

# Poetic Fragments



**Karoline von Günderrode**

*Translated and with Introductory Essays by*

**Anna C. Ezekiel**

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(Tian)

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**SUNY**  
P R E S S

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## A Note on the Translation

This volume aims to make Karoline von Günderrode's work accessible to an English-speaking audience, and to allow Günderrode's contributions to philosophy to be recognized. With these goals in mind I have focused on capturing the meanings of the original German text with as much nuance as possible, rather than attempting to reflect meter or rhyme. The original German is presented beside the English, which I hope will enable even non-German speakers to gain an idea of the rhythm and rhyme of the original, as well as facilitate checking of the translations. Nonetheless, I have tried to avoid introducing awkwardness even for the sake of accuracy. I hope that the English translations will communicate something of the pleasure of reading Günderrode while functioning as useful texts for English-speaking students and scholars.

The German text used in this volume is based on Leopold Hirschberg's edition of Günderrode's collected works (1920–22; reprint 1970), but has been checked against the historical-critical edition edited by Walther Morgenthaler and published by Stroemfeld/Roter Stern (1990–91), which is the most accurate available. The differences between the Hirschberg and Morgenthaler editions are minor, but where they affect meaning the text follows the Hirschberg version, as does the translation unless otherwise indicated, and the alternative Morgenthaler version is noted in a footnote to the English text. Very minor differences in spelling and punctuation are not indicated. I have not

amended errors in Hirschberg's transcription or idiosyncrasies in spelling or punctuation by G nderrode.

The translation of *Muhammad, the Prophet of Mecca* uses common English transliterations for Arabic names instead of the German transliterations used by G nderrode. Most characters and places in the text are based on historical individuals and places, and I hope this approach will help English-speaking readers find out more about these, if they should so desire.

# Introduction

## *The Work of Karoline von Günderrode*

The poet, dramatist, and philosopher Karoline von Günderrode (1780–1806) published several collections and individual pieces of writing, including *Poetic Fragments*, at the start of the nineteenth century. Günderrode was a nuanced and original thinker whose varied writings include philosophical fragments, dialogues, erotic, mystical, and religious poetry, ballads, epic, tragic and comic dramas, and fictional and semi-fictional fragments that consider political, historical, religious, and philosophical questions. Her work was known to many of the leading intellectual lights of her day, including Bettina Brentano/von Arnim, Clemens Brentano, Georg Friedrich Creuzer, Friedrich Carl von Savigny, and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. She was a major influence on the modern German writers Anna Seghers and Christa Wolf, and has inspired works of fiction, music, film, and poetry. However, despite a steady cult following, Günderrode's writing is generally little known even to German speakers, and is practically unknown in the English-speaking world. This gap should be addressed, since Günderrode's work is not only often beautiful and powerful, but also reflects her original, at times radical, philosophical thought.

Günderrode's work reveals a thoughtful and innovative engagement with philosophical questions and literary themes of her age, but there has been little attention to her contributions to these fields. In part, this is because Günderrode wrote at a time when women were

expected to restrict their writing to particular styles (charming, sweet, whimsical) and genres (letters, diaries, lyrical poetry), when their desire to be published was often seen as reflecting vanity or other dubious or unfeminine personality traits, and when their efforts were thought to be of lower intellectual, literary, and creative merit than the work of their male peers.<sup>1</sup> As a result, the disciplines of German literature and philosophy have yet to explore G nderrode’s treatment of literary themes or her approach to philosophical questions about metaphysics, subjectivity, death, free will, ethics, politics, and gender roles. G nderrode was also one of the first interpreters of Asian and Middle Eastern philosophy, religion, and culture in Germany and Europe, and studying her appropriation of these sources can provide information on the modern European adoption of ideas from the East.

G nderrode’s work will certainly be of interest to fans and scholars of German literature. But my interest in G nderrode is primarily a philosophical one, and this book aims to promote the interpretation of her work as a contribution to the philosophical, as well as literary, culture of her time. Thus, this book has two goals. First, the translations of G nderrode’s writings make these pieces available to an English-speaking audience, allowing them to be enjoyed by more readers and more readily included in courses on German literature and philosophy. Second, the critical material included in this volume indicates some of the ways in which G nderrode’s writing reveals a rich and innovative philosophy, justifying the inclusion of G nderrode’s work in the academic study of philosophy. In particular, this book points out G nderrode’s unique contributions to the German Romantic and Idealist projects of reimagining metaphysics, personhood, freedom, gender roles, and possibilities for social and political arrangements. These areas of G nderrode’s thought all require closer study, and it is my hope that this book will invite more readers and scholars to embark on this rewarding investigative task.

### **The Reception of G nderrode’s Work**

There is a long tradition of fascination with G nderrode’s life, relationships, and suicide, and G nderrode has been the subject of several films, novels, and poems, as well as many biographical or biographically oriented essays and books.<sup>2</sup> However, this construction of a “G nderrode

mythos” has not been accompanied by rigorous or extensive attention to either the literary or philosophical merits of her writings. In fact, as a number of commentators have pointed out, the attention to Günderrode’s biography and psychology has tended to distract attention from her work, or at best to focus the study of her writings on their connections with events in her life or their supposed function as forms of escape or wish fulfillment.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, in English-speaking culture and scholarship there is very little awareness of any sort about Günderrode or her work.

At the time of their publication, Günderrode’s two collections, *Poems and Fantasies* and *Poetic Fragments*, were met with moderate attention and mixed reviews. The work was widely enough known to reach Goethe’s eyes, as we know from a letter he sent in 1804 stating that the poems of *Poetic Fragments* “are really a peculiar phenomenon.”<sup>4</sup> Reviews of Günderrode’s work also appeared in well-circulated journals. A review of *Poems and Fantasies* in *Der Freimüthige* claimed that “[a] beautiful, tender, feminine mind reveals itself therein, and arouses expectations for the future,” but maintains that the ideas are “seldom or never original; some have reminiscences and hold them for original ideas!”<sup>5</sup> Günderrode’s friend Christian Nees von Esenbeck reviewed the collection in the *Jenaische Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*, providing generally positive comments but criticizing Günderrode’s errors in form.<sup>6</sup> *Poetic Fragments* received a very warm review in the *Taschenbuch für das Jahr 1806*;<sup>7</sup> however, the *Freimüthige* review of this collection was harsh, referring to the pieces as “school exercises” and advising that they would have been better left unpublished.<sup>8</sup> Nees von Esenbeck’s review of *Poetic Fragments*, published after Günderrode’s death in 1807, was also quite negative, claiming that Günderrode’s work had taken a “false direction” after *Poems and Fantasies*.<sup>9</sup> Nees’s review also shows early signs of the sexist and mythologizing tendencies that came to characterize the Günderrode reception. Notably, Nees claims that Günderrode “wanted to poetize as a woman in a manly spirit” but that her “feminine nature” caused her to fall short of her goal, “her flight flagging in a powerless middle.”

The fascination with Günderrode’s supposedly conflictual character and/or otherworldly or mystical nature, her relationship with Creuzer and the role of these factors in her suicide began immediately after her death. A month after Günderrode’s death, one of her friends wrote to another, “Your representation of her three souls is very true. The unity of

these three powers would have been love. —In the reign of the first soul she was woman and inasmuch modern being, in the second man and lived in antiquity. In the third lay the tendency to the accommodation of both in the purely human.”<sup>10</sup> In 1808, Günderrode’s friend Bettina von Arnim wrote a “Report on Günderrode’s Suicide” for Goethe’s mother Catharina Elizabeth Goethe, which was published in von Arnim’s 1839 collection *Goethe’s Correspondence with a Child*.<sup>11</sup> The “report” gives poetic descriptions of Günderrode and claims that von Arnim had visions of Günderrode’s death. In 1840 von Arnim published *Die Günderrode*, a novelized account of her friendship with Günderrode based on edited versions of their letters, which was translated into English in 1841 by Margaret Fuller.<sup>12</sup> This text exerted a strong influence on the public perception of Günderrode. The book presents “Günderrode” as an intellectual and spiritual mentor for the earthier “Bettine,” characterizes Günderrode as elusive and disconnected from the everyday world, and emphasizes the two women’s discussions of religion. The image of Günderrode as mystical, detached from the world, and destined for an early death pervades the secondary literature until at least the mid-twentieth century, and emerges even in relatively recent work.<sup>13</sup> The fact that *Die Günderrode* was based on real letters encouraged conflation of the historical Günderrode with the semi-fictional Günderrode created by von Arnim.

For more than a century after her death, discussion of Günderrode was largely limited to introductions to collections of her works and letters or biographical articles in encyclopedias and journals.<sup>14</sup> Several partial editions of Günderrode’s writings<sup>15</sup> and collections of her letters<sup>16</sup> appeared, but few studies of her work or thought. A notable exception is Erich Regen’s *Die Dramen Karolinens von Günderrode (The Dramas of Karoline von Günderrode)* of 1910, which was the first text to pay serious attention to Günderrode’s dramas and which is still a useful document for understanding Günderrode’s sources. The eighteenth and early-nineteenth-century reception focused on Günderrode’s biography, particularly her suicide, and represented these as central to her work. Commentators often dismissed or denigrated Günderrode’s writing, especially her dramas.<sup>17</sup> For example, in 1895 Ludwig Geiger wrote that “[i]f Karoline von Günderrode had only been a poet, then, despite the significance of individual poems, her renown would have scarcely survived her lifetime. That she is still known today she owes to her personality and her fate.”<sup>18</sup> Where authors praised Günderrode’s work,

they tended to portray her strengths as a writer as mystical and/or as reflections of her personality, as in Karl Schwartz's claim that Günderrode's poems are "the pure mirror of her true beautiful individuality, giving testimony to a tenderness of feeling bound with glowing fantasy and deep earnestness of sentiment."<sup>19</sup>

In the 1930s, biographies of Günderrode by Otto Heuschele, Margaret Mattheis, and Richard Wilhelm appeared,<sup>20</sup> but Günderrode's work received little attention. The period between 1940 and the late 1970s saw the publication of a handful of articles on Günderrode's writings, but the most significant texts were collections of Günderrode's letters by Max Preitz,<sup>21</sup> a publication of Günderrode's study book by Preitz and Doris Hopp,<sup>22</sup> and dissertations by Waltraud Howeg and Annelore Naumann.<sup>23</sup>

Most of the relatively small amount of secondary literature on Günderrode and her work has emerged since 1979, when Christa Wolf published a collection of some of Günderrode's writings and letters (*The Shadow of a Dream*)<sup>24</sup> and a fictionalized encounter between Günderrode and Heinrich von Kleist in her novel *Kein Ort. Nirgends* (translated as *No Place on Earth*). Notably, Wolf omitted Günderrode's plays from her collection of Günderrode's work, on the grounds that they were less successful than her poetry and fragments.<sup>25</sup> In *Kein Ort. Nirgends* and the introduction to *The Shadow of a Dream*, Wolf presents Günderrode as an untimely poet whose death was a necessary sacrifice to the changing times in which she lived. While Wolf's work greatly increased interest in Günderrode's writings, her influential interpretation contributed to a literature that viewed Günderrode's work largely in relation to her suicide, rather than in relation to literary traditions or philosophical questions and problems. The literature that emerged in the 1980s continued to focus on Günderrode's biography, but with a new, feminist emphasis on the impact of social constraints on Günderrode's work and life.<sup>26</sup> Representative of this tendency is Margarete Lazarowicz's *Karoline von Günderrode: Portrait of a Stranger* (1986), which analyzes Günderrode's correspondence to support the claim that Günderrode's acquaintances subjected her to isolating, socially normalizing criticism and advice, and provides biographical interpretations of most of Günderrode's works.

Wolf's rehabilitation of Günderrode contributed to Günderrode featuring among German women writers whose work received new attention starting in the 1980s, along with von Arnim, Annette von Droste-Hülshoff, Therese Huber, Sophie von La Roche, Sophie



Mereau, Benedikte Naubert, Rahel Varnhagen and others.<sup>27</sup> Discussion of Günderrode's work, and the occasional English translation, began to appear in books and articles on eighteenth and nineteenth century writing by women<sup>28</sup>—a trend that continued in the 1990s<sup>29</sup> and after the turn of the century.<sup>30</sup> A number of authors began to explore the new forms of identity that they argued emerged in women's writing around 1800, including in the work of Günderrode. Texts on this topic include articles by Karl Heinz Bohrer, Lorely French, Sara Friedrichsmeyer, and Helene Kastinger Riley.<sup>31</sup>

The 1990–91 publication by Stroemfeld/Roter Stern of a complete German edition of Günderrode's writings, edited by Walther Morgenthaler, has helped make Günderrode's work accessible to a German-speaking audience. Since the publication of this edition, discussion of Günderrode's work has appeared in collections not just on German women writers, but on German literature in general.<sup>32</sup> Articles by Barbara Becker-Cantarino, Sabine Gözl, Marjanne Goozé, and others analyze particular pieces by Günderrode as original contributions to German literature.<sup>33</sup> Several articles have continued the interest that emerged in the 1980s in the potential of Günderrode's work to suggest new forms of self-construction and provide strategies of resistance to patriarchal forms of writing and thinking.<sup>34</sup> A few more explore the relationship of Günderrode's work and thought to Eastern philosophy and mythology.<sup>35</sup> Some commentators have also begun to investigate the philosophical and political aspects of Günderrode's thought, notably Ruth Christmann, Helga Dormann, and Lucia Licher.<sup>36</sup> Most significantly, Christmann, Dormann, and Licher published books on Günderrode's work that investigate the relationship of her thought to the philosophical, social, political, mythological, and religious ideas to which she was exposed, particularly the work of the Early German Romantics.<sup>37</sup> In 2006, new biographies of Günderrode by Dagmar von Gersdorff and Hopp appeared.<sup>38</sup>

As the above summary shows, there exist a few texts that explore the philosophical aspects of Günderrode's work and several more that interpret Günderrode's writings as contributions to German literature, particularly women's literature, in the early nineteenth century. However, the majority of texts on Günderrode are still very general and introductory, focus on her dramatic life, failed love affairs, and early suicide, and/or interpret her work in biographical and psychological terms. As a result, much work must still be done in order to piece together a

thorough interpretation of Günderrode's philosophical thought and its significance for German Romanticism and post-Kantian Idealism, and to raise the profile of her writings to the point at which they can be accepted into mainstream research.

### This Book

The collection translated here consists of five pieces by Günderrode, which she published together in 1805 as *Poetic Fragments* (*Poetische Fragmente*). As was common for women writers at the time, Günderrode used a pseudonym for this publication: "Tian"—which to Günderrode's contemporaries sounded male or androgynous. The five works in this volume are representative of Günderrode's religious and erotic poetry and her use of momentous historical events and characters as foils for her development of philosophical and political claims. *Poetic Fragments* comprises two epic historical dramas, *Hildgund* and *Muhammad, the Prophet of Mecca*, and three poems or sets of poems: the ballad "Piedro," the mystical poem cycle "The Pilgrims," and the erotic poem "The Kiss in the Dream." The latter is one of Günderrode's best-known works.

*Poetic Fragments* was the second collection of writings published by Günderrode (*Poems and Fantasies* appeared in 1804) and was to be followed by a third, *Melete*, which had been sent to the publishers at the time of her death in 1806. However, following her death Günderrode's contacts, including Creuzer, who had agreed to arrange publication of the collection, suppressed its publication, fearing a scandal due to the book's allusions to Günderrode's affair with the married Creuzer. *Melete* therefore did not appear until 1906. Günderrode also published separately a number of dramas, poems, and fragments. These writings are almost all either unavailable in English or hard to find, being scattered in anthologies, articles, and dissertations. This book translates the entirety of *Poetic Fragments* and provides critical essays introducing the most important philosophical concerns of *Hildgund*, *Prophet of Mecca* and the poems. These essays are followed by short annotated lists of suggested further reading in English and German, where relevant texts are available.

The first piece in this volume, *Hildgund*, is a play centering on the decision by Hildgund, a warrior-princess from Burgundy, of how to

respond to an offer of marriage from Attila the Hun, whose armies are menacing Burgundy's borders. The introductory essay highlights Günderrode's exploration of the conditions of possibility for agency, particularly for women. I suggest that, characteristically for Günderrode's writings on agency, *Hildgund* addresses the implications for self-determination of how one is treated by others. The play also touches on the related question of whether free will can exist in a universe governed by forces beyond one's control.

The first poem in this volume, "Piedro," is a homoerotic ballad describing Piedro's mission by sea to rescue his kidnapped bride and his encounter with her kidnapper. This poem is followed by "The Pilgrims": two linked poems with Christian mystical overtones, which evoke a sense of rootlessness and longing for union with God after death. The final poem, "The Kiss in the Dream," describes an erotic awakening and erotic longing, connecting this longing to imagery of death. While these poems are very different in form and subject matter, all highlight themes of love, death, and longing. This constellation of concepts is often said to be central to Günderrode's work, and is frequently taken to reflect her own suicidal ideation in connection to her failed love affairs, particularly her affair with Creuzer.<sup>39</sup> The introductory essay to the poems analyzes these concepts as they appear in Günderrode's writings, aiming to counteract the tendency to misunderstand the significance of these themes or overemphasize their connections to Günderrode's life and death. I argue that the reduction of the death-theme in Günderrode's writing to its biographical relevance misses the complex set of questions that Günderrode explored using the theme of death, and I examine some of these in the context of Günderrode's broader oeuvre. I also investigate the role of love in Günderrode's thought, particularly in relation to Early German Romantic theories of love.

The final piece in *Poetic Fragments* is Günderrode's longest work, the play *Muhammad, the Prophet of Mecca*. This play follows Muhammad from his decision to reveal his visions to the people of Mecca, through banishment and a series of battles, to just after his final conquest of Mecca. The introductory essay highlights Günderrode's use of the figure of Muhammad to respond to earlier literary works on the Prophet and to political and cultural change in Europe; her idea of a synthesis of religions and the implications of this idea for her metaphysics; her account of selfhood; and the relationship of her character Muhammad to central concepts in German Romanticism and Idealism. The essay also

explores how the play problematizes the question of free will, addresses the effects of power and recognition on the freedom and personhood of women and other marginalized individuals, and outlines a political ideal.

The remainder of this introduction places *Poetic Fragments* in the context of the rest of G nderrode's work and the literary, political, and philosophical themes with which her writings engage. The next section examines the social context in which G nderrode wrote, which is important both for interpreting G nderrode's writing and for understanding why her work has been neglected despite the relatively high levels of interest in her biography. The subsequent section provides an overview of some of the most significant philosophical topics in G nderrode's writing, while the last section shows how these relate to movements in the philosophy and broader intellectual context of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

### Writing *Poetic Fragments*

The pieces of *Poetic Fragments* are not immediately recognizable as works of philosophy. They are not written in philosophical language and do not explicitly refer to specific philosophers, texts, or ideas. In part, this may reflect G nderrode's engagement with Early German Romanticism, which, as we will see in the last section of this introduction, considered novels, poems, and fragments to be appropriate media for philosophical thought. G nderrode was also subject to constraints regarding the forms in which women were expected to write and the topics they were supposed to consider. Women in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries did not receive the same kind of education as their male peers, and were said to be unsuited for intellectual pursuits such as philosophy and literature. In their investigation of norms for women's writing at that time, Becker-Cantarino and Jeanette Clausen cite a query by Goethe: "Ought one to think about philosophy, let alone natural philosophy, with so much charm, emotion, and high spirits?" These authors also note Johann Gottlieb Fichte's claims that, although women could not make original discoveries, a woman might write in order to popularize the discoveries of men, but only for other women, and "must not appear in her writings as a badly disguised man."<sup>40</sup> In other words, women should not present themselves as having

original ideas or display too much abstract reasoning. This widespread attitude contributed to the relative lack of philosophical treatises by women of this time. As a result, if we want to benefit from the insights of women of this period, we must look outside the expected systematic or traditional philosophical forms, for example, in poems, novels, letters, diaries, and memoirs.

A number of scholars have explored how attitudes to women's thinking and writing influenced G nderrode's work and its reception. Some take G nderrode as a case study in "gender censorship," that is, the systematic suppression and obscuring of women's perspectives and their attempts to speak or write.<sup>41</sup> Such censorship takes many forms, both overt and covert, including imposing explicit or implicit rules and norms for the styles, genres, and subject matter of "women's writing," failing to publish women's writing or take women's writing seriously, sanctioning women who publish by violence or stigmatization, and the internalization of these norms, rejections, threats, and expectations by women, which affects their speech and writing.

Gabriele D rbeck identifies eight tendencies that have marginalized the writings of female Romantic authors in particular: (1) a focus on the author at the expense of considering her work; (2) mythologization/degradation (e.g., casting an author as "Prophetess," "Sybil," or other mythic figure); (3) a characterization of the author as immoral or morally weak; (4) a denial of the author's originality, for example by focusing on her dependence on other works (by men); (5) a denial of the author's creativity, for example by focusing on a biographical interpretation of her writings; (6) accusations of inauthenticity, for example claiming that an author's work is artificial, fantastical, or narcissistic; (7) claims that an author's work is nonpolitical or that her attempts at political engagement are ineffective, thus restricting the scope of her work to the private sphere; and (8) the exclusion from the literary canon of marginal genres such as letters, autobiographies, and memoirs, which were more accessible to women.<sup>42</sup>

Most of these tendencies are evident in the reception of G nderrode's work. I mentioned above the focus of the secondary literature on G nderrode's biography and psychology at the expense of her work (point 1) and on biographical interpretations of her writings (point 5), as well as the emergence of a "G nderrode mythos" (point 2), which has characterized G nderrode as a "German Sappho,"<sup>43</sup> prophetess,<sup>44</sup> and priestess.<sup>45</sup> Dormann and Licher note G nderrode's image as a

nonpolitical writer (point 7), which endured until the late twentieth century<sup>46</sup> despite the overtly political themes of many of Günderrode's pieces, including *Hildgund*, *Prophet of Mecca*, and most of her other dramas. Dormann has also criticized efforts to situate Günderrode in the canons of philosophy and literature by relating her ideas to the work of more famous male philosophers and writers, such as Friedrich von Hardenberg (Novalis) and Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, which Dormann claims often present Günderrode's ideas as derivative of these thinkers (point 4).<sup>47</sup> Instead of investigating parallels between Günderrode's ideas and those of her male contemporaries and predecessors, Dormann suggests scholars investigate how Günderrode modified and added to their work.

The Günderrode reception also shows gender censorship in the general neglect of her work by critics and scholars and, where it has received attention, reviews and commentary that reflect sexist norms for women writers. This tendency has been well established in the secondary literature<sup>48</sup> and therefore will not be discussed in detail here, but as an example, consider the following excerpt from a review of *Poetic Fragments* in the *Jenaische Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* in 1807, a year after Günderrode died. The reviewer describes the pieces in *Poetic Fragments* as “children of a lovely fantasy, that play with images of human life and with ideas of science like flowers, without other purpose and other joys than to place them in a wreath, and in the fleeting connection of the gently molten colors to prepare them as a jewel for her head.”<sup>49</sup> Not only is the review dismissive of Günderrode's work, but the particular criticisms it levels at her writing are based on gender stereotypes. The reviewer suggests that the pieces of *Poetic Fragments* are superficial, decorative, and lack genuine understanding of the “ideas of science” with which they are concerned, and that their writer is motivated by vanity—all consistent with the stereotype of women as appropriately interested in the charming and pleasant and lacking the ability for profound intellectual engagement. The reviewer subsequently states that “[w]e have clarified above our opinion of the limits of feminine fantasy”—no wonder, then, that he did not perceive any philosophical value in the works of *Poetic Fragments*.

In this climate, women had to struggle against gender censorship to publish their work. Not only did they run a high risk of censure if they strayed outside norms for women's writing, but the decision to publish at all was often seen as a questionable one for women, exposing them

to inappropriate public attention and possibly revealing vanity. Günderrode's friend Clemens Brentano, himself an aspiring writer, wrote to her after she published *Poems and Fantasies* to warn her that the publication of this work "must be an epoch in your life that you cannot well rescind" and that she had "authorized the world to make demands" of her because of her "audacity" in publishing her poems.<sup>50</sup> This kind of censure formed a strong social stigma for women writers. In response, women used various strategies to legitimate their writing and its publication and evade criticism of their character. Many female authors published anonymously or used pseudonyms. Many enlisted men to help publish and justify their writing. For example, La Roche had her 1771 novel *The Story of the Lady Sternheim* edited and introduced by her friend Christoph Martin Wieland, while Varnhagen's husband Karl August Varnhagen edited and published her letters, establishing her as a writer after her death.<sup>51</sup> Some women carefully attended to gender norms for women writers, creating lyric poetry, letters detailing everyday events, or novels intended for the moral improvement of women and/or featuring heroines embodying, at least overtly, stereotypes of female virtues.<sup>52</sup> Others rejected these norms to varying degrees. For example, von Arnim wrote social and political criticism in *This Book Belongs to the King*, Huber wrote travel reports and essays, and Mereau engaged with Fichte's philosophy in her writing.<sup>53</sup> Another strategy was to subvert male norms, creating new forms of writing. French argues that Varnhagen, Günderrode, and Mereau used techniques such as silence (e.g., ellipses), imitations of classical patriarchal forms, new systems of syntax and vocabulary, new genres, and an emphasis on subjective and personal elements to convey experiences that were excluded from the male canon or that women were not permitted to express.<sup>54</sup> The use of such techniques by women in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries has led a number of commentators to study their writings, including the work of Günderrode, as sources for the development of both new literary styles and new forms of self-awareness and self-construction.<sup>55</sup>

Günderrode had several advantages in her efforts to become a published author. She came from an intellectual and literary family that encouraged reading works of high literature and philosophy, and was given a relatively good education by a house tutor.<sup>56</sup> Her father, Hektor Wilhelm von Günderrode, wrote historical biographies and "idylls" that were read at home,<sup>57</sup> and her mother, Luise von Günderrode, read philosophy, including Fichte's work, and wrote poetry and several

novels.<sup>58</sup> Günderrode's mother was friends with La Roche, who was the grandmother of Bettina Brentano/von Arnim. La Roche published Günderrode's "Story of a Brahmin" in her 1805 *Herbsttage*. Günderrode included among her friends many other educated, wealthy individuals, including several members of the Brentano family, Lisette and Christian Nees von Esenbeck, Creuzer, and Savigny, who provided her with reading materials, feedback on her work, and access to publishers. Creuzer also edited a journal, the Heidelberg *Studien*, with his friend Carl Daub, in which Günderrode published her plays *Udohla* and *Magic and Destiny* in 1805.

Nonetheless, Günderrode faced similar barriers to other female writers of the time in navigating the male-controlled publishing process. To help overcome these, she published under pseudonyms that hid her gender and used male third parties to negotiate with publishers. Nees von Esenbeck edited and helped publish *Poems and Fantasies* and wrote a largely positive review of the collection for the *Jenaer Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*.<sup>59</sup> Both Nees and Creuzer provided editorial advice and helped Günderrode search for a publisher for *Poetic Fragments*, which was eventually published with the help of an unknown mediator.<sup>60</sup> Creuzer also worked on and agreed to help publish the collection *Melete*, which had not yet appeared at the time of Günderrode's death.

However, Günderrode's dependence on these male contacts for the publication of her work also subjected her to their oversight and control. Becker-Cantarino and Clausen argue that this was a common obstacle for women writers at the time and reflected "something like a genuine political 'men's movement' with the goal of checking the influence of women and ladies on the state and in society."<sup>61</sup> They claim that, although men such as the Early German Romantics, who coached the women writers in their circle, often hoped to help women writers, they wanted "even more to watch over and control, that is, to act as mentors, guardians, and tutors, to 'speak for [the women].'"<sup>62</sup> Not only did Günderrode's contemporaries tend to believe that women's writing should be guided by the opinions of men, but they also believed that a central goal of this guidance was to ensure that women's writing adhered to gender norms. Becker-Cantarino and Clausen cite Goethe in support of this claim: "Shouldn't sophisticated and talented women be able to win sophisticated and talented male friends to whom they would submit their manuscripts? Then all unfeminine aspects could be obliterated and nothing would remain in their work that could attach itself like



an annoying counter weight to the natural feeling, the charming disposition, the romantic, heartfelt opinions, the graceful representation, and all the goodness that female writings possess in such abundance."<sup>63</sup>

Several commentators have analyzed G nderrode's correspondence in order to reveal the extent to which Nees, Creuzer, and others exerted pressure on G nderrode to modify her work, including in order to fit gender-specific norms.<sup>64</sup> Creuzer often extolled the "mythic" or "mystic" quality of G nderrode's writing, guiding her away from clear, dramatic, epic, or historical writing toward more "feminine" lyrical forms. The most striking example of this is his exhortation, "Your poetry is *mystic* . . . —and for that reason it is *not plastic*. Therefore everything is alien to you that by its nature demands productive systematic form, therefore the *real systematic Drama*. . . . [A]void that drama that has a *historical* ground; especially the *occidental* with its *wholly clear history*. If it is generally awkward to try to surpass the documents that speak distinctly of a great man, then it is doubly awkward for a woman."<sup>65</sup> Nees provided detailed and sometimes harsh editorial comments on G nderrode's writings, for example arguing that a prophet could not be the subject of a drama and that *Prophet of Mecca* was instead more of a "dialogicized history."<sup>66</sup> Stephanie Hilger notes that, in response to Nees's criticisms, G nderrode proposed categorizing the piece as a "dramatic fragment," thus acknowledging Nees's authority while maintaining the status of the piece as belonging to the dramatic genre.<sup>67</sup>

The objections of G nderrode's friends to her dramatic and epic writing reflect social conceptions of what were appropriate styles, genres, and subject matters for women writers. Hoff, Friedrichsmeyer, and Patricia Herminhouse point out that, in western Europe at the time G nderrode was writing, the association of women with the stage was considered inappropriate at a number of levels, including performing, viewing, and writing.<sup>68</sup> G nderrode's plays were designed as *Lesedramen* or plays for reading (also sometimes translated, revealingly, as "closet dramas" or "closet plays"), which were considered more acceptable for a woman writer than plays that were intended to be performed on the stage. Nonetheless, as Hoff, Friedrichsmeyer, and Herminhouse state, drama "dealt with issues of political and historical power; it also ordered communication and introduced a temporal order. This structure was in clear contrast to what was understood as a feminine form of writing."<sup>69</sup>

As the existence of *Hildgund*, *Prophet of Mecca*, and other of her epic and dramatic works shows, G nderrode resisted pressure to avoid

writing dramas or considering political or historical topics. However, in other respects Günderröde either acquiesced to or was unable to circumvent the demands of her male editors, as several commentators have explored.<sup>70</sup> Most drastically, Creuzer's control over the manuscript for *Melete* resulted in his withdrawal of the collection from publication after Günderröde's death, and it was not published until a century later. Creuzer claimed that Daub had persuaded him that "the suppression of this text is thoroughly necessary" and that another friend and Günderröde's brother were of the same opinion.<sup>71</sup> These individuals hoped that by suppressing this text, and also destroying most of Creuzer's correspondence with Günderröde, they could avoid public scrutiny and scandal associated with Creuzer's affair with Günderröde and her suicide. They obviously viewed the protection of Creuzer's (and Günderröde's) reputation as more important than Günderröde's ambitions to have her work published.

*Poetic Fragments* was created in an environment that strongly emphasized rigid norms for women writers and established obstacles to the publication and reception of women's intellectual work. As Hoff, Friedrichsmeyer, and Herminhouse point out, "If one looks carefully at the interventions, good advice, recommendations, and comments of [Günderröde's] friends, and the utterly destructive criticism and reviews to which Günderröde's writing was subjected, then it is clear how very difficult her task was made. Only when one listens to the voices of the censors does one become aware of the atmosphere of repression that characterized the literary public sphere in Frankfurt at that time."<sup>72</sup> It is therefore not surprising that in order to discover what women at this time thought and wrote about the historical, political, and philosophical ideas of their day, scholars must look outside the usual forms of writing on these topics, which were effectively reserved for the exclusive use of men. *Poetic Fragments* is one such alternative source.

### **Philosophical Topics in Günderröde's Writing**

Günderröde's writings are a source of insight into the intellectual culture to which she hoped to contribute, including German Idealism and Romanticism. At the same time, her writings develop original responses to the philosophical problems addressed by these movements. This section considers Günderröde's social and political thought, metaphysics,

conceptions of free will and selfhood, approaches to love and death, understanding of prophecy, and view of religion, all of which feature in the pieces in *Poetic Fragments*.

One significant philosophical contribution of Günderrode's writings is their attention to the effects of oppression and marginalization on the emergence of agency and personhood. These issues are central to the pieces in *Poetic Fragments*, particularly *Hildgund* and *Prophet of Mecca*, as the introductory essays to these pieces explore. Some scholars have interpreted Günderrode's work as suggesting feminist alternatives to patriarchal models of self, society, agency, and the human-nature relationship, including models of these found in Early German Romanticism<sup>73</sup> and the work of Immanuel Kant.<sup>74</sup> A number of scholars have investigated the relationship between Günderrode's life and work in order to explore the difficulties for self-determination faced by eighteenth and nineteenth-century women, as well as the possibilities these women developed for creating new forms of literary identities in response to these constraints. For example, Gisela Dischner investigates the relationship between Günderrode and Bettina von Arnim in the context of the social and intellectual environment in which they worked, and particularly of Early German Romantic attempts to question gender norms and define a new feminine culture. Dischner argues that Günderrode and von Arnim developed a strong female self-consciousness that could have founded an alternative Early German Romantic image of women.<sup>75</sup> Karen Daubert argues that Günderrode explores the possibility of a poetic, female self as one who transcends cultural and gender boundaries, and that she suggests the possibility for relationships based on friendship and giving rather than possession.<sup>76</sup> French maintains that Günderrode, as well as Mereau and Varnhagen, used their writing to resist the construction of their selves by a male-centered discourse, rejecting a model of the self as stable or consistent.<sup>77</sup>

Günderrode's attention to the problems of female selfhood and agency reflects a perspective that may have been shaped in part by her own marginalization. As a woman of her time, Günderrode often encountered limitations on her freedom and self-expression, which likely added to differences of perspective from her male contemporaries on issues of politics, social arrangements, agency, gender roles, and ethics. Commentators often draw attention to the frustration Günderrode expressed in her letters over her unfulfilled desires to travel, participate in great events, and perform acts of heroism.<sup>78</sup> Some have suggested that these frustrations underlie a wish-fulfilling identification

on Günderrode's part with both her female and male heroic characters, through whom they claim she lived out her fantasies.<sup>79</sup> Others point to those of Günderrode's works in which female characters act heroically, or to those in which her female characters are passive and lack agency, as revealing Günderrode's experience, as a woman, of exclusion from the political sphere.<sup>80</sup> Yet others have suggested that Günderrode's writing and suicide were complementary forms of self-expression or self-constitution in a social environment that strictly limited women's options for expressing themselves and for ways of life.<sup>81</sup>

We can learn a certain amount from these kinds of analysis about the relationship of Günderrode's writings to her psychology and more generally about the situation of women at the start of the nineteenth century. However, several commentators have pointed out that the tendency of Günderrode's readers to focus on the relationship of Günderrode's work to her life and psychology has had the unfortunate effect of sidelining, obscuring, or denying the philosophical significance of her thought and her contributions to German literature and philosophy.<sup>82</sup> This tendency repeats a sexist tradition of viewing women's work as less intellectually valuable and less creative than men's writing, reducing women's creative efforts to expressions of their authors' emotions and inner conflicts. Whatever the relationship between Günderrode's life and her writing may be, here we will consider her writings in their own right as making serious and original points about metaphysics, ethics, politics, death, love, freedom, and the nature of the self.

One of the dominant themes in *Poetic Fragments* is the question of agency, particularly how an individual's agency is facilitated or impeded by the behavior of other people. Characters in *Hildgund* and *Prophet of Mecca* question the denial of agency and personhood to women in societies that confer power largely on men. In both plays, Günderrode's consideration of this issue with respect to particular individuals or groups questions the nature and conditions of possibility of agency and personhood in general, as the introductory essays to these plays explore. The introductions also investigate Günderrode's response to the metaphysical question whether it is possible to truly be an agent at all, that is, whether free will is possible or whether events are determined. Günderrode addressed this issue in *Hildgund* and *Prophet of Mecca*, as well as other works such as *Magic and Destiny* and *Udohla*.

Another philosophical problem of interest to Günderrode was the nature of knowledge. Her work often features prophets, sorcerers, and priests with access to secret knowledge. These characters, including

Muhammad in *Prophet of Mecca*, encounter a hidden inner truth to the world, which is very different from how the world appears to everyday eyes, and which has a profound spiritual significance. In *Prophet of Mecca*, as well as *Magic and Destiny*, “An Apocalyptic Fragment,” “Once I Lived Sweet Life,” “The Manes,” “A Dream,” and other pieces, G nderrode describes a world of chaotic elements that exists outside our usual experiences of time and space, which her prophetic figures experience in dreams and visions.

The revelation of the real, secret nature of the universe often demands of G nderrode’s characters that they separate themselves from ordinary life and social norms, either through isolation or, as in Muhammad’s case, by undergoing spiritual change. In many of her works, including those in *Poetic Fragments*, G nderrode presents concern with day-to-day matters, as opposed to spiritual matters, as a distraction from obtaining knowledge of the self and the universe, drawing the individual into the superficial hustle and bustle of commerce and away from her connections with the spiritual nature of things. This is a prominent and explicit theme in *Prophet of Mecca*, as well as in G nderrode’s fragments “Excellence is a Whole . . .” and “Story of a Brahmin.” The protagonists of these works are led by their search for knowledge to abandon the everyday world of personal desires and obligations in search of a higher meaning.

Themes of revolution, cultural renewal, and power are also important in *Hildgund* and *Prophet of Mecca*. In *Hildgund*, Attila is represented as a vital and powerful force in contrast to the “enervated” empires of Rome and “the Orient.” Similarly, in *Prophet of Mecca*, the Prophet and his followers are contrasted to the fading Roman and Persian empires and the fragmented Christian and Jewish religions. Muhammad features as a revolutionary figure who will unify and revitalize a flagging Arabia. As such, Muhammad acts as a metaphor for the figures of Luther and Napoleon Bonaparte and his story as an analogy for a hoped-for revitalization of Europe. G nderrode’s play thus provides, among other things, a commentary on European politics and society.

G nderrode’s treatment of the topic of death has received some attention in the secondary literature. Commentators have generally viewed G nderrode’s approach as conforming to a stereotyped “Romantic” attitude toward death, that is, as a morbid longing for death,<sup>83</sup> and often consider this theme in terms of its relationship to her suicide. There has been a tendency to highlight the eroticization of death in

many of Günderrode's works and to interpret her writings as an expression of a desire for death, or as a positive reevaluation of death that was part of her trajectory toward suicide. For example, one commentator states that "Günderrode killed her self in her 'work'"<sup>84</sup> and another that Günderrode had a "fascination, if not obsession, with death and sacrificial love" and that "[m]yth and death are at the center of the poetic works of Karoline von Günderrode."<sup>85</sup>

The three poems included in *Poetic Fragments* all give death a central place, and all present death in erotic terms. *Hildgund* may also hint at a heroic death for its protagonist in the near future. However, as my introductory essay to the poems of *Poetic Fragments* considers in more detail, the concept of death held various meanings for Günderrode, not all of which can be adequately understood with reference to her biography. Death for Günderrode could represent a period of rejuvenation and release, a state of altered consciousness, the possibility of union with loved ones, or a metamorphosis of the individual. Günderrode's consideration of death was also important for her conceptualizations of the self and the world, which involve the continuation of the self in an altered form after death.

Elsewhere in her writing, Günderrode develops a cosmology that informs her unique conception of the self and her understanding of death. This model underlies the political and social thought presented in *Poetic Fragments* and Günderrode's idea of prophecy. Günderrode's metaphysics were influenced by Schellingian *Naturphilosophie* as well as Christian, Hindu, and Zoroastrian mythology. The model that emerges, however, is not an incoherent or derivative agglomeration of incommensurate philosophies, nor a literary rendering of a philosophical system created by someone else, but an original cosmology that, while not fully developed, is carefully thought out in relation to Günderrode's political and philosophical commitments. This cosmology must be pieced together from short fragments and pieces of information scattered throughout Günderrode's writings, including the works of *Poetic Fragments*. Outside this collection, key texts for understanding this model include the philosophical fragment "Idea of the Earth" (written in 1805), the prose poem "An Apocalyptic Fragment" and the short dialogue "The Manes" (both part of the 1804 collection *Poems and Fantasies*), the poem "Once I Lived Sweet Life" (probably written in 1802–03 and completed by 1804), and the play *Udohla* (first published in 1805). There has as yet been no systematic investigation of

Günderrode's metaphysics and it remains to be seen whether her fragmentary considerations of the nature of the cosmos can (or should) be pulled together into a coherent system. However, we can indicate some characteristics of Günderrode's model.

Günderrode views the universe as monistic, that is, as a single universe with no incommensurable separation between spiritual (or divine, intellectual, rational, or mental) and physical realms or attributes. Instead, she maintains that there is a spiritual component to the physical universe itself. In "Idea of the Earth," Günderrode describes the universe as formed from myriad "elements" that over time more or less temporarily combine, fall apart, and recombine to form objects and entities. In the process, the elements ideally become more harmonious (although they may instead become less harmonious).<sup>86</sup> The notion of vigor is important to this model: over time, particular forms of organization lose energy and begin to collapse and decay. Consequently, these forms must be reborn: they are destroyed and new forms emerge from the old. This idea is prominent in *Prophet of Mecca*, which describes the enervation of Persia and Arabia and prophesies the destruction and recreation of the world. Similarly, the play *Udohla* calls for a political revolution in order to revitalize India, and "An Apocalyptic Fragment" depicts individuals dissolving in a great ocean and emerging again in new forms. The introductory essay to *Prophet of Mecca* explores this process in more detail. The introductory essay to the poems of *Poetic Fragments* discusses the role of Günderrode's theory of love in this process. For Günderrode, love is the subjective experience of attraction between elements, and therefore an important motor for the constitution of new forms of being and the emergence of a more harmonious world.

Günderrode approaches the question of what it is to be a human being in the light of this cosmology. She considers the individual person to be radically mutable, made up, like the rest of the world, from many "elements" that are unified only contingently in any given individual. After death, these separate and recombine with other elements to create new individuals.<sup>87</sup> Günderrode links this idea to a form of reincarnation in which the new entities that emerge can retain traces of memory from their previous existences. As Bohrer points out, Günderrode's letters suggest that she views the individual as changing radically not only after death, but also while alive, from one moment to the next.<sup>88</sup> I have argued elsewhere that Günderrode saw the changes that an individual undergoes while alive as similar to those she experiences

at death, allowing a continuity of personhood after death. This would also suggest that G nderrode’s conception of personal identity displaces consciousness from the center of subjectivity and replaces it with a notion of continuity of unconscious elements.<sup>89</sup>

The above picture of the human being and its world informs the pieces in *Poetic Fragments* in important ways. For example, G nderrode’s conceptualization of the self, and the implications of this model for how she understood the nature and significance of death, underlies the imagery of death in the three poems included in this volume, which means that this imagery resists interpretation as straightforwardly morbid or self-destructive. The role of love in these pieces is also informed by G nderrode’s conception of attraction between compatible elements, and cannot be understood as simply biographical. In *Prophet of Mecca*, as the introductory essay for this play explores in detail, G nderrode’s interest in political and cultural revolution can be interpreted in light of her cosmology as a necessary movement of world history, rather than a merely contingent political event.

This brief summary of some of G nderrode’s central concerns highlights the ways in which the works of *Poetic Fragments* reflect her philosophical and political commitments. These pieces cannot be interpreted as primarily reflections of wish fulfillment, escape, or sublimated frustration, but must be seen as part of G nderrode’s consideration of questions about the nature of the world, human beings, love, death, agency, free will, and the best kind of society. These questions were also at issue for many of G nderrode’s contemporaries. The final section of this introduction examines the ways in which G nderrode’s writings participate in the intellectual discussions of her time.

### **The Intellectual Context of G nderrode’s Work**

G nderrode worked in a period during which Europe was undergoing a great deal of philosophical, political, religious, scientific, industrial, and social change. Many Germans had expected great things of the French Revolution, which began in 1789, and of Napoleon, who seized power in 1799. Kant, Fichte, Wieland, Johann Gottfried Herder, Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock, Georg Forster, and Wilhelm von Humboldt wrote in favor of the Revolution or its ideals, and Friedrich Schlegel famously claimed that “The French Revolution, Fichte’s *Wissenschaftslehre*, and



Goethe's *Meister* are the greatest tendencies of the age."<sup>90</sup> By the time G nderrode wrote *Poetic Fragments*, many initial supporters of the Revolution had become disillusioned in light of the violence of the Terror and Napoleon's imperial conquests. Nonetheless, some still hoped for new social and political arrangements that reflected the ideals of the Revolution. When she wrote *Poetic Fragments*, G nderrode was still a proponent of revolution, although she had tempered her enthusiasm for Napoleon to a degree. Revolution—not just political, but also spiritual and metaphysical—is an important theme of G nderrode's work, including in *Prophet of Mecca*. The introductory essay to this play explores G nderrode's Muhammad's call for the birth of a new world in the context of other writings on revolution and Islam by G nderrode's contemporaries.

The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were also a period during which texts from Asia and the Middle East were being translated into German and other European languages and for the first time becoming available to the intelligentsia in Europe, who appropriated these discoveries for their philosophical, religious, moral, and literary projects. By the time G nderrode died in 1806, primary texts available in German translation included the Quran,<sup>91</sup> the *Bhagavad Gita*,<sup>92</sup> the *Manusm rti*,<sup>93</sup> and the Zoroastrian *Zend Avesta*.<sup>94</sup> The *Upanishads* were available in Latin translation.<sup>95</sup> There were historical or partly historical accounts of the life of the Prophet Muhammad<sup>96</sup> and Attila the Hun,<sup>97</sup> and secondary works on Indian and Middle Eastern religions, philosophy, language, customs, and law by German, French, and English scholars, including Herder, Friedrich Majer, Johann Friedrich Kleuker, Jacob Adler, Johann Gottfried Eichhorn, Abraham Anquetil-Duperron, Alexander Dow, John Richardson, and William Jones.

G nderrode used concepts and images from Eastern cultures, religions, and mythologies to shape and express her philosophical ideas in several of her works, including *Prophet of Mecca*. She modified doctrines from Zoroastrian, Hindu, and Islamic sources, in addition to elements from Christianity and Greek mythology. These included the Zoroastrian conception of ages of the world ending in conflagration and rebirth, an idea of reincarnation that G nderrode based partly on Greek and Hindu sources, and the ideal of a synthesis of monotheistic religions in Islam, which is prominent in *Prophet of Mecca*.

The burgeoning research into cultures and ideas from the East was absorbed by European philosophers and, especially, writers of literature,

and Günderrode read many of their works. Popular and influential works of literature included Wieland's 1780 poem *Oberon*, which blended European mythology and characters from Shakespeare with a Middle Eastern and North African setting, and Forster's 1791 translation of Kalidasa's play *Sakunthala*, itself a dramatization of part of the *Mahabharata*. Creuzer advised Günderrode to follow the style of this play, which he thought would be more appropriate for her than what he perceived as the more masculine style of Western drama.<sup>98</sup> *Sakunthala* featured a blue flower, which became a symbol of longing and mysticism for the Early German Romantics, appearing as such in Novalis's *Henry of Ofterdingen* (1802). Friedrich Schiller's 1795 ballad "The Veiled Image at Saïs" provided another paradigmatic image from the East for German Romanticism: a youth who, seeking hidden knowledge, raises the veil of Isis, signifying nature. Novalis gives another version of this story in *The Apprentices at Saïs* (1802). Among the many other works from this time with Eastern themes are several poems by Goethe, including "The God and the Bayadere," "The Pariah" and "Muhammad's Song," and, later, *Westöstlichen Divan* (1819), a collection inspired by the Sufi poet Hafiz.<sup>99</sup> Günderrode's *Studienbuch* and letters show that she was familiar with the work of these authors, and her writings can be understood as deliberately contributing to a literary tradition that adopted Eastern narratives, ideas, and images.

Among philosophers, one of the most important early students of Eastern thought was Herder, who studied Sanskrit and religious texts from India and argued that language, culture, and European religion originated in the Orient. Herder's ideas exerted a strong influence on the Early German Romantics, and Günderrode is known to have read some of his work, including his magnum opus, *Ideas for the Philosophy of History of Humanity* (1784–1791).<sup>100</sup> At her death, Günderrode left a note with her own reworking of Herder's translation of an aphorism by the fifth-century Sanskrit poet Bhartrihari.<sup>101</sup> The brothers August Wilhelm and Friedrich Schlegel were also strong influences on the conceptualization and appropriation of Eastern thought in Germany. Their most important work in this area appeared after Günderrode's death, but their interest in Eastern languages and religions is evident in some of their earlier writings, including their claims of an Eastern origin for language and poetry in August Wilhelm's 1798 "The Languages" and Friedrich's 1800 "Discourse on Poetry."<sup>102</sup> In his 1803 essay "Journey to France," Friedrich Schlegel claimed that Eastern culture embodied

a unified, organic religious worldview that modern European societies lacked.<sup>103</sup> The need for a new, unifying mythology or religion for Europe was a central issue for the Early German Romantics, including Schlegel. This idea also features prominently in Günderröde's *Prophet of Mecca*, as the introductory essay to this piece explores.

Another important figure for the early reception of Eastern thought in German-speaking countries was Creuzer, whose *Symbolism and Mythology of the Ancient Peoples, Especially the Greeks* was published in 1810–12 and ran to three editions. In this text, Creuzer argued that ancient Greek culture developed from an original revelation in the East. Creuzer thus belonged to a syncretistic stream of thought that saw Eastern and Western religions as mediating a common message, and the East as the home of original revelation. Creuzer was working on this book during his relationship with Günderröde, who will certainly have been familiar with many of his ideas and may well have influenced them.

During and after this period, the Orient figured in the European imagination as mysterious, feminine, sensuous, and passive, but also as a land of promise, a lost homeland, and a place of revelation, secret knowledge, and truth. For example, Friedrich Schlegel writes that “the spiritual self-annihilation of the Christian, and the most sumptuous wildest materialism in the religion of the Greeks, both find their highest original image in their common fatherland, in India.”<sup>104</sup> As Becker-Cantarino phrases it, “[N]arratives from earlier times and from foreign, distant places were veiled stories symbolic of origins and the human condition, which contained signs indicating how a better future could be created.”<sup>105</sup> Eastern images, themes, characters, and settings were often used as foils for commentary on European society and politics and to imagine forms of spiritual and cultural renewal. Friedrich Schlegel famously asks, “What new poetry could flow to us from India?” and asserts that “In the Orient we must find the highest Romantic,”<sup>106</sup> while Johann Georg Hamann wrote, “[T]hrough what should we resurrect the extinct speech of nature from the dead?—Through pilgrimages to the happy Arabia, through crusades to the eastern lands, and through the restoration of their magic.”<sup>107</sup> Like many of her contemporaries, Günderröde used Eastern settings to comment on, and call for a revitalization of, European politics, culture, and spirituality, as the introduction to *Prophet of Mecca* explores.

Several writers have argued that Günderröde participated in a tradition that viewed the Orient as providing forms of knowledge associated

with the imagination, sensuality, and the divine, and that used this idea to critique Enlightenment scientific and rational inquiry.<sup>108</sup> This overtly positive view of the East nonetheless also devalues Eastern cultures, stereotyping them as irrational and passive and objectifying them as an “other” to the West that can be appropriated for the spiritual development of Western individuals or cultures. In this respect, the construction of the Orient as possessing qualities that were supposedly deficient in the Occident mirrors the view of women in relation to men that was held by Early German Romantics such as Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis, which I discuss in the introduction to the poems of *Poetic Fragments*. Günderröde’s work is thus sometimes guilty of Orientalism, repeating the European stereotyping of Eastern cultures as feminine and sleepy, associated with sluggishness, the body, nature, secret knowledge, and the occult.<sup>109</sup> This is evident in *Udohla*, “Story of a Brahmin,” and “The Adept,” among other works, and perhaps to a degree in *Prophet of Mecca*, which is the only piece in *Poetic Fragments* to have an Eastern setting. In this play, Muhammad is connected to the imagination, irrationality, and inspiration through his revelations and claims that he follows God’s will rather than his own reasoning.

On the other hand, Günderröde also complicates and in places subverts this stereotyping of the East. Her Prophet Muhammad epitomizes vigor rather than languor, the Sultan in *Udohla* is an enlightened, active, and autonomous subject, and another character in that play, Nerissa, struggles for autonomy against the restrictions imposed on her by her colonial ruler. Many of Günderröde’s characters, especially female characters, who at first appear passive and are treated as if they are passive by other characters, have characteristics of activity that we expect to be associated with the stereotypically male and Occidental. In characters such as Hildgund, *Prophet of Mecca*’s Halima, *Udohla*’s Nerissa, and Las-trata in “The Frank in Egypt,” Günderröde suggests that the construction of certain individuals, particularly women and people from the East, as passive, childlike, lacking reason, and associated with nature is the result of oppression by a patriarchal or colonizing power. The combination of Orientalism and its subversion in Günderröde’s work makes her writing valuable for understanding the European appropriation of the East, particularly around the seminal period of the reception of Eastern texts in Europe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Among the biggest set of influences on Günderröde’s thought were philosophical developments in the post-Kantian and, especially, Early

German Romantic traditions. In 1781, Kant published *The Critique of Pure Reason*, with its groundbreaking segregation of the realms of appearance and reality, which led to a renewed search for the foundations of philosophy and a new questioning of the nature, and indeed possibility, of knowledge, freedom, selfhood, ethics, and life after death. Kant claimed that the world that human beings experience through their senses, which takes the forms of space and time and is subject to physical laws such as the law of causality, was a world of appearances only—that is, a subjective world formed by the interpretive activity of the human cognitive and sensual apparatuses. The real world—that is, the world as it exists in and for itself, outside our perceptions—is simply unknowable, he claimed. This created a new set of problems for philosophers, as well as a new context for old problems: How can we know anything about the real world, if all we ever encounter is a world of appearances? How is free will possible, if the world we experience is causally determined? How is our soul, which seems to belong to the realm of real things that we cannot perceive, connected to our body, which seems to belong to the realm of physical objects? Do feelings and emotions contribute to our free actions, or are they part of the causally determined world and therefore impediments to our freedom? Günderröde's writings, like the work of Kant himself as well as Fichte, Schelling, Novalis, Friedrich Schlegel, Schiller, Karl Leonhard Reinhold, and others, show a concern with these questions, placing her work firmly within the post-Kantian philosophical tradition.

Günderröde's responses to the above and other questions are distinguished by a monistic cosmology, a decentering of conscious experience from both personal identity and knowledge, attention to the effects of social and political conditions on human experience, and the integration of multiple philosophical, religious, and mythological influences within a largely Idealist and Romantic framework. Günderröde's treatment of the problem of free will, which is touched on in several of her works, including *Hildgund* and *Prophet of Mecca*, is typical of her open-ended and syncretistic approach. Kant and his successors viewed this problem in terms of the apparent incompatibility of motivation by reasons (freedom) with physical processes, which seem to be completely determined by physical causality. Günderröde does not use these terms, instead presenting an apparent conflict between individual motives and "destiny" or God's will. In this respect, her work seems to operate within a paradigm, not of post-Kantian philosophy, but of Greek tragedy, in

which individuals are powerless to resist their destiny, or Christianity, in which individual freedom seems impossible in the face of God's omnipotence. Christianity traditionally resolves this apparent conflict by claiming that there is no incompatibility between the realization of human freedom and God's universal efficacy. For example, Aquinas claims that "the same effect is ascribed to a natural cause [e.g., a human being] and to God, not as though part were effected by God and part by the natural agent: but the whole effect proceeds from each, yet in different ways."<sup>110</sup> However, Günderrode does not follow either of these models. Counter to the model of Greek tragedy, in *Hildgund* she portrays an individual effectively opposing what seems to be her destiny, while in *Prophet of Mecca* she questions the truthfulness and motivations of claims that God's will is effective in events and human actions.

Despite the differences from German Idealism, Günderrode's literary presentations of the problem of free will explore the same basic question: whether it is possible to determine one's actions according to one's will, or only to reconcile oneself with events. As I discuss in the introductory essays to *Hildgund* and *Prophet of Mecca*, rather than insisting on one clear resolution to this question, Günderrode problematizes the issue, exploring various models for freedom. She considers the possibility that free will is an illusion, raising the issue as a debate between Muhammad and various interlocutors in *Prophet of Mecca*, and in *Hildgund* using the character Herrich to express a quietist position. Rather than commit to this position, Günderrode uses viewpoints expressed by other characters and the action of the dramas to throw Muhammad's and Herrich's perspectives into question. Günderrode also explores social factors that inhibit or enable an individual's experience of her- or himself as a freely acting agent, especially the recognition by others of an individual's agency. Examples of this can be seen in the reactions of Hildgund's father and fiancé to her need to decide on a response to Attila's demand for her hand in marriage, and Muhammad's treatment of Halima toward the end of *Prophet of Mecca*. In this way, Günderrode takes account of the complexities of the debate about the possibility of free will on a metaphysical level, while on a sociopolitical level flagging the restrictive potential of marginalization, violence, and domination for the exercise of agency, as well as the potential for various forms of resistance to these practices.

While Günderrode's approach to the questions of free will, agency, and personhood may have been shaped by her own treatment, as a

woman who wanted to do things considered exclusively the domain of men, her considerations of these issues respond to a philosophical context that was fascinated by the problems of whether free action was possible in a physical universe controlled by forces operating beyond individual control, by what constituted a self, and by how social relations should be organized in order to maximize self-determination.

Günderrode's consideration of many philosophical questions reflects a particular engagement with the treatment of the problems by the Early German Romantics. There is no clear answer to the question whether Günderrode was a "Romantic," and from a literary perspective it is important to emphasize the classical influences on her work in addition to her Romantic tendencies. Philosophically, however, Günderrode shared many central concerns with the Early German Romantics. As I discuss in more detail in the introduction to "Piedro," "The Pilgrims," and "The Kiss in the Dream," Günderrode's conception of love has much in common with Novalis's and Friedrich Schlegel's theories of love, although it differs in crucial respects. In general, the efforts of Schelling, Novalis, and Schlegel to create new metaphysics, religions, and forms of social organization were among the approaches that Günderrode seemed to find most promising and that exerted a strong influence on her work.

Günderrode's metaphysics is based on the idea that the world progresses toward more advanced forms through the repeated emergence and destruction of particular entities. Günderrode's model is an instance of a common tendency, found in the work of Schelling, Fichte, and Novalis and, later, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, to view the world as the gradual development of the self-consciousness of a divine or spiritual inner nature of the cosmos. These philosophers claimed that this development reaches its pinnacle in human beings, and particularly in certain ideal forms of individual consciousness or social and political arrangements between human beings.

The interest of Novalis, Fichte, and Schelling in the development of consciousness and the status of human beings as potential carriers of the self-awareness of the universe is mirrored by Günderrode's emphasis on prophecy and secret knowledge in works such as *Prophet of Mecca, Magic and Destiny*, "Story of a Brahmin," and "The Adept." Like the Romantics, Günderrode emphasized intuition and mysterious knowledge as means of access to the truth of things, by contrast presenting intellectual study or worldly occupations as unsatisfying. However,

unlike many of her contemporaries, Günderröde does not explicitly connect an individual's knowledge of the secrets of the universe to the development of the awareness of the universe itself. In fact, it is not clear that Günderröde viewed the universe as coming to awareness through human beings, or that she saw consciousness as an important goal of world history. Instead, Günderröde emphasizes harmony in "Idea of the Earth,"<sup>111</sup> while in other pieces, including *Prophet of Mecca*, she stresses the importance of vigor and energy, and the need for a dynamic process allowing occasional paroxysms of change in order to maintain this vigor. As mentioned above, Günderröde presents the destruction of the world and its recreation in new forms as desirable. Her model is therefore more cyclical and less linear than those of many of her contemporaries, and places less emphasis on consciousness, stressing the importance of vitality and power over that of cognition.

Nonetheless, the issue of knowledge, particularly secret knowledge or "prophecy," is important to Günderröde. She adapts Novalis's conception of divine writing in natural objects and events, according to which everything in the world forms a secret language with a spiritual meaning, which certain people can learn to read.<sup>112</sup> We find references to this idea in *Prophet of Mecca*: for example, Muhammad claims that "the incidents and appearances in the course of destinies are hieroglyphs, in which the eye of the seer often sees the deep sense of God." Those who can read this writing are "geniuses," according to Novalis; Günderröde follows another term used by Novalis and refers to these individuals as "prophets." However, Günderröde provides a distinctive articulation of the nature of this form of wisdom, emphasizing the extent to which it distances the prophet from the everyday world and from other people. This leads Günderröde to consider some of the problems and costs of such wisdom that render it an ambivalent gift. This ambiguity is clear in Günderröde's play *Magic and Destiny*, which emphasizes the unsuitability of some people for this gift, its unpredictability, and the often difficult nature of the knowledge it permits. As the introductory essay in this volume describes, *Prophet of Mecca* also explores this ambiguity through the sacrifices that Muhammad's choice of a spiritual path demands of the Prophet and those close to him, and the distance it places between Muhammad and his family and followers.

An important characteristic of German Romanticism was its attempt to fuse philosophy with poetry and literature, and even to transcend what the Romantics perceived as the limits of philosophy and



rational thought generally with the evocative and metaphorical qualities of poetry. In part, this was an acknowledgment of the power of language to stimulate and persuade through the emotions, rather than only through reason and logic. For example, Novalis claims that “whoever has a fine feeling for [language’s] application, its pulse, its musical spirit, whoever hears in himself the tender effects of its inner nature, and thereafter moves his tongue or his hand, he will be a prophet.”<sup>113</sup> This position also reflected a belief in the inadequacy of language to its object, that is, its inability to capture perfectly the things it attempted to describe. As a result, uses of language—including poetry, fiction, and unfinished fragments—that are deliberately subjective and evocative are more honest and more successful as communications of truth than language that pretends to be objective and literally accurate. This is what Friedrich Schlegel means when he claims that “[t]he impossibility of positively reaching the *highest* through reflection, leads to allegory, i.e. to (*mythology and*) *fine art*.”<sup>114</sup> Günderrode falls within this tradition of poetic philosophizing, using fragments, poems, plays, and short stories to convey philosophical and political ideas not just descriptively, but also evocatively. Günderrode’s open-ended presentation of several competing responses to philosophical problems, such as the various responses she articulates in *Hildgund* and *Prophet of Mecca* to the question of free will, may also be read in line with the Early German Romantic tradition, as an attempt to stimulate the reader to engage with the problem rather than to dictate a particular solution.

This last point provides a closing argument for regarding Günderrode’s literary work from a philosophical perspective, despite its deviation from more usual forms of philosophy. Günderrode’s use of poems, plays, and fragments to develop her ideas was consistent with the conventions and philosophical commitments of other philosophers at the time she was writing. This use reflects skepticism about the adequacy of reason to truth and optimism about the capacity of evocative language to facilitate authentic knowledge and communication, as well as a value for ambiguity, questioning, and open-endedness. These philosophical commitments motivated Günderrode’s use of literary forms, in combination with personal preference and her need to accommodate social conventions that effectively prohibited women from producing philosophical works in systematic or conventional formats. This justifies the reading of Günderrode’s works, not as philosophically empty

or as literary reformulations of the philosophical work of others, but as significant contributions to philosophical dialogue in their own right.

### Further Reading on Karoline von Günderrode and Her Work

#### *In English*

**Battersby, Christine.** “Stages on Kant’s Way: Aesthetics, Morality, and the Gendered Sublime.” In *Feminism and Tradition in Aesthetics*. Edited by Peggy Zeglin Brand and Carolyn Korsmeyer, 88–114. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995. And *The Sublime, Terror and Human Difference*. Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2007. Battersby’s 2007 book contains an updated version of the discussion of Günderrode’s work first published in her 1995 article. Battersby explores how Günderrode’s work relates to Kant’s model of the sublime, in the context of Kant’s aesthetic and moral theories. According to Battersby, Günderrode modifies the Kantian sublime to avoid Kant’s implicit exclusion of women from the experience of the sublime—an exclusion that ultimately denies women full personhood. She argues that Günderrode’s approach to the sublime also addresses problems with Kant’s model that emerge from its dependence on the separation between appearance and reality.

**Becker-Cantarino, Barbara.** “The ‘New Mythology’: Myth and Death in Karoline von Günderrode’s Literary Work.” In *Women and Death 3: Women’s Representations of Death in German Culture Since 1500*. Edited by Clare Bielby and Anna Richards, 51–70. Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2010. Becker-Cantarino argues that Günderrode came to identify in her work and life with the Romantic “new mythology,” particularly its love-death paradigm, which reinscribes gender roles and subordinates women. The article also describes Creuzer’s contributions to the construction of an image of Günderrode as a feminized “other.”

**Becker-Cantarino, Barbara, and Jeanette Clausen.** “Gender Censorship’: On Literary Production in German Romanticism.” *Women in German Yearbook: Feminist Studies and German Culture* 11 (1995):

**81–97.** Investigates several examples of gender censorship around 1800, including in the relationships of female Romantic authors to men who controlled and often inhibited their writing in various ways. The article also provides background information on discourse at the time around female creativity and authorship.

**Daubert, Karen F.** “**Karoline von Günderrode’s ‘Der Gefangene und der Sänger’**: New Voices in Romanticism’s Desire for Cultural Transcendence.” *New German Review* 8 (1992): 1–17. Daubert compares Günderrode’s poem to two ballads by Goethe, arguing that Günderrode blurs the boundaries between self and other and suggests the possibility for relationships based on friendship and giving rather than possession. Daubert claims that, by projecting two selves in the two characters of this poem, Günderrode explores the possibility of a poetic, female self as one who transcends cultural and gender boundaries.

**Ezekiel, Anna.** “**Metamorphosis, Personhood, and Power in Karoline von Günderrode.**” *European Romantic Review* 25, no. 6 (2014): 773–91. This article argues that Günderrode developed a unique model of death as metamorphosis. Günderrode’s model avoids both overemphasizing consciousness and autonomy on the one hand and affirming self-annihilation or accepting determinism on the other. The paper argues that Günderrode’s view of the self informs a model of agency that acknowledges the vulnerability and finitude of human beings and denies that autonomy is a condition of freedom.

**French, Lorely.** “**Meine beiden Ichs’**: Confrontations with Language and Self in Letters by Early Nineteenth-Century Women.” *Women in German Yearbook* 5 (1989): 73–89. French describes the strategies of three letter writers (Günderrode, Mereau, and Varnhagen) for resisting the construction of their selves by a male-centered discourse and for expressing their true selves. According to French, these three writers resist the idea that the self is stable, consistent or constructed in the ways that an authoritative, dominant language construes the self to be.

**Gözl, Sabine.** “**Günderrode Mines Novalis.**” In *“The Spirit of Poetry”: Essays on Jewish and German Literature and Thought in Honor of Géza von Molnár.* Edited by Richard Block and Peter Fenves, 89–130. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2000. An analysis of

Günderrode's five-verse version of Novalis's fifteen-verse poem "The Song of the Dead," found in Günderrode's notebooks. Gözl argues that Günderrode's transcription of the poem is not a careless or passive reception, but an active writing of a new poem that resists gendered norms of authorship through a particular strategy of reading.

**Goozé, Marjanne E.** "The Seduction of Don Juan: Karoline von Günderode's Romantic Rendering of a Classic Story." In *The Enlightenment and Its Legacy. Studies in German Literature in Honor of Helga Slessarev*. Edited by Sara Friedrichsmeyer and Barbara Becker-Cantarino, 117–129. Bonn: Bouvier, 1991. Goozé claims that Günderrode's poem "Don Juan" features the first "romantic" Don Juan. Rather than seeking physical gratification in enjoying sex with many women, this character idealistically seeks "woman" in one woman, one moment, which will allow him to die satisfied. Goozé is interested in Günderrode's subject of identification in this poem—narrator, Don Juan, or Queen—and whether that makes the narrator's gender male or female. She concludes that the conflict is not resolved in the poem.

**Kuzniar, Alice.** "Labor Pains: Romantic Theories of Creativity and Gender." In *The Spirit of Poesy: Essays on Jewish and German Literature and Thought in Honor of Géza von Molnár*. Edited by Richard Block and Peter Fenves, 74–88. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2000. Kuzniar's article investigates the ways in which Novalis, Friedrich Schlegel, and Günderrode reinforce and/or subvert gender divisions. Kuzniar connects Günderrode's writing to her suicide, arguing that Günderrode understands the relationship of writing to the body not as passive, natural creation, as in a birth, but as the inscription of writing on the body, so that writing (like birth) leads to death. Kuzniar also argues that Günderrode retained a "uterine" connection to or identification with the mother, revealed in a longing, which she expressed in her writing, to return to waters of unity.

**Lokke, Kari.** "Poetry as Self-Consumption: Women Writers and Their Audiences in British and German Romanticism." In *Romantic Poetry*. Vol. 7. Edited by Angela Esterhammer, 91–111. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2002. Lokke argues that the myth of an abandoned, suicidal woman poet has shaped the reception of female romantic poets until today, and points to the predominance of

biographical interpretations and focus on suicide in work on G nderrode even now. Lokke argues against this stereotyping of G nderrode and, in commentaries on “Ariadne on Naxos” and “The Kiss in the Dream,” maintains that G nderrode sees immersion in the absolute not just as escape or annihilation but as healing and regenerating.

**Martinson, Steven D.** “. . . aus dem Schiffbruch des irdischen Lebens’: The Literature of Karoline von G nderrode and Early German Romantic and Idealist Philosophy.” *German Studies Review* 28, no. 2 (2005): 303–26. A brief outline of some elements of G nderrode’s philosophical thought, relating this to the work of Novalis, Schelling, Fichte, and Schleiermacher as well as Spinozism and Hinduism. Martinson points out G nderrode’s contributions to questions of freedom versus determinism and to the fate of the individual after death, and concludes that her position on this places her within the Early German Romantic tradition.

**Wolf, Christa.** “The Shadow of a Dream: A Sketch of Karoline von G nderrode [*Karoline von G nderrode—ein Entwurf*].” Translated by Jan van Heurch. In *The Author’s Dimension: Selected Essays*. Edited by Alexander Stephan, 131–75. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993. First published in German in 1979. Wolf’s influential essay explores the idea that G nderrode’s suicide was an expression of poetry, caused by the conflict between her needs and aspirations and the realities of her situation as a woman of her time. Wolf argues that G nderrode’s generation was a sacrifice to the changing times, and presents this as preordained destiny. Wolf’s connection of G nderrode’s life and writings has shaped much subsequent work on G nderrode.

*In German*

**Becker-Cantarino, Barbara.** “Mythos und Symbolik bei Karoline von G nderrode und Friedrich Creuzer.” In *200 Jahre Heidelberg-Romantik* 51 (2007). Edited by Friedrich Stack, 281–98. Berlin: Springer, 2008. Becker-Cantarino investigates the ways in which mythology and symbolism are at the center of works by G nderrode and Creuzer. Using *Magic and Destiny* as a case study, Becker-Cantarino argues that G nderrode used the “timeless” mythology of the East to build a fantasy world in which she could express her inner life. The

paper highlights parallels in Günderrode's and Creuzer's expressions of scientific and philosophical ideas.

**Bohrer, Karl Heinz.** "Identität als Selbstverlust. Zum romantischen Subjektbegriff." *Merkur* 38, no. 4 (1984): 367–79. Bohrer presents Günderrode as a precursor for the kinds of "romantic catastrophic I" imagined by Clemens Brentano and Kleist. Bohrer claims that Günderrode's self-image replaces the notion of a continuous I, which works to refine its consciousness and knowledge and contribute to the community through a social role, with a momentary I, which changes from one moment to the next and is centered on the feelings and perceptions of the moment.

**Bürger, Christa.** "Aber eine Sehnsucht war in mir, die ihren Gegenstand nicht kannte . . . ' Ein Versuch über Karoline von Günderrode." *Metis* no. 2 (1995): 24–43. Bürger claims that Günderrode's lack of self-image and her resulting search for form and a reflection of her self in others resulted in her suicide and the exclusion of her work from the canon of literature. Bürger tends to repeat this occlusion of Günderrode by presenting her as mysterious, failing, formless, and self-obsessed, and by focusing on her death as the telos of her existence and giving meaning to her work. However, the article includes brief but insightful commentaries on several of Günderrode's works.

