

## 7. Sekundärliteratur

### **Halle Pietists in England. Anthony William Boehm and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.**

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#### The Bookshop and Bible Institute at Halle

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Library at Canterbury". The Society's response was to "persuade Mr. Belke of the usefulness of the Books he mention'd and let him know the Opinion of the Society".<sup>17</sup> As late as 1739 the SPCK still considered the works of Boehm and Arndt important enough to be included in the libraries it supported.

#### *The Bookshop and Bible Institute at Halle*

The SPCK's publishing and distribution programme was paralleled in Halle, where a bookshop had been set up in 1697 by H.J. Elers. It quickly received the support of Baron von Canstein in Berlin who helped secure for it royal privileges, giving it authority to manufacture and sell goods and exempting it from paying excise taxes.<sup>18</sup> In 1701 a print shop was added so that Francke could do his own printing at Halle. Possessed of his own publishing agency and print works, Francke was enabled to spread his published material throughout Germany more easily. Already in 1698 Ludolf told his friend Arthur Charlett in Oxford of Francke's successes in the distribution of Pietist literature:

My friend [Francke] here [in Halle] ... hath indeed baffled the booksellers at last, some of his breeding being up and down Germany in Schools and Churches, which spare for no labor to disperse the writings he puts out for the edification of the Lutheran Church; though God hath enlarged his soul beyond the Confining his charity and Zeal to the rails of the Augustan Confession.<sup>19</sup>

As Ludolf's letter implies, Francke had sole control over what was dispersed from the Halle bookshop. Consisting predominantly of Bibles and Pietist devotional treatises and sermons, this literature was largely propagated by Francke's friends and former students.

The book and print shops were but preludes to the Bible Institute which Francke and Canstein founded in 1710.<sup>20</sup> The purpose of this enterprise, Canstein told Francke, was "to print the Bible, and above all the New Testament, in all languages and so inexpensively as has never happened before ...so that the precious Word of God will be brought among all nations".<sup>21</sup> Canstein's interest in providing Bibles, his clear Pietist proclivities, his influ-

17 Edwin Belke to SPCK, London, 4 Oct. 1739, with Society response (ArSPCK, ALB [CR1/20:15153]).

18 Canstein to Francke, Canstein, Nov. 1697, printed in: Schicketanz, p. 6; cf. Sattler, *God's Glory*, p. 84.

19 Ludolf to Dr. Charlett, Halle, 17 Feb. 1698 (Bodl., Ballard MSS 26:81-82).

20 See A.H. Niemeyer, *Geschichte der Cansteinschen Bibel-Anstalt seit ihrer Gründung bis auf gegenwärtige Zeit* (Halle, 1827); A. Schürmann, *Zur Geschichte der Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses und der Cansteinschen Bibelanstalt in Halle* (Halle, 1898); W. Fries, *Die Cansteinsche Bibelanstalt und ihr Stifter Carl Hildebrand Freiherr von Canstein* (Halle, 1910).

21 "Mein vorsatz ist allemahl gewesen, vermittelst gottlicher gnade, die bibel und zuporderst das N.T. in allerley sprachen in druck zu bringen, und so wohlfeyl, als niemahlen noch nicht geschehen, ... damit das theure wort gottes recht unter alle nationen gebracht werde." (Canstein to Francke, Canstein, 16 June 1710, printed in: Schicketanz, p. 419)



ence with the Berlin authorities, and his personal wealth were joined with Francke's organizational skills and the printing and distribution facilities at Halle to create what was in effect the first Bible Society.<sup>22</sup> Canstein insisted that the Bibles be available to everyone and priced the new German Bible at considerably less than Francke had anticipated. To forestall criticism, he promised to accept liability for all losses.<sup>23</sup> When the use of fixed type came into full use a few years later the Bible Institute flourished. The Institute printed religious literature, especially Francke's sermons, and even some medical and philological works, but its main purpose was to print Bibles. From 1712, when the first Bible was printed, to Canstein's death in 1719, 40,000 Bibles and 100,000 New Testaments were printed and by 1810 over 2 million Bibles had been printed in almost 400 editions.<sup>24</sup>

### *Contacts and Comparisons*

What links were there, if any, between Halle and the SPCK with regard to publishing and distribution? Boehm knew that Elers wanted to establish branch bookshops in both England and Holland, but soon after his arrival he informed Elers that it was difficult to find German books in London.<sup>25</sup> He suggested that Elers concentrate on Latin books, even though he knew of too few Latin devotional books written from the standpoint of a genuine experiential religion.<sup>26</sup> Elers himself, he suggested, should visit England to see if it would be advantageous to the *Waisenhaus* to open a bookshop there.<sup>27</sup> A possibility for the circulation of Halle books in England presented itself in 1708 when Boehm informed Francke that Thomas Bray's son, who had learned the book trade in Holland, had approached him with questions about bookshops in Germany and especially in Halle; he thought that young Bray was inclined to set up a book trade with a capable bookseller in Germany, if it could be conveniently done.<sup>28</sup> In Bray Elers now had the freedom to yoke with a

22 Sattler, *God's Glory*, pp. 85f.

23 Canstein to Francke, Berlin, 10 Feb. and 8 Apr. 1710, printed in: Schicketanz, pp. 408, 414.

24 Niemeyer, *Geschichte der Cansteinschen Bibel-Anstalt*, p. 12, Beilage V [p. 89]. K. Aland, "Der Hallesche Pietismus und die Bibel", in: *Die bleibende Bedeutung des Pietismus*, ed. O. Söhngen (Witten/Berlin, 1960), p. 55 n50, says that if anything Niemeyer's figures may be too low. In any case, the number seems that much more significant when compared with other Bible-distribution efforts both before and after. Cf. K. Aland, "Bibel und Bibeltext bei August Hermann Francke und Johann Albrecht Bengel", in: *Pietismus und Bibel*, ed. K. Aland (Witten, 1970), pp. 90-92.

25 Boehm to H.J. Elers, London, 17 Nov. 1701, printed in: Sames, p. 178.

26 Boehm to Francke, 7 Sept. 1702 (ArFrSt C 229:80).

27 Boehm to H.J. Elers, London, 3 Sept. 1706, printed in: Sames, pp. 184f.

28 "Er schiene geneigt to seyn, mit einem tüchtiger Buchhändler in eine Correspondence und Bücher-Commercium sich einzulassen, so ein solches füglich möchte ins Werck gerichtet werden."