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From Goethe to Gundolf

ESSAYS ON

GERMAN LITERATURE

AND CULTURE

To coincide with the two-hundredth anniversary of Wilhelm Müller’s birth in 1794, the first collected edition of his works since 1830 has been produced. This must be regarded as a literary event that will give pleasure alike to friends and lovers of ‘Die schöne Müllerin’ (‘The Fair Maid of the Mill’) or ‘Die Winterreise’ (‘The Winter Journey’) and to scholars of Romanticism and Biedermeier. Not everyone may be aware that there is an ‘Internationale Wilhelm Müller-Gesellschaft’; its support was an important factor in the production of this much-needed edition. The catalogue of an exhibition mounted in his birthplace, Dessau, marks the same event with useful documentation and fascinating pictorial material. The word ‘minor’ punctuates the whole literature on Müller,

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1 This chapter was originally published in Modern Language Review, 92 (1997), 363–78.
but surely it is on this occasion not inappropriate to speak of a ‘minor’
literary sensation.

Wilhelm Müller is one of those figures in the history of German
literature who stand in the shadow of others mightier than themselves.
First there is Franz Schubert. It is now surely impossible to unravel the
composer of ‘Die schöne Müllerin’ and ‘Die Winterreise’ from their
author, so much have they assumed an existence of their own. Then there
is Heinrich Heine. To many, perhaps to most, Müller appears as Heine’s
forerunner. The famous and much-quoted letter of July 1826, a little
over a year before Müller’s tragically early death, for all its deferentiality
(and its pleasure at being well reviewed by the other),\(^4\) places Müller in
most readers’ minds in a relationship where personal genius lies finally
with the essentially greater figure, with Müller the spur for the superior
achievement:

Ich bin groß genug, Ihnen offen zu bekennen, daß mein kleines Intermezzo-
Metrum nicht bloß zufällige Ähnlichkeit mit Ihrem gewöhnlichen
Metrum hat, sondern daß es wahrscheinlich seinen geheimsten Tonfall
Ihren Liedern verdankt, indem es die lieben Müller’schen Lieder waren,
die ich zu eben der Zeit kennen lernte, als ich das Intermezzo schrieb. Ich
habe sehr früh schon das deutsche Volkslied auf mich einwirken lassen,
späterhin, als ich in Bonn studirte, hat mir August Schlegel viel metrische
Geheimnisse aufgeschlossen, aber ich glaube erst in Ihren Liedern den
reinen Klang und die wahre Einfachheit, wonach ich immer strebte,
gefunden zu haben. Wie rein, wie klar sind Ihre Lieder und sämtlich
sind es Volkslieder. In meinen Gedichten hingegen ist nur die Form
einigermaßen volksthümlich, der Inhalt gehört der conventionellen
Gesellschaft. Ja, ich bin groß genug, es sogar bestimmt zu wiederholen,
und Sie werden es mal öffentlich ausgesprochen finden, daß mir durch
die Lecture Ihrer 77 Gedichte zuerst klar geworden, wie man aus den
alten, vorhandenen Volksliedformen neue Formen bilden kann, die
ebenfalls volksthümlich sind, ohne daß man nöthig hat, die alten
Sprachholperigkeiten und Unbeholfenheiten nachzuahmen. Im zweiten
Theile Ihrer Gedichte fand ich die Form noch reiner, noch durchsichtig
klarer — doch, was spreche ich viel von Formwesen, es drängt mich
mehr, Ihnen zu sagen, daß ich keinen Liederdichter außer Goethe so sehr
liebe wie Sie.\(^5\)

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\(^4\) ‘Über H. Heine’ (1823), in Wilhelm Müller, *Vermischte Schriften. Herausgegeben mit
einer Biographie Müller’s begleitet von Gustav Schwab*, 5 vols (Leipzig: Brockhaus,
1830), V, 440. Cited henceforth as VSchr. [BL, L, OT, Edin].

\(^5\) ‘I can freely admit to you that my little Intermezzo does not have a mere chance
similarity to your accustomed metre, but that it most likely owes the inner secret of
There is a double irony here (a word purposely chosen). The *Sieben und siebzig Gedichte aus den hinterlassenen Papieren eines reisenden Waldhornisten* / *Seventy-Seven Poems from the Literary Remains of a Travelling Horn Player* (the seventy-seven poems referred to), with their dedication to Ludwig Tieck, are, like all of Müller’s collections, a miscellany: naturally and pre-eminently, ‘Die schöne Müllerin’, but also ‘Wanderlieder’, ‘Reiselieder’, ‘Ländliche Lieder’, sonnets, poems to nature, to wine, to love, to friendship. The second part of the collection, which Heine in his letter claims so much to have enjoyed, contains ‘Johannes und Esther’, poems with another conventional theme, unfulfilled love, but in a context that gives the Petrarcan patterns a particular twist: boy (Christian) loves girl (Jew). It is the subject (or rather, one of them) of Müller’s later Novelle *Debora* and none the better for appearing in that collection of modish narrative clichés.

Heine is prepared to be accommodating. For Müller, with consummate grace and ease, has assembled the most accessible lyrical forms and themes of the almanacs and florilegia both of the late eighteenth century and of Romanticism. With the exception of some sonnets, which Müller, like Heine, can turn as well as the next poet, these are by and large in ‘Volksliedstrophen’, but there are sections that will recall the anacreontic poetry so popular in Germany since Hagedorn and rarely exceeded in quality since his day. The esoteric, ‘difficult’, un-folk-like Romance stanzaic forms are absent from Müller’s collection, but not, as his reviews make clear, from the efforts of so many early Biedermeier poetasters. Another irony lies in the reflection that

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6 ‘Songs of the Wayfarer’; ‘Songs of Travel’; ‘Country Songs’.
Müller himself said words similar to Heine’s about both Ludwig Uhland and Justinus Kerner, not privately but in print, in the important article in Brockhaus’s periodical Hermes, ‘Über die neueste lyrische Poesie der Deutschen’ (‘On the Latest Lyrical Poetry of the Germans’, 1827). Heine is thus enunciating not so much a statement of personal discipleship as a set of criteria to which nearly all the great lyrical poets of the nineteenth century subscribed. Theodor Storm, whose two anthologies of 1859 and 1870 draw generously on both these poets, articulates in his credally formulated introductions the principles that Müller and Heine had expressed before him. Yet all of them know and admit that it was Gottfried August Bürger and Goethe who first showed them the simplicity of poetic language producing the ‘Natursprache’, the ‘Urmutter aller Poesie’, that can appeal directly to the heart. It will be rhymed, readily set to music, not rhetorical (Klopstock’s and Schiller’s failing), not archaicizing, arch, or faux-naïf (the lesser Romantics’ weakness).