**Christmann, Ruth.** *Zwischen Identitätsgewinn und Bewußtseinsverlust. Das philosophisch-literarische Werk der Karoline von Günderrode (1780–1806)*. Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2005. Christmann makes a solid start on the project of tracing the philosophical considerations of Günderrode's writings, including the connections of these writings to the works of her contemporary and earlier philosophers, particularly Schelling, Schleiermacher, Friedrich Schlegel, and Novalis. The later part of the book also includes brief but insightful summaries of the important philosophical themes of many of Günderrode's pieces.

**Dormann, Helga.** "Die Karoline von Günderrode-Forschung 1945–1995. Ein Bericht." *Athenaeum* 6 (1996): 227–48. An extremely useful, concise, and insightful overview of research on Günderrode. Dormann's literature review shows how pervasive has been the mystification of Günderrode and the connection of her work to her biography, particularly her suicide. Dormann emphasizes texts that resist this interpretive

strategy, making this literature review an excellent resource for finding good texts on Günderrode's work written before 1995.

**Dormann, Helga.** *Die Kunst des inneren Sinns. Mythisierung der inneren und äusseren Natur im Werk Karoline von Günderrodes.* Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2004. Dormann argues that Günderrode's work responds to a wide range of philosophical and scientific advances of her time while drawing on knowledge and mythology from ancient times. The book investigates the respects in which Günderrode's work provides a novel contribution to the call for a new mythology by early German Romantics and others around 1800. Dormann argues that Günderrode's work is farther from Schelling than is usually claimed. The book includes close consideration of Günderrode's works "Story of a Brahmin," "Orphic Song," "The Manes," "The Adept," "An Apocalyptic Fragment," "The Wanderer's Descent," and "Letters of Two Friends."

**Kastinger Riley, Helene M.** "Zwischen den Welten. Ambivalenz und Existentialproblematik im Werk Caroline von Günderrodes." In *Die weiblich Muse: Sechs Essays über künstlerisch schaffende Frauen der Goethezeit*, 91–119. Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1986. One of the few works to consider Günderrode's writing independently of her biography. Kastinger Riley analyzes several pieces, emphasizing the originality of Günderrode's work as a response to problems about the relationship of the individual to its environment that also occupied contemporaries including Novalis, Schiller, Schelling, Herder, and Goethe. Kastinger Riley draws attention to themes of agency and passivity and the opposition of the individual to society in Günderrode's work, and claims that Günderrode saw philosophy, religion, science, and social rules as limiting the individual and foreclosing knowledge.

**Licher, Lucia Maria.** *Mein Leben in einer bleibenden Form aussprechen. Umrisse einer Ästhetik im Werk Karoline von Günderrodes (1780–1806).* Heidelberg: Winter, 1996. Licher argues that Günderrode was a political poet with similarities to the Early German Romantics, and relates Günderrode's work to the social, political, and intellectual movements of her time.

**Licher, Lucia Maria.** "Siehe! Glaube! Thue!" *Die poetische Konfession der Karoline von Günderode (1780–1806).* Oldenburg: Bis, 1998.

The author explores the role given by the early Romantics, especially Günderrode, to literature in responding to the question of how a modern political society could emerge. Licher provides detailed analyses of many individual pieces by Günderrode, including *Muhammad, the Prophet of Mecca*.

**Schärf, Christian.** “Artistische Ironie und Fremdheit der Seele. Zur ästhetischen Disposition in der Frühromantik bei Friedrich Schlegel und Karoline von Günderrode.” *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 72, no. 3 (1998): 433–62. Schärf argues that both Schlegel and Günderrode imaginatively stylized the opposite sex in order to poetically and aesthetically transfigure energies into a unified transcendent realm. Schärf focuses on Günderrode’s letters and biography in arguing that Günderrode was alienated, fragmented, and seeking the impossible, especially to be a man.

*Books and Poems Based on Günderrode’s Life*

**Arnim, Bettina von, and Karoline von Günderrode.** *Correspondence of Fräulein Günderrode and Bettine von Arnim*. Translated by Margaret Fuller and Minna Wesselhoeft. Boston: T. O. H. P. Burnham, 1861. Based on letters between Günderrode and Bettina von Arnim, heavily edited and added to by von Arnim, this book has been influential in shaping the image of “*die Günderrode*” as otherworldly and conflicted. The book highlights themes of friendship between women, the idea of a new religion, and the interactions between intellectual learning, social mores, and childlike living in the world.

**Bobrowski, Johannes.** “Günderrode [*Die Günderrode*].” Translated by Ruth and Matthew Mead. In *Shadow Lands: Selected Poems*. New York: New Directions, 1994. First published in German in 1961. Bobrowski’s poem presents a ghostly image of Günderrode that echoes Günderrode’s theory of affinity between individuals across time, even after death, which she articulates most clearly in “The Manes.”

**Wolf, Christa.** *No Place on Earth [Kein Ort. Nirgends]*. Translated by Jan van Heurck. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1982. First published in German in 1979. A novel based on a fictional meeting between Günderrode and Kleist. The book explores themes of selfhood, alienation, gender, and self-determination.





## ONE

# *Hildgund*

### Introduction to *Hildgund*

Günderrode's drama *Hildgund*, written before 1804, is striking for its active, warlike female protagonist. This heroine is one of Günderrode's most positive characters, able to determine events in her own life and act in the political sphere. The play follows the Burgundian warrior Hildgund after her return from captivity at the hands of Attila the Hun, whose armies are spreading across Europe. Hildgund is confronted directly by the apparently irresistible force of Attila's power when he demands her hand in marriage in exchange for sparing Burgundy. The central issue of the play is Hildgund's consideration of and response to this demand, in the context of the responses of the other characters, notably Hildgund's father Herrich, Lord of Burgundy, and her fiancé Walther. The play closes with Hildgund preparing to enact her decision, which is to accept Attila's offer of marriage but to murder him, thereby liberating not just Burgundy, but the whole of Europe and also herself. The play is of interest for both its evocation of epic historical events and its imagining of women's political power in a patriarchal society.

An influential late-nineteenth-century commentator on Günderrode's work, Ludwig Geiger, dismissed all Günderrode's dramas as "insignificant,"<sup>1</sup> and this evaluation seems to have endured until relatively recently. Christa Wolf omitted the plays from her 1979 selected edition of Günderrode's work, claiming that in her dramas and dramatic fragments Günderrode "presents pale figures, often in artificial activities, merely in order to express her ideas, her world-feeling."<sup>2</sup> This occlusion

of G nderrode’s dramatic work may reflect the influence of earlier dismissals of her playwriting, which, as several commentators have argued, and as the introduction to this volume notes, were partly shaped by expectations for women writers.<sup>3</sup> More recently, however, *Hildgund* has received attention for its portrayal of a woman struggling to act in the public sphere against barriers to female political engagement. *Hildgund* is probably the piece in which G nderrode most clearly addresses the question of how women can realize their agency and influence events. The play also touches on a related question: Is action according to free will possible at all? This introductory essay explores *Hildgund*’s contributions to the consideration of free will, agency, and gender, after briefly outlining the play’s historical, literary, social, and political context.

### *Hildgund in Context*

The events and characters of the play *Hildgund* are based in part on historical events and figures, particularly as these appear through the filter of Germanic mythology. Attila the Hun was engaged in conquering Europe and contributing to the fragmentation of the Roman Empire in the mid-fifth century AD, with his incursion reaching as far as what is now central France. One source for the character Hildgund is Justa Grata Honoria, sister of the Roman emperor Valentinian III (419–455). In the year 449, Honoria asked Attila to help her escape an unwanted marriage imposed by her brother by sending Attila her engagement ring, which he took as a proposal. He used this as a pretext for invading Europe, demanding a large portion of the Roman Empire as a dowry. A second source for Hildgund is the Ostrogoth or Burgundian princess Ildico, the last wife of Attila the Hun who, on some accounts, murdered him at their wedding feast in 453 AD. Other accounts claim that Attila died of natural causes or was assassinated by someone else. Ildico is related to a figure who features prominently in Germanic mythical sources. These include the *Nibelungenlied*, where she appears as Kriemhild, who marries Etzel (Attila), and the thirteenth-century Norse *Edda*, where she is known as Gudrun, who marries and kills Atli (Attila). G nderrode was familiar with the *Nibelungenlied* and the *Edda*, the latter of which had been translated into German by Jacob Schimmerman in 1777. G nderrode’s piece “Edda-Fragment,” probably written after *Hildgund* in 1805, shows her interest in this text.

Another source for *Hildgund* is the set of stories based around the figure Walther of Aquitaine, who also makes a brief appearance in the *Nibelungenlied*. The manuscripts and sources for these stories include various versions of the characters Walther, Hildgund, Herrich, Attila, and Ospiru. The most complete of these, the tenth-century *Waltharius Saga*, features the flight of Walther and Hildgund from Attila's captivity, taking with them part of his treasure—the event that immediately precedes the opening of Günderrode's play. Following this escape, the events of the *Waltharius Saga* diverge from those of *Hildgund*, being concerned mainly with Walther's battles with various opponents; the saga also ends very differently to Günderrode's play, with Walther's marriage to Hildgund.<sup>4</sup> Günderrode's *Hildgund* connects the myths of Attila and Walther, merging the latter's Hildegund with the figures of Honoria and Ildico and linking the first part of the *Waltharius* saga, which sets the scene for Günderrode's play, with the events and myths around Attila's death, which will occur after *Hildgund*'s curtain closes. Erich Regen notes that in this respect Günderrode followed Ignaz Aurelius Feßler's 1794 novelization of Attila's life in *Attila, König der Hunnen* (*Attila, King of the Huns*), which also linked the stories of Attila and *Waltharius* and identified Hildgund with Ildico as Attila's murderer.<sup>5</sup>

*Hildgund* is sometimes interpreted as partly a commentary on European politics, with Attila featuring as an analogue for Napoleon. Licher claims that Hildgund's promise to rescue "Italy" (not Burgundy or Europe) from Attila's dominance reveals the analogy with the Napoleonic conquests,<sup>6</sup> and Wendy Nielsen claims that "[Kleist's] *Penthesilea* and [Günderrode's] *Hildgund* read as allegories for German-speaking territories at the beginning of the nineteenth century."<sup>7</sup> Licher and Hoff point out that the French Revolution seemed to many Europeans to reveal new possibilities for political arrangements and female political action, which were explored in literature, including in dramas written by women, such as *Hildgund* and Christine Westphalen's *Charlotte Corday*.<sup>8</sup>

Christmann points out that *Hildgund* subverts a tradition of patriotic literature that advocates devotion to father and fatherland.<sup>9</sup> The connection to this tradition is evident in Herrich's claim near the beginning of the play that "Not to the fatherland alone, but to the father / Belongs the daughter's principal joy" and Hildgund's response that "The father only makes the fatherland worthier, / And my joy divides itself between him and it." With *Hildgund*, Günderrode replaces the loyal son with a daughter and undermines Herrich's claim to reverence

as patriarch by depicting him as weak and flawed. Nielsen and Patricia Anne Simpson similarly maintain that in *Hildgund* Günderrode challenges men's monopoly on both patriotism and power by depicting a patriotic heroine with the capacity to make political decisions.<sup>10</sup>

Around the time that Günderrode created her warrior Hildgund, several other authors wrote dramas exploring the possibilities for women to act in the political sphere. Among these, a number of plays feature heroic armed women or women warriors. These include Schiller's *Maid of Orleans* (1801), Kleist's *Penthesilea* (1808), and plays based on Charlotte Corday's assassination of Jean Paul Marat, such as those by Westphalen (1804) and Renatus Karl von Senckenberg (1797). Hoff points out that numerous plays written or performed around the time of Günderrode's work feature female protagonists who, although not necessarily warlike, respond with virtue and self-sacrifice to the call of duty. These include Westphalen's *Charlotte Corday* and plays based on the life, brief reign, and execution of the English queen Lady Jane Grey, such as those by Wieland (1758), E. L. Deimling (1789), and Karoline Ludecus (1806). Hoff emphasizes the resolution of these plays in the sacrificial deaths of the female protagonists, arguing that this represents the lack of options for women to express their inner conflicts in action.<sup>11</sup> Like these characters, Günderrode's Hildgund acts in accordance with what she believes is her duty, at great risk to herself. On the other hand, it is debatable whether Hildgund emerges as a frustrated, sacrificial protagonist of the kind Hoff describes. It is not certain that Hildgund will die following her assassination of Attila, and she may even achieve her twin goals of self-determination and liberation of her homeland. Nielsen has argued that even those of Günderrode's female characters who do die may represent empowerment and transcendence rather than a lack of options for women.<sup>12</sup> As I hope the rest of this introduction will show, the contribution of Günderrode's *Hildgund* to the consideration of possibilities for female agency does not reduce to stereotypes of tragic heroines.

### *Hildgund and Gender Censorship*

The question of the extent to which *Hildgund* reveals possibilities for women to act in the political sphere has received a relatively large amount of attention in the secondary literature, and is sometimes linked to Günderrode's own experiences of limited possibilities for action as

a woman of her time.<sup>13</sup> As I discussed in the introduction to this volume, the context in which G nderrode wrote was not a friendly one for women who wanted to write, especially if their work challenged expectations for women writers. This hostile climate is reflected in various ways in G nderrode’s work. In this section, I investigate the claim that one particular aspect of *Hildgund*—its omission of Attila’s assassination by Hildgund—reveals G nderrode’s submission to gender censorship. The subsequent two sections explore how G nderrode uses *Hildgund* to tackle head-on the suppression of women’s attempts to assert themselves.

Hoff argues that *Hildgund* demonstrates gender censorship not just in its form as a *Lesedrama*, which it shared with all G nderrode’s dramas, but also by depicting the impossibility of women acting in the political sphere. According to Hoff, the curtain’s falling before Hildgund’s assassination of Attila signifies this impossibility. Hoff contrasts G nderrode’s elision of this assassination with her depiction of the assassination of a tyrant by a male hero in her play *Nikator*, and argues that G nderrode was constrained by social mores to gloss over the act of assassination by a woman.<sup>14</sup> Together with Friedrichsmeyer and Herminhouse, Hoff points out that in *Hildgund* G nderrode “formulates women’s claim to action without actually making the deed a part of the dramatic action.”<sup>15</sup> It is true that G nderrode builds the picture of Hildgund as a decisive and able political agent, a warrior, and a hero without depicting her actually engaging in any heroic activities. The play takes place between two major actions by Hildgund, beginning with her return after escaping Attila and ending just before the assassination, with neither of these politically significant acts depicted directly. Hildgund is introduced as returning from scenes of battle: she describes “[m]y gaze, tired of weapons and of turmoil” and “[m]y ear, accustomed to rough men’s steps and clang of arms.” Her own words describe her heroic escape from Attila as well as the assassination she plans for him. Hoff claims that this falls into a dramatic tradition in which women can only act secretly or internalize their actions in monologues. Hildgund, Hoff claims, is frustrated in her desire for action and instead expresses her claim to assassinate Attila “in ever further chains of monologue, almost redundant.”<sup>16</sup>

I believe Hoff is right that G nderrode’s formulation of Hildgund’s agency in Hildgund’s own words rather than in dramatic action is significant, but not that this depicts the impotence of women or demonstrates G nderrode’s subjection to gender censorship in the

way Hoff argues it does. There are no convincing counterexamples for Hoff's claim that Günderröde submitted to taboos against portraying murder by women. Günderröde represents the murder of a man by a woman in the short prose piece "Timur," which she published in *Poems and Fantasies* (1804), but the woman in question kills herself with her victim, fitting Hoff's category of self-sacrificing heroines whose desire for action can only be expressed in their death. On the other hand, there are good reasons other than gender censorship for Günderröde to have ended *Hildgund* before Attila's assassination.

First, there are at least two possible reasons for the elision of the assassination that relate to Günderröde's interests as a writer. The events of *Hildgund* are positioned between those described in the *Waltharius Saga* and in stories of Attila's death. If it was Günderröde's purpose to connect the Hildegund of the *Waltharius Saga* with historical and mythical women linked to Attila's death, her interest may have been in plausibly uniting these two sets of myths by constructing a series of events and decisions that might have led Hildgund to return to Attila and murder him after having escaped him. Günderröde's interest may have been in creatively filling a gap in the stories, rather than in rehashing the well-known tales themselves, which could have led her to focus exclusively on the period between the actions described in these tales.

Günderröde also seems to have had a preference for unresolved endings, since she gives similarly open-ended conclusions to other of her plays, including *Nikator*. Although Nikator's assassination of King Egestis is depicted in this play, the play does not end with the assassination but with the unresolved question of whether Nikator will be executed.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, Günderröde's play *Udohla* ends with the expectation of a rebellion that has not come.<sup>18</sup> Günderröde tended to defer the resolution of her dramas to an unrealized future point, whether or not these dramas involved politically active women.

The omission of Attila's assassination from the play contributes to Günderröde's portrayal, not of the impossibility of female agency in the political sphere, as Hoff suggests, but of its possibility. As Christmann points out, leaving out the actual murder of Attila allows Günderröde to focus on the psychological aspect of the act—on Hildgund's deliberations—rather than the act itself.<sup>19</sup> Günderröde emphasizes the character traits and thought processes that Hildgund displays in performing these actions. For example, Hildgund's description of her escape from Attila places the emphasis on the resolution she had to show in order to manage this escape:

Hardship followed us quickly with its earnest tread,  
But our courage derided it.  
Soon we had to cut through the streams' course,  
Then hide ourselves in the deepest chasms' night.  
Only stars lit up our rough path,  
Then the way hid from us in wide steppes' sand;  
But the great confidence that we bore in our breasts  
Brought us here.

Similarly, Hildgund's statements, including internal monologues, regarding her decision to accept Attila's offer of marriage and then assassinate him provide a clear depiction of a resolute, thoughtful, and virtuous moral agent. Hildgund makes her decision on the basis of the greater good and not on the basis of passively enduring events, as her father entreats: Herrich tells her, "To bear misfortune's hard blow with silent senses, / Oh daughter, well befits your noble soul!" Hildgund, however, describes the decision as "the resolution that clever prudence begs."

In Hildgund, G nderrode depicts a rational moral and political agent who is female. Nielsen has suggested that G nderrode is at pains to display Hildgund's assassination of Attila as rationally and virtuously motivated in order to preclude the interpretation of her behavior according to stereotypes of female murderers and women in general as irrational or motivated (or rather, overcome) by emotions.<sup>20</sup> This suggests that, although Hoff is right that Hildgund's gender is significant to the omission of her murder of Attila, the omission is not due to a taboo against depicting a murdering woman, but to G nderrode's concern with establishing Hildgund's autonomy. By focusing on Hildgund's reasonable and admirable motivations for killing Attila rather than the sensational and perhaps abhorrent act itself, G nderrode leaves her audience no room to interpret Hildgund's assassination of Attila as impulsive, irrational, selfish, or misguided, and instead forces them to perceive her as a rational autonomous agent capable of acting effectively in the political sphere. This would mean that, rather than adding to the portrayals of women as participating in the political sphere only at the cost of their sanity, virtue, and/or lives, *Hildgund* presents an alternative image of a woman who is the ideal political agent—a position that, at the time G nderrode wrote, was usually reserved for men. Thus, the elision of Hildgund's assassination of Attila responds to negative stereotypes of murdering women by finding a means to counteract them, rather than by submitting to them.



*The Character Hildgund*

One of the characteristics that makes G nderrode's treatment of Hildgund especially interesting is that Hildgund is not simply a woman written as if she were a man, with supposedly masculine characteristics and occupying a role that was in fact exclusively reserved for men. Rather, the fact that Hildgund is a woman, and must therefore struggle against social constraints in order to occupy the role of a warrior and a political agent, is integral to her characterization. G nderrode's depiction of Hildgund as a rational, capable agent involves a subversion of stereotypical gender roles, and G nderrode not only performs this subversion but also addresses the difficulties that it entails for Hildgund.

G nderrode paints Hildgund as brave, capable, independent, determined, and rational—all characteristics of an ideal agent, but also particularly necessary for a woman in a patriarchal society, who must struggle to assert her autonomy. Hildgund is accustomed to battle, has her own armor, and does not flinch from bold deeds such as escaping from Attila's captivity and returning to Attila's camp to murder him. She is independent, not only chafing at her imprisonment by Attila but also rejecting Walther's attempts to act on her behalf to protect her from Attila. Attila recognizes and admires this aspect of her character, forgiving her for escaping on the grounds that "a great heart longs for freedom." Hildgund is also determined, insisting on her ability to decide her own fate when Attila and Walther try to decide it for her, even when Walther insults her for refusing his offer of help, telling him "You do not know what I want. / In my heart's deepest foundations ripens / The greatest deed that ever a woman has done."

Hildgund is also rational, and G nderrode contrasts this rationality with the other characters. Hildgund considers carefully how she can best respond to Attila's ultimatum of marriage or invasion, rather than acting impulsively like Walther or evading responsibility for the decision like Herrich. While Herrich asks Hildgund to submit to "misfortune's hard blow" and Walther wants to vent his anger in physical violence in a show of machismo, Hildgund carefully weighs the options, analyzing her feelings and subordinating them to what she decides is the right course of action. After being told of Attila's offer of marriage and threat of invasion, she quickly announces, "I am resolute; only in cowardly breasts struggles / The greater with the smaller resolution, / I am Attila's." She considers her decision to assassinate Attila in an internal monologue, acknowledging her apprehension about the murder

but overcoming these feelings through a reasoned consideration of the greater good:

Why do I hesitate, is it, then, too monstrous,  
 For shy, pale lips to name it?  
 Murder! Ha, the name alone appalls,  
 The deed is just, and bold and great,  
 The peoples' destiny rests in my breast;  
 I will free them, free me.  
 Banished are fear and childish hesitation;  
 Only a bold warrior wins a great goal.

Nielsen investigates the ways that G nderrode contrasts Hildgund's noble and virtuous action with the actions and motivations of the male characters in the play, who are focused on their own desires and emotions rather than the greater good. Nielsen claims that "in G nderrode's dramatic work, male violence occurs owing to unmediated passion," whereas "G nderrode's female protagonists sacrifice themselves in order to assure the safety of their homeland, making their decisions to fight just ones."<sup>21</sup> While this claim may be debated in relation to some of G nderrode's pieces, for example, "Timur," it is certainly true of *Hildgund*. According to Nielsen, this shows that G nderrode suggests that if women had as much power as men they would use it to more virtuous ends.<sup>22</sup> However, I do not think Nielsen is justified in drawing this conclusion. There are also virtuous men in G nderrode's dramas, such as Erodion in *Immortalita*, Alchemines in *Magic and Destiny*, and the Sultan in *Udohla*. Admittedly, with the exception of Erodion these characters are not as flawlessly noble as Hildgund (or *Udohla's* Nerissa). G nderrode may have felt it necessary, in light of her audience's likely assumptions about women's weakness and irrationality, to make her female agents flawless in order to be as unambiguous as possible about their ability and right to enter the sphere of moral and political action that was typically reserved for men. G nderrode's point seems to be, not that men cannot be virtuous and effective political agents, but that women can be.

The character of Hildgund contrasts strongly with that of the other woman in the play, Attila's wife Ospiru. Ospiru is kind, happy, and trusting and revels in domesticity, but despite their differences, Hildgund respects and perhaps even envies Ospiru's way of life. When Attila's advisor, Edezon, tells Hildgund that Ospiru is well and happy in

domesticity, Hildgund responds “Oh threefold blessed lot, well is he to whom you are granted, / Who is happy in his own ones’ intimate midst! / No doubt nears the happy circle / And no worry nears the silent peace.” Ospiru’s peaceful, conventional life is very different from Hildgund’s life of war and political decision making, and from Hildgund’s own marriage to Attila, which has been forced on her against her will and which she plans to end quickly by killing the groom.

Edezon’s response to Hildgund’s praising of Ospiru reveals how Hildgund’s nonconformity to norms for women presents a challenge for the other characters and, as a result, for Hildgund herself. Edezon consoles Hildgund, “So, too, are you happy in a beautiful circle. / A great man chooses you, a good people loves you.” In saying this, Edezon mistakes Hildgund’s goals, desires, and nature. Similarly, although it is Hildgund’s independence and heroic nature that attracted Attila to her in the first place, he drastically misreads her character when he imagines that he can force her to become his wife or relegate her to the domestic sphere. Attila tells Hildgund, “I seek home’s quiet happiness in your arms, / And those hours’ rest, that, after the day’s battle / And after work’s load, you sweeten for the victor.” As Simpson points out, Attila’s “vision of the warrior’s return from battle to the peaceful, sweet domicile approaches a vision of the bourgeois sphere in which the male operates in the public, only to recuperate in the embrace of the feminized private territory.”<sup>23</sup> By casting Hildgund in the role of passive domestic support, Attila fails to recognize Hildgund’s personality, her autonomy, or her own role in the public sphere.

This is an important point because it underscores both the difficulty and the opportunity for Hildgund to assert her agency. Hildgund must struggle in order to act and determine her own life because the other characters continually attribute to her a passive role. On the other hand, this misreading is what eventually allows Hildgund to act effectively in the political sphere. While Attila is indulging in his fantasies of domestic bliss, Hildgund is committed to killing him, muttering to herself, “Ha, only celebrate, tyrant, / The last day’s fast fled hours.” Attila has made the mistake of failing to recognize an active agent, assuming he can subjugate her—and as a result omitting to take precautions against her actions when her desires are thwarted. What we witness at the end of *Hildgund* is not Hildgund’s failure to realize her ability to determine events, but her success in overcoming obstacles to its realization.

*Recognizing Hildgund as a Political Agent*

Günderrode does not present Hildgund as straightforwardly able to act in the political sphere as if she were a man. In order to act, Hildgund must establish the possibility of her agency, which, due to her constitution as a “weak woman,” is not assumed from the outset. Hildgund must struggle to assert her agency not only in the face of Attila’s overwhelming power, which also constrains all the other characters in the play, but also in the face of the challenges to having her ability to self-determine recognized by others, particularly her father Herrich and fiancé Walther.

Both Herrich’s fatalistic resignation and Walther’s heroic self-assertion threaten to obscure Hildgund’s capacity for self-determination. Both men have trouble recognizing that Hildgund’s actions can determine events. Near the start of the play, Herrich’s faith that events are determined by destiny or the gods leads him to ignore Hildgund’s capacity to determine her own fate, even when she points it out to him explicitly. When learning about her escape from Attila, Herrich asks, “Did you have the gods’ help, did you free yourself?” Although Hildgund replies that, “The god who freed me dwells in my own heart,” Herrich ignores this assertion of self-determination and states, “Thus thanks ascend to our gods’ thrones / That they sent to me my daughter.” Herrich’s first response to Attila’s ultimatum is to exhort Hildgund to submit passively, as he intends to: “To bear misfortune’s hard blow with silent senses, / Oh daughter, well befits your noble soul!”

On the other hand, after Walther’s threat to respond violently to Attila’s ultimatum, Herrich acknowledges, and even makes room for, Hildgund’s agency, telling Walther that “[o]nly my daughter’s will can decide.” Christmann argues plausibly that Herrich’s insistence on Hildgund’s right to choose her fate and the fate of Burgundy stems from Herrich’s weakness and desires to avoid conflict and abdicate responsibility rather than his recognition of Hildgund’s autonomy.<sup>24</sup> Nonetheless, Herrich’s abdication of responsibility helps create a space for Hildgund to make her own decision about Attila’s ultimatum.

By contrast, Walther resists Hildgund’s assertion of her right to speak and act for herself, and Hildgund must fend off his attempts to take over, eventually making her decision against his objections and in the face of his anger. Walther is unable to grasp the legitimacy of

Hildgund's choice, attributing her decision to marry Attila to fickleness, pride, desire, greed, and ambition:

Your loyalty, then, depends on gold and majesty?  
 Deplorable sex! Woe to him who trusts you!  
 Yes, you call generosity what is only fickleness,  
 Your soul's proud desire pursues Attila's throne,  
 And his name's glory devotes you so easily to him.  
 Will you still think of him who freed you, on a throne,  
 When golden majesty's intoxication beguiles your soul?

Walther assumes that the only possibilities are for Hildgund to submit to Attila or to be rescued by someone else, that is, by Walther: "Oh speak a word, I will free you, / Protect you from the Hun-King's wrath." He ignores Hildgund's own ability to act and the existence of other possibilities for responding to Attila's ultimatum, instead asserting his right to determine her fate.

Hildgund eventually gives up trying to persuade Walther to recognize her right to choose how she will respond to Attila and proceeds without his legitimation of her action. Walther exits with the bitter statement, "I will leave you, yes you have yourself chosen." He is ultimately forced to acknowledge, although resentfully, the fact of Hildgund's agency.

Importantly, although Herrich, Walther, and Attila all create obstacles to Hildgund's self-determination, she is eventually able to influence her own fate with or without their recognition or consent. The play thus suggests the possibility for women to realize their agency despite its occlusion by patriarchal norms that assume only men can act in the political sphere and interpret women as passive and subordinate to men. While these norms establish barriers to acting for women, in Hildgund Günderröde shows us a woman overcoming these barriers to pursue her objectives in the political arena.

### *Agency and Femininity*

Some writers argue that in Günderröde's work, like in other works written around the same time that feature female agents, women are depicted as paying a high price for their political engagement. Hoff describes Hildgund as a virgin in arms who removes herself from all social

connections and faces exile in order to assassinate Attila.<sup>25</sup> Simpson states that in her work *Günderode* repeatedly shows women experiencing a conflict between love and duty.<sup>26</sup> Nielsen claims that Hildgund gives up her femininity, at the cost of her life, to become a warrior and an assassin, and that she sacrifices her ability to love in order to fight.<sup>27</sup>

Of these claims, the only one that I find substantiated with reference to *Hildgund* is Hoff's claim that Hildgund must sever social connections in order to act in the political sphere. Walther's anger and bitter exhortation to Hildgund to "[n]ever speak my name so that Attila knows it; / I would be forgotten by him and also by you" show the strong social sanction and threat of isolation that face those who defy gender roles. Hildgund's escape from Attila was also achieved only at the cost of betraying her friend and protector Ospiru: "[M]y gaze deceived her, that feigns eternal joy." On the other hand, the only reference to exile in the play is to Hildgund's previous captivity by Attila; she does not intend to accept such exile a second time, as she will kill Attila (and possibly die herself) rather than live under his captivity.

Unlike *Udohla's* Nerissa, who may love the Sultan she leaves at the end of the play, Hildgund experiences no conflict between love and duty. In the first place, we cannot assume that Hildgund is in love with Walther. Their marriage was arranged by their fathers, and while there are several references to Walther's love for Hildgund and to Hildgund's love for her father, Hildgund never makes any declarations of love for Walther. Also, Hildgund cannot marry Walther as long as Attila wants her for himself, as she points out: "As long as Attila lives, you are not granted me." Her duty to marry Attila and save Burgundy, or, as she interprets it, to ostensibly accept Attila's offer in order to kill him and thereby liberate her homeland, does not conflict, but aligns, with a goal of marrying Walther. Hildgund points out as much when she wonders, in her parting words to Walther, "[w]hether a dagger will unite us." Similarly, it does not seem that Hildgund's decision to fight involves giving up the possibility of love. There is no evidence that she cannot love romantically, and some evidence that she can love in other ways—for example, she asks Walther to care for her father while she is gone, and inquires caring of Edezon about Ospiru's well-being.

Finally, Hildgund does not sacrifice her femininity in order to become a warrior or a political agent. Hildgund twice explicitly identifies as a woman in the same breath as articulating her plan to kill Attila, most strikingly when she mutters, "Already my dagger twitches, soon the great sacrifice will bleed, / That, ruler of a world, a weak woman

conquers.” It is true that Hildgund possesses characteristics, such as bravery, decisiveness, and rationality, that have often been stereotyped as masculine, which may motivate interpretations of Hildgund as abandoning her femininity. However, as Hoff and Simpson have also argued, in *Hildgund* G nderrode challenges the dichotomy of these categories, presenting a woman with the power to act and introducing supposedly feminine characteristics, such as consideration for others, to the realms of war and desire.<sup>28</sup> For example, Hildgund fulfills her traditional responsibility as a daughter while taking on a masculine role as the conqueror of Attila, ensuring that her father is cared for in her absence. This care involves a surprising role reversal: Hildgund asks Walther to look after Herrich while she enters the political sphere, saving Burgundy from war and, she secretly hopes, assassinating the tyrant and liberating all of Europe. As Lazarowicz points out, Walther must depend on Hildgund’s political action for the realization of his private desires (marriage with Hildgund), inverting traditional gender roles that restrict women’s activity to the private sphere while men act in the public sphere on their behalf.<sup>29</sup> In *Hildgund*, G nderrode rejects the attribution of certain characteristics or domains for action essentially to men or to women. She shows us that a woman can have and can express masculine characteristics, including those associated with agency and violence, and act in the political sphere, without ceasing to be either a woman or feminine.

### *Free Will and Destiny*

Unlike G nderrode’s exploration of the social and political context for self-determination, the metaphysical problem of free will does not feature prominently in *Hildgund*. G nderrode’s treatment of the latter topic in this play consists of passing references to “destiny” and prophets that could easily be dismissed as poetic license. But in other of G nderrode’s works, including *Prophet of Mecca*, *Magic and Destiny*, and *Udohla*, the question of destiny and its relation to human freedom is a major theme, which suggests that we should consider the possibility that the references to destiny in *Hildgund* are significant and that G nderrode means them to be understood in a literal sense.

Attila is the only character in the play who clearly refers to destiny in the sense of a preordained course of events, claiming that “the hour

of [Aquilegia's] fall is now here, / So says the seeress, who in the depths of things / Reads all coming destiny [*Geschicke*]." In fact, Aquilegia did fall to Attila in 452, a year before Attila's death, and in *Hildgund* its towers have already toppled as Attila makes this statement. This might suggest that G nderrode presents destiny as real and inalterable. However, this is the only evidence in the play for this idea and it is weak: one correlation of a seer's vision and actual events is not proof of the controlling hand of fate governing all things. Furthermore, Hildgund herself maintains an opposing position, behaving throughout the play in defiance of "destiny," refusing "[t]o bear misfortune's hard blow with silent senses" as Herrich urges and seeking ways to resist events that are apparently inevitable. As we will also see in the case of *Prophet of Mecca*, in *Hildgund* G nderrode articulates more than one position on the question of free will.

The lack of one clear position on this issue is characteristic of G nderrode's nuanced approach to this question. Christmann maintains that G nderrode overcomes the apparent opposition of free will and destiny by suggesting that one's will may be realized when it aligns with destiny.<sup>30</sup> In *Hildgund*, Herrich seems to advocate this effectively quietist position. I have argued elsewhere that G nderrode also considers another, more interesting possibility in this play.<sup>31</sup> This possibility is that, rather than being incompatible with either destiny or causal determinism, free will operates within a universe of mutually conditioning physical forces. I argue that this position acknowledges the insignificance of the human agent in relation to the forces of world history, but maintains that the human will can be effective. In other words, the possibility suggested by G nderrode steers a path between quietism and a scenario in which an active rational agent imposes its will on a passive material world. G nderrode's monistic cosmology entails that the human being is wholly embedded in the world as part of it, and cannot be understood as having a nonphysical mind that seeks to influence the physical world through its physical body. In other words, for G nderrode, the will must exist on the same plane as the physical forces that constitute events. Consequently, although human beings are vulnerable to external forces, which, especially taken as a whole, are much more powerful than they, their will can influence events, albeit in limited, risky ways. While this model addresses free will in the context of "destiny" rather than causal determinism, it may also provide a response to the problem of free will that plagued post-Kantian German philosophy,



since it denies the dualism that made it difficult for Kant and his successors to conceive how an agent's will could have an effect in the world.

In my 2014 article, I argued that the above conception of the will emerges in *Hildgund*, where G nderrode explores the possibility of leveraging opportunities for action that emerge from the activities of individuals and events more powerful than oneself, in order to shift the course of history.<sup>32</sup> Thus, rather than resigning herself to the Huns' seemingly unstoppable advance across Europe, Hildgund will stab Attila, altering the course of the invasion: "The mighty catch springs, that pushes a globe." The question whether it is possible to resist or even shape "destiny" or whether one should instead submit to it is thus the central issue of the play, articulated in the attitudes of the various characters to the apparently foreordained progress of the Huns across Europe.

Susanne Kord also notes that G nderrode gives no single answer to the question whether autonomous action is possible, but relates this to G nderrode's treatment of gender. Kord claims that G nderrode asks "whether the human being is autonomous in relation to destiny, and whether—for women a logical extension of the question—this autonomy, if it exists for men, also holds for women."<sup>33</sup> Kord argues that G nderrode answers that it does not: according to Kord, while G nderrode's female characters are not passive, and are in fact often more decisive than her male characters, they are dependent on the men around them in a way the men are not. As a result, Kord claims, self-determination is possible only for G nderrode's male heroes, not her heroines, whose lives are dominated by G nderrode's male characters.<sup>34</sup> However, as I have argued above, although *Hildgund* portrays women as constrained from acting in ways men are not, it also shows that these constraints can be overcome, allowing women to determine their own lives.

Kord's argument is based mainly on G nderrode's plays *Nikator* and *Magic and Destiny*, but the following statement by Hildgund also appears to support the claim that for G nderrode men, but not women, can determine the course of their own lives:

How lordly is man, he shapes his destiny [*Schicksal*],  
 By just his own powers is his law at its goal.  
 Woman's destiny [*Schicksal*], ah! does not rest in her own hand!  
 Now she follows need, now strict custom's will,  
 Can one revoke what superior power commands?

However, Hildgund's actions and other statements suggest that she does not ascribe to the position that she articulates in this passage. On the contrary, she indicates that she believes she has control not just over her own destiny, but over the destiny of her country and perhaps beyond, claiming that "[t]he peoples' destiny [*Schicksal*] rests in my breast." At times she even seems confident that she will be successful in turning aside the march of destiny: "Italy, do not fear! I will free you, / The peoples' scourge falls by Hildgund's hand." The question at the end of the inset passage just above seems therefore to be a genuine one—Can an individual woman resist a stronger power?

This is the question that hangs over the end of the play. The question also appears in Hildgund's last words to Walther: "Who sees the future's magical dark image? / Whether a dagger will unite us, or destiny [*Schicksal*] separate us?" Can Hildgund revoke her destiny of marriage to Attila, and Burgundy's destiny of subjugation by the tyrant? She will make the attempt. Whether the attempt will be successful, and whether its success or failure will reveal the effectiveness of free will or the workings of necessity, is never spelled out. However, as I suggested above, it seems likely that Günderröde meant to depict events just prior to those described in stories of the historical Attila's actual death, and therefore that Hildgund represents a woman successfully acting in the political sphere. In doing so, *Hildgund* makes a unique and important contribution to early nineteenth century considerations of both the metaphysical and sociopolitical conditions of possibility for freedom.

### Further Reading on *Hildgund*

#### *In English*

Ezekiel, Anna. "Metamorphosis, Personhood, and Power in *Karoline von Günderröde*." *European Romantic Review* 25, no. 6 (2014): 773–91. This paper argues that Günderröde's view of the self informs a model of agency that acknowledges the vulnerability and finitude of human beings and denies that autonomy is a condition of freedom. The article uses an account of Günderröde's understanding of death as metamorphosis to show how Günderröde avoids either overemphasizing consciousness and autonomy or affirming self-annihilation and accepting determinism. The paper shows how this model of agency emerges in the play *Hildgund*.

**Hoff, Dagmar von, S. Friedrichsmeyer, and Patricia Herminhouse.** "Aspects of Censorship in the Work of Karoline von Günderrode." *Women in German Yearbook: Feminist Studies and German Culture* 11 (1995): 99–112. This article argues for the presence of gender censorship, in the form of the internalization of cultural restrictions on women's writing, in Günderrode's work. The authors argue that this censorship takes three forms: Günderrode's use of pseudonyms for publishing her work; her decision to leave some of her dramas unfinished, editing out actions such as political assassination that were considered taboo for women; and her choice of styles and formats that (partly) conformed to social expectations for women's writing.

**Nielsen, Wendy C.** "The Just Warrior in Kleist and Günderrode." In *Women Warriors in Romantic Drama*, 73–96. Lanham, MD: University of Delaware Press, 2013. Nielsen argues that Günderrode presents her women warriors as just, in opposition to her male warriors. Nielsen notes the tendency of commentators to view the death of Günderrode's heroines as signifying failure and limited options, which Günderrode also experienced in her life; Nielsen argues that these deaths may instead have represented freedom and empowerment for Günderrode.

**Simpson, Patricia Anne.** "The Essential Duel: Karoline von Günderrode on the Margins of War." In *The Erotics of War in German Romanticism*, 104–27. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2006. Simpson argues that in various pieces, including *Hildgund*, Günderrode appropriated emotional traits coded as masculine, such as patriotism, rage, and courage, to create an imaginary female identity. According to Simpson, Günderrode's female warriors change sex, becoming male in her fantasies. Simpson associates Günderrode's fantasized female identities with her biography, including her relationship with Creuzer.

*In German*

**Hoff, Dagmar von.** "Dramatisch Weiblichkeitsmuster zur Zeit der Französischen Revolution: Dramen von deutschsprachigen Autorinnen um 1800." In *Die Marseillaise der Weiber: Frauen, die Französische Revolution und ihre Rezeption*. Edited by Inge Stephan and Sigrid Weigel, 74–88. Hamburg: Argument, 1989. Hoff claims that late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth-century women's drama embodied a particular feminine gaze, based on an outsider's view of the realm

of life and politics inhabited by men. Hoff uses Günderrode's *Hildgund* and *Nikator* and Westphalen's *Charlotte Corday* to establish this point, arguing that while *Nikator* has a tyrant murdered onstage by a male protagonist, the female protagonists in the other plays are not shown carrying out the tyrant's murder, which is restricted to an imagined act. This, Hoff argues, shows the feminine gaze on the realm of political action: the desire to be involved but the obstacles to acting that are established by oneself and society.

**Hoff, Dagmar von.** "Geschlecht und Zensur. Legenden und Mythen im Werk Karoline von Günderrodes." *Germanica* 7 (2000): 5–20. Hoff uses Freud's account of the censor mediating the unconscious and its conscious expression, particularly in the form of gender censorship, to show censorship at work in Günderrode's writings at various levels. Hoff presents Günderrode's suicide as partially resulting from such censorship, in literary terms as a "scoring out" of herself.

**Licher, Lucia Maria.** "Der Völker Schicksal ruht in meinen Busen.' Karoline von Günderrode als Dichterin der Revolution." In *"Der Menschheit Hälfte blieb noch ohne Recht." Frauen und die französische Revolution.* Edited by Helge Brandes, 113–32. Wiesbaden: DeutscherUniversitätsVerlag, 1991. Licher considers Günderrode as a political thinker with revolutionary commitments, positioning herself against Wolf's influential claim that poets are sacrifices to their time. Licher considers the Brutus theme in Günderrode's work and its connection to revolution, Günderrode's "hopeful commentary" on the rise of Napoleon, and the role Günderrode sees for women and female poets in the revolutionary process. Licher admits that Günderrode's approach to the French Revolution became increasingly nuanced, with her relatively late *Hildgund* revealing criticisms of Bonaparte while still advocating a revolution brought about by both men and women.

#### *Other Translations*

**Nielsen, Wendy C.** Appendix C: "Hildgund." In *Women Warriors in Romantic Drama*, 151–67. Lanham, MD: University of Delaware Press, 2013.

**Schrauder, Monika.** "Hildgund." In *The Kiss in the Dream*. MA Diss. University of Massachusetts: 2010.

## *Hildgund*

### *Persons.*

*Herrich*, Lord of the Burgundians  
*Hildgund*, his daughter  
*Walther* of Aquitania, her betrothed  
*Attila*, King of the Huns  
*Edezon*, a Hun

**(Herrich's palace at Cabilonum.)**

**Herrich. Hildgund.**

*Hildgund*

Hail, you long-desired fields,  
And you, Burgundy, my paternal land!  
My gaze, tired of weapons and of turmoil  
Gladly lingers in my homeland's quiet halls.  
My ear, accustomed to rough men's steps and clang of arms,  
Now hears love's sweet voice,  
Only where my spouse and father beckon me, and my heritage.  
Where custom rules and not raw might.  
Only here is happiness, and peace and sweet rest.

# Hildgund

## Personen.

Herrich, Fürst der Burgunder  
Hildgund, seine Tochter  
Walthere von Aquitanien, ihr Verlobter  
Attila, König der Hunnen  
Edeson, ein Hunne

(Herrichs Palast zu Cabilonum.)

## Herrich. Hildgund.

Hildgund  
Seyd mir begrüßt, ihr längst ersehnte Fluren,  
Und du Burgund, mein väterliches Land!  
Mein Blick der Waffen müd', und des Getümmels  
Weilt in der Heimath stillen Hallen gern.  
Mein Ohr, gewöhnt an rauhe Männertritt' und Waffenklirr,  
Vernimmt der Liebe süße Stimme nun,  
Nur wo mir Gatte, Vater winket, und mein Erbe,  
Wo Sitte herrschet und nicht rohe Macht,  
Nur hier ist Glück, und Fried' und süße Ruhe.

*Herrich*

Not to the fatherland alone, but to the father  
Belongs the daughter's principal joy.

*Hildgund*

The father only makes the fatherland worthier,  
And my joy divides itself between him and it.

*Herrich*

Forgotten are separation's anxious years,  
My youth's daughter presses me to her heart.  
What lies between this day and that parting  
Is trifling dream and anxious self-deceit.  
Youthful joy shoos away the dreary times' misery,  
For what is forgotten is no longer anything to men.

*Hildgund*

So fly away then, too, you dark years' dreams!  
Joyful with new being, I forget what once was.

*Herrich*

Forget it! But do not forget to speak of him,  
Of him, whom all peoples' voices name glorious.  
My ear has heard only confused legends of him,  
And a distant rumor remains unbelieved by me.

*Hildgund*

What rumor's echoing lips speak of him,  
What may seem implausible or real,  
That is the King: in barbaric greatness  
He rules Pannonia's wide realm,  
If around him gold enervates the Romans,  
If weakness loots lust's cup,  
He himself scorns what he grants others,  
No enjoyment fetters him, his able spirit  
Escapes the enervation of dull joys  
And he so disdains what to others is bliss.  
In face of Greece's guile and the Romans' customs,  
He remains Attila, to himself sufficient and severe,

H e r r i c h

Dem Vaterlande nicht allein, dem Vater  
Gehört der Tochter erste Freude an.

H i l d g u n d

Der Vater macht das Vaterland erst werther,  
Und meine Freude theilet sich in ihn, und es.

H e r r i c h

Vergessen sind der Trennung bange Jahre,  
Der Jugend Tochter drückt mich an ihr Herz,  
Was zwischen diesem Tag und jenem Scheiden lieget  
Ist nichtiger Traum und banger Selbstbetrug.  
Die junge Freude scheucht der trüben Zeiten Jammer,  
Denn was vergessen ist, das ist dem Menschen nichts mehr.

H i l d g u n d

So flieht denn auch dahin, ihr dunkler Jahre Träume!  
Des neuen Daseyns froh, vergeß ich was einst war.

H e r r i c h

Vergiß es! Doch vergiß von ihm zu reden nicht,  
Von ihm, den aller Völker Stimme herrlich nennet.  
Verworrene Sage nur vernahm von ihm mein Ohr,  
Und glaublos bleibt mir ein entfernt Gerücht.

H i l d g u n d

Was des Gerüchtes Echolippen von ihm sprachen,  
Was unwahrscheinlich scheine oder wahr,  
Das ist der König: in barbarischer Größe  
Beherrschet er Panoniens weites Reich,  
Wenn um ihn her der Römer Gold entnervet,  
Wenn Weichlichkeit der Wollust Schaale beut,  
Verschmäht er selbst, was er den Andern gönnet,  
Ihn fesselt kein Genuß, sein thätiger Geist  
Entfliehet der Entnervung matten Freuden,  
Und er verachtet so, was Anderer Wonne ist.  
Bei Griechenlandes List und bei der Römer Sitte  
Blieb er noch Attila, sich selbst genug und streng,



No lowly goal will ripen his plans,  
 The dominion of a world seems determined for him;  
 The Orient's gold heaps itself at his feet,  
 But he gives it away lightly and wears a linen gown.  
 When his lords' wine bubbles in golden beakers,  
 He drinks from wood the pure spring's flood.—  
 In proud certainty he defies Odin's sword,  
 And his ancestors' glory and his people's greatness  
 No longer suffice him.—

*Herrich*

It shocks me what you say.—  
 But what was your fortune with this man's severity?

*Hildgund*

First I was abandoned, and alone lamented  
 My sorrowful heart, yet no-one wept with me;  
 From Walther, with whom my father's wish early united me,  
 Custom's segregating command divided me.  
 Then Ospiru saw me, the wife of Attila.  
 At first sight she was already well-disposed to me,  
 And her rank's finery did not prevent her friendship.  
 The Queen forgot who she and who I were,  
 And that the Hun people were hostile to mine,  
 Through loyalty I tied concord's tender bands  
 And the Queen sensed my friendship's worth.  
 Above all women Attila was well-disposed to her  
 And her happiness' radiance threw a beam upon me;  
 I, otherwise forgotten, now found mercy before the ruler,  
 I became the guardian of the kingly treasure.  
 But not Attila's grace, nor his woman's love  
 Sweetened exile to the outcasts;  
 My cheerless gaze hung on the gloomy distances  
 Of home, and the mountains of my fatherland.

*Herrich*

Welcome day that led you back!  
 But how were you able to tear the strong bond  
 That the King's will drew around you?

Kein niederes Ziel wird seinen Planen reifen,  
Die Herrschaft einer Welt scheint ihm bestimmt zu seyn;  
Des Orientes Gold häuft sich zu seinen Füßen,  
Doch er verschenkt es leicht und trägt ein leinen Kleid.  
Wenn seiner Fürsten Wein in goldenen Bechern sprudelt,  
So trinket er aus Holz der reinen Quelle Fluth.—  
In stolzer Sicherheit trotzt er auf Odin's Schwert,  
Und seiner Ahnen Ruhm und seines Volkes Größe  
Genügen ihm nicht mehr.—

H e r r i c h

Mich schrecket, was du sprichst.—  
Doch wie war dein Geschick bei dieses Mannes Strenge?

H i l d g u n d

Verlassen war ich erst und einsam klagte  
Mein traurig Herz, doch niemand weinte mit;  
Von Walther, dem mich früh des Vaters Wunsch vereinet,  
Schied mich der Sitte trennendes Gebot.  
Da sah mich Ospiru, die Gattin Attilas.  
Beim ersten Blick ward sie mir schon gewogen,  
Und ihres Ranges Glanz verwehrt ihr Freundschaft nicht,  
Die Königin vergaß wer sie und wer ich wäre,  
Und daß der Hunnen Volk dem meinen feindlich sey,  
Durch Treue knüpfte ich der Eintracht zarte Bande  
Und meiner Freundschaft Werth empfand die Königin.  
Vor allen Weibern war Attila ihr gewogen  
Und ihres Glückes Glanz warf einen Strahl auf mich;  
Ich sonst vergessen fand nun vor dem Herrscher Gnade,  
Des königlichen Schatzes Hütherin ward ich.  
Doch nicht Attilas Gunst, noch seines Weibes Liebe  
Versüßten der Verbannten das Exil;  
Mein trüber Blick hing an den düstern Fernen  
Der Heimath und den vaterländischen Bergen.

H e r r i c h

Willkommener Tag der dich zurückgeführt!  
Wie aber konntest du das starke Band zerreißen,  
Das um dich her des Königs Wille zog?

*Hildgund*

Hateful to me was the Hun's arrogance,  
 Hateful the day that beheld me in servitude,  
 And my soul brooded on a sure flight.  
 Then, after a hard battle, lauded by Attila,  
 Spattered with enemy blood, came Walther from the slaughter;  
 His victory did not delight me, nor his mass of laurels,  
 And with restrained pain I passed him the cup;  
 Then he whispers to me: Hildgund, I love you,  
 You already know my heart and our fathers' will.  
 Up! let us now flee! a fatherland beckons us,  
 A throne, and our true love  
 There awaits marriage's sweet bond.  
 Have you the courage to combat dangers,  
 That each morning brings, that no night chases off?  
 Then hear my counsel: Take from Attila's treasures  
 What your judiciousness deems useful,  
 Gold can only level the long path;  
 The poor find protection nowhere.—  
 Hard was the act, impossible its beginning,  
 If sly guile had not joined itself to external confidence.  
 Beloved by Ospiru, I had to fear her doubt,  
 If my anxious heart only betrayed my inner torment.  
 Then my gaze deceived her, that feigns eternal joy,  
 And the contentment that my tongue speaks.  
 One day, as at supper the cup gives pleasure  
 And cheerfulness banishes all mistrust,  
 Walther gives me the cue that bids swift flight,  
 And from the King's treasure I take my armor,  
 The golden sword, the golden arm-hangings,  
 My ancestors' heavy shield; my loyal steed bears them,  
 And under the moon's luster, under pale stars' shimmer  
 We forsake the Hun ruler's castle.

*Herrich*

And how did you escape the Scythians' wild hordes,  
 Did you have the gods' help, did you free yourself?

## H i l d g u n d

Verhast ward mir der Hunnen Uebermuth,  
Verhast der Tag, der in der Knechtschaft mich erblickte,  
Und meine Seele sann auf eine sichere Flucht.  
Da kam, nach schwerem Kampf, von Attila gepriesen,  
Mit Feindes Blut besprützt, einst Walther aus der Schlacht;  
Mich freute nicht sein Sieg, noch seiner Lorbern Menge,  
Und mit verhaltenem Schmerz reicht ich den Becher ihm;  
Da flüstert er mir zu: Hildgund, ich liebe dich,  
Du kennest schon mein Herz und unserer Väter Wille.  
Auf! laß uns jetzt entfliehn! uns winkt ein Vaterland,  
Ein Thron, und unserer treuen Liebe  
Erwartet dort der Ehe süßes Band.  
Hast du den Muth, Gefahren zu bekämpfen,  
Die jeder Morgen bringt, die keine Nacht verscheucht?  
So höre meinen Rath: Nimm von Attila's Schätzen,  
Was deiner Klugheit nützlich dünkt,  
Gold kann den langen Pfad nur ebnen,  
Der Arme findet nirgends Schutz.—  
Schwer war die That, unmöglich das Beginnen,  
Wenn sich nicht schlaue List an fremdes Zutraun band.  
Geliebt von Ospiru'n, mußt ich ihr Zweifeln fürchten,  
Wenn nur mein sorgend Herz die innere Quaal verrieth.  
Da täuschte sie mein Blick, der ewige Freude heuchelt,  
Und die Zufriedenheit, die meine Zunge spricht.  
Einst, da beim Abendmahl der Becher Freude giebt  
Und Frohsinn aller Argwohn bannet,  
Giebt Walther mir den Wink, der schnelle Flucht befiehlt,  
Und von des Königs Schatz nehm ich den Harnisch mir,  
Das goldne Schwert, die goldne Armgehenke,  
Der Väter schweres Schild; sie trägt mein treues Roß,  
Und bei des Mondes Glanz, bei blasser Sterne Schimmer  
Verlassen wir des Hunnenherrschers Burg.

## H e r r i c h

Und wie entkamet ihr der Szyten wilden Horden,  
Hat dich der Götter Hülff', hast du dich selbst befreit?

*Hildgund*

The god who freed me dwells in my own heart,  
 Whoever trusts his voice, to him rescue is near;  
 Hardship followed us quickly with its earnest tread,  
 But our courage derided it.  
 Soon we had to cut through the streams' course,  
 Then hide ourselves in the deepest chasms' night.  
 Only stars lit up our rough path,  
 Then the way hid from us in wide steppes' sand;  
 But the great confidence that we bore in our breasts  
 Brought us here, now we are indeed at the goal.

*Herrich*

Thus thanks ascend to our gods' thrones,  
 That they sent to me my daughter, and the youth!  
 My daughter's love will ease the pain of age,  
 And my enemies<sup>35</sup> might falls by the youth's arm.  
 He may choose<sup>36</sup> his recompense as his heart desires,  
 And you, Hildgund, devote yourself to him.

**(Attila's tent in front of Aquilegia.)****Attila. Edezon.***Edezon*

The army's muttering must reach the King's ear,  
 He who does not consider others' feelings begins unwise acts.

*Attila*

I have never yet scorned the clever advice of the loyal,  
 I gladly hear and follow wisdom's golden word,  
 For only in the darkness of distant times ripens  
 That which was my ancestors' plan, my father's will,  
 And my own heart's earliest longing.  
 Look up! in heaven you still see the same sun,  
 To which Hunnimund made his great vow,  
 That one day, as far as it sends its rays,  
 The Huns' strong scepter shall reach.

H i l d g u n d

Der Gott, der mich befreit, wohnt in dem eigenen Herzen,  
Wer seiner Stimme traut, dem ist die Rettung nah;  
Uns folgte schnell die Noth mit ihrem ernsten Tritte,  
Doch unser Muth verlachte sie.  
Bald mußten wir der Ströme Lauf durchschneiden,  
Dann uns verbergen in der tiefsten Schlünde Nacht,  
Nur Sterne leuchteten auf unserm rauhen Pfade,  
Dann barg sich uns der Weg in weiter Steppen Sand;  
Doch hohe Zuversicht, die wir im Busen trugen,  
Bracht uns hierher, jetzt sind wir ja am Ziel.

H e r r i c h

So steige Dank empor zu unserer Götter Throne,  
Daß sie die Tochter mir, den Jüngling mir gesandt!  
Es wird des Alters Schmerz der Tochter Liebe lindern,  
Und von des Jünglings Arm stürzt meiner Feinde Macht.  
Er wählte sich den Lohn, wie ihn sein Herz begehret  
Und Hildegunde du, gieb dich ihm selber hin.

**(Attilas Gezelt vor Acuilegia.)**

**Attila. Edezon.**

E d e z o n

Des Heeres Murren muß des Königs Ohr erreichen,  
Unkluge That beginnt, wer anderer Sinn nicht prüft.

A t t i l a

Des Treuen klugen Rath hab ich noch nie verschmähet,  
Der Weisheit goldnes Wort vernehm und folg ich gern,  
Denn nur im Dunkel ferner Zeiten reifet,  
Was meiner Ahnen Plan, was meines Vaters Wille,  
Und meines eignen Herzens frühste Sehnsucht war.  
Blick auf! am Himmel schaut du noch dieselbe Sonne,  
Der Hunnimund den großen Schwur gethan,  
Daß einst, so weit sie ihre Strahlen sendet,  
Der Hunnen starker Zepter reichen soll.

And could I ever forget such a word?  
 Forget what a great ancestor spoke?

*Edezon*

And have you not yourself fulfilled that oath?  
 Is the entire east, the west not submissive to you?  
 Do not the Romans pay you tribute in gold? The barbarians fear you  
 And Catalonia's plain gave you victory.  
 Who may count the Goths' bloody wounds  
 That Odin's sword struck in their<sup>37</sup> valleys.  
 In the blood of heroes Matrona's dark waves roll,  
 Bidden by Attila, victory follows the Huns.

*Attila*

You speak of that which has already happened,  
 But not of that which must still happen.  
 My people's heroic reputation is entrusted to this sword,  
 Woe is me if I do not fulfill what they hoped of me.

*Edezon*

Do not Goths, Huns and Gepids obey you,  
 Heruli, Scythians and Pannonia's mighty people?  
 And your art unites what seems so diverse  
 To one great purpose, to many a bold deed.  
 Is there still a goal that you have not yet won?  
 Still a glory that is not yours?

*Attila*

Rome still lives, still the Orient's dying empire  
 Twitches in vivid death spasms.  
 When both go, when the pride of both is conquered,  
 When my Huns' sword has avenged the rape of the world,  
 And thoroughly slaughtered that Roman people, that pairs  
 Deceit with cowardice, then only have I won.

*Edezon*

Still, what do you resolve for Aquilegia?  
 Its towers' pinnacles have toppled in rubble  
 And its citizens' courage climbs to desperation.

Und könnt ich auch ein solches Wort vergessen?  
Vergessen was ein großer Ahnherr sprach?

E d e z o n

Und hast du selbst nicht jenen Schwur erfüllt?  
Ist dir der ganze Ost, der West nicht unterthänig?  
Zollt dir nicht Römer Gold? Dich fürchten die Barbaren  
Und Katalaunens Ebne gab dir Sieg.  
Wer mag der Gothen blutige Wunden zählen,  
Die Odins Schwert in seinen Thälern schlug.  
Es rollt im Heldenblut Matronas dunkle Welle,  
Doch Attila gebeut, den Hunnen folgt der Sieg.

A t t i l a

Du sprichst von dem was schon geschehen,  
Doch nicht von dem, was noch geschehen muß.  
Der Meinen Heldenruhm ist diesem Schwerdt vertraut,  
Weh mir, erfüll ich nicht, was sie von mir gehofft.

E d e z o n

Gehorchen dir nicht Gothen, Hunnen und Gepiden,  
Heruler, Szyten und Panoniens mächtiges Volk?  
Und deine Kunst vereint, was so verschieden denket,  
Zu einem großen Zweck, zu mancher kühnen That.  
Giebts auch ein Ziel, das du noch nicht ersieget?  
Noch einen Ruhm, der nicht der deine sey?

A t t i l a

Noch lebet Rom, noch zuckt in regen Lebens-Krämpfen  
Des Orientes sterbend Kaiserthum.  
Wenn beide hin, wenn beider Stolz besieget,  
Wenn meiner Hunnen Schwerdt den Raub der Welt gerächt  
Und jenes Römer Volk, das Trug mit Feigheit paaret,  
Dahin geschlachtet hat, dann erst hab ich gesiegt.

E d e z o n

Doch was beschließt du mit Aquilegia?  
In Schutt gestürzt sind seiner Thürme Zinnen  
Und seiner Bürger Muth steigt zur Verzweiflung.



Where hidden powers slumber in the human breast,  
 There they wake them to monstrous deeds.  
 The Scythians' courage succumbed to lack's burden,  
 A stalwart man seeks only death in battle.

*Attila*

I do not fear it, nor Aquilegia's defenses,  
 For the hour of its fall is now here,  
 So says the seeress, who in the depths of things  
 Reads all coming destiny.

*Edezon*

Lord! before the blood of the brave stains Italy's earth,  
 Before uncertain victory strikes certain wounds,  
 Hear only once more quarter's inexpensive words,  
 Offer mercy and your forgiveness to the valiant warriors.

*Attila*

I will gladly give quarter, if mercy moves them,  
 Fear does not conquer me, but often a pleading word.

*Edezon*

Offer mercy and your forgiveness to the valiant warriors,  
 Surely your grace will guide men's souls,  
 They will gladly devote themselves to the victor's generosity.

*Attila*

Only know, today a bloody lot will still befall them,  
 If they scorn mercy's word with proud defiance,  
 If they choose Rome's cowardly yoke and weak emperor's will  
 And scorn the Huns' rule.

*Edezon*

Is there still a choice here? Perdition  
 Rests in the one hand, only the other is salvation.

*Attila*

So go then, you proven son of honor!  
 My friend, go! bring the warriors peace.

Wo in der Menschenbrust verborgne Kräfte schlummern,  
Da weckt sie sie zu ungeheurer That.  
Der Szyten Muth erliegt des Mangels Bürde,  
Den Tod im Streit nur sucht ein tapfrer Mann.

A t t i l a

Ich fürchte es nicht, noch Aquilegias Wehren,  
Denn seines Falles Stunde ist nun da,  
So spricht die Seherin, die in der Dinge Tiefen  
Die künftigen Geschicke alle liest.

E d e z o n

Herr! eh' der Tapfern Blut Italiens Erde färbet,  
Eh ungewisser Sieg gewisse Wunden schlägt,  
Vernimm nur einmal noch der Schonung billige Worte,  
Biet' Gnad' und dein Verzeihn den wackern Kämpfern an.

A t t i l a

Verschonen will ich gern, wenn Gnade sie bewegt,  
Die Furcht besiegt mich nicht, doch oft ein bittend Wort.

E d e z o n

Biet' Gnad' und dein Verzeihn den wackern Kämpfern an,  
Gewiß wird deine Huld der Männer Seelen lenken,  
Sie werden gerne sich des Siegers Großmuth weihn.

A t t i l a

Nur wisse, heute noch fällt blutiges Loos auf sie,  
Wenn sie der Gnade Wort mit stolzem Trotz verschmähn,  
Wenn sie Roms feiges Joch und schwacher Kaiser Wille  
Erwählen und der Hunnen Herrschaft schmähn.

E d e z o n

Ist hier noch eine Wahl? Verderben  
Ruht in der einen Hand, die andere nur ist Heil.

A t t i l a

So geh denn, du bewährter Sohn der Ehre!  
Mein Freund, geh! bring den Kämpfern Friede hin.

**Attila alone.***Attila*

I will still feel victory's glory today,  
 Yet an unfamiliar pain presses on my soul.  
 When after the Goths' fall the bloody plains smoked  
 And the devastation's horror filled me with sorrow;  
 Who sought to carry away the clouds from my brow?  
 Who sang of the hero's deed enthusiastically into my heart?  
 The daughter of Herrich it was, but terrible thought!  
 Treason, black as the night, stains Hildgund's image.—  
 I will forgive her for it, for bondage pressed her,  
 And because a great heart longs for freedom.  
 I will reclaim her, she shall have forgiveness,  
 And my heart's choice demands her as Queen.

**(Herrich's palace in Cabilonum.)**

**Herrich. Hildgund. Walther of Aquitania.**

*Herrich*

To bear misfortune's hard blow with silent senses,  
 Oh daughter, well befits your noble soul!  
 Attila calls for you, he will gladly forgive you,  
 The envoys greet you as Queen;  
 He sends you gifts, of gold and of jewelry,  
 And he gives me peace for my daughter's hand.

*Walther*

Yes just call, tyrant, she will never be for you,  
 As long as Walther lives, who laughs at your threat.

*Herrich*

Yet if Hildgund does not follow the Hun leader,  
 Then war's sword will be the King's avenger,  
 Then regret will come too late, and no tears save,  
 Burgundy will then feel servitude's deepest disgrace.

**Attila allein.**

A t t i l a

Des Sieges Herrlichkeit werd ich noch heut empfinden,  
Doch meine Seele drückt ein ungewohnter Schmerz.  
Als nach der Gothen Fall die blutigen Ebenen rauchten  
Und der Verwüstung Graus mit Trauer mich erfüllt;  
Wer suchte meiner Stirn die Wolken zu entrücken?  
Wer sang der Helden That begeistert mir ins Herz?  
Die Tochter Herrichs wars, doch schrecklicher Gedanke!  
Verrath, schwarz wie die Nacht, befleckt Hildgundens Bild.—  
Ich will es ihr verzeihn, weil Knechtschaft sie gedrückt,  
Und weil ein großes Herz sich auch nach Freiheit sehnt.  
Ich fodere sie zurück, Verzeihung soll ihr werden  
Und meines Herzens Wahl heischt sie als Königin.

**(Herrichs Palast in Cabilonum.)****Herrich. Hildgund. Walther von Aquitanien.**

H e r r i c h

Des Unglücks harten Schlag mit stillem Sinne dulden,  
O Tochter ziemet deiner edlen Seele wohl!  
Dich fordert Attila, er wird dir gern vergeben,  
Als Königin begrüßen die Gesandten dich;  
Geschenke schickt er dir, an Gold und an Geschmeide,  
Und Friede giebt er mir um meiner Tochter Hand.

W a l t h e r

Ja fodre nur, Tirann, dir wird sie nimmer werden,  
So lang' noch Walther lebt, der deiner Drohung lacht.

H e r r i c h

Doch, will Hildgunde nicht dem Hunnenführer folgen,  
So soll des Krieges Schwerdt des Königs Rächer seyn,  
Dann kommt die Reu zu spät, und keine Thräne rettet,  
Burgund empfinde dann der Knechtschaft tiefste Schmach.

*Walther*

Trust only in this sword, trust in my arm's strength,  
 Love conquers through me, death for it is sweet.  
 I know the danger, and yonder Huns' wars—  
 Have I not led thousands to fame and victory?  
 And do you believe only the Scythian hordes conquer?  
 Oh no! Aquitania's lords too have  
 Impressed on time the seal of glory.

*Herrich*

I know it, how you will sacrifice  
 Blood and life to honor and to love;  
 Only my daughter's will can decide over them,  
 Hildgund is silent, what does her dismal gaze say?

*Hildgund*

I am resolute; only in cowardly breasts struggles  
 The greater with the smaller resolution,  
 I am Attila's. You, oh Walther, flee,  
 If you love me! The one departing wills it so.

*Herrich*

The nobler, maiden, you have now chosen,  
 I feel it. Long, long may you fare well!

*Hildgund*

Already now, my father, you want to leave me,  
 And without blessing, without parting you hurry from me?

*Herrich*

My blessing ever follows you, spare me the parting,  
 Do not forget your father, think of him in the distance.—  
 Fortune guides you, may it ever be graceful to you.

**Hildgund. Walther.***Walther*

Your loyalty, then, depends on gold and majesty?  
 Deplorable sex! Woe to him who trusts you!

W a l t h e r

Trau nur auf dieses Schwerdt, trau auf des Armes Stärke,  
Die Liebe siegt durch mich, der Tod für sie ist süß.  
Ich kenne die Gefahr, und jener Hunnen Kriege—  
Hab ich nicht Tausende zu Ruhm und Sieg geführt?  
Und glaubst du, nur der Szyten Horden siegen?  
O nein! Auch Aquitaniens Fürsten haben  
Der Zeit des Ruhmes Siegel aufgedrückt.

H e r r i c h

Ich weiß es, wie du Blut und Leben  
Der Ehre und der Liebe opfern wirst;  
Der Tochter Wille nur kann über sie entscheiden,  
Hildgunde schweigt, was sagt ihr düstrer Blick?

H i l d g u n d

Ich bin entschieden; nur in feigen Busen kämpft  
Der größere mit dem kleineren Entschluß,  
Ich bin Attilas. Du, o Walther, fliehe,  
Wenn du mich liebst. Die Scheidende wills so.

H e r r i c h

Das Edlere, Mädchen, hast du jetzt gewählt,  
Ich fühl' es Leb' auf lange, lange wohl!

H i l d g u n d

Schon jetzt, mein Vater, willst du mich verlassen,  
Und ohne Segen, ohne Abschied eilest du von mir?

H e r r i c h

Mein Segen folgt dir stets, den Abschied spare mir,  
Vergiß den Vater nicht, denk seiner in der Ferne. —  
Das Glück geleitet dich, es sey dir immer hold.

**Hildgund. Walther.**

W a l t h e r

So hängt auch deine Treu von Gold und Hoheit ab?  
Unseliges Geschlecht! Weh' dem, der dir vertrauet!

Yes, you call generosity what is only fickleness,  
 Your soul's proud desire pursues Attila's throne,  
 And his name's glory devotes you so easily to him.  
 Will you still think of him who freed you, on a throne,  
 When golden majesty's intoxication beguiles your soul?

*Hildgund*

Oh slander the resolution that clever prudence begs  
 Not too early! You do not know what I want.  
 In my heart's deepest foundations ripens  
 The greatest deed that ever a woman has done.

*Walther*

Oh speak a word, I will free you,  
 Protect you from the Hun-King's wrath.

*Hildgund*

As long as Attila lives, you are not granted me;  
 His word commands the world, where should I flee?  
 Ruin is certain, only one resolution lights up  
 In this dreary night, yet the resolution is hard.

*Walther*

Hard, to do something for you? Do you know my love so  
 And my loyalty's ever-devoted heart?  
 I avenge every act, what your soul broods over  
 This dagger will carry out, be certain of my courage.

*Hildgund*

How lordly is man, he shapes his destiny,  
 By just his own powers is his law at its goal.  
 Woman's destiny, ah! does not rest in her own hand!  
 Now she follows need, now strict custom's will,  
 Can one revoke what superior power commands?

*Walther*

So without trying what my love can do, you  
 Will throw yourself in the Hun-King's arms?

Ja, Großmuth nennest du, was Wankelmuth nur ist,  
Der Seele stolzer Wunsch geht nach Attilas Throne,  
Und seines Namens Ruhm giebt dich so leicht ihm hin,  
Wirst du, wer dich befreit, auf einem Thron noch denken,  
Wenn goldener Hoheit Rausch die Seele dir bethört?

