

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

German Language and Literature Papers

Modern Languages and Literatures, Department
of

1-27-1990

**Review of *Heidelberg im säkularen Umbruch.
Traditionsbewußtsein und Kulturpolitik um 1800*, edited by
Friedrich Strack**

Priscilla A. Hayden-Roy
University of Nebraska-Lincoln, phayden-roy1@unl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/modlanggerman>



Part of the [Modern Languages Commons](#)

Hayden-Roy, Priscilla A., "Review of *Heidelberg im säkularen Umbruch. Traditionsbewußtsein und Kulturpolitik um 1800*, edited by Friedrich Strack" (1990). *German Language and Literature Papers*. 12. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/modlanggerman/12>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Modern Languages and Literatures, Department of at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in German Language and Literature Papers by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

Published in *German Quarterly* 63 (1990), 117-119.

Published by the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG)
112 Haddontowne Ct. #104, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034-3668 USA

<http://germanquarterly.aatg.org/>

Copyright © 1990 American Association of Teachers of German.
Used by permission.

Heidelberg im säkularen Umbruch. Traditionsbewußtsein und Kulturpolitik um 1800. Ed. Friedrich Strack. Deutscher Idealismus. Philosophie und Wirkungsgeschichte in Quellen und Studien 12. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1987. 568 pp.

This twelfth volume in the Klett-Cotta series on aspects of German Idealism maintains the high quality set by earlier volumes in this series. It consists of 23 articles that originally were presented at a colloquium held in Heidelberg in the fall of 1985 on the occasion of the 600th anniversary of Heidelberg University. The collection focuses on the period of transition at the University after 1803 when, in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars, the Palatinate was divided and Heidelberg was incorporated into Baden. The city's new territorial prince, Karl Friedrich, decided to improve the University and, following the trend in many German

territories, completely reorganized and secularized the University's fiscal and administrative structure (as discussed by Eike Wolgast 35-60). The University was able to attract leading German intellectuals of the period, becoming the home of what is known as Heidelberg Romanticism. It remains one of history's little paradoxes that the political situation facilitating the rise of an institution that became the haven of nationalistic sentiment was itself created by French military and political intervention.

The articles are divided into six sections: 1) history, politics, and law; 2) libraries, journals, and publishing; 3) literary life (the longest section); 4) the fine arts; 5) religion and the history of mythology; 6) philosophy and aesthetics. The interdisciplinary breadth of the collection admirably reconstructs something of the variety of intellectual concerns and positions within this Heidelberg enclave, as well as offering acute analyses of its varied relationships to Enlightenment thought, to Goethe, to the Early Romanticism of the Schlegels and Novalis, and to German Idealism. These intellectual connections help to locate Heidelberg Romanticism within the broad transition—as Fr. Meinecke defined it—from eighteenth-century Enlightenment cosmopolitanism and progressivism to the emergence of the idea of a German nation state in the nineteenth century. Most of the articles treat some aspect of this problem. For example, Lothar Pikulik (“Die sogenannte Heidelberger Romantik”) discusses the continuities and discontinuities between Early and Heidelberg Romanticism. Early Romanticism still belongs “als Überspitzung, als Überreife und Herbst” (194) to the eighteenth century, he argues, while Heidelberg Romanticism rejects a view of historical progressivity in its turn to the past. But Pikulik also provides examples of persisting continuities to eighteenth-century ideas, cases where the Heidelberg Romantics were unable “über den eigenen Schatten zu springen” (198). Gerhard von Hofe discusses in his article how the concept of “Volk” became for the Heidelberg Romantics the epitome of the “Kulturturnation,” the focal point of a literary-political program that was to serve to unify Germans within a national state. Again this stands in contrast, for example, to Herder's notion of “Volk,” to which the Heidelbergers clearly were indebted, but which was conceived within a universal-historical framework typical of the eighteenth century (250-51). Friedrich Strack comes to similar conclusions in looking at the Heidelberg Romantics' interest in

the Middle Ages. Significant continuities exist to the earlier Romantics, which Strack delineates, but the Heidelbergers were the first to employ this interest as a cultural-political tool (278). Strack's differentiated analysis also points out the varying historical views among the Heidelbergers themselves, which led to the diversity of opinion concerning, for example, the “Wunderhorn” collection. Günter Niggel's article (“Geschichtsbewußtsein und Poesieverständnis bei den ‘Einsiedlern’ und den Brüdern Grimm”) also addresses this problem.

Besides the interest in German folk culture, the Heidelberg Romantic circle also cultivated an interest in German art, again finding here a potential tool for awakening nationalistic sentiment. Several articles treat aspects of the Boisserée collection (especially Annemarie Gethmann-Siefert, “Die Sammlung Boisserée in Heidelberg. Anspruch und Wirkung”). Viktor Lange discusses Goethe's favorable view of the collection which, he contests, did not constitute a turning point in Goethe's aesthetics (352). Although perceptible doubts regarding his own Classical style emerged in such works as *Faust* (343), he refused to accept the turn to a nationally tinged Christian art as promoted by the Nazarenes as a viable answer to the cultural crisis in which he found himself (353).

Late Enlightenment figures also are given some attention in this volume, particularly Johann Heinrich Voß. Heribert Raab writes on the contentious relationship between Voß and Görres; Günter Häntzschel attempts to vindicate Voß in his article, pointing out that the Romantics' disparaging view of him is what predominates in literary histories (301-02).

Several other articles may be of particular interest to this readership, though space limitations permit only a mention of them. Gabriele Brandstetter writes on the literary women of the Heidelberg Romantic circle: Sophie Mereau, Karoline von Günderode, and Bettine Brentano. Otto Pöggeler discusses the history of the University journal founded in 1808, the *Jahrbücher der Literatur*. Görres's “Mythengeschichte” is the subject of Peter Michelsen's article. Bernd-Rüdiger Kern discusses the role of the *Burschenschaft* in Heidelberg, again as a means of fostering nationalistic sentiment. Jean-Louis Vieillard-Baron discusses Creuzer as an interpreter of Plotinus. Hegel's Heidelberg period is the subject of Hans Friedrich Fulda's article. A collection on this topic would not be complete with-

out acknowledging the Romantic and politically charged symbol of the Heidelberg castle ruin, the subject of studies by Jens Christian Jensen, Volker Sellin, and Joachim Göricke.

All literary historians of this period will take delight in this highly informative collection, which serves to deepen and broaden one's understanding of the intellectual milieu of Heidelberg around 1800.

PRISCILLA HAYDEN-ROY

University of Nebraska, Lincoln