

Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, An Unpublished Autobiography

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I

KARL REINHARDT in what may charitably be called a hurried sketch of Wilamowitz' life observes:¹ "His departure from Pforta (*sic*) in September 1867 . . . became for him a religious experience, a solemn vow, that never for a moment deserted him and that in his most difficult hours strode comforting before him." This is true. Wilamowitz believed that some mysterious higher power—which he usually called his "Daimon"—had led him to Pforte. It spoke first through the lips of a private tutor. His beloved mother, Ulrike, approved and encouraged the oracle. Ulrich, to the life-long disgust of his brutish father, unlike Hugo and Tello, would not attend the cavalry school at Brandenburg. Easter 1862, the thirteen-year-old boy, accompanied by his mother—she writes of her sorrow at Kösen the first night away from him—entered the cloister walls. *Ecce Porta Coeli!* In the five and one half years that followed, a miracle occurred. His teachers there, as he would later write, awakened the slumbering soul, taught it first to fly, those bearers of the divine power of that Eros that is the mediator between gods and men. He devoted himself (in the etymological sense) "with fire and love" to a goddess whom he called *Wissenschaft*.

The price was to abandon his past and consign himself to a future that embarrassed and revolted his family. Who may be credited with the conversion? If any single man, it is the Rector of Pforte, Karl Ludwig Peter (1808–93), in whose home Ulrich lived while a pupil and whom he until his death revered as a saint. He dedicated his disserta-

¹ Karl Reinhardt, *apud* H. Heimpel, T. Heuss and B. Reifenberg, *Die grossen Deutschen* 5 (Berlin 1957) 416. On this same page the name of Wilamowitz' school is thrice misspelled. He is said to have spent seven years there. His last work at school is said to have been a comparison of the *Edda* with the *Nibelungenlied*. His retort to Nietzsche's *Geburt der Tragödie* is called his *erstling*. Friedrich Leo, who did not attend Bonn until autumn 1871, is put with Diels, Kaibel and Robert as one of his closest Bonn student friends of 1867. And the name of Otto Jahn has managed to be omitted. Nur eine Stichprobe!

tion to him rather than to his parents in 1870. At the age of forty-four, shortly after Peter's death, he writes on 23 September 1893 to his teacher's son, Hermann Wilhelm Gottlob Peter (1837–1914), the Rector of Meissen, "I shall for all time look upon him only with the piety of a child; and the years have taught me to love him more and more. If I could believe myself capable of fully understanding him—which I cannot—I should not be able to express it." Such an expression of affection is almost unparalleled in Wilamowitz' private and public writings. I know of only three other persons who could have extracted it from him. Rumpf once called Dörpfeld Schliemann's greatest discovery. Wilamowitz certainly was Peter's. Mommsen's intolerance for Peter's work must have distressed his son-in-law. Peter on the other hand once magnanimously advised Ulrich's mother to give the boy Mommsen's *History* as a Christmas present.

Success at school was phenomenal and must reflect an inner satisfaction. One need not speak of his academic brilliance. He excelled in dramatics and became more or less what we should call a senior prefect. Inevitably Bonn, but for Jahn, the Pforte 'Old Boy', was academically a disappointment. Wilamowitz was too well prepared and no longer the darling of his teachers. He writes a revealing metaphor to his mother from Bonn on 4 December 1867, less than three months after his graduation from Pforte: "there is such a colossal difference, while here one is a drop in the sea, there one was the foam that rides on the wave." He lives on letters from Pforte friends.

Any documents illuminating Wilamowitz' crucial Pforte years are of highest importance, for here the destiny of a genius was forged. The principal published source is the remarkable chapter of his *Erinnerungen*.² There is also his obituary, written by himself, for the school alumni bulletin.³ Unpublished letters exist. In June 1970 in the library of the Pforte I discovered several documents, one of which I publish here with translation and selected commentary, largely exegetical, occasionally textual. A brief general appraisal ends the paper. It is a six-page, hand-written autobiography that introduces his valedictory essay, "In wie weit befriedigen die Schlüsse der erhaltenen griechischen Trauerspiele? Ein ästhetischer Versuch." The manuscript is dated 9 September 1867, and was written, therefore, when its

² See Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Erinnerungen 1848–1914*² (Leipzig 1929) 62–83 (henceforth: *Erinnerungen*²).

³ See *Ecce der Landesschule zur Pforte* (Naumberg 1931) 8–11 (henceforth: *Ecce*).

author was eighteen years old.⁴ By this time, one may add, he had read critically all extant Greek tragedies, including *Rhesus*. The calligraphy is still that of a school-boy, large and legible, thoroughly unlike that of 1869.⁵ Either he had not yet adopted or was forbidden to use the peculiar orthography of Jakob Grimm, which was to fascinate him for at least the next decade.⁶

I owe especial thanks to the Librarian of the Pforte and to Dorothea Freifrau Hiller von Gaertringen geb. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, who together made publication possible. Freifrau Hiller has also lent and given to me some 700 letters from Wilamowitz' early period. Seldom has a scholar met with such generosity. The quotations in the text and notes are from these letters.⁷ Frau Luise Therese Cäcilie von der Hude, geb. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, has generously shared many memories and provided me with the typescript of "Chronik der Familie des Freiherrn von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff," begun by her father, Hugo Freiherr von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, Ulrich's eldest brother and the heir of Arnold.

II

TEXT

Verwahren⁸ muss ich im Voraus mich dagegen, dass etwa jener über diesen Zeilen befindliche Titel⁹ mehr besage, als meine äusseren

⁴ I shall not soon forget the excitement of the first reading in that same ancient library, before the same books, at the same table, where some 100 years before the brilliant pupil read and labored. The pictures of his teachers still hung there, Peter, Koberstein, Corssen.

⁵ Cf. GRBS 11 (1970) pl.5 (4 December 1869). The change in two years is remarkable. This early handwriting is reminiscent of Tycho's in 1909.

