

LEIGH T. I. PENMAN

A Second Christian Rosencreuz?

Jakob Böhme's Disciple Balthasar Walther (1558–c.1630) and the Kabbalah. With a Bibliography of Walther's Printed Works*

Introduction

In the eighteenth chapter of his commentary on Genesis, entitled *Mysterium Magnum* (completed 1624), the Lusatian theosopher Jakob Böhme (1575–1624) made a startling declaration concerning the reception of the Ten Commandments atop Mount Sinai. According to the account of Exodus, God had commanded Moses to hew two tables of stone upon which He would inscribe the text of the *Decalogue* for the instruction of His chosen people. This Moses did, 'and it came to pass . . . Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony' (Ex 34:29). Böhme's account, however, differed significantly. For, according to the cobbler, the text of the new covenant was not recorded on 'two tables of stone.' Rather, Böhme asserted, God had given Moses 'another writing upon a globe (*Kugel*).'¹

To would-be defenders of Böhme's orthodox Lutheran character in the years after the shoemaker's death, this particular passage, which brazenly contradicted the sacred word of scripture, posed a decidedly

* Elements of this article were presented at the Association for the Study of Esotericism Conference, University of California, Davis June 8–11 2006, where I received stimulating feedback from Arthur Versluis (Michigan State) and Marsha Keith Schuchard that encouraged further research upon Walther. Further advice was offered by Prof. Charles Zika (Melbourne). I would also like to thank Matthias Wenzel (Oberlausitzische Bibliothek der Wissenschaften, Görlitz) and Dr Robert Schweitzer (Bibliothek der Hansestadt Lübeck) for their friendly assistance during the preparation of this article, as well as Ilona Fekete (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest) for her invaluable bibliographical help and comments upon the manuscript.

1 Böhme 1730, VII: 121: '[G]leichwie Moses die Tafeln zerbrach, und Gott Mose eine andere Schrift auf eine Kugel gab.'

thorny problem. Already during his lifetime, Böhme had been persecuted on several occasions by Lutheran authorities in his home-town of Görlitz on account of his enthusiastic tendencies. In 1613, following the distribution of manuscript copies of his first work, *Aurora*, Böhme was forbidden to record or further disseminate his ideas. In 1624, the local pastor Gregor Richter accused him of being the Antichrist. That same year, Böhme's first printed work, the *Weg zu Christo* (Way to Christ) had been decried by one Lutheran theologian as actually consisting the 'weg von Christo' (way from Christ) (Widmann 1624: 5). As an open invitation for further accusations of heresy, it was therefore important for the shoemaker's followers to explain away this curious assertion concerning a globe of the covenant.² The editor of the so-called Toruń edition (*thorner Ausgabe*) of Böhme's work (8 vols, 1652–74), one of the most systematic early attempts to defend Böhme's theosophy from accusations of heterodoxy, therefore directly addressed this dangerous passage.³ Next to the crucial citation, the editor hastily inserted the following marginal notation:

What the author [Böhme] here states appears to contradict the clear text of Moses, Exodus 34:1, Deuteronomy 10:1 and 1st Kings 8:9, which expressly speak of stone tablets. This may be explained thusly: the thoughts of the blessed, deceased Jacob Böhme concerning the two globes [*sic!* Böhme only mentioned one] upon which the law was recorded derived from a conversation with Dr. Balthasar Walther, who read it in Reuchlin, and lived with Böhme for an entire quarter-year.⁴

- 2 In England the problem was avoided altogether, for the passage in John Ellistone and John Sparrow's 1656 translation (*Mysterium Magnum*, London: Lodowick Lloyd, ch. 18, §21, p. 81) egregiously mistranslated *Kugel* as 'table of stone'. This choice echoed the words of the King James Bible: 'And God gave Moses another Scripture upon a Table of stone. . . .'
- 3 For a bibliographical description and analysis, see Buddecke 1937, I: 80–6 (Item 32).
- 4 'Merckwürdigkeiten' 1730, X: 91: 'Es findet sich in den Collectaneis des jüngern Richters eine dienliche Anmerkung/ so in dieses Buch Myst. Mag. gehört/ und zwar zum 19. Cap. § 20 [*sic!* the reference should be to Chapter 18 § 20] der letzten Zeilen wo Autor schreibt: Wie Gott Mose eine andere Schrift auf eine Kugel gab. Dabey besagter Collector folgendes erinnert: Daß allhie, der Autor scheint wider den klaren Text Mosis, Exod 34:1, Deut 10:1, 1 Reg 8:9 zu schreiben/ der von steinern Taffeln expresse schreibt/ damit verhält sichs

The passage does indeed exist in Reuchlin's *De arte Cabalistica*, where the Pforzheimer wrote that 'the kabbalists believe that God first recorded his covenant (*legem*) onto a fiery globe, applying dark fire to white fire.' And as Reuchlin's citations make clear, this idea had indeed an even longer history amongst older kabbalistic authorities (1517: fol. lx–ii^v). But despite claiming to have read 'works of many high masters' (*viel hoher Meister Schriften*) Böhme could not speak Latin, let alone Hebrew, and therefore could have had no direct access to Reuchlin or his sources. So who then was this Balthasar Walther, portrayed here by the editor of the Toruń edition not only as an apparent expert in kabbalistic tracts, but also as someone who had poisoned Böhme's pious Lutheran thoughts with its teachings and perhaps also with other heretical material?

The definitive biographical account that we possess concerning Balthasar (also Balthazar, Baldasar, Baldassar, Baltzer, Paltzer, etc.) Walther was first printed in the early 1650s by the Silesian noble Abraham von Franckenberg, as part of his extensive report upon Böhme's life.

