



# ESOTERICA

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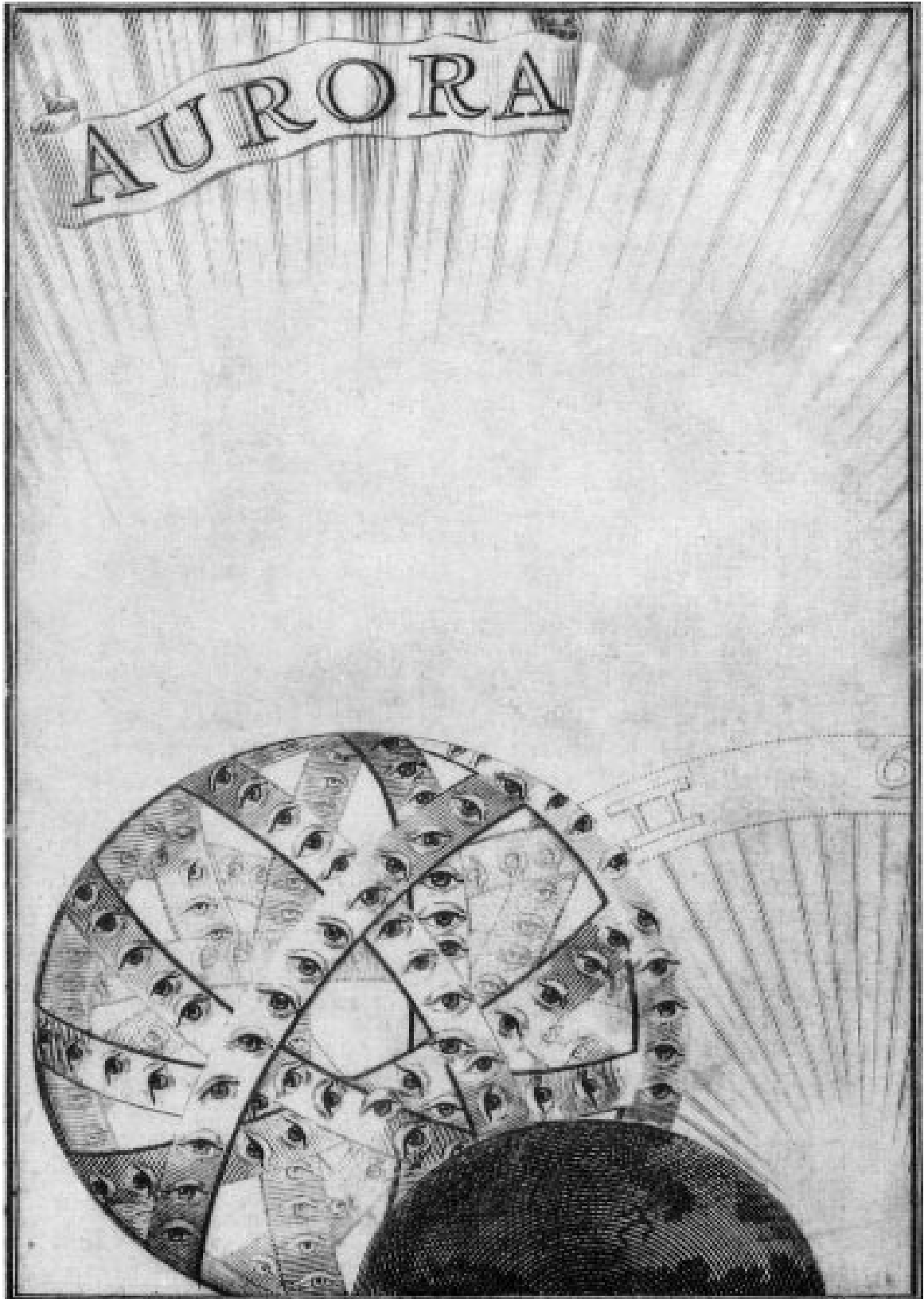
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**‘The Teutonicks Writings’: Translating  
Jacob Boehme into English and Welsh  
Ariel Hessayon**

**Goldsmiths, University of London**

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**Goldsmiths, University of London**

On 4 August 1653 Samuel Herring of Swan Alley in Coleman Street, London, petitioned Parliament to consider thirty suggestions for the good of the nation. The second was that two colleges at Oxford and Cambridge should be devoted to the study of “attaining and enjoying the spirit of our Lord Jesus.” Few books would be needed besides the Bible and English translations of “Jacob Behmen, and such like, who had true revelation from the true spirit.”<sup>1</sup> This proposal was not adopted, nor is there evidence for how much support it attracted among Herring’s fellow parishioners or in Parliament. Though he may have acted alone, it is equally possible that Herring represented the public face of a group promoting the dissemination of English versions of the German mystic’s writings. Indeed, it is significant that between 1645 and 1662 most of Boehme’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.

There are many twentieth-century studies of Boehme’s life and thought, as well as several scholarly discussions on the reception of his ideas in Germany, the Netherlands and the British Isles.<sup>2</sup> But why his writings were translated into English and the mechanisms behind this process has never been adequately explained. Among Boehme’s followers there circulated a garbled story that Charles I had been the main patron of the venture before his execution. Some also maintained, probably correctly, that after the Restoration the remaining works were brought out under the auspices of the 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 Boehme'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 Hendrik Niclaes and other prominent members of 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 (c.1600–1662), a Polish émigré resident in London since 1628, and members of his circle acted as intermediaries by using agents to purchase books, subsequently shipping them to England.



Sparrow, John (1615–1670), by David Loggan, 1659

Among Hartlib's international network of correspondents and the people connected to them were several figures whom we shall encounter: Petrus Serrarius, Johann Moriaen, John Dury and Henry Appellius. 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. They also advocated educational and medical reform.<sup>3</sup> Though it had gone unheeded by many of his compatriots, Boehme's announcement of the dawn of a new reformation thus chimed with their vision of universal reformation. Similarly, Boehme's principal English translators hoped their efforts would be rewarded with the settlement of religious controversies and the disappearance of sects and heresies. One of them also believed that knowledge of Boehme's "Three Principles" was both necessary for the advancement of "all Arts and Sciences" and conducive for the "curing, and healing of corrupt and decayed nature."<sup>4</sup>

This article uses several manuscript sources unknown to, or untapped by, all previous scholars – notably extracts made by an eighteenth-century antiquary from the diary of John Sparrow, Boehme's foremost English translator. It is mainly concerned with the dissemination of Boehme's writings rather than their reception and accordingly focuses upon the contribution of intermediaries (Samuel Hartlib, Petrus Serrarius, Johann Moriaen, John Dury, Henry Appellius); patrons (Abraham Willemsz van Beyerland, Charles I, the fifth Earl of Pembroke); translators (Johannes Angelius Werdenhagen, Michel le Blon, John Sparrow, John Ellistone, Charles Hotham, Morgan Llwyd); biographers (Abraham von Franckenberg, Durand Hotham); printers (Johann Janssonius, Matthew Simmons, John Streater, Lodowick Lloyd), and publishers (Humphrey Blunden, Giles Calvert). It shows how Boehme's texts were copied, transmitted, issued and translated, demonstrating the key role Hartlib's circle played in facilitating the project. Furthermore, it uncovers the translators' networks, revealing their ties through kinship and friendship, as well as

shared professional and commercial interests. Indeed, these extensive connections, which included sympathetic publishers, largely explains why Boehme's works were acquired so readily in printed English translations and later selectively rendered into Welsh.

