

Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff to Wolfgang Schadewaldt on the Classic

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EACH OF Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff's (1848–1931) great students extended a narrow part of the teacher's universal genius. One may look metaphorically at books. *Aristoteles und Athen* yielded Felix Jacoby, *Griechische Verskunst* Paul Maas, *Hellenistische Dichtung* Rudolf Pfeiffer, the Aeschylus books Ed. Fraenkel, and the three Homer books Wolfgang Schadewaldt (1900–1974).¹ In the preface to his Berlin dissertation² Schadewaldt thanked three scholars “deren Vorbild immer von neuem Richtung wies: Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, Tycho von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff und mein Lehrer Werner Jaeger.” The book began from disagreement with Wilamowitz's Roman friend and Göttingen colleague, Friedrich Leo.³ Its director was Wilamowitz's successor, Werner Jaeger (1888–1961).⁴ On 22 December 1928 to honor his eightieth birthday, Schadewaldt dedicated “Der Aufbau des Pindari-

¹ “In meinen Arbeiten habe ich versucht, neue Zugänge zumal zur griechischen Tragödie, Geschichtsschreibung, Lyrik und vor allem zu Homer zu eröffnen”: Wolfgang Schadewaldt, *Hellas und Hesperien: Gesammelte Schriften zur Antike und zur neueren Literatur in zwei Bänden*, edd. Klaus Bartels, Reinhard Thurow und Ernst Zinn, II² (Zürich/Stuttgart 1970) 781 [henceforth: *HuH*]; cf. W. Schadewaldt, *Von Homers Welt und Werk: Aufsätze und Auslegungen zur homerischen Frage*³ (Stuttgart 1959) 28–29, 36; *Iliasstudien*³ (Darmstadt 1966) iv. For a bibliography of writings about Schadewaldt see *HuH* II² 848.

² W. Schadewaldt, *Monolog und Selbstgespräch: Untersuchungen zur Formgeschichte der griechischen Tragödie* (Berlin 1926; repr. 1966) iii.

³ Friedrich Leo, “Der Monolog im Drama: Ein Beitrag zur griechisch-römischen Poetik,” *AbhGött* NF 10.5 (Berlin 1908). The extensive valuable correspondence between Wilamowitz and Leo has been lost except for the letter of 8 May 1878 written by Wilamowitz from Greifswald to inform Leo of his engagement, published by F. and D. Hiller von Gaertringen, *Mommsen und Wilamowitz: Briefwechsel 1872–1903* (Berlin 1935) 534–35 with commentary at 565–66. Wilamowitz always addressed Leo with *Sie*. *Du* was restricted to Kaibel, Diels and Robert. For F. Leo see especially Ed. Fraenkel, *apud* Friedrich Leo, *Ausgewählte kleine Schriften*, ed. Ed. Fraenkel, I (Rome 1960) xiii–xliii, and for Wilamowitz's words at his grave *Erinnerungen*² 243–44. A biography is lacking.

⁴ For Schadewaldt on Jaeger see *HuH* II² 707–30.

schen Epinikion” to Wilamowitz “in Dankbarkeit und Verehrung.”⁵ In 1946 he wrote his *Die Heimkehr des Odysseus*⁶ in imitation of Wilamowitz’s book of the same title, both inspired by the returning veterans of two wars. There was another reason for Schadewaldt’s attraction to the book. On the one-hundredth birthday of Wilamowitz, Schadewaldt delivered at the Berlin Academy a brief impassioned memorial address⁷ that still deserves close attention. He once at the request of Wolfgang Schmid wrote down a memorable apophthegm of Wilamowitz, heard in student days, on philological method.⁸ Besides its intrinsic importance the fragment is a rare example of Wilamowitz’s spoken style, which I have often heard imitated by those who knew him well. I append an English version here:

Why, this prized ‘philological method’? There simply isn’t any—any more than a method to catch fish. The whale is harpooned; the herring caught in a net; minnows are trapped;⁹ the salmon speared; trout caught on a fly. Where do you find the method to catch fish? And hunting? I suppose there is something like method there? Why, ladies and gentlemen, there is a difference between hunting lions and catching fleas!

At Tübingen on 10 June 1974, one of his last public appearances, Schadewaldt reminisced about the greatest man among many great men he had known. He stressed the uncanny learning and memory, the fierceness of his character,¹⁰ and confided an important insight that “Wilamowitz was a third general, a third actor and—a third pastor (*Pfarrer*).” He said also that Wilamowitz had only written one book, his *Staat und Gesellschaft der Griechen*. All the others were interpretation. And he made the brilliant suggestion that one reason for

⁵ W. Schadewaldt, “Der Aufbau des Pindarischen Epinikion,” *Schriften der Königsberger Gelehrten Gesellschaft* 5.3 (Halle 1928). Wilamowitz is cited on almost every page. For criticism of Schadewaldt’s book see David C. Young, “Pindaric Criticism,” *apud* William M. Calder III and Jacob Stern, *Pindaros und Bakchylides (Wege der Forschung 134, Darmstadt 1970)* 60–64.

