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Book Reviews

Reviewed work(s): Arndt, Andreas, ed. *Wissenschaft und Gesellschaft: Friedrich Schleiermacher in Berlin, 1796–1802*. Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009. xiii+145 pp. €19.95/\$28.00 (e-book).; Schleiermacher, Friedrich. *Über die Religion: Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern 1799, 1806, 1821*. Edited by Niklaus Peter, Frank Bestebreurtje, and Anna Büsching. Zurich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 2012. xxix+275 pp. €32.00.

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Serious-minded English-speaking students of Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834) should be immensely pleased to discover these two recent German titles. Together, though in different ways, they shed light on the literary, scientific, and religious setting of the theologian’s lifework. The collection of social-historical essays *Wissenschaft und Gesellschaft: Friedrich Schleiermacher in Berlin 1796–1802* (*Science and society: Friedrich Schleiermacher in Berlin, 1796–1802*) illumines the theologian’s formative years, while the new German study edition of his *Über die Religion: Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern* (*On religion: Speeches to its cultured despisers*) prints versions from 1799, 1806, and 1821 in a format that invites comparison, thus enabling readers to see how his early romanticist commitment to grounding religion in an “intuition of the universe” plays out in his subsequent career.

The six chapters of *Wissenschaft und Gesellschaft*, edited by Andreas Arndt, treat the young Schleiermacher’s initial years in Berlin amid his full-time tasks as chaplain when he was also launching himself as a writer in that vibrant social world. Originating at a symposium of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences in 2007, the book includes an index by Wolfgang Virmond that lists the dates and venues of Schleiermacher’s preaching assignments. With deft strokes the book’s specialist contributors shed light on diverse facets of the young theologian’s life.

In “Eine literarische Ehe: Schleiermachers Wohngemeinschaft mit Friedrich Schlegel” (A literary marriage: Schleiermacher’s shared apartment with Friedrich Schlegel [3–14]), Arndt traces the soulmates’ intellectual pursuits of co-philosophizing (*symphilosophieren*). Schleiermacher credited Schlegel with initiating “a new period” of his life “in the philosophical and literary world.” Though Schlegel urged him to write *Über die Religion*, he remained puzzled by Schleiermacher’s commitment to Christianity. In turn, Schleiermacher came to the defense of Schlegel’s novel *Lucinde* with his *Vertraute Briefe über Schlegels “Lucinde”* (Confidential letters on Schlegel’s “Lucinde”). Despite an eventual falling out, their relationship was never trivial. Arndt is not alone in seeing traces of Schlegel’s influence in Schleiermacher’s work on the interpretation of Plato, the hermeneutics, and the lectures on dialectics that he began to give in 1811.

Simon Gerber's chapter, "Seelsorge ganz unten—Schleiermacher, der Charité-Prediger" (A lowly chaplaincy—Schleiermacher, the Charité preacher [15–41]), takes readers into the chaplain's daily rounds at this famous Berlin hospital, then in transition from almshouse to a medical teaching center. Charged with catechizing the basic truths of religion, Schleiermacher delivered sermons at the Charité whose injunctions to personal integrity and trust in God contrast with his more sophisticated orations preached in Berlin churches or at court in Potsdam. In line with his Reformed understanding of the Word, Schleiermacher refused to administer the Eucharist at bedside to persons who were no longer mentally capable of grasping the meaning of the sacrament; among such persons, he reasoned, the Eucharist could accomplish its aim only as an act of magic.

In writing "Liebe, Freundschaft, Faublastät—der frühe Schleiermacher und die Frauen" (Love, friendship, faublasity [the term alludes to Jean-Baptiste Louvet's late eighteenth-century French novel about serial love affairs]—the early Schleiermacher and women [43–65]), Wolfgang Virmond sets forth "preliminary guidelines" on this much-discussed topic. He laments the fact that (a) scholarship on this topic has scarcely begun to utilize information in the Walter de Gruyter critical edition (KGA) of Schleiermacher's correspondence, while he also notes that (b) Schleiermacher's widow, the former Henriette Willich, carefully destroyed all the letters in her possession that referred to other women, including Henriette Herz and Eleanore Grunow, his most famous unrequited early love, who was caught in a desperate marriage and thus for Schleiermacher not properly wed.