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Jacob Boehme (1575–1624), came from Alt-Seidenberg, a village near Görlitz, a city of about 10,000 inhabitants in Upper Lusatia. The son of devout Lutheran peasants, he progressed from shoemaker's apprentice to journeyman, afterwards purchasing a cobbler's shop and marrying a local butcher's daughter. About 1600 he was possessed with a "*Divine Light*" and going out into an open field beheld "the *Wonder-workes* of the Creator in the Signatures of all created things, very cleerly and manifestly laid open."<sup>5</sup> Between January and June 1612 Boehme made a fair copy of his celebrated "Morgenröthe im Aufgang" or Aurora (literally "Morning Glow, Ascending"), a long unfinished work that had been at least twelve years in the making. Following the circulation of the manuscript and the transcription of additional copies he was denounced by the city magistrates of Görlitz and then from the pulpit. Thereafter Boehme sold his cobbler's bench and began to engage in small-scale commerce, trading in yarns and woollen gloves. After an interval of some years he was said to have been stirred up by the Holy Spirit and, encouraged by the entreaties of certain people, took up his pen, producing *The Three Principles of the Divine Essence* (1619), *The Threefold Life of Man* (completed and copied by September 1620), *Forty Questions on the Soul* (1620), *The Incarnation of Christ* (1620), and several other treatises such as *Signatura Rerum* (completed by August 1621), and *Mysterium Magnum* (completed by September 1623).<sup>6</sup> He boasted that his writings were known to "nearly all of Silesia," as well as in many places in Saxony and Meissen. Nonetheless, they remained unpublished until the printing of *Der Weg zu Christo* (Görlitz, c.1624), which probably contained two shorter pieces,

“True Repentance” and “True Resignation.”<sup>7</sup>

Boehme’s death served only to increase the aura surrounding his life and teachings. A legend began to take shape of a simple, pious barely literate artisan who was given the gift of “Universall knowledge” and shown:

*the Centre of all Beings; how all things arise from God Originally: consist in God, and againe returne.*<sup>8</sup>

The Silesian nobleman Abraham von Franckenberg (1593–1652) praised his “*profound*” and “*deep-grounded*” writings, believing that they hinted at the great wonders God would perform in future generations. Indeed, in his last years some of Boehme’s followers began calling him “Teutonicus Philosophus,” regarding him as a prophet of the Thirty Years’ War.<sup>9</sup>

Boehme maintained that he wrote *Aurora* in sudden bursts of inspiration, like a shower of rain which hit “whatsoever it lighteth upon.” He claimed he had not received instruction from men or knowledge from reading books, but had written “out of my own Book which was opened in me, being the Noble similitude of God.”<sup>10</sup> Doubtless this gave rise to the image of him having penned *Aurora* secretly for his own benefit, consulting “only the *Holy Scriptures*.”<sup>11</sup> Yet Boehme also acknowledged having read the writings of “very high Masters, hoping to find therein the ground and true depth.”<sup>12</sup> Indeed, the work’s success introduced him into the company of “learned men” such as Balthasar Walter, much travelled director of the Geheimes Laboratorium (Secret Laboratory) at Dresden, and Tobias Kober, Paracelsian physician at Görlitz.<sup>13</sup> Equally significant were the mercantile journeys that took Boehme to Prague and brought him in touch with a network of tradesmen. From 1621, moreover, he began visiting supporters among the Protestant dissenters in Silesia and elsewhere. These contacts provided him with some information and probably made it easier to acquire texts in his native tongue. Though Boehme seldom named his sources, he appears to have been familiar with

doctrines enunciated by Spiritualist reformers like Sebastian Franck (1499–1542), Caspar Schwenckfeld (1490–1561) and Valentin Weigel (1533–1588).<sup>14</sup> In addition, he was influenced by the teachings of Martin Luther (1483–1546) and perhaps through him works of German mysticism such as the anonymous *Theologia Germanica* (fourteenth century). Arguably his most profound debt, however, was to the Swiss physician Paracelsus (1493–1541), from whom he derived the alchemical term *Tincture* and the three categories of Salt, Mercury and Sulphur.<sup>15</sup> Taken together these sources help explain the presence of Neoplatonic and Kabbalistic ideas in Boehme’s writings, particularly several striking resemblances to concepts in *Sefer Ha-Zohar* (*The Book of Splendour*).

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In the summer of 1631 the latter part of Boehme’s lengthy commentary on Genesis, “Mysterium Magnum,” was issued in German as *Iosephus Redivivus Das ist Die Vberaus Lehr vnd Trostreiche Historia von dem Ertzvatter Joseph* (Amsterdam, 1631). Printed by Veit Heinrichs, the book was enlarged with excerpts from the writings of the German Dominican and mystic Johannes Tauler (c.1300–1361). It was edited by Abraham von Franckenberg, who also supplied a memoir of Boehme.<sup>16</sup> The next year Boehme’s “Forty Questions on the Soul” appeared in a Latin translation by the “noble and very learned” German professor Johannes Angelius Werdenhagen (1581–1652) in a work printed by Johann Janssonius entitled [*Psychologia*] *vera I.B. T[eutonicus]* (Amsterdam, 1632).<sup>17</sup> Two years later, despite the concern of the Lutheran classis of the North German city of Lübeck, Janssonius printed a corrupt copy of Boehme’s *Avrora Das ist: MorgenRöthe im Auffgang vnd Mutter der Philosophiæ* ([Amsterdam], 1634). Over the next six years several more writings by Boehme were issued in German at Amsterdam, including; *De Signatura Rerum* (1635), *Trostschrift, Von vier Complexionen* (before 1636), *Der Weg zu Christo* (1635), *Bedencken Vber Esaiaë Stiefels* (1639), and



a complete if unreliable edition of *Mysterium Magnum* (1640). At least two of these publications were supported by Abraham Willemsz van Beyerland (1587–1648), an Amsterdam merchant and leading member of the Dutch civet cartel.<sup>18</sup>

Van Beyerland had purchased the extensive manuscript collection of Boehme's patrons, the brothers Carl and Michael von Ender, in 1637 from Hans Roth of Görlitz for 100 thalers. Packed into a chest they fortuitously survived the hazardous journey by wagon via Leipzig to Hamburg and thence by ship to Amsterdam.<sup>19</sup> By 1640 van Beyerland had also acquired an autograph of *Mysterium Magnum*, which he subsequently annotated and published. In addition, through the mediation of von Franckenberg and others, he was able to obtain several manuscript examples of every work by Boehme, as well as autographs and letters. His prized possession was undoubtedly the confiscated autograph of *Morgenröthe im Aufgang* which had been brought to light in November 1641 by Dr Paul Scipio a burgomaster at Görlitz and afterwards presented to Georg Pflugden, Hausmarschall (Marshal of the house) of Johann Georg, the Elector of Saxony.<sup>20</sup> Van Beyerland, moreover, was responsible for collating and then translating most of Boehme's texts into Dutch. Between autumn 1634 and 1635 he issued at his own expense four small anthologies, the first entitled *Handboecken (Manual)*. These were followed by further Dutch editions such as *Hooge ende diepe gronden van't drievoudigh leven des menschen (High and deep grounds of the threefold life of man)* (1636) and *Van de drie principien (Of the three principles)* (1637).<sup>21</sup> Another important Boehme translator was the German-born Hermetic engraver and diplomatic agent of the Swedish crown at Amsterdam, Michel le Blon (1587–1656). An acquaintance of van Beyerland and Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel (1604–1657) as well as a correspondent of von Franckenberg and Christian Bernhard of Sagan, le Blon acquired 25 autograph letters which he translated while staying at Stockholm in 1647. These were later published together with his version of the "Little Prayer-book" under the title *Gulde Kleynoot eener Aandachtighe Ziele (Golden gem of a devout soul)* (1653).<sup>22</sup> Significantly, it

was the German and Latin versions of Boehme's works published at Amsterdam, together with van Beyerland's and le Blon's manuscripts that provided the source for English translations of the Teutonic Philosopher's writings.<sup>23</sup>

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In February 1633 an unnamed writer directed a Latin compendium of Boehme's theosophy to "his very loving friend Mr Theodorick Gravius at Linford."<sup>24</sup> Gravius (*fl.* 1631–1658), an iatrochemical physician and translator of alchemical works, was to be presented by Richard Napier to the rectory of Great Linford, Buckinghamshire.<sup>25</sup> He was also a friend and correspondent of Petrus Serrarius (1600–1669).<sup>26</sup> Born in London and educated at Oxford, Serrarius was a member of an affluent Walloon family. Having studied theology at the Walloon seminary in Leiden, he was appointed minister of the French Church in Cologne. Serrarius, however, was removed by the Walloon Synod after less than two years. Thereafter, he studied medicine at Groningen University, where he developed an interest in iatrochemistry that matched his enthusiasm for mystical theology. Sometime in 1630 Serrarius settled in Amsterdam, making it likely that it was he who sent an abstract of Boehme's teachings to Gravius in England.<sup>27</sup>

