

Franckesche Stiftungen zu Halle

Tief verwurzelt - hoch hinaus. Die Baukunst der Franckeschen Stiftungen als Sozial- und Bildungsarchitektur des protestantischen Barock / Metta ...

33). - S. 247-251

The Francke Foundations as an Early Centre of Communication and Mediality.
Cabinet of Curiosities - Archive - Libraray.

Gestrich, Andreas

Halle (Saale) [u.a.], 2015

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die Digitalisate des Francke-Portals sind urheberrechtlich geschützt. Sie dürfen für wissenschaftliche und private Zwecke heruntergeladen und ausgedruckt werden. Vorhandene Herkunftsbezeichnungen dürfen dabei nicht entfernt werden.

Eine kommerzielle oder institutionelle Nutzung oder Veröffentlichung dieser Inhalte ist ohne vorheriges schriftliches Einverständnis des Studienzentrums August Hermann Francke der Franckeschen Stiftungen nicht gestattet, das ggf. auf weitere Institutionen als Rechteinhaber verweist. Für die Veröffentlichung der Digitalisate können gemäß der Gebührenordnung der Franckeschen Stiftungen Entgelte erhoben werden.

Zur Erteilung einer Veröffentlichungsgenehmigung wenden Sie sich bitte an die Leiterin des Studienzentrums, Frau Dr. Britta Klosterberg, Franckeplatz 1, Haus 22-24, 06110 Halle (studienzentrum@francke-halle.de)

Terms of use

All digital documents of the Francke-Portal are protected by copyright. They may be downloaded and printed only for non-commercial educational, research and private purposes. Attached provenance marks may not be removed.

Commercial or institutional use or publication of these digital documents in printed or digital form is not allowed without obtaining prior written permission by the Study Center August Hermann Francke of the Francke Foundations which can refer to other institutions as right holders. If digital documents are published, the Study Center is entitled to charge a fee in accordance with the scale of charges of the Francke Foundations.

For reproduction requests and permission to publish, contact the head of the Study Center, Frau Dr. Britta Klosterberg, Franckeplatz 1, Haus 22-24, 06110 Halle (studienzentrum@francke-halle.de)

urn:nbn:de:hbz:5:1-212253

The Francke Foundations as an Early Centre of Communication and Mediality.

Cabinet of Curiosities – Archive – Library

Summary

Francke, father and son, their assistants and followers combined a unique zeal for universal religious reform with an impressive philanthropic and educational programme and active engagement in a global Christian mission that laid the foundations for the European 'civilising mission' of the 19th century. The backbone of the Francke Foundations' complex system of schools, missions and religious politics formed a truly global communication network. This network, uniquely preserved in the Foundations' archive, was not only connected to a printing shop, which transformed the information from correspondence into newsletters and journals, but also to Baron Canstein's Bible press which revolutionised mass printing in the early 18th century and distributed millions of Bibles worldwide.

These various enterprises were supported by and contributed to a magnificent library. Primarily focused on theology and religious matters, the library also covered many other areas of knowledge, and compares with the best scholarly libraries of its day. Today's collection comprises over 144,000 books, many from the early modern period, with maps and manuscripts from all over the world in many different languages, and is still housed in an immaculately preserved, early 18th century library building, Germany's oldest existing purpose-built public library.

The global dimensions of Halle's quest for acquiring and disseminating knowledge are best represented in its beautifully restored *Wunderkammer* ('Cabinet of Wonders'). This soon became an attraction in its own right, acquiring the status of a public museum.

With these diverse activities combined in one large institution of Christian 'practical utopianism', the Francke Foundations' buildings in Halle represent more than just an extraordinary architectural testimony to the power of Protestant reform in Prussia at the turn of the 18th century. The collections preserved in them also represent an extraordinary archive of knowledge, both for the general visitor and academic researcher. Moreover, these collections function as a remarkable prism illustrating the many varied fac-

tors flowing into the transition from the so-called first or early modern period to the second period of 19th century globalisation, with its combination of mission and trade, communication and technical innovation, scholarship and global knowledge production, and its religious and civilising mission at home and abroad. With this institutional and intellectual infrastructure and its global outreach preserved in its authentic state and at its original location, the Francke Foundations' buildings provide a truly unique 'cosmos' of 18th-century knowledge and a heritage site of outstanding universal value.

Pietism, communication and new media

August Hermann Francke sought to achieve a renewal of the world through the spirit of awakened piety. This practical Christianity, which aimed at changing the world, comprised the key elements of a Christian education and, in particular, the formation of Christian elites, the mission in Germany, Europe and globally, as well as the establishment of Christian communities and a deliberate personnel policy to spread the seeds of this new belief. Communication lay at the heart of this practice as a means of propagating the Christian message and of conversion, as well as of creating communities and networks.

