

The Hollis-Collections in Switzerland

An Attempt to Disseminate Political and Religious Freedom through Books in the 18th Century¹

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Thomas Hollis² was born in 1720 in London as the only child of his parents and »was the fifth and last of that name, the descendant and heir of a tribe of wealthy and successful manufactures and merchants, Dissenters in religion and Old Whigs in politics.«³ He passed Schools and Colleges until 1748. By then, at age 28, as a wealthy young man, because he had inherited from his uncle, his father and his grandfather, he undertook two Grand Tours through Europe, where he met famous French philosophers and several Italian painters. He returned in 1753 to England and became a member of the Society of Arts, of the Society of Antiquaries and of the Royal Society. In 1754 he started on what he called his »great plan«: the distribution and reprinting of titles of the seventeenth-century republican canon, among them the works of John Locke, Henry Neville, Algernon Sidney and above all the prose

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² See also: Colin *Bonwick*, Thomas Hollis, in: Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, vol. 27, Oxford 2004, 749f.

³ William Henry *Bond*, Thomas Hollis of Lincoln's Inn: A Whig and his Books, Cambridge, MA 2009, 3.

works of John Milton. The goals of his plan were »to foster and extend human liberty, to eliminate governmental corruption, and to establish religious toleration, even extending, with certain safeguards, to Roman Catholics.«⁴ Hollis was an acrimonious enemy of all kind of despotism and tyrannical regimes, not least of the Roman Catholic Church and especially the Jesuits. He considered the Catholic Church to be not so much a church as a government meddling with other governments.⁵ As a rational dissenter he advocated religious tolerance and pleaded that religion should not be mixed with politics. On the other hand he preferred the republican form of government against democracy, because he considered, that the »benevolent rule of an intellectual élite [...] was the surest means of preserving and fostering his ideals of civil and religious liberty.«⁶ Hollis retired in 1770 (only 50 years old) to Urles Farm in Dorset. There he died suddenly in 1774. He was never married and had no descendants, so his friend Thomas Brand with surname Hollis became his heir. He wished to be buried in a field not far from his house »and that the field should be immediately plowed over, that no trace of his burial-place might remain.«⁷

Thomas Hollis was not only one of the great donors of Harvard College,⁸ but also a promoter and sponsor of a lot of other institutions, libraries and persons. Concerning his support of libraries, I found evidence of donations in Denmark, Germany, Italy, the

⁴ *Bond*, Thomas Hollis, 29.

⁵ *Bond*, Thomas Hollis, 9f.

⁶ *Bond*, Thomas Hollis, 28.

⁷ Francis *Blackburne*, *Memoirs of Thomas Hollis*, vol. 1, London: John Nichols, 1780, 481.

⁸ William H. *Bond*, »From the Great Desire of Promoting Learning«: Thomas Hollis's Gifts to the Harvard College Library, Cambridge, MA / London 2010 (Special Issue of the *Harvard Library Bulletin* 19/1–2). Cf. William H. *Bond*, Letters from Thomas Hollis of Lincoln's Inn to Andrew Eliot, in: *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 99 (1988), 76–167. Concerning book donations to North America there »was an exotic attractiveness to the idea of planting civilization in the wilderness and the English intellectuals were so moved by [Jeremiah] Dummer's appeal that no fewer than 180 of them contributed, including such leading figures as Sir Isaac Newton, Edmund Halley, Sir Hans Sloane, and Richard Steele. They sent more than 500 volumes, of which the first shipment, packed in nine boxes, arrived in September 1714.« Edmund S. *Morgan*, *American Heroes: Profiles of Men and Women who Shaped Early America*, New York/London 2009, 26.

Netherlands,⁹ Russia, Schottland, Sweden, North America¹⁰ and Switzerland¹¹. Among the Swiss libraries he sponsored the University Library in Basle, the Public Library in Berne, the University Library in Geneva and the Public Library in Zürich.

1. The Great Plan

Hollis intended to propagate his ideas about liberty not by an engagement in politics, which he regarded as quite corrupt, nor by writing books, but by presenting books to libraries.¹² Libraries are places where everybody can go and read or borrow books. Contrary to a book on a private bookshelf, a book in a library can be read by several people and influence their thinking. Hollis hoped that his liberty-books would be read by a lot of people visiting the libraries where he donated them and that they would challenge their opinions and change their minds. The source for this understanding of the value of the printed word was perhaps a passage in the *Areopagitica* by his intellectual inspiration John Milton. Milton wrote:

»For books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a potency of life in them to be as active as that soul was whose progeny they are; nay, they do preserve as in a vial the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred them. I know they are as lively and as vigorously productive as those fabulous dragon's teeth; and being sown up and down, may chance to spring up armed men. And yet, on the other hand, unless wariness be used, as good almost kill a man as kill a good book: who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but the who destroys a good

⁹ Kees van *Strien*, Thomas Hollis and his Donation to Leiden University Library, 1759–70, in: *Quaerendo* 30/1 (2000), 3–34.

¹⁰ James Holly *Hanford*, »Ut Spargam«: Thomas Hollis Books in Princeton, in: *The Princeton University Library Chronicle* 20/4 (1959), 165–176.

¹¹ *Bond*, Thomas Hollis, 113; Hans *Utz*, Die Hollis-Sammlung in Bern: Ein Beitrag zu den englisch-schweizerischen Beziehungen in der Zeit der Aufklärung, Bern 1959 (*Schriften der Literarischen Gesellschaft Bern, Neue Folge der Neujaarsblätter* 8), 81.

