklichkeitskonstruktion in der Morgen Röte im aufgang* (1612) (Tübingen and Basel: Francke, 2007). On Hegel and Böhme see 9; I don't agree about the fact that Hegel does not consider Böhme a 'proper philosopher', and I interpret Hegel's statement about "using actuality as a concept" differently (on this Muratori, , *The First German Philosopher*, 249).

unsystematic mode of presentation prevents an accurate reconstruction of his philosophy. Despite this structural difficulty, Hegel claims that Böhme intertwined words (often his own linguistic inventions) and concepts in such a way that he created nothing less than the first philosophy in the German language.

As Hegel's discussion suggests, Böhme's unstable place in the history of philosophy depends above all on his language, which was alternatively inadequate to the depth of the concepts it denoted, deemed impenetrable and unphilosophical (for instance by Tennemann and Tiedemann), or philosophical but confused (as for Rixner and Hegel). In all cases, direct engagement with Böhme's works, or the lack thereof, plays the pivotal role.

Bringing attention to a key phase in Böhme's afterlives, that is the reception among the Jena Romantics, Paola Mayer has shown that only in a few cases – most notably that of Friedrich Schlegel – can we prove that an actual engagement with the sources had taken place.⁵⁶ The history of the editions of Böhme's works sheds considerable light on this phenomenon:⁵⁷ because of the accusations of heresy, Böhme's manuscripts circulated primarily within a network of friends and followers and only one short book (*Der Weg zu Christo*) was published during his lifetime.⁵⁸ After Böhme's death, plans for an edition of his writings were carried out in the first instance abroad, especially in Holland and England. Even after the publication of the two comprehensive eighteenth-century editions of Böhme's works (published 1715 and 1730) the circulation in Germany was evidently limited given that major eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century philosophers who were readers of Böhme either encountered his works abroad (this is the case with Baader),⁵⁹ or were sent the editions from abroad (as was Hegel),⁶⁰ or investigated the possibility to acquire a copy through antiquarian booksellers (as did Schelling).⁶¹ Real readers of Böhme must thus be distinguished from mere admirers (or despisers) who

56 Cf. Paola Mayer, *Jena Romanticism*; and ead., "Reinventing the Sacred: The Romantic Myth of Jakob Böhme," *German Quarterly* 69.3 (1996): 247–59.

57 See especially Werner Buddecke, *Die Jakob Böhme-Ausgaben: ein beschreibendes Verzeichnis. Teil I: Die Ausgaben in deutscher Sprache* (Göttingen: Häntzschel, 1937).

58 On Böhme's network see Leigh T.I. Penman, "Jacob Boehme's intellectual networks and the heterodox milieu of his theosophy, 1600–1624," in *An Introduction to Jacob Boehme: Four Centuries of Thought and Reception*, ed. Ariel Hessayon and Sarah Apetrei, 57–76. On the early circulation of Böhme's writings see Carlos Gilly, "Zur Geschichte und Überlieferung der Handschriften Jacob Böhmes," in *Jacob Böhmes Weg in die Welt*, 39–54.

59 Cf. Julius Hamberger, *Die Cardinalpunkte der Franz Baader'schen Philosophie* (Stuttgart: Steinkopf, 1855), 9.

60 See Muratori, *The First German Philosopher*, 58–66.

61 See Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *Aus Schellings Leben. In Briefen (1803–1820)*, ed. Gustav Leopold Plitt (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1870), 162.

did not have direct access to Böhme's works. But, in the case of those who read and commented on Böhme's writings, on the basis of which specific texts by Böhme was his philosophy revived in each case?

4 Imagination, Indifference and the Power of Negativity: Readers of Böhme and Their Favourite Books (Baader, Schelling, Hegel)

Addressing the problem of Böhme's afterlives, Fechner stated that a mere glance at the literature on Böhme shows "which side, in Böhme's writings, encountered appreciation and was fought against, that is mostly the theological, rarely the alchemical, and the philosophical hardly at all". In his view, Böhme's philosophical afterlives had thus been extremely scarce.⁶² Even if, as we have seen, the first generation of his readers did draw connections with philosophical traditions, it is true that a fully philosophical reception occurred late, during his "rediscovery" from the later eighteenth century – and even then often by way of the debate on his right to be included in the history of philosophy. This late philosophical reception brings us back to his own understanding of what philosophy means. Indeed the connection between the study of nature and the attempt to grasp God's essence is at the heart of Böhme's philosophical afterlives in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: it is not by chance that among his main readers there are philosophers who had a specific interest in natural philosophy, including those aspects related to earlier alchemical enterprises, such as animal magnetism.⁶³

With regard to Böhme's "comeback" at the end of the 19th century under the auspices of *Naturphilosophie*, Franz von Baader, one of Böhme's most important interpreters, compared the reception of his works to the way water-plants grow: their seeds first seem to disappear, and their flowers become visible only when the plant has reached the surface of the water.⁶⁴ In fact Baader himself intended to bring to light, so to speak, the flowers of Böhme's philosophy for his contemporaries: one of the most important proofs of this attempt are the private lectures Baader gave to a group of students, which were only

62 Hermann Adolph Fechner, *Jakob Böhme. Sein Leben und seine Schriften, mit Benutzung handschriftlicher Quellen dargestellt* (Görlitz: Oberlausitzische Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften, 1857), 131.

63 I have reconstructed this in detail in Muratori, *The First German Philosopher*, 29–56 and 66–73. On the link between mysticism and 'science', considering especially the case of Ritter see also Mayer, *Jena Romanticism*, 96 et seq.

64 Franz Xaver von Baader, *Vorlesungen und Erläuterungen zu Jacob Böhme's Lehre*, ed. Julius Hamberger (Leipzig, Bethmann, 1855), 162.

published posthumously. These lectures can serve as a case study for showing how the reading of specific works led to a certain presentation of his philosophy, emphasizing in particular words and concepts that Böhme uses in the chosen work.

Baader lectured on Böhme's *Election of Grace* (1623) and on *Mysterium Magnum* (1623). Baader's student Hamberger reports that Baader intended his lectures on *Election of Grace* as the basis for a commentary on this work, which was nevertheless never written:⁶⁵ what remains are notes which swing from very precise, textually based comments, to freer elaborations inspired by Böhme's terminology. In the first lecture Baader explains why he has chosen *On the Election of Grace* as the basis of a presentation of Böhme's philosophy. There is, first of all, a practical reason: this text does not contain invectives, i.e. polemic against contemporaries of Böhme (this aspect is at times very strong in other works) and is free from other stylistic "intermixtures" that might interfere with the arguments. It is therefore "rein wissenschaftlich", purely scientific in content.⁶⁶ The work contains a series of concepts which Baader considers to make up the core of Böhme's legacy, starting with the presentation of God as *Ungrund* in the first chapter of the work, and the conception of will (*Wille*) which is associated with it. *Ungrund* is a word that appears for the first time in Böhme's *Forty Questions* and is used to grasp the Divine considered in itself, without any relation to the creation and in perfect, un-grounded balance and stillness. It is one of the main instances of Böhme's constant refining of his vocabulary, and one of the most successful terms among Böhme's nineteenth-century readers.

Baader's attention to Böhme's vocabulary in this text emerges also in his comments on specific terms, showing his students how Böhme reinterpreted common words or special ones deriving from alchemical literature. An example is the verb *tingieren*, which – Baader explains – does not mean for Böhme "a superficial colouring", but it has rather to do with investing something with a spiritual power.⁶⁷ Furthermore, Baader paraphrases Böhme by using

65 Baader, *Vorlesungen und Erläuterungen zu Jacob Böhme's Lehre*, 3.

66 Baader, *Vorlesungen und Erläuterungen zu Jacob Böhme's Lehre*, 59: "Ich habe absichtlich seine Schrift über die Gnadenwahl zum Gegenstand meiner Vorträge gewählt, weil diese sich am reinsten von Invectiven und sonstigen Beimischungen gehalten hat und weil sie sich rein wissenschaftlich darstellt."

67 Baader, *Vorlesungen und Erläuterungen zu Jacob Böhme's Lehre*, 82: "Tingiren hat bei J. Böhme nicht den flachen Sinn, den es bei den Franzosen hat, als ein oberflächliches Farbe Geben, Schein Verleihen, sondern hat bei ihm die Bedeutung vom geistigen Potenzieren".

new, eighteenth-century terminology in order to clarify Böhme's complex vocabulary, which plays the pivotal role in these lectures. This occurs when Baader comments on another conceptual knot which he selects from *Von der Gnadenwahl* and which is of particular importance to him – that is to say the definition, role and power of *imagination*. Baader writes that "every egotist [*Egoist*] is a phantast [*Phantast*]." ⁶⁸ He encapsulates Böhme's conception of Lucifer as the creature who desires to be independent from God in the term *Egoist*, which was new around the beginning of the eighteenth century. ⁶⁹

The topic of imagination runs through Baader's works, and he finds in this book by Böhme a point of connection with his own philosophical endeavours. For Baader, imagination is directly linked not only to magic (*Magia*), but also to the etymological root of *magnet*: he emphasizes the attracting force of the action of imagining, while also applying Böhme's concept of imagination to a "new" area of scientific research. ⁷⁰ In *Election of Grace* this active, stimulating function is embodied by the figure of the Devil, since the dynamic relationship between God and his "Other" is essential to the understanding of God himself, viewed from a perspective different from the one expressed by the word *Ungrund*.

Baader focuses precisely on this latter term in order to frame Böhme within a broader philosophical tradition, which encompasses the Cabala. He reads Böhme's distinction between the Divine as the Un-ground and God as creator as a reformulation of the one between the two types of *logos*: "The first chapter of *Election of Grace* discusses λόγος ἐνδιάθετος, the second λόγος προφορικός. Essentially the same differentiation is already to be found in the cabalists. [...] Spinoza took his idea from it [i.e. the Cabala]." ⁷¹

Baader emphasizes the natural philosophical aspects of Böhme's thought, thus recognizing that the connection between the study of nature and of the divine plays the crucial role. Indeed he repeatedly reflects on the points of

68 Baader, *Vorlesungen und Erläuterungen zu Jacob Böhme's Lehre*, 72; and 73: "Das Böse [...] hat in sich auch ein Ideelles".

69 Cf. Friedrich Kluge, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache*, ed. Walther Mitzka (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1967), 152.

70 See for instance Baader, *Vorlesungen und Erläuterungen zu Jacob Böhme's Lehre*, 106, about Böhme and Galvanism.

71 Baader, *Vorlesungen und Erläuterungen zu Jacob Böhme's Lehre*, 71. The parallel with Spinoza leads to asking whether Böhme was also considered to be a pantheist or not. In fact the role played by the reception of Böhme within the so called 'Panteismusstreit' is a topic worth exploring in more detail (see on this Fechner, *Jakob Böhme*, 131; and Baader, *Vorlesungen und Erläuterungen zu Jacob Böhme's Lehre*, 173).

connection between Böhme's philosophy and new "scientific" experiments, which were proving that Böhme's description of the universe was substantially correct. At the same time, commenting on *Election of Grace* provides Baader with material to explicate the differences between those he calls *Naturphilosophen* and Böhme himself. Once again, it is the conception of *Ungrund* – a conception not present in the "early Böhme" – which is decisive in this respect.⁷²

In the second lecture, Baader quotes Böhme's "definition" of *Ungrund* in the first chapter of *Von der Gnadenwahl*: "One cannot say of God [...] that he is this or that, evil or good, that he has distinction within himself [...] In himself he is the Ungrounded without a united will in respect to nature and creature as an eternal nothing".⁷³ As already mentioned, Baader considers Böhme's conception of this Divine before God, which in this book is called *Ungrund*, substantially as a reformulation of a Cabalistic idea. Indeed, behind this interpretation we might detect another reason for Baader's choice of *The Election of Grace* as a guidebook for his lectures: Böhme's attempt to find new ways of describing the essence of the abyssal divine is evident here right from the first chapters.

But of course linking Böhme with the Cabala and emphasizing the notion of *Ungrund* inevitably prepares an intervention in a contemporary philosophical debate. Indeed, Baader glides from commenting on Böhme to drawing connections with the way in which two other famous readers of Böhme – Schelling and Hegel – dealt with the conception of the *Absolute*. Just as Baader does in the case of Böhme's description of nature's movements, so in the debate on the Absolute he wishes to show that Böhme had essentially already grasped the core of this understanding of the Divine. In the lectures dedicated to *Mysterium Magnum*, we read:

When Hegel and Schelling talk about the going out and coming back to itself of God as spirit, and when Hegel calls this going-out-of-itself of the Absolute the same as a manifesting of itself as nature or a becoming

72 Baader, *Vorlesungen und Erläuterungen zu Jacob Böhme's Lehre*, 72: "Darin unterscheidet sich J. Böhme von allen Naturphilosophen, dass er den stillen, esoterischen Gott (den auch jene annehmen) nicht wie jede durch die Creatur, sondern durch die ewige Natur in sich selbst offenbar werden lässt."

73 Baader, *Vorlesungen und Erläuterungen zu Jacob Böhme's Lehre*, 63, quotes this passage from *Von der Gnadenwahl* (chap. 1, § 3): "Man kann nicht von Gott sagen [...] dass Er diess oder das sei, böse oder gut, dass er in sich selber Unterschiede habe [...] Er ist in sich selber der Ungrund ohne einigen Willen gegen die Natur und Creatur als ein ewig Nichts".

nature, through whose re-sublation the Absolute comes to itself, reveals itself, that is it becomes spirit [...] so, long before, Böhme has grasped the Absolute as Ensoph of the Jews or in the moment of its non-ontic and esoteric Being [...].⁷⁴

Without mentioning their differences in understanding the Absolute, Baader here identifies Böhme as the key source for contemporary re-interpretations. But while Schelling, as is well known, does use the Böhman word *Ungrund*, Hegel never does, despite the fact that he, too, was a reader of Böhme.⁷⁵ This disparity becomes understandable if we recur once more to the main questions that I have suggested as a guide for approaching the philosophical reception of Böhme: who read which of his works? And why did different readers place emphasis on different works?

Schelling and Hegel do not engage with Böhme from the same perspective: they are both interested in his philosophy, but not for the same reasons. The conception of the *Ungrund* is foundational for Schelling's philosophy: not only does he employ the word himself, but he fully integrates it in his own vocabulary often without need of mentioning the source. This is the case in *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom* (1809), where Schelling uses the substantive "the Un-ground" in order to present the idea of a perfect indifference: "There must be a being *before* all ground and before all that exists, thus generally before any duality – how can we call it anything other the original ground or rather the *Un-ground* [*Ungrund*]? Since it precedes all opposites, these cannot be distinguishable in it nor can they be present in any way. Therefore, it cannot be described as the identity of opposites; it can only be described as the absolute *indifference* [*Indifferenz*] of both."⁷⁶

The overall conceptual consonance between Schelling's undifferentiated Absolute and Böhme's ungrounded Divine has even lead Koyré to use Schelling's vocabulary to explain Böhme's *Ungrund*: in his monograph on

74 Baader, *Vorlesungen und Erläuterungen zu Jacob Böhme's Lehre*, 172.

75 See Muratori, *The First German Philosopher*, 192–199. On Schelling's reading of Böhme see Robert F. Brown, *The Late Philosophy of Schelling. The Influence of Böhme on the Works 1809–1815* (Lewsburg: Bucknell University Press, 1977).

76 Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom*, trans. by Jeff Love and Johannes Schmidt (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 68 (translation only very slightly modified). On the borrowings from Böhme in the *Freiheitsschrift* see Buchheim's introduction to Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *Philosophische Untersuchungen über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit* (Hamburg: Meiner, 2011), especially xliii; xl–xlii.

Böhme, he defines *Ungrund* as the absolutely undifferentiated Absolute – a terminology which is Schellingian more than Böhmian (Böhme does not use the word Absolute). Schelling's approach to Böhme seems indeed to have been characterized by the feeling of a certain affinity, which persisted through the various phases of Schelling's philosophical development.⁷⁷ This affinity would also at least partially explain the sporadic nature of direct references to Böhme's works: this makes it difficult to track down precisely Schelling's borrowings from him. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, himself an avid reader of Böhme, indeed wrote that "the coincidence of SCHELLING'S system with certain general ideas of Behmen, he declares to have been *mere* coincidence; while *my* obligations have been more direct. *He* needs give to Behmen only feelings of sympathy".⁷⁸

It is clear, in any case, that Schelling's "sympathy" for Böhme catalysed on a series of concepts and words which deal with the problem of understanding the relationship between indifference and the moment of differentiation; ultimately, the crucial question about the origin of evil is also involved with the articulation of unity and plurality, or of how the Divine as God emerges from the Un-ground. Böhme's conception of the "birth of God" is the cornerstone of his philosophy for Schelling. He even claims that Böhme played the role of a major source of inspiration for all subsequent philosophical systems. As he writes in *Philosophy of Revelation*, Böhme paved the way for all scientific systems of modern philosophy thanks to his presentation of God's birth.⁷⁹

Schelling's interpretation of Böhme developed in a complex way that cannot be summarized in a few lines; but the key point is that for him Böhme is the thinker of God as Absolute, as Baader pointed out. On the other hand, reading Hegel's interpretation gives a completely different picture of Böhme's philosophical legacy. Baader himself is well aware of this when he writes in the lectures:

77 Paola Mayer gives a lucid overview of the material evidence of Schelling's engagement with Böhme's philosophy, also discussing the main secondary literature on the topic (see Mayer, *Jena Romanticism*, 179–221). Mayer also presents clearly the debate about the beginning of Schelling's textual based reception of Böhme (as opposed to a more vague reception of certain Böhmian ideas).

78 Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, ed. Nigel Leask (London: Everyman, 1997), 93.

79 Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *Philosophie der Offenbarung* (Stuttgart und Augsburg: Cotta, 1858), 123: "Wie die Mythologien und Theogonien der Völker der Wissenschaft vorausgingen, so ist J. Böhme mit der Geburt Gottes, wie es sie uns beschreibt, allen wissenschaftlichen Systemen der neueren Philosophie vorausgegangen."

But the third moment, as the negative middle point constrains the will-to-separate as well as the will-to-opposition, and this is precisely the torment and anguish of that which is caught in contradictions [...] Hegel has demonstrated thoroughly the necessity of this third. He himself told me that Böhme was the deepest of all philosophers because of this, that is to say that he grasped this decisive idea in the most definite and clear way.⁸⁰

To put it in simple terms, for Hegel Böhme is not at all the thinker of the *Ungrund* as *Absolute*: rather, Böhme's philosophical legacy consists in the fact that he has grasped the logical structure of the triadic movement. The fact that Hegel lays emphasis on a completely different level of Böhme's philosophy can explain why he avoids discussing the Böhman conception of *Ungrund* (arguably even in tacit disagreement with Schelling's own Böhme-interpretation). But what is more, such a different reading of Böhme is, not surprisingly, based on texts in which Hegel finds Böhme's idea of the movement of the Divine most clearly represented.

In the lecture course on the history of philosophy of 1825–1826 Hegel quotes from the short work *Theosopia*, or *Von Göttlicher Beschaulichkeit* (*On Divine Contemplation*) (1622). Hegel's interest in this specific text might at first seem peculiar, since it is not one of Böhme's main works, and Hegel, unlike Baader, does not linger on the reasons for his choice. Yet, the passage itself points clearly to Hegel's main focus in reading Böhme, that is the topic of dialectical movement in the conception of the Divine, and the way this movement is reflected in nature as well.

Highlighting this "second moment", that is to say the moment of separation within the original neutrality (also called *temperamentum*), Hegel quotes as follows:

Nothing can be revealed to itself without contrariety [*Widerwärtigkeit*], because if it doesn't have anything which opposes it, then it constantly goes out of itself, and does not go back into itself again. But if it doesn't go back into itself again, that is into that from which it originally proceeded, then it knows nothing of its original state [*Urstand*].⁸¹

80 Baader, *Vorlesungen und Erläuterungen zu Jacob Böhme's Lehre*, 81.

81 Böhme, *Von Göttlicher Beschaulichkeit*, in *Theosophia revelata*, vol. 9, 167–168 (chap. 1, §§ 8–9), quoted by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, ed. Walter Jaeschke and Pierre Garniron, vols 6–9 of *Vorlesungen. Ausgewählte Nachschriften und Manuskripte* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1989–1996), here vol. 9, 83. See also Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy 1825–6*, 99.

