

Hermann Diels : what sort of fellow was he?

Autor(en): **Calder, William M.**

Objektyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **Entretiens sur l'Antiquité classique**

Band (Jahr): **45 (1999)**

PDF erstellt am: **10.08.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-660695>

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I

WILLIAM M. CALDER III

HERMANN DIELS: WHAT SORT OF FELLOW WAS HE?

“Dann vertraute mir eines Tages
der berühmte Altertumsforscher Diels an,
wie herrlich ihm und seiner Frau
der erste Pferdebraten geschmeckt habe,
so schmackhaft und nahrhaft!”
Alois Brandl¹

I. *Introduction*

I have repeatedly pled for *Wissenschaftlertgeschichte als Wissenschaftsgeschichte*. The naive believe that scholars argue from the facts available to them. Rather I have come to believe each scholar imposes on the evidence his own pre-conceived opinion. He finds what he has already decided is there². That is scholarship even at the level of *Mikrophilologie* is *Rezeptionsgeschichte*. I enjoy reading what are optimistically called “scholarly books” in order to find out about their authors. How did the ideology of National Socialism color Jaeger’s *Platonbild* or his SS past Pöschl’s *Aeneid*? How did Welcker’s homosexuality determine his “rescue of Sappho from an overwhelming prejudice”? Why did Wilamowitz

¹ A. BRANDL, *Zwischen Inn und Themse. Lebensbeobachtungen eines Anglisten. Alt-Tirol/England/Berlin* (Berlin 1936), 324.

² See my “Wissenschaftlertgeschichte als Wissenschaftsgeschichte”, in *Das Altertum* 42 (1997), 245-256.

detest Demosthenes? What drew Eduard Norden to Tacitus, *Germania*?

Diels has always puzzled me. The man is so elusive. His *Sitz im Leben* condemned him to play Xenophon to Wilamowitz' Thucydides³. There are very few anecdotes of Diels. Why did so few ever write of their teacher? Our portrait of Diels the man was fixed over seventy years ago⁴. How historical is that portrait? And we have two published memoirs of Diels by his lifelong friend and colleague, Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff. How much did Wilamowitz tell us? And were they friends or simply colleagues who knew each other well? Scattered anecdotes require collection. What do we learn from them? Then suddenly seven years ago a DDR scholar restored the man Diels to the world⁵. We had two volumes of expertly edited letters between Diels and his mentors Hermann Usener and Eduard Zeller. In 1995 with Maximilian Braun and Dietrich Ehlers, I edited the letters between Diels and his friend of over half a century and almost 150 letters discovered in California of Diels to Theodor and Heinrich Gomperz⁶. What can we learn from over 1000 new documents?

³ See W. BURKERT, in *KS (Diels)* p.VII: "Dem Namen Hermann Diels scheint freilich, verglichen etwa mit Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, weniger individuelle Farbe und Leuchtkraft zu eignen".

⁴ O. KERN, *Hermann Diels und Carl Robert. Ein biographischer Versuch* (Leipzig 1927). Kern consistently plays down what today we should call Diels' leftist inclinations: see Dietrich EHLERS, *DUZ* II 424-428. For the standard modern bibliography of Diels' publications see H. DIELS, *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte der antiken Philosophie*, hrsg. von Walter BURKERT (Darmstadt 1969), p.XIV-XXVI. Reviews of Diels' books are not included nor are entries numbered. We have no list of dissertations written under him.

⁵ Hermann DIELS, Hermann USENER, Eduard ZELLER, *Briefwechsel*, herausgegeben von Dietrich EHLERS (Berlin 1992), I: 591 S.; II: 562 S.; Register; Personen und biographische Daten; Index nominum antiquorum; henceforth cited *DUZ*. I review the volumes in *Gnomon* forthcoming.

⁶ See Maximilian BRAUN, William M. CALDER III and Dietrich EHLERS (Hrsgg.), *'Lieber Prinz'. Der Briefwechsel zwischen Hermann Diels und Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1869—1921)*, unter Mitarbeit von Stephen Trzaskoma (Hildesheim 1995), xxiv + 353 S.; henceforth cited: *Briefe Diels*. This must be read with the supplement by M. BRAUN and W.M. CALDER