H i l d g u n d

O lästere den Entschluß, den kluge Vorsicht heischet,  
Zu frühe nicht! Du weist nicht was ich will.  
In meines Herzens tiefsten Gründen reifet  
Die größte That, die je ein Weib gethan.

W a l t h e r

O sprich ein Wort, ich werde dich befreien,  
Dich schützen vor des Hunnen-Königs Zorn.

H i l d g u n d

So lang' Attila lebt, bist du mir nicht vergönnet;  
Sein Wort befiehlt der Welt, wo sollt' ich hin entfliehen?  
Verderben ist gewiß, nur ein Entschluß erhellet  
In dieser trüben Nacht, doch der Entschluß ist schwer.

W a l t h e r

Schwer was für dich zu thun? Kennst du so meine Liebe  
Und meiner Treue ewig hingegebenes Herz?  
Ich ahnde jene That, was deine Seele brütet  
Vollführet dieser Dolch, sey meines Muths gewiß.

H i l d g u n d

Wie herrlich ist der Mann, sein Schicksal bildet er,  
Nur eigener Kräfte Maas ist sein Gesetz am Ziele,  
Des Weibes Schicksal, ach! ruht nicht in eigener Hand!  
Bald folget sie der Noth, bald strenger Sitte Wille,  
Kann man sich dem entziehn, was Uebermacht befiehlt?

W a l t h e r

So willst du unversucht, was meine Liebe kann,  
Dich in des Hunnen-Königs Arme werfen?



*Hildgund*

Protect my father still, as you have done till now.  
 The strength leaves him, from now on be his support.  
 His daughter's gentle thanks flow to you from afar.  
 If, for this favor, I can fulfill one wish  
 That you bear in your breast, oh tell it to me now!

*Walther*

Never speak my name so that Attila knows it;  
 I would be forgotten by him and also by you.

*Hildgund*

Go, bring my father his daughter's anxious greeting,  
 Tell him the farewell that will long separate us,  
 A steep way awaits me, his is at its goal.—  
 Who sees the future's magical dark image?  
 Whether a dagger will unite us, or destiny separate us?

*Walther*

I will leave you, yes you have yourself chosen,  
 Spare you brooding's regret, I can excuse you that.

**Hildgund alone.***Hildgund*

Oh Walther! Yet you will indeed one day be avenged  
 And he regret his robbery's brief joy.  
 Why do I hesitate, is it, then, too monstrous,  
 For shy, pale lips to name it?  
 Murder! Ha, the name alone appalls,  
 The deed is just, and bold and great,  
 The peoples' destiny rests in my breast;  
 I will free them, free me.  
 Banished are fear and childish hesitation,  
 Only a bold warrior wins a great goal.

**(Attila's palace at Curta in Pannonia.)**

**Hildgund. Edezon.**

H i l d g u n d

Beschütz' den Vater noch, wie du vordem gethan,  
Die Kraft verlässet ihn, sey du von jetzt ihm Stütze,  
Der Tochter leiser dank wallt aus der Ferne dir,  
Kann ich für diese Huld noch einen Wunsch erfüllen,  
Den du im Busen trägst, o sage mir ihn bald!

W a l t h e r

Nenn meinen Namen nie, daß es Attila wisse,  
Vergessen will ich sein von ihm und auch von dir.

H i l d g u n d

Geh, bring dem Vater noch der Tochter bangen Gruß,  
Sag' ihm das Lebewohl, das uns auf lange trennet,  
Mein harrt ein steiler Weg, der seine ist am Ziel.—  
Wer sieht der Zukunft magisch dunkele Gebilde?  
Ob uns ein Dolch vereint, ob uns das Schicksal trennt?

W a l t h e r

Verlassen will ich dich, du hast ja selbst gewählet,  
Spar' dir des Grübelns Reu, ich kann es dir verzeihn.

### **Hildgund allein.**

H i l d g u n d

O Walther! Doch du wirst ja einst gerochen  
Und seines Raubes kurze Lust ihn reun.  
Was zag ich noch, ists denn zu ungeheuer,  
Als daß die scheue, blasse Lipp' es nennen mag?  
Mord! Ha der Name nur entsetzet,  
Die That ist recht, und kühn und groß,  
Der Völker Schicksal ruht in meinem Busen,  
Ich werde sie, ich werde mich befrein.  
Verbannt sey Furcht und kindisch Zagen,  
Ein kühner Kämpfer nur ersiegt ein großes Ziel.

(Attilas Pallast zu Curta in Pannonien.)

**Hildgund. Edezon.**

*Edezon*

As Queen the Huns' King greets you.

*Hildgund*

Thanks be to the ruler for his mildness and favor.

*Edezon*

Attila wishes to find a true heart in you,  
 Give him, Queen, what he so gladly hopes;  
 He is a noble man, you will see him be gracious,  
 If you hear wisdom's word and his love.

*Hildgund*

I honor the friend's advice and will also fulfill it,  
 You are Attila's friend, you are honored by me.

*Edezon*

If you hear prudence, you will find yourself happy.

*Hildgund*

How does Ospiru live, do you hear anything of her?

*Edezon*

A quiet happiness blooms upon her, woman's loveliest lot,  
 The stronger love her, the weaker honor her,  
 A loving true heart lives in others' well-being.

*Hildgund*

Oh threefold blessed lot, well is he to whom you are granted,  
 Who is happy in his own ones' intimate midst!  
 No doubt nears the happy circle  
 And no worry nears the silent peace.

*Edezon*

So, too, are you happy in a beautiful circle.  
 A great man chooses you, a good people loves you.

*Hildgund*

Speak, is the King near? What? or is he far?

E d e z o n

Als Königin begrüßt der Hunnen König dich.

H i l d g u n d

Dem Herrscher werde Dank für seine Mild und Huld.

E d e z o n

Attila wünscht bei dir ein treues Herz zu finden,  
Gieb, Königin, es ihm, was er so gerne hofft;  
Er ist ein edler Mann, du wirst ihn gütig sehen,  
Wenn du der Weisheit Wort und seine Liebe hörst.

H i l d g u n d

Ich ehr' des Freundes Rath und werd' ihn auch erfüllen,  
Du bist Attilas Freund, du bist von mir geehrt.

E d e z o n

Wenn du die Klugheit hörst wirst du dich glücklich finden.

H i l d g u n d

Wie lebet Ospiru, vernahmst du nichts von ihr?

E d e z o n

Ihr blüht ein stilles Glück, des Weibes schönstes Loos,  
Sie liebt der Stärkere, der Schwächere ehret sie,  
Ein liebend treues Herz lebt in der Andern Wohl.

H i l d g u n d

O dreifach selig Loos, wohl dem, dem du vergönnt,  
Der in der Seinen trauter Mitte glücklich ist!  
Kein Zweifel nahet da dem frohen Kreise  
Und keine Sorge nahet sich der stillen Ruh.

E d e z o n

So bist du glücklich auch in einem schönen Kreise,  
Dich wählt ein großer Mann, dich liebt ein gutes Volk.

H i l d g u n d

Sprich, ist der König nah? Wie? oder ist er ferne?

*Edezon*

He is near to you, I'll go; soon he will be with you.

**Hildgund alone.***Hildgund*

Already my dagger twitches, soon the great sacrifice will bleed,  
 That, ruler of a world, a weak woman conquers.  
 The strong chain rips, that binds millions,  
 The mighty catch springs, that pushes a globe;  
 Italy, do not fear! I will free you,  
 The peoples' scourge falls by Hildgund's hand.

**Hildgund. Attila.***Attila*

Be welcomed by me to Pannonia, you, oh dear one!

*Hildgund*

I bow down to the dust before my ruler.

*Attila*

Where integrity guides open speech,  
 I gladly pass on kneeling and what humility demands,  
 Arise, Hildgund! arise! I have forgiven you.

*Hildgund*

Lord, your generosity's reward is indeed in your own heart,  
 May the gods' favor give you happiness and health and glory.

*Attila*

I seek home's quiet happiness in your arms,  
 And those hours' rest, that, after the day's battle  
 And after work's load, you sweeten for the victor.

*Hildgund*

You gods, thanks be to you, that you designated me,  
 To be worthy of the greatest, best King.

E d e z o n

Er ist dir nah, ich geh; bald wird er bei dir seyn.

**Hildgund allein.**

H i l d g u n d

Schon zuckt mein Dolch, bald wird das große Opfer bluten,  
Das, Herrscher einer Welt, ein schwaches Weib besiegt.  
Die starke Kette reißt, die Millionen bindet,  
Die mächtige Feder springt, die einen Erdball drückt;  
Italien zage nicht! ich werde dich befreien,  
Der Völker Geisel fällt durch Hildegundens Hand.

**Hildgund. Attila.**

A t t i l a

Sey in Pannonien du, o Theure, mir gegrüßt!

H i l d g u n d

Ich beuge mich zum Staub vor meinem Herrscher hin.

A t t i l a

Wo Redlichkeit die offne Sprache führet  
Erlaß ich knien gern und was die Demuth heischt,  
Steh auf Hildgund! steh auf! ich hab' es dir verziehn.

H i l d g u n d

Herr deiner Großmuth Lohn ist zwar in eigenem Herzen,  
Doch gebe Götter Huld dir Glück und Heil und Ruhm.

A t t i l a

Des Hauses stilles Glück such ich in deinem Arme  
Und jener Stunden Ruh, die nach des Tages Kampf  
Und nach der Arbeit Last dem Sieger du versüßest.

H i l d g u n d

Euch Götter, euch sey Dank, daß ihr mich ausersehen,  
Dem größten, besten König werth zu seyn.

Whatever my heart may do, that I will gladly give,  
To him, who is already a god, to delight humanly.

*Attila*

So come, a glad feast awaits  
The happy ones, my joyful people awaits you.

*Hildgund*

I follow my lord! (to herself) Ha, only celebrate, tyrant,  
The last day's fast fled hours.

Was nur mein Herz vermag, das werd' ich gerne geben,  
Den, der ein Gott schon ist, noch menschlich zu erfreun.

A t t i l a

So komm, ein frohes Fest erwartet  
Die Glücklichen, mein freudig Volk erwartet dich.

H i l d g u n d

Ich folge meinem Herrn! (für sich) Ha feire nur, Tirann,  
Des letzten Tages schnell entflohe Stunden.





## TWO

# “Piedro,” “The Pilgrims,” and “The Kiss in the Dream”

### Introduction to “Piedro,” “The Pilgrims,” and “The Kiss in the Dream”

The three poems in *Poetic Fragments* reflect Günderröde's use of a wide variety of forms for her writing, comprising a literary ballad (“Piedro”), a set of two mystical poems (“The Pilgrims”), and an erotic lyric poem (“The Kiss in the Dream”). Günderröde had written “Piedro” by October 1804, when she corresponded about the piece with Creuzer.<sup>1</sup> “The Pilgrims” was also completed by 1804, with the first part dated earlier, possibly to 1802.<sup>2</sup> Günderröde sent “The Kiss in the Dream” to Savigny in April 1804, around the time of his marriage to Günderröde's friend Kunigunde (Gunda) Brentano. Günderröde and Savigny had met in 1799 and were romantically interested in each other, but Savigny eventually decided that Günderröde would not be a suitable wife. The poem bears the subtitle “from an unpublished novel”—perhaps a reference to what might have been. In her letter accompanying the poem, Günderröde wrote, “Such things dreams little Günderröde, and of whom? Of someone who is very dear and will always be loved.”<sup>3</sup> While scholars writing on Günderröde's work have used biographical elements to interpret all three poems in *Poetic Fragments*, the connection between Günderröde's life and poetry is most easily supported in

the case of "The Kiss in the Dream." This essay, however, focuses on some of the philosophically significant aspects of Günderrode's work that can be discovered outside the lens of biographical interpretation.

The poems of *Poetic Fragments* provide an opportunity to explore two of the topics that receive the most philosophically interesting and original treatment in Günderrode's writing: love and death. It is particularly important to interpret Günderrode's writings on these themes carefully because, with a few exceptions, the secondary literature oversimplifies Günderrode's thought on these subjects, tending to connect her erotic depictions of death with her suicide and ignore the philosophical context for her treatment of love and the ways in which she reconceptualized death. Both love and death play important roles in Günderrode's cosmology. Günderrode's concept of love follows Early German Romantic theories of love in some respects, but differs from the latter in avoiding dualism, including gender dualism, while her complex and unique reimagining of death is crucial to her understanding of personal identity. This introduction examines Günderrode's representation of love as a unifying force within a monistic universe and considers several aspects of her conception of death: as a period of rejuvenation, as union with loved ones, as unification with the divine, and as a metamorphosis of the individual that involves an altered state of consciousness. These philosophical commitments must be considered in order to adequately interpret the three poems in *Poetic Fragments*.

The poems in *Poetic Fragments* are very different in form, but share a prominent use of themes of love, death, and longing. In "Piedro," the title character falls in love with a young man whom he has killed in a battle over his bride. Piedro's love for the young man poisons his relationship with his beloved, who was inadvertently the cause of the boy's death, and draws Piedro to the grave. Piedro's love cannot be consummated and is expressed instead by longing: he feels he is "entwined / By the dead youth's arm," who holds him in death "with a longing gaze / And with hot loving kisses." The battle between Piedro and the young man, including the moment of the young man's death, is highly erotically charged ("in wrathful surges / The fighters' hot blood mixes"). This battle is their only encounter, and it is the young man's bravery, unyieldingness, and gracefulness as he dies on Piedro's sword that attract Piedro to him. The connection between death and eroticism is the driving force of the poem, motivating Piedro's search for his bride, his

attraction to the youth, his confrontation with and killing of the youth, his change in attitude toward his bride after the young man's death, and his own willing death.

The first poem of "The Pilgrims" also describes the protagonist as held captive by love in a way that draws her or him to death: "Your lovely nature, / The red of your lips, / Holds me imprisoned / Until death." In this case, the grave is presented as an escape from this captivity: the narrator tells his "beloved" that "There I can leave you." The poem conveys a sense of alienation as the pilgrim wanders over the earth, traveling eventually to the sea, which Günderröde uses here, as elsewhere in her work, as a metaphor for the divine: the source of all life and the place to which all life returns to be merged once again in the whole. The second poem of "The Pilgrims" makes explicit the rejection of earthly life in favor of spiritual exaltation in death that is implied in the first poem: "What is the magnificence of the world / And all, that pleases the senses? / I will gladly renounce it."

In "The Kiss in the Dream" Günderröde mingles sexual imagery and expressions of erotic longing with images of the night, which she uses to evoke death. The poem ends with the exhortation: "Wrap yourself in night, it slakes your longing / And heals the pain, like Lethe's cool floods." Kari Lokke has pointed out the images of sexual fulfillment in this poem, especially at the start, which, Lokke argues, "suggests that Günderröde should also be known as a poet of fulfilled and satisfied desire rather than simply as an emblem of unrequited love."<sup>4</sup> Lokke does not deny that Günderröde's work often expresses longing for an other who is out of reach, or that in many pieces, including this poem, Günderröde connects this longing with death. Rather, Lokke rightly claims that an overemphasis on these aspects, usually motivated by an interest in the biographical background of Günderröde's work (such as her unfulfilled love for Savigny in the case of "The Kiss in the Dream"), obscures other concerns in Günderröde's writings, and with them the complexity and originality of Günderröde's erotic poetry. When we acknowledge the expression of sexual satiety in the early part of "The Kiss in the Dream," not only does Günderröde's poem appear as a surprisingly outspoken and powerful expression of female sexuality for its time, rather than simply a morbid expression of unrequited love, but the imagery of death at the end of the poem also takes on a different tone. The "night" has its own positive allure, not just the negative

appeal of obscuring the things of the world and their disappointments. The narrator's turn to the night is not just a turn away from an inadequate world, but a turn toward secret pleasures. While the imagery of the night in this poem certainly contains connotations of death, this reading also opens up the possibility of interpreting darkness and night in a more literal sense—as a time for sensual pleasures.

Commentators often claim that death, particularly eroticized death, is the most central theme in Günderröde's writing.<sup>5</sup> Many interpreters assume that this topic was important to Günderröde because of her supposed real desire for death, reflected in her suicide.<sup>6</sup> The idea that Günderröde was pathologically fascinated by death may partly result from assumptions about Romanticism and Romantic attitudes to death, with which Günderröde's imagery and thought often resonate. The stereotype of the unworldly, morbid Romantic is a prevalent one, but it is something of a caricature. As Marina Rauchenbacher has pointed out, the term *Romantic* has a complicated history and a variety of meanings, but is often used in a vague or pejorative sense to denote a pathological, unrealistic, or naive attitude.<sup>7</sup> It has often been claimed that "Romanticism" in general, and Early German Romanticism in particular, are obsessed with death and as a result are dangerous, even provoking the deaths and suicides of various Romantic figures.<sup>8</sup> This is at least an oversimplification of Romantic attempts to find new ways to respond to the reality and inevitability of death that take account of recent changes in attitudes to religion and in physics, medicine, and philosophy. If we understand Günderröde's writings on death as belonging to one such attempt, we can see that these writings provide a quite radical reimagining and revaluation of death.

Some writers treat the desire for death that they attribute to Günderröde as a longing for annihilation, possibly as a response to Günderröde's romantic rejection by Creuzer (and, earlier, by Savigny) or to her feelings of impotence and negation at the hands of her contemporaries. For example, the writers of one article claim that Günderröde "crossed herself out, just as one might do with a text to make it unreadable."<sup>9</sup> Lokke has argued against the interpretation of the death-motif in Günderröde's work as signifying a desire for annihilation, pointing out Günderröde's association of death with reincarnation. As Lokke argues, this connection is evident at the end of "The Kiss in the Dream"

in the reference to the waters of Lethe, which in ancient Greek mythology are the waters of forgetfulness, given to souls after death and prior to their reincarnation as new individuals. On this interpretation, death is a period of rest and rejuvenation that offers a chance to forget one's history, including one's sufferings, without annihilating the individual, who is instead reborn.<sup>10</sup>

Most of Günderröde's commentators recognize that death did not simply represent oblivion for Günderröde, although few consider the importance of reincarnation to Günderröde's account. Instead, several authors address another important meaning that death held for Günderröde: the possibility of reunification with loved ones, particularly lovers, after death. We see this idea in an understated form in "Piedro," in which the dead youth seems to long for Piedro even in death, and where Piedro's bride "Would gladly die of pain, / Only not to leave her dear one." This concept of rejoining loved ones after death is particularly overt in Günderröde's poem "The Malabarian Widows," which idealizes the now illegal Hindu practice of *sati*, in which a widow throws herself (or in reality is often thrown by others) onto her husband's pyre. Others have remarked on Günderröde's uncritical appropriation of this practice in her work.<sup>11</sup> In "The Malabarian Widows," Günderröde claims that this practice represents a recognition that the loving husband and wife will be unified after death, as "the previously disunited flames of love / Are struck heatedly together into one."<sup>12</sup>

Most commentators writing on Günderröde's idea of the unification of lovers in death relate this idea to Günderröde's suicide, which took place immediately after she learned that Creuzer had ended their relationship. It is sometimes suggested that Günderröde's suicide was partly motivated by a desire for eternal union with her lover after death, and that her use of the motif of death in her work reflects this desire.<sup>13</sup> For example, Joachim Heimerl suggests that the homoerotic love story in "Piedro" is partly a foil for Günderröde's forbidden love with the married Creuzer. According to Heimerl, the homoeroticism of this ballad reflects Günderröde's identification with the title character and rejection of social mores pertaining to romantic love, which she experienced in her own life as unbearably restrictive.<sup>14</sup> Piedro's longing to be united with the young man beyond the grave can then be interpreted in biographical terms as reflecting Günderröde's desire for union with Creuzer. Other commentators point to Günderröde's correspondence

with Creuzer as evidence that Günderrode genuinely anticipated union with Creuzer after their deaths.<sup>15</sup>

Whether or not the idea of a posthumous union of lovers can inform us about Günderrode and her suicide, the details of this idea and its role in Günderrode's thought are philosophically interesting. The hope of being reunited with loved ones after death was not peculiar to Günderrode, but has a long and prominent history. This idea was (and still is) widespread in popular understandings of the Christian heaven, and was appropriated by Early German Romantics such as Novalis. For example, Novalis's "Hymns to the Night" includes a vision of the narrator's dead lover in a scene that promises eternal union after death: "In her eyes rested eternity—I grasped her hands, and the tears became a sparkling, unbreakable bond."<sup>16</sup> Günderrode's version of this idea takes a particular form that is grounded in her metaphysics, which she adapts from Schelling. As I described in the introduction to this volume, Günderrode presents the universe as constituted by entities, including human beings, formed from perpetually changing constellations of "elements." After death, these constellations disintegrate and the elements combine with others to create new entities. Günderrode claims that the elements that make up the universe are combined in individual entities according to laws of affinity.<sup>17</sup> Thus, attraction between individuals, or love, can be understood as an affinity between some or all of the elements that constitute them, which pull at each other across the boundary formed by their division into separate, distinct individuals. After the deaths of these individuals, the compatible elements are released from their connections to other, less compatible elements and (in principle) able to unite. This theory underlies Günderrode's claim in "The Malabarian Widows" that "Death will become sweet celebration of love, / The separated elements unified." In her philosophical fragment "Idea of the Earth," Günderrode suggests that over time, the working out of the affinities and attractions between elements could result in constellations of elements that are more homogeneous, more harmonious, or have stronger connections between them. This means that while the unification of lovers in death may have held romantic appeal for Günderrode, it is also, on her account, part of a metaphysical process. This process may also have ethical implications in the imperative to create more harmoniously constituted entities.

The frequent connection of love and death in Günderröde's work is therefore not simply an expression of romantic morbidity following her disappointing love affairs; rather, this connection has philosophical significance. For Günderröde, love is not just an emotion or desire with no significance beyond itself; it is the felt experience of a connection between the elements that make up individuals, which are drawn to unite. This draw or attraction is what drives the progression of the universe through its ever-changing individual forms—changes that are only possible through the deaths of individuals.

Günderröde's view of death as a dissolution of the self that permits reconstitution in new forms provides a very different reference point than the idea of death as oblivion or an idea of death that follows a Christian model of reunification with loved ones in heaven. When interpreting passages such as "He only wants to be sunk deeply / In contemplation of the dead" ("Piedro"), "I long, oh sweet / Beloved, for you! / But I choose the grave, / Of the savior for that" ("The Pilgrims"), or "Wrap yourself in night, it slakes your longing" ("The Kiss in the Dream"), it matters whether the death that is signified is annihilation, a passage of the soul to a place where it will encounter its loved ones, or a metamorphosis of the self in combination with other entities that is part of the natural and spiritual unfolding of the universe.

Günderröde's metaphysics also suggests a philosophical interpretation of her frequent use of the theme of love, particularly tragic or unfulfilled love. For Günderröde, love is the experience of attraction between elements, which is consummated in the union of these elements. However, union is impossible as long as the elements are organized into separate individuals, and their attraction may therefore be felt as longing. The poems of *Poetic Fragments* all thematize longing, which is directed at a dead lover in "Piedro," a past or absent lover in "The Kiss in the Dream," and the divine in "The Pilgrims." Similarly, in "The Manes" a student longs for the past age of a dead king with whom he feels an affinity, and in "The Frank in Egypt" all three characters long for distant lands. As these examples suggest, for Günderröde longing, representing the striving of separated elements to join together, is not restricted to romantic love, but is a characteristic of the human condition that may be experienced in many contexts.<sup>18</sup> Günderröde's depictions of protagonists longing or searching for a homeland, a lover, or secret knowledge



all illustrate the same predicament: the world is currently organized in such a way that things that are drawn to join together are often kept separated. As a result, while Günderröde sometimes depicts moments of union or consummation (for example in “The Malabarian Widows” and “The Kiss in the Dream,” where the narrator claims a kiss “[s]laked my breast’s deepest craving”), she also often depicts situations in which consummation cannot take place and the attraction between elements, or love, is experienced as longing or loss (including in “Piedro” and other lines of “The Kiss in the Dream”).

Like Günderröde, the Early German Romantics presented longing as the expression of a drive to (re-)unite with something lost or absent. In his 1798 *System of Ethics*, Fichte claimed that longing was the means by which the self could become aware of objects outside itself, since “the only way [an instance of longing] can be distinguished from another longing is by means of its object. Thus . . . I now also become conscious of the object of my longing.”<sup>19</sup> He continued, “A longing that is determined through its object, however, is called a *desiring*.” The Early German Romantics followed Fichte in characterizing the individual self and objects outside this self as having been created by the dividing of an original, unitary, greater self. This entailed that longing for or desiring an object that is apparently outside the self is in fact longing for a lost or separated part of the deeper self. Schelling, for example, characterized longing as “striving to return to itself.”<sup>20</sup>

The writings of the Early German Romantics often depict quests for lost unity that illustrate this philosophical commitment. These include Novalis’s tale of “Hyacinth and Roseblossom” in *The Apprentices at Saïs*, and Novalis’s and Schlegel’s depictions of the development of, respectively, a poet in *Henry of Ofterdingen* and an artist in *Lucinde*. In these stories, longing stimulates the protagonist to seek something, which is ultimately revealed to be a lost part of himself. In the three stories just mentioned, this is represented by a female counterpart to the male protagonist, who is eventually united with the protagonist through romantic love. Love is therefore the force through which the individual self recovers its connection to the greater self and becomes whole.

The ideal of wholeness or unity was central to the Early German Romantic project of overcoming what they saw as the alienation and materialism of worldly existence, particularly in the modern age. They imagined this unity as a synthesis of various opposing forces or

characteristics, which included the divine/spiritual and the physical world, consciousness and the unconscious, mind and nature, reason and imagination, and philosophy and poetry. Early German Romantic theories of love operated within this worldview, presenting love as a force that could overcome this dualistic starting point in order to achieve unity. In other words, for the Early German Romantics longing and love were means, not only for individuals to achieve wholeness and greatness, but also for the spiritualization and unification of the world.

As several commentators have explored, Early German Romantic theories of love were heteronormative and depended on gender stereotypes.<sup>21</sup> The dichotomous characteristics mentioned above have widely been imagined as gendered, with women associated with nature, the unconscious, the emotions, imagination, and the body, and men associated with intellect, reason, and the mind. For the Early German Romantics, these polarized qualities could be shared in love, including sexual union. Consequently, as Friedrichsmeyer points out, "heterosexual love would become the prototypical synthesis of all polarities and the singular most important medium for effecting the restoration of universal accord."<sup>22</sup>

Becker-Cantarino, Friedrichsmeyer, and Michaela Schräge-Fruh claim that Schlegel intended to undermine gender dichotomies by advocating heterosexual union as an exchange of gendered attributes between the partners.<sup>23</sup> In this way, he believed, each partner could develop the characteristics of the opposite gender and become whole. Instead, these authors argue, this model reinforces the gendered constructions it claims to mitigate, since it must presuppose them in order to present heterosexual love as unifying opposites. Furthermore, they point out, this model tends to idealize an asymmetrical appropriation of the female by the male. Romantic authors focused on male protagonists, whose development toward self-fulfillment and rediscovery of their original, whole self is enabled by women, and failed to describe a parallel development for female characters. As Friedrichsmeyer notes, in *Lucinde*, Julius's relationship with Lucinde results in his discovery of his inner divinity and emergence as an artist, while Lucinde experiences no development.<sup>24</sup> Novalis's work follows the same pattern. For example, in *Henry of Ofterdingen*, Henry's achievement of wholeness and poetic genius is effected through heterosexual union with his opposite, Mathilde, who subsequently dies.<sup>25</sup>

Although Günderrode also presents love as a unifying force, her theory of love differs significantly from those of the Early German Romantics. Günderrode did not make heterosexual love paradigmatic of union that recovers a lost spiritual whole. Her cosmology is not based on a set of dichotomies between spiritual and physical, consciousness and the unconscious, mind and world, or reason and imagination, but on a monistic universe comprised of elements. On her account, the synthesis aspired to in love is not a synthesis of opposites, but a synthesis of things that are alike, namely, elements.<sup>26</sup> This seems to support the claim by some commentators that Günderrode viewed homosexual love, such as that depicted in “Piedro,” as paradigmatic of union.<sup>27</sup> This is plausible in theory, but in practice although some of Günderrode’s work is homoerotic, she does not privilege homosexual love in depicting attraction between elements. Instead, she uses relationships between women and men for this purpose as well as relationships between people of the same sex. For example, in “The Malabarian Widows” and “Timur” the attraction Günderrode describes is between a man and a woman, while in “The Manes” and “Piedro” it is between two men. Nonetheless, Günderrode provides an alternative to the Early German Romantic idealization of heterosexual love as a force that unifies opposite attributes. The homoeroticism in “Piedro” is an indication that she avoids both the essentialist conceptions of gender reinforced by Early German Romantic theories of love and the dualism that the Early German Romantics aimed to overcome, but presupposed.

Notwithstanding this difference, Licher and Dormann claim that in Günderrode’s work, as in Early German Romanticism, the unifying force of love provides an alternative basis for conceptualizing existence to the individualistic, materialistic, and mechanistic worldview of the Enlightenment and post-feudal European society.<sup>28</sup> As Manfred Frank and Dormann have explored in detail, creating such an alternative was the goal of Novalis’s and Friedrich Schlegel’s new mythology, as well as of other contemporaries of Günderrode’s, including the authors of *Das älteste Systemprogramm des deutschen Idealismus* (*The Oldest System-program of German Idealism*) (i.e., the young Hegel, Schelling, and/or Hölderlin).<sup>29</sup> Although this social and political project is not prominent in the poems of *Poetic Fragments*, some writers have argued that a rejection of capitalist, Enlightenment, and bourgeois social norms is present in the homoeroticism of “Piedro”<sup>30</sup> or in any of Günderrode’s pieces that

feature quests for a meaningful alternative to the everyday world of business and society or to scientific forms of knowledge.<sup>31</sup> Such pieces include "The Pilgrims" and *Prophet of Mecca*, as well as "The Frank in Egypt," "The Adept," "Story of a Brahmin," and others. One might also find a rejection of the Enlightenment or everyday pursuits and values in the turn to the night portrayed in "The Kiss in the Dream."

According to Dormann and Licher, G nderrode and the Early German Romantics view love as having a similar role in establishing these desired alternative ways of living. Licher claims that for G nderrode, like for the Romantics, an individual may experience "all-love," that is, an unconscious awareness of the interconnectedness of all things. Dormann adds that it is longing that stimulates the individual to discover this interconnectedness, which she also characterizes as "love."<sup>32</sup> On Licher's interpretation, once the individual recognizes this love as a principle of life, she may change her way of living, orienting herself to nature and sharing with others. Licher claims that this model is the cornerstone of Romantic praxis and, in addition to being found in G nderrode's work, underpins Early German Romantic notions of sympathy, *Symphilosophie*, and *Sympoesie*.<sup>33</sup>

So far, we have seen that G nderrode's depictions of love and longing, including in "Piedro" and "The Kiss in the Dream," indicate connections between elements, but not that they indicate a connection between all things. However, G nderrode also uses images to represent longing that recall the Early German Romantic ideal of union with the whole, especially after death. These images of longing for a homeland or immersion in an oceanic whole feature in all three poems of *Poetic Fragments*, and represent G nderrode's version of a *unio mystica*. Below, I explore the relation of these images to concepts of unification with the absolute in Early German Romanticism and Christianity, and ask whether, for G nderrode, the realization of one's connectedness to all things initiates a change in praxis similar to that imagined by the Romantics.

Like the Early German Romantics and mainstream Christianity, G nderrode understood death as permitting union with the divine as well as with other individuals. A fundamental doctrine of Christianity is the alienation of human beings from God, expressed paradigmatically in the tale of Adam and Eve's expulsion from Eden. The New Testament presents Christ's message of hope as the possibility for human

beings to be reconciled with their creator through love, with the process of reconciliation beginning in life and completed after death. Fichte and his Early German Romantic successors gave this tale of alienation and reconciliation a philosophical reconstruction. On these models, the universe was created from an originally single, unconscious, spiritual or divine whole, which differentiated itself into the individual entities that make up the world in order to become conscious and know itself. Such differentiation is necessary for consciousness because of the requirement for distance between the knowing, perceiving subject and the object that is known or perceived. Without this distance, subject and object collapse into an undifferentiated unity that by definition lacks the perspective necessary for knowledge. This is what Novalis means when he claims, "We abandon the *identical* in order to represent it":<sup>34</sup> without separation and distance between the representing subject and represented object, representation, or knowledge, is impossible.

Also by definition, for the Early German Romantics the state of fragmentation in which the universe and individuals within it exist is an alienated one: all these entities have broken off from their original unity. However, upon the deaths of individual entities these are absorbed again in the whole. This reabsorption is the end of alienated individual existence and a return to unified existence as part of the divine whole. "Death," claims Novalis, "is beginning and ending at the same time, separation and closer self-bonding at the same time. Through death the reduction will be completed."<sup>35</sup>

Günderrode's model of death incorporates a modified version of this movement of fragmentation and reunification. Her ocean imagery expresses the idea of a unitary all-encompassing origin for life, to which individual entities return and from which they are born again. In her prose poem "An Apocalyptic Fragment," Günderrode describes individual entities emerging from the ocean and then returning to it, dissolving in it, and arising again: "I became aware that all the creatures that had climbed from the ocean would turn back to it and generate themselves again in changing forms."<sup>36</sup> The image of immersion in an ocean, representing death as dissolution in the whole, appears in all three poems in *Poetic Fragments*. The ocean features prominently in "Piedro," which begins with an image of the waters of creation that is repeated midway through the poem and again at the end. This phrase, "Darkness rests upon the waters," recalls Genesis 1:2, which describes

the world at the first moment of creation ("and darkness was upon the face of the deep").<sup>37</sup> At the end of the poem we learn that Piedro, who has ripped off his bandages and joined the dead, "sleeps deep in the ocean." In "The Pilgrims," the return of the pilgrims to the oceanic whole is more explicitly related to the divine. The First Pilgrim wanders the earth, alienated, longing to reach the ocean, and this desire is reframed by the Second Pilgrim as the desire to leave earthly existence to participate in the heavenly realm. "The Kiss in the Dream" refers to death predominantly using imagery of night rather than oceanic imagery, but the image of "Lethe's cool floods" with which the poem ends recalls the waters of death, as Lokke has explored.

Heimerl claims that G nderrode's use of oceanic imagery in "Piedro" expresses the idea of union with the whole of existence. According to Heimerl, in this poem G nderrode uses the breaking of taboos in homoerotic love to represent overstepping the bounds of individual existence into union with the other. This union with an individual other also represents immersion in the origins of all life, embodied by the ocean. According to Heimerl, Piedro's longing for the dead youth reveals an opposition, which Heimerl claims is characteristic of both G nderrode's works and her psychological experience, between an unbearably restrictive earthly life as a distinct individual and a longed-for "metaphysical" existence that permits full being-together with others, and that is only possible in death.<sup>38</sup> Several commentators connect this idea of the dissolution of the individual in the absolute to G nderrode's concept of love. Christmann and Friedrichsmeyer claim that G nderrode secularizes the Christian model of redemptive love to present love as a force that effects a *unio mystica*, not with a God conceived along Christian lines, but with an all-encompassing nature.<sup>39</sup> Gisela Dischner claims that, for G nderrode, "Love binds us . . . with each other and with the elements (nature), thus with the continuity of being."<sup>40</sup>

Heimerl notes similarities between G nderrode's idea of immersion in the whole and Novalis's conception of a return to the divine spirit, as well as its influence by Schellingian metaphysics.<sup>41</sup> However, there are important and interesting differences between G nderrode's model of the relationship of individual entities to an original divine unity and versions of this model by Novalis, Schelling, or Fichte. One such difference is G nderrode's suggestion of the possibility of continued awareness and personal identity after death. For Fichte and the

Early German Romantics, awareness and personal identity are defining features of individual existence, and it is logically impossible to maintain these once the individual has dissolved in the whole, that is, after she or he has died. By contrast, Günderrode seems to imagine an attenuated and altered form of awareness during one's existence as part of the whole—that is, after/during death—and a continuation of personal identity even after the original living individual has ceased to exist. For example, in “An Apocalyptic Fragment” the narrator describes a vision in which s/he wakes after a period of sleep that seems to represent death, during which s/he claims to have had “airless and tangled dreams.”<sup>42</sup> Similarly, in “A Dream,” Günderrode writes “I came to a dark hollow where past times and the great spirits of antiquity slept a deep sleep. / . . . But into the ears of the sleepers pressed only weakly the tangled booming of [events'] voices, they raised their heads, rubbed their heavy lashes, and stretched their arms out longingly towards life.”<sup>43</sup> In these pieces, Günderrode describes the self as continuing to be aware of itself and its surroundings after death, but in a way that eludes categories of space and time and that is attenuated, confused, and, at least in some formulations, impotent.

This point counts against the attribution to Günderrode of a model of death as oblivion or annihilation of the individual. It also reveals Günderrode's account of death as an original addition to post-Kantian debates about the nature of knowledge and the self. Despite their insistence on the importance of the subject-object distinction for knowledge and consciousness, the Early German Romantics maintained the possibility of some form of nondiscursive knowledge, or intuition, of reality. Although cut off from the original whole, the individual could potentially catch glimpses of this whole through dreams, visions, chains of association, and the use of linguistic tropes such as metaphor and irony, all of which intimated, rather than directly represented, the true nature of the world as whole and divine. Thus, Novalis writes that “Whoever . . . wants to attain knowledge of nature, uses his moral sense, acts and develops in accord with the noble kernel of his innerness, and as if spontaneously nature will open herself before him,” and “the element of feeling is an inner light.”<sup>44</sup> But all these ways of knowing and perceiving pertain to individual existence and are not possible after death. Günderrode, however, describes forms of awareness after death, after the loss of individuation should make it impossible to have any sort of awareness

at all, according to these other models. I have suggested elsewhere that this could have important ramifications for conceptualizing the nature and importance of consciousness and its role in the constitution of the self and the interactions of this self with the world.<sup>45</sup>

For Günderrode, as in Christianity and Early German Romanticism, the union that occurs after death can be prefigured in life, with implications for how one lives. Much of the imagery that Günderrode uses to depict death as a form of union with the whole, including in the three poems of *Poetic Fragments*, belongs to a mystical tradition of expressing union with God, particularly in erotic terms. This is especially clear in "The Kiss in the Dream," in which the depiction of pleasures experienced in the turn from the world to the night can signify the ecstasy of spiritual communion, which renders all earthly pleasures inadequate. In places, the poems of *Poetic Fragments* prioritize the image of union with the divine over imagery of death itself. For example, the Second Pilgrim claims that s/he will renounce the world and cries, "Jesus! only to you! to you! / Will I bear my longing." While it is implied that the Pilgrim looks forward to death, what is expressed is primarily hope for union with Christ, rather than any other expectation of death. Furthermore, the mystical tradition saw union with God as not necessarily restricted to death, but as possible in a limited sense in visions and dreams. Mystics such as Jakob Böhme, Meister Eckhart, and Teresa of Avila saw themselves as experiencing moments of union with God while alive. This notion is taken up by Novalis in "Hymns to the Night"<sup>46</sup> and can be seen in some of Günderrode's works, including "An Apocalyptic Fragment," "Feast of the Wildflowers," "Prayer to the Patron Saints," "To My Saint," and "The Kiss in the Dream." In these pieces, the protagonists catch glimpses of union with the divine, whether this is expressed in traditionally Christian (Catholic) terms as union with the Virgin or saints, as a broader form of spirituality for the world, or metaphorically as sexual pleasure.

In Novalis's "Hymns to the Night," the vision of spiritual unity after death results not only in an altered understanding of death, but also in changes to one's life. Christmann claims that this is not the case for Günderrode, arguing that unlike for Novalis, for Günderrode the experience of inner unity with the dead does not lead to an intensification or alteration of the experience of life.<sup>47</sup> There exists considerable evidence against this claim and it cannot be supported as a statement about



Günderrode's work in general. In "The Manes," for example, Günderrode explicitly links awareness of our connections with the dead to the capacity for prophecy and the ability to perceive spirits.<sup>48</sup> Elsewhere in Günderrode's work, characters who experience visions of the true nature of the universe are not drawn to death but change their lives in light of their visions. These characters, including Muhammad in *Prophet of Mecca*, Almor in "Story of a Brahmin," and Alchemines in *Magic and Destiny*, appear as wise men and women who live lives of contemplation or spiritual engagement. While the poems of *Poetic Fragments* emphasize longing for death, as Christmann suggests, elsewhere in her work Günderrode instead emphasizes the sense of magic and wonder that arises from the realization of one's potential for an altered relationship with the things of the world, and the capacity this has to change one's life. Günderrode's images of immersion in a whole can therefore be understood as initiating changes in how one relates to the natural world and the world of material pursuits, as Licher and Dormann suggest.

On the other hand, it is not clear that these changes resemble the shift to a communal praxis imagined by the Early German Romantics. Rather than advocating a closer community of individuals who understand themselves as parts of a greater self, Günderrode emphasizes the connection to nature or the divine that emerges from the experience of union. Günderrode's prophets and visionaries often separate themselves from their communities, for example, Alchemines in *Magic and Destiny*, the seeress in "Timur," and Muhammad in *Prophet of Mecca*. Where these individuals subsequently found a new, ideal community, as in "Story of a Brahmin" and *Prophet of Mecca*, this tends to involve a small number of members who live in the wilderness, again emphasizing relationships with nature and spirituality rather than with other people.<sup>49</sup> The poems of *Poetic Fragments* focus on the moment of turning away from the community that Günderrode associates with the experience of union with nature or the divine. "The Kiss in the Dream" describes a rejection of everyday pursuits, while Pedro's longing for his dead lover destroys his relationship with his fiancée, which, as Heimerl and Lazarowicz note, is a socially sanctioned relationship that binds Pedro to his community.<sup>50</sup> In this scene, Pedro "[t]urns away from his bride. . . . He only wants to be sunk deeply / In contemplation of the dead."

Many of Günderrode's characters are drawn to death, either longing for death, as in the poems of *Poetic Fragments*, or, like Hildgund in

her decision to assassinate Attila, choosing to pursue an ideal that they know will or may lead to their death. I hope the above discussion shows that this tendency cannot be adequately understood as a morbid or pathological fixation with death on G nderrode's part. The longing for death represents only one aspect of G nderrode's thinking about death, and furthermore even this aspect is more complex than a straightforward desire for self-annihilation, or even for union with loved ones or the divine. G nderrode does not necessarily give the idea of death a single meaning or the meaning we expect. It is important, therefore, not to assume that G nderrode's poetry and/or suicide embody either a desire for oblivion or a fantasy of union with a lover after death. It is also important to avoid interpreting G nderrode's writings on love in wholly biographical terms, or assimilating her concept of love to Early German Romantic versions of this concept, since G nderrode's cosmology avoids the dualism on which Early German Romantic theories depend. Interpretations of G nderrode's writings on death and love should address the metaphysical implications of G nderrode's approach to these concepts, their contributions to the religious and philosophical traditions to which her work responded, and their significance for G nderrode's conceptions of the self, consciousness, and knowledge. Taking these implications into account will provide insight into pieces, such as the poems of *Poetic Fragments*, that seem to reinforce the caricature of G nderrode's writings as straightforward expressions of tragic love and a pathological attraction to death.

**Further Reading on "Piedro," "The Pilgrims,"  
and "The Kiss in the Dream"**

*In English*

**Friedrichsmeyer, Sara.** *The Androgyne in Early German Romanticism: Friedrich Schlegel, Novalis, and the Metaphysics of Love.* Bern: Lange, 1983. Friedrichsmeyer explores the history of the ideal of the androgyne, particularly its role as an ideal of oneness for the Early German Romantics. Friedrichsmeyer argues that Friedrich Schlegel's early ideal of men and women overcoming their gender roles to integrate characteristics attributed to the other sex gave way to his later ideal

of synthesizing essentialist masculine and feminine characteristics in a heterosexual relationship.

**Lokke, Kari.** “Poetry as Self-Consumption: Women Writers and Their Audiences in British and German Romanticism.” In *Romantic Poetry*, vol. 7. Edited by Angela Esterhammer, 91–111. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2002. Lokke argues that G nderrode uses imagery of immersion in the absolute, including in “The Kiss in the Dream,” not simply to signify oblivion, but as a metaphor for healing and regenerating.

*In German*

**Dormann, Helga.** *Die Kunst des inneren Sinns. Mythisierung der inneren und  usseren Natur im Werk Karoline von G nderrodes*. W rzburg: K nigshausen und Neumann, 2004. This book investigates the respects in which G nderrode’s work provides a novel contribution to the call for a new mythology by early German Romantics and others around 1800. Dormann argues that G nderrode treats love as an important philosophical concept that has a variety of meanings and objects, and which plays a central role in G nderrode’s version of a new mythology.

**Heimerl, Joachim.** “Dem Tode verfallen: Die Ballade ‘Piedro’ im Kontext des literarischen Werks der Karoline von G nderrode.” *Wirkendes Wort* 53, no. 3 (2003): 401–16. Interprets the homoeroticism of “Piedro” in partly biographical terms as reflecting G nderrode’s rejection of social mores, especially regarding romantic love, and a desire to overstep restrictive earthly existence as a distinct individual into a longed-for “metaphysical” sphere of connection with others. Heimerl places this ballad in a literary context of works by Goethe (“The Bride of Messina”) and G nderrode (“The Bonds of Love”) that have vampiric or necrophiliac themes of dead lovers sucking life from the living, and in a philosophical context of Novalis’s treatment of death and Schelling’s metaphysics.

*Other translations*

Cocalis, Susan, trans. "The Dream Kiss" and "To Creuzer." In *The Defiant Muse: German Feminist Poems from the Middle Ages to the Present: A Bilingual Anthology*, 26–27. New York: Feminist Press at the University of New York, 1986. This excellent translation of "The Dream Kiss" ("The Kiss in the Dream") follows the meaning of G nderrode's poem closely while capturing much of the meter and rhyme of the original.

Ferber, Michael, trans. "The Kiss in the Dream." In *European Romantic Poetry*, 116–17. New York, London: Pearson Longman, 2005.

Ives, Margaret C. "Karoline von G nderrode (1780–1806): The 'Tian' Legend." With Examples of G nderrode's Poetry Translated by Deborah Mercer." In *Sappho in the Shadows: Essays on the Work of German Women Poets of the Age of Goethe (1749–1832), with Translations of Their Poetry into English*. Edited by Anthony J. Harper and Margaret C. Ives, 87–111. Berlin: Peter Lang, 2000.

## *Piedro*

Darkness rests upon the waters,  
Deep silence all around,  
Piedro's ship alone parts the waves,  
His oars beat the ocean.

But Piedro stands at the mast  
And, his eye dully aglow,  
Seeks the thief of his beloved,  
Seeks her through the ocean's flood.

At last he nears their sail,  
At last the long night ends,  
And with impatient haste  
He arranges the ships' battle.

Many fall, many conquer,  
One fights with lion's courage,  
Comes near Piedro through the crowd  
Daringly with humble pluck.

And they fight, neither yields,  
Bravery becomes wild rage;  
And in wrathful surges  
The fighters' hot blood mixes.

## P i e d r o

Dunkel ruhet auf den Wassern,  
Tiefe Stille weit umher,  
Piedro's Schiff nur theilt die Wellen,  
Seine Ruder schlägt das Meer.

Aber Piedro steht am Maste  
Und sein Aug' in trüber Glut,  
Sucht den Räuber der Geliebten,  
Sucht sie durch des Meeres Fluth.

Endlich naht er ihrem Segel,  
Endlich geht die lange Nacht,  
Und mit ungedult'ger Eile  
Ordnet er der Schiffe Schlacht.

Viele fallen, Viele siegen,  
Einer kämpft mit Löwenmuth,  
Naht sich Piedron durch die Menge  
Kühnlich mit bescheidnem Muth.

Und sie kämpfen, keiner weicht,  
Tapferkeit wird wilde Wuth;  
Und in zornigen Strömen mischet  
Sich der Kämpfer heißes Blut.

At last in the youth's breast  
Piedro sinks his steel,  
Before this unwelcome guest  
Flees his sweet—life, all.

And he fades so gracefully in death,  
That Piedro sinks down,  
And from his pale lips  
Ruefully drinks hot kisses.

Night will finally sink down,  
Deep silence all around;  
Piedro's ship alone parts the waves,  
His oars beat the ocean.

Piedro though lies wounded  
Alone in his ship's space;  
His soul is imprisoned,  
All and wholly in a dream.

For it seems to him he is entwined  
By the dead youth's arm,  
Friendly, his gaze would shatter,<sup>51</sup>  
But still his heart beats warm.

Piedro would tear himself from him,  
But with a longing gaze  
And with hot loving kisses  
The boy holds him back.

Joyful, that he frees her,  
The bride steps up to Piedro,  
Wants to console him, wants to see,  
Whether the evil dreams flee.

And she bends down to him,  
Calls the dear one's name aloud.  
He awakens and with horror  
Turns away from his bride.

Endlich in des Jünglings Busen  
Senket Piedro seinen Stahl,  
Vor dem unwillkommenen Gaste  
Flieht sein süßes—Leben all.

Und er stirbt so hold im Tode,  
Daß Piedro niedersinkt,  
Und von seinen blassen Lippen  
Reuig heiße Küsse trinkt.

Nacht will endlich niedersinken,  
Tiefe Stille weit umher;  
Piedro's Schiff nur theilt die Wellen,  
Seine Ruder schlägt das Meer.

Piedro aber liegt verwundet  
Einsam in des Schiffes Raum;  
Seine Seele ist gefangen,  
Ganz und gar in einem Traum.

Denn ihm däucht er sey umschlungen  
Von des todten Jünglings Arm,  
Freundlich will sein Auge brechen,  
Doch es schlägt sein Herz noch warm.

Piedro will sich von ihm reißen,  
Doch mit sehnsuchtsvollem Blick  
Und mit heißen Liebesküssen  
Hält der Knabe ihn zurück.

Freudig, daß er sie befreiet,  
Tritt die Braut zu Piedro hin,  
Will ihn trösten, will versuchen,  
Ob die bösen Träume fliehn.

Und sie neigt sich zu ihm nieder,  
Ruft des Theuern Namen laut.  
Er erwacht und mit Entsetzen  
Wendet er sich von der Braut.



And he wants no more to see her,  
Her love is torment to him.  
He only wants to be sunk deeply  
In contemplation of the dead.

And the sweet girl weeps,  
She conceals her face,  
Would gladly die of pain,  
Only not to leave her dear one.

Piedro sees it, a deep longing  
Draws him to the grave's rest,  
He rips his wound's bindings  
And goes silently to the dead.

Darkness rests upon the waters,  
Deep silence all around,  
Piedro's ship reaches the coast,  
But he sleeps deep in the ocean.

Und er mag sie nicht mehr schauen,  
Ihre Liebe ist ihm Pein.  
Tief versenkt nur im Betrachten  
Des Gestorbenen mag er seyn.

Und das süße Mädchen weinet,  
Sie verhüllt ihr Angesicht,  
Möchte gern vor Schmerzen sterben,  
Nur den Theuern lassen nicht.

Piedro siehts, ein tiefes Sehnen  
Zieht ihn nach des Grabes Ruh,  
Er zerreißt der Wunde Banden  
Und geht still den Todten zu.

Dunkel ruhet auf den Wassern,  
Tiefe Stille weit umher,  
Piedro's Schiff erreicht die Küste,  
Aber er schläft tief im Meer.

## *The Pilgrims*

### *The First Pilgrim*

I am sickened  
By love's pain,  
Might only recover  
If you would be mine.

Your lovely nature,  
The red of your lips,  
Holds me imprisoned  
Until death.

My eye is dull,  
My youth dried up,  
Yet I know healing,  
I know well the port.

To which I will pilgrimage,  
Over lands and seas,  
My breast is oppressed,  
My heart is heavy.

I grasp my staff,  
I pilgrimage to the sea;  
The winds roar,

# Die Pilger

## Der erste Pilger

Ich bin erkranket  
An Liebespein,  
Mögt' nur genesen,  
Wollst du mein seyn.

Dein lieblich Wesen,  
Dein Lippenroth,  
Hält mich gefangen  
Bis an den Tod.

Mein Aug' ist trübe,  
Mein' Jugend verdorrt,  
Doch kenn' ich noch Heilung,  
Wohl weiß ich den Port.

Zu dem will ich wallen  
Ob Länder und Meer,  
Die Brust ist beklommen,  
Das Herz ist mir schwer.

Ich greife zum Stabe,  
Ich walle zum Meer;  
Es brausen die Winde,

The ocean rages.

The little birds fly  
So merrily forth,  
They seek the spring  
And find it.

Love holds me,  
I'd stay so gladly,  
But longing draws me  
To the grave of the lord.

Farewell then you eyes  
Of friendly shine,  
Only to heaven shall  
My gaze be turned.

I long, oh sweet  
Beloved, for you!  
But I choose the grave,  
Of the savior for that.

There I kneel down  
Full of bitter pain;  
There I can leave you,  
There my heart breaks.

The healing is bitter,  
The way indeed far;  
Yet I grasp my staff  
And end my grief.

*The Second Pilgrim*

I depart gladly from my fatherland  
And seek the beloved shore,  
Where Jesus Christ pilgrimaged;  
Where he, attired in humility

Es tobet das Meer.

Die Vöglein fliegen  
So lustig voran,  
Sie suchen den Frühling  
Und treffen ihn an.

Es hält mich die Liebe,  
Ich bliebe so gern,  
Doch ziehet mich Sehnsucht  
Zum Grabe des Herrn.

Lebt wohl dann ihr Augen  
Von freundlichem Schein,  
Mein Blick soll zum Himmel  
Gerichtet nur seyn.

Mich sehnet, o süße  
Geliebte, nach dir!  
Doch wähl' ich das Grab mir,  
Des Heilands dafür.

Da kniee ich nieder  
Voll bitterem Schmerz;  
Da kann ich dich lassen,  
Da bricht mir das Herz.

Die Heilung ist bitter,  
Der Weg ist wohl weit;  
Doch greif' ich zum Stabe  
Und ende mein Leid.

### Der zweite Pilger

Ich scheid froh vom Vaterland  
Und suche den geliebten Strand,  
Wo Jesus Christus wallte;  
Wo er in Demuth angethan

With silent senses made a pilgrimage,  
Of earthly life's hard course.

What is the magnificence of the world  
And all, that pleases the senses?  
I will gladly renounce it.  
The earthly chain falls from me,  
And Jesus! only to you! to you!  
Will I bear my longing.

The martyrs' crown beckons me  
And indeed blessedness for ever and ever,  
When I am consummated.  
Oh sweet penitence! heavenly suffering!  
In pious simplicity's blessedness,  
You dwell at the holy grave.

Des Erdenlebens schwere Bahn,  
Mit stillem Sinne wallte.

Was ist die Herrlichkeit der Welt  
Und alles, was dem Sinn gefällt?  
Ich will ihm froh entsagen.  
Die irrdische Kette fällt von mir,  
Und Jesu! nur zu dir! zu dir!  
Will ich mein Sehnen tragen.

Die Märterkrone winket mir  
Und Seligkeit wohl für und für,  
Wenn ich vollendet habe.  
O süße Buße! himmlisch Leid!  
In frommer Einfalt Seligkeit,  
Ihr wohnt am heiligen Grabe.



## *The Kiss in the Dream*

**from an unpublished novel.**

It was a kiss that breathed life into me,  
Slaked my breast's deepest craving,  
Come, darkness! intimately to benight me,  
That my lips may suckle new delight.

In dreams such life was immersed,  
Therefore I live to contemplate eternal dreams,  
Can despise all other joys' luster,  
For only the night breathes such sweet balm.

The day is meager in love-sweet delights,  
Its light's vain boasts hurt me  
And its sun's blazes consume me.  
So hide, eyes, from the luster of the earthly sun!  
Wrap yourself in night, it slakes your longing  
And heals the pain, like Lethe's cool floods.

# Der Kuß im Traume

aus einem ungedruckten Romane

Es hat ein Kuß mir Leben eingehaucht,  
Gestillet meines Busens tiefstes Schmachten,  
Komm, Dunkelheit! mich traulich zu umnachten,  
Daß neue Wonne meine Lippe saugt.

In Träume war solch Leben eingetaucht,  
Drum leb' ich, ewig Träume zu betrachten,  
Kann aller andern Freuden Glanz verachten,  
Weil nur die Nacht so süßen Balsam haucht.

Der Tag ist karg an liebesüßen Wonnen,  
Es schmerzt mich seines Lichtes eitles Prangen  
Und mich verzehren seiner Sonne Gluthen.  
Drum birg dich Aug' dem Glanze irrd'scher Sonnen!  
Hüll' dich in Nacht, sie stillt dein Verlangen  
Und heilt den Schmerz, wie Lethes kühle Fluthen.



## THREE

# Muhammad, the Prophet of Mecca

### *Introduction to Muhammad, the Prophet of Mecca*

Günderrode's play *Muhammad, the Prophet of Mecca*, written early in 1804, is the longest of her works and one of the broadest in scope, addressing questions of cultural and political change, power, freedom, and individual sovereignty. Nicholas Saul describes the play as Günderrode's "most successful work."<sup>1</sup> Like the play *Hildgund*, included earlier in this volume, *Prophet of Mecca* deals with great figures from history at a time of war, which were controversial topics for female writers of the time. *Prophet of Mecca* also enters into dialogue with works by Günderrode's contemporaries and predecessors on political and religious issues, and considers metaphysical and ethical questions. These topics were also viewed by many at the time to be inappropriate, or too intellectual, for women writers. For example, after being shown the play by Günderrode, Creuzer, generally a supporter of Günderrode's, complained that in places it was "too reasoned in thought and expression—too philosophizing in tone and color."<sup>2</sup> The philosophical content of Günderrode's dramas is one of the characteristics that make them valuable to study, but at the time Günderrode wrote such a "tone" was considered unsuitable and inauthentic for women. Until today, with only a couple of exceptions, Günderrode's readers have never seriously investigated the ways in which *Prophet of Mecca* contributes to the philosophical issues it considers, and there has been only limited discussion of its political and religious points.

This introductory essay outlines several of the philosophical and political ideas that G nderrode develops in *Prophet of Mecca*. These include G nderrode’s comments on social, political, religious, and cultural renewal in Europe, the notion of a reconciliation of religions, specifically Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, the questions whether and under what conditions human beings can determine their own lives, and the nature of desirable social arrangements. The essay also briefly considers how *Prophet of Mecca* reveals G nderrode’s metaphysical commitments.

### *Europe, the Orient, and Revolution*

G nderrode’s use of Eastern settings and characters for her work is sometimes explained as a form of wish fulfillment in response to the limitations of her real life, which was based in a convent housing unmarried women of cash-strapped nobility. G nderrode’s letters provide some justification for this interpretation, as she sometimes describes herself as escaping into an inner world or a world of poetry.<sup>3</sup> In relation to *Prophet of Mecca* specifically, she writes, “I am writing a drama, my whole soul is occupied with it, yes I think myself so vividly in it, become so at home in it, that my own life becomes foreign to me.”<sup>4</sup> Licher has argued that in *Prophet of Mecca* G nderrode uses her writing to transcend not only the geographical boundaries, but also the cultural and gender boundaries that she experienced and found restricting.<sup>5</sup> In the figure of Muhammad, G nderrode described the life of a man from a time and culture far from her own and thereby stepped outside the narrow circle of her own situation.

While this line of investigation provides some insight into G nderrode’s choices as a writer, too much attention to the role of her writing as wish fulfillment risks dismissing the serious points that she used her work to make. As I discussed in the introduction to this volume, the use of Eastern settings and themes was shared by many of G nderrode’s contemporaries and predecessors for political, philosophical, theological, and aesthetic purposes, and I argue that *Prophet of Mecca* falls within this tradition.

The prevalence of works set in India, Egypt, and the Middle East during the Enlightenment reflected the widespread sense among European intellectuals at the time that their new encounters with texts,

cultures, and artifacts from the East would reveal important truths about human beings, civilization, the physical universe, and the divine. This is the theme of Novalis's *The Novices at Saïs* (1802), Schiller's "The Veiled Image at Saïs" (1795), and Ludwig Tieck's "Almansur" (1790), as well as many of Günderröde's works including "The Frank in Egypt," "Story of a Brahmin," and "The Adept." Annette Simonis argues that this idea also underlies the emphasis in *Prophet of Mecca* on a common origin and meaning for Christianity, Judaism, and Islam: Islam, on this model, functions as a reflection of Christianity, revealing the original truth that both religions communicate.<sup>6</sup>

Characters and settings from the East were also often used as analogies for European figures, events, and problems. Günderröde's contemporaries sometimes used the Orient as a metaphor for European society in order to make political points or explore issues that were considered controversial. For example, Goethe's poem "Muhammad's Song" presents the Nile as refreshing and nourishing the desert, which Kevin Hilliard suggests is partly a metaphor for the rejuvenation of Europe through religious renewal in the form of Protestantism. Hilliard emphasizes the medical connotations of the theme of rejuvenation in Goethe's work, connecting it to a European Enlightenment conception of the Oriental sun as drying out the humors of the body, which was thought to lead to sluggishness.<sup>7</sup> The river in Goethe's poem can then be understood as offering both spiritual and physical renewal. As Hilliard points out, Günderröde's poem "The Nile" works with similar themes.<sup>8</sup> In *Prophet of Mecca*, related imagery emerges in Muhammad's descriptions of himself or others quenching the thirst of suffering individuals. For example, he tells the citizens of Mecca, "That is why he [God] sent me to you, that I should call you in his name, and quench you, who swelter in the arid desert of temporality, with the fresh running spring of eternal life." This suggests the possibility of reading Günderröde's Muhammad as a metaphor for Luther, as a figure who initiated a rejuvenation of Christianity and thereby of Europe. The idea of a lethargic Orient, which Hilliard argues forms part of the basis for Goethe's imagery, is obviously racist, but this aspect of the metaphor is largely lost in *Prophet of Mecca* (although it appears quite clearly in Günderröde's play *Udohla*). As we will see in more detail below, in *Prophet of Mecca* Günderröde presents sluggishness as a tendency affecting all parts of the world, explicitly including Christendom, and as overcome by the more vital Muhammad and Islam.

Günderrode wrote *Prophet of Mecca* in the context of previous works that used the Prophet to comment on European society, most obviously Voltaire's *La fanatisme, ou Mahomet le prophète* (*Fanaticism, or Muhammad the Prophet*). This piece was written in 1736 and first performed in 1741, and had been translated into German several times by the early nineteenth century, including, with some modifications, by Goethe in 1802. Voltaire's play presented Muhammad and Islam in a highly negative light, using invented characters and events to cast Muhammad as an evil megalomaniac. The play was controversial at the time, being understood as a veiled attack on Christianity and French society.<sup>9</sup>

Goethe's translation of Voltaire's *Mahomet* was thought by some to include references to Napoleon in the figure of the Prophet.<sup>10</sup> Napoleon's assumption of power in 1799 was viewed by many of Günderrode's contemporaries as promising a revitalization of a Europe become decadent and corrupt, or as permitting new and better forms of political organization to emerge. Particularly as his rule progressed, however, Napoleon was also sometimes presented as a megalomaniac who subjected Europe to tyranny and war. Licher has argued plausibly that both these images of Napoleon are present in *Prophet of Mecca*, and are reflected in Günderrode's decreasingly sympathetic treatment of Muhammad as the play progresses.<sup>11</sup>

Nonetheless, unlike Voltaire's *Mahomet*, Günderrode's *Prophet of Mecca* is a largely, albeit not entirely, positive portrayal of Muhammad and Islam. Günderrode was an avid and sympathetic student of cultures outside Europe, and may have intended to counteract the virulently anti-Islamic stance of Voltaire's dramatization by presenting a more nuanced picture. Like Voltaire, Günderrode had her own agenda in writing about Muhammad and she manipulates the story of the origins of Islam for these purposes. However, although *Prophet of Mecca* introduces at least one important fictional character (Nahlid) and alters events from the Prophet's life, Günderrode's play incorporates a large number of historical events and individuals. Sources on the Prophet Muhammad that were available to Günderrode included Friedrich Eberhard Boysen's 1773 translation of the Quran and accounts of Muhammad's life by Henri de Boulainvilliers (translated into German by J. A. Mebes in 1786) and J. Gagnier (translated into German by C. F. R. Vetterlein in 1802–04).<sup>12</sup>

While presenting a positive side to the Prophet, Günderrode's play interprets Muhammad's life and the origins of Islam in terms

commensurate with her reimagining of certain Romantic themes. This interpretation uses the story of the founding of Islam as an analogy for the establishment of a new world order that reconciles cultures and peoples that have split apart and are suffering and degenerate as a result. Günderrode's Muhammad describes his mission in the following terms:

Christendom has torn itself away from its begetter, Judaism, it abandoned its parental house and wandered out to all four winds, it sends out of the distances the poisoned arrows of persecution against its father's holy head; at the same time it is at odds with itself, its parts dispute in grim strife and its otherwise well-built body is full of wild, ghoulisn excesses. So confused is the sense of people, so antagonistic their holiest feelings and opinions, so sickened are the times and religions.—That peace, concord and health return to earth, for this God has sent me; the peoples shall be assembled in one temple, heathendom slaughtered on the new altar as a sacrifice pleasing to God; Christendom shall turn back to Judaism and in my teachings reconcile and unite with it.

This ideal was characteristic of the widespread hope at the time Günderrode was writing for new forms of society that reflected human rationality and needs. Such a hope was expressed, for example, in Kant's ideal of the kingdom of ends, the political programs of Fichte and *The Oldest System-program of German Idealism*, and Novalis's and Friedrich Schlegel's idea of founding a new religion.

In *Prophet of Mecca*, Günderrode takes up the theme of founding a new religion that was central to Early German Romanticism, but expresses this idea in more revolutionary terms than do Novalis or Schlegel. In *Prophet of Mecca* (and *Udohla*), Günderrode describes the idea of founding a new society in terms of the establishment of a new world. The chorus proclaims: "Produced by [Muhammad], the world will be born anew, / The temple of God arise from the rubble," and:

Now the face of the earth  
Will transform itself,  
The old, familiar,  
Aged and ugly,  
Full of worn looks;



Now will unfold itself  
 In smiling youth;  
 The weakness of age  
 Of ailing times,  
 Become bold youth  
 By the breath of enthusiasm  
 Awakened to life.

Günderrode uses imagery of storms, eruptions, and other forms of physical destruction to represent the collapse of the old world and origination of a new order. In *Prophet of Mecca*, the chorus connects the coming revolution to natural disasters, for example:

When instead of refreshing earth's children,  
 Destruction breaks from the womb of clouds;  
 When enraged waves break on the shore,  
 The fire's glow churns up the earth's womb,  
 When loud thunder speaks through the heavens,  
 And pain, horror fills every breast;  
 Then the narrow bounds cave in,  
 The old world is devoured,  
 Yet from the creaturely mind  
 A more beautiful is established.

Günderrode's advocacy of a new world arising from the destruction of the old has led some commentators to view her as a "writer of revolution," in the sense of being a supporter of radical political change and the ideals of the French Revolution.<sup>13</sup> There is some evidence for Günderrode's revolutionary sympathies in her correspondence, notably a teasing comment from Savigny asking whether her "republican sentiments" are "perhaps a little residue from the French Revolution."<sup>14</sup> However, as the language of physical destruction in the above passage and elsewhere suggests, Günderrode's account of revolution extends beyond a call for political change to describe a physical process. The next section sketches how the revolutionary language in *Prophet of Mecca* depicts, not just a shift of political power or religion, but what Günderrode presents as a necessary periodic revitalization of cultures, empires, humanity, and the world.

*Islam as Synthesis of Judaism and Christianity*

One of the clearest themes of *Prophet of Mecca* is the notion of a synthesis of Christianity and Judaism in Islam. This section describes three important contributions of G nderrode's presentation of this theme to her contemporary intellectual scene: as a comment on European politics and religion; as a statement on the common origins and meaning of apparently diverse myths and cultures; and as an account of world history. This section also clarifies what sort of synthesis of religions G nderrode had in mind. I argue that *Prophet of Mecca* does not demand equality between faiths but indicates a shared meaning for these faiths that must be articulated by a succession of religions.

As I mentioned above, G nderrode's play was written in the context of a convention of using an Eastern setting, and Islam and Muhammad in particular, to comment on European culture and society. Given this context, we can see Muhammad's call for a unity of religions and peoples under Islam as a call for a reconciliation of Christianity following its schism during the Reformation. This connects G nderrode's project with that of Early German Romanticism, for example with Novalis's demand for a unified religion for all of Europe in his essay "Christendom or Europe." Novalis's essay recounts the development of Europe from an idealized Middle Ages, characterized by an unsophisticated form of unified common life under the Church, through a period of schism and fragmentation but greater development of education and trade, to a hoped-for future reunification under a coming religion.<sup>15</sup> Whether or not G nderrode shared Novalis's goal of a new religion, in *Prophet of Mecca* she suggests, like Novalis, that social and spiritual progress requires movement through schism to greater unity.

The idea that *Prophet of Mecca* presents a call for religious unity may seem at odds with the notion that G nderrode's Muhammad can be read as a stand-in for Luther, who, while often seen as revitalizing Europe, was a paradigmatically schismatic figure. Like Luther, G nderrode's Muhammad is presented, especially by his enemies, as causing division and discord. For example, the character Khalid claims that "[i]t is known that Muhammad is no friend of peace and order: he lives on discord." A central event of the play is the Prophet's trial on charges of fomenting sedition and schism. Muhammad's enemy Sufyan claims that "[h]e divided the tribes of Mecca from each other through his

teachings, and ripped apart all bonds of order.” Although Muhammad’s goal is to unify Arabia and the world under Islam, he begins this task by introducing conflict to Mecca. Thus, the Prophet may seem like a force for division rather than unity.

However, the seeming antagonism between Muhammad’s role as a unifier and a divider of peoples is not a contradiction, but indicates a form of dialectic, described through the story of the origin of Islam. Taken together, the schismatic moment and the unifying moment in the play describe a particular sort of movement of world history.<sup>16</sup> This movement is a dialectical one, that is, one that moves from an original position (thesis) through an opposing position (antithesis) to a third state (synthesis) that integrates both thesis and antithesis. In concrete terms, the movement is from a starting point of unity of religion, culture, or statehood, which begins to lose vitality, fragments into sects and partisanship, and is then reunified in a new form. We see this movement of falling away from original glory in several points in the play, for example in Muhammad’s description of the slow fall of the Roman and Persian empires:

The Romans’ mighty realm in the Occident has gone under, slowly their empire in the Orient dies away from inner enervation; . . . If your view now turns to our vicinity, the Persian’s second realm reached its highest peak of might under the first Khosrau; the second Khosrau indeed continued his father’s course of victory against the East-Romans, but he conquered more through his enemies’ weakness than through his own power. . . . The Persians’ great time is over, the high flood of their fame is lost, the ebb comes as fast as certain.

This is also how Muhammad characterizes the situation of Christianity at the time, claiming that Christendom “is at odds with itself, its parts dispute in grim quarrels.” We also see this movement in the fate of Mecca. According to Muhammad, the people of Mecca have turned from the one real God to worship multiple powerless gods, and for this reason are at the mercy of their enemies. He accuses them: “You have abandoned this God? have fragmented him into your idols, fire, sun, moon and animals? Oh blindness! Because you worship his limbs his spirit escaped from you; that is why his power in you has lapsed, that is why you are sunken in hollow animality, imprisoned in time, and have

no eternal life, no heaven and no blessedness; that is why you have no vitality." Following Muhammad's speech, the city is plunged into discord and then redeemed with Muhammad's return, which will reunify Mecca as an Islamic community. At the same time, the wider world, which has fallen from its former glory, is also to be revitalized and unified under Islam: "The scepter of the Orient will raise itself from Mecca, it will, like a meteor, send its beams to the west and east." By the end of the play Muhammad has unified not only Mecca but all of Arabia, and is prophesied to go even farther and unify the whole world, "from sunrise to sunset." This unification will at the same time restore life and power to a flagging and broken world.

Thus, the crime of which Muhammad is accused, that of fostering discord, is the same problem that he is on a mission to heal and a necessary stage in the development of a higher unity. The trajectory of the play takes Mecca in particular and the world in general from unity, through a period of fragmentation and even warfare, to a final reconciliation, in which the common life of the people has a higher meaning and a stronger connection to the divine. In *Prophet of Mecca*, the establishment of Islam in Mecca and Arabia thus exemplifies a dialectical movement of world history from homogeneity through fragmentation and conflict to unified glory and vitality.