¹² Cf. Mirjam *Foot*, *The History of Bookbinding as a Mirror of Society*, London 1998 (*The Panizzi Lectures* 1997), 95: »A character somewhat resembling Hollis was his acquaintance Jonas Hanway (1712–1786). He also sought to further the good causes he espoused by presenting suitable patrons with elaborately bound books on such subjects.«

book kills reason itself, kills the image of God, as it were, in the eye. Many a man lives a burden to the earth; but a good book is the precious life blood of a master-spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life.«¹³

2. Hollis' Supralibros

The volumes presented by Hollis are easy to discover in the shelves of a library. They are bound in leather of different colours and bear supralibros with typical motifs. Sometimes there are to find handwritten inscriptions by Hollis in the form of dedications or marginal notes. William Henry Bond, former librarian of the Houghton Library in Harvard, described fifteen Hollis-tools for stamping supralibros on the book cover.¹⁴

The first, and most represented shows a seated owl. The owl is an antique symbol of the goddess Athena and stands for wisdom and learning. The inverted owl can also be found on Hollis-bindings and announces disapproval and lack of wisdom. The second tool consists of an owl with wings spread and a palm branch in its talons. It represents the victory of wisdom in the cause of peace. The third is a cock and it stands for freedom or enlightenment. The fourth shows the statue of liberty with a liberty-cap in her hand. Number five is the liberty-cap alone. Among the Romans, commoners and freed slaves sometimes wore the felt pileus, imitated in the liberty cap. The sixth emblem consists of a harpy clutching a severed head. On the background of ancient coins and medals this symbolizes the overthrow of tyranny. The next represents the palm branch and means victory. The lyre is a symbol for poetry. The ninth shows an olive branch and means peace. Number ten depicts an insect (perhaps butterfly) with an arrow and is very rarely used by Hollis on his bindings. The insect stands for the human soul and the arrow for tortures, but the meaning of this motif is not really clear. Number 11 represents the statue of Britannia in different variations. For Hollis England was the only country or one of the few countries where people could live in liberty. The English

¹³ John Milton, *Das verlorene Paradies*, in: John Milton: Werke. Englisch-Deutsch, Frankfurt a.M. 2008, 872.

¹⁴ Bond, Thomas Hollis, 34–77.

understanding of liberty should not only be preserved but also dispersed among other people, countries and continents. A very common supralibros is the short sword or dagger and it stands for the right to take arms against tyranny or the threat of invasion. If the short sword point is downward it signifies conflict. The cornucopia represents abundance, good fortune and happiness. The wand of Aesculapius signifies not only medicine but symbolizes learning in the service of mankind. The last of Hollis' supralibros is the club of Hercules and means probably power and courage in the defence of freedom.

3. Why Berne?

Most books Hollis donated to Harvard College. In 1766 for example the theologian and later president of Yale College Ezra Stiles visited Harvard and counted 1200 Hollis-volumes.¹⁵ There is only one other library, where Hollis donated hundreds of volumes: the Public Library of Berne, the so called »Burgerbibliothek«. Today there are more than 300 volumes still extant.¹⁶ According to the book of donations in the Burgerbibliothek, an anonymous English donor gave between 1758 and 1767 over 400 volumes and 7 medals. After his death, his name became known because it was mentioned by handing over a legacy of 100 Pounds to the library.¹⁷

Why did Hollis choose Berne for such a generous gift? He visited the city on his Grand Tour. We have no idea how long he stayed there, but he must have been truly impressed with the order, neatness and prosperity of the town and countryside. The virtuous and hardworking people were exemplary in Hollis' eyes. The militia of freeholders and the military education, the severe and puritan mor-

¹⁵ Caroline Robbins, *Library of Liberty: Assembled for Harvard College by Thomas Hollis of Lincoln's Inn*, in: *Harvard Library Bulletin* 5 (1951), 6.

¹⁶ For Berne see mainly: *Utz*, *Hollis-Sammlung*; Anne Thirouard Wyss, *The Hollis Collection in Berne: An Account of Some Books in the Collection*, Thesis Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1981/1982. This chapter draws heavily on this unfortunately unpublished typescript.

¹⁷ *Munificentiae Monumentum Dicarum Honori Fautorum, Qui Bibliothecam hanc Publicam Donis locupletarunt*, 238r-v (*Burgerbibliothek Bern*, call number: Mss. h.h. XII 1); see also: *Utz*, *Hollis-Sammlung*, 10-13.

als, ordered and enforced by the state and church, the expulsion of the Catholics and the regular meetings of old and wise aristocrats and middle class members, were all features that would have given Hollis a favourable outlook on Berne. Beyond that another factor in favour of Berne was Hollis' encounter with Rodolphe de Vautravers or Valltravers in Genoa in 1753 on his second tour. Valltravers was a bit of an adventurer, always on the move, an extravagant, and not quite serious person: »Born in 1723, as a citizen of Vevey and a Bernese subject, he had married an English girl, which explained his knowledge of the English language:

»As he himself was a collector of books, manuscripts and medals, and as he seemed interested in Hollis' research and was in constant need for money, he agreed to Hollis' proposal, which consisted in delivering and dispatching the book collections that Hollis intended to send to the Continent. He must have spoken very highly of Berne for very personal reasons: his main aim in life namely was to enter the Bernese administration [...] Thus, as he wished to attract the attention of the Bernese Excellencies, he might also have prompted Hollis to send the collection to Berne instead of another Swiss city. However, he never reached his aim and had to be content with his activities as a representative of Hollis and a private tutor. Valltravers travelled 18 years, accompanying the rich people's progeny on tours on the Continent and through England. Thus, he distributed books that Hollis had entrusted to him in Sweden and Norway, while he was on a journey with two Russian students.«¹⁸