Indeed, it is the idea of the necessity of opposition which according to Hegel is Böhme's main contribution to the history of philosophy: he is the "first German philosopher" because he created a vocabulary with which to describe this internal movement of opposition. This opposition characterizes both the religious representation of God and, what is more, its effect on the vitality of nature, which for Böhme depends directly on this Divine impulse. Moreover, it is clear that with respect to this particular aspect Hegel views Böhme as a forerunner of his own philosophical approach: as Baader commented in his lectures on Böhme, "Hegel no doubt took this concept of sublation from J. Böhme".⁸² Böhme's *philosophia*, as a way to link the understanding of God's essence as the origin of nature's life, is thus emphasized by Hegel's reception. *Theosopia* – significantly constructed as a dialogue in which *reason* seeks the answers to a series of questions it cannot reply to by itself – thus becomes for Hegel the cornerstone of his interpretation of Böhme's dialectics. But Hegel also quotes from *Aurora*, again selecting passages concerned with the internal movement of all phenomena in the universe.⁸³ Indeed, he concludes that Böhme "contemplates everything as this trinity",⁸⁴ which he interprets as a threefold movement making everything alive, thanks to the passing into the moment of opposition and conflict, as the quotation from *Von Göttlicher Beschaulichkeit* showed. For Hegel, the conception of this triadic movement is not only Böhme's main thought but even his "only thought", that is to say his proper contribution to the history of philosophy.⁸⁵

Compared to the interpretations of Baader and Schelling, Hegel thus constructs a completely different philosophical view of Böhme, a view based on a specific selection of texts, and of words: for instance he remarks on the philosophical value of the word *Urkund*, while excluding others, such as *Ungrund*. The basis that allows us to make sense of such varied philosophical afterlives is Böhme's ever developing philosophy, generated by a constant attempt at grasping and better formulating the content of his original intuition.

82 Baader, *Vorlesungen und Erläuterungen zu Jacob Böhme's Lehre*, 81.

83 See Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, 81–82. Cf. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* 1825–6, 97–99.

84 Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, 82: "Er [Böhme] betrachtet also alles als diese Dreienigkeit." (Translated differently in Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* 1825–6, 97).

85 Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* 1825–6, 96: "His principal thought, indeed we can say his sole thought, is the Trinity [*Dreieinigkeit*]: it is the universal principle in which and through which everything is, and it is indeed that principle in such a way that everything has this Trinity within it, not just as a Trinity of representation but as real."

5 Conclusion

Despite the difference, a common trait in Baader', Schelling' and Hegel's readings of Böhme is the fact that each of them selected from Böhme's works key ideas and terms which allowed them to construct specific links to their own personal philosophical endeavours. We see this at work in Baader's interest in Böhme's conception of imagination, as well as in Schelling's use of Böhman terminology dealing with the idea of the Absolute, and finally in Hegel's presentation of a 'Böhman dialectics'. Reconstructing the conceptual reasons as well as the textual foundation of such philosophical engagements with Böhme certainly shows the richness of the Teutonic philosopher's legacy. Direct reference to Böhme's works is essential to understanding the diversity of such philosophical afterlives. In other words, the philosophical legacy points us back to the study of *Theosophia revelata* – that is to say to Böhme's philosophical development, to the changes in the language, and of course to the basis itself, namely to Böhme's understanding of *philosophia*.

Examination of the nineteenth-century reception thus indicates the need to return to the study of Böhme's own writings: the path I have sketched in this essay leads to identifying those aspects which I believe would be the main desiderata for further research on Böhme considered from the perspective of the history of philosophy. First and foremost, it is the development of Böhme's thought which needs to be reconstructed with special attention to the terminological inventions that gradually accrued, and that in turn inflected the major concepts. Koyré's monograph already pointed to such an approach, and what is now needed is a more detailed reconstruction of Böhme's philosophical journey, consisting of an analysis of the works in their chronological order. This reconstruction would prompt a fresh consideration of the contexts in which his philosophy evolved: which influences and interactions with contemporaries can be identified? Which sources can be recognized, following the red thread of his continuous labouring over his terminology? What was the trajectory of his philosophical legacy, and how did the engagement with philosophical content of the *Theosophia revelata* vary as the very meaning of philosophy changed?

To such questions, the readers whom I briefly discussed in the previous sections had answers of their own. They framed Böhme within different traditions, and selected parts of his works in order to create their own Böhme, the philosopher. "A philosopher does not stand still", as Böhme himself reminds us, and indeed his philosophical 'unquietness', his constant re-elaborating of words and concepts, can explain both the varied and controversial philosophical

reception I have outlined, and the difficulties that historians of philosophers will continue to encounter in treating him as a philosopher. Yet, it is only by following Böhme step by step through his writing career that we can understand his philosophical journey towards grasping “the centre of a thing”, which in his own words is the philosopher’s ultimate goal. In so doing we place him back where he belongs – in the history of philosophy.

Spiritualism and Cultures of Dissent: Johann Theodor von Tschesch (1595–1649) Interprets Jacob Böhme

Tünde Beatrix Karnitscher

Recently, several researchers have focused new attention on Jacob Böhme's earliest readers, and thus on the extent, complexity and function of the circles of contacts which surrounded Böhme.¹ One reason for this interest is that it was not Böhme, but rather his earliest readers and followers who were responsible for setting his works in print, both in the Holy Roman Empire and in the United Provinces.² During his lifetime, most of Böhme's readership encountered both Böhme the personality and his works through the medium of manuscript. The reliance of supporters on a manuscript tradition became even stronger after 1621 and 1622, following Böhme's less than successful attempts to share his insights personally during a series of disputations concerning predestination.³ Following these meetings with followers, Böhme requested that, in the future, his many interlocutors pose their questions in written form, so that he could reply in appropriate detail and aforethought through his letters.⁴

* I would like to express my gratitude to Lavinia Brancaccio for her help with writing this essay in English.

1 See *Offenbarung und Episteme: Zur europäischen Wirkung Jakob Böhmes im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, eds. Wilhelm Kühlmann and Friedrich Vollhardt (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012); *An Introduction to Jacob Boehme: Four Centuries of Thought and Reception*, ed. Ariel Hessayon and Sarah Apetrei (New York: Routledge, 2014); *Jacob Böhmes Weg in die Welt: Zur Geschichte der Handschriftensammlung, Übersetzungen und Editionen von Abraham Willemsz van Beyerland*, ed. Theodor Harmsen (Amsterdam: In de Pelikaan, 2007).

2 See Harmsen, *Böhmes Weg*; Werner Buddecke, *Die Jakob Böhme-Ausgaben: Ein beschreibendes Verzeichnis*, vol. 2, *Die Übersetzungen* (Göttingen: Häntzschel, 1957); Ferdinand van Ingen, *Böhme und Böhmen in den Niederlanden im 17. Jahrhundert* (Bonn: Presse- und Kulturabteilung der Königlichen Niederländischen Botschaft, 1984), 6 and 19.

3 On Böhme's reflection about his attempts to transfer his knowledge orally, see Tünde Beatrix Karnitscher, "Die viele der Disputaten ist kein nütze, sie machen nur Verwirrung': Die Rolle des Trostbriefs bei Jakob Böhme," *Aus Gottes Wort und eigener Erfahrung gezeigt: Erfahrung – Glauben, Erkennen und Handeln im Pietismus*. Beiträge zum III. Internationalen Kongress für Pietismusforschung 2009, ed. Christian Soboth et al. (Halle: Verlag der Franckeschen Stiftungen Halle, 2012), vol. 1, 379–393.

4 Böhme's letters will be abbreviated here as "ep." followed by the letter number and paragraph. They were published in Jacob Böhme, *Sämtliche Schriften: Faksimile-Neudruck der Ausgabe von 1730*, 11 vols., ed. Will-Erich Peuckert (Stuttgart: Frommann, 1955–1960), vol. 9.

These letters, which Hans Grunsky referred to as the “most important source regarding Böhme’s life and development” allow us to witness Böhme’s strategies of self-representation as an authentic mediator of “God’s word,” as well as to evaluate the relative success or failure of his attempts to communicate his knowledge to other “Seekers of God” (*Gottsuchende*).⁵ Böhme’s letters were not simply a way of maintaining contacts with members of his networks. Rather, the letters also often served as a vehicle for the distribution of Böhme’s tracts. Copies of these tracts were soon prepared by followers. In this way, Böhme’s theosophical works spread surprisingly quickly, largely without his knowledge or control. This is remarkable because during Böhme’s lifetime, only his short *Weg zu Christo* (1624) appeared in print, and was brought to the press at the behest of one of Böhme’s patron Johann Sigismund von Schweinichen.⁶ Two further noble supporters of Böhme’s works were Johann Theodor von Tschesch and Abraham von Franckenberg,⁷ both of whom have been recognized as prominent disseminators of Böhme’s theosophy, as well as representatives of the so-called “new mysticism” (*neue Mystik*).⁸ However, while recent research on Franckenberg has resulted in a differentiated portrait of an individual whose ideas, thought, and publications have allowed him to emerge from the

5 Grunsky, *Jacob Boehme*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Frommann, 1956). Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

6 The 1624 edition was published anonymously and with the false date M. DC. XXII. (Werner Buddecke, *Die Jakob Böhme-Ausgaben: Ein beschreibendes Verzeichnis*, vol. 1, *Die Ausgaben in deutscher Sprache* [Göttingen: Häntzschel, 1937], 54–58 nr. 14–16, and further Buddecke, *Böhme-Ausgaben*, vol. 2, 12–13 nr. 6–7 and 32–33 nr. 29–30). Exemplars of this rare early edition are preserved in the Houghton Library of Harvard University; The Hague, Royal Library of the Netherlands (Ritman Collection), and at the Evangelisches Predigerseminar in Wittenberg.

7 On Franckenberg see: Abraham von Franckenberg, *Briefwechsel*, ed. Joachim Telle (Stuttgart and Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1995), especially the detailed introduction from Telle on pages 17–57.

8 Karl Viëtor, *Probleme der deutschen Barockliteratur* (Leipzig: Weber, 1928), 20. On these figures see more generally *Geschichte Schlesiens: Die Habsburgerzeit, 1526–1740*, eds. Ludwig Petry and Josef Joachim Menzel (Darmstadt: Bläschke, 1973), vol. 2, 213; Gustav Koffmane, *Die religiösen Bewegungen in der evangelischen Kirche Schlesiens während des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Breslau: n. p., 1880), 22 and Hellmut Zschoch, “Tschesch, Johann Theodor von,” *Biographisch-bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, 34 vols., eds. Friedrich Wilhelm Bautz and Traugott Bautz (Herzberg et al.: Bautz, 1990–2013), vol. 12, 1997, 655–657. Through the research of Telle and Rusterholz, Franckenberg emerges as an independent figure in his own right and not just as a successor to Böhme (see Franckenberg, *Briefwechsel*, especially 38–42 and Sybille Rusterholz, “Abraham von Franckenbergs Verhältnis zu Jacob Böhme: Versuch einer Neubestimmung aufgrund kritischer Sichtung der Textgrundlagen,” *Kulturgeschichte Schlesiens in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Klaus Garber [Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2005], vol. 1, 205–237).

shadow of Böhme's thought as a figure of independent importance, Tschesch has not received the same attention.

In the present essay I present findings concerning Tschesch and his relationship to Böhme's legacy, based on the analysis of little-known manuscripts as well as Tschesch's printed works. In doing so, I summarize some of the material presented in my recent full-length monograph on Tschesch.⁹ The research presented here demonstrates that the spiritualist tendencies of Böhme's followers had multiple sources of inspiration beyond Böhme himself. In the case of Tschesch, the distribution and defense of Böhme's texts played a key role in his intellectual world, but did not absorb all of his time or resources. Thus, Tschesch and perhaps other later seventeenth-century proponents of Böhme may not necessarily be best understood as mere disciples of the Görlitz theosopher, but rather as independent thinkers within a tradition of spiritualist thought and philosophy, in which Böhme played a key role.

1 Tschesch: A Biographical Sketch

Tschesch was born on 18 March 1595 in Voigtsdorff, a village in the vicinity of Grottkau (Grodków) in Lower Silesia.¹⁰ In the winter of 1614 he enrolled to study at the University of Leipzig, thereafter continuing his education in Marburg and, for only a short time, Heidelberg. His education in law and liberal arts was typical for a young nobleman inclined toward state service, and during his studies Tschesch may have encountered Paracelsian, Weigelian, Rosicrucian and alchemical thought. If Tschesch did come into contact with these streams of thought, the influence of these spiritualist and dissident religious traditions is not observable until the beginning of the 1620s. During the 1610s, Tschesch appeared conscious of the prudence of establishing contacts at Reformed courts throughout the Empire, which may indicate an inclination toward Calvinism. At any rate, following his studies in law, Tschesch appears to have accepted a court counselor's position at the court of Elector Frederick V of the Palatinate. After the battle at White Mountain on 8 November 1620,

9 Tünde Beatrix Karnitscher, *Der vergessene Spiritualist Johann Theodor von Tschesch (1595–1649): Untersuchungen und Spurensicherung zu Leben und Werk eines religiösen Nonkonformisten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015).

10 This section is based on the thorough biographical treatment provided in Karnitscher, *Der vergessene Spiritualist*, as well as Karnitscher, "[...] felix / Hora fuit, plane occisae victoria Mortis" – Das 'einzige Leben' bei Johann Theodor von Tschesch," *Gutes Leben und guter Tod von der Spätantike bis zur Gegenwart: Ein philosophisch-ethischer Diskurs über die Jahrhunderte hinweg*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 2012), 403–424.

when Frederick V was deposed as King of Bohemia, Tschesch sought and found employment at the Reformed Courts of the Piast princes in Brieg and Liegnitz/Breslau, where, albeit with several interruptions, he took up a long-term post as Privy Counselor.

The early seventeenth century is renowned as a time of great poetic achievement in Silesia, and Tschesch contributed to this legacy. Tschesch's *Vita cum Christo* (1644), a collection of more than 1,200 Latin epigrams composed between 1621 and 1644, documents both Tschesch's worldly and spiritual "lives," and can be read as a kind of diary of his experiences. The authorship of these epigrams was initially prompted by a spiritual awakening that Tschesch experienced in 1621, following a near fatal fall down the stairway of the Liegnitz castle.¹¹

Following this "awakening," Tschesch began to perceive irresolvable contradictions between his courtly life and the spiritualist path he had chosen to adopt. According to Tschesch's epigrams, life at court in Liegnitz became increasingly tedious and unpleasant. On account of his spiritualist turn and efforts toward a general "Erneuerung," Tschesch's colleagues began to regard him with suspicion. Tschesch appears not to have understood the reticence of others to engage with his ideas, particularly as he considered a spiritual renovation of the world to be an essential political as well as religious task.¹² Thus, in the 1630s Tschesch sought to convince a young Prince Georg Rudolf of Liegnitz (1595–1653) to move closer to God by providing him with the examples of the writings of both Böhme and Abraham von Franckenberg. Simultaneously, Tschesch believed that God would punish others at court for their excessive lifestyles.¹³

Tschesch's troubles at court concluded on 25 December 1639 with the death of his most powerful supporter, Duke Johann Christian of Brieg (1591–1639). As a consequence, in 1639 or 1640 Tschesch departed Liegnitz, and in 1642 he began a series of restless travels in search of spiritual insight. His quest initially

11 On the experience, see Tschesch, *Vitae cum Christo, sive Epigrammatum sacrorum, centuriae XII*, (n.p., 1644), 5 and also the epigrams V, 1; V, 41; V, 72; V, 95. I cite Tschesch's epigrams by indicating the century in Roman numerals, followed by the ordinal number in Arabic numerals. On Tschesch's epigrams, see additionally Annemarie Baldinger-Meier, "Lateinische und Deutsche Dichtung im 17. Jahrhundert: Johann Theodor von Tscheschs *Vitae cum Christo sive epigrammatum sacrorum centuriae XII* (1644)," *Daphnis* 6 (1977/3), 291–312.

12 See Tschesch to Franckenberg, 12 Sept. 1634, printed in Tschesch, *Vertrauliche Send=Schreiben, Vom Inneren Ewigen Leben / Wobey Ein auserlesen Brief Jacob Böhmens / Vom Wahren Christen [...]* (n.p., 1711) 17, 20f and 25. See also Franckenberg, *Briefwechsel*, 70f nr. 34/09/12.

13 „quod me etiam in Aula heri, castigationi divinae subiecit” (Tschesch to Franckenberg, 12 Sept. 1634 in Tschesch, *Send=Schreiben*, 22, 19; Franckenberg, *Briefwechsel*, 70f nr. 34/09/12).

took him via Thorn to Danzig, where at the end of September and beginning of October 1642 he lodged with Abraham von Franckenberg. From there Tschesch travelled to the Dutch Republic, arriving in Amsterdam on 20 November 1642, in which city he lived until 1646. In his epigrams from this period, Tschesch wrote little of his quotidian life, concentrating instead on the spiritual significance of contemporary political events and natural phenomena. Simultaneously, Tschesch labored over the publication of a variety of spiritualist treatises, and undertook a series of journeys in search of patronage, such as to Wolfenbüttel in September 1646, where he presented an inscribed copy of his *Vitae cum Christo* to Herzog August of Wolfenbüttel.¹⁴ In 1646, Tschesch departed Amsterdam; according to Abraham von Franckenberg, Tschesch died in penury in Elbing in Polish Prussia in 1649.¹⁵

2 Recent Scholarship on Tschesch

Tschesch's significance has occasionally been recognised in the centuries after his death. Several of his books posthumously found their way into print in the second half of the seventeenth century. At the turn of the eighteenth century, Gottfried Arnold dedicated space to him in his *Unpartheyische[n] Kirchen- und Ketzer-Historie*.¹⁶ Fragments of his work appeared in texts authored by Arnold and Friedrich Christoph Oetinger. Additionally, between 1712 and 1718 Valentin Ernst Löscher included several pieces of Tschesch's correspondence in the periodical *Unschuldige Nachrichten*.¹⁷ Little detailed scholarly attention has been devoted to Tschesch in more modern times. Apart from the publication of two fragments of letters in Ferdinand van Ingen's critical edition of Böhme's

14 See the exemplar in the Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel (HAB), shelfmark: 182.2.1. Poet.; Martin Gosky, "EPINICIA Ob INGRESSUM In URBEM & CASTELLUM GVELPHERBYTTUM Procurata ET AUGUSTO, Duci Brunovico & Lunaeburgo. Destinata et determinata," in *Arbustum vel arboretum Augustaeum, AETernitati ac domni Augustae Selenianae sacrum* [...] ed. Martin Gosky (Wolfenbüttel: Stern 1650), 617–18.

15 See Franckenberg to Gerrit Schaep, 3 Mar. 1650 in Franckenberg, *Briefwechsel*, 252–257 nr. 50/03/03.

16 Gottfried Arnold, *Unpartheyische[n] Kirchen- und Ketzer-Historie* [...], (Frankfurt a. M.: Fritsch, 1729), Part 3, 95–97.

17 On the printing of Tschesch's works see Karnitscher, "Das mediale Profil der veröffentlichten Schriften von Johann Theodor von Tschesch (1595–1649)," in *Schrift soll leserlich seyn: Der Pietismus und die Medien. Beiträge zum IV. Internationalen Kongress für Pietismusforschung 2013*, 2 vols., ed. Christian Soboth et al. (Halle: Verlag der Franckeschen Stiftungen Halle, 2016), vol.1, 229–244.

Aurora, there have been few substantial evaluations of Tschesch's writings,¹⁸ outside of the attention focused on Tschesch's *Vitae cvm Christo* and his *Einleitung in dem Edlen Lielen-Zweig*, posthumously printed in 1679.¹⁹ In the assessments of Tschesch that have appeared, often even basic biographical and bibliographical information is inconsistent or wrong.²⁰ In my recently published monograph on Tschesch, I was able to correct several errors and provide much new information. In the section that follows, I will describe Tschesch's "passive" reception of Böhme as a reader and audient, as well as his "active" engagement with Böhme's thought in his letters and tracts. This sheds light not only on Tschesch, but also on the early reception of Böhme's theosophy more generally.

