

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

German Language and Literature Papers

Modern Languages and Literatures, Department
of

6-1-1987

Review of Reinhard Breymayer, ed., *Hölderlin, Friedrich (Zuschreibung). Hymne an die Heiterkeit. Ein unbekanntes Lied "Gesungen bei der Einweihung eines Gartenhauses das zur Aufschrift hat: SERENITY"*

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 Reinhard Breymayer, ed., *Hölderlin, Friedrich (Zuschreibung). Hymne an die Heiterkeit. Ein unbekanntes Lied "Gesungen bei der Einweihung eines Gartenhauses das zur Aufschrift hat: SERENITY"* (1987). *German Language and Literature Papers*. 5.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/modlanggerman/5>

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 *The German Quarterly* 60 (Summer 1987), 477-479.

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

Published by the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG), 112 Haddontowne Ct. #104, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034-3668 USA. Copyright © 1987 American Association of Teachers of German. Used by permission.

HÖLDERLIN, FRIEDRICH (Zuschreibung). *Hymne an die Heiterkeit. Ein unbekanntes Lied* "Gesungen bei der Einweihung eines Gartenhauses das zur Aufschrift hat: SERENITY" Ed. Reinhard Breymayer. Tübingen: Noëtis Verlag Thomas Heck, 1985. 151 pp. DM 15.

On August 31, 1984, the Tübingen Germanist Reinhard Breymayer published an article in the *Stuttgarter Zeitung* announcing his discovery of a poem with the heading "Gesungen bei der Einweihung eines Gartenhauses, das zur Aufschrift hat: SERENITY," which he believed could be ascribed conclusively to Friedrich Hölderlin. The announcement sparked off a minor controversy among several Germanists which was documented in the European press, the most critical voice being that of Jochen Hieber (*FAZ*, September 17, 1984; *FAZ*, October 22, 1984). Breymayer came across the poem over a year prior to his announcement while reading through the volumes of the *Taschenkalender für Natur- und Gartenfreunde* (published by Goethe's, Schiller's, and Hölderlin's publisher in Stuttgart, Johann Friedrich Cotta) in search of additional works by the little-known Württemberg pastor-poet, Christian Gottlieb Göz (1746–1803). In the 1797 volume of the almanach, immediately following an article on how to rid the garden of moles, an anonymous poem was printed which roused his curiosity. In the ensuing year he subjected the poem, twenty-one four-lined stanzas of rhymed verse, to a careful examination, considering questions of content and style, having become convinced the poem was by Friedrich Hölderlin. The poem and the results of this investigation, as well as a response to the criticisms voiced in the press, have been edited by Reinhard Breymayer and published in a small volume bearing the title *Hymne an die Heiterkeit*, by Thomas Heck's newly founded Noëtis Verlag.

The volume begins with the newly found poem. As the heading indicates, the work is an occasional poem written for the dedication of a garden house. "Einweihung" suggests the cultic overtones the narrator and his friend (the "wir" of the poem) wish to evoke as they dedicate the garden house as a temple to serenity (*Heiterkeit*). With its proximity to the beauty and tranquility of nature, the garden house is to provide a paradisaical refuge from the "bunte(s) Stadtgewühl" (15) and from the deception of fleeting fashions, the transitory pleasures of life (12–13), a place where nature's serenity can be mirrored in the love, peace and concord of true and lasting friendship (10–11). The poem does not advocate escapism, however, which would be most unlike Hölderlin, whose interest in political action was particularly keen at the time this poem would have been written. It is presumed that serenity's "Zauberglanz" will one day become shrouded (13) through some still unknown act of fate. The narrator prays that the serenity he and his friend have absorbed from nature during their stay in the garden house would become an

undying source of strength in the future, enabling the tranquil feeling within them to flow outwards "(n)icht in Worten schön und leer" but "in edler That" (14): "Tief beseelt vom großen Triebe / Gut, wie die Natur, zu seyn, / Wollen wir der reinsten Liebe / Unsrer besten Kräfte weih'n" (15). Finally the poet invokes "(d)er Erinnerung Wonn" (15) to accompany himself and his friend when they depart, that their spirits may be able to live on perpetually "in süßen Träumen" (15) in the serenity of the garden house.