In early 1634 Samuel Hartlib recorded in his ephemeris that Joachim Morsius (1593–1643), a Hamburg doctor and Rosicrucian sympathizer, possessed Boehme's books. He added laconically that Hans van Keerbergen of Hamburg, Johannes Sack of Amsterdam and the Austrian chiliast Johannes Permeier (1597–1644?) were members of "the fraternity" of the Rosy Cross and had some manuscripts of Boehme.<sup>28</sup> A few years later Hartlib remarked that "Teutonicus" had "far higher" and soaring notions "in the creating or speaking word" than did the Caroline divine John Gauden (1605–1662), "which are but a little glimpse of that light." Though Hartlib did not specify which of Boehme's works

had made this impression on him, a terse entry in his ephemeris for 1639 indicated that “Teutonici Commentarium in Genesi” was being printed at Amsterdam. Another entry in his ephemeris about August 1640 noted that more “opuscula” of Jacob Boehme “Sancti Teutonici” had lately been printed at Amsterdam, notably a treatise on the Creation in quarto. Hartlib’s references probably alluded to the German edition of *Mysterium Magnum* issued anonymously at Amsterdam in 1640.<sup>29</sup> On 26 October 1640 Johann Moriaen (c.1591–1668?), a former minister at Cologne with interests in Helmontian medicine and chemistry, wrote to Hartlib from Amsterdam concerning the delivery of one of Boehme’s books to Theodore Haak (1605–1690), a German-born theologian resident in England. Moriaen, however, did not state its title.<sup>30</sup>

Sometime in 1644 a manuscript entitled “The most Remarkable History of IOSEPH Mystically expounded & interpreted” was completed. Rendered into English from “out of y<sup>e</sup> German Tongue” the text consisted of a translation of Boehme’s *Mysterium Magnum* “beginning at y<sup>e</sup> 36<sup>th</sup> Chapt<sup>r</sup> of Genesis and continuing to y<sup>e</sup> end of y<sup>t</sup> booke.” The translator was probably John Sparrow and it appears that his source was *Iosephus Redivivus* (Amsterdam, 1631).<sup>31</sup> On 8 November 1644 the London bookseller George Thomason acquired a copy of *The Life of one Jacob Boehmen* (printed by L.N. for Richard Whitaker, at the sign of the Kings Armes in Pauls Church-yard, 1644). Though the translator of Franckenberg’s brief biography declined to supply his name, it is possible that the pamphlet was issued to coincide with the twentieth anniversary of Boehme’s death.<sup>32</sup> The following year there appeared an edition of Boehme’s *Two Theosophicall Epistles* (printed by M[atthew] S[immons] for B[enjamin] Allen, and are to be sold at his shop, at the Crown in Popes-head Alley, 1645). The work was described on the title-page as “Lately *Englised* out of the *German Language*.” Thomason dated his copy 2 May 1645.<sup>33</sup>

On 11 December 1645 an unknown translator completed the rendering of several more treatises by Boehme into English, namely; “The Way to Christ Comprehended,” “The third booke,

of regeneration,” “The 4 booke, being a dialogue betweene a master and a schollar, of the super-sensuall life,” “A compendium of repentance,” “Of the mixt world and its wickedness,” “A letter to a good friend of his” and “An exposition of some words” used in Boehme’s writings. This manuscript survives in a fair copy. Significantly it predates and differs from a printed version entitled *The Way to Christ Discovered* (1648). It may, moreover, be connected with another carefully transcribed translation of Boehme’s “The Way to Christ Comprehended” apparently derived from *Der Weg zu Christo* (Amsterdam, 1635). This was once in the possession of William Clopton – perhaps the Emmanuel College graduate and Essex clergyman of that name.<sup>34</sup> Another extant manuscript translation of Boehme’s writings probably copied by the grammarian and physician Joseph Webbe (fl.1612–1633) is preserved in the papers of the antiquary, astrologer and botanist Elias Ashmole (1617–1692). This is an extract from a letter written in 1622 to the physician Christian Steinberg of Lübeck. It differs substantially from the version printed in *The Epistles of Jacob Behmen* (1649).<sup>35</sup>

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On 21 November 1644 John Dury wrote to Samuel Hartlib from Rotterdam to inform him that he had let Serrarius know that “I will pay him that which Mr. Sparrow hath giuen you for him.”<sup>36</sup> Dury (1596–1680) was the son of a Presbyterian minister. Born in Edinburgh, educated at the Walloon seminary in Leiden, the Huguenot academy in Sédan and briefly at Oxford, he was Serrarius’s predecessor as minister of the French Church in Cologne. Afterwards Dury became pastor of the English and Scottish merchant congregation at the Baltic port of Elbing (now in Poland), where he became acquainted with Hartlib. The “Mr. Sparrow” that Dury refers to in his communication with Hartlib was the barrister John Sparrow (1615–1670). Educated at Trinity College, Cambridge and the Inner Temple, he was later

appointed a treasurer and collector of prize goods, a member of the Parliamentary committee to consider reformation of the law and a judge for the probate of wills. His father, John Sparrow the elder (1592–1664) of Stambourne, was a Captain of one of the Essex Trained Bands in 1634. Following promotions during the Civil War he was appointed Colonel by the committee of Essex and by October 1644 had been given command of an entire regiment serving as part of the garrison of Abingdon, Berkshire. The elder Sparrow was to be described as a gentleman of “rare Accomplishm<sup>t</sup>.”<sup>37</sup> No doubt this was for his ingenious schemes, one of which had been recorded in Hartlib’s ephemeris for 1640:

Perpetuus Motus will not so much take away worke from Men as facilitate and ease them in their great toyles and labours. Captain Sparrow.<sup>38</sup>

Dury’s letter to Hartlib indicates that the younger Sparrow was using his association with Hartlib to buy something available on the continent and that the agent used for this transaction was Serrarius. Sparrow’s request had been made within two weeks of the publication of *The Life of one Jacob Boehmen* (1644), and as Sparrow was to translate several treatises by Boehme into English it seems probable that Serrarius procured editions of Boehme’s works printed at Amsterdam for Sparrow.<sup>39</sup>

The first published English translation of Boehme’s writings that can certainly be attributed to Sparrow is *XL. Qvestions Concerning the Soule* (printed by Matth[ew] Simmons, 1647). In his preface to the reader Sparrow declared that he had:

*taken in hand to put this Treatise into English, which I chose to doe rather out of the Originall then out of any Translations, because they many times come short of the Authors owne meaning, and because I found many errours in some of them, and he is so deep in his writings, that we have need to desire that our soules may be put into such a condition as his was in, else they cannot be fully understood.*

Sparrow conceded that he had been reluctant to issue his English translation from the German, fearing “*to make such things knowne in my Native Language*” to “*so many various minds, as are now sprung up.*” Yet he contented himself with the thought that:

*our troubled doubting Soules may receive much comfort leading to that inward Peace which passeth all understanding: that all the disturbing Sects and Heresies arising from the Darknesse and malice of men and Devills, will be made to vanish, and cease by that understanding which may be kindled in them from it.*<sup>40</sup>

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John Lambert (1619-1684), after Robert Walker, c.1650–55.

