



# JACOB BÖHME

HISTORICO-CRITICAL COMPLETE EDITION

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Illustrations:

Front page: Detail from the painting of Jacob Böhme by Christoph Gottlob Glyman

Page 5: »Ein Gründtlicher Bericht. Von dem Irdischen Mysterio, vnnd dann von dem himlischen Mysterio [...]«. Scribe unknown (17th century). BU Wrocław: R 188 (Budd. 69).

Page 6: »Ein gründttliger bericht Von dem Irrdischen mysterio vndtt dann von dem himlischen mysterio [...]«. Transcription by Michael Ender (1620 or later). BU Wrocław: AKC. 1975/252 (Budd. 71).

Page 9: »Gründtlicher Bericht vom Irrdischen und Himlischen MYSTERIO [...]«. Scribe unknown (18th century). UB Amsterdam IV J. 14 (Budd. 100).

Page 12: Transcription by the court scribe of Abraham von Sommerfeld (possibly late 1620s). BU Wrocław: AKC. 1975/271 (Budd. 72).

## »The First German Philosopher« Jacob Böhme (1575–1624)

It was ultimately the problem of the theodicy which caused Jacob Böhme, who was a trained shoemaker, to exchange the tools of his trade for the pen. He himself provides information on how someone like him, who did not attend »institutions of higher education«, became the author of highly theoretical philosophical and theological writings: Years earlier he had experienced a »severe melancholy« in view of the success of evil actions in the world. He was unable to reconcile these with his image of God, and this led to »pagan thoughts«, which he however did not want to accept. He struggled to find an insight which would lead him out of his sadness again, and in the course of a »quarter of an hour« he was given the answer to his questions, an answer which in fact could contain no less than a comprehensive concept of the world which he repeatedly attempted to put down on paper in all its aspects up to

the end of his life. With this work he became the last great mystic in the German-speaking countries, and at the same time he can be regarded as one of the (critical) forerunners of the European Enlightenment, since it was avowedly »reason« which almost made an atheist out of him.

The reaction among his contemporaries to his ambitions to be a writer was divided. Whereas Böhme was prohibited from writing after his first work was confiscated by the Görlitz authorities, a ban to which he adhered for several years, at the same time a small community of patrons and followers was growing who copied his writings so assiduously that not one of them was lost in the course of the centuries. And these two ways of dealing with his work remained the determining factor, albeit to a somewhat lesser extent, in the period that followed. On the one hand expressions of the highest esteem can be found in the works of Novalis, Friedrich Schlegel and Schopenhauer – Hegel even considered Böhme to be »the first Ger-

man philosopher« –, on the other hand he failed to receive the wider recognition among the experts which was even remotely similar to that given Meister Eckhart, to whom Böhme was perhaps intellectually the closest. Even today, he is persistently ignored in some histories of philosophy, which is possibly still related to his lack of a university education – this is admittedly an assumption.

### Editorial history

The edition reflects the situation in its own way. The last complete edition, which was based on the available handwritten material, the autographs and early transcriptions, dates back to 1730. Research and readers have had to make do with this up to the present time, and even if it is quite accurate for that time it can only meet the present-day standards for textual reliability and transparency of each textual structure to a certain degree. The printed versions are typical blends of various textual media which were common in this form until well into the 20th century,

which means that the text presented by the editors is the result of a mixture of the existing manuscripts, and that in individual cases the decisions for or against one or the other version remain not only unsubstantiated but also completely unknown to the readers. In addition there were arbitrary changes made by the editors, changes which were not based on any of the source material, which were presumably made largely with the best intentions, namely in an attempt at clarification, but are however no less falsifying because of this.

### The new edition

The historico-critical edition of all of Jacob Böhme's extant writings and letters, the first volume of which, the small tract ›Gründlicher Bericht von dem irdischen und dann von dem himmlischen Mysterio‹ (Basic Account of the Earthly and Heavenly Mystery), is now available, provides the first reliable textual basis for Böhme's entire work. A total of 30 volumes are planned, and in spite of

Da in Bründtliches Vericht.

Von dem Irdischen Mysterio, vmd dann von dem Himlischen Mysterio,  
wie die In einander stehen, vnd wie inn dem Irdischen das Him-  
lische Offenbaret werde.

Auf den Babel die große Stadt auff Erden werdet sehen mit ihrer  
gestalt vnd wundern, vmd warum Babel erbawet ist, oder woraus:  
alda der Anti Christ soll bloß stehen: Wie gantz wunderbarliche  
Offenbring aus dem sechsten Arcano genommen, hiervinnen soll  
gantz Offenbar stehen, was die Türba aller Wesen sey: geschrieben  
Im E. 1.



## Ein gründlicher Bericht

Von dem Irdischen mysterio und dann von dem  
himmlischen mysterio: wie die in einander ste-  
hen, und wie im dem Irdischen das himmlische  
offenbaret werde: das ist dann Babell die groß-  
se Stadt auf Erden coendet setzen mit ihrer ge-  
stalt und wundern, und warum Babell erbozt.

their partially very different lengths there will be one volume for each of his own works. Two volumes have been reserved for the one surviving exchange of letters and for the remaining letters. In addition, all the relevant textual media will be provided as digital facsimiles for research purposes. Each edition will also contain explanatory texts on the origin, dissemination and impact of each work as well as a commentary on passages as well as indexes.

