

**[Introduction]**

(I.) In the 13<sup>th</sup> century Sachsenland was a region belonging to the Hungarian kingdom, an area in the Southern parts of Transylvania. The Germans domiciled here received autonomy (*universitas Saxonum*) from the Hungarian kings. The detachedness of the group was further elaborated with the coming of the Reformation: the territories of the Saxons of Transylvania joined the Lutheran line, formulated an independent bishopric, and even the emerging Transylvanian principality had accepted their judicial and religious autonomy. At the same time peregrination towards Lutheran Germany underwent a heavy increase. Besides the magisterial centre of Hermannstadt (in Rumanian: Sibiu), Kronstadt (Rum.: Braşov) was the economical centre of *Sachsenland*, owing to its favourable location as the last station on the commercial route towards the Black Sea. Kronstadt formed a sort of endpoint on the cultural and religious map of Europe, still receiving Western books, but also open towards the East, exemplified by, besides other aspects, the activity of the great Saxon reformer, Johannes Honterus (1498-1549), who, helped by his erudite colleagues, created a press which also produced more than a few publications in Church Slavonic language.

If and ever this firmly Lutheran Church had concerns about external influences, then instead of the spiritualist movements, they must have been directed towards the other Protestant denominations of the Transylvanian Principality: initially towards the Unitarians of Hungarian ethnicity, later and more extensively towards the Calvinist faith of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Principals. In Sachsenland, and particularly in Kronstadt, the homogeneous ecclesiastical authority shared power with the magistrate and the secular elite in one accord.<sup>2</sup>

(II.) “Johannes Bayer Corona-Transylvanus”<sup>3</sup> (before 1650-1686) is the sole person throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> century history of Transylvanian Saxons who gained fame through his radical views. His case is, nevertheless, a very unique one: in two major German towns, later in his birthplace as well, he was accused of propagating ideas which have always been

---

<sup>1</sup> Promoted by the Project NKFIH-OTKA Nr. 116234.

<sup>2</sup> R. J. W. Evans, ‘The Transylvanian Saxons: A German Diaspora’, in R. J. W. Evans, *Austria, Hungary, and the Habsburgs. Central Europe c. 1683-1867* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 209-227.

<sup>3</sup> Besides other sources, this form of the name is known from university records. The place of his origin bears relevance, since the discussed person must be differentiated from a certain “Hungarus” philosopher with the same name, who was also working in German environment, in Eperjes (today in Slovakia), who died in 1674.

considered in Protestant circles as radical heterodoxies, representing danger to the Church, if not to the whole of Christian religion.

Bayer's secondary education started in his native town in 1663.<sup>4</sup> From the well-to-do city it was relatively easy for him to settle for a *peregrinatio academica*, which played an especially significant role in Transylvania, where no university was operating. He started his university studies in the autumn of 1670 in Leipzig, in 1671 in Wittenberg, and in October 1672 in Rostock.<sup>5</sup>

As yet, not even disputations are attributable to Bayer, but he has certainly published minor writings, although, possibly because of their anonymous nature, none of these are known.<sup>6</sup> In some instances, available documents feature Bayer's "heresies" as his own "false and extravagant" inventions, but they are also claimed to be originating from major 16<sup>th</sup> century Lutheran dissenters. The conflict with his church is only briefly mentioned in lexicons and summaries of the Transylvanian Saxon ecclesiastical history.<sup>7</sup> However, exceptionally rich related document material has been recently discovered,<sup>8</sup> which, besides reflecting ancient and actual European ideas, also contribute to the understanding of the first articulation of individual speculations and the circumstances of a personal drama. The manuscripts of indictments and synod orders form an exceptionally precious source for the reconstruction of his radical views.

### [I. Phases of Bayer's Drama]

Besides the data concerning his matriculations, we only have documents about his conflicts. Four parts of this case can be reconstructed: after visiting universities, Johann Bayer appeared in Lübeck before the spring of 1675, which is known from a landsman's unequal

---

<sup>4</sup> Friedrich Schiel, 'Matrikel des Kronstädter Gymnasiums vom Jahre 1544-1810', in *Programm des evangelischen Gymnasiums in Kronstadt 1862/63* (Kronstadt, 1863), 69-70.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Erdélyiek egyetemjárása a korai újkorban, 1521-1700* (Szeged, 1992), Nr. 1371. (Fontes rerum scholasticarum, IV). He had also attended a fourth university before 1675, but no records reveal when and where.

<sup>6</sup> Bayer's short leaflets, referred to as "Cartchen" must have been printed publications; not a single copy of these has been found up to now, and his *Clavis Encyclopediae* is another work from which only the title is known. Four of his sermons have been preserved in fragmentary copies.

<sup>7</sup> Friedrich Teutsch, *Geschichte der ev. Kirche in Siebenbürgen* (2 vols., Hermannstadt, 1921), vol. 1, pp. 503-504.; Josef Trausch, *Schriftsteller-Lexicon... der Siebenbürger Deutschen* (3 vols., Kronstadt-Hermannstadt, 1868), vol. 1, p. 77.

<sup>8</sup> Several dozens of folios in the *Archiv der Schwarzen Kirche* in Kronstadt.

report, later ordered by the accusers.<sup>9</sup> The reporter moved to Wittenberg after being exiled from Eperjes, and he went from Wittenberg to Lübeck with the purpose of watching Bayer, following the suggestions of landsmen who had already heard about the spiritual crisis and the enthusiasm of the Kronstadter youth. The report, including a lot of dialogues, is very detailed and offers interesting insights into the case.<sup>10</sup> He may have been the central figure of a circle in the famous Hansa-city, but he strived to reach wider audiences as a prophet with thundering voice. Through his leaflets threatening with the approaching end, he could only address his private students and the ministers and the teachers of the city. Although he had been observed by ecclesiastical authorities for a long time, he was later helped by the overlooking attitude of Samuel Pomarius (1624-1683)<sup>11</sup>, who was the bishop of Lübeck by then, and thus he could leave the city without further complications on 13 July 1675 despite his conspicuous activity in the city, which may suggest that they simply wanted to dispose of him.

