

2004

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Recommended Citation

McCulloch, Margery Palmer (2004) "Volksdichter und Künstler: German Responses to Robert Burns," *Studies in Scottish Literature*: Vol. 33: Iss. 1.

Available at: <https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/ssl/vol33/iss1/5>

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Margery Palmer McCulloch

Volksdichter und Künstler:
German Responses to Robert Burns

It was Catherine Carswell who first aroused my interest in the German reception of Burns, with her review in the *Spectator* magazine in 1936 of the translation by Jane Lyburn of Hans Hecht's *Robert Burns: The Man and his Work*.¹ Although completed in 1914, the original German edition, *Robert Burns: Leben und Wirken des Schottischen Volksdichters*, did not appear until 1919, its publication delayed by the First World War. The reading of Carswell's review, which emphasized Hecht's view of Burns as a European poet, connected with work I was doing at the time on the significance of translation in the interwar Scottish Renaissance period, including Alexander Gray's translation into Scots of German folk-songs and ballads and his demonstration of the close relationship between these folk traditions.

No scholar is an island, and I have been greatly helped in my research not only by Hecht's *Leben und Wirken* but also by the article he published in the *Burns Chronicle* of 1939, "The Reception of Burns in German Literature," the first part of an intended series which was not continued—this time as a result of the outbreak of World War Two. Of much value also have been a perceptive article in *Modern Language Review* of 1960 by Alexander Gillies, who added further to Hecht's information; and Hans Jürg Kupper's *Robert Burns im deutschen Sprachraum*, published in Bern in 1979. It deals with Burns's re-

¹Catherine Carswell, "A German on Robert Burns," *Spectator* (7 February 1936), p. 224.

ception in Germany from the late eighteenth century to the 1970s,² analyzes the inseparable combination of folk art and high art and Scots and English language in Burns's poetry, and opens up responses and strategies in relation to the translation of Burns into German, with particular reference to the Schweizer-Deutsch translation of August Corrodi. Unfortunately, this publication has not yet been translated into English, although it would be a most useful addition to existing English-language studies.

The Preface of Kupper's book speaks of his having had to hum to his colleagues the tune of "Auld Lang Syne" in order to awaken a dim recollection of Burns, and he asks: "Ist der schottische Dichter im deutschen Sprachraum ein Unbekannter gewesen?" [Has the Scottish poet become an unknown in German-speaking countries?] This question chimes with the first responses I received recently from colleagues at the Germersheim Scottish Studies Centre, University of Mainz, when I put a question to them about Burns's contemporary reputation. The answer came back that it had sometimes been said that Burns, like Schiller, who shares his birth year, was nowadays little more than a name in Germany.

Burns's apparent disappearance from German literary consciousness in the post-1945 period contrasts strongly with his reception in the nineteenth century, which reached its climax in the tributes of the centenary celebrations in 1896. Four Scots-language editions of his poems were published in Germany between 1841 and 1859, and at least twelve editions translated into German between 1839 and 1896, some of these going into a second or third reprint. BOSLIT lists many translations of individual poems through the 1790s and the nineteenth century, with "Green Grow the Rashers" taking first place in 1795 and "John Barleycorn"—a very popular poem for translation—appearing in 1799. In addition, brief biographical and bibliographical references to the Scottish poet are to be found as early as 1791, where an entry in J. D. Reuss's *Das gelehrte England*, published in Berlin and Stettin, referred to: "Burns, a Ploughman in the country of Ayr at [sic] Scotland. Poems, chiefly in the Scottish dialect. 1786" (Hecht, p. 55). A second edition published in 1804 gave more information about Burns including a list of articles about him in English, American and German periodicals up to 1803, but unfortunately gave his birth date as 1758. Other early references include an article sent anonymously from Edinburgh and published in the periodical *Neue Teutsche Merkur*, founded by C. M. Wieland. This article was dated 26 October 1796 and, as Hans Hecht comments, "served as a kind of obituary notice of the lately deceased poet." Hecht, however, did not consider this contribution to contain anything of value,

²Hans Jürg Kupper, *Robert Burns im deutschen Sprachraum* (Bern, 1979), p. 7. Henceforth Kupper.