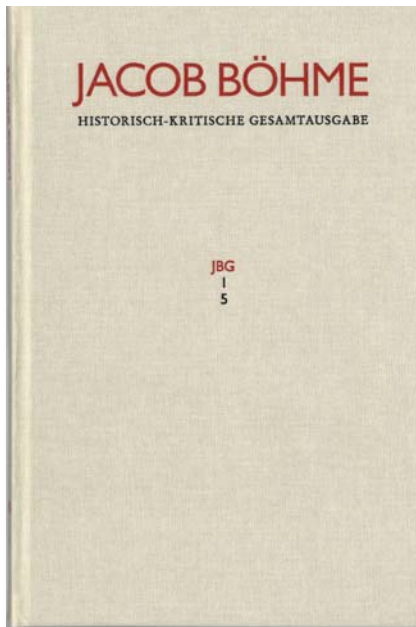
Each volume is also available as eBook (PDF).

## JACOB BÖHME

### Historisch-Kritische Gesamtausgabe

Edited by Günther Bonheim. In cooperation with the Jacob Böhme Research Centre at the University of Stuttgart (SRC Text Studies). 2020 ff. *Ca. 30 volumes. Cloth-bound. ISBN 978 3 7728 5000 4. 1 volume available*

Jacob Böhme (1575–1624), in his own words an »uneducated und not very knowledgeable man«, who was however summoned by God to say »great things«, was one of the outstanding philosophers of the early modern period. The last of the great Christian mystics, he can also be seen as a (critical) forerunner of the European Enlightenment. There was a wide reaction to his writings during the time of the early Enlightenment in Holland. In Germany they exerted a strong influence on philosophy around the year 1800 in particular. Hegel recognized him as being the »first German philosopher«, and



Schelling and the Jena Romantics associated with F. Schlegel, Tieck and Novalis as well as younger philosophers such as W. Benjamin were also inspired by Böhme. For the first time, this new edition of Jacob Böhme's works provides all of the surviving writings and letters in autograph manuscripts or handwritten copies in an historico-critical edition. Böhme's original manuscripts are presented synoptically with a transcription. All further relevant textual media are made available in a digital form. Each volume also contains explanatory texts describing the development, dissemination and impact of the work as well as an annotation of passages and indices.

The facsimiles of volume I,5 can be downloaded from [https://www.frommann-holzboog.de/boehme\\_I-5](https://www.frommann-holzboog.de/boehme_I-5).



lernen will, muß erst in der *Magia* lernen; es sey eine hohe oder niedrige Kunst: selbst der Bauer auf dem Acker muß in die *Magische* Schule gehen, so er seinen Acker will bestellen.

87. *Magia* ist die beste *Theologia*: Dann der wahre Glaube wird in ihr gegründet und gefunden: und der sie schilt der ist ein Narr; denn er kennt sie nicht: und lästert Gott und sich selbst, und ist mehr ein Gaukler, dann ein verständiger *Theologus*.

88. Gleich wie einer, der vor einem Spiegel fechtet und nicht weiß, was der Streit ist; dann er fechtet von außen: also siehet der ungerechte *Theologus* auch *Magiam* an durch einen Spiegel-glast; und versteht nichts von der Kraft: dann sie ist Göttlich (und er ungöttlich) wie wol auch Teuffelisch; nach der eigenschaft eines jeden *Principii*; in summa: *Magia* ist das thun in dem willengeiste.

Der Sechste Punct.  
Von dem *Mysterio*; was  
Dasselbige sey

89. *Mysterium* ist nichts anders, dan der *Magische* Wille, welcher noch in der Dämonie steckt: der mag

Gründlicher Bericht  
vom  
Irdischen und Himlischen  
M Y S T E R I O

Wie die zwey ineinander stehen,  
und wie im Irdischen das Him-  
lische offenbar wird

Verfasset in Neün Texten



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el Spang. 2020. *LXIX*, 88 p. *Cloth-bound. Single volume € 58,-; subscription price for the complete edition € 48,-. ISBN 978 3 7728 5005 9.* *Available*

The new edition of Jacob Böhme's writings and letters begins with his short but, from a philosophical point of view, extremely demanding ›Gründlichen Bericht vom irdischen und himmlischen Mysterio‹ (Basic Account of the Earthly and Heavenly Mystery), also known as ›Mysterium Pansophicum‹, which was only preserved in copies. In it, Böhme developed the main feature of his cosmology of God's self-generation up to the creation of the world and man in nine texts, each of which is based on the previous one. Of pivotal significance is the concept of the un-ground, to which Böhme gave a new interpretation and which like no other is directly linked to his name and his doctrine. The first sentence, »Der Ungrund ist ein ewig Nichts« (The un-ground is an eternal nothingness), is the key element of this work.

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In Böhme's terminology, resignation has nothing in common with the modern use of the term in psychological advice literature. For him, resignation means complete surrender of one's own will into the union with God. In his

work ›Von der wahren Gelassenheit‹ (Of True Serenity), Böhme conforms to the tradition of mystic reflections on this term, ranging from Meister Eckhart, Johannes Tauler and Heinrich Seuse to the ›Theologia Deutsch‹ and Valentin Weigel. The work is also particularly interesting from the perspective of a philological study of the edition. This work, ›Der Weg zu Christo‹ (The Way to Christ), an edited volume published in 1624, is not only the only one preserved in Böhme's handwriting; it was also printed in Görlitz in his lifetime and thus possibly authorized by Böhme himself.

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Eründlicher Bericht, von dem Himlisen, und Irdischen Mysterio.

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Ein Eründtlicher Bericht,

Von dem Irdischen, und dann von dem Himlischen Mysterio,  
wie die in einander stehen, und wie in dem Irdischen, das him-  
lische offeribaret werde. Da ihr dann auff Erden sehen wer-  
det, Babel die grosse Stadt, mit ihren wunden und Be-  
staltten. Auch warumb, und worauf, Babel  
erbohret ist, Allda dann der Antichrist sol bloß stehen.

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