Goethe, whom Heine placed on a rather higher altar of his idolatry, seems to have had an off day when Müller visited him in Weimar in 1827, committing unflattering comments to Kanzler von Müller (‘eine unangenehme Personage, sagte er, süffisant, überdies Brillen tragend, was mir das Unleidlichste ist’). Heine linked Goethe and Müller as lyric poets, but both the Italienische Reise/Italian Journey and Müller’s highly readable Rom, Römer und Römerinnen/Rome, Roman Men and Roman Women of 1820, largely forgotten today, are formative texts for his own Italian memoirs and point forward to Heine’s own inimitable style. The sentence from Heine’s Reise von München nach Genua/Journey from Munich to Genua, ‘ach, er [Müller] war ein deutscher Dichter!’ thus places him in a double relationship, as a lyrical poet in the folk mode, but also as a master of the witty and interesting travelogue.

Müller, born in 1794, was six years younger than Byron, for whose fame and reputation in Germany he did so much, and three years older than Heine, whose eloquent admissions of debt I have just quoted. These are years of brief spans of talent (like Wilhelm Hauff, 1802–27).

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7 Wilhelm Müller, IV, 297–342.
8 ‘The language of nature’; ‘the earth-mother of all poetry’. Ibid., 299.
10 ‘Oh, he was a German poet!’. Heine, Säkularausgabe, VI, 55.
or genius (like Franz Schubert, 1797–1828). Whatever else Müller may have in common with Byron and Heine, arguably the two greatest masters of poetic form of their century, he shares the problem of their true place in literary history and of their subsequent reputations. But am I not setting my sights just a little too high in linking Müller with these manifestly superior names? It is a matter of degree. To deal with the last aspect first: it is understandable that Müller’s reputation, while freeing itself in the course of the century from the mild hagiography of Gustav Schwab’s introductory ‘Wilhelm Müller’s Leben’ of 1830, had nothing to fear from the kind of personal revelation that was to prove injurious to Byron and to some extent Heine. But in associating the three poets I am making a slightly different point. All three belong, for differing reasons, fairly and squarely in the century that gave them birth, and yet (allowing for Müller’s lesser stature) they are associated with revolutionary movements that are part of the political tissue of the nineteenth: Greek, and to some extent Italian, national determination, or the future constitution of the German nation. Müller had taken part in the Wars of Liberation in 1813–15, and there is no doubt that this experience and his subsequent association with figures like (and as unlikely as) ‘Turnvater’ Jahn or Kalckreuth senior and junior, or Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué, were at least factors in his admiration for the hero of Missolonghi. The young Müller shared briefly some of the inanities of patriotic professors and firebrand students, but he did also cherish liberal ideals, especially after the clampdown of Karlsbad. His short career as a writer had to contend with censorship, known, it is true, for its severity but also its capriciousness. Generally, Müller politically played safe and sailed less close to the wind than Heine was (later) to do. The example of Béranger across the border was not encouraging, but it did not prevent Müller from writing a generous and warm-hearted defence of the man and poet, at that time in prison for his views. His several reviews and articles on Byron, quoting copious extracts from the man himself, sentimental, witty, but also outrageous and subversive (‘Lord Byron ist vielleicht das größte und fruchtbarste, aber auch das gefährlichst Dichtergenie unsers Zeitalters’), send

11 VSchr, I, xvii-lxiii.
12 Wilhelm Müller, IV, 151–55.
13 ‘Lord Byron is perhaps the greatest and most fertile, but also the most dangerous genius of our age’. VSchr, V, 156.
out an encoded message to his liberal-minded and educated readers arguably more effective than all the young poets who were emulating Cain or Manfred. It is a message different from Goethe’s: what the older man found fascinating was daemonic poetic genius, not a heroic death in the Morea. If Müller never created an Euphorion (or Heine’s William Ratcliff), he does deserve some credit as the man who for a short period of years kept the name of Byron fairly and squarely before the literary reading public.

There is, in a literary age so given to eclecticism, no contradiction between the folk mode and that of the ‘conventionnelle Gesellschaft’. And, as both Byron and Heine demonstrate, the mastery of form is no barrier to the expression of deep feeling. At his level of achievement, Müller’s poetry reflects both these willingly borne constraints. It also, I feel, shares in the fortunes of both Byron’s and Heine’s receptions. The oeuvre of both these great poets survives during the latter part of the nineteenth century essentially on a reduced and narrowed base. Byron cannot easily provide a ready model for generations that produce Alfred Tennyson, Matthew Arnold, Dante Gabriel Rossetti or Algernon Charles Swinburne; Heine, so formative for Storm, has less to say to Gottfried Keller and nothing at all to Conrad Ferdinand Meyer, let alone Hugo von Hofmannsthal or Stefan George. But both have passed on enough into the life-stream of their respective national poetic traditions to ensure that they are known and read, and can be revived when times are more receptive to their particular styles. Müller at his level, is altogether more vulnerable. He survives as part of the ‘Hausschatz der deutschen Lyrik’, and as the sung text of two of Schubert’s song cycles. His complete poetry is never out of print during the nineteenth century: Gustav Schwab’s edition of 1837 is succeeded by, among others, Max Müller’s reissue of his father’s poems in 1868 and a nearly 400-page Reclam volume in 1898. But the five-volume Vermischte Schriften edited by the same Gustav Schwab in 1830, which are the essential monument

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14 ‘Conventional society’.
15 ‘Treasury of German Poetry for the Home’.
to the full range of Müller’s achievement, have had to wait until 1994 for the nearest approach to a reprint. The reception of Heine’s works, by contrast, with the exception of the shameful interlude of 1933–45, is clearly and deservedly different.

My association of Byron and Heine with Müller is not intended to crank his reputation up to a level with theirs. Nor do the nearly twenty-five pages of entries in the standard bibliography, the 1905 edition of Karl Goedeke’s Grundriss, necessarily justify a major rehabilitation of all aspects of his oeuvre, although they make for interesting and salutary reading. Friedrich Sengle, for whom Müller was a significant (but not central) figure in his Biedermeier constellation, dealt with him in a few deft and masterly strokes and stressed the centrality of ‘Lieder-Müller’. The editors of the new edition also place the major (but not sole) emphasis on the song-writer and the range of his lyrical activity. My own view is that much of Müller, not just the lyrical poetry but even the less-read and less-readable output, can serve to place a period and its major figures in focus. For that reason, I now dwell a little on his short life and his circumstances.

Schwab, the dutiful chronicler of Schiller’s and Hauff’s lives, produced a short biography of Wilhelm Müller for the Vermischte Schriften, which appeared in 1830. Schwab made Müller’s personal acquaintance in the last year of his life, and this note tinges his assessment of the other poet’s work and character:

Wenn mich schon seine Lieder dem liebenswerthen Dichtergeiste recht nahe gebracht hatten, so versprach die Woche, die ich ihm ausschließlich widmen durfte, mir ein langes, inniges Verhältniß mit Müller dem Menschen. Seine Gedichte ließen harmloses Wohlwollen gegen jedermann, schnelle Begeisterung für Schönes und Gutes, Talent für Geselligkeit und geistreiche Unterhaltung zum voraus ahnen. Im näheren Umgang aber entwickelte sich bei ihm auch ein Ernst der Gesinnung, ein biederer Sinn, eine sittliche Zuverlässigkeit, die, wenn man sie einmal

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Einleitung und einem Vorwort herausgegeben von Curt Müller (Leipzig: Reclam, 1898) (henceforth cited as Gedichte (1898)).