Hence, when August Hermann Francke started his work in Halle, he built up a network of correspondents soon covering all of Europe, in particular eastern Europe, America and – in the course of the mission – India. In all countries, Francke had intermediaries, usually in high-ranking positions and often ex-pupils from his schools, working on the common goal of *Weltreformation* (world reformation). The objective was to support these intermediaries spiritually, coordinating and controlling their activities. However, they also provided a flow of information of all kinds back to Halle, turning the Francke Foundations into a leading centre of news. The Francke Foundations' archive has records of over 20,000 letters to and from August Hermann Francke alone, let alone the additional correspondence conducted by assistants, successors and friends.

This global correspondence network not only served as a basis for the Francke Foundations to coordinate their own policies, but also as a commercial basis for entering into the modern media market. From 1703, Francke was granted the royal privilege allowing him to publish a newspaper. After initially appearing in handwritten form, a printed broadsheet was issued from 1708 which also contained news from Francke's own correspondence. In addition, the Halle publications included devotional writings and, above all, journals such as the *Hallesche Berichte*. The latter disseminated reports by missionaries at the Halle mission in Tranquebar in India, and the revenues from it went to support the mission. The Bible Society founded in 1710 by Baron Carl Hildebrand von Canstein was at the centre of the Francke Foundations' printing activities. Using a new typesetting process, the printing of the Bible was revolutionised so that by 1719, when Canstein died, the previously inconceivable number of over 100,000 Bibles alone had been printed and distributed at affordable prices. In 1725, to safeguard the profits from the printing shop, Francke also set up his own paper mill, affiliated with the printing shop. In a previous step, he had already secured the sales of these publications through the Foundations' own bookshops.

In the Protestant sphere, the Francke Foundations' network of correspondents and their archive are unparalleled. Although the Moravian community in Herrnhut, which evolved from Halle Pietism, also established an archive, this was set up a later date. In general, moreover, those conducting the Herrnhut correspondence were not integrated into similarly high-ranking political networks, nor was there any equivalent marketing of the news content. The records of the Basel Mission, founded in 1815, only cover the 19th century. Within Protestantism, the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK), founded in 1698 in Britain, is the only organisation with a similar archival wealth of 18th-century materials. Francke worked closely together with the SPCK, whose archives are now part of the University of Cambridge archival holdings. However, from the outset, in contrast to Halle, the SPCK was less an organisation focused around a charismatic religious leader with sweeping vision, than one dedicated specifically to disseminating Christian writings. Furthermore, the SPCK's records are no longer part of an originally preserved ensemble of architecture and archive.

For this reason, the Francke Foundations and their archive can, in fact, only be compared with the large Catholic orders

and, in particular, the Jesuits. The Society of Jesus' programme of forming religious elites through education, international power politics and the world's (re-)Catholisation must have inspired Francke's visions and organisational style. However, the structures of the Society of Jesus were different, and had no parallel in Protestantism. Moreover, with its physical as well as religious proximity to the Vatican, the Jesuit Order was almost a part of the Papal apparatus. As a result, many of the Order's buildings – though not their intellectual infrastructure – belong to the UNESCO World Heritage Sites through the Vatican's heritage status. And any comparison based on the model of the Society of Jesus, which was founded in the 16th century, fails to allow for precisely the new focus and modernity of the Pietist Protestant institution of the Francke Foundations in the 18th century. Certainly, the Jesuits did not merely use their extensive correspondence for internal purposes, since from the turn of the 17th century annual missionaries' reports appeared in printed form. However, such reports were not published as newspapers or journals and, most notably, as they were printed in Latin well into the 19th century, they were not intended for a broad audience. Furthermore, in the 18th century, the Jesuit Order came under increasing pressure, was driven out of a number of countries, and in 1773 suppressed entirely. Finally, the nature of the Order's headquarters in Rome was very different from the Francke Foundations in Halle, where mission, education and scholarship were channelled into a uniquely lived symbiosis which was given a concrete architectural form.

