

The Halle Orphanage

The Francke Foundations:
History and Sights



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	6	<i>Forewords</i>
CHAPTER 1	10	<i>The Founder</i> August Hermann Francke
CHAPTER 2	24	<i>The Great Undertaking</i> An Architectural History of the Orphanage and the Francke Foundations in the Eighteenth Century
CHAPTER 3	38	<i>The Architecture</i> “So fair and large ... no age hath before seen”. The Architecture of the Francke Foundations in its Historical Context around 1700
CHAPTER 4	52	<i>The Present</i> The Francke Foundations Today
CHAPTER 5	64	<i>The Historic Orphanage</i> The Historic Orphanage and its Exhibitions
CHAPTER 6	102	<i>Francke’s Home</i>
CHAPTER 7	108	<i>The Library</i>
CHAPTER 8	124	<i>The Chapels</i> Sacred spaces in the Francke Foundations
CHAPTER 9	130	<i>The Historic Brewery and Bakery</i>
APPENDIX	136	August Hermann Francke – A Short Biography
	138	The Francke Foundations Site
	140	Index of Persons
	142	Bibliography

Foreword to the third edition

It is very positive to see the Francke Foundations' first catalogue now being re-issued in a third edition exactly twenty years after its initially publication. Just as those who re-established the Foundations in the early 1990s intended and hoped, the ensemble has again evolved into a richly faceted educational cosmos. Over these years, their work in the cultural, scholarly, educational and social areas has moved on from the pioneer phase to attain a high degree of continuity. Since the catalogue's second edition was issued ten years ago, the restoration work to save Francke's historical school town has largely been completed. After repairing and refurbishing the Historic Orphanage as the Foundation's most visible and iconic landmark, work continued on the core architectural ensemble around the *Lindenhof* courtyard. In the second decade of restoration, most buildings to the south of the *Schwarzer Weg* were then thoroughly renovated and filled with new life. At this time, not only were the row of houses at the entry to the site refurbished and supplemented by a striking new building, but the mid-eighteenth-century bakery and brewery was also restored, as were the infirmary and the tenants' buildings. Today, the buildings further to the south on the Foundations site have all been refurbished and are used by schools and the university.

The perspective of this third edition has also been expanded to reflect the growth in activities as the buildings have been gradually restored. The thorough review and extension of the catalogue's content has been inspired by the desire not merely to present the Orphanage itself, but also introduce the entire Francke Foundations ensemble with its major cultural sights. As a result, the catalogue now opens with a chapter dedicated to August Hermann Francke, who envisioned and established the Foundations, and gave them his name. This is followed, as in the first edition, by a discussion of the architectural history of the Orphanage and the Foundations. The next chapter, which locates the architecture in

a wider historical context, also integrates the new scholarly insights gained during the Francke Foundations' application for inscription as UNESCO World Heritage.

Although an additional chapter has been added on the present activities in the Francke Foundations, the catalogue's main focus remains the Historic Orphanage. Since reopening in 1995, the Orphanage, from its roof platform to plinth floor, has been home to a diverse range of cultural facilities and activities. Not only are these designed for a broad audience but, just as with the building's technical equipment, they are continually adapted and evolved to meet today's demands. In a similar spirit, the principal chapter on the Orphanage has also been thoroughly revised to reflect the major changes, not least on the ground floor where visitors enter the building. The introductory exhibition to the Foundations' history has been entirely revamped, and the rooms opposite now hold an additional permanent exhibition on Pietism and its cultural-historical impact. The ticket desk and museum shop, previously located on the entry floor, have been relocated to Francke's Home, the nearby building in which Francke lived for many years. Since Francke's Home also functions as a centre for various cultural activities, it is also described in this catalogue. Similarly, a chapter has been dedicated to the refurbished historic bakery and brewery, which now also houses exhibitions and other cultural events. Finally, no account of the Foundations' sights would be complete without a description of the Historic Library, which is presented in a dedicated chapter. This picture of the Foundations is supplemented by a short chapter on the two chapels in the basement of the former Canstein Bible Society. These two sacred spaces illustrate just how closely the cultural and religious spheres are interwoven here, and highlight the Christian spirit inspiring the Francke Foundations' work, past and present.

The idea of revising and developing the catalogue's third edition was originally proposed by Metta Scholz, and I

would like to thank her both for tenaciously canvassing for this project and her resolution over the years in making it a reality. Not only did she orchestrate all the many details, but she also systematically edited the texts. We are also very grateful to the authors of the chapters collected in this volume. In some cases, these texts had to be written under a distinct time pressure, yet all our contributors enthusiastically accepted the task and accomplished it with great skill and expertise. Finally, I would like to thank our designers – both Klaus E. Göltz for the attractive layout of the chapters and Joachim Dimanski for the cover design. Since the Foundations are also now establishing a more prominent international profile, this catalogue is appearing both in German and English, and our thanks go to Andrew Boreham for the English translations.

Over the last twenty years, the Francke Foundations have undergone almost unimaginable changes. The intense commitment to saving and restoring the Foundations, which often had to overcome significant difficulties, is now primarily directed to the challenge of suitably preserving these heritage buildings. This not only involves a watchful eye to prevent any renewed gradual decline, but also cherishing the Foundations' tradition and programme, both in terms of the high standards of the content and the professional approach, and ensuring these are sustainable for the future. Now, twenty-five years after German reunification, the Francke Foundations have gained a firm place in the growing awareness of cultural heritage – and this in itself is an encouragement to put every effort into continuing this work.

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