On 16 August 1647 Henry Appelius wrote to Hartlib from Purmerend in the United Provinces informing him that Dury’s friend Abraham Willemsz van Beyerland “desireth 2 coppies of I. Bohmens XL questions of the Soule, Mr Iohannes et Samuel who are by Mr Serrarius can deliver them unto him.” Appelius, who was acquainted with the alchemist Johann Rudolph Glauber (1604–1670), added that “Behm hath much written of the times of

Wonders, wherein wee live or come, the Lord fitt us for him.”<sup>41</sup> It is not known if van Beyerland’s request was fulfilled, but one man who did possess a copy of Boehme’s *XL. Qvestions Concerning the Soule* (1647) was Major-General John Lambert.<sup>42</sup> Lambert’s opinions of Boehme are unrecorded, but his continuing interest in mystical theology was confirmed while on campaign in Scotland in 1651, for his agent recorded that he had received a little bag containing copies of Jean d’Espagnet’s *Enchyridion Physicæ Restitutæ* (1651), a book by Juan de Valdés – probably *Divine considerations treating of those things which are most profitable* (Cambridge, 1646) – and *Theologia Germanica. Or, Mysticall Divinitie* (printed for John Sweeting, at the Angell in Popes head Alley, 1648).<sup>43</sup>

Another likely reader of Sparrow’s translation of Boehme’s *XL. Qvestions Concerning the Soule* (1647) was Charles I. In his preface to a new edition entitled *Forty Questions of the Soul* (printed for L[odowick] Lloyd, at the Castle in Cornhil[1], 1665), Sparrow related how:

When this Book was first Printed, I endeavoured by a Friend to present one of them to his Majesty King *Charles* that then was, who vouchsafed the perusal of it; about a Month after was desired to say what he thought of the Book, who answered, that the Publisher in English seemed to say of the Author, that he was no Scholar, and if he were not, he did believe that the Holy Ghost was now in Men, but if he were a Scholar, it was one of the best Inventions that ever he read.<sup>44</sup>

Sparrow’s account appears trustworthy, for it suggests that Charles I was given an edition of Boehme’s work during the period of his confinement by the army in 1647. Nevertheless, passed around by word of mouth the story became embellished. After staying some months in London in 1676 a foreign traveller enthused how some trustworthy Englishmen had told him:

It is but too true, that the King of England, *Charles I*, before his

martyr-death not only gave the means for the printing of Jacob Böhme's writings, especially of the *Mysterii Magni*, but also that he was astonished, after having read A°. 1646 the "40 Questions of the Soul," and called out: Praise be to God! that there are still men to be found, who are able to give a living witness of God and his word by experience. And this caused him to send a habile person to Görlitz in Lusatia, to learn there the German language, and thus to become more able to understand better Jacob Böhme's style in his own mother-tongue, and to translate his writings into English. At the same time he was ordered to note down all and everything he could learn at Görlitz of J. Böhm's life, writings and circumstances; which things all have been executed and done.<sup>45</sup>

This anecdote is probably attributable to the "learned" poet Quirinus Kuhlmann (1651–1689) of Breslau who, while in London in October 1676, "defended Jacob Boehmen against the Academicos (regarding philosophy) in published writings."<sup>46</sup> Evidently it had an enduring appeal for about 1701 Francis Lee (c.1662–1719), former Fellow of St. John's College, Oxford, Nonjuror and a founder of the Philadelphian Society, wrote to Pierre Poiret (1649–1719) in Holland, informing him:

*Forty Questions on the Soul* came out here in England a little before the martyrdom of King Charles the First, and was put into his hands and read by him with great admiration, for he quickly perceived that something remarkable was concealed under the enigmas of the writer.<sup>47</sup>

Accepting his source without question, Poiret incorporated a summary of Lee's epistle in *Bibliotheca Mysticorum Selecta* (Amsterdam, 1708), remarking that the "pious King Charles I and several nobles from his court" thought highly of Boehme - "even when they had read only very little from his writings."<sup>48</sup> This tradition was also preserved in an anonymous account sent from London after 1715 and published in Johann Wilhelm Ueberfeld's complete edition of Boehme's works entitled *Theosophia Revelata* ([Leiden?], 1730). According to this version some said that



Charles I had supplied the funds for the publication of Boehme's writings and that therefore they had been "printed royal."<sup>49</sup> The truth was that Sparrow had stipulated in his contract with the publisher and bookseller Lodowick Lloyd that four copies of *Several Treatises: of Jacob Behme Not printed in English* (1661) were to be on "Royall paper."<sup>50</sup>



Philip Herbert, 5th Earl of Pembroke (1619-1669),  
Member of Parliament.

Lee's letter to Poiret also stated that Boehme's remaining works were "brought out under the auspices of the Earl of Pembroke."<sup>51</sup> Philip Herbert (1619–1669), fifth Earl of Pembroke, acceded to his titles in January 1650, inheriting a fortune estimated at £30,000 per annum, but also rumoured debts of £80,000. It is not known when he first read the Teutonic Philosopher, but some of Boehme's teachings – notably on the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper – were assimilated in a treatise attributed to the "Earle of Pembrok" entitled *Of the Internal and Eternal Nature of Man in Christ* (printed by John Macock, 1654).<sup>52</sup> At an unknown date Pembroke joined a Behmenist community established at Bradfield, Berkshire by the rector John Pordage (1607–1681). These ties endured for Pordage was to be received "most friendly" at Pembroke's country seat in Wilton, Wiltshire as was Thomas Bromley (1630–1691) another member of the community.<sup>53</sup>

According to the antiquary John Aubrey, the Earl of Pembroke had:

an admirable Witt, and was contemplative but did not much care for reading. His chiefest Diversion was Chymistrie, which his Lordship did understand very well and he made Medicines, that did great Cures.<sup>54</sup>



Pordage, John (bap. 1607, d. 1681), by William Faithorne the elder, published 1683

Pembroke's reputation as a devotee of this "most Divine and

Mysterious Art” was indeed widespread. Hartlib, for example, recorded in his ephemeris that Pembroke had paid an alchemist a pension of £100 and created a medicine which cured “dropsies and other incurable diseases.”<sup>55</sup> Nor was his patronage confined to this sphere. The heresiarch John Reeve addressed an epistle to him hoping Pembroke would support its publication. Likewise, a Quaker woman was apparently given £20 by Pembroke, using some of it to finance the printing of books.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, Pembroke employed John Milton’s nephew Edward Phillips “to interpret some of the Teutonic philosophy, to whose mystic theology his lordship” was “much addicted.”<sup>57</sup>

About 1661 Sparrow loaned Pembroke his English translations of four treatises by Boehme; “An apologie concerning perfection”; “Of the four complexions”; “Of the Earthly and the Heavenly Mystery”; “Exposition of the Table of the Three Principles.” The first couple were either manuscripts or printed copies taken from *The remainder of the books written by Jacob Behme* (1662), the latter printed copies from *Several Treatises: of Jacob Behme* (1661).<sup>58</sup> It was these two publications that Lee afterwards claimed were issued with Pembroke’s backing.

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On 1 July 1665 John Bolles of St. James, Clerkenwell made his will. To Captain Francis Stacy living on Tower Hill he bequeathed “All my books written by Jacob Behme Teutonick Philosopher, and Cornelius Agrippa.” Having commended his “Spiritt and soule into the hands of the Tri=une God” he named John Sparrow of the [Inner] Temple as one of his executors.<sup>59</sup> Stacy, “a wise and moderate Man,” had once invited the heresiarchs John Reeve and Lodowick Muggleton to dinner at an inn where they disputed with a minister whom Reeve soon pronounced cursed and damned to eternity.<sup>60</sup> Bolles had served as deputy clerk of the Crown

in Chancery and afterwards as the Commonwealth's clerk in Chancery until at least April 1654. He had also been one of the original backers of the Eleutheria project.

On 9 July 1647 articles and orders were made out on behalf of a company of Adventurers for the colonization of the Islands of Eleutheria, formerly known as Buhama in the Americas. Adapted from the Greek word for liberty, the Eleutheria plantation in the Bahamas 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.”<sup>61</sup> Following some amendments an 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 of this act a letter of attorney from Bolles to his brother dated 15 August 1654 names the twenty-six original investors in this utopian scheme.<sup>62</sup> Drawn from the government, army and churches these men included Colonel Nathaniel Rich (*d.*1701), a veteran of the battle of Naseby and speaker at the Council of Officers at Whitehall; John Rushworth (1612–1690), an under-Clerk to the Parliament and Secretary to Lord General Fairfax; Gualter Frost the elder (*d.*1652), Secretary to the Council of State; John Hutchinson, regicide and member of the Council of State; Peter Chamberlen (1601–1683), physician and subsequently Sabbatarian pastor of the Baptist church in Lothbury Square, London; Arthur Squibb the younger (*d.*1680), a Parliamentarian clerk, republican and lay preacher, who became a Fifth Monarchist, Sabbatarian and member for Middlesex in the Barebone’s Parliament; Captain John Blackwell (1624–1701), a Deputy War Treasurer and republican; Captain Robert Norwood, who like Blackwell had commanded a troop of horse in Colonel Edmund Harvey’s regiment; Colonel John Sparrow, who with Norwood was to be made a member of the High Court of Justice; and John Ellistone the elder (*c.*1599–1652), whose will was to specify a bequest of his “adventure in the Elutherian plantation with the profitts thereof.”<sup>63</sup>