Of those learn'd men that convers'd with [Böhme] in the greatest familiarity, was one *Balthazar Walter*, this Gentelman was a *Silesian* by birth, by profession a Physician, and had in the search of the antient Magick learning, travell'd [for six years] through *Egypt*, *Syria* and the *Araby's*, and there found such small remainders of it, that he return'd empty, and unsatisfy'd, into his own Country, where hearing of this man, he repair'd to him, as the Queen of *Sheeba* with King *Solomon*, [to] try him with those hard Questions, concerning the soul [i.e. Böhme's *Psychologia Vera*] . . . from whence, and from frequent discourses with him, he was so satisfy'd that he there stay'd three months, and profess'd, that from his converse, he had reciev'd more solid answer to his curious scruples, than he had found among the best wits of those more promising Climats, and for the future, detested from following rivulets, since God had open'd a fountain at his own door (Franckenberg & Hotham 1654: fol. E2^{r-v}.)

In as much as this account mentions Walther's three-month stay with Böhme, and indeed his interest in 'antient Magick learning', it undoubt-

also: des sel. Jacob Bøhmens Teut. Meinung von den 2. Kugeln/ darauf das Gesetz geschrieben/ rühret her aus mündlicher Conversation mit Dr. Balthasar Walthern, der es bey Reuchlino gelesen/ und ein ganz viertel Jahr bey J.B. gewohnet.'

edly represented the major source of the Toruń editor's conjectures. Yet as I have remarked elsewhere (Penman Forthcoming a), this standard view of Walther's life communicated to us by von Franckenberg presents two competing, if not entirely contradictory elements to the physician's character. Was Walther another Christian Rosencreuz, as the first half of this account, which reflects the journey of Frater C.R. in the Rosicrucian *Fama Fraternitatis*, suggests? Or a sensitive student of the mysteries, as the second portion, where Walther learns at the feet of Böhme, hints? An esoteric master, or merely a disciple? It is these questions that I would like to address here, utilizing several newly (re)discovered manuscript and print sources that offer new insights into Walther's life and interests. Amongst these is the identification of von Franckenberg's major source for his Walther biography; a series of several short statements made by Walther himself to Johann Angelus Werdenhagen, and printed in Werdenhagen's edition of Böhme's *Psychologia Vera* in 1632. Concerning manuscript evidence, in addition to the correspondence of the Torgau chiliast Paul Nagel with the Paracelsian physician in Leipzig, Arnold Kerner, in which Walther is discussed on several occasions (Leipzig MS), further documents that I have found in Lübeck, Germany conclusively demonstrate the physician's active interest in magical, kabbalistic and Paracelsian texts. This final detail is of crucial importance, for while many scholars, primarily following von Franckenberg's account, have identified Walther as the source of Böhme's kabbalistic ideas (or analogues thereof), actual evidence of Walther's expertise in these matters has lacked (Schulitz 1993: 16). I wish to demonstrate in this article that further investigation into Walther's own career and interests through these sources not only proves that he did indeed furnish Böhme with ideas drawn from kabbalistic writings, but also that there exist broader Paracelsian and Schwenckfeldian contexts in which we might consider Walther's life and activities, establishing him as an important and interesting protagonist in his own right independent of his connection to Böhme's circle and developing philosophy.

Walther and the Kabbalah: *die Morgenlandfahrt*

Until the recent discovery of the Lübeck manuscript, the greatest suggestion that we possessed concerning Walther's kabbalistic proclivities was simultaneously the most bizarre and suggestive of the anecdotes communicated to us by von Franckenberg: namely, his fabled trip to the Orient. This trip, or pilgrimage, has long been a source of intense specula-

tion, and, due to its similarity with the account of Christian Rosencreuz's legendary travels, the question of whether or not it was ever undertaken has been called into question on at least one occasion.

That three separate contemporary sources attest to the details of the journey demonstrate that such pessimism is unwarranted, although the partially contradictory accounts that survive indeed evince some problematic evidentiary diversions. Concerning these sources, firstly we have von Franckenberg's assertion that Walther had spent six years travelling in the Orient in search of magical wisdom. The origin of this account actually stems from another source, indeed Walther himself, who informed Johann Angelus Werdenhagen of the extent of his travels sometime before December 1631 (Werdenhagen 1632: 63–4; Franckenberg 1730: 15). It seems, however, that on this account Walther himself is not to be trusted, for a third, lesser known source—a now lost entry in the *Diarium* of the Görlitz cartographer and astronomer Bartholomäus Scultetus (1540–1614)—contradicts Walther's words in no uncertain terms. In August of 1599, Scultetus recorded:

On the 19th of August 1599 Balthasar Walther visited my step-mother's bath house garden and laid out the items he had collected since 1597 when he journeyed outward from Poland through Walachia, Greece, Asia, Syria, Egypt and the Mediterranean. . .⁵

Scultetus' account makes clear that Walther's experiences were not gathered during some epic six-year journey, or even a two-year odyssey that might have taken place between 1597 and 1599. Indeed, his travels must have consisted of several shorter excursions conducted after 1597 from a base somewhere in Poland. The fact that Walther visited Scultetus on three more occasions in Görlitz during 1588 (on 19th February, 1st August and 26th December) confirms that during this period, the longest continuous time that Walther could have spent in the Orient was no more than eight months.

5 The entry has been reprinted in Jecht 1924: 63: '1599 Aug. 19. Balthasar Walther, so seither An. 1597 von Polen aus durch die Walachei, Graecium Asiam Syriam Aegyptum und per mare medit gewandert, in der Schwiegermutter Badegärtlein kommen und seine mitgebrachten Sachen ausgelegt. Ich habe empfangen ein gemein Kreuz vom Oelbaum mit eingelegten Heiligtume, zwei Paternoster, eines de terra Adami de Damasco schwarz, das andre von Oelbaumholz ex monte Oliveti, Johannsbrot ex deserto Bethabarae, 4. Samen der Baumwolle aus der Insel Cypren.'

