

WILEY



---

Hölderlins geschichtsphilosophische Hymnen: "Friedensfeier," "Der Einzige," "Patmos" by Jochen Schmidt

Review by: Mark W. Roche

*The German Quarterly*, Vol. 65, No. 2, From the Beginnings to the Present (Spring, 1992), pp. 243-244

Published by: [Wiley](#) on behalf of the [American Association of Teachers of German](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/406500>

Accessed: 12/12/2012 15:31

---

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).



Wiley and American Association of Teachers of German are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The German Quarterly*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

heraus. Selbst die größten Eingriffe seiner Montagen, so beteuert man geflissentlich, verstoßen nicht gegen 'Schiller' und bereichern sogar die "Werktreue" um "Zeittreue" (14, 7).

Werktreue oder nicht, das Theater hat seine eigenen Interessen. Aber der Kölner *Wallenstein* war eben nicht von Schiller, sondern halbehrlich von Schiller/Heyme. Über den tatsächlichen Abstand täuscht freilich hier und anderswo das historisch-theoretische Wissenschaftsgetue der Programmhefte. Es täuscht die Urheber, das Publikum und leider auch Piedmont (8). Nur, warum meint er dann wie andere, man wäre hier ohne Reclamheft verloren (14)? Eben weil nur Textkenntnis hier ein unglücklich "gebrochenes" Verhältnis "zur klassischen deutschen Literatur überhaupt" offenbart; und das soll allerdings gebrochen sein im Gegensatz zum Genusse eines "ungebrochenen" (17). Eine "unglückliche" Alternative. Denn weder glücklicher Genuß weltanschaulicher Heimat noch auch zynisches Frohlocken oder wehleidige Klage über den Verlust metaphysischer Nestwärme haben Platz angesichts großer Kunst und ihrer idealistischen Antwort auf die "Fremde des Lebens." Davon indessen, also von 'Schiller,' hört man rein nichts in diesem Band, in dem jedermann den Schiller von der Schulbank mitbringt, liebt und meistens haßt.

Haßt Heyme, wie Piedmont versichert, einzig Schillers Kunstidealismus (11), so geht hier und anderswo der ethische Idealismus, die politische Ethik im historischen Drama, gleich mit über Bord. Doch wer bemerkt das schon? Schwab-Felisch rügt zwar einmal die Begriffsverwirrung eines Regisseurs, bezweifelt aber im Tenor dieser Auswahl, ob Idealismus auf der Bühne etwas helfe (44, 66). Daß er da allerdings nichts hilft, wenn das Publikum nichts davon übernimmt, ahnt hier, in unserem gesegneten Zeitalter der Rezeptionstheorie, kaum jemand. Einzig der einzige Ausländer weiß es (aus der Sowjetunion)—sein FAZ-Korrespondent aber übersetzt idealistische Ethik prompt in materialistisches Utopiedenken (49); ein einzigartiges Dokument westdeutscher Geistesbeschaffenheit! Kurz, indem man wie Brecht (mitten in der Hochkonjunktur theoriefroher Reflexivität) die Gegenpole intentional objektiver Historizität und subjektiver Aktualität 'dialektisch' identisch setzte, entfernte die Theaterszene sich zunehmend von Schiller und erklärte, sie erobere und rette ihn. Das dürften ganz andere nötig

haben. Wer sich erinnert fühlt an Vorgänge in der Forschung, wird um so eher die für diese Auswahl-Dokumentation beanspruchte "Repräsentanz" (xiii) zugeben.

WOLFGANG WITTKOWSKI

*State University of New York, Albany*

SCHMIDT, JOCHEN. *Hölderlins geschichtsphilosophische Hymnen: "Friedensfeier," "Der Einzige," "Patmos."* Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1990. x + 296 pp. DM 52, cloth (DM 42 for members).

Schmidt opens his fourth book on Hölderlin by recognizing a development in the late hymns, specifically in the realm of the philosophy of history: cyclical-revolutionary structures are superseded by a linear-eschatological concept of history. Instead of discontinuous moments of harmony, positivity (in Hegel's sense), and chaos, which are characteristic of antiquity, Hölderlin elucidates for modernity a pneumatic concept: after the death of Christ, history develops toward a more stable and universal spirituality. Reconciliation and insight are no longer momentary gifts but the culmination of a long historical process.

The bulk of the book consists of readings of "Friedensfeier," "Der Einzige," and "Patmos," each of which focuses on the harmony of gods; Christ is privileged only to the extent that he mediates between the gods and between God the Father and humanity. History is seen not predominantly in the light of nature, as in some earlier works, but more from a theological perspective.