Furthermore Hollis was a mental friend of the Economical Society (»Oekonomische Gesellschaft«) of Berne and prompted his correspondents in the colonies of North America to create similar societies. So he sent in 1760 many books on agriculture and husbandry to Berne for the benefit of this Society. Another reason why Hollis sent books to Berne might have been the reception which Berne made to Edmund Ludlow. He belonged to the judges, who condemned King Charles I to the death penalty. At the restoration of Charles II in 1660 he took refuge in Switzerland. The asylum so generously afforded to the English refugees by the Swiss and the protection that Ludlow enjoyed during the attacks initiated by the House of Savoy with the approval of Charles II against the regicide exiles, was much to Berne's credit. Ludlow had gone to

¹⁸ *Thirouard Wyss*, Hollis Collection, 22 f.

thank personally their Excellencies of Berne for their protection and dedicated his *Memoirs* to the Bernese government.¹⁹

But in fact the government of Berne was not as liberal, open minded and modern as Hollis thought. If the members of the council had been able to read Hollis' books published in English, his gifts would have been censored and disapproved. Rudolph Sinner, the librarian of the Burgerbibliothek, was able to read English and as a liberal person he claimed for tolerance and freedom in religious matters. He understood the situation very well, and directed the council's attention on the worth and beauty of the collection and not on its philosophical and political contents.

A few years later, Hollis recognized the true character of the Bernese government and became disappointed by the city he had revered so much. The first blow, which shook Hollis' trust in the Bernese liberalism, was caused by Jean Jacques Rousseau's expulsion from the canton Berne. The other blow was caused six months later (1766) by a small book²⁰ written by Beat Herport, who was a member of the Bernese ruling class. »This treatise was published anonymously at Biel. It was a humble request to lower the number of oaths every Swiss had to take, and Herport insisted on the fact, that in matters of conscience, those oaths should not be compulsory, thus pleading for religious liberty. As soon as *der grosse Rat* had heard about this book, the copies were seized and burnt under the pretext that they were dangerous for the state and church. Herport, although aged and sick, was imprisoned and ordered to stop writing down such dangerous and subversive ideas.«²¹ It was clear, that Hollis' opinion on Berne from 1766 onwards had radically changed. He published anonymously articles against the Bernese government in different newspapers in England. The council protested against these articles and engaged a private detective to identify the defamer, but without any results. They did not recognize any link between the anonymous donor and the author of the letters which had upset them so much, yet

¹⁹ *Thirouard Wyss*, Hollis Collection, 25.

²⁰ Versuch über wichtige Wahrheiten, zur Glückseligkeit der Menschen: bestens empfohlen allen Regenten der freyen Staaten, zur Erdaurung und nöthigen Besserung, von einem redlich gesinnten Schweizer, s.l.: s.n., 1766.

²¹ *Thirouard Wyss*, Hollis Collection, 29.

who were one and the same man. Hollis nevertheless, was seriously disappointed and his conclusion on this subject was that the Secret Council of Berne is composed of tyrants.²²

4. Books for Berne, Basle and Geneva

The first donation of 18 books arrived in Berne on July 20, 1758. There are three titles, which were very important for Hollis. He gave them away to quite a lot of libraries. First and most fundamental of all were the prose works written by John Milton in two volumes, published in 1753 in London.²³ The second title was the *Life of John Milton* written by John Toland and printed in 1761 in London too.²⁴ Both he presented also to Basle and Geneva. The third, which he also donated to Basle, was the English Grammar by John Wallis, published in 1765 in London.²⁵ The latter two were reprints initiated by Hollis. All in all he was responsible for at least about 30 titles being reissued which he believed were worth being reprinted again and again. Most of the books Hollis donated to North American and European libraries were published in English, but only a few people in Central Europe were able to understand this language. So Hollis would help diffuse the command of English by distributing Wallis' English grammar. Hollis wrote in his Diary on June 28, 1760, that he was at the bookseller Mr. Miller »to engage him to reprint Dr. Wallis Latin Grammar of the English tongue: for the benefit of Foreigners, and the spreading of the Principles of truth and Liberty.«²⁶ These »principles of truth and liberty« can be found in the works of authors like Nathaniel Bacon, George Buchanan, John Locke, Edmund Ludlow, Henry Neville, Algernon Sidney and others. He believed »that only in England and in the English colonies could freedom be enjoyed.«²⁷

²² *Thirouard Wyss*, Hollis Collection, 30; *Utz*, Hollis-Sammlung, 124.

²³ The work has the following call number in Basle: A.O.I.2 and 2a; Berne: Hollis 69; Geneva: BGE Hgc 622*.

²⁴ The work has the following call number in Basle: A.O.I.2b; Berne: Hollis 101; Geneva: BGE Hgc 636.

²⁵ The work has the following call number in Basle: A.O.III.63; Berne: Hollis 280.

²⁶ *Hollis Diary* is preserved in the Houghton Library, Harvard University.

²⁷ *Robbins*, Library of Liberty, 11.