It is worth noting that, while we cannot entirely discount the idea that Walther might have exaggerated the duration of his travels in order to impress his friend Werdenhagen, (and indeed, being undoubtedly aware of the content of the Rosicrucian *Fama*, emphasized similarities between his own experiences and those of Father C.R.), I suggest the two accounts must not necessarily be understood as contradictory. Werdenhagen's report, after all, did not specify that Walther's kabbalistic expertise was gained during a single stay abroad, rather that he spent six years there in total: '[Walther] mihi retulit, quod in hoc conatu integrum sexennium in Ægypto, Arabia, & illis vicinis terris confecisset' (Werdenhagen 1632: 64). It is indeed possible that while Walther had returned from a series of shorter trips from the Middle East to visit Scultetus in Görlitz in August of 1599, he might also have conducted several more during the years that followed.

Yet assuming that the physician did indeed spend a significant amount of time in the Holy Land in pursuit of magical and kabbalistic knowledge, several questions are thereby raised. What did Walther do there? Who did he visit? There are endless possibilities. As the gifts Walther bestowed upon Scultetus and noted by the cartographer in his *Diarium* demonstrate, during his travels the physician had at least reached the Mount of Olives, the Syrian city of Damascus, the desert of Betharaba beyond the river Jordan and the island of Cyprus.⁶ On the way, it is highly likely that Walther visited the city of Safed in modern Israel, a renowned spiritual centre famous for its numerous mystical practitioners of kabbalah. In Safed, he might have met with followers of Joseph Karo (1488–1575), the Sephardic Rabbi Moses Cordovero (1522–70) or even Isaac Luria (1534–72) in order to study different kabbalistic philosophies, or have encountered any number of the numerous kabbalistic/alchemical writings circulating in the region during this time (Patai 1994: 321–94). I have little doubt, however, that even assuming a command of Hebrew (which cannot be demonstrated from any of his surviving literary works), had Walther spent six years in the Holy Land or only six weeks, his chances of actually learning from kabbalistic and magical experts, usually governed by strict rules of secrecy and initiation, were minimal. It is almost certainly for this reason that an 'empty and unsatisfy'd' Walther, like the mythical Christian Rosencreuz before him, found such 'small remainders' of the ancient magical teachings of the magi during his travels (Franckenberg & Hotham 1654: fol. E2'). Yet we must keep in mind that, for the time, Walther's journey (or series

6 The full citation is given in note 5, above.

of journeys) consisted of almost unimaginable distance and hardship. The fact that he undertook one such trip—or perhaps several—is proof enough of Walther's interest and resolve in engaging with such matters.

At the Origins of Walther's Kabbalistic and Magical Interests

The roots of Walther's interest in these subjects, however, lay much closer to home than the far-flung shores of the Holy Land. Born in 1558 in Liegnitz, a major centre of Schwenckfeldian activity in Silesia, Walther's education appears to have been relatively conventional. In 1579 he matriculated at the University of Frankfurt/Oder, where he studied medicine (Liebe & Thenner 1887: 270b). As a student there he moved in the same circles as the theologian and apocalypticist Leonhard Krentzheim of Görlitz, later Lutheran superintendent in Liegnitz, and his contribution of several congratulatory poems to various publications during his university years suggests that he led an active social life while studying.⁷ Shortly after the conclusion of his studies, we find him in the principality of Anhalt as a court physician, where his first literary work, a poetic pamphlet without the slightest hint of Paracelsian or magical tendencies was printed in Zerbst in 1585 (see References I, Item 3).

The decisive moment for Walther was, however, about to occur. For on the 19th July 1587—a decade before his first trip to the Orient—the young physician found himself for the first time in the Upper-Lusatian city of Görlitz. Walther's goal there was not to visit a then thirteen year old shoemaker's apprentice named Jakob Böhme, but instead, perhaps upon Krentzheim's suggestion, to establish contact with the 'secta medicorum Paracelsi', a burgeoning community of learned and enthusiastic Paracelsians inside the town's walls (Lemper 1970: 347–60). This group was truly diverse. In addition to the friend and correspondent of Valentin Weigel, Abraham Behem, chief among them was the aforementioned astronomer, mathematician and cartographer who had once studied with Tycho Brahe in Leipzig: Bartholomäus Scultetus. The connection between Walther and Scultetus, both personal and philosophical, must have been immense and instantaneous. For, in addition to es-

7 For details of Walther's personal bibliography, refer to Section I of the References (below).

establishing an enduring friendship, Scultetus also gave several magical and Paracelsian religious manuscripts to Walther (Koch 1916: 4, 26, 30–1; Jecht 1924: 60; Sudhoff 1898: Items 15, 83–5). Several of these manuscript works survive today in a codex in Lübeck, Germany. A further (now lost) codex, once in the collection of the city library of Wrocław, Poland (former Cod. Rhed. 334) has been extensively catalogued by Karl Sudhoff during the final years of the nineteenth century (1898: 499–538).

Outside of the pilgrimage to the Middle East, these manuscripts comprise the most direct confirmation that we have of Walther's kabbalistic expertise. Although information concerning the matter is difficult to come by, Scultetus evidently acquired many of the texts he passed on to Walther around 1567, when he was in contact with several well-known kabbalistic practitioners, including Jeremias Waldner and the Straßburger Franz Brun. During the same period he also prepared commentaries and editions of several of Paracelsus' medical works (Gondolatsch 1936: 76), such as a manuscript edition of the *Archidoxes* in collaboration with Franz Kretschmeir (Telle 1992: 212–13, 226). While the folio volume in Wrocław consisted entirely of religious commentaries and other theological works authored by Paracelsus (Sudhoff 1898: 499–538), the Lübeck codex, a thick quarto volume bound in vellum, is wholly magical in content, consisting entirely of tracts copied either from earlier manuscripts or out of printed books. The selection is more than a little surprising. It begins with Latin extracts from the *Picatrix*, and continues with a commentary by a Hungarian (Michal Eyking) upon the kabbalah, a version of books one and two of the infamous manual of angel magic, the *Liber Raziel*, a copy of the *Imagines Abelis filii Adæ*, extracts from Trithemius on the seven spirits, a short astrological tract called the *Astrum Magicum*, several magical works by Paracelsus (including *De septem stellis* and *De arte magica*) in addition to texts by Pietro d'Abano and Hermes Trismegistus himself. Walther's connection to the Lübeck codex is demonstrated by several notations throughout the text (although mainly in the *Liber Raziel*).⁸ On one leaf we find the