⁶ Cf. *Erinnerungen*² 130, probably a retort to the sneer of Erwin Rohde, *Afterphilologie* (Leipzig 1872) 5 n.=K. Gründer, *Der Streit um Nietzsches "Geburt der Tragoedie"*: *Die Schriften von E. Rohde*, R. Wagner, U. v. Wilamowitz-Möllendorff (Hildesheim 1969) 68 n.

⁷ I am grateful especially for the elucidation of difficult passages in the German text to Dr Wolfgang Buchwald (Munich), Dr Christa Dill (Goethe Lexicon, Berlin, D.D.R.), Dr Elfriede Knauer (West Berlin), Dr Wolfgang Schindler (Winckelmann Institut, Berlin, D.D.R.), who has also provided three photographs [PLATES 10, 11 and 12], and Professor Dr Joachim Wohlleben (West Berlin). I am grateful to the American Council of Learned Societies for a stipendium (1971) that enabled me to complete work on the text. My student, Herr Karl Schlebusch, made an able first transcription of the text for me. Professor W. J. Slater has beneficially read my manuscript.

⁸ Wilamowitz seems in fact to have written *verwarnen*; but *mich* proves he meant, if he did not write, *verwahren*.

⁹ The title, as I recall, is simply *Mein Leben*.

Lebensumstände, denn theils kann ein in seiner Entwicklung begriffener, unreifer Jüngling noch nicht auf die kurze durchlebte Spanne Zeit mit sichtigem und die Fehlgriffe beurtheilendem Blicke zurückschauen, geschweige denn mit sicherem Tacte das Bedeutende und doch nicht Verletzende hervorheben, theils bin ich nicht im mindesten gewillt, mein Gemüths- und Seelenleben, mein Urtheil, das ich mir denn doch über manches gebildet habe, ein für alle Male durch die Schrift fixiert in die Hände von solchen kommen zu lassen, für welche es entweder nicht bestimmt, oder verletzend sein könnte.

Am 22ten December 1848 bin ich, Ulrich Friedrich Wichard von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff geboren, und zwar Mittags Schlag zwölf,¹⁰ und das eines Freitags, so dass ich Geister sehen kann,¹¹ was mir freilich bisher noch nicht passiert ist. Um die Constellation meiner Geburtsstunde habe ich mich bisher nicht bekümmert. Ich muss wohl grosse Lust gehabt haben, auf diesen Erdball zu spazieren, denn ich kam überaus unerwartet, auch ohne irgend einen ärztlichen Beistand, doch äusserst fidel an. Ich soll sehr wohl genährt gewesen sein und wenig geschrien haben; beides hat sich freilich geändert, dagegen habe ich noch die Neigungen recht zu lachen und mir Geschichten einzuprägen, wodurch ich schon als kleines Kind Anstoss erregt habe. Im Übrigen weiss ich von meinen ersten Jahren herzlich wenig, und [p.2] das ist auch natürlich. Mein Geburtsort ist nämlich das Gut meines Vaters, Markowitz,¹² zu Deutsch Garbenheim benamset. In den noch heut verrufenen¹³ Wäldern Kujaviens belegen (*sic*), hat es mit seinen Nachbarfluren das gemeinsam, dass es keinen Wald hat,¹⁴ denn kaum irgendwo ist solcher Holzmangel als im Netz-

¹⁰ Wilamowitz imitates the opening of Goethe's autobiography. See *Goethes Werke*, herausgegeben im Auftrage der Grossherzogin Sophie von Sachsen, Abt. I.26 (Weimar 1889) 11: "Am 28. August 1749, mittags mit dem Glockenschlage zwölf, kam ich in Frankfurt am Main auf die Welt. Die Constellation war glücklich." The imitation is meant to be humorous as its context shows.

¹¹ Rather because he was born at noon (the hour of Pan) than on a Friday he can see ghosts (*cf.* 'Mittagsgespenst'): see Jungbauer *apud* E. Hoffmann-Krayer and Hanns Bächtold-Stäubli, *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens* 7 (Berlin/Leipzig 1934-35) 398ff *s.v.* MITTAG.

¹² See PLATE 10. The residence erected by Arnold in 1840 was destroyed by the Poles in August 1939 (*Familien Chronik*). GRBS 11 (1970) 140 must be corrected. Its origin is self-evident. The grounds are now a village park.

¹³ "Notorious," presumably, because they once harbored Polish partisans.

¹⁴ But an hour's walk away deep in the forest at Wymysłowice is the family burial

district (*sic*), welcher circa 80 □ Meiln gross allenfalls doch die Bedeutung hatte, bei der ersten Theilung Polens miterwähnt zu werden, zum Beispiel Ostfriesland übertrifft er an Grösse, Fruchtbarkeit und Bedeutung für die preussische Geschichte. Das ist richtig, abgelegen sind wir noch von der grossen, durch die Eisenbahnnetze verbreiteten, so genannten Civilisation; wie aber das Klima kaum rauher ist als im Saalthal (*sic*), wenigstens sicher ebensoguten Weizen, Raps und auch alle Obstsorten erzeugt, die hier gedeihen—selbst Wein wird dort gekeltert—so ist Markowitz auch so gut ein Ort polnischer Wirthschaft,¹⁵ als ich selbst ein Pole bin. Jedenfalls lebten¹⁶ wir dort, wenn auch comfortable, so doch ohne grosse Geselligkeit; und ich kann bei dem gleichmässigen Strome des Lebens, der damals für mich floss, mich nur weniger Momente entsinnen. Umgang mit Gleichaltrigen fehlte mir völlig, da schon die mildesten Reinlichkeitsrücksichten jede Annäherung zu der Dorfjugend verwehrten.¹⁷ Also war ich theils auf mich selbst, theils auf Erwachsene, deren mancher allerdings mit der freundlichsten Herablassung sich meiner annahm, angewiesen. Wir sind unser vier Brüder; je zwei zu zwei geordnet;¹⁸ nämlich zwischen dem zweiten und dem dritten, als wie mir, ist ein bedeutenderer Altersunterschied, sonst immer drei¹⁹ Jahre. So fügte es sich, dass ich, da meine beiden ältern Brüder schon ausser dem Hause waren, die schwere Last, der ältere zu sein [p.3] auf mich nahm, zugleich aber in den Ferien meiner Brüder mir zu Gemüthe geführt wurde, eigentlich sei ich noch recht klein. Das that aber begreiflicherweise der allgemeinen Seligkeit keinen Eintrag. Ich glaube wohl, dass selten ein Kind bis zu seinem neunten Jahre eine so

ground: see PLATE 11. There too, Luise von der Hude recalls, was the forest theater which Wilamowitz made and where he often acted with the children.