Library and scholarship

In 1698, the needs of the schools at the Francke Foundations and Francke's general enthusiasm for education led to the establishment of what was initially a small library. From the outset, Francke envisaged the library as being open to the public. Through acquisitions and, first and foremost, donations from large scholarly libraries (such as those of Canstein and Stryck, among others), the library quickly grew into one of the leading early modern libraries in the German-speaking area. The library is fully preserved with a collection reflecting academic scholarship in those areas of theology, education and Christian mission associated with Francke and the Foundations from the very earliest days. Today, the library comprises over 144,000 printed volumes, many from the early modern period, as well as medieval manuscripts on vellum and paper, valuable maps and collections of pic-

tures. At the end of the 18th century, the library comprised around 18,000 volumes and the collection grew significantly once again, thanks to numerous donations, mainly in the 19th century. Some sections of the collection are of outstanding value both for the history of science and the history of the book. Not only does the library cover the entire range of contemporary sciences but, thanks to the collecting undertaken by the Francke Foundations' missionaries and intermediaries, it also includes intercultural and polyglot materials rarely found in collections at that time.

The quantitative importance of the library's collection can be gauged by the fact that only a few of the German libraries in the early 18th century had significantly larger holdings such as, for example, the *Herzog August Bibliothek* in Wolfenbüttel. Moreover, in comparison, even such an exceptional library as the Bodleian in Oxford only comprised approximately 250,000 books in the mid-19th century. Similarly, it was not until the end of the 19th century that the collection of the famous *Bibliotheca Ambrosiana* in Milan amounted to 160,000 volumes. In 1872, when the Italian state confiscated the library of the *Gregorianum*, the Jesuit university in Rome, the collection had shrunk to a mere 45,000 books (as a result of the Order's difficult history in the 18th century).

In the Francke Foundations' library, the single largest section of materials is dedicated to theology, which accounts for over fifty per cent of the collection. Here, for example, the materials published by the Francke Foundation printing shop and the Canstein Bible Society, together with important copies of the Bible, Pietist writings and the entire spectrum of theological scholarship comprise one major section. In the context of biblical studies and translations, the linguistic sciences and regional studies are especially important, aside from such other subjects as political and natural science. The library's holdings expanded in the wake of August Hermann Francke founding the *Collegium Orientale Theologicum* in 1702, a training institute for linguistic and biblical theology supported and headed by the leading specialists in oriental studies at that time. The collection similarly grew in 1728 when Johann Heinrich Callenberg established the *Institutum Judaicum et Muhammedicum*, which was associated with the Foundations, as it similarly did with the mission to India. Hence, in a unique way, the library of the Francke Foundations in Halle reflects the global knowledge of its day. It constituted the knowledge infrastructure of an undertaking which, through its goal of disseminating Christianity to the

world, engaged intensively and profoundly with non-European cultures and languages.

The library's outstanding cultural importance is further heightened by August Hermann Francke's decision to build a new purpose-built library to house the expanded stocks. The library building, of considerable significance both architecturally and in art historical terms, still houses the collection today. Moreover, thanks to the surviving catalogues, it is possible to reconstruct the system of shelving the books first introduced by Francke and which was informed by the latest debates on libraries at that time. The historical collection is today arranged as it would have been at the close of the 18th century. Since the *Herzog August Bibliothek's* purpose-built library in Wolfenbüttel, similarly constructed in the early 18th century, was demolished in the 19th century, the Francke Foundations' library is now the oldest purpose-built library in Germany outside monastic buildings or royal palaces. Given that Francke opened the library's holdings to the general public as well, this library can be regarded, along with the *Herzog August Bibliothek*, as one of the most important public libraries of its time in Germany.

Quite aside from other criteria, this local continuity and the significance of the library building in particular underline the outstanding importance of the Francke Foundations' library. In the 19th century, the purpose-built *Herzog August Bibliothek* library was replaced, as noted above, by a modern structure, and although the Bodleian rotunda, finally completed in 1743, is undoubtedly impressive, the interior has been adapted a number of times to meet the requirements of a modern university library. In this sense, the nearest parallel may well be the *Bibliotheca Ambrosiana* in Milan, which is the second oldest public library in Europe after the Bodleian, and is similarly connected to a school for studying ancient languages as well as having a printing press for books and, last but not least, an associated museum. However, the thrust of its collection is clearly indebted to the humanist ideal of education and remained primarily focused on the educational canon dominant in the European Mediterranean world. The design of the *Sala Fredericiana*, the first public reading room in the *Veneranda Bibliotheca Ambrosiana*, followed the standard principle of a wall-system library, with shelving for the books lining the walls. In contrast, the Francke Foundations' library adopted the principle of placing bookshelves at right angles to the walls as found, for example, in the Wren Library in Trinity College, Cambridge or in the library at Trinity College, Dublin. Although some German

libraries (e.g. Görlitz), then copied this *Kulissenbibliothek*, where the shelves at right angles formed a 'perspective scenery' similar to a stage, there are no known models for it within the German-speaking world. In its functional simplicity, the spatial design represents a particular expression of Protestant scholarship, quite possibly creating a deliberate contrast to the ornate display of books found in Baroque monastery libraries in Europe and Latin America. In this sense, in its entirety as a complex combining the collection and the experience of its authentic presentation in its original form, the Francke Foundations' library is unparalleled and of "outstanding universal value".