⁶ See *Von Homers Welt und Werk*³ 375–412.

⁷ *HuH II*³ 698–99 = *Gymnasium* 56 (1949) 80–81.

⁸ *HuH II*³ 606–07. E. C. Kopff compares A. E. Housman, *Classical Papers III* (Cambridge 1972) 1059.

⁹ The original is “Der Butt wird getreten,” which means nothing to modern readers.

¹⁰ Cf. *HuH II*³ 699: “Wilamowitz war eine grosse Natur, und eben wie die Natur so wenig abzuleiten wie einzuordnen: herb, männlich, stark, nicht förmlich, doch geprägt und zu schlichter Würde fähig. Kleinliches kannte er nicht.”

the friendship with Kaibel was to prove that a musician could be his friend, an apology for the enmity with Nietzsche. Kaibel ought in part to be interpreted as a Nietzsche substitute. That Nietzsche had argued the birth of tragedy from the spirit of music had been a red flag to the man who never learned to play an instrument nor taught his children to.¹¹

Wilamowitz's enthusiastic support of Schadewaldt at an early stage was decisive for his later career. In a review of the Berlin dissertation at *DLZ* 47 (1926) 851–54 (= *KS I* 464–66), Wilamowitz proclaimed:¹² “Hier . . . begrüßen wir das Auftreten eines wirklichen Forschers noch freudiger als ein gutes Buch.” He had read *Monolog* during the summer of 1926 while writing “in einem Zuge” *Die Heimkehr des Odysseus*. He ended that book¹³ with an excited endorsement of Schadewaldt's work.¹⁴ This was the other reason why Schadewaldt later took Wilamowitz's title for a study of his own.

Once again the aged Wilamowitz was to refer to Schadewaldt in print. Unthinking readers criticize the haste and dogmatism of Wilamowitz's last books. In 1918 he was 70.¹⁵ He did not know that he would live to be almost 83. The post-1918 books are written in a desperate effort to transmit and preserve knowledge that could never be reduplicated. Preoccupation with the history of Greek religion had led Wilamowitz to Hesiod, *Theogony*. *Glaube der Hellenen* had long been planned. Schadewaldt had suggested in 1927, while still Dozent at Berlin, that he and Wilamowitz read the *Erga* together. “That happened, and it came to light how much the poem needed and deserved attention. Therefore, I put everything aside and did what was required.”¹⁶

Schadewaldt left Berlin to become Ordinarius at Königsberg in 1928. During 1929–34 he was at Freiburg im Breisgau. Between 1928

¹¹ The last is attested by Schwester Hildegard von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff.

¹² *KS I* 464.

¹³ U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Die Heimkehr des Odysseus* (Berlin 1927) 197–201, esp. 199.

¹⁴ It was typical of Wilamowitz's enthusiasm to allow irrelevant material that excited him to intrude into the subject at hand. Schadewaldt on tragedy had little to do with Homer's *Odyssey*. But neither in Winter Semester 1907/08 had Menander with “Greek Literary History in the Attic Period.” The Cairo papyrus had just been published and Wilamowitz had worked through it: see Ed. Fraenkel, *apud* Leo, *KS I* xxxii n.1.

¹⁵ For his despair at his seventieth birthday see *GRBS* 12 (1971) 570 n.60.

¹⁶ U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Hesiodos Erga* (Berlin 1928; repr. 1962) 1.

and 1931 a certain amount of correspondence between the two scholars occurred. Enemy action later destroyed Schadewaldt's library at Berlin and all his cherished Wilamowitz letters. One card had so impressed him that he had memorized it and later was able to reconstitute the text. On 10 June 1974 he entrusted me with his version and the task of publishing it.

Whitsuntide 1930 Werner Jaeger (aged 42), since 1921 holder of Wilamowitz's Berlin chair,¹⁷ directed a conference (*Fachtagung*) at Naumburg on the subject "Das Problem des Klassischen und die Antike."¹⁸ Eight lectures were delivered and discussed: Johannes Stroux (Manifestations of the Classic in Antiquity); Wolfgang Schadewaldt (Concept and Essence of the Ancient Classic); Paul Friedländer (Pre- and Post-Classic); Ed. Fraenkel (The Classical Poetry of the Romans); Bernhard Schweitzer (On the Classical in Ancient Art); Ed. Schmidt (Classicism and Classic in Ancient Art); Matthias Gelzer (Does a Classical Form Exist in Political Development?); and H. Kuhn ('Classic' as an Historical Concept). The whole conference was decidedly un-Anglo-Saxon in tone. Sterling Dow once remarked of it to me: "It is not a problem; it is a *Problem*"—pronouncing the latter noun in the German manner. Jaeger in his summary of the proceedings¹⁹ allots special praise to Schadewaldt's contribution.²⁰ Before Dr Alfred Giesecke of B. G. Teubner invited Jaeger to allow him to publish the addresses in a single volume, Jaeger had asked Schadewaldt, alone of the contributors, to publish his lecture in the *Hausorgan, Die Antike*.²¹ The article appeared dedicated to "den Königsberger Freunden" at *Die Antike* 6 (1930) 265–83, the first contribution in the last number of the year. Offprints would be available possibly in December 1930; and Schadewaldt immediately mailed one to Wilamowitz at Westend. What follows is Wilamowitz's extraordinary