In the copy of Milton's prose works which Hollis donated four years later in 1762 to the University Library in Basle, he wrote on the last flyleaf a list of so called »Liberty Books« in the following sequence:²⁸

- 1.* George Buchanan: De iure regni apud Scotos, Edinburgh 1579.
2. Stephanus Iunius Brutus [i.e. Hubert Languet]²⁹: Vindiciae contra Tyrannos ..., Edinburgh [i.e. Basle] 1579.
3. William Prynne: The sovereign Power of Parliaments and Kingdoms; in 4 parts with an appendix, London 1643.
4. John Sadler: Rights of the Kingdom; or Customs of our Ancestors, London 1649.
5. Henry Neville: Plato Redivivus [without mentioning printing place and year].
6. Titus Oates: Picture of the late King James,³⁰ in four parts [without mentioning printing place and year].
7. Samuel Johnson: Works, edit. 2, London 1693.
- 8.* Edmund Ludlow: Memoirs [without mentioning printing place and year].
- 9.* [Nathaniel] Bacon: On government³¹ [without mentioning printing place and year].
- 10.* Algernon Sidney: On government³² [without mentioning printing place and year].
- 11.* John Locke: On government³³ [without mentioning printing place and year].
- 12.* [Robert] Molesworth: Account of Denmark,³⁴ and other pieces.
13. [John] Trenchard, History of standing armies in England; and other pieces.
14. The State tracts of C. II. and W. III; in three vol. in folio.³⁵

²⁸ See also the list of »Canonical Books« composed by *Robbins*, Library of Liberty, 193–196.

²⁹ Sometimes this pseudonym is also attributed to Philippe de Mornay (1549–1623). Hollis adds wrongly »sive ut putatur Theodoro Beza«.

³⁰ Id est: Eikon basilikē, or, The picture of the late King James drawn to the life.

³¹ Not clear, which work: An historical discourse of the uniformity of the government of England, or The continuation of an historical discourse of the government of England or XVI propositions concerning the reign and government of a king.

³² Id est: Discourses concerning government.

³³ Id est: Two treatises of government.

³⁴ Id est: An account of Denmark as it was in the year 1692.

³⁵ Id est: A collection of State tracts: published on occasion of the late revolution 1688 and during the reign of King William III., London 1705–1707. There is a copy in the Hollis-collection in Berne, call number: Hollis 37: 1–3.

Six of them, marked with an asterisk, were part of the first gift to Berne. The second and much larger present to Berne from 1765 (before the disillusioning events of 1766) contained 397 volumes. About one third of all the titles were works on politics, one third on religion and one third on other topics,³⁶ among them for example scientific publications written by Isaac Newton, books on British fossils by John Woodward or on biblical chronology by James Ussher. Hollis not only wanted to promulgate the political and religious »truth and liberty« of England, but also wanted to acquaint the Swiss people with the culture, history and scientific achievements of his beloved fatherland. He explained »history in terms of a struggle between tyranny and liberty. English development is all important, because only in England, with all her faults and backslidings, can any real freedom be found. Nothing English is without interest [...]«.³⁷

Books donated by Hollis can easily be identified by their bindings as we have seen above. Bound in one of the Bernese volumes is a little piece of paper on which Hollis gave instructions for the binder. He wrote: »To be bound in rough calf. The Title as on the other side. No gilding. The leaves to be cut but not colored.«³⁸ On the title page there's a handwritten note by Hollis, which can also be found quite often in the books he gave away: »Ut spargam«. These two Latin words mean, that the title should be diffused as part of his »great plan«.

Another criterion for identifying volumes donated by Hollis is the anonymous handwritten dedication with the following words as for example written on the flyleaf of John Locke's *Letters concerning toleration*:³⁹ »An Englishman, a Lover of Liberty, civil & religious, Citizen of the World, is desirous of having the honour to present this book to the public Library at Berne in Switzerland. London, Jan. 1, 1765.« Or a dedication written on the same day to Basle is quite similar: »An Englishman, Citizen of the World, is desirous of having the honor to present this Book to the public Library of the University of Basle. London, Jan. 1, 1765.«⁴⁰ Ano-

³⁶ Utz, Hollis-Sammlung, 24.

³⁷ Robbins, Library of Liberty, 15.

³⁸ Berne, call number: Hollis 292.

³⁹ Berne, call number: Hollis 71.

ther example of a volume, dedicated in 1769 to Zurich, has the following inscription: »An Englishman, an Assertor of Liberty, civil & religious, at all times, is desirous of having the honor to present this Book, to the Public Library at Zurich, in Switzerland. London, June 12, 1769.«⁴¹

A last thing, which is very typical for Hollis-books is the fact that he sometimes wrote marginal commentaries and underlined or marked passages, which were important in his eyes. It is interesting to see, that he donated often the same books to different libraries, but he did not write the same notes or did not punctuate the same passages. It seems to be, that he prepared the books especially for each library. So he wrote several times about his preparatory works in his diary. On September 15, 1761 he noted: »Buisy [sic!] the afternoon & evening about the Sett of Milton's prose works [in two volumes] intended for the public library of the University of Groningen.« And at September 20: »Finished the Milton's intended for the University Library of Groningen.«

On January 2, 1762, he spent time on annotating another work: »Within the whole day preparing notes which are to be inserted in a work intituled Clementis XI Pont. max. epistolae [...] Romae, MDCCXXIV, [...], 2 v[olumes] in folio; which work I [...] intend, in the course of some months to present to the British Museum, for service of the public & posterity.« And a last example from March 29, 1762: »Buisy all the morning preparing notes for A[lgeron] Sydney's works.«

The notes Hollis made contain additional information concerning the author and the work, would guide the reader to important passages and help him to draw the »right« conclusions. So he gave for example on the back of the titlepage of the anonymous published tract *The Occasional Writer: Being an Answer to the Second Manifesto of the Pretender's Eldest Son [...]*« (London 1746) informations about the author's name: »This is a very fine Liberty tract, & was written by The Right honorable William Grant of

⁴⁰ John Wallis, *Grammatica [...]*, London: Guil. Bowyer, prostant apud A. Millar, 1765. Basle, call number: A.O.III.63.