8 Other indications of date and place in the Lübeck MS include: fol. 35^r, 'A° 86 21 Mai [symbol] in tracte germinos intelligit'; fol. 40^r, 'Anno 89 im Juli'; fol. 91^r, 'Ex scriptis Cracovi H. Scultetus & Walthery ab mo[.] . . rest has been trimmed'; fol. 94^v, '1 May Anno 89 Harpersdorf ex Bart. Scultetij'; fol. 110^v, 'Ex libri Bartholomaii Sculteti Gorlitiani et scripti 3 Mai[. . .]'; fol. 111^r, '3 Mai A° 89 novi Calend. ex Sculteto Gorlitiano Mathem.'; fol. 126^v, 'Scriptum Bartol. Sculteti Gorlitiani Mathem. libris. 6 Mai A° 89 calendarium novum computatum in Harpersdorf.'

suggestive notation 'Gorlicii ex scripto Cracovij Rhetici Scriptj Barthol. Scultety 21 Febr. A° 1567. Ex huius scripto B. Walthery Iun. 30 Aprilis A° [15]89 novi calen. Harper[sdorf]' (Lübeck MS, fol. 88r). It is with this formulation ('B. Walther Iun.')

that Walther signed the majority of his printed works and poetical contributions. This annotation is significant, not only because it supplements previous evidence of Scultetus' role in the copying and distribution of Paracelsian and magical manuscripts during the 1560s, but also because it definitively links Walther to heterodox Paracelsian groups in Harpersdorf, a subject to which I will shortly return. According to Sudhoff, the Wrocław folio was devoid of any mention of Görlitz, Scultetus or indeed Walther himself. However, his careful lexicographical description of the volume (including the tendency of one scribe to write in tight columns), strongly suggests that the manuscript was prepared by the same scribes in Harpersdorf who copied the texts of the Lübeck manuscript. What is more, the dates of composition mentioned within the individual tracts in both codices demonstrate that they were produced simultaneously.⁹ As Sudhoff has pointed out, that there existed a close relationship between several of the Wrocław texts with other Paracelsian manuscripts copied by Scultetus in the late 1560s and preserved today in Wolfenbüttel and Munich, further suggests their provenance amongst Walther's Görlitz circle (Sudhoff 1898: 530, 534).

However, more so than for its involvement in the copying and production of Paracelsian manuscripts, the Silesian village of Harpersdorf was of enormous significance during the final third of the sixteenth century as the central point of a thriving and tolerant Schwenckfelder community, comprised mainly of members earlier expelled from Walther's birthplace of Liegnitz (Weigelt 1973: 195–212). The existence of the two Harpersdorf manuscripts therefore suggests an enduring connection between Walther and Schwenckfeldian communities in Silesia, and furthermore between Schwenckfeldian sympathizers and Paracelsian networks in the area and beyond during the late sixteenth century. This is a connection that predated and would endure even after Walther made Böhme's acquaintance around 1617, for the cobbler himself was supported by several Silesian nobles, each with their own contacts to Schwenckfeldian groups (Fechner 1857: 61; Weigelt 1973: 205). Böhme

9 The Lübeck MS was copied between 1586 and May 1589 (see above note 8), the dates of which broadly coincide with those found in the Wrocław MS, which span from the 21st August 1588 to June 1589.

even addressed one letter to Johann Jakob Huser, brother of the editor of the 1596 edition of Paracelsus' works, friend of Scultetus, and therefore perhaps also of Walther, Johann Huser (c.1545–c.1600) (Lemper 1976: 83; Telle 1992: 160).

Unfortunately, because original magical and kabbalistic works authored by Walther are absent from both the Wrocław and Lübeck codices, it is difficult to gauge the depth with which he read in these particular treatises, or assess the level of expertise that he had reached in working with them. Clearly, he thought them at least worthy of having copied. However, as Federico Barbierato has recently argued, magical books and manuscripts enjoyed almost constant popularity during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries irrespective of the expertise or intentions of their possessors, mainly on account of their decorative, dangerous, and therefore attractive nature. Indeed, he suggests that the majority of those who possessed magical works, such as the *Picatrix* and *Liber Raziel*, probably did not even use them for magical purposes (Barbierato 2002: 163). I find it however difficult to doubt the words of Jakob Böhme when he stated that Walther was a true 'enthusiast of the mysteries': particularly in light of his later undertakings in search of magical, kabbalistic and occult knowledge, especially his trip(s) to the Holy Land.

There is, however, further evidence of Walther's enduring connection to Paracelsian networks of communication throughout Germany. Following his 1617 encounter with Böhme and his subsequent conversion to the cobbler's theosophy, Walther would not only be involved in the distribution of Böhme's manuscripts, but also copies of Paracelsian and other magical texts. A prominent example of this activity is the transmission history of the short 'Mysterium Lapis Philosophorum ex MS codice Balthazaris Waltheri Silesij', an undoubtedly apocryphal account of an act of transmutation achieved by Paracelsus in 1527, the secret of which was supposedly recorded in a series of magical symbols on the pommel of his sword. Not only did Walther pass this text on to the chiliast Paul Nagel in Torgau (Karlsruhe MS, 383–4), but he also provided a copy to the Hamburg dissident, manuscript collector and Rosicrucian respondent, Joachim Morsius, who promptly set the account in print in his *Magische Propheceyung Aureoli Philippi Theophrasti Paracelsi* (1625). There, Morsius would exult Walther with the titles 'Equitis Hierosolymitani, Theosophiæ [*sic*] & Secretioris medicinæ eximie periti, amici carissimi' (1625, fol. B1'). The original manuscript of this pseudo-Paracelsian text, from which the text of the printed edition was set, can be found today within the pages of the Lübeck codex: proof

that the collection itself indeed once belonged to Walther, and then later to Morsius.

