

The Anglo-Celtic-German Connection:

*American Museum* meets *Amerikanisches Magazin*

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The debate among early American political economists over what economic form their new republic should take – manufacturing, agriculture, liberal, mercantilist, and so forth – has been thoroughly documented in recent decades.<sup>1</sup> The old Hamiltonian-Jeffersonian, republican-liberal dichotomies have been pretty much exploded and we have been left with a more nuanced view for the most part. American historians' view of this debate (and this period), however, remains a rather parochial one that rarely extends beyond the new nation's borders, and when it does it is mainly to consider the reaction to or “influence” of canonical thinkers such as Adam Smith and the French Physiocrats. Yet there is good evidence in Mathew Carey's correspondence that the great discussion of American political economy was far richer, theoretically as well as linguistically, and that, in spilling across the Atlantic, it penetrated deeper into the European heartland than hitherto acknowledged.

Carey's own biography offers a good example of the trans-Atlantic nature of early American political economy. Carey's economic ideas developed first in Ireland where, as a young printer and publisher, he urged the Irish parliament to institute protective measures against England. His Irish nationalism and implied threats of violence against the Chancellor of the Exchequer made it prudent for him to flee to the U.S. in 1784. In the United States, his anti-English economic nationalism comported well with a developing nationalist pro-manufacturing protectionist movement that was fed, in large measure, by hostility to English policies, and Carey became one of the new nation's leading promoters

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<sup>1</sup> A short list of literature on this topic should include Drew McCoy, *The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America* (Chapel Hill, 1980); John R. Nelson, Jr., *Liberty and Property: Political Economy and Policymaking in the New Nation, 1789-1812* (Baltimore, 1987); Cathy D. Matson and Peter S. Onuf, *A Union of Interests: Political and Economic Thought in Revolutionary America* (Lawrence, KS, 1990); John E. Crowley, *The Privileges of Independence: Neomercantilism and the American Revolution* (Baltimore, 1993); Cathy D. Matson, “Capitalizing Hope: Economic Thought and the Early National Economy” *Journal of the Early Republic* 16 (Summer, 1996) 273-291; Lawrence A. Peskin, *Manufacturing Revolution: The Intellectual Origins of Early American Industry* (Baltimore, 2003); Andrew Shankman, *Crucible of American Democracy: The Struggle to Fuse Egalitarianism and Capitalism in Jeffersonian Pennsylvania* (Lawrence, KS, 2004); Andrew Shankman, “‘A New Thing on Earth’: Alexander Hamilton, Pro-Manufacturing Republicans, and the Democratization of American Political Economy,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 23 (2003): 323-352; Martin Öhman, “Perfecting Independence: Tench Coxe and the Political Economy of Western Development,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 31 (Fall, 2011): 397-433.

of manufacturing and tariffs. While often a derivative economic thinker, Carey was perhaps the aggregator par excellence in the early republic. He solicited and reprinted hundreds of articles in his influential magazine, *American Museum*, and, even as an author, drew heavily on the writings of others in a manner not all that different from the content providers of today's world wide web. He was an important influence in early national protectionist circles, tirelessly (and tiresomely) arguing that the new nation must protect its manufactures in order to develop a balanced, independent economy. Carey was also one of the leading printers and booksellers in the new republic, and like many of his colleagues (most notably John Coles and John Norman) engraved maps for the use of the army, explorers, administrators and merchants.<sup>2</sup> It was as a bookseller as well as geographer and publisher that he not only helped to spread America's national economic discourse to Germany but brought some German teachings back to the U.S.

If Germans enter most historians' discussion of American political economy at all, it is not until 1825, when the great national economist Friedrich List began a six-year sojourn here. List took part in the pro-tariff lobbying in the United States during this period and is thought to have influenced Mathew Carey's son Henry, perhaps the most prominent American economist of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and (sometimes) an important protectionist. List's contribution to the development of American political economy, however, is generally traced back not to his German intellectual background but to 'the American writings on political economy [he] encountered in the mid-1820s'.<sup>3</sup> Our aim is to suggest that, at least since the eighteenth century beginnings of a public sphere that allowed for the widespread circulation and discussion of political-economic ideas, political economy should be considered to have

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David Bosse, "'To Promote Useful Knowledge': 'An Accurate Map of the Four New England States' by John Norman and John Coles", *Imago Mundi* 52 (2000):145

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Keith Tribe, *Strategies of Economic Order: German Economic Discourse, 1750-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 38.

been a supranational rather than a national phenomenon.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, it is difficult and probably foolhardy to attempt to disaggregate German and American political economy in List's background due to the fact that American-German interaction on political economy had begun well before his arrival in America. This interaction, as we are going to make clear, is emblematically captured by Mathew Carey's correspondence and business dealings with Christoph Daniel Ebeling of Hamburg, whose collection of Americana was bought by Israel Thorndike and presented to Harvard University in 1818 as the first major bibliographical collection acquired by America's oldest university. Not only does the Carey-Ebeling correspondence suggest that a significant U.S.-German dialogue of political economy existed earlier than is usually acknowledged, it also demonstrates the complex and multiple channels through which ideas were transmitted during this period.

Rather than a simple model of the reception of great books by great people (e.g. the founding fathers' reaction to *The Wealth of Nations*), our research suggests that economic ideas, often in their embryonic stages, crossed back and forth across the Atlantic between individuals who were hardly great philosophers – more “aggregators”, “content providers” in today's argot, or bureaucrats - and that, even when the transatlantic discussion involved serious scholars and academics (such as economists Gottfried Achenwall and Ebeling), it often proceeded along channels provided by business networks. We need, in short, to widen our net in order to understand the origins of American political economy and to understand the supranational nature of political-economic ideas.