His famous son, Max Müller, in the preface to his edition for the ‘Bibliothek der Deutschen Nationalliteratur’ in 1868, could also write from the heart, and his words ‘ich habe ihn ja kaum gekannt’\(^{21}\) have a certain poignancy. But he was, or was to be, in possession of family papers that showed his father in a more human light, notably his early diaries. Max Müller, as befits the times, and, it is fair to say, his own convictions, writes more of his father’s political views and his contention with the censor than does Schwab. He is by the same token now aware that not all of his father’s œuvre is secure. Both of these biographical sketches stress the harmony between Müller’s poetic persona and his actual character, and that is in keeping with nineteenth-century literary biography in general. Schwab’s comments are, however, telling. For there was no immediate reason why Müller, a North German, should appeal to the Swabian school of poets, to Schwab himself in particular, but also to Ludwig Uhland and Justinus Kerner. But Schwab, later mercilessly harried by Heine along with his fellow-countrymen, is making the point that the happy coexistence of simple lyricism, ‘Talent for Geselligkeit’,\(^{22}\) and what Heine called ‘conventionnelle Gesellschaft’, was not regionally limited and that it appealed to a broad national reading public. Indeed, Heine’s style was not very much different from that favoured in Stuttgart except for its being more witty, less conventional, and, crucially, more talented. One could, after all, read Heine without approving of him. Prince Metternich read Heine’s love poetry attentively while also allowing his minions to wield the blue pencil on the political writings; he may have also enjoyed Müller’s ‘biederer Sinn’ (‘honest sense’) while

\(^{20}\) If his Lieder brought this agreeable poetic personality very close to me, the week that I was to devote exclusively to him promised me a long and intimate relationship with Müller the man. His poems gave intimation of innocence, benevolence towards everyone, a quick enthusiasm for the beautiful and good, a talent for conviviality and witty conversation. But on closer acquaintance one was also made aware of a serious-mindedness, an inner worth, a sureness in moral matters, which, once one was made aware of them, gave even his lightest products a particularly charming aspect, like summer-houses built on rocks’. VSchr, I, lvi-lvii.

\(^{21}\) I hardly knew him’. Gedichte (1868), xi.

\(^{22}\) ‘Talent for conviviality’.
noting his more carefully phrased subversiveness. In terms of the history of style and taste, Müller represents what he himself, talking of the ultimate model Goethe, called ‘Vieltönigkeit’. It is the principle of versatility and even eclecticism that can be found in nearly all the poets, great and small, in the Biedermeier period, that dominates their major publication outlet, the literary almanac, and that provides the most important factor of continuity with the century that first allowed *poésies fugitives*, ‘Volkslied’ (‘folksong’), and sentimentality to coexist: the eighteenth. Thus Müller, who so admires in Schmidt von Lübeck the ‘echt deutscher Liedersänger von reiner, voller und herzlich bewegter Stimme’ and in Kerner ‘jenes rückhaltslose Erschließen des innersten Herzens’, is equally at home in the poetry of wine and mild eroticism, of friendship and ‘deutscher Sang’, but he can also display an intolerance of revealed religion’s embrace of political reaction. None of these positions is incompatible with the other. They were not all handed down to the poet; some, indeed, would need the impulse of his own times for their acquisition and mastering.

Müller lived and died in Dessau, the capital and residence of Anhalt-Dessau, one of the more liberal, if patriarchal, states of the post-1815 ‘Bund’. If Dessau later gave him a professional base and enabled him to carry out a wide range of literary activities for publishers in several different centres, it was Berlin that proved in the first instance formative. Müller’s father was a master tailor, who, after a period of financial uncertainty, and a second marriage, could be called fairly well-off. It seemed reasonable and proper that his son should proceed to the liberal and enlightened ‘Hauptschule’ in the town, and Müller’s excellent knowledge of both classical and modern languages was certainly acquired there. When later giving an account of Byron’s miserable schooldays and love-hate relationship with the ancient classics, Müller might well reflect that however much Germany lacked in Byronic panache and effrontery, it certainly produced well-educated writers. Anhalt not having a university of its own, the choice for higher study fell on Berlin. Again, the contrast between Humboldt’s University of Berlin and Byron’s Trinity College,

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23 ‘Singing in many tones’. Wilhelm Müller, IV, 417.
24 ‘True German song-writer of pure, full voice, moved from the heart’. Ibid., 426
25 ‘This opening of the inner heart without any restraint’. Ibid., 476.
as yet innocent of William Whewell, Julius Hare or Connop Thirlwall, cannot be stressed too much, except, of course, for the poets it brought forth. Yet for a young man of a scholarly turn of mind, it might be bliss to be alive in Berlin in 1813, in the university of Friedrich August Wolf, of Karl Wilhelm Ferdinand Solger, of August Böckh, Johann Wilhelm Süvern, Friedrich Rühls (the list could be extended). Müller’s father could finance Wilhelm’s studies, but was immediately confronted (his reaction is not recorded) with a less studious side of his son’s character. Müller, at the age of eighteen, responded to the King of Prussia’s call to arms after Napoleon’s defeat in Russia. This was easily enough done, until one considered that Anhalt-Dessau, despite the ‘Alter Dessauer’26 and his role in Frederick II’s greatness, was not a Prussian fief. Clearly, local dynastic differences were not holding back the patriotic fervour of the young. From 1813 to 1815, Müller was a soldier, rising to the rank of lieutenant. This puts him in the company of those other soldier poets and painters (Joseph von Eichendorff, Max von Schenkendorf, Theodor Körner, Friedrich Rückert, Fouqué, Ferdinand Olivier, Philipp Veit, and others) whose formative experience was the Wars of Liberation. Yet Müller never wrote anything approaching ‘Der gute Kamerad’ or even ‘Lützows wilde Jagd’;27 we have no images of him in uniform, as in Georg Friedrich Kersting’s well-known painting of Körner and comrades.28 It may therefore come as a surprise to find the singer of ‘Die Winterreise’ as a young man expressing animadversions like these:

Aus Franzenschädeln trinken wir
Dort unsern deutschen Trank
Und feiern Wilhelms Siegeszier
Mit altem Bardensang.29

26 Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau (‘the Dessauer’) was a general in Prussian service under Frederick William I and Frederick the Great.
29 ‘From Frenchmen’s skulls we quaff
There our German wine
And mark Wilhelm’s victory bays
With bard-song as of yore!’. Wilhelm Müller, I, 4.
These calamitous verses are from Müller’s first collection of poetry, *Bundesblüthen* (1816).\textsuperscript{30} It is significant that neither Schwab nor any subsequent nineteenth-century editor, even in an age fairly flowing with patriotic gore, chose to include this early stuff. The later *Lieder der Griechen/Songs of the Greeks*, where the skulls might be Turkish and the wine Chian, would be sufficient reminder of Müller the political bard. This side of his oeuvre cannot be overlooked, and, as already stated, it is part, but part only, of his admiration for Byron and political freedom. For all that, it did mean that he had actually wielded the ‘Schwert’ while also stringing the ‘Leyer’,\textsuperscript{31} and that his warrior pose was marginally more convincing than had been Johann Wilhelm Ludwig Gleim’s enfeebled calls to arms under Frederick (or even the minor Romantics’ under Frederick William III).