The second part is Bayer's role on the pulpits of several congregations in his native town in 1676. Considering the previous events, this shift seems to be rather enigmatic: he left as a chase in the summer – how could he get home? It is also peculiar that he received a pulpit only a few months after uttering a sharp criticism against priesthood in general. Four of his sermons are pointed out in the later accusations, and the texts of two are available from copies. The first of the sermons in Kronstadt was delivered on 5 January 1676, and the dissenting opinions below should not hide the fact that prophetic passion and millenarist expectations can be scarcely detected here.

\*\*\*

The third part is the prosecution against Bayer. We do not exactly know when did this trial sequence start, but the accurate date of its ending is known from the *Errores revocandi*, in which his regretted and revoked “false doctrines” are listed in 24 points, concluding with the exact date of 28 December 1677.<sup>12</sup> These trial records form the most valuable source for the profound reconstruction of the ideas propagated by him in his homeland. During the

---

<sup>9</sup> Available in the archives of the Kronstadter Black Church under the title “*Waß ein Ehrwürdig Ministerium Coronense wegen H. Bayers von meiner wenigckheit zu wissen begehret, bin ich bereitwillig alles umbständlich zuberichten.*” Kronstadt, Archiv der Schwarzen Kirche, IV. F. 148 I/4.

<sup>10</sup> Already presented: Zs. Font-B. Keserű, ‘Erdélyi szász rajongók a 17. században’, in Sípos et. al. ed. *Emlékkönyv Kiss András születésének nyolcvanadik évfordulójára* (Kolozsvár, 2003), pp. 236-244.

<sup>11</sup> After being a professor in Wittenberg, he became the rector of the top-level school of Upper-Hungary, the college in Eperjes. Escaping from the persecution of Protestants, he returned in 1673, where he regained his professorate. The anonymous person writing reports about Bayer reached the Hansa-city as a praeceptor of his students, via Wittenberg .

<sup>12</sup> “A. 1677 d. 28. Xbris in Cronstadt Jonannes Bayerus Corona-Transsylvanus.” The 18<sup>th</sup> century copy can be found in Archiv der Schwarzen Kirche, I. F 15 Nr. 33 pp. 598-632.

procedure, someone (almost certainly one of the Landsleute in Wittenberg) suggested acquiring the records of the Lübeck events connected to Bayer, which were written by the mentioned observer.<sup>13</sup> There were plans to utilise these documents during the trial, but the two or three types of more and less detailed error lists bear no sign of such use. Certain passages of the apparently reliable reports from Lübeck refer to an eager, almost aggressive revolt – while such elements are almost completely absent from the Kronstadter sermons and the accusations. Besides explicit prophetic intentions, the reports also indicate the expectation of the approaching end, some sort of chiliastic conviction. Obviously, this should have been a significant point against someone engaged in preaching, since the 17 points of the Augustan confession explicitly prohibit such activities. The judges probably tried to avoid a severe punishment and the prohibition from ecclesiastical services, which Bayer himself assisted by restraining his chiliastic and prophetic ambitions in the sermons delivered in Kronstadt. Therefore, by the end of 1677, Bayer recanted from the promulgation of not more than three concepts (described in more details below), each considered dangerous by Lutherans: the position opposing knowledge acquired by humans, the questioning of the exclusive authenticity of the Bible, and the adaptation of a triadic system quite popular among the followers of Paracelsus and Weigel. Finally, Bayer received a humiliating sentence: he had to attend the rector's theological lectures to study the catechism and to take an examination.<sup>14</sup>

\*\*\*

The final act of Bayer's drama is known from recently discovered documents representing Bayer as a relapse. The proceedings of a prebend include the recently published synopsis of a synod in 1684, "where the false doctrines of Bayer fanaticus" were led back to "the reading of the tabulae of Henricus Conradus",<sup>15</sup> that is, Heinrich Khunrath (c. 1560-1605), the infamous alchemist from the first times of the Rosicrucian movement.<sup>16</sup> The chronicle about the synod is regarded as the last sign of life known today. The records of his parent school, the Gymnasium of Kronstadt, contain the following note (next to the date of his

---

<sup>13</sup> The instructor of Pomarius's children.

<sup>14</sup> „besuche er ein Jahr lang deß H. Rectoris ... Lectiones Theologicas, und mache sich D. Dietrichs Praecepta Catechetica so bekant, das er nach werlauf deß Jahres dem Ehrw. Capitulo von allen Glaubens Articuln gutten bescheyd entweder schriftlich oder mündlich geben, und dann das Juramentum religionis ablegen könne.“ Archiv der Schwarzen Kirche, T f 4. Nr. 134, f. 998.

<sup>15</sup> Bayer fanaticus [...], qui concionatus sit in ecclesiis Coronae filialibus variosque errores sparsisse. Seductus ex lectione tabularum Henrici Conradi med. doctoris Lipsiensis, qui sinistre omnibus intellectis in errores illos incident... Annuitur. Cf. J. Gross, G. Nussbächer, E. Marin ed. *Quellen zur Geschichte der Stadt Kronstadt* (8 vols., Kronstadt, 2002), vol. 8. Heft 2., p. 391.