On April 19, 1792, Matthew Carey received a letter from an obscure German professor, who introduced himself as a friend of the Philadelphian Samuel Vaughan and asked for a long list of books on American administration, statistic, geography and economics. This was the beginning of the

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<sup>4</sup> For similar arguments, see John Robertson, *The Case for the Enlightenment: Scotland and Naples, 1680-1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) and Sophus A. Reinert, *Translating Empire: Emulation and the Origins of Political Economy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

correspondence between Carey and the said professor, Christoph Daniel Ebeling, but it was far from the beginning of Ebeling's interest in American political economy, nor that of his countrymen. The son of a minister, professor Ebeling was a theologian and a musicologist who had the privilege of accompanying Bach's son on the piano and writing some compositions for him. He had studied theology in Göttingen alongside Oriental languages, geography, and history, while his literary-poetical and musical interests dated back to his postgraduate studies in Leipzig, between 1766 and 1770. Things took an unexpected turn in Hamburg, where Ebeling moved after graduation to look for a job from the luxurious mansion of the merchant and privy commercial councilor of Prussia Friedrich Christoph Wurmb. Ebeling then found himself among the elite merchants of the city, who involved him right from the start in the creation of a school for training businessmen, merchants, and bureaucrats, the *Handelsakademie*.<sup>5</sup> Originally entrusted with the secondary role of supervising the students' moral and religious development, Ebeling eventually became the school's director (even if only temporarily), saved it from bankruptcy and, in 1774, initiated his courses in 'Commercial Geography' and 'General World History for Merchants', to which he would later add 'Theory and History of Commerce', 'Commercial Geography', and 'Knowledge of Useful Books for Merchants'.<sup>6</sup>

In introducing his own translation of Andrew Burnaby's *Travels through the Middle Settlements in North America*, one year after he started teaching at the Hamburg academy, Ebeling revealed that he had been busy 'over the last few years' writing a book on the English colonies of North America.<sup>7</sup> This

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Gordon McNett Stewart, "Christoph Daniel Ebeling: America's Friend in Eighteenth Century Germany", *Monatshefte* 68, no. 2 (1976): 154; Stewart, *The Literary Contributions of Christoph Daniel Ebeling* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1978), 12-20; Jürgen Zabeck, *Johann Georg Büsch: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte und zur Methodologie der Wirtschaftswissenschaften und der Wirtschaftspädagogik* (PhD dissertation, University of Hamburg, 1964), 4.

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Stewart, *The Literary Contribution*, 21.

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*Reisen durch die mittleren Colonien der Engländer in Nordamerika, nebst Anmerkungen über den Zustand der Colonien, von M. Andrew Burnaby, Vicar zu Greenwich. Aus dem Englischen übersetzt*, tr. Christoph Daniel Ebeling

meant that he probably went to work on the book for the first time after the foundation of the *Handelsakademie*. But the seeds of this intellectual enterprise were already present during his earlier studies in Göttingen. As part of the electoral state of Hanover, this university was one of the ‘scientific holdings’ of the king of England, and this very kinship had made Göttingen intellectuals particularly alert to the vicissitudes of England’s American colonies and quicker to realize the consequences of George’s policies on their relation with the mother country.<sup>8</sup> Ebeling’s professor of Oriental languages, Johann David Michaelis, had forecasted the revolution of the American colonies as early as 1741, when he visited England for a year as a student. 34 years later, while attending his lectures, Ebeling had published an article in the *Hannoverisches Magazin* to suggest America’s possible future economic, political and scientific hegemony.<sup>9</sup>

The Cassandra like monitions of Göttingen intellectuals and students did not always imply their endorsement of the American cause. When Franklin had visited the University in 1766, many academics had felt relieved in hearing that, in his opinion, Michaelis’ prophecies were misplaced and that the colonies were deemed to remain under British rule. Were we to lend an ear to the scholarly consensus, we would search for the enthusiasts of the Revolution among those German (or Göttingen) intellectuals who aligned with the principles of economic freedom and natural rights, and its enemies among the so-called ‘realists’, who placed ‘more emphasis upon the observable facts, historical development, and constitutional rights’.<sup>10</sup> Things, however, turned out to be more complicated. Isaak

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(Hamburg: Bohn, 1775), iv..

<sup>8</sup> As defined by J. L. Heilbron, “Benjamin Franklin in Europe: Electrician, Academician, Politician”, *Notes and Records of the Royal Society* 61 (2007): 355.

<sup>9</sup> Ebeling, Christoph Daniel, “Fragen welche erst nach einigen Jahrhunderten können aufgelöst werden”, 3, col. 1441-1448 (1765). See also Eugene Edgar Doll, “American History as Interpreted by German Historians from 1770 to 1815”, *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, New Series, 38, no. 5 (1848): 437. On Michaelis, see among others Michael Legaspi, *The Death of Scripture and the Rise of Biblical Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>10</sup> Doll, “American History”, 441.