Müller saw action at Grossgörschen and Kulm in 1813, then postings at headquarters in Prague and Brussels. In Brussels there was a shadowy love-affair with ‘Therese’, and there have been those who have wished to identify her as the Jew of ‘Johannes und Maria’ and later of *Debora*. Returning to Berlin in the autumn of 1815, he was to experience another variant of the Petrarchan cycle; meeting the young artist and bemedalled war veteran Wilhelm Hensel and entering his house circle, Müller fell in love with his sister Luise. That might be too gross an expression for this relationship; the two lovers met in a common religious inwardness: their virginal devotion was to be sustained by the suppression of the flesh and its earthly lust (‘böse Erdenlust’).\textsuperscript{32} Luise’s spirituality and ethereality were later to try the sexual patience of Clemens Brentano, ever ready to sublimate his baser desires in otherworldly devotion. If Müller’s diary fragments from the period reveal less self-maceration, they are documents of a young man urgently eager to be pure, patriotic and poetic. The relationship with Luise came to nothing. Yet Müller, like Heine, both knew the Petrarchan literary mode and experienced its real-life counterpart. Brooding melancholy, but also the forceful overcoming of introspection, are as much part of the tissue of his poetic cycles as they are of Heine’s *Buch der Lieder/Book of Songs*. But whereas


\textsuperscript{31} A reference to Körner’s collection *Leyer und Schwert/Lyre and Sword* (1814).

\textsuperscript{32} ‘Wicked earthly lust’. *Wilhelm Müller*, V, 55.
Heine compensates by challenging accepted norms, Müller more often than not has recourse to conviviality and friendship as the cure for Weltschmerz.\(^{33}\) It was with friends, including Hensel and the young count Friedrich Kalckreuth, that the collection *Bundesblüthen* of 1816 came about. It displeased the Prussian censor, not for its exquisite badness, but for its possible seditiousness.\(^{34}\) With these particular friends it could be said that Müller had fallen socially and professionally on his feet. His rather bland portrait drawing joins the gallery of Biedermeier notables (Heine, the Mendelssohns, Brentano, Rahel Varnhagen) in Hensel’s portfolio.\(^{35}\) Kalckreuth is the son of the Prussian field marshal. Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué, a mere baron and a major, receives a letter containing this sentence: ‘Und so war es auch gestern abend, als er den freundlichen Händedruck des Mannes fühlte, dem er nächst Gott und seinen Eltern das Meiste und Beste verdankt, ich meine nicht die vergänglichen Wohltaten des Lebens, sondern die immergrüne Saat des Guten und Schönen in ihm, so jung sie auch noch sein mag, mit einem Worte, ein deutsches Herz und einen deutschen Geschmack’.\(^{36}\) Müller later had cause to be ashamed of such sentiments, and of his association with the ‘Gesellschaft für deutsche Sprache’, the Germanophile society that harboured the xenophobia, illiberalism and anti-Semitism of Berlin notables like Jahn, Böckh, or Rühs. Yet his first non-poetic publication, if one will, his first scholarly effort, was a product of these circles: *Blumenlese aus den Minnesingern*/*Florilegium from the Minnesingers* (1816).\(^ {37}\) Was this just an interest in Petrarchism, this time German-style, or a harbinger of something deeper? Müller reprints Johann Jacob Bodmer’s Middle High German based on the Manesse text, adding his own modern version *en face* (it is not encouraging to find the Kürenberger’s famous poem

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\(^{33}\) ‘Melancholy’, ‘mal du siècle’.

\(^{34}\) Wilhelm Müller, I, 279.


\(^{36}\) ‘And thus it was yesterday evening, too, when he felt the friendly hand-clasp of the man to whom next to God and his parents, he owed the most and best, I do not mean the fleeting benefits of life, but the evergreen seed of the good and beautiful in him, however young it may be, in a word, a German heart and German taste’. Wilhelm Müller, V, 109–10.

\(^{37}\) *Blumenlese aus den Minnesingern*, ed. by Wilhelm Müller (Berlin: Maurer, 1816). [BL, OT, StA].
masquerading as ‘Fräuleins Klage’). Other eighteenth-century revivals of Minnesang, Gleim’s or Bürger’s, had been more interested in the psychological stance of speaker and addressee than in textual niceties. The Romantics, Ludwig Tieck and Friedrich Heinrich von der Hagen, modernizing and making accessible texts they saw as appealing to the spirit of their times, were at the same time continuing the previous century’s antiquarianism. Tieck, following Friedrich Schlegel, had postulated a continuity of ‘Eine Poesie’ throughout the undulations and anfractuosities of the historical process. Müller’s preface reflects his deference to the great Friedrich August Wolf and his ‘Liedertheorie’ of Homer, already turning the heads of sober classical scholars like Niebuhr. The mode of transmission from the heroic age or even the ‘schwäbisches Zeitalter’, of epic or lyrical texts in older Germanic dialects might, in Müller’s eyes, best be compared with that of the songs of Homer as they passed through many hands and became remoter from the texts that the rhapsodists had once sung. As a philologist (and Müller can lay claim to this title) he sides less with academic scholars like Georg Friedrich Benecke or the Grimms or Karl Lachmann. There is a wider reading public in mind; the style is clear and elegant; his models are Johann Heinrich Voss, August Wilhelm Schlegel and Goethe. ‘Wissenschaftliche Prosa’ of this kind was still highly regarded by teachers of aesthetics and ‘Beredsamkeit’ (‘eloquence’), and it has the advantage of accessibility and readability: it is the tradition that became great in the hands of Ranke and Mommsen, Alexander von Humboldt and (later) the Grimm brothers.

Of further significance during Müller’s period in Berlin was the circle around August von Stägemann and his wife Elisabeth. Stägemann was a man of affairs, close to the chancellor Karl August von Hardenberg, but, on less secure ground, also a poet of sorts. His wife’s salon brought together Berlin notabilities: here Müller met Friedrich Förster, whose Die Sängervorrah/The Minstrel’s Journey is one of the key texts of Berlin late Romanticism, and most likely Achim von Arnim, with whom he was to collaborate in translating Christopher Marlowe. The Stägemann

38 ‘Young Lady’s Complaint’.
39 ‘One sole poetry’.
40 ‘Era of the Swabian emperors’.
41 Wilhelm Müller, IV, 75.
42 ‘Scholarly prose’.
house was musical, convivial and literary: it contained the elements that were to launch Müller on a career in letters. We may assume that his contributions to almanacs and literary magazines (such as Friedrich Wilhelm Gubitz’s much-read periodical Der Gesellschafter, in which both Arnim and Brentano published) were in some measure due to the contacts the concourse in the Stägemanns’ house afforded. Some of these early efforts contain the first versions of the works that were to bring Müller fame: Der Gesellschafter for 1818, for instance, contained twelve ‘Müller-Lieder’, some written for a lyrical dramolet in the Stägemann house and now taking on lineaments of their own.