Two issues still to be investigated are the ways in which, compared to other versions of this movement, such as that presented by Novalis, Günderröde's version of this dialectic involves (1) an emphasis on impotence, as opposed to lower consciousness/self-awareness, in the first stage of this history, and (2) violence and conflict, as opposed to alienation, in the second. While I will touch on these issues later in this introduction, there is unfortunately not space here for a detailed investigation.

Instead, let us now clarify the nature of the synthesis of religions that Günderröde describes in *Prophet of Mecca*. It may be tempting to see this theme as derivative of a famous earlier work that also defends the unity of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam: Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's 1779 play *Nathan the Wise*. This play calls for tolerance and reconciliation between the three religions. However, the similarities between the plays do not extend far beyond an emphasis on the common origins and shared truth or meaning of the religions. Whereas Lessing's play argues for reason, moderation, and tolerance, especially religious tolerance, Günderröde's calls for faith in one particular religion and for

revolution. Lessing's play ends with representatives of each of the three monotheistic religions learning that they are all part of the same (literal) family and embracing each other; Günderrode's *Prophet of Mecca* ends just after the conquest of Mecca and introduction of Islam, which supplants the idols of the city and promises to also supplant Christianity and Judaism in the rest of the world. In Günderrode's play, Islam is not one religion among equals, but a new, stronger religion come to replace dying and ineffectual faiths and found a new world.

This difference is illustrated by a fable told by Günderrode's Muhammad, which contrasts with the famous Ring Parable of Lessing's Nathan. Whereas Nathan's story illustrates the impossibility of determining whether Judaism, Christianity, or Islam is truer or better, and therefore the need for tolerance between their adherents, Muhammad's tale shows the religions replacing each other. Muhammad's tale begins with "the breath of heaven" creating a man, representing Judaism, who sits on a throne and speaks words of prophecy. However, he is soon dethroned and abused: "[T]he children of the world stepped up to him, broke up the table in his left hand and ripped from his right the gilded scepter." A second figure, representing Christianity, is born to the first, who has become old and weak and whose "lips of prophecy" have fallen silent—that is, he has lost his connection to the divine. However, the second figure is weak and unworldly: he "had only one eye, which he always directed towards heaven and which could not see the earth; his heart was very great and full of tender drops . . . [and] he wandered through the earth like a pilgrim who knocks at the huts of the needy and lowly." The third and final figure, Islam, is the second son of the old man (Judaism). This second son is "great and strong" and unites the world with heaven, being both spiritual and warlike. Muhammad claims of this last son that "in the one hand he carries a book, in the other a sword; this is the hero of whom it is written: He will subdue the sunset to the farthest west, where the sun goes down in an ocean of darkness, and he will subdue the dawn as far as the peoples over whose heads the sun stands vertically. This is the conqueror." This figure does not represent a religion that shares the world with other faiths, but a religion that will take up the torch from the failing hands of its predecessors, and replace them.<sup>17</sup>

A second difference between the tales is in the relative values they ascribe to the three religions. Nathan's parable concludes with the point that if one religion were more legitimate than the others it would show

this in the virtuous and lovable acts of its adherents, but that in all the centuries since these religions emerged, no one has been able to judge which is better. Günderrode's Muhammad also claims that the best religion is the one that is effective; but he maintains that we can identify this religion—and, of course, it is Islam. This is the proof of Islam's superiority and the reality of its God. Muhammad states, "The God who sends me to you . . . makes great the hearts that follow him and gives doubled power to the arm that serves him," and, "Where no deed is, there is no power, where no effect is, there the effective thing is missing."

The latter claim is made in relation to the city gods of Mecca, which Muhammad later orders to be thrown from their altars. Judaism and Christianity fare somewhat better at Muhammad's hands than Mecca's gods, and at times Günderrode seems to present a more tolerant message. The play indicates that the three religions mediate the same truth to their believers—for example, the fable described above presents the three figures as closely related and all brought into existence by God. Elsewhere, one character accuses Muhammad, "[Y]ou say the God of the Israelites and the Christians sent you to us," and another places Muhammad in the same lineage as Noah, Moses, and Jesus. At several points, Muhammad recollects the common origins of the three religions, and laments the loss of this commonality: for example, "[T]he beautiful flower of our land is stripped of leaves on many stems, which hardly remember their common parentage, which hate, envy and persecute each other." Muhammad's encounter with three rabbis from Yathrib (Medina) who greet him as "the promised one" and "the Messiah of the world" also suggests an Islam that is prepared to tolerate other monotheistic religions. In this respect, Günderrode seems to call for a degree of tolerance, while taking up the central Islamic idea of Muhammad as the completion of earlier monotheistic faiths and the final prophet in the line of Old and New Testament prophets.

The claim that Islam completes and supersedes earlier religions shows that Günderrode does not see the shared meaning of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam as entailing that these religions should coexist. Instead, she uses this shared meaning to identify and endorse a progression of the religions, as different forms of mediation of their common ground. As Judaism loses its strength, power, and connection to truth, it is replaced by Christianity; and when Christianity proves too weak to mediate the divine, it fragments and the torch is passed to Islam.

This model corresponds to Günderrode's notion of cultural development, which appears most clearly in *Udohla*. According to this model, human civilization began in the East, probably in India, but died out there and moved westward to Persia, Greece, and Rome, its various manifestations successively rising and falling until, having exhausted its westward trajectory, civilization will die out and then, hopefully, begin again in the East. Similar conceptions of the development of human civilization from an origin in India were advanced by some of Günderrode's contemporaries and predecessors, including Herder, Friedrich Schlegel, and Creuzer, as I noted in the introduction to this volume. On Günderrode's model, like in the case of the ascendancy of various religions, any specific cultural or political power experiences an initial period of vigor and vitality but then wears itself out and disperses in enervation and fragmentation, whereupon it is replaced by a new movement. As described above, in *Prophet of Mecca* this tendency is visible in Muhammad's descriptions of the fall of the Persian and Roman empires, the current state of Christianity and Judaism, and the situation in Mecca.

Christmann has argued that, unlike the Early German Romantics, Günderrode was not concerned with the idea of a "new mythology" or the state of society, instead turning inward to a consideration of the self.<sup>18</sup> I think the evidence speaks against this claim, and Dormann and Licher have similarly argued that Günderrode imagined a new mythology that would revitalize society.<sup>19</sup> In *Prophet of Mecca*, Günderrode connects her cosmology, account of human history, and view of spiritual insight or prophecy to make a case for spiritual renewal on a communal level. It might seem that Günderrode even presents Islam as a new religion that could mediate this renewal. Islam as Günderrode represents it has some of the characteristics we might expect from an ideal religion on her account, particularly its vigor and its dual nature as connected to both the heavenly and the earthly. However, I believe it unlikely that Günderrode meant Islam to be the medium for accomplishing the renewal that she envisioned. It is more likely that Günderrode saw Islam as a past manifestation of the divine message and/or a model for a new manifestation than as that new manifestation itself. The historical setting for the religious revolution described in the play shows Islam as a past, not a future, embodiment of religious truth. We may also speculate that Günderrode's interest in religious or cultural renewal is likely to have been centered in Europe, like the texts and

philosophical movements to which her work responded, and that her model for this renewal would likely have been strongly influenced by Christianity, Hinduism, and other systems of thought in which she was interested. Hilger has indicated some of the ways in which Christian themes, events, concepts, and language appear in *Prophet of Mecca* (these are discussed below), while elsewhere in Günderrode's work we see the influence of Hinduism and Zoroastrianism. Thus, Günderrode uses Islam to suggest the outlines of a new and revitalizing religion, without necessarily committing to Islam as embodying the specific characteristics of the religion, mythology, culture, or social arrangements that she thought could embody this renewal.

#### *Günderrode's Prophet Muhammad*

Günderrode's Muhammad is a complex character, flawed and with ambiguous motivations, but sympathetic and human. Günderrode uses this character to respond to representations by her contemporaries and predecessors of the Prophet and Napoleon, and to explore questions of power, agency, free will, and the relation of spiritual to earthly pursuits. This section outlines how Günderrode uses the figure of Muhammad to address these questions, and suggests some ways that this character relates to German Idealistic and Romantic models of the ideal individual.

Günderrode presents Muhammad as a man of profound religious faith, but she humanizes this conviction by having the Prophet describe his earlier hardships in abandoning the religion of his people, experiencing his first prophecies and visions and giving up his worldly goals. We learn that Muhammad has lost his sons and loves his young companions Nahlid and Ali as surrogates. We see Muhammad as well-loved by his uncle and friends, hear from citizens of Mecca that he is wise and gifted, and are told that "his virtues are praised through the whole of Arabia." Throughout the play, Muhammad follows the promptings of his visions, which he experiences as the voice of God. Acting according to his conscience in this way, despite protests by close friends and family as well as enemies, Muhammad eventually achieves a bloodless victory at Mecca. Following this victory, Muhammad shows clemency to his enemies. This positive picture of Muhammad is completed by Muhammad's gift of prophecy itself, which suggests that he is both wise and favored by God. Finally, in addition to showing Muhammad's



positive characteristics directly, Günderrode encourages her audience to sympathize with the Prophet by showing other sympathetic characters, such as the judge Habib ibn Malik and the convert Omar, being won over by Muhammad's words and actions.

Günderrode's relatively positive portrayal of the Prophet contrasts with the Muhammad of Voltaire and Goethe, who is an alien and despicable figure. Hilger claims that these writers thereby "present cultural difference as inhumanity," whereas "Günderrode recovers the familiar in the religious Other."<sup>20</sup> Günderrode's emphasis on Muhammad's childhood, development of the gift of prophecy, and moments of suffering, which Hilger interprets as results of questioning his religious calling, give the character complexity and allow the reader to identify with him.<sup>21</sup>

As Hilger notes, Günderrode encourages her audience to identify with the Prophet not only in her characterization of Muhammad himself, but also in the way she presents Islam, emphasizing "those aspects of Islam that show an affinity with Christianity."<sup>22</sup> Thus, Günderrode focuses on stories from Muhammad's life that resonate in a Christian context, such as his encounter with the angel Gabriel, his ending of idolatry, and the payment of fifty gold pieces to Muhammad's enemy Khalid for betraying his companion Omar, which parallels Judas's betrayal of Jesus in exchange for thirty silver pieces. Muhammad's narration of the story of the seven sleepers, which appears in the Quran but also in Christian versions, also connects the Prophet to the Christian tradition. The language of *Prophet of Mecca* often reflects Christian, particularly Lutheran, terminology and emphasis. For example, Günderrode describes Muhammad's crisis of faith using phrasing that recalls Jesus's words on the cross: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"<sup>23</sup> Hilger claims that Muhammad expresses his fury at the worship of the false gods of Mecca in terms similar to Jesus's speech to the money changers at the temple.<sup>24</sup> Ingeborg Solbrig gives examples of language reflecting a Lutheran emphasis on conscience and inner devotion, including Muhammad's veneration of "the voice of God in my breast" and his teaching to the people of Mecca that "[t]he God of your fathers desires no sacrifice that the flame consumes . . . but he desires a pure heart, that his light may dwell within, and faithful confidence, that your spirit may rise to him."<sup>25</sup> As a result, *Prophet of Mecca* sometimes resonates more clearly in a Christian context than an Islamic

one. Hilger goes so far as to claim that at certain points Muhammad appears as “a version of Jesus.”<sup>26</sup>

Solbrig claims that Günderrode’s Muhammad is “almost a pure being” and that *Prophet of Mecca* is “not a drama but a kind of celebration of the ‘perfect man.’”<sup>27</sup> It is true that Günderrode gives Muhammad admirable qualities, but Solbrig’s interpretation overlooks the extent to which Günderrode allows Muhammad’s motivations, character, and inspiration to be questioned in the play.<sup>28</sup> Muhammad’s flaws are made particularly clear in his increasingly autocratic and unfeeling behavior, which results in the death of at least one sympathetic character: the Prophet’s young companion Nahlid, who dies after accusing Muhammad, “Here ends my servitude and your tyranny. Death, come! shatter the chains that fetter me to the most wanton of men.” Several times Muhammad is accused by other characters of being power hungry and selfish. His enemy Sufyan says of him that “he plays the prophet not only in order to play it, oh no! he plays it for a share of the winnings,” and Abu Jahl makes the same claim: “[H]e wants nothing but to rule, to this end he plays the prophet.” Since these accusations are made by the play’s villains, it might seem that Günderrode presents them as unjust, particularly since Sufyan and Abu Jahl lose both the case they bring against Muhammad and the struggle for Mecca. However, especially toward the end of the play, similar accusations are made by sympathetic characters and some of Muhammad’s strongest supporters. Muhammad’s follower Halima tells Nahlid that “[h]e only wants to rule, may the world perish over it, that does not concern him.” Subsequent events suggest that Halima’s criticisms may be justified: Muhammad will not be swayed from his decision to send Halima away against her wishes, which leads Nahlid to kill himself and leaves Halima in despair.

Muhammad appears unfeeling and egocentric as well as tyrannical by the end of the play. His response to Nahlid’s suicide is, “Oh Nahlid! What have you done to me?” and he has the body disposed of abruptly. The chorus echoes the sentiment that it is Muhammad who has been injured by Nahlid’s actions and not the other way around: “Unholy act! / That you, with drops / Of poisonous pain, / Mix the cup / Of lordly delight.”

Nonetheless, these events do not paint Muhammad as evil, but as a generally well-intentioned and wise man with some negative characteristics. Unlike in Voltaire’s play, the tragic results of the Prophet’s actions

stem from blindness and lack of consideration rather than evil, are presented in the context of larger benefits expected from his actions, and are regretted by Muhammad. As is usual in Günderröde's consideration of any topic, her approach to the character of Muhammad is nuanced and, to a degree, open-ended.

Licher has argued that Muhammad's ambivalent nature represents Günderröde's ambivalence toward Napoleon, which reflected a change in how Günderröde's contemporaries viewed Napoleon over time.<sup>29</sup> Many Europeans had hoped that Napoleon's assumption of power in 1799 would lead to the establishment of an ideal republic along rational lines, and a unified Europe (or a unified empire extending beyond Europe). However, when Bonaparte began to conquer Europe and beyond he disappointed these hopes, behaving as a colonial master rather than a liberator. Licher claims that both positive and negative attitudes to Napoleon are encapsulated in Günderröde's Muhammad, whom Licher calls "Buonaparte-Mahomet."<sup>30</sup> Licher argues that Muhammad's unification of Arabia is an analogy for Napoleon's empire, and that by the end of the play the high hopes for Muhammad's union of Arabia under Islam are, like the hopes of many Europeans for Napoleon's republic, disappointed by his tyrannical rule.

One of the defining characteristics Günderröde's Muhammad is his status as situated between earthly and heavenly ways of being. This point is articulated several times, including in Muhammad's opening speech, in which he states that "[t]wofold life flowed down to me from this star [Gemini], and it was to me a symbol of my double life, that partly joins me to the earth and the affairs of the world, and partly leads me to the unearthly and to strange revelations." As in other of her works such as "Story of a Brahmin" and "The Adept," Günderröde emphasizes the opposition between a life concerned with material benefit and a life concerned with virtue and obedience to the divine will. This opposition between heavenly and worldly lifestyles should not be confused with an irreconcilable opposition between heaven and earth. While Muhammad presents the pursuit of worldly goods as incompatible with a spiritual life, he claims that heaven can be united with earth, and that Islam will do just this, installing a divine realm in the world. He confidently asserts his role as mediating and unifying the two realms: "I am the priest who weds the human to the divine."

In his role as mediator, Muhammad resembles Jesus Christ, who is essentially both divine and human and who mediates God to the

world, and the figure of the mediator in Novalis's work, who performs the same function. Like Novalis's prophets and artists, Günderröde's prophetic figures, including Muhammad, can read the spiritual truth of the universe in the objects and events of the physical world. For example, Muhammad claims that "even the incidents and appearances in the course of destinies are hieroglyphs, in which the eye of the seer often sees the deep sense of God," and, "In each moment to espy God's will, to read him in the incidents and in that which one names accidents, that is my wisdom."<sup>31</sup> Solbrig and Christmann note the similarity between Günderröde's Muhammad and ideal figures from Early German Romanticism, describing Günderröde's Muhammad respectively as a "religious genius" and a "poet-artist."<sup>32</sup> These figures can perceive the spiritual nature of the physical world and communicate this to others.

Hilger claims that Günderröde's Muhammad is a figure of German Idealism: a man attempting to overcome his physical desires, especially greed, in order to achieve moral integrity.<sup>33</sup> However, although Günderröde does raise the question of Muhammad's motivations, Muhammad himself does not struggle with this issue. It is other characters, never Muhammad, who ask whether Muhammad is driven by spiritual goals or by greed (or, rather, the desire for power). Muhammad never doubts that his actions are mandated by the divine, and asserts that this is the case at numerous points in the play. In separate disagreements with Nahlid, Abu Talib, and Omar, he rejects their pleas to use human reason to plan his battles with his enemies, preferring to rely on divine guidance. Even more explicitly, he claims that "my deed is not my work, but the will of God," and maintains that his words and actions are divinely inspired: "I have called you to talk with you, not as a man to men, no, a higher spirit speaks through me to you." The chorus affirms that "A God it is, who from his mouth / Speaks to us of high revelation." Near the start of the play, Muhammad claims that when he had his first visions, he "did not know whether I should surrender to these inner revelations or flee them like night phantoms." However, by the time the action of the play takes place Muhammad is unwavering in his commitment to his spiritual calling. Thus, while Günderröde shows worldly and spiritual obligations in conflict, this conflict does not trouble Muhammad.

*Prophet of Mecca* does describe a conflict between the spiritual path and more human goals, but not by showing Muhammad struggling with this conflict. Instead, the play depicts Muhammad's actions in the name of God as having unfortunate consequences for his family and

followers. For example, Muhammad's uncle, Abu Talib, begs him to reconsider his pronouncement of Islam for the sake of his family:

I have always loved you, I was the carer of your childhood, the guardian of your youth; in you I hoped to find the friend, the consolation of my old age. But woe is me: you tear apart all bands of humanity, leave their society, in order to set yourself on a height where no friendship, no love can reach you, become a stranger among your own. I am now abandoned, torn away from you: that is the reward of my love.

Muhammad's response is immediate and unequivocal: "Let your love remain valuable to me, for truthfully I tell you, I would curse it, I would execrate your loyalty, if they could speak more loudly to me than the voice of God in my breast." The play does not show Muhammad as torn between the worldly and heavenly paths, but as firmly committed to the latter.

There is one point in the play where Muhammad undergoes emotional turmoil, indeed a crisis of faith, but this is not a moral struggle of the sort that Hilger attributes to him. Muhammad experiences a crisis when, during his exile in the desert, he loses his connection to the voice of God:

[T]he light of my spirit is extinguished, hushed are the prophecies of my bosom, the power of God is no longer alone victorious in me. —Doubt has displaced heaven from me. —The sanctuary of God is a hotbed of passions. How different I have become, the spirit no longer rules in me, my wish and resolution, courage and timidity, faith and fear fight humanly in my soul, —now I must worry, reflect, seek, —God, how you have slipped away from me! how you have abandoned me in the heat of the day! turned your face away from me in the night!

Even this crisis does not reflect a struggle between Muhammad's worldly desires and obligations and his spiritual calling. Muhammad is convinced that he has heard God's commands and that he should obey them, and he experiences a crisis when he no longer hears these commands. Muhammad has been thrown back on his own emotional and intellectual resources and, committed as he is to following God's

ordinations, these resources seem inadequate. Muhammad's doubts therefore do not result from questioning his divine mission or wondering whether he should follow the ordinations of God, but from the difficulty of acting without these ordinations.

Günderrode presents Muhammad as complex, ambivalent, and human: as a man with faults who suffers loss, doubt, and unhappiness. However, his humanity does not consist in a struggle with moral uncertainty or questioning his spiritual path; on the contrary, Günderrode's Muhammad represents a particular position of moral certainty. Günderrode questions this position and this certainty in the play, but not through conflicts in the inner life of the Prophet. Instead, she questions Muhammad's perspective through the different perspectives represented by the other characters in the play and through the ambivalent results, including the deaths of sympathetic characters, of Muhammad's unwavering commitment to his cause.

### *Free Will*

In many of her writings, Günderrode explores the possibility, nature, and enabling conditions of self-determination—that is, of acting according to one's own desires and volitions, instead of in a way that is determined by external circumstances. With respect to Günderrode's work, we can understand this issue as comprising two related questions, which I distinguish as: (1) the social and political question of "agency," or whether one can determine one's own life in light of one's particular circumstances; and (2) the metaphysical question of "free will," that is, whether it is possible to determine one's actions at all, or whether everything takes place according to an external necessity (whether that is understood as causal determinism or as divine will or destiny). Günderrode considers both questions in *Prophet of Mecca*. The next section of this introduction examines the question of agency as it features in *Prophet of Mecca*, while this section explores the question of free will.

Although Günderrode considers the problem of free will in several pieces, it is characteristic of her thought that she does not provide a clear answer on this topic, instead problematizing the issue. This is the case in *Prophet of Mecca*, where she uses various characters to articulate different positions on the issue and leaves these positions in tension. While Muhammad's perspective is articulated most clearly and

strongly, Günderrode uses the other characters and the action of the play to question this perspective. Thus, while maintaining a generally positive appraisal of Muhammad and his beliefs, Günderrode complicates the following questions: (1) whether one *can* act according to one's own will; (2) whether one *should* act according to one's own will; (3) whether action according to one's own will is the same as, or different than, action in accordance with God's will; and (4) whether Muhammad really acts according to God's will as he claims, or whether he acts according to his own will.

Overtly, *Prophet of Mecca* indicates that action according to one's own will is possible, although undesirable and eschewed by Muhammad. The play repeatedly contrasts action determined by one's own reasons and emotions with action determined passively by obedience to God's will. Muhammad is characterized as passively carrying out God's will rather than acting on his own initiative. He is marked out as special, and especially worthy, in this respect. Omar, Nahlid, and Abu Talib each separately urge Muhammad to determine his own actions instead of submitting passively to events, but Muhammad's responses indicate that he views himself as carrying out processes that are beyond his control. When Abu Talib asks him to (re-)consider his proclamation of Islam, Muhammad replies, "Can I also consider whether the spring shall come and the sun sink today in the west?" The chorus claims that Muhammad "does not long ponder what and how he wants, / He does as the moment prompts him, / And God's will is to him his feeling." Muhammad himself tells the citizens of Mecca, "I have called you to talk with you, not as a man to men, no, a higher spirit speaks through me to you."

Muhammad presents action according to one's own will as undesirable, maintaining that such action potentially conflicts with God's will: "[I]s it not higher wisdom to abandon oneself to [God's] providence than to rip oneself free of him and want to have a plan of one's own that is perhaps contrary to the will of God?" Here, Muhammad suggests that acting according to one's own will is a form of turning away from God. Elsewhere, he describes such action as a miserable and inadequate process necessitated by alienation from God: "[T]he spirit no longer rules in me, my wish and resolution, courage and timidity, faith and fear fight humanly in my soul, —now I must worry, reflect, seek." Both statements assume an opposition between the use of human reason and emotion on the one hand and passivity to God on the other, and both

statements use this opposition to devalue human means of determining how to act.

While Muhammad calls for a renunciation of self-willed action in favor of conformity to God's will, *Prophet of Mecca* includes some moments that seem to question whether it is possible to determine one's actions at all. For instance, when Omar fails in an attempt to kill Muhammad, it is suggested that this is because Muhammad is not destined to die:

*Muhammad.* Truly, I say to you Omar! it is not determined for me to fall by your hand.

(exits)

*Omar.* The moment was favorable! why does he still live?  
Odd—my arm trembled, my eyes deceived me, I could not accomplish it!

Similarly, at another point Muhammad reassures one of his companions that “[t]he destiny of the peoples is in me, the seed of the future is sown in my breast, must I not live, that the crop ripen and the future generations quicken?” The implication is that, regardless of human desires and attempts to act, events will unfold in accordance with God's will.

One interpretation of these passages is that it is possible to realize one's will only when that will conforms to the will of God. That is, since God's foreordinations will come to pass regardless of one's own actions, aligning one's desires and attempts to act with the divine will entails that one's desires and actions will be realized. At several points, the play suggests that Muhammad's conformity to God's will is the reason he so consistently accomplishes his goals. For example, Muhammad tells the people of Mecca that his God “gives doubled power to the arm that serves him.” He admits to Omar that rather than devising his own means to his ends, he waits for them to come to him, and that this is a successful strategy: he has “always found [means] in the moment when I needed them.” The chorus also connects success with obedience to the voice of God:

He seems to me unmindful, driven  
By spirit and himself will-less;  
Obeying those dark drives,



Bred in rapture's womb;  
 Then I see, astonished, how he finds  
 Discretion and means easy.

The second chorus confirms this association of conformity to God's will and the ability to accomplish one's ends, adding: "God's will is to him his feeling; / . . . He finds a path in any winding way, / He acts cleverly and is unconscious of it."

The claim that effective action is made possible by conforming one's will to necessity has been attributed to *Prophet of Mecca* by some commentators and taken to suggest that the play argues for quietism.<sup>34</sup> However, despite Muhammad's frequent avowals of passivity, it is not clear that Günderröde means her audience to accept that Muhammad is either genuinely passive with respect to God's will or genuinely party to that will. As we saw above, Günderröde casts some doubt on the purity of Muhammad's motives. Muhammad's supposed passivity underlies an increasing concentration of earthly power in his hands, which some characters interpret as a tyrannical imposition of Muhammad's own will rather than the manifestation of God's will. Nahlid accuses him, "[Y]our unbreakable will has prevailed again," and even more clearly condemns this overbearing authority when he tells Muhammad, "[Y]ou should not be able lordly to decide over [Halima]; should not be able to do everything that you want." In the very last speech of the play, Muhammad claims, not that he serves God or destiny, but the reverse: that God has commanded destiny to serve him: "Oh Allah be praised! That you led us here with your power, that you exalt your prophet before the peoples of earth. You said to destiny: serve him! And to victory: Step beside him!" This could be taken to reflect an egocentric assertion of will, rather than a passive renunciation of willing.

The outcome of these considerations is that, although the most prominent position presented in *Prophet of Mecca* on the question of free will is the one articulated by the character Muhammad, it is not clear that Günderröde endorses this position. Muhammad claims that free will is possible but should be set aside in order to conform to God's will, that he does this, and that his success can be attributed to this conformity to divine ordination. While at first glance Muhammad's generally sympathetic characterization and his successes seem to indicate that this is Günderröde's own position, the play also throws doubt

on Muhammad's perspective. The result is that G nderrode remains ambiguous on the possibility and nature of free will.

*Women, Agency, and Politics*

The status of women is not a prominent theme in *Prophet of Mecca*, but it is nonetheless important. G nderrode's treatment of female characters in this piece demonstrates her usual attention to the implications for agency and personhood of marginalization, and specifically her acknowledgment of the difficulty for women (and other marginalized individuals) of becoming agents in a society that does not recognize them as such.

The two female characters in *Prophet of Mecca* are both relatively passive and have their lives determined by Muhammad. Muhammad's wife, Khadijah, is a minor character who is left behind when Muhammad is banished from Mecca and dies before he returns. Muslims grant Khadijah an important position as Muhammad's confidante and supporter and Islam's first convert, but in *Prophet of Mecca* Muhammad treats her as a tie to the worldly things that he must leave behind. He dismisses her forebodings and her attempts to remind him of his obligations to her, and when he leaves Mecca they both know that she will die before they meet again.

Khadijah's inability to gain Muhammad's recognition as an individual with needs and desires of her own, or to influence her own fate, foreshadows the story of Halima, the daughter of Muhammad's enemy Sufyan. Having abandoned her father to follow Muhammad into the wilderness, Halima spends most of the play in the unhappy position of knowing that the two men she loves are trying to kill each other. Eventually, Muhammad sends her back to her father as a peace offering, against her protestations and those of Muhammad's young companion Nahlid, who has fallen in love with her. As a consequence, Nahlid kills himself and Muhammad sends Halima away, still against her wishes. Unlike Khadijah, who is almost totally passive, Halima struggles to avert the fate that is being determined for her. However, these efforts are in vain, as Halima knows from the start they will be. Nahlid's efforts are also futile. His request to Muhammad to take back the deal with Sufyan falls on deaf ears—Muhammad tells him, “[D]ear Nahlid! it

can indeed not happen, resign yourself to necessity.” As we saw above, Muhammad views his actions as ordained by destiny, and furthermore has already completed the deal that will send Halima away. As Halima points out, it is impossible to withstand Muhammad: “[E]verything is successful for him, and he has always done what he wanted.” The consequence of this absolute power to determine events is that the other characters are left powerless. Nahlid and, especially, Halima have their lives’ courses determined for them by Muhammad—a determination that costs Nahlid his life and probably Halima’s as well, judging by her claim that she will “despair, die of grief” and her parting speech: “Then farewell, sweet hopes! beautiful, friendly life; smiling future, farewell!”

As we saw in *Hildgund*, Günderrode is interested in the implications of recognition by others for one’s ability to realize one’s agency. In *Prophet of Mecca* and *Hildgund*, as well as Günderrode’s play *Udohla* and *Nikator*, central, usually female, characters struggle to determine events in the face of a lack of recognition of their agency by others. In *Prophet of Mecca*, not just female characters, but all of Muhammad’s companions and most of his enemies are subjected to his will. This parallels the situation of the characters in *Hildgund*, whose agency is constrained almost to the point of negation by Attila the Hun; in *Udohla*, where absolute power rests with the Sultan; and in *Nikator*, where King Egestes tyrannizes his subjects. The ability of these figures to impose their will is so complete that it threatens to deny the agency of others. As the deaths of Nahlid, Halima, and Khadijah suggest, to Günderrode this denial is not just restrictive of the others’ freedom, but a denial of their very selfhood. The refusal to recognize the other as an independent agent ultimately restricts the ability of that other to construct or sustain her- or himself as a subject.

Licher has explored some of the political ramifications of this point. On Licher’s account, in *Prophet of Mecca* Günderrode opposes the political situation in the early days of Muhammad’s community in exile, in which interactions between “the people” are based on equality, freedom, and solidarity, with that in the burgeoning state established by Muhammad by the end of the play, in which interactions are based on power and economy.<sup>35</sup> Following Licher’s claim, we can see the difference between these political structures as illustrated by Halima’s treatment by Muhammad. When Halima first arrives in Muhammad’s company, her decision to leave her father seems to be a sign of her developing

autonomy and moral independence, which Muhammad seems to recognize. Muhammad tells her:

You would not have done wrong, Halima! if you had remained with your father; you would have been like the plant, which cannot leave the maternal soil. . . . But you did better than if you had stayed: man does not belong to the soil that generated him; he may seek what profits him—you have recognized and chosen the better!

However, the subsequent consolidation of Muhammad's power reveals his endorsement of Halima's decision as an endorsement of the path she has chosen (Islam) rather than of her capacity for self-determination. He does not consult her before sending her back to her father and, in the context of the developing sense of individuality associated with Halima's decision to leave, this could be interpreted as a withdrawal of Muhammad's recognition of her agency and independent identity and a return of Halima to passivity and nonpersonhood.

In the story of Halima and Nahlid, Günderröde persuades her audience of the wrongness of autocratic decision making that denies the independence of its subjects. Licher argues that Günderröde calls instead for a form of society in which encounters with the other are used to build and sustain individual personhood. According to Licher, *Prophet of Mecca* points to the need for a free state, in which different genders as well as different cultures can create themselves through interacting with each other. On Licher's interpretation, this community in difference takes place both on the individual level and on the level of cultures, which also create themselves through interaction with others that are different: "The principle of cultural search for identity," Licher claims, "is rapprochement."<sup>36</sup> For Günderröde, this requires the recognition of the agency of individuals or of individual cultures during this interaction.

Licher argues that the culture that Günderröde envisions rejects gender hierarchy, war, and schism, instead promoting tolerance of difference and peaceful coexistence.<sup>37</sup> Licher's interpretation of Günderröde's position on gender difference identifies an important political concept in Günderröde's work: the recognition of the potential of large disparities in power to preclude the possibility, not just of freedom, but

of constituting oneself as a subject at all. In that sense, Günderrode does call for unity in difference, or for a community of autonomous individuals. However, I am skeptical of the claim that Günderrode demands an end to war and schism. In many of her works Günderrode seems to relish the idea of violent conflict, but more concretely, war features in *Prophet of Mecca* as both a valid means of furthering unity and spiritual enlightenment and as a sign of vigor. For example, the figure of Islam carries both a book and a sword, and the former greatness of Rome and Persia is demonstrated primarily by their military victories. Muhammad makes this point explicitly, telling his persecutors that “[t]he peace that you seek is a peace of slackness, dying off and servitude; war is better than such a peace.” As we saw above, in the dialectical movement of world history that Günderrode describes, unity is only one moment, and fragmentation another. Any culture, society, empire, or religion will ultimately lose vitality, and its fragmentation and subsequent reunification is the driver of history and the way the world maintains its vigor. One remaining question is whether Günderrode sees these fragmented elements as essentially conflictual or as potentially existing as harmony in difference. This question may have to be answered at the level of Günderrode’s metaphysics, which are also based on an idea of repeated fragmentation and unification, this time at the level of “elements,” before we can properly assess Licher’s interpretation of Günderrode’s social and political thought.

Whether or not we can construct a specific model of social arrangements on the basis of Günderrode’s writings, Günderrode’s plays, including *Prophet of Mecca*, constitute a valuable social commentary insofar as they highlight the importance of recognition by others for the development of agency and personhood. They also point out the ways in which this recognition is often denied, particularly to women but also to other disenfranchised individuals.

### *Günderrode’s Metaphysics*

*Prophet of Mecca* reflects the metaphysical model that Günderrode develops elsewhere in her work in at least two respects. First, the play’s articulation of a process of successive emergence and dissolution of social arrangements reflects an essential underlying metaphysical process; and

second, the picture of the “earthly” and “spiritual” realms that Muhammad must mediate provides material for the interpretation of G nderrode’s attempt to produce a monistic cosmology.

We have seen how G nderrode uses the story of Muhammad to depict a dialectical progression of world history, and we should note that this picture has a metaphysical, as well as a political, significance. It is not just a movement from one set of flagging social arrangements or gods through a period of conflict to a new, more vital set of social arrangements or gods. This aspect of G nderrode’s thought was informed by Fichtean, Early German Romantic, and Schellingian metaphysics that present the cosmos as essentially developing toward self-consciousness through a similar dialectical process. In some of G nderrode’s writings we see a related model expressed explicitly. In the philosophical fragment “Idea of the Earth,” G nderrode describes the world and every entity within it, including human beings, as contingently constituted from “elements” that, over time, separate and recombine in new constellations to form new entities.<sup>38</sup> As we saw in the introduction to the poems of *Poetic Fragments*, in the case of human beings this separation and recombination takes place after death. For G nderrode, the succession of different groupings of elements would ideally lead to a more harmonious and unified world, although she states that this is not guaranteed. Unlike Novalis, Fichte, or Schelling, G nderrode does not describe this progression as oriented toward developing consciousness. *Prophet of Mecca* suggests that the movements of world history are driven, not by a regulative principle of achieving greater consciousness, but by a gradual attenuation of vigor, requiring repeated revitalizations in the form of new constellations of elements. This need for repeated revitalization applies to the elements that constitute the world at its most basic level, as well as to cultures, empires, and religions. The result is a picture of the universe as cyclical and revolutionary, with a goal of maintaining vitality, as opposed to a linear universe that progresses toward greater self-awareness.

Simonis has argued that *Prophet of Mecca* shows Spinozistic, that is, pantheistic, tendencies. According to pantheism, the universe is monistic rather than dualistic, because the divine is present within the physical world rather than separate from it. Simonis claims that pantheism is entailed by the connection between the worldly and heavenly realms in *Prophet of Mecca*. This connection is seen primarily in the

person of Muhammad, who exists between these realms and whose self-proclaimed mission is to unite them. Simonis identifies this as an unorthodox element of Günderrode's work.<sup>39</sup> While I agree with Simonis that Günderrode generally presents a monistic view in her work, I do not find this indicated clearly in *Prophet of Mecca*. It is true that the play characterizes Muhammad as connected to both heaven and earth and as having a mission of uniting these. But does this entail either a pantheistic cosmology or a worldview that is incompatible with mainstream forms of Christianity, as Simonis claims?

Pantheism was a proscribed position at the time Günderrode was writing, but the claim that the heavenly and the earthly realms could be mediated by a special individual was orthodox—this is, after all, how Christ is usually characterized: as God and man, belonging to both heaven and earth. Christ's mission, like Muhammad's in *Prophet of Mecca*, was to mediate between human beings and heaven, allowing humankind to be reconciled with God. As this shows, the claim that the gulf between the divine and the mundane can be bridged, which we see in *Prophet of Mecca*, is not the same as the claim that there is no gulf—that there are no separate realms but only one realm of divine/earthly being. At the time Günderrode was writing, mainstream Christianity accepted the possibility of a mediation or connection between the divine and the physical world, but rejected the idea that these were identical, as pantheism claimed. The question is: Which of these models best fits Günderrode's account of Muhammad's mediation of heaven and earth? I will leave you with this question. The answer has implications not just for scholarship on Günderrode, but also for our understanding of Early German Romanticism and post-Kantian Idealism, which in various ways also struggled with the question of the relationship between spirit and matter.

Work on Günderrode's metaphysics, like work on her politics, ethics, religious ideals, and other philosophical commitments, is still at an early stage. As I have tried to show, *Prophet of Mecca* is a rich and fascinating source for interpreting Günderrode's contributions in these areas. This play, like the rest of Günderrode's works, has much to offer in addition to insight into its author's inner life, aspirations, and frustrations or, more broadly, those of women in the early nineteenth century. While an exotic setting, great historical characters, and themes of free will, agency, and personhood may have appealed to Günderrode partly

as a result of her own constrained circumstances, her use of these motifs, like their use by her male contemporaries, was designed to participate in a dialogue about politics, religion, and society. I hope that reading the pieces included in this volume will encourage scholars and students to begin uncovering G nderrode's contributions to this dialogue.

### **Further Reading on *Muhammad, the Prophet of Mecca***

#### *In English*

**Hilger, Stephanie Mathilde.** "Staging Islam: Karoline von G nderrode's *Mahomed, der Prophet von Mekka*." In *Women Write Back: Strategies of Response and the Dynamics of European Literary Culture, 1790–1805*, 91–118. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2009. Investigates *Prophet of Mecca* as a response to Voltaire's *Le fanatisme ou Mahomet le proph te* and Goethe's translation of Voltaire's play, which present Muhammad as a one-sided villain. Hilger explains how G nderrode emphasizes similarities between Islam and Christianity and the personal development of Muhammad to make her Prophet a complex and familiar figure, caught between two worlds and struggling with his divine mission.

**Licher, Lucia M.** "A Sceptical Mohammedan: Aesthetics as a Theory of Life's Practice in the Writings of Karoline von G nderrode." In *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century. Transactions of the Ninth International Congress on the Enlightenment*. Edited by the Voltaire Foundation, Oxford, 1996. Vol. 346, no. 3 (1997): 1450–52. A very short article positioning G nderrode as a revolutionary with democratic ideals, joining the Romantic struggle for an Enlightened Catholicism or Enlightened Islam against the association of Enlightenment with a particular kind of Protestantism.

**Solbrig, Ingeborg.** "The Contemplative Muse: Caroline von G nderrode, Religious Works." *Germanic Notes* 18, no. 1–2 (1987): 18–20. Solbrig briefly makes a case for the philosophical and religious significance of three pieces by G nderrode: "Muhammad's Dream in the Desert," "Story of a Brahmin," and *Muhammad, the Prophet of Mecca*.



In German

**Licher, Lucia Maria.** “Du mußt Dich in eine entferntere Empfindung versetzen.’ Strategien interkultureller Annäherung im Werk Karoline von Günderrodes (1780–1806).” In *“Der weibliche multikulturelle Blick” Ergebnisse eines Symposiums*. Edited by Hannelore Scholz and Brita Baume, 21–36. Berlin: Trafo Verlag, 1995. Licher argues that *Prophet of Mecca* and another piece by Günderrode, “A Persian Tale,” develop Günderrode’s models of the creation of individual and cultural identity and freedom in community. While “A Persian Tale” explores individual self-creation, *Prophet of Mecca* presents the creation of cultural identity through the encounter with another culture, resulting in the possibility of an ideal society that represents unity in difference. Licher claims that Günderrode presents Muhammad in a partly negative light in order to emphasize the importance of promoting others’ autonomy.

**Licher, Lucia Maria.** *“Siehe! Glaube! Thue!” Die poetische Konfession der Karoline von Günderode (1780–1806)*. Oldenburg: Bis, 1998. The author explores the role given to literature by the early Romantics, especially Günderrode, in responding to the question of how a modern political society could emerge. Licher argues that Günderrode uses the synthesis of religions in *Prophet of Mecca* to represent the union of the outcome of the French Revolution with those of the Enlightenment in a new religion or *poesie* (“poetry”).

**Simonis, Annette.** “Das verschleierte Bild’: Mythopoetik und Geschlechterrollen bei Karoline von Günderrode.” *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft* 74, no. 2 (2000): 254–78. Simonis presents Günderrode as a key figure in the transition from Enlightenment to early Romanticism, addressing the ways in which Günderrode’s work is both characteristic of her time and a unique contribution to her contemporaries’ search for the origins of religion, myth, and culture. Simonis focuses on Günderrode’s treatment of Egypt and Isis imagery, but points out more generally Günderrode’s use of Oriental settings to discuss controversial topics, including in *Prophet of Mecca*.

**Solbrig, Ingeborg.** “Die orientalische Muse Meletes: Zu den Mohammed-Dichtungen Karoline von Günderrodes.” *Jahrbuch der Deutschen Schillergesellschaft* 33 (1989): 299–322. Solbrig’s discussion

of *Prophet of Mecca* is largely descriptive, but notes Günderrode's concern in this play with political and social revolution and with the synthesis of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism. Solbrig claims that Günderrode's Muhammad, as God's messenger, acts from necessity and not free will.

## *Muhammad, the Prophet of Mecca*

### *Persons.*

*Habib ibn Malik*, Great Emir.

*Tariq*, Lord of the Sahamites.<sup>40</sup>

*Abu Sufyan*, Emir of the Quraysh.

*Abu Talib*, High Priest.

*Ali*, his son.

*Muhammad Abu'l Qasim*.

*Omar*, a warrior.

*Abu Jahl*

*Khalid*

*Al-Abbas*

} Quraysh.

*Uthman*

*Saad*

*Zubayr*

*Nahlid*<sup>41</sup>

} Muhammad's friends.

Three old men from Yathrib.<sup>42</sup>

*Khadijah*, Muhammad's wife.

*Halima*, Sufyan's daughter.<sup>43</sup>

The two choirs, in Egyptian slave clothing.

Citizens of Mecca.

Armed people.

Followers and people.

# Mahomed, der Prophet von Mekka

## Personen.

H a b i b - E b n - M a l e c, Großemir.

T a r r i k, Fürst der Sahamiten.

A b u - S o f i a n, Emir der Koreschiten.

A b u - T a l e b, Oberpriester.

A l i, sein Sohn.

M a h o m e d A b u l - C a s e m.

O m a r, ein Krieger.

A b u - J o h l

K a l e d

A l - A b b a s

O t h m a n n

S a a d

Z o b a i r<sup>75</sup>

N a h l i d

} Koreschiten.

} Mahomed's Freunde.

Drei Greise aus Yatreb.

K a d i s c h a, Mahomed's Gemahlin.

H a l i m a, Sofians Tochter.

Die beiden Chöre, in ägyptischer Slavenkleidung.

Bürger von Mekka.

Bewaffnete.

Gefolge und Volk.

*First space of time.***(An area in front of Mecca.)***Muhammad and both choruses.*

*Muhammad.* Already morning! Truly, yes! that purple stripe in the east heralds the light of day, which already gushes out from the sun's fiery womb. The star of Gemini, which ever escorts me on this whole journey, to which I ever gazed hopefully, expires in the morning rays. Twofold life flowed down to me from this star, and it was to me a symbol of my double life, that partly joins me to the earth and the affairs of the world, and partly leads me to the unearthly and to strange revelations. When the stars at midnight stand high over my head, then with their vertical rays all sorts of fantastical lights fall into my soul, which then disappear when the stars are devoured by sunlight.

(Muhammad throws himself full of thought down onto the stones.)

(The chorus approaches.)

*First half chorus.*

When the sun's beams sink,  
 Then the gate of night opens up;  
 And from the dark abyss ascend  
 Phantoms and dreams:  
 Nighttime forces rule,  
 Gladly beguile human sense,  
 They wrap themselves in false forms,  
 And drag him into the abyss.

*Second chorus.*

But also at night the true stars beckon,  
 Not every gleam is a false will-o'-the-wisp.  
 Dark destiny speaks from a far distance,  
 Thus it cannot be audible to all;  
 To deaf ears it remains unspoken,  
 To dull eyes the world narrows itself,  
 The mantles are drawn away from things,  
 When the light is wed to seer's eyes.

**Erster Zeitraum.**

**(Eine Gegend vor Mekka.)**

**Mahomed und die beiden Chöre.**

M a h o m e d. Schon Morgen! Wahrlich, ja! jener Purpurstreif im Osten verkündet das Licht des Tages, das schon der Sonne Feuer-  
schoos entquillt. Das Gestirn der Zwillinge, das auf dieser ganzen Reise mich stets begleitet, auf das ich hoffend stets geblickt, erlischt im Morgenstrahl. Zweifaches Leben floß aus diesem Gestirn auf mich herab, und ein Sinnbild war es mir, meines doppelten Lebens, das mich theilweise an die Erde und die Geschäfte der Welt knüpft, und mich theilweise zu dem Ueberirdischen und zu seltsamen Offenbarungen führt. Wenn die Gestirne um Mitternacht hoch über meinem Scheitel steh'n, so fallen mit ihren senkrechten Strahlen allerlei wunderliche Lichter in meine Seele, die dann verschwinden, wenn die Sterne vom Sonnenlicht verschlungen werden.

(Mahomed wirft sich gedankenvoll auf die Steine nieder.)

(Das Chor tritt herzu.)

**Erstes Halbchor.**

Wenn sich der Sonnen Strahlen neigen,  
So thut das Thor der Nacht sich auf;  
Und aus dem dunkeln Abgrund steigen  
Gespenster dann und Traum herauf:  
Es herrschen nächtliche Gewalten,  
Bethören gern der Menschen Sinn,  
Sie hüllen sich in Truggestalten,  
Und zerren ihn zum Abgrund hin.

**Zweites Chor.**

Doch winken auch bei Nacht die treuen Sterne,  
Nicht jeder Glanz ist falscher Irrwischschein.  
Das dunkle Schicksal spricht aus weiter Ferne,  
Drum kann es allen nicht vernehmlich seyn;  
Dem tauben Ohre bleibt es ungesprochen,  
Dem blöden Aug' verenget sich die Welt;  
Den Dingen wird die Hülle weggezogen,  
Wenn sich das Licht dem Seheraug' vermählt.

*Third chorus.*

Blessed, blessed! whoever fathoms  
 What here is truth and what deceit;  
 Whoever finds the riddle's solution,  
 For error brings malediction.  
 Among all who live,  
 The future speaks only to few;  
 Many words are given,  
 Only one calls the spirits.

(Nahlid enters, the chorus retires.)

*Nahlid, the previous.*

*Nahlid.* Welcome dear commander! and well-being and blessings on your return; it must have been good gods who led you back so well.

*Muhammad.* Be welcomed by me too, young friend! it is to me a sign of good auspices that Mecca sends my dearest friend to me for a morning greeting.

*Nahlid.* Oh dear master!

*Muhammad.* But what brings you to me so early? What robs you of your morning sleep?

*Nahlid.* Khadijah sends me to you. Abu Talib called the heads of the Quraysh together once more, and demanded from them the punishment of your insulters and compensation for your goods; but after long consultation they refused.

*Muhammad.* They refused it? Oh, they are an unjust, deeply fallen people, whom the sun unwillingly illuminates and the dew of heaven begrudgingly refreshes.

*Nahlid.* Your uncle insisted on his demand, but they reproached him that you had fostered secret negotiation with the lord of the Sahamites in order to obtain what the heads of your people had denied you.

*Muhammad.* And what did my uncle say?

E r s t e s C h o r.

Selig, selig! wer ergründet  
Was hier Wahrheit sey und Trug;  
Wer des Räthsels Lösung findet,  
Denn es bringt der Irrthum Fluch.  
Unter allen, die da leben,  
Spricht die Zukunft Wen'gen nur;  
Viele Worte sind gegeben,  
Eines ruft die Geister nur.

(Nahlid tritt auf, das Chor tritt zurück.)

**Nahlid, die Vorigen.**

N a h l i d. Willkommen theurer Gebieter! und Heil und Segen deiner  
Heimkehr; das müssen gute Götter seyn, die dich so gesund zu-  
rückgeleitet haben.

M a h o m e d. Sey auch mir willkommen, junger Freund! es ist mir ein  
Zeichen guter Vorbedeutung, daß Mekka mir zum Morgengruß  
den liebsten Freund entgesendet.

N a h l i d. O theurer Herr!

M a h o m e d. Aber was bringt dich mir so früh entgegen? Was raubt  
dir den Morgenschlummer?

N a h l i d. Cadischa sendet mich zu dir, Abu-Taleb hat die Häupter  
der Koreschiten noch einmal zusammen berufen, und von ihnen  
die Bestrafung deiner Beleidiger und deiner Güter Ersatz gefodert;  
aber sie verweigerten es nach langer Berathung.

M a h o m e d. Sie weigerten es? O, es ist ein ungerechtes, tiefgesun-  
kenes-Volk, dem die Sonne unwillig leuchtet und das der Thau des  
Himmels ungern erquickt.

N a h l i d. Dein Oheim bestand auf seiner Foderung, aber sie warfen  
ihm vor, du habest mit dem Fürsten der Sahamiten geheime Un-  
terhandlung gepflogen, um das zu erlangen, was die Häupter deines  
Volks dir versagten.

M a h o m e d. Und was sagte mein Oheim?



*Nablid.* He was silent and abandoned his demand, for it was well known to him that you had solicited the friendship of the Sahamites.

*Muhammad.* Then good, I know enough of this matter. What I will do I cannot yet tell you, much less debate it now. So let us now talk of more important things.

*Nablid.* More important things for you?

*Muhammad.* You're surprised? Indeed there was a time when nothing so occupied my spirit as the wish for vengeful justice for my good cause, when nothing lay so close to my heart than the hope of humbling my proud enemies. But all that is different now. Something higher rests on me, and other worries. Whether the Quraysh allow justice to befall me or not is all the same to me: I consider this, and all the little acts, the daily bustle of human busyness, no further.

*Nablid.* How should I understand that, my dear lord?

*Muhammad.* I tell you, I saw the realms and lands of this earth pass by like fog before my eyes, and then Mecca appeared to me such a meaningless little fleck that it seemed incomprehensible to me how something yet smaller than this Mecca could disturb the muse of my spirit.

*Nablid.* I do not comprehend you.

*Muhammad.* While I was away from you I spent more than a hundred years, for I was not within time, no! over it, and saw how it drags the mortal race along in its whirl. So hear, for I confide to you: you are engendered by light, and have received from the earth that is wedded to it, from whose womb you were born, not so great an inheritance of sin and frailty as other men; that I know and confide to you.

*Nablid.* How happy you make me; should I be worthy of such a trust, being still so young and inexperienced?

*Muhammad.* To me your youth guarantees that you are not so weaned from the aether, not so intimate with the dust, as the aged. Your

N a h l i d. Er schwieg und stand ab von seiner Forderung, denn ihm war wohl bekannt, du habest dich um die Freundschaft der Sahamiten beworben.

M a h o m e d. Nun gut, ich weiß genug von dieser Sache. Was ich thun werde, kann ich dir noch nicht sagen, vielweniger es jetzt berathen. Doch laß uns jetzt von wichtigern Dingen reden.

N a h l i d. Wichtigern Dingen für dich?

M a h o m e d. Du staunest? Wohl gab es eine Zeit, wo nichts meinen Geist so beschäftigte, als der Wunsch nach rächender Gerechtigkeit für meine gute Sache, wo nichts mir so am Herzen lag, als die Hoffnung, meine stolzen Feinde zu demüthigen. Doch das alles ist nun anders, ein Höheres liegt mir ob und andere Sorgen. Ob die Koreschiten mir Gerechtigkeit widerfahren lassen oder nicht, mir gleichviel, ich bedenke dies, und alle die kleinen Händel, das tägliche Getreibe menschlicher Geschäftigkeit nicht ferner.

N a h l i d. Wie versteh' ich das, mein theurer Herr?

M a h o m e d. Ich sage dir, ich habe die Reiche und Länder dieser Erde wie Nebel vor meinen Augen vorüber ziehen sehen, und da schien mir Mekka ein so unbedeutender kleiner Fleck, daß es mir unbegreiflich dünkte, wie etwas noch Kleineres als dieses Mekka die Muse meines Geistes stören konnte.

N a h l i d. Ich begreife dich nicht.

M a h o m e d. Ich habe, seit ich von dir entfernt war, mehr denn hundert Jahre verlebt, denn ich war nicht in der Zeit, nein! über ihr, und sah, wie sie in ihren Strudeln das sterbliche Geschlecht dahin reißt. Doch vernimm, denn dir vertrau' ich, du bist vom Licht erzeugt und hast von der mit ihm vermählten Erde, aus deren Schoos du geboren bist, kein so großes Erbtheil von Sünde und Gebrechlichkeit erhalten, als andere Menschen; dies weiß ich und vertraue dir.

N a h l i d. Wie glücklich machst du mich; eines solchen Vertrauens sollt ich werth seyn, und bin doch noch so jung und unerfahren?

M a h o m e d. Deine Jugend bürgt mir dafür, daß du des Aethers noch nicht so entwöhnt, mit dem Staube nicht so vertraut bist, als das Alter. Auch deine Unerfahrenheit ist mir lieb. Was würde es mir nutzen, wenn du den nächsten Augenblick klug zu berechnen wüßtest,

inexperience too is dear to me. What would it serve me if you knew how to cleverly calculate the next moment, had for every nearest difficulty a little means; I must scale a height from which I can look over centuries and peoples, those to study, these to lead. This wisdom befits me and no other.

*Nablid.* Whatever else you confide in me, whatever you may demand of me, I am wholly yours and your purposes'. I have always honored you and loved you more than all other people, but today you stand before me lordly and radiant, like a messenger of heaven, and act like a god upon my soul's depths.

*Mubammad.* Well then! you are as I wish you. Hear what my soul has already long, long brooded. I was still a boy when the heads of our paternal city elected me to bear the consecrated stone to the designated place in the holy Kaaba. The day on which this happened was a great day in my life. But before I would be admitted to the holy establishment, the priests bathed me three times in pure spring-water and anointed my hair with consecrated oil. These customs worked deeply and wonderfully on my spirit. I imagined myself splendidly favored by the gods of my country, believed they would grant to their favorite, without labor, all things that other mortals obtain only with effort. With these thoughts I grew up and looked forward with more than hope to a glittering future.

*Nablid.* Then the gods proved themselves badly in your destiny.

*Mubammad.* I became a youth, and still every morning with ardent prayers I turned my hopeful eyes towards the east, to see whether the new sun would not bring a new fortune to me. In vain! deaf those false gods remained. Where no deed is, there is no power, where no effect is, there the effective thing is missing. If ever a faith was great, it was mine, and yet I was deceived; and although my soul was as pure as a temple of God, and my faith pious, like the prayers of the angels, I was still discarded. I found my friends faithless, avaricious miscreants divided up my assets, and, like an abandoned servant, I had to drive camels through the hot sand of the desert and with hard work and base arts gain the meager happiness of a few sparse breadcrumbs. I had to bow my proud neck in unaccustomed

für jede nächste Verlegenheit ein kleines Mittel hättest; ich muß eine Höhe erklimmen, von der ich Jahrhunderte und Völker überschauen kann, jene zu erforschen, diese zu leiten, diese Weisheit geziemt mir und keine andere.

N a h l i d. Was du mir auch vertrauen, was du von mir begehren magst, ich bin ganz dein und deinen Absichten; immer habe ich dich geehrt und mehr geliebt, als alle andere Menschen, heute aber stehest du herrlich und glänzend, wie ein Bote des Himmels, vor mir, und wirkst wie ein Gott in meiner Seele Tiefen.

M a h o m e d. Nun wohlan! du bist, wie ich dich wünsche. Vernimm, was lange, lange meine Seele schon gebrütet hat. Ich war ein Knaabe noch, als die Häupter unserer Vaterstadt mich erwählten, den geweihten Stein in der heiligen Kaaba an die bestimmte Stelle zu tragen. Der Tag, an dem dieses geschah, war ein großer Tag in meinem Leben. Eh' ich aber zu dem heiligen Geschäft zugelassen wurde, badeten die Priester mich dreimal in reinem Quellwasser und salbten meine Haare mit geweihtem Oehl. Tief und wunderbar wirkten diese Gebräuche auf meinen Geist, ich währte mich von den Göttern meines Landes vorzüglich begünstiget, glaubte, sie würden ihrem Lieblinge alle Dinge, die andere Sterbliche nur mit Mühe erlangen, ohne Beschwerde gewähren. Mit diesen Gedanken wuchs ich auf und sah mit mehr als Hoffnung einer glänzenden Zukunft entgegen.

N a h l i d. So haben sich die Götter in deinem Schicksal schlecht bewährt.

M a h o m e d. Ich ward ein Jüngling, und noch jeden Morgen wandte ich mit brünstigen Gebeten mein hoffendes Auge gen Osten, ob nicht die neue Sonne ein neues Glück mir bringen wollte. Vergeblich! taub blieben jene falschen Götter. Wo keine That ist, da ist keine Kraft, wo keine Wirkung ist, da fehlt das Wirkende. Wenn je ein Vertrauen groß war, so war es das meinige, und doch ward ich betrogen; und ob meine Seele gleich rein war, wie ein Tempel Gottes, und mein Vertrauen fromm, wie die Gebete der Engel, so ward ich doch verworfen. Ich fand meine Freunde treulos, habsüchtige Bösewichter theilten sich in mein Vermögen, und ich mußte, wie ein verlaßner Knecht, Kameele durch den heißen Sand der Wüste treiben und mit schwerer Arbeit und niedrigen Künsten dem

servitude and sigh, when I thought of the golden dreams of my beautiful and free youth, or scornfully laughing despise myself and my past foolery.

*Nahlid.* I shudder to hear it. This is dreadful!

*Mubammad.* My faith was now dead, my heart turned from the false gods. I sank back into dull animality and lived only in the beggarliness of my profession; thus years went by. Once it happened that I moved toward Syria with a caravan of my uncle. We rested in the forecourt of the cloister that lies in the desert of Bosra. The monks discoursed with my uncle; I, as an unnoticed servant, did not dare join in with their conversation, but the abbot of the cloister, the venerable Bahira, approached me, threw himself down before me and prophesied to me lordship over Arabia. My uncle handled me thereafter with much distinction. Luck was all round more generous to me. I won Khadijah's hand, with her riches and reputation, and my soul was from that day animated and alive. I was active, made great journeys and sought to acquire for myself knowledge of all sorts, until a new incident gave my mind another direction. One of my friends fell ill. He sent me a messenger to give me news of it; but when the messenger opened his mouth I knew everything in advance, yes, I could have laid each of his words in his mouth, and when he had pronounced it seemed to me as if I had already once experienced this incident exactly so. I lapsed into profound contemplation over this. My business, society, yes even Khadijah's tenderness disturbed me, I sought solitude and spent whole nights in the mountains of this land. When it became dark and shadows enshrouded all eyes, then only would mine become clear. Many kinds of images passed before me; whence they came, I did not know, where they went, I did not know; but often I found between them and the incidents of the following days a dark connection; often though they seemed wholly lost for reality. I thought much about it and often, but back then I did not know how to order them and make them my own; far more they ruled me and plagued me.

kargen Glücke einige sparsame Brosamen abgewinnen; mußte den stolzen Nacken in ungewohnte Knechtschaft beugen und seufzen, wenn ich an die goldnen Träume meiner schönen und freien Jugend dachte, oder mich selbst und die vergangene Thorheit hohnlachend verachten.

N a h l i d. Ich schaudre, es zu hören. Dies ist gräßlich!

M a h o m e d. Gestorben war jetzt mein Vertrauen, mein Herz wich von den falschen Göttern, ich sank in dumpfe Thierheit zurück und lebte nur in der Armseligkeit meines Berufs; so vergingen Jahre. Einst begab es sich, daß ich mit einer Karawane meines Oheims nach Sirien zog; wir ruhten in dem Vorhofe des Klosters, das in der Wüste von Bosra liegt, die Mönche unterredeten sich mit meinem Oheim; ich, als ein unbemerkter Knecht, wagte es nicht, mich in ihre Gespräche zu mischen; aber der Abt des Klosters, der ehrwürdige Boheira, nahte sich mir, warf sich vor mir nieder und weissagte mir die Herrschaft über Arabien. Mein Oheim behandelte mich seitdem mit vieler Auszeichnung. Das Glück war mir überall günstiger, ich erwarb mir Kadischas Hand, mit ihr Reichthum und Ansehen, und meine Seele war seit jenem Tage ermuntert und belebt. Ich war thätig, machte große Reisen und suchte mir Kenntnisse aller Art zu erwerben, bis eine neue Begebenheit meinem Gemüthe eine andere Richtung gab. Einer meiner Freunde fiel krank darnieder, er sandte mir einen Boten, mir Kunde davon zu geben; als aber der Bote seinen Mund aufthat, wußte ich alles voraus, ja ich hätte ihm jedes seiner Worte in den Mund legen können, und als er ausgesprochen hatte, war es mir, als habe ich diese Begebenheit gerade so schon einmal erlebt. Ich verfiel darüber in ein tiefsinniges Nachdenken, meine Geschäfte, die Gesellschaft, ja selbst Kadischas Zärtlichkeit störten mich, ich suchte die Einsamkeit und brachte ganze Nächte in den Gebirgen dieses Landes zu. Wenn es dunkel wurde und Schatten alle Augen verhüllten, dann wurden die meinigen erst hell, vielerlei Bilder gingen an mir vorüber, sie kamen, ich wußte nicht woher, sie gingen, ich wußte nicht wohin; aber oft fand ich zwischen ihnen und den Begebenheiten der folgenden Tage einen dunklen Zusammenhang, oft aber schienen sie für die Wirklichkeit ganz verlohren; ich dachte viel darüber und oft, aber ich wußte sie damals noch nicht zu ordnen und mir zu eigen zu machen, sie beherrschten mich vielmehr und quälten mich.

*Nahlid.* We believed you then to be profound.

*Muhammad.* That I was too, and did not know whether I should surrender to these inner revelations or flee them like night phantoms.

*Nahlid.* But how did you recognize their worth or unworth?

*Muhammad.* On a humid day, when the Simoom singed the earth with hot breath, I strayed in the desert. It was high midday when I scaled halfway up the mountains and arrived in a valley that divided Horeb and Sinai from each other. I fell into a deep slumber, which poured out over me leaden and oppressive; vainly I sought to wrest myself from it; its embrace became ever heavier, more numbing. Suddenly I was awoken by fearsome voices. Deep darkness was around me, the stars gleamed wanly and the peaks of Horeb and Sinai conversed like giants' voices with the night and the blue arch of heaven. My innermost marrow congealed with horror, and I would have been sunk in dreadful madness had not from the east a consoling angel appeared to me. His countenance beamed friendlily, like the moon on the Red Sea, and his garb like the dawn; he touched my forehead and the icy terror of my bones gave way, and now he led me to a high bluff which an immeasurable plain surrounded. The angel commanded me, and I threw my staff down in the valley, there it transformed itself suddenly into a tree which reached up to the moon, it overshadowed the whole plain, and peoples and immeasurable realms harbored themselves under its branches. But the angel spoke to me: see! believe! do! But I answered: I am only a mortal, and this is an immortal work. Then the angel took the heart out of my breast and pressed it forcefully, until a dark drop sprung from it: it was the earthly fear and doubt; and when he had joined my heart again in my breast, it seemed to me very well and easy, for the narrow limit of mortality had fallen away from me. The angel thereupon gripped my hand and led me in spaces that no eye had yet seen, I heard things that no ear had yet heard. (Long pause.) I have finished, Nahlid! what remains for me to say you and all Mecca will hear from me when the hour has come; until then be silent and obey.

N a h l i d. Wir glaubten dich damals tiefsinnig.

M a h o m e d. Das war ich auch, und wußte nicht, ob ich mich diesen innern Offenbarungen überlassen oder sie wie Nachtgespenster fliehen sollte.

N a h l i d. Wie aber erkanntest du ihren Werth oder Unwerth?

M a h o m e d. An einem schwülen Tage, da der Samum mit heißem Hauche die Erde versengte, verirrte ich mich in der Wüste, es war hoch am Mittag, als ich das Gebirge zur Hälfte erklimmte und in einem Thale anlangte, das den Horeb und Sinai von einander scheidet; ich fiel in einen tiefen Schlummer, der sich bleiern und drückend über mich ausgoß, vergebens suchte ich mich ihm zu entreißen, seine Umarmung wurde immer schwerer, betäubender. Plötzlich ward ich von fürchterlichen Stimmen erweckt, tiefes Dunkel war um mich her, die Sterne glänzten bleich und die Gipfel Horeb und Sinai unterredeten sich wie Riesenstimmen mit der Nacht und dem blauen Bogen des Himmels, mein innerstes Mark gerann vor Entsetzen, und versunken wär' ich in gräßlichem Wahnsinn, wäre mir von Ost her nicht ein tröstender Engel erschienen. Sein Angesicht strahlte freundlich, wie der Mond auf dem Schilfmeer, und sein Gewand wie das Morgenroth; er berührte meine Stirne und das eisige Schrecken meiner Gebeine entwich, und nun führte er mich auf einen hohen Fels, den eine unermeßliche Ebne umgab. Der Engel gebot mir, und ich warf meinen Stab hinab in das Thal, da verwandelte er sich plötzlich in einen Baum, der hinaufreichte bis an den Mond, er überschattete die ganze Ebne und Völker und unermeßliche Reiche bargen sich unter seinen Zweigen. Der Engel aber sprach zu mir: siehe! glaube! thue! Aber ich antwortete: ich bin ein Sterblicher nur, und dies ist ein unsterbliches Werk. Da nahm der Engel das Herz aus meiner Brust und drückte es gewaltig, bis ihm ein dunkler Tropfen entquoll, es war die irdische Angst und der Zweifel; und als er das Herz wieder in meine Brust gefügt hatte, war es mir sehr wohl und leicht, denn die enge Schranke der Sterblichkeit war von mir abgefallen. Der Engel ergriff hierauf meine Hand und führte mich in Räume, die noch kein Auge gesehen, ich vernahm Dinge, die noch kein Ohr gehöret hat. (Lange Pause.) Ich habe vollendet, Nahlid! was mir zu sagen noch übrig bleibt, wirst du und ganz Mekka von mir hören, wann die Stunde gekommen ist, bis dahin schweige und gehorche.



*Nablid.* As you command, my dear lord, so will I do.

(exits)

*Tariq, the previous.*

*Muhammad.* Greetings, noble Tariq, worthiest of your people!

*Tariq.* I do not come alone to offer you my friendship; Mostasem<sup>44</sup> and Nekared<sup>45</sup> too, the other lords of the Sahamites, unite with me and offer you their hands in a close alliance.

*Muhammad.* What do you lords desire of me, and what alliance would you contract with me?

*Tariq.* The people of Mecca insulted us, the Quraysh remain indebted to you for proper reparation; what can we, what can you wish after such injustices but revenge? What we endured in common makes us brothers, we have *one* enemy and *one* good cause. Thus what do I need to prove this to you; indeed you formerly sought our union yourself.

*Muhammad.* Formerly, admittedly, but now much is different. But speak, how should I serve you?

*Tariq.* We will bring our united armies near to this city. You head back there, and when time and circumstance are advantageous, open the gates to us.

*Muhammad.* So you would make Mecca into your possession and from the battlements of this city rule Arabia?

*Tariq.* You err, such a plan overreaches our powers. We want to invade Mecca, punish our enemies, plunder, and then pull back into the desert before our enemies have plucked up courage.

*Muhammad.* Before I determine for or against your plan, just allow me a few more questions. Say, what drives you to the alliance with Mostasem and Nekared, your old enemies?

*Tariq.* The advantage of the moment.

*Muhammad.* And for what do you believe your union will serve you?

N a h l i d. Wie du gebietest, mein theurer Herr, so will ich thun.

(ab)

### T a r r i k, die Vorigen.

M a h o m e d. Sey gegrüßt, edler Tarrik, Würdigster deines Volks!

T a r r i k. Ich komme nicht allein dir meine Freundschaft anzubieten, auch Mostasem und Nekared, die andern Fürsten der Sahamiten, vereinigen sich mit mir und bieten dir die Hand zu einem engen Bündnisse.

M a h o m e d. Was begehrt ihr Fürsten von mir, und welches Bündniß wollt ihr mit mir schließen?

T a r r i k. Das Volk von Mekka hat uns beleidigt, dir sind die Koreschiten eine billige Genugthuung schuldig geblieben, was können wir, was kannst du nach solchen Ungerechtigkeiten wünschen, als Rache? Was wir gemeinsam erlitten, macht uns zu Brüdern, wir haben e i n e n Feind und e i n e gute Sache. Doch was brauch ich dir dies zu beweisen, du hast ja ehemals selber unsern Bund gesucht.

M a h o m e d. Ehemals freilich, jetzt aber ist vieles anders; doch sprich, wie soll ich euch nützen?

T a r r i k. Wir bringen unsere vereinigten Heere in die Nähe dieser Stadt, du kehrest dahin zurück, und wenn Zeit und Umstände günstig sind, öffnest du uns die Thore.

M a h o m e d. So wollt ihr Mekka zu eurem Eigenthume machen und von den Zinnen dieser Stadt Arabien beherrschen?

T a r r i k. Du irrst, ein solcher Plan überschreitet unsere Kräfte, wir wollen Mekka überfallen, unsere Feinde bestrafen, plündern und uns dann zurücke ziehen in die Wüste, ehe unsre Feinde sich ermannet haben.

M a h o m e d. Ehe ich mich für oder gegen euren Plan entschliesse, erlaube mir noch einige Fragen. Sage, was treibt dich doch zu dem Bündniß mit Mostasem und Nekared, deinen alten Feinden?

T a r r i k. Der Vortheil des Augenblicks.

M a h o m e d. Und wozu glaubst du, daß ihr Bund dir nützen wird?

*Tariq.* At least to achieve the nearest goal.

*Muhammad.* Tell me, how did your enmity develop?

*Tariq.* We had common goods in Yemen to share. They lured me there, united against me and defrauded me of my share.

*Muhammad.* I worry, Tariq! Mecca might become a second Yemen for us. I do not trust them: they deceived you, the companion of their rank, their fellow citizen. Allegiance with traitors brings malediction, they will flatter us so long as they need us and then ruin us; they will never be of one mind with us, we never of one mind with bond-breakers. I tell you, I cannot be the fourth in your alliance, seek your salvation, conquer Mecca without me.

*Tariq.* Are you raving? Only an inner enemy can make an outer one dangerous to this city.

*Muhammad.* It cannot be; this alliance of right-mindedness with fraud is unnatural. With you alone I would conquer the world; they would only constrain our vigor. What does a great body help me, if I cannot rule all its limbs and move them as I will? Our union would be such a body, mere willful limbs without centerpoint, without living connection. Deadlock and inner agitation would soon wear it out.

*Tariq.* Truly, I fear, you are right. —But listen, I will not abandon my plan; I will seek another helpmate. My alliance with Mostasem and Nekared is not so firm; what advantage bound, advantage may also tear apart again. I'll go to them, persuade them of the impossibility of our undertaking, and when they have gone home in peace we'll make common cause.

*Muhammad.* Good. On this condition I am your ally.

*Tariq.* But how? When will we invade Mecca?