Iselin, who had graduated in law from the University of Göttingen, and whose sympathies for the American colonies are often traced back to his Physiocratic background and belief in the principle of economic liberty, entertained a vision of the state as the ‘machine’ responsible for the ‘happiness of the burgher’ that bordered on Cameralist statism.<sup>11</sup> Ebeling’s Göttingen professor of statistics and geography, Gottfried Achenwall, had published a famous account of his 1767 conversation with Benjamin Franklin, which under a neutral patina of Anglophilia betrayed a substantial solidarity with the issue of taxation and representation raised by the colonies, and recognition of the usefulness of American manufactures and their right to compete worldwide. Notwithstanding the English restrictions to prevent the existence and exportation of American manufactures, Achenwall said, these ‘must in time be established in the Colonies’ without any fear of international competition, ‘as workmen are few there, and farming is always preferred to trades’.<sup>12</sup>

What “vitiating” Iselin and Achenwall’s liberal approach to the American Revolution was the shared Cameralist background of their formations, the same element that, as we shall see, shaped Ebeling’s writings on America and assured the consonance of his views with those of some of his American correspondents, like Matthew Carey. ‘Cameralist sciences’ (or *Kameralwissenschaften*) were all those disciplines useful for the formation of administrators, particularly *Oekonomie* and *Polizei*, which verged on the art of managing resources (more than on that of exchanging or producing them) and were taught in the light of the Aristotelian idea that the state was an extension of the household and

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<sup>11</sup> Iselin as quoted by Tribe, *Governing Economy: the Reformation of German Economic Discourse 1750-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 117.

<sup>12</sup> Gottfried Achenwall, “Anmerkungen über Nordamerika und über dasige grosbritannische Colonien aus mündlichen Nachrichten des Herrn Dr. Franklins”, *Hannoversches Magazin* 5 (1767): 257-296, 481-508; republished first in Frankfurt (1769) and then in Helmstedt (Rühnlin 1777). Achenwall’s original quotation comes from the 1777 edition, 37. Interestingly enough, the English translator de-emphasized Achenwall’s insistence on the importance of manufactures. Compare with *Achenwall’s Observations on North America*, tr. J. G. Rosengarten (Philadelphia, 1903), 14.

that the prince (or the government in the *politeia*) was the equivalent of the patriarch.<sup>13</sup> As far as we know, Ebeling never took courses in *Kameralwissenschaften*, but he certainly took Achenwall's courses, and these at the very least were ancillary to Cameralism.<sup>14</sup> Achenwall himself stressed this link by inventing the term 'statistik' to designate his own discipline, a name that he traced back to the Italian words 'statista' (stateman) and 'ragione di stato', terms prevalent in the early modern discourse vulgarly known as mercantilism (Giovanni Botero, Antonio Serra, Seckendorff, etc.).<sup>15</sup> The literary reference was not misplaced, since statistics was meant to help reason of state by providing the prince with descriptions, comparisons and 'phenomena' of states ('*Staaten Beschreibung*' or '*Staatskunde*', '*Staatenvergleichen*' and '*Staatsbesonderheiten*') in the light of which public men could best manage the state's internal resources (both industrial and intellectual) and its external policy.<sup>16</sup> Achenwall's lectures certainly convinced Ebeling that the state had good reason to direct and shape the economic lives of its citizens and that the economy first of all was a tool for aggrandizing a country and increasing its relative power in international relations: 'the first degree of the wealth of a nation' – Achenwall said almost echoing Seckendorff - consisted in its being dependent 'only on a few foreign goods for her own use'.<sup>17</sup> Achenwall based his belief in economic autarky on the mercantilist principle

<sup>13</sup> David F. Lindenfeld, *The Political Imagination: The German Sciences of State in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 16-17. On cameralism see, too, Albion Small, *The Cameralists: The Pioneers of German Social Polity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1909); Keith Tribe, *Strategies of Economic Order: German Economic Discourse, 1750-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Andre Wakefield, *The Disordered Police State: German Cameralism as Science and Practice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Lisbet Koerner, *Linnaeus: Nature and Nation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

<sup>14</sup> Lindenfeld, *The Political Imagination*, 20; Kluebing, *Die Lehre von der Macht der Staaten: Das aussenpolitische Machtproblem in der "politischen Wissenschaft" und in der praktischen Politik in 18. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Dunker & Humboldt, 1986).

<sup>15</sup> Achenwall, *Abriss der neuesten Staatswissenschaft der vornehmsten Europäischen Reiche und Republiken zum Gebrauch Academischen Vorlesungen* (Göttingen: Schmidt, 1749), 1.

<sup>16</sup> Charles Hull, "The Service of Statistics to History", *Publications of the American Statistical Association* 14, no. 105 (1914): 32; Lindenfeld, *The Political Imagination*, 20-21, 28; Keith Tribe, *Governing Economy: The Reformation of German Economic Discourse 1750-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 8, 49, 58, 116; Howard W. Eves, "A Very Brief History of Statistics", *College Mathematics Journal* 33, no. 4 (2003): 307; August Meitzen and Roland P. Falkner, "History, Theory, and Technique of Statistics. Part First", *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 1, supplement 2 (1891): 23, 89.

<sup>17</sup> Achenwall, *Die Staatsklugheit nach ihren ersten Grundsätzen* (Göttingen, 1761), 114, 94. To this day, the most



that ‘the purpose of foreign commerce is to exchange the required goods and, when possible, to encourage importation and therefore win the balance of commerce’.<sup>18</sup> Like Dugald Stewart in England and Johann Georg Büsch in Hamburg, however, Achenwall worked to adapt this ‘mercantilist’ heritage to a paper-money economy. He continued to think that, in order to win the balance of commerce, it was necessary to restrict the citizens’ needs for foreign goods and impose tariffs, and yet he justified these measures not as a means to attract foreign gold, but as a tool to strengthen internal manufacture and, through it, increase the circulation of money.<sup>19</sup>

Scholars have systematically neglected the core of economic doctrines behind Ebeling’s literary and historical formation at Göttingen, and used the latter to construe the prevailing, one-sided picture of Ebeling as a lover of ‘justice, [...] freedom, [...] peace and order’.<sup>20</sup> Like his economic thought, much of Ebeling’s juridical-political knowledge came from Achenwall, who embedded his Mercantilist economics in a larger legal structure defining the obligations of the prince and the rights of the people, and famously left a mark in the philosophy of his undoubtedly most famous followers, Immanuel Kant. Achenwall’s prince was neither Machiavelli’s nor Hobbes’: it was the Stoic prince of Justus Lipsius, whose ‘systematical politics’ Achenwall suggested to all ‘writers in history’; it was the prince who directed his action according to the rights of nature and the right of state, by spreading knowledge and avoiding secrecy.<sup>21</sup> But it was a patriarch anyway, and – *pace* the contemporary efforts to make a proto-liberal out of Achenwall - the natural laws in which he anchored the prince and his subjects to were

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thorough study of Achenwall’s political and statistical work remains Georg Achilles, *Die Bedeutung und Stellung von Gottfried Achenwall in der Nationalökonomie und Statistik* (PhD dissertation: Univ. Bern, 1906), see in particular 68.