Before Müller emerged as a literary persona, he had to undergo yet another formative influence: Italy. It was to have been Greece, but unromantic circumstances deemed otherwise. Had it been Greece, it is conceivable that he might have followed an academic career, for Friedrich August Wolf was involved in the matter. He had been approached by Baron Albert von Sack, a gentleman of means and leisure who wished to spend two years travelling in Greece and the Near East and sought a suitably qualified young travelling companion. Wolf and Böckh recommended Müller, who in his turn had good reason to turn away from the cloying religious and patriotic atmosphere of the last two years. This was in August, 1817; the journey was to lead from Vienna to Constantinople. In Vienna, Müller met for the first time Greeks exiled through the political circumstances of their native country; it was the germ of the later Lieder der Griechen. In Vienna, too, the news reached the travellers that an outbreak of plague had made the Ottoman lands unsafe. Baron Sack, not lacking resource, decided to do the Italian leg of the journey, originally planned for the return stage. Thus it was that Müller made the journey to Rome; his other travelling companion was the Nazarene artist Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld, for whose society he later had cause to be grateful. Once arrived in Rome, Müller parted company with Sack amid recriminations, and he was glad of contacts among the Nazarenes: Schnorr and Philipp Fohr did portrait drawings of him (Schnorr’s the kind of superbly severe head-and-shoulders likeness in which the brotherhood excelled), and the art historian and patron Carl Friedrich von Rumohr, ever interested in young men, lent him money. It may be hard to imagine Müller among the company in

43 Cat., 120.
the Caffè Greco depicted by Fohr before his tragic death in the Tiber:⁴⁴ there was already too much ‘altdeutsche Tracht’,⁴⁵ too much intense seriousness, too much religiosity. But like the Nazarenes, Müller sought relief from the Roman heat in the Albano mountains, not idealizing the local inhabitants as backdrop studies for religious paintings, as their scenes of Olevano tend to do, but trying to understand their mentality. Although Müller befriended August Sigismund Ruhl,⁴⁶ one of the few Nazarenes who actually broke his bond with the brotherhood, he seems to have found the company of Per Daniel Amadeus Atterbom, the Swedish Romantic, more congenial. Each is commemorated: Ruhl is the dedicatee of the sonnet collection ‘Die Monate/The Months’ in the Sieben und siebzig Gedichte, while Atterbom is more aptly remembered in the preface to Book II of Rom, Römer und Römerinnen/Rome, Roman Men and Roman Women. That text, which appeared in 1820,⁴⁷ revealed that the Italian experience was a search for both his personal and his national identity, while claiming to offer some insights into the mentality of a people much written about by the Germans but equally often misjudged by them. Müller did not echo Tieck’s testy words of 1816 to his friend Solger: ‘Ich liebe die Italiener und ihr leichtes Wesen, bin aber in Italien erst recht zum Deutschen geworden’.⁴⁸ That was an ungenerous reaction to Goethe’s Italienische Reise, a text that had not scrupled to treat Romantic sensibilities with some little severity. Müller, for his part, did not omit some unflattering asides on the subject of the Nazarenes, but that was all part of the business of casting off native prejudices and inborn preconceptions. The servants of revealed religion do not emerge well from Müller’s account, except where they display scholarship and learning, but by the same token Northern Protestant ‘Verinnerlichung’⁴⁹ emerges as the main barrier to understanding the Italian character and

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⁴⁵ ‘Old German costume’.
⁴⁶ Deutsche Romantik. Handzeichnungen, I, 1476.
⁴⁸ ‘I love the Italians and their easy ways, but Italy first made a German of me’. Goethe in vertraulichen Briefen seiner Zeitgenossen, ed. by Wilhelm Bode, 3 vols (Berlin and Weimar:Aufbau,1979), II, 667–68. See Chapter Two of this volume.
⁴⁹ ‘Inwardness’.
its notions of right and wrong. Müller does see religion in Italy, but it is enshrined in observances that are already present in the mythology and customs of Roman antiquity. This mythological interest could be called Romantic, but it also casts a wry and dispassionate eye over things considered sacred and ‘naive’ by the Nazarenes. Above all, Müller seeks to discard received moral and cultural ideas, to understand a national character while gaining comprehension of himself. In practical terms that means learning the language and its dialects, not blenching at its sexual mores or its robust folk-song, playing the flâneur, listening and keeping one’s eyes open. These are also features that the best Roman sections of Goethe’s *Italienische Reise* contain. *Rom, Römer und Römerinnen* keeps the figure of the exploring author firmly before the reader; he may not be the famous ‘pittore’ hiding his identity, but he is a young man bent on finding his psychological feet in a foreign land.

One senses that Müller returned from Italy late in 1818 having cast off his priggishness and many of his inhibitions. He did, however, face a crucial decision. What could one do after Berlin and Rome? A matter-of-fact solution was reached: to return home to Dessau. Had Müller abandoned the monde that had seemed to beckon, or the hopes of academic preferment? Perhaps not without some sense of resignation, he seems, like so many of his contemporaries, to have concluded that home is best. If Dessau was not Berlin or Leipzig or Dresden, in a pre-railway age it was not far from these cultural centres either. Literary magazines and almanacs could be published even in Altona or Karlsruhe or Bunzlau and still reach the reading public on which they depended. Yet Müller as a teaching assistant at the Latin school that had replaced his own old institution does seem a depressing climb-down, a Carl Spitzweg painting without the humour or the whimsy. He found an outlet in the duties of a librarian, for Dessau was to receive a public library, and, after struggles with his superiors, he was eventually to be entrusted with its charge. But that was not until 1823. He had first to establish himself socially and economically. The irony is that he had only a few more years to live, and the tragedy is that he seems almost to have worked himself to death.

The return from Italy coincided with publications reflecting the first flush of his lyrical energy, but also *Die Sängervielfahrt* and *Doktor Faustus*.50

50 *Die Sängervielfahrt. Eine Neujahrgabe für Freunde der Dichtkunst und Mahlerery […] Gesammelt von Friedrich Förster […]* (Berlin: Maurer, 1818), ed. by Siegfried Sudhof
The former, so significant for its stories by Brentano and Arnim, hardly does Müller credit. For the latter, Müller was certainly better versed in English than Arnim and certainly more knowledgeable. Not even Arnim’s preface would touch off any great wave of interest in Marlowe’s work in Germany, an uphill task against the ‘Shakespearomanie’ in which neither poet, to their credit, chose to join. But Arnim was generous and entrusted one of his longer and better poems to Müller’s short-lived periodical *Askania*.\(^{51}\)

For the remainder of his short life, Müller pitched himself into a frenetic series of activities. This, at least, is how they seem to the observer at today’s distance. It does, however, emerge that Müller was tidy, well organized, wrote easily, and could readily draw on the vast fund of literary knowledge in several languages that he had acquired in Berlin and Italy. In 1821 he married Adelheid Basedow, the granddaughter of the famous educationalist of the Philanthropin: Wilhelm Hensel obliged this time with a double portrait, anodyne like the first and lacking the forceful character of Schnorr’s. Like most of Hensel’s portrait drawings, it bore an autograph: ‘Werde glücklich wie der durch ein Weib wie die!’,\(^{52}\) the Biedermeier marriage ideal in a nutshell.