¹⁵ The phrase is pejorative and colonialistic. Wilamowitz means that Markowitz and he are Prussian. In fact he was one-eighth Polish, and his great-grandfather could not speak German (Luise von der Hude).

¹⁶ He first wrote *leben* and then added the *t*.

¹⁷ This was typical for German colonialism. A colleague recalls that as a boy in the so-called Sudetenland of the 1930's he was forbidden to play with Czechs on the same grounds. Cf. *Erinnerungen*² 49, where Hugo and Tello bring lice home.

¹⁸ The brothers and their dates (*Familien Chronik*) are: Hugo, b. 18 June 1840, d. 21 August 1905 following a heart-attack while riding at Kobelnik; Tello, b. 15 March 1843, d. 2 July 1903 at Weimar from a heart-attack; Ulrich, b. 22 December 1848 (he never allowed birthday presents because Christmas was so near: Freifrau Hiller), d. 25 September 1931 at Berlin; and Georg, b. 23 April 1852, d. 2 July 1910 at Frankfurt/Main, where he was an art dealer, from a heart-attack.

¹⁹ An earlier *zwei* seems to have been corrected.

durchaus treffliche Erziehung genießt, wie ich, Dank meiner theueren Mutter,²⁰ das Glück gehabt habe. Selbst von der Dienstboten schmutzigen Einflüssen fern gehalten, nach Neigung entwickelt, ohne mit albernem Abplappern von Gebeten und schlechten s.g. geistlichen lieblichen Liedern, wovon das Kind nichts versteht, nichts verstehen kann, das also nur verwirrend wirken kann, geplagt zu werden, erzog mich meine Mutter, deren Name ich trage (sie heisst Ulrike) und ihr am ähnlichsten bin, ganz allein, ohne zu commandieren und zu himmeln,²¹ wohl aber indem sie mich lehrte Gott und den Menschen zu gefallen zu streben.²² Bald hatte ich Lesen und Schreiben begriffen, las nun die Bücher, die ich erhielt, meist geschichtliche, ihr vor; also hernach die schwierigen Aufgaben des Bruchrechnens und der Regel de tri²³ kam, erkannte ich zuerst die Schwere der Wissenschaft! Mein ältester Bruder,²⁴ damals Secundaner in Bromberg, that sich gar wichtig, meine Arbeiten zu controlieren. Schliesslich kam ein Hauslehrer. Der erste²⁵ war . . . das Original eines Genrebildes in Trewendts²⁶ Volkskalender, betitelt "immer noch Candidat." Nach vier Wochen war er fort. Dann kam grade das Gegentheil, ein junger Mensch, auch cand. theol. welcher sich gut mit dem rebellischen katholischen Pfaffen²⁷ und noch besser

²⁰ See *Erinnerungen*² 58: "Der eigentliche Unterricht begann damit, dass ich lesen, schreiben, rechnen bei der Mutter lernte, aber das war nur schöner als spielen." See PLATE 13. I owe the photograph, the only extant one of Ulrike, to Freifrau Hiller. E. Thummer well detects the influence of Tac. *Dial.* 28.6ff (cf. *Agr.* 4, *Germ.* 20). Wilamowitz had recently read the dialogue privately with Rector Peter.

²¹ Dr W. Buchwald observes: "ein bemerkenswerter Wortgebrauch (statt: anhimmeln, verhimmeln), der in Grimms *Dt. Wb.* IV.2 (1877) s.v. fehlt."

²² See *Erinnerungen*² 57: "Religionsübung gab es im Hause eigentlich nicht." On *lieblichen* Dr W. Buchwald comments: "ironisch gesagt, vgl. *Erinnerungen*² 82; ich erinnere mich auch einer Stelle, die etwa lautet 'solange die Schule den Kindern die Steine des Katechismus und das Holz der Kirchenlieder statt der Früchte des Evangeliums bietet . . .', aber ich kann es nicht finden." Throughout his life he never attended church regularly (Freifrau Hiller).

²³ Dr Buchwald observes: "Regel *de tri* (letzteres italienisch): der sog. Dreisatz, zur Lösung einfacher Rechenaufgaben in der Schule benutzt."

²⁴ Hugo's letters to "Ulli" reveal throughout an affectionate and fatherly interest. On various occasions he intervened with Arnold, whom Ulrich detested and who thought little of him. Ulrich's remarks here are meant to be humorous and good-natured.

²⁵ Something unpleasant occurred. In a contemporary letter Ulrike refers to "einem Lehrer, der aber nicht tüchtig ist." Cf. *Erinnerungen*² 58: "Mit den ersten Hauslehrern ward es nichts Rechtes."

²⁶ Eduard Trewendt of Breslau (Wrocław), a contemporary printer, apparently supplied popular calendars to the colonials.