dismissing the writer as belonging to “the anecdote-mongering variety.”³ Yet it did contain, in English and in German blank verse, the poem written on seeing the Royal Palace at Stirling in Ruins, which, even if it is generally agreed to be poor German blank verse, is, as Alexander Gillies suggests, among the first lines by Burns to appear in German translation.⁴ Hecht found “on an incomparably higher level” the contribution relating to Burns in the *Englische Miscellen* of 1800, written most probably by its editor, Johann Christian Hüttner, a German resident in London and correspondent of Goethe and other members of the Weimar circle (Hecht, p. 56). Hüttner calls Burns a “real Scot” from Ayrshire and describes how he “bestowed upon their dialect, hitherto only despised and laughed at as broad Scotch, i.e. ‘Platt-englisch,’ a kind of classical dignity.” For Hecht, “these are ingenious observations, sharp-sightedly anticipating later historical comment” (Hecht, pp. 56-7).

The article by Alexander Gillies is especially interesting in relation to this early reception of Burns. It had been generally accepted by Hecht and others that the beginning of Germany’s knowledge of Burns (as opposed to the early brief mentions) dated from the correspondence between Goethe and Carlyle in the late 1820s. Gillies, however, brings to attention a fairly extensive reference to Burns in Emilie von Berlepsch’s *Caledonia*, published in Hamburg between 1802 and 1804. Emilie was a writer and friend of Johann Gottfried Herder and, according to Gillies, she had become emotionally attached to the Rev. James Macdonald, Herder’s adviser on Ossianic matters. Emilie had followed Macdonald to Scotland, thus creating some scandal at Weimar, and she made a tour of Scotland, in part accompanied by him. *Caledonia* was an account of her travels between 1799 and 1800 and was dedicated to Herder, who also saw sections of it before publication. The passage relating to Burns was apparently written in Oban where she was held up by stormy weather before crossing to Mull.

Emilie, as Gillies points out, wrongly regarded Burns as a Highlander and thought that Ayrshire was in the Highlands, while she had also accepted the legend of the humble ploughman, ruined by arrogant patrons, who “ended prematurely in a drunkard’s grave,” (Gillies, p. 585). Yet, despite these mistakes, she also acknowledged Burns’s knowledge of the Psalms and the Scottish ballads, as well as the poetry of his earlier countrymen, Ramsay and Fergusson. In this she may well be considered to have shown herself more perceptive than

³Hans Hecht, “The Reception of Burns in German Literature. I: Weimar and Berlin,” *Burns Chronicle*, 2nd Series, 14 (1939), 55. Henceforth Hecht.

⁴Alexander Gillies, “Emilie von Berlepsch and Burns,” *Modern Language Review*, 55 (1960), 584-7. Gillies suggests on p. 584 that the poem is “possibly the first lines by Burns to appear in German translation.” However, BOSLIT now gives that distinction to “Green Grow the Rashes” in 1795 followed by the “Lines on Stirling” in 1796. Henceforth Gillies.

Thomas Carlyle, who, in his *Edinburgh Review* essay on Burns in 1828, considered the poet to have been “without model; or with models only of the meanest sort.”⁵

Although von Berlepsch clearly had an agenda in writing about Burns—namely to use his work and fate as a stick with which to beat contemporary German literary fashion—she did have some interesting observations to make about the nature of Burns’s poetry and its effect on the reader. She also included in her account some free prose translations of passages from Burns, including “The Cotter’s Saturday Night,” although she felt that she could not translate Burns’s Scots dialect into verse in Hochdeutsch without destroying the warmth of the poems, thus changing the nature of the poetry.

In *Caledonia*, von Berlepsch comments on the effect on her of reading some of Burns’s poems, an effect which seems especially to relate to the detail of “The Cotter’s Saturday Night”:

Ich kann Ihnen nicht beschreiben, mit welcher Rührung ich diese ächt schottische Volksidylle immer wieder lese, wenn ich Abends zwischen den Hütten herumgehe, und sehe, wie die stillen freundlichen Familien vor der Thür oder um einen Tisch in der Hütte sich versammeln. Heilige Menschenliebe! (Gillies, p. 586)

[I can’t describe to you with what emotion I read and re-read these pure Scottish folk-idylls when in the evening I go among the cottages and see how the peaceful, friendly families gather together in front of the door or round a table in the cottage. Holy human love!]