With the identification of these two manuscript codices once in Walther's possession, or in possession of those with whom he trafficked, we have two concrete examples of the physician's enduring interest in Paracelsian and magical writings that exist entirely independently of his enthusiasm for Böhme's philosophy, and more importantly, suggest a broader context for analyzing his life and work independently of the Böhme-mythos. Indeed, supplementary sources make these new contexts even more clear. For a short period during the late sixteenth century, Walther was active as an alchemist, metallurgist and physician in Hungary and Wallachia (Fechner 1857: 69). In 1621, he served as personal physician to Prince August of Anhalt-Plötzkau (Böhme 1730, IX: 12:77), one of the first enthusiasts of the Rosicrucian brotherhood in the Holy Roman Empire, who possessed extensive contacts amongst members of what I have called the 'chiliastic underground': a loose network of heterodox spiritualists linked by millenarian tendencies product of Paracelsian enthusiasm (Penman 2008). Shortly before that, he was active as the supervisor of the laboratory at the court of Johann Georg I in Dresden, responsible for the production of medicaments under the order of the Saxon court physician (Worbs 1966: 11). It is worth mentioning that there are also repeated mentions of Walther in the company of Paracelsians, not only in Böhme's *Theosophical Epistles*, but especially in the manuscript correspondence of Paul Nagel. As I have detailed elsewhere (Penman Forthcoming a & b), Nagel's letters reveal Walther as an active member of a startlingly large network of Paracelsian and heretical sympathisers, not only in Saxony, Silesia, Poland and Bohemia, but also throughout Europe. Indeed, both Walther's thirst for occult knowledge and independence of mind were so great that, for a brief period in the 1610s and early 1620s (before Böhme's conclusion of the *Psychologia Vera* and a time in which he remained ambivalent towards Böhme's theosophy) he was an active follower of one of Böhme's chief opponents, the Thuringian antinomian and dissident Esajas Stiefel and his nephew, Ezechiel Meth.

Somewhat frustratingly, Walther's printed works don't adequately reflect the extent of his interests in magical and kabbalistic areas as we might reasonably expect. Nor, surprisingly, do they even evince a particular enthusiasm for Paracelsian medicine or philosophy. Outside of several congratulatory and other poetical contributions, and excluding the previously mentioned *Ode dicolos tetrastraphos* (1585), Walther composed only one other major work of note, a Latin language biography of

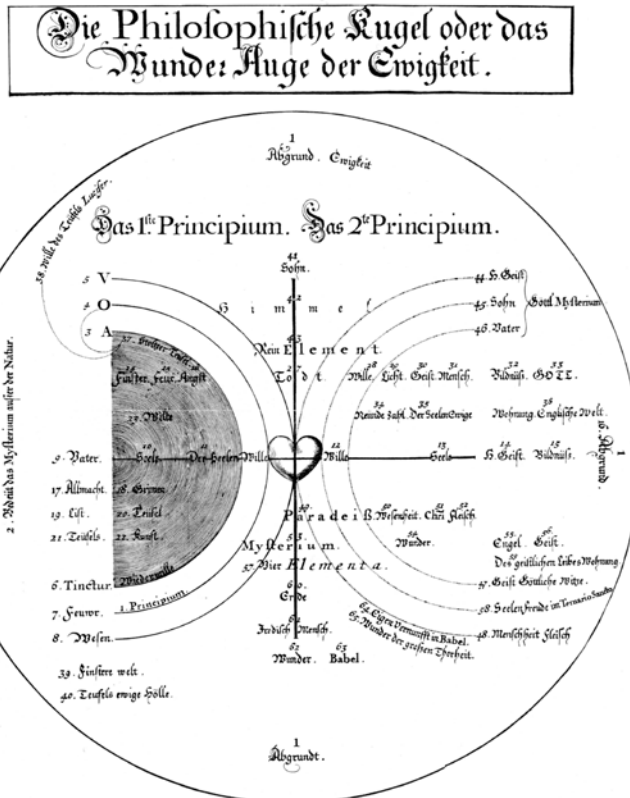
Prince Michael 'the Brave' of Walachia (1558–1601). It was during a visit in June and July of 1597 to Michael's court at the foot of the Carpathians that Walther received a manuscript from a certain Andreas Tarnow, which detailed the Prince's considerable exploits. Perhaps in an attempt to secure patronage, Walther promptly transposed the account into Latin (having first had it set into Polish), and added a poetic *Epigramm* and *Elegia* to its conclusion. The book was ultimately printed, with a warm dedication to his 'great friend and supporter' Bartholomäus Scultetus, on the feast day of St Michael in 1599: shortly after Walther's return from the Holy Land (Walther 1599: A3^v). In terms of its reception, it was by far the most successful of Walther's literary works, being reprinted on several occasions during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Yet despite the lack of any significant evidence brought forth within the pages of Walther's printed works concerning his connection to Paracelsian philosophy and social networks, the existence of a diverse manuscript tradition indeed demonstrates a burgeoning interest in kabbalistic, magical and allied areas of knowledge that began in the 1580s. With this context in mind, it becomes clear that when Walther first encountered Jakob Böhme in Görlitz in 1617, it was not a result of the physician intentionally travelling there in order to visit the shoemaker, retiring like 'the Queen of Sheeba with King Solomon', as von Franckenberg portrayed it, but rather to deepen contacts with the network of Paracelsians that had existed in the town since the 1570s: the same network whose common interests and generosity with manuscript sources had inspired Walther's initial journey to the Holy Land, 'with the greatest industry and effort, in search of the true hidden wisdom, which one might call kabbalah, magic, alchemy, or, more correctly, theosophy' (Franckenberg 1730: 15). That Walther upon his return would continue to seek after numerous and diverse sources of the magical wisdom that he so very much desired, and so disappointedly could not find amongst the magi, should represent no real surprise. And while, unlike Christian Rosencreuz, this disappointment did not lead him to found a secret society in order to distribute the data that he had indeed succeeded in collecting during his adventures, it led instead to an intensification of his connections with pre-existing networks of magical, kabbalistic and Paracelsian practitioners in the Holy Roman Empire and beyond. While the revelation of Walther's connection to the two manuscript codices in Lübeck and Wrocław firmly demonstrates the physician's kabbalistic and magical proclivities, more importantly, it shows that it is amongst the secretive networks of Paracelsian and Schwenckfeldian protagonists

that we must search in order to find further information and contexts for understanding and analyzing Walther's life.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to return to the globe of the covenant, supposedly given by God to Moses atop Mt Sinai, and consider afresh the vexed question of Böhme, Walther, and the kabbalah. For the fact that Böhme was happy to communicate this idea in the pages of his *Mysterium Magnum* does, I argue, indeed provide an indication of Walther's influence upon Böhme's theosophy. For between 1617 and 1621 Böhme not