²⁷ The family clearly was not philo-catholic. Catholicism was synonymous with Polish

mit dessen Weinen²⁸ abzufinden wusste,²⁹ aber nach einem Jahr sich auch von uns fortfind.³⁰ Wir befinden uns jetzt im Sommer 1857, der in so fern von Bedeutung für mich ward, als damals ich die Welt ein wenig sah, namentlich zuerst Berge.³¹ Eine Krankheit meines zweiten Bruders brachte es nämlich mit sich, dass wir ein Paar Wochen in Kreuznach zubrachten.³² [p.4] Da sah ich auch den Rhein im Vorüberfahren;³³ obwohl doch noch recht jung, ist mir doch der Eindruck von jener schönen Gegend geblieben, und damals schon spürte ich instinctives Verlangen, in Bonn mich der Wissenschaft zu widmen.³⁴ Gleich nach meiner Rückkehr warf mich ein äusserst heftiges Nervenfieber³⁵ so weit nieder, dass lange Zeit mein Leben aufgegeben war; ich [[mich]] auch kaum in Jahresfrist mich erholte. Mittlerweile hatte ich einen dritten Lehrer erhalten,³⁶ welcher mich allerdings bis zu meiner Aufnahme in Pforte vorbereitete, mich in manchem auch über das Mass eines Knaben erhob—an dessen Unterricht ich aber doch nur mit Aerger zurückdenke. Das³⁷ lag mehr in dem Ton unsres Hauses, in dem Wunsch meiner Mutter, dass ich durch den steten Umgang mit Erwachsenen auf Lektüre, auch solche, die ich noch nicht verstand, hingeführt ward. Es war dies mir segensreich. So lernte ich Shakespeare durch Vorlesen—denn die jammervollen Rücksichten schwachnerviger Prüderie³⁸ galten nichts—bereits als

nationalism and could not be encouraged. For the Catholic church at Markowitz see PLATE 12. Luise von der Hude recalls that until the thirties there was a monastery attached to the church: cf. *Erinnerungen*² 33–34.

²⁸ Presumably “wine” rather than “whining.”

²⁹ Dr W. Buchwald notes: “welcher sich . . . abzufinden wußte: wohl nach Goethe, *Faust* 3714f ich weiß mich trefflich mit der Polizei, doch mit dem Blutbann schlecht mich abzufinden.”

³⁰ A neologism on the analogy of *sich fortstehlen* and opposite to *sich einfinden* (Dr Christa Dill).

³¹ See *Erinnerungen*² 52–53.

³² The mother, children and Charlotte (see n.41 *infra*) went to Kreuznach. Ulrike met no one there and devoted herself to “the children and nature.” While she was away, Arnold destroyed her cherished flower-garden (Luise von der Hude).

³³ They travelled down the Rhein by steamer to Bonn (*Erinnerungen*² 53).

³⁴ He is alleged (aged eight) to have said: “hier werde ich einmal Professor der Geschichte” (*ibid.*)!

³⁵ The nineteenth-century word for typhus (Dr Christa Dill). At *Erinnerungen*² 52 he uses the modern term.

³⁶ See *Erinnerungen*² 60–61.

³⁷ That is, the fact that “I think back in anger.”

³⁸ Wilamowitz never had patience with prudery: see Reinhardt, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.1) 419:

Knabe zu Hause kennen, und ward in die Vorhöfe manches Dichter-tempels eingeführt. Vossens Homer³⁹ kannte ich in und auswendig⁴⁰ schon als zehnjähriges Kind; mit Leidenschaft las ich also später das Original; freute mich die Erkenntnis der Volkspoesie zu erlangen—und nichts ärget mich so, als z.B. in der obersten Klasse die trefflichste, natürlichste Poesie zu buchstabieren, und “in dem Lanzenkrachen, und Schilderdröhnen nichts als Jonismen und Dorismen zu hören.”⁴¹ Auch auf unsre deutsche Heldensage wie auf die Edda kam ich bald; doch ist mir die rechte Erkenntnis erst als ich reifer ward aufgegangen; es liegt dies zum Theil an der saubern Sitte kaum von Wuotan, Frouwa und Paltar, von Brünhild, Dietrich und Hilde,⁴² wohl aber von Jupiter, Venus und Aeneas—auch nicht von Zeus, Aphrodite und Achilleus—zu hören!

Meinem Leben in der Heimat mag eins zu fehlen scheinen, eine Schwester.⁴³ In gewisser Weise mag dies richtig sein, doch hat meine Mutter stets junge Mädchen im Hause gehabt, welche ihr die Wirthschaft im Hause erleichterten; die erste⁴⁴ von die[p.5]sen war es namentlich, welche ich stets meine Pflegeschwester nenne. Ihr verdanke

“Er will die Griechen nackt. Nicht weniger heftig ist sein Kampf gegen die ‘Pruderie.’” Dr W. Buchwald well compares Wilamowitz’s *Aristophanes Lysistrata* (Berlin 1927) 7–8.

³⁹ Cf. *Erinnerungen*³ 59: “und was nie aus meiner Hand kam, der Homer von Voss, so daß er mir ganz geläufig war, ehe ich einen griechischen Buchstaben kennenlernte.”

⁴⁰ He puns on the meanings *by heart* and *inside out* (Dr Christa Dill).

⁴¹ Dr W. Buchwald observes: “Zitat aus Franz v. Gaudy (die Stelle habe ich trotz manchem Suchen in seinem Werk, zusammen etwa 1800 normale Seiten, nicht finden können, auch nicht in der Erzählung ‘Schülerliebe’, deren erster Teil in Schulpforte spielt), vgl. Wilamowitz, ‘Der Unterricht im Griechischen’, in *Die Reform des höheren Schulwesens in Preußen*, ed. W. Lexis (Halle 1902) 163=*Kleine Schriften* VI (Berlin 1972) 98: ‘verwundern werden wir uns nicht, wenn derselbe Unterricht, der Meineke zum Textkritiker machte, ein Dichtergemüt wie Franz v. Gaudy anwiderte, weil die Heroenkämpfe von Äolismen und Dorismen übertönt wurden’.—Jonismen, nicht Äolismen, dürfte das Richtige sein, denn als Wilamowitz die Vita schrieb, lag die Lektüre der Werke des ehemaligen Pfortner Schülers (gestorben 1840) für ihn noch nicht lange zurück.” Perhaps the citation was orally transmitted from a letter or statement and told the young Wilamowitz by, e.g., Koberstein or Corssen.