The son of an eminent clothier, Ellistone was educated at Corpus

Christi College, Cambridge. On 22 April 1622 Ellistone's father and grandfather purchased the manor of Overhall in Gestingthorpe, Essex for £3600 from John Sparrow the elder and his father. Before 1625 Ellistone married Elizabeth (*d.*1632), a younger sister of John Sparrow the elder.<sup>64</sup> Their eldest son, John Ellistone (c.1625–1652), was admitted to Gray's Inn on 3 February 1644 and later married Winifred, daughter of Robert Barrington. Working from a German edition the younger Ellistone translated into English *The Epistles of Jacob Behmen aliter, Tevtonicvs Philosophvs* perhaps together with *A reall and unfeigned Testimonie, Concerning Iacob Beme Of Old Seidenberg, in upper Lausatia* and *A Warning From Iacob Beem The Teutonique Phylosopher* (printed by Matthew Simmons in Aldersgate-Street, 1649). In his preface Ellistone defended the author, claiming that his language was neither "trimmed up" in the scholastic "pompe, and pride of words" nor savoured of "a Sectarian spirit of Hypocrisie and affectation." Like Sparrow he too hoped that all "Sects" and "Controversies in Religion" would be settled "on the true ground."<sup>65</sup> Ellistone next translated Boehme's *Signatura Rerum: Or The Signatvre of all Things* (printed by John Macock, for Gyles Calvert, at the black spread Eagle, at the West end of Pauls Church, 1651) from an "Original Copy" in his possession.<sup>66</sup> He also translated "more than half" of Boehme's *Mysterium Magnum, or An Exposition of the First Book of Moses called Genesis* (printed by M[atthew] Simmons for H[umphrey] Blunden at the Castle in Cornehill, 1654); John Sparrow his "dear kinsman" completed the work. Ellistone drew up his will on 21 August 1652 in the presence of Sparrow and others, appointing Sparrow one of its supervisors. He died the next day at Gestingthorpe about 1 o'clock in the morning.<sup>67</sup>

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On 25 October 1647 George Thomason acquired a copy of *The Way to Christ Discovered. By Iacob Behmen. In these Treatises. 1. Of true Repentance. 2. Of true Resignation. 3. Of Regeneration. 4. Of the Super-rationall life. Also, the Discourse of Illumination.*

*The Compendium of Repentance. And the mixt World, &c* (printed by M[atthew] S[immons] for H[umphrey] Blunden, at the Castle in Corne-hill, 1648). Some, if not all of this translation, was by Sparrow. Sparrow next translated Boehme's *A Description Of the Three Principles of the Divine Essence* (printed by M[atthew] S[immons] for H[umphrey] Blunden at the Castle in Cornhill, 1648). It also seems likely that Sparrow and Ellistone collaborated in translating a compilation of Boehme's prophetic writings under the title *Mercurius Teutonicus, or, A Christian information concerning the last Times* (printed by M[atthew] Simmons, for H[umphrey] Blunden, at the Castle in Corn-hill, 1649). The copyright of this tract was entered in the Stationers' Register on 2 February 1649, only days after the execution of Charles I.<sup>68</sup> Afterwards, Sparrow translated a number of other works by Boehme, including; *The Third Booke of the Author, Being The High and Deep Searching out of the Three-Fold Life Of Man* (printed by M[atthew] S[immons] for H[umphrey] Blunden, at the Castle in Cornhill, 1650);<sup>69</sup> *Of Christs Testaments, viz: Baptisme and the Supper* (printed by M[atthew] Simmons, and are to be sold neare the signe of the Golden Lyon in Aldersgate-streete, or by H[umphrey] Blunden at the Castle in Cornhill neere the Exchange, 1652);<sup>70</sup> *Concerning the Election of Grace. Or Of Gods Will towards Man. Commonly called Predestination* (printed by John Streater, for Giles Calvert, and John Allen, and are to be sold at their shops, at the Black-spread-Eagle at the West End of Pauls; and at the Sun Rising in Paul's Church-Yard in the New Buildings between the two North Doores, 1655);<sup>71</sup> *Aurora, That is, the Day-Spring, or dawning of the day in the Orient* (printed by John Streater, for Giles Calvert, and are be sold at his Shop at the Black-Spread-Eagle at the West-End of Pauls, 1656);<sup>72</sup> *The Fifth Book of the Authour, In Three Parts* (printed by J[ohn] M[acock] for Lodowick Lloyd, at the Castle in Cornhil[l], 1659);<sup>73</sup> *Several Treatises: of Jacob Behme Not printed in English before* (printed by L[odowick] Lloyd at the Castle in Corn-hill, 1661); and *The remainder of the books written by Jacob Behme* (printed by M[atthew] S[immons] for Giles Calvert, at the Sign of the Black-Spread-Eagle, at the West End of St. Pauls, 1662). Recognizing

this achievement the poet and future dramatist Samuel Pordage (1633–1691?) penned an encomium on Boehme and his interpreter:

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?<sup>74</sup>

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.”<sup>75</sup> Wishing to justify the undertaking of a new translation of Boehme into English the Nonjuror and mystic William Law (1686–1761) was even less charitable:

The translators of J.B., Ellistone and Sparrow, are much to be honoured for their work; they had great piety and great abilities, and well apprehended their author, especially Ellistone; but the translation is too much loaded with words, and in many places the sense is mistaken.<sup>76</sup>

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According to Richard Baxter's edited memoirs, when aged about eighteen, he made the acquaintance in London of Humphrey Blunden (1609–*fl.*1654), “a sober, godly understanding” apprentice “whom I very much loved,” and who “is since turned

an extraordinary Chymist, and got *Jacob Behem* his Books translated and printed.”<sup>77</sup> Blunden’s shop was at “The Castle” in Cornhill near the Royal Exchange and during the latter half of the 1640s he entered into partnership to issue the writings of the astrologer William Lilly. Blunden also published six works by the alchemist Thomas Vaughan and may be the H.B. who appended an encomium to “his ever honour’d” friend’s *Anima Magica Abscondita* (printed by T.W. for H[umphrey] B[lunden], 1650).<sup>78</sup> In his ephemeris for 1648 Hartlib remarked that Blunden had gotten “an Instrument for curing deafness” from the alchemist Johann Rudolph Glauber; he apparently intended to apply it to his wife but was reluctant to pay £5 for it.<sup>79</sup> Blunden, moreover, queried some passages in Glauber’s books – probably those translated as *A Description of New Philosophical Furnaces* (1651), as well as reportedly corresponding with Serrarius in Amsterdam.<sup>80</sup> In addition, he published a number of works by or derived from the writings of Jacob Boehme, several in association with the printer Matthew Simmons. Indeed, such was Blunden’s enthusiasm for that “deep illuminated man of God” that he “furnished” Durand Hotham with material for the latter’s *The Life of Jacob Behmen* (printed for H[umphrey] Blunden, and sold at the Castle in Cornhill, 1654).<sup>81</sup> He is most likely the H.Blunden who supplied a prefatory epistle to Boehme’s *Four Tables of Divine Revelation* (printed for H[umphrey] Blunden, and sold at the Castle in Cornhill, 1654). This treatise was rendered into English by H.B. - a monogram that may be identified with either Blunden, a namesake licensed to practise medicine or Humphrey Blundell (c.1622–fl.1644), Shropshire educated and a former pupil of Charles Hotham’s.<sup>82</sup>

Charles Hotham (1615–1672), third son of Sir John Hotham of Scarborough by his second wife, was educated at Westminster school, Peterhouse and Christ’s College, Cambridge. In June 1644 Hotham was intruded Fellow of Peterhouse and was afterwards nominated as junior Proctor of the University. He was presented on 22 July 1646 and continued in the post until March 1647. One former student recalled that “besides some other of his



singularities” Hotham “made the sophisters to say their positions without book.”<sup>83</sup> While junior Proctor Hotham also engaged in a public debate before Thomas Hill, the Vice-Chancellor on the question of whether the soul was transmitted from the parent or created by God out of nothing and infused into the body. This was later published as *Ad Philosophiam Teutonicam Manuductio* (printed by T.W. for H[umphrey] Blunden, 1648) with a commendatory verse by his friend the Platonist Henry More. An English translation by Durand Hotham appeared as *An Introduction to the Tevtonick Philosophie* (printed by T.M. & A.C. for Nath[aniel] Brooks at the Angel in Corn-hill, 1650). In his dedication to the Vice-Chancellor Hotham explained that he sought to make these “*abstruse Notions*” more accessible by “*taking off the dark style*” of Boehme’s “*magick language*,” for:

*Whatsoever the Thrice-great Hermes deliver’d as Oracles from his Propheticall Tripos, or Pythagoras spake by authority, or Socrates debated, or Aristotle affirmed; yea, whatever divine Plato prophesied, or Plotinus proved; this, and all this, or a far higher and profounder Philosophy is (I think) contained in the Teutonicks writings.*<sup>84</sup>

On 12 September 1648 Drew Sparrow (1630–*fl.*1648), a younger brother of the Boehme translator, was admitted to Peterhouse under Hotham’s tutelage. How long he remained in his charge is unknown as he did not take a degree.<sup>85</sup> Hotham afterwards preached a notable sermon against taking the oath of Engagement and was eventually deprived of his Fellowship. In 1653 he was presented rector of Wigan, Lancashire where he remained until his ejection for nonconformity in 1662. During this time Hotham translated Boehme’s *A Consolatory Treatise of the Four Complexions* (printed by T.W. for H[umphrey] Blunden, and sold at the Castle in Corn-hill, 1654).<sup>86</sup> He was later elected Fellow of the Royal Society before emigrating to the Bermudas where he was appointed a minister. Shortly before his death Hotham drew up his will. His “Astrologically Books” – so far as they could be “singled out from the rest” – were to be burnt “as monuments of

living vanity and remnants of the heathen Idolatry.” He possessed, in addition, some works on astronomy and “Chimicall Iron Tooles” valued at about £10.<sup>87</sup> The nonconformist and biographer Edmund Calamy (1671–1732) regarded him as:

An excellent Scholar, both in Divinity and human Literature. A great Philosopher, and Searcher into the Secrets of Nature, and much addicted to Chymistry.<sup>88</sup>

Durand Hotham (c.1617–1691), fifth son of Sir John Hotham by his second wife, was educated at Westminster school, Christ’s College, Cambridge and the Middle Temple. His father was Parliament’s appointed governor of Hull, but was arrested in June 1643 when it was feared that he and his eldest son would betray the garrison to the royalists. Durand was also taken into custody but was soon discharged on the intervention of William Fiennes, Viscount Saye and Sele. He defended his father and half-brother before a court martial, albeit unsuccessfully, and was present at his half-brother’s execution on 1 January 1645.<sup>89</sup> Afterwards he returned to Yorkshire, settling at Hutton Cranswick in the East Riding. By February 1651 Durand had been appointed a Justice of the Peace. About December that year George Fox went to “Justice Hothams: a pretty tender man y<sup>t</sup> had had some experiences of Gods workeinge in his hearte.” According to Fox’s account they discoursed of “ye thinges of God,” Durand saying privately that he had known the “principle” of the inner light for ten years and was glad that “ye Lord did now publish it abroad to people.” The following Sunday evening Fox came to Durand’s house again:

& hee tooke mee in his armes & saide his house was my house: & hee was exceedinge glad att ye worke of ye Lorde & his power.<sup>90</sup>

Afterwards Fox submitted twenty queries to Durand. Loath to enter into a dispute with “any sort of men y<sup>t</sup> pretend religion, and a Command and Notion aboue y<sup>e</sup> reach of mans naturall frame to comprehend,” Durand eventually responded with a lengthy letter

to Fox.<sup>91</sup> About this time Durand began gaining a reputation as one of two Justices of the Peace in the East Riding sympathetic to the Quakers, later meeting with James Nayler as well.<sup>92</sup> Indeed, Fox reported that Durand was glad that “ye Lords power & truth was spreade & soe many had received it,” attributing to him the remark:

if God had not raised uppe this principle light & life: ye nation had been overspread with rantisme & all ye Justices in ye nation could not stoppe it with all there lawes.<sup>93</sup>



George Fox (1624-1691), Founder of the Society of Friends.

In February 1653 Hartlib noted in his ephemeris that Durand had “elegantly” retranslated Sir Thomas More’s *Utopia* (probably from Latin into English), and that it was to be printed shortly.<sup>94</sup> There is, however, no known copy of this work. On 7 November 1653 Durand completed *The Life of Jacob Behmen* (1654). Addressing the reader he conceded finding many “obscure” things as well as “highly honest, pious” and “just” sentiments in Boehme’s writings. Yet he trusted that this short relation would stir up more “searching Spirits” to thoroughly weigh his publications. Durand concluded by proposing Boehme’s inclusion at the head of a new roll of

“Civil Saints,” hoping that in these “last generations” he would be joined by such as have “cry’d out against, acted, and suffer’d, to redeem that part of mankind joyn’d in the Communion of a nation with them, from the captivity of tyrannous usurpation, and pretence, to rule by servile and customary Lawes.”<sup>95</sup>

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The diffusion of Boehme’s texts from east to west, from Görlitz to Amsterdam and thence to the port of London, Essex and the East Riding, continued with their translation from English into Welsh at Wrexham by Morgan Llwyd (1619–1659) of Gwynedd. Regarded as the greatest Welsh prose-writer of the seventeenth century, Llwyd was probably educated at Wrexham grammar school – where according to tradition he heard the local curate Walter Cradock preach. During the Civil Wars he seems to have served as a chaplain and was associated with the Welsh army officers and regicides John Jones and Thomas Harrison, justifying the execution of Charles I with the lines “The law was ever above Kings.”<sup>96</sup> By October 1651 Llwyd was pastor of the gathered church at Wrexham. He considered the Welsh preacher William Erbery (1604–1654) his “*ever remembred friend*” and “*once-dear School-master*”; significantly, Cradock had been Erbery’s curate at St. Mary’s, Cardiff before he went to Wrexham.<sup>97</sup> Erbery knew Boehme’s *Mercurius Teutonicus* (1649), paraphrasing a prophetic passage that “the Turks shal yet turn to be true Christians, and that Christians shall all know the Truth as it is in Jesus.”<sup>98</sup> Perhaps he introduced Boehme to Llwyd, who by June 1651 was studying the Teutonic Philosopher. Llwyd was also known to some in London that waited for the “kingdome of God & the saluation of Israel” and emboldened by reading Michael Gähler’s *Clavis Apocalyptica* (1651) he wrote to Hartlib in December 1652 to know the truth about a rumour concerning the appearance of “the signe of the son of man” in the clouds above Germany or Poland.<sup>99</sup> One of Llwyd’s earliest published works was an allegory on contemporary

# A V R O R A.

*That is, the*

## Day-Spring.

Or

*Dawning of the Day in the Orient*

Or

**Dawning-Rednesse**

in the Rising of the

**S V N.**

That is

The Root or Mother of

*Philosophie, Astrologie & Theologie*

from the true Ground.

Or

*A Description of Nature.*

- I. How All was; and came to be in the Beginning.
- II. How Nature and the Elements are become Creaturely.
- III. Also of the Two Qualities Evill and Good.
- IIII. From whence all things had their Original.
- V. And how all stand and work at present.
- VI. Also how all will be at the End of this Time.
- VII. Also what is the Condition of the Kingdom of God, and of the Kingdom of Hell.
- VIII. And how men work and act creaturely in Each of them.

All this set down diligently from a true Ground in the Knowledge of the Spirit, and in the impulse of God.

By

# Jacob Behme

*Teutonick Philosopher.*

864: 17:

Being his FIRST BOOK.

Written in Gerlitz in Germany Anno Christi M. DC. XII. on Tuesday after the Day of Pentecost or Whitsunday *Ætatis sue* 37.

London, Printed by John Streater, for Giles Calvert, and are to be sold at his Shop at the Black-spread-Eagle at the West-End of Pauls, 1656.

religious and political divisions entitled *Dirgelwch i rai iw ddeall, ac i ereill iw watwar, sef, Tri Aderyn yn ymddiddan yr Eryr, a'r Golomen, a'r Gigfran* (A Mystery for some to understand and others to mock at, that is to say, Three Birds discoursing, the Eagle, the Dove, and the Raven) (1653). The title-page indicated that it was also a sign to address the Welsh “before the coming of 666 [anti-Christ]” (Revelation 13:18).