Cabinet of Artefacts and Natural Curiosities

It was common for early modern libraries, and especially court libraries, to be supplemented by collections of other natural and artificial objects. For example, the *Bibliotheca Ambrosiana* in Milan also housed the *Pinacotheca Ambrosiana* art gallery, while Athanasius Kircher, one of the best-known early modern scholars, established the *Museo Kircheriano*, a typical Baroque cabinet of curiosities, at the Jesuit *Collegio Romano*. From 1698, for teaching purposes, August Hermann Francke also started a collection of *naturalia*, which soon developed into an extensive cabinet of natural curiosities. In the 1730s, the collection was moved to the large attic room in the mansard roof in the Orphanage. The artist and naturalist Gottfried August Gründler was entrusted with the task of re-structuring the collection and creating a suitable interior design for its display. In the 20th century especially, the room and collection suffered from the general decay of the building and neglect. However, since 1992 the room has been restored to its original state and once again displays a substantial proportion of the original objects and artefacts. The collection, which soon became famous, was already open to the public in the 18th century and attracted many visitors. Even today, the collection not only provides an outstanding insight into the particular culture of knowledge in Halle Pietism, but also into the Francke Foundations' extensive connections to the rest of the world. Indeed, to a certain extent, Francke's cabinet of curiosities was precisely intended to give, in one room, a tangible form to these connections.

Gründler's display structure was largely informed by the 'museum theory' of his day – the *naturalia* were separated from the artefacts, and objects were stored in customised shelving with shelf bases and drawers allowing them to be arranged by size. The artefacts in particular reflect the par-

ticular focus and interests of the Francke Foundations with the collection comprising special topics such as India, religion and, for example, writing implements and the type of letters used in writing. Gründler also decorated each of the display cupboards with artistic and exact depictions of the objects found in them.

Today, this cabinet of curiosities offers a uniquely authentic impression of an 18th century collection. Since the majority of early modern cabinets of curiosities were later absorbed into other collections, this cabinet is of outstanding importance. Although the *Kunstammer* of Archduke Ferdinand II of Tyrol has been preserved in its entirety at Ambras Castle near Innsbruck, it has been adapted to be shown in a new museum environment. The *Pinacotheca Ambrosiana* only contains paintings, while the renowned Tradescant collection of rarities, the first cabinet of curiosities in England open to the public, was absorbed into the collection which later became the foundation for the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. Hans Sloane's collection similarly provided the basis for the British Museum; since 2003, the museum's Enlightenment Gallery has sought to recreate the original design of this collection, which ultimately comprised a cabinet of curiosities. In contrast, the *Museo Kircheriano* was dissolved in 1915 and the exhibits are now scattered. Other important educational collections possibly comparable in terms of the diversity of their artefacts and exhibits, for instance those in Jesuit schools such as Stonyhurst boarding school in Lancashire, UK, have similarly been integrated into 19th century museal display practices. I am not aware of any other cabinet of curiosities of the size and quality of the Francke Foundations' *Wunderkammer* which is still located at the original site and presented in its original 18th-century display furniture.

Final comparative assessment

As a centre for intellectual and theological thought, scientific knowledge, and social and charitable activities in the 18th century, the Francke Foundations not only exercised an evident influence around the world, but also had a significance extending far beyond Europe's borders. The knowledge infrastructure of this spiritual powerhouse informed by the Reformed Protestant tradition is preserved in its archive, library and collections. The Jesuit or Vatican archives may have started to collect information earlier, gathered more, and hold materials on a similar global scale. However, the Francke Foundations' archive is unique in its insights into the origins of the Protestant mission and its vision of a world

reformation that paved the way for what was seen as the West's global civilising mission in the 19th century. In addition, the archive's value is enhanced through its connection with the library and collections. Even though there were larger libraries in 18th century Europe with more valuable holdings such as the *Herzog August Bibliothek* in Wolfenbüttel, the *Bibliotheca Ambrosiana* in Milan or university libraries in Paris, Oxford or Heidelberg, the Francke Foundations' library is of unique importance. It not only impressively documents the Protestant mission's scholarship and active appropriation of the eastern and non-European world, but does so in the authentic environment of the oldest existing purpose-built public library in Germany. Finally, the library and archives are complemented by the cabinet of curiosities collections, a truly unique 18th century museum which, in a well ordered display of a remarkable collection of objects, encapsulates the Foundations' links with the world and its interpretation of that world.