<sup>18</sup> Achenwall, *Staatsklugheit*, 116.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 116-118. On Büsch, see Jürgen Zabeck, *Johann Georg Büsch: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte und zur Methodologie der Wirtschaftswissenschaften und der Wirtschaftspädagogik* (PhD dissertation, University of Hamburg, 1964). On Stewart and his influences on German economics, see Gordon Macintyre, *Dugald Stewart: the Pride and Ornament of Scotland* (Eastburne: Sussex Academic Press, 2003).

<sup>20</sup> Doll, “American History”, 484; Stewart, *The Literary Contributions*, 39, 90.

<sup>21</sup> Achenwall as quoted in Gerhard Oestreich, “Justus Lipsius als Theoretiker des neuzeitlichen Mactstaates: Zu seinem 350. Todestage (24. März 1606)”, *Historische Zeitschrift* 181, no. 1 (1956): 69. See also Lindenfeld, *The Political Imagination*, 18; Georg Achilles, *Die Bedeutung und Stellung von Gottfried Achenwall in der Nationalökonomie und der Statistik* (Phd dissertation: Univ. Bern 1906), 68..

closer to the scholastic theories of Aquinas than to the eighteenth-century principles inspiring the American Revolution.<sup>22</sup> It is still possible that Achenwall's familiarity with the language of rights of nature had helped him dialogue with Franklin and the American rebels, but Achenwall's *Naturrecht* was an instrument of moral reform, while the Americans' philosophy of rights was an instrument of political emancipation. Ebeling's language of rights was closer to Achenwall than to Franklin, as demonstrated by the fact that he could praise the 'goodness of the Danish Government' because of 'their stout adherence to justice and morals', and criticize the constitutions of Pennsylvania except for their being founded on the 'principles of virtue and morality'.<sup>23</sup>

Yet Achenwall's *Naturrecht* did leave a mark on his and Ebeling's Cameralism, and this very modification, as we will see shortly, was due to facilitate the German-American dialogue of political economy. Scholars normally distinguish a narrow definition of Cameralism (*Kameralwissenschaft*), which designates the *Kammer's* actual management of the prince's treasury, from a wider and more intellectual one (often emphasized by the use of the plural *Kameralwissenschaften*), which indicate the sciences on which the said management was based.<sup>24</sup> In so doing, however, they miss out on Achenwall's softened Cameralism, which maintained a strong belief in interventionist measures, but fought against the secrecy of the *Kammer's* decisions and aimed at extending the debate on the best way of managing the state's resources to include merchants and entrepreneurs. Ebeling condensed this 'enlightened' method when he said that 'no government should ever conceal its measures from the people, and must always handle them promptly and publicly, without recurring to the low tricks of

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<sup>22</sup> As it has been rightly said of Christian Wolff. See Francis Oakley, *Natural law, laws of nature, natural rights: Continuity and Discontinuity in the History of Ideas* (Continuum International Publishing Group, 2005). For a contrary approach to Achenwall, one stressing the innovation of his theory of natural law, see Diethelm Klippel, *Politische Freiheit und Freiheitsrechte im deutschen Naturrecht des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Schöningh: München/Paderborn, 1976). And Joachim Hruschka, "The Permissive Law of Practical Reason in Kant's 'Metaphysics of Morals'", *Law and Philosophy* 23, no. 1 (2004): 45-72.

<sup>23</sup> "Ebeling's History of Pennsylvania", *Hazard's Register of Pennsylvania* 1 (1828): 404.

<sup>24</sup> Lindenfeld, *The Political Imagination*, 32.

politics'.<sup>25</sup>

It was precisely on the program of creating a logic of statecraft without arcana and accessible to all that Ebeling's economic and political interests met those of Carey and his cohort. American geographers and statisticians had guided Americans in the settlement of their cities, in the construction of their canals, in the conduct of their wars (as proved by Carey's 1784 *General Atlas for the Present War*) and in the establishment of their commercial enterprises even before the Revolution broke out.<sup>26</sup> Cheap and small maps, such as those contained in Mathew Carey's *Pocket Atlas*, brought into American houses not only a unified vision of America, but a detailed and 'statistical-Cameralist' description of each state, complete with data about commerce, industry and so-forth. Similarly, Carey's *American Museum* spread among common readers the 'secrets' of a wise management of national resources by way of state and federal intervention, penned by some of the key figures of American politics (John Adams, Alexander Hamilton, Benjamin Franklin, Tench Coxe), or reproduced extracts from classics in the history of political thought and economics. Nothing of sort was possible in Germany, where geographers and statisticians worked within state institutions, such as the *Kammer* or the university. They had, however, their own way of contributing to the democratization of *Staatswissenschaft*, which consisted in the publication of previously secret datasets of statistics related to commerce and industry. Ebeling's *Erdbeschreibung und Geschichte von Amerika* (1793-1816) was born from a similar enterprise, even if he was not the prime mover behind it.

