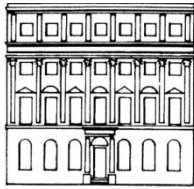


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Erik Nagel:

*Networking across the Channel: England and Halle Pietism
in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*

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CONFERENCE REPORTS

Networking across the Channel: England and Halle Pietism in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries. Joint conference of the Franckesche Stiftungen Halle and the German Historical Institute London, held in Halle, 10–11 Mar. 2011.

At a time when cultural history and the study of transfers and socio-cultural interactions are dominant, Pietism's processes of exchange with corresponding spaces are a frequently researched topic. Relations between England and Halle Pietism are considered to represent an uncontroversial and fixed body of knowledge. Yet little is known about the concrete shape taken by these relations in situative communicative acts, their success, or how they were perceived by contemporaries. This is the problem addressed by the conference 'Networking across the Channel: England and Halle Pietism in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries'. Its focus, the axis London–Halle, was one of the most significant paths of communication by which Pietism impacted on the world. The conference was sponsored by the German Historical Institute London and the Franckesche Stiftungen in Halle, into whose remit the topic outlined here falls.

Individual papers were held together by a history of communications approach which provided a model for analysis and interpretation. Against this background the conference's organizer, Holger Zaunstöck (Halle), in his introductory paper presented a theoretical model for interpreting a communicative space. According to this model, Pietist protagonists and their opposite numbers interacted in a number of different mental and physical spaces. The process of opening up space by 'communication between absent partners' served, from Halle's point of view, to create a 'Pietist public', whose point of reference, both physical and symbolic, was always the Franckesche Schulstadt in Halle. An essential element in this process, which was partly deliberate and partly unintentional, was the establishment of fragile but stable networks. This approach drawn from communications history strongly emphasizes the acts as process.

Drawing examples from Halle's perspective, Zaunstöck outlined how this theoretical approach could be translated into empirical

Conference Reports

practice. He suggested that charity schools, the stock of historic buildings, Pietist correspondence, the journal *Hallische Korrespondenz*, and the famous Kulissenbibliothek's rich holdings relating to England could provide elements for spatial reconstruction. The point of these projects, he continued, was to make money, to position Halle Pietism in translocal discursive spaces, and to bind Pietist network actors and the widespread circles which they addressed to the Franckeschen Stiftungen. In addition, Halle Pietism's network can be reconstructed at various levels on the basis of its concrete relations with England. From this prescribed perspective, it remained for the rest of the conference papers to break open and critically investigate established topoi and the metanarratives of Pietism in the eighteenth century.

Alexander Schunka (Erfurt/Gotha) demonstrated how, in retrospect, the independent polyglot Orientalist Heinrich Wilhelm Ludolf became a central agent of Halle Pietism in London and the essential 'motor driving Halle's expansion out into the world'. Even before he came into contact with August Hermann Francke, Ludolf, as a philologist who travelled tirelessly, worked in the service of a Christian universal church. His linguistic work, which is still in use today, is an eloquent testimony to his interest in the Ethiopian, Orthodox, Greek, and Armenian churches. As secretary to Prince George, consort of the later Queen Anne, Ludolf was able to secure reliable influence, donations, and contacts to support Halle's efforts in London. His own confessional indifference, intercultural competence, and acceptance of his role as God's instrument meant that he could successfully interact in a diffuse field between the Anglican church, the irenic movement, and internal Protestant reforming movements. He was not completely tied into any specific communications system, and rejected institutional commitment. Ludolf was therefore able to use different networks and instrumentalize them for his own specific interests, while his many contacts also guaranteed his usefulness to his various partners. Schunka convincingly showed how Ludolf became an effective connecting link between existing networks.

The special case of communications between Halle and London formed part of a wider historical and geographical context of mutual perception. For Jan van de Kamp (Amsterdam) its central factors were the European-wide *peregrinatio academiae*, the extensive migration movements of intellectual and religious refugees, increasingly

intense economic exchange processes, and mutual literary reception. The demand for English-language and translated devotional literature of British provenance revealed common interests. The thematization of subjects such as social conflict, intense catachesis, self-observation, and Sunday observance demonstrated the large overlap between Anglicanism, Pietism, and the Reformed churches, despite strict observation of confessional boundaries. The objectives of the various political and church actors, however, precluded either a church union among the Protestants, or the mutual adoption of heterodox principles. Van de Kamp concluded that ecclesiological differences prevented 'mutual intellectual stimulation and financial support' from assuming an institutional, permanent form.