Faced with this situation, Virmond urges painstaking detective work, based upon available sources. He criticizes writing on this topic that interprets Schleiermacher's relationships with women in ways that are misleading, only partly informed, or deficient in grasping the interplay between societal status, marriage, and affairs of the heart in the early 1800s. On his view, the groundbreaking book by Ruth D. Richardson, *The Role of Women in the Life and Thought of the Early Schleiermacher (1768–1806): An Historical Overview* (Lewiston, NY, 1991) errs repeatedly in this regard. Schleiermacher's interest in women, whether single, married, or divorced, was not always erotic or in pursuit of marriage. Some of his women friends were highly cultivated—for example, Henriette Herz, Dorothea Mendelssohn, Caroline Böhmer, Rahel Levin, and Bettina Brentano—while others were simpler souls, which is how Virmond views Eleonore Grunow and Schleiermacher's eventual wife, Henriette Willich.

Readers of Schleiermacher's *Über die Religion* are aware of his affinity for physical as well as biological metaphors. Ursula Klein's "Der Chemiekult der Frühromantik" (The cult of chemistry of early romanticism [67–92]) traces one provenance of this affinity. She depicts Schleiermacher avidly attending public lectures that the chemist-apothecary Martin Heinrich Klaproth had held in Berlin since 1783. Klaproth fascinated the Berlin literati with his empirical and physical investigations of chemical reactions; indeed, his early experiments led to discovery of the elements uranium and zirconium. Klein's essay reminds us of the literary-philosophical impact of late eighteenth-century science, shows how the cult of chemistry around 1800 confirmed the usefulness not just of chemistry itself but of the natural sciences generally, and in this fashion pointed to the underlying faith in progress that characterized the period.

A final essay, by Doris Reimer, "'Fahre fort mich zu lieben': Zum Beginn der Freundschaft und Verlagsbeziehung von Schleiermacher und Georg Andreas Reimer—mit Blick auf die spätere Zeit" ("Continue to love me": On the beginning of the friendship and publishing relationship between Schleiermacher and Georg Andreas Reimer—with a view to later times

[93–119]), documents an extremely close, heartfelt friendship. Georg Reimer rose to prominence as the publisher of the early German romantics and relished his authors' philosophical quests and literary pursuits. After Schleiermacher's death, in 1834, Reimer maintained that he had virtually not lived, thought, or done anything without thinking of his friend. In addition to Schleiermacher's theological books, Reimer published the Plato translation and *Der Preußische Correspondent*, which Schleiermacher briefly edited during the war of liberation from Napoleon. Indeed, the Holy Trinity preacher and Berlin professor and his family lived for some years in a wing of Reimer's stately Berlin mansion.

In contrast with the vivid interpretive essays in *Wissenschaft und Gesellschaft*, the major study edition of *Über die Religion: Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern 1799 / 1806 / 1821* (On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers) offers us invaluable Schleiermacher source material. We can be grateful that the Zurich theologian Niklaus Peter realized the acute need for this edition and saw the project to completion, ably assisted on technical matters (typography and correlation and layout of texts) by his coworkers Frank Bestebreurtje and Anna Büsching. Now that it is on hand, the book enables us to take the measure of Schleiermacher at his writing desk. Happily, the book is reasonably priced and, for those with German, preeminently usable. Of course, Schleiermacher's diction, contemporary allusions, and complex writing style will challenge Anglophone readers. But the payoff for acquiring needed competence is huge.

This study edition of *On Religion* supplants a work by Bernhard Pünjer, published in 1879 and long out of print. Although the utility of Pünjer's edition was somewhat limited, owing to an unduly complicated mix of typefaces and footnote annotations, it did have the virtue of drawing attention to the original 1799 edition and the implicit problems of its author's developing ideas as a theologian. When Rudolf Otto reissued the first edition as a centennial edition in 1899, twentieth-century Germans came to know the book in that version, while English readers continued to study the 1821 edition of *On Religion* in John Oman's 1893 translation. It was in this context that I translated the 1799 edition, thus making it available in English for the very first time (Cambridge, 1988; reissued in 1996.)