Müller was professionally a librarian. In the terms of his day that also meant being an antiquarian, a side that emerges in his editions of seventeenth-century German poetry. He remained a classical scholar, but of the more popularizing kind: *Homerische Vorschule/Homer’s Forebears* is the result. He was well and truly harnessed into what might seem the ephemeral world of reviewing and contributions to reference works. He kept several almanacs stocked with his occasional verse, including Amadeus Wendt’s *Taschenbuch zum geselligen Vergnügen/Almanac for Social Enjoyment*, even his own *Askania*, the mayfly that did not outlive the year 1820, and out of these emerged the collections for some of which he is remembered today. He joined in gregariousness and conviviality of all kinds: so much of his verse seems to have been written for occasions where time stood still and the song and the wine flowed. But there

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\(^{52}\) ‘Be happy like him with a wife like her!’ *Cat.*, 119.
was also a shrewdness underlying this flurry of activity. He chose his publishers with care: Friedrich Arnold, and later Heinrich, Brockhaus in Leipzig, had every cause to be satisfied with their young author in Dessau, and they paid well for work always punctually delivered. Friedrich Arnold Brockhaus, as an astute publisher, kept a variety of different enterprises going: *Literarisches Conversations-Blatt/Literary Conversations, Hermes oder kritisches Jahrbuch der Literatur/Hermes, or Critical Yearbook of Literature*, the almanac *Urania*, the famous *Conversations-Lexicon*. Müller contributed to them all, but he also kept his options open, playing off the cautious Brockhaus against the mighty Johann Friedrich Cotta and his *Morgenblatt für die gebildeten Stände/Morning Paper for Educated Classes*, yet not entrusting his *Waldhornist* collections to either and having them printed locally in Dessau. As his literary reputation increased, he could bargain for better royalties, not quite yet in the league of popular writers like Heinrich Clauren or Carl Franz van der Velde or Tieck, but the mild tussle with Brockhaus over *Debora* shows Müller standing his ground in monetary matters.  

Müller was well received in literary circles, notably those in Dresden, and especially those around Ludwig Tieck. The dedications of the *Waldhornist* volumes to Tieck and Carl Maria von Weber respectively are not mere conventional deferentiality. Weber (also working himself to death) was a reminder of the important links between poetry and music; that the naked text of so much seemingly trivial verse of the period is calling out for the decent covering of a musical setting. For a younger writer, Tieck was a model in both a positive and negative sense. His poetry, by then at last available in collected form, would provide the base line for so many of the young generation, the vocabulary, the attitudes, the clichés. His *Novellen*, the product of a pen that Müller rightly calls ‘flüchtig’, might convince the younger and less experienced that they too could extract a fairly good story from a set of stock situations. Perhaps Wilhelm Hauff could; Müller certainly could not. Tieck was a warning example of how not to dissipate one’s time and talents in conflicting and multifarious projects. Yet Müller did not share Tieck’s consuming passion for the theatre and for Shakespeare.

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53 Wilhelm Müller, V, 413–14.
55 ‘Fugitive’. Wilhelm Müller, IV, 411.
His corpus of reviews at their best recall more of the later Goethe’s range of interests, in their catholicity, their sense of ‘Weltliteratur/World literature’, their admiration of the folk traditions of southern Europe, their (differently accentuated) fascination with Byron. If the actual meeting with Goethe went badly, at least Müller’s reception in Dresden compensated, where he stayed in the grandeur of the Kalckreuths’ Villa Grassi. There he joined the lesser lights of that city, Malsburg, Förster, Loeben, as they revolved around the star attraction of Tieck, or paid brief homage to Weber.

How many of the writings of this almost manic spurt of activity actually deserve to survive? With this question I also approach the problems of the selection principles faced by past and present editors. Leaving aside the poetry proper for the moment, it emerges that nearly all of his writings actually impact on questions of poetic tradition, taste, or convention, on the relationship of the written to the spoken word. *Rom, Römer und Römerinnen*, already alluded to for its function in Müller’s development, has important sections on Italian folksong, which it quotes liberally, noting the ability of unlettered Italian street singers to improvise, but also their extraordinary feats of memory (a point also observed by Goethe).\(^56\) Hearing an Italian recite from memory canto after canto of Tasso is a living reminder of the ‘Geist der alten natürlichen Poesie’;\(^57\) the oral tradition that exists outside written documentation or inscription, and adapts to the times in which the stories are being recounted, which is inevitably accompanied by dance and music. The quotation comes from Müller’s *Homerische Vorschule. Eine Einleitung in das Studium der Ilias und Odyssee/Homer’s Forebears. An Introduction into the Study of the Iliad and the Odyssey*,\(^58\) easily written off as Friedrich August Wolf made accessible for the aesthetic tea-table (it is his only scholarly work to go into a second edition), yet for Müller proof that natural sung language is a reflection of the essence of those who sing, the ‘Stimme der Völker’.\(^59\) His praise of the Volkslied and of those who practise it well (Goethe, Uhland, Kerner) links him with Herder’s

\(^{56}\) Goethe, *Gedenkausgabe*, XIV, 410.
\(^{57}\) ‘Spirit of ancient natural poetry’.
\(^{59}\) ‘Voice of the nations’.
concerns half a century or so earlier, but, as already noted, it postulates a national poetry for the Germans that will be from the heart, natural, and free of artifice. It speaks the language of Goethe’s famous review of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, and it is fair to say that Müller, by precept and example, is a major factor in the process that eventually denies legitimacy to mere formalism and rhetoric in lyrical poetry. These concerns inform his best literary criticism, in a negative sense his unease at what formal poets like Platen or Rückert were producing, his ill-concealed contempt for so much of the poetic almanacs (and his ironic self-deprecation at being so dependent on them); more positively, his praise of the best Swabian poetry, but a word of commendation for the ‘durch heite Ironie gemilderte Schwermut’ of lesser lights such as Schmidt von Lübeck. When Müller produced his major anthology *Bibliothek deutscher Dichter des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts/Library of German Poets of the Seventeenth Century* he was not pursuing mere antiquarianism (although collating the texts also involves that) but seeking to reacquaint the Germans with a tradition of their own poetry on which they had all but turned their backs. Modern Baroque scholars should pay some deference to Müller as one who tried, but ultimately failed, to secure some of the best older lyrical poetry for the nation. If he preferred Paul Fleming and Simon Dach to Martin Opitz and Andreas Gryphius, this is consistent with his general criteria, where ‘bürgerliche Biederkeit und Unumwundenheit’ (referring to Dach) rank higher than formal correctness or *vanitas*. In rehabilitating Johann Christian Günther as the only genuine poet in a half-century of aridity, he had Goethe’s judgement on his side.

These criteria extend without qualification to foreign literatures. The translator must know how to employ them in his task of ‘Eindringen und Untergehen’ in an alien tongue. I draw attention to the word Müller uses for particularly successful translations in these terms, namely ‘Ueberdichtungen’, a word not known to the *Deutsches*
Wörterbuch/German Dictionary and not readily translatable, yet one that expresses concerns peculiarly close to nineteenth-century German poetic endeavour. Müller himself is no great translator:

War das der Blick, der tausend Schiffe trieb
In’s Meer, der Trojas hohe Zinnen stürzte?