Schmidt begins his detailed philological and intellectual-historical readings with an analysis of "Friedensfeier," a hymn dominated by images of harmony and unity. The line-by-line analysis is rich in its account of rhetorical language, internal relations, parallel passages, and sources, such as Homer, Pindar, Hesiod, and the Bible. Schmidt is attentive to nuances of meaning and concerned with Hölderlin's method(s) of presentation. He demythologizes the passages into conceptual terms even as he draws attention to the richness and beauty of the mythological imagery. The interrelation of form and content is given special attention.

(Schmidt reads the "Fürst des Festes," by the way, as God the Father—even as he is later revealed to be essentially identical with Christ).

The interpretation of "Friedensfeier" is followed by a discussion of the broader context: the actual *Friedensfest* that took place in Paris in 1801 and contemporary essays on peace; similarities with Hegelian notions of divinity, historicity, and totality; Hölderlin's concept of poetic prolepsis; and structures of chiliastic thought and their reception by Hölderlin and his contemporaries. Without taking away from Hölderlin's individuality, the result is a view of Hölderlin less as an outsider and more as a representative of his age and as a reworker of tradition.

In his reading of "Der Einzige," Schmidt places Hölderlin in the context of Stoic, Neoplatonic, and pantheistic thought, even as he recognizes Hölderlin's specific contribution. The poet mediates between the divine figures of mediation: Heracles, Dionysus, and Christ, all of whom are—as Schmidt shows in detail—*soter* figures. Christ's death is the turning point from a sensuous definition of divinity to a pneumatic one. The poet is torn between privileging Christ and giving each god its due, a conflict—which is also indicative of a poetological tension—that eventually gives way to balance and synthesis.

Schmidt also turns to a comprehensive reading of the second version of "Der Einzige," beginning with manuscript problems. He stresses the anti-Empedoclean dimension, the movement toward limitation, restraint, and individuality, and so relates the poem to a general tendency in Hölderlin's late work. Interesting is the attempt to reinforce the reading with categories from Hegel's *Logic*, though Schmidt apparently does not see that for Hegel the "Other" is not only the negation of the "Something," it is itself a "Something" (162). Fascinating for post-Nietzscheans is the reading of Dionysus in the light of form and restraint.

In preliminary reflections on "Patmos," Schmidt stresses the importance of the most pneumatic Gospel, that of John, not only for Hölderlin but for Hegel and Schelling as well. He then reads the poem as a struggle with the dissolution of Christianity, engendered by the Enlightenment and modern biblical criticism. The poem does not call for a return to naive belief or orthodox Christianity; rather, it advocates an idealist philosophy of history that recognizes enlightenment as necessary. Like "Der Einzige,"

the hymn distinguishes between the plasticity of the Greek gods and the spirituality of Christ, which fulfills itself in a historical process of increasing spirituality, characterized by the sublation of mere positivity and dogma (assisted in this by the Enlightenment) and the development of community. A complexly idealistic reading of history (and of the Enlightenment) is Hölderlin's answer to the seeming disintegration of traditional values, the contemporary counterenlightenment, and the theodicy.

A knowledge of classical and religious sources is essential for an understanding of Hölderlin, and Schmidt exhibits this on almost every page. Many of the connections to tradition are new, such as the importance of Plato's *Timaeus* for "Friedensfeier," the elaborate, if subtle, synthesis of classical and Christian worldviews in the same hymn, the elaboration of soteriological imagery for "Der Einzige," and the range of biblical quotations and allusions to Christian thought in "Patmos."

Hölderlin interpreters of a poststructuralist orientation will not be satisfied by Schmidt's interpretation of potentially disruptive passages in the light of idealism, rather than deconstruction (see, for example, the works of Alice Kuzniar or Eric Santner, or, from a different perspective, the debate in *DVJs* 63 [1989]), but Schmidt offers compelling internal and external reasons for his readings, and he is attentive to the hymns' moments of caution and darkness. A more serious criticism might be that Schmidt's analyses tend to exhaust themselves in description, however complex, of Hölderlin's sources and positions, rather than moving on toward any assessment. Is Hölderlin of merely historical and formal interest, or are his positions to be taken seriously (also for the present) and subjected to a rigorous evaluation of their internal coherence and correspondence with what we know of reason or of history? Related to this, certain apparently demythologized paraphrases, such as "das Ende aller Geschichte" (44) and "Aufhebung der Zeit" (75), are in need of further explication.

Schmidt brings extraordinary erudition to his topic, and he writes clearly; students and critics would do well to study his readings, despite their minor limitations, as examples of exemplary philological and intellectual-historical interpretive work.

MARK W. ROCHE  
*Ohio State University*