The first German statistician to press for the publication of hitherto secret statistical data was another Göttingen scholar, Anton Friedrich Büsching, a Cameralist who published and widely used the tables and statistical data on industry and commerce committed by the "Cameralist Prince" by

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<sup>25</sup> Ebeling, *Erdbeschreibung und Geschichte von Amerika*, 7 vols (Hamburg: Bohn 1793-1916), 1: iv.

<sup>26</sup> Martin Brückner, *The Geographic Revolution in Early America: Maps, Literacy, & National Identity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 120-121; Walter W. Ristow, *American Maps and Mapmakers: Commercial Cartography in the Nineteenth Century* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1985), 135, 151.

definition, Frederick the Great, and kept secret until then.<sup>27</sup> His *Neue Erdbeschreibung* (1754-1792) was the first German serious effort to bring the *kammer*'s secret knowledge of internal and foreign policies to the common people, and Ebeling's major work on America was the 'continuation' of the project: a set of seven volumes which followed Büsching's statistical gallery of European states.<sup>28</sup> In them, Ebeling simply developed the scheme adopted by Achenwall in interviewing Franklin. Instead of letting him speak with his own words to the German people, Achenwall had woven a bricolage of Franklin's answers to different questions according to the pattern then prevalent in the discipline of statistics, as if Franklin were speaking with the voice and method of a German Cameralist: he was first made to describe the vegetation and plant life of the North American colonies, then their urban settlements, followed by population, social patterns, state constitutions, legal and educative institutions, farming, fishing, manufactures, and commerce, both national and international. Ebeling followed approximately the same order of arguments when he described the characteristics of each American state in his *Erdbeschreibung*. He first gave a detailed description of its 'location and size', climate, 'composition of the ground', 'stretches of water', natural products (stones, plants, and farming), fisheries, inhabitants, government, system of public finance, military, religions, trade and manufacture, 'description of the place'. This information, like that spread by Carey among Western settlers and future entrepreneurs, was destined to teach a profane public of business people, particularly his Hamburg students, to harness the resources usually controlled by *Kammerherrn*. In the late nineteenth century Hamburg was still the 'florentissimum Emporium totius Germaniae' it had been in the sixteenth century, what Johann Ulrich Pauli defined 'nothing more than a commercial state, in which

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<sup>27</sup> August Meitzen and Roland P. Falkner, "History, Theory, and Technique of Statistics. Part First: History of Statistics", *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 1, supplement 2, part 1 (1891): 28 (1+3-100); David Blackbourn, *The Conquest of Nature: Water, Landscape, and the Making of Modern Germany* (New York and London: Norton, 2006).

<sup>28</sup> Ebeling, *Erdbeschreibung* 1: v-vi.

each and every thing draws its politics, raison d'être, and its very essence from commerce'.<sup>29</sup> After the Thirty Years War, however, and the blockade of Mediterranean coasts by Barbary pirates, the axis of Hamburg's main commercial alliances and interests shifted away from England, whose European incursions had provoked a strong resentment all over the continent, and Spain or Portugal towards France.<sup>30</sup> This Anglophobic wave and subsequent French connection brought Hamburg's merchants closer to America and led them to sound out the possibility of establishing long distance commerce with them. And yet the chronic absence of money in the states of North America and the financial yoke imposed by the English merchants on their American colleagues had made any form of commercial transaction with them highly risky if not impracticable. Ebeling's detailed account of the economy and politics of the United States was meant, in a Cameralist fashion, to present a dataset through which to analyze the possible directions the American economy would take in the near future and their consequences for the international balance of power.

While Ebeling already had contacts in America he apparently did not yet have a reliable book source in Philadelphia before he came into contact with Carey. In the summer of 1791 he wrote, "everywhere there is the same lack of good books. My friend in Baltimore has, however, again promised me everything and I have put him in contact with my friend in Philadelphia"<sup>31</sup> Shortly thereafter Ebeling made contact with Carey via the Baltimore merchant Charles Ghequiere who forwarded Ebeling's request for books to Daniel Freihauf in Philadelphia. That same day, Ebeling wrote a letter directly to Carey in which he mentioned Samuel Vaughan as a reference. Both letters appear to have reached Carey eventually as they are archived with Carey's incoming correspondence in

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<sup>29</sup> Quoted in Mary Lindemann, *Patriots and Paupers: Hamburg, 1712-1830* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 5.

<sup>30</sup> Lindemann, 33-34.

<sup>31</sup> Carey to Hofrath 30 July 1791, Lea and Febiger records, 1785-1792 Collection 227 B Mathew Carey Correspondence, 1785-1796 (hereafter Lea and Febiger).

the Lea-Febiger collection at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.<sup>32</sup> Ebeling was already familiar with Carey's work in 1792, having received copies of the *American Museum* through a German bookseller.<sup>33</sup>

Ebeling's requests for publications from Carey were consonant with his intention to promote trade with the new nation and formulated in line with the cameralist focus on political-economy and coordinated development of national production. In his first letter to Carey, Ebeling requested a long list of books, a list that he shared with other American merchants, including Ghequiere. He most likely culled many of these titles from advertisements in periodicals.<sup>34</sup> Ebeling apparently wanted these books for his own use rather than for a bookselling venture as he stipulated that he desired no duplicates of any works. He did, however, hold out hope to Ghequiere and Carey that in the future he might be able to broker larger sales with German libraries and “literati” in Germany and the rest of Europe.<sup>35</sup> Beyond the specific titles, Ebeling requested a number of “general commissions,” essentially a standing order for certain publications. These included, “all new maps” of the United States and British colonies and all new original American publications “concerning the geography, topography, commerce, navigation, [and] finances of the North American states as well as all accounts of travel through the states. He also requested laws and acts of Congress, all of the United States, the Canadian provinces and West Indian colonies. Finally, he requested copies of Vincent Pelosi's *Marine List* and of Carey's *American Museum*.<sup>36</sup>

