

Anglo-German Scholarly Networks in the Long Nineteenth Century

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The two-day conference „Anglo-German Scholarly Networks in the Long Nineteenth Century“ took place on the 19th and 20th of August 2011 at the Centre for British Studies at the Humboldt-University Berlin and was organized by HEATHER ELLIS (Berlin) and ULRIKE KIRCHBERGER (Bayreuth/Eichstätt). The conference aimed to achieve an integrated, transnational perspective on Anglo-German scholarly relations in the long nineteenth century. Based on the idea of the transnational network in both its informal and institutional dimensions, the participants discussed the transfer of knowledge and ideas which took place through the medium of scholarly correspondence and publication, and through the migration of scholars between the two countries. The organizers intended to contribute to a better understanding of how Anglo-German scholarly networks were built up, how they functioned and how coherent they were in relation to the wider European, Anglo-American and global scholarly networks in which they were integrated. Furthermore, they aimed to investigate the impact which Anglo-German collaboration had on developments in science and society in both countries. University reforms, the formation of academic disciplines and increasing professionalization, paradigm shifts in science as well as mutual perceptions and stereotypes in the context of Anglo-German interaction were central topics of the conference. These issues, which were outlined in a keynote address by ULRIKE KIRCHBERGER (Bayreuth/Eichstätt), were subsequently addressed in eight panels dealing with specific aspects of Anglo-German scholarly networks from 1780 to 1918.

The first panel comprised papers on the institutional infrastructures of Anglo-German

scholarly networks. THOMAS BISKUP (Hull) analyzed this aspect for the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. After the Seven Years' War the British demand for scientists to explore the natural world of the expanding overseas empire was growing. As there was a lack of qualified personnel on the British side, German scientists played a central role in British „scientific imperialism“. Thomas Biskup explained the intense cooperation between British and German natural scientists in the early nineteenth century against the background of the Personal Union between Hanover and Britain. Particularly close connections were systematically developed between the University of Göttingen and London's Royal Society, the British Museum and the Royal Botanic Gardens. He emphasized that religion and politics shaped these scholarly relations and that the mechanisms and itineraries of Anglo-German scholarly exchange built on earlier religious networks established by Pietists and other Protestant theologians. JOHN R. DAVIS (Kingston) then turned to another important institutional aspect of Anglo-German scholarly networking. He explored the role of British images about German higher education in the debate about university reform in Britain. After outlining the impact of individual German scholars and of British perceptions of German university reform on the British reform discourse, he concentrated on the Royal Commissions which visited Oxford and Cambridge in the early 1850s and which were crucial tipping-points in the process of reforming higher education in Britain in the nineteenth century. He further investigated the changing images of German education presented by the reformers before, at, and after the Royal Commissions.

The second panel concentrated on informal networks, in particular on the networks which important individual scholars built up around themselves. One example of such an ego-networker was the Cambridge Germanist Karl Breul, who was the subject of the paper presented by SYLVIA JAWORSKA (London). Breul was an influential Germanist in the University of Cambridge and used his position to fight for peaceful relations between Britain and Germany in the years before the

First World War. Sylvia Jaworska interpreted Breul's political activities as evidence for an attitude of „cosmopolitan nationalism“ – a term Thomas Weber has introduced to break up the binary „anti-German-pro-British“ or „anti-British-pro-German“ when defining the relations between British and German elites before the First World War. ELIZABETH KESLACY (Michigan, USA) then presented a further case study of informal cooperation between individual German and British scholars. She dealt with the personal connections between the German architect Hermann Muthesius and William R. Lethaby, a protagonist of the British Arts and Crafts movement. Muthesius made Lethaby's acquaintance when he was sent to Britain by the Prussian Ministry of Commerce and Trade and charged with the task of reporting back on a variety of technical and aesthetic developments in architecture and the arts. Elizabeth Kessler went on to analyze the transfer of ideas which took place between Muthesius and Lethaby in the context of the social and cultural history of Britain and Germany.

The next panel approached the concept of the scholarly network from a sociological perspective. Whereas JAN FUHSE (Bielefeld) dealt with the problems and possibilities of intercultural communication in scientific networks, RICHARD HEIDLER (Wuppertal) introduced a theory of scientific collaboration on the basis of social network analysis. By applying a three-level-model he addressed issues such as the factors which motivated scientists to enter a cooperation and the role structural preconditions played for the decision of a researcher to enter into a collaboration with other colleagues. These sociological papers stimulated a lively debate among the participating historians about the possibilities sociological theory offered those working on historical case studies of scholarly networks.