At a time when scientific standards were just emerging and establishing themselves, the pre-modern republic of scholars exchanged and produced knowledge primarily through personal relations. Therefore, according to Kelly Withmer (Sewanee), trust and credibility were the central resources in encouraging and disseminating innovative thinking. Taking as an example the transfer of knowledge between the Royal Society and Halle, Withmer showed how knowledge was transported in both directions over the Channel. The strict requirements of the English empirical school, under the watchful eye of the Royal Society, exerted an enormous pressure to conform on European scholars who wanted to be successful in England. One of the main German mechanisms of transmission between the two scientific traditions was the eclectic method, among whose adepts were Johann Daniel Herrnschmidt and Johann Christoph Sturm. The selective, situative choice out of a large pool of available theories allowed them to become aware of newer experimental approaches. Yet as the example of research on luminescence shows, the findings of Continental Europeans were not accepted if they did not match up to English scientific standards. The trend towards scientization was supported by new didactic concepts such as the teaching of *Realien*, that is, subjects related to the real world such as biology, geography, and mathematics, in Halle. Thus the eclectic method and new educational approaches created an opening by which empiricism could enter, and they formed a bridge for transmitting knowledge between the two scientific cultures.

Presenting a micro historical case study, Juliane Jacobi (Potsdam) described how an attempt to organize a permanent exchange of stu-

Conference Reports

dents and teachers between schools in Halle and London failed. The teachers despatched to London lacked the sensitivity to grasp the specific features of the English school system and to integrate them into their own practice. The charity school movement which came out of the institutionalized church in England was closely followed in Halle through the relevant publications, and a Latin education on the Halle model was introduced on the English education market. But the pressure to offer economically profitable schooling quickly led to conformity in terms of language and syllabuses. The second objective of recruiting school and university students for Halle's educational institutions also, in retrospect, had disappointing results. For the period between 1700 and 1720, there were only thirteen English students in the Franckeschen Stiftungen. The main barrier was probably confessional. Another factor not to be underestimated, Jacobi suggested, was the English tradition that, into the twentieth century, gave parents a significantly greater part in educating their children.

In the evening lecture, Andreas Gestrich (London) provided an overview of how the Pietist movement fitted into the whole context of British–German relations. The period of upheaval and change around 1700 made similar demands on both regions, which responded with analogously adapted strategies. In two central problem areas, religious renewal and moral reform, for example, the mission developed common working spaces and, through bidirectional translating and publishing activities, a common space for intellectual perception. While London drew on the human resources and linguistic ability of central Germany, its counterpart in Halle was dependent on English infrastructure. Even in their common fields of activity, the two sides could have different addressees, objectives, and institutional forms of problem-solving. Thus the English charity school movement and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) targeted the problem classes and lower social strata. The Franckeschen Stiftungen, by contrast, pursued a wider aim of educating and reforming the whole of society. Beyond this, Gestrich suggested, the strong millenarian charge and the development of various denominations within the English monarchy can only be understood against the background of political instability. For the Pietist movement, by contrast, Lutheran orthodoxy represented the real challenge, as millenarianism in Germany was limited to the lay sec-

tor of piety. On the whole, Gestrich said, an 'incomparable communications network of Pietists' emerged that, in the context of British-German relations, was outdone only by the arcane and inaccessible correspondence between diplomats.

Michael Schaich (London) traced the factors determining the development of Pietism in London, and identified the Pietist-dominated nodal points. The capital, he said, was characterized by a unique religious diversity, and the emissaries of Pietism thus entered a 'multi-confessional, religiously fragmented city space'. The two most important spaces clearly shaped by Pietism, he went on, were the Lutheran German court chapel and the Lady chapel in the Savoy. The court chapel was highly significant for transnational, Pietist communication networks, but less so for contexts relating to the court and capital city. The Lady chapel in the Liberty of the Savoy, by contrast, was located in a unique religious biotope, housing five confessional communities in close and competitive proximity. Lobbyists from the whole Protestant spectrum came together here, which made for lively exchanges while also lowering the barriers to confessional border-crossing. To oversimplify, the 'constraints of the space, which placed limits on action' meant that it was precisely the many freedoms and opportunities offered by the English capital that limited the space to act because they exposed the Pietist actors to free competition.