<sup>16</sup> The expression "tabulae of Khunrath" obviously refers to the rich, primarily alchemy-related picture material of his main work, the *Amphiteatrum sapientiae aeternae* (1595 Hamburg, 2. edn. 1609 Hanau), cf. Urszula

immatriculation) by a later hand: *rediit in patriam, ubi erroris convictus palinodiam publice cecinit ac anno 1686 die 16. Mart. obiit. - Vir cetera religiosus ac eruditus.*<sup>17</sup>

### [II. The major “false doctrines”]

It seems feasible to restrict the demonstrative material to Bayer’s most stubbornly recurring radical ideas, which were held the “most dangerous” ones by the church of Kronstadt.

(1) The declaration of the baseness of human books, the disapproval of science and its institutions are old, enduring ideas of mystics and spiritualists. It was a foolish wisdom of distracted scholars. The doubt concerning the legitimacy of human knowledge has been a widely known topic from the time Nicholas of Cusa formulated his *docta ignorantia* concept. The expression “*the more learned, the more perverse*” was a preferred phrase of the young Luther, and later it was frequently used precisely by dissenting radicals.<sup>18</sup> During his first public appearance in his hometown, from the pulpit of the Johannes Church, on the 5<sup>th</sup> January 1676, Bayer raged against the “foolish, made-up wisdom [of his contemporaries], who became *verkehrte Gelehrten*, and thus took over various heresies and false interpretations of the Bible...”.<sup>19</sup> In this dispute, he rushes against his opponent with a passion possibly reflecting his own personal disappointment. These events are recalled by the opponent in the following way: “He completely destroyed universities, claiming that what he attended were not universities but pigpens. But God taught him on a different kind of university, so he does not need books any more.”<sup>20</sup> As time passes by and Protestant neoscholasticism settles itself, spiritualist thinkers – and not only the more radicals – attacked

---

Szulakowska, *The Sacrificial Body and the Day of Doom: Alchemy and Apocalyptic Discourse in the Protestant Reformation* (Leiden, 2006), Aries Book Series.

<sup>17</sup> Schiel, ‘Matrikel des Kronstädter Gymnasiums vom Jahre 1544-1810’, p. 70.

<sup>18</sup> Latin and English texts also tend to stick to the German phrase, as seen in the extended 1609 edition (printed in Hanau) of Heinrich Khunrath’s above mentioned book, the *Amphiteatrum sapientiae aeternae*: “hinc eruditi illi perversi, de quibus natum, proverbium, *die gelehrten die verkerten*”. Cf. Heiko A. Oberman, ‘Die Gelehrten die Verkehrten: Popular Response to Learned Culture in the Renaissance and Reformation’, in Steven Ozment ed., *Religion and Culture in the Renaissance and Reformation* (Kirksville, Mo., 1989), pp. 43-63. On the history of the proverb see Carlos Gilly, ‘Das Sprichwort “Die Gelehrten die Verkehrten” oder der Verrat der Intellektuellen im Zeitalter der Glaubensspaltung’, in *Forme e destinazione del messaggio religioso* (Firenze, 1991), pp. 229-375.

<sup>19</sup> „...durch ihre eigen ertichtete vor Gott dem H[err] thörichte Weißheit ... verkehrte Gelehrten worden sind, und haben allerley Ketzerey und ungleiche Deutung der Heil. Schrifft beygemeßen, auß keines andern als auß des Teuffels trieb...” Prima concio in Templo Johanneo Ao. 1676 die 5 Januarij habita (Kronstadt, Archiv der Schwarzen Kirche, IV. F. 147/V Nr. 1.)

<sup>20</sup> „... Hat unter andren die Universitäten sehr vernichtet[!] und gesagt: er sey nicht auff Universitäten, sondern (*parcant dicto*) in Sau=Ställen gewesen, Gott aber habe ihn in einer andren Universität informiert und gelehret, also daß er auch keine Bücher mehr von Nöthen habe...” Kronstadt, Archiv der Schwarzen Kirche, IV.

schools, science, books and above all universities with increasing fervour (many of them to such an extreme extent that even school reforms were out of the question). It seems that Bayer was not behind his fellow thinkers in this respect.

(2) Besides this widespread concept, a less frequent theory also occurs among Bayer's ideas, that is the juxtaposition of the book of nature and the book of conscience with the Scripture as the main sources of knowing God. In that time, in the given Protestant context, this could only be interpreted as a degradation of the Bible. Already in Lübeck he bothers his companions with this. The general statements of accusation and abuse are followed by the description of the scene when Bayer grabs a chalk and draws "his fundament" to the reporter.<sup>21</sup> *Deus* is on the top of the pyramid, whereas on the baselines are *Mundus*, *Conscientia* and *Sacra Scriptura*. The unknown landsman was not supposed to describe such speculations; he was expected instead to report on Bayer's absurdity.

In his already mentioned first sermon in his homeland, he selects the theme of Christ's baptism, but it begins with speculations concerning his concept of "book-trinity": The Father, as the Creator, corresponds to the Book of Nature; the Son, as the Messiah, is the Holy Script and the Holy Ghost is the book of *conscientia* promising consolation and sanctification.<sup>22</sup> So here the role of conscience is central again, in that it is closest to the man addressed by the preaching. Like the persons of the Trinity, these books are inseparable. Heathens' attempts at such a separation profoundly failed (because, not knowing Christ, the Holy Ghost and the Scripture, they could learn merely from Nature –

---

F. 148 I/4. Bayer had a serious conflict with her landlady and his countryman in this matter: the raging Bayer tore his books into pieces, then set them ablaze.

<sup>21</sup> *Hat mir auch alß bald mit Kräyden ein Figur gemacht, daß sein fundament wäre, die figur war solcher gestalt.* Archiv der Schwarzen Kirche, IV. F. 148. I/4.