Tschesch is said to have met Böhme personally in 1621 or 1622, in a meeting or meetings attended by several parties familiar with Böhme's thought.²¹ Böhme's letters on the matter make clear that the topic of discussion at these meetings was predestination.²² They furthermore reveal that his interlocutors did not unquestioningly adopt Böhme's ideas, but rather engaged with them

18 Jacob Böhme, *Werke: Morgen-Röte im Aufgangk. De Signatura Rerum*, ed. Ferdinand van Ingen (Frankfurt a. M.: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1997 and 2009), 502–03. Two of Tschesch's letters were reprinted in Theodor Wotschke, "Zwei Schwärmer am Niederrhein," *Monatshefte für rheinische Kirchengeschichte* 27 (1933), 156–60.

19 Tschesch, *Einleitung in dem Edlen Lielen-Zweig des Grundes und der Erkenntniß / der Schriften des Hoherleuchten Jacob Böhmens / geschrieben an Heinricum Prunium [...] durch Johannem Theodorum von Tschesch [...]* (Amsterdam: Betkio, 1679). See also Werner Milch, *Daniel von Czepko: Persönlichkeit und Leistung* (Breslau: Trewendt & Granier, 1934), 114–118; Jan-Steffen Mohr, *Epigramm und Aphorismus im Verbund: Kompositionen aus kleinen Textformen im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert* (Daniel Czepko, *Angelus Silesius, Friedrich Schlegel, Novalis*) (Frankfurt a. M.: Lang, 2007), about Tschesch 55–57; Koffmane, *Bewegungen*, 25; Will-Erich Peuckert, *Das Leben Jakob Böhmens* (Jena: Diederichs, 1924), 75; Hermann Adolph Fechner, "Jakob Böhme: Sein Leben und seine Schriften, mit Benutzung handschriftlicher Quellen dargestellt," *Neues Lausitzisches Magazin* 33 (1857), 440.

20 Siegfried Wollgast, *Philosophie in Deutschland zwischen Reformation und Aufklärung: 1550–1650*, (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1988), 763, 773–74; Marian Szyrocki, *Die deutsche Literatur des Barock: Eine Einführung* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1979), 245; Reinhard Müller, "Tschesch, Johann Theodor von," *Deutsches Literatur-Lexikon*, 34 vols., 3rd ed. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1968–2015), vol. 24, 19–20.

21 See ep. 15. Tschesch's name is not mentioned in any of the extant manuscripts, but in 1715 the editors of the folio edition of Böhme's works identified Tschesch with the "T.v.s." mentioned in this letter by Böhme. See further Leigh T.I. Penman, "The Broken Tradition: Uncovering Errors in the Correspondence of Jacob Böhme," *Aries* 18, no. 1 (2018), 96–125.

22 Concerning the meetings see Andrew Weeks, *Boehme: An intellectual biography of the seventeenth-century philosopher and mystic* (Albany: SUNY, 1991), 162–164, although he does not mention Tschesch.

critically, and even contested certain tenets. This would prove crucial to the unfolding of Böhme's further strategies concerning the distribution of his wisdom. After the meetings, Böhme resolved never to take part in oral debates again. As his letters affirm, he could not answer the many questions put to him satisfactorily, and as such announced his intentions to write a treatise on the subject instead.²³ In Böhme's tract *Von der Gnadenwahl*, completed on 8 February 1623, he laid out a thorough justification of his views and sought to correct any misconceptions about his doctrines that might have proliferated as a result of the disputations, and sent letters to those who attended.²⁴ Argument and dispute about Böhme's doctrines did not hinder the spread of the theosopher's tracts and ideas throughout Silesia during the 1620s. Indeed, Böhme's extant letters demonstrate that after the aforementioned meetings, his circle of acquaintances increased.²⁵ He initiated contact with the Troppau cloth worker Balthasar Nitsche as well as with Schweinichen, who is said to have initiated the printing of Böhme's *Weg zu Christo* in 1624.²⁶ Other pious Silesians also took notice of Böhme and contacted him by letter, for example, the imperial toll collector Kaspar Lindner in Beuthen an der Oder and Johann Butowsky, also of Troppau.²⁷

While Tschesch may have met Böhme personally in 1621, it is perhaps surprising that it was only around 1635 that he began to employ a vocabulary and imagery similar to Böhme's own. Indeed, Böhme's first work, *Aurora* (1612), probably became known to Tschesch only in the course of 1634.²⁸ Tschesch rightly identified *Aurora*'s value as an introduction to Böhme's ideas, and indeed his appreciation of the work resulted in fragments of two of his letters being printed in the Amsterdam edition of 1656.²⁹ From Tschesch's extant correspondence between 1634 and 1643, mainly exchanged with Franckenberg

23 See ep. 39, 4–5; 41, 1–3 and 19, 6. See further Karnitscher, "Disputaten."

24 Compare ep. 15, 4.

25 On this, see further Karnitscher, "Zur Entstehung und Erweiterung der Rezipientenkreise um Jacob Böhme (1575–1624)," *Neues Lausitzisches Magazin* 138 (2016), 51–68.

26 See eps. 24 and 36 for Nitsche, and ep. 18 on Schweinichen. On Schweinichen see Harmsen, *Böhmes Weg*, 478; Franckenberg, *Briefwechsel*, 59; Penman, "Intellectual Networks," 62.

27 See ep. 12. On Lindner see Harmsen, *Böhmes Weg*, 472; On Butowski (also Butowsky, Butowski, etc.) see ep. 35. Butowski was also in contact with Franckenberg as well as Tschesch, see Tschesch, *Send=Schreiben*, 5–9.

28 See Tschesch to Franckenberg, 15 Sept. 1634 in Tschesch, *Send=Schreiben*, 25; Tschesch, *Zweifache Apologia, und Christliche Verantwortung auf die fünf lästerlichen Hauptpuncte Davids Gilberti von Utrecht / ins gemein: Wider die Person und Schriften des theueren und hocherleuchteten Manns Jacob Böhmens [...]* (Amsterdam: n. p., 1676), 147.

29 For Tschesch's opinion, see his letter to Franckenberg of 15 Sept. 1634 (Tschesch, *Send=Schreiben*, 25). The printed letters are in: Böhme, *Werke: Morgen-Röte*, 502–03.

and the Hessian medical student and language teacher Heinrich Prunius,³⁰ we gain insight into the transmission of Böhme's manuscript works in mid-century Europe.³¹ From at least 1634, Tschesch and Franckenberg corresponded on the subject of Böhme's *Weg zu Christo*.³² In his *Einleitung* (authored 1642/1643), Tschesch presumed to provide guidance to novice readers of Böhme's works, encouraging them to make scribal copies of his works,³³ and recommending that they ponder seemingly "incomprehensible" passages of Böhme's tracts, for such passages yielded Böhme's greatest insights. In addition, Tschesch recommended that readers study Böhme's letters to glean further insights into his major works.³⁴ Tschesch also uses Böhme's letters for this purpose in his *Eerste Apologie*, where he employs Böhme's ep. 5, addressed to Karl Ender von Sercha, in order to defend the revelatory origins of Böhme's theosophy.³⁵

3 Tschesch as a Promoter of Böhme's Doctrines

Tschesch's books and letters demonstrate that by 1641 he read or possessed several editions of Böhme's writings, including *Josephus Redivivus* (1631),³⁶ *Vierzig Fragen von der Seelen Urstand* in Werdenhagen's Latin translation of 1632,³⁷ *De signatura rerum* (1635),³⁸ *Bedenken über Stiefels Büchlein* (1638),³⁹

30 Prunius (also Prunnus, Brunius, etc.) of Hersfeld in Hesse was a medical student who studied in Basel and several other universities. After 1638 Prunius served in Dresden as a secretary of the Electoral Saxon *Hausmarschall*, Georg Pflug auf Posterstein. See further Carlos Gilly, "Wege der Verbreitung von Jacob Böhmes Schriften in Deutschland und den Niederlanden," Harmsen, *Böhmes Weg*, 71–98, here 94–95.

31 For an overview of Tschesch's correspondence see Karnitscher, *Der vergessene Spiritualist*, 350–355.

32 See Tschesch to Franckenberg, 12 Sept. 1634 in Tschesch, *Send=Schreiben*, 17; Franckenberg, *Briefwechsel*, 70–71 nr. 34/09/12.

33 See Tschesch, *Einleitung*, 51 cf. also 46; Tschesch to Zobel, 23 Jan. 1642 in Tschesch, *Send=Schreiben*, 37.

34 Tschesch, *Einleitung*, 25–26, 53.

35 Tschesch, *Apologia*, 76, 43–45, 183 and 261; Buddecke, *Böhme-Ausgaben*, vol. 2, 47 nr. 43. On Ender see Harmsen, *Böhmes Weg*, 462.

36 Buddecke, *Böhme-Ausgaben*, vol. 1, 195–197 nr. 166–167.

37 See Tschesch, *Einleitung*, 27, 52; Tschesch, *Apologia*, 222, 229; see also Buddecke, *Böhme-Ausgaben*, vol. 2, 1–4 nr. 1. On Werdenhagen see Jost Eickmeyer, "Ein Politiker als Böhmist: Johann Angelius Werdenhagen (1581–1652) und seine *Psychologia Vera* [Jacobi] B[öhmii] T[eutonic] (1632)," in *Offenbarung und Episteme*, 67–92.

38 See Tschesch, *Einleitung*, 84, 89–90; Tschesch, *Apologia*, 184, 213; cf. Buddecke, *Böhme-Ausgaben*, vol. 1, 169–70 nr. 145.

39 See Tschesch, *Einleitung*, 46, 52; Tschesch, *Apologia*, 27, 43, 245, 247; Buddecke, *Böhme-Ausgaben*, vol. 1, 166 nr. 140.

and *Mysterium Magnum* (1640),⁴⁰ as well as almost all of Beyerland's Dutch translations, the first of which was issued in 1641.⁴¹ While Tschesch may have met Böhme personally in 1621 or 1622, it is striking that he appears to have paid no attention to Böhme's writings before 1635, and ignored them again between 1637 and 1641. In his *Einleitung*, Tschesch explicitly apologizes to his readers for this.⁴² But if these gaps are not simply the result of the caprice of time concerning the survival of manuscript and other evidence, how might we explain them, and what might they mean?

A close reading of Tschesch's extant works and correspondence suggests a likely solution, namely that Tschesch's writing was only sometimes and marginally indebted to Böhme's theosophical oeuvre; thus it is to be expected that his extant works and letters would not revolve exclusively around Böhme. Much of Tschesch's writing appears to have been aimed at seeking patronage, sending his contacts, among other things, lists of his manuscripts, hoping that they might be printed.⁴³ After meeting with little success in these endeavors, from about 1641 Tschesch apparently turned his attention to discussing and spreading Böhme's writings. Around this time, Prunius made contact with Tschesch, desirous of his expertise and knowledge of Böhme's works.⁴⁴ The publication of Dutch translations of Böhme's works in the United Provinces from 1641 may also have played a role in reigniting Tschesch's interest in Böhme. Indeed, with the exception of his *Kurtze Entwurffung* of ca. 1635 – which will be discussed further below – all of Tschesch's works concerning Böhme date to after 1641.⁴⁵ These circumstances reinforce the impression that Tschesch was an independent spiritualist thinker, in addition to a figure interested in Böhme's oeuvre.

4 Tschesch's Intellectual Networks

I would now like to briefly point to a few personalities in Tschesch's networks who were relevant to the early reception of Böhme's works. Extant correspondence and other documents indicate that between 1630 and 1640 many participants in Tschesch's networks were also in contact with Abraham

40 See Tschesch, *Einleitung*, 52; Tschesch, *Apologia*, 208, 261; Buddecke, *Böhme-Ausgaben*, vol. 1, 191–193 nr. 164.

41 Buddecke, *Böhme-Ausgaben*, vol. 2, 5–49 (item nos. 3–43).

42 See Tschesch, *Einleitung*, 42; Karnitscher, "Hora fuit," 419.

43 This becomes most evident in Tschesch's letter to Lazar Henckel Jr. of 10 Nov. 1637 in the Klassik Stiftung Weimar: Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek (HAAB), Ms.Q.286/18, 22r–26r.

44 See Tschesch to Prunius, 3 Oct. 1641 in HAB 796 Helms., 57r, 59r.

45 On Tschesch's writings see further Karnitscher, "Vigasz 'éhező lelkek' számára: A sziléziai spiritualista, J. Th. von Tschesch művei nyomában," *Acta Historiae Litterarum Hungaricarum*, vol. 30, ed. Font Zsuzsa (Szeged: University Press, 2011), 235–241.

von Franckenberg. Among contacts shared by Franckenberg and Tschesch, we also find other early readers and even correspondents of Böhme, including the aforementioned Butowski and Schweinichen.⁴⁶ Other correspondents, such as Georg Fischer,⁴⁷ or the Amsterdam chiliast Petrus Serrarius,⁴⁸ possessed scribal publications of Böhme's works, to say nothing of more well-known agents in the dissemination of the shoemaker's theosophical doctrines, such as Joachim Morsius, who strove to distribute Böhme's manuscripts to princely patrons in Hessen-Kassel and Wolfenbüttel.⁴⁹ The bookkeeper and calligrapher Wilhelm Schwartz of Breslau (Wrocław) declared that his own spiritual revelation was sparked by contact with Franckenberg and Tschesch.⁵⁰ Others in these circles included Prunius, Abraham Willemsz van Beyerland, Ehrenfried Hegenicht,⁵¹ and Matthias Engelhardt.⁵²

After about 1640, extant evidence suggests that Tschesch became more proactive within his correspondence networks, attempting to prompt the

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- 46 On Butowski see Tschesch to Franckenberg, 11 Apr. 1635 in Tschesch, *Send=Schreiben*, 7. On Schweinichen, see Tschesch to Franckenberg, 11 Apr. 1635 in Tschesch, *Send=Schreiben*, 6; Tschesch to Franckenberg, 7 Sept. 1635 in Tschesch, *Send=Schreiben*, 15–16.
- 47 See Tschesch to Franckenberg, 17 Jan. 1639 in Tschesch, *Send=Schreiben*, 33. Shortly before Franckenberg died, he had a collection of manuscripts and books sent to Georg Fischer. See Harmsen, *Böhmes Weg*, 463; Franckenberg, *Briefwechsel*, 89–94 nr. 37/09/15, 116–117 nr. 39/01/17 and 293–296 nr. 52/03/16.
- 48 On Serrarius see Franckenberg, *Briefwechsel*, 346–347 and 298 nr. 59/05/09; Harmsen, *Böhmes Weg*, 479, and Johannes van den Berg, “Die Frömmigkeitsbestrebungen in den Niederlanden,” *Geschichte des Pietismus*, vol. 1, *Der Pietismus vom siebzehnten bis zum frühen achtzehnten Jahrhundert*, ed. Martin Brecht (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 105–106. Tschesch mentioned Serrarius in his letter to Johann Friedrich Münster of 8 Sept. 1643 in Gotha, Universitäts- und Forschungsbibliothek Chart. A. 413, 338r.
- 49 See Carlos Gilly, “Zur Geschichte und Überlieferung der Handschriften Jacob Böhmes,” Harmsen, *Böhmes Weg*, 51 and 407 n. 41; Tschesch, *Vitae*, 261; Franckenberg, *Briefwechsel*, 81–86, 308–09.
- 50 See Schwartz to Lazar Henckel Jr., 13 Jan. 1638 in Andrea Schaffer, “Briefe an und von Lazar Henckel d.J. bzw. an seinen Sohn Elias,” *Oberschlesische Dichter und Gelehrte vom Humanismus bis zum Barock*, ed. Gerhard Kosellek (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2000), 293–301, here 300; Theodor Wotschke, “Wilhelm Schwartz: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Vorpietismus in Schlesien,” *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Geschichte Schlesiens* 64 (1930), 89–126; Noémi Viskolcz, *Reformációs könyvek: Tervek az evangélikus egyház megújítására* (Budapest: Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, 2006); Rusterholz, *Franckenbergs*, 213; Harmsen, *Böhmes Weg*, 478 and Franckenberg, *Briefwechsel*, 339–343.
- 51 See Tschesch's letter to Franckenberg of 15 Sept. 1634 in Tschesch, *Send=Schreiben*, 23 and his letter of 10 Mar. 1635 in Tschesch, *Send=Schreiben*, 3. On Hegenitz see Harmsen, *Böhmes Weg*, 467.
- 52 See Tschesch to Franckenberg, 11 Apr. 1635 in Tschesch, *Send=Schreiben*, 8.

publication of his writings.⁵³ These undertakings did not go smoothly. In 1643 an argument occurred when Beyerland demanded a substantial subvention of 150 Reichsthaler from Tschesch and one of the brothers Werner or Johann Friedrich von Pallandt before printing tracts Tschesch had transmitted to him.⁵⁴ Upon learning of the affair, Franckenberg doubted the sincerity of Beyerland's purported support for spiritualist and dissident religiosity, and accused Beyerland of being motivated by profit alone.⁵⁵ This incident, despite its unknown outcome, demonstrates Tschesch's proactive attitude toward the promotion of spiritualist literature which is typical of his activities in the 1640s.

Another of Tschesch's correspondents, Prunius, also played an important role in printing and publicizing Böhme's writings. Tschesch met Prunius at the latest in 1626 in Basel, after which both traveled together to Italy.⁵⁶ Tschesch returned to Silesia in 1627, but Prunius seems to have stayed abroad much longer. He returned to the Empire in 1638 and, with Schwartz as intermediary, regained contact with Tschesch in 1641.⁵⁷ In his extant letters, Prunius asked Tschesch for his opinion on numerous matters, for example about the Württemberg lay prophet Ludwig Friedrich Gifftheil. In turn, Tschesch assisted Prunius in his efforts to find manuscripts of Böhme's works, in particular his letters. Their correspondence indicates that Tschesch sometimes interpreted and even corrected manuscript that had come into Prunius's possession.⁵⁸ Prunius became convinced that Tschesch was sent to him as an "angel of God" in order to "console" him.⁵⁹ He developed into a kind of catalyst for Tschesch, attempting to motivate him to continue his own spiritualist writing. It was at Prunius' request that Tschesch wrote a short commentary on Böhme's ep. 22 – in which Böhme provided his opinion on a miraculous gravestone that wept

53 See Tschesch to Beyerland, 12 April 1643, in Biblioteka Uniwersytecka we Wrocławiu (BUWr) (Akc. 1977–132, mf. 8384, 11–12); Gilly, "Verbreitung," 419.

54 On the conflict see Franckenberg, *Briefwechsel*, 340–41; Gilly, "Verbreitung," 90 and 418 note 58.

55 See Franckenberg, *Briefwechsel*, 341, and BUWr Akc. 1977/132, mf. 8384, 11–12; Gilly, "Verbreitung," 90 and 418 note 58.

56 Tschesch and Prunius probably met in Basel, where both studied during 1626. See *Die Matrikel der Universität Basel*, vol. 3, 1601/02–1665/66, ed. Hans Georg Wackernagel (Basel: Verlag der Universitätsbibliothek, 1962), 288 and 291; Tschesch to Prunius, 3 Oct. 1641 in HAB 796 Helms., 56r; Tschesch, *Vitae*, I, 78–85.

57 See Baldinger-Meier, "Dichtung," 308 and Tschesch, *Vitae*, I, 92. See also Tschesch to Prunius, 3 Oct. 1641 in HAB 796 Helms., 57r and 59r; Prunius to Tschesch, 21 Oct. 1641 in HAB 67 noviss, 4f, 103r; Böhme, *Sämtliche Schriften*, vol. 10, 128.

58 See Prunius to Tschesch, 21 Oct. 1641 in HAB 67 noviss 4f, 104v; Tschesch to Prunius, 3 Oct. 1641 in HAB 796 Helmst., 59r.