II. Kern's Diels

Kern's account of early Diels is based almost entirely on Diels' lost *Erinnerungen*. This means we have what Diels wished to remember from his childhood and, therefore, what shaped the adult. Kern states that he is "aus dem werktätigen Volk". Whether this means upper working class or lower middle class remains a *Streitfrage*⁷. Diels tells us that his maternal grandmother was not happy with her daughter's marriage. A sense of unease certainly accompanied him in the presence of his social superiors. This led to modesty and a lack of self-assurance. On the other hand, and I wish to make this absolutely clear, this ought to cause us to admire all the more what Diels accomplished and the upwardly mobile society that allowed him to do so. A man of his origins could never have become a classics don at Oxbridge nor a classics professor at Harvard at this time. Like Wilamowitz, he succeeded against his father's wishes. His father would have preferred that he became a chemist and forced him to learn the bookbinder's trade. Again like Wilamowitz, he attended a humanistic gymnasium and became a classicist because of a mother's influence. Already in the middle-school what we might call today his dyslexia was known, "ein Defekt seines Hirns"⁸. This crippled him mentally for life. I can compare the distinguished American Byzantine historian, my teacher, Glanville Downey's

III, "Hermann Diels, the Gomperzes and Wilamowitz: A Postscript", in *Quaderni di storia* 45 (1997), 173-184. See the reviews of Hans-Ulrich BERNER, in *Gymnasium* 104 (1997), 578-9; C.J. CLASSEN, in *Historische Zeitschrift* 264 (1997), 139-140; Robert L. FOWLER, in *BMCRev* 9 (1998) and W.A. SCHRÖDER, in *Eikasmos* 8 (1997), 283-307. See further IDD., *Philology and Philosophy. The Letters of Hermann Diels to Theodor and Heinrich Gomperz (1871-1922)* (Darmstadt 1995).

⁷ W.A. SCHRÖDER at *Eikasmos* 8 (1997), 302 seeks admirably to rescue Diels from the working class: "Tatsächlich war Diels der Sohn eines Bahnbeamten, der kurz nach der Geburt seines Sohnes zum Bahnhofsvorsteher (-verwalter) in Wiesbaden avancierte". Not untrue but one wonders to which parties Diels' parents were invited.

⁸ See KERN 9 and *infra*.

(1908-1991) lifelong stuttering⁹. One can only laud their courage.

Diels was ten years a schoolmaster. These were his formative years (1872-82), 24-34 years old. These are the years that create the mature scholar. For Wilamowitz it was Greifswald with a variety of teaching, inspiring colleagues (not least Wellhausen but also Kiessling) and students who asked questions. Kern (63-64) perceptively detected the permanent stamp that these years fixed on Diels. "Er war und bleibt ein Schulmeister". That is he was programmed to present his pupils with truth which they should learn and regurgitate on command. Lectures by nature are passive. But a seminar, where *commilitones* work with a *primus inter pares* to uncover truth of a sort that might cause the teacher to change his mind, was always foreign to Diels. One need simply contrast Wilamowitz' and Diels' behaviour in Usener's seminars. "Umzulernen stets bereit" was fundamental to Wilamowitz from Greifswald through retirement. The correspondence with Friedländer documents a young student's daring to correct the restorations on unpublished papyri by a superordinarius, called a god by Werner Jaeger and Eduard Fraenkel. And Wilamowitz was willing and even grateful to have been corrected by someone forty years younger than he. The other side of the coin is that students admired Wilamowitz in a way they could not Diels.

III. *Wilamowitz' Diels*

Wilamowitz twice delivers a final verdict on a Du-friend of over fifty years. First there is his *Gedächtnisrede* held in the

⁹ See W.M. CALDER III, "Glanville Downey", in *Biographical Dictionary of North American Classicists*, ed. by Ward W. BRIGGS, Jr. (Westport 1994), 141-143. Comparable also is the Swiss scholar, Heinrich Meyer (1802-1871), who because of a speech defect that prevented him from delivering sermons became a scholar rather than a pastor. His lifework was the editing of the fragments of lost Roman orations: see Andrea BALBO, in *Athenaeum* 85 (1997), 625 n. 4.