*Muhammad.* That is not yet to be specified; we must devise another, totally new plan. I must first have seen how things stand in Mecca, then, and not before, can we arrange things.

T a r r i k. Wenigstens dazu, den nächsten Zweck zu erreichen.

M a h o m e d. Sag' mir, wie entspann sich doch eure Feindschaft?

T a r r i k. Wir hatten gemeinsame Güter in Yemen zu theilen, sie lockten mich dahin, vereinigten sich gegen mich und brachten mich um meinen Antheil.

M a h o m e d. Ich sorge, Tarrik! Mekka möchte für uns ein zweites Yemen werden, ich traue ihnen nicht, haben sie doch dich, den Genossen ihres Ranges, ihren Mitbürger betrogen. Fluch bringt das Bündniß mit Verräthern, sie würden uns schmeicheln, so lange sie unsrer bedürfen, und uns dann verderben; nie würden sie eines Sinnes mit uns seyn, wir nie eines Sinnes mit Bundbrüchigen. Ich sage dir, ich kann nicht der vierte seyn in eurer Verbindung, versucht euer Heil, erobert Mekka ohne mich.

T a r r i k. Rasest du? Nur ein innerer Feind kann einen äußern dieser Stadt gefährlich machen.

M a h o m e d. Es kann nicht seyn, dies Bündniß des geraden Sinnes mit dem Betrug ist unnatürlich. Mit dir allein wollt' ich die Welt erobern, jene würden nur unsere Thatkraft hemmen. Was hilft mir ein großer Körper, wenn ich nicht alle seine Glieder beherrschen und, wie ich will, bewegen kann? Ein solcher Körper wäre unser Verein, lauter eigenwillige Glieder ohne Mittelpunkt, ohne lebendigen Zusammenhang, Stockung und innere Gährung würden ihn bald aufreiben.

T a r r i k. Wahrlich, ich fürchte, du hast Recht. —Aber höre, ich stehe von meinem Plane nicht ab, ich suche mir einen andern Gehülfen, mein Bündniß mit Mostasem und Nekared ist nicht so fest; was der Vortheil verband, darf der Vortheil auch wieder zerreißen. Ich gehe zu ihnen, überzeuge sie von der Unmöglichkeit unsers Vornehmens, und wenn sie in Frieden heimgezogen sind, machen wir gemeinschaftliche Sache.

M a h o m e d. Gut. Auf diese Bedingung bin ich dein Bundesgenosse.

T a r r i k. Aber wie? Wann wollen wir Mekka überfallen?

M a h o m e d. Das steht noch nicht zu bestimmen, wir müssen einen andern, ganz neuen Plan entwerfen; ich muß erst gesehen haben, wie es in Mekka steht, dann und nicht eher, können wir uns verabreden.

*Tariq.* Good. And what surety do I have from you?

*Muhammad.* I will send you hostages this evening that shall content you.

*Tariq.* I am satisfied of it; goodbye. Victory and Mecca!

*Muhammad.* Farewell, my noble Tariq! (Tariq exits.) Well for me, the ruinous bond is torn. Victory and Mecca! but in a wholly other sense. Ever more clearly I know now what I shall do; therefore off to Mecca!

(exits)

*First chorus.*

What did I, shuddering, have to hear,  
Does he bear such a deed in his breast?  
To expiate delayed vengeance's thirst  
He sells his paternal city,  
He can betray his mother's breast!  
Stain her holy womb!  
Bathe in her children's blood  
And become her dishonor's companion?

*Second chorus.*

I saw him stray through the desert,  
Full of thought and all alone  
Making conversation with his spirit;  
And in the moon's dusky light  
Descend to pyramids,  
Summon there the earth's spirit:  
To show him what is hidden  
And how the stream of times flows.  
What he saw there in the night,  
That my eyes did not see;  
Whether he entrusted himself to creatures,  
That have never seen the pure day?  
Whether gods descended to him?  
I do not know myself to say;  
But innocence is in his features,  
Glorification's luster in his countenance.

T a r r i k. Gut. Und welche Sicherheit habe ich von dir?

M a h o m e d. Ich werde dir noch diesen Abend Geißeln senden, die dich befriedigen sollen.

T a r r i k. Ich bins zufrieden; auf Wiedersehen. Sieg und Mekka!

M a h o m e d. Leb wohl, mein edler Tarrik! (Tarrik ab.) Wohl mir, das verderbliche Band ist zerrissen; Sieg und Mekka! doch in einem ganz andern Sinne. Immer deutlicher weiß ich nun, was ich soll, drum auf nach Mekka!

(ab)

E r s t e s C h o r.

Was hab ich schauernd hören müssen,  
Trägt er im Busen solche That?  
Verjährt Rache Durst zu büßen  
Verkauft er seine Vaterstadt,  
Der Mutter Brust kann er verrathen!  
Beflecken ihren heiligen Schoos!  
In ihrer Kinder Blut ihn baden  
Und werden ihrer Schmach Genöß?

Z w e i t e s C h o r.

Ich sah ihn durch die Wüste irren,  
Gedankenvoll und ganz allein  
Mit seinem Geist Gespräche führen;  
Und bei des Mondes Dämmerschein  
Hinab in Pyramiden steigen,  
Beschwören dort der Erde Geist:  
Ihm das Verborgene zu zeigen  
Und wie der Strom der Zeiten fließt.  
Was dort er in der Nacht geschauet,  
Das hat mein Auge nicht gesehen;  
Ob er den Wesen sich vertrauet,  
Die nie den reinen Tag gesehen?  
Ob Götter zu ihm niederstiegen?  
Ich weiß es selbst zu sagen nicht;  
Doch Unschuld ist in seinen Zügen,  
Verklärungsglanz im Angesicht.

*First chorus.*

Astonishingly I found him  
 Once in exultation's glow;  
 And dissolved in a colorful  
 High-foaming, powerful flood  
 His whole being and life appeared to me;  
 He, will-less and unconscious,  
 Seemed devoted to higher powers,  
 That thus suffused his breast.  
 To me the soul of the prophet seemed  
 To stand in discourse with spirits,  
 I saw his eyes like comets  
 Spin him wildly in their circuits;  
 He raced, like the ocean's wave  
 Lashed by the north wind's might,  
 Yet divine speech like lighting brightness  
 Flashed through his madness' night.

*Second chorus.*

But when the mighty  
 Spirits leave him,  
 That possessed him,  
 He, astonished, pulls himself  
 Together from the ground,  
 Seems exhausted,  
 As if he had borne  
 All the spirits,  
 That possessed him.  
 Were now abandoned,  
 Tired and empty,  
 Sinks in profundity;  
 Confused thoughts  
 Cloud his eyes,  
 Cloud his spirit.

*First chorus.*

But he composes himself,  
 Brings to life  
 What he dreamt;  
 Changes order

## E r s t e s C h o r.

Erstaunend hab ich ihn gefunden  
Dereinst in der Begeistrung Gluth;  
Und aufgelöst in einer bunten,  
Hochschäumenden, gewalt'gen Fluth  
Schien mir sein ganzes Seyn und Leben;  
Er, willenlos und unbewußt,  
Schien höhern Mächten hingegeben,  
Die so erfüllten seine Brust.  
Mir schien die Seele des Propheten  
Mit Geistern im Gespräch zu stehn,  
Die Augen sah ich wie Kometen  
Ihn wild in ihren Kreisen drehn;  
Er raßte, wie des Meeres Welle  
Gepeitschet von des Nordwinds Macht,  
Doch Göttersprüch' wie Blitzeshelle  
Durchzuckten seines Wahnsinns Nacht.

## Z w e i t e s C h o r.

Wenn aber die mächtigen  
Geister ihn lassen,  
Die ihn besessen,  
Rafft er erstaunet  
Auf sich vom Boden,  
Scheinet ermattet,  
Als hab' er geboren  
Alle die Geister,  
Die ihn besessen.  
Sey nun verlassen,  
Müde und leer,  
Sinket in Tiefsinn;  
Verworr'ne Gedanken  
Trüben das Aug' ihm,  
Trüben den Geist.

## E r s t e s C h o r.

Aber er faßt sich,  
Führet ins Leben  
Was ihn geträumet;  
Wandelt die Ordnung



Into dream's confusion;  
 The things' existence  
 Into change and flight.

*Second chorus.*

Such forces, too, must the cosmos have,  
 Quiet existence is no use to it;  
 When instead of refreshing earth's children,  
 Destruction breaks from the womb of clouds;  
 When enraged waves break on the shore,  
 The fire's glow churns up the earth's womb,  
 When loud thunder speaks through the heavens,  
 And pain, horror fills every breast;  
 Then the narrow bounds cave in,  
 The old world is devoured,  
 Yet from the creaturely mind  
 A more beautiful is established.

*First chorus.*

To Mecca, then, with him to fight,  
 With him to die, if he wants;  
 May he argue with his gods,  
 I follow him to the boldest game.

*Both choruses.*

May he argue with his gods,  
 I follow him to the boldest game.

**(An open place in Mecca.)**

(Two citizens of Mecca encounter each other.)

*First citizen.* Where are you coming from, neighbor?

*Second citizen.* From the great gate: a caravan with Persian wares has come.

*First citizen.* Where does it come from, and is it richly laden?

*Second citizen.* There are thirty camels, heavily laden, and also a few mules.

*First citizen.* Who leads it?

In Traumes Verwirrung;  
Der Dinge Bestehen  
In Wandel und Flucht.

Z w e i t e s C h o r.

Auch solche Kräfte muß das Weltall haben,  
Das ruhige Bestehen frommt ihm nicht;  
Wenn statt der Erde Kinder zu erlaben,  
Zerstörung aus dem Schoos der Wolken bricht;  
Wenn sich am Strand erzürnte Wogen brechen,  
Des Feuers Gluth der Erde Schoos zerwühlt,  
Wenn laute Donner durch die Lüfte sprechen,  
Und Schmerz, Entsetzen jede Brust erfüllt;  
Dann stürzen ein die engen Schranken,  
Verschlungen wird die alte Welt,  
Doch von dem schöpfrischen Gedanken  
Wird eine schön're hergestellt.

E r s t e s C h o r.

Nach Mekka denn, mit ihm zu fechten,  
Mit ihm zu sterben, wenn er will;  
Mag er mit seinen Göttern rechten,  
Ich folge ihm zum kühnsten Spiel.

B e i d e C h ö r e.

Mag er mit seinen Göttern rechten,  
Wir folgen ihm zum kühnsten Spiel.

**(Ein freier Platz in Mekka.)**

(Zwei Bürger von Mekka begegnen sich.)

E r s t e r B ü r g e r. Wo kommt ihr her, Nachbar?

Z w e i t e r B ü r g e r. Von dem großen Thor, es ist eine Karawane mit  
persischen Waaren gekommen.

E r s t e r B ü r g e r. Woher kommt sie, und ist sie reich beladen?

Z w e i t e r B ü r g e r. Es sind dreißig Kameele, schwer beladen, und  
noch einige Maulthiere.

E r s t e r B ü r g e r. Wer führt sie denn?

*Second citizen.* A Quraysh, Muhammad, you have certainly already heard of him.

*First citizen.* Indeed, if it is he who a few years ago led our richest caravan to Mecca by detours and thereby saved it from the plunderings of the Canaanites and Hawzanites?<sup>46</sup>

*Second citizen.* The elders of our city were then in great distress, for had the caravans fallen into the hands of our enemies, then we would have had famine in the city.

*First citizen.* He must be a highly gifted man, Muhammad. Do you know how, in the war with the Canaanites, he gave his uncle the assault, to set upon their enemies in the narrow paths of Arafat. The wise Abu Talib obeyed his nephew and beat the enemy. I fought with them myself, for this victory we had him alone to thank.

*Second citizen.* He was also honored for that, his name was hung up with a panegyric in the Kaaba, but that made him many enemies and enviers. Farewell, neighbor, I have business.

(both exit)

### *Muhammad and Abu Talib*

*Abu Talib.* So is it then irrevocable, you will declare to the people what you declared to me?

*Muhammad.* It will certainly happen, but when—that is not yet clear even to me.

*Abu Talib.* Do not hurry so much, oh Muhammad! Give yourself a few more days of mature consideration.

*Muhammad.* Can I also consider whether the spring shall come and the sun sink today in the west?

*Abu Talib.* Is that even an answer? Believe me, the hours do not change alone, but with them the attitudes of human beings; and truly, you have not considered this deed enough.

Zweiter Bürger. Ein Koreschite, der Mahomed, ihr habt gewiß schon von ihm gehört.

Erster Bürger. Freilich, wenn es der ist, der vor einigen Jahren unsere reichste Karawane durch Umwege nach Mekka führte, und sie dadurch vor den Plünderungen der Kenaniten und Hamzaniten rettete?

Zweiter Bürger. Die Aeltesten unserer Stadt waren damals in großer Bedrängniß, denn wären die Karawanen in die Hände der Feinde gefallen, so hätten wir die Hungersnoth in der Stadt gehabt.

Erster Bürger. Er muß ein hochbegabter Mann seyn, der Mahomed. Wißt ihr noch, wie er im Kriege mit den Kenaniten seinem Oheim den Anschlag gab, die Feinde in den Engwegen des Arafat zu überfallen; der weise Abu-Taleb gehorchte seinem Neffen und schlug die Feinde; ich focht selber mit, diesen Sieg hatten wir ihm allein zu danken.

Zweiter Bürger. Er ward auch dafür geehrt, sein Name wurde mit einer Lobschrift in der Kaaba aufgehängt, doch das hat ihm viel Feinde und Neider zugezogen. Lebt wohl, Nachbar, ich habe Geschäfte.

(beide ab)

### **Mahomed und Abu-Taleb.**

Abu-Taleb. So ist es denn unwiederrufflich, du wirst dem Volke verkündigen, was du mir verkündet hast?

Mahomed. Es wird gewiß geschehen, wann aber, das ist mir selbst noch nicht klar.

Abu-Taleb. Eile nicht so sehr, o Mahomed! Gieb dir noch einige Tage reifer Ueberlegung.

Mahomed. Kann ich auch überlegen, ob der Frühling kommen und die Sonne sich heute in Westen senken soll?

Abu-Taleb. Ist dies auch eine Antwort? Glaube mir, nicht allein die Stunden wechseln, auch mit ihnen die Gesinnungen der Menschen; und wahrlich, du hast diese That nicht genug bedacht.

*Mubammad.* Considered? —I have not considered it at all; it came over me; it hovered over the times like a cloud over the earth, but now it has become ripe and trickles down over me like heaven's dew.

*Abu Talib.* You do not know this people, will not know how to win them.

*Mubammad.* What I require, all that I will find, if there is need.

*Abu Talib.* They will malign, hate, persecute you; and not you alone, also your wife, your friends and all who follow you.

*Mubammad.* It can easily happen.

*Abu Talib.* It should not happen, I tell you; you regard your own people's well-being so little that the thought of their ruin does not make you tremble.

*Mubammad.* I do not regard it little, but indeed not<sup>47</sup> so highly as the voice that speaks to me.

*Abu Talib.* So you will throw the torch of discord in the peaceful bosom of this city? Lend your name to bloodshed, to turmoil? Will—

*Mubammad.* Stop, uncle! will you never grasp that it is not at all a matter of my will?

*Abu Talib.* I rile your impatience, forgive me and listen to me only a moment more. Look, I have always loved you, I was the carer of your childhood, the guardian of your youth; in you I hoped to find the friend, the consolation of my old age. But woe is me: you tear apart all bands of humanity, leave their society, in order to set yourself on a height where no friendship, no love can reach you, become a stranger among your own. I am now abandoned, torn away from you: that is the reward of my love.

*Mubammad.* Let your love remain valuable to me, for truthfully I tell you, I would curse it, I would execrate your loyalty, if they could speak more loudly to me than the voice of God in my breast. Only

M a h o m e d. Bedacht? —Ich habe sie gar nicht bedacht, sie ist über mich gekommen; über den Zeiten hat sie geschwebt wie eine Wolke über der Erde, nun aber ist sie reif geworden und träufelt wie Himmelstau auf mich herab.

A b u - T a l e b. Du kennst dies Volk nicht, wirst es nicht zu gewinnen wissen.

M a h o m e d. Was ich bedarf, das werde ich alles finden, wenn es Noth thut.

A b u - T a l e b. Man wird dich verläumdten, hassen, verfolgen; und nicht allein dich, auch dein Weib, deine Freunde und alle die dir anhängen:

M a h o m e d. Es kann leicht geschehen.

A b u - T a l e b. Es sollte nicht geschehen, sag ich dir; du achtest der Deinen Wohl so gering, daß dich der Gedanke an ihr Verderben nicht zittern macht.

M a h o m e d. Ich achte es nicht gering, doch nicht so hoch, als die Stimme, die zu mir spricht.

A b u - T a l e b. So willst du denn die Fackel der Zwietracht in den friedlichen Busen dieser Stadt werfen? Dem Blutvergießen, dem Aufruhr deinen Namen leihen? willst—

M a h o m e d. Haltet ein, Oheim! werdet ihr denn nie begreifen, daß von meinem Wollen gar nicht die Rede ist?

A b u - T a l e b. Ich reize deine Ungeduld, vergieb und höre mich nur noch einen Augenblick. Siehe, ich habe dich stets geliebt, ich war der Pfleger deiner Kindheit, der Beschützer deiner Jugend; in dir hoffte ich den Freund, den Trost meines Alters zu finden, aber wehe mir, du zerreißeest alle Bande der Menschheit, trittst aus ihrem Verein, um dich auf eine Höhe zu stellen, wo keine Freundschaft, keine Liebe dich erreichen kann, wirst ein Fremdling unter den Deinen, verlassen bin ich nun, abgerissen von dir, das ist der Lohn meiner Liebe.

M a h o m e d. Laßt mir eure Liebe werth bleiben, denn wahrlich ich sage euch, fluchen würde ich ihr, verwünschen würde ich eure Treue, wenn sie lauter zu mir sprechen könnte, als die Stimme

my feet wander on earth; my head touches the heavens. See, in this sense everything earthly is very narrow to me.

(One sees many people in a long train going across the background of the scene. The chorus joins the people.)

*Mubammad.* Look, uncle! what does the throng there mean? Where are the people going?

*Abu Talib.* To the great temple, to celebrate a holy feast.

*Mubammad.* Wonderful destiny! why this right now? —The people are gathered, not for the sake of earthly business, not distracted by the concerns of life; their souls seek the holy, a temple, a community in the divine. Yes, I shall, I will open to them the eternal temple's gates; now the moment has come when the earth is ready to receive the kiss of heaven. Well then! I am the priest who weds the human to the divine.

(He goes toward the background.)

*Both choruses.*

The future's wave rolls nearer,  
 Secretive and terrible,  
 For divine power animates the seer,  
 He feels he is the arm of destiny.

(Muhammad steps forward. A crowd of people, led by *Sufyan*, follows him.)

*Mubammad.* Friends! Fellow citizens! I have called you to talk with you, not as a man to men, no, a higher spirit speaks through me to you, and he will lead you through me to life; I do not understand the arts of speech nor flattery that wins hearts; as the spirit commands me, so I do. That spirit that you do not know, who promised Abraham: I will make your son Ismael to a great people, if your grandchildren's hearts follow me, who for the sorrowful Hagar called a source of life to bubble in the sand of the desert, from that God your heart has slipped away, for that reason your enemies are victorious, your name unnoted, your riches the booty of bold robbers. The God who sends me to you is a God of victory; slaves do not serve him, not the weak, downtrodden; he makes great the hearts that follow him and gives doubled power to the arm that serves him. He is with

Gottes in meiner Brust; nur meine Füße wandeln auf Erden, mein Haupt berührt die Himmel, seht in diesem Sinne ist alles Irrdische mir sehr gering.

(Man sieht vieles Volk in einem langen Zug über den Hintergrund der Scene gehen. Das Chor schließt sich an das Volk.)

M a h o m e d. Seht, Oheim! was bedeutet das Gedränge dort? Wohin zieht das Volk?

A b u - T a l e b. Nach dem großen Tempel, ein heil'ges Fest zu feiern.

M a h o m e d. Wunderbares Schicksal! warum dies gerade jetzt? —Das Volk ist versammelt nicht um irrdischer Geschäfte willen, nicht zerstreut von den Sorgen des Lebens; ihre Seelen suchen das Heilige, einen Tempel, eine Gemeinschaft im Göttlichen. Ja, ich soll, ich will ihnen des ewigen Tempels Thore öffnen; jetzt ist der Augenblick gekommen, wo die Erde geschickt ist, den Kuß des Himmels zu empfangen; wohlan denn! ich bin der Priester, der das Menschliche dem Göttlichen vermählt.

(Er geht nach dem Hintergrund.)

B e i d e C h ö r e.

Der Zukunft Woge wälzt sich näher,  
Geheimnißvoll und fürchterlich,  
Doch Götterkraft belebt den Seher,  
Den Arm des Schicksals fühlt er sich.

(Mahomed tritt hervor, eine Menge Volks, von Sofian geführt, folgt ihm.)

M a h o m e d. Freunde! Mitbürger! ich habe euch berufen mit euch zu reden, nicht wie ein Mensch zu den Menschen, nein, ein höh'rer Geist spricht durch mich zu euch, und er will euch durch mich zum Leben führen; nicht versteh ich der Rede Künste noch Schmeichelei, die die Herzen gewinnt, wie der Geist mir gebietet, so thue ich; jener Geist, den ihr nicht kennt, der dem Abraham verhiess: Ich werde deinen Sohn Ismael zum großen Volke machen, wenn deiner Enkel Herz an mir hanget, der der traurigen Hagar im Sand der Wüste eine Lebensquelle sprudeln hieß, von dem Gott ist euer Herz gewichen, darum sind eure Feinde siegreich, euer Name unberühmt, eure Reichthümer die Beute kühner Räuber. Der Gott,



those who love him, he is to them consolation, courage, victory, and hope, he is the shield in their battles, the marrow of their bones, the exultation of their hearts; as the clouds hover over the earth, so he hovers over those who worshipfully recognize him; he pours down everywhere around him rich streams of blessing and doing good that other men do not see and taste. He is a God of life, his eternal being streams in fresh wellsprings through the whole circle of the world, through all spaces and all heavens. And you have abandoned this God? have fragmented him into your idols, fire, sun, moon and animals? Oh blindness! Because you worship his limbs his spirit escaped from you, that is why his power in you has lapsed, that is why you are sunken in hollow animality, imprisoned in time, and have no eternal life, no heaven and no blessedness; that is why you have no vitality, for life only emanates from life but your idols are dead, without effect, without salvation for you.

*First chorus.*

A God it is, who from his mouth  
Speaks to us of high revelation.

*Second chorus.*

From heaven come tidings of life,  
From eternal clarity flows the light.

*Muhammad.* Deep and ever deeper you would sink in the inertness of servitude, in the hollow, dull night of animality, if the God of your fathers had not looked down full of mercy upon you. He does not want your ruin, no, he wants to deliver you from finitude. That is why he sent me to you, that I should call you in his name, and quench you, who swelter in the arid desert of temporality, with the fresh running spring of eternal life. Hear my voice, that your souls will be saved, that the God of light send you his angels, for he wants you already now to participate in him in devotion, prayer, and purity; he wants to install his believers after time in the magnificence of his heaven, there no worry, no grief will dim their spirit; love, sweeter than all earthly, will fill their heart and ever blooming beauty will eternally surround them. But woe, tenfold woe! to those

der mich zu euch sendet, ist ein Gott des Sieges, Slaven dienen ihm nicht, nicht Schwache, Unterdrückte; er macht die Herzen groß, die ihm anhangen, und giebt zweifache Kraft dem Arm, der ihm dienet; er ist mit denen, die ihn lieben, er ist ihnen Trost, Muth, Sieg und Hoffnung, er ist der Schild in ihren Schlachten, das Mark ihrer Gebeine, das Frohlocken ihres Herzens; wie die Wolken schweben über der Erde, so schwebt er über denen, die ihn anbetend erkennen; reiche Ströme des Segens und Wohlthuns gießt er allenthalben auf sie herab, die andere Menschen nicht sehen und schmecken. Er ist ein Gott des Lebens, sein ewiges Seyn strömt in frischen Quellen durch den ganzen Weltkreis, durch alle Räume und alle Himmel. Und diesen Gott habt ihr verlassen? habt ihn zersplittert in eure Götzen, Feuer, Sonne, Mond und Thiere? O der Blindheit! Da ihr seine Glieder anbetet, da entwich sein Geist von euch, darum ist seine Kraft in euch erloschen, darum seyd ihr versunken in dumpfe Thierheit, gefangen in der Zeit, und habt kein ewiges Leben, keinen Himmel und keine Seligkeit; darum habt ihr keine Thatkraft, weil nur Leben ausgeht vom Leben, eure Götzen aber sind todt, ohne Wirkung, ohne Heil für euch.

**E r s t e s C h o r.**

Ein Gott ists, der aus seinem Munde  
Uns hohe Offenbarung spricht.

**Z w e i t e s C h o r.**

Vom Himmel kommt die Lebenskunde,  
Vom ew'gen Lichte fließt das Licht.

**M a h o m e d.** Tief und immer tiefer würdet ihr versinken in die Schlaffheit der Knechtschaft, in die dumpfe, träge Nacht der Thierheit, wenn nicht der Gott eurer Väter voll Erbarmen auf euch niedersähe. Er will nicht euer Verderben, nein, er will euch erlösen von der Endlichkeit. Darum hat er mich zu euch gesandt, daß ich euch berufen soll in seinem Namen, und euch, die ihr verschmachtet in der dünnen Wüste der Zeitlichkeit, tränke mit dem frischen Brunnquell des ewigen Lebens. Höret meine Stimme, daß eure Seelen errettet werden, daß der Gott des Lichtes euch seine Engel sende, denn er will, daß ihr schon jetzt in Andacht, Gebet und Reinigkeit seiner theilhaftig werdet; er will seine Gläubigen nach der Zeit einführen in die Herrlichkeit seiner Himmel, dort wird keine Sorge, kein Gram ihren Geist trüben; Liebe, süßer als alle irrdische, wird

who hear the voice of spirit and do not follow it, who, ensnared in evil and unbelief, will not raise their eyes and hearts to heaven. Never will the peace of God revive their soul; their spirit dwells in eternal night, never will they behold the kindness of God, never the magnificence of the heavens, and the sweetness of heavenly love will never quench their heart.

*Both choruses.*

They blaze up, heaven's sparks  
 Fanned by the breath of the seer,  
 The veil has fallen from him;  
 And brilliant from the dreams' night  
 We see him step to sainthood,  
 Bold, like a priestly hero,  
 To save us from each ignominy,  
 To ground a new world.

*Muhammad.* The great hour has come, a new star has risen above you, prepare yourselves then worthily to gaze upon it. The God of your fathers desires no sacrifice that the flame consumes, the blood of your sacrificial animals does not gladden him; but he desires a pure heart, that his light may dwell within, and faithful confidence, that your spirit may rise to him. The God whom I announce to you can bear no idols beside him, he does not dwell in a temple or a heart that idolatry has stained; for this reason turn over the despicable altars upon which you brought sinful sacrifices to your idols. Purify your temple, that I may there make further known to you the spirit of truth and his commands. Whoever hears his voice, wants to participate in his salvation, follow me thence, to absolve yourself before God, who unwillingly looks down on your previous abominations.

*Many voices.* We follow! We follow!

*Sufyan.* Stop, Muhammad! People of Mecca! allow me to speak.

*Muhammad.* Now is not the time to stay, and you, Sufyan, will not now speak.

*Many voices.* No, he shall not speak, he shall not speak.

*Muhammad.* Follow me, my friends.

ihr Herz erfüllen und immer blühende Schönheit wird sie ewig umfassen. Aber Wehe, zehnfaches Wehe! denen, die die Stimme des Geistes hören und ihr nicht folgen, die in Bosheit und Unglauben verstrickt, ihre Augen und Herzen nicht erheben mögen zum Himmel. Nimmer wird der Friede Gottes ihre Seele erquickern; ihr Geist wohnt in ewiger Nacht, nimmer werden sie die Freundlichkeit Gottes, nimmer die Herrlichkeit der Himmel schauen, und die Süßigkeit der himmlischen Liebe wird nie ihr Herz tränken.

**B e i d e C h ö r e.**

Sie lodern auf, die Himmelsfunken  
Vom Hauch des Sehers angefacht,  
Der Schleier ist von ihm gesunken;  
Und glanzvoll aus der Träume Nacht  
Sehn wir zum Heiligthum ihn treten,  
Kühn, wie ein priesterlicher Held,  
Von jeder Schmach uns zu erretten,  
Zu gründen eine neue Welt.

**M a h o m e d.** Die große Stunde ist gekommen, ein neues Gestirn ist über euch aufgegangen, bereitet euch denn würdig vor, es zu schauen. Der Gott eurer Väter verlangt keine Opfer, die die Flamme verzehrt, das Blut eurer Opferthiere erfreuet ihn nicht; aber er verlangt ein reines Herz, daß sein Licht darin wohnen, und glaubige Zuversicht, daß euer Geist sich zu ihm erheben möge. Der Gott, den ich euch verkünde, kann keine Götzen neben sich dulden, er wohnt nicht in einem Tempel oder einem Herzen, das die Abgötterei befleckt hat; darum stoßt die schnöden Altäre um, auf denen ihr euren Götzen sündige Opfer gebracht habt. Reinigt euern Tempel, daß ich euch dort den Geist der Wahrheit und seine Gebote noch ferner bekannt mache. Wer seine Stimme hören, seines Heils theilhaftig werden will, der folge mir dahin, den Gott zu entsühnen, der unwillig auf eure vorige Greuel herabsieht.

**V i e l e S t i m m e n.** Wir folgen! Wir folgen!

**S o f i a n.** Halt, Mahomed! Volk von Mekka! vergönne mir zu reden.

**M a h o m e d.** Jetzt ist nicht Zeit zu bleiben, und du, Sofian, wirst jetzt nicht reden.

**V i e l e S t i m m e n.** Nein, er soll nicht reden, er soll nicht reden.

**M a h o m e d.** Folgt mir, meine Freunde.

(He exits, all the people follow him, the chorus stays back.)

*First chorus.*

The great word is spoken  
 The act wrenches it into the world's bustle;  
 The quick arrow leaves the bow,  
 But it often misses its target,  
 Envious destiny can turn it,  
 Lead it into the shooter's breast,  
 Destiny will dispense itself  
 And punishes the human desire to act.

*Second chorus.*

Now the face of the earth  
 Will transform itself,  
 The old, familiar,  
 Aged and ugly,  
 Full of worn looks;  
 Now will unfold itself  
 In smiling youth;  
 The weakness of age  
 Of ailing times,  
 Becomes bold youth  
 By the breath of enthusiasm  
 Awakened to life.

*First chorus.*

The earth will now become a colorful bustle,  
 That resembles Muhammad's dream vision,

*Second chorus.*

I never saw a man like him on earth,  
 No mortal has equaled him.  
 So I follow him, to never leave him,  
 For him I should abandon even the dearest.

*Second space of time.*

**(The inner courtyard of Muhammad's house.)**

(Muhammad leans thoughtfully on a tree.)

(Er geht ab, alles Volk folgt ihm, das Chor bleibt zurück.)

E r s t e s C h o r.

Das große Wort es ist gesprochen,  
Die That reißt ihn ins Weltgewühl;  
Der schnelle Pfeil verläßt den Bogen,  
Doch er verfehlet oft sein Ziel,  
Das neid'sche Schicksal kann ihn wenden,  
Ihn führen in des Schützen Brust,  
Sich selber will das Schicksal spenden  
Und straft des Menschen Thatenlust.

Z w e i t e s C h o r.

Jetzt wird sich das Antlitz  
Der Erde verwandeln,  
Das alte, gewohnte,  
Bejahret und häßlich,  
Voll trüglicher Mienen;  
Nun wird sichs entfalten  
In lächelnde Jugend;  
Die Schwäche des Alters  
Der kränkelnden Zeiten,  
Wird muthige Jugend  
Vom Hauch der Begeistrung  
Zum Leben erweckt.

E r s t e s C h o r.

Ein bunt Gewühl wird nun die Erde werden,  
Das Mahoms Traumgesichten gleicht,

Z w e i t e s C h o r.

Nie sah ich einen Mann wie ihn auf Erden,  
Kein Sterblicher hat ihn erreicht.  
Drum folg ich ihm, um nimmer ihn zu lassen,  
Sollt' ich für ihn das Liebste auch verlassen.

### Z w e i t e r Z e i t r a u m.

(Der innre Hof von Mahomed's Hause.)

(Mahomed lehnt sich gedankenvoll an einen Baum.)

*The chorus.**First chorus.*

Blustered out are the storms,  
 The foaming waves,  
 They sink their heads,  
 And slumber like children  
 In the womb of the deep  
 In silent peace.

*Second chorus.*

The gleaming moon climbs,  
 Aloft into the sky,  
 And mirrors its face  
 In the breast of the still,  
 The smiling flood.

*First chorus.*

Booming waves do not  
 Rip apart its image  
 Into shimmering sparks,  
 All truly mirrored,  
 It beholds<sup>48</sup> its smile  
 In the heart of the flood.

*Nahlid, Uthman, Ali, the previous.*

*Muhammad.* Be welcome, my friends! Valiant Uthman! You, doughty Ali, tamer of the strong! You, you, my dear Nahlid! Greetings, all three.

*Ali.* You summoned us here, what do you command?

*Muhammad.* Hear! obey! The spirit spoke to me: Muhammad, fight against idolatry. Now as God commanded me, so I command you, throw the shameful idols, Lat and 'Uzzá,<sup>49</sup> from the altars of the great temple, that the sanctum will be pure, for I do not enter the place that is besmirched by idolatry.

*Ali.* Your will shall be done.

(exits)

**D a s C h o r.**

E r s t e s C h o r.

Verbraußt sind die Stürme,  
Die schäumenden Wogen,  
Sie senken die Häupter,  
Und schlummern wie Kinder  
Im Schooße der Tiefe  
In schweigender Ruh.

Z w e i t e s C h o r.

Der glänzende Mond steigt,  
Empor an die Himmel,  
Und spiegelt sein Antlitz  
Im Busen der stillen,  
Der lächenden Fluth.

E r s t e s C h o r.

Nicht brausende Wogen  
Zerreißen sein Bildniß  
In schimmernde Funken,  
Gar treulich gespiegelt,  
Erblickt er sein Lächlen  
Im Herzen der Fluth.

**N a h l i d, O t h m a n n, A l i, d i e V o r i g e n.**

M a h o m e d. Seyd mir willkommen, meine Freunde! Wackrer Othmann! Du, tapfrer Ali, Bändiger der Starken! Du, du, mein lieber Nahlid! Seyd mir alle drei gegrüßt.

A l i. Du hast uns herbeschieden, was gebietest du?

M a h o m e d. Höre! gehorcht! Der Geist hat zu mir gesprochen: Mahomed, kämpfe wider die Abgötterei. Wie nun Gott mir geboten hat, so gebiete ich dir, wirf die schändlichen Götzen, den Lath und Ozza von den Altären des großen Tempels, daß das Heiligthum rein werde, denn ich betrete nicht die Stätte, die von Abgötterei besudelt ist.

A l i. Dein Wille soll geschehen.

(ab)



*Mubammad.* And you, Uthman! move toward Medina, announce to the people there: There is a single God, in whom heaven and earth and all things are, and Muhammad is his prophet. (He hands him a piece of parchment.) Here, this page will tell you further what you shall do there.

(Uthman exits)

*Nahlid.* You give assignments to all, all others may work for you; only I alone am useless to you?

*Mubammad.* I feel well in your presence, therefore stay in my house; let others do my deeds, you gladden my heart.

*Khadijah, the previous.*

*Khadijah.* You are home again, my dear husband? Oh, let me always share the hours of your muse. You seem to me so gladly moved? Say, may I know what delights you, that your joy may become greater through the addition of mine?

*Mubammad.* Once, when my sons died, I was very sad; now they are resurrected for me, therefore I am cheerful. God gave me the peoples of this earth as the inheritance of my deeds, here my Nahlid and the doughty Ali as children of my heart.

*Khadijah.* If you bear such great love for your friends, my husband! what will remain of you for Khadijah?

*Mubammad.* The sun *warms* the Orient with its beams, do you believe it will be too poor to *light* the Occident?

*Khadijah.* No, my husband! it will also delight it.

*Mubammad.* So be calm, Khadijah! many worries crowd upon me, none are forgotten.

(Nahlid sits and reads from a roll of parchment.)

*Khadijah.* My heart feels so heavy, and yet I should be cheerful! Is Muhammad not my husband? And is my husband not the greatest of men? But also in the greatest danger; my heart repeats that so often, so fearfully, that it almost overwhelms my courage.

M a h o m e d. Und du, Othmann! zieh hin gen Medina, verkündige dem Volk dort: Es ist ein einziger Gott, in dem Himmel und Erde und alle Dinge sind, und Mahomed ist sein Prophet. (Er reicht ihm ein Pergament.) Hier, dies Blatt wird dir ferner sagen, was du dort sollst.

(Othmann ab)

N a h l i d. Allen giebst du Aufträge, alle andern dürfen für dich arbeiten, nur ich allein bin dir unnütz?

M a h o m e d. Mir ist wohl in deiner Gegenwart, darum bleibe in meinem Hause; laß andre meine Thaten thun, erfreue du mein Herz.

### K a d i s c h a, d i e V o r i g e n.

K a d i s c h a. Du bist wieder zu Hause, mein theurer Gemahl? O laß mich immer die Stunden deiner Muse theilen. Du scheinst mir so froh bewegt? Sag, darf ich wissen, was dich vergnügt, daß deine Freude größer werde durch den Zusatz der meinigen?

M a h o m e d. Einst, da meine Söhne starben, da war ich sehr traurig, jetzt sind sie mir auferstanden, darum bin ich fröhlich. Gott hat mir die Völker dieser Erde zu Erben meiner Thaten gegeben, hier meinen Nahlid und den tapfern Ali, zu Kindern meines Herzens.

K a d i s c h a. Wenn du so große Liebe für deine Freunde trägst, mein Gemahl! was wird dir übrig bleiben für Kadischa?

M a h o m e d. Die Sonne e r w ä r m t den Orient mit ihren Strahlen, glaubst du, sie werde zu arm seyn, dem Occident zu l e u c h t e n ?

K a d i s c h a. Nein, mein Gemahl! sie wird auch ihn erfreuen.

M a h o m e d. Darum sey ruhig, Kadischa! viel Sorgen drängen sich zu mir, keine wird vergessen.

(Nahlid setzt sich und liest in einer Pergamentrolle.)

K a d i s c h a. Mein Herz ist mir so schwer, und ich sollte doch fröhlich seyn! Ist Mahomed nicht mein Gemahl? Und ist mein Gemahl nicht der größte der Menschen? Aber auch in der größten Gefahr; mein Herz wiederholt das so oft, so ängstlich, daß es meinen Muth fast überwältigt.

*Mubammad.* Fear not: the deed needs me, therefore I will not die now.

*Khadijah.* There are more evils than death.

*Mubammad.* But as many means as dangers. The spirit will indicate to me what I should avoid.

*Khadijah.* Does he always speak to you? Is everything always evident to you that it would be useful to you to know?

*Mubammad.* Be without fear, Khadijah! Ah, I hear someone coming—go! another time you shall learn what it will be of use to you to hear.

(Khadijah exits)

***Mubammad, Omar, Nablid.***

*Mubammad.* You, Omar, here? Be welcome.

*Omar.* If you knew why I came you would not welcome me. Know! I demand accountability!

*Mubammad.* That does not behoove you, Omar!

*Omar.* It is not enough for you, that you disloyally abandon your gods and speak derision of the law; not enough, that you provoke the people to downsliding; no, my complaint concerns myself more closely: you have bewitched my sister, whom I love like the sight of my eyes, so that she too abandons the gods of her land and chases after your fairy tales.

*Mubammad.* Is that all that you have to say to me?

*Omar.* Nothing further, but that I curse you.

*Mubammad.* I thank God that through me he has awoken your sister from the death of the soul; and I want to cry over your blindness.

*Omar.* Is that your whole apology?

*Mubammad.* Did I want to apologize? Who made you believe that?

(he wants to leave)

M a h o m e d. Fürchte nichts, die That bedarf meiner, ich werde also jetzt nicht sterben.

K a d i s c h a. Es giebt mehr Uebel noch, als den Tod.

M a h o m e d. Doch so viel Mittel als Gefahren. Der Geist wird mir andeuten, was ich meiden soll.

K a d i s c h a. Spricht er dir immer? Ist dir immer alles offenbar, was dir zu wissen nützlich wäre?

M a h o m e d. Sey ohne Furcht, Kadischa! Doch, ich höre kommen, geh! ein andermal sollst du erfahren, was dir zu hören frommt.

(Kadischa ab)

### **M a h o m e d, O m a r, N a h l i d.**

M a h o m e d. Du, Omar, hier? Sey mir willkommen.

O m a r. Wenn du wüßtest, warum ich komme, du würdest mich nicht willkommen heißen. Wisse! ich fodere Rechenschaft.

M a h o m e d. Das geziemt dir nicht, Omar!

O m a r. Es ist dir nicht genug, daß du abtrünnig deine Götter verlässest und dem Gesetz Hohn sprichst; nicht genug, daß du das Volk zum Abfall reizest, nein, meine Klage geht mich selbst noch näher an, du hast meine Schwester, die ich liebe, wie das Sehen meiner Augen, bethört, daß auch sie die Götter ihres Landes verläßt und deinen Märlein nachjagt.

M a h o m e d. Ist das alles, was du mir zu sagen hast?

O m a r. Nichts weiter, als daß ich dir fluche.

M a h o m e d. Ich danke Gott, daß er deine Schwester durch mich vom Tode der Seele erweckt hat; und weinen möchte ich über deine Blindheit.

O m a r. Ist das deine ganze Entschuldigung?

M a h o m e d. Wollte ich mich denn entschuldigen? Wer machte dich das glauben?

(er will abgehen)

*Omar.* Take this with you for your arrogance.

(He flicks the dagger after him, but the dagger falls from his hand.  
Pause.)

*Muhammad.* Truly, I say to you Omar! it is not determined for me to  
fall by your hand.

(exits)

*Omar.* The moment was favorable! why does he still live? Odd—my arm  
trembled, my eyes deceived me, I could not accomplish it! (Pause)  
You still here, Nahlid? I did not notice you; what are you reading  
so eagerly?

*Nahlid.* I'm reading a preaching from the holy Quran.

*Omar.* Is that indeed the speech of your Muhammad? Let me see!<sup>150</sup> (He  
rips the parchment from him and reads:)

“I let the word of salvation reach you, not to disturb you in the  
enjoyment of earthly goods; I announce the mercy of the God who  
called the worlds to being, and whose light flows out over the sky.”

Say, Nahlid! are those really the words of your prophet?

*Nahlid.* Do not doubt, they are Muhammad's own words.

*Omar.* Should Muhammad be able to speak like that? I am aston-  
ished!—Let me take this page with me, Nahlid!

*Nahlid.* Do with it as you will.

(both exit)

*First chorus.*

Astonished I see the seer's deeds,  
Yes, much considering I see them,  
For *one* I cannot guess,  
And *one* I never grasp;  
He seems to me unmindful, driven  
By spirit and himself will-less;  
Obeying those dark drives,  
Bred in rapture's womb;  
Then I see, astonished, how he finds  
Discretion and means easy;

O m a r. Nimm dies für deinen Uebermuth mit.

(Er zuckt den Dolch nach ihm, aber der Dolch entfällt seiner Hand.  
Pause.)

M a h o m e d. Wahrlich, ich sage dir, Omar! mir ist nicht bestimmt  
durch deine Hand zu fallen.

(ab)

O m a r. Der Augenblick war günstig! warum lebt er noch? Sonder-  
bar—mein Arm zitterte, meinem Auge schwindelte, ich konnte es  
nicht vollbringen! (Pause) Du noch hier, Nahlid? ich bemerkte dich  
nicht, was liesest du so eifrig?

N a h l i d. Ich lese eine Verkündigung aus dem heiligen Koran.

O m a r. Das sind wohl die Reden eures Mahomed? Laß sehen! (Er  
entreißt ihm das Pergament und liest:)

“Ich habe das Wort des Heiles an dich gelangen lassen, nicht um dich  
im Genuß der irdischen Güter zu stören; ich verkündige die Barm-  
herzigkeit des Gottes, der die Welten gerufen hat zum Daseyn, und  
der sein Licht ausgießt über die Himmel.”

Sage, Nahlid! sind das wirklich die Worte deines Propheten?

N a h l i d. Zweifle nicht, es sind Mahomed's eigne Worte.

O m a r. Sollte Mahomed so reden können? Ich erstaune! —Laß mich  
dies Blatt mitnehmen, Nahlid!

N a h l i d. Thue damit, wie du willst.

(beide ab)

E r s t e s C h o r.

Erstaunt seh ich des Sehers Thaten,  
Ja, viel bedenkend seh ich sie,  
Denn e i n e s kann ich nicht errathen,  
Und e i n s begreif ich ewig nie;  
Er scheint mir unbedacht, getrieben  
Vom Geist und selber willenlos;  
Gehorchend jenen dunklen Trieben,  
Erzeugt in der Begeistrung Schooß;  
Dann seh' ich staunend, wie er findet  
Besonnenheit und Mittel leicht;

How he fathoms the human heart  
 And cleverly bends their wills.  
 Cleverness is the sense of the earth,  
 But the ecstatic do not know it,  
 Frailty is its companion,  
 One suffused with God does not need it.

*Second chorus.*

His inner life is not consideration,  
 He does not long ponder what and how he wants,  
 He does as the moment prompts him,  
 And God's will is to him his feeling;  
 His seer's eye shows him the heart's grounds,  
 Living being bubbles from his breast,  
 He finds a path in any winding way,  
 He acts cleverly and is unconscious of it.

**(A forecourt of the Kaaba.)**

*Muhammad, Sufyan, Abu Talib, Omar, Khalid, and people.*

*Sufyan.* You, Muhammad, give yourself out as a prophet, you say the God of the Israelites and the Christians sent you to us; if it is true, then reinforce your mission with miracles. I swear to you, we will believe you, if you can make a garden bloom in the desert, or command the mountain Thawr that a spring should spring up in its rocks.

*Muhammad.* The God who bears the heavens surrounds you with miracles, he can do greater than those which you desire. But I am only a human being, sent to open for you the gates of heaven. What would it help you if I called Thawr to bubble springs, or bade the desert clothe itself in green? Would the truth thereby become truer, or the wicked become good? An evil spirit could have given me the power to do such.

*Khalid.* If you, oh Muhammad, are a seer of divine secrets, then answer me one question. In the holy books of the Jews it is written of a

Wie er der Menschen Herz ergründet  
Und klüglich ihren Willen beugt.  
Die Klugheit ist der Sinn der Erde,  
Doch der Verzückte kennt sie nicht,  
Gebrechlichkeit ist ihr Gefährte,  
Der Gotterfüllte braucht sie nicht.

Z w e i t e s C h o r.

Nicht Ueberlegung ist sein innres Leben,  
Er sinnt nicht lange was und wie er will,  
Er thut, wie der Moment ihm eingegeben,  
Und Gottes Wille ist ihm sein Gefühl;  
Sein Seheraug' zeigt ihm der Herzen Gründe,  
Lebend'ges Seyn entsprudelt seiner Brust,  
Er findet Pfad in jeglichem Gewinde,  
Er handelt klug und wird sichs nicht bewußt.

(Ein Vorhof der Kaaba.)

**Mahomed, Sofian, Abu-Taleb,  
Omar, Kaled und Volk.**

S o f i a n. Du, Mahomed, giebst dich für einen Propheten aus, du sagst, der Gott der Israeliten und der Christen habe dich zu uns gesandt; wenn es wahr ist, so bekräftige deine Sendung durch Wunder. Ich schwöre dir, wir wollen dir glauben, wenn du in der Wüste einen Garten blühen lässest, oder dem Berg Thaur gebietest, daß eine Quelle in seinen Felsen entspringe.

M a h o m e d. Der Gott, der die Himmel trägt, umgiebt euch mit Wundern, er kann größere thun, als die, welche ihr begehret. Aber ich bin nur ein Mensch, gesandt, die Thore des Himmels für euch aufzuthun. Was würde es euch helfen, wenn ich dem Thaur Quellen sprudeln hieße, oder der Wüste geböte, sich grün zu bekleiden, würde darum die Wahrheit wahrer, oder das Schlimme gut werden? Ein böser Geist könnte mir die Macht gegeben haben, solches zu thun.

K a l e d. Wenn du, o Mahomed, ein Seher göttlicher Geheimnisse bist, so beantworte mir eine Frage. In den heiligen Büchern der Juden stehet geschrieben von einem großen Ueberwinder, der da kommen



great conqueror, who will come and subjugate sunrise and sunset.  
Tell us, who is this conqueror?

*Muhammad.* I will tell you, Khalid! listen to me, you men of Mecca! There lies a land on the heart of the earth, the oceans surround it heatedly with their arms and its brooks flow gleaming like silver and sweet, like honey, through the plains. In the desert of this land the breath of heaven engendered a boy who soon grew up into a strong man; his monstrous head was bedecked with thick veils and his dress was roseate, like the blood of sacrificial animals. He sat on a chair that cherubim bore, in his left hand he held a table of laws, in his right a gilded scepter, and a hundred lips spoke forth words of prophecy under his veils. But the children of the world stepped up to him, broke up the table in his left hand and ripped from his right the gilded scepter; then the man aged on the chair, he became weak and the lips of prophecy fell silent. But God commanded, there arose to him a son who had only one eye, which he always directed toward heaven and which could not see the earth; his heart was very great and full of tender drops; in his left hand he bore a crown of thorns, in his right a cross, and so he wandered through the earth like a pilgrim who knocks at the huts of the needy and lowly. And again God commanded, there arose to the old man another son, who is great and strong, he has two eyes, the one he directs toward heaven, the other to earth; two horns, curved like the sickle of the moon, are on his head, the marrow of the lion is in his bones, and in the one hand he carries a book, in the other a sword; this is the hero of whom it is written: He will subdue the sunset to the farthest west, where the sun goes down in an ocean of darkness, and he will subdue the sunrise as far as the peoples over whose heads the sun stands vertically. This is the conqueror. One day after this time it will become clear to you, but now it remains still dark to you.

*Sufyan.* There is a legend in the Orient: Several youths testified to the truth of the mission of Jesus of Nazareth in the land of Palestine among the heathen, but because a persecution arose against the sect of Nazareth, the youths hid in a cavern and there slept; but when

und sich den Aufgang und Niedergang unterwerfen würde. Sage uns, wer ist dieser Ueberwinder?

**M a h o m e d.** Ich will es dir sagen, Kaled! höret mir zu, ihr Männer von Mekka! Es liegt ein Land auf dem Herzen der Erde, die Meere umfängen es brünstig mit ihren Armen und seine Bäche fließen glänzend wie Silber, und süß, wie Honig, durch die Ebenen. In der Wüste dieses Landes erzeugte der Hauch des Himmels einen Knaben, der bald heranwuchs zum starken Manne; sein ungeheures Haupt war mit dichten Schleiern bedeckt, und sein Kleid rosinroth, wie das Blut der Opfthiere; er saß auf einem Stuhle, den Cherubim trugen, in seiner Linken hielt er eine Gesetztafel, in seiner Rechten ein güldenes Zepter und hundert Lippen sprachen Worte der Weissagung unter seinen Schleiern hervor. Aber die Kinder der Welt traten zu ihm, zerbrachen die Tafel in seiner Linken und ent-rissen seiner Rechten das güldene Zepter; da veraltete der Mann auf dem Stuhle, er ward schwach und die Lippen der Weissagung verstummten. Aber Gott gebot, da erwuchs ihm ein Sohn, der hatte nur ein Auge, das er immer gen Himmel richtete und die Erde nicht sehen konnte; sein Herz war sehr groß und voll weicher Tropfen; in seiner Linken trug er eine Dornenkrone, in seiner Rechten ein Kreuz, und so durchwandelte er die Erde, wie ein Pilgrim, der an den Hütten der Dürftigen und Niedern anklopft. Und Gott gebot abermals, da erwuchs dem Greise noch ein Sohn, der ist groß und stark, er hat zwei Augen, das eine richtet er gen Himmel, das andere zur Erde; zwei Hörner, gekrümmt wie die Sichel des Mondes, sind auf seinem Haupte, das Mark des Löwen ist in seinen Gebeinen, und in der einen Hand trägt er ein Buch, in der andern ein Schwerdt; dies ist der Held, von dem geschrieben steht: Er wird sich den Niedergang unterwerfen bis zum äußersten Westen, wo die Sonne untergeht in einem Meer von Dunkelheit, und er wird sich den Aufgang unterwerfen bis zu den Völkern, über deren Häuptern die Sonne senkrecht steht. Dies ist der Ueberwinder. Einst wird es euch klar werden nach dieser Zeit, jetzt aber bleibt es euch noch dunkel.

**S o f i a n.** Es geht eine Sage im Morgenlande: Etliche Jünglinge hätten die Wahrheit der Sendung des Jesus von Nazareth im Lande Palästina unter den Heiden bezeuget, da sich aber eine Verfolgung gegen die Secte von Nazareth erhob, hätten sich die Jünglinge in

they awoke, their land was so changed that they no longer recognized it. Tell us, Muhammad! is this story true? How many youths were there, and where did they sleep?

*Muhammad.* The story is true, as I will tell it to you, attend, you men of Mecca! Beyond the straits, in the great lands of Libya, a father had seven sons, whom he sent to wander from midday to midnight, and they obeyed their father and wandered in the direction that he had ordered them. They proclaimed the goodness of God through many good deeds that proved it to people, they refreshed the thirsty and fed the hungry, they cooled those who were sweltering from heat and were friendly to the children of men. But there arose a great heat of persecution against them, then the youths feared and spoke to each other: If we were mighty, like our father in the middle of his life, then we would withstand our enemies, but the power of our begetter is divided in us seven, let us yield before those whom we may not withstand. And the seven hid themselves in the cavern under the sand, and remained there until the persecution was over; but they became aware of this when their dog, whom they named Anubis,<sup>51</sup> awoke early and ran from there before the rising of the sun. This is the truthful story of the seven brothers.

*Omar.* Answer us another question, oh Muhammad! You teach your pupils that the souls of men do not die in death; they come to a land beyond the grave. But how can this be, for the pulse congeals in the grave, the heart ceases to move, the eyes close and decay consumes everything?

*Muhammad.* The soul of man does not die with the death of the body; it abandons it when its life has ended; and if it is the soul of a pious person then it climbs aloft in the space of the stars and creates itself a body out of air; this new body has all senses like the previous, only in a yet<sup>52</sup> higher degree; it never gets tired, knows no pain and is full of eternal health, life and youth. With this body the faithful come to paradise, the place that God has prepared for them in order to delight them eternally.

eine Höhle verborgen und da geschlafen; als sie aber erwacht seyn, wäre ihr Land so verändert gewesen, daß sie es nicht mehr erkannt hätten. Sag' uns, Mahomed! ist diese Geschichte wahr? Wie viel Jünglinge waren es, und wo schliefen sie?

**M a h o m e d.** Die Geschichte ist wahr, wie ich sie euch erzählen werde, merkt auf, ihr Männer von Mekka! Jenseits der Meerenge, im großen Lande Lybia, hatte ein Vater sieben Söhne, die sandte er zu wandeln von Mittag gen Mitternacht, und sie gehorchten ihrem Vater und wandelten in der Richtung, die er ihnen befohlen hatte. Sie verkündigten die Güte Gottes durch vielerlei Wohlthat, die sie den Menschen erwiesen, sie tränkten die Durstigen und speisten die Hungrigen, sie kühlten den vor Hitze Verschmachtenden und waren freundlich den Kindern der Menschen. Aber es erhob sich eine große Hitze der Verfolgung wider sie, da fürchteten sich die Jünglinge und sprachen zu einander: Wenn wir mächtig wären, wie unser Vater in der Mitte seines Lebens, so würden wir dem Feinde widerstehen, aber die Kraft unsers Erzeugers ist vertheilet in uns sieben, lasset uns weichen vor dem, dem wir nicht widerstehen mögen. Und die sieben verbargen sich in die Höhle unter dem Sande, und verharrten da, bis die Verfolgung vorüber war; dies wurden sie aber gewahr, als ihr Hund, den sie Anubis nannten, früh erwachte und daherlief vor dem Aufgange der Sonne. Dies ist die wahrhafte Geschichte der sieben Brüder.

**O m a r.** Noch eine Frage beantworte uns, o Mahomed! Du lehrest deine Schüler, die Seelen der Menschen stürben nicht im Tode, sie kämen in ein Land über dem Grabe. Wie kann aber dies seyn, da doch der Puls im Grabe erstarrt, das Herz aufhört sich zu bewegen, das Auge sich schließet und Verwesung alles verzehret?

**M a h o m e d.** Die Seele des Menschen stirbt nicht mit dem Tode des Leibes, sie verläset ihn, wenn sein Leben aufgehöret hat; und wenn es die Seele eines Frommen ist, so steigt sie empor in den Raum der Gestirne und bildet sich einen Körper aus Luft; dieser neue Körper hat alle Sinne wie der vorige, nur in einem noch höhern Grade; er wird nie müde, kennt keine Schmerzen und ist voll ewiger Gesundheit, Leben und Jugend. Mit diesem Körper kommen die Gläubigen in das Paradies, den Ort, den Gott für sie bereitet hat, um sie ewig zu erfreuen.

*Omar.* But how can you know all this? A dead person has never come back, the grave has never spoken.

*Muhammad.* My soul too was once surrounded by doubts; error frightened my spirit; so I prayed to God that he might enlighten me, and when I had prayed thus for one hour, the angel of the lord came to me: his head reached the clouds and his voice was like the rushing of the brooks that cascade from high cliffs. I was very afraid, but the angel told me to be confident, he grasped my hand and took me with him forth through the immeasurable space, until we came to a gate that gleamed like dawn. It opened, and a light, seven times brighter than the light of the sun, beamed towards us; my eyes would almost have been blinded, if the angel had not showed me a fountain. I bent and scooped water, but the water was purple-red, and when I had drunk from it I could bear the brilliance of this place; but the angel spoke to me: This is the paradise that God has set aside for the pious, to delight them eternally after death. We went further, and everywhere bloomed the most beautiful flowers, golden fruits glowed among dark branches, the air was mild and fragrant, like waves of balsam; the song of melodious birds mingled with the dulcet rushing of the brooks that plunged to flowering valleys. All colors of light soon poured out in broad streams through the area, and beautiful maidens, blooming like the spring and full of warm life like the summer, hid in the shadows of the forests and then stepped laughing out again; soon they submerged themselves in the silver lakes and then arose again from the waves, like suns from the east. But much magnificence and beauty that I saw there I cannot describe to you, for great over all human words is the delight that there awaits the faithful. But when the angel had led me back again to earth, he spoke to me: Prophet! go forth to the peoples in Arabia and declare to them how great is the mercy of God, but also tell them how perdition will consume the unbelievers and godless, how those who now scorn to be the believers' brothers shall soon be their slaves. So spoke the angel to me, and I tell it to you with his words, so that you may hear, believe, and live.

O m a r. Wie aber kannst du dies alles wissen? Nie kam ein Todter zurück, nie sprach das Grab.

M a h o m e d. Auch meine Seele war einst von Zweifeln umgeben, Irrthum ängstete meinen Geist; da bat ich zu Gott, er möchte mich erleuchten, und als ich eine Stunde so gebetet hatte, kam der Engel des Herrn zu mir, sein Haupt erreichte die Wolken und seine Stimme war wie das Rauschen der Wasserbäche, die von hohen Felsen herabstürzen. Ich fürchtete mich sehr, aber der Engel hieß mich getrost seyn, er ergriff meine Hand und nahm mich mit sich fort durch den unermesslichen Raum, bis wir an ein Thor kamen, das da glänzte wie Morgenroth; es that sich auf, und ein Licht, siebenmal glänzender, als das Licht der Sonne, strahlte uns entgegen; verblindet wären fast meine Augen, wenn der Engel mir nicht einen Brunnen gezeigt hätte. Ich beugte mich und schöpfte Wasser, das Wasser aber war purpurroth, und als ich davon getrunken hatte, konnte ich den Glanz dieses Ortes ertragen; der Engel aber sprach zu mir: Dies ist das Paradies, das Gott den Frommen aufbewahret hat, sie nach dem Tode ewig zu erfreuen. Wir gingen weiter, und überall blühten die schönsten Blumen, goldne Früchte glühten unter dunklen Zweigen, die Luft war lau und wohlriechend, wie Wellen von Balsam; der Gesang melodischer Vögel mischte sich in das wohlklingende Rauschen der Bäche, die sich in blumichte Thäler stürzten; alle Farben von Licht ergossen sich bald in breiten Strömen durch die Gegend, und schöne Mädchen, blühend wie der Frühling und voll warmen Lebens, wie der Sommer, bargen sich in die Schatten der Wälder und traten dann wieder lächelnd hervor, bald tauchten sie unter in den Silberseen und hoben sich dann wieder aus den Wellen empor, wie Sonnen aus dem Osten. Aber viel Herrlichkeit und Schönheit, die ich dort gesehen, kann ich euch nicht beschreiben, denn über aller Menschen Worte groß ist die Wonne, die dort der Gläubigen wartet. Als der Engel mich aber wieder zurückgeführt hatte zur Erde, sprach er zu mir: Prophet! gehe hin zu den Völkern in Arabia, und verkündige ihnen, wie groß die Barmherzigkeit Gottes sey, sage ihnen aber auch, wie das Verderben die Ungläubigen und Gottlosen verzehren werde, wie die, die es jetzt verschmähen, der Gläubigen Brüder zu seyn, bald ihre Slaven werden sollen. So sprach der Engel zu mir, und ich sage es euch mit seinen Worten, auf daß ihr hören, glauben und leben möget.

*A few voices.* Truly, Muhammad is a prophet, let us believe in him.

*Other voices.* Yes, he is a prophet, a seer.

*Sufyan.* You have spoken well, Muhammad! we will inform the high council of this city of your answers.

*Muhammad.* Do as you will. (He exits, a part of the people follows him, the other wanders off by and by.)

*Sufyan.* What is now to be done, you friends? You see, it is futile to want to bring him out of composure.

*Khalid.* I hoped our questions should baffle him, show him to the people in his nakedness, but he triumphs; we bear the disgrace.

*Sufyan.* Why did you not believe me? I told you, such means are too mild, for he plays the prophet not only in order to play it, oh no! he plays it for a share of the winnings.

*Abu Talib.* It is not as you say, Sufyan! his heart is pure, I know it.

*Khalid.* You, Abu Talib, could not count here as impartial.

*Abu Talib.* I can, for I am not one of his disciples.

*Sufyan.* You are so mute, Omar! give your opinion too.

*Omar.* I am not disposed to give counsel today; you are wise men, decide without me what seems good to you.

(exits)

*Sufyan.* Odd—very odd!

*Khalid.* Very odd?<sup>53</sup> and I fear almost—

*Sufyan.* But let us resolve something; do not be so worried, you men! Omar is easily moved, fear nothing, I know him.

*Khalid.* You speak first, wise Sufyan!

*Sufyan.* Now, so pay attention. Muhammad is a weed that, if it were only to be mowed down, would advance new sprouts and a new

E i n i g e S t i m m e n. Wahrlich, Mahomed ist ein Prophet, lasset uns an ihn glauben.

A n d e r e S t i m m e n. Ja, er ist ein Prophet, ein Seher.

S o f i a n. Du hast wohlgesprochen, Mahomed! wir werden dem hohen Rathe dieser Stadt deine Antworten hinterbringen.

M a h o m e d. Thut wie ihr wollt. (Er geht ab, ein Theil des Volks folgt ihm, der andere verliert sich nach und nach.)

S o f i a n. Was ist nun zu thun, ihr Freunde? Ihr sehet, vergeblich ist's, ihn aus der Fassung bringen zu wollen.

K a l e d. Ich hoffte, unsere Fragen sollten ihn verwirren, ihn dem Volke in seiner Blöße zeigen, aber er siegt, wir behalten die Schande.

S o f i a n. Warum habt ihr mir nicht geglaubt? Ich sagte es euch, solche Mittel sind zu gelinde, denn er spielt den Propheten nicht nur um ihn zu spielen, o nein! er spielt ihn um des Gewinnes halben.

A b u - T a l e b. Es ist nicht so, wie ihr sagt, Sofian! sein Herz ist rein, ich weiß es.

K a l e d. Ihr, Abu-Taleb, könnt hier nicht für unpartheiisch gelten.

A b u - T a l e b. Ich kanns, denn ich bin keiner seiner Jünger.

S o f i a n. Ihr seyd so stumm, Omar! gebt doch auch eure Meinung.

O m a r. Ich bin heute nicht zum Rathgeben aufgelegt, ihr seyd weise Männer, beschließet ohne mich, was euch gut dünkt.

(ab)

S o f i a n. Seltsam—sehr seltsam!

K a l e d. Sehr seltsam? und ich fürchte fast—

S o f i a n. Laßt uns doch etwas beschließen; seyd nicht so besorgt, ihr Männer! Omar ist leicht bewegt, fürchtet nichts, ich kenne ihn.

K a l e d. Rede du zuerst, weiser Sofian!

S o f i a n. Nun so merket auf. Mahomed ist ein Unkraut, das, wenn es nur abgemäht würde, neue Sprossen und eine neue Krone treiben würde, darum sag' ich, verbannt ihn nicht, verbannen wäre wie



crown. Therefore I say do not banish him, to banish would be like mowing down, and mowing down would only help for the moment. I repeat it to you: he is a poisonous weed, that corrupts the beautiful garden of this land, therefore away with him, kill him, his life is our death, rip him out by the root that all will be saved, though one may be lost.

*Abu Talib.* Do you not fear, oh Sufyan! the revenge of heaven in the hate and abhorrence of people, for you dare to destroy your innocent fellow citizen through a bloodthirsty word? Beware of pronouncing this murderous word once more. You speak, Khalid! you will be more just.

*Khalid.* I, too, say like Sufyan that Muhammad is a guzzling harm to our lands, our religion, our constitution. Therefore banish him with all his followers: we will not rip out his roots, but they will wither in misfortune, and the blood-guilt will not come upon our heads; thus I say banish him from Mecca.

*Abu Talib.* How you are hard, unjust, and ruled by hate, you men! What did Muhammad do, that he earned death or banishment? Was his way of life not always just? Was he not always friendly to the lowly, generous to his enemies, and merciful to the needy? Why do you not let him believe what he wants? Why do you not allow him to accept as pupils and friends those who belong with him and whose spirits draw them to him?

*Sufyan.* If we were to endure all that which you in an unthinking way demand of us, then Mecca would soon stop being Mecca, the spirit of discord and partisanship would, like a corrosive aqua fortis, run through all the veins of the body politic and dissolve them. No, Abu Talib, your will cannot occur, for you consider the well-being of your land very badly.

*Khalid.* I will go and notify the fathers of this city of that which occurred here.

*Sufyan.* And my first and last word, which I will say to the high council, is: Death to Muhammad! You, Abu Talib! conform to the times, it befits a wise man well to forget himself when the talk is of the salvation of all.

(All exit)

abmähen, und abmähen würde nur dem Augenblick helfen. Ich wiederhole es euch, er ist ein giftiges Unkraut, das den schönen Garten dieses Landes verdirbt, darum hinweg mit ihm, tödtet ihn, sein Leben ist unser Tod, reißt ihn mit der Wurzel aus, daß alle gerettet werden, mag einer verloren werden.

A b u - T a l e b. Fürchtest du nicht, o Sofian! die Rache des Himmels im Haß und Abscheu der Menschen, da du es wagst, deinen unschuldigen Mitbürger durch ein blutgieriges Wort zu verderben? Hüte dich, dies mörderische Wort noch einmal auszusprechen. Rede du, Kaled! du wirst gerechter seyn.

K a l e d. Auch ich sage wie Sofian, Mahomed ist ein fressender Schade unserm Lande, unserer Religion, unserer Verfassung. Darum verbannet ihn mit all' seinen Anhängern, wir wollen nicht seine Wurzeln ausreißen, aber sie werden verdorren im Unglück, und die Blutschuld kommt nicht über unsere Häupter; darum sag' ich, verbannet ihn aus Mekka.

A b u - T a l e b. Wie seydt ihr hart, ungerecht und von Haß regiert, ihr Männer! Was hat Mahomed gethan, daß er Tod oder Verbannung verdiente? War sein Wandel nicht immer gerecht? War er nicht immer freundlich den Niedern, großmüthig seinen Feinden und barmherzig den Dürftigen? Warum laßt ihr ihn nicht glauben, was er will? Warum vergönnet ihr ihm nicht, die zu Schülern und Freunden anzunehmen, die ihm angehören, und deren Geister sich nach ihm ziehen?

S o f i a n. Wenn wir das alles dulden wollten, was du unbedachter Weise von uns foderst, so würde Mekka bald aufhören Mekka zu seyn, der Geist der Zwietracht und der Partheisucht würde wie ein ätzendes Scheidewasser alle Adern des Staatskörpers durchlaufen und ihn auflösen. Nein, Abu-Taleb, dein Wille kann nicht geschehen, denn du bedenkst das Wohl deines Landes sehr schlecht.

K a l e d. Ich gehe und benachrichtige die Väter dieser Stadt von dem, was hier vorgefallen ist.

S o f i a n. Und mein erstes und letztes Wort, das ich dem hohen Rathe sagen werde, ist: Tod dem Mahomed! Du, Abu-Taleb! schicke dich in die Zeit, es ziemt einem weisen Manne wohl, sich zu vergessen, wenn von der Rettung aller die Rede ist.

(Alle ab)

**(A courtyard in Muhammad's house.)*****Khadijah, the chorus.****First chorus.*

Clouds gather in the blueness,  
 Settle down around the mountains,  
 Waves rise foaming in the ocean,  
 The sulfur-lit air breathes oppressively.

*Khadijah.* It is too close for me in the house: the air, instead of nourishing my life, wants to suffocate me. Say, you men! why am I so uneasy?

*Second chorus.*

It is the storm that booms from the north,  
 But it does not snap low flowers,  
 It gladly bends the trees' tips,  
 That proudly stand on high mountains.

*Khadijah.* Would you prepare me for a misfortune that threatens Muhammad's dear head? You are silent; but I read it in your countenances and my soul intuits the danger.

***Abu Talib, the previous.***

*Abu Talib.* Is Muhammad not here? I have many important things to say to him, look for him, Khadijah.<sup>54</sup>

*Khadijah.* Immediately, my dear uncle! Ha! There he is himself.

***Muhammad, the previous.***

*Abu Talib.* Now, Muhammad! The time has come of which I warned you. And what a wonder! Did you not call out to perdition: Engulf me? and to unhappiness: Hunt after me! It has now come so far that only a single means can still save you, and that is: Retract what you taught the people.

*Muhammad.* It is as shameful as impossible.

**(Ein Hof in Mahomed's Hause.)**

**K a d i s c h a, d a s C h o r.**

**E r s t e s C h o r.**

Wolken versammeln sich in der Bläue,  
Lagern sich um die Berge herum,  
Wogen erheben sich schäumend im Meere,  
Drückend hauchet die schweflichte Luft.

**K a d i s c h a.** Zu eng wird mir im Hause, die Luft, statt mein Leben  
zu nähren, will mich ersticken, sagt, ihr Männer! was will diese  
Unruhe an mir?

**Z w e i t e s C h o r.**

Der Sturm ists, der von Norden brauset,  
Doch niedre Blumen knickt er nicht,  
Er beuget gern der Bäume Wipfel,  
Die stolz auf hohen Bergen stehn.

**K a d i s c h a.** Wollt ihr mich vorbereiten auf ein Unglück, das dem  
theuren Haupte Mahomed's droht? Ihr schweiget; ich les' es doch in  
euren Mienen und meine Seele ahndet die Gefahr.

**A b u - T a l e b, d i e V o r i g e n.**

**A b u - T a l e b.** Ist Mahomed nicht hier? viel Wichtiges hab' ich ihm  
zu sagen, laß ihn suchen, Kadischa,

**K a d i s c h a.** Sogleich, mein theurer Oheim! Ha! Da ist er schon selbst.

**M a h o m e d, d i e V o r i g e n.**

**A b u - T a l e b.** Nun, Mahomed! Die Zeit ist gekommen, vor der ich  
dich gewarnt habe. Was Wunder auch! Hast du nicht dem Ver-  
derben zugerufen: Verschlinge mich? und dem Unglück: Jage mir  
nach! Es ist nun so weit gekommen, daß nur ein einziges Mittel  
dich noch retten kann, und dies ist: Widerruf, was du dem Volke  
gelehret hast.

