

FURTHER INFORMATION

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ALMANACH
DE
GOTHA

1942

FÜRSTL.
TASCHENBUCH

1942

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GOTHAISCH.
JAHRBUCH



GRÄFL.
TASCHENBUCH

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**Almanach de Gotha –
Der Gothaische Hofkalender**

Calendars and almanacs are typical examples of the book and publishing culture of the 18th century, which aimed to entertain, educate and inform an aristocratic and increasingly bourgeois audience. When the Duchy of Gotha developed into a nationally recognised publishing centre in the 18th century, the first calendars were also printed here. In 1740, Andreas Reyher published the first *Neu verbesserte Gothaisch-genealogischer und SchreibCalender*, which anticipated the programme of the later court calendar. In 1764, Johann Christian Dieterich published the *Almanach de Gotha contenant diverses connoissances curieuses et utiles, pour l'Année MDCCLXV* for the first time. In addition to a calendar, it contained a brief genealogy of the European princes, the genealogical table of the Saxon dynasty, the chronological directory of the German emperors, numerous announcements from science, trade and art. Its German-language counterpart followed in 1765 under the title *Gothaischer Hofkalender zum Nutzen und Vergnügen eingerichtet auf das Jahr 1765*. This established a series that continued uninterrupted until 1944. From then on, a French-language and a German-language calendar were published annually. These contained both recurring and annually changing articles. The permanent contents included genealogical directories, tables of European rulers and statistics on population figures, territories, army strength and state expenditure as well as tables of weights, measures and coins.

The varying contents included entertaining and informative essays. The calendars were illustrated with copperplate engravings by renowned artists. Carl Wilhelm



I. C. Böhme sc.

Ettinger took over the court calendar in 1776. Ettinger was one of the most important Thuringian publishers of his time. The constant expansion of his business prompted him to lease out some of his publishing products. In 1785, he entrusted 'both the publishing and distribution' of the court calendar 'for a certain number of years [...] to Mr Justus Perthes'. Johann Georg Justus Perthes, who had come to Gotha in 1778 and joined Ettinger's publishing bookshop as a partner, thus ventured into entrepreneurial independence. From then on, Perthes and the court calendar were inextricably linked for over 150 years. However, this symbiosis only becomes visible on the title page of *Gotha* in 1816, the year of Justus Perthes' death, when the lease agreement with Ettinger expired. From then on, the court calendar and the geographical and cartographic publications that began at the same time formed the two most important pillars of the Perthes publishing house and turned it into a globally active company. The annual editions of *Gotha* became a popular Christmas and New Year gift. They established themselves in aristocratic and middle-class households, in offices, consulates and ministries. Over the course of the 19th century, the *Gotha* became modernised and was the only calendar of the Enlightenment period to survive on the market.

Gradually, the entertaining and popular texts disappeared in favour of statistical, diplomatic and chronological information. At the same time, the genealogies of the nobility gained more and more space, so that eventually independent genealogical pocketbooks were published, which were orientated

towards the ranks of the nobility. This was followed in 1825 by the 'gräfliche', the 'freiherrliche' (1848), the 'uradelige' (1900) and finally the 'briefadelige' pocket-books (1907). The families themselves had to ensure that the entries were up to date. The Gotha editors of the court calendar received daily letters announcing births, baptisms, marriages, honours and deaths. In addition to the genealogical pocketbooks, which became a standard work of European aristocratic society, the court calendar/almanac became a statistical and diplomatic handbook of the world of the 19th and 20th centuries. The editors utilised an extensive network of correspondents consisting of diplomats, consuls and officials. In 1928, the original centrepiece of the court calendar was dropped: the calendar. In the end, the court calendar and the associated genealogical paperbacks had grown to an impressive series of ten volumes a year.

In the course of its history, the *Gotha* was repeatedly caught up in the flow of historical events. Napoleon had the 1808 edition confiscated and censored. In the 1930s, the court calendar was caught up in the maelstrom of National Socialist racial ideology and only included 'pure-blooded' German nobility who had no Jewish or coloured ancestors after 1750. The *Almanach de Gotha* and its German-language counterpart were published for the last time in 1944. The genealogical paperbacks had already ceased publication two years earlier due to a shortage of paper caused by the war economy. In view of its involvement in the National Socialist regime, resuming the *Gotha* after the Second World War, especially in the Soviet occupation zone,

Gothaischer
genealogischer

Kalender

auf das Jahr
1816.

Drei-und Fünfzigster Jahrgang.

Gotha,

bei Justus Perthes.

was no longer conceivable. In 2013, the Vereinigung der Deutschen Adelsverbände e.V. acquired the rights to the name Gotha from Ernst Klett Verlag, the legal successor to Perthes Verlag. Since 2015, the new editions of Gotha have been published by the Deutsches Adelsarchiv. The historical heritage of the Gotha, including the archive and the editors' working library, is now part of the Perthes Collection, which was acquired by the Free State of Thuringia in 2003 with the support of the Kulturstiftung der Länder and is preserved and maintained by the Gotha Research Library. It includes representative historical cabinets for the presentation of the court calendar at sales fairs and an almost complete collection of specimen copies of Gotha and its predecessors, comprising almost 700 volumes and covering well over 20 linear metres.

Use of the collection is possible by appointment, guided tours on request.