Böhme's 'Philosophical Globe or Wonder-Eye of Eternity'. An engraving from the *Vierzig Fragen von der Seelen Urstand* (= *Sämtliche Schriften* III: 30).

only answered 40 questions concerning the soul posed to him by the Liegnitzer in the *Psychologia Vera*, but at Walther's insistence, also attempted to illustrate his theosophical system using a complex graphic entitled 'God's wonder-eye of eternity' ('Merckwürdigkeiten' 1730, X: 85–6): a graphic that Böhme also named the 'philosophical globe' (*philosophische Kugel*) (see figure). In as much as the 'philosophical globe' embodied an attempt to bring together all the features of his difficult theosophy in a graphical representation that incorporated the immaterial qualities of God's love with landmarks of the physical and metaphysical landscape, it could indeed be said that this was, in many ways, Böhme's attempt to elaborate the details of God's covenant above and beyond the *Decalogue* itself. The existence of an actual Böhmanian globe seems to therefore support the opinion of the anonymous editor of Böhme's Toruń edition, who, although he was no eyewitness to the events he described, might have indeed been correct when he pointed to Walther as the source for Böhme's 'globe of the law'.

References

1. Balthasar Walther's Printed Works

The following chronological list of known works by Walther incorporates both prose and poetic texts, excluding editions of Böhme's *Psychologia vera*, (already recorded by Buddecke [1937]). Where appropriate, a description of the type of work Walther contributed to the text in question has been added. Following the title, a list of known holding libraries (*Loc*) has been indicated, inclusive of call numbers. In the case of Items 6a–c, this list is *not* exhaustive. Finally, when possible, reference has been made to appropriate entries in the 'Verzeichnis der im deutschen Sprachbereich erschienenen Drucke des 16. Jahrhunderts', <<http://www.vd16.de>> (abbreviation: VD16), and the 'Verzeichnis der im deutschen Sprachraum erschienenen Drucke des 17. Jahrhunderts' <<http://www.vd17.de>> (abbreviation: VD17).

Item 1. [1581: Congratulatory poem, in]

GRATVLATIONES | IN HONO-|REM ORNATISSIMI, ET | DOCTISSIMI
 IUVVENIS [. . .] | MAR-|TINI NOSSLERI, CVM MAGI-|STERII PHILOSOPHICI
 GRA-|DV IN ACADEMIA FRANCO-|FORDIANA A [. . .] | M. IACOBO
 EBERTO, | PHILOSOPHICI ORDINIS DE-|CANO ET PROFESSORE |
 PVBLICO, ORNA-|RETVR. | SCRIPTÆ | AB | AMICIS | FRANCOFORDIÆ
 MAR-|CHIONVM | ANNO M. D. LXXXI. | XII. CAL. MAII. |

Loc: Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz, 8 in: Xc 555.

VD16 ZV 6968

Item 2. [1582: Congratulatory poem, in]

Gratulatoria | INNVPIT- | AS REVERENDI, PIE | TATE, DOCTRINA, ET VIRTU-
| te præstantis viri Dn Magistri MARTINI | NOSSLERI Monsterbergensis Silesij,
Pa- | storis apud Fürstewaldenses fidelis- | simi, Sponsi, | ET | [. . .] EVAE | [. . .]
Basilij Mehl- | horns primarij ciuis Francofordensis | filiaë, Sponsæ. Scripta |
ab Amicis. | FRANCOFORDIÆ AD ODERAM, | IN OFFICINA IOANNIS |
EICHORN. | M. D. LXXXII. | 14. Maij

Loc: Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz, 20 in: Xc558 R.
VD16 ZV 6984

Item 3. [1585]

Ode | Dicolos Tetrastrophos, totum re= | demtionis opus, à Christo Seruatore
nostro hu= | mano generi præstitum, breuiter com= | plectens, | AD | [. . .]
CHRISTOPHORVM AB HOIM | in Ermsleben, Conradsburg, VVegeleben,
Drie- | sig, etc. Primatus Halberstadiensis per- | petuum Camerarium | [Orna-
ment] | ILLVSTRISS. PRINCIPIS | AC DOMINI DN. IOACHIMI ERNESTI |
Principis Anhaltini, Comitis Ascaniaë [...] | Consiliarium intimum ac | præcip-
uum, Dn. ac promotorem | suum obseruandum | SCRIPTA | A BALDASARE
VVALTHERO IVN. S. | SERVESTAE | Bonauentura Faber excudebat. | ANNO
M. D. LXXXV.

Loc: Halle, Universitätsbibliothek, an Id 4212 (11).
VD16 ZV 23734

Item 4. [1587: Congratulatory poem, in]

Trostschrift | Weiland | Des Hochwirdigen und | Durchläuchten/ Hochgebornen
Fürsten | und Herrn/ Herrn Georgen/ Fürsten zu An- | halt/ Graffen zu
Ascanien/ Herrn zu Zerbst | und Bernburgk/ Thumprobsten zu Mag- | deburg
und Meissen/ Coadiutorn | in Geistlichen sachen zu | Merssburgk. | An | S. F.
G. geliebten Herrn brudern/ | Fürst Johansen zu Anhalt etc. beyde Hoch- | löb-
licher/ Christlicher und milder Gedechtnüs. | [. . .] | M.D.LXXXVII.