**M a h o m e d.** Es ist so schändlich als unmöglich.

*Abu Talib.* Then swear to me that you will not spread your teaching further; then on this condition I will still try to rescue you.

*Muhammad.* If you would give me the circle of the earth on the condition that I concealed the truth of God from the peoples, and if death were unavoidable for me if I continued to pronounce the will of God, then I would rather die in obedience to the spirit that commands my spirit than be king of the world and an apostate.

*Abu Talib.* The senate is gathered to judge over you, probably banishment will be pronounced for you.

*Muhammad.* Banishment is a hard word; it is sad when the son is set adrift in the strange world like an evildoer; and yet is not heaven everywhere over me—what can I fear?

*Ali, the previous.*

*Ali.* Speak, my father! is Muhammad's destiny decided?

*Abu Talib.* Yes. Know, Muhammad! the most terrible still remains for me to say, I hoped to move you without telling you the worst, but your stubbornness compels me to reveal everything to you. The high council could not agree over your destiny; then your bitterest enemies were incensed, especially Sufyan and Abu Jahl—they conspired to murder you tonight.

*Ali.* The shameful traitors, curses upon them.

*Abu Talib.* Ten of the most distinguished men are among the conspirators; Al-Abbas, who was with them<sup>55</sup> in the council of blood, and did not want to consent to the scandalous deed, confessed it to me. You are lost, lost without any rescue, if you do not flee, and indeed in this hour; for your persecutors will gather in the evening twilight in your house and make the escape impossible for you; therefore go this moment, if you will not recant.

*Muhammad.* Ungrateful Mecca! I will flee into the desert and hide myself there until the storm is over.

A b u - T a l e b. Nun so schwöre mir, daß du deine Lehre nicht weiter ausbreiten willst; ich versuche dann, dich auf diese Bedingung noch zu retten.

M a h o m e d. Wenn ihr mir den Erdkreis geben wolltet, auf daß ich die Wahrheit Gottes den Völkern verschwiege, und wenn mir der Tod unvermeidlich wäre, wenn ich fortführe den Willen Gottes zu verkündigen, so würde ich lieber sterben im Gehorsam gegen den Geist, der meinem Geiste gebietet, als König der Welt seyn und ein Abtrünniger.

A b u - T a l e b. Der Senat ist versammelt, um über dich zu richten, wahrscheinlich wird Verbannung über dich ausgesprochen.

M a h o m e d. Verbannung ist ein hartes Wort; traurig ists, wenn der Sohn wie ein Uebelthäter hinausgestoßen wird in die fremde Welt; und doch, ist nicht überall der Himmel über mir, was kann ich fürchten?

### **Ali, die Vorigen.**

A l i. Sprich, mein Vater! ist Mahomed's Schicksal entschieden?

A b u - T a l e b. Ja. Wisse Mahomed! das Schrecklichste bleibt mir noch zu sagen übrig, ich hoffte dich zu bewegen, ohne dir das Aeußerste zu sagen, aber dein Starrsinn zwingt mich, dir alles zu entdecken. Der hohe Rath konnte nicht einig werden über dein Schicksal, da ergrimmten deine bittersten Feinde, besonders Sofian und Abu-Johl, sie verschworen sich, dich in dieser Nacht zu ermorden.

A l i. Die schändlichen Verräther, Fluch treffe sie.

A b u - T a l e b. Zehen der angesehensten Männer sind unter den Verschwornen; Al-Abbas, der mit mir war im Blutrath, und nicht einwilligen wollte in die Schandthat, hat es mir gestanden. Du bist verloren, ohne alle Rettung verloren, wenn du nicht fliehst, und zwar noch in dieser Stunde; denn deine Verfolger werden sich in der Abenddämmerung in dein Haus versammeln und dir das Ent-rinnen unmöglich machen; geh' also noch diesen Augenblick, wenn du nicht widerrufen willst.

M a h o m e d. Undankbares Mekka! Ich will in die Wüste fliehen und mich dort verbergen, bis der Sturm vorüber ist.

*Ali.* And I will accompany you in death and danger.

*Abu Talib.* You too will abandon me, my Ali! my dear son!

*Ali.* Mightier than other love is that for Muhammad: I cannot abandon him, and woe to the Muslim who now abandons the prophet. I will go, Muhammad! and announce to your friends the danger in which you hang, they will all want to accompany you.

(exits)

*Abu Talib.* My soul is full of lament over your destiny. Look at your Khadijah, her eyes are full of tears, she cannot speak, only sigh; oh! through one word you could so easily make us all so happy again.

*Muhammad.* Go, Khadijah! be steadfast and fare well.

*Khadijah.* I will bear a deep pain under my heart and its birth will kill me. —Farewell then, my dear husband.

(exits)

*Muhammad.* I beg you, my uncle! be the father, the consoler of my Khadijah; I more gladly part from you than from her, for you I will see again, her never.

*Abu Talib.* So, then farewell! I will meanwhile work for your welfare. Perhaps I will succeed in your absence in dampening your enemies' rage; already their attempted murder will make their affairs suspicious and hated; the Hashimites are inclined to you, and many among the people still remember gratefully your previous deeds.

*Muhammad.* Fare thee well, my uncle!

(The choruses and both exit.)

**(An open place in front of the gate of Mecca.)**

(Many followers of Muhammad gather, then comes Muhammad, Nahlid, Ali and the choruses.)

A l i. Und ich begleite dich in Tod und Gefahr.

A b u - T a l e b. Auch du willst mich verlassen, mein Ali! mein theurer Sohn!

A l i. Mächtiger als andere Liebe ist die für den Mahomed, ich kann ihn nicht verlassen, und wehe dem Moslem, der den Propheten jetzt verläßt. Ich gehe, Mahomed! und verkündige deinen Freunden deine Gefahr, in der du schwebst, sie werden dich alle begleiten wollen.

(ab)

A b u - T a l e b. Meine Seele ist voll Jammer über dein Geschick. Siehe deine Kadischa an, ihre Augen sind voll Thränen, sie kann nicht reden, nur seufzen; ach! uns alle könntest du so leicht durch ein Wort wieder glücklich machen.

M a h o m e d. Geh', Kadischa! sey standhaft und lebe wohl.

K a d i s c h a. Ich werde einen tiefen Schmerz unter meinem Herzen tragen und seine Geburt wird mich tödten. —Lebe wohl denn, mein theurer Gemahl.

(ab)

M a h o m e d. Ich bitte euch, mein Oheim! seydt der Vater, der Tröster meiner Kadischa; freudiger trenne ich mich von euch, als von ihr, denn euch werde ich wiedersehen, sie nimmer.

A b u - T a l e b. So lebe denn wohl! ich will indeß für dein Wohl arbeiten; vielleicht gelingt es mir in deiner Abwesenheit, deiner Feinde Wuth zu dämpfen, schon ihr Mordanschlag wird ihre Sache verdächtig und verhaßt machen, die Haschemiden sind dir geneigt, und viele im Volke erinnern sich noch dankbar deiner vorigen Thaten.

M a h o m e d. Gehabt euch wohl, mein Oheim!

(Die Chöre und beide ab.)

**(Ein freier Platz vor dem Thore von Mekka.)**

(Es versammeln sich viele Anhänger von Mahomed, dann kommt Mahomed, Nahlid, Ali und die Chöre.)



*Ali.* Without sorrow I leave this godless, cursed city, that sets the prophet of God adrift in the desert; murder and discord must go devastatingly through its streets, and may fire and brimstone fall down on this shameful Gomorrah.

*Mubammad.* Do not curse your paternal city, it is holy, a pledge of happiness, a palm of victory, an exquisite diamond in the crown of the earth.

*Nablid.* Your friends have gathered, oh Muhammad! they know your danger.

(All press around Muhammad.)

*Mubammad.* My friends! The moment has come when heaven will test your loyalty. My enemies conspired to murder me under the cover of the coming night; I would have been lost if God had not awoken a noble Quraysh to warn me; yes, praise be the omnipotence of our God, who knew how to find a rescuer for his prophet even in the council of the unbelievers. My enemies become daily grimmer and more vengeful, hence I must leave you and the holy city Mecca if I want to defend the Quran further. You will now be alone among enemies<sup>56</sup> and unbelievers, and my voice will not reach you; but swear to me by our God, by the holy prayer house on the heights of Moriah and by the grave of our progenitor Ismael, that you will stay true to the Quran in your belief and your way of life, swear it to me.

*All.* We will not stay with your enemies, we do not want to live among the godless.

*Mubammad.* What, my friends! you would leave Mecca and all that you there possess? You would hide with me by day in forests and mountains, by night seek with me the paths of danger?

*All.* Whatever befalls you, that we should also encounter: we would share all your destinies.

*Both choruses.*

Avoid love,  
Earn hate,

A l i. Ohne Leid verlasse ich diese gottlose, verfluchte Stadt, die den Propheten Gottes hinausstößt in die Wüste; Mord und Zwietracht müssen verheerend durch ihre Straßen gehen, und Feuer und Schwefel mögen herunterfallen auf dies schändliche Gomorra.

M a h o m e d. Fluche deiner Vaterstadt nicht, sie ist heilig, ein Pfand des Glücks, eine Palme des Siegs, ein köstlicher Diamant in der Krone der Erde.

N a h l i d. Deine Freunde sind versammelt, o Mahomed! sie kennen deine Gefahr.

(Alle drängen sich um den Mahomed.)

M a h o m e d. Meine Freunde! Der Augenblick ist gekommen, da der Himmel eure Treue prüfen will. Meine Feinde haben sich verschworen, mich unter der Hülle der kommenden Nacht zu ermorden, verloren wäre ich gewesen, wenn nicht Gott einen edlen Koreschiten erweckt hätte, mich zu warnen; ja, gepriesen sey die Allmacht unseres Gottes, der einen Retter für seinen Propheten selbst in dem Rathe der Ungläubigen zu finden wußte. Grimmiger und rachsüchtiger werden täglich meine Feinde, ich muß euch daher und die heilige Stadt Mekka verlassen, wenn ich den Koran noch ferner vertheidigen will. Ihr werdet nun allein seyn unter Feinden und Ungläubigen, und meine Stimme wird euch nicht erreichen; schwört mir aber bei unserm Gott, bei dem heiligen Bethaus auf der Höhe Moria und bei dem Grabe unsers Stammvaters Ismael, daß ihr dem Koran treu bleiben wollt in eurem Glauben und eurem Wandel, schwört es mir.

A l l e. Wir bleiben nicht bei deinen Feinden, wir wollen nicht wohnen unter den Gottlosen.

M a h o m e d. Wie, meine Freunde! ihr wollt Mekka und alles, was ihr dort besitzt, verlassen? Wollt euch mit mir bei Tage verbergen in Wälder und Gebirge, bei Nacht die Pfade der Gefahr mit mir suchen?

A l l e. Was dir widerfährt, das soll auch uns begegnen, wir wollen alle deine Schicksale theilen.

B e i d e C h ö r e.

Liebe meiden,  
Haß verdienen,

Flee lust,  
 Endure need,  
 Leave honor,  
 Gain ignominy,  
 Donate riches,  
 Have poverty,  
 For you we want all this.

*Ali.* We must go with you, even if it leads to death, may my breast be your shield, my sword your angel of life.

*Muhammad.* Today, as I become a homeless fugitive, as I must forsake everything that is otherwise dear to men, today I become richer, happier through your love than my adversaries through their victory.

(He wants to leave.)

*Halima, the previous.*

*Halima.* (She approaches fearfully and throws herself down before Muhammad.) Swear to me, great prophet! to take me with you and to protect me like a sanctuary, swear it to me by God and your holy head.

*Muhammad.* Are you not Halima, the daughter of Sufyan, my enemy?

*Halima.* Yes, I am she. But your astonishment makes me anxious, is then what I do so monstrous?

*Muhammad.* I am not astonished at your deed, no, the providence of God is so wonderful.

*Halima.* Hear what moved me to follow you. Since you have been back in Mecca, I heard only hatred's lips say your name, but even that which enmity spoke of you aroused a deep longing in me to hear, to see you; unnoticed by you I overheard your conversations with Omar's sister; the divine truths that flowed from your lips fell like germinating grains in my heart and there grew up into mighty trees. I prayed to your God. When the persecution slandered you, I transferred its defamation into the writing of my heart, and so the

Wollust fliehen,  
Noth erdulden,  
Ehre lassen,  
Schmach erwerben,  
Reichthum spenden,  
Armuth haben,  
Alles wollen wir für dich.

A l i. Wir müssen mit dir ziehen, gieng es auch in den Tod, meine Brust sey dein Schild, mein Schwerdt dein Lebensengel.

M a h o m e d. Heute, da ich ein heimatloser Flüchtling werde, da ich alles verlassen muß, was sonst den Menschen theuer ist, heute werde ich reicher, glücklicher durch eure Liebe, als meine Widersacher durch ihren Sieg.

(Er will abgehen.)

### **Halima, die Vorigen.**

H a l i m a. (Sie nähert sich furchtsam und wirft sich vor Mahomed nieder.) Schwöre mir, großer Prophet! mich mit dir zu nehmen und mich zu beschützen wie ein Heiligthum, schwöre es mir bei Gott und deinem heiligen Haupte.

M a h o m e d. Bist du nicht Halima, die Tochter Sofians, meines Feindes?

H a l i m a. Ja, ich bins. Doch dein Erstaunen macht mir bange, ist denn, was ich thue, so ungeheuer?

M a h o m e d. Ich staune nicht ob deiner That, nein, die Fügung Gottes ist so wunderbar.

H a l i m a. Vernimm, was mich bewogen hat, dir zu folgen. Seit du wieder in Mekka bist, hörte ich nur des Hasses Lippen deinen Namen nennen, aber auch das, was die Feindschaft von dir sprach, erregte eine tiefe Sehnsucht in mir, dich zu hören, zu sehen; unbemerkt von dir belauschte ich deine Gespräche mit Omars Schwester; die göttlichen Wahrheiten, die von deinen Lippen flossen, fielen wie keimende Samenkörner in mein Herz und wuchsen da empor zu mächtigen Bäumen. Ich betete zu deinem Gott. Wenn die Verfolgung dich lästerte, so übertrug ich ihre Verläumdung in die

censure became a song of praise. I trembled before your dangers; your enemies were hated by me, yes I even turned away with abhorrence from my father. So I lived for you in my loneliness, and when I heard you were leaving Mecca, then my courage flared up, my heart became great and I resolved to follow you, and rather share shame and persecution with you than live among your enemies and sinful idolators. Swear to me now to fulfill my requests.

*Muhammad.* God! you give the daughter of my enemy, his greatest jewel, into my hand; through me shall she find the way to life! Rise, Halima! May salvation befall you! and I swear to you by the angel of death, who registers our deeds for the Last Judgment, by this I swear to you, I will protect you and hold you sacred, like a virgin of paradise.

*Halima.* (Rising.) Will not reproach burden my soul because I gave the old age of my father loneliness as reward, because I leave my friends, my relatives? Will not sacrilege be my name?

*Muhammad.* You would not have done wrong, Halima! if you had remained with your father; you would have been like the plant, which cannot leave the maternal soil, even if right in the distance a more beautiful land and a warmer summer, where it could bloom more beautifully, beckons; it cannot go forth, it gives back to the earth the life that it received from it. But you did better than if you had stayed: man does not belong to the soil that generated him, he may seek what profits him—you have recognized and chosen the better!<sup>57</sup> Never let yourself regret that the bonds that tied you to heaven were holier to you than everything earthly. Blessed are they who leave everything for the sake of truth and follow the voice of God, the love of him is the highest. Also do not distress yourself that the world will slander your name; whoever does something great does not escape slander, for the crowd is small, its measure narrow, and its judgment frailty.

*Halima.* You have taken the concern from my soul, now I follow you with joyful courage.

(All exit except the choruses.)

Schrift meines Herzens, und so wurde der Tadel ein Loblied. Ich zitterte vor deinen Gefahren; deine Feinde wurden mir verhaßt, ja ich wandte mich selbst mit Abscheu von meinem Vater. So lebte ich dir in meiner Einsamkeit, und als ich vernahm, du verließest Mekka, da entbrannte mein Muth, mein Herz wurde groß und ich beschloß dir zu folgen, und lieber Schmach und Verfolgung mit dir zu theilen, als unter deinen Feinden und sündigen Götzendienern zu leben. Schwöre mir jetzt, meine Bitten zu erfüllen.

M a h o m e d. Gott! du gibst die Tochter meines Feindes, sein größtes Kleinod, in meine Hand, durch mich soll sie den Weg zum Leben finden! Steh' auf, Halima! Heil wiederfahre dir! und ich schwöre dir bei dem Todesengel, der unsere Thaten aufzeichnet zum Weltgericht, bei diesem schwöre ich dir, ich will dich beschützen und heilig halten wie eine Jungfrau des Paradieses.

H a l i m a. (Aufstehend.) Wird nicht Vorwurf meine Seele belasten, weil ich das Alter meines Vaters der Einsamkeit Preis gab, weil ich meine Freunde, meine Verwandten verlasse? Wird nicht Lästerung meinen Namen nennen?

M a h o m e d. Du hättest nicht Unrecht gethan, Halima! wenn du bei deinem Vater geblieben wärest; wie die Pflanze wärest du gewesen, die den mütterlichen Boden nicht verlassen kann, wenn ihr auch gleich in der Ferne ein schöneres Land und ein wärmerer Sommer, wo sie schöner blühen könnte, winkte; sie kann nicht fort, sie giebt der Erde das Leben wieder, das sie von ihr empfangen hat. Aber du hast besser gethan, als wenn du geblieben wärest, der Mensch gehört dem Boden nicht an, der ihn erzeugt hat, er darf suchen, was ihm frommt, du hast das Bessere erkannt und gewählt! Laß es dich nie gereuen, daß dir die Bande, die dich an den Himmel knüpften, heiliger waren, als alles Irrdische. Selig sind die, welche um der Wahrheit willen alles verlassen und der Stimme Gottes folgen, die Liebe zu ihm ist die höchste. Betrübe dich auch nicht, daß die Welt deinen Namen lästern wird, wer Großes thut entgeht der Lästerung nicht, denn die Menge ist klein, ihr Maas gering und ihr Urtheil Gebrechlichkeit.

H a l i m a. Du hast die Sorge von meiner Seele genommen, jetzt folge ich dir mit freudigem Muthe.

(Alle ab bis auf die Chöre.)

*First chorus.*

Sacrosanct city!  
 That in your womb  
 Bear jewels,  
 That to possess  
 Yearns the whole  
 Mighty world;  
 Kaaba! you I name  
 Feted before all,  
 Abraham's dwelling,  
 That once, from heaven,  
 Angels trod,  
 Holy! you!—  
 Wellspring, that once  
 An angel  
 Kindly showed Hagar,  
 Hail!  
 Blackish marble!  
 You cover  
 Ismael's ashes,  
 Hail!—

*Second chorus.*

I should avoid you,  
 Pearl of the East!  
 Flower of cities!  
 You I should flee?—

*Both choruses.*

For the last time I see the sun glow,  
 On your pinnacles, much beloved city!  
 Becoming far, dim, the times escape me,  
 For sorrowful is banishment's path.  
 I will never see your festivals;  
 Your jubilant chime does not reach my ear;  
 No more I step in the circle of your women,  
 And never listen to your maidens' chorus.  
 Farewell, then, groves! Fields! prayers'  
 Consecrated sanctuary! high Kaaba, you!  
 The pious pilgrim's holy refuge!

## E r s t e s C h o r.

Hochheilige Stadt!  
Die du im Schooße  
Kleinode trägest,  
Die zu besitzen  
Geizet die ganze  
Gewaltige Welt;  
Kaabe! dich nenne ich  
Feirend vor allen,  
Abrahams Wohnung,  
Die einst vom Himmel  
Engel betraten,  
Heilige! du!—  
Brunnquell, den einstens  
Hagarn gezeiget  
Freundlich ein Engel,  
Sey mir begrüßt!  
Schwärtzlicher Marmor!  
Der du bedeckest  
Ismaels Asche,  
Sey mir begrüßt!—

## Z w e i t e s C h o r.

Dich soll ich meiden,  
Perle des Osten!  
Blume der Städte!  
Dich soll ich fliehn?—

## B e i d e C h ö r e.

Zum letztenmal seh ich die Sonne glühen,  
Auf deinen Zinnen, vielgeliebte Stadt!  
Fern werden trüb' die Zeiten mir entfliehen,  
Denn trauervoll ist der Verbannung Pfad.  
Ich werde nimmer deine Feste schauen;  
Dein Jubelklang erreicht nicht mein Ohr;  
Nicht tret ich mehr zum Kreise deiner Frauen,  
Und nimmer lausch ich deiner Mädchen Chor.  
Lebt wohl denn, Haine! Fluren! der Gebete  
Geweihete Freistatt! hohe Kaabe, du!  
Der frommen Pilger heilige Zufluchtsstätte!



Broken hearts' salvation and consolation and peace!  
 Farewell! destiny calls to other paths,  
 Farewell! your dear native shore!

*Third space of time.*

**(A valley surrounded by cliffs.)**

(Muhammad comes hastily from the cliffs. The chorus follows him.)

*Both choruses.*

Flee through the winding rocks,  
 For revenge's footfall follows you,  
 Hide in the mountains' gorges,  
 That their darkness will guard you.

*Muhammad.* I stay. Why should I flee before the Quraysh? a greater enemy than them pursues me. —My star founders, the light of my spirit is extinguished, hushed are the prophecies of my bosom, the power of God is no longer alone victorious in me. —Doubt has displaced heaven from me. —The sanctuary of God is a hotbed of passions. How different I have become, the spirit no longer rules in me, my wish and resolution, courage and timidity, faith and fear fight humanly in my soul, —now I must worry, reflect, seek, —God, how you have slipped away from me! how you have abandoned me in the heat of the day! turned your face away from me in the night! (He sits between the rocks.) In Mecca's soil, the angel once said, the tree must be planted that shall overshadow the earth. —And Mecca casts me out! —(To the chorus.) You men, go to that rock, a few steps from here is a cave in which a hundred-year-old mage lives; he can conjure spirits, knows the Kabbala's secret uses and the course of the stars, go! question him about the Quran's destiny and how you may save yourself from my pursuers, but do not think of me.

(First chorus exits.)

(It becomes night, one hears it thunder in the distance.)

Zerbrochener Herzen Heil und Trost und Ruh!  
Lebt wohl! das Schicksal ruft auf andre Pfade,  
Lebt wohl! ihr theuren heimischen Gestade!

**D r i t t e r   Z e i t r a u m .**  
**(Ein von Felsen umgebenes Thal.)**

(Mahomed kommt hastig von dem Felsen. Das Chor folgt ihm.)

B e i d e   C h ö r e .

Fliehe durch das Felsgewinde,  
Denn dir folgt der Fuß der Rache,  
Birg dich in der Berge Schlünde,  
Daß ihr Dunkel dich bewache.

M a h o m e d . Ich bleibe. Warum soll ich fliehen vor den Koreschiten? ein größerer Feind, als sie, verfolgt mich. —Mein Gestirn geht unter, das Licht meines Geistes ist erloschen, verstummt sind die Weissagungen meines Busens, die Kraft Gottes ist nicht mehr allein sieghaft in mir. —Der Zweifel hat den Himmel aus mir verdrängt. —Das Heiligthum Gottes ist ein Tummelplatz der Leidenschaften. Wie anders bin ich geworden, der Geist herrscht nicht mehr in mir, mein Wunsch und Entschluß, Muth und Zagheit, Glauben und Furcht kämpfen menschlich in meiner Seele, —jetzt muß ich sorgen, sinnen, suchen, —Gott, wie bist du von mir gewichen! wie hast du mich verlassen am heißen Tage! dein Antlitz von mir gewendet in der Nacht! (Er setzt sich zwischen den Felsen.) In Mekkas Boden, sagte einst der Engel, muß der Baum gepflanzt werden, der die Erde überschatten soll. —Und Mekka verstößt mich! —(Zum Chor.) Ihr Männer geht nach jenem Felsen, wenige Schritte von hier ist eine Höhle, in der ein hundertjähriger Magier wohnt; er kann Geister beschwören, kennt der Kabala geheime Gebräuche und den Lauf der Gestirne, geht! befragt ihn um des Korans Schicksal, und wie ihr euch retten möget vor meinen Verfolgern, meiner aber gedenket nicht.

(Erstes Chor ab.)

(Es wird Nacht, man hört in der Ferne donnern.)

*Second chorus.*

Thus will he ask other gods,  
 Draw prophecies from the abyss?  
 Despair of his bosom's God  
 And flee to the underearthly?  
 Yet guilt inhabits the dark threshold,  
 That leads to the underearthly;  
 I fear it is the art of hell  
 To which his spirit doubting strays.

(The storm becomes ever stronger.)

(Muhammad leaps up.)

Lightning rages,  
 Thunder rolls,  
 Winds howl,  
 They indict  
 My despair,  
 Terribly stride  
 By my side  
 Death's angels,  
 And already  
 The abyss opens  
 Its deeps;  
 Its fumes,  
 They bewilder  
 My senses!—

(He throws himself between the rocks; the storm dwindles.)

*Second chorus.*

Woe is us! what has become of him?  
 He raves; his gaze is terrible.—  
 Oh open, you heaven's gates!  
 You angels! smile graciously.  
 Turn full of mercy back to him,  
 Breathe God's joy down upon him.

*Halima.* (Behind the scene.) Ali! Nahlid! where are you?

*Ali.* (Behind the scene.) Here! who calls?

Z w e i t e s C h o r.

So will er andre Götter fragen,  
Weissagung aus dem Abgrund ziehn?  
An seines Busens Gott verzagen  
Und zu den Unterirrdschen fliehn?  
Doch Schuld bewohnt die dunkle Schwelle,  
Die zu den Unterirrdschen führt;  
Ich fürcht', es ist die Kunst der Hölle  
Zu der sein Geist verzweifelnd irrt.

(Das Gewitter wird immer stärker.)

(Mahomed springt auf.)

Blitze zürnen,  
Donner rollen,  
Winde heulen,  
Sie verklagen  
Mein Verzagen,  
Furchtbar schreiten  
Mir zur Seiten  
Todesengel,  
Und es öffnet  
Seine Tiefen  
Schon der Abgrund;  
Seine Dämpfe,  
Sie verwirren  
Meine Sinne!—

(Er wirft sich zwischen die Felsen, das Gewitter nimmt ab.)

Z w e i t e s C h o r.

Weh uns! was ist aus ihm geworden?  
Er rast; sein Blick ist fürchterlich.—  
O öffnet euch ihr Himmelsporten!  
Ihr Engel! lächelt gnädiglich.  
Kehrt voll Erbarmen zu ihm wieder,  
Haucht Gottes Friede auf ihn nieder.

H a l i m a. (Hinter der Scene.) Ali! Nahlid! wo seyd ihr?

A l i. (Hinter der Scene.) Hier! wer ruft?

(Ali and Nahlid come from one side, Halima from the other.)

*Halima.* Ali! Nahlid! hurry, for God's sake save the prophet.

*Ali.* Say, what happened?

*Halima.* A loyal slave overtook me; she says my father is on the way at the head of a hundred Quraysh, to murder the prophet; Omar too has set out after him. Save! for God's sake save him! (she becomes aware of Muhammad.) There he is himself, I believe he sleeps, Muhammad! Muhammad! —No, he does not sleep, his eyes are open, his lips twitch, say, what is that?

*Ali.* His whole being is terrible, I shudder to see him.

*Nahlid.* Leave him, it passes, I saw him so once before. It is a state of rapture, his outer eye is dead, but his inner observes the depths of things.

*Ali.* Then remain here with him, Nahlid! I will gather our friends and defend that narrow way until Muhammad awakes and commands us what we should do. Come, Halima! I will send you with your slaves to Medina.

(Ali and Halima exit.)

(The first chorus comes.)

*Second chorus.*

Speak, what tidings  
Do you bring from the priest,  
Who devotes himself  
To the Kabbala's service?

*First chorus.*

Reluctantly he heard,  
What we asked;  
Shook his white,  
Curled hair;  
Made circles round us,  
Murmured sayings,  
Then spoke the words:  
"Hurry and see,  
"The night is past,

(Ali und Nahlid kommen von der einen, Halima von der andern Seite.)

H a l i m a. Ali! Nahlid! eilt, um Gotteswillen rettet den Propheten.

A l i. Sag', was ist denn geschehen?

H a l i m a. Eine treue Slavinn hat mich ereilt, sie sagt, mein Vater sey an der Spitze von hundert Koreschiten auf dem Wege, den Propheten zu ermorden; auch Omar hat ihm nachgesetzt, rettet! um Gotteswillen rettet ihn! (sie wird Mahomed gewahr.) Da ist er selbst, ich glaube er schläft, Mahomed! Mahomed! —Nein, er schläft nicht, seine Augen sind offen, seine Lippen zucken, sagt, was ist das?

A l i. Sein ganzes Wesen ist fürchterlich, mir schauert, ihn zu sehen.

N a h l i d. Laßt ihn, es geht vorüber, ich sah ihn schon einmal so, es ist ein Zustand der Verzückung, sein äußeres Auge ist todt, aber sein inneres betrachtet die Tiefen der Dinge.

A l i. So bleibe hier bei ihm, Nahlid! ich will unsere Freunde versammeln und jenen engen Weg vertheidigen, bis Mahomed erwacht und uns gebietet, was wir sollen. Komm, Halima! ich werde dich mit deinen Slavinnen nach Medina senden.

(Ali und Halima ab.)

(Das erste Chor kommt.)

Z w e i t e s C h o r.

Sprich, welche Kunde  
Bringst du vom Priester,  
Der der Kabala  
Diensten sich weiht?

E r s t e s C h o r.

Ungern vernahm er,  
Was wir gefraget;  
Schüttelt die weißen,  
Lockigten Haare;  
Zog um uns Kreise,  
Murmelte Sprüche,  
Sprach dann die Worte:  
"Eilet und schauet,  
"Die Nacht ist vorüber,

“The future born,  
 “The world has arisen,  
 “The time come.”

(During this time the sky has become bright.)

*Muhammad.* (Slowly stands up.) Stars! tremendous are your steps in your courses; the rush of your circular flight still rings in my ear; the blue waves of the immeasurable ocean of air break groaningly on your banks. And through all the immeasurable spaces the tree of life has planted itself, centuries and millennia draw whispering through its boughs, like light spring breezes. (Pause.) The scepter of the Orient will raise itself from Mecca, it will, like a meteor, send its beams to the west and east. (He becomes aware of Nahlid.) Nahlid, you here? You still live? Is it not a hundred years since we left Mecca?

*Nahlid.* No lord, it has not been a long time.

*Muhammad.* Truly, Nahlid! I tell you, it needs a century to see, to hear, to realize what in this time I saw, heard and realized. But indeed you are right, it is not long since we left Mecca, although meanwhile the rapid stream of events has torn sluggish time forcibly with it in its whirl.

*Nahlid.* Oh lord! think now of your rescue, the terrible Omar and the vengeful Sufyan pursue us, flee! save yourself! before it is too late.

*Muhammad.* Let them come. I was dead, but tenfold life is awakened in me; after doubt is faith the strongest, after misdeed mercy the sweetest.

*Nahlid.* But still think of means, that the enemy will not surprise us.

*Muhammad.* Be unconcerned, I am indeed only a man, a vessel of dust and ashes, like you, but a drop from the fountain of eternal life is preserved in me, therefore I will not become the prey of my enemies. (Pause.) The destiny of the peoples is in me, the seed of the future is sown in my breast, must I not live, that the crop ripen and the future generations quicken?

“Die Zukunft geboren,  
“Die Welt ist erstanden,  
“Gekommen die Zeit.”

(Der Himmel ist während dieser Zeit hell geworden.)

M a h o m e d. (Steht langsam auf.) Sterne! gewaltig sind eure Schritte in euren Bahnen; das Rauschen eures Umflugs tönt noch in meinem Ohr; die blauen Wellen des unermesslichen Luftmeer's brechen sich ächzend an euren Ufern. Und durch all die unermessliche Räume hat sich der Baum des Lebens gepflanzt, Jahrhunderte und Jahrtausende ziehen flüsternd durch seine Zweige, wie leichte Frühlingslüfte. (Pause.) Das Zepter des Orients wird sich emporheben aus Mekka, es wird, einem Meteor gleich, gen Westen und Osten seine Strahlen senden. (Er wird den Nahlid gewahr.) Nahlid, du hier? Lebst du noch? Ist es nicht hundert Jahre, daß wir Mekka verließen?

N a h l i d. Nein Herr, es ist noch nicht lange Zeit.

M a h o m e d. Wahrlich, Nahlid! ich sage dir, es bedarf ein Jahrhundert, um zu sehen, zu hören, zu erkennen, was ich in dieser Zeit gesehn, gehört und erkannt habe. Aber doch hast du recht, es ist noch nicht lange, daß wir Mekka verließen, obgleich indeß der rasche Strom der Begebenheiten die träge Zeit gewaltsam in seine Wirbel mit gerissen hat.

N a h l i d. O Herr! gedenke jetzt an deine Rettung, der schreckliche Omar und der rachedurstige Sofian verfolgen uns, flieh! rette dich! ehe es zu spät ist.

M a h o m e d. Laß sie kommen. Ich war ertötet, aber zehenfaches Leben ist erwacht in mir; nach dem Zweifel ist das Vertrauen am stärksten, nach der Vergehung die Barmherzigkeit am süßesten.

N a h l i d. Aber denke doch auf Mittel, daß uns der Feind nicht überrasche.

M a h o m e d. Sey unbesorgt, ich bin zwar nur ein Mensch, ein Gefäß von Staub und Asche, wie ihr, aber ein Tropfen aus dem Brunn des ewigen Lebens ist in mir aufbewahrt, darum werde ich nicht die Beute meiner Feinde werden. (Pause.) Das Schicksal der Völker ist in mir, die Saat der Zukunft ist in meine Brust gesäet, muß ich nicht leben, daß die Erndte reife und die künftigen Geschlechter erquickte?



*Nablid.* Lord! I do not comprehend your certainty.

*Mubammad.* The spirit spoke to me: Prophet! rise and ground the community of the faithful, found the realm with which I am well pleased. But now our enemies are numerous, they do not fight against us with their spirit alone, no, but also with all their earthly power and force. Therefore our weapons are unequal, if we resist theirs only with words and submission: the mind alone cannot win the battle; that requires arms and swords. To earthly defiance we must oppose an earthly force, and this we will create ourselves.

*Nablid.* But when, and how can that happen?

*Mubammad.* That we will learn from the future, believe me, even the incidents and appearances in the course of destinies are hieroglyphs, in which the eye of the seer often sees the deep sense of God. —(Pause.) We have received an exquisite branch from the tree of divine blessedness, this we shall inject in the earth; but that it may thrive, it is necessary that we select a good stem with which it may easily mix, and that we secure for it a fruitful soil in which it may grow sturdy and spread out. But we must also preserve it from the impetuous winds, that the burning Simoom does not strip its blooms. That this should all occur, God gave us the indomitable courage, the marrow of the lion and the sharpness of the sword.

*Nablid.* So should we acquire the soil with the sword and spatter it with blood?

*Mubammad.* What needs be, that will happen. Whoever dies for the truth, he lives tenfold in God's magnificence; but the death of the godless gives the sickened world convalescence and fresher life, for their evil deeds are the putrefaction of the earth, and hail the sword that separates them from the healthy body.

(Turmoil is heard behind the scenes.)

N a h l i d. Herr! ich begreife deine Sicherheit nicht.

M a h o m e d. Der Geist hat zu mir gesprochen: Prophet! stehe auf und gründe die Gemeinschaft der Gläubigen, stifte das Reich, an dem ich Wohlgefallen habe. Nun aber sind unsere Feinde zahlreich, sie kämpfen nicht allein mit ihrem Geist gegen uns, nein, auch noch mit all ihrer irrdischen Kraft und Gewalt. Daher sind unsere Waffen ungleich, wenn wir uns nur mit Worten und Unterwerfung ihrer erwehren, der Gedanke allein kann die Schlacht nicht gewinnen, es bedarf dazu des Armes und des Schwerdtes. Dem irrdischen Trotz müssen wir eine irrdische Gewalt entgegensetzen, und diese wollen wir uns erschaffen.

N a h l i d. Wann aber, und wie kann das geschehen?

M a h o m e d. Das wollen wir der Zukunft ablernen, glaube mir, auch die Begebenheiten und Erscheinungen im Laufe der Schicksale sind Hieroglyphen, in denen das Auge des Sehers oft den tiefen Sinn Gottes schauet. —(Pause.) Wir haben einen köstlichen Zweig vom Baum der göttlichen Seligkeit erhalten, diesen sollen wir der Erde einimpfen; daß er aber gedeihen möge, thut es Noth, daß wir einen guten Stamm erlesen, mit dem er sich leichtlich vermische, und daß wir ihm einen fruchtbaren Boden erwerben, in dem er kräftig wachsen und sich ausbreiten möge. Aber auch vor den ungestümen Winden müssen wir ihn bewahren, daß nicht der brennende Samum seine Blüten entblättere. Daß dies alles geschehe, gab uns Gott den unbezwinglichen Muth, das Mark des Löwen und die Schärfe des Schwerdtes.

N a h l i d. So sollen wir den Boden mit dem Schwerdte erwerben und mit Blut besprühen?

M a h o m e d. Was Noth thut, das geschehe; wer für die Wahrheit stirbt, der lebt zehnfach in Gottes Herrlichkeit; der Tod der Gottlosen aber giebt der erkrankten Welt Genesung und frischeres Leben, denn ihre bösen Thaten sind die Fäulniß der Erde, und Heil dem Schwerdte, das sie trennt von dem gesunden Leibe.

(Man hört Getümmel hinter der Scene.)

*Ali, several friends of Muhammad, the previous.*

*Ali.* Omar has reached us. We wanted to oppose his entrance into this valley with the sword, but he desired a discussion with you.

*Nablid.* Is he alone or are many with him?

*Ali.* Khalid is with him and a few more armed men, his remaining companions are a good hundred steps back.

*Muhammad.* Lead Omar to me.

(Ali exits)

*Nablid.* Lord, I only fear Omar will murder or double-cross you, you know his wild hate.

*Muhammad.* Omar is raw, impetuous, but no traitor. Listen! they're coming.

(All draw their swords except Muhammad.)

(Omar, Khalid, some warriors with drawn swords.)

(Ali and the previous, Muhammad steps aside.)

*Khalid.* What's the point of this discussion? Would you let yourselves be beguiled? You would have done better to remain with Sufyan and Abu Jahl.

*Omar.* Be silent or go.

*Khalid.* No, I remain, you have nothing secret to negotiate with the enemy of the Quraysh.

*Omar.* Then stay and submit.

*Muhammad.* (Stepping forward.) What do you want from me? Why do you persecute me, you citizens of Mecca? Could you do something yet more serious to me? I am innocent and you cast me out from the sanctified city of Mecca to the predators of the desert. Am I not a Quraysh, like you? Arabia's noblest blood flows in my veins; I, the wise Abdullah's son, the conqueror of the Canaanites, am thrown out of the holy community of my people like an evildoer?

**Ali, mehrere Freunde Mahomeds, die Vorigen.**

A l i. Omar hat uns erreicht, wir wollten ihm den Eingang in dies Thal mit dem Schwerdte wehren, aber er beehrte eine Unterredung mit dir.

N a h l i d. Ist er allein oder sind viele bei ihm?

A l i. Kaled ist mit ihm und noch einige Bewaffnete, seine übrigen Begleiter sind wohl noch hundert Schritte zurück.

M a h o m e d. Führt den Omar zu mir.

(Ali ab)

N a h l i d. Herr, ich fürchte nur, Omar will dich ermorden oder hintergehen, du kennst seinen wilden Haß.

M a h o m e d. Omar ist rau, ungestüm, doch kein Verräther. Horch! sie kommen.

(Alle ziehen die Schwerdter bis auf Mahomed.)

(Omar, Kaled, einige Krieger mit gezogenen Schwerdtern.)

(Ali und die Vorigen, Mahomed tritt bei Seite.)

K a l e d. Was soll diese Unterredung? Wollt ihr euch bethören lassen? Ihr hättet besser gethan bei Sofian und Abu-Johl zu bleiben.

O m a r. Schweigt oder geht.

K a l e d. Nein, ich bleibe, ihr habt nichts Geheimes zu unterhandeln mit dem Feind der Koreschiten.

O m a r. Nun so bleibt und fügt euch.

M a h o m e d. (Hervortretend.) Was wollt ihr von mir? Was verfolgt ihr mich, ihr Bürger von Mekka? Könnt ihr noch Schlimmeres an mir thun? Ich bin unschuldig und ihr habt mich aus der geweihten Stadt Mekka hinausgestoßen zu den Raubthieren der Wüste. Bin ich nicht ein Koreschite, wie ihr? Arabiens edelstes Blut fließt in meinen Adern; ich, des weisen Abdahlas Sohn, der Ueberwinder der Kenaniten, werde hinausgeworfen aus der heiligen Gemeinschaft meines Volkes wie ein Uebelthäter?

*Khalid.* Know, they were too mild toward you: as long as you live concord is far from us. Your followers nourish discord in our paternal city; so that we gain peace, you must die.

*Muhammad.* The peace that you seek is a peace of slackness, dying off, and servitude; war is better than such a peace.

*Khalid.* It is known that Muhammad is no friend of peace and order: he lives on discord, so no wonder if he praises it.

*Muhammad.* To you, Omar, I turn, I'll have nothing to do with Khalid. Know, therefore, my enemies mistrust you, they fear that you want to recuperate through me from the blindness of unbelief; to prevent this they acquired Khalid with fifty gold pieces to observe you, and if you waver to deliver you to their vengeance.

*Khalid.* Ha! those are the liar's arts, in this, Omar! recognize Muhammad; thus he knows to trickle the poisoned aqua fortis of defamation on the firmest union; thus will he save himself through your mistrust.

*Muhammad.* (He beckons his companions.) Go, search Khalid: he bears upon him the fifty gold pieces for which he would betray Omar.

(They search him.)

*Ali.* Here are the gold pieces.

*Muhammad.* Lead Khalid away. (They march him off.) Now, Omar, those are your friends, your confederates; I must rescue you from their snares. Why do you stare so at the earth? Raise your eyes to heaven, for the God whom I proclaim gave me the wisdom to see through the nighttime arising of evil.

*Omar.* What shall I say? My soul is swept away on a stormy sea.

*Muhammad.* So that you believe that I am a seer of deep secrets, I will also illuminate with the light of prophecy the grounds of your shuttered breast. Since the day that you read the Quran you have

K a l e d. Wisse, man war zu gelinde gegen dich, so lange du lebst ist die Eintracht ferne von uns. Deine Anhänger nähren die Zwietracht in unserer Vaterstadt, daß wir Ruhe erlangen, mußt du sterben.

M a h o m e d. Die Ruhe, die ihr sucht, ist eine Ruhe der Schloffheit, des Absterbens und der Knechtschaft; Krieg ist besser denn solch ein Friede.

K a l e d. Es ist bekannt, daß Mahomed kein Freund der Ruhe und Ordnung ist, er lebt von der Zwietracht, kein Wunder also, wenn er sie preist.

M a h o m e d. Zu dir, Omar, wende ich mich, ich habe mit dem Kaled nichts zu schaffen. Wisse also, meine Feinde mißtrauen dir, sie fürchten, du möchtest durch mich von der Blindheit des Unglaubens genesen; dies zu verhindern, haben sie den Kaled mit fünfzig Goldstücken gewonnen, dich zu beobachten, und wenn du wanktest, dich ihrer Rache auszuliefern.

K a l e d. Ha! das sind des Lügners Künste, hieran, Omar! erkenne den Mahomed; so weiß er in den festesten Verein das giftige Scheidewasser der Verläumdung zu träufeln; so will er sich retten durch dein Mißtrauen.

M a h o m e d. (Er winkt seinen Begleitern.) Gehet, durchsuchet den Kaled, er trägt die fünfzig Goldstücke, für welche er den Omar verrathen wollte, bei sich.

(Sie durchsuchen ihn.)

A l i. Hier sind die Goldstücke.

M a h o m e d. Führt den Kaled hinweg. (Sie schleppen ihn fort.) Nun, Omar, das sind deine Freunde, deine Bundesgenossen, ich muß dich retten aus ihren Fallstricken. Was blickst du so zur Erde? Hebe deine Augen gen Himmel, denn der Gott, den ich verkünde, gab mir die Weisheit, das nächtliche Beginnen der Bosheit zu durchschauen.

O m a r. Was soll ich sagen? Meine Seele ist dahingerissen auf ein stürmisches Meer.

M a h o m e d. Damit du glaubest, daß ich ein Seher tiefer Geheimnisse bin, will ich mit dem Lichte der Weissagung auch die Gründe deiner verschlossenen Brust erhellen. Seit dem Tage, da du den Koran

been my enemy no longer, but your soul was imprisoned in doubt, pressed to the soil by earthly trepidation. A few days ago you went up and down in your arboretum, there your soul spoke to itself: If Muhammad is a deceiver, then it were better for him if he had never been born, but if he is a prophet of God, then malediction meets the arm that raises itself to ruin him. In this hour you resolved to seek me out and investigate me.

*Omar.* (Throwing himself down before him.) Yes, truly, Muhammad! you are a seer, you have seen through the deep thoughts of my spirit that never became words. Yes, I confess, you are the prophet of the only God.

*Mubammad.* (Raising him up.) Omar, you have healed my soul from a great pain, for your hatred troubled my heart.

*Omar.* I came here with the intention of killing you if I were to find you false, to serve you if you were true. From today on I belong to your people, may my breast be your shield, more caringly than my own life will I now defend yours.

*Mubammad.* Soon I will test your loyalty, but even without trial I believe you. You are a noble man, that I knew when you were still my enemy; today you step into the community of the faithful. Among them is no guile, they have one love and one good cause, that these triumph is all their purpose, they do not know another prize, they did not come together in order to acquire glory, riches, or well-being for themselves. Through their union the temple of God shall be built; that this work should succeed, for this they sacrifice life, peace, and happiness, they will have no other homeland than in the realm of God that they will found, thus they have no other fatherland than their holy community.

*Omar.* So let us acquire a fatherland with the sword, in which you will found the temple of God with peace and certainty. Speak, how can I serve you? disclose yourself to me.

*Mubammad.* How? that I must first learn myself; I have not with earthly cleverness devised a plan for the far future and considered each circumstance that could come. In each moment to espy God's will, to read him in the incidents and in that which one names accidents, that is my wisdom.

lasest, bist du mein Feind nicht mehr, aber deine Seele war gefangen in Zweifel, zu Boden gedrückt von der irdischen Bangigkeit. Vor einigen Tagen giengst du in deinem Baumgarten auf und nieder, da sprach deine Seele zu sich selbst: Wenn Mahomed ein Betrüger ist, so wäre ihm besser, er wäre nie geboren, wenn er aber ein Prophet Gottes ist, so trifft Fluch den Arm, der sich aufhebt, ihn zu verderben. In dieser Stunde beschloßest du, mich aufzusuchen und zu erforschen.

O m a r. (Sich vor ihm niederwerfend.) Ja, wahrlich, Mahomed! du bist ein Seher, du hast die tiefen Gedanken meines Geistes, die nie Worte wurden, durchschaut. Ja, ich bekenne, du bist der Prophet des einzigen Gottes.

M a h o m e d. (Ihn aufhebend.) Omar, du hast meine Seele von einem großen Schmerz geheilet, denn dein Haß bekümmerte mein Herz.

O m a r. Ich kam mit dem Vorsatz hierher, dich zu tödten, wenn ich dich falsch befinden würde, dir zu dienen, wenn du wahr seyest. Von heute an gehöre ich zu den Deinen, meine Brust sey dein Schild, sorglicher als mein eigenes Leben vertheidige ich jetzt das deinige.

M a h o m e d. Bald werde ich deine Treue erproben, doch auch ohne Probe glaube ich dir, du bist ein edler Mann, das wußte ich, als du noch mein Feind warst, heute trittst du in die Gemeinschaft der Gläubigen, unter ihnen ist kein Falsch, sie haben eine Liebe und eine gute Sache, daß diese siege, ist ihr aller Zweck, andern Gewinn kennen sie nicht, sie sind nicht zusammen getreten, um sich Ehre, Reichthum oder Wohlleben zu erwerben. Durch ihre Verbindung soll der Tempel Gottes erbauet werden, daß dieses Werk gelinge, dafür opfern sie Leben, Ruhe und Glück, sie wollen keine andere Heimath haben, als in dem Reiche Gottes, das sie gründen werden, darum haben sie kein ander Vaterland, als ihre heilige Gemeinschaft.

O m a r. So laß' uns mit dem Schwerdt ein Vaterland erwerben, indem du den Tempel Gottes mit Ruh und Sicherheit gründest. Sprich, wie kann ich dir dienen? enthülle dich mir.

M a h o m e d. Wie? das muß ich selbst erst lernen; ich habe nicht mit irrdischer Klugheit einen Plan für die ferne Zukunft ersonnen und jeden Umstand bedacht, der kommen könnte. In jedem Augenblicke Gottes Willen erspähen, ihn in den Begebenheiten und dem, was man Zufälle nennt, lesen, das ist meine Weisheit.



*Omar.* What, you have no plan, that grasps all possible accidents and cleverly turns even the unfavorable to your advantage? You omitted to do that? Could your work still be in such infancy?

*Mubammad.* I know that from Mecca we shall found a realm, but when, and through which means, that I do not now know.

*Omar.* Will you surrender all that to accident? You fight against men, so also employ human means.

*Mubammad.* I do that too, but I have always found them in the moment when I needed them.

*Omar.* It is outrageous audacity to act in this way.

*Mubammad.* Is not God the original spring of all knowledge and all cognition? And is it not higher wisdom to abandon oneself to his providence than to rip oneself free of him and want to have a plan of one's own that is perhaps contrary to the will of God?

*Omar.* I think one should first deploy all human cleverness before one tries heaven.

*Mubammad.* That means roughly: to begin one's own work, and if it miscarries, abdicating to heaven, as if surrendered to one's evil destiny. (Long pause.) Look around you, Omar! The earth is ripe for our work, illness and inner disquiet unhinge it, we shall breathe into it again a healthy living breath; it is disunited by partisanship and bloody hate, we shall unite the parties, reconcile hate. The age-old, many-headed monster, heathendom, is displaced from the West, in the East it fights despairingly its last fight against Christendom. Christendom has torn itself away from its begetter, Judaism, it abandoned its parental house and wandered out to all four winds, it sends out of the distances the poisoned arrows of persecution against its father's holy head; at the same time it is at odds with itself, its parts dispute in grim strife and its otherwise well-built body is full of wild, ghoulish excesses. So confused is the sense of people, so antagonistic their holiest feelings and opinions, so sickened are

O m a r. Wie, du hättest keinen Plan, der alle mögliche Zufälle in sich begreift und selbst die Ungünstigen klug zu deinem Vortheil verwendet? Das hättest du versäumt? In solcher Kindheit wäre noch dein Werk?

M a h o m e d. Ich weiß, daß wir von Mekka aus ein Reich gründen sollen, wann aber, und durch welche Hilfsmittel, das weiß ich jetzt noch nicht.

O m a r. Willst du das alles dem Zufalle überlassen? Du streitest gegen Menschen, so bediene dich auch menschlicher Mittel.

M a h o m e d. Das thue ich auch, doch habe ich sie immer im Augenblicke, da ich sie bedurfte, gefunden.

O m a r. Es ist eine frevelhafte Verwegenheit in dieser Art zu handeln.

M a h o m e d. Ist nicht Gott der Urborn alles Wissens und aller Erkenntniß? Und ist es nicht höhere Weisheit, sich seinen Fügungen hingeben, als sich von ihm losreißen und einen eignen Plan haben wollen, der vielleicht dem Willen Gottes zuwider ist?

O m a r. Ich denke, man sollte erst alle menschliche Klugheit anwenden, eh' man den Himmel versucht.

M a h o m e d. Das hieße ungefähr: ein eigenes Werk beginnen, und wenn es mißlänge, sich dem Himmel entsagend, wie seinem bösen Schicksal überlassen. (Lange Pause.) Schau um dich, Omar! Die Erde ist reif für unser Werk, Krankheit und innere Gährung zerrütten sie, wir sollen ihr wieder einen gesunden Lebensodem einhauchen, sie ist entweit von Partheisucht und blutigem Haß, wir sollen die Partheien vereinigen, den Haß versöhnen. Das uralte, vielköpfige Ungeheuer, das Heidenthum, ist verdrängt aus dem Westen, im Osten kämpft es verzweifelnd den letzten Kampf gegen das Christenthum. Das Christenthum hat sich von seinem Erzeuger, dem Judenthum, losgerissen, es hat das elterliche Haus verlassen und ist hinausgewandert nach allen vier Winden, es sendet aus der Ferne die giftigen Pfeile der Verfolgung nach seines Vaters heiligem Haupte; zugleich ist es uneins mit sich selbst, seine Theile bestreiten sich in grimmigem Zwist und sein sonst wohlgebauter Körper ist voll wilder, gräulicher Auswüchse. So verworren ist der Sinn der Menschen, so widerstrebend ihre heiligsten Gefühle und Meinungen, so erkrankt sind die Zeiten und Religionen. — Daß

the times and religions. —That peace, concord, and health return to earth, for this God has sent me; the peoples shall be assembled in one temple, heathendom slaughtered on the new altar as a sacrifice pleasing to God; Christendom shall turn back to Judaism and in my teachings reconcile and unite with it. —See, Omar! this is the work that I must complete, this the spirit commanded me. If you want to participate in this deed, then give me your hand, we will then share faithfully danger and victory.

*Omar.* Yes, I want to, although it is a monstrous resolution; we are seventy, against us stands the whole mighty world, and nothing is for us but our courage and our resolution.

*Mubammad.* I have wandered through the earth in the East, the states and the peoples' circumstances are known to me. The Romans' mighty realm in the Occident has gone under, slowly their empire in the Orient dies away from inner enervation; in vain gleamed forth in the ranks of weak and weak-willed rulers the great Justinian like a star; in vain he conquered the Goths and Vandals, he strengthened the realm's arms, but he could not heal the sick, flagging heart; since Heraclius ruled there the evil has imparted itself to the whole sluggish body. —If your view now turns to our vicinity, the Persian's second realm reached its highest peak of might under the first Khosrau; the second Khosrau indeed continued his father's course of victory against the East-Romans, but he conquered more through his enemies' weakness than through his own power. This Khosrau is no great-hearted man, like his father. The Persians' great time is over, the high flood of their fame is lost, the ebb comes as fast as certain. Observe now with me our fatherland: the beautiful flower of our land is stripped of leaves on many stems, which hardly remember their common parentage, which hate, envy, and persecute each other. —See, Omar! that is the stage onto which we step, it is favorable; the circumstances easily espouse what we begin; ours are indeed few, but God's strength is with us, our enemies are not powerful and the deed not impossible.

*Omar.* In Mecca the circumstances have become more favorable since your absence; the Quraysh have cursed you and your friends'

Friede, Eintracht und Gesundheit wiederkehren auf Erden, dazu hat mich Gott gesandt; die Völker sollen in einen Tempel versammelt, das Heidenthum an dem neuen Altare als ein Gott wohlgefälliges Opfer geschlachtet werden; das Christenthum soll zurückkehren zu dem Judenthum und sich in meiner Lehre mit ihm versöhnen und vereinigen. —Sieh, Omar! dies ist das Werk, das ich vollbringen muß, dieses hat mir der Geist geboten. Willst du dieser That theilhaftig werden, so reiche mir deine Hand, wir theilen dann treulich Gefahr und Sieg.

O m a r. Ja, ich will es, obgleich es ein ungeheurer Entschluß ist; unserer sind siebenzig, uns gegenüber steht die ganze gewaltige Welt, und nichts ist für uns, als unser Muth und unser Entschluß.

M a h o m e d. Ich habe die Erde durchwandert im Osten, der Staaten und der Völker Verhältnisse sind mir bekannt. Der Römer mächtiges Reich im Abendlande ist untergegangen, langsam erstirbt an innerer Entnervung ihr Kaiserthum im Orient; vergebens glänzte in der Reihe schwacher und willenloser Beherrscher der große Justinian wie ein Gestirn hervor; vergebens besiegte er die Gothen und Vandalen, er stärkte des Reiches Arme, doch das kranke, erschlaffte Herz konnte er nicht heilen; seit Heraklius dort herrscht, hat sich das Uebel dem ganzen trägen Körper mitgetheilt. —Wende jetzt deinen Blick in unsre Nähe, der Perser zweites Reich hat den höchsten Gipfel der Macht unter dem ersten Cosru erreicht, der zweite Cosru setzt zwar seines Vaters Siegesbahn gegen die Ost-Römer fort, doch er überwindet mehr durch seiner Feinde Schwäche als durch eigene Kraft. Dieser Cosru ist kein großherziger Mann, wie sein Vater. Der Perser große Zeit ist doch vorüber, die hohe Fluth ihres Ruhms ist dahin, die Ebbe kommt so schnell, als gewiß. Betrachte jetzt mit mir unser Vaterland, die schöne Blume unsers Landes ist verblättert in viele Stämme, die sich kaum ihrer gemeinschaftlichen Abkunft erinnern, die sich hassen, beneiden und verfolgen. —Sieh, Omar! das ist der Schauplatz, den wir betreten, er ist günstig; leicht vermählen sich die Umstände mit unserm Beginnen; unserer sind zwar Wenige, aber Gottes Kraft ist mit uns, unsere Feinde sind nicht gewaltig, und die That nicht unmöglich.

O m a r. In Mekka sind seit deiner Abwesenheit die Umstände günstiger geworden; die Koreschiten haben deinen und deiner Freunde Namen verflucht, aber der Stamm von Haschem ist dir geneigt

names, but the tribe of Hashim has become inclined toward you, he wishes your recall and complains loudly about the injustice of your enemies.

(A warrior comes.)

*Warrior.* There's noise down there in the valley, the gleam of weapons can be seen, probably Abu Sufyan's troops are advancing against us.

*Mubammad.* We will not await the bloodthirsty, Omar! we will move against them. My friends are few, but they are all resolved to die for the Quran.

*Omar.*<sup>58</sup> Yes, for you and the Quran.

*Mubammad.* Go ahead, Ali! command our party to hold themselves ready for battle. (Ali exits.) God of victory be with us! Come, Omar! your doughty arm will find deeds. Come, my friends! my soul rushes over with courage and battle-lust. (He draws his sword. All, except the chorus, exit. The clash of weapons can be heard from the distance.)

*First chorus.*

Do you hear the shields, the swords ring out?  
 On! to the war god's raging lust,  
 Let us join the fight, let us join the struggle,  
 Offer enemies our manly breast.  
 On then! gripping the brave sword,  
 Forth into the encounter's thickest crush,  
 Brave fighters loot the earth,  
 Death and dangers are to them only play;  
 Yes, death, the ruler of cowards,  
 He becomes the doughty's servant and vassal,  
 Lordly they lead him through the round dance,  
 He obeys them in wild combat.

*Second Chorus.*

Yes, I hear the swords ring out,  
 Bold life raises my breast,  
 I will join the fight, I will join the struggle,  
 Plunge to death with exultant desire.

(Choruses exit.)

geworden, er wünscht deine Zurückberufung und klagt laut über die Ungerechtigkeit deiner Feinde.

(Ein Krieger kommt.)

K r i e g e r. Es ist Geräusch drunten im Thale, man sieht Waffen glänzen, wahrscheinlich sind Abu-Sofians Schaaren gegen uns im Anzug.

M a h o m e d. Wir wollen die Blutgierigen nicht erwarten, Omar! wir wollen ihnen entgegenziehen, meiner Freunde sind wenig, aber sie sind alle entschlossen für den Koran zu sterben.

O m a r. Ja, für dich und den Koran.

M a h o m e d. Geh voraus, Ali! gebiete den Unsrigen, daß sie sich zum Kampfe bereit halten. (Ali ab.) Gott des Sieges sey mit uns! Komm, Omar! dein tapferer Arm wird Thaten finden. Kommt, meine Freunde! meine Seele braust über von Muth und Kampflust. (Er zieht sein Schwerdt. Alle, bis auf die Chöre, ab. Man hört Waffengeklirr aus der Ferne.)

E r s t e s C h o r.

Hörst du die Schilder, die Schwerdter erklingen?  
Auf! zu des Kriegsgottes tobender Lust,  
Laß uns mitkämpfen, laß uns mitringen,  
Bieten den Feinden die männliche Brust.  
Auf dann! gegriffen zum muthigen Schwerdte,  
Fort in des Treffens dickstes Gewühl,  
Muthige Kämpfer erbeuten die Erde,  
Tod und Gefahren sind ihnen nur Spiel;  
Ja, der Tod, der Beherrscher der Feigen,  
Er wird der Tapfern Diener und Knecht,  
Herrisch führen sie ihn durch die Reigen,  
Ihnen gehorcht er im wilden Gefecht.

Z w e i t e s C h o r.

Ja, ich höre die Schwerdter erklingen,  
Muthiges Leben erhebt mir die Brust,  
Mit will ich kämpfen, mit will ich ringen,  
Stürzen zum Tod mit frohlockender Lust.

(Chöre ab.)

**(Another region of the mountains.)***Halima alone.*

*Halima.* Where shall I flee? Everywhere clang of weapons, death, persecution! —Here I will stay, until the encounter is over. —Where may Muhammad be now, is he perhaps in danger? My father, has he perhaps been killed!<sup>59</sup> Terrible thought! For whom shall I pray? For my father! Does he not persecute the seer's holy, dear, beloved head? For the prophet! Will he not perhaps be the murderer of my father? Oh, how fearful my heart is! My life is like the blossom of the lotus, it opens its petals and all its aromatic beauty to the sun, but when the star of the day has sunk down on the rim of the earth, it seals its calyx and grieves withdrawn in itself; easily withered is the lotus flower, its petals fall off and their place is never found. —Listen! do the leaves not rustle? No, my ear deceives me with false terrors. —I love him, I the prophet, the envoy of God? Oh outrageous madness of the dust! —Listen! someone comes! where shall I hide myself?

(She steps aside.)

*Ali, Nahlid, armed men.*

*Ali.* Stay here, Nahlid! with these men; Sufyan is cut off from his party, this is the only way upon which he can flee, await him here and kill him when he comes.

(exits.)

*Halima.* (Stepping forward.) What did Ali say to you?

*Nahlid.* You here, Halima? He told me—no, I may not tell it to you.

*Halima.* Yet I heard it, he wants, you should kill my father, will you do it?

*Nahlid.* Oh do not look at me with such glances, they speak to my deepest heart, and yet I must do what Ali commanded of me.

*Halima.* You must not, your soul is gentle and full of compassion, obey it, that is better than serving vengeance.

**(Eine andre Gegend des Gebirgs.)****Halima allein.**

H a l i m a. Wo soll ich hinfliehen? Ueberall Waffengeklirr, Mord, Verfolgung! —Hier will ich bleiben, bis das Treffen vorüber ist. —Wo mag Mahomed jetzt seyn, ist er vielleicht in Gefahr? Mein Vater, ist er vielleicht getödtet! Schrecklicher Gedanke! Für wen soll ich beten? Für meinen Vater! Verfolgt er nicht des Sehers heiliges, theueres, geliebtes Haupt? Für den Propheten! Wird er nicht vielleicht der Mörder meines Vaters? O wie ist meinem Herzen bange! Mein Leben gleicht der Blüthe des Lotus, sie öffnet ihre Blätter und all ihre duftige Schönheit der Sonne, wenn aber das Gestirn des Tages hinabgesunken ist an den Rand der Erde, so verschließt sie ihren Kelch und trauert verschlossen in sich; leicht verwelklich ist des Lotus Blume, ihre Blätter fallen ab und ihre Stätte wird nimmer gefunden. —Horch! rauscht es nicht durch die Blätter? Nein, mein Ohr täuscht mich mit falschen Schrecken. —Ich ihn lieben, ich den Propheten, den Gesandten Gottes? O frevelhafter Wahnsinn des Staubes. —Horch! man kommt! wo berg' ich mich?

(Sie tritt bei Seite.)

**Ali, Nahlid, Bewaffnete.**

A l i. Bleibe hier, Nahlid! mit diesen Männern; Sofian ist von den Seinigen abgeschnitten, dies ist der einzige Weg, auf dem er entfliehen kann, erwarte ihn hier und tödte ihn, wenn er kommt.

(ab.)

H a l i m a. (Hervortretend.) Was sagte dir Ali?

N a h l i d. Du hier, Halima? Er sagte mir—nein, ich darf es dir nicht sagen.

H a l i m a. Ich habe es doch gehört, er will, du sollst meinen Vater tödten, wirst du es thun?

N a h l i d. O sieh mich nicht mit solchen Blicken an, sie reden zu meinem tiefsten Herzen, und doch muß ich thun, was mir Ali gebot.

H a l i m a. Du mußt nicht, deine Seele ist sanft und mitleidsvoll, ihr gehorchen, das ist besser als der Rache dienen.



*Nablid.* I may, I cannot do otherwise.

*Halima.* One may do much if one only wants to. You are Muhammad's favorite, what will he not forgive you?

*Nablid.* I myself could not forgive myself for it, for your father's life is dangerous to the prophet.

*Halima.* May heaven prevent that. Muhammad's life is holy to me, as to you, but save, save my father; seek no excuse for mercilessness and do not stain your hands with the blood of my father, I would have to hate, flee you, if you could do it.

*Nablid.* Oh Allah! forgive! This maiden makes me into a criminal. Halima, I will do what you wish, although this hour will forever burden my soul. Come, Halima! I will bring you to safety. (To the armed men.) Follow me!

(All exit.)

***Sufyan comes out of the bushes.***

*Sufyan.* Ha, this path is still open, now I am saved. What a day! Evil spirits must be with Muhammad.

***Abu Jahl comes with warriors.***

*Abu Jahl.* You're here, Abu Sufyan! I feared myself captured.

*Sufyan.* Luck is still not wholly unfavorable to us, for it has still left us this way for flight.

*Abu Jahl.* Flight! oh shameful word! We flee? Woe is me, that I had to undergo this day, it is abhorrent.

*Sufyan.* Now, do not stomp so upon the earth, and throw no such grim looks at me, I did not flee first.

*Abu Jahl.* I neither, whoever says so speaks shameful lies.

*Sufyan.* Did I say so, then? Go, save your displeasure for our enemies and spare me the wild outbursts of your evil mood.

N a h l i d. Ich darf, ich kann nicht anders.

H a l i m a. Man darf viel, wenn man nur will, du bist Mahomed's Liebling, was wird er dir nicht verzeihen?

N a h l i d. Ich selber darf es mir nicht verzeihen, denn deines Vaters Leben ist dem Propheten gefährlich.

H a l i m a. Das verhüte der Himmel. Mahomed's Leben ist mir heilig, wie dir, aber rette, rette meinen Vater; suche der Unbarmherzigkeit keine Entschuldigung und beflecke deine Hände nicht mit dem Blute meines Vaters, ich müßte dich hassen, fliehen, wenn du es könntest.

N a h l i d. O Allah! verzeih! Dies Mädchen macht mich zum Verbrecher. Halima, ich werde thun, was du wünschest, obgleich diese Stunde meine Seele auf immer belasten wird. Komm, Halima! ich bringe dich in Sicherheit. (Zu den Bewaffneten.) Folgt mir!

(Alle ab.)

### **S o f i a n kommt aus dem Gebüsch.**

S o f i a n. Ha, dieser Weg ist noch offen, jetzt bin ich gerettet. Das war ein Tag! Böse Geister müssen mit dem Mahomed seyn.

### **A b u - J o h l kommt mit Krieger'n.**

A b u - J o h l. Seyd ihr hier, Abu-Sofian! ich fürchtete mich gefangen.

S o f i a n. Das Glück ist uns noch nicht ganz ungünstig, da es uns noch diesen Weg zur Flucht übrig ließ.

A b u - J o h l. Flucht! o schändliches Wort! Wir fliehen? Wehe mir, daß ich diesen Tag erleben mußte, es ist abscheulich.

S o f i a n. Nun, stampft nicht so auf die Erde, und werft mir keine so grimmige Blicke zu, ich bin nicht zuerst geflohen.

A b u - J o h l. Ich auch nicht, wer es sagt, redet schändliche Lügen.

S o f i a n. Hab' ich es denn gesagt? Geht, spart euern Unmuth für unsere Feinde und verschont mich mit den wilden Ausbrüchen eurer üblen Launen.

*Abu Jahl.* You, Sufyan, are guilty of our loss and our disgrace, your gullibility plunged us into ruin. You believed in Omar's loyalty and vouched for him.

*Sufyan.* Your mistrust could have kept Omar from betrayal as little as my trust; but you seek only an excuse and would be glad if you could declare me the cause of all damage, for you could not be beaten, you swore as victor or never again to enter Mecca; fortunately you knew how to preserve your precious life.

*Abu Jahl.* I'll stick my sword in your breast if you are not silent, are you mad that you so goad me?

*Sufyan.* Your fieriness spoils everything and has always spoiled everything; if you would be calm, then I would indeed like to speak a couple of reasonable words with you, but one cannot, you conduct yourself like a frenzied person, it is unwatchable.

*Abu Jahl.* Oh Omar! cursed, abhorrent, base traitor! Believe me, Sufyan! that damned Omar is guilty of everything, if he had not been against us we would have beaten, trodden down, wiped out Muhammad. Omar's betrayal beat us, he has brought me out of all composure, but I swear by Al-'Uzzá<sup>60</sup>, I will avenge it, bloodily, terribly.

*Sufyan.* By all the gods, control yourself, what does raging help? Come, we will gather our scattered warriors and move to Mecca, come, console yourself. I have a plan that will ruin our enemies. You know that Habib ibn Malik, the Great Emir of the nomadic tribes, is encamped since yesterday between Mecca and Tazef;<sup>61</sup> we will recite our complaint against Muhammad to him and subject ourselves to his judgment. He adheres to the old religion, innovation and upheaval are hateful to him, the peaceful old man; I believe we will easily bring it about that he condemns Muhammad to death.

*Abu Jahl.* You are right, Sufyan, you are indeed a wise man, now I feel courage and strength again in my soul. But I will still summon up all my friends beforehand to pursue Muhammad; if we could kill him beforehand it would be better, we would then require no foreign judgment.

- A b u - J o h l. Ihr, Sofian, seyd doch Schuld an unserm Verlust und unsrer Schmach, eure Leichtgläubigkeit hat uns ins Verderben gestürzt. Ihr habt an Omars Treue geglaubt und für ihn gutgesagt.
- S o f i a n. Euer Mißtrauen hat den Omar so wenig vom Verrath abhalten können, als mein Vertrauen; aber ihr sucht nur eine Entschuldigung und freut euch, wenn ihr mich als die Ursache alles Schadens angeben könnt, denn ihr könnt nicht geschlagen werden, ihr habt geschworen, als Sieger oder nie wieder in Mekka einzuziehen; glücklicher Weise habt ihr doch euer kostbares Leben zu erhalten gewußt.
- A b u - J o h l. Ich stoße euch mein Schwerdt in die Brust, wenn ihr nicht schweiget, seyd ihr toll, daß ihr mich so reizt?
- S o f i a n. Eure Hitze verdirbt alles und hat von jeher alles verdorben; wenn ihr ruhig seyn wolltet, so möcht' ich wohl ein Paar vernünftige Worte mit euch reden, aber man kann nicht, ihr geberdet euch wie ein Rasender, es ist nicht anzusehen.
- A b u - J o h l. O Omar! verfluchter, abscheulicher, niederträchtiger Verräther! Glaube mir, Sofian! dieser verdammte Omar ist an allem Schuld, wäre er nicht gegen uns gewesen, wir hätten den Mahomed geschlagen, zertreten, aufgerieben. Omars Verrath hat uns geschlagen, er hat mich aus aller Fassung gebracht, aber ich schwöre bei Al-Ozza, ich will es rächen, blutig, entsetzlich.
- S o f i a n. Um aller Götter willen, mässiget euch, was hilft das Wüthen? Kommt, wir wollen unsere zerstreuten Krieger sammeln und nach Mekka ziehn, kommt, tröstet euch. Ich habe einen Plan, der unsere Feinde verderben wird. Ihr wißt, daß Habib-Ebn-Malec, der Großemir der nomadischen Stämme, seit gestern zwischen Mekka und Tazef lagert; ihm wollen wir unsere Klagen gegen den Mahomed vortragen und uns seinem Urtheil unterwerfen, er hängt an der alten Religion, Neuerung und Aufruhr sind ihm, dem ruhigen Greis, verhaßt; ich glaube, wir werden es leicht dahin bringen, daß er den Mahomed zum Tode verdammt.
- A b u - J o h l. Ihr habt Recht, Sofian, ihr seyd doch ein weiser Mann, jetzt fühle ich wieder Muth und Kraft in meiner Seele. Doch werde ich noch vorher alle meine Freunde aufbieten, den Mahomed zu verfolgen; wenn wir ihn vorher tödten können, so ist es besser, wir bedürfen alsdann keinen fremden Richterspruch.