In the fourth panel, we discussed the ways in which the results of scientific research were transferred between scholarly networks and wider society. ROB BODDICE (Berlin) analyzed the „German dimension“ of the controversy surrounding the introduction of vivisection into Britain in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The growth of physiology as a scientific discipline in British univer-

sities owed much to the appropriation of German laboratory methods. The public protests against vivisection, which arose in Britain, had a strong anti-German element. Britain's most prominent men of science therefore sought publicly to defend themselves as men of feeling and sensitivity in contradistinction to their cool Germanic peers. At the same time, they continued their academic relationships with German scientists, and continued to laud German methods. Meanwhile, the British brand of anti-vivisection agitation was transplanted to Germany. German scientists bemoaned the peculiar sensitivity of the English for the welfare of animals. The debates therefore represent a curious feedback loop, of the successful dissemination of „German“ methods, and the prevailing currents of „English“ morality. Subsequently, ANGELA SCHWARZ (Siegen) discussed the role Anglo-German networks played in the process of the popularization of science in the late nineteenth century. The example of Ernst Haeckel, who popularized the work of Charles Darwin in Germany, perhaps best demonstrates the significance of Anglo-German networks in the context of the popularization of science in the second half of the nineteenth century. Angela Schwarz identified three levels via which cooperation and transnational transfer took place, firstly between the scientists, secondly between the publishers, and thirdly between the writers of popular science. On these three levels, Anglo-German transfer contributed to the diffusion of science among the mass reading publics which emerged in the course of the nineteenth century.

The next panel was dedicated to the colonial contexts of Anglo-German scholarly networking. PASCAL SCHILLINGS (Köln) gave a paper on Anglo-German cooperation in Antarctic exploration. He analyzed the scientific networks by which knowledge of Antarctica was distributed in Europe and became an important topic within European learned circles. Protagonists like the meteorologist and terrestrial magnetist Georg von Neumayer, and Clemens Markham, president of the Royal Geographical Society, were key actors in campaigning and organizing the great polar expeditions of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Pascal Schillings emphasized

that in spite of all the nationalist rhetoric which was connected with the expeditions, they were fundamentally transnational in character, due to the intense scientific collaboration. HILARY HOWES (Canberra/Berlin) then dealt with the exchange and transfer processes between British and German anthropologists who carried out research on the indigenous inhabitants of New Guinea and the surrounding islands. The German naturalist, Adolf Bernhard Meyer, translated the work of the famous British anthropologist Alfred Russel Wallace into German, thereby contributing to the dissemination of his work in the German-speaking world. After having travelled in the Philippines, Celebes and north-west New Guinea himself, he attracted the interest of the British anthropologist Alfred Cort Haddon. By examining the Meyer-Haddon and Meyer-Wallace connections, Hilary Howes shed new light on the role of transnational transfer processes in anthropological research in relation to the different interpretations of the results of this shared research in German and British national cultures of scientific knowledge.

The conference then proceeded to a panel on Anglo-German scholarly relations before the First World War. THOMAS WEBER (Aberdeen) dealt with the mentalities of German students at the University of Oxford before the war. He argued that the education of the German diplomatic elite in Oxford, and vice versa of future British diplomats in Heidelberg, created a specific cultural attitude of „cosmopolitan nationalism“ which influenced political decision-making processes before the war. German nationalism and a wish for amicable Anglo-German relations were for many German alumni of Oxford university not contradictory attitudes. The paper thus concluded that German Oxonians (and British Heidelbergers) are best understood as „transnational nationalists“. HEATHER ELLIS (Berlin) then revisited the history of the „British Association for the Advancement of Science“. She described it as an institution which facilitated international scholarly exchange and the construction of transnational networks. She suggested that the years between 1870 and the outbreak of the First World War, often seen as the high-point of

tingoistic nationalism, were in fact the period when the Association began to assume a consciously international and cosmopolitan dimension which has so far received little attention from historians. Within the framework of the BAAS, Heather Ellis interpreted Anglo-German connections as forming part of a wider „republic of letters“ in which scholarly exchange was frequently characterized by disciplinary and professional priorities alongside (and sometimes in opposition to) national and imperial concerns.

In the panel on knowledge transfer within scholarly disciplines, CHRISTOPH GELBHAAR (Mannheim) analyzed Anglo-German transfer processes in the context of the spread of neomercantilist economic thought before the First World War. The adherents of these neomercantilist ideas viewed international trade as a kind of warfare, a zero sum game that had nothing to do with the liberal ideal of global economic cooperation benefitting everyone. Interestingly, their focus on the national economy did not prevent British and German protectionists from establishing contacts with each other. In sum, Christoph Gelbhaar's paper outlined the mental patterns and ideological backgrounds of the Anglo-German cooperation in the field of neomercantilism. PETER HOERES (Gießen) then explored the ways in which the concept of German idealism developed at British philosophy departments during the First World War. British scholars who had introduced the philosophy of „German Idealism“ to Britain before the war, had to face opposition from two directions in the war. In Britain, they were accused of being germanizers, whereas in the Anglo-German „war of philosophers“ their colleagues in Germany accused them of having abandoned their idealist roots and of having become apostles of Treitschkeism and Nietzscheanism. The German New Idealists, at the same time, attacked their British colleagues as utilitarians, ignoring the idealist shift in British philosophy. Peter Hoeres showed how, against the background of the war, British idealists transformed their concepts of idealism into new directions, and he described the impact this struggle of philosophies had in the political and public sphere.