⁴¹ Zurich, call number: Ch 396. This anonymously written volume has no typical Hollis-binding. The title is: *Authentic Memoirs Concerning the Portuguese Inquisition, Never before Published [...]*, London: John Murray, 1769.

Preston Grange, now Lord Advocate of Scotland. (1757)«. ⁴² Another title of the Public Library in Berne is the *History of Standing Armies in England* written by John Trenchard. Hollis noted at the margin on page 12 about the detested Kings of the Stuarts: »Observe how masterly the four most infamous Characters of J[ames] I., C[harles] I., C[harles] II. & J[ames] II. are drawn.« ⁴³ On the last page he gave advices for further reading: »There are two other fine Liberty tracts on this Subject written about the same time with this pamphlet; one of them by Fletcher of Saltoun,⁴⁴ the other by Mr. Moyle.«

On the flyleaf of John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* (London 1690),⁴⁵ which belongs according to Hollis to the most important books ever published, he wrote on the flyleaf of the copy in Berne: »This most excellent Book, was written in defence of the ever memorable and glorious Revolution, and in support of the common rights of mankind; and this edition, and that of 1698, are the best editions of this Work. For they were published during the life of the Author, and the later editions have been rendered obscure and abused by new printing.« He punctuated in the preface the following sentence (underlining identical with the original): »And to justifie to the World, the People of England, whose love of their just and natural Rights with their Resolution to preserve them, saved the Nation, when it was on the very brink of Slavery and Ruine.« Hollis emphasized once more the love of the English to political freedom and the fact, that other nations can learn from them. There would be many more interesting examples of commentaries and references to other works which are worth studying more in detail.

The fact that Hollis did not always make the same inscriptions is obvious for example on the basis of a comparison of the copies of the edition of Milton's prose works in two volumes (London 1753) that are today preserved in Berne and in Basle. The copy in the Public Library in Berne was donated on July 20, 1758, the copy in

⁴² Berne, call number: Hollis 186, Nr. 3.

⁴³ Berne, call number: Hollis 186, Nr. 4.

⁴⁴ Andrew Feltcher of Saltoun (1692–1766) was a notable Scottish judge and Lord Justice Clerk.

⁴⁵ Berne, call number: Hollis 261.

Basle on April 14, 1761. Between the two donations nearly three years had elapsed. The copy of the Public Library in Geneva dates also from April 14, 1761. The first remarkable difference is the binding. The copy in Berne is bound in brown leather and shows Britannia with a palm branch goffered on the front and back cover and on the spine together with a lion. The copies in Basle and Geneva are bound in red maroquin leather and have also Britannia on the front cover of the first volume, but not only with a palm branch in the right hand, but also with a stick with the liberty cap at the top. The backcover of the first volume shows the statue of liberty with two clubs of Hercules. The front cover of volume two has two swords and a liberty cap in the middle, the back cover a harpy clutching a head flanked of two lyres. The Basle copy has an owl on the spine, the Genevan an owl and a cock.⁴⁶

Concerning the handwritten notes, the volumes in Berne and Basle differ as well. Worth mentioning is not only the list of »Liberty Books« presented above, but also an entry in the introduction of the first volume where a painting showing the young Milton is described. The picture was in the collection of Charles Stanhope. Hollis noted in the Basle copy at the bottom: »Now in the possession of Thomas Hollis of Lincoln's Inn.«⁴⁷ This picture of Milton is the same painting, which Hollis mentions in his diary on June 3, 1760: »Purchased an original portrait of John Milton, when a youth of ten years at age [...] by public auction [...] for one and thirty Guineas.«

According to the handwritten dedications by Hollis he donated the prose works of Milton and the *Life of John Milton* written by John Toland on April 14, 1761, to the libraries in Basle⁴⁸ and Geneva. It was his 41st birthday. He wrote nothing about these gifts in his diary but only some selfcritical thoughts. During the next years he made further donations to both cities. On July 27,

⁴⁶ I thank Thierry Dubois (Bibliothèque de Genève) for his descriptions of the Genevan bindings.

⁴⁷ John Milton, *The Works of John Milton – Historical, Political, and Miscellaneous*, vol. 1, London: Printed for A. Millar, in the Strand, 1753, p. iii (call number University Library Basle: A.O.I.2).

⁴⁸ Isaak Iselin from Basle wrote on September 2, 1762, to Salomon Hirzel in Zürich, that the anonymous donator and friend of freedom should be invited to Switzerland, see *Utz*, *Hollis-Sammlung*, 81.

1762, he sent a collection of twelve etchings with portraits of John Milton, Edmund Ludlow, Algernon Sidney, Andrew Marvell, Isaac Newton and some medals to Geneva.⁴⁹ The fourth and last volume he donated to the University Library in Basle is the English Grammar by John Wallis. Hollis' dedication dates from January 1, 1765.⁵⁰ Another inscription on a flyleaf of the same volume proves that the volume did not arrive in Basle before October 1766: »Bibliothecae publicae Basiliensis, Dono Viri illustris, Anonymi Angli. 1766. Mense Octobri allatum per D. de Valtraverse.« Valltravers was once more the intermediary for this Hollis-book's journey to Switzerland.