*Sufyan.* You do very well in that, Abu Jahl.

(Both exit.)

***Fourth space of time.***

(Muhammad lies under a tree and sleeps.)

***The chorus.***

*First chorus.*

Son of strength! God of victories!  
 You were helpful in the slaughter,  
 But in vain; for bloodier wars  
 Mecca's might arms itself anew,  
 We, the victors, must wander  
 Fleetingly forth through the deserts,  
 No rescue will lead us  
 To peace's safe port.  
 Night! wrap us in your shadows!  
 Day! we shun your clear light!  
 But in vain, for forests, shadows,  
 Do not hide us from vengeance.

*Second chorus.*

See, how he slumbers,  
 Gently and serene,  
 Like in the lair,  
 Of fierce lions,  
 A little child slumbers.—  
 Blessed peace  
 Wreaths his temple;  
 Filmy dreams  
 Strew blossom  
 Over life,  
 Over the world.

***Ali, the previous.***

*Ali.* Muhammad! Muhammad!

*Muhammad.* (Springing up) Ali! you? what do you desire?

S o f i a n. Ihr thut sehr wohl daran, Abu-Johl.

(Beide ab.)

### **Vierter Zeitraum.**

(Mahomed liegt unter einem Baume und schläft.)

### **Das Chor.**

#### **E r s t e s C h o r.**

Sohn der Stärke! Gott der Siege!  
Hülfreich warst du in der Schlacht,  
Doch umsonst; zu blutigerm Kriege  
Rüstet neu sich Mekkas Macht,  
Wir, die Sieger müssen irren  
Flüchtig durch die Wüsten fort,  
Keine Rettung will uns führen  
In des Friedens sichern Port.  
Nacht! hüll uns in deine Schatten!  
Tag! wir scheu'n dein helles Licht!  
Doch, umsonst, denn Wälder, Schatten,  
Bergen uns der Rache nicht.

#### **Z w e i t e s C h o r.**

Seht, wie er schlummert,  
Freundlich und heiter,  
Wie in der Höhle,  
Grimmiger Löwen,  
Schlummert ein Kindlein. —  
Seliger Friede  
Kränzt ihm die Schläfe;  
Duftige Träume  
Streuen die Blüthen  
Ueber das Leben,  
Ueber die Welt.

### **Ali, die Vorigen.**

A l i. Mahomed! Mahomed!

M a h o m e d. (Aufspringend) Ali! du? was begehrtst du?

*Ali.* Oh lord, a great misfortune threatens us.

*Muhammad.* What then? speak!

*Ali.* Habib ibn Malik, the Emir of the nomads, camps in a valley not far from here, many thousands of warlike men accompany him and his marching army is terrible to all tribes.

*Muhammad.* Now! is that a misfortune for us?

*Ali.* All tribes of Mecca, the Hashimites excepted, sent him a delegation that named him as adjudicator of their disputes with you. Today ten Quraysh will step before him and indict you for blasphemy, high treason, and sedition; they are all firmly resolved to urge for your death.

*Muhammad.* Oh heaven! what danger surrounds me? But silence, my soul! certainly rescue must come. —But speak, Ali! who gave you news of it all?

*Ali.* I was this night in Mecca; Abu Jahl, the damned blasphemer, could not hide his gloating, he went to my father and spoke: Now, wise Abu Talib! save your little son, for Muhammad's iniquity has an end, the great Emir will condemn him to death and give all his followers the reward of shame and banishment. Thus spoke Abu Jahl, and his glances were even grimmer than his poisonous speech. Before the morning dawned I left the city in order to warn you.

*Muhammad.* In vain: where should I flee? I must stay and wait.

*Ali.* Hide yourself in the gorges of the mountains of Najd, do not appear before the Emir.

*Muhammad.* I will appear, if he has me called for.

*Ali.* Habib must be glad, it must flatter him that the proud Quraysh elected him as judge; to please them he will ruin you, you will become the sacrifice of his ambition.

(A messenger comes.)

*Messenger.* Are you Muhammad Abu'l Qasim, the Quraysh?

*Muhammad.* Yes, I am he.

A l i. O Herr, es bedroht uns ein großes Unglück.

M a h o m e d. Welches denn? rede!

A l i. Habib-Ebn-Malec der Emir der Nomaden lagert im Thal unfern von hier, mehrere Tausend streitbare Männer begleiten ihn und sein Heereszug ist allen Stämmen furchtbar.

M a h o m e d. Nun! ist das ein Unglück für uns?

A l i. Alle Stämme von Mekka, die Haschemiden ausgenommen, haben ihm eine Gesandtschaft geschickt, die ihn zum Schiedsrichter ihrer Streitigkeiten mit dir ernannt hat. Heute werden zehen Koreschiten vor ihn treten und dich der Gotteslästerung, des Hochverraths und des Aufruhrs verklagen; sie sind alle fest entschlossen auf deinen Tod zu dringen.

M a h o m e d. O Himmel! welche Gefahr umgiebt mich? Doch stille, meine Seele! es muß ja Rettung kommen. —Aber sprich, Ali! wer gab dir von allen dem Kunde?

A l i. Ich war diese Nacht in Mekka; Abu-Johl, der verdammte Lästere, konnte seine Schadenfreude nicht bergen, er trat zu meinem Vater und sprach: Nun, weiser Abu-Taleb! rette dein Söhnlein, denn Mahomed's Frevel hat ein Ende, der große Emir wird ihn zum Tode verdammen und alle seine Anhänger der Schande und der Verbannung Preis geben. So sprach Abu-Johl, und seine Blicke waren noch grimmiger, als seine giftigen Reden. Ehe noch der Morgen graute verließ ich die Stadt, um dich zu warnen.

M a h o m e d. Umsonst, wo soll ich hinfliehen? ich muß bleiben und erwarten.

A l i. Verbirg dich in den Schlünden der Gebirge von Najed, erscheine nicht vor dem Emir.

M a h o m e d. Ich erscheine, wenn er mich fodern läßt.

A l i. Habib muß sich freuen, es muß ihm schmeicheln, daß ihn die stolzen Koreschiten zum Richter erwählet haben; ihnen zu gefallen, wird er dich verderben, du wirst das Opfer seines Ehrgeizes werden.

(Ein Bote kommt.)

B o t e. Bist du Mahomed Abul-Casem, der Koreisch?

M a h o m e d. Ja, ich bins.



*Messenger.* Habib ibn Malik, the Emir of Emirs, sends me to you: you shall appear today before his judgment seat; by whom you are accused you shall hear from his mouth.

*Muhammad.* Notify the great Emir, I will appear before him.

(Messenger exits.)

*Ali.* So is it irrevocable?

*Muhammad.* Go, Ali! take these men with you (indicating the Chorus.) Wrap yourselves in festival clothes and prepare yourselves to appear before Habib, go ahead, I will follow after you.

(Ali and the chorus exit.)

*Muhammad.* (Kneels down.) Oh Allah! God of my fathers! you, who live in the magnificence of sevenfold heaven! Wisdom, omnipotence and grace surround you from eternity to eternity; your mercifulness is unending, all guilt perishes therein, like a drop in the ocean. Oh lord! have mercy also on your servant, let me not come to ruin before my enemies, let me not become a mockery to the godless; look graciously down upon me from your eternal clarity, send me a beam of your heavenly light, that your truth will be manifest to the peoples through my mouth and they recognize you are the living, only God and Muhammad your prophet, whom you sent into the world to announce you, and through your divine life to lead mortals to immortality. (He stands up.)

***Three old men appear.***

*First old man.* Are you Muhammad, the prophet, whom the citizens of Mecca persecute?

*Muhammad.* Yes, I am he, but who are you? your appearance is so venerable and so wonderful at the same time that I might have taken you for the spirits of these mountains; if you are that, then honor me with your answer.

*Second old man.* We are the Rabbis of the Jewish communities in the lands of Yathrib. Our way leads us to Mecca, but the cool shadows

B o t e. Habib-Ebn-Malec, der Emir der Emiren sendet mich zu dir, du sollst noch heute vor seinem Richterstuhl erscheinen; wessen du angeklagt bist, sollst du aus seinem Munde erfahren.

M a h o m e d. Meldet dem großen Emir, ich würde vor ihm erscheinen.  
(Bote ab.)

A l i. So ist es denn unwiderrufflich?

M a h o m e d. Geh, Ali! nimm diese Männer mit dir (auf die Chöre deutend.) Hüllet euch in Feierkleider und bereitet euch vor Habib zu erscheinen, geht voraus, ich folge euch nach.

(Ali und das Chor ab.)

M a h o m e d. (Kniert nieder.) O Allah! Gott meiner Väter! der du wohnst in der Herrlichkeit siebenfacher Himmel! Weisheit, Allmacht und Gnade umgeben dich von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit; deine Barmherzigkeit ist unendlich, alle Schuld gehet darin unter, wie ein Tropfen im Weltmeer. O Herr! erbarme dich auch deines Knechtes, laß mich nicht zu Schanden werden vor meinen Feinden, laß mich nicht ein Spott werden der Gottlosen; sieh gnädig herab auf mich aus deiner ewigen Klarheit, sende mir einen Strahl von deinem himmlischen Lichte, daß deine Wahrheit durch meinen Mund offenbar werde den Völkern, und sie erkennen, du seyest der lebendige, einzige Gott und Mahomed dein Prophet, den du in die Welt gesandt hast, dich zu verkündigen, und durch dein göttliches Leben die Sterblichen zur Unsterblichkeit zu führen. (Er steht auf.)

### **Drei Greise treten auf.**

E r s t e r G r e i s. Bist du Mahomed, der Prophet, den die Bürger von Mekka verfolgen?

M a h o m e d. Ja, ich bins, doch wer seydt ihr? euer Ansehen ist so ehrwürdig und so wunderbar zugleich, daß ich euch für die Geister dieses Gebirges halten mögte; wenn ihr es seydt, so würdigt mich eurer Antwort.

Z w e i t e r G r e i s. Wir sind die Rabbis der Judäischen Gemeinden im Lande Yatreb, unser Weg führt uns nach Mekka, aber die kühlen Schatten dieses Waldes luden uns zur Mittagsruhe ein, ungesehen

of this forest invited us to a midday nap. Unseen by you we heard your prayer. Yes, you must be a prophet, only one filled with God can pray like you did.

*Third old man.* Your reputation pervades all Arabia, in Yathrib too we know you; we have always thought good of you, for you resemble the old prophets of our people, and many of their prophecies fulfill themselves in you.

*First old man.* Truly, you are he of whom it is written: He will come and rescue us from all ignominy and from all servitude to strangers.

*Muhammad.* If you would like to be of my party, then say: There is only a single God, and Muhammad is his prophet.

*All three old men.* (Throwing themselves down before him.) Yes, you are the prophet of the only God, you are the promised one.

*Muhammad.* Stand up, my friends, go to the land of Yathrib, announce to the people the salvation that has befallen you, and hold faithfully the truth in your hearts.—

*Second old man.* We will announce what you have announced to us, you are the Messiah of the world. Do not forget us, and if the unbelievers persecute you, then flee to our valleys, we would die for your defense.

*Muhammad.* Go in peace, Allah guide you!

(The three old men go off.)

### *Nablid and Muhammad.*

*Nablid.* I have a very sad message to bring you. Khadijah, your wife, is dead.

*Muhammad.* I knew it well, that I would never see her again.

*Nablid.* Lord! I have something else to reveal to you; my soul is heavily burdened, sometimes I want to speak and then again to be silent. Do not look so benignly at me, you will hate me, I have committed high treason against you.

*Muhammad.* Never! you dreamt, it cannot be!

von dir haben wir dein Gebet gehört. Ja, du mußt ein Prophet seyn, nur ein Gotterfüllter kann so beten, wie du gethan hast.

**D r i t t e r G r e i s.** Dein Ruf erfüllt ganz Arabien, auch in Yatreb kennt man dich; wir haben stets gut von dir gedacht, denn du gleichst den alten Propheten unsers Volks, und viele ihrer Weissagungen erfüllen sich in dir.

**E r s t e r G r e i s.** Wahrlich, du bist der, von dem geschrieben steht: Er wird kommen und uns erretten von aller Schmach und von aller Knechtschaft der Fremden.

**M a h o m e d.** Wenn ihr von den Meinen seyn wollt, so spricht: Es ist nur ein einziger Gott, und Mahomed ist sein Prophet.

**A l l e d r e i G r e i s e.** (Sich vor ihm niederwerfend.) Ja, du bist der Prophet des einzigen Gottes, du bist der Verheißene.

**M a h o m e d.** Steht auf, meine Freunde, zieht hin ins Land Yatreb, verkündet dem Volke das Heil, das euch widerfahren ist, und behaltet treu die Wahrheit in euern Herzen.—

**Z w e i t e r G r e i s.** Wir wollen verkündigen, was du uns verkündigt hast, du bist der Messias der Welt; vergiß uns nicht, und wenn dich die Ungläubigen verfolgen, so flüchte in unsere Thäler, wir wollen für deine Vertheidigung sterben.

**M a h o m e d.** Zieht hin in Frieden, Allah geleite euch!

(Die drei Greise gehen ab.)

### **N a h l i d u n d M a h o m e d.**

**N a h l i d.** Ich habe dir eine sehr traurige Botschaft zu bringen. Kadischa, dein Weib ist gestorben.

**M a h o m e d.** Ich wußte es wohl, daß ich sie nicht wiedersehen würde.

**N a h l i d.** Herr! ich habe dir noch etwas zu entdecken; meine Seele ist schwer belastet, bald möchte ich reden und bald auch wieder schweigen. Sieh mich nicht so gütig an, du wirst mich hassen, ich habe Hochverrath an dir begangen.

**M a h o m e d.** Nimmermehr! du hast geträumt, es kann nicht seyn!

*Nahlid.* I let Sufyan escape, his life is my work and your ruin.

*Muhammad.* You did that? did it deliberately?

*Nahlid.* Yes, Halima begged for his life, and I, I love Sufyan's daughter.

*Muhammad.* You love her? (Pause.) Come! I forgive you.

(Both exit.)

**(Plain not far from Mecca.)**

(Many people go on and off, then four slaves bring a throne and set it down. A warlike procession follows them. Finally Habib ibn Malik enters and sits down on the throne. Little by little it becomes darker and the moon rises.)

*Habib.* (To the retinue.) Go, call the envoys from Mecca to me.

*Sufyan, Abu Jabl, Khalid, retinue, the previous.*

*Abu Jabl.* (Throwing himself down before Habib.) Is it granted to me to speak before you, Emir of Emirs! Sun of Arabia!

*Habib.* If you are the spokesman of this delegation, then speak.

*Abu Jabl.* (Standing up.) Yes, but it is a sad matter that leads us to your throne. We came to indict one of our fellow citizens. Your justness, your wisdom, and your knowledge of things moved us to subject ourselves to your judgment; we wish that justice will also befall our enemies, for this reason we swear to do with them as you order.

*Habib.* Are you all agreed to that? you subject yourselves to my judgment?

*Khalid.*

*Sufyan.*

*Abu Jabl.*

} We subject ourselves to your wisdom.

*Habib.* Then continue.

N a h l i d. Ich habe den Sofian entrinnen lassen, sein Leben ist mein Werk und dein Verderben.

M a h o m e d. Das hättest du gethan? absichtlich gethan?

N a h l i d. Ja, Halima bat für sein Leben, und ich, ich liebe Sofians Tochter.

M a h o m e d. Du liebst sie? (Pause.) Komm! ich verzeihe dir.

(Beide ab.)

**(Ebne unfern Mekka.)**

(Viel Volk geht ab und zu, dann bringen vier Slaven einen Thronessel und setzen ihn nieder, ihnen folgt ein kriegerischer Zug, zuletzt tritt Habib-Ebn-Malec auf und setzt sich auf den Thron nieder, es wird nach und nach dunkler und der Mond geht auf.)

H a b i b. (Zum Gefolge.) Geht, ruft die Gesandten von Mekka zu mir.

**Sofian, Abu-Johl, Kaled, Gefolge, die Vorigen.**

A b u - J o h l. (Sich vor Habib niederwerfend.) Ist es mir vergönnt, vor dir zu reden, Emir der Emire! Sonne Arabiens!

H a b i b. Wenn du der Sprecher dieser Gesandtschaft bist, so rede.

A b u - J o h l. (Aufstehend.) Ja, aber es ist eine traurige Angelegenheit, die uns zu deinem Thron führt. Wir sind gekommen, um einen unserer Mitbürger zu verklagen, deine Gerechtigkeit, deine Weisheit und deine Kenntniß der Dinge haben uns bewogen, uns deinem Richterspruch zu unterwerfen; wir wünschen, daß auch unsern Feinden Recht wiederfahre, darum schwören wir, mit ihnen zu thun, wie du es befehlst.

H a b i b. Seyd ihr das alle einverstanden? unterwerft ihr euch meinem Urtheil?

K a l e d.

S o f i a n.

A b u - J o h l.

} Wir unterwerfen uns deiner Weisheit.

H a b i b. Nun so fahre fort.

*Abu Jahl.* Muhammad Abu'l Qasim, a citizen of Mecca from the tribe of Quraysh, made himself guilty of high treason, blasphemy, sedition, and murder.

*Habib.* Is it possible? Never have I heard Muhammad's name spoken with such a disgraceful addendum; his virtues are praised through the whole of Arabia.

*Abu Jahl.* Lord! he, like us, sprouted from the noble tribe of Quraysh, he is our fellow citizen, our relative, he was the companion of our youth. Only the excessiveness of his crimes, only the downfall that he prepares for our city, compels us to this accusation.

*Habib.* You accuse him of sedition, blasphemy, high treason, and murder, how do you justify your statement?

*Abu Jahl.* He is a traitor, for he negotiates with strange tribes for Mecca's downfall. He promised the Sahamites the plundering of our paternal city if they would make him our ruler; he wants nothing but to rule, to this end he plays the prophet.

*Habib.* Is there no one who contradicts this? Is the accusation provable?

*Al-Abbas.* (Stepping forward.) Forgive me, Abu Jahl! your statement is not founded. (To Habib.) If you will grant me to speak, great Emir! then I could perhaps wholly clarify this matter.

*Abu Jahl.* Lord! I am nominated to speak, not him, it does not befit him to interrupt me.

*Habib.* I will hear all. (To Abbas.) Speak!

*Al-Abbas.* I am more precisely informed of the negotiations of Muhammad with the Sahamites than all others in Mecca. Muhammad had some grievances against the heads of the Quraysh, long in vain he demanded reparation, finally he turned to some Sahamite Emirs, in order through their advocacy to enforce his claims. They did not get involved with him back then, although later on they sought his alliance in order to ruin Mecca. Muhammad resolved nothing toward the ruin of his paternal city; much more he destroyed the hostile plans of the Sahamites. —I stand with my head for what I have said.

A b u - J o h l. Mahomed Abul-Casem, ein Bürger von Mekka aus dem Stamme Koreisch, hat sich des Hochverraths, der Gotteslästerung, des Aufruhrs und des Mordes schuldig gemacht.

H a b i b. Ists möglich? Nie habe ich Mahomed's Namen mit solchem schändlichen Zusatz nennen hören; man preist seine Tugenden durch ganz Arabien.

A b u - J o h l. Herr! er ist, wie wir, aus dem edlen Stamm Koreisch entsprossen, er ist unser Mitbürger, unser Verwandter, er war der Genosse unserer Jugend, nur das Uebermaaß seiner Verbrechen, nur der Untergang, den er unserer Stadt bereitet, zwingt uns zu dieser Anklage.

H a b i b. Du verklagst ihn des Aufruhrs, der Gotteslästerung, des Hochverraths und des Mordes, wie rechtfertigst du deine Aussage?

A b u - J o h l. Er ist ein Hochverräther, denn er unterhandelt mit fremden Stämmen über Mekkas Untergang. Er hat den Sahamiden die Plünderung unserer Vaterstadt versprochen, wenn sie ihn zu unserm Herrn machen würden; er will nichts als herrschen, darum spielt er den Propheten.

H a b i b. Ist keiner, der dem widerspräche? Ist die Anklage erweislich?

A l - A b b a s. (Hervortretend.) Verzeiht mir, Abu-Johl! eure Aussage ist nicht gegründet. (Zu Habib.) Wenn du mir vergönnen willst, zu reden, großer Emir! so könnte ich vielleicht diese Sache ganz aufklären.

A b u - J o h l. Herr! ich bin ernannt zu reden, nicht dieser, es geziemt ihm nicht, mich zu unterbrechen.

H a b i b. Ich werde alle hören. (Zu Abbas.) Rede!

A l - A b b a s. Ich bin genauer von den Unterhandlungen des Mahomed mit den Sahamiden unterrichtet, als alle andere in Mekka. Mahomed hatte einige Beschwerden gegen die Häupter der Koreschiten, er foderte lange vergeblich Genugthuung, endlich wandte er sich an einige sahamidische Emiren, um durch ihre Fürsprache seine Forderungen durchzusetzen. Sie ließen sich damals nicht mit ihm ein, obgleich sie späterhin sein Bündniß, um Mekka zu verderben, suchten; Mahomed beschloß nichts zum Verderben seiner Vaterstadt, er zerstörte vielmehr die feindseligen Pläne der Sahamiden. —Ich stehe mit meinem Kopfe für das Gesagte.



*Sufyan.* We do not insist upon this charge, inasmuch as we are not informed enough.

*Khalid.* We are glad that Al-Abbas vindicated our fellow citizen, and we wish to see him freed from each fault as from this one.

*Abu Jahl.* He openly blasphemed our gods, he named them misshapen, impotent hulks.

*Sufyan.* By all that is holy, he did that.

*Many voices.* Yes, truly! we heard it.

*Abu Jahl.* He announced a new religion that misled youths to abandon their gods, through his followers divided the city and the people in two parties, and brought unrest and discord inside our walls.

*Many voices.* Yes, that is true.

*Khalid.* Concord has abandoned us since this false prophet seeks through all arts of inveiglement to obtain followers.

*Sufyan.* He divided the tribes of Mecca from each other through his teachings, and ripped apart all bonds of order.

(A slave comes.)

*Slave.* Abu Talib, the High Priest of the Kaaba, wishes to be admitted.

*Habib.* He may come.

(Slave exits.)

*Abu Jahl.* Abu Talib is the uncle and nurturer of Muhammad, without doubt he will seek to awaken your compassion, oh magnanimous Emir! for the afflicted.

*Habib.* Leave that concern to me.

*Abu Talib, Ali, Nahlid, retinue, and the previous.*

*Abu Talib.* Grant me, magnanimous son of the wise Malik! to hear with you the accusations against my nephew.

S o f i a n. Wir bestehen nicht auf diesen Klagpunkt, indem wir nicht genug unterrichtet sind.

K a l e d. Wir freuen uns, daß Al-Abbas unsern Mitbürger gerechtfertiget hat, und wir wünschen ihn von jeder Schuld so befreiet zu sehen, als von dieser.

A b u - J o h l. Er hat unsere Götter öffentlich gelästert, er hat sie unförmliche, unmächtige Klötze genannt.

S o f i a n. Bei allem, was heilig ist, er hat es gethan.

V i e l e S t i m m e n. Ja, wahrlich! wir haben es gehört.

A b u - J o h l. Er hat eine neue Religion verkündigt, die Jugend verführt, ihre Götter zu verlassen, durch seine Anhänger die Stadt und das Volk in zwei Partheien getheilt, und Unruh und Zwistigkeit in unsere Mauern gebracht.

V i e l e S t i m m e n. Ja, das ist wahr.

K a l e d. Die Eintracht hat uns verlassen, seit dieser falsche Prophet sich durch alle Künste der Verführung Schüler zu erwerben sucht.

S o f i a n. Er hat die Stämme von Mekka durch seine Lehren mit einander entzweit und alle Bande der Ordnung zerrissen.

(Ein Slave kommt.)

S c l a v e. Abu-Taleb, der Oberpriester der Kaabe, wünscht vorgelassen zu werden.

H a b i b. Er komme.

(Slave ab.)

A b u - J o h l. Abu-Taleb ist der Oheim und Erzieher des Mahomed, er wird ohne Zweifel dein Mitleid, o großmüthiger Emir! für den Elenden zu erwecken suchen.

H a b i b. Laßt diese Sorge mir.

### **Abu-Taleb, Ali, Nahlid, Gefolge und die Vorigen.**

A b u - T a l e b. Vergönne mir, großmüthiger Sohn des weisen Malec! die Anklagen gegen meinen Neffen mit anzuhören.

*Habib.* It is granted to you. —Continue, Abu Jahl.

*Abu Jahl.* Muhammad attacked us rapaciously as we moved through the desert, and when we set ourselves to arms, killed thirty of our servants and two Quraysh.

*Habib.* What? he attacked you as you passed by peacefully?

*Abu Jahl.* Yes, we passed by—by—a forest, in which he was tucked away with his party, and there he attacked us.

*Abu Talib.* Oh great Emir! this statement is a shameful defamation. Abu Sufyan, Abu Jahl and ten Quraysh had set out with a hundred and fifty warriors to kill Muhammad.

*Abu Jahl.* Did I deny it?

*Ali.* The magnanimous Omar had set out with them against Muhammad, but God turned his heart; he went over to the prophet, revealed to him the danger in which he hung, and became a Muslim.

*Nablid.* When Muhammad saw that they wanted to attack him, he armed himself, moved against his enemies<sup>62</sup> and struck them on the head.

*Abu Talib.* May the priestly bindings singe my white hair if it is not so.

*Habib.* You seem to me untrue and contradictory in your statements, you accusers!

*Sufyan.* Lord! we set out against Muhammad because there remained to us no other means for our salvation.

*Abu Jahl.* If Muhammad knew himself to be pure, then he would long ago have appeared before you, but he is wary of that. He will indeed still know a lonely mountain cleft in which he tucks himself away in order to escape justice.

*Abbas.* He will appear, for he is brave and truthful.

*Abu Jahl.* Al-Abbas seems to have become a warm defender of Muhammad.

H a b i b. Es ist dir vergönnt. —Fahre fort, Abu-Johl.

A b u - J o h l. Mahomed hat uns, als wir durch die Wüste zogen, räuberisch überfallen, und als wir uns zur Wehr setzten, dreißig unserer Knechte und zwei Koreschiten getödtet.

H a b i b. Wie? er hat euch überfallen, als ihr friedlich vorüberzogt?

A b u - J o h l. Ja, wir zogen vorüber an—an—einem Wald, in dem er mit den Seinigen versteckt war, und da überfiel er uns.

A b u - T a l e b. O großer Emir! diese Aussage ist eine schändliche Verläumdung. Abu-Sofian, Abu-Johl und zehen Koreschiten waren mit hundert und funfzig Kriegsknechten ausgezogen, den Mahomed zu tödten.

A b u - J o h l. Hab ich es denn geläugnet?

A l i. Der großmüthige Omar war mit ausgezogen gegen den Mahomed, aber Gott wandte sein Herz; er gieng zu dem Propheten über, entdeckte ihm die Gefahr, in der er schwebte, und wurde ein Moslem.

N a h l i d. Als Mahomed sah, daß man ihn überfallen wollte, rüstete er sich, zog den Fremden entgegen und schlug sie aufs Haupt.

A b u - T a l e b. Die priesterliche Binde versenge meine weißen Haare, wenn es nicht so ist.

H a b i b. Ihr scheint mir unwahr und widersprechend in euren Aussagen, ihr Ankläger!

S o f i a n. Herr! wir zogen aus gegen Mahomed, weil uns kein anderes Mittel zu unserer Rettung übrig blieb.

A b u - J o h l. Wenn Mahomed sich rein wüßte, so würde er längst vor dir erschienen seyn, aber davor hütet er sich, er wird wohl noch eine einsame Bergkluft wissen, in die er sich versteckt, um der Gerechtigkeit zu entrinnen.

A b b a s. Er wird erscheinen, denn er ist muthig und wahrhaft.

A b u - J o h l. Al-Abbas scheint ein warmer Vertheidiger Mahomed's geworden zu seyn.

*Muhammad, Omar, the choruses, the previous.*

*Abu Talib.* There comes Muhammad himself, he will know how to tame defamation's poisonous tongue.

*Habib.* Step nearer, Muhammad! the Quraysh have named me as arbitrator between you and them, submit to my judgment.

*Muhammad.* Yes, lord!

*Habib.* You are accused before me of serious crimes, the Quraysh accuse you of blasphemy.

*Muhammad.* The only God, who created all things, whom the unbelievers do not know, said to me: Muhammad! rise and announce to the peoples of the earth my truth, that they recover from error and do not further worship the false gods. So the spirit spoke to me and outrageous caprice did not drive me to show to these people the nothingness of their dead, powerless idols; my deed is not my work, but the will of God.

*First chorus.*

Destiny chose the seer,  
It lets him see its deepest deeps,  
Produced by him, the world will be born anew,  
The temple of God arise from the rubble.

*Habib.* The Quraysh indict you for sedition, they say you brought unrest and disputes to the peaceful Mecca.

*Muhammad.* I announced my God in light and power, therefore the godless rose up against me, to ruin me.

*Habib.* Muhammad! do you not hold your wishes to be the inspirations of a God?

*Muhammad.* By the stars that twinkle over us, God speaks through my mouth, the speaker of God cannot err.

*Habib.* If God sent you as his prophet to the peoples of Arabia, then he will also give you the power to prove your high vocation.

**Mahomed, Omar, die Chöre, die Vorigen.**

A b u - T a l e b. Da kommt Mahomed selbst, er wird der Verläumdung giftige Zunge zu zähmen wissen.

H a b i b. Tritt näher, Mahomed! die Koreschiten haben mich zum Schiedsrichter zwischen dir und ihnen ernannt, unterwirf dich meinem Urtheil.

M a h o m e d. Ja, Herr!

H a b i b. Du bist schwerer Verbrechen vor mir angeklagt, die Koreschiten beschuldigen dich der Gotteslästerung.

M a h o m e d. Der einzige Gott, der alle Dinge geschaffen hat, den die Ungläubigen nicht kennen, hat zu mir gesagt: Mahomed! stehe auf und verkünde den Völkern der Erde meine Wahrheit, daß sie genesen vom Irrthum und die falschen Götter nicht ferner anbeten. So hat der Geist zu mir gesprochen und nicht die frevelhafte Willkühr treibt mich diesem Volke die Nichtigkeit seiner todten, ohnmächtigen Götzen zu zeigen; meine That ist nicht mein Werk, sondern der Wille Gottes.

E r s t e s C h o r.

Das Schicksal hat den Seher sich erkohren,  
Es ließ ihn seine tiefsten Tiefen sehn,  
Von ihm erzeugt, wird neu die Welt gebohren,  
Der Tempel Gottes aus dem Schutt erstehn.

H a b i b. Die Koreschiten verklagen dich des Aufruhrs, sie sagen, du hättest Unruhe und Zwistigkeiten in das friedliche Mekka gebracht.

M a h o m e d. Ich habe meinen Gott in Licht und Kraft verkündigt, darum sind die Gottlosen gegen mich aufgestanden, mich zu verderben.

H a b i b. Mahomed! hältst du nicht deine Wünsche für die Eingebungen eines Gottes?

M a h o m e d. Bei den Sternen, die über uns funkeln, Gott spricht durch meinen Mund, der Sprecher Gottes kann nicht irren.

H a b i b. Hat dich Gott als seinen Propheten an die Völker Arabiens gesandt, so wird er dir auch die Kraft geben, deinen hohen Beruf zu beweisen.

*Muhammad.* Have you read the Quran, and you still require another proof? Can you still doubt that God speaks through the Quran? Or can a mortal speak words of heaven?

*Habib.* Not for me, no; in order to convince your accusers I demand that you do a miracle, to set outside all doubt the divinity of your mission. Noah's wonderful rescue through the ark proved his divine mission; Moses called springs to gush forth from the rock; Jesus of Nazareth commanded the stormy sea and it obeyed him. Similar proofs must you give, if the peoples of Arabia should recognize your divine mission.

*Abu Jabl.* Yes, we swear, we will believe him if he is able to do a miracle.

*Sufyan.* Yes, under this condition we will believe and revere him as the prophet of God.

*Muhammad.* Oh you deceived ones! You would bring me to ruin, but the God of victory is with me! Well then, I will do the miracle.<sup>63</sup> (He throws himself down to the earth. Long solemn silence. Muhammad stands up and turns with his face toward the moon.) Darkness! ascend over the mountains of Najd! Moon! shroud yourself on the peak of the high Merva! (The moon darkens itself almost wholly. Long pause.) Oh Allah! Ruler of the heavens! you answered my prayer. The unbelievers stand benumbed, horror has gripped their innermost marrow. Oh God! glorify me now before their eyes in heavenly clarity. (The moon becomes very bright. Long pause.)

*Habib.* Yes, truly, Muhammad is a prophet; you peoples of Arabia! you men of Mecca! hear me! There is only a single God and Muhammad is his prophet.

*Ali.*

*Nahlid.*

*Omar.*

*Abbas.*

} Hail, Muhammad! Hail, favorite of the godhead!

*Many voices.* Truly! Muhammad is the prophet of God.

M a h o m e d. Hast du den Koran gelesen, und bedarfst du noch eines andern Beweises? Kannst du noch zweifeln, daß Gott durch den Koran spricht? Oder kann ein Sterblicher Worte des Himmels reden?

H a b i b. Nicht für mich, nein, um deine Ankläger zu überzeugen, fordere ich, daß du ein Wunder thust, um die Göttlichkeit deiner Sendung außer allen Zweifel zu setzen. Noahs göttliche Sendung bewies seine wunderbare Rettung durch die Arche; Moses hieß dem Felsen Quellen entsprudeln; Jesus von Nazareth gebot der stürmischen See und sie gehorchte ihm. Aehnliche Beweise mußt du geben, wenn die Völker Arabiens deine göttliche Sendung anerkennen sollen.

A b u - J o h l. Ja, wir schwören, wir wollen ihm glauben, wenn er ein Wunder zu thun vermag.

S o f i a n. Ja, unter dieser Bedingung wollen wir glauben und ihn als den Propheten Gottes verehren.

M a h o m e d. O ihr Bethörten! Ihr wollt mich zu Schanden machen, aber der Gott des Sieges ist mit mir! Wohlan, ich will das Wunder thun. (Er wirft sich zur Erde nieder. Lange feierliche Stille. Mahomed steht auf und wendet sich mit dem Angesicht gegen den Mond.) Dunkelheit! steige herauf über die Gebirge Najeds! Mond! verhülle dich auf dem Gipfel des hohen Merva! (Der Mond verdunkelt sich fast ganz. Lange Pause.) O Allah! Herrscher der Himmel! du hast mein Gebet erhört. Betäubt stehen die Ungläubigen, Entsetzen hat ihr innerstes Mark ergriffen. O Gott! verherrliche mich jetzt vor ihren Augen in himmlischer Klarheit. (Der Mond wird sehr hell. Lange Pause.)

H a b i b. Ja, wahrlich, Mahomed ist ein Prophet; ihr Völker Arabiens! ihr Männer von Mekka! hört mich! Es ist nur ein einziger Gott und Mahomed ist sein Prophet.

A l i.

N a h l i d.

O m a r.

A b b a s.

} Heil dir, Mahomed! Heil dir, Liebling der Gottheit!

V i e l e S t i m m e n. Wahrlich! Mahomed ist der Prophet Gottes.



*Habib.* He is, do not doubt, subject yourselves to him, you men of Mecca!

*Abu Jabl.* Never, he is a deceiver.

*Sufyan.* They are deceitful arts with which he blinds and misleads.

*Khalid.* What? we should treacherously abandon our benevolent gods and follow the artist of lies?

*Habib.* Is that your word, your oath, you Quraysh?

*Muhammad.* Do not wonder at it, son of the wise Malik! so perverse, so faithless was always the invention of my enemies; thus their deeds and their oaths are snares to deceive the faithful.

*Habib.* So abandon the faithless, oh Muhammad! and come to the desert, I will protect you.

*Abu Jabl.* And you too let yourself be beguiled by him, great Emir? Flee him, illusion, deception, and fraud are his miracles, his proximity is dangerous.

*Habib.* Your truthfulness proved itself poor today, you Quraysh! I have now nothing more to say to you, I will leave you and Mecca. You will rue too late what you did today. You, Muhammad, will always find a safe sanctuary with me. Farewell! May well-being befall you!

(He exits with his retinue.)

*Abu Jabl.* (To Muhammad.) That was successful for you, abhorrent deceiver! Throw-off of your people! Shameful stain on your noble tribe!

*Ali.* (Draws his sword.) Poisonous blasphemer! may this be your last defamation!

*Muhammad.* Leave the madman, his raving is not dangerous.

*Abu Jabl.* Not dangerous? By Al-'Uzzá, my sword shall be dangerous to you. (He draws his sword.)

*Omar.* (To Muhammad.) He draws his sword against you! Do not leave it unavenged, Muhammad! Up, you Muslims! defend the prophet!

*Sufyan.* To arms! to arms, you Quraysh!

H a b i b. Er ists, zweifelt nicht, unterwerft euch ihm, ihr Männer von Mekka!

A b u - J o h l. Nimmermehr, er ist ein Betrüger.

S o f i a n. Es sind betrügerische Künste, mit denen er blendet und verführt.

K a l e d. Wie? unsere wohlthätigen Götter sollen wir verrätherisch verlassen und dem Lügenkünstler anhangen?

H a b i b. Ist das euer Wort, euer Schwur, ihr Koreschiten?

M a h o m e d. Wundere dich des nicht, Sohn des weisen Malec! so verkehrt, so treulos war immer das Beginnen meiner Feinde; so sind ihre Thaten und ihre Schwüre Fallstricke, die Treue zu betrügen.

H a b i b. So verlasse die Treulosen, o Mahomed! und komm in die Wüste, ich werde dich schützen.

A b u - J o h l. Und auch du lässest dich von ihm bethören, großer Emir? Fliehe ihn, Blendwerk, Täuschung und Betrug sind seine Wunder, seine Nähe ist gefährlich.

H a b i b. Eure Wahrhaftigkeit erprobt sich heute schlecht, ihr Koreschiten! Ich habe euch nun nichts mehr zu sagen, ich verlasse euch und Mekka. Ihr werdet zu spät bereuen, was ihr heute gethan habt. Du, Mahomed, wirst stets eine sichere Freistatt bei mir finden. Lebe wohl! Heil wiederfahre dir! (Er geht mit seinem Gefolge ab.)

A b u - J o h l. (Zu Mahomed.) Das ist dir gelungen, abscheulicher Betrüger! Auswurf deines Volkes! Schandfleck deines edlen Stammes!

A l i. (Zieht sein Schwerdt.) Giftiger Lästere! dies sey deine letzte Schmähung.

M a h o m e d. Lasse den Unsinnigen, seine Raserei ist nicht gefährlich.

A b u - J o h l. Nicht gefährlich? Bei Al-Ozza, mein Schwerdt soll dir gefährlich seyn. (Er zieht das Schwerdt.)

O m a r. (Zu Mahomed.) Er zieht das Schwerdt gegen dich! Lasse es nicht ungerochen, Mahomed! Auf, ihr Moslems! vertheidigt den Propheten!

S o f i a n. Zu den Waffen! zu den Waffen, ihr Koreschiten!

(All draw their swords, the people divides itself into two parties, the greater part is on Muhammad's side.)

*Abu Jahl.* War! War! once must it be decided, for this reason begun!

*Sufyan.* Let us turn home, Abu Jahl! you see the supremacy is on Muhammad's side.

*Khalid.* We will go home, we cannot win today.

*Abu Jahl.* Your cowardice ruins us, it defeats us, not Muhammad's sword.

*Ali.* (To Muhammad.) Let us strike, we will conquer.

*Omar.* By God! The moment is very favorable.

*Muhammad.* Let them go in peace, the moment has not yet come, Mecca is not yet given to us and I do not like to spill unnecessary blood.

*Ali.* Oh lord! Let us strike the enemies!

*Muhammad.* Obey!

*Abu Talib.* So come, you Quraysh, follow me to Mecca.

(Abu Talib, Khalid, Sufyan, Abu Jahl and retinue exit.)

*Omar.* It is not clever, oh Muhammad! that you let the enemies escape so fortunately.

*Muhammad.* Forgive me, Omar! it was necessary.

***Tariq, Uthman, retinue, the previous.***

*Tariq.* Greetings, Muhammad!

*Muhammad.* Welcome friend! blessed is the hour that leads you to me. But speak, why did I hear nothing from you for so long?

*Tariq.* I left you at Mecca with the firm intention to get into this city with your help; but soon I heard that you pursued a totally different plan than that which I had designed. Then mistrust seized my soul, I wanted to wait for what would become of you and let you

(Alle ziehen die Schwerdter, das Volk theilt sich in zwei Partheien, der größere Theil ist auf Mahomed's Seite.)

A b u - J o h l. Krieg! Krieg! einmal muß es sich entscheiden, darum begonnen!

S o f i a n. Laßt uns heimziehen, Abu-Johl! ihr seht die Uebermacht ist auf Mahomed's Seite.

K a l e d. Wir wollen heimziehen, wir können heute nicht gewinnen.

A b u - J o h l. Eure Feigheit verdirbt uns, sie schlägt uns, nicht Mahomed's Schwerdt.

A l i. (Zu Mahomed.) Laß uns schlagen, wir werden siegen.

O m a r. Bei Gott! Der Augenblick ist sehr günstig.

M a h o m e d. Laßt sie in Frieden ziehn, der Augenblick ist noch nicht gekommen, Mekka ist uns noch nicht gegeben und unnöthiges Blut mag ich nicht vergießen.

A l i. O Herr! Laß uns die Feinde schlagen!

M a h o m e d. Gehorche!

A b u - T a l e b. So kommt, ihr Koreschiten, folgt mir nach Mekka.

(Abu-Taleb, Kaled, Sofian, Abu-Johl und Gefolge gehen ab.)

O m a r. Es ist nicht klug, o Mahomed! daß du die Feinde so glücklich entrinnen ließest.

M a h o m e d. Verzeihe mir, Omar! es war nothwendig.

### **T a r r i k, O t h m a n n, G e f o l g e, d i e V o r i g e n.**

T a r r i k. Sey gegrüßet, Mahomed!

M a h o m e d. Willkommen Freund! gesegnet sey die Stunde, die dich mir zuführt. Aber sprich, warum vernahm ich so lange nichts von dir?

T a r r i k. Ich verließ dich bei Mekka mit dem festen Vorsatz, durch deine Hülfe in diese Stadt zu dringen; bald aber vernahm ich, du verfolgst einen ganz andern Plan, als den ich entworfen hatte, da bemächtigte sich Mißtrauen meiner Seele, ich wollte erwarten,

perish. With this resolution I came to Medina. There I saw Uthman, he announced to me you were the prophet of the only God, he read the Quran to me, I recognized the divinity of your mission and became a Muslim. Command me now, I will serve you as the truest of your servants.

*Mubammad.* Let the Quran's destiny be your own, this, Tariq! is the sense of our community! —And you, Uthman! gained me an exquisite gem in this friend.

*Uthman.* Lord, everywhere the holy word of the Quran was living in deed and effect. Medina recognizes you as the envoy of heaven, and Giafar<sup>64</sup> gained many students and friends for Islam in the lands of Yathrib. —Luck and victory was with us, only the tribes Thaab, Moharab, and Aum<sup>65</sup> strive against you, they persecute your followers and threaten your friends in Medina with murder and devastation; terror has seized this city, and it implores you for help against its angry enemies.

*Mubammad.* Help it shall have. You, Tariq! set off with your troops and protect Medina. You, Omar! move against the tribes of Thaab and Aum, I will give you the valiant Ubayda as companion. And you, my doughty Ali! should move with me against our grim enemy Sarakos;<sup>66</sup> Nahlid will accompany us. Now you know all that you have to do, begin bravely your course; for I tell you, truly! we will gather victoriously before Mecca!

(All exit except the choruses.)

*First chorus.*

Reluctantly you will,  
Dear earth!  
Drink the drops  
Of blood of your children,  
Sorrowingly enshroud  
Bloody corpses  
Blooming sons,  
That you engendered.

was aus dir würde und dich zu Grunde gehen lassen. Mit diesem Entschluß kam ich nach Medina, da sah ich Othmann, er verkündigte mir, du seyest der Prophet des einzigen Gottes, er las mir den Koran, ich erkannte die Göttlichkeit deiner Sendung und wurde ein Moslem. Gebiete mir jetzt, ich will dir dienen als der treuste deiner Knechte.

**M a h o m e d.** Laß des Korans Schicksal dein eignes werden, dies, Tarrik! ist der Sinn unserer Gemeinschaft. —Und du, Othmann! hast mir ein köstliches Kleinod in diesem Freund erworben.

**O t h m a n n.** Herr, überall war das heilige Wort des Koran lebendig in That und Wirkung. Medina erkennt dich als den Gesandten des Himmels, und Giafar hat im Lande Yatreb viele Schüler und Freunde für den Islam erworben. —Glück und Sieg war mit uns, nur die Stämme Thaab, Moharab und Aum widerstreben dir, sie verfolgen deine Anhänger und bedrohen deine Freunde in Medina mit Mord und Verwüstung; Schrecken hat sich dieser Stadt bemächtigt, und sie fleht dich um Hülfe gegen ihre ergrimnten Feinde.

**M a h o m e d.** Hülfe soll ihr werden. Du, Tarrik! brich auf mit deinen Schaaren und beschütze Medina. Du, Omar! ziehe gegen die Stämme von Thaab und Aum, ich will dir den wackern Obeida zum Begleiter geben. Und du, mein tapfrer Ali! sollst mit mir gegen unsern grimmigen Feind, den Sarakos, ziehen, Nahlid begleitet uns. Ihr wißt nun alle, was ihr zu thun habt, beginnet muthig eure Bahn; denn ich sage euch, wahrlich! wir werden uns siegreich vor Mekka versammeln.

(Alle ab bis auf die Chöre.)

**E r s t e s C h o r.**

Ungerne wirst du,  
Theure Erde!  
Trinken die Tropfen  
Bluts deiner Kinder,  
Trauernd verhüllen  
Blutige Leichen  
Blühender Söhne,  
Die du erzeuget.

*Second chorus.*

In vain twines shiftingly the dance of the Houris,  
 Ah! no hour brings us peace,  
 The highest allure is lost in the turmoil,  
 The deep silence and the sweet rest.

*First chorus.*

Forth, that the deep longing does not awaken,  
 Forth in the battle, to murder and death and vengeance.

*Fifth space of time.*

**(Gate in front of Mecca. Open space, to the side tents, in the background the gate of Mecca.)**

*Both choruses.**First chorus.*

Victory's wing bore us forth,  
 Through battles, slaughters, to Medina.  
 Yes, God shattered our enemies' power,  
 And the sword carried off their blooms;  
 And even the enemies' proudest despair,  
 They know their sins' measure is full.  
 The mothers of Mecca, they indict  
 The brave sword that devoured their sons.

*Second chorus.*

The God of the strong leads us through the desert,  
 The seer's arm gave victory, like his prayer,  
 Medina, the lauded city, greeted  
 As its lord the divine prophet;  
 Arabia obeys our signals,  
 The proud Mecca still withstands us,  
 But its high walls shall fall,  
 The never-conquered bear our yoke.

*First chorus.*

Yet also many of ours fell,  
 Reaped by the enemy's sword;  
 Let lament ring out for the dead,  
 For their deeds are worthy of posthumous fame.

Z w e i t e s C h o r.

Umsonst schlingt wechselnd sich der Tanz der Horen,  
Ach! keine Stunde führt uns Frieden zu,  
Der höchste Reiz geht im Gewühl verloren,  
Die tiefe Stille und die süße Ruh.

E r s t e s C h o r.

Fort, daß die tiefe Sehnsucht nicht erwache,  
Fort in die Schlacht, zu Mord und Tod und Rache.

**F ü n f t e r Z e i t r a u m.**

**(Thor vor Mekka. Freier Platz, zur Seite Gezelte, im Hintergrunde  
das Thor von Mekka.)**

**D i e b e i d e n C h ö r e.**

E r s t e s C h o r.

Des Sieges Fittig hat uns fortgetragen,  
Durch Kämpfe, Schlachten, nach Medina hin.  
Ja, unsrer Feinde Kraft hat Gott zerschlagen,  
Und ihre Blüten rafft das Schwerdt dahin;  
Und auch der Feinde Stolzeste verzagen,  
Sie wissen, voll ist ihrer Sünden Maaß.  
Die Mütter Mekkas, sie verklagen  
Das tapfre Schwerdt, das ihre Söhne fraß.

Z w e i t e s C h o r.

Der Gott der Starken führt uns durch die Wüste,  
Des Sehers Arm gab Sieg, wie sein Gebet,  
Medina, die gepriesne Stadt, begrüßte  
Als ihren Herrn, den göttlichen Prophet;  
Arabia gehorchet unsern Winken,  
Die stolze Mekka widersteht uns noch,  
Doch ihre hohe Mauern sollen sinken,  
Die Niebesiegten tragen unser Joch.

E r s t e s C h o r.

Doch auch der unsern Viele sind gefallen,  
Hingeraffet von der Feinde Schwerdt;  
Laßt für die Todten Klaggesang erschallen,  
Denn ihre Thaten sind des Nachruhms werth.



*Both choruses.*

Badr, your earth has drunk  
 Our friends', our brave ones' blood;  
 In life's springtime they sank,  
 Gone out in youth's glow.  
 Lament, you maidens! their sweet beauty,  
 The grace that sinks to the dark grave,  
 Arabia! weep for your sons,  
 That the long night devours them so early.

(Halima comes from one side, Nahlid from the other.)

*Halima.* Come, Nahlid! and listen, a great misfortune threatens me. Sufyan, my father, wants to forge peace with the prophet, demands me as pledge of the union; and can you believe it? Muhammad consents to the contract.

*Nahlid.* Never, he cannot so afflict you.

*Halima.* I would be happy if I could still have<sup>67</sup> the smallest doubt, yes I would gladly die, if I did not know how ready he is to sacrifice me. He only wants to rule, may the world perish over it, that does not concern him. —Oh heaven! forgive that I blaspheme the prophet;<sup>68</sup> but my soul is too painfully agitated against him.

*Nahlid.* He shall not send you back to your father.

*Halima.* Have you forgotten that for him there is no contradiction? And everything is successful for him, and he has always done what he wanted. He will not unlearn it today; he will send me back, and I will despair, die of grief.

*Nahlid.* I swear to you by the angel of paradise, Muhammad shall not send you back, I would rather die before I would tolerate this.

*Halima.* No, Nahlid! you shall not die, you are so good, and I love you too, but not as you deserve, for my soul is so suffused with adoration and love for the seer.—

*Nahlid.* Oh! that I know well, you think of him, and always only of him, your heart has no room for me, that is the angel of death that steps beside my life. Why did I not fall with my comrades in arms in our battles? Why was I not buried at Badr?

B e i d e C h ö r e.

Bedr, deine Erde hat getrunken  
Unsrer Freunde, unsrer Tapfern Blut;  
In des Lebens Mai sind sie gesunken,  
Sind verlöschet in der Jugend Glut.  
Beklagt ihr Mädchen! ihre süße Schöne,  
Die Anmuth, die zum dunklen Grabe sinkt,  
Arabia! beweine deine Söhne,  
Daß sie so früh die lange Nacht verschlingt.

(Halima kommt von der einen, Nahlid von der andern Seite.)

H a l i m a. Komm, Nahlid! und höre, ein großes Unglück bedroht mich.  
Sofian, mein Vater, will Frieden schließen mit dem Propheten, mich  
fodert er zum Unterpfand des Vereins; und kannst du es glauben?  
Mahomed willigt in den Vertrag.

N a h l i d. Nimmermehr, er kann dich nicht so betrüben.

H a l i m a. Glücklich wäre ich, könnte ich noch den kleinsten Zweifel  
haben, ja ich wollte gerne sterben, wüßte ich nicht, wie bereitwillig  
er ist, mich aufzuopfern. Er will nur herrschen, mag auch die Welt  
darüber zu Grunde gehen, das kümmert ihn nicht. —O Himmel!  
verzeih, daß ich den Propheten lästere; doch meine Seele ist zu  
schmerzlich gegen ihn erregt.

N a h l i d. Er soll dich deinem Vater nicht zurücksenden.

H a l i m a. Hast du vergessen, daß es für ihn keinen Widerspruch giebt?  
Noch ist ihm alles gelungen, noch hat er immer gethan, was er  
wollte, er wird es heute nicht verlernen, er wird mich zurücksenden,  
und ich werde verzweifeln, sterben vor Betrübniß.

N a h l i d. Ich schwöre dir bei dem Engel des Paradieses, Mahomed  
soll dich nicht zurücksenden, ehe sterbe ich, ehe ich dieses dulde.

H a l i m a. Nein, Nahlid! du sollst nicht sterben, du bist so gut, und  
ich liebe dich auch, doch nicht so, wie du es verdienst, denn meine  
Seele ist so erfüllt von Anbetung und Liebe für den Seher.

N a h l i d. O! das weiß ich wohl, seiner gedenkst du, und immer nur  
seiner, dein Herz hat keinen Raum für mich, das ist der Todesengel,  
der neben meinem Leben daher tritt. Warum bin ich nicht gefallen  
mit meinen Kampfgenossen in unsern Schlachten? Warum bin ich  
nicht begraben bei Bedr?

*Halima.* You make me sad, Nahlid!

*Nahlid.* Be consoled, for you I live, for you I will die. Go! I will seek Muhammad, soon your destiny will be decided.

(The choruses and both exit.)

*Omar, Ali.*

*Omar.* Can I still not speak to the prophet?

*Ali.* Be patient, there are delegates of the tribes of Odal and Kara with him.

*Omar.* What do they desire?

*Ali.* They want that the prophet should send them delegates to educate them in the Quran.

*Omar.* What kind of men were they that stepped into Muhammad's tent?

*Ali.* They were envoys of the King Negus of Abyssinia, they brought the prophet greetings, friendship and gifts.

*Omar.* With Ubayda's help I overcame the tribes of Thaab and Aum; but my deeds do not suffice me, I envy you for the victories at Badr and Ravina.<sup>69</sup>

*Ali.* They were two great days. At Ravina five peoples were against us, but Muhammad's sword was like a wasting fire; Zaid, Zubayr, Abu Bakr, Hamza, and others fought like lions and the victory was ours.

*Omar.* Abu Jahl was left in the battle at Badr?

*Ali.* The revenge of heaven overtook him, Abdullah's good sword sent him to hell; but also Hamza, the noble Hamza, had to purchase the victory at Ravina with his life.

*Omar.* Did you overcome Sarakos?

*Ali.* Yes, but not with the sword; he became a Muslim, conquered by Muhammad's ecstatic speech.

*Omar.* Truly! Muhammad is the son of fortune. If I think back to that day when he, without means, without friends, a banished refugee,

H a l i m a. Du machst mich traurig, Nahlid!

N a h l i d. Sey getrost, für dich lebe ich, für dich will ich sterben. Geh!  
ich suche den Mahomed, bald ist dein Schicksal entschieden.

(Die Chöre und beide ab.)

**O m a r, A l i.**

O m a r. Kann ich den Propheten noch nicht sprechen?

A l i. Gedulde dich, es sind Abgeordnete der Stämme Odal und Kara bei ihm.

O m a r. Was begehren sie?

A l i. Sie wollen, der Prophet soll ihnen Abgeordnete senden, die sie im Koran unterrichten.

O m a r. Was waren das für Männer, die eben in das Gezelt Mahomed's traten?

A l i. Es waren Gesandte des Königs Nejus von Habesch, sie brachten dem Propheten Gruß, Freundschaft und Geschenke.

O m a r. Ich habe mit Obeida's Hülfe die Stämme Thaab und Aum überwunden; aber meine Thaten genügen mir nicht, ich beneide euch um die Siege bei Bedr und Rawina.

A l i. Es waren zwei große Tage. Bei Rawina waren fünf Völker gegen uns, aber Mahomed's Schwerdt war wie ein zehrendes Feuer; Zaid, Zobair, Abu-Bekr, Hamza und andere kämpften wie Löwen und der Sieg war unser.

O m a r. Abu-Johl blieb in der Schlacht bei Bedr?

A l i. Die Rache des Himmels hat ihn ereilt, Abdohla's gutes Schwerdt sandte ihn zur Hölle; aber auch Hamza, der edle Hamza, mußte den Sieg bei Rawina mit dem Leben erkaufen.

O m a r. Habt ihr den Sarakos überwunden?

A l i. Ja, doch nicht mit dem Schwerdt, er ist ein Moslem geworden, besiegt von Mahomed's begeisterten Reden.

O m a r. Wahrlich! Mahomed ist der Sohn des Glückes. Wenn ich an jenen Tag zurückdenke, an dem er ohne Mittel, ohne Freunde, ein

had the monstrous idea to conquer Arabia, my spirit then resisted this adventurous thought, but his eloquence held my doubts captive, and now he has indeed accomplished what to the world and posterity must seem impossible; Arabia has subjected itself to him, he himself must wonder over that.

*Ali.* Indeed! But is not everything wonderful in and around him?

(Muhammad, the first chorus and warlike retinue come from one side, Uthman, Tariq, Zubayr and Saad from the other; the previous.)

*Muhammad.* Are all my captains assembled?

*Zubayr.* Abu Bakr and Ubayda are still missing.

*Muhammad.* And why do they not appear at my command?

*Saad.* Abu Bakr arranges his peoples on the hill Thu-Tawa.

*Omar.* Ubayda leads his warriors to the suburbs.

*Muhammad.* Good. Did my messenger come back from Mecca?

*Ali.* We expect him any moment.

*Muhammad.* How many warriors do you bring me today, valiant Tariq?

*Tariq.* More than a thousand.

*Muhammad.* Greetings, Omar! Conqueror of numerous enemies! How many Ansari<sup>70</sup> do you lead?

*Omar.* Nine hundred await your command.

*Muhammad.* So ten thousand lusty fighters stand gathered today to conquer Mecca. See, friends! so great and mighty has God made his prophet, therefore do not quail, whatever I command you. —Know, the great day has broken on which we must plant our victory banner on the sacred Kaaba. Before the sun has completed three quarters of its course, I will move into Mecca as its conqueror.

*A few voices.* Impossible!

*Ali.* By your holy head, prophet! I did not pronounce this word.

verbannter Flüchtling, den ungeheuern Einfall hatte, Arabien zu erobern, mein Geist widerstrebte damals diesen abentheuerlichen Gedanken, aber seine Beredsamkeit hielt meine Zweifel gefangen, und nun ist es ihm doch gelungen, was der Welt und Nachwelt unmöglich scheinen muß; Arabien hat sich ihm unterworfen, er muß sich selbst darüber wundern.

A l i. Wohl! Aber ist nicht alles wunderbar in und um ihn?

(Mahomed, das erste Chor und kriegerisches Gefolge kommen von der einen, Othmann, Tarrik, Zobair und Saad von der andern Seite, die Vorigen.)

M a h o m e d. Sind alle meine Hauptleute versammelt?

Z o b a i r. Abubekr und Obeida fehlen noch.

M a h o m e d. Und warum erschienen sie nicht auf meinen Befehl?

S a a d. Abubekr ordnet deine Völker auf dem Hügel Thu-Tawa.

O m a r. Obeida führt deine Krieger nach den Vorstädten.

M a h o m e d. Gut. Ist mein Bote von Mekka zurückgekommen?

A l i. Wir erwarten ihn jeden Augenblick.

M a h o m e d. Wie viele Krieger führst du mir heute zu, wackrer Tarrik?

T a r r i k. Mehr denn Tausende.

M a h o m e d. Sey mir begrüßet, Omar! Ueberwinder zahlreicher Feinde! Wie viel Ansaren führst du?

O m a r. Neun hundert warten deines Befehles.

M a h o m e d. So stehn heute zehntausend rüstige Streiter versammelt, um Mekka zu besiegen. Seht, Freunde! so groß und mächtig hat Gott seinen Propheten gemacht, darum verzagt nicht, was ich euch auch befehlen werde. —Wisset, der große Tag ist angebrochen, an welchem wir unsere Siegerfahne auf der geweihten Kaaba aufpflanzen müssen. Ehe noch die Sonne drei Viertheile ihres Laufs vollbracht hat, ziehe ich als Sieger in Mekka ein.

E i n i g e S t i m m e n. Unmöglich!

A l i. Bei deinem heiligem Haupte, Prophet! ich habe dies Wort nicht ausgesprochen.

*Mubammad.* Ali! you were born to protect the truth that I announce with your doughty arm; your name shall be mentioned before all others, son of glory!

*Saad.* Lord, I fear we are not prepared enough for so great an undertaking.

*Tariq.* My warriors have not rested.

*Mubammad.* Can you still doubt now, you of little faith? The God of strength was with us everywhere, he sent a thousand times a thousand angels to show us the way to victory, and now that we have reached the peak of splendor and might, now you fear? Remember the day that we dispersed ourselves in the camp of the great Emir to make war against our enemies; then our number was small, our means little and your wavering confidence accident's servant; but I spoke to you: do not fear, we will gather victoriously before Mecca; now the ungraspable miracle has happened and you doubt once more?<sup>71</sup>

*Ali.* Entrust to me the holy banner, I swear to you, Prophet! I will plant it today on the Kaaba.

*Uthman.* And I will accompany Ali.

*Omar.* I cannot be Ali's follower, but give me deeds, I will complete them.

*Mubammad.* Good, so obey. You, Tariq, lead your warriors to the east side of the city. Zubayr, move with the vanguard to the second gate. Omar and Saad lead three thousand of the doughtiest to the suburbs, and at the twelfth hour all invade Mecca at the same time. Let anyone who submits receive mercy, for by Allah! I will bloodily revenge each atrocity that you commit against conquered enemies. Hear and obey!

*All.* We do as you command.

*Mubammad.* I will not accompany you, for I will not enter the holy Mecca with my sword in my hand, the whimpering of the dying shall not receive me, I want to move in peacefully, that befits me; today you may work for me. Go now, Allah is with you. You stay with me, Ali.

M a h o m e d. Ali! du bist geboren, die Wahrheit, die ich verkündige, mit deinem tapfern Arm zu beschützen; dein Name soll vor allen andern genannt werden, Sohn des Ruhmes!

S a a d. Herr, ich fürchte, wir sind nicht genug vorbereitet auf ein so großes Unternehmen.

T a r r i k. Meine Krieger haben nicht ausgeruht.

M a h o m e d. Könnt ihr jetzt noch zweifeln, ihr Kleingläubigen? Der Gott der Stärke war allenthalben mit uns, er sandte tausendmal Tausend Engel, uns den Weg zum Sieg zu zeigen, und jetzt, da wir den Gipfel der Herrlichkeit und Macht erreicht haben, jetzt fürchtet ihr? Erinnert euch des Tages, da wir uns in dem Lager des Großemirs zerstreuten, um unsere Feinde zu bekriegen; damals war unsere Anzahl gering, unserer Mittel wenig und euer schwankendes Vertrauen des Zufalls Knecht; aber ich sprach zu euch: Fürchtet euch nicht, wir werden uns siegreich vor Mekka versammeln; jetzt ist das unbegreifliche Wunder geschehen und ihr zweifelt abermals?

A l i. Vertraue mir das heilige Panier, ich schwöre dir, Prophet! ich will es heute noch auf die Kaaba pflanzen.

O t h m a n n. Und ich begleite den Ali.

O m a r. Ich kann nicht Alis Nachtreter seyn, aber gib mir Thaten, ich will sie vollbringen.

M a h o m e d. Wohl, so gehorcht. Du, Tarrik, führe deine Krieger nach der Ostseite der Stadt. Zobair, ziehe mit dem Vortrab nach dem zweiten Thor. Omar und Saad führet drei Tausend der Tapfersten nach den Vorstädten, und um die zwölfte Stunde dringt alle zugleich in Mekka ein, laßt jedem, der sich unterwirft, Gnade wiederfahren, denn, beim Allah! ich will jede Grausamkeit, die ihr gegen besiegte Feinde verübt, blutig rächen, höret und gehorchet!

A l l e. Wir thun, wie du gebietest.

M a h o m e d. Ich begleite euch nicht, denn ich will nicht mit dem Schwerdt in der Hand die heilige Mekka betreten, mich soll nicht das Gewinsel der Sterbenden empfangen, friedlich will ich einziehen, so geziemet mirs; heute mögt ihr für mich arbeiten. Geht jetzt, Allah ist mit euch. Bleibe du noch bei mir, Ali.



(Tariq, Omar, Uthman, Saad and Zubayr exit.)

*Ali.* What do you want from me lord?

*Muhammad.* I will not hide it from you, Ali! that you are valuable to me above all, for you are bold because your strong soul commands it of you; you are brave out of braveness, but the others are so from the thirst for glory, that I recognized today and often before. Therefore from now on you shall be the nearest to my heart.

*Ali.* I have often wished for your favor, but I could never strive much for it.

*Muhammad.* I know it and know you, therefore I will entrust to you something else: Sufyan will yield to me today, this is a great step towards Mecca's possession.

*Ali.* Now that is more than we could have hoped.

*Muhammad.* Take care that the leaders spare the people of Mecca, I do not want innocent blood to stain the holy soil.

*Ali.* I will do it, lord!

(Ali exits.)

*Nahlid and the previous.*

*Nahlid.* Lord, let me find audience for a plea: do not send Halima to her father.

*Muhammad.* Your plea comes too late.

*Nahlid.* If you ever loved me, then take back your word, for that I will give my whole life to you.

*Muhammad.* You know, Nahlid! how reluctantly I refuse you anything, but it cannot happen, it is irrevocable.

*Nahlid.* Oh do not speak my death sentence with this word; save! save! Sufyan's daughter; if you knew how she only lives for you—but that you should never learn.

*Muhammad.* But hear, dear Nahlid! it can indeed not happen, resign yourself to necessity.

(Tarrik, Omar, Othmann, Saad und Zobair ab.)

A l i. Was willst du von mir Herr?

M a h o m e d. Ich will dirs nicht verbergen, Ali! daß du mir werth bist vor allen, denn du bist kühn, weil die starke Seele es dir gebietet; du bist tapfer aus Tapferkeit, die andern aber sind es aus Ruhmsucht, das hab ich heute und schon oft erkannt, darum sollst du meinem Herzen von nun an der nächste seyn.

A l i. Ich habe mir oft deine Gunst gewünscht, aber ich konnte nie sehr darnach trachten.

M a h o m e d. Ich weiß es und kenne dich, darum will ich dir noch etwas vertrauen: Sofian wird sich mir heute ergeben, dies ist ein großer Schritt zu Mekkas Besitz.

A l i. Nun das ist mehr als wir hoffen konnten.

M a h o m e d. Trage Sorge, daß die Führer das Volk von Mekka schonen, ich will nicht, daß unschuldiges Blut den heiligen Boden beflecke.

A l i. Ich will es thun Herr!

(Ali ab.)

### **Nahlid und die Vorigen.**

N a h l i d. Herr, laß mich die Erhörung einer Bitte finden, sende Halima nicht zu ihrem Vater.

M a h o m e d. Deine Bitte kommt zu spät.

N a h l i d. Wenn du mich je geliebt hast, so nimm dein Wort zurück, mein ganzes Leben will ich dir dafür schenken.

M a h o m e d. Du weißt Nahlid! wie ungern ich dir etwas verweigere, aber es kann nicht geschehen, es ist unwiderruflich.

N a h l i d. O sprich mein Todesurtheil nicht mit diesem Wort; rette! rette! Sofians Tochter; wann du wüßtest, wie sie nur für dich lebt, doch das solltest du nicht erfahren.

M a h o m e d. So höre doch, lieber Nahlid! es kann ja nicht geschehen, füge dich der Nothwendigkeit.

*Nahlid.* It should happen, you should not be able lordly to decide over her; should not be able to do everything that you want.

*Muhammad.* Bethink yourself, Nahlid, should I learn from you what I may do?

*Nahlid.* (Throwing himself down before him.) Forgive! but do not kill Halima through your cruel word.

*Muhammad.* I have already sent her to her father.

*Nahlid.* (Springing up.) It has happened? —Thus my pulse falters! Break, my heart! All love has parted from me, alone I stand at the edge of barren life. Night! benevolent night! gather me into your shadows, bury me in your depths into which no air and no life comes. And you, Muhammad! be glad! your unbreakable will has prevailed again.

*Muhammad.* Truly, you rave!

*Nahlid.* Yes, raving was my senseless love for you, so may my death also be raving. Here ends my servitude and your tyranny. Death, come! shatter the chains that fetter me to the most wanton of men.<sup>72</sup> (He runs himself through with his sword, Muhammad wants to prevent it, but Nahlid sinks dead to the earth.)

*Muhammad.* Oh Nahlid! my dear, dear Nahlid!

(He veils himself.)

*First chorus.*

Unholy act!  
That you, with drops  
Of poisonous pain,  
Mix the cup  
Of lordly delight.—  
Dark clouds  
In midday brightness!  
Wilting flower  
In the wreath of joy!  
Melancholy afflicts me,  
Thus I see leafless  
The blossom  
Of cheerful youth,

N a h l i d. Es soll geschehen, du sollst nicht herrisch über sie entscheiden dürfen; sollst nicht alles können, was du willst.

M a h o m e d. Besinne dich Nahlid, soll ich von dir erfahren, was ich darf?

N a h l i d. (Sich vor ihm niederwerfend.) Vergieb! aber tödte Halima nicht durch dein grausames Wort.

M a h o m e d. Ich habe sie schon zu ihrem Vater gesendet.

N a h l i d. (Aufspringend.) Es ist geschehen? — So stockt meine Pulse! Brich mein Herz! Alle Liebe hat sich von mir geschieden, einsam stehe ich am Rande des öden Lebens. Nacht! wohlthätige Nacht! nimm mich auf in deine Schatten, begrabe mich in deine Tiefen, dahin keine Luft und kein Leben kommt. Und du Mahomed! freue dich! dein unzerbrechlicher Wille hat wieder obgesiegt.

M a h o m e d. Wahrlich, du rasest!

N a h l i d. Ja Raserei war meine unsinnige Liebe zu dir, so sey mein Sterben auch Raserei. Hier endet meine Knechtschaft und deine Tirannei. Tod, komm! zerbrich die Ketten, die mich an den Uebermüthigsten der Menschen fesseln. (Er rennt sich in sein Schwerdt, Mahomed will es verhindern, aber Nahlid sinkt tod zur Erde.)

M a h o m e d. O Nahlid! mein theurer, theurer Nahlid!

(Er verhüllt sich.)

E r s t e s C h o r.

Unselige That!  
Die du mit Tropfen  
Giftiger Schmerzen  
Mischest den Becher  
Herrlicher Freuden.—  
Dunkele Wolke  
Im Mittagsglanze!  
Welkende Blume  
Im Kranze der Lust!  
Wehmuth befällt mich,  
Seh ich entblättert  
Also die Blüthe  
Fröhlicher Jugend,

Before the summer's  
Glow kissed it.

*Al-Abbas, the previous.*

*Abbas.* Hail, great prophet!

*Muhammad.* Ha! you, Al-Abbas? what tidings do you bring me?

*Abbas.* What occurred here? Is not Nahlid dead? Oh Allah! he bleeds.

*Muhammad.* Silence! oh say nothing to me of the unfortunate.

(Some of the retinue bear Nahlid away. Long pause.)

*Abbas.* Sad, wretched sight!

*Muhammad.* (To himself.) Oh Nahlid! What have you done to me?  
Forgive, Abbas! what did you want to say to me?

