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Review of *Zwischen Revolution und Orthodoxie?  
Schelling und seine Freunde im Stift und an der  
Universität Tübingen: Texte und Untersuchungen.* by  
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**Zwischen Revolution und Orthodoxie? Schelling und seine Freunde im Stift und an der Universität Tübingen: Texte und Untersuchungen.**

Von Wilhelm G. Jacobs. Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: frommann-holzboog, 1989. 325 Seiten. DM 128,-.

This volume makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the education Schelling and his contemporaries received at the Tübingen *Stift* in the last decades of the eighteenth century. The book consists of three parts: first Jacobs's discussion of the academic setting of the *Stift*, and then two sections of previously unpublished texts—a selection of eight *Specimina* (masters' essays) written between 1785 and 1795 by some of the lesser lights at the *Stift*, followed by a list of the titles of all dissertations and *Specimina* written at the *Stift* during the same time period. While earlier studies have pointed to the importance of the young *Repetenten* in mediating Kantian and revolutionary ideas to the *Stiftler*, Jacobs goes a step further by looking at the professors at the *Stift*. Common opinion has held that these men espoused conservative theological views that served to hinder rather than stimulate the intellectual development of the *Stift*'s most illustrious graduates of the late eighteenth century, Hegel, Hölderlin, and Schelling. Jacobs suggests that this view corresponds to "einer längst überholten Genievorstellung" (10) and turns to archival materials to formulate a more historically accurate picture of the education at the *Stift*.

Jacobs begins the first section with a discussion of the impact of the French Revolution on students and faculty at the *Stift*, summarizing the important research to date on this topic as well as offering his own interpretive spin. The author argues that contrary to previous opinion, Württemberg's educated bourgeois elite, the *Ehrbarkeit*, was influenced in the latter half of the eighteenth century by Enlightenment thought and advocated educational and political reform within the duchy. While appealing conservatively to "das alte Recht" in order to protect their privileges, the *Ehrbarkeit* at the same time cultivated an anti-absolutistic and reform-minded attitude that, argues Jacobs, could have predisposed the young *Stiftler* of Schelling's generation to more radical sympathies.

In the next two chapters Jacobs discusses the revolutionary activities of the *Stiftler* in the 1790s and the influence of Kant's philosophy in leading them to criticize the intellectual subordination required by orthodox doctrine, with particular emphasis on Schelling. Jacobs's synthesis of relevant secondary literature here provides a good overview of the research to date on this topic.

In the final chapters of his discussion Jacobs summarizes and draws interesting conclusions from his archival research. He focuses on the *Specimina* and observes that these essays do not simply regurgitate the opinion of the professor for whom they were written. Rather the variety of conclusions drawn in the *Specimina* suggests that the students were expected to argue their own opinions by drawing on pertinent scholarly literature: the *Specimina* thus were to demonstrate "die Fähigkeit zu selbständiger wissenschaftlicher Arbeit" (76). This applies also to *Specimina* treating aspects of Kant's philosophy, one of which, written by Ernst Friedrich Hesler, a member of Hegel's and Hölderlin's class, is included in the text section. Jacobs concludes that the Tübingen professors' engagement with Kant was more intense than previously thought, and that through their

acceptance of pro-Kantian *Specimina* they showed at least a degree of intellectual tolerance vis-à-vis their students. In his evaluation of the list of philosophical *Specimina* topics written between 1785 and 1795, Jacobs finds the students treating a wide range of philosophers, including Kant, Spinoza, Herder, Leibniz, and even Fichte, which again suggests that the *Stift* was not such an intellectual backwater as has previously been asserted. Jacobs also argues that the *Specimina* treating problems of biblical interpretation, which were written for Ephorus Christian Friedrich Schnurrer (seven of which are printed in the text section), betray what he calls a “crisis of theology”: the questioning of orthodox doctrine by means of biblical text criticism. Interesting for Hölderlin scholars already familiar with the poet’s *Specimin* are two *Specimina* included in the text section by fellow *Aldermänner* Magenau and Neuffer, which, like Hölderlin’s own, treat biblical texts from an aesthetic rather than a theological point of view, thus placing the biblical text on the same plane as any other profane text. Jacobs argues, as have previous scholars, that the students were encouraged in this way of thinking by Schnurrer’s instruction, which employed the then nascent method of modern text criticism.

Jacobs concludes that Schelling’s philosophy, formulated in the face of the tension between revolution and orthodoxy, received some impetus from both the instruction at Tübingen, which he characterizes as “eine durch die Aufklärung schon heftig erschütterte Orthodoxie,” and from the professors, who “diese Erschütterung teils wahrnahmen, teils sogar vermittelten und bewirkten” (111). Jacobs’s volume gives a differentiated view of academic life at the Tübinger Stift at the time of the French Revolution and also points to the need for further examination of relevant archival materials. For scholars of Schelling, Hölderlin, and Hegel, the inclusion of contemporary masters’ *Specimina* will be of particular interest; the volume also provides an excellent synthetic overview of recent scholarship on the *Stift* in the late eighteenth century.

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–Priscilla Hayden-Roy