<sup>22</sup> „Der dreyeinige Gott zu seiner erkäntnuß hat uns ein dreyeinigtes Buch gegönnet... nemlich: Gott der Vater in dem Buch der Natur als ein gnadenreicher Schöpffer; Gott der Sohn in dem Buch der Heiligen Schrift als ein heilwärtiger Erlöser; Gott der heilige Geist in dem Buch des Gewißens, als ein Trost, und lehrreicher Heiligmacher wäre." Prima concio in Templo Johanneo Ao. 1676 die 5 Januarij habita (Archiv der Schwarzen Kirche in Kronstadt, IV. F. 147/V Nr. 1.)

*nur aus der Natur allein*). Recent writers' conceit demonstrates that foolishness and chaos have lately appeared in Christianity: when they taught exclusively from the Bible, with nature and conscience left behind.<sup>23</sup>

Nonetheless, there are far and close antecedents of this model, like the work widely read in Bayer's time, Johann Arndt's *Vier Bücher vom wahren Christentum*. Three of the four books are *Buch der Natur*, *Buch des Gewissens* and *Buch der Heiligen Schrift*.<sup>24</sup> Another obvious example is Comenius's *Via lucis*, in which the source of the heavenly light and our inner enlightenment is threefold (just like in Bayer's concept): the book of world, the book of conscience and the book of Scripture. The "Book of nature" was a received topic already at Paracelsus, it was a (not only) Hermetic commonplace. In this context *conscientia* differs from its present-day meaning of a certain compass for moral behaviour, instead it refers to something connected to the etymology of the word: con+scientia (*Mitwissen*), that is, some cosmic law of thinking together with God (social sanctions are only involved in the realisation of this). This approach supposes an anthropology rooted in an *Urgewissen*, born together with mankind. Many contemporaries attribute such a cosmic meaning – besides the acceptance of heathens – to this idea. The central role of *conscientia* in understanding God and the world occurs at Bayer combined with the mystic inner enlightenment. Stressing this point is especially important if we consider that at the time when the young theologian-to-be made the mentioned confession in Lübeck, in a German city not so far away, in Jena, Matthias Knutzen (b. 1646)<sup>25</sup> declared a 'conscience-religion', which was connected to harsh atheistic speculations in his system. According to certain views, this is why his not too many followers were called *Gewissener* or *conscientiarii*. It seems that Bayer's views differ from those of the Jena hellion, just as they differ from the practical conscience-examination of Calvinist Hungarians or from the Puritan cult of self-examination. Maybe the Lutheran inquisitors were not far from truth when they identified Caspar von Schwenckfeld as the ideal to follow for Bayer. Schwenckfeld, a contemporary of Luther and Paracelsus, differentiated between the true and the false conscience (he published a tract in 1533: *Von einem christlichen*,

---

<sup>23</sup> "...es haben auch viell in der Christenheit... allein aus der Bibel wollen gelehrt werden mit Hindansetzung der Natur und des Gewißens, daher sie es nicht anders seyn kante". Prima concio in Templo Johanneo Ao. 1676 die 5 Januarij habita (Ibid.)

<sup>24</sup> The threefold system identical with Bayer's is led back to Arndt by Andreas Deppermann, *Johann Jakob Schütz und die Anfänge des Pietismus* (Tübingen, 2002), p. 325. (Beiträge zur historischen Theologie, 119.) – About the „conscientiae nempe liber” by Paracelsus, Arndt and Christoph Besold see already: C. Gilly, 'Das Sprichwort, 354-356.

<sup>25</sup> Werner Pfoh (ed. and intr.), *Ein deutscher Atheist und revolutionärer Demokrat des 17. Jahrhunderts: Flugschriften und andere zeitgenössische sozialkritische Schriften* (Berlin, 1965). (Philosophische Studentexte).

*neugeschaffenen und einem pharisäischen, alten, menschlichen Gewissen*). It is especially interesting that the synonyms for the conscience, playing a central role in Schwenkfeld's system, are the logos, the *innere Licht*, and even the pre-Fall, spotless Vernunft.<sup>26</sup>

(3) Another returning 'Bayeriad', quite popular among the followers of Paracelsus and Weigel, was the adaptation of a triadic system, causing a fervent resistance. In this system the *body* and the *soul* is complemented by the Geist, pneuma.<sup>27</sup>

*Bayer touches upon this matter in his first sermon in Kronstadt, and in the last one even his selection of the Scriptural text is determined by the intention of transmitting the triadic anthropology to the congregation. He features Christ in his sermon, proving to his disciples that he is not a spirit/Geist, but appears among them in his long known true form. This is another occasion for the preacher to call attention to the goal of 'discovering the three components of human beings: body, soul and Geist, or the strength of the soul.'*<sup>28</sup> *The use of the Krafft der Seelen synonym by Bayer means that he was aware of the problematic distinction of the third component. Weigel – among other places, in the preface of a major work of his – also makes rich use of synonyms: he describes the three parts: the first is the visible, palpable body, originating from the elements, the second is the other part of the mortal man, originating from the stars, namely the ars, the sensibility, the intelligence. The third has a number of names: syderic knowledge born with us, strength, will.*<sup>29</sup> *This anthropological*

---

<sup>26</sup> These correspondences are ably summarized in Hermann E. Stockinger, *Die hermetisch-esoterische Tradition: unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Einflüsse auf das Denken Johann Christian Edelmanns (1698 - 1767)* (Hildesheim, 2004), pp. 727-729, 862-870.

<sup>27</sup> On these problems see Walter Pagel, *Paracelsus: an introduction to philosophical medicine in the era of the Renaissance*, 2., rev. ed. (Basel, 1982); on Weigel's use of this system, see Ernst Wilhelm Kämmerer, *Das Leib-Seele-Geist-Problem bei Paracelsus und einigen Autoren des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden, 1971), pp. 70-76 and passim.