¹⁷ For Jaeger as Wilamowitz's successor see *HuH* II² 713–14.

¹⁸ Werner Jaeger (ed.), *Das Problem des Klassischen und die Antike* (Leipzig/Berlin 1931, repr. Darmstadt 1961). For an English summary see T. B. L. Webster, *CR* 45 (1931) 203–04.

¹⁹ Jaeger, *Problem* vii–x.

²⁰ *Ibid.* ix: "theoretisch am schärfsten ausgeprägten Standpunkt Schadewaldts."

²¹ Jaeger founded the journal in 1925: see *Die Antike* 1 (1925) 1–4. He edited it until 1937 when three contributors to the Naumburg Conference, W. Schadewaldt, B. Schweitzer and J. Stroux succeeded him: see *Die Antike* 13 (1937) 77–78, pages that reward attention. The journal survived until 1944. We need not discuss the interesting phenomenon of the 'Third Humanism': see Horst Rüdiger, "Der Dritte Humanismus," *apud* Hans Oppermann, *Humanismus (Wege der Forschung* 17, Darmstadt 1970) 206–23.

reply.²² I reproduce exactly the copy given me by Schadewaldt on 10 June 1974.

Ohne Datum²³

Lieber Herr Kollege!²⁴

Immer wenn ich 'Die Antike'²⁵ lese, geht mir ein Mühlrad im Kopfe herum, aber Mehl mahlt das Rad nicht, für mich nicht.—Ich habe eine Vorstellung davon, was klassische Physik ist, und klassische Musik gibt es auch. Aber sonst?—Die englische Literatur ist reich genug, gibt es da Klassik? Ist Shakespeare klassisch? Bei Sophokles wurde gerade seine Anomalia empfunden, wie Plutarch berichtet.²⁶ Ich habe mit dem Wort 'klassisch', das mir ein Greuel²⁷ ist, nie etwas anfangen können, und so erwarte ich auch nicht, das andere es tun.

Aber nichts für ungut, wie der Berliner sagt, oder zu meiner Zeit gesagt hat, die vorbei ist.

Ihr Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff
deponatus²⁸

TRANSLATION

No date

Dear Colleague:

Whenever I read "Die Antike" a millstone goes round and round in my head. But the stone grinds no meal. For me it

²² Ca 7 June 1931 Wilamowitz collapsed in the Berlin heat and for a time his son Hermann wrote his letters for him. The last preserved letter of substance known to me is to James Loeb, dated 28 April 1931: see *Illinois Classical Studies* 2 (1976).

²³ December 1930 or January 1931.

²⁴ Wilamowitz would have written without exclamation point *Hochgeehrter Herr College*.

²⁵ See n.21 *supra*. Cf. "Mir wird von alle dem so dumm, | As ging' mir ein Mühlrad im Kopf herum," *Faust* I.1946–47.

²⁶ Plut. *Mor.* 45b. A rebuke surely; see *Die Antike* 6 (1930) 276=*Problem* 25: "Sophokles ist der Vollender der klassischen Form der Tragödie . . . So vermag sich bei Sophokles die Sprache kühn und straff zu entfalten, ihrer selbst gewiss, gefügig und sprungbereit, einzigartig in Wortwahl, Fügung und Wortstellung, dabei ohne bewusste Caprice, ein natürliches Organ für Rede des Heros wie des niederen Mannes."

²⁷ Cf. *HuH* II² 699: "Hier zeigt sich dann freilich das Wunderbare, dass der grosse geschichtliche Realist des Altertums, dem, wie er noch in seinen letzten Jahren einmal schrieb, das Wort 'klassisch' ein 'Greuel' war, rein aus dem Instinkt des gesunden Gefühls in seiner Seele praktisch dann doch wieder das Grosse in seiner Grösse hingestellt hat. Es war in ihm eben beides, der 'kühle Kopf' und die 'heisse Liebe', beianander."