59 Prunius to Tschesch, 21 Oct. 1641 in HAB 67 noviss 4f, 103v.

in effigy – as well as a lengthier “Judicium” on Böhme’s writings more generally.⁶⁰ Prunius was also enthusiastic about other, smaller pieces that Tschesch composed, and initially planned to print a selection of these in his edition of Böhme’s *Gebetbüchlein* (published in Dresden in 1641 or 1642), but they only appeared in a later edition of Bohme’s *Von Christi Testamenten*.⁶¹ Thereafter, Prunius collected two fragments from Tschesch’s letters concerning Böhme’s *Aurora*, which were included in several later editions of that work, and he also appears to have encouraged the publication of Tschesch’s *Einleitung*.⁶² It is to this work that we now turn our attention.

5 Tschesch Defends Böhme in Print

Tschesch’s most significant engagement with Böhme’s thought is his *Einleitung* (authored ca. 1642/43) a ninety-page work which, on account of its somewhat confusing title-page, has occasionally been attributed to Prunius.⁶³ The *Einleitung* appears to be based on Tschesch’s epistles to Prunius, albeit substantially rewritten. For example, parts of chapters seven, eight, nine and seventeen of the *Einleitung* incorporate significant portions of Tschesch’s letter to Prunius of 3 October 1641, along with several additions from other letters as well as unknown sources.⁶⁴ As such, Tschesch’s *Einleitung* is more than just an epistolary collection, it is a synthesis. Although the title-page of the original edition states that the *Einleitung* was completed in 1641, this is almost certainly wrong. In a letter from Prunius to Tschesch of 25 February 1642, Prunius encouraged Tschesch to continue his composition of the *Einleitung*, so that Tschesch’s letters might become a “memorial to the[ir] old acquaintance and friendship”⁶⁵ and so that an “everlasting brotherhood could flourish.”⁶⁶

60 Prunius to Tschesch 21 Oct. 1641 in HAB 67 noviss 4f, 105r; Böhme, *Beschreibung der drey Principien* [...] (Amsterdam: Betkuis, 1660), sig. *****v.

61 See Prunius to Tschesch, 21 Oct. 1641 in HAB 67 noviss 4f, 105r. Böhme, *Von Christi Testamenten* (Sonnenburg: Anastasio Morgenroth, 1642), YIIv–YIXr. On Prunius’s publication projects see Franckenberg to Prunius, 5 Dec. 1641 in Franckenberg, *Briefwechsel*, 143–149 nr. 41/12/05.

62 See Prunius to Tschesch, 21 Oct. 1641 in HAB 67 noviss 4f, 103r.

63 Arnold, *Ketzer=Historie*, Part 3, 96; Koffmane, *Bewegungen*, 25; Peuckert, *Leben Jakob Böhmes*, 75; Wollgast, *Philosophie*, 763 and Fechner, *Böhme*, 440.

64 Tschesch, *Einleitung*, 16–26 and 44–46.

65 “MEMORIAL [... der] alten kund-und Freundschaft” (Prunius to Tschesch 25 Feb. 1642 in HAB 67 noviss. 4f, 105v. An additional copy is in the Oberlausitzische Bibliothek der Wissenschaften, (hereafter OLB) LA III 393, 2v–3v; and another in Düsseldorf, Landeskirchliches Archiv, Nachlass Prof. J.F. Gerhard Goeters (hereafter DLA), Sig. 7 NL 015, Nr. 742, 3r.

66 “ewige Brüderschaft [...] außgrün[e]” in Prunius to Tschesch 25 Feb. 1642—HAB 67 noviss. 4f, 105v; OLB LA III 393, 2v–3v and DLA 7 NL 015, Nr. 742, 3r.

Further information concerning the *Einleitung* is contained in a letter from Tschesch to Beyerland, in which Tschesch sought advice about whether he should have the tract printed anonymously.⁶⁷ Ultimately, however, the work was only printed posthumously.

In 1644, Tschesch issued another defense of Böhme's doctrines, a Dutch-language work entitled *Eerste Apologie ende Christelycke Voorberecht*.⁶⁸ This was likely a translation of a text initially written in German. It provides insight into a completely different aspect of Tschesch's character than discernible in his letters or even the *Einleitung*, for in this work, Tschesch also emerges as a talented apologist and polemicist. Tschesch's book was a reaction to a 1643 polemical text written by the theologian David Gilbertus.⁶⁹ In his *Christelijke waerschouwing*, Gilbertus criticized not only Böhme's ideas and those of his followers, but also Beyerland. Indeed, Tschesch's text was prompted by a complaint of Beyerland to Tschesch in a letter dated 12 April 1643, in which Beyerland wrote of Gilbertus's tract.⁷⁰ By September 1643, Tschesch had completed his *Eerste Apologie* and was seeking a printer in Augsburg.⁷¹ In the defense, Tschesch discusses the extent to which Böhme was dismissive of various religions, recalling Böhme's assertion that the "Turk / heathen and Jew / who have no knowledge of Christ / [can also have] everlasting salvation."⁷² Twice Tschesch engages with Böhme's statements on this subject, defending them with reference to Paul's epistles to the Romans concerning the Jewish rite of circumcision, a key passage in early modern discourses on toleration. (Romans 2:25–29)⁷³ In this way, Tschesch directs the attention of the reader away from Gilbertus's polemics, and situates Böhme as a theorist of a notion of religion independent of confessional identity and dogma.⁷⁴ An indication of this subject's importance

67 Tschesch to Beyerland, 12 Apr. 1643 in BUWr Ms. Akc. 1977–132, 11.

68 Tschesch, *Eerste Apologie ende CHRISTELYCKE VOORBERECHT, op die vijf Hooft-puncten der Lasteringen Davidis Gilberti Vltrajectini in't Generael. Tegen de Persoon ende Schriften des dierbaren en hoochverlichten Iacob Bohmens, andersins Teutonicus genaemt [...]* (Amsterdam: Jan Rieuwerts, 1644).

69 David Gilbertus, *Christelijke Waerschouwing/ Theghens de Gruwelijcke Boecken Van Jacob Böhmen [...]* (Amsterdam: Anthoni Tielemans, 1643).

70 BUWr Ms. Akc. 1977/132, 11.

71 See Tschesch to Münster, 8 Sept. 1643 in Theodor Wotschke, "Schwärmer", 158–160 (Universitäts- und Forschungsbibliothek Erfurt / Gotha: Chart. A. 413, 338r–339v).

72 Tschesch, *Apologia*, 248–49: "Türken / Heyden und Juden / die von Christo kein Wissen haben / die ewige Seeligkeit zuschreibet."

73 Tschesch, *Apologia*, 115–16, 169.

74 Tschesch, *Apologia*, 95–125, 248–261, 169–70. On the question in the polemics surrounding Böhme in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see Sibylle Rusterholz, "Jacob Böhme im Licht seiner Gegner und Anhänger: Die zentralen Argumente der Streitschriften von ihren Anfängen zu Lebzeiten Böhmens bis zum Ende des 17. Jahrhunderts," *Offenbarung und Episteme*, 7–32, here 25–26.

to Tschesch is the fact that he later dedicated an entire whole treatise to the subject of the “true religion” and to the possibility of universal salvation, under the title *Kurtzer und einfältiger Bericht von der einigen wahren Religion* (1646). While this book does not refer directly to Böhme, it makes use of similar argumentation and scriptural sources to those Tschesch had relied upon in his *Eerste Apologie*.⁷⁵

The publication of Tschesch's *Eerste Apologie* prompted a lively exchange between Tschesch and Gilbertus. Yet as Sybille Rusterholz has pointed out, Tschesch's tract played a major role in the unfolding debate concerning Böhme's doctrines in the mid to late seventeenth century. When the German version of the *Eerste Apologie* appeared in 1676, it immediately found an opponent, this time a Catholic, who wrote a *Novi Apellis* under the pseudonym Gerardo Antognossi.⁷⁶ As Rusterholz has demonstrated, this author knew Böhme's works solely through Tschesch's *Apologia*. The case may be similar with the Dutch reformed theologian Gisbertus Voetius, who in 1669 also refers – when condemning Böhme – to Tschesch's *Eerste Apologie*, and not directly to any of Böhme's own texts.⁷⁷

6 A “straightforward calculation”: Tschesch's *Kurtze Entwurfung* (Printed ca. 1639)

Another of Tschesch's works which engaged with Böhme's ideas was his *Kurtze Entwurfung der Tage Adams in Paradiese* (ca. 1639), a work which was supposedly written under the guidance („Handleitung”) of Böhme's theosophy.⁷⁸ This text, which numbers only about thirteen printed pages in octavo, was printed

75 Tschesch, *Kurtzer und einfältiger Bericht / Von der einigen wahren RELIGION* [...] (Amsterdam: Hans Fabel, 1646). On this edition see János Bruckner, *A Bibliographical Catalogue of Seventeenth-Century German books published in Holland* (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1971), 131 nr. 149; Leigh T.I. Penman, “A Heterodox Publishing Enterprise of the Thirty Years' War: The Amsterdam Office of Hans Fabel (1616–after 1650),” *The Library. Transactions of the Bibliographical Society* 143/1 (2014), 37 nr. 21.

76 See Gerardo Antognossi, *Novi Apellis, Ne Sutor Ultra Crepidam* [...] (Frankfurt a. M.: Johann Philipp Andreae, 1676).

77 See Rusterholz, “Böhme im Licht,” 10; Van Ingen, *Böhmisten*, 17; Gisbertus Voetius, *Politica Ecclesiastica*, vol. 2 (Amsterdam: Waesberge, 1669), 218.

78 The only known exemplar of the 1639 edition is preserved in Wrocław BU, sig. 308032. For a bibliographical description see Buddecke, *Böhme-Ausgaben*, vol. 1, 220–21 nr. 185. For the present study I had access to Tschesch, *Kurtze Entwurfung der Tage Adams im Paradiese: Nach der Analogia seiner mit Mose und Christo, in: Der Seelig und aber Seelig-en JANE LEADE Letztere Lebens-Stunden: oder Umständlicher Bericht alles desjenigen was sich in Ihrer letzten Kranckheit zugetragen* [...]: Nebenst [...] ein Kurtzer Entwurff der Tage Adams im Paradiese [...] aufgesetzt durch Herrn Johann Theodorum von Tscheschen [...]

together with four of Böhme's epistles, and was reprinted in 1705 and 1731, albeit unattached to any Böhme material.⁷⁹ Tschesch defined this treatise as a "straightforward calculation" (*Einfältige Rechnung*).⁸⁰ The "calculation" in question is a reference to Tschesch's ruminations concerning the first 148 "days of the world" (*Tage der Welt*), which is to say, the time between creation and the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise.⁸¹ Tschesch is at pains in this work to demonstrate that this period stood in a ready though vague "harmony" (*Harmonie*) with certain biblical passages concerning the lives of both Moses and Christ.⁸² Böhme too had enumerated similar parallels between Adam, Moses, and Christ in his *Von der Gnadenwahl* (completed 8 February 1623), particularly when discussing the question of an individual's free will, as well as in his *De signatura rerum* (1622).⁸³ This is interesting, for Tschesch might have been present at the 1621 or 1622 disputation with Böhme on the election of grace, and he also possessed or at least had access to the 1635 German edition of Böhme's *De signatura rerum*.⁸⁴ Despite their similar subject matter, the argumentation in Tschesch's and Böhme's works are very different. Böhme consistently rejected chronology as an affectation of "Babylon", and prized instead divine *revelatio* to understand history metaphysically.⁸⁵ Tschesch took exactly the opposite view. A reference to Böhme appears only briefly on the title-page. Indeed, Tschesch's language in this tract does not appear to have been influenced by Böhme. Tschesch instead presents himself in the treatise as an erudite scholar, and not as an "inspired messenger of God".

7 Conclusions

This essay has focused on Johann Theodor von Tschesch and his reception of Böhme's works, in order to provide an example of one of the many ways in which Böhme's works were received by mid-century religious dissenters. With

Denen annoch beygefügt ist des seel Johann Arndts groß Geheimnus der Menschwerdung des ewigen Worts (Amsterdam: Wetstein 1705), 62–74.

79 Two manuscript versions are also preserved in BUWr, Akc. 1976/12, 1–19 and BUWr, Akc. 1975/210, 3–33.

80 Tschesch, *Kurtze Entwurffung*, 74.

81 Tschesch, *Kurtze Entwurffung*, 72.

82 Tschesch, *Kurtze Entwurffung*, 74.

83 See Böhme, *Werke: De signatura rerum*, commentary to page 695, line 3 on page 1111.

84 It is the Beyerland edition printed in Amsterdam (see Buddecke, *Böhme-Ausgaben*, vol. 1, 169–70 nr. 145 and Tschesch, *Einleitung*, 89–90). It is possible that Tschesch used this edition of *De signatura rerum* also between 1635 and 1637, while working on his *Kurtze Entwurffung*.

85 Böhme, *Werke: De signatura rerum*, 696.

the exception of his *Eerste Apologie*, all of Tschesch's texts concerning Böhme were based upon his correspondence with other Böhme readers. Even the *Kurtze Entwerffung*, a text in which Böhme only appears in the paratext (on the title-page), was later stronger connected to Böhme by editors who published the work together with selections of Böhme's epistles. Yet despite the fact that his printed works, correspondence, and general legacy had much to do with Böhme, Tschesch's own reception of Böhme's doctrines was not defined by slavish adulation. Until the mid 1630s, Tschesch's extant writings display an eclectic character. It was only after this point that Tschesch attempted to promote Böhme's writings ahead of his own works, evidently feeling that their circulation aided the spread of the "one, true Religion" as he conceived of it. Böhme thus served as Tschesch's "inspiration" as well as giving him an "occasion" for writing and publishing a variety of spiritualist tracts.

Nevertheless, clear differences between Böhme and his earliest readers emerge. In Tschesch's case, he presented opinions that substantially diverged from Böhme in his *Eerste Apologie*. The way that Tschesch processed and understood his revelatory spiritualist experience of 1621 contrasts directly with Böhme. Despite his manifold dealings with and obvious interest in Böhme's work, it is noteworthy that Tschesch did not mention Böhme or his teachings in any of his epigrams, which otherwise contain a wealth of information concerning Tschesch's readings.⁸⁶ Indeed, the novice reader of Tschesch's work may initially be confused by its eclecticism, incorporating as it does references from classical philosophy and hermetic literature, writings of medieval mystics, Luther, Melancthon, and Valentin Weigel. This kind of eclecticism was widespread among so-called spiritualists and the successors of Böhme.

Tschesch's case suggests something of the potential spectrum of interests held by Böhme's followers and readers of the seventeenth century. They were not exclusively concerned with defending, expanding, and explicating Böhme's doctrines. Scholars should consider the "halo effect" associated with Böhme as part of the broader context of early modern spirituality and religious dissent. Although Tschesch made an invaluable contribution to Böhme's legacy through his many defenses, it was not his exclusive concern, nor, I suggest, should it define Tschesch's legacy.

86 See further Tünde Beatrix Karnitscher, "A spiritualisták és a könyvműveltség: Tschesch és elvoknai olvasottságának nyomában," *Magyar Könyvszemle: Revue Pour L'Histoire du livre et de la presse* 128 (2012/1), 118–125.

Jacob Böhme's Foremost Seventeenth-Century English Translator: John Sparrow (1615–1670) of Essex

Ariel Hessayon

John Sparrow (1615–1670), the foremost seventeenth-century English translator of the writings of the German Lutheran mystic Jacob Böhme (c.1575–1624) is a name unfamiliar to many students of early modern England. What little fame he enjoys is largely a result of the efforts of a small group of scholars interested in the reception of the Teutonic Philosopher's writings in the British Isles.¹ There is a brief entry on Sparrow in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Unfortunately it is of little value, although unlike some earlier notices it avoids conflating him with his father and namesake.²

* Earlier versions of this chapter were read at conferences held at Reading University and at Görlitz. I would like to thank the participants for their helpful comments and suggestions. In addition, I have profited from the advice of Lorenza Gianfrancesco and Diego Lucci. Interpolations and inclusions from various Holman extracts in the body of quotations from Holman are indicated by <arrowheads>.

- 1 J. Yeowell, "Jacob Böhme, or Behmen", *Notes and Queries*, 1st series, 8 (1853), 246; Alexander Whyte, *Jacob Behmen: an Appreciation* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1894), 46, 54–55; Margaret Bailey, *Milton and Jakob Boehme: A study of German Mysticism in Seventeenth-Century England* (New York: Oxford UP, 1914), 58–60, 62–63; R.R.A. Walker, "John Elliston and John Sparrow, the English translators of Jacob Behmen", *Notes and Queries*, 14th series, 167 (1934), 312; Reginald Maxse, "The reception of Jacob Boehme in England in the XVII and XVIII centuries", unpublished Oxford University B.Litt. thesis, 1934, 2–3, 5–6; Werner Buddecke, *Die Jakob Böhme-Ausgaben. Ein beschreibendes Verzeichnis* (2 vols., Göttingen, 1937–57), vol. 2, 64–67, 129–132; Serge Hutin, *Les Disciples Anglais de Jacob Boehme aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris: Denoël, 1960), 39–42; W. Heijting, "Hendrick Beets (1625?–1708), publisher to the German adherents of Jacob Böhme in Amsterdam", *Quaerendo*, 3 (1973), 259; Ariel Hessayon, "Gold Tried in the Fire": *The prophet TheaurauJohn Tany and the English Revolution* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 290–297.
- 2 K. Grudzien Baston, "Sparrow, John (1615–1670)", *ODNB*; cf. James Granger, *A Biographical History of England* (3rd edn., London: J. Rivington & sons, 4 vols., 1779), vol. 3, 108–109; Alexander Gordon, "Sparrow, John (1615–1665?)", *DNB*; D. Willen, "Sparrow, John (1615–c.1665)", in *Biographical Dictionary of British Radicals in the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Richard Greaves and Robert Zaller (3 vols., Brighton: Harvester Press, 1982–84), vol. 3, 190–191.

Nonetheless, Sparrow's obscurity is unmerited. By drawing on a range of my recent archival discoveries, notably scattered extracts made from Sparrow's diaries by the congregational minister and Essex antiquarian William Holman (1669–1730),³ I aim to situate Sparrow's interest in Böhme within broader contexts; namely his religious beliefs, intellectual pursuits, and extensive social network. By so doing I also intend to show why, to quote Holman, "this unfortunate Gent deserv'd a better Fate". For Sparrow was "a person of most rare accomplishments":

He was a rare linguist but excelled in y^e knowledge of the Teutonick language.

He was not only master of the French, Latin, Greeke and Hebrew Languages, but understood most of the Orientall, and was a great Encour[a]ger of the profoundly learned Dr Edmund Castle in compiling his Lexicon Polyglottall. He was an encourager of Mr [William] Robertson to print the New Testam[en]t in Hebrew with the Points for the Conversion of the Jewes.

<He understood Heraldry well Merch[an]^{ts} acc[oun]^{ts} admirably well>

He was admirably verst in Chimistry Arithmetick Astronomy and Mathematicall Sciences and a great promoter of the Royall Society when in its Infancy-

He understood musick.

He was a great proficient in Naturall and Experimentall philosophy and was attempting to supply the Defects in my L[or]d Verulams's Instauration Magna.

He was intimately acquainted with the Famous Mr [Henry] Oldenburgh Secretary to the Royall Society, Mr [Samuel] Hartlib, Samuel Parker, afors[ai]d Bishop of Oxford, Dr [Joachim] Paleman, [Wenceslaus] Hollar <^the Kings Scenographer, [William] Lilly, [John] Gadbury, Edw[ard] Benlowes>, [Edward] Cocker and others, the most ingenious men of the Age, with whom he corresponded, and was not a little esteemed by them.⁴

³ W. Raymond Powell, "Holman, William (*bap.* 1669, *d.* 1730)", *ODNB*.

⁴ Essex Record Office, D/Y 1/3/68 (ii, vi); Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson Essex 22, fols. 222v–24r.