⁴² See *Erinnerungen*³ 59. Wilamowitz abandoned *Altgermanistik* only with regret and from necessity: see GRBS 11 (1970) 146–47.

⁴³ Cf. *Erinnerungen*³ 49: “es fehlte die Schwester, dem Hause die Tochter.” Wilamowitz either did not know of—which seems improbable—or ignores a sister (Marie Margaretha, 16–24 November 1847) who died in infancy. Freifrau Hiller remarks that Ulrich was the “Ersatztochter.”

⁴⁴ Presumably “Charlotte” of the letters, who eloped with the third tutor (*Erinnerungen*³ 61), rather to Ulrich’s disgust. Although he clearly loved her as a child, he will not mention her name here or at *Erinnerungen*² 43.

ich besonders das Glück meiner Kindheit; sie ersetzte mir völlig zugleich die ältre und die gleichaltrige Schwester.

Mittlerweile war ich dreizehn Jahr alt geworden; die Zeit der Kindheit sollte aufhören. Da ward denn über die Schule berathen, der ich übergeben werden sollte; meine Neigung zur Wissenschaft war gewachsen, fast unbewusst. Mit Freuden, und eigentlich aus eigener Wahl griff ich also nach dem hingeworfenen Gedanken an Pforte.⁴⁵ Bald war es entschieden!⁴⁶ Ostern 1862 trat ich in die Gemeinschaft der Pforte ein. Ich kam als Extraneer in das Haus des Herrn Rector Peter. War meine Jugend bisher auch äusserst glücklich gewesen, so musste für mich der Eintritt unter viele Altersgenossen, mit denen ich in engster Vereinigung leben sollte, manche Gefahr bringen.⁴⁷ Desto glücklicher traf es sich, dass ich in eine Familie kam, wo ich so wohl einen festen Halt, als die mir von Haus aus nöthige liebevolle Behandlung fand. Ich glaube es diesem Umstande vornehmlich mit zuschreiben zu dürfen, dass ich mich so bald in Pforte völlig einwohnte, eine zweite Heimat erhielt; wie ich denn auch aus besondrer Güte bis zu meinem nunmehrigen Abgang habe in jenem Hause bleiben dürfen. Es ist nicht Undankbarkeit, wenn ich mit zuschreiben sage, es ist nur Aufrichtigkeit. Denn da ich in der Classe sehr leicht fortkam, ausserdem umgänglich genug war um ein gutes Verhältnis zu meinen Mitschülern zu erhalten, so mussten auch diese Umstände wesentlich dazu beitragen, mir den Aufenthalt nicht nur leicht sondern angenehm zu machen. Was soll ich weiter von diesen 5½ Jahr sagen?⁴⁸ "Eines jeden Tages hab'ich mich gefreut, einen jeden Tag⁴⁹ [. . .] meine Pflicht gethan, wie sie mein Gewissen sie (*sic*) mir

⁴⁵ The original suggestion came from the third tutor, who had himself been tutored by a Pforte alumnus: see *Erinnerungen*² 61. The alumnus was one Goszrau (*Pförtner Stammbuch* 9077): see *Ecce* p.8.

⁴⁶ His father agreed because the cost of Schulpforte was so much less than that of Brandenburg: see *Erinnerungen*² 61.

⁴⁷ Cf. *Erinnerungen*² 62: "Aus der Einsamkeit unter eine Menge von älteren und gleichaltrigen Knaben versetzt, hatte ich es nicht ganz leicht, gab Anlass zu Hänseleien und machte das Heimweh durch."

⁴⁸ He quotes Goethe's *Egmont* from memory: see *Goethes Werke* (*supra* n.10), Abt. I.8 (Weimar 1889) 300 (Dr Christa Dill). Wilamowitz played the title-rôle in the school production (*Erinnerungen*² 60) and both quotations are from this rôle. Dr Dill draws attention to the anti-Catholic character of the play. This would have confirmed Wilamowitz' predispositions and indicates the ideology of Pforte. The class list shows that there was no Jew or Catholic in Wilamowitz' class.

⁴⁹ "an jedem Tage mit rascher Wirkung" (Goethe). Then there is an omission.

vorschrieb.⁵⁰ Ich höre auf, hier zu leben, aber ich habe gelebt.”⁵¹ So sprach ich einst, an dem seligsten Tage meines Lebens, am Fastnachtstage 1867,⁵² mag ich⁵³ auch jetzt so sprechen. Wohl hab’ich manchen Knabenstreich vollführt.⁵⁴ Wer that es nicht? Ich bereue wenig davon.⁵⁵ “Sind uns die kurzen, [p.6] bunten Lumpen zu missgönnen, die ein jugendlicher Muth und eine angefrischte Phantasie um unsres⁵⁶ Lebens arme Blösse hängen mag?” Ich habe die Wissenschaft nicht vergessen. Ich scheue es mich nicht auszusprechen, ich habe ihr mich mit Feuer und Liebe ergeben; ich blickte weiter, über des Schülers Gränzen hinaus; ich hoffe der beigefügte ästhetische Versuch⁵⁷ wird dafür Zeugniß ablegen. Ich will ein Jünger der Wissenschaft werden, freiwillig, scheinbar angesehen von Verwandten,⁵⁸ Nahestehenden, verstossen aus den vermeintlich⁵⁹ höheren Kreisen, in welche die Geburt mich gestellt hat. Wohl—es wird gehen, ich folge ungehemmtem Drange, verehrte Männer, die sich freundlich für mich interessieren, und wahre Freunde werden mir übervoll alles etwa verlorne ersetzen. Also vorwärts⁶⁰

⁵⁰ “wie mein Gewissen mir sie zeigte” (Goethe). Wilamowitz then omits a sentence.

⁵¹ “Ich höre auf zu leben; aber ich habe gelebt” (Goethe). Wilamowitz has added an adverb to make the citation more *à propos*.