This is hardly the Marlowe we know and love. His major corpus of translated work, Neugriechische Volkslieder/Modern Greek Folksongs, is itself a reworking of Claude Charles Fauriel’s French version. When discussing Pierre-Jean de Béranger or Byron or Thomas Moore or modern Greek poetry, Müller blends his remarks with factors that are more or less overtly political. The texts of Neugriechische Volkslieder pre-date the main struggle for independence and are in some ways closer to older ballad traditions or even the Serbian folksongs that so appealed to Goethe. They gain through their formulaic quality a tone that is alien to Müller’s own Lieder der Griechen, where moral outrage (and even rant) are never too far from the surface. In reviewing Moore’s poetry for Hermes in 1823 Müller made a crucial distinction between verse that was merely ‘demagogisch’ and patriotic poetry that could produce ‘unmittelbare Begeisterung durch die Zeit’. While admitting that Moore did not always observe this rule, Müller might well have reflected that his Lieder der Griechen were closer to the former than to the latter. It is hard to be fair to political poetry at the best of times. To cite an analogy: Heine at his best would satisfy the nobler of Müller’s two categories; Ferdinand Freiligrath or Georg Herwegh would fall into the lesser. It is easy to write off German ‘Griechenlieder/Songs of the Greeks’ (Müller’s are but one example among many) or ‘Polenlieder/Songs of the Poles’ as being vicarious or surrogate, as not addressing directly the need for freedom at home and, with questionable honesty, embracing the needs of those conveniently remote in space and culture. His interest in Byron

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64 ‘Transpoeticization’, perhaps. Ibid., 281.
65 ‘Was this the face that launched a thousand ships
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?’ Doktor Faustus, 131.
66 Neugriechische Volkslieder, ed. by C. Fauriel, trans. by Wilhelm Müller, 2 parts
(Leipzig: Voss, 1825). [BL, CUL, CTrin, OB, Edin].
and Moore and Walter Scott and so much other foreign literature might by the same token be a mere attempt to counteract the political stuffiness and limitation which he was powerless to change. Neither of these views is really fair. I therefore quote in full his poem ‘Die verpestete Freiheit/ Freedom under the Plague’, not for its poetic qualities, although its contained rage is not without effect, but for what it actually says:

Was schreit das Pharisäervolk so ängstlich durch die Länder,
Die Häupter dick mit Staub bestreut, zerrissen die Gewänder?
Sie schreien: Sperrt die Häfen zu, umzieht mit Quarantänen
Die Grenzen und die Ufer schnell vor Schiffen und vor Kähnen!
Die Pest ist unter ihrer Schar. Da seht die Strafgerichte,
Damit des Herrn gerechte Hand Empörer macht zunichte!
Die Freiheit selber, wie es heißt, ist von der Pest befallen,
Und flüchtet sich nach Westen nun mit ihren Jüngern allen.
O seht euch vor, daß in das Land die Freiheit euch nicht schleiche,
Und der gesunden Völker Herz mit ihrem Hauch erreiche!
Sie kleidet sich zu dieser Zeit in vielerlei Gestalten:
Bald Weib, bald Mann, bald nur ein Kind, bald hat sie greise Falten.
Drum lasset keinen Flüchtling ein, der kommt vom Griechenlande,
Daß nicht die Freiheit ihre Pest bring in die guten Landet.

This is Müller accepting the limits imposed by censorship and political constraint, but also registering a point that still (alas) has relevance in the Europe of 1995 (or 2021).

Inevitably, the two collections, *Sieben und siebzig Gedichte aus den hinterlassenen Papieren eines reisenden Waldhornisten* of 1821 (dedicated to Tieck and containing ‘Die schöne Müllerin’) and *Gedichte aus den hinterlassenen Papieren eines reisenden Waldhornisten* of 1824 (dedicated to

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68 ‘Why do the Pharisees rage so excitedly through the lands,
Their heads strewn with dust, garments torn to bands?
They cry: Close down the ports and put a quarantine
On all our borders, ship and barquentine!
The plague has broken out. See the court that sits,
For the Lord’s just hand to smite his enemies in bits!
For freedom, so we hear, the plague has got,
And is fleeing westwards bringing all her lot.
Beware that freedom does not slip into the land
And taint the people’s hearts with pestilential hand!
She puts on many guises in our day:
Man, woman, child, even heads grey.
Keep out all refugees arriving from Greek isles,
Or freedom brings its plague and with it all its wiles!’. *Wilhelm Müller*, II, 285.
Carl Maria von Weber and containing the full text of ‘Die Winterreise’) must command more attention than any other aspect of his oeuvre, for these encapsulate quintessentially the ‘Lieder-Müller’ whose survival is assured. It will, however, not do simply to isolate the Schubert texts and forget the rest, for that would overlook the complexity of the relationship between melodic and poetic line. It is also not merely a question of noting where the major differences lie between Müller’s and Schubert’s respective order and phrasing (especially with reference to ‘Die Winterreise’). Müller set both these lyrical cycles of ‘Rollenlieder’ in collections (sometimes containing further, different sets of ‘Rollenlieder’) and he seems to be inviting the reader of the Waldhornisten poems, as it were, to forget Schubert and look at the overall context. The phrase ‘durch heite Ironie gemilderte Schwermut’, quoted above in respect of Schmidt von Lübeck, can serve as a cautionary superscription to both of these collections. In giving them the titles he does, Müller is making a statement about the mixed nature of his poetry, or rather, the unforced coexistence of various components in forming a harmonious whole. Thus, while ‘Die schöne Müllerin’ and ‘Die Winterreise’ are undoubtedly texts of Weltschmerz (‘melancholy’), there is enough in the collections that frame them to counteract any sense of utter existential loss. ‘Die schöne Müllerin’ even contains those two poems, ‘Der Dichter, als Prolog/The Poet as Prologue’ and ‘Der Dichter, als Epilog/The Poet as Epilogue’, ironizing through a deliberate ‘Stimmungsbruchung’ the lapse from fulfilment into despair that the encapsulated poems express. But the titles of these poetic collections’ titles keep a similar set of contradictory components in balance: the ‘Waldhornist’ immediately has associations with Tieck’s Romantic novel Franz Sternbald and its constant horn serenades amid forest glades, ‘reisend’ as befits a novel that never reaches its destination, with ‘hinterlassene Papiere’ suggesting perhaps that he, too, has gone the way of the young miller. We must, however, accept the fiction that the ‘Waldhornist’ in his turn is also the author of all the poems, ‘Reiselieder/Songs of Travel’ or ‘Ländliche Lieder/Songs of the Country’ or ‘Tafellieder/Drinking Songs’, that contain the therapy against the despair of the ‘Winterreise’. Schubert, never otherwise noted for the sureness of his literary taste, found ‘Die schöne Müllerin’ in

69 Wilhelm Müller, IV, 424.
70 ‘Break in tone’.
the 1821 collection and promptly excluded the prologue and epilogue poems. This changes Müller’s text and leads the way for the domination of words by music. ‘Die Winterreise’ is more complex, in that Schubert first composed the twelve poems that had come out in Urania (1823), with an order slightly different from the 1824 edition, then added the remaining poems, but in a sequence that was not Müller’s but his own. Thus, while the Weltschmerz of ‘Die schone Müllerin’ comes out fully only in the musical setting, the text of ‘Die Winterreise’ is altogether more pointed in its message. Winter already has bleak connotations. We are clearly not in the late eighteenth-century rococo winter landscape of, say, Günther von Goeckingk’s ‘Als der erste Schnee fiel/When the First Snow Fell’,71 with Nantchen wrapped up in her muff, but in a world of doors that close, houses that remain shut, nature that is inimical, trackless, without destination, where wandering is a symbol of the human state. Schubert, even without altering the text, intensifies the Weltschmerz (‘melancholy’) and makes it the dominant tone; the poet, in his turn, invites us to read back or read on and find a more cheerful collection to raise our spirits, perhaps those ‘Tafellieder’ that appealed to two other composers, not alas of Schubert’s stature.