1 Sparrow's Family and Biography

So who was Sparrow? He was born on 12 May 1615, the eldest son of John Sparrow (1592–1664), then of Stambourne, Essex and his first wife Maryan (1590–1638), daughter of Robert Hawley (*d.*1599), merchant of Ipswich.⁵ His paternal grandfather John Sparrow senior (1564–1626) was a younger son of John Sparrow (*d.*1590) of Sible Hedingham, Essex and his second wife Joan (*d.*1599), daughter of one Jackson of Ashdown, Essex. At the time of the Böhme translator's birth Sparrow senior was lord of the manor of Overhall in Gestingthorpe, Essex which he had purchased in October 1608 together with the advowson. In April 1622 Sparrow senior sold the manor but not the rectory for £3600 to John Elliston senior (*d.*1630), an eminent clothier of Hawkwood in Sible Hedingham. In addition, Sparrow senior was a Captain of the Essex trained band for Hinckford hundred.⁶ He married Anne (*d.*1634), daughter of Robert Buckminster (*d.*1566/67) of Poynton, Lincolnshire.⁷ They had only one son but four daughters. Sparrow senior was buried at the upper end of the chancel at Gestingthorpe church [figure 14.1] where on the south wall there is an alabaster monument with a Latin inscription. It depicts him as a kneeling figure in half-armour, set in a round-headed niche, with an achievement of arms above the pediment [figures 14.2, 14.3, 14.4].⁸

5 Essex RO, D/Y 1/3/68 (vii); Essex RO, D/P 85/1/1, burial at Gestingthorpe, Essex of "Maryan the wife of Captain John Sparrow of Stamborne" (22 January 1638); Bodl., MS Rawlinson Essex 22, fol. 221r; Bodl., MS Rawlinson Essex 23, fol. 295r.

6 Essex RO, D/P 93/1/1, parish register of Sible Hedingham; Suffolk RO, Bury St Edmunds, HA 517/C15; Essex RO, D/Y 1/3/68 (i, ii, iii, iv); Bodl., MS Rawlinson Essex 22, fol. 220r–v; Essex RO, T/P 195/12/12, no pagination; Philip Morant, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Essex* (2 vols., London: T. Osborne, J. Whiston, S. Baker, L. Davis, C. Reymers and B. White, 1768), vol. 2, 289, 306, 372; Thomas Wright, *The History and Topography of the county of Essex* (2 vols., London: George Virtue, 1836), vol. 1, 537, 542, vol. 2, 7; William Berry, *County Genealogies* (8 vols., London: Sherwood, Gilbert & Piper, 1830–42), vol. 7, 53–55 (Essex); George Marshall (ed.), *Le Neve's pedigrees of the Knights*, Harleian Society, 8 (London, 1873), 213; Walter Metcalfe (ed.), *The Visitations of Essex by Hawley, 1552: Hervey, 1558; Cooke, 1570; Raven, 1612; and Owen and Lilly, 1634 to which are added, miscellaneous Essex pedigrees from various Harleian Manuscripts*, Harleian Society, 13–14 (London, 1878–79), 492, 714–715; "The Sparrow family of Gestingthorpe", *Essex Review* 48 (1939), 214–215.

7 TNA: PRO, Prob 11/49 fol. 48; Essex RO, D/P 85/1/1.

8 Frederic Chancellor, *The ancient sepulchral monuments of Essex: a record of interesting tombs in Essex churches and some account of the persons and families connected with them* (London: the author, 1890), 372; Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England): *an inventory of the historical monuments in Essex* (London: H.M.S.O., 1916–23), vol. 1, 100.



FIGURE 14.1 Gestingthorpe, Essex.
PHOTOGRAPH BY THE AUTHOR.



FIGURE 14.2 Funeral monument of John Sparrow senior (*baptised* 7 November 1564 – *died* 11 September 1626) in the church of Gestingthorpe, Essex.
 PHOTOGRAPH BY THE AUTHOR.

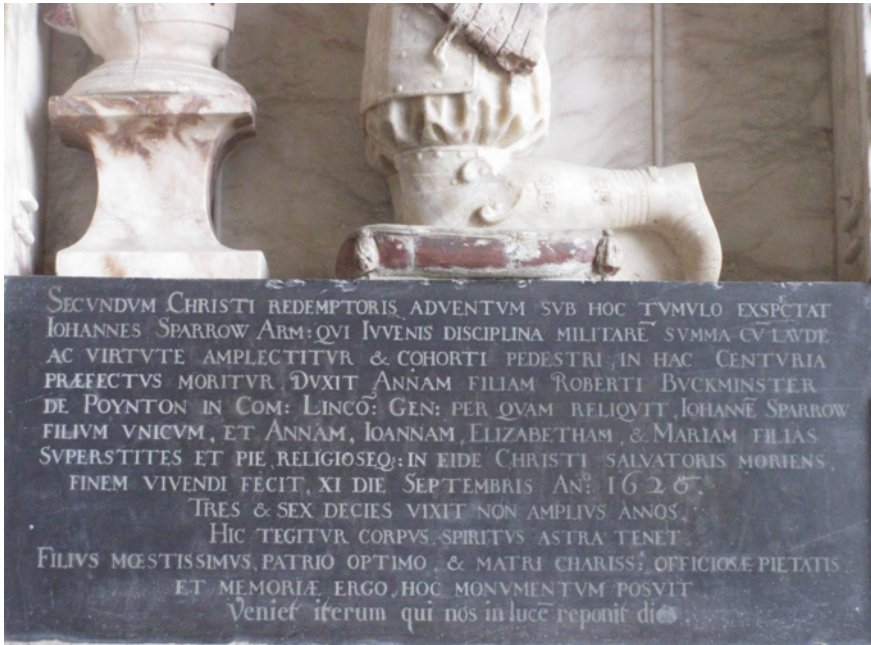


FIGURE 14.3 Funeral monument of John Sparrow senior (detail), at Gestingthorpe, Essex.

An engraving of the monument together with a translation of the Latin inscription can be seen in Frederic Chancellor, *The ancient sepulchral monuments of Essex: a record of interesting tombs in Essex churches and some account of the persons and families connected with them* (1890), 372. Another translation is provided in Thomas Wright, *The History and Topography of the county of Essex* (2 vols., 1836), vol. 1, 542. Wright translates the inscription thus:

Under this tomb lies, expecting the second coming of Christ, his redeemer, John Sparrow, Esq. who, when a young man, engaged in a military life, in which, for his exemplary conduct and courage, he received the highest applause. He died in this century, captain of a company of foot. He married Anne, the daughter of Robert Buckminster, of Poynton, in the county of Lincoln, gent. by whom he had John Sparrow, his only son, and four daughters, Anne, Johanna, Elizabeth, and Mary: he died piously, religiously, and in the faith of Christ, his Saviour, on the eleventh day of September, in the year 1626. He lived no more than sixty-three years. Here his body is entombed, but his soul is in heaven. An afflicted son erected this monument, out of dutiful affection to, and in memory of, the best of fathers, and the most beloved of mothers. The day will come, when we shall see each other again.

The Böhme translator's father John Sparrow the elder was, in Holman's estimation, "generally esteem'd a Gent of sobriety courage and conduct; every way fitted to be trusted".⁹ Born on 8 October 1592, he matriculated at Trinity College,

9 Bodl., MS Rawlinson Essex 22, fol. 222r; Essex RO, D/Y 1/3/68 (vii).



FIGURE 14.4 Funeral monument of John Sparrow senior (detail), at Gestingthorpe, Essex.

The Sparrow family coat of arms

1. Argent, three roses 2, 1, and a chief gules [*Sparrow*]
2. Vert, three chevrons or, on the uppermost a crescent, gules, for difference [*Aspall?*]
3. Per chevron, azure and argent, a bordure, engrailed gules [*Aldres*]
4. Vert, a buck trippant or [*Buckminster?*]

Cambridge in 1606, graduating BA in 1610 and MA in 1613.¹⁰ In his youth the elder Sparrow had served as one of the gentlemen ushers to James I.¹¹ Afterwards he lived at Stambourne although in November 1630 he presented William

¹⁰ John Venn and J.A. Venn (eds.), *Alumni Cantabrigienses: a biographical list of all known students, graduates and holders of office at the University of Cambridge, from the earliest times to 1900* (2 parts in 10 vols., Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1922–54), vol. 4, 128.

¹¹ Bodl., MS Rawlinson Essex 22, fol. 220r; Essex RO, D/Y 1/3/68 (vii).

Berman to the rectory of Gestingthorpe.¹² From 1634 he was also a Captain of one of the Essex trained bands.¹³ When Civil War broke out the elder Sparrow sided with Parliament. His banner bore the motto "Res nomines".¹⁴ He served initially as a Captain in Colonel Sir John Seaton's regiment.¹⁵ By summer 1643 he had been promoted to Major.¹⁶ Thereafter he was appointed Colonel of a 400-strong regiment of foot which in September 1644 formed part of the garrison of Abingdon, Berkshire. According to his commander, however, Sparrow soon absented himself intending to lay down his commission. Consequently a number of his troops deserted.¹⁷ Even so, Colonel Sparrow was active during the Second Civil War, participating at the siege of Colchester (summer 1648).¹⁸ In addition, John Sparrow the elder was a member of the Parliamentary Committee for Essex sitting at Chelmsford (1644–55),¹⁹ a Justice of the Peace for Essex (1644–45, 1648, 1651–56, 1657–60),²⁰ and twice High Sheriff of Essex (1656, 1657).²¹ Together with his nomination to sit on the High Court of Justice (26 March 1650),²² this accords with Holman's verdict that the elder Sparrow was "in great esteem with the Republican Party then predominant". He was also a

- 12 Richard Newcourt, *Repertorium Ecclesiasticum Parochiale Londinense* (2 vols., London: Benjamin Motte, 1710), vol. 2, 279–280; Bodl., MS Rawlinson Essex 22, fol. 222r; Lambeth Palace Library, Comm. XIIa/8, fols. 308–310, printed in Harold Smith, *The Ecclesiastical History of Essex under the Long Parliament and Commonwealth* (Colchester: Benham & co., [1933]), 298.
- 13 Metcalfe (ed.), *Visitations of Essex*, 492; Essex RO, D/P 85/1/1.
- 14 Bodl., MS Rawlinson D 942, fol. 32; John Prestwich, *Prestwich's Respublica; Or a Display of the Honors, Ceremonies & Ensigns of the Common-Wealth, Under the Protectorship of Oliver Cromwell* (London: J. Nichols, 1787), 54–55, 104.
- 15 TNA: PRO, SP 28/5 fol. 204.
- 16 British Library, MS Egerton 2646 fol. 283r; BL, MS Egerton 2647 fols. 82r, 84r, 95r, 180r, 281r; *Historical Manuscripts Commission. Seventh Report, Appendix* (London: H.M.S.O., 1879), 552, 556, 560.
- 17 *CSPD 1644*, 479–480; TNA: PRO, SP 21/17, fol. 153; TNA: PRO, SP 21/19, fols. 67, 69; *CSPD 1644–45*, 8, 11, 13, 14, 16, 180, 233; *CJ*, vol. 4, 1.
- 18 Cambridge University Library, Add. MS 89, fols. 227–228, printed in *HMC. Thirteenth Report, Appendix, Part I* (London: H.M.S.O., 1891), 467–468; *CJ*, vol. 5, 613; *LJ*, vol. 10, 478; PA, HL/PO/JO/10/1/294; Alfred Kingston, *East Anglia and the Great Civil War* (London: Elliot Stock, 1897), 258–260, 267.
- 19 *CJ*, vol. 3, 403; *LJ*, vol. 6, 435; Parliamentary Archives, HL/PO/JO/10/1/165; BL, Add. MS 37,491 fols. 234v, 235r, 236r, 237r; BL, MS Stowe 833, fol. 121.
- 20 *HMC. Tenth Report, Appendix, Part IV* (London: H.M.S.O., 1885), 508–510; Essex RO, Q/SO 1/674; D.H. Allen (ed.), *Essex Quarter Sessions order book 1652–1661*, Essex edited texts, 1 (Chelmsford: Essex County Council, 1974), xl, 1, 12, 13, 18, 25, 30, 35, 48, 74, 107, 114, 133, 139, 143, 149, 153.
- 21 Essex RO, D/Y 1/3/68 (vii); Bodl., MS Rawlinson Essex 22, fol. 220r.
- 22 Charles Firth and R.S. Rait (eds.), *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642–1660* (3 vols., London: H.M.S.O., 1911), vol. 2, 364–367 [hereafter A & O]; *CSPD 1651*, 479.

well-bred gentleman and “in his prosperity was very civill and obliging” to the defeated Royalists.²³

John Sparrow the elder apparently married three widows, although he only had issue with his first wife Maryan.²⁴ Besides the Böhme translator, their children were Anne (1618–1667), Maryan (1619–*fl.*1664), Dorothy (1621–*fl.*1664), William (*b.*1622), Robert (1624–1651?), and Drue (1630–1653). His second wife was Alice, the widow of Richard Gore of Nether Wallop, Hampshire and Alexander Butler, an Essex-born inn holder with premises in St. Peter Cornhill, London. His third wife was Mary (*d.*1669), daughter of James Rolfe an official of the Archdeaconry of St. Albans, Hertfordshire. She was the widow of William Colles of Parkbury, Hertfordshire and Sir Richard Sanders of St. Albans.²⁵ Sparrow the elder died of gangrene on Sunday, 27 November 1664 at the “Saracens Head” in Gracechurch Street, London. He was buried at Gestingthorpe on 1 December 1664. His grave was located in the north-east end of the chancel of Gestingthorpe church, about three feet from the north wall. The elder Sparrow’s dying wish was to be buried in his first wife Maryan’s grave, separated with a little earth, and that he be commemorated with an inscription attesting that he had “lived in the Hope of the Resurrection and died to enjoy the same”.²⁶

Like his father before him, John Sparrow the younger attended Trinity College Cambridge, where he matriculated pensioner on 15 December 1631.²⁷ There is no record of him taking a degree, however, and on 24 October 1634 he was admitted at the Inner Temple where he trained successfully as a barrister.²⁸ According to Holman, he also “performed there the Readers Exercise with great Applause”.²⁹ Before the outbreak of Civil War Sparrow the younger married Hester (1621–*fl.*1664), daughter of Joseph Norgate (*d.*1636), brewer and

23 Essex RO, D/Y 1/3/68 (vii); Bodl., MS Rawlinson Essex 22, fols. 220r, 222r.

24 Essex RO, D/Y 1/3/68 (vii).

25 Essex RO, D/Y 1/3/68 (vi, vii); Bodl., MS Rawlinson Essex 22, fol. 221r–v.

26 Essex RO, D/Y 1/3/68 (vi, vii); Bodl., MS Rawlinson Essex 22, fols. 221v–22r, 226r; Bodl., MS Rawlinson Essex 23, fols. 296v–97r; Alan Macfarlane (ed.), *The Diary of Ralph Josselin 1616–1683* (1976; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1991), 513–514; Essex RO, D/P 85/1/1, “Jo[ann]es Sparrow Armiger de Maplested Magna sepultus suit primo die Decembris” 1664; TNA: PRO, Prob 11/317 fol. 82 r–v; TNA: PRO, Prob 11/335 fol. 312r. Evidently there was no memorial inscription since about fifty years later Holman noted that “I can’t find y^t this his Dying Request was ever fulfilled – so y^t the distinct place of his sepulchre is unknown”.

27 CUL, Cambridge University Archives, Matric. 6, no. 1195; CUL, C.U.A. Matric. 2, no pagination; Venn and Venn (eds.), *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, vol. 4, 128; W.W. Rouse Ball and J.A. Venn (eds.), *Admissions to Trinity College, Cambridge* (5 vols., London: Macmillan & co., 1911–16), vol. 2, 333.

28 CUL, Add. MS 6697, fol. 202v; cf. W.H. Cooke (ed.), *Students admitted to the Inner Temple, 1547–1660* (London, [1878]), 279.

29 Essex RO, D/Y 1/3/68 (ii, vi, vii); Bodl., MS Rawlinson Essex 22, fol. 222r.

afterwards gentleman of St. Michael Coslany in Norwich.³⁰ The couple had ten known children: John (1642–*fl.*1707), Robert (1644–*fl.*1664), Philip (*b.*1646), Joseph (1648–1705), Mary (1649–1651), Hester (1651–*fl.*1670), Anne (*d.*1653), Drue (1656–*fl.*1670), Elizabeth (1657–*fl.*1670), and Margaret (1660–1661).³¹

While living at Gestingthorpe in the late 1640s the younger Sparrow seems to have been commissioned as a Captain.³² But it was Sparrow's reputation as a lawyer – not to mention his influential connections – that resulted in him sitting on the Parliamentary Committee to consider reformation of the law (17 January – 23 July 1652).³³ Besides his appointment as a Judge for the Probate of Wills (8 April 1653, and again from 19 May – 30 June 1659),³⁴ he also sat with his father as a Justice of the Peace for Essex (1659–60).³⁵ In addition, on the recommendation of Colonel Edward Popham (c.1610–1651) and the regicide Colonel Richard Deane (1610–1653), Sparrow the younger had been appointed one of several treasurers and collectors of prize goods (17 April 1649 – before 20 June 1657).³⁶ During the same period one of the Sparrows – identified only as of Gestingthorpe and therefore most likely the elder – was appointed one of several trustees for the sale of former Crown lands (16 July 1649); for overseeing the sale of fee-farm rents that had formerly been payable to the Crown, the Duchy of Lancaster and the Duchy of Cornwall (11 March 1650); and for supervising the sale of castles, mansions, parks and lands hitherto in the Crown's possession (31 December 1652).³⁷ Moreover, in August 1654 John Sparrow – again most likely the elder – was named a trustee for the sale of four forests

30 J.J. Howard (ed.), *A Visitation of the County of Essex Begun AD MDCLXIII, finished AD MDCLXVIII by Sir Edward Bysshe* (London: Mitchell & Hughes, 1888), 86; Norfolk RO, AF 157, 175x5; Norfolk RO, Parish register of St. Michael Coslany, Norwich; Norfolk RO, NCC, will register Spendlove, 272, will of Joseph Norgate (1636); TNA: PRO, C 3/462/19; Essex RO, D/Y 1/3/68 (vi, vii); Bodl., MS Rawlinson Essex 22, fol. 222r; Bodl., MS Rawlinson Essex 23, fol. 295v; TNA: PRO, Prob 11/317 fol. 82v.

31 Essex RO, D/P 346/1/2; Essex RO, D/Y 1/3/68 (vi, vii); Bodl., MS Rawlinson Essex 23, fol. 295v; Marshall (ed.), *Le Neve's pedigrees*, 214.

32 TNA: PRO, C 3/462/19; BL, MS Harleian 6244, fol. 25v; Bodl., MS Rawlinson Essex 22, fol. 222r; Bodl., MS Rawlinson Essex 23, fol. 294r.

33 *CJ*, vol. 7, 67, 73, 74; *Mercurius Politicus*, no. 85 (15–22 January 1652), 1364; BL, Add. MS 35,863; M. Cotterell, "Interregnum law reform: the Hale Commission of 1652", *English Historical Review*, 83 (1968), 693.

34 *A & O*, vol. 2, 702–703, 1272; *CSPD* 1653–54, 271; *CJ*, vol. 7, 657.

35 Norman Penney (ed.), *Extracts from State Papers relating to Friends 1654 to 1672* (London: Friends' Historical Society, 1913), 106; Essex RO, Q/SO 1/674; Allen (ed.), *Essex Quarter Sessions*, xl, 149, 153.

36 *CSPD* 1649–50, 39–40, 51, 71, 171, 190, 204, 527; *A & O*, vol. 2, 75–78, 1180–1181; *CSPD* 1650, 212; *CSPD* 1655–56, 181, 224; *CSPD* 1657–58, 17.

37 *A & O*, vol. 2, 168–171, 358–359, 691–694; BL, Add. MS 21,427 fols. 98r, 172r; *CSPD* 1651, 267.