Carey and Ebeling's business connection continued for roughly three years. During this time Ebeling requested 100 specific titles from Carey (exclusive of maps). Of these, the largest group (31) dealt with legal issues. Most of these were collections of state laws, although Ebeling also requested

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<sup>32</sup> Ebeling to Freihauf, April 19, 1792; Ebeling to Carey, April 19, 1792. Lea and Febiger

<sup>33</sup> Carey to Hofrath 30 July 1791. Lea and Febiger

<sup>34</sup> Evidence that he relied on advertisements includes the fact that he requested a number of books that were not yet published but might well have been advertised.

<sup>35</sup> Ebeling to Ghequiere Dec. 9, 1791. Ebeling to Carey, Nov. 12, 1791. Lea and Febiger

<sup>36</sup> Ebeling to Carey, Sept. 25, 1792. Lea and Febiger

some general legal titles, such as *Observations on the Government of the United States*. The next largest category, with 17 requests, was for specific periodicals, including newspapers, magazines, almanacs, and others. History was the third largest category (9) followed by economics (8), geography (7), and literature (6). Ebeling also requested small numbers of biographies (4), city directories (3), religious (3) and scientific (2) titles.

It is unclear which or how many of these books arrived in Germany as we have not yet discovered any accounts or receipts. It is clear from the Carey-Ebeling correspondence, however, that Ebeling received at least five packages of books from Carey – four in 1793 and one in 1794. Ebeling's response to Carey's first shipment seems to indicate that Carey fulfilled the bulk of his order as Ebeling wrote that only two items were lacking. Carey also apparently added a number of extra books and maps for Ebeling to sell on commission. Ebeling sold some of these himself and gave others to booksellers to peddle at the Leipzig Fair. Carey also sent 297 copies of a German book – presumably printed in America – which Ebeling forwarded to a local bookseller to dispose of.<sup>37</sup> The bulk of this book trade went from America to Germany. Ebeling offered to send Carey a number of books printed in Germany, but Carey seems only to have been interested in receiving some German hymn books, no doubt to sell to the many Germans in the environs of Philadelphia.

The titles requested by Ebeling at first may not seem to be dominated by political-economic concerns. Fewer than 10% were specifically economic topics. However, considering these titles through the lens of cameralist concerns highlights Ebeling's political-economic interests. Books about American commerce, navigation and finance obviously have an economic component, and for cameralists interested in the circulation of goods and money within a polity they would be crucially important. Likewise, acts of Congress and state laws would be of crucial importance to cameralists

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<sup>37</sup> Ebeling to C Mar. 15, 1793; *Ibid* May 28, 1793; *Ibid* Aug. 30, 1793; *Ibid* Oct. 14, 1793; Nov. 30, 1793, Mar. 20, 1794, Feb. 26, 1795, Sept. 20, 1794. Lea and Febiger

intent on considering methods of state economic regulation. Pelosi's *Marine List*, which chronicled exports and imports likewise had obvious political-economic relevance, particularly in relation to the duties and tariffs that were so important to mercantilist and cameralist thought. Finally, as will be discussed below, the neo-mercantilistic tone and the raw economic data provided in Carey's *American Museum* would be similarly appealing and useful.

The great majority of the specific titles requested by Ebeling were collections of acts and statutes for the various North American polities. While not specifically economic, these titles clearly would have been important to German cameralists seeking to understand or American political-economy and accustomed to governments that crafted legislation to prime the economy. Other titles also accorded well with cameralist sensibilities. Two titles, *The American Accountant* and the *Complete Counting House Companion* would illuminate American methods of record keeping. John Spurrier's *Practical Farmer*, part of a larger debate over the productivity of American farming, would be of interest to cameralists accustomed to using state power to maximize agricultural production.<sup>38</sup> As such it would. Pelosi's *Marine List* (already mentioned above) would certainly fit in with cameralist interests in regulating international trade (as could the legal volumes).

Most of the other economic titles related to the important ongoing debate over the form of the new nation's political-economy. In gauging America's suitability as a trading partner, cameralist Germans would no doubt be particularly interested in American efforts to regulate their economy and to stimulate commerce, manufacturing, and agriculture. As we have said before, Ebeling was interested in this debate well before he came into contact with Carey and this interest was reflected in the publication of two journals, the *Amerikanische Magazin* (1777-1778) and the *Handlungs Bibliothek* (1784-1797), both inspired by Ebeling's project of popularizing mercantilist thinking among merchants

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<sup>38</sup> Joyce Appleby, *Liberalism and Republicanism in the Historical Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 265-75.



and business men. The *Amerikanische Bibliothek* contained extensive data on New England's commerce with Britain and on American imports and exports. The *Handlungsbibliothek* (1784-89) contained the German translation of Lord Sheffield's famous *Observations on the Commerce of the American States*, which incensed American mercantilists by arguing that the United States could not survive economically without Britain.<sup>39</sup> As the crucial figure in the political-economic debate of the 1790s and the federal government's chief financial officer, Alexander Hamilton greatly interested Ebeling, who requested *The Examination of the Official Conduct of Mr. Hamilton* from Carey. Thomas Paine's *Dissertations on Government, The Affairs of the Bank, and Paper Money*, was also relevant to the debate over the new nation's fiscal structure even though it referred to a state bank – Pennsylvania's Bank of North America – rather than to Hamilton's federally chartered Bank of the United States. Both were quite controversial, and the future of such institutions would certainly be of interest to German cameralists who tended to size up an economy based on state action rather than individual activity.