She then goes on to say that while her fashionable contemporaries in Germany would probably find nothing to suit their taste in such folk poems, they should think over the fact that Burns’s poems “nicht für weiche ästhetische Griechen gesungen sind”—that Burns’s poems are not sung for weak, aesthetic Greeks—nor for people who change their opinions and principles every two or three years, as they do their fashions and furniture. She continues: “[these poems] were made for the Scots, that is for a *nation*, which possesses positive forms of morality and religion; of citizenship and national virtue.” And she contrasts what she sees as this true harmony between the Scottish poet and his people with the artificiality of contemporary German poetry with its foreign influences—“das Geklingel der Sonette und Concettis in unserer deutschen Sprache” [the ringing of sonnets and conceits in our German language]—which she believes cannot be pleasing to a German ear,⁶ an attack which is reminiscent of Robert Fergusson’s roughly contemporaneous lament in “Elegy, on the Death of Scots Music” [1772]:

⁵Thomas Carlyle, “Burns” (1828), *Essays on Burns and Scott* (London, 1895), p. 15.

⁶The quotations in German are from Gillies, p. 586; the translations into English are mine.

Now foreign sonnets bear the gree,
And crabbit queer variety
Of sound fresh sprung frae Italy,
A bastard breed!
Unlike that saft-tongu'd melody
Which now lies dead.⁷

Von Berlepsch's friend and dedicatee, Herder, did much to change German poetic taste and to promote interest in the primitive, thus, of course, contributing to the creation of a climate in which Burns's poems would be appreciated.

Gillies also draws attention to the fact that Herder had himself translated Burns's "John Anderson my Jo" under the title of "Die goldne Hochzeit." This translation appeared in Seckendorf's *Oster-Taschenbuch von Weimar* in 1801, with a third stanza added by Herder. Herder apparently possessed Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum*, volumes I-III, where Burns's poem appears anonymously, and it is possible that he did not realize that the song was by Burns. "John Anderson" was a popular choice with a number of German translators, and I was interested to read Herder's version in his *Collected Works*, still under the title of "Die goldne Hochzeit," but this time with Burns's name added. Despite his interest in the primitive, Herder's version is much more rhetorical than Burns's original. In particular it loses the immediate sense of intimacy and tenderness created by Burns through the direct address of the opening lines and by the sound of the repeated *J* consonant, and the added, almost whispered, "John" at the end of the first musical phrase: "John Anderson, my jo, John/ When we were first acquent." Herder, in contrast, begins with what seems a more distanced, objective narrative:

Vor manchen, manchen Jahren,
Als ich zuerst dich sah,
War deine Locke rabenschwarz,
Braun deine Wange da.

[Many, many years ago,
when I first saw you,
your locks were black as the raven,
your cheeks brown.]

Herder also alters the pattern at the end of each stanza, replacing Burns's two lines and complementary musical phrases with three lines, a change which destroys the natural rhythm and instinctive, warm feeling of the original. "But blessings on your frosty pow/ John Anderson, my Jo" becomes "Und dennoch

⁷"Elegy on the Death of Scots Music," in *Poems by Allan Ramsay and Robert Fergusson*, ed. Alexander Manson Kinghorn and Alexander Law (Edinburgh, 1974), p. 124.

bist du lieber mir/ Ja lieber/ Als mir der Jüngling war" [And yet you are dearer to me./ yes dearer/ than that young man was"]. And he completes his version by adding a third stanza in which the old couple's sons and daughters sing their golden wedding song, strewing myrtle branches and rejoicing over every day that Heaven has given their parents, while these parents move lovingly into the shadow of the grave.⁸

A book which communicates a strong sense of the recognition of Burns in Germany, despite its characterization by Hans Jürg Kupper as "etwas dilettantisch" and "nicht immer zuverlässig" (p. 46) [a bit amateurish and not always reliable], is *Burns in Germany* by the Rev. William Macintosh, published in 1928. Macintosh had been a British Chaplain in Germany and his introduction to the book describes his last days in the country at the end of November 1914, reading Burns with a German professor and his class in Freiburg while waiting for a passport to return to Britain. The aim of the book, which had appeared in a smaller version in 1920, seems to have been not only the stated objective of making clear to readers that Burns was early known and respected throughout Germany, but also the implicit wish to heal the terrible breach which had occurred between Macintosh's two beloved peoples and their authors.