Müller’s remaining lyrical collection, Lyrische Reisen und epigrammatische Spaziergänge/Lyrical Journeys and Epigrammatic Strolls (1827), is presumably to be read in a similar fashion: ‘Lieder aus dem Meerbusen von Salerno/Songs from the Gulf of Salerno’, ‘Lieder aus Franzensbad bei Eger/Songs from Franzensbad Near Eger’, ‘Frühlingskranz aus dem Plauenschen Grunde bei Dresden/Spring Nosegay from the Plauenscher Grund near Dresden’, ‘Muscheln von der Insel Rügen/Shells from the Island of Rügen’ (echoes of Heine here), ‘Berenice. Ein erotischer Spaziergang/Berenice. An Erotic Promenade’. He did not live to unite other remaining disparate items. Fatigued, with eye and heart trouble, seeking convalescence on Rügen or in Franzensbad, even granted a temporary Tusculum in Dessau by his reigning prince, he worked on to the end. The visit to Stuttgart and Tübingen, to Schwab, Uhland and Kerner, was his last personal triumph. A heart attack brought his life to an end on September 30, 1827, just short of his thirty-third birthday. It was left to Gustav Schwab to commemorate his newly found friend in the five-volume Vermischte

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71 A well-known anthology poem (1778).
Schriften of 1830, and the two-volume Gedichte of 1837 that reprinted the first two parts of the earlier edition.

An editor of Müller’s works will be both constrained and encouraged by the printing history of his disparate oeuvre, whereas a commemorative volume will seek to do justice to all significant aspects of the man and writer. The Vermischte Schriften contain the poetry, the Novellen and the major critical essays (including those on the Tasso and Dante translations, on Uhland and Kerner, on almanac literature, on Rückert and on Willibald Alexis’s Walladamor), the crucial account of Byron’s life and works, and a miscellany of almanac and magazine contributions. They exclude much that was still in print in 1830, such as the collections and editions. The first two volumes provided a basis for the various editions of the poems, enabling these to remain within reach of the reading public. The poetry in both the 1830 and 1837 editions, even in Max Müller’s 1868 edition, was grouped round thematic clusters, not in strict chronological progression. The diaries and letters were edited by Philip Allen and James Hatfield in 1903,25 publishing the early Berlin diary and such correspondence as was available at the time. Hatfield in his turn did a critical edition of the poems in 1906,72 and Heinrich Lohre’s ‘Lebensbild’ of 1927 added important letters to Brockhaus.73 Much of the material in the later volumes of the Vermischte Schriften has never been reprinted, but Debora, for reasons best known to the compilers, made its way into Paul Heyse’s and Hermann Kurz’s Deutscher Novellenschatz.74 Rom, Römer und Römerinnen has until now never been republished in its entirety. Doktor Faustus was reprinted in 1911,75 and the recent reprint of Die Sängefahrt/The Minstrels’ Journey picked up the few, hardly significant, contributions Müller made to that collection. Neither of these works is, however, truly central to Müller. Much else is in the rare book category and difficult of access: the Müller scholar still needs a

72 Diary and Letters of Wilhelm Müller, ed. by Philip Schuyler Allen and James Taft Hatfield (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1903).
75 Ed. by Bertha Badt, Pandora 11 (Munich: Georg Müller, 1911).
‘hands-on’ approach to texts; reprinted prefaces alone do not give the feel, texture or scope of many of the large-scale works.

Müller is not an author for whom a historical-critical approach is appropriate. Thus this multi-volume and splendidly produced edition by Maria-Verena Leistner is inevitably a selection, a generous and judicious one for all that. The poetry and the diaries and travel accounts are virtually complete; the letters are well chosen. I could have done without the Novellen, but that is a personal judgement and not a scholarly criterion. My own selection of the critical writing might well have been different from the editor’s, but only in detail (I should have preferred the Tasso and Moore pieces to one or two published here). I should single out for special mention the prefaces to the Minnesinger and Opitz selections (republished for the first time), the large and important article on Byron, and the review of Uhland and Kerner. I regret that the decision was made, however understandable, to exclude the contributions to encyclopaedias: the printing history of these publications is a bibliographer’s nightmare, and not even Goedeke ventured into this veritable minefield. Encyclopaedias are, however, the single most important mode of dissemination of useful knowledge in the period, Müller almost coinciding with the inception of Brockhaus’s or Ersch-Gruber’s enterprises. They also represent a factor of continuity amid the changes of critical theory and literary canon. The scholarly apparatus of this edition consists of a fifty-eight-page introduction to Volume I, by Bernd Leistner, short introductions to each work or set of works, and notes. Volume V contains a select bibliography of primary and secondary literature, an important orientation for non-specialist and specialist alike. The editorial principles set out in the same volume are matter-of-fact and without fuss. While accepting that most of Müller’s work does not exist in manuscript, and that he made alterations to his own works during his lifetime, the principle of manuscript or first printing is adhered to, with variants available in the notes. The spelling has been modernized in accordance with good sense and practice. The notes themselves, especially those of a bibliographical nature, are useful, and clearly much research into sources has gone into

them. Unlike those of the ‘Bibliothek deutscher Klassiker’, for instance, they are more cryptic than expansive. Thus in some cases just a few more chosen sentences of introduction would have been useful, as on Byron, or the Greek wars of independence, or even on, say, the Bibliothek deutscher Dichter des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts/Library of German Poets of the Seventeenth Century. True, Leistner’s highly useful introductory essay to Volume I does this in a few, sometimes very few, well-weighed words. The decision not to document except in passing Müller’s contributions to encyclopaedias means that references to these are not as clear as they might be. These are very small criticisms to raise of an edition of this scope and significance.

The commemorative volume, Wilhelm Müller. Eine Lebensreise/Wilhelm Müller’s Life’s Journey contains contributions by both Bernd and Maria-Verena Leistner, but also by a dozen other experts. These range from essays of more local interest to articles dealing with major aspects of Müller’s oeuvre and thinking. These roughly 100 pages form a corpus of knowledge (I have drawn on it extensively for this article) that will, I hope, help to bring Müller back into a wider general consciousness, and, who knows, attract visitors to his birthplace. There are superb illustrations based on the exhibition that gave rise to the volume.