The interplay of these three perfectly preserved and authentically presented collections are of immense global historical value, and rank the Francke Foundations buildings in Halle above other archives, libraries or museums whose authentic environments have been destroyed, or where the connection between these three elements have been lost over time. Taken together, these collections represent in a unique way the 'cosmos' of the knowledge of the world in the 18th century.

The Francke Foundations buildings additionally present us with an 18th century institution which actively engaged with the world at large through the most modern means of communication, advanced scholarship and education to change and improve it in a (Protestant) Christian spirit – a combination which shaped the foundation of the West's 'civilising mission' in the 19th century. Nowhere are its early roots so well preserved and so authentically presented as in Halle. The Francke Foundations are a site of outstanding universal value.

Bibliography

Beßler, Gabriele: *Wunderkammern. Weltmodelle von der Renaissance bis zur Kunst der Gegenwart*. Berlin 2009.

Baumunk, Bodo-Michael (ed.): *Frühmoderne Bücherwelten. Die Bibliothek des 18. Jahrhunderts und das hallesche Waisenhaus*. Halle 2007 (Kataloge der Franckeschen Stiftungen, 19).

Birkenmeier, Jochen: Die weltweite Ausstrahlung des Halleschen Waisenhauses. In: Veltmann, Claus/Birkenmeier, Jochen (eds.): *Kinder, Krätze, Caritas. Waisenhäuser in der Frühen Neuzeit*. Halle 2009 (Kataloge der Franckeschen Stiftungen, 23), 101–111.

Campbell, James: *The Library. A World History*. London 2013.

Gestrich, Andreas: Der Pietismus und die deutsch-britischen Beziehungen um 1700. In: Zaunstöck, Holger et al. (eds.): *London und das Hallesche Waisenhaus. Eine Kommunikationsgeschichte im 18. Jahrhundert*. Halle 2014 (Hallesche Forschungen, 39), 23–48.

Grote, Andreas (ed.): *Macrocosmos in Microcosmo. Die Welt in der Stube. Zur Geschichte des Sammelns 1450 bis 1800*. Opladen 1994 (Berliner Schriften zur Museumskunde, 10).

Habermas, Rebekka (ed.): *Mission global. Eine Verflechtungsgeschichte seit dem 19. Jahrhundert*. Köln et al. 2014.

Impey, Oliver/MacGregor, Arthur (eds.): *The Origins of Museums. The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe*. London 1985.

Jacobi, Juliane: Bildungstransfer im frühen 18. Jahrhundert? Die Beziehungen zwischen dem Halleschen Waisenhaus und der Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. In: Zaunstöck, Holger et al. (eds.): *London und das Hallesche Waisenhaus. Eine Kommunikationsgeschichte im 18. Jahrhundert*. Halle 2014 (Hallesche Forschungen, 39), 121–137.

Klosterberg, Brigitte: August Hermann Francke und das hallesche Kommunikationsnetzwerk: Bedeutung, Überlieferung, Erschließung. In: Zaunstöck, Holger et al. (eds.): *Die Welt verändern. August Hermann Francke – Ein Lebenswerk um 1700*. Halle 2013 (Kataloge der Franckeschen Stiftungen, 29), 157–165.

Klosterberg, Brigitte: *Die Bibliothek der Franckeschen Stiftungen*. Halle 2007.

Klosterberg, Brigitte: *Bibliotheken in der Bibliothek. Wissenstransfer durch pietistische Privatbibliotheken*

in der Bibliothek der Franckeschen Stiftungen. In: Brinker-von der Heyde, Claudia et al. (eds.): *Frühneuzeitliche Bibliotheken als Zentren des europäischen Kulturtransfers*. Stuttgart 2014, 200–214.

MacGregor, Arthur: *Curiosity and Enlightenment. Collectors and Collections from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century*. New Haven et al. 2007.

MacGregor, Arthur (ed.): *Sir Hans Sloane: Collector, Scientist, Antiquary, Founding Father of the British Museum*. London 1994.

Müller-Bahlke, Thomas: The Mission in India and the worldwide communication network of the Halle orphan-house. In: Gross, Andres et al. (eds.): *Halle and the Beginning of Protestant Christianity in India*. 3 vols. Vol. 1: *The Danish-Halle and the English-Halle Mission*. Halle 2006, 57–79.

Müller-Bahlke, Thomas: *Die Wunderkammer der Franckeschen Stiftungen*. 2nd ed. Halle 2012.