[On leaf C7^v: Gedruckt zu Zerbst/ durch Bonaventur Schmid.]

Loc: Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, A: 812.5 Theol. (6).
VD16 G 1331

Item 5. [1587: Congratulatory poem, in]

Coniugio | DOCTISSIMI | ET HVMANISSIMI | VIRI, DOMINI FRANCISCI
CRO- | SCHELI SVEBVSIIENSIS, SPONSI: ET PV- | dicißimæ virginis DORO-
THEAE Peuce- | rianæ, IOACHIMI filiaë, Gorli- | censis, Sponsæ, | Benè pre-
cantur amici, | [Ornament] | GORLICII | Excusum typis Ambrosij Fritschij |
M.D.LXXXVII.

Loc: Görlitz, Oberlausitzische Bibliothek der Wissenschaften, Ba VII 4^o 16,24.
Not in VD16.

Item 6. [1599]

BREVIS ET VERA | DESCRIPTIO | RERVM AB | ILLVST. AMPLISS. | ET
FORTISS. MILITIAE | CON- | trapatriæ suæ Reiq[ue] Pub. Christianæ hostes |
Duce ac Dn. Dn. Jön Michaele, Mol- | dawia Transalpinæ sive VValachia |
Palatino gestarum, | In eiusdem aula Tervvisana fideliter collecta | opera &
studio | Baldassaris Waltheri Iun. S. | 15 [printer's signet] 99 | GORLICII Typis
Johannis Rhambæ.

Loc: Budapest, Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, Ant. 2864–2865; Ant. 4670(6);
RMK III. 933b; Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, 70, 410. 2 eks.; Görlitz,
Oberlausitzische Bibliothek der Wissenschaften, B IV 4° 25,5; Halle, Universi-
tätsbibliothek, Ung II 45; Jena, Thüringer Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek,
4 Bud.Pol.29(21); Lüneburg, Ratsbücherei, Göa 94; Oxford, Bodleian Library,
Vet. D1 d.37; Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, HBF 325; Vienna,
Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 64.F.43 (2); Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August
Bibliothek, A: 17.20 Pol. (1); Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 4 Turc. 75
[lost.].

VD16 W 932

Item 6a. [1603, another edition]

‘Brevis Rerum a Michaele Moldavviae Transalpinæ sive VValachia Palatino
Michaele gestarum descriptio.’ pp. 227–55, in Nicholas Reusner, ed.

RERVM | MEMORABILIVM | IN PANNONIA SVB TVR- | CARVM
IMPERATORIBVS, A CAPTA | CONSTANTINOPOLI VSQVE AD HANC |
ætatem nostram, bello, militia[ue] | gestarum. | EXEGESES | sive | NAR-
RATIONES ILLVSTRES | VARIORVM ET DIVERSORVM | AVCTORVM. | [. . .]
FRANCOFVRTI, | Impensis Claudij Marnij, & hæredum | Ioannis Aubrij. |
[single rule] | M. DC. III.

Loc: Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Se 2848<a>; Cambridge,
University Library, Dd*.2.3(D); Dresden, Sächsische Landesbibliothek, Hist.
Hung.381; Gotha, Forschungs- und Landesbibliothek, Hist 8° 05569 (02);
London, British Library, C.73.c.7.(1.); Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 4.
Eur. 232; Oxford, Christ Church Library, a.1.277; Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August
Bibliothek, A: 37.4 Hist. (2); T 5.4° Helmst. (4).

VD17 23:230278P

Item 6b. [1627, another edition:]

‘Brevis Rerum a Michaele Moldavviae Transalpinæ sive VValachia Palatino
Michaele gestarum descriptio.’ pp. 227–55, in Nicholas Reusner, ed.

SYNDROMVS | RERVM TVRCI- | CO-PANNONICARVM, | HISTORIAMCEN-
TVM QVINQVA- | ginta annorum complectens; | QVA QVICQVID A CAPTA
CONSTANTINOPOLI | ad Annum usq[ue] partæ per Christum salutis MDC.
[. . .] OMNIA E DIVERSIS SCRIPTORIBVS COLLECTA, ET IN | unum hoc
corpus bono publico redacta. | [woodcut] | FRANCOFVRTI AD MOENVM,
| Typis & sumptibus Wecheliorum, apud Danielelem & | Daudidem Aubrios &

Clementem Schleichium. | [single rule] | M.DC.XXVII.

Loc: Dresden, Sächsische Landesbibliothek, Hist.Hung.382; Göttingen, Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, 4 H TURC 850:1; Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 4 Eur. 274–1; 4 P.lat. 322; 4 Polon. 29; Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, A: 74.1 Hist. (1).

VD17 23:230309F

Item 6c. [1770, another edition:]

‘Brevis Rervm a Michaele Moldawiae Transalpinae sive Walachiae Palatino gestarvm descriptio.’ pp. 232–261, in Nicholas Reusner, ed.

RERVM MEMORABILIVM | IN | PANNONIA | SVB | TVRCARVM IMPERATORIBVS | A | CAPTA CONSTANTINOPOLI | VSQVE | AD ANNVM MDC. BELLO MILITIAQVE GESTARVM | NARRATIONES ILLVSTRES | VARIORVM, ET DIVERSORVM | AVCTORVM. | [. . .] | RECVSAE | COLOCAE M. DCC. LXX.

Loc: Buffalo, SUNY, DB932 .R47 1770; Cambridge, University Library, Acton. c.42.73; London, British Library, 9315.ee.13; Oxford, Bodleian Library, 24183 d.9.

Item 7. [1625: Two Short Poems, in Joachim Morsius, ed.]