Macintosh's enthusiasm for Scottish and German culture at times leads him to overemphasize the connection between Burns and Goethe. He draws on the correspondence between Carlyle and Goethe in his account of Burns's reception in Germany. He also refers to the views Goethe expressed to Eckermann in 1827 that while Burns's poems spring from and live in the mouths and ears of the people, in Germany the old folksongs have been neglected, while the works of those who collected them or tried to draw on them for influence "remain in the libraries, quite in accordance with the general fate of German poets." And, Goethe adds, "Of my own songs, how many live? Perhaps one or another of them may be sung by a pretty girl to the piano; but among the people, properly so called, they have no sound."⁹ These comments seem to accord with those of Emilie von Berlepsch in her earlier *Caledonia*. Macintosh's enthusiasm, however, leads him to suggest that not only did Goethe know and admire Burns's poems, but that in his songs he was influenced by Burns "if he did not indeed imitate him" (Macintosh, p. 14). This may well be the kind of comment that led Kupper to call Macintosh unreliable, for the poems of Goethe which might seem to come closest to Burns's songs—poems such as "Heidenröslein," "Mailed," "Erlkönig," "Gretchen am Spinrade"—were written in the 1770s and early 1780s and therefore before the publication of the Kilmarnock edition in 1786, although some were later set to music by Schubert

⁸*Herders Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. Bernhard Suphan, 33 vols. (Berlin, 1877-1913), 25 (1885), 626-7.

⁹W. Macintosh, *Burns in Germany* (Aberdeen, 1928), pp. 3-4. Henceforth Macintosh.

in 1814 and 1815. Burns certainly knew about Goethe and had a copy of his *Werther*, but there is no indication of personal contact. Nevertheless, despite its exaggeration in some respects, Macintosh's account does demonstrate the capacity of Burns's poetry to cross borders, and as with Herder earlier, he testifies to the popularity of "John Anderson, my Jo" with German readers in his references to Paul Hertz's book *Unser Elternhaus* [*Our Parents' House*], the narrative of a cultured merchant family, originally from Holland, who had settled in Hamburg in the eighteenth century. Hertz mentions many favorite poems read in his family, then says, "But one in particular, a beautiful song I cannot hear without thinking of the old people; here it is by Burns"; and he goes on to quote—in German—"John Anderson, my Jo." The translation which, unlike Herder's but like most of the translations of this song, has as its first line "John Anderson, mein Lieb!" is a good one, and Macintosh comments that "the song must early have found its way to Hamburg, and was fortunate in having a capable and sympathetic translator, whose name, unfortunately, is not given" (Macintosh, pp. 19-20). In my own perusal of German translations of Burns in the Mitchell Library collection, however, I was excited to discover that Hertz's anonymous translation matched (except for the missing repeated "John" in the first line of the stanza) the version in one of the collections I most enjoyed, which was also one of the earliest collections, that by W. Gerhard, published in Leipzig in 1840.

I mentioned Hans Jürg Kupper's comments about the decline of Burns's reputation in Germany after the high point of the centenary in 1896. On the other hand, Kupper also suggests that there had at the same time been a compensation for this decline in the new standards of Burns scholarship which evolved in the twentieth century and which replaced the cult of the "heaven-taught ploughman" with, for example, the pioneering work of Hans Hecht whose stated aim was "to explain the personality and the writings of the poet by placing them against the background of his time, his environment and the tendencies of the literary life of which his work forms a part."¹⁰ Important work was also done by Hecht's younger countryman Kurt Wittig in his 1958 study *The Scottish Tradition in Literature*, which deals meaningfully and contextually with Burns's poetry. Kupper's own book is representative of this new scholarly interest in its examination of early responses to Burns and its discussion of twentieth-century analyses of Burns's language and poetry and in particular the challenges they have presented for translators. In his discussion, he applies to Burns Monica Jaeger's analysis of poetic naivety in her book *Theorien der Mundartdichtung* of 1964, a naivety which is the simplicity of the

¹⁰Hans Hecht, *Robert Burns: The Man and His Work*, 2nd edn., trans. Jane Lyburn (London, 1950), p. 2; quoted in Kupper, p. 9. Henceforth *Robert Burns*.