(Needwood, Kingswood, Ashdown and Sherwood) designated as collateral security for arrears owed to army officers and the rank-and-file.³⁸

Given the elder Sparrow's military rank and administrative responsibilities together with the younger Sparrow's legal expertise, it is unsurprising that between May 1650 and January 1656 father and son were involved in a number of complex transactions concerning former Crown possessions. It should be stressed, however, that beyond the nominal conveyance of land and property, it is difficult to ascertain whether the elder and younger Sparrow were acting merely as trustees for soldiers disposing of their debentures or as interested parties. Whatever the specific arrangement, it is clear that they profited greatly from their involvement. Thus either individually or together with some London merchants and a Buckinghamshire gentleman, the elder Sparrow purchased portions of Theobalds house, Hertfordshire (notably the council chamber) for undisclosed sums; Dell's lodge and 113 acres in Theobalds for £600; and 78 acres in Theobalds Park for £613. The portions of Theobalds house were sold for an undisclosed sum and £200 respectively; Dell's lodge and 113 acres for £1,200; the 78 acres in Theobalds Park in six separate parcels for more than £1214; and a tenement at the east gate of Theobalds Park for £80. In short, the elder Sparrow and his partners probably made more than £1500 from buying and selling parts of former Crown possessions in Theobalds.³⁹

A similar process can be observed in the acquisition and redistribution of the manor house at Havering-atte-Bower, Essex together with Havering Park and keepers' lodges. Contracts were drawn up on 1 May 1650 and in September that year Colonel Richard Deane, John Sparrow the elder and John Sparrow the younger purchased a moiety of the manor of Havering for £1196-13s.-8d. on behalf of Deane and some soldiers. The park itself was divided into three parts (subsequently designated as the East, Middle and West divisions). What became known as the East division of Havering Park consisted of 497 acres. This together with the manor house, outhouses, gardens and a lodge was bought on behalf of several army officers and the rank-and-file by Deane, the elder Sparrow, and the younger Sparrow for £4492-2s.-6d. on 16 June 1651 (later improvements resulted in an adjusted price of £4733-16s.-8d. with the purchasers discharged the difference of £241-14s.-1d.). William Wood a London merchant

38 *A & O*, vol. 2, 993–996, 1116–1122.

39 TNA: PRO, C 54/3689 no. 16; C54/3691 no. 17; C54/3695 no. 33; C54/3696 no. 34; C54/3701 no. 7; C54/3703 no. 26; C54/3705 no. 2; C54/3720 nos. 3, 32; C54/3724 no. 34; C54/3733 nos. 30, 31; C54/3734 no. 29; C54/3793 no. 26; C54/3877 no. 1; Ian Gentles, "The Debentures Market and Military Purchases of Crown Land, 1649–1660," unpublished University of London Ph.D. thesis, 1969, pp. 166–168, 337. I owe most of these references to the kindness of Professor Gentles.

and formerly Muster General of the Northern Army purchased another part of Havering Park for £4,158-14s.-3½*d.*, while Captain John Rayner bought the other part for £4350-8s.-5*d.*⁴⁰ It is noteworthy that in many of these transactions the younger Sparrow, described as of the Inner Temple, acted as attorney for the soldiers. Thereafter the Sparrows conveyed a messuage in Havering with a yearly rent of £54 to a grocer for £700.⁴¹ They retained a substantial property, however, which seems to have been the manor house. It was here that the Böhme translator mostly lived between about October 1651 and January 1661, if not longer, for three of his daughters were buried in nearby Romford during this period. During his residence the younger Sparrow spent a considerable amount on home improvements, including £100 on a single room.⁴² Shortly after the Restoration the house was said to be well-furnished with plate and other objects. The younger Sparrow also possessed a lease for about 300 acres where Havering Park had been and on which he kept a great head of cattle.⁴³

According to Holman, the elder Sparrow was involved in a further transaction – namely the purchase of Hyde Park, which he supposedly exchanged with Anthony Deane (1630–c.1676) for Deane’s “noble seat” of Dynes Hall in Great Maplestead, Essex.⁴⁴ Although Holman represented Deane as “very much addicted” to the Parliamentary cause, believing “the structure then raised would have stood for ever”, this story may be nothing more than a flight of fancy prompted by a coincidence.⁴⁵ Alternatively, since Holman had access to the younger Sparrow’s papers and diaries, it suggests the possibility that the elder Sparrow used a proxy for additional purchases of former Crown possessions. What can be established is that on 27 November 1652 Parliament ordered Hyde Park to be sold. It was split into five divisions: Kensington, Gravel Pit, Banqueting House, Old Lodge and Middle. Anthony Deane purchased the Banqueting House, Old Lodge and Middle divisions for £9,020-8s.-2*d.* on 5 April 1653, afterwards selling 61 acres to the purchaser of the Kensington division

40 TNA: PRO, E 121/2/5 nos. 14, 19, 35, 37; TNA: PRO, E 214/480; TNA: PRO, E 315/153/10–11, pp. 261–275; TNA: PRO, E 320/F9, F16, F18; TNA: PRO, SP 46/109 fols. 26, 28; CUL, MS Dd.viii.30, fols. 12v–13r; CUL, MS Dd.xiii.20, fol. 67.

41 TNA: PRO, C 54/3854 no. 29.

42 Essex RO, D/Y 1/3/68 (vi, vii); Bodl., MS Rawlinson Essex 22, fols. 220v, 222v; Bodl., MS Rawlinson Essex 23, fol. 295r; Essex RO, D/P 346/1/2, parish registers of St. Edward, Romford, which record the burial of “Marie Sparrow daughter of John gent from Hau[er]ing” (21 October 1651), “Ann Sparrow daughter of John of Havering” (28 June 1653), and “Maragretta Sparrow daughter of John fro[m] Hauering” (7 January 1661).

43 BL, MS Egerton 2979, fol. 64r.

44 Essex RO, D/Y 1/3/68 (vi, vii); Bodl., MS Rawlinson Essex 22, fols. 220v, 221v.

45 Essex RO, T/P 195/12/10, p. 22; Morant, *Essex*, vol. 2, 278–279.

and leasing most of the remainder of his holdings.⁴⁶ Deane's financial records indicate both that he had borrowed substantial sums of money, and that on 27 December 1653 he and his business partner were anticipating the repayment of an £8,000 loan.⁴⁷ Moreover, Anthony Deane sold Dynes Hall together with manors of Dynes, Hosedens and Caxtons to John Sparrow the elder for £6,000 on 1 February 1654. This "fine brick house" and attached lands – including barns, stables, coach-house, dovecote, malt-house, brick kilns, orchards, garden, "handsome avenue of elms", bowling alley, pond, watermill, and roughly 80 acre park – had an estimated yearly value of £304.⁴⁸ On its acquisition the elder Sparrow seems to have mainly resided at Dynes Hall until his death in November 1664, while the Böhme translator seems to have lived there from about July 1665 until he was forced to sell the property for £6,490 on 20 November 1667 – of which more in the concluding section to this chapter.⁴⁹

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Judging by Sparrow the elder's administrative, judicial, fiscal and military responsibilities, he was among the fifty most important men in Essex during the English Revolution. The younger Sparrow can be placed on the rung below, ranking roughly among the two-hundred-and-fifty most influential men in the county.⁵⁰ Moreover, as we have seen, the elder and younger Sparrow were clearly among those privileged army and navy officers and civil functionaries serving in the upper echelons of the Commonwealth government who benefited greatly from the English republic's sequestration of a number of Royalists' estates together with the state's confiscation and redistribution of property that had belonged to the crown, bishops, dean and chapters. Their position was further strengthened through mutually beneficial alliances – notably the marriage of Colonel Richard Deane's youngest sister Jane (*d.*1670) to the Böhme translator's youngest brother Drue.⁵¹ By April 1651 Drue Sparrow was

46 *CJ*, vol. 7, 222; Alec Tweedie, *Hyde Park. Its history and romance* (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1908), 81–83; Gentles, "Debentures Market", 118, 120, 187–188, 274, 291, 340, 346.

47 National Maritime Museum, LBK/3; Essex RO, D/Dac 166.

48 BL, Charter Harleian, 111 H. 24. a, b; Essex RO, D/Dac 157, 158, 159, 160; Essex RO, T/P 195/12/10, p. 21; Bodl., MS Rawlinson C 441, fols. 112–113; Bodl., MS Rawlinson Essex 5, fol. 177r; Bodl., MS Rawlinson Essex 23, fol. 297r; Morant, *Essex*, vol. 2, 278–279; Joseph Rush, *Seats in Essex comprising picturesque views of the seats of the noble men and gentry, with historical and architectural descriptions* (London: King, Sell & co., 1897), 69–72.

49 BL, Add. MS 37,078; Essex RO, D/DHt T 114/1; Essex RO, D/DHt T 177/1; Bodl., MS Rawlinson Essex 23, fols. 297r–v, 304r.

50 *A & O*, vol. 2, 24–57, 285–319, 456–490, 653–688, 1058–1097, 1233–1251, 1320–1342, 1355–1403.

51 John Bathurst Deane, *The Life of Richard Deane* (London: Longmans, Green & co., 1870), 57.

serving as Deane's secretary, probably accompanying him to Scotland where Deane shared military command with Major-Generals John Lambert and George Monck. Together with Robert Blake, Deane had also been appointed one of three Generals-at-sea in February 1649. Completing the triumvirate was Edward Popham who, with Deane, had recommended John Sparrow the younger's appointment as a collector of prize goods. Following Popham's death and eventual replacement by Monck, Drue Sparrow served as secretary to the Generals of the fleet.⁵² But he was killed aboard Blake's flagship "The Triumph" during the battle of Portland against the Dutch on 18 February 1653.⁵³ Deane himself died in another fierce naval engagement at the battle of the Gabbard on 1 June 1653. His recently drawn up will had been witnessed by John Sparrow.⁵⁴ On 24 June Deane was buried in a public funeral at Westminster Abbey and laid to rest near Popham. An elegy lamented that they should "make roome" in their "five-fold Tombe" for "pious" Drue Sparrow.⁵⁵

Elsewhere I have noted Major-General Lambert's ownership of a copy of Böhme's *XL. Qvestions Concerning the Soule* (1647), as well as Lambert's interest in mystical theology while on campaign in Scotland.⁵⁶ Here I want to focus on a comment by Monck's contemporary biographer that General-at-sea Deane "was a *Beemist* in Religion". There has been disagreement among Deane's own biographers as to whether this meant Deane was a follower of the moderate Lutheran Michael Behm (1612–1650) rather than Jacob Böhme.⁵⁷ But Holman's hitherto unknown evidence is conclusive. According to Holman, John Sparrow the younger had obtained his post as a collector of prize goods through Deane's patronage in the following manner:

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- 52 Sheffield University Library, HP 28/2/3A; *CSPD* 1651–52, 542; BL, Add. MS 22,546 fol. 88; *CSPD* 1652–53, 526, 528, 529, 532; S.R. Gardiner and C.T. Atkinson (eds.), *Letters and papers relating to the First Dutch War, 1652–1654*, Navy Record Society, 37–41 (1910–12), vol. 37, 63, 80, 83, 101; Deane, *Life of Richard Deane*, 528–532.
- 53 *A Perfect Account*, no. 111 (16–23 February 1653), 886; *The Faithful Scout*, no. 105 (18–25 February 1653), 824; *The Moderate Messenger*, no. 3 (21–28 February 1653), 20; *CSPD* 1652–53, 213; Essex RO, D/Y 1/3/68 (vi, vii); Bodl., MS Rawlinson Essex 22, fol. 221r.
- 54 TNA: PRO, Prob 11/239 fols. 339r–40v, printed in Deane, *Life of Richard Deane*, 692–694.
- 55 J.R., *An Elegie upon the Death of the thrice Noble Generall, Richard Dean* (London: Thomas Jenner, 1653), brs., reprinted in Deane, *Life of Richard Deane*, 704.
- 56 CUL, Syn.7.64.145¹; BL, Add. MS 21,426 fol. 349r; Hessayon, *Gold*, 292–293.
- 57 Thomas Gumble, *The Life of General Monck* (London: Thomas Bassett, 1671), 60; cf. John Prince, *Danmonii Orientales Illustres: or, The Worthies of Devon* (London: Rees & Curtis, 1810), 590; Deane, *Life of Richard Deane*, 246–247, 535–536; J.K. Laughton, "Deane, Richard (*bap.* 1610, *d.* 1653)," rev. Michael Baumber, *ODNB*.

Being well skill'd in the Teutonick Language he gave a Specimen of it by translating one of Jacob Behmens Books, which falling accidentally into the Hands of Generall Dean afores[ai]d he was so taken with the performance of it y^t he advanced him to the forementioned <prize> Office <in ye Dutch war in the time of the Com[m]onwealth: then made him attempt the Translation of the rest of Behmens writings – wch he accomlisht>.⁵⁸

It may have been Deane who brought Böhme's writings to Lambert's attention. Yet whatever the reason that Lambert acquired one of Böhme's books, it is surely significant that two of the highest ranking military officers in the republic were interested in the Teutonic Philosopher and that one was closely linked to his foremost English translator.

Besides this connection with a prominent regicide, the Sparrows were also associated with certain investors in an overseas venture. On 9 July 1647 articles and orders were made and agreed on behalf of a company of Adventurers for the colonization of the islands of Eleutheria, formerly known as Buhama in the Caribbean.⁵⁹ Mindful that the imposition of religious conformity both in England and abroad had had deleterious consequences – divisions, factions, persecutions and unrest – the Eleutheria plantation (the name was an English adaptation of the Greek word for liberty) was to be a republic with no “names of distinction or reproach, as *Independent*, *Antinomian*, *Anabaptist*, or any other cast upon any such for their difference in judgement”. Accordingly, without any form of ecclesiastical authority such as bishops and their detested church courts, or even a Presbyterian polity, the jurisdiction of power was to be strictly limited to the civil sphere: elected magistrates and other officials were to be responsible for the maintenance of justice, peace and sobriety; not matters pertaining to religious belief. Government of the islands was to be by a single governor, twelve councillors and 100 senators. There was also to be a common treasury administered by the governor and council. Moreover, once the plantation had been sufficiently fortified, storehouses provisioned and public buildings erected, one third of both the salvage from shipwrecks and

58 Essex RO, D/Y 1/3/68 (ii, vii); Bodl., MS Rawlinson Essex 22, fol. 222v–23r; see also, Essex R.O, D/Y 1/1/134/2.

59 J.T. Hassam, “The Bahamas: Notes on an Early Attempt at Colonization”, *Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings*, 2nd series, 13 (1899), 4–58; W.H. Miller, “The Colonization of the Bahamas, 1647–1670”, *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 2 (1945), 33–46; Robert Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution. Commercial Change, Political Conflict, and London's Overseas Traders, 1550–1653* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 523–527, 548; Hessayon, “Gold,” 294–295.

the islands' commodities was to be distributed in "works of mercy and charity". Planters were to be "godly people" and their servants Christians. Relations with indigenous Indians were to be peaceable and respectful so as to facilitate their conversion. Any natives who had been taken and sold as slaves within the Caribbean were to be sought out, redeemed and returned to the plantations so that they might appreciate the benefits of English civilisation.⁶⁰

Following debate in the House of Commons an amended act was passed on 31 August 1649 for "settling the Islands in the *West Indies*" between 24 and 29 degrees latitude. Though there appears to be no official record, a subsequent letter of attorney named twenty-six investors: Captain John Blackwell (1624–1701), John Bolles (1603–1665/66), Nicholas Bond (*d.*1673), Peter Chamberlen (1601–1683), Gregory Clements (1594–1660), John Elliston the elder (*c.*1599–1652), Gualter Frost the elder (1598–1652), Robert Houghton (*d.*1653/54), Cornelius Holland (1600–1671?), Colonel John Humphry (*d.*1651), Major Azariah Husbands (*d.*1666), Lieutenant-Colonel George Hutchinson (1618–*fl.*1664), Colonel John Hutchinson (1615–1664), Thomas Jopson (*d.*1653), Captain Robert Norwood (*c.*1610–1654), Colonel Nathaniel Rich (*c.*1621–1701?), Colonel Owen Rowe (1592/93–1661), Scoutmaster-General William Rowe (*fl.*1655), John Rushworth (*c.*1612–1690), Captain William Sayle (*d.*1671), Thomas Smith (*d.*1658), Colonel John Sparrow (1592–1664), Samuel Spurstow, Arthur Squibb (*d.*1679/80), Nicholas West and Thomas Westrowe (1616–1653).⁶¹ As Robert Brenner has recognised, the Eleutheria plantation is important because it shows a cluster of "London-based colonizing radicals working together with a group of similarly radical City, army, parliamentary, and bureaucratic personages in an explicitly oligarchic republican and tolerationist project a year and a half before the advent of the Commonwealth". Furthermore, Brenner has suggested that models for this "self-perpetuating oligarchic republic" were primarily Dutch and Venetian.⁶² That may be so, although there are parallels with the select vestries that controlled the affairs of several London parishes, not to mention a partial anticipation of Gerrard Winstanley's ideal republic as outlined in his *The Law of Freedom* (1652).

As for the investors themselves, three were regicides (Gregory Clements, John Hutchinson, Owen Rowe), while another had attended the king's trial

60 *Articles and Orders, made and agreed upon the 9th Day of July, 1647 ... By the Company of Adventurers for the Plantation of the Islands of Eleutheria* ([1647]), brs., reprinted in F. Mood, "A Broadside Advertising Eleuthera and the Bahama Islands London, 1647", *Colonial Society of Massachusetts*, 32 (1933–37), 81–85.

61 *CJ*, vol. 6, 270, 283, 284, 286, 288; *SUL*, HP 28/1/26B; Hassam, "Bahamas," 5; Miller, "Colonization of the Bahamas," 37.

62 Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution*, 525, 526.

but not signed the death warrant (Cornelius Holland). Three were nominated with Sparrow the elder to sit on the High Court of Justice (John Blackwell, Robert Norwood, Owen Rowe).⁶³ Two were appointed with Sparrow the elder to oversee the sale of fee-farm rents (Nicholas Bond, John Humphry), and one to supervise the sale of castles, mansions and estates formerly in the Crown's possession (Nicholas Bond). In addition, John Rushworth was appointed with Sparrow the younger to sit on the Parliamentary committee to consider law reform and as a judge for the probate of wills. Deeper relationships can be demonstrated with John Bolles and John Elliston the elder. Bolles had served as acting clerk of the Crown in Chancery from December 1643 and became the Commonwealth's clerk in Chancery.⁶⁴ He named the younger Sparrow an executor and possessed a modest library including works by the puritan clergymen William Perkins, Robert Bolton and Richard Sibbes as well as writings by Cornelius Agrippa and Böhme.⁶⁵ Elliston the elder, whose will included a bequest of his £50 investment in the Eleutheria plantation, had married Sparrow the elder's younger sister Elizabeth (d.1632).⁶⁶ Their eldest son, John Elliston the younger (c.1625–1652) translated Böhme's *Epistles* (1649) and *Signatura Rerum* (1651), as well as more than half of *Mysterium Magnum* (1654). The work was completed by his "deare kinsman" John Sparrow the younger, who also witnessed Elliston's will and was appointed one of its supervisors.⁶⁷

63 Contrary to Brenner, I have omitted William Rowe since the Eleutheria adventurer was most likely Scoutmaster General, whereas the High Court of Justice nominee Sir William Rowe of Walthamstow, Essex seems to have been a different man. Likewise, and again contrary to Brenner, I have not included John Sparrow the elder among the 64 men appointed to sit on the court for the treason trials of the five Lords (February 1649). This was clearly Robert Sparrow, who may have been either a younger brother of the Böhme translator, Major Robert Sparrow (1624–1651?), or his namesake Captain Robert Sparrow (fl.1659), sometime of Wickhambrook, Suffolk. See Metcalfe (ed.), *Visitations of Essex*, 479; *CJ*, vol. 6, 128, 130; *Perfect Occurrences of Every Daies iournall in Parliament*, no. 110 (2–9 February 1649), 825; *A List of the Names of the Iudges of the High Court of Iustice* (London: William Wright, 1649), brs.; Parliamentary Archives, main papers, 20 June 1660, printed in *HMC. Seventh Report, Appendix*, 71; cf. Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution*, 548–549.

64 *LJ*, vol. 6, 338, 340; *CSPD* 1651–52, 162; *CSPD* 1653–54, 357; Bodl., MS Rawlinson A 328, pp. 4, 12; *CSPD* 1654, 135–136; *CSPD* 1668–69, 245; Gerald Aylmer, *The State's Servants. The Civil Service of the English Republic 1649–1660* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), 87–88.