⁵² On Fastnachtstag 1868 at Bonn his thoughts are at Pforte and he writes to his mother at Markowitz (12 February 1868): “ich mag jetzt nicht viel an Pforte denken, da ist Fastnachtsspiel, nun hoffentlich werden sie nicht ihren Egmont vermissen.” He later wrote of himself for posthumous publication (*Ecce* p.9): “Als er Fastnacht 1867 den Egmont spielte und am Schulfeste die lateinischen Verse vortrug, hatte er das Gefühl, dass ihm das Leben Augenblicke jenes Glückes, zu denen man spricht: ‘Verweile doch, Du bist so schön!’, nicht wieder schenken würde.”

⁵³ He inverts for rhythm and parallelism (Dr Christa Dill).

⁵⁴ Clearly he had been reproved for some boyish prank and his sensitive nature could not forget the reproach. There are some embarrassed allusions in the correspondence with his mother, and cf. *Erinnerungen*³ 62: “Von Übertretungen der Schulordnung und den entsprechenden Strafen, auch solchen, die ich als ungerecht schwer ertrug, rede ich ebenso wenig wie von Erfolgen.”

⁵⁵ Again he cites *Egmont*, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.48) 219 (Professor Dr Joachim Wohlleben).

⁵⁶ *unsers* (Goethe).

⁵⁷ I hope eventually to edit this ms (134 pp.), which, by his own admission, was the kernel of *Herakles*. One learns how early many of his ideas were formed, and his debt to German humanism (Lessing, Goethe, Schiller) is pedantically documented while later it will only be implied.

⁵⁸ Especially his father, who never forgave him: see *Erinnerungen*³ 59, 84.

⁵⁹ Few of his relatives would have approved this adverb.

⁶⁰ Wilamowitz cites Eur. *HF* 674–77. Later he would translate (*Herakles* II².213):

Allzeit will ich zu holdem Vereine
Chariten laden und Musen:

Οὐ παύσομαι τὰς Χάριτας
 Μούσαις συγκαταμειγνύς,
 ἠδίεταν συζυγίαν.
 μὴ ζώην μετ' ἀμουσίας,
 ἀεὶ δ' ἐν στεφάνοισιν εἶην.

III

TRANSLATION⁶¹

I must protect⁸ myself in advance against the possibility that the title,⁹ found above these lines, may signify more than the external circumstances of my life, partly because an immature youth who is still developing cannot yet look back at the short span of time through which he has lived with a glance that sifts and criticizes mistakes, not to speak of drawing out with sure tact what has meaning and yet does not pain; and partly because I have not wanted to allow my inner and spiritual life, my judgement, that I have in fact formed for myself on many matters, fixed once and for all through writing, to come into

Ohne die Kunst kein Leben,
 Immer kränze mein Haupt der Efeu.

The verses became a sacred vow which guided and comforted him throughout his life ("Es war und ist ein Gelübde fürs Leben"). In 1889, when he was forty years old, he fulfilled the promise of his boyhood and dedicated his "first great book" to "Almae Matri Portae" (see *Erinnerungen*² 62; *Einleitung*² vii). At the base of the dedicatory page stood the same verses. In the blackest hours of his seventieth birthday (22 December 1918), he wrote in despair "I have had to experience the self-destruction, the self-castration of my people." There remains only "to die out." One consolation exists. "But the kingdom of eternal forms which Plato has opened is indestructible; and we serve it with our Scholarship. Into its pure ether the spectres of putrefaction do not penetrate. Hate and Envy are said too to remain outside its divine pale. Under the sign of Plato I shall struggle so long as I have breath. What the boy promised on leaving his beloved mother, Pforte, he will hold to: οὐ παύσομαι etc." See *Platon I*² (Berlin 1920) vi, where he substitutes Eur. *HF* 678-79 for 676-77. I should further hazard that the mystic reverence in which he held these lines led him to prefer *Herakles* as the tragedy which he would elucidate so profoundly. There is a hint in the preface to the first edition (= *Einleitung*² vii): "Er tut es heut [*sc.* fulfils that vow], indem er das Drama, aus dem er damals das Motto nahm, erläutert und ein Buch veröffentlicht, das vor allem so grünen aber von den Musen begeisterten Jünglingen, wie er damals einer war, das Verständnis der Tragödie erschließen soll." The decision to publish the whole in his fortieth year was no coincidence. Wilamowitz had read Apollodorus and wrote that geniuses, like Goethe, Plato (and himself?), developed until the fortieth year (*Einleitung*² 18).

⁶¹ The repeated small reference numbers 8-60 within this translation refer respectively to the notes attached to the German text *supra*.

the hands of such for whom it either is not intended or could be painful.

On the 22nd of December 1848, I, Ulrich Friedrich Wichard von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, was born, and exactly at noon, the stroke of twelve, and that of a Friday,¹⁰ so that I can see ghosts,¹¹ something which to be sure has not yet happened to me. With the constellation at the moment of my birth I have up to now not troubled myself. Surely I must have had great desire to walk on this globe; for I arrived utterly unexpectedly, further without any medical help whatsoever, nonetheless extraordinarily happy. I am said to have been well fed and to have cried little. Both of course changed. On the other hand I still have the facility to laugh heartily and to remember stories, whereby—even as a small child—I raised eyebrows. In general I know blessed little of my first years, and that is also natural. My birthplace is in fact the estate of my Father, Markowitz,¹² in German called Garbenheim. Situated in the forests of Kujavia, still notorious today,¹³ it shares with its neighboring fields the fact that it has no forests;¹⁴ for scarcely anywhere is there such a lack of wood as in the district of the Netze. About 80 square miles in size, at all events this still was important enough to be mentioned at the first division of Poland. It exceeds for example Ostfriesland in size, fertility, and importance for Prussian history. It is true, we are isolated still from the great “Civilization so-called” which has been spread about through the network of railways. But since the climate is scarcely rawer than that in the Saal valley, and at any rate produces surely just as good wheat, rape, and even all the kinds of fruit that grow here—even wine is pressed there—so Markowitz is just as much a place of “Polack industry”¹⁵ as I myself am a Pole. In any case we lived¹⁶ there, though comfortably, yet without a great social life; and I can recall only a few moments in the even current of the life that flowed for me there. Association with contemporaries was utterly lacking to me; for even the most elementary considerations of cleanliness forbade any intercourse with the village children.¹⁷ As a result I was left partly to myself, partly to adults, many of whom to be sure cared for me with the friendliest condescension. We are four brothers arranged in two pairs.¹⁸ That is between the second and third—that’s me—there is a more important difference in age. Otherwise always three¹⁹ years. So it came about that I, because both my elder brothers were already out of the house, took upon myself the difficult task of being