5. Hollis' Network

If we have a look at Hollis' diary and read his entries from December 1764 to February 1765 we not only find out that Hollis was responsible for the new edition of Wallis' grammar, but we discover a wide branching network, built up by Hollis for the distribution of his books. According to his diary he invested a lot of time between December 28, 1764, until February 6, 1765 in preparing the new editions of Locke's *Letter concerning toleration* and Wallis' *Grammar* for sending abroad. On January 9 he sent »away several Boxes of Locke's & Wallis's yesterday and today to Ned Burton to be shipped to Italy.« On January 11 he again was »preparing some of Wallis's Grammars and other odd matters, which are to sent to that Consul [Tatem] to be distributed under his obliging direction in the Island of Sicily.« Next day: »Busied the whole day in preparing Locke on Toleration, some Wallis's Grammars, & other odd matters, which are to be sent to Mr. Francis Jermy of Leghorn,⁵¹ to be distributed by him, obligingly, in Italy.« On January 18, 1765, we find the note: »Finished and

⁴⁹ The same collection is also preserved in the Burgerbibliothek Berne.

⁵⁰ The volume is mentioned in: Ueli Dill, *Schenkungen verzeichnen*, in: *Treffentliche schöne Biecher: Hans Ungnads Büchergeschenk und die Universitätsbibliothek Basel im 16. Jahrhundert*, ed. Lorenz Heiligensetzer et al., Basel 2005, 126. The book is still extant in the University Library Basle (call number: A.O.III.63).

⁵¹ Francis Jermy Leghorn (1705–1781), until 1751 merchant in Livorno, then in Leghorn.

packed a number of Locke's and Wallis's, which are to be sent to Mr. Valltravers of Rockhall near Bienne in Switzerland; one of each for himself, the rest to be distributed by him, obligingly, in Switzerland & that Neighbourhood.« Four boxes with books by Locke and Wallis were addressed to Mister John George Bausch, Merchant in Hamburg, to be distributed among Mister Wroughton in Warsaw (Poland), Mister Valltravers near Berne (Switzerland), Mister Charles Reynold Berch in Stockholm (Sweden) and one box was to be sent to the University in Copenhagen (Denmark). Further copies of Locke and Wallis were intended for the Academy of Arts and Sciences at Saint Petersburg and to the University of Moscow.⁵² On January 27 he prepared another box with books and tracts for Dr. Dumaresque⁵³ at Saint Petersburg. On January 29 he noted that he was busy all evening with preparing »another parcel of books, that is intended to be sent to Mister John George Bausch in Hamburg, anonymously like the former parcel, and finished forthwith but not forwarded till the departure of the next ship, in 4 or 5 weeks. It will contain a Locke & Wallis for himself, & nineteen other copies of Wallis's Grammar, which are to be dispatched by him obligingly, into different parts of Germany.« The entry on January 29 sheds some light on the channels of distribution in Eastern Europe. The Wallis-volumes have to be forwarded to Thomas Wroughton Esq. British Minister at Warsaw, »to be distributed, obligingly, one of each to the King of Poland, one of each for himself, and the rest, Wallis's books, to various learned Bodies in Poland and Transilvania.« On January 23 he noted that some copies of Wallis' Grammar had been meant to be sent to Denmark and Sweden. According to a note on February 4, some Wallis-books should be shipped to Mister Bartholomew Ulloa, bookseller at Madrid, a correspondent of Mister Baker, to be dispersed in that city and in Spain. On February 6 he prepared further Wallis-books for Spain: »Busied till late at Night in preparing 4 Copies of Wallis, which are to be sent anonymously, to The Rev. Edward Clarke, author of the *Letter concerning the Spanish Nation* now

⁵² Hollis, Diary, January 26, 1765.

⁵³ Dr. Daniel Dumaresque (1712–1805), Fellow of the Royal Society and educational consultant to Russian and Polish monarchs among them Catherine the Great (1762–1796).

Chaplain to the Garrison at Minorca.« So Hollis' distribution grid included diplomats, merchants, booksellers and theologians. This interesting network would be well worth for further research. There is much additional information to be found on it in Hollis' diary and in his *Memoirs*.

6. The Hollis-Collection in Zurich

Absolutely different and unique compared to all the mentioned gifts is the Hollis-collection in Zurich. Hollis sent neither Milton's prose works, nor Toland's biography on Milton nor Wallis' Grammar to Zürich. The reason may be, because Milton was already well known in Zurich and highly esteemed and there were an unknown number of people who were able to understand English. The famous Swiss writer and representative of the Enlightenment in Zürich Johann Jakob Bodmer not only possessed works by Milton,⁵⁴ but translated his *Paradise lost* into German and published it six times in Zurich in 1732, 1742, 1754, 1759, 1769 and 1780.⁵⁵ Sending Milton's works to Zürich would have been like carrying owls to Athens.

The 115 titles in all which Hollis sent between 1762 and 1769 to Zürich are an interesting collection of anti-Jesuit works.⁵⁶ Some of the titles are quite seldom as already Johann Caspar von Orelli – commonly called the founder of the University of Zurich – noted on the inside cover of one of these books.⁵⁷ As already mentioned Hollis did not like the Jesuits because they seemed to him to be the incarnation of religious intolerance and coercion. The whole collection is bound in brown leather and all except one have Supralibros as described above. The most common motif is the sitting

⁵⁴ Bodmer possessed for example an edition of the important *Defensio secunda pro populo Anglicano*. The volume is part of Bodmer's library, which is preserved in the Zentralbibliothek Zurich (call number: 25.21). The title was already read in Zurich at the end of the 17th century as a copy of the book proves, which belonged since 1691 to Johann Heinrich Waser (call number: 10.446₁).

⁵⁵ Simon Grynaeus in Basle translated Miltons *Paradise regained*, *Samson* and some poems into German. The book was published in 1752.

⁵⁶ They are all part of the shelf mark »Ch«.