65 TNA: PRO, Prob 11/320 fols. 173r–74r, abstracted in Henry Waters (ed.), *Genealogical Gleanings in England* (2 vols., Boston, MA: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1901), vol. 1, 606–607.

66 Essex RO, D/P 85/1/1; TNA: PRO, Prob 11/225 fol. 218r; Bodl., MS Rawlinson Essex 22, fol. 247r.

67 Jacob Böhme, *Mysterium Magnum*, trans. John Elliston and John Sparrow (London: Humphrey Blunden, 1654), "To the Reader"; TNA: PRO, Prob 11/225 fols. 218v–19r; Bodl., MS Rawlinson Essex 23, fol. 296r; Hessayon, *Gold*, 295–296.



The upshot of this section is that John Sparrow the younger's prefaces to his translations of Jacob Böhme must be reappraised. For they constitute a careful act of self-representation. Despite the contemplative tone, not to mention his oft-repeated self-effacing claim to be "one of the unworthiest of the Children of Men" Sparrow was, on the contrary, a university-educated, legally trained, multilingual polymath descended from an Essex gentry family. Moreover, he was a relatively high-ranking Commonwealth official who acquired substantial property following the English republic's seizure and sale of former Crown possessions, was firmly established within the social and political hierarchy of his county community, and closely associated with an assortment of influential republicans and advocates of religious toleration. Hoping to catch the attention of these powerful governmental and military figures, Sparrow regarded Böhme's admittedly difficult texts as both a pathway for individual salvation and as a balm to heal the nation's sectarian wounds; even as a means to advance much needed law reform. Accordingly, it is to these translations that we now turn.

2 Sparrow's Translations

It is not known what motivated Sparrow to study German nor when he began learning the language, although he regarded himself as "an Instrument" for publishing Böhme's "Divine Writings" in English.⁶⁸ Like another Böhme translator Charles Hotham (1615–1672), who had also matriculated at Cambridge in 1631 and who would tutor his youngest brother Drue,⁶⁹ Sparrow may have been partly self-taught, perhaps receiving additional instruction from an unidentified Fellow of Peterhouse who was a native speaker.⁷⁰ Quite possibly Sparrow's German teacher was part of the loose community of Protestant refugee

68 Jacob Böhme, *XL. Questions Concerning the Soule*, trans. J[ohn] S[parrow] (London: Matthew Simmons, 1647), "To the Reader"; Jacob Böhme, *Concerning the Election of Grace*, trans. John Sparrow (London: Giles Calvert & John Allen, 1655), "To the Reader".

69 Thomas Walker (ed.), *Admissions to Peterhouse ... A biographical register* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1912), 45, 91; John Peile, *Biographical Register of Christ's College, 1505–1905* (2 vols., Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1910–13), vol. 1, 418–419; Venn and Venn (eds.), *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, vol. 2, 412, vol. 4, 128.

70 Jacob Böhme, *A Consolatory Treatise Of The Four Complexions*, trans. Charles Hotham (London: Humphrey Blunden, 1654), A5.

scholars forced into exile by plundering armies marauding through central Europe during the Thirty Years' War.

Sparrow probably began translating Böhme by the age of twenty-nine for in 1644 an anonymous English manuscript translation of a German work was completed. Variouslly entitled "The most Remarkable History of IOSEPH Mystically expounded & interpreted" or "The most excellent Historie of Joseph, with morall and mystical expositions", it survives in two copies in different scribal hands – one in the British Library Harleian collection with which scholars are familiar, the other in the Bibliothèque Mazarine which I discovered.⁷¹ The Harleian version lacks the final two paragraphs and is without ownership inscription, whereas the undated Mazarine copy was made "for the Lord Phillip Herbert" who would accede to Earldom of Pembroke on 23 January 1650.⁷² The text itself consisted of a translation of Böhme's *Mysterium Magnum* "beginning at y^e 36th Chapt^r of Genesis and continuing to y^e end of y^t booke". The translator's source was Chapters 64 to 78 (pp. 537–704) of the German version of *Mysterium Magnum* published at Amsterdam in 1640.⁷³ It is noteworthy that this manuscript translation is quite similar in style and structure to *The Third Part* of the English version of Böhme's *Mysterium Magnum* which was published with a separate title-page as *The most excellent history of Joseph* at London in 1654. While Sparrow's cousin John Elliston the younger translated more than half this text (presumably at least 40 of the 78 chapters), Sparrow himself was likely responsible for the third part since Elliston would have been about nineteen at the time of the manuscript's completion. It can therefore be assumed the manuscript represents an earlier version of Sparrow's translation which, much like scribal copies of *Theologia Germanica*, circulated among aristocratic or wealthy patrons.⁷⁴

On 8 November 1644 the London book collector George Thomason acquired a copy of *The Life one Jacob Boehmen* by the Silesian nobleman Abraham von Franckenberg (1593–1652). This version of Franckenberg's essentially hagiographic 6-page biography derived from the prefatory material to the German version of *Mysterium Magnum* published at Amsterdam in 1640, although it omitted Michael Kurtz's verses praising Böhme. Since this was the same edition used by the translator of the "The most excellent Historie of Joseph"

71 BL, MS Harleian 1821; Bibliothèque Mazarine, MS 4581.

72 Hessayon, *Gold*, 320–323.

73 These chapters of Böhme's *Mysterium Magnum* had been previously issued as a separate publication entitled *Iosephus Redivivus, das ist, Die Vberaus Lehr vnd Trostreiche Historia von dem Ertzvatter Joseph* (Amsterdam: Veit Heinrichs, 1631).

74 Scribal copies of John Everard's translation of *Theologia Germanica* were in the possession of Edmund Sheffield, 1st Earl of Mulgrave and Henry Rich, 1st Earl of Holland.

described above it is likely to have been by Sparrow as well.⁷⁵ Possibly the pamphlet was issued to coincide with the twentieth anniversary of Böhme's death on 7/17 November 1624. While some of Böhme's followers regarded him as a prophet of the Thirty Years' War, Franckenberg had praised his "*profound*" and "*deepe-grounded*" writings, believing that they hinted at the great wonders God would perform in future generations.⁷⁶ So it is significant that the publication of Franckenberg's *Life of Boehme* signalled the beginning of a loosely co-ordinated project to issue English versions of the Teutonic Philosopher's writings.

Between 1645 and 1662 most of Böhme's treatises and the majority of his letters were printed in English translation at London. Moreover, two shorter pieces were rendered from English into Welsh in 1655. These translations must be located within the wider context of the breakdown of pre-publication censorship during the English Revolution and the broader framework of the dissemination of continental alchemical, astrological, millenarian and mystical writings during this turbulent period of English history. Elsewhere I have discussed at greater length why Böhme's writings were translated into English and shown the mechanisms behind this process.⁷⁷ Among his followers there circulated a garbled story that Charles I had been the main patron of this venture before his execution in January 1649. Some like Francis Lee (a nonjuror and co-founder of the Philadelphian Society) also maintained, probably correctly, that after the restoration of the Stuart monarchy in 1660 the remaining works were brought out under the auspices of Philip Herbert, 5th Earl of Pembroke. In their eyes this tradition of royal and aristocratic support gave the undertaking prestige. Yet it simplifies developments, obscuring the involvement of a number of people with common aims. Actually, there were three overlapping phases. Initially several individuals with knowledge of Latin or German received abstracts of Böhme's teachings or selected treatises from their associates in Amsterdam. Then manuscript translations were made from German and Latin versions of works published at Amsterdam, as well as from copies of the original texts. These circulated privately in much the same way as had the writings of the sixteenth-century mystic Hendrik Niclaes and other conspicuous

75 BL, Thomason E 16(16). This translation differs somewhat from a later version included in Jacob Böhme, *Forty Questions of the Soul*, trans. John Sparrow (London: Lodowick Lloyd, 1665).

76 Anon., *A reall and unfeigned Testimonie, concerning Iacob Beme* (1649), 6 [usually bound with Jacob Böhme, *The Epistles of Jacob Behmen*, trans. John Elliston (London: Giles Calvert, 1649)].

77 A. Hessayon, "The Teutonicks writings': translating Jacob Böhme into English and Welsh", *Esoterica*, 9 (2007), 129–165 <<http://www.esoteric.msu.edu/VolumeIX/EsotericaIX.pdf>>.

members of his heretical sect known as the Family of Love. Finally there was an organized scheme for publishing the extant corpus. While some of the cost was met by the translators themselves, it is clear that Samuel Hartlib, a Prussian émigré resident in London since 1628, and members of his circle acted as go-betweens by using agents to purchase books, subsequently shipping them to England.

As is well known, Hartlib's circle promoted reconciliation between the Protestant churches and planned to establish a University in London with a College for Oriental Studies to assist with the conversion of the Jews to Christianity. They also advocated educational and medical reform as well as disseminating the Moravian exile Johannes Amos Comenius's theories concerning universal knowledge (pansophy) and the importance of translation as a first step towards establishing communication through a common tongue.⁷⁸ Although it had gone unheeded by many of his compatriots, Böhme's announcement of the dawn of a new reformation thus chimed with their vision of universal reformation. Similarly, Sparrow hoped his efforts would be rewarded with the settlement of religious controversies and the disappearance of sects and heresies. And though he feared making such things known in his native language to "*so many various minds, as are now sprung up*", Sparrow nonetheless contented himself with the knowledge that his public-spirited efforts might provide "*much comfort*" to "*troubled doubting*" souls, enabling them to attain that "*inward Peace which passeth all understanding*".⁷⁹ It was, however, to prove a vain hope. Instead of the promised "Day of Pentecost", when the "*true sence and meaning of all Languages*" would be united into one tongue, there was a new Babel.⁸⁰ Instead of doctrinal unanimity there was discord. For Böhme's readers responded in largely unforeseen ways: sometimes with enthusiasm but on other occasions with exasperation, ambivalence and even revulsion. A handful were convicted of blasphemy, others formed spiritual communities, while others still fulminated against what they regarded as Böhme's incomprehensible nonsense and vile falsehoods. All the same, engagement with Böhme's teachings was more extensive at this crucial moment in English history than has usually been recognised. Nor was his influence either straightforward or always easy to untangle from the wider tradition of continental mystical, prophetic and visionary writing that he epitomised.⁸¹

78 Mark Greengrass, Michael Leslie and Timothy Raylor (eds.), *Samuel Hartlib and Universal Reformation: Studies in Intellectual Communication* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994).

79 Böhme, *XL. Qvestions*, "To the Reader".

80 Jacob Böhme, *Signatura Rerum*, trans. J[ohn] Elliston (London: Giles Calvert, 1651), A3^{r-2}.

81 A. Hessayon, "Jacob Boehme's writings during the English Revolution and afterwards: their publication, dissemination and influence," in *An Introduction to Jacob Boehme: Four*



Significantly, Sparrow's acquaintanceship with Hartlib preceded his undertaking to translate Böhme. For in 1639 Hartlib noted in his ephemerides that Mr Sparrow had gone to great lengths to ascertain the fate of Francis Bacon's manuscripts, which had been divided between his chaplain and biographer Dr William Rawley, Sir William Boswell and a servant. Further observations indicate that over a period of several months Sparrow related certain anecdotes and some of Bacon's apothegms to Hartlib. He also supplied Hartlib with a complete catalogue of Bacon's extant manuscripts together with the beginning of an unfinished treatise on education.⁸² Twenty-five years later in his preface to a new edition of Böhme's *Forty Questions of the Soul* (1665) Sparrow praised the intellectual edifice constructed by the "renowned" Sir Francis Bacon in his *Instauratio Magna* ["the great instauration"], in which Bacon taught people how to "free themselves from the *Idola Mentis humanae*" ["phantoms of the human mind"]. Although Bacon never completed his projected six-volume *Instauratio Magna*, Sparrow nonetheless regarded Bacon's innovative natural philosophy as a necessary foundation for building a divine philosophy. Accordingly, Sparrow intended to use those of Bacon's manuscripts in Rawley's possession to remedy the deficiencies of Bacon's *Instauratio Magna*. But nothing seems to have materialized.⁸³

Further entries in Hartlib's ephemerides between 1639 and 1651 indicate that he was regularly updated about the Sparrows' – both father and son – latest scientific inventions. These included the "Perpetuus Motus", which would "not so much take away worke from Men as facilitate and ease them in their great toyles and labours" (Captain Sparrow); the "Mechanica Oeconomica", a new and more efficient method of heating large rooms during winter (Colonel Sparrow); mechanical instruments made by a skilled blacksmith (Sparrow); new types of keels (young Sparrow); a water pump designed to drain fens and clear flooded mines (young Sparrow); a process for reducing the cost of fuel (young Sparrow); and another to make beer brewing more efficient (young Sparrow).⁸⁴ These inventions brought Sparrow the younger into

Centuries of Thought and Reception, ed. Ariel Hessayon and Sarah Apetrei (New York and Oxford: Routledge, 2014), 77–97.

82 SUL, HP 30/4/4B, 5A, 6A; SUL, HP 30/4/27B; SUL, HP 30/4/54B; Alan Stewart, "Rawley, William (c.1588–1667)," *ODNB*.

83 Jacob Böhme, *Forty Questions of the Soul*, trans. John Sparrow (London: Lodowick Lloyd, 1665), A3r–v; Bodl., MS Rawlinson Essex 22, fol. 224r; Bodl., MS Rawlinson Essex 23, fol. 300v.

84 SUL, HP 30/4/10B, 27B, 44A, 53B; SUL, HP 28/1/22A, 82A, 84A; SUL, HP 28/2/2A, 3A, 5B, 6A–B.

contact with Hartlib's correspondent William Potter, who advocated a scheme to establish a Public Bank, and a son of the Dutch drainage engineer Sir Cornelius Vermuyden (possibly Colonel Cornelius Vermuyden).⁸⁵ In addition, Hartlib's friend and collaborator the philosopher and historian Joachim Hübner wrote to him from Cleves, Westphalia in March 1647 welcoming the news that "the good lad Sparrow is still in his well-meaning humour" and that he had an "even greater appetite" to see Sparrow's "little tract on the approbation of the common writing".⁸⁶ Doubtless this otherwise unknown piece was prompted by Francis Lodowick's *A Common Writing* (1647), a publication very likely sponsored by Hartlib.⁸⁷ Yet it is also noteworthy that Hübner was associated with Comenius and that he knew some works by the grammarian Joseph Webbe,⁸⁸ who for his part appears to have copied an English translation of an extract from one of Böhme's letters.⁸⁹

At an unknown date Hartlib listed Sparrow as one of a number of recipients of a new book by Comenius.⁹⁰ Hartlib's accounts also indicate that he paid £3-6s.-od. to Mr Sparrow and a further sum to Captain Sparrow in connection with the printing and distribution of certain questions.⁹¹ From another source it can be demonstrated that within two weeks of the publication of Franckenberg's *Life of Boehme* Sparrow was using his association with Hartlib to purchase what was most likely editions of Böhme's works printed at Amsterdam and that the agent used for this transaction was the millenarian and student of mystical theology Petrus Serrarius.⁹² Moreover, Hartlib knew of the German version of *Mysterium Magnum* published at Amsterdam in 1640;⁹³ the same edition used by the translator of the "The most excellent Historie of Joseph" who, as shown above, was probably Sparrow.

Sparrow's piecemeal acquisition of German editions of Böhme's works printed at Amsterdam provides an insight into his method. He did not translate Böhme's texts in chronological order. Nor, by and large, did he prioritise

85 Virginia Hewitt, "Potter, William (fl.1650–1651)", *ODNB*; Joan Thirsk, "Vermuyden, Sir Cornelius (1590–1677)", *ODNB*.

86 BL, MS Sloane 639 fol. 234v. I am grateful to Leigh Penman for this reference and his translation.

87 Felicity Henderson and William Poole (eds.), *Francis Lodowick: On Language, Theology, and Utopia* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2011), 23–24.

88 Vivian Salmon, *The Study of Language in 17th-century England* (1979; 2nd edn., Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1988), 4–12.

89 Bodl., MS Ashmole 1499 fol. 279r–v; Hessayon, "Gold," 291.

90 SUL, HP 23/13/1B.

91 SUL, HP 21/15/1.

92 SUL, HP 3/2/77; Hessayon, "Gold," 291–292.

93 SUL, HP 30/4/27A, 27B, 53A; Hessayon, "Gold," 290.

the supposedly easier writings, leaving the more difficult ones till last. Hence Böhme's second work *The Three Principles of the Divine Essence* (1619) appeared in 1648; his third work *The Threefold Life of Man* (1620) in 1650; and his fourth work *Forty Questions concerning the Soul* (1620) in 1647. On the other hand, Sparrow did make some concessions, appending *The Clavis, or Key, being an exposition of some principal matters and words in Boehme's writings* (1624) to *Forty Questions*, as well as issuing a collection of four relatively accessible pieces concerning *True Repentance* (1622), *True Resignation* (1622), *Regeneration* (1622) and *The Super-sensual life* (1624) under the title *The Way to Christ Discovered* (1648).⁹⁴ That said Sparrow's practice seems to have been generally to wait until he acquired reliable versions of each treatise through foreign contacts. This can be illustrated in the case of Böhme's first and most famous book *Aurora* (1612).

On 18 October 1656 the publisher Giles Calvert, having paid the standard fee of sixpence, had the copyright of Böhme's *Aurora, that is the day spring* entered in the Stationers' Register by a warden of the company. The previous day the London book collector George Thomason had acquired and dated a copy of this publication, which had been printed for Calvert by John Streeter and was to be sold at Calvert's shop at the "Black-Spread-Eagle" at the west end of St Paul's Cathedral.⁹⁵ This quarto volume consisted of 643 pages of text together with a preface by Sparrow and an engraving by the Prague-born etcher Wenceslaus Hollar. Evidently there was more than one printing since a variant has some misnumbered pages.

Sparrow's translation seems to have been based on three sources. Firstly, a transcription of Böhme's "Morgenröthe im Aufgang" made in 1614 from what seems to have been the original unfinished autograph manuscript of January to June 1612. This copy had been brought to light on 26 November 1641 by Dr Paul Scipio a burgomaster at Görlitz and was afterwards presented to Georg Pflug, Hausmarschall of Johann Georg the Elector of Saxony.⁹⁶ Secondly, an abridged and unreliable German edition published by Johann Janssonius at Amsterdam

94 Hessayon and Apetrei (eds.), *Introduction to Boehme*, 299–300; Ariel Hessayon, Leigh Penman and Jennifer Smyth, "Seventeenth-century editions of Jacob Böhme's works in English and Welsh: a census of extant copies" (forthcoming).

95 G.E. Briscoe Eyre, H.R. Plomer and C.R. Rivington (eds.), *A Transcript of the Registers of the worshipful Company of Stationers from 1640 to 1708* (3 vols., London: privately printed, 1913–14), vol. 2, 91; BL, Thomason E 890(1); Ariel Hessayon, "Calvert, Giles (*bap.* 1615, *d.* 1663)", *ODNB*.

96 Jacob Böhme, *Aurora*, trans. John Sparrow (London: Giles Calvert, 1656), (a) 2^v; Dr Williams's Library, MS 186.17 (15), fol. 65; Francis Okely (ed.), *Memoirs of the Life, Death, Burial, and Wonderful Writings, of Jacob Behmen* (Northampton: James Lackington, 1780), 10.

in 1634.⁹⁷ This was derived from an imperfect and truncated copy of Böhme's text but contained notes added by the author in 1620. Once in the possession of Böhme's patron Michael von Ender, it was judged so "unfit" that the Amsterdam merchant Abraham Willemsz van Beyerland had warned against using it on account of "many alterations" to the text.⁹⁸ Thirdly, a German version recently printed at Amsterdam in 1656, perhaps based on the 1614 manuscript copy used by Sparrow, and which had been compared with Böhme's original autograph of 1612.⁹⁹ Sparrow drew primarily on the 1614 copy but also incorporated, where he judged appropriate, Böhme's amendments from the 1634 edition. To further assist the reader Sparrow added his own marginal glosses. Shortly after the main text of his English version had been printed, but before the prefatory material had been inserted and the whole stitched and bound, Sparrow acquired the 1656 Amsterdam edition. He then compared this text with his own, adding substantial errata for the reader's benefit so as to clarify the meaning of obscure passages.¹⁰⁰ It must also have been at this point that Sparrow commissioned Hollar to engrave the frontispiece since despite some minor but interesting variations Hollar's representation of the Trinity seated on a throne, which incorporates motifs from Revelation, Isaiah 9:2 and Matthew 4:16, clearly derives from the 1656 Amsterdam edition.