Künstler, the artist, not of Burns the man.¹¹ In the late eighteenth century, Schiller had made a distinction between two kinds of poets, the "naïve" and the "sentimentalisch."¹² He saw Homer and Shakespeare as belonging to the naïve category in that they expressed in their work a direct, instinctive response to nature, while the sentimental poet was visionary, seeking in nature a lost ideal. Burns's naivety, as seen by Kupper, is of the kind characterized by Schiller, and it is this which, in his songs in particular, allows him to be both folk poet and universal artist.

Hans Hecht had no doubt that Burns was such an artist and in his study of the Kilmarnock poems he links Burns to Shakespeare, Molière and Ibsen in relation to the attack of all four writers on social hypocrisy (*Robert Burns*, p. 59). In his discussion of the Kilmarnock poems, he also characterizes Burns's art as "Heimatkunst," a characterization which relates to Schiller's definition of the naïve, while implicitly pointing forward to the way in which Burns's poetry was received and imitated by his less talented countrymen. For Hecht, Burns's art is "Heimatkunst," i.e., "home" or "regional" art, in the strictest sense of the word, meaning that these poems aim at describing the personalities and conditions of a narrowly compassed area, with every detail of which the poet himself is most intimately acquainted." But, he adds, "the Kilmarnock poems are also 'Heimatkunst' in the specific sense that they take as their theme country life and not the life and spirit of the great cities" (*Robert Burns*, p. 86). In this respect, it is interesting to remember that Kurt Wittig was later to point to the fact that while "Burns, at his best, was always immediately and intimately in contact with the environment, social as well as natural," Burns's imitators "mistook his directness for 'hameliness'"¹³—a very different quality from Hecht's "Heimatkunst"—to the detriment of Burns's reputation, one might add, and the future course of much Scottish poetry.

Kupper sees Burns as "one of the last great folksong collectors in Scotland," adding: "But he was also linguistically in an in-between situation, which most of the educated in Scotland in the late-eighteenth century corresponded to" (Kupper, p. 51). I take him to mean that this was, linguistically, a unique moment in the history of language in lowland Scotland, where two languages, Scots and English, were in some kind of balance, and where the educated, including upper class women ballad-singers and song-writers such as Anna Gordon, Lady Nairne and Jean Rutherford, and the self-educated such as

¹¹Monica Jaeger, *Theorien der Mundartdichtung* (Tübingen, 1964), p. 33; noted in Kupper, pp. 55-6.

¹²Friedrich Schiller, "Über naïve und sentimentalische Dichtung" [1795], *Ausgewählte Werke*, ed. Ernst Müller, 6 vols. (Stuttgart, 1954-5), V, 377-478, esp. 377-409.

¹³Kurt Wittig, *The Scottish Tradition in Literature* (Edinburgh, 1958), p. 220

Mrs. Dunlop's other protégée, the poet Janet Little, could move between languages (although Burns and Little were moving in reverse direction to the educated upper class). Kupper therefore sees the Scottishness of Burns's language as belonging to that consciously-formed naivety discussed by Monica Jaeger, which he believes gives Burns also the identity of a transitional poet who points the way to the Romantic period. He points, for example, to what he sees as Burns's conscious use of masks in the protection of his artistic integrity, playing the role of the simple heaven-taught ploughman when it suits him; at other times, showing his education and awareness of the English tradition. Kupper illustrates this through Burns's disagreements with George Thomson over the words for songs for Thomson's *Select Collection of Original Scottish Airs*, with the poet at one point insisting that "these English songs gravel me to death.—I have not that command of the language that I have of my native tongue.—In fact, I think my ideas are more barren in English than in Scottish"; yet on another occasion reassuring Thomson that "a small sprinkling of Scotticisms is no objection to an English reader... I have sprinkled it with the Scots dialect, but it may be easily turned into correct English" (Kupper, pp. 54-5). As Kupper suggests, Burns's vacillation as regards language was a defense of his own artistry and artistic decisions for, especially in relation to his song-collecting and writing, it was always on artistic grounds that his decisions about language were made.