Berlin Academy in 1922¹⁰. This is a formal occasion and *topoi* are expected. But one sees what Wilamowitz most admired in his friend, what most joined them together apart from a half century's shared experiences. Wilamowitz cites *Arbeitskraft* and *Schaffenslust* as Diels' two great qualities. He worked hard and he enjoyed it. His work was the most important part of his life. He compares him to Zeller in a revealing phrase: "In der Tat waren sie verwandt, beide aristotelische Naturen¹¹, Diels noch mehr als Zeller" (72). This I do think is praise but with a faint damn. Wilamowitz was a Platonist. "Fidem platonicam profiteor"¹². That means he preferred Platonic natures to Aristotelian ones but would be the last to deny the value of the other party. Compare his ill-concealed contempt for people who write *RE* articles or compile bibliographies. Jaeger confirms Wilamowitz' verdict when he writes¹³: "...[Diels] deliberately kept away from Plato, for whom he had no inner spiritual affinity". I wonder whether this was the source for Jaeger's later contention, confided to me at Harvard, that scholars of working or lower class origin simply could never understand the aristocratic milieu of the Platonic dialogue. The implication was that Wilamowitz could.

Diels, even more than Zeller, worked *sine ira et studio*. He finished up enormous projects that would have defeated others. He had a patience with people that Wilamowitz lacked. One need only compare the two men's relations to Usener and Gomperz. Diels was not threatening. Wilamowitz cites a younger colleague (72) on "ein geradezu väterlicher Freund".

¹⁰ I cite Wilamowitz, *KS VI* 71-74.

¹¹ See KERN 107: "Aristotelisch ist Diels' Lebensarbeit deshalb zu nennen, weil er die wissenschaftliche Arbeit nicht nur organisierte, sondern auch selbst mühselige Arbeit tat, ähnlich wie Theodor Mommsen, ein König und Karner zugleich". See further REGENBOGEN 553: "Leibniz und Aristoteles waren seine Heroen".

¹² Eduard NORDEN, *Kleine Schriften zum Klassischen Altertum* (Berlin 1966), 668. Cf. REGENBOGEN 553: "...und dem Problem Plato ist er [Diels] zeit seines Lebens mit einer gewissen Scheu aus dem Wege gegangen".

¹³ See Werner JAEGER, *Five Essays* (Montreal 1966), 30.

Wilamowitz' students (I think of Jaeger and Ed. Fraenkel) preferred to refer to him as God or a lion¹⁴ rather than Dad. "Papa Wilamowitz" is nowhere attested. My impression is that Wilamowitz implies here and elsewhere "thoroughly admirable but a trifle dull". Kern tells us that, unlike Robert, Diels did not like music, the theater or to party¹⁵. He lacks the passion, the mania of a Platonist, rather the icy objectivity of an Aristotle. Both men were servants of the Goddess Wissenschaft, as Wilamowitz liked to call her. "Wir wissen, daß wir Diener sind, tun unsere Pflicht und bringen willig die Opfer, die gerade ein freiwillig übernommener Dienst immer verlangt"(73).

Finally there are his last words on Diels in the *Erinnerungen*¹⁶ of 1928:

"Wir waren seit der Studentenzeit in Fühlung geblieben, und so verschiedene Menschen wir waren, auch vom Leben verschieden geführt und in der Wissenschaft nicht nur in dem was wir trieben, sondern auch wie wir es trieben, verschieden (darauf gerade beruhte unsere einander ergänzende Wirkung auf die Schüler): im Grunde waren wir doch dieselben, die in Bonn ihre Freundschaft begründet hatten. Durch die Verschiedenheit unserer Lebensgewohnheiten ergab es sich, daß wir uns nicht sehr viel sahen und die eigenen Arbeiten, abgesehen von den Papyri, kaum je besprachen, aber jeder von uns fühlte sich im Hause des andern besonders wohl, wozu unsere Frauen nicht wenig beitrugen."

He continues to praise Frau Diels, the exemplary wife and mother, to whom the three remarkable sons owed as much as to their father. One finds a revealing difference. Any letter that Diels thought of especial importance he had his wife read before mailing it. Contrarily any letter that was utterly unimportant Wilamowitz had his wife answer. We know from the typewriter used which were hers. Wilamowitz does not skirt the problems.

¹⁴ See *Briefe Althoff* 140 n.580, where Peter Corssen (1856-1928) sees Wilamowitz as a lion and himself as a worm who lifelong crawls on his stomach and eats dirt.

¹⁵ KERN 29.

¹⁶ See *Erinnerungen* 283-284.

He notes the lasting wounds of the Hamburg period that embittered Diels. He was oversensitive and sometimes lost his temper. He held grudges and once he had made up his mind it was difficult to make him change it. This was contrary to Wilamowitz. He forgave Rohde and didn't waste time on Cauer or Flach¹⁷ and until the very end could change his mind. Friedländer convinced him that *Alc. I* was genuine. Diels on the other hand was easier to get along with than Wilamowitz. He had more patience and tact. Success in his organizational capacities confirm this. Also his long membership in the prestigious *Mittwochs-gesellschaft*. Its liberal origins would also have been a factor¹⁸.