Space does not permit discussion of how the English version of Böhme's *Aurora* was interpreted. But in his preface to the reader Sparrow explained that Böhme's highly valued and deep writings should collectively be regarded as a true guide to understanding the divine and natural mysteries hidden within the Holy Scriptures, one moreover that superseded ancient and modern biblical commentaries. Thus enlightened men and women would be able to resolve their religious differences and settle their "*debates controversies disputes and contests*". For example, among recent thorny issues – especially since the advent of the Quakers – were the questions of whether Christ was present within the believer as an inner light; whether it was possible to attain perfection in this life and live without committing sin; and why not everyone would attain eternal salvation even though Christ was the saviour of all. Böhme was admittedly a difficult author to understand, even with the aid of "*explanatory Tables, and a Clavis*" to his writings. Yet Sparrow held out the promise that with careful and repeated study understanding would come by degrees. Indeed, of all Böhme's texts Sparrow had found *Aurora* to be the most beneficial, regarding it

97 Amsterdam UL, BV5080 .B6 M67 1634 T; BL, 853.a.16.

98 Böhme, *Aurora*, (a) 2^v; DWL, MS 186.17 (15), fol. 50.

99 BL, 853.a.19.

100 Böhme, *Aurora*, (a) 2^v, [b 2]^{r-3}, 66.

as a suitable and plain introduction to the remainder of his works; “a large and most cleere ABC ...for Beginners”.¹⁰¹

...

Abraham von Franckenberg reckoned that Böhme wrote thirty works besides his correspondence and an explanatory key for “some principal matters and words”. A handful of writings were unfinished while a few minor works and some correspondence has been lost.¹⁰² Altogether twenty different books – some containing several titles – by the “Teutonic Philosopher” were issued in English versions at London between 1645 and 1662. Sparrow acknowledged the translation of ten of these publications, together with *The Clavis, or Key*. He also translated one or more works in collaboration with Elliston and may in addition have translated two books anonymously. While others today are better placed to judge the quality and fidelity of his endeavour, Sparrow’s achievement was commemorated by one contemporary. This was the poet and future dramatist Samuel Pordage (1633–1691?), who in lines that he mistook for poetry penned an encomium on Böhme’s foremost translator:

learned *Sparrow* we thy praises too
 Will sing; Rewards too small for what is due.
 The gifts of Glory, and of Praise we owe:
 The English *Behman* doth thy Trophies shew.
 Whilst English men that great Saints praise declare,
 Thy Name shall joyn’d with His receive a share:
 The Time shall come when his great Name shall rise,
 Thy Glory also shall ascend the Skies.
 Thou mad’st him English speak: or else what Good
 Had his works done us if not understood?
 To *Germany* they beneficial prove
 Alone; till we enjoy’d them by thy Love.
 Their German-Robes thou took’st from them, that we
 Their Beauties, might in English Garments see.
 Thus has thy Love a vast rich Treasure shoven,
 And made what was exotic now our own.¹⁰³

101 Böhme, *Aurora*, A^v–(a) 2^v.

102 Hessayon and Apetrei (eds.), *Introduction to Boehme*, 34, 299–300.

103 S[amuel] P[ordage], *Mundorum Explicatio* (London: Lodowick Lloyd, 1661), a4^{r-2}.

An eighteenth-century writer likewise commended Sparrow as a man of “true virtue”, who seemed to have penetrated “very deeply into the spirit of the author”. Nevertheless, he noted that while his translation was regarded as faithful and correct except for some of the most obscure passages, it was “not the most beautiful”.¹⁰⁴ Wishing to justify the undertaking of a new translation of Böhme into English the nonjuror and mystic William Law (1686–1761) was even less charitable:

The translators of J[acob] B[ehmen], Elliston and Sparrow, are much to be honoured for their work; they had great piety and great abilities, and well apprehended their author, especially Elliston; but the translation is too much loaded with words, and in many places the sense is mistaken.¹⁰⁵

3 *Sparrow's Diaries*

Had it not been for the partial recovery and reconstruction of Sparrow's lost diaries there would be little else to add.¹⁰⁶ But this valuable source provides remarkable insights enabling us to locate Sparrow in a milieu similar to that inhabited by Samuel Pepys. While there is no evidence that the two knew each other, the worlds of this Essex gentleman and Londoner (who shared common acquaintances) intersected at several fascinating junctures.

Both were educated at Cambridge University and had an extensive social network of kin, friends, correspondents and neighbours. Both owed the advancement of their careers during the English republic to powerful patrons within the navy hierarchy; Pepys as secretary to Edward Montague (the future Earl of Sandwich), Sparrow to General-at-sea Richard Deane as a collector of prize goods. Both had an appetite for domestic news, foreign affairs and travellers' accounts. Both possessed well-stocked libraries, purchasing custom bound works directly through their contacts in the London book trade (Pepys proudly displayed his collection to selected guests while Sparrow loaned items to certain acquaintances). Both liked music and were skilled linguists (Pepys read French, Spanish and Italian, while besides his expertise in German, Sparrow also mastered French, Latin, Greek and Hebrew). Furthermore, both shared an interest in mathematics, geometry, and engineering, as well as being fascinated by scientific instruments, inventions and experiments. Pepys would

104 DWL, MS 186.17 (15), fol. 59; cf. DWL, MS I.1.62, p. 175.

105 Christopher Walton, *Notes and Materials for an adequate Biography of the celebrated divine and theosopher, William Law* (London: privately printed, 1854), 45 n.

106 Ariel Hessayon and Leigh Penman (eds.), *Extracts from the diary of John Sparrow (1615–1670) of Essex, made by the antiquarian William Holman (1669–1730)* (forthcoming).

be elected president of the Royal Society in 1684 while Sparrow was an “intimate acquaintance” of Henry Oldenburg, the Society’s first secretary, and if never a fellow of that institution (he seemed to balk at paying the fees) then still a noted well-wisher. After much of London’s destruction by fire in September 1666 both discussed detailed plans for the city’s rebuilding. And both unusually sought out and spoke with Jews, who had tacitly been readmitted to England with Oliver Cromwell’s connivance only in 1656, and of whom at the Restoration there were still less than about 200 openly living in London. Sparrow, moreover, has much to say about quack medicine, faith healing and the Irish “stroker” Valentine Greatrakes; apocalyptic predictions and the fevered reaction among English millenarians to news of the Jewish pseudo-messiah Sabbatai Sevi’s exploits in 1666. Indeed, a number of entries in Sparrow’s diary are sufficiently detailed giving the day of the week together with the date (notably for the years 1665, 1666 and 1667), that they can profitably be read side by side with the corresponding entry in Pepys.

Yet it is the mundane details recorded in Holman’s extracts from Sparrow’s diaries that are most revealing: his antiquarian pursuits – notably visits to nearby churches to record architectural features and heraldic monuments; sociable dining with friends and regular visits to his neighbours’ fine homes; their marriage alliances, land transactions and schemes for estate improvement; and his own fluctuating finances. For they suggest that Sparrow’s preoccupation with Böhme did not result in ostracism. Quite the contrary: he was a respected figure enjoying the trappings of gentility, a person firmly integrated in the upper echelon of local society. What set the translator apart from many members of his social class was not mysticism but politics. His fortunes had waxed with the advent of the English republic but waned during the twilight of the Protectorate and with the recall of the Rump Parliament. In June 1659 fourteen articles were presented against Sparrow and the five other collectors of prize goods accusing them of corruption.¹⁰⁷ Following the restoration of the Stuart monarchy the charges were revived and in January 1661 Sparrow and two of the others were accused in the Court of Exchequer of embezzling the staggering amount of £110,632-7s.-10¼d. The evidence may have been fabricated, or at the very least embellished, but the defendants were found guilty nonetheless.¹⁰⁸ According to Holman, Sparrow’s colleagues escaped to Holland leaving him “a sacrifice to some Hungry Courtiers”. The price of his liberty was apparently

¹⁰⁷ *CSPD* 1657–58, 174, 264, 356; BL, Add. MS 5500, fols. 1r–v, 5r, 13r, 19r, 27r, 29v.

¹⁰⁸ *CJ*, vol. 8, 72; TNA: PRO, SP 29/16 fol. 15; *CSPD* 1660–61, 268; BL, MS Egerton 2979 fols. 60r–64v, 70r–71v, 74r, 88v; *CSPD* 1661–62, 133, 198; TNA: PRO, SP 29/67 fol. 319; *CSPD* 1663–64, 2, 36.

set at £4000, which was “a great Deale of money for him to part with”, especially considering his sizeable family.¹⁰⁹ Eventually his debts proved so crippling that on 20 November 1667 Sparrow was obliged to sell his manor house at Dynes Hall in Great Maplestead for £6,490.¹¹⁰ Having drawn up his will and bequeathed his soul “up unto the Omnipresent, Omnipotent God who filleth me and all things throughout One God the Father Word and Spirit”, Sparrow was buried at Gestingthorpe “with his Ancestors” on 8 December 1670.¹¹¹

...

The “ingenious” John Sparrow was a seventeenth-century polyglot and polymath.¹¹² The Irish alchemist and Helmontian physician Benjamin Worsley (c.1620–1673) praised him for his “not inconsiderable” judgment, “Parts, learninge & Integrity”, believing him to be “a Civil person & a man of honest Christian principles”.¹¹³ Had it not been for the loss of Sparrow’s correspondence, library and diaries – all of which were consulted within fifty years of his death by Holman in the course of his research for a planned but never completed history of Essex – we would know as much if not more about him than many of his contemporaries whose records have survived. All the same, at least now we know something more about Böhme’s foremost English translator and his wider accomplishments.

109 Essex RO, D/Y 1/3/68 (vi); Bodl., MS Rawlinson Essex 22, fol. 223r–v.

110 Essex RO, D/DHt T 114/1, 2, 3; Bodl., MS Rawlinson Essex 22, fol. 223v.

111 TNA: PRO, Prob 11/335 fol. 312r–v; Essex RO, D/P 85/1/1, “Johannes Sparrow Armiger Sepultus suit octavo die Decembris Anno Domini 1670”; Bodl., MS Rawlinson Essex 22, fol. 223v.

112 Bodl., MS Rawlinson Essex 22, fol. 225r.

113 SUL, HP 42/1/9B; SUL, HP 33/2/11B.

Concluding Bibliographical Remarks

Lucinda Martin and Leigh T.I. Penman

The aim of the present volume is to stimulate further research. Our concluding remarks will list and briefly characterize some resources useful for beginners. This survey is not comprehensive, but we hope that it may help neophytes gain access to Böhme scholarship. The continuing interest in Böhme means that our remarks will soon be outdated as new research emerges, a state of affairs that we welcome.

1 Bibliographies

Werner Buddecke's bibliographies are an essential foundation for research on Jacob Böhme. They cover Böhme's manuscripts, as well as German and non-German printed editions. First printed in Göttingen in 1934, Buddecke's excellent list of Böhme manuscripts was revised by Matthias Wenzel (in collaboration with Daniela Frieze and Karin Stichel), and printed as *Jacob Böhme: Verzeichnis der Handschriften und frühen Abschriften* (Görlitz: Schriftenreihe der Städtischen Sammlungen für Geschichte und Kultur, 2000). This revision provides a modest expansion and valuable update to the original – especially with its identification of the present shelfmarks of manuscripts from the former Linz am Rhein collection – although it also introduces several errors, and omits Buddecke's later updates to the original 1934 edition of the *Verzeichnis*. In light of the recent discovery of numerous German and foreign language Böhme manuscripts – including entirely new letters written by Böhme – a new edition of the *Verzeichnis* is a desideratum.

Buddecke's indispensable bibliographies of Böhme's printed works are *Die Jakob-Böhme-Ausgaben. Teil 1. Die Ausgaben in deutscher Sprache*. (Göttingen: Häntzschel, 1937), and its sequel documenting the translations, *Die Jakob-Böhme-Ausgaben. Teil 2. Die Übersetzungen* (Göttingen: Häntzschel, 1957). Both volumes were reprinted in a uniform edition in Vaduz by Topos Verlag in 1981. Although several volumes which Buddecke considered lost have since resurfaced – most notably multiple copies of the 1624 edition of Böhme's *Der Weg zu Christo* – others described herein were lost in the Second World War. Buddecke's careful work has in no wise been surpassed on this subject.

Concerning secondary literature, Jan Garewicz (1921–2002) deposited a typescript “Zusammenstellung der Böhme Literatur” (covering material published up to 1993) in the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel (Shelfmark: KA30 6656), which is relatively exhaustive and covers material in a variety of European languages. A selection therefrom was included in Christoph Geissmar, *Das Auge Gottes. Bilder zu Jakob Böhme*. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1993), 140–164. Online bibliographies are also available: Bruce B. Janz’s “Jacob Böhme Bibliography” (last updated in November 2009) is still available at: <https://pegasus.cc.ucf.edu/~janzb/boehme/boehmebib.htm>. An ongoing bibliographical project documenting secondary literature from 1990 onwards is periodically updated (last in 2013) and maintained by the Internationales-Jacob-Böhme-Institut, available at: <https://www.jacob-boehme.org/Bibliographie/bibliographie.php>.

Related to bibliography are the reference works for Böhme’s terminology. Günther zu Solms-Rödelheim’s dissertation, *Die Grundvorstellungen Jacob Böhmes und ihre Terminologie* (University of Munich, 1962), while spotty in its treatment, contains material that scholars might build on in studying Böhme’s terms, as does Hans Grunsky’s *Jacob Böhme* (Stuttgart, Frommann Holzboog, 1964). The most helpful aid for Böhme’s terminology is the “Register der theosophischen Materien” at the end of the 1730 edition of his collected theosophical writings. Other scholars have examined individual aspects or terms in select texts pertinent to the term or concept in question.

2 Editions

A very accurate transcription and edition of Böhme’s extant autograph manuscripts was edited by Werner Buddecke and published as *Jacob Böhme: Die Urschriften*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, 1964–1966). This study is absolutely indispensable, as it contains several passages from Böhme’s writings, especially his epistles, which have been printed nowhere else, and compares the text of the autographs with major printed editions of 1682, 1715, and 1730. The standard edition of Böhme’s collected works remains the 1730 *Theosophia Revelata*, 11 vols. (Leiden, 1730) which was reprinted with modern introductory material under the editorial guidance of Will-Erich Peuckert as *Jacob Böhme. Sämtliche Schriften. Faksimile-Neudruck der Ausgabe von 1730 in elf Bänden* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1956–1961). Although the texts printed in facsimile were critically edited according to eighteenth-century standards, Böhme scholars impatiently await modern editions of virtually all Böhme’s works. Readers should be particularly wary of the hasty editorial

interventions in the epistles, which were uncritically adopted from the inferior edition of 1715.

Modern editions of Böhme's *Morgenröte* (1612) and *De Signatura rerum* (1622) have been edited by Ferdinand von Ingen as *Jacob Böhme: Werke. ("Morgenröte" und "De Signatura Rerum" – Böhmes Hauptwerke in kritischer Edition und mit umfassenden Kommentar)* (Frankfurt/Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1997). This edition of the "Morgenröte" has been surpassed in a dual German-English critical edition and translation by Andrew Weeks, *Aurora (Morgen Röte im auffgang, 1612) and Fundamental Report (Gründlicher Bericht, Mysterium Pansophicum, 1620)* (Leiden: Brill, 2013); as the title of the latter work indicates, it also includes an edition of Böhme's *Grundlicher Bericht*, edited by Günther Bonheim in collaboration with Michael Stang. An additional volume in the same series of facing-page editions and translations, *Beschreibung der Drey Principien Göttliches Wesens [Of the Three Principles of Divine Being, 1619]*, should appear simultaneously with the present volume. Reliable modern scholarly editions and translations of Böhme's works remain a desideratum.

3 Biographies

A variety of valuable biographical studies are available. All Böhme biographies build to a greater or lesser extent upon Abraham von Franckenberg's foundational "De vita et scriptis oder Historischer Bericht Von dem Leben und Schriften Jacob Böhmens" of 1651 (published in, among other places, *Sämtliche Schriften*, vol. 10, 5–31). An English translation of Franckenberg's "Vita," in addition to other early German material, appeared in Francis Okely, *Memoirs of the Life, Death, Burial, and Wonderful Writings, of Jacob Behmen. Now first done at large into English, from the best edition of his works in the original German* (Northampton, 1780). It was not until the nineteenth century that other useful and/or critical biographical studies emerged. These include Gustav Köhler's anonymously-printed article "Jacob Böhme," printed over several numbers of *Der Wegweiser: eine Wochenschrift für die Ober- und Niederlausitz*, vol. 6 (1837): 674–678, 690–693, 705–708, 721–728, 739–742, 754–756, which drew on a variety of manuscripts, some of which are no longer extant. A relatively accurate biographical account remains Hermann Adolph Fechner, *Jakob Böhme. Sein Leben und seine Schriften, mit Benutzung handschriftlicher Quellen dargestellt* (Görlitz: Oberlausitzische Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften, 1857), which combines superb source-based research with sober judgements of the available evidence.

Later studies of value and interest include Will-Erich Peuckert, *Das Leben Jakob Böhmes* (Jena: Diederichs, 1924); Richard Jecht, "Die Lebensumstände Jakob Böhmes," in *Jakob Böhme: Gedenkgabe der Stadt Görlitz* (Görlitz: Magistrat der Stadt, 1924), 7–76; also printed in *Neues Lausitzisches Magazin* 100 (1924), 179–248, which presents a great deal of previously unpublished material and information concerning Böhme discovered in Görlitz archives and libraries. Jecht's work provided the foundation for the useful English-language account of John Joseph Stoudt, *Sunrise to Eternity. A Study in Jacob Böhme's Life and Thought* (Philadelphia, 1957), which is helpful for bare details culled from German research, but very light on interpretation. An often-cited work which must be used with caution is that of Ernst-Heinz Lemper, *Böhme. Leben und Werk* ([East] Berlin: Union Verlag 1974), which reprints some interesting new documents, and is informed by the author's encyclopaedic knowledge of the history of Görlitz, but is marred somewhat by questionable interpretations of broader issues. Andrew Weeks, *Böhme: An Intellectual Biography of the Seventeenth-Century Philosopher and Mystic* (Albany: SUNY, 1991), provides a readable and accessible modern approach to Böhme's life and writings.

4 Outlook

The interpretive literature on Böhme is so extensive that we will not attempt to outline it here but instead refer students to the bibliographies cited in Section 1 above. The approaches taken by the contributors to this volume have included social and urban history, the history of science, the study of early modern networks, Kabbalah, Pietism, Paracelsism, alchemy, the history of philosophy, and, last but not least, the application to Böhme's writings of rhetorical theory, linguistics, and metaphorology.

The approaches to Böhme included here are by no means exhaustive. For example, the advancing state of research on Gnostic writings has rendered what has already been written on Böhme and Gnosis in need of revision. Gender theory has only touched on the most salient aspects of the gendered natural world in his work. Network theory might offer a fresh access not only to Böhme's environment but to the intricate contents of his writings. Above all, many of his writings have yet to be examined as organically composed individual pieces of literature rather than as tokens of a single, all-encompassing revelation.

No subdivision within Böhme scholarship bifurcates as deeply as that between those who regard his work as literature composed in a specific time to address specific audiences and aims and those who regard it as the vehicle of a cohesive revelation. Since the deep division between students of an

historically contextualized literature in the broadest sense of the term and students of mystical revelation is based on articles of faith and methodological premises, it is unlikely that such differences can be resolved soon. Fortunately, since both sides agree on the priority of a well edited and (for non-readers of German) accurately translated work, there has been and will continue to be a broad area for fruitful collaboration. We can only hope that in Böhme scholarship, as elsewhere in the sciences and humanities, debate and disagreement will act as a motor for generating deeper insights.

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