According to Breymayer's thesis, Hölderlin wrote the "Hymne an die Heiterkeit" for the dedication of the garden house outside Jena which he and Isaac von Sinclair occupied in the summer of 1795 (documented by Hölderlin's letters to his sister on April 20, 1795 (*StA* 6, 168) and to Neuffer on April 28, 1795 (*StA* 6, 169), see Breymayer, pp. 62 f.). The elevated style of the poem is typical of the academic *Gesellschaftslieder* of the period; that a social gathering be thus imbued with a sacral aura is a reflection of the cult of friendship widespread at the time (pp. 68 f.). The most well-known example of this genre, Schiller's ode "An die Freude," was most certainly the model for the newly found poem, according to Breymayer. Beyond similarities in content, both poems use the same outer form of four-footed trochaic rhymed verse with crossed, regularly alternating single and double rhymes. This, too, fits well with Hölderlin's biography, since during his stay in Jena he was strongly under Schiller's influence (p. 70).

Breymayer's familiarity with little known sources of occasional poetry has led him not only to this poem, but to three others which he believes can be attributed to Hölderlin. In the first section of the commentary in this volume he recounts the history of these finds. Although of peripheral significance to the interpretation of the poem at hand, Breymayer's discussion gives an insight into his research methods. His expertise in Württemberg genealogies and Württemberg Pietism led him to the papers of Hölderlin's cousin-in-law, Johann Friedrich Blum (1759-1843), where he found a wedding poem dated 1789 which he has attributed to Hölderlin. The two other poems are epicedia written at the death of two students at the Tübingen *Stift* in 1793. The last, "Morgenopfer an den Erlöser," contains explicitly Christian themes and was written, according to Breymayer, for a student from a Pietist family. The bibliographical information in this section is valuable for anyone doing research on the young Hölderlin.

In evaluating Breymayer's latest find we must first emphasize the broad base on which he has constructed his argument. It is supported by the biographical data he collected concerning Hölderlin's and Sinclair's move to the garden house in 1795, and by the results of his stylistic analysis of the poem. He constructs an argument for the presence of occasional poetry in Hölderlin's opus. He presents examples of other poems by Hölderlin which use an outer form similar to this one (pp. 74-79). Finally, Breymayer gives a lengthy register of parallels between the "Heiterkeit" poem and Hölderlin's known works (pp. 79-128), drawing on the computerized concordance in Aachen for many of his references. Particularly for those words Jochen Hieber judged too conventional to be Hölderlin's—"Strahlenkranz," "Lebensglück," "Zauberlichtes Schein," "nahe Blumenflur," "Truggewebe," "Schlangenzischen," "Nebelschleir"—Breymayer is careful to provide approximate, if not exact parallels. Parallels to the poem's syntax, grammar and rhetorical figures are also listed, as well as to the rhymes used in the poem. Although his hypothesis cannot be proven absolutely without further documentation, Breymayer

has assembled the data at hand in a plausible manner. However, the reader should not expect a synthetic interpretation of the poem in this volume. Breymayer's concern is to justify his attribution to Hölderlin; his analysis addresses a large spectrum of particulars and consequently remains somewhat atomized. A coherent interpretation of various themes in the poem (serenity, nature, beauty, memory) in the context of Hölderlin's known work would be instructive and might well further support Breymayer's thesis.

Breymayer's volume will be of interest to Hölderlin scholars and Germanists in general for a number of reasons. The poem itself, having been unearthed from obscurity and introduced to us now under Hölderlin's name, is at the very least a curiosity. Second, Breymayer is claiming a place for occasional poetry within Hölderlin's opus, thus calling attention to a tradition largely overlooked by scholars of "classical" literature. Finally, with his archival and genealogical expertise Breymayer is able to bring Hölderlin's social and familial ties into sharper focus, providing a necessary antidote to strictly text-immanent scholarship.

We might add here that an English translation of the *Heiterkeit* poem by David Farrell Krell has recently appeared with a brief commentary taken largely from Breymayer's book (see the *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 1 [1986], pp. 3-15).

Washington University, St. Louis

PRISCILLA HAYDEN-ROY