Another title, George Logan's "Five letters Addressed to the Yeomanry of the United States," also helped to illuminate a controversy provoked by Hamilton's program. Logan, a gentleman farmer and political figure, strongly opposed Hamilton's proposed federal Society for Establishing Useful Manufactures on the grounds that it would create a manufacturing monopoly that would impoverish small manufactures unable to compete with it.<sup>40</sup> Logan also attacked Hamilton's funding system and his Bank of the United States in a similarly titled pamphlet, "Letters Addressed to the Yeomanry of the United States," published one year later. Ebeling's somewhat ambiguous request for "Letters to the Yeomanry" might have been for either, but he noted a 1792 publication date, which would seem to indicate the earlier pamphlet and there is evidence that it is the one that Carey sent him.

Finally, Ebeling requested William Bingham's *A Letter from an American... Containing*

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<sup>39</sup> "Anmerkungen über den Handel der vereinten Staaten in Nordamerika", *Handlungsmagazin* (1785): 469-505.

<sup>40</sup> Peskin, *Manufacturing Revolution*, 116-117; Frederick Tolles, *George Logan of Philadelphia* (Oxford, 1953) 115-122.

*Strictures on Lord Sheffield's Pamphlet on the Commerce of the United States*. This pamphlet would be a must-read for Ebeling considering his earlier work translating Sheffield's pamphlet. While Sheffield had argued that Britain should vigorously counter potential commercial competition with the new nation by restricting the United States' trade with the British West Indies, Bingham wrote that British restrictions would actually have the opposite effect. Instead of enriching the British empire by eliminating American competition, they would starve the West Indian sugar plantations, which depended on American food, and, rather than damaging the United States, such restrictions would instead tie them more closely to each other and allow them to become still more independent as they spurred internal trade networks and developed their own manufacturing capacity rather than relying on British trade and British manufactures. This analysis led Bingham to urge Parliament to consider free, unrestrained trade with the former colonies.

It is not easy to access the impact this book trade might have had in Germany beyond its immediate utility to Ebeling. However, there is good evidence that it did move beyond Ebeling and his immediate circle. While Ebeling only requested one copy of each title, Carey sent him multiple copies of at least some titles that Ebeling then distributed to book fairs. Furthermore, Ebeling may well have lent many of his books out to students and colleagues. It is also certain that Carey's magazine, *The American Museum* did circulate through Germany. As already noted, Ebeling had obtained copies even before corresponding with Carey, who sent him a bundle of *Museums* in March of 1793 with the request that Ebeling sell them and send Carey German Lutheran hymnals in exchange. Ebeling dutifully advertised the *Museum* for sale in a Hamburg newspaper but doubted it would sell due to its high price. Nevertheless, to his surprise the *Museum* sold out entirely within a few months.<sup>41</sup>

It is easy to understand why the *Museum* would have appealed to Germans, particularly those

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<sup>41</sup> C to E Mar. 20, 1793; E to C May 28, 1793; E to C Aug. 30, 1793; E to C Oct. 14, 1793. Lea and Febiger...?????

who were interested in the American trade. Every volume, indeed every issue, provided valuable economic data of the sort that cameralists were used to collecting and distributing amongst themselves and were then beginning to spread among common readers under the pressure of statisticians like Büsching and Ebeling. The *Museum* also reflected Carey's nationalistic neo-mercantilistic economics, an approach that was very much in line with cameralist concerns about restricting the need for foreign goods, strengthening domestic manufacturing and increasing the circulation of money. While the *Museum* printed a great deal of fiction and non-economic prose, each issue carried articles and excerpts of state papers that addressed the crucial economic issues of the day. The issues printed in 1792, the first year of the Carey-Ebeling correspondence and last of the magazine's publication, was no exception. Beginning in January, Carey serialized Hamilton's entire *Report on Manufactures*. This report, calling for federal creation of the Society for Encouraging Useful manufactures and its massive factory in Patterson, NJ, stirred up a great deal of controversy and secured its author a reputation as a leading mercantilist thinker.<sup>42</sup> Carey also printed Hamilton's report on the excise law in May and, in September, portions of Logan's *Letters Addressed to the Yeomanry of the United States* which, as noted above attacked the Report on Manufactures and was one of the books specifically requested of Carey by Ebeling. The August issue contained a complicated debate, initiated by Philadelphia merchant John Swanwick, over how to calibrate American tariff legislation to best protect American shipping. The March issue contained census material from all sixteen states. The July issue contained an abstract of United States exports and a summary of British trade restriction and impositions on the United States. The magazine also frequently reported on American manufacturing societies and agricultural societies whose frequently neo-mercantilistic members sought to maximize economic production and create trade connections in ways that would have interested German cameralists like Ebeling as much as they interested Carey.

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<sup>42</sup> This reputation has subsequently been attacked on the grounds that Tench Coxe, not Hamilton, wrote much of the report.