the elder. On the other hand during my brothers' holidays it was made clear to me that essentially I was still really small. But that didn't diminish the general joy in any comprehensible way. I quite believe that rarely has a child up to his ninth year enjoyed so thoroughly fine an education as I have had the good fortune to have, thanks to my dear Mother.²⁰ Kept far from the filthy influence of servants, developed according to my inclination, without being plagued with foolish prattlings of prayers and bad so-called "lovely spiritual airs," of which the child understands nothing, can understand nothing, that therefore can only confuse, I was educated by my Mother, whose name I bear (her name is Ulrike), and to her I am most similar. She did it utterly alone, without ordering and exalting,²¹ but while teaching me to strive to please God and men.²² Soon I had grasped reading and writing, read now aloud to her the books which I received, mostly historical. When afterwards the difficult tasks of fractions and of mixture and speed problems²³ came, I first learned the difficulties of *Wissenschaft*! My eldest brother,²⁴ at the time a junior in Bromberg, assumed an important air and controlled my studies. At last a tutor came.²⁵ The first was . . . the original of a genre-picture in *Trewendt's*²⁶ *Popular Calendar*, entitled: "The Eternal Student." After four weeks he was out. Then came exactly the opposite, a young man, also a theological student, who knew well how to make the best of the rebellious Catholic priest²⁷ and still better of his wine.^{28,29} But after a year he too left us.³⁰ We are now in the summer of 1857, which was of importance to me in so far that then I saw the world a bit, more precisely for the first time—mountains.³¹ That is, an illness of my second brother resulted in our spending a couple of weeks at Kreuznach.³² Then I also saw the Rhine as we crossed over it.³³ Although I was still very young, nonetheless the impression of that beautiful area has stayed with me; and, even at that time, I sensed an instinctive desire to devote myself to scholarship in Bonn.³⁴ Right after my return a particularly virulent typhus³⁵ struck me down so much that for a long time my life was given up. I barely recovered within a year.

Meanwhile I had obtained a third teacher,³⁶ who now prepared me until my acceptance at Pforte. In many things too he raised me above the level of a child—but still I think back on this education with anger. This³⁷ lay more in the tone of our house, in the wish of my Mother that through constant association with adults I be guided to readings, even such things as I did not yet understand. This was bene-

ficial to me. Thus I came to know Shakespeare through reading aloud, already as a child at home—for the miserable objections of spineless prudery³⁸ mattered nothing—and I was introduced into the forecourts of many a poet's temple. Already as a ten-year-old child, I knew Voss' Homer³⁹ inside and out.⁴⁰ With passion, therefore, I later read the original; I rejoiced in gaining knowledge of folk-poetry, and nothing angered me so, as for example, in the highest class to spell out literally the most admirable and natural poetry and "in the cracking of lances and crashing of shields to hear nothing but Ionisms and Doricisms."⁴¹ Soon I came also to our German Heroic Saga as well as to the *Edda*. Yet true knowledge opened up to me first when I was more mature. In part this was the fault of prudish tradition scarcely to hear anything of Wuotan, Frouwa and Paltar, of Brünhild, Dietrich and Hilde,⁴² nor of Zeus, Aphrodite and Achilleus, but rather of Jupiter, Venus and Aeneas!

In my life at home one thing may seem to be lacking, a sister.⁴³ In certain ways this may be right. Yet my Mother constantly had young girls in the house, who helped lighten her housework. The first⁴⁴ of these it was whom I always call my step-sister. I am particularly grateful to her for the happiness of my childhood. For me she compensated fully at once for an elder sister and for one of my own age.

Meanwhile I had become thirteen years old. The time of childhood was supposed to be over. For then thought had to be taken about the school to which I was to be handed over. My inclination to scholarship had grown, almost unrealized. With joy and really from personal choice, therefore, I seized upon the suggestion of Pforte.⁴⁵ Soon it was decided.⁴⁶ Easter 1862 I entered into the community of Pforte. I came as day-boy into the house of the headmaster, Peter. If my youth up to now had been extraordinarily happy, so the introduction among many contemporaries with whom I was to live in closest association had to bring many a danger.⁴⁷ All the more fortunate it turned out that I came into a family where I discovered both strong support and the loving care that was necessary to me from home on. I believe that I ought especially to attribute to this circumstance the fact that I so soon felt fully at home in Pforte, gained a second native land, inasmuch as I through extraordinary kindness have been allowed to remain in that home until my present departure. It is not thanklessness if I say "attribute," it is only honesty. For because I got

on very easily in the class and, moreover, was sociable enough to preserve a good relationship to my fellow students, so these circumstances also must have contributed substantially not only to making my stay easy but pleasant as well. What am I to say further of these 5½ years?⁴⁸ “Every single day I have enjoyed myself, every single day⁴⁹ have done my duty as my conscience prescribed it to me.⁵⁰ I cease to live here, but I have lived.”⁵¹ Thus I spoke once on the most joyous day of my life, on the Tuesday before Lent 1867;⁵² may I⁵³ now too speak so. Surely I have done a good deal of mischief.⁵⁴ Who doesn’t? I little regret it.⁵⁵ “Are the brief mottled rags to be begrudged which a youthful spirit and a lively imagination may hang about our⁵⁶ poor life?” I have not forgotten Scholarship. I do not hesitate to proclaim that I have surrendered myself to her with fire and love. I looked further out, beyond the frontiers of the pupil. I hope the attached aesthetic essay⁵⁷ will be set down as witness thereof. I want to become a youth of Scholarship, of my own free will, looked askance upon by relatives,⁵⁸ close acquaintances, rejected from the allegedly⁵⁹ high circles in which birth has placed me. Good. It will be so. I follow irresistible impulses; revered men, who have friendly interest in me, and true friends will fully compensate for anything that is lost. Therefore forwards:⁶⁰