⁵⁷ Call number: Ch 411.

owl (81), followed by the sword (19) and combinations of other emblems like the sitting owl, flying owl, cock, palm branch and the harpy clutching a head. In 1769 he presented one last volume⁵⁸ with a few little stars on the binding. Furthermore he donated at the same time 20 Guineas for the acquisition of more anti-Jesuit works. These books are not totally bound in leather, but have only cheaper halfleather bindings. The Supralibros of the owl and the sword are imitations of the English tools; both are a little bit broader than the originals.

Most of the works (82) are published anonymously, because it could be dangerous to write against the Jesuits and to present the author's name on the titlepage. Contrary to the other donations, the Hollis-books in Zürich are not only published in English, but also in other languages: 53 titles are in French, 40 in Italian, 15 in English, 5 in German and 2 in Latin. The imprints were published in different parts of Europe: Amsterdam, Barcelona, Cologne, Lisbon, London, Naples, Paris, Venice and other cities. One of the most mentioned places of printing is Lugano as the catholic capital city of the Italian speaking part of Switzerland. These titles were all produced between 1759 and 1762. Recent research has shown that the printing place Lugano of these anti-Jesuit tracts was a false address, the real place of publication was Venice.⁵⁹ Venice had for centuries maintained its autonomy from the Pope and had quite a liberal attitude toward censorship, but even the printers there choose the fictitious printing place »Lugano«. ⁶⁰ 25 books of the Hollis-Collection in Zurich were published in Venice, though 18 of them list Lugano on the title page, 19 appeared in the liberal city of Amsterdam, 15 in London, 8 in Lisbon and the rest in other cities.

Concerning the themes which are discussed in these books and tracts, there are some recognizable focal points. One is the abolition of the Jesuits in France and Portugal. In Portugal the Jesuits

⁵⁸ Call number: Ch 396.

⁵⁹ P. Callisto *Caldelari*, *L'arte della stampa da Milano a Lugano: La tipografia Agnelli specchio di un'epoca*, Lugano 2008, 60–64. Especially anti-Jesuit tracts were printed with the false address »Lugano«: Patrizia *Bravetti*, *Orfea Granzotto*, *False date: Repertorio delle licenze di stampa veneziane con falso luogo di edizione (1740–1797)*, Firenze 2008 (Fonti storiche e letterarie: Edizioni cartacee e digitali 21), 18–22.

⁶⁰ Ekkehard *Eickhoff*, *Venedig – Spätes Feuerwerk: Glanz und Untergang der Republik (1700–1797)*, Stuttgart 2006, 225 f.

were forbidden and expelled in October 1759 in the context of Enlightened absolutism and in France the activity of the Jesuits ended in November 1764. Furthermore the Hollis donation included titles about Jansenism and the bull called *Unigenitus* from 1713, wherein the Pope wrote against the Jansenists. Also the papal bull *In coena domini* is quite often discussed. This bull was written by Pope Gregory IX in 1229 and was read every year on Holy Thursday in the Catholic Churches. Among other things it disapproved all kind of heretics and people working against the church. During the 18th century several enlightened heads of state stopped the reading of that bull.

Hollis was well informed about the problems with the Jesuits in Europe.⁶¹ He composed his collection with the help of Mister Elmsly,⁶² a French bookseller, and Reverend Dr. Caleb Fleming, a Protestant Dissenter and many years the Pastor of an Independent Congregation in Bartholomew Close and at Pinner's Hall.⁶³ Originally Hollis intended to present this collection to the British Museum, but, as he wrote in his *Memoirs*: »[...] the behaviour of a committee of the trustees was so strange towards me, on a particular occasion, that I could not resolve any longer, with any degree of magnanimity, to send it to that place.«⁶⁴ What was this obscure »occasion«? There were two conflicts between Hollis and the British Museum in 1761. The first took place in January 1761, because of the refusal of a certain New Years gift. Hollis presented a rare satirical Italian print against the Jesuits in a handsome frame of glass to the Museum,⁶⁵ but the Committee refused to hang it up, »because they were apprehensive of offence being taken, if it be

⁶¹ He wrote in his diary on November 2, 1760: »Read in the afternoon certain French papers relating to the affairs of the Jesuits in Portugal.«

⁶² *Blackburne*, *Memoirs of Thomas Hollis*, 169: »Some time before this period Mr. Hollis had employed Mr. Elmsly the French bookseller, to collect every thing he could meet with written against the Jesuits; which commission Mr. Elmsly executed with great success. The collection was a noble one, and was sent this year to the public library of Zurich.«

⁶³ Hollis wrote in his diary on April 28, 1761: »Found a curious labored letter from The Rev. Mr. Caleb Fleming, in answer to one of mine, requesting him to furnish me with a List of Writers against the Jesuits.«

⁶⁴ *Blackburne*, *Memoirs of Thomas Hollis*, 169.