<sup>28</sup> "...erkennen, daß alle drey theil des menschlichen wesens bey ihm anzutreffen sind, nemlich der Leib, die Seele und der Geist oder die Krafft der Seelen, wie dieselbige drey theil offtmahlst in der Schrifft, unter andern sprüchen 1Thess 5,28; Ebr 4,12; Luc 1,46 und sonst." Archiv der Schwarzen Kirche, IV. F. 148. I/4, f. 9-19. Johann Bayeri Concio in Templo Martini in Monte habita Ao 1676 d. 7. April. Textus Luc. 24,36-46.

<sup>29</sup> "...also ist der Mensch geordnet... in dem Leib, Geist und Seele. Den sichtbaren greiflichen Leib hat er von den Elementen... Vom Gestirn ist ein ander Halbtheil des sterblichen Menschens, und ist seine Kunst, Verstand, Witz, Klugheit auff dies tödliche Leben; Der Geist hat viel Namen, denn er heisst: *spiritus sydericus*,... auch *genius, quod nobiscum nascitur*... d.i. alle Creaturen haben einen syderischen Geist in ihnen, er wird auch genannt Gabalis." Quoted by for example Alexandre Koyré, *Mystiques, spirituels, alchimistes du XVIe siècle allemand* (Paris, 1971), pp. 176-182.



*triformity is used in a fairly loose way by spiritualists, as well as by the Bayer following them,<sup>30</sup> it seems that in fact they pose as the denouncer of an imagined dogma in front of their opponents. A group among the followers of Paracelsus applied two terms for the body, in order to resolve and in a distinct way reinterpret the triadic anthropology: the earthly, perishable body is separated from the celestial (syderic, aerial) body.<sup>31</sup> It is generally known that the debate concerning the trichotomic anthropology was remarkably significant in three Hansa cities: Lüneburg, Lübeck and Hamburg, and the clergy of these towns expressed that only the principle of the duality of a mortal body and an immortal soul is acceptable.<sup>32</sup>*

*As Bayer supposedly claimed in Lübeck, “Christ should have been born even if the Fall of man had not occurred, he would have come to this world driven by his love towards mankind.”<sup>33</sup> Maybe we are not far from truth when we connect this to mystic and spiritualist thinkers’ ideas about Christ’s pre-existence and indirectly about his “celestial body,” disregarding conventional concepts of Christology and Creation.<sup>34</sup>*

---

<sup>30</sup> Both Paracelsus and Weigel occasionally render rather plausible and simple duality above the trichotomy: the world, and the microcosm inside (viz. man) are visible and invisible, ex limo duplici eternal and in time existing.

<sup>31</sup> Among radical-spiritualist reformators this concept has a particularly significant stance at Schwenckfeld, and later at Böhme. Cf. George Huntston Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 3rd ed. rev. and expanded (Kirksville, 1992), sub voce: ‘Celestial Flesh doctrine’. On Böhme’s revision of the doctrine, see the early work by Alexandre Koyré, *La Philosophie de Jacob Boehme* (Paris, 1929), livre 4.

<sup>32</sup> Quoted by Colberg, 154. Raselius was famous in the Lübeck of the 1660s about putting particular emphasis upon the triadic nature of man even in his leaflets.

<sup>33</sup> „Eins kompt mir in Sinn, nemlich er hat gesagt: daß wenn der Mensch auch nicht in den Sündenfall gerathen were, so hette doch Christus müßen gebohren werden, und in die Welt kommen,... auß großer Liebe zum menschlichen Geschlecht...” Archiv der Schwarzen Kirche, IV. F. 148. I/4.

<sup>34</sup> Vö. H.-J. Schoeps, *Vom himmlischen Fleisch Christi* (Tübingen, 1951).

(4. Prophetism, millenarism.)

After the landlady called the attention of the superintendent to the clergy appointed a semi-official observer to Bayer. The Kronstadter invited the appointed man to one of his preachings, probably not to a church, but to a family (or maybe to a conventicle, organised by the *Dantaun Behausung*?). According to the documents, at one point Bayer confessed that “God wanted to warn the city of Lübeck through me, and to remind them [to their sins], although I was a stranger there.”<sup>35</sup> This confession is followed by well-rhetoricised, enthusiastic, hot tempered exclamations concerning the sins of the city, his own position of an elect, as well as the certainty of his success. Bayer uncovered everything with great confidence, which may be one cause of his short stay: probably the clergy, having been alerted by former events in the city (discussed in more details below), discovered the threat posed by Bayer, who claimed the role of the prophet in the city’s life. However, such expectations of the final judgement and prophetic rapture were probably uncommon in Kronstadt, or maybe Bayer was simply trying to avoid another heterodoxy besides the numerous others.

Other errors mentioned in the trial documents venture even further in terms of abstractness, touching upon minor questions about the creation of the world, different cosmological phenomena, God’s attributes and so on, and even accusers can highlight nothing more than the confused and childish nature of these teachings. Bayer also discusses the Book of Nature and the Book of Conscience, and he alludes to the *creatio ex nihilo* theory, encouraging his audience to meditate upon the nothing, from which the world evolved: *Was das Nichts sey, darauß die Weldt erschaffen ist?*

---

<sup>35</sup> *Es hat Gott diese Stadt noch zu gutter Letzt durch mich wollen warnen und erinnern laßen, und das hat Gott durch mich, der ich ein Fremdling bin, thun wollen. Ich hab es nicht länger hinterm berge können halten.*

The extensively quoted passages by Bayer and the supplements to the accusations are expected to be authentic, but they are certainly reduced, which (together with the “dynamics of accusation”) leads to heavy simplification. However, a temporal reconstruction of the defendant’s system of ideas can be made with their help. The unequal refutations also contain important elements.

### **[III. Sources of the ‘false doctrines’: dissident groups in Lübeck between 1673-1675]**

The extent to which Lübeck was an odd destination for a peregrinatio academica cannot be emphasised enough (the city had no university, not even a *gymnasium illustre*). One should also keep in mind that we only know that Bayer arrived there *before* March 1675 (by then, his noncompliant activity had become widely known), however, he may already have been in the city in 1673-74, and it seems almost certain that he was invited there.