The *Museum* certainly interested Ebeling. When he learned the 1792 volume was to be Carey's last he wrote him, "Your Museum I wish may not be stopt entirely but will be retaken soon."<sup>43</sup> Ebeling not only shared the American mercantilist approach to economics, founded on the idea that merchants and not only statesmen should be instructed in the principles leading to the 'common good', but relied both on the *Museum* and the books sent by Carey to complete his *Erdbeschreibung*. Ebeling's repeated complaints to Carey about his difficulty in acquiring appropriate materials for his study suggest how highly Ebeling valued the books sent to him by Carey.. As soon as Ebeling completed the second volume he sent a copy to Carey to be forwarded to the American Philosophical Society.<sup>44</sup> Ebeling later praised Carey as "a patriotic and insightful bookseller, who already deserves merit for issuing the volumes of the *American museum*" in his *Amerikanisches Magazin*.<sup>45</sup>

Citations in the *Erdbeschreibung* clearly reveal Carey's *American Museum* importance to Ebeling.<sup>46</sup> It is mentioned several times, including a reference to volume 8, which was published in 1790. Clearly Ebeling had read a number of copies of the *Museum* besides the final volumes (published in 1792) that he requested from Carey. Ebeling also relied on Logan's *Five Letters...* and cited them as having been published in the *American Museum* volume XII, a good indication that he read them in Carey's magazine rather than (or before) reading them in book form. He also cited two other publications that were serialized in the *Museum*: Hamilton's *Report on Manufactures* and Tench Coxe's *A Brief Examination of Lord Sheffield's Observations on the Commerce of the United States*. In addition, Ebeling frequently cited journals and legal volumes that he requested from Carey in their correspondence.

Carey's and Ebeling's perspectives aligned not only in their shared neo-mercantilist approach

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<sup>43</sup> Ebeling to Carey Aug. 30, 1793. Lea and Febiger

<sup>44</sup> Ebeling to Carey Mar. 20, 1794, Feb. 26, 1795, April 12, 1795. Lea and Febiger

<sup>45</sup> Ebeling, "Ein Paar Rezensionen, Amerika betreffend", *Amerikanisches Magazin* 1, no. 4 (1797): 163 (170-184)..

<sup>46</sup> Ebeling quoted from Carey's *American Museum* extensively in his *Erdbeschreibung*, and sometimes, like in vol. 2 ("Rhode Island"), inserted it among the chapter's general sources.

and their common intent to democratize economic knowledge, but also in their treatments of specific themes, such as in the controversy surrounding Lord Sheffield's pronouncements. As noted earlier, Ebeling translated Sheffield's book calling for strong restrictions on American trade with Britain and its colonies, and requested William Bingham's response to Sheffield from Carey. Ebeling also frequently cited Tench Coxe's long response to Sheffield in the *Erdbeschreibung*. Ebeling could have been introduced to Coxe's work in serialized form in the *American Museum*. Coxe shared Bingham's belief that restrictions on American goods would push the former colonies to become more united and more economically independent, thereby causing America to lose its dependency on British goods. But, while Bingham urged Parliament to lift trade restrictions in order to keep America dependent, Coxe hoped that British restrictions would, in fact, lead to American economic independence. Bingham has been seen as an advocate of free trade because of his stance against the restrictions, while Coxe is often described as a neo-mercantilist for his support of protective measures and the Society for Encouraging Useful Manufactures. However, in this case both Bingham and Coxe are really working from the same neo-mercantilist assumptions – that protecting the American market from British goods (intentionally or unintentionally) will stimulate a more unified, independent manufacturing-oriented economy. These aspects of the Lord Sheffield debate no doubt made it extremely interesting and intelligible to Ebeling, who as a German academic in a commercial program, stood at the center of German cameralism with its emphasis on state action to harness productivity.

Ebeling continued in this vein in the four volumes of his *Amerikanisches Magazin* published between 1795 and 1797. The form and content of this magazine owed much to Carey's *American Museum*. Like Carey, Ebeling sought mostly to aggregate and publicize government reports and private observations regarding American political economy rather than offering his own observations and analysis. Most volumes included lists of American imports and exports as well as details of public credit and public finance. Ebeling published several pieces by or about Hamilton, including his 1795

report on public credit, a short report on his *Camillus* letters in defense of Jay's Treaty, and, later, the full text of Hamilton's defense of the treaty.<sup>47</sup> Finally, he printed excerpts from Tench Coxe's *A View of the United States of America* (1794), which, besides containing numerous statistics of the sort beloved by cameralists, was an extremely important neo-mercantilistic call for nationalistic economic self-sufficiency.<sup>48</sup>

Ebeling continued to be interested in Coxe for some time. Much later he requested Coxe's *Statement of the Arts and Manufactures of the United States* from Carey and initiated a correspondence with Coxe.<sup>49</sup> Coxe, along with Carey, was the most prolific and influential pro-manufacturing American neo-mercantilist. As an assistant Secretary of the Treasury he had been instrumental in putting together Hamilton's Report on Manufactures, and, as has been noted, both his response to Lord Sheffield and his *View of the United States* had fascinated Ebeling. Like Carey, Coxe advocated an anti-British economic nationalism that may well have intrigued Ebeling. Could Ebeling's interest in these Americans have been informed by a nascent desire for a sort of German economic nationalism that, like Carey and Coxe's (and Hamilton's) program for the 13 American states would help bind together the fractious German states? Still more intriguingly, one wonders whether Ebeling's efforts to publicize such notions caught the attention of Friedrich List who would later advocate similar ideas in consort with Carey in the United States. Whatever the answer to this question, it is indisputable that due to Ebeling's energetic efforts to publicize the material he received from Carey and others such materials were readily available to List before he left for America. Whether or not List read American political-economy in Germany, his stint in the United States should be seen as the culmination of a generation of American-German exchanges on political-economy rather than a new beginning.

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<sup>47</sup> Amerikanisches Magazin, Hegewisch, Dietrich Hermann, 1746-1812, 1 volume, four parts, 1795-1797.

<sup>48</sup> Cooke, *Tench Coxe and the Early Republic*, 212-216.

<sup>49</sup> See Ebeling to Carey, 1815 Lea and Febiger Collection box 93 and Ebeling to Coxe, Tench Coxe Collection HSP.