A significant part of *Robert Burns im deutschen Sprachraum* is given over to a discussion of the question facing translators of Burns's poems, questions posed immediately by the title of the Kilmarnock edition: *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*. "Ist Burns ein Dialektdichter?" [Is Burns a dialect poet?] is therefore an immediate question for the translator. Even the earliest commentators on Burns were certain of his artistry yet recognized that he wrote in a Scottish linguistic form which was difficult to translate. This recognition has posed another question for translators: "Wie schottisch aber ist Burns' Sprache?" [how Scottish actually is Burns's language?] (Kupper, pp. 48, 51). And this un-uniform language, this Scots which intersects with English, could not readily be translated either into the standard High German or into a German dialect without doing some damage to the actuality and spirit of Burns's art.

There have been various attempts over the centuries to translate Burns's poems into German, Hochdeutsch or dialect. As a singer of Burns's songs, I would mention briefly that my investigation of selected song translations has reinforced my long-held belief in the consummate craftsmanship and artistry of Burns's songs, and in the importance in any edition of Burns's works of printing Burns's chosen tune together with the words. Although Sir Walter Scott and Robert Louis Stevenson considered Burns to have "frittered away" his time and talents in song-collection and composition, others such as Francis Jeffrey, writing in the *Edinburgh Review* in 1809, believed that the songs would

“transmit the name of Burns to all future generations.”¹⁴ Even Thomas Carlyle, who had some difficulty in reconciling Burns’s humble origins with his artistry, was in no doubt about the significance of the songs. Writing in 1840 to R. Peacock of Lübeck who had sent him a copy of Burns’s poems and songs translated by one of his earliest translators, Heinrich Julius Heintze, Carlyle comments: “they are the truest Songs, these of Burns’s, that we have had in Europe for a long while” and, while praising Heintze’s translations, he offers advice about dealing with the songs:

Perhaps the one counsel I should venture to give Herr Heintze were this: In all cases to *learn the tune* first.... The tune is the *soul* of a true Song,—that is to say, if it be a Song at all, if it have any *soul*. Burns always strummed upon the fiddle till he got his head and mind *filled* with the tune (such is his own account); then came the words, the thoughts, all singing themselves by that. There is tune in every syllable.... The primary root of Herr Heintze’s shortcomings, where he has come short, one might define to be this, that he had forsaken the tune, that he did not know the tune: Pray tell him so, if you judge it worth while.¹⁵

Carlyle’s advice is not misplaced, for if we take “John Anderson” as an example, Heintze manages to destroy completely Burns’s marriage of words, music and emotion by creating a run-on line between lines 6 and 7 of the first stanza: “Nun is dein Scheitel kahl, John./ Dein Haar wie Schnee und trüb/ Dein Aug.” In the original, we have “But now your brow is beld, John/ Your locks are like the snaw,” with the musical phrase rising to “beld, John” complemented by the falling movement to “snaw,” where word and sound are held together in stillness for a moment before the movement is taken up again with the emotional endorsement of “But blessings on your frosty pow/ John Anderson my Jo.”¹⁶

Hugh MacDiarmid said: “It’s soon’, no’ sense, that faddoms the herts o’ men,”¹⁷ and what these German translations bring into relief is Burns’s outstanding craftsmanship in sound. It is not that the translations are poor work,

¹⁴Sir Walter Scott, *Quarterly Review*, I (1809), 30-32; Francis Jeffrey, *Edinburgh Review*, XII (1809), 267.

¹⁵Letter to R. Peacock of 14 Sept. 1840, in *The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle*, ed. Charles Richard Sanders (Durham, NC, 1985), 12, 257-8. Carlyle also reviewed Heintze’s translation in the *Examiner* of 27 Sept. 1840.