Today a reader may harbor a preference for the earliest edition or for a later one, but the fact is that all these editions *together* are the work of the Schleiermacher. They cry out to be understood synoptically in the course of his production of other theological works, published and unpublished. This splendid new edition that Peter and his colleagues have produced makes it possible for us to examine the making of this modern theological classic in detail. Their volume presents the three versions of *On Religion*: the 1806 changes to the original 1799 edition are shown in parallel offset type, and the 1821 emendations indicated in footnotes, while the 1821 "Explanations" are appended to each of the five speeches. It was not found necessary to present Schleiermacher's fourth edition, of 1831, which standardized the book's orthography; the current editors have taken on that task for today's readers. Schleiermacher's various prefaces and an 1806 afterword, further annotated in 1821, convey the author's ruminations as he sought to connect with contemporaries by reissuing the book. Anna Büsching's cover design, which superimposes portraits of a youthful, middle-aged, and elderly Schleiermacher, reminds us that *On Religion* was an intellectual companion during his entire career, not just a youthful romanticist aberration subsequently abandoned.

Peter's introduction (vii–xxv) succinctly describes the author's setting amid the shifting cultural and theological tides that motivated the 1806 and 1821 revisions. To illustrate the yield of these changes would require a monograph, not a book review. Yet a few hints can nonetheless be given. The 1806 version stands as the most significant intellectual revision,

with “intuition” appearing less often and “feeling” being conceptually elevated to quasi-philosophical status as “immediate consciousness.” Comparing the 1799 version with the 1806 and also the 1821 version yields insight that occasionally muffles and rephrases, though it does not destroy, the book’s original impulses. The 1821 version’s explanations appended to the speeches (a) respond to specific misunderstandings of earlier editions and (b) link the religious rhetoric of *On Religion* to the first edition of his dogmatics (1821/22). It is remarkable that the 1821 “Explanations”—available to English speakers since 1893 in the Oman translation—are so rarely studied; much of what is stated there presents tenets of Schleiermacher’s dogmatics, *The Christian Faith* (1821/22, revised in 1830/31), in a more accessible form.

My long-held view—that even if Schleiermacher significantly revised the book at crucial junctures of his life he never renounced its structure or basic ideas—may, and doubtless should, be further put to the test with the help of this new edition. Even if that view is upheld, I shall be surprised if careful study of this edition does not make us aware of further nuances and subtleties in Schleiermacher’s evolving project amid the theological trade winds of his Berlin contemporaries. Literary studies of self-editing are a major pastime of the scholarly world, and it is especially inviting to engage this dimension of the history of theology. To study such editorial productivity is to engage the nexus where the creation of texts arises from immediate social history. Not just the fate of phrases like “intuition of the universe” but the earmarks of Schleiermacher’s theological liberalism (his quarrels with literalism and traditional orthodoxies, and his resistance to external scriptural or ecclesial authority) come into sharp delineation when we follow his mind through this lifelong theological project. The new edition invites us to clarify exactly how Schleiermacher seeks to maintain a stance that approximates a religious naturalism yet wishes at the same time to remain theistic—in other words, to resist anthropomorphism and supernaturalism—while making the case for a way of apprehending the reality of a living God.

The new Peter edition offers something not achieved in the de Gruyter critical edition. Although the de Gruyter edition includes masterful technical and historical introductions by Günter Meckenstock, that critical edition inhibits comparison by publishing the original 1799 *On Religion* in KGA I/2 (Berlin, 1984) and the 1806, 1821, and 1831 versions in KGA I/12 (Berlin, 1995). In effect, Peter’s new study edition does for Schleiermacher studies what the Greek synoptic parallels do for the study of the New Testament gospels, except that—in this instance—all the words are with certainty by the same hand and there is no need to approximate the dating of texts. This new edition will count as an indispensable resource for interpreters of Schleiermacher’s Protestant Christianity for years to come. One may hope that its availability will spur fresh interest in mastery of the complex style and nuanced cadences that mark Schleiermacher’s German, which is often an impediment to the understanding and interpretation of his thought, and not just on this side of the Atlantic.

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