In July 1656 Llwyd wrote from Wrexham to the Baptist preacher Henry Jessey recommending that he peruse “Jac. Behmens three-fold life, & especially his booke of Baptisme & lords supper.”<sup>100</sup> Another of Llwyd’s correspondents was Richard Baxter, whose understanding of God’s “first and second” will he questioned:

None knowes the will before the revealed essence of God. Know wee him (as immanent), then all is plaine & the key is found, though philosophy could never well attend to the eternall word who is the only begotten Image and universall declaration of the wonderful everblessed Godhead & is God eternall.<sup>101</sup>

Baxter responded on 10 July 1656, complaining that he could not understand Llwyd’s meaning. Furthermore, having looked into Sir Henry Vane’s and Boehme’s writings he was dissatisfied with their use of allegory and their obscure manner of revealing “y<sup>e</sup> whole fabricke & systeme or body of truths w<sup>ch</sup> they p[ro]fess to have attained.”<sup>102</sup> Llwyd replied in December 1656 acknowledging that some things concerning God, paradise and new Jerusalem were either impossible to comprehend, difficult to speak of, unlawful or inconvenient to have all made known. Indeed, the “present writings of men” lagged far behind Paul for “elegant expressions and depth of understanding.”<sup>103</sup> Yet Llwyd had turned to Sparrow’s version of Boehme’s *The Way to Christ Discovered* (1648, 1654), translating “Of True Resignation” and “A Dialogue between a Scholar and his Master, Concerning the Super sensuall life” into Welsh as “Yr Ymroddiad” (“Resignation”) and “Y Discybl ai Athraw O newydd” (“The Disciple and his Teacher Anew”) (1655). These were published in London together with two works by

Y R  
YMRODDIAD  
NEU  
BAPURYN  
A  
GYFIEUTHIWYD  
DDWYWAITH

I

Helpu y cymru unwaith  
allan or Hunan ar  
drygioni.

Fc ai cyfieithwyd yn y flwyddyn 1654.  
Ag ai printiwyd 1657.

Llwyd as *Yr ymroddiad neu Bapuryn a gyfieuthiwyd ddwywaith*

*i helpu y cymru unwaith allan or Hunan ar drygioni (Self Resignation, or a Paper translated to help the Welsh out of Self and Evil)* (1657). His objective was explained in the preface; “to bring the spirit of man into entire submission to God by subduing the natural self to the spiritual self.”<sup>104</sup>

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The dream of Boehme’s principal English translators that his writings would put an end to religious strife proved to be a vain hope. Instead of a new reformation there was a new Babel. Condemned by some as a mixture of incomprehensible nonsense and vile falsehoods, the Teutonic Philosopher’s ideas and vocabulary were appropriated and reworked into a variety of belief systems, ranging from the syncretism of the Cambridge Platonists to alchemists’ experiments to discover the secrets of nature, and several early Quakers’ notions of the unfolding of divine mysteries. Like other continental European works sold in English versions at London during the 1640s and 1650s, Boehme’s texts were issued as a result of co-operation between translators, patrons, facilitators, printers and publishers. This was at a time when legislation empowered civil and military officials to fine or imprison the authors, printers, publishers and booksellers of unlicensed material. Indeed, while Boehme’s writings were not suppressed (the copyright of four books was entered in the Stationers’ Register) a few of his readers were imprisoned for blasphemy or punished by authority. Their fate falls beyond the scope of this article, though it serves to emphasize the English translators’ inability to control how Boehme would be interpreted.<sup>106</sup>



### ***Bibliographic Note***

Unlike the complete German editions of Boehme's writings *Des Gottseeligen Hoch-Erleuchtet Jacob Bohmens Teutonici Philosophi* (Amsterdam, 10 volumes, printed for Hendrick Beets, 1682) and *Theosophia Revelata* ([Leiden?], 21 parts, 1730), it was more than a century before something approaching a complete English edition of his writings was published as *The Works of Jacob Behmen* (4 volumes, printed for M. Richardson, Joseph Richardson and G. Robinson in Paternoster Row, 1764–81). With the exception of Francis Lee's rendering of a dialogue "Of the Supersensual Life" and a version of *The Way to Christ discovered* issued at Bath in 1775, this translation – with some slight alterations in phraseology – was by Sparrow and Ellistone. Though it is a lasting monument to their endeavours this edition was still incomplete, lacking several important treatises and Boehme's letters.<sup>105</sup>

### **Notes**

\* An earlier version of this article was read at a conference on mysticism and spiritualism held at the University of Szeged, Hungary. I would like to thank the participants for their helpful comments and suggestions. In addition, I have profited from the advice of Mario Caricchio and John Morrill as well as two anonymous referees. Place of publication, where known and unless otherwise stated, is London. The year is taken to begin on 1 January and English dates are "old style," while European are "new style." I alone am responsible for any mistakes or shortcomings.

<sup>1</sup> John Nickolls (ed.), *Original Letters and Papers of State, Addressed to Oliver Cromwell; Concerning the Affairs of Great Britain* (1743), p. 99.

<sup>2</sup> Margaret Bailey, *Milton and Jakob Boehme: A study of German Mysticism in Seventeenth-Century England* (New York, 1914); Reginald Maxse, "The reception of Jacob Boehme in England in the XVII and XVIII centuries," Unpublished Oxford University B.Litt., 1934; Nils Thune, *The Behmenists and the Philadelphians: A Contribution to the Study of English Mysticism in the 17th and 18th Centuries* (Uppsala, 1948); Serge Hutin, *Les Disciples Anglais de Jacob Boehme aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris, 1960); Nigel Smith, *Perfection*

*Proclaimed: Language and Literature in English Radical Religion 1640-1660* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 185–225; Brian Gibbons, *Gender in Mystical and Occult Thought: Behmenism and its Development in England* (Cambridge, 1996); A. Hessayon, “Jacob Boehme and the early Quakers,” *Journal of the Friends Historical Society*, 60 (2005), pp. 191–223.

<sup>3</sup> George Turnbull, *Hartlib, Dury and Comenius. Gleanings from Hartlib’s papers* (Liverpool, 1947); Charles Webster, *The great instauration: science, medicine and reform, 1626–1660* (1975); Mark Greengrass, Michael Leslie and Timothy Raylor (eds.), *Samuel Hartlib and universal reformation: studies in intellectual communication* (Cambridge, 1994).

<sup>4</sup> Jacob Boehme, *The Epistles of Jacob Behmen*, trans. J[ohn] E[l]listone (1649), sigs. a2<sup>v</sup>–a2<sup>r2</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> [Abraham von Franckenberg], *The Life of one Jacob Boehmen* (1644), sig. A2.

<sup>6</sup> [von Franckenberg], *Life of Boehmen*, sig. A2<sup>v</sup>; Boehme, *Epistles*, 2.65–74, 18.6, pp. 32–33, 143; “A Catalogue of All The Books that are known to be Extant written by Jacob Behme” in *The remainder of the books written by Jacob Behme*, trans. John Sparrow (1662).

<sup>7</sup> Boehme, *Epistles*, 33.10, p. 204; Andrew Weeks, *Boehme. An Intellectual Biography of the Seventeenth-Century Philosopher and Mystic* (Albany, New York, 1991), pp. 184, 187, 205–06.

<sup>8</sup> *A reall and unfeigned Testimonie, concerning Iacob Beme* (1649), p. 2.

<sup>9</sup> *A reall and unfeigned Testimonie*, p. 6.

<sup>10</sup> Boehme, *Epistles*, 2.10, 2.14, pp. 20, 21.

<sup>11</sup> [von Franckenberg], *Life of Boehmen*, sig. A2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> Jacob Boehme, *Aurora, That is, the Day-Spring*, trans. John Sparrow (1656), 10.45, p. 184.

<sup>13</sup> Durand Hotham, *The Life of Jacob Behmen* (1654), sig. E2.

<sup>14</sup> Boehme, *Epistles*, 2.51–54, 2.59–60, pp. 29–30, 31.