Magische Propheceyung | AUREOLI PHILIPPI | THEOPHRASTI PARACELSI, | Von | Entdeckung seiner 3. Schätzen. | Darvon der erste in Friaul: Der ander zwischen | Schwaben und Bayern: Der dritte zwischen | Franckreich und Hispanien soll gefunden | werden/ | Zur zeit der Regierung des Gelben Mitternäch=|tigen Löwens. | Worbey gefüget | Die Characteres Chymici, dardurch er Mysterium lapidis | Philosophorum beschrieben/ und so in seinem Rapier knopffe gefunden worden seyn: | Und | PAULI GREBNERI vaticinia de Leone Septentrionali | & ruina Antichristi. | Gedruckt PHILADELPHIÆ | M. DC. XXV. | S. Antonius. | Temporibus Antichristi periculosum erit sapere, | periculosum loqui, periculosum | tacere.

Loc: Hannover, Leibniz Bibliothek, N-A 84; Uppsala universitetsbibliotek, A 200 C.

Not in VD17. See Sudhoff 1898: no. 330; Bruckner 1971: no. 30.

II. Manuscript Sources

Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, MS Allerheiligen 3.

Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek, MS O 356.

Lübeck, Bibliothek der Hansestadt, MS Math. 4° 9.

III. Printed Sources

Barbierato, Federico

2002 Magical Literature and the Venice Inquisition from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries. In: Carlos Gilly & Cis van Heertum (eds), *Magia*,

Alchimia, Scienza dal '400 al '700. L'influsso di Ermete Trismegisto. Vol. I; pp. 159–75. Florence: Centro Di.

Böhme, Jakob

1730 *Theosophia Revelata. Alle theosophische Schriften. [= Sämtliche Schriften. W.-E. Peuckert & A. Faust (eds). 11 vols. Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1952–61.]*

Bruckner, John

1971 *A Bibliographical Catalogue of Seventeenth-Century German Books Published in Holland. The Hague: Mouton.*

Buddecke, Werner

1937 *Die Jakob Böhme-Ausgaben. Ein beschreibendes Verzeichnis. Göttingen: Häntzschel.*

Fechner, Hermann Adolph

1857 *Jakob Böhme. Sein Leben und seine Schriften, mit Benutzung handschriftlicher Quellen dargestellt. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der neuen Philosophie. Görlitz: Julius Köhler. [= Neues lausitzisches Magazin 33 (1857): 313–446 & 34 (1858): 27–138.]*

Franckenberg, Abraham von

1730 *Gründlicher und wahrhafter Bericht von dem Leben und Abscheid des in Gott selig-ruhenden Jacob Böhmens. . . [= Böhme 1730, X: (5)–31].*

Franckenberg, Abraham von & Durant Hotham (ed. & trans.)

1654 *The Life of Jacob Behmen. London: Printed for H. Blunden.*

Friedlander, Ernst, Georg Liebe & Emil Thenner (eds)

1887 *Älterer Universitäts-Matrikeln. Band I. Universität Frankfurt a. O. Leipzig: S. Hirzel.*

Gondolatsch, Max

1936 *Der Personenkreis um das Görlitzer Convivium und Collegium Musicum im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert. Neues lausitzisches Magazin 112: 76–155.*

Jecht, Richard

1924 *Die Lebensumstände Jakob Böhmens. In: Richard Jecht (ed.), Jakob Böhme Gedenkgabe der Stadt Görlitz seinem 300 jährigen Todestage; pp. 7–76. Görlitz: Magistrat der Stadt. [= Neues lausitzisches Magazin 100 (1924): 179–248.]*

Koch, Ernst

1916 *Scultetica. Neues lausitzisches Magazin 92: 20–58.*

Lemper, Ernst-Heinz

1970 *Görlitz und der Paracelsismus. Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie 18: 347–60.*

1976 *Jakob Böhme. Leben und Werk. [East] Berlin: Union Verlag.*

‘Merckwürdigkeiten’

1730 *Mehrere Merckwürdigkeiten von J. Böhmens. . . Person. . . [= Böhme 1730, X: 61–96].*

Morsius, Joachim

1625 *Magische Propheceyung. . . Philippi Theophrasti Paracelsi. ‘Philadelphiae’: No Printer.*

Patai, Raphael

1994 *The Jewish Alchemists. History and Sourcebook*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Penman, Leigh

2008 *The Chiliastic Underground*. PhD Dissertation. University of Melbourne.

Forthcoming a 'Balthasar Walther: The Life of a Wandering Paracelsian Physician.'

Forthcoming b 'Between Erfurt and Görlitz. The Torgau Chiliast Paul Nagel (died c. 1627) and his relationship to Jakob Böhme and Esaias Stiefel.'

Reuchlin, Johann

1517 *De arte Cabalastica*. Hagenau: Thomas Anshelm.

Schulitz, John

1993 *Jakob Böhme und die Kabbalah*. Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang Verlag.

Sudhoff, Karl

1898 *Versuch einer Kritik der Echtheit der Paracelsischen Schriften*. Zweiter Theil. *Paracelsische Handschriften*. Berlin: Georg Reimer.

Telle, Joachim

1992 Johann Huser in seinen Breifen. Zum schlesischen Paracelsismus im 16. Jahrhundert. In: Joachim Telle (ed.), *Parerga Paracelsica. Paracelsus in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart*; pp. 159–248. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner.

Walther, Balthasar

See personal bibliography in References, Section I.

Weigelt, Horst

1973 *Spiritualistische Tradition im Protestantismus: die Geschichte des Schwenckfeldertums in Schlesien*. Berlin: Walter De Gruyter.

Werdenhagen, Johann Angelus [with Jakob Böhme]

1632 *[Greek: Psychologia] vera I.B.T. XL Quæstionibus explicata[. . .]*. Amsterdam: Janßon.

Widmann, Peter

1624 *Christliche Warnung, Für einem new außgesprengeten Enthusiastischen Büchlein, . . . Der Weg zu Christo. . .* Leipzig: Abraham Lamberg für Eliae Rehefeld & Johann Grosen.

Worbs, Erich

1966 Balthasar Walther. Ein Porträt aus dem schlesischen Frühbarock. *Schlesien* 11: 8–13.