In the Lübeck of the 1670s, several groups were working in the city in a more or less active way, most of which were pervaded by radical ideas, and ventured as far as to undertake separation (or the risk of it) from their Church. Debates also occurred among them, but they were principally tolerant with each other. There are specific grounds to suppose that Bayer was in some kind of – either personal or ideological – contact with three of these groups, which we discuss in more details below.

#### **(1 The Lübeck conventicles)**

The true significance of the data made newly available in the previous passages becomes truly significant only in the light of contemporary events in Lübeck. According to a relevant study on the topic, the movement in Lübeck began around 1662, when Thomas Tanto (d. 1673) returned to the city after years spent

with theological studies.<sup>36</sup> He was soon considered adequate for candidacy by the *Geistliches Ministerium*, but he simultaneously began to attend meetings held with the aim of practising Christian faith. Leaders of the city prohibited further meetings in 1665, and therefore conventicles (at least seemingly) disappeared for a short time, during which Tanto appeared in Zwolle, as a guest of the prominent spiritualist Friedrich Breckling. He returned in 1666, and events became further complicated with the arrival of a certain Jacob Taube (d. 1680) in the same year.

Taube did not really try to avoid conflicts, and after the situation got seriously violent, he had to leave, but the influence he left behind was enormous. By 1668, the date of the next official record about a conventicle in Lübeck, things drifted in a more radical direction. In the same year Tanto's printed confession appeared, further deepening the conflict. After the fervent reaction of the city authorities, Tanto left Lübeck in August 1668, which, according to Jonathan Strom, was the first step towards the decline of the movement. However, conventicles did not cease, and the remains of the group finally vanished in 1676, when most of the members catholicised. Other sources claim that several persons had tried for a long time to mediate between the group and the city, like Gottfried Friedeborn (b. 1612) up to his expulsion in 1673, and maybe later again.<sup>37</sup>

From the aspect of Bayer's case, such a chronology of events leads to unsettling questions. The time of the first actual records about him in Lübeck, the spring of 1675, strongly suggests the possibility of some sort of continuation,

---

<sup>36</sup> Theodor Schulze, 'Die Anfänge des Pietismus in Lübeck. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des religiösen Lebens im 17. Jahrhundert', *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Lübeckische Geschichte und Altertumskunde*, 10 (1902), Jonathan Strom, 'Early Conventicles in Lübeck', *Pietismus und Neuzeit*, 27 (2001): 19-53. Our survey of the movement is primarily based on Strom's work.

<sup>37</sup> This ex-convict Weigelian moved to Holland after his expulsion from Lauenburg in 1668. He – according to Gottfried Arnold – later returned to Lübeck and died here. Gottfried Arnold, *Unparteyische Kirchen- und Ketzer-Historie vom Anfang des Neuen Testaments biß auff das Jahr Christi 1688* (2 vols., Frankfurt am Main, 1699-1700) vol. 2. Th. 3. Cap. X. § 7. p. 97., Friedrich Breckling, *Autobiographie: Ein frühneuzeitliches Ego-Dokument im Spannungsfeld von Spiritualismus, radikalem Pietismus und Theosophie*, ed. Johann Anselm Steiger (Tübingen, 2005), 29 and passim, Theodor Schulze, 'Die Anfänge des Pietismus in Lübeck. Ein Beitrag zur

and there are even firmer grounds for this assumption. After arriving in Lübeck, the reporting landsman found Bayer in a rather suspicious place: “*in the Fischer Graben (as the street is called), in the Dantaun house.*”<sup>38</sup> Obviously, this is the family of the above mentioned Thomas Tanto, whom the landsman calls a debaucher (*Verführer*), and his references to the earlier events prove that the landsman was aware of the family’s reputation. He emphasises the case of ten women, who went as far as to dispense the sacrament among themselves.<sup>39</sup>

Unfortunately, there are no clear records of Bayer as the leader (or even the member) of an actual conventicle, although there are parts of the landsman’s report that support the possibility.<sup>40</sup> Strom does not mention Bayer, but claims that by 1675 there were no conventicles left in the city. It is also highly questionable whether the intention to organise a conventicle was in accord with Bayer’s personal ambitions. If we recall his eager words about the wish to preach for wider audiences, there seems to be an irreconcilable opposition.<sup>41</sup> His sound prophetic attitude is another abhorrent factor – conventicle, as a form of clandestine religious practise, may not be the best method for turning the tide in a whole city.

On the other hand, the situation is further complicated by the fact that 1675 is not necessarily an obvious date for the dissolution of the Lübeck conventicle. This is the year when Quirinus Kuhlmann (1651-1689) arrived in the city on the invitation of the Mennonite Christian Werner.<sup>42</sup> He was not too much impressed by Pomarius, whom he found to be an orthodox Lutheran, however, he received a warm welcome from the “*Schwärmergemeinde*” of the

---

Gesichte des religiösen Lebens im 17. Jahrhundert’, pp. 92-94. Schulze illustrates the continuity of the Tanto-followers’ silent activity between 1668-1674 with important archival records.

<sup>38</sup> “(...) in der Fischer Graben (so heißet man die Strase) in der Dantaun behausung.”

<sup>39</sup> “(...) einander auch Sacram haben gereichet.”

<sup>40</sup> gab er mir ein Exemplar von seinen Chartulis ... sagte, er habe einem iegcklichen seiner Discipulorum solcher Cartchen eins gegeben.’ Archiv der Schwarzen Kirche, IV. F. 148. I/4.