⁶⁵ *Hollis*, *Diary*, January 6, 1761.

hung up.«⁶⁶ They made the proposal to take it out of the frame and insert it in the collection of the Museum, but Hollis let them know: »The Trustees may hang up the print or return it as they please, but it shall not be taken out of its frame.«⁶⁷

The second disappointment cropped up when Hollis presented a new edition procured by him of Toland's *Life of Milton*. The gift was thrown out by the curators, because it was a duplicate, »and the first edition [was] kept in preference to it. This must have had the appearance of an intended affront to the donor, who always accompanied his presents with some intimation in writing from whom they came. This slight, it is conjectured, deprived the Museum of this curious collection of tracts against the Jesuits.«⁶⁸

On June 8, 1762, Hollis wrote in his diary: »Dispatched away, gladly, the set of Books relating to the Jesuits, & of the three sets of Milton's. Mr. Valltravers with me, from eleven till three. Much conversation with him concerning the best method of forwarding those books [...]«. Four days later he was the greatest part of the day busy in writing a catalogue of the books »relating to the Jesuits & to Popery, just now sent abroad as a present to the Public Library of the Canton of Zurich.«⁶⁹ On July 30 Valltravers met with Hollis for the last time before returning to Switzerland.⁷⁰ The Committee for the Public Library in Zurich registered at the meeting of December 18 of the same year the donation of 84 books, all relating to the politics and moral of the Jesuits, by an unknown English gentleman who signed with the name »Marville«. ⁷¹ The poet and politician Andrew Marvell, who was in good relationship with Cromwell and Milton, belonged to Hollis' favourite authors. Two years before he had purchased an oil painting showing his portrait.⁷² On May 1763 Hollis sent another 15 volumes to Zurich.⁷³ He received the books from the consul Smith in

⁶⁶ Hollis, Diary, January 11, 1761.

⁶⁷ Hollis, Diary, January 11, 1761.

⁶⁸ Blackburne, *Memoirs of Thomas Hollis*, 170.

⁶⁹ The catalogue is lost.

⁷⁰ Hollis, Diary, July 30, 1761.

⁷¹ *Actorum bibliothecae civicae Turicensium, Tomus VIII*, Archive of the Zentralbibliothek Zurich, call number: Arch St. 8, 26.

⁷² Hollis, Diary, July 9, 1760.

⁷³ Utz, *Hollis-Sammlung*, 51; Hollis, Diary, June 29, 1763: »Buisy the whole morn-

Venice: »[...] fifteen volumes of tracts in duodecimo, uniformly bound, relating to the Jesuits; being intended by Mr. Hollis for a supplement to the present he made the year before to Zurich.«⁷⁴ This present was also delivered by Valltravers. Johann Gerhard Andreae, Apothecary to the Court of Hanover, met him in Zurich and wrote about him on September 7, 1763: »This morning early I left Zurich in company with an English ship's captain and Mr de Valltravers who lives in Bienne, a very pleasant gentleman, widely travelled, whose familiarity with many lands has earned for him great skill in science and natural history.«⁷⁵

On January 30, 1769, Hollis received via Valltravers a letter written by the librarian Caspar Hess from Zurich. Hess asked pardon for the delay in expressing the library's gratitude for Hollis' donations and explained the reason why they had been forgotten. At the same time he wrote that friends of the Jesuits sent books for their defense.

On the occasion of their meeting on June 10, 1769, the Committee of the Zurich Library heard about a letter Valltravers wrote to Doctor Ziegler in Winterthur, announcing 20 Guineas from »Marvell« for buying more books against the Jesuits.⁷⁶ It was decided to comply with the donor's wish.⁷⁷ The volumes were bound in halfleather bindings with imitations of the original supralibros as described above.

According to his last will, Hollis gave to Berne⁷⁸ and Geneva⁷⁹ in 1774 100 Pounds Sterling each. Then by the opening of the testament it became apparent, who the English donor was.

ing in preparing a small parcel of books which are to go to the public library of Zurich, as a supplement to those sent there last year.«

⁷⁴ *Blackburne*, *Memoirs of Thomas Hollis*, 189.

⁷⁵ G. R. *de Beer*, *Rodolph Valltravers, F.R.S.*, in: *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London* 4/2 (1946), 220.

⁷⁶ See also *Hollis*, *Diary*, June 7, 1769.

⁷⁷ *Actorum bibliothecae civicae Turicensium*, Tomus VIII, Meeting of June 10, 1769, *Archive of the Zentralbibliothek Zurich*, call number: Arch St. 8, 32.

⁷⁸ *Utz*, *Hollis-Sammlung*, 136.

⁷⁹ *Thiery Dubois*, »Comme des tuteurs à l'égard de leur pupille [...]«: *Les fonds d'imprimés anciens*, in: *Patrimoine de la Bibliothèque de Genève: Un état des lieux au début du XXI^e siècle*, ed. *Danielle Buysens et al.*, Geneva 2006, 43. In the Genevan records the name of the donor is curiously mentioned as »Denzel Hollis«.

In Zurich nobody had any idea, who had made the donations and why. After Hollis' death it became clear for some people, who read scholarly journals, that the donator's name was Hollis. But it was still not evident, why he gave the books to Zurich. Decades later the librarian Johann Jakob Horner bought Hollis' *Memoirs*, held a talk in 1848⁸⁰ and recapitulated what he had read in the two volumes⁸¹ and why the collection came to Zurich. So there elapsed nearly 80 years between Hollis' last donation in 1769 and the time when his identity was disclosed for a wider public.

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Abstract: Thomas Hollis (1720–1774) was not only one of the most important donors of the Harvard College Library, but donated also books to a number of institutions throughout Europe, among them the main libraries in Basle, Berne, Geneva and Zurich. This article shows the motivations behind Hollis's choice of books and recipients to spread the philosophy of political and religious liberty and demonstrates for the first time the full extent of Hollis's campaign to influence protestant scholars in Switzerland.

Keywords: Enlightenment, History of Libraries, History of Books, England, Protestantism, Switzerland, Thomas Hollis, Tolerance, 18th Century

⁸⁰ Zentralbibliothek Zurich, Ms M 12.36, 1.

⁸¹ The books are still preserved in the Zentralbibliothek Zurich, call numbers: GG 35 & 36.