Wilamowitz admired and understood his friend. He learned that Diels feared if he came to Berlin all the students would attend his lectures and not Diels'. Wilamowitz heard of this and anticipated a difficulty by suggesting that he and Diels split the *Kollegiengeld* without regard to how many students were enrolled in which lectures¹⁹. Diels needed the money and it was not an issue with Wilamowitz.

IV. *Students and Friends on the Man*

THEODOR MOMMSEN²⁰

Mommsen at least once was disappointed with the man. Certainly he was a hard worker. In 1895 he would with

¹⁷ See H. FLACH, *Herr v. Wilamowitz-Möllendorff und Eudocia. Eine Skizze aus dem byzantinischen Gelehrtenleben* (Leipzig 1881). I am grateful to Prof. Dr. Martin Hose for a copy of this rare item.

¹⁸ See Gerhard BESIER (ed.), *Die Mittwochsgesellschaft im Kaiserreich: Protokolle aus dem geistigen Deutschland 1863-1919* (Berlin 1990), 381 s.n. Diels.

¹⁹ Information from Schwester Hildegard von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff.

²⁰ I wish to state clearly that I have not seen the Mommsen-Diels correspondence. The contribution of Stefan Rebenich to this volume for the first time documents the working relationship between Diels and Mommsen and casts doubt on Wilamowitz' verdict.

Mommsen's support succeed Mommsen as Sekretar of the Akademie. Better Diels than Vahlen. But he had earlier turned down a great chance. A young man, who wants to go somewhere, should not say "No." Diels had. The evidence is Mommsen to Wilamowitz (24 January 1880)²¹. There was clearly a need for a review journal to be called *Centralblatt* that would provide expert, prompt and critical reviews of the flood of publications in classical studies. The *Jena Literaturzeitung* failed. Years later the *DLZ* would partially supply the need and finally Jaeger's *Gnomon* (1925) did. Mommsen wanted Diels aged 32 to edit the new publication. The blessing of the Academy and support from Reimer were assured. Diels typically turned to Usener, who discouraged him²². Usener rightly underscored the considerable difficulties; but one cannot help but think that part of his reaction was due his dislike of Mommsen. Mommsen certainly interpreted it so and was disappointed that Diels turned down a challenge that would have made him world-famous and done only good for the *Großbetrieb der Wissenschaft*. It is revealing that Mommsen preferred Diels to Wilamowitz for the post. Of course that Wilamowitz was in Greifswald not Berlin was a factor; but Mommsen saw that Wilamowitz lacked the patience and the tact to edit such a journal.

JULIUS WELLHAUSEN

Wilamowitz often thought that the greatest legacy of the Greifswald years was the friendship with the Old Testament scholar and historian of Judaism, Julius Wellhausen (1844-1914)²³. He had arranged Wellhausen's Göttingen appointment. His very frank evaluation of Diels as Sekretar of the

²¹ See *Briefe Mommsen* 72 (86-87). A new edition of the uncensored letters with commentary is in progress.

²² The crucial documents are at *DUZ* I 194-203.

²³ For Wilamowitz' most important evaluation of Wellhausen see *Briefe Schwartz* 78-84 and further *Erinnerungen* 188-191.

Academy survives in a personal letter of 18 March 1904 to Harnack. I cite it here²⁴:

“Ich habe meinen Wahlzettel schon vorgestern abgeschickt und Wilamowitz darauf genannt, weil ich ihn für den bedeutendsten deutschen Philologen der Gegenwart halte. Ich meinerseits brauche keine anderweitigen Rücksichten zu nehmen. Ich will aber nicht sagen, daß solche Rücksichten überhaupt unberechtigt wären. Nur Diels kann sie kaum beanspruchen. Ich halte ihn trotz seiner größeren ‘Gediegenheit’ im Vergleich zu W. für untergeordnet. Er scheint mir als der edelste Typus eines Klassenlehrers für Obersecunda. Wenn er als Secretar der Akademie geistreich werden muß, stellt er sich so auf die Zehen, daß mir der Mund zuckt.”