<sup>41</sup> “*Es wird mir ja hoffentlich vergönnet werden, einmal eine Oration zum Volck zu thun, geschichts nicht in der Kirchen auff einer Kantzel, wirdts ja zum wenigsten geschehen auff freyen Marckts...*” Archiv der Schwarzen Kirche, IV. F. 148. I/4.

<sup>42</sup> Walter Dietze, *Quirinus Kuhlmann. Ketzer und Poet: Versuch einer monographischen Darstellung von Leben und Werk* (Berlin, 1963), pp. 116-120 (Neue Beiträge zur Literaturwissenschaft, 17).

city. Dietze states that at this time there was a group around Tannecke Denys and her husband, Henrik van Schwindern. Kuhlmann arrived in the city on Palm Sunday, and stayed there until 2 March 1676. This means that there is a chance of encounter between Kuhlmann and Bayer, which has never been suggested previously. Nevertheless, it should also be considered that Tannecke is described in the study as a woman with ascetic, world-denying inclinations, reminding to Gichtel and other similar Behmenists.<sup>43</sup> She and her followers must have considered Bayer overwhelmingly radical.

### (2 Rothe and actual political prophecies)

Around 1675 real, *actual* novelty was imported to Lübeck by the tiny group of dissidents having just escaped from the Netherlands. They were members of the radical movement which is conventionally associated with the name of Johannes Rothe (1628-1702).

The family Rohde or Rothe originally came from Danzig. Johannes was an offspring of the merchant branch that settled down in Amsterdam, and he became a “travelling prophet” and a talented organiser at an early age, ?? at the summit of this career, in 1660, he accompanied Charles II to England, where he received knighthood.<sup>44</sup> Sir John and Lady Rothe (a Hartlib-daughter?) returned to the Netherlands, but later they have lived for years in London (“close to the court”).<sup>45</sup> Rothe soon settled in the Netherlands for good, from 1668 as an author of seditious pamphlets. He became widely read and listened to when French troops reached the middle of the Netherlands, and the leading statesman of the republic, the ‘great pensionaris’ De Witt had been overthrown and

---

<sup>43</sup> “Ihr Weltbild trägt asketische, weltabgewandte, an Gichtel und ähnliche Böhmenisten gemahnende Züge...” Dietze, *Quirinus Kuhlmann*, p. 117.

<sup>44</sup> Our account is based on: K. H. D. Haley, ‘Sir Johannes Rothe: English Knight and Dutch Fifth Monarchist’, in Donald Pennington and Keith Thomas (eds.), *Puritans and Revolutionaries. Essays in Seventeenth-Century History presented to Christopher Hill* (Oxford, 1978), pp. 310-332.

<sup>45</sup> In the house of Samuel Hartlib (ca. 1600 - 1662) he became friends with persons like Samuel Pepys and John Dury (1596-1680). The latter was invited to make Rothe’s Utrecht house his headquarters for his work towards the protestant union. The relationship between the Hartlib circle and Rothe was reinforced by many ideas with a strong millenarian element. See Haley, ‘Sir Johannes Rothe’, p. 314.

lynched, when “after a short, panic-stricken period ... [came] the catastrophes of the disaster-year of 1672.”<sup>46</sup> Rothe, the devoted and intrepid prophet (and adventurer) became the leader of the religious-political dissidents gathering along the Rhine: the Labadists, Mennonites, Quakers and the followers of the visionary Antoinette de Bourignon (1616-1680). A short war should have led to a quick breakdown of the movement. Rothe, however, announced the final assault against Satan (in fact, the exodus). His followers set off towards North at the Easter of 1674 as an expectant and militant camp. Before they could reach Hamburg, the rest of the organised sects separated from the group and they settled down, whereas others scattered around in different places.<sup>47</sup> The core of the movement was as radical (even after the decline) as maybe no other schismatic religious group of the continent at that time. And there are grounds to suppose that Bayer felt sympathy for this group,<sup>48</sup> and he inevitably met several times with the figures of this chaos and fight. It is particularly likely that he met the two most important figures of this group: Tanneke Denys and the already mentioned insane poet, Quirinus Kuhlmann,<sup>49</sup> who moved to Lübeck just a few weeks after the publication of his *Neubegeisterte Böhme*.<sup>50</sup> It is completely implausible that Bayer had not met these two, and it is not impossible that the reporter following his activities was simply unable to mention such an encounter because of the conspiring behaviour of Bayer: he might have represented himself more solitary than he actually was, while at the same time suggesting the picture of a restless rebel.

---

<sup>46</sup> Such a description is provided by Haley about the situation in Netherlands up to 1675. See Haley, ‘Sir Johannes Rothe’, pp. 311; 315.

<sup>47</sup> Rothe was arrested and taken to the ‘tuchthuis’ at Amsterdam. Up to the extent of his possibilities, he mediated relations with German spiritualists and former Fifth Monarchists. Cf. Haley ‘Sir Johannes Rothe’, pp. 330-331. and recently A. Deppermann, *Johann Jakob Schütz und die Anfänge des Pietismus*, pp. 134-136.

<sup>48</sup> His active participation might as well be proven, should we once be able to identify him as the ‘Beyer’ mentioned among those taking part in Rothe’s exodus (the reconstruction of the absent first name as ‘Gisbert’ – Breckling, *Autobiographie*, p. 42. – is groundless).

<sup>49</sup> Dietze, *Quirinus Kuhlmann*, pp. 116-120 (*Shwärmer in Lübeck*).

<sup>50</sup> It is characteristic that the name of the rebellious leader is highlighted already in the title of this collection: *Neubegeisterter Böhme: begreifend Hundert funftzig Weissagungen/ mit der Fünften Monarchi... des Holländischen Propheten JOHAN ROTHENS übereinstimmend...*, (Leiden, 1674).