*Οὐ παύσομαι τὰς Χάριτας
Μούσαις συγκαταμειγνύς,
ἠδίεταν συζυγίαν.
μὴ ζῶην μετ’ ἀμουσίας,
ἀεὶ δ’ ἐν στεφάνοισιν εἶην.*

IV

What do we learn from the new autobiography that could not obviously be extracted from the *Erinnerungen*? Wilamowitz felt himself a *Fremdling* at the Pforte. He lived at the headmaster’s house and not with his classmates in the dormitory. He was the only boy in his class from the east. His need vehemently to deny being a Pole implies that schoolmates taunted him for being one. This alienation is increased in a hypersensitive nature by the conviction that his relatives, indeed

his class⁶² and especially his father, censure and reject him. He fears the autobiography may come into his father's hands.⁶³ Already at eighteen he knows what again and again in correspondence and conversation he will call the *Einsamkeit meines Lebens*. His genius obviously and unavoidably condemned him to isolation. Even one of his closest friends, Carl Robert, the godfather of his eldest child, he looked upon as a protégée rather than an equal.⁶⁴ The other side of alienation was the compulsive adulation of his teachers, those revered men, "my friends," who will compensate for anything that is lost. They replaced his family. Not Jahn, nor Haupt, nor Bernays, nor even Mommsen could ever replace or surpass them.⁶⁵

The rationalization of the alienation is the conviction that it was unavoidable. This is the explanation of the Wilamowitzian conception of his *Daimon*. He was educated "according to his inclination." Before he was eight he had learned the difficulties of *Wissenschaft*. Before he was nine he sensed an instinctive desire to devote himself to *Wissenschaft* at Bonn. By the age of thirteen his inclination to *Wissenschaft* had grown *fast unbewusst*. In a brief *vita* requesting permission to graduate, he thanks the impulse (*Regung*) that led him *halb instinktiv* to choose Pforte as his school. His destiny was in hands other than his own. He stood on "das kleine Katheder des Betsaales" and could not do otherwise. This sense of destiny, itself deriving from the alienation natural for a genius, entailed obligation, *Pflicht*, for Wilamowitz, along with *Arbeit*, a holy word. "Man is not here to be happy but to obey

⁶² In May 1971 Luise von der Hude still spoke only of Marie Mommsen!

⁶³ The guilt persisted. Ironically and typically he was the only son at his father's deathbed. He wrote (8 January 1888) from Göttingen to K. L. Peter: "... denn ich mußte zu meinem Vater, damit doch einer seiner Söhne bei seinem Tode wäre. Er war längst vom Alter und den Folgen seines früheren Schlaganfalles gebrochen; der Tod war nichtsdestoweniger schwer und die Bezeichnung des Endes, die mein Bruder aus der Ferne gewählt hat, trifft nicht zu. Es ward mir schwer . . . es war aber doch gut und nötig, daß ich es tat." See *Erinnerungen*² 171.

⁶⁴ He writes from Rome to his parents at Markowitz on 7 February 1873: "Seine Dissertation ist von den Herren dort unbedingt anerkannt; das freut mich auch für mich, denn dass aus dem Jungen etwas geworden ist, daran kann ich mir ohne Ruhmredigkeit ein gutes Teil beimessen."

⁶⁵ Wilamowitz writes from Göttingen to Hermann Peter on 23 September 1893 (*cf.* p.562 *supra*): "Ich kann mich wohl meinen wissenschaftlichen Lehrmeistern gegenüber ganz frei äußern, selbst Jahn und Haupt und Bernays gegenüber, würde mich auch nicht befangen fühlen, wenn ich Mommsen behandeln sollte; aber meinen Pförtner Lehrern und vor allem Ihrem verewigten Herrn Vater gegenüber werde ich niemals das Schülergefühl los." One notes that Usener is not even mentioned.



LANDSCAPE, MARKOWITZ (JUNE 1965)

(Photograph by Dr Wolfgang Schindler)

PLATE 11 CALDER



THE FOREST CEMETERY, WYMYSŁOWICE (JUNE 1971)

(Photograph by Dr Wolfgang Schindler)

CALDER PLATE 12



THE VILLAGE CHURCH, MARKOWITZ (JUNE 1971)

(Photograph by Dr Wolfgang Schindler)

PLATE 13 CALDER



ULRIKE VON WILAMOWITZ-MOELLENDORFF, GEB. VON CALBO (5 JUNE 1820-
26 JUNE 1874)

*(Photograph by courtesy of Dorothea Freifrau Hiller von Gaertringen,
geb. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff)*

*Pflicht.*⁶⁶ The great contribution of the early autobiography is that it proves how early and why the die was cast. As Lothar Wickert, the biographer of Mommsen, remarked of Wilamowitz' first letter to Bormann: "er wußte schon damals, wer er war."⁶⁷

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY *and*
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⁶⁶ See *Erinnerungen*² 239, a lesson he learned from his mother (*Erinnerungen*² 48); and GRBS 11 (1970) 163 with n.81.

⁶⁷ *Per litt.* 31 May 1971. A version of this paper was delivered at the Center for Hellenic Studies on 14 October 1971, at McMaster University on 28 October 1971, and at the Queen's University of Belfast on 17 December 1971.