The last panel focused on Anglo-Ger-

man rapprochement after the war. ANNE BLAUDZUN (Rostock) dealt with the germanophile British historian George Peabody Gooch (1873-1968). Although he lived through two wars against Germany, he kept up a friendly disposition towards his German colleagues, and he tried to overcome political antagonism in his research on German history. Anne Blaudzun described the publication process of an article by the German historian Hans Delbrück about the origins of the First World War. Gooch printed Delbrück's article under the title „Did the Kaiser want the War?“ in the journal „Contemporary Review“ soon after the war. Anne Blaudzun pointed out that the cooperation between Gooch and Delbrück was in many respects an example of scholarly bridge-building in times of national hostilities, even though it was not free from conflicting attitudes and discrepancies. TARA WINDSOR (Birmingham) dealt with the breakdown of Anglo-German academic relations during the First World War and the reconstruction of scholarly networks after the war was over. She analyzed the first cautious steps towards an Anglo-German academic exchange in the hostile political climate of the post-war years which paved the way for a phase of increased activity from the mid-1920s. She discussed the development of the „Anglo-German Academic Board“, the „Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst“ and its London Bureau, and the reinstatement of the German Rhodes scholarships. In this context, she also examined the ways in which the organizers of the renewed academic exchange recognized the potential of such cultural initiatives to contribute to wider political reconstruction.

The discussion at the end of the conference was chaired by MARC SCHALENBERG (Berlin). In his thought-provoking final comment he rose a number of key points which were developed in the ensuing discussion. The role of Protestantism in Anglo-German networks, the social context of the individual scholar outside of the academic networks he was integrated in, the relevance of place for the scholar, and the significance of terms like „republic of letters“ and „scientific community“ in their relevance to the term „network“ were some of the topics which were re-

viewed by the participants. Further aspects which were raised in the discussion dealt with the role of women in the male-dominated scholarly networks of the nineteenth century and with the question of whether there was a „special relationship“ between British and German scholars, defined by factors such as the institutional infrastructure provided by the Hanoverian Personal Union or the cooperations in the field of „scientific imperialism“.

Conference Overview:

Keynote Address

Ulrike Kirchberger (Universität Bayreuth)

Panel 1: University Reform

Thomas Biskup (University of Hull): The Empire Project: 'British Science' and German Universities around 1800

John Davis (Kingston University, London): Higher Education Reform and the German Model: A Victorian Discourse

Panel 2: Personal Connections/Ego-Networkers

Elizabeth Keslacy (University of Michigan): The End of Style: Hermann Muthesius and William R. Lethab

Sylvia Jaworska (Queen Mary, University of London): From Philology to Peace Activism – A Scholarly Journey of the Cambridge Germanist Karl Breul

Panel 3: Network Analysis and Scholarly Exchange

Richard Heidler (Universität Wuppertal): A Theory of Scientific Co-operation on the Basis of Social Network Analysis

Jan Fuhse (Universität Bielefeld): Scientific Communications across National Borders – Problems and Possibilities

Panel 4: Science and Society

Angela Schwarz (Universität Siegen): Networking in Popular Science: Anglo-German Transfers in the late Nineteenth Century

Rob Boddice (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin): German Methods, English Morals: The Scientific Defence of Animal Experimentation at the Fin de Siècle

Panel 5: Colonial Contexts

Pascal Schillings (Universität Köln): Anglo-German Cooperation in Antarctic Expedition

Hilary Howes (The Australian National University): Anglo-German anthropology in the Malay Peninsula, 1869-1912: Adolf Bernhard Meyer, Alfred Russel Wallace and A. C. Haddon

Panel 6: Anglo-German Scholarly Relations before the War

Thomas Weber (University of Aberdeen): Transnational nationalists – Anglo-German student exchange, c. 1800-1914. The case of German Oxonians and British Heidelbergers

Heather Ellis (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin): Academic Collaboration and Professional Identity in Anglo-German Scholarly Exchange, 1870-1914

Panel 7: Knowledge Transfer within Scholarly Disciplines

Christoph Gelbhaar (Universität Mannheim): Anglo-German Scholarly Relations and the Spread of Neomercantilist Economic Thought, 1890s to 1914

Peter Hoeres (Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen): Idealism as a Transnational War Philosophy, 1914-1918

Panel 8: Anglo-German Rapprochement after the War

Anne Blaudzun (Universität Rostock): Germanophilia of a British Historian or 'Did the Kaiser want the war?'

Tara Windsor (University of Birmingham): Rekindling Contact: Anglo-German Academic Exchange after the First World War

Summing up:

Marc Schalenberg (Technische Universität, Berlin)

Tagungsbericht *Anglo-German Scholarly Networks in the Long Nineteenth Century*. 19.08.2011-20.08.2011, Berlin, in: H-Soz-u-Kult 02.11.2011.