¹⁶Heinrich Julius Heintze, *Lieder und Balladen des Schotten Robert Burns* (Braunschweig, 1840), p. 119; *The Poems and Songs of Robert Burns*, ed., James Kinsley, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1968), II, 529. Henceforth Burns..

¹⁷Hugh MacDiarmid, “Gairmscoile” in *Complete Poems 1920-1976*, ed. Michael Grieve and W. R. Aitken, 2 vols. (London, 1978), I, 74.

although some are clearly better than others. It is rather that Burns had a unique gift, not only for matching words and music, but for creating character and emotion through the sound qualities of the words themselves. In the "John Anderson" stanza mentioned above, the youthful vitality of John is created through the alliteration of the strong plosive *b* consonants, accompanied by the rolling of the *rs* in the line "Your bonnie brow was brent," which is then answered in the following musical phrase and by gentler, more subdued word-sound in "But now your brow is beld, John." The plosive *bs* are still there, but the loss of the rolling *rs* and the substitution of the nasal "now" and the *e* vowel and *l* consonant in "beld" soften the sound and bring the weaker old man before us. Yet that weakness is itself emotionally transformed by the emphatic sound and rising musical pattern of "But blessings on your frosty pow" and the intimate, loving final "John Anderson, my Jo," the intimacy again created by word-sound linked to music.

In "A red red Rose," the German translations draw attention to the artistic impersonality of many of Burns's love songs, by being unable to reproduce this quality. In a reversal of Herder's approach to "John Anderson," translators of "A red red Rose" on the whole make Burns's song less rhetorical and more personal in an earth-bound way which limits its potential to transcend its immediate situation and become a universal utterance of love and longing. Burns's use of similes:

O my Luve's like a red, red rose,
That's newly sprung in June;
O my Luve's like the melodie
That's sweetly play'd in tune.—(Burns, II, 735)

and his exaggerated images in "Till a' the seas gang dry, my Dear,/ And the rocks melt wi' the sun" put the focus of attention not on a specific beloved, but on the images, and this creates a kind of objectivity, a distancing between speaker and supposed subject which allows the listener's imagination to interact freely with what is being communicated. This is assisted by the beauty of the slow but leaping melody, which holds sentimentality at bay while creating an intense mood of passionate longing, perhaps for the unattainable, as suggested by the rhetorical imagery. Most German translations, on the other hand, to a greater or lesser degree, present this song as a more direct and mundane statement of admiring love.

Despite the lull in German-language translations of Burns in the twentieth century, after the flood in the nineteenth, it is interesting to note from BOSLIT that new translations are continuing. I was especially interested to see listed a selection of Burns's poems entitled *Liebe und Freiheit; Lieder und Gedichte*, edited by Rudi Camerer, together with Rosemary Selle, Horst Meller and Joachim Utz, published in Heidelberg in 1988, for this mixture of love and liberty in Burns's songs in particular is something which has been attracting

increasing attention in the English-speaking world also, as has Burns's relationship with the political and cultural events in Europe in the late eighteenth century. Rosemary Selle's name was also one given to me by Dr. Susanne Hagemann of Germersheim when she came back to me with further thoughts from her colleagues on German interest in Burns in the contemporary period. Another recent scholar she mentioned was Dietrich Hohmann, and in her own article on translation studies in *Terranglian Territories* (2000) Hagemann refers to work on Burns's reception in Germany in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries published in 1995 by Birgit Bödecker, and in 1981 Dietrich Strauss published *Die Erotische Dichtung von Robert Burns*.

This admittedly small sample, when taken together with the work previously discussed by scholars such as Hecht, Wittig and Kupper, suggests that, while Burns may no longer have the popular appeal in Germany that he had in the nineteenth century, he is now receiving more serious scholarly attention as a European poet of his time. To think of him as an "Unbekannter im deutschen Sprachraum" is too pessimistic. On the contrary, present as well as past German writers on Burns are making a significant contribution to our understanding of this poet as both *Volksdichter* and *Künstler*—a poet of the people and universal artist.

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