²⁸ See Pauli *Festus* 66.5–6 Lindsay: "Depontani senes appellabantur, qui sexagenarii de ponte deiciebantur." See J. G. Frazer on Ovid, *Fasti* 5.621–23 and Th. Birt, "Pontifex und Sexagenarii de Ponte," *RhM* 75 (1926) 115–26, a contemporary account of the matter.

doesn't. I have an idea what classical physics is, and classical music exists too. But what else? English literature is rich enough—does 'classic' exist there? Is Shakespeare classic? Why with Sophocles his 'anomalies' were discovered, as Plutarch reports. I have never been able to make a start with the word 'classic', which is an abomination to me, and so I also do not expect that others do so.

But no harm intended as the Berliner says, or said in my time, which is over.

Yours,

Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff
deponatus

One understands why Wilamowitz did not attend the Naumburg Conference. He is not named once by any of the eight speakers nor by the chairman. Others more competent than I may set Wilamowitz's rejection of 'the classic' into the historical context of German intellectual history. Heinz Otto Burger's²⁹ useful recent volume will simplify the task. Karl Reinhardt's famous address "Die klassische Philologie und das Klassische" (1942) remains fundamental.³⁰ Richard Harder³¹ wrote that for Ritschl, Rohde und Usener—the first two friends and benefactors of the unspeakable Nietzsche, the third of questionable competence—the great authors were an inviolable Garden of Eden. Wilamowitz entered this garden to clear and plough it. Schadewaldt's³² 'great historical realist', while, in Harder's words, he destroyed classicism, built anew roads to these authors. With stones, papyri, monuments, with a universal knowledge of politics, law and daily life, he set the authors into an historical context. "He wanted his Greeks naked," wrote Reinhardt³³ half in despair. As a

²⁹ Heinz Otto Burger (ed.), *Begriffsbestimmung der Klassik und des Klassischen (Wege der Forschung 220, Darmstadt 1972)*. No contribution of Wilamowitz appears in the volume.

³⁰ K. Reinhardt, *Vermächtnis der Antike*, ed. Carl Becker (Göttingen 1960) 334–60; reprinted *apud* Burger, *Begriffsbestimmung* 66–97, where see especially p.80: "Ob und als was Wilamowitz in der Reihe deutscher Humanisten anzuführen wäre, ist eine nicht leicht zu beantwortende Frage." I shall draw attention here to the recent learned and intelligent survey by Marcello Gigante, "Dal Wilamowitz al Pfeiffer, *Storici della Filologia Classica*," *Parola del Passato* 28 (1974) 196–224.

³¹ Richard Harder, *Kleine Schriften*, ed. Walter Marg (Munich 1960) 469.

³² *HuH* II³ 699.

³³ K. Reinhardt, *apud* H. Heimpel, T. Heuss and B. Reifenberg, *Die Grossen Deutschen 5* (Berlin 1957) 419: "Er will die Griechen nackt."

schoolboy he had rejected the worship of *Antigone*.³⁴ He stressed the sameness of the Greeks not, after Winckelmann, their exclusiveness. The George circle ridiculed his 'Plato for servantmaids'. Two famous passages deserve notice where the great advocate of *Historismus* denied the idea of 'classical'. This letter provides the last and most vigorous denial. He began the history of Greek literature³⁵ with the outrageous epigram that nothing makes an author so difficult to understand as his apotheosis.³⁶ Greek literature from Homer to the Roman Empire was equally classic from the moment it began to be studied historically. But his most eloquent rejection of classicism occurs in the introduction to a work which cost much effort and to which he attached considerable importance, his *Griechisches Lesebuch*,³⁷ where he justifies the learning of Greek by the young. We learn Greek in the last analysis to read Greek books, but:

Greek is more than a language in which a few heroes in a distant beautiful springtime of the world have sung and spoken with melody beyond our grasp. In this light Hellas itself turns into a fairyland, the acropolis of Athens scarcely less than the isle of the Phaeacians; and Greek history turns into heroism,³⁸ the Persian War no less than the battle round Ilium. But this is an artificial false light; and our boys are entitled to the truth.³⁹

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³⁴ U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *In wieweit befriedigen die Schlüsse der erhaltenen griechischen Trauerspiele?: ein ästhetischer Versuch*, ed. William M. Calder III (Leiden 1974) 77.

³⁵ U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, "Die griechische Literatur des Altertums," *Die Kultur der Gegenwart* I.viii³, ed. Paul Hinneberg (Leipzig/Berlin 1912) 3.

³⁶ A rephrasing: "Nichts trübt ein Menschenbild so stark wie die Apotheose" (*Ibid.*).

³⁷ I cite from U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Griechisches Lesebuch* I¹³ (Berlin 1929) iv.

³⁸ *Heroentum*: something between 'heroism' and 'heroics' but neither.

³⁹ I am grateful to Schwester Hildegard von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff and the late Professor Dr Wolfgang Schadewaldt for permission to publish this document. I thank the Fondation Hardt for the leisure to write this paper.