

Transkription eines Briefes von O. Chanute an Moedebeck

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Transkript: Otto-Lilienthal-Museum

Sept. 29, 1901

Major Moedebeck

Neisse, Germany

My dear Major Moedebeck

I have your very interesting letter of 15th and am touched by the sympathy which you exhibit with our misfortune.

I much desire to promote a translation of your book. I have no German friend where who takes interest in the subject, or who is an expert, so I should be willing to contribute something towards the expense of translating in Germany or in England, where the book would have a sale. I will interview a publisher however.

I will be very glad to contribute to your lexicon, but I feel sure that this will not be of enough value to warrant including my name among the compilers of chapter 15. In fact I had thought I might be of use to you when I recently was invited to contribute to the "Techno-lexicon" of the German Society of Engineers. I chose for my specialties "Wood preserving" and "Aeronautics" and as I happen to be the President of the "Western Society of Engineers" this year, I have written the enclosed circular, to get the members to help in collecting general Engineering words. It is my understanding that it will be several years before the "Techno-lexicon" is published, and I hope that your own lexicon will form the basis for such Aeronautical words as the German Engineers will conclude to admit. I suppose that you are in communication with Dr. Jansen.

I shall be very glad to receive the "épreuves" of the chapter on kites, dynamic flying machines, motors & on propellers, which you kindly offer; and still more pleased to have English translations if you arrange to have this done. I now enclose confidentially a proof of an article which I contributed to the supplement to the Encyclopaedia Britannica 18 months ago. It is only now being printed and I now regret that I gave such prominence to the Lilienthal table, as his co-efficients seem invalidated by Wright's experiments. Some of the material may however be of use to Capt. Hoernes. If your book is to appear first, he can only use the facts, which are public property, but if the Encyclopaedia appears first (it is the London Times edition) he may quote what he likes, giving credit to the English publication.

Permit me to object to the caption you have sent me for Chapter VIII. Artificial flight “Engineer O. Chanute.” I understood that you intended to reprint Lilienthal's chapter entire, give yourself an account of his work & death, and that I was to furnish some notes of what has been accomplished since, as a mere continuation. That is what I gathered from your former letters, and it seems fitting to me that in a German book the prominent place should be given to Lilienthal. I therefore propose that the title to Chapter VIII shall be Chapter VIII – Artificial flight – Eng. Otto Lilienthal, to which you may add if you choose “with notes by Major Moedebeck & O. Chanute.”

Unless a new light is thrown on the subject by your answer to the letter which I wrote to you September 19~, I should have to say that doubt has been cast upon Lilienthal's table on page 106 by Wright's experiments with full sized machines, and that the data of Lilienthal and Wellner should be revised by fresh experiments. It seems, even now, incredible to me that these scientists can have blundered and I hope that you, or Capt. Hoernes, or Prof. Wellner, or someone else will set me right by explaining how Lilienthal calculated his flights by the use of his table.

Please let me know two things:

1. About how many words you want my contribution.
2. About what time is your book to appear.

Yours truly,

O. Chanute