From 1722 on, Friedrich Michael Ziegenhagen (1694-1776) developed the court chapel in London to become an independent Pietist centre. Christina Jetter (Tübingen) showed how, in the tension between Halle and London, Ziegenhagen presented himself as a strict Lutheran and celibate servant of God's Kingdom. He developed his personal profile as a Pietist against the negative background of London, the stronghold of freedom and moral depravity, of prosperity and unbelief. Ziegenhagen's acceptance by the SPCK ensured him access to MPs and members of the East India Company. In addition, he maintained a widespread communications network in Germany. Halle was not its only nodal point, but measured in terms of frequency of correspondence and capital acquisition, certainly the most important. Ziegenhagen's success as a mediator was firmly reliant on his ability to incorporate mutual expectations and filter information for specific addressees.

Ziegenhagen's correspondence and private papers proved to be controversial property on his death, both conveying the knowledge

Conference Reports

required for power and identifying his legitimate successor. With the meticulous care of an archivist, Jürgen Gröschl (Halle) traced what had happened to Ziegenhagen's papers. He described how some of the papers left by this London court preacher, items which had long been sought, were recently discovered among the holdings of the Franckeschen Stiftungen, and presented them as an important foundation for future research. The majority of the newly discovered documents (around 400 items) are sermons, catalogues of sermons, and plans for sermons. The different stages preserved here make it possible for the first time to reconstruct how the 'famous exegete' Ziegenhagen built up his sermons. However, we are still sadly missing the correspondence conducted from this contact point between England, Germany, the East Indies, and the West Indies, for example, about competing religious communities.

Daniel Jeyaraj (Liverpool) presented his initial findings on the reception of Christian Friedrich Schwartz (1726–98) in the English-language area. Schwarz is remembered as the founding father of the Lutheran Tamil church in south India. An assessment of the journalistic, devotional, and biographical literature around 1800 revealed that our view has been dominated by a strongly idealized image of the missionary. Hagiographic anecdotes and iconographic stylization rapidly produced the stable legend of a Christian missionary. This image has largely ignored the restrictions placed on Schwartz's ability to work by wars and territorial and religious borders, and the conflicts that erupted between the Lutheran Schwartz and other religious communities and missionary groups, administrative officials, and rulers in the confused political conditions of south India.

A conceptually ambitious paper by Alexander Pyrges (Trier) took us back onto theoretical terrain for the end of the conference. From its heights, Pyrges looked anew at the 'topography of the social' and provided an empirical example to illustrate that 'networking was the natural state of the social'. The colonization project in Ebenezer (Georgia) for emigrants from Salzburg shows, from an external perspective, what use was made of the established communications link between Halle and London. Among other things, those involved took recourse to the ability of the Halle orphanage's network, which was accustomed to handling precarious communications, to tap into foreign communications systems. Multipolar transfers and concentrated interactions ranging from latent to manifest allowed those involved

to increase their options by crossing borders and multiplying their resources. Thus Pyrges concluded that in a relatively long-lasting context of interaction such as the Ebenezer project, belonging to a network and the network structure predetermined the actions of the actors if it did not drive them.

To sum up a successful conference, it remains to be said that by focusing thematically on a clearly defined question, the contributors provided a thick description of the state of communications between London and Halle in the early modern period. One advantage of this methodologically rewarding approach was that the individual contributions were closely related to each other. The fact that the papers were interlinked produced intense discussions in which different assessments and ways of looking at things often produced controversial but stimulating findings. Another outcome of the conference was an assessment of the significance of transfer. As almost all the actors, transfers, and topics presented at the conference originated in Halle, Halle seemed to play the more active part in the bilateral relations discussed. For the Pietist networkers, London represented a medium in the lexical meaning of the word. As a transmission space and intensifier, the city demanded concessions and posed challenges, but offered the chance to obtain attractive added value. A final point needs to be made about the conceptual nature of the conference's topic, Halle Pietism. Various papers concentrated on the reform movement from different focal lengths. Often, details of individual actors or phenomena could not be unequivocally assigned to Pietism, as in the specific historical examples presented, many borders were blurred. This is an important observation with respect to the definition of the polymorphic term 'Pietism', especially in its Halle version.

ERIK NAGEL (Studienzentrum August-Hermann-Francke)