It cannot be neglected that all the ideas quoted above from Bayer's confession appear in the early works of Kuhlmann. More complicated concepts are also found in these works: the three books as a basis for the concept of the world, and the principal of the interplay between them as the sole warrant for complete harmony.<sup>51</sup>

These events, which were especially aggressive and radical in the case of Rothe,<sup>52</sup> should by no means be regarded as something inspired by Quaker influences, since a number of writings against Quakers were produced by the members of this circle, among others by Kuhlmann, too. It must be noted though that in – at least a number of – these writings it is the “tameless”, the opportunism, and the institutionalisation of the Quakers that is questioned or heavily attacked.

Unfortunately, accounts consulted by us seemingly fail to grasp the **true** “intellectual environment” of Lübeck, which functioned as a centre about 1675. The Dutchmen simultaneously involved in debate and affiliation with Quakers are completely neglected by the monographers of the conventicle movement or the church history of Lübeck.<sup>53</sup>

### **3. Quakers.**

The following annotation was added by someone to the Bayer-entry of a Kronstadter school catalogue: “Hic Lubecae in Germania Quackerorum, ut

---

<sup>51</sup> This can be found word-by-word in the accusation against Bayer. Kuhlmann, in his letter in April 1674 to Athanasius Kircher, writes against scholastic explanations: “Nam cuncti Aeternitatis, Aeviternitatis, Temporisque thesauri latent in libro *Naturae, Scripturae, Conscientiae* & explicatur *Scriptura ex Natura, Natura ex Scriptura, ambae ex Conscientia*, dulcissima profecto harmonia.” Quirini Kuhlmanni, Kircheriana De arte magna sciendi sive combinatoria... (London, 1681), ep. 2, n. 12, p. 26.

<sup>52</sup> Johannes Wallmann, *Philipp Jakob Spener und die Anfänge des Pietismus*, 2., überarb. und erw. Aufl. (Tübingen Mohr, 1986), pp. 341-344 (Beiträge zur historischen Theologie, 42).

<sup>53</sup> The fact that the conventicle movement has not disappeared completely is shown by the great bewilderment caused by the conversion of the following persons: Klaus Lampe. Markus Matthias, *Johann Wilhelm und Johanna Eleonora Petersen: eine Biographie bis zur Amtsenthebung Petersens im Jahre 1692*, pp. 106-107.



vocantur, veneno infectus.” While considering this remark, the stages of Bayer's peregrination in Germany must be taken into account. It is beyond question that during the time between his stay in Rostock and Lübeck he (maybe even personally) encountered the movement of Friedrich Breckling and the propaganda surrounding it. In the ominous year, 1675, not as much through Quaker communities as through the direct and indirect influence of open-minded Quakers, Quakerism had a solid influence in Hamburg, in the small Schleswig town of Fridrichstadt (always ready to accommodate dissidents), and in Lübeck, oddly enough precisely at the time of Bayer's stay. Paradoxically, the moderate nature, the openness and of the Quaker elite<sup>54</sup> resulted in the emergence of the tendency of imagining these fairly different oppositional parties as the precursory or early phase of Pietism, which seems to be still in effect.<sup>55</sup>

In the Lübeck (and Netherlands) of the 1670s, numerous dissident groups ranging from the radical Behmenists, the Labadists, and the Mennonites to the Quakers confessed and propagated intersecting but often similar beliefs. They were served eagerly and skilfully by the printer Heinrick Betke, who was from Lübeck but moved to the Netherlands (Hendrick Beets, 1625?-1708), and who was forced to leave the town again because of the censorship actions of 1675.<sup>56</sup> There were also Mennonites, “extraordinary” Behmenists etc., but these groups usually mixed with the mentioned others and also with each other (a nice example of this case is Quirinus Kuhlmann). Neither had the three mentioned groups at the pinnacle of their power, none of them seem to have a strong influence 1670s even among intellectuals (but all of them had full power in other places, in other times).

---

<sup>54</sup> The most famous event related to the link between Pietism and Quakerism is the semi-official journey of William Penn to the Spener-Schütz-Petersen circle, operating in Frankfurt. It is a well-known fact that many members of this movement were touched by the idea of moving to Pennsylvania, with the motto of “leaving Babylon”. See Andreas Depperman, *Johann Jakob Schütz und die Anfänge des Pietismus*, pp. 327-335.

<sup>55</sup> The title of the still widely quoted hundred-year-old study is quite typical: Theodor Schulze, *Die Anfänge des Pietismus in Lübeck. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des religiösen Lebens im 17. Jahrhundert*, *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Lübeckische Geschichte und Altertumskunde*, 10 (1902), pp. 68-96, pp. 99-113.

<sup>56</sup> Schulze, ‘Die Anfänge des Pietismus in Lübeck’, 95-96.

The Transylvanian Johann Bayer could meet several dissident religious groups in Lübeck in 1675, but more likely he had already discovered spiritualist ideas in 1673 or 1674.<sup>57</sup> All the dissidents appearing in the Hansa city of the time could contribute to the strengthening of his prophetic awareness and devotion, which later made him brave enough to act as a pioneering preacher.

1679 saw Johann Bayer involved in a fairly auspicious situation in his native city. No perturbing ecclesiastical trial is needed for a preacher educated at universities to shift to the profession of a teacher. Bayer did so, and maybe it was his own free decision. Not only in a symbolic manner, though: Bayer is the sole figure in the 17<sup>th</sup> century who represents an “automatic” opposition in Lutheran churches: our last piece of information concerning him is a synod order from 1684, condemning him once again for heterodoxy. For this reason, we must regard Bayer as an exceptional phenomenon, and at the same time as a person who maintained consequent and active radicalism throughout the parts of his life we know.

---

<sup>57</sup> No reliable information is available about him in these two years, but he presumably went to Lübeck following some kind of invitation or recommendation, maybe he had heard that the group around the Tanto family deemed him as one belonging to themselves.