*Abbas.* I bring you Abu Sufyan's greeting; he will submit to you. But you know him, know how he is proud and stiff-necked, therefore do not treat him like someone conquered.

*Muhammad.* Return his greeting in my name, I will treat him as one of the first rank, and that he should know how I will honor him, I will issue immediately to my warriors the order that mercy shall befall all enemies that flee to Sufyan's palace. Announce to him this message, Abbas! I go to give the sign for the attack. Seek to keep the people of Mecca calm.

(All, except the chorus, exit.)

*First chorus.*

Finally the decision  
Appears near,  
Any height  
Is soon scaled;  
Any laurel  
Is soon won.—  
Shuddering trembles through  
My bones,  
Fearful heaviness

Ehe des Sommers  
Glut sie geküßt.

**Al-Abbas, die Vorigen.**

A b b a s. Heil dir, großer Prophet!

M a h o m e d. Ha! du, Al-Abbas? welche Kunde bringst du mir?

A b b a s. Was ist hier vorgefallen? Ist nicht Nahlid todt? O Allah! er blutet.

M a h o m e d. Schweige! o schweige mir von dem Unglückseligen.

(Einige von dem Gefolge tragen den Nahlid weg. Lange Pause.)

A b b a s. Trauriger, jammervoller Anblick!

M a h o m e d. (Für sich.) O Nahlid! Was hast du mir gethan. Vergib. Abbas! was wolltest du mir sagen?

A b b a s. Ich bringe dir Abu-Sofians Gruß; er wird sich dir unterwerfen. Aber du kennst ihn, weißt, wie er stolz und hartnäckig ist, darum begegne ihm nicht wie einem Ueberwundnen.

M a h o m e d. Erwiedere seinen Gruß in meinem Namen, ich will ihm begegnen als der Ersten einem, und daß er erkenne, wie ich ihn ehren will, ertheile ich sogleich meinen Kriegern den Befehl, daß Gnade allen Feinden, die sich in Sofians Pallast flüchten, wiederfahren soll. Verkündige ihm diese Botschaft, Abbas! Ich gehe das Zeichen zum Angriff zu geben. Suche das Volk von Mekka in Ruhe zu erhalten.

(Alle, bis auf das Chor, ab.)

E r s t e s C h o r.

Endlich erscheint  
Nah die Entscheidung,  
Bald ist erklimmet  
Jegliche Höhe;  
Bald ist ersieget  
Jeglicher Lorbeer.—  
Schauer durchzuckt mir  
Meine Gebeine,  
Aengstliche Schwere

Presses on my breast,  
 I see the goal now  
 Of my endeavors,  
 Brave striving's  
 End before me.—  
 Any ending  
 Frightens the soul,  
 Shoos the mind's  
 Wrestling and striving  
 Backward. The bounds  
 Of all things  
 There become visible.  
 Finitude speaks  
 Woe to the heart,  
 Lames life's  
 Brave desire.

*Sufyan, Halima, Al-Abbas, the previous.*

*Halima.* Allah be praised, who transformed your heart, my father! for I could not have borne it, to find you again as the persecutor of the prophet.

*Abbas.* When Muhammad comes, do not forget, Abu Sufyan! that he is the conqueror of Arabia.

*Sufyan.* I will bear that very much in mind.

*First chorus.*

Maiden! you will hear  
 The tidings,  
 That will forever  
 Bleach your cheeks,  
 Sink your gaze,  
 Tarnish the world.

*Halima.* Oh Nahlid! Unhappy intuition of my heart! Speak, you men! what has happened?

*Muhammad, warlike retinue, the previous.*

Drückt mir den Busen,  
Seh' ich das Ziel nun  
Meines Beginns,  
Muthigen Strebens  
Ende vor mir.—  
Jegliches Ende  
Schrecket die Seele,  
Scheucht des Gedankens  
Ringens und Streben  
Rückwärts. Die Schranken  
Aller der Dinge  
Werden da sichtbar.  
Endlichkeit redet  
Wehmuth zum Herzen,  
Lähmet das Leben  
Muthiger Lust.

**Sofian, Halima, Al-Abbas, die Vorigen.**

H a l i m a. Allah sey gepriesen, der euer Herz verwandelt, mein Vater!  
denn ich hätte es nicht ertragen können, euch wieder als den Ver-  
folger des Propheten zu finden.

A b b a s. Wenn Mahomed kommt, so vergeßt nicht, Abu-Sofian! daß  
er der Ueberwinder Arabiens ist.

S o f i a n. Ich werde sehr daran erinnert.

E r s t e s C h o r.

Mädchen! vernehmen  
Wirst du die Kunde,  
Die dir auf immer  
Bleichet die Wange,  
Senket die Blicke,  
Trübet die Welt.

H a l i m a. O Nahlid! Unglückselige Ahndung meines Herzens! Redet,  
ihr Männer! was ist geschehen?

**Mahomed, kriegerisches Gefolge, die Vorigen.**



(Long pause.)

*Sufyan.* Luck has decided between you and me, Muhammad!

*Muhammad.* Luck?

*Abbas.* (To Sufyan.) Consider—

*Sufyan.* I greet you as the prophet of the only true God, as Arabia's ruler, (kneeling) and so subject myself to you.

*Muhammad.* (Raising him up.) Rise, Sufyan! at my side is a place worthier of you, may the long enmity that divided us pass away into an eternal death-sleep.

*Sufyan.* Recognize that the wish of my heart led me to you, and not slavish humility nor the compulsion of ungenerous times. Take my daughter, I give her to you, be her lord and commander.

*Muhammad.* Valued, very valued is your friendship to me, Sufyan! but I honor your daughter too much to be her commander, and Nahlid's love is too holy to me than that I could possess her. —Halima! Nahlid died for you. —Go, Halima! live in remembrance of his love.

*Halima.* Then farewell, sweet hopes! beautiful, friendly life; smiling future, farewell! farewell! (exits.)

(One hears the noise of weapons behind the scenes.)

*Muhammad.* Take my hand, Sufyan! as a sign of my friendship.

*Sufyan.* Here is mine, may nothing separate our union.

*Omar, the previous.*

*Omar.* Hail and victory! Mecca is ours, the Quraysh still defend one of the suburbs.

*Muhammad.* Have prisoners already fallen into your hands?

*Omar.* More than two hundred. They are from among your grimmest enemies. If my word is valuable to you, great prophet! then let the guiltiest of them be beheaded today.

(Lange Pause.)

S o f i a n. Das Glück hat zwischen dir und mir entschieden, Mahomed!

M a h o m e d. Das Glück?

A b b a s. (Zu Sofian.) Bedenkt—

S o f i a n. Ich begrüße dich als den Propheten des einzigen wahren Gottes, als Arabiens Beherrscher, (knieend) und so unterwerfe ich mich dir.

M a h o m e d. (Ihn aufhebend.) Steh auf, Sofian! mir zur Seite ist ein Platz deiner würdiger, die lange Feindschaft, die uns entzweite, entschlummere zum ewigen Todesschlaf.

S o f i a n. Erkenne, daß mich der Wunsch meines Herzens zu dir führt, und nicht knechtische Demuth noch der Zwang ungünstiger Zeiten. Nimm meine Tochter, ich schenke sie dir, sey ihr Herr und Gebieter.

M a h o m e d. Werth, sehr werth ist mir deine Freundschaft, Sofian! aber ich ehre deine Tochter zu sehr, um ihr Gebieter zu seyn, und Nahlids Liebe ist mir zu heilig, als daß ich sie besitzen könnte. —Halima! Nahlid starb für dich. —Geh, Halima! lebe dem Andenken seiner Liebe.

H a l i m a. So lebt wohl denn, süße Hoffnungen! schönes, freundliches Leben; lächelnde Zukunft, lebt wohl! lebt wohl! (ab.)

(Man hört Waffengeräusch hinter der Scene.)

M a h o m e d. Nimm meine Hand, Sofian! zum Zeichen meiner Freundschaft.

S o f i a n. Hier ist die meinige, nichts trenne unsern Bund.

### Omar, die Vorigen.

O m a r. Heil und Sieg! Mekka ist unser, die Koreschiten vertheidigen noch eine der Vorstädte.

M a h o m e d. Sind schon Gefangne in eure Hände gefallen?

O m a r. Mehr denn zwei hundert. Es sind von deinen grimmigsten Feinden. Wenn mein Wort dir werth ist, großer Prophet! so lasse die Schuldigsten von ihnen noch heute enthaupten.

*Muhammad.* Forgive, Omar! today I can only speak words of mercy.

(The gate opens,<sup>73</sup> there step out: Abu Talib, Ali, Uthman, Zubayr, Saad, Tariq and the second chorus, citizens of Mecca, armed men; finally Khalid is brought out in chains.)

*Abu Talib.* I greet you as Mecca's and Arabia's ruler. Be welcome! you will plant the palm of peace in our holy soil.

*Muhammad.* Yes, that I will, my noble uncle! the palm shall bloom under the protection of victory and power.

*Ali.* The holy Kaaba has fallen into my hands, your victory banner waves on its pinnacle.

*Muhammad.* I thank you, my doughty Ali! I thank you all, my friends!

*All.* Hail to you, you prophet of God! Be our lord, our king!

*Ali.* Here stands Khalid, the poisonous villain! I beg you, speak his death sentence!

*Many voices.* He dies! He dies!

*Muhammad.* Not thus, my friends! unfetter him!

(Saad loosens his chains.)

*Khalid.* Am I really free, Muhammad?

*Muhammad.* Yes, you are.

*Khalid.* Now, then I swear to you<sup>74</sup> by Al-'Uzzá, I renounce enmity with you, Muhammad! but I may not be your subject. If it pleases you, then let me move to Persia.

*Muhammad.* You may move there.

*Ali.* What? thus unpunished the villain should escape us! Grant me, prophet! that I may fight him to the death, for his life is to me a disgrace.

*Muhammad.* If you want to be my friend, Ali! then do not fight with his kind.

*Khalid.* Farewell, then, my countryfolk!

M a h o m e d. Verzeih, Omar! ich kann heute nur Worte der Gnade reden.

(Das Thor öffnet sich, es treten heraus: Abu-Taleb, Ali, Othmann, Zobair, Saad, Tarrik und das zweite Chor, Bürger von Mekka, Bewaffnete, zuletzt wird Kaled in Ketten herbeigeführt.)

A b u - T a l e b. Ich begrüße dich als Mekkas und Arabiens Beherrscher. Sey mir willkommen! du wirst die Friedenspalme in unsern heiligen Boden pflanzen.

M a h o m e d. Ja, das werde ich, mein edler Oheim! die Palme soll blühen unter dem Schutze des Siegs und der Kraft.

A l i. Die heilige Kaaba ist in meine Hände gefallen, dein Siegespanier weht auf ihrem Gipfel.

M a h o m e d. Ich danke dir, mein tapferer Ali! Ich danke euch allen, meine Freunde!

A l l e. Heil dir, du Prophet Gottes! Sey unser Herr, unser König!

A l i. Hier steht Kaled, der giftige Bösewicht! ich bitte dich, sprich sein Todesurtheil!

V i e l e S t i m m e n. Er sterbe! er sterbe!

M a h o m e d. Nicht also, meine Freunde! entfesselt ihn!

(Saad löst ihm die Ketten.)

K a l e d. Bin ich wirklich frei, Mahomed?

M a h o m e d. Ja, du bists.

K a l e d. Nun, so schwöre ich dir bei Al-Ozza, ich entsage der Feindschaft mit dir, Mahomed! aber dein Unterthan mag ich nicht seyn. Wenn es dir gefällt, so laß mich nach Persien ziehen.

M a h o m e d. Du magst hinziehen.

A l i. Wie? so ungestraft soll uns der Bösewicht entkommen! Vergönne mir, Prophet! daß ich auf Tod und Leben mit ihm kämpfe, denn sein Leben ist mir eine Schmach.

M a h o m e d. Wenn du mein Freund seyn willst, Ali! so kämpfe nicht mit seines Gleichen.

K a l e d. Lebt wohl denn, meine Landsleute!

(exits)

*Muhammad.* Treat all prisoners like this Khalid.

*Many voices.* Hail! Hail! to you, Muhammad!

*Second chorus.*

Splendidly in a wreath  
 The laurels arrange themselves,  
 That you won,  
 Never withering  
 They bloom around you;  
 For heavenly coolness  
 Wafts around them,  
 For ambrosial dew  
 Revives them!

*First chorus.*

In destiny you read divine writing,  
 To mortals proclaimed tidings of life;  
 You see what will be, what is, and what has been,  
 And presagingly saw this great hour.

*Abu Talib.* Let us move into the city, my nephew! The people await their ruler with impatience.

*Muhammad.* Oh Allah! be praised, that you led us here with your power, that you exalt your prophet before the peoples of earth. You said to destiny: Serve him! and to victory: Step beside him! —You equipped Islam with the marrow of the lion, with the sword of the cherubim, and spoke to it: Go! wander victoriously through the earth from the farthest west, where the sun goes down in an ocean of darkness, to the peoples of the East, over whose heads the sun stands vertically; for you are the conqueror, of whom it is written: He will subjugate sunrise and sunset.

(ab)

M a h o m e d. Begegnet allen Gefangenen, wie diesem Kaled.

V i e l e S t i m m e n. Heil! Heil! dir, Mahomed!

Z w e i t e s C h o r.

Herrlich zum Kranze  
Reih'n sich die Lorbeern,  
Die du ersieget,  
Nimmer verwelklich  
Blühn sie um dich;  
Denn sie umduftet  
Himmlische Kühle,  
Denn sie erquicket  
Ambrosischer Thau!

E r s t e s C h o r.

Im Schicksal hast du Gottesschrift gelesen,  
Dem Sterblichen verkündet Lebenskunde;  
Du siehst, was wird, was ist, und was gewesen,  
Und ahndend sahst du diese große Stunde.

A b u - T a l e b. Laß uns in die Stadt ziehen, mein Neffe! Das Volk erwartet seinen Beherrscher mit Ungeduld.

M a h o m e d. O Allah! sey gepriesen, daß du uns bis hieher geleitet hast mit deiner Kraft, daß du deinen Propheten verherrlichst vor den Völkern der Erde, du hast zu dem Schicksal gesagt: Diene ihm! und zu dem Sieg: Tritt zu seiner Seite! —Du hast den Islam ausgerüstet mit dem Mark des Löwen, mit dem Schwerdte der Cherubim, und zu ihm gesprochen: Geh! durchwandle siegreich die Erde vom äußersten Westen, wo die Sonne untergeht in einem Meer von Dunkelheit, bis zu den Völkern des Osten, über deren Häuptern die Sonne senkrecht steht; denn du bist der Ueberwinder, von dem geschrieben ist: Er wird sich den Aufgang unterwerfen und den Niedergang.



# Notes

## Introduction

1. On expectations for eighteenth and nineteenth-century women's writing, see Gabriele Brandstetter, "Die Welt mit lachendem Mut umwälzen.'—Frauen im Umkreis der Heidelberger Romantik," in *Heidelberg im säkularen Umbruch. Traditionsbewußtsein und Kulturpolitik um 1800*, ed. Friedrich Strach (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1987), 282–300; Susan Cocalis, "Der Vormund will Vormund sein: Zur Problematik der weiblichen Unmündigkeit," in *Gestaltet und Gestaltend: Frauen in der deutschen Literatur*, ed. Marianne Burkhard, *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur neueren Germanistik* 10 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1980): 33–55; Dagmar von Hoff, "Geschlecht und Zensur. Legenden und Mythen im Werk Karoline von Günderrodes," *Germanica* 7 (2000): 5–20.
2. Biographies include: Dagmar von Gersdorff, "*Die Erde ist mir Heimat nicht geworden.*" *Das Leben der Karoline von Günderrode* (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 2006); Doris Hopp, *Karoline von Günderrode* (Frankfurt: Freies Deutsches Hochstift, Frankfurter Goethe-Museum, 2006); Margarete Lazarowicz, *Karoline von Günderrode. Porträt einer Fremden* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1986). A selection of works inspired by Günderrode are listed in the further reading section at the end of this introduction.
3. Christa Bürger, "Aber eine Sehnsucht war in mir, die ihren Gegenstand nicht kannte. . . ." Ein Versuch über Karoline von



- Günderrode," *Metis* no. 2 (1995): 24–43; Helga Dormann, "Die Karoline von Günderrode-Forschung 1945–1995. Ein Bericht," *Athenaeum* 6 (1996): 227–48; Karl Foldenauer, "Karoline von Günderrode (1780–1806)," in *Kostbarkeiten. Essays und Laudationes zur Literatur des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Beatrice Steiner (Waldkirch: Waldkircher Verlagsgesellschaft, 1981), 81–111.
4. Goethe, letter to Eichstädt, April 28, 1804, cited in Gersdorff, *Erde mir Heimat*, 141.
  5. Anonymous review, *Der Freimüthige oder Ernst und Scherz*, May 15, 1804, in Karoline von Günderrode, *Sämtliche Werke und ausgewählte Studien. Historisch-Kritische Ausgabe*, ed. Walther Morgenthaler (Basel and Frankfurt: Stroemfeld/Roter Stern, 1990–1991), 3: 64–66.
  6. Christian Nees von Esenbeck, review, *Jenaische Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*, July 9, 1804, in Günderrode, *Sämtliche Werke* 3: 64–66.
  7. Anonymous review, *Taschenbuch für das Jahr 1806*, in Günderrode, *Sämtliche Werke* 3: 112.
  8. Review by R. L., *Der Freimüthige oder Ernst und Scherz*, May 4, 1805, in Günderrode, *Sämtliche Werke* 3: 110–11.
  9. Christian Nees von Esenbeck, review, *Jenaische Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*, June 6, 1804, in Günderrode, *Sämtliche Werke* 3: 112–14.
  10. Lisette Nees von Esenbeck, letter to Susanne von Heyden, August, 1806, in "Ich sende Dir ein zärtliches Pfand." *Die Briefe der Karoline von Günderrode*, ed. Birgit Wießenborn (Frankfurt and Leipzig: Insel, 1992), 350.
  11. Bettina von Arnim, "Report on Günderrode's Suicide (1808/1839)," in *Bitter Healing: German Women Writers from 1700 to 1830. An Anthology*, ed. Jeannine Blackwell and Susanne Zantop (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 455–72.
  12. Bettina von Arnim, *Correspondence of Fräulein Günderrode and Bettine von Arnim*, trans. Margaret Fuller and Minna Wesselhoeft (Boston: T. O. H. P. Burnham, 1861).
  13. Some examples, in chronological order of publication: Ludwig Geiger, "Karoline von Günderrode," in *Dichter und Frauen. Vorträge und Abhandlungen* (Berlin: E. Paetel, 1896), 151–78; Oswald Floeck, "G. F. Creuzer und Karoline von Günderrode," *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift* 3, no. 8 (1911): 452–61; Margarete Susman, "Karoline von Günderrode," in *Frauen der Romantik* (Frankfurt: Insel, 1996 [1929]), 135–59; Vilma Lober, "Karoline von Günderrode," in *Die*

- Frauen der Romantik im Urteil ihrer Zeit* (Diss., Friedrich-Alexander-Universität, Erlangen, 1947), 23–37; Olivier Apert, Preface in *Rouge vif: poésies complètes* (Paris : la Différence, 1992), 7–19; Rüdiger Görner, “Das ‘heimliche Ächzen des gemißhandelten Herzens . . .’ Karoline von Günderrodes Grenzgang,” in *Grenzgänger. Dichter und Denker im Dazwischen* (Tübingen: Klöpfer und Meyer, 1996), 73–85.
14. For example, R. Dittenberger, “Karoline von Günderode,” *Westermanns illustrierte Deutsche Monatshefte für das gesamte geistige Leben der Gegenwart* 77 (December 1895): 352–57; Geiger, “Karoline von Günderode”; Geiger, introduction to *Karoline von Günderode und ihre Freunde* (Frankfurt: Insel, 2006 [1895]), 151–78; Leopold Hirschberg, “Das Märchen von der schönen Günderode,” *Gesammelte Werke der Karoline von Günderode*, ed. Leopold Hirschberg (Berlin: Verlag Goldschmidt-Gabrielli, 1920–1922; reprint Bern: Herbert Lang, 1970), vol. 1, ix–xxii; Ludwig von Pigenot, ed., “Karoline von Günderode. Dichtungen,” *Zeitschrift für Bücherfreund* 14 (January 1, 1922): 226; Karl Preisendanz, ed., introduction to *Die Liebe der Günderode. Friedrich Creuzers Briefe an Caroline von Günderode* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1975 [1912]), i–xix; Friedrich Raßmann, “Tian,” in *Mimigardia. Poetisches Taschenbuch für 1810* (Münster: Waldeck, 1810); Karl Schwartz, “Karoline von Günderode,” *Allgemeine Enzyklopädie der Wissenschaften und Künste* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1878, reprint Graz: Akademische Druck und Verlagsanstalt, 1977), Section I, part 97, 167–231.
  15. In chronological order: F. Götz, ed., *Karoline von Günderode. Gesammelte Dichtungen* (Mannheim: Verlagshandlung von F. Götz, 1857); Max Büsing, ed., *Die Reihenfolge der Gedichte Karolinens von Günderode. Mit einem Anhang* (Berlin: E. Ebering, 1903); Erich Regen, *Die Dramen Karolinens von Günderode* (Berlin: E. Ebering, 1910); Leopold Hirschberg, ed., *Gesammelte Werke der Karoline von Günderode* (Berlin: Verlag Goldschmidt-Gabrielli, 1920–1922, reprint Bern: Herbert Lang, 1970); Elisabeth Salomon, ed., *Karoline von Günderode. Gesammelte Dichtungen* (Munich: Drei Masken Verlag, 1923).
  16. In chronological order: Geiger, *Karoline von Günderode und ihre Freunde*; Karl Groos, ed., *Friedrich Creuzer und Karoline von Günderode. Mitteilung über deren Verhältnis* (Heidelberg: K. Groos, 1895); Erwin Rohde, ed., *Friedrich Creuzer und Karoline von Günderode*.

- Briefe und Dichtungen* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1896); Preisendanz, *Die Liebe der Günderröde*; Heinz Amelung, ed., *Grundgescheuten Antiquarius* (1921).
17. Geiger, introduction, 154; Schwartz, "Karoline von Günderröde," 221, 227–28.
  18. Geiger, introduction, 158; see also 154–55.
  19. Schwartz, "Karoline von Günderröde," 221.
  20. Otto Heuschele, *Karoline von Günderröde: Trost in der Dichtung* (Halle: Werkstätten der Stadt, 1932); Margarete Mattheis, *Günderröde: Gestalt, Leben und Wirkung* (Diss., Marburg: 1934); Richard Wilhelm, *Die Günderröde. Dichtung und Schicksal. Mit zeitgenössischen Bildern und Briefproben* (Frankfurt: Identitäts-Verlag, 1938).
  21. Max Preitz, "Karoline von Günderröde in ihrer Umwelt. I. Briefe von Lisette und Christian Gottfried Nees von Esenbeck, Karoline von Günderröde, Friedrich Creuzer, Clemens Brentano und Susanne von Heyden," *Jahrbuch des Freien Deutschen Hochstifts* (1962): 208–306; Preitz, "Karoline von Günderröde in ihrer Umwelt. II. Karoline von Günderrödes Briefwechsel mit Friedrich Karl und Gunda von Savigny," *Jahrbuch des Freien Deutschen Hochstifts* (1964): 158–235.
  22. Doris Hopp and Max Preitz, "Karoline von Günderröde in ihrer Umwelt III. Karoline von Günderröde's 'Studienbuch,'" in *Jahrbuch des Freien Deutschen Hochstifts* (1975): 223–323.
  23. Waltraud Howeg, *Karoline von Günderröde und Hölderlin* (Diss., Halle: 1953); Annelore Naumann, *Caroline von Günderröde* (Diss., Berlin: 1957).
  24. Christa Wolf, ed., *Der Schatten eines Traumes. Gedichte, Prosa, Briefe, Zeugnisse von Zeitgenossen* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1997 [1979]).
  25. Christa Wolf, "Karoline von Günderröde—ein Entwurf," in *Schatten eines Traumes*, 58.
  26. As Dormann notes in "Karoline von Günderröde-Forschung," 234.
  27. As part of increased interest in women's writing, often by feminist scholars, a number of anthologies and collections of essays on German women writers appeared in the 1980s and early 1990s. These include: Barbara Becker-Cantarino, *Der lange Weg zur Mündigkeit: Frauen und Literatur in Deutschland von 1500 bis 1800* (München: dtv, 1989); Gisela Brinkler-Gabler, ed., *Deutsche Literatur von Frauen*, vol. 2, 19. und 20. Jahrhundert (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1988); Elisabeth Friedrichs, *Die deutschsprachigen Schriftstellerinnen des 18.*

- und 19. Jahrhunderts: *Ein Lexikon* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1981); Helga Gallas and Magdalene Heuser, eds., *Untersuchungen zum Roman von Frauen um 1800* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1990); Hildgund Gnüg and Renate Möhrmann, *Frauen Literatur Geschichte: Schreibende Frauen vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1985); Katherine Goodman and Edith Waldstein, eds., *In the Shadow of Olympus: German Women Writers Around 1800* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992); Susanne Kord, *Ein Blick hinter die Kulissen. Deutschsprachigere Dramatikerinnen im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1992); Helga Meise, *Die Unschuld und die Schrift: Deutsche Frauenromane im 18. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Guttandin and Hoppe, 1983); Annagret Pelz, Marianne Schuller, Inge Stephan, Sigrid Weigel, and Kerstin Wilhelms, eds., *Frauen—Literatur—Politik* (Hamburg: Argument, 1988); Lydia Schieth, *Die Entwicklung des deutschen Frauenromans im ausgehenden 18. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt: Lang, 1987); Inge Stephan and Sigrid Weigel, eds., *Die Marseillaise der Weiber: Frauen, die Französische Revolution und ihre Rezeption* (Hamburg: Argument, 1989); Karin A. Wurst, ed. *Frauen und Drama im achtzehnten Jahrhundert* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1991).
28. Jeannine Blackwell and Susanne Zantop, eds., *Bitter Healing: German Women Writers. From 1700 to 1830. An Anthology* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990); Brandstetter, "Welt mit lachendem Mut"; Dagmar von Hoff, "Dramatisch Weiblichkeitsmuster zur Zeit der Französischen Revolution: Dramen von deutschsprachigen Autorinnen um 1800," in *Die Marseillaise der Weiber: Frauen, die Französische Revolution und ihre Rezeption*, ed. Inge Stephan and Sigrid Weigel (Hamburg: Argument, 1989), 74–88; Hoff, *Dramen des Weiblichen. Deutsche Dramatikerinnen um 1800* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1989); Hoff, "Revolutionsdramen von deutschen Autorinnen um 1800," *Runa* 11–12 (1989): 140.
29. Sabine Eickenrodt, "Die Vergangenheit war mir dahin! Karoline von Günderrodes apokalyptische Vision," in *Geschriebenes Leben: Autobiographik von Frauen*, ed. Michaela Holdenried (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1995), 185–97; Susanne Kord, "Über die Abhängigkeit des Weibes: Günderrode, Droste-Hülffhoff," in *Ein Blick hinter die Kulissen. Deutschsprachigere Dramatikerinnen im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1992), 109–21; Lucia Maria Licher, "'Der Völker Schicksal ruht in meinen Busen.' Karoline von Günderrode als

- Dichterin der Revolution,” in *Der Menschheit Hälfte blieb noch ohne Recht.* *Frauen und die französische Revolution*, ed. Helge Brandes (Weisbaden: Deutscher Universitäts-Verlag, 1991), 113–32; Karin Obermeier, “‘Ach diese Rolle wird mir allzu schwer’: Gender and Cultural Identity in Karoline von Günderrode’s Drama ‘Udohla,’” in *Thalia’s Daughters: German Women Dramatists from the Eighteenth Century to the Present*, ed. Susan Cocalis and Ferrel Rose, with Karin Obermeier (Tübingen: Francke, 1996), 99–114; Birgit Wägenbaur, “. . . habe getaumelt in den Räumen des Aethers.’ Karoline von Günderrode’s ästhetische Identität,” in *Frauen: MitSprechen. MitSchreiben. Beiträge zur literatur- und sprachwissenschaftlichen Frauenforschung*, ed. Marianne Henn and Britta Hufeisen (Stuttgart: Heinz, 1997), 211.
30. Barbara Becker-Cantarino, “Karoline von Günderrode: Dichtung—Mythologie—Geschlecht,” in *Schriftstellerinnen der Romantik: Epoche, Werke, Wirkung* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2000), 199–225; Stephanie Mathilde Hilger, “Staging Islam: Karoline von Günderrode’s *Mahomed, der Prophet von Mekka*,” in *Women Write Back: Strategies of Response and the Dynamics of European Literary Culture, 1790–1805* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2009), 91–118; Carola Hilmes, “. . . Wie eine Religion zu zweit.’ Literarische Reflexionen romantischer Liebe bei Karoline von Günderrode und Lou Andreas-Salome,” in *Skandalgeschichten: Aspekte einer Frauenliteraturgeschichte* (Königstein and Taunus: Ulrike Helmer Verlag, 2004), 61–79; Elizabeth Krimmer, “Karoline von Günderrode’s *Mora* and *Darthula According to Ossian*,” in *In the Company of Men: Cross-Dressed Women Around 1800* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004), 130–39; Kari Lokke, “Beyond Impossibility. Bettine von Arnim’s *Die Günderode*, ‘an ideal relation realized,’” in *Tracing Women’s Romanticism: Gender, History, and Transcendence* (London, New York: Routledge, 2004), 84–116; Wendy Nielsen, “The Just Warrior in Kleist and Günderrode,” in *Women Warriors in Romantic Drama* (Lanham, MD: University of Delaware Press, 2013).
31. Karl Heinz Bohrer, “Identität als Selbstverlust. Zum romantischen Subjektbegriff,” *Merkur* 38, no. 4 (1984): 367–79; Elke Frederiksen, “Die Frau als Autorin zur Zeit der romantik-weiblichen literarischen Tradition,” in *Gestaltet und Gestaltend: Frauen in der deutschen Literatur*, ed. Marianne Burkhard, *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur neueren Germanistik* 10 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1980): 83–108; Lorely

- French, "Meine beiden Ichs': Confrontations with Language and Self in Letters by Early Nineteenth-Century Women," *Women in German Yearbook* 5 (1989): 73–89; Sara Friedrichsmeyer, "The Subversive Androgyne," in *Women in German Yearbook* 3, ed. Marianne Burkhard and Edith Waldstein (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987), 63–75; Helene M. Kastinger Riley, "Zwischen den Welten. Ambivalenz und Existentialproblematik im Werk Caroline von Günderrodes," in *Die weiblich Muse: Sechs Essays über künstlerisch schaffende Frauen der Goethezeit* (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1986), 91–119; Werner Kohlschmidt, "Ästhetische Existenz und Leidenschaft: Mythos und Wirklichkeit der Karoline von Günderrode," in *Selbständigkeit und Hingabe: Frauen der Romantik*, ed. Wolfgang Böhme (Karlsruhe: W. Böhme, 1980), 9–21; Uta Treder, "Karoline von Günderrode—Gedichte sind Balsam auf unfüllbares Leben," *Studi Dell'Istituto-Linguistico* 3 (1980): 35–59.
32. Barbara Becker-Cantarino, "Liebestod: Goethe 'Der Gott und die Bajadere' und Günderrode 'Die Malabarischen Witwen,'" in *Emotionen in der Romantik*, ed. Antje Arnold (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 21–31; Véronique Dallet-Mann, "Nur das Wilde, Große, Glänzende gefällt mir.: l'orient de Karoline von Günderrode," in *L'Orient dans la culture allemande aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles: actes du colloque organisé par le Centre d'études germaniques et scandinaves (LIRA) de l'Université Nancy (9 et 10 décembre 2004)*, ed. Sylvie Grimm-Hamen and Philippe Alexandre, 61–72 (Nancy: Presses universitaires de Nancy, 2007); Dorothy M. Figueira, "The Dynamics of Exoticism: Herder's Epigram and Günderrode's Epitaph," in *The Exotic: A Decadent Quest* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 21–28; Sabine Gölz, "Günderrode Mines Novalis," in *"The Spirit of Poesy": Essays on Jewish and German Literature and Thought in Honor of Géza von Molnár*, ed. Richard Block and Peter Fenves (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2000), 89–130; Marjanne E. Goozé, "The Seduction of Don Juan: Karoline von Günderrode's Romantic Rendering of a Classic Story," in *The Enlightenment and Its Legacy: Studies in German Literature in Honor of Helga Slessarev*, ed. Sara Friedrichsmeyer and Barbara Becker-Cantarino (Bonn: Bouvier, 1991), 117–129; Patricia Anne Simpson, "The Essential Duel: Karoline von Günderrode on the Margins of War," in *The Erotics of War in German Romanticism* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2006), 104–27.

33. Becker-Cantarino, "Liebestod"; Karen F. Daubert, "Karoline von Günderrode's 'Der Gefangene und der Sänger': New Voices in Romanticism's Desire for Cultural Transcendence," *New German Review* 8 (1992): 1–17; Gölz, "Günderrode Mines Novalis"; Goozé, "The Seduction of Don Juan"; Joachim Heimerl, "Dem Tode verfallen: Die Ballade 'Piedro' im Kontext des literarischen Werks der Karoline von Günderrode," *Wirkendes Wort* 53, no. 3 (2003): 401–16.
34. Christine Battersby, "Stages on Kant's Way: Aesthetics, Morality, and the Gendered Sublime," in *Feminism and Tradition in Aesthetics*, ed. Peggy Zeglin Brand and Carolyn Korsmeyer (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995); Alice Kuzniar, "Labor Pains: Romantic Theories of Creativity and Gender," in *The Spirit of Poesy: Essays on Jewish and German Literature and Thought in Honor of Géza von Molnár*, ed. Richard Block and Peter Fenves (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2000), 74–88; Kari Lokke, "Poetry as Self-Consumption: Women Writers and Their Audiences in British and German Romanticism," in *Romantic Poetry*, vol. 7, ed. Angela Esterhammer (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2002), 91–111; Annette Simonis, "'Das verschleierte Bild': Mythopoetik und Geschlechterrollen bei Karoline von Günderrode," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft* 74, no. 2 (2000): 254–78.
35. Dallet-Mann, "'Nur das Wilde'"; Figueira, "Dynamics of Exoticism"; K. F. Hilliard, "Orient und Mythos: Karoline von Günderrode," in *Frauen: MitSprechen. MitSchreiben. Beiträge zur literatur- und sprachwissenschaftlichen Frauenforschung*, ed. Marianne Henn and Britta Hufeisen (Stuttgart: Heinz, 1997), 244–55.
36. Christine Battersby, *The Sublime, Terror, and Human Difference* (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2007), 120–22; Ruth Christmann, *Zwischen Identitätsgewinn und Bewußtseinsverlust. Das philosophisch-literarische Werk der Karoline von Günderrode (1780–1806)* (Frankfurt: Lang, 2005); Helga Dormann, *Die Kunst des inneren Sinns. Mythisierung der inneren und äusseren Natur im Werk Karoline von Günderrodes* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2004); Lucia Maria Licher, "'Du mußt Dich in eine entferntere Empfindung versetzen.' Strategien interkultureller Annäherung im Werk Karoline von Günderrodes (1780–1806)," in *"Der weibliche multi-kulturelle Blick" Ergebnisse eines Symposiums*, ed. Hannelore Scholz

- and Brita Baume et al. (Berlin: Trafo Verlag, 1995), 21–36; Licher, “A Sceptical Mohammedan: Aesthetics as a Theory of Life’s Practice in the Writings of Karoline von Günderrode,” *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century: Transactions of the Ninth International Congress on the Enlightenment* 346:3 (1997): 1450–52; Licher, “Der Völker Schicksal”; Silke Lipinski, “Udohla—Plattform für Karoline von Günderrodes philosophische Gedanken,” *New German Review* 24, no. 1 (2011): 113–22; Steven D. Martinson, “. . . aus dem Schiffbruch des irdischen Lebens’: The Literature of Karoline von Günderrode and Early German Romantic and Idealist Philosophy,” *German Studies Review* 28, no. 2 (2005): 303–26.
37. Christmann, *Zwischen Identitätsgewinn und Bewußtseinsverlust*; Dormann, *Kunst des inneren Sinns*; Lucia Maria Licher, *Mein Leben in einer bleibenden Form aussprechen. Umrisse einer Ästhetik im Werk Karoline von Günderrodes (1780–1806)* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1996); Licher, “Siehe! Glaube! Thue!” *Die poetische Konfession der Karoline von Günderrode (1780–1806)* (Oldenburg: Bis, 1998). See also Wolfgang Westphal, *Karoline von Günderrode und “Naturdenken um 1800”* (Essen: Verlag Die Blaue Eule, 1993).
38. Gersdorff, *Erde ist mir Heimat*; Hopp, *Karoline von Günderrode*.
39. Becker-Cantarino, “Dichtung—Mythologie—Geschlecht,” 225; Becker-Cantarino, “The ‘New Mythology’: Myth and Death in Karoline von Günderrode’s Literary Work,” in *Women and Death 3: Women’s Representations of Death in German Culture since 1500*, ed. Clare Bielby and Anna Richards (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2010), 51, 52; Bürger, “Aber eine Sehnsuch,” 42; Goozé, “Seduction of Don Juan,” 120.
40. Barbara Becker-Cantarino and Jeanette Clausen, “‘Gender Censorship’: On Literary Production in German Romanticism,” *Women in German Yearbook: Feminist Studies and German Culture* II (1995): 86, 82. See also Becker-Cantarino “Geschlecht und Kanonbildung am Beispiel der ‘Autorinnen der Romantik,’” in *Autorinnen der Frauenforschung für die Literaturgeschichtsschreibung und Literaturdokumentation*, vol. 3, *Autorinnen in der Literaturgeschichte. Konsequenzen der Frauenforschung für die Literaturgeschichtsschreibung und Literaturdokumentation*, ed. Christiane Caemmerer, Walter Delabar, and Marion Schulz (Osnabrück: Zeller Verlag, 1999), 19f.
41. Becker-Cantarino, “Geschlecht und Kanonbildung”; Becker-Cantarino and Clausen, “Gender Censorship”: 8–97; Hoff, “Dramatisch



- Weiblichkeitsmuster"; Hoff, "Geschlecht und Zensur"; Hoff, *Dramen des Weiblichen*; Hoff, Sara Friedrichsmeyer, and Patricia Herminhouse, "Aspects of Censorship in the Work of Karoline von Günderode," *Women in German Yearbook: Feminist studies and German culture* 11 (1995): 99–112; Licher, "Der Völker Schicksal"; Nielsen, "The Just Warrior"; Simpson, "The Essential Duel."
42. Gabriele Dürbeck, "'Sibylle,' 'Pythia' oder 'Dame Lucifer.' Zur Idealisierung und Marginalisierung von Autorinnen der Romantik in der Literaturgeschichtsschreibung des 19. Jahrhunderts," *Zeitschrift für Germanistik* 2 (2000): 260–61.
  43. For discussion of the use of this term in relation to Günderode see Marina Rauchenbacher, *Karoline von Günderode. Eine Rezeptionsstudie* (PhD diss., Vienna: 2012), 124f.
  44. Achim von Arnim, "Melück Maria Blainville, die Hausprophetin aus Arabien. Eine Anekdote," in *Achim von Arnim: Werke*, vol. 2: *Sämtliche Romane und Erzählungen*, ed. Walter Migge (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1963 [1812]), 558–85.
  45. Otto Berdrow, "Eine Priesterin der Romantik. Karoline von Günderode," *Die Frau* 2 (1894/1895): 681–88.
  46. Dormann, "Karoline von Günderode-Forschung," 233; Licher, *Mein Leben*, 1.
  47. Dormann, "Karoline von Günderode-Forschung," 231–32.
  48. Becker-Cantarino and Clausen, "Gender Censorship"; Hoff, "Dramatisch Weiblichkeitsmuster," 74–88; Hoff, *Dramen des Weiblichen*; Hoff, Friedrichsmeyer, and Herminhouse, "Aspects of Censorship."
  49. Günderode, *Sämtliche Werke* 3: 112–13.
  50. Clemens Brentano, letter to Günderode, June 2, 1804, in Wolf, ed., *Schatten eines Traumes*, 217.
  51. Carola Hilmes, "Vom Skandal weiblicher Autorschaft. Publikationsbedingungen für Schriftstellerinnen zwischen 1770 und 1830," in *Skandalgeschichten: Aspekte einer Frauenliteraturgeschichte* (Königstein/Taunus: Ulrike Helmer Verlag, 2004), 44.
  52. For example, the works of La Roche, and Wilhelmine Karoline von Wobeser's *Elisa oder das Weib wie es seyn sollte* (1795), which Hilmes reads as subtly ironic ("Skandal weiblicher Autorschaft," 47–48).
  53. Adrian Daub, "Marriage Interrupted: Sophie Mereau's *Blüthenalter der Empfindung*," in *Uncivil Unions: The Metaphysics of Marriage in German Idealism and Romanticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 207–39.

54. French, "Meine beiden Ichs."
55. For example, Brandstetter, "Welt mit lachendem Mut"; Alan Corkhill, "Female Language Theory in the Age of Goethe: Three Case Studies," *The Modern Language Review* 94, no. 4 (1999): 1041–53; Frederiksen, "Frau als Autorin"; French, "Meine beiden Ichs"; Hilmes, "Vom Skandal weiblicher Autorschaft."
56. Gersdorff, *Erde ist mir Heimat*, 30, 28.
57. *Ibid.*, 16.
58. *Ibid.*, 63.
59. Nees, cited in Günderröde, *Sämtliche Werke* 3: 64–66.
60. Günderröde, *Sämtliche Werke* 3: 126.
61. Becker-Cantarino and Clausen, "Gender Censorship," 90.
62. *Ibid.*, 82.
63. Goethe, cited in *ibid.*, 86.
64. Dormann, *Kunst des inneren Sinns*, 12; Gersdorff, *Erde ist mir Heimat*, 189; Hilger, "Staging Islam"; Hoff, Friedrichsmeyer, and Herminhouse, "Aspects of Censorship"; Rauchenbacher, *Karoline von Günderröde*, 28, 130.
65. Creuzer, letter to Günderröde, February 20, 1806, *Sämtliche Werke* 3: 144.
66. Nees, letter to Günderröde, May 25, 1804, *Sämtliche Werke* 3: 128, 129.
67. Hilger, "Staging Islam," 99.
68. Hoff, Friedrichsmeyer, and Herminhouse, "Aspects of Censorship," 99, 103.
69. *Ibid.*
70. Dormann, *Kunst des inneren Sinns*, 12; Gersdorff, *Erde ist mir Heimat*, 189; Rauchenbacher, *Karoline von Günderröde*, 28, 130.
71. Creuzer, letter to Leonhard Creuzer, October 20, 1806, *Sämtliche Werke* 3: 169.
72. Hoff, Friedrichsmeyer, and Herminhouse, "Aspects of Censorship," 103–104.
73. Friedrichsmeyer, "The Subversive Androgyne."
74. Battersby, *Sublime, Terror, and Human Difference*, 120–22.
75. Gisela Dischner, "Die Günderröde," in *Bettine von Arnim: Eine weibliche Sozialbiographie aus dem 19. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Wagenbach, 1977), 61–148.
76. Daubert, "Der Gefangene und der Sänger."
77. French, "Meine beiden Ichs"; see also Bohrer, "Identität als

- Selbstverlust”; Brandstetter, “Welt mit lachendem Mut”; Corkhill, “Female Language Theory”; Frederiksen, “Frau als Autorin”; Hilmes, “Wie eine Religion zu zweit”; Hilmes, “Vom Skandal weiblicher Autorschaft.”
78. Roswitha Burwick, “Liebe und Tod in Leben und Werk der Günderröde,” *German Studies Review* 3, no. 2 (1980): 211–12; Dallet-Mann, “Nur das Wilde”; Görner, “Das ‘heimliche Ächzen,’” 73, 74.
  79. Bürger, “Aber eine Sehnsucht,” 26, 27; Xu Pei, “Karoline von Günderröde (1780–1806),” in *Frauenbilder der Romantik* (Düsseldorf: Grupello, 1997), 89.
  80. Hoff, “Dramatisch Weiblichkeitsmuster,” 74–88; Hoff, Friedrichsmeyer, and Herminghouse, “Aspects of Censorship.”
  81. Kuzniar, “Labor Pains.”
  82. Dormann, “Karoline von Günderröde-Forschung,” 234; Krimmer, “*Mora and Darthula*”; Rauchenbacher, *Karoline von Günderröde*.
  83. For example, Nicholas Saul, “Morbid? Suicide, Freedom, Human Dignity, and the German Romantic Yearning for Death,” *Historical Reflections* 32, no. 3 (2006): 579–99.
  84. Bürger, “Aber eine Sehnsucht,” 42.
  85. Becker-Cantarino, “New Mythology,” 51, 52. See also Becker-Cantarino, “Dichtung—Mythologie—Geschlecht,” 225; Goozè, “Seduction of Don Juan,” 120.
  86. Günderröde, *Sämtliche Werke* 1: 446–47.
  87. Ibid.
  88. Bohrer, “Identität als Selbstverlust.”
  89. Anna Ezekiel, “Metamorphosis, Personhood, and Power in Karoline von Günderröde,” *European Romantic Review* 25, no. 6 (2014): 773–91.
  90. Friedrich Schlegel, *Athenaeum*, vol. 1, pt. 1, ed. August Wilhelm Schlegel and Friedrich Schlegel (Berlin: Friedrich Vieweg, 1798), 56 #216.
  91. Including, notably, F. E. Boysen’s *Der Koran, oder Das Gesetz für Muselmänner durch Muhammed* (Halle: J. J. Gebauers Wittwe and J. J. Gebauer, 1773).
  92. In 1802, the *Bhagavad Gita* was translated into German by Friedrich Majer from Charles Wilkins’s 1785 English translation. Friedrich Schlegel published the first direct translation of parts of the

- Bhagavad Gita* from Sanskrit into German in 1808, after Günderröde's death.
93. The *Manusmṛiti* was translated into German as *Hindu Gesetzbuch oder Menu's Verordnungen* in 1797 by Johann Christian Hüttner, on the basis of William Jones's 1794 English translation. Manu's writings were also used in Nathaniel Brassey Halhed's 1776 collation of Indian laws, *A Code of Gentoo Laws*, which was translated into English from Persian translations by Brahmin scholars. Halhed's *Code* was published in German translation as *Gesetzbuch der Gentoos* by Rudolf Erich Raspe in 1778.
  94. Johann Friedrich Kleuker published a translation of Abraham Anquetil-Duperron's 1771 French translation of the *Zend Avesta* in 1776–78.
  95. Anquetil-Duperron published a rough translation of the *Upanishads* in Latin, from a translation into Persian, in 1801–02.
  96. Henri de Boulainvilliers, *Leben des Muhammed*, trans. J. A. Mebes (Halle: Johann Christian Hendels, 1786); Jean Gagnier, *Leben Mohammeds, des Propheten*, 2 vols, trans. C. F. R. Vetterlein (Köthen: I. A. Aue, 1802–04).
  97. Ignaz Aurelius Feßler, *Attila, König der Hunnen* (Breslau: W. G. Korn, 1794).
  98. Creuzer, letter to Günderröde, February 20, 1806, *Sämtliche Werke* 3: 144.
  99. Other famous works that featured Eastern images or settings include Voltaire's 1736 play *La fanatisme, ou Mahomet le prophète* (*Fanaticism, or Muhammad the Prophet*) and Goethe's 1802 translation of this play (discussed in the introduction to *Prophet of Mecca* later in this volume), Tieck's poems "Almansur" (1790), "Abdallah" (1792), and "The Brothers" (1795), Hölderlin's *Hyperion* (1797–99), Friedrich Schlegel's "Muhammad's Flight" (1802), and Jean Paul's *Hesperus* (1795). Several commentators have addressed the relationship of Günderröde's work to writings by more famous authors who used Eastern imagery in their work. Barbara Becker-Cantarino traces the influence of Goethe's "The God and the Bayadere" on Günderröde's poem "The Malabarian Widows" in "Liebestod," Stephanie Hilger explores the connection of *Prophet of Mecca* to plays about Muhammad by Voltaire and Goethe in "Staging Islam," K. F. Hilliard compares Goethe's "Muhammad's Song" with Günderröde's

- poems “Egypt” and “The Nile” in “Orient and Mythos,” and Annette Simonis analyzes Günderrode’s use of the Isis image in “Das verschleierte Bild.”
100. Günderrode describes Herder’s *Ideas* as providing her with a “true consolation” in the thought of her insignificance compared to the whole of creation. Letter to Karoline von Barkhaus, July 17, 1799, in Wolf, ed., *Schatten eines Traumes*, 155.
  101. Dorothy Figueira analyzes Günderrode’s use of Herder’s translation in “Dynamics of Exoticism” and “Karoline von Günderrode’s Sanskrit Epitaph,” *Comparative Literature Studies* 26, no. 4 (1989): 291–303.
  102. August Wilhelm Schlegel, “Die Sprachen: Ein Gespräch über Klopstocks grammatische Gespräche,” in *Athenaeum*, vol. 1, pt. 1, ed. August Wilhelm Schlegel and Friedrich Schlegel (Berlin: Friedrich Vieweg, 1798), 3–69; Friedrich Schlegel, “Gespräch über die Poesie I and II,” in *Athenaeum*, vol. 3 (Berlin: Frölich, 1800).
  103. Friedrich Schlegel, “Reise nach Frankreich,” in *Europa*, vol. 1 (Frankfurt: Friedrich Wilmans, 1803), 5–40.
  104. *Ibid.*, 32.
  105. Becker-Cantarino, “New Mythology,” 55.
  106. Friedrich Schlegel, “Rede über die Mythologie,” *Zeno.org*.
  107. Johann Georg Hamann, “Aesthetica in Nuce: A Rhapsody in Kabalistic Prose,” *Zeno.org*.
  108. Dallet-Mann, “Nur das Wilde”; Dormann, *Kunst des inneren Sinns*, 61–70, 119, 149, 170; Licher, “Du mußt Dich,” 23; Licher, *Mein Leben*, 83; Obermeier, “Ach diese Rolle,” 104.
  109. Barbara Becker-Cantarino, “Mythos und Symbolik bei Karoline von Günderrode und Friedrich Creuzer,” in *200 Jahre Heidelberger Romantik* (Berlin and New York: Springer, 2008), 281–98.
  110. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, trans. The English Dominican Fathers (New York: Benzinger Brothers, 1924), III: 70.
  111. Günderrode, *Sämtliche Werke* 1: 448, 449.
  112. Novalis, *Schriften. Zweite, nach den Handschriften ergänzte, erweiterte und verbesserte Auflage in vier Bänden*, ed. Paul Kluckhohn and Richard Samuel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1960f), 1: 79–80.
  113. *Ibid.* 2: 672.
  114. Friedrich Schlegel, cited in Dormann, *Kunst des inneren Sinns*, 42.

### Chapter One. *Hildgund*

1. Geiger, "Karoline von Günderode," 154.
2. Wolf, "Entwurf," 58.
3. For example, Hoff, "Geschlecht und Zensur," 12.
4. Ekkehard I, "Waltharius," *Waltertree.com*.
5. Regen, *Dramen Karolinens von Günderode*, 12–28. See also Hoff, *Dramen des Weiblichen*, 96–97.
6. Licher, "Der Völker Schicksal," 127.
7. Nielsen, "The Just Warrior," 75.
8. Hoff, "Dramatisch Weiblichkeitsmuster," 75; Licher, "Der Völker Schicksal."
9. Christmann, *Zwischen Identitätsgewinn und Bewußtseinsverlust*, 192–93.
10. Nielsen, "The Just Warrior"; Simpson, "The Essential Duel," 109.
11. Hoff, *Dramen des Weiblichen*, 84.
12. Nielsen, "The Just Warrior," 84.
13. Hoff, *Dramen des Weiblichen*, 84.
14. Hoff, "Dramatisch Weiblichkeitsmuster," 74–88; Hoff, *Dramen des Weiblichen*; Hoff, Friedrichsmeyer, and Herminghouse, "Aspects of Censorship," 106–107.
15. Hoff, Friedrichsmeyer and Herminghouse, "Aspects of Censorship," 106.
16. Hoff, "Dramatisch Weiblichkeitsmuster," 82.
17. Günderode, *Sämtliche Werke* 1:3 02.
18. *Ibid.*, 1: 231.
19. Christmann, *Zwischen Identitätsgewinn und Bewußtseinsverlust*, 196.
20. Nielsen, "The Just Warrior," 75.
21. *Ibid.*, 85.
22. *Ibid.*, 74.
23. Simpson, "The Essential Duel," 123.
24. Christmann, *Zwischen Identitätsgewinn und Bewußtseinsverlust*, 192–93.
25. Hoff, *Dramen des Weiblichen*, 98.
26. Simpson, "The Essential Duel," 107.
27. Nielsen, "The Just Warrior," 89.
28. Hoff, *Dramen des Weiblichen*, 100; Simpson, "The Essential Duel," 115.

29. Lazarowicz, *Porträt einer Fremden*, 143.
30. Christmann, *Zwischen Identitätsgewinn und Bewußtseinsverlust*, 208.
31. Ezekiel, "Metamorphosis, Personhood, and Power."
32. Ibid.
33. Kord, "Über die Abhängigkeit des Weibes," 109.
34. Ibid., 114.
35. The Morgenthaler edition of Günderrode's works has *Freude* ("joy") where the Hirschberg edition has *Feinde* ("enemies").
36. The Morgenthaler edition has *wähle* ("may choose") where the Hirschberg edition has *wählte* ("chose"). The translation follows the Morgenthaler version.
37. The Morgenthaler edition has *jenen* ("those") where the Hirschberg edition has *seinen* ("his"). The translation follows the Morgenthaler version.

## Chapter 2. "Piedro," "The Pilgrims," and "The Kiss in the Dream"

1. Creuzer, letter to Günderrode, October 21, 1804, in Günderrode, *Sämtliche Werke* 3: 117.
2. Günderrode, *Sämtliche Werke* 3: 120.
3. Günderrode, letter to Savigny, April 1804, in Weißenborn, ed., *zärtliches Pfand*, 124.
4. Lokke, "Poetry as Self-Consumption," 97.
5. For example, Bürger, "Aber eine Sehnsucht," 36; Becker-Cantarino, "The 'New Mythology,'" 51, 52.
6. Burwick, "Liebe und Tod," 207–23; Ingeborg Drewitz, "Karoline von Günderrode (1780–1806)," in *Letzte Tage. Sterbegeschichten aus zwei Jahrtausenden*, ed. Hans Jürgen Schultz (Berlin: Kreuz-Verlag, 1983), 87–100; Figueira, "Dynamics of Exoticism."
7. Rauchenbacher, *Karoline von Günderrode*, 53f.
8. Saul, "Morbid?" 579–99.
9. Hoff, Friedrichsmeyer, and Herminghouse, "Aspects of Censorship," 108.
10. Lokke, "Poetry as Self-Consumption," 96–99.
11. For example Becker-Cantarino, "Dichtung—Mythologie—Geschlecht," 223; Stefani Engelstein, "Sibling Incest and Cultural Voyeurism in Günderrode's 'Udohla' and Thomas Mann's 'Wälsungenblut,'" *German Quarterly* 77, no. 3 (2004): 285.

12. Günderrode, *Sämtliche Werke* 1: 325.
13. Wolf, "Entwurf," 47–50.
14. Heimerl, "Dem Tode verfallen," 403.
15. Becker-Cantarino, "The 'New Mythology,'" 59.
16. Novalis, *Schriften* 1: 135.
17. Günderrode, *Sämtliche Werke* 1: 446–47.
18. Dormann, *Kunst des inneren Sinns*, 136.
19. Johann Gottlob Fichte, *The System of Ethics*, ed. and trans. Daniel Breazeale and Günter Zöllner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 120–21.
20. Friedrich Schelling, "Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom and Related Matters," trans. Priscilla Hayden-Roy, in *Philosophy of German Idealism: Fichte, Jacobi, and Schelling*, ed. Ernst Behler (New York: Continuum, 2003), 240.
21. Barbara Becker-Cantarino, "'Feminismus' und 'Emanzipation'? Zum Geschlechterdiskurs der deutschen Romantik am Beispiel der *Lucinde* und ihrer Rezeption," in *Salons der Romantik: Beiträge eines wiepersdorfer Colloquiums zu Theorie und Geschichte des Salons*, ed. Hartwig Schultz (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1997), 21–44; Sara Friedrichsmeyer, *The Androgyne in Early German Romanticism: Friedrich Schlegel, Novalis, and the Metaphysics of Love* (Bern: Lang, 1983); Friedrichsmeyer, "Subversive Androgyne"; Michaela Schrage-Früh, "Subversive Weiblichkeit? Die Frau als Muse, Geliebte und Künstlerin im Werk Friedrich Schlegels und Karoline von Günderrodes," in *Subversive Romantik* (2004): 365–90.
22. Friedrichsmeyer, *Androgyne*, 2, see also 137. The idea that heterosexual love, particularly marriage, could unite masculine and feminine elements, thereby recovering a spiritual whole, is not unique to Early German Romanticism, but is found in Pietistic and other traditions that influenced the Early German Romantics. Friedrichsmeyer traces the theme through Hermeticism and the work of Jakob Böhme, Gottfried Arnold, Friedrich Christoph Oetinger, Nicolaus Zinzendorf, Emanuel Swedenborg, and others to the Early German Romantics (Friedrichsmeyer, *Androgyne*, 20–36).
23. Becker-Cantarino, "'Feminismus' und 'Emanzipation?'" 21–44; Friedrichsmeyer, *Androgyne*, 158; Friedrichsmeyer, "Subversive Androgyne," 69; Schrage-Früh, "Subversive Weiblichkeit?" 371–72.
24. Friedrichsmeyer, *Androgyne*, 158–59.
25. *Ibid.*, 77.
26. Karoline von Günderrode, *Sämtliche Werke* 1: 32.



27. Karin Obermeier, "Karoline von Günderrode (1780–1806)," in *Women Writers in German-Speaking Countries. A Bio-Bibliographical Critical Sourcebook*, ed. Elke P. Frederiksen and Elizabeth G. Ametsbichler (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1988), 183.
28. Licher, *Siehe! Glaube! Thue!*, 234; Dormann, *Kunst des inneren Sinns*, 56.
29. Dormann, *Kunst des inneren Sinns*; Manfred Frank, *Der kommende Gott. Vorlesung über die Neue Mythologie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1982).
30. Heimerl, "Dem Tode verfallen," 403; Obermeier, "Karoline von Günderrode, 183.
31. Dormann, *Kunst des inneren Sinns*, 62–64; Licher, *Siehe! Glaube! Thue!*, 20; Obermeier, "Karoline von Günderrode," 182.
32. Dormann, *Kunst des inneren Sinns*, 116.
33. Licher, *Siehe! Glaube! Thue!*, 31–32.
34. Novalis, *Schriften* 2: 104 #1.
35. *Ibid.*, 2: 416 #15 and 417 #14.
36. Karoline von Günderrode, *Sämtliche Werke* 1:53.
37. The Official King James Bible Online.
38. Heimerl, "Dem Tode verfallen," 408; see also Burwick, "Liebe und Tod," 216; Obermeier, "Karoline von Günderrode," 183.
39. Christmann, *Zwischen Identitätsgewinn und Bewußtseinsverlust*, 122, 138; Friedrichsmeyer, *Androgyne*, 53. See also Dormann, *Kunst des inneren Sinns*, 204; Licher, *Mein Leben*, 287; Wägenbauer, "... habe getaumelt," 211.
40. Dischner, "Die Günderrode," 67.
41. Heimerl, "Dem Tode verfallen," 405, 415–16.
42. Karoline von Günderrode, *Sämtliche Werke* 1:52.
43. *Ibid.*, 1: 439.
44. Novalis, *Schriften* 1: 90, 96.
45. Ezekiel, "Metamorphosis, Personhood, and Power," 773–91.
46. Novalis, *Schriften* 2: 133–34.
47. Christmann, *Zwischen Identitätsgewinn und Bewußtseinsverlust*, 133, 148.
48. Karoline von Günderrode, *Sämtliche Werke* 1:35.
49. The return of Muhammad to Mecca with his new community complicates this picture, suggesting that Günderrode had a political program as well as a natural-philosophical one. Licher argues that Günderrode views only the community in the wilderness as the

ideal community, and the return to Mecca and rise in Muhammad's political power as undermining the ideal society ("Du mußt Dich"; "Sceptical Mohammedan"). I touch on this topic in the introduction to *Prophet of Mecca*.

50. Heimerl, "Dem Tode verfallen," 402–403; Lazarowicz, *Porträt einer Fremden*, 146.
51. The German phrase *sein Auge brechen* means literally "his eye breaks," but signifies dying.

### Chapter 3. *Muhammad, the Prophet of Mecca*

1. Nicholas Saul, "The Pursuit of the Subject: Literature as Critic and Perfecter of Philosophy 1790–1830," in *Philosophy and German Literature 1700–1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 85.
2. Creuzer, letter to Günderröde, November 7, 1804, in Günderröde, *Sämtliche Werke* 3: 135.
3. For example, Günderröde, letter to Gunda Brentano, August 29, 1801, in *Sämtliche Werke* 3: 70; Günderröde, letter to Gunda Brentano, October 20, 1801, in Preitz, "Karoline von Günderröde in ihrer Umwelt. II," 173.
4. Günderröde, letter to Savigny, February 26, 1804, in Preitz, "Karoline von Günderröde in ihrer Umwelt. II," 199.
5. Licher, "Du mußt Dich," 22.
6. Simonis, "Das verschleierte Bild," 258–59.
7. K. F. Hilliard, "Goethe and the Cure for Melancholy: 'Mahomets Gesang.' Orientalism and the Medical Psychology of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century," *Oxford German Studies* 23 (1994): 85–96.
8. Hilliard, "Orient und Mythos."
9. Hilger, "Staging Islam," 100.
10. *Ibid.*, 102.
11. Licher, "Du mußt Dich," 28; see also Christmann, *Zwischen Identitätsgewinn und Bewußtseinsverlust*, 212.
12. Cf. Hilger, "Staging Islam," 110–12; Ingeborg Solbrig, "Die orientalische Muse Meletes: Zu den Mohammed-Dichtungen Karoline von Günderrödes," *Jahrbuch der Deutschen Schillergesellschaft* 33 (1989): 311, 312; Boysen, ed., *Der Koran*; Boulainvilliers, *Leben des Muhammed*; Gagnier, *Leben Mohammeds*.

13. Dormann, *Kunst des inneren Sinns*, 14; Licher, "Der Völker Schicksal," 113–32.
14. Savigny, letter to Günderröde, January 8, 1804, in Preitz, "Karoline von Günderröde in ihrer Umwelt. II," 195.
15. Novalis, *Schriften* 3: 507–26.
16. Licher may have something like this in mind when she claims that "[t]he biography of the historical personality of Muhammad is Günderröde's foil in order to develop her analysis of history"; however, she does not elaborate ("Du mußt Dich," 27).
17. Christmann points out that in Günderröde's play *Udohla*, Hinduism similarly appears as a form of faith whose time has passed (*Zwischen Identitätsgewinn und Bewußtseinsverlust*, 222).
18. Christmann, *Zwischen Identitätsgewinn und Bewußtseinsverlust*, 75, 119.
19. Dormann, *Kunst des inneren Sinns*; Licher, "Du mußt Dich," 26; Licher, *Mein Leben*.
20. Hilger, "Staging Islam," 106.
21. *Ibid.*, 108–10, 114–15.
22. *Ibid.*, 106.
23. Official King James Bible Online, Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34. Cf. Günderröde's Muhammad's "God, how you have slipped away from me! How you have abandoned me in the heat of the day! Turned your face away from me in the night!"
24. Hilger, "Staging Islam," 112–13; cf. John 2.13–16.
25. Solbrig, "Orientalische Muse Meletes," 318–19.
26. Hilger, "Staging Islam," 112. Christmann also points out the similarity between Günderröde's Muhammad and Christ (*Zwischen Identitätsgewinn und Bewußtseinsverlust*, 210).
27. Ingeborg Solbrig, "The Contemplative Muse: Caroline von Günderröde, Religious Works," *Germanic Notes* 18, no. 1–2 (1987): 19.
28. Christmann suggests some of the ways that the chorus questions the authenticity of Muhammad's visions (*Zwischen Identitätsgewinn und Bewußtseinsverlust*, 204).
29. Licher, "Du mußt Dich," 28; see also Christmann, *Zwischen Identitätsgewinn und Bewußtseinsverlust*, 212.
30. Licher, "Du mußt Dich," 30.
31. Cf. Novalis, "Die Lehrlinge zu Saïs," in *Schriften* 1: 79.
32. Solbrig, "Orientalische Muse Meletes," 321; see also Christmann, *Zwischen Identitätsgewinn und Bewußtseinsverlust*, 212.

33. Hilger, "Staging Islam," 107–108.
34. For example, Christmann, *Zwischen Identitätsgewinn und Bewußtseinsverlust*, 208.
35. Licher, "Du mußt Dich," 30.
36. *Ibid.*, 31; see also 22.
37. *Ibid.*, 29.
38. Karoline von Günderrode, *Sämtliche Werke* 1: 446–47.
39. Simonis, "Das verschleierte Bild," 271.
40. Presumably the Banu Sahm: a clan of the Quraysh tribe.
41. While most of the characters in the play are based on historical individuals, Nahlid appears to have been created by Günderrode. Regen suggests that Günderrode derived the name from the figure Valid in Boulainvilliers' *Leben des Muhammed*, possibly combining it with the name of another character, Naim (*Die Dramen Karolinens von Günderode*, 33).
42. Another name for the city of Medina.
43. In Günderrode's play, Halima is Abu Sufyan's daughter. The historical Abu Sufyan's daughter was called Ramla or Ramlah, also known as Umm Habiba, and married Muhammad after her first husband converted to Christianity. Muhammad's foster mother was called Halima.
44. Regen notes that this is spelled "Motassem" in Boulainvillier's *Leben Mohammeds (Dramen des Karolinens von Günderode*, 33).
45. I have not been able to trace the source for this character. Regen spells the name "Rekared" and claims it stems from the names of two Visigothic kings (in English spelling "Reccared") (Regen, *Dramen Karolinens von Günderode*, 34).
46. Probably the Hawazin or Ha'wa zin: a pre-Islamic Arabian tribe. The Hirschberg edition of Günderrode's works has *Hamzaniten* while the Morgenthaler edition has *Hawzaniten*. The translation follows the Morgenthaler edition.
47. The Morgenthaler edition has *nichts* ("nothing") where the Hirschberg edition has *nicht* ("not").
48. The Hirschberg edition has a missing "1" in *erblickt*.
49. Al-Lāt: A pre-Islamic goddess and, along with Al-'Uzzá and Manāt, the chief goddess of Mecca. Before Islam, Al-Lāt, Manāt and Al-'Uzzá were considered to be the three daughters of Allah.
50. The Morgenthaler edition has a question mark here instead of an exclamation mark.

51. This story exists in both the Christian and Islamic traditions, with the earliest record dating from before the sixth century AD. The Christian version is known as the “Seven Sleepers,” while the Islamic version does not specify the number of youths and, also unlike the Christian version, features a dog (Quran 18.9–26). Günderröde’s name for the dog, Anubis, is her own addition, integrating imagery from Egyptian mythology with the Christian and Islamic story. Licher interprets this passage as indicating that *Prophet of Mecca* presents Islam as a resurrection of the Isis cult, synthesizing one-sided versions of the teachings of this cult that emerged in Judaism and Christianity (*Mein Leben*, 166–84).
52. The Morgenthaler edition has *hoch* (“high”) where the Hirschberg edition has *noch* (“still,” “yet”). This might be translated as “a much higher degree.”
53. The Morgenthaler edition has an exclamation mark here instead of a question mark.
54. The Morgenthaler edition has an exclamation mark here instead of a period.
55. Hirschberg’s edition has “me” (*mir*) here, which the Morgenthaler edition omits. Hirschberg’s version would make this clause “who was with me in the council of blood,” which would conflict with the rest of the sentence. For this reason, the translation follows the Morgenthaler edition.
56. The Morgenthaler edition has *unter den Feinden* (“among the enemies”) where the Hirschberg edition has *unter Feinden* (“among enemies”).
57. The Morgenthaler edition has a period here instead of an exclamation mark.
58. According to the Morgenthaler edition, this statement is made by “All” rather than Omar.
59. The Morgenthaler edition has a question mark here instead of an exclamation mark.
60. A pre-Islamic goddess and, along with Al-Lāt and Manāt, the chief goddess of Mecca. Before Islam, Al-Lāt, Manāt and Al-‘Uzzá were considered to be the three daughters of Allah.
61. Probably Taif or Ta’if, a town not far from Mecca.
62. Hirschberg’s edition has this as *Fremden* (“strangers”), which does not seem to make sense as Muhammad’s adversaries are known to him. The translation follows the Morgenthaler edition, which has *Feinden* (“enemies”).

63. The Morgenthaler edition here inserts “Long pause.” (*Lange Pause*).
64. Possibly Muhammad’s companion Ja-far ibn Abi Talib, also known as Ja’far al’Tayyar, who was known for his good deeds in Medina (Yathrib) and, like this character, rejoined Muhammad after a battle.
65. Probably the tribes Talabah/Thalabah and Muharib, which the historical Muhammad fought at the battle of Thi Amr (“Aum”?) after they threatened Medina.
66. As Regen suggests, this seems to be Günderrode’s spelling of Gagnier’s “Soraka” (*Dramen Karolinens von Günderrode*, 33).
67. The Morgenthaler edition has “cherish” (*hegen*) where the Hirschberg edition has “have” (*haben*).
68. The Morgenthaler edition has an exclamation mark here instead of a semicolon.
69. Regen suggests that Günderrode derived the name “Rawina” from Gagnier’s “Rawma” (*Dramen Karolinens von Günderrode*, 52–53). I could not identify a historical battle that Günderrode might have had in mind, so I have kept Günderrode’s spelling apart from changing the “w” to a “v” to retain the pronunciation of the German.
70. “Helpers”—this term refers to citizens of Medina who aided Muhammad.
71. The Morgenthaler edition has an exclamation mark here instead of a question mark.
72. Cf. Palmire’s last words to Muhammad in Voltaire’s play: “I die. I cease to see you, execrable imposter. I flatter myself in dying that a more equitable God reserves a future for innocent hearts. You must reign; the world is made for tyrants” (Voltaire, *Fanaticisme, ou Mahomet le prophète*, Wikisource.fr; my translation). In Goethe’s translation, Palmire’s dying words are changed to: “I die. Get out! Not to see you is the greatest happiness. The world is for tyrants—you live!” (Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Mahomet*, Projekt Gutenberg—DE).
73. The Morgenthaler edition has *eröffnet* (“opens up”) where the Hirschberg edition has *öffnet* (“opens”).
74. The Morgenthaler edition omits *dir* (“to you”), giving “I swear by Al-‘Uzzá.”
75. In the list of characters, the Morgenthaler edition of Günderrode spells this name *Jobair*. However, throughout the play Günderrode uses the spelling *Zobair*, which the Hirschberg edition also uses in the character list.



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The second collection of writings by the German poet, dramatist, and philosopher Karoline von Günderrode (1780–1806), *Poetic Fragments* was published in 1805 under the pseudonym “Tian.” Günderrode’s work is an unmined source of insight into German Romanticism and Idealism, as well as into the reception of Indian, Persian, and Islamic thought in Europe. Anna C. Ezekiel’s introductions highlight the philosophical significance of the texts, demonstrating their radical and original consideration of the nature of the universe, death, religion, power, and gender roles. The dramas “Hildgund” and “Muhammad, the Prophet of Mecca” are two of Günderrode’s most important works for her accounts of agency, recognition, and the status of women. The three poems included in the collection, “Piedro,” “The Pilgrims,” and “The Kiss in the Dream,” represent the wide range of forms in which Günderrode wrote. They reflect themes of erotic longing and union with the divine, and point to her radical reimagining of death. This bilingual English-German edition is the first volume of Günderrode’s work to appear in English, and will help unearth this rich, complex, and innovative writer for English readers.

**Anna C. Ezekiel** is an independent scholar living in Singapore.

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