The verdict, especially from such a source, is devastating. Is it fair? We do not know the background. Had Wellhausen reason to dislike Diels? Was he jealous of Diels' intimacy with his close friend and benefactor? The objections are to Diels' personality. Not a word is said of his scholarly achievement by 1904 considerable. However unwelcome, such a source cannot be ignored.

OTTO JESPERSEN

The great Danish linguist, Otto Jespersen (1860-1943), except for Heiberg is the only non-Germanspeaking European whose testimony on Diels is known to me. The publication of an English translation of the memoirs of Jespersen²⁵ makes available an hitherto unknown testimony for the life of Diels. The incident recorded occurred in summer 1911. It is of interest for three reasons: 1) it contains a rare reference to Diels' wife, 2) it provides a rare glimpse of Diels abroad²⁶ and 3) it

²⁴ The letter has been published by William M. CALDER III and Maximilian BRAUN at *Quaderni di storia* 45 (1997), 179-180.

²⁵ Arne JUUL, Hans F. NIELSEN, Jørgen Erik NIELSEN (editors), *A Linguist's Life. An English Translation of Otto Jespersen's Autobiography with Notes, Photos and a Bibliography* (Odense 1995). The passage here cited is on p. 175.

²⁶ See REGENBOGEN 552: “er [Diels] war kein beweglicher Mensch des Reisens und der dadurch erworbenen Anschauung; es ist charakteristisch, daß er Sizilien und Griechenland erst im Frühjahr 1903 als Fünfundfünfzigjähriger besucht hat”. Wilamowitz had first visited Greece at age 24!

documents the political naïveté of Diels, who believed in the permanence of peace. The passage is²⁷:

“I found myself in the same train compartment as the excellent German classical scholar Diels, who as secretary of the Berlin Academy was bound for the same destination²⁸. We got onto the subject of world politics²⁹, and both he and his vivacious little wife³⁰ assured me most eagerly and from their personal acquaintance with the Kaiser that he was a wholehearted lover of peace and the best guarantee against war breaking out. The German nation was also against war. ‘Das wäre ja unsinnig, ja ein verbrechen, eine torheit!’ What about the Pan-Germanists? ‘Oh, the Pan-Germanists! Nobody in Germany takes them seriously, there are only a couple of them in the Reichstag and they have absolutely no influence’. Otherwise our conversation was mainly about the possibility of a world language³¹. Diels favoured the revival of Latin; better methods might promote greater proficiency in speaking and writing it among young people at school; perhaps the language might be simplified somewhat.”

WILLIAM A. HEIDEL

William A. Heidel (1868-1941) seems to have been Diels' only American student³². He was of German origin, a man of ability, who, confined to a small college, produced little. He had no doctoral students and hence no lasting influence. His

²⁷ This passage was earlier discussed at *Quaderni di storia* 45 (1997), 178-179.

²⁸ St Andrew's University, Scotland, which was celebrating its 500th anniversary.

²⁹ For Jespersen's politics see *A Linguist's Life*, 269: “From my student days I have had a radical bent...”

³⁰ Bertha Diels, geb. Dübell (1847-1919). She married Diels in 1873: see KERN 50.

³¹ At least ten years earlier Diels had been concerned with the matter of a world language: see H. DIELS, “Das Problem der Weltsprache”, in *Deutsche Revue* 26,1 (January/March 1901), 45-58 and his letters to Th. Gomperz of 4 and 12 April 1904 (= *DGG* 161-162).

³² For his life see David SIDER, “William Arthur Heidel”, in *Biographical Dictionary* (note 9 above), 274-276.

dissertation remains authoritative³³. A revealing letter of 12 October 1922 to Ilberg was published by Otto Kern³⁴. Heidel wrote:

“When as a lad of twenty years I went to Berlin in 1888³⁵ I was especially attracted by two men, Zeller and Diels, both of whom showed me much courtesy and consideration. There the fusion of my two chief interests — in philosophy and Greek — took the turn of a deep interest in Greek philosophy, probably in no small degree in consequence of my association with these great teachers. Of the two I was most drawn to Diels, and I conceived for him a great affection, which will continue while I live. For twenty-five years we have written to one another more or less frequently and exchanged copies of our published studies; and when I was in Germany of course I paid my respects to him in person. The sympathy between us was deeper however, than any outward correspondence. Of course, as the younger man, my debt to him was the greater; but for years I have observed that without knowing it we were almost always engaged upon the same things... His departure is a sad blow to me, and to our common studies. I incline to think that in the retrospect of the next generation Diels will be regarded as the foremost