<sup>15</sup> Boehme, *Epistles*, 23.18, p. 171; Weeks, *Boehme*, pp. 29–30, 49–50, 197–98.

<sup>16</sup> John Bruckner, *A Bibliographical Catalogue of Seventeenth-Century German Books Published in Holland* (The Hague and Paris, 1971), pp. 47–48.

<sup>17</sup> “De vita et scriptis Jacobi Böhmii” in Johann Wilhelm Ueberfeld (ed.), *Theosophia Revelata. Das ist: Alle göttliche Schriften des Gottfeligen und hocheleuchteten Deutschen Theosophi Jacob Böhmens* (21 parts, [Leiden?], 1730), partly translated as “VI. Of the old and new editions and impressions of these writings; also of the Dutch, English, Latin and French translation of the same” in Dr. Williams’s Library, London (hereafter DWL), MS 186.17 (15), “Introduction to Philosophy” (1858), fol. 61; Francis Okely (ed.), *Memoirs of the Life, Death, Burial, and Wonderful Writings, of Jacob Behmen* (Northampton, 1780), p. 13.

<sup>18</sup> DWL, MS 186.17 (15), fols. 52–53; Bruckner, *Bibliographical Catalogue*, pp. xvi, 64–66, 76–77, 82.

<sup>19</sup> DWL, MS 186.17 (15), fols. 62–64.

<sup>20</sup> Boehme, *Aurora*, “To the Reader”; DWL, MS 186.17 (15), fols. 65–66; Okely (ed.), *Memoirs of Jacob Behmen*, p. 10.

- <sup>21</sup> F.A. Janssen, “Böhme’s *Wercken* (1682): its editor, its publisher, its printer,” *Quaerendo*, 16 (1986): 138–39.
- <sup>22</sup> DWL, MS 186.17 (15), fols. 67–68, 69–70; University Library of Amsterdam (UvA), MS III E 9 (31, 37, 76).
- <sup>23</sup> “Theosophick Letters or Epistles’ p. 31 in *The remainder of the books written by Jacob Behme*, trans. John Sparrow (1662); W. Heijting, “Hendrick Beets (1625?–1708), publisher to the German adherents of Jacob Böhme in Amsterdam,” *Quaerendo*, 3 (1973): 259.
- <sup>24</sup> Bodleian Library, Oxford (hereafter Bodl.), MS Ashmole 1399, fols. 88r–93v.
- <sup>25</sup> Bodl., MS Ashmole 756; British Library, London (hereafter BL), Add. MS 5829, fol. 92v.
- <sup>26</sup> Bodl., MS Ashmole 1458, fols. 157r–58v.
- <sup>27</sup> UL Amsterdam (UvA), MS N a–e.
- <sup>28</sup> Sheffield University Library, Sheffield (hereafter SUL), Hartlib Papers, 29/2/12A–B.
- <sup>29</sup> SUL, HP 30/4/27A, 27B; SUL, HP 30/4/53A.
- <sup>30</sup> SUL, HP 37/70A; SUL HP 37/71A.
- <sup>31</sup> BL, MS Harleian 1821.
- <sup>32</sup> [Abraham von Franckenberg], *The Life of one Jacob Boehmen* (1644) [Thomason E 16(16)]. This translation differs from that contained in Jacob Boehme, *Forty Questions of the Soul*, trans. John Sparrow (1665).
- <sup>33</sup> Jacob Boehme, *Two Theosophicall Epistles*, (1645), title-page [Thomason E 1170(1)].
- <sup>34</sup> Bodl., MS Rawlinson C 763; Bodl., MS Eng.th.e.103.
- <sup>35</sup> Bodl., MS Ashmole 1499, fol. 279r-v; cf. Boehme, *Epistles*, 23.15–18, pp. 170–71.
- <sup>36</sup> SUL, HP 3/2/77.
- <sup>37</sup> Essex Record Office, T/P 195/12, fol. 22.
- <sup>38</sup> SUL, HP 30/4/44A.
- <sup>39</sup> SUL, HP 21/15/1
- <sup>40</sup> Jacob Boehme, *XL. Qvestions Concerning the Soule*, trans. J[ohn] S[parrow] (1647), “To the Reader.”
- <sup>41</sup> SUL, HP 45/1/33B–34A; SUL, HP 45/1/47A.
- <sup>42</sup> Cambridge University Library, Syn.7.64.145, flyleaf.
- <sup>43</sup> BL, Add. MS 21,426, fol. 349r.
- <sup>44</sup> Jacob Boehme, *Forty Questions of the Soul*, trans. John Sparrow (1665), “Preface.”
- <sup>45</sup> DWL, MS 186.17 (15), fols. 60–61; cf. DWL, MS I.1.62, p. 176, partly printed in Hutin, *Les Disciples Anglais de Jacob Boehme*, p. 196 n. 24.
- <sup>46</sup> E. Bernstein, “Letters of Hilary Prach and John G. Matern,” *Journal of the Friends Historical Society*, 16 (1919): 5.
- <sup>47</sup> DWL, MS 186.18 (1) a, Epistle I (c.1701), printed in [R.C. Jenkins], ‘Miracles, Visions, and Revelations, Mediaeval and Modern’, *British Quarterly Review*, 58 (1873): 182, and in Hutin, *Les Disciples Anglais de Jacob Boehme*, pp. 195–96 n. 24.

- <sup>48</sup> Pierre Poiret, *Bibliotheca Mysticorum Selecta* (Amsterdam, 1708), p. 169.
- <sup>49</sup> DWL, MS 186.17 (15), fol. 60; cf. DWL, MS I.1.62, p. 175, printed in Hutin, *Les Disciples Anglais de Jacob Boehme*, p. 195 n. 22.
- <sup>50</sup> Bodl., MS Rawlinson Essex 23, fol. 294v.
- <sup>51</sup> DWL, MS 186.18 (1) a, Epistle I.
- <sup>52</sup> [Philip Herbert, fifth Earl of Pembroke], *Of the Internal and Eternal Nature of Man in Christ* (1654), title-page [Thomason E 734(1)].
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- <sup>59</sup> National Archives, London (hereafter NA), Prob 11/320 fols. 173r–75r, printed in Henry Waters (ed.), *Genealogical Gleanings in England* (2 vols., Boston, Mass., 1901), vol. 1, pp. 606–07.
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- <sup>61</sup> F. Mood, “A Broadside Advertising Eleuthera and the Bahama Islands London, 1647,” *Colonial Society of Massachusetts*, 32 (1933–37): 82.
- <sup>62</sup> *Journals of the House of Commons* vi. 288; J.T. Hassam, “The Bahamas: Notes on an Early Attempt at Colonization,” *Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings*, 2nd series, 13 (1899): 4–58.
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- <sup>81</sup> Jacob Boehme, *Four Tables of Divine Revelation*, trans. H. B. (1654), sig. H3; Durand Hotham, *The Life of Jacob Behmen* (1654), sig. B2.
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<sup>96</sup> National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth (hereafter NLW), MS 11434 B, printed in T.E. Ellis and J.H. Davies (eds.), *Gweithiau Morgan Llwyd O Wynedd* (2 vols., Bangor and London, 1899–1908), vol. 1, p. 55.

<sup>97</sup> William Erbery, *A Call to the Churches* (1653), pp. 21, 22; William Scott and James Bliss (eds.), *The Works of ... William Laud* (7 vols., Oxford, 1847–60), vol. 5, p. 329.

<sup>98</sup> William Erbery, *The Testimony of William Erbery* (1658), p. 333.

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<sup>102</sup> DWL, MS Baxter, Letters, I 53, calendared in Keeble and Nuttall (eds.), *Calendar of Baxter Correspondence*, vol. 1, pp. 217–18.

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<sup>104</sup> Alfred Palmer, *A History of the Older Nonconformity of Wrexham and its Neighbourhood* (Wrexham, [1888]), p. 14; Thomas Parry, *A History of Welsh Literature* (Oxford, 1955), p. 246.

<sup>105</sup> J. Yeowell, “Jacob Böhme, or Behmen,” *Notes & Queries*, 1st series, 8 (1853): 246.

<sup>106</sup> Boehme’s readership is explored in my forthcoming book ‘*Teutonic Philosophy*’: *Jacob Boehme (1575–1624) and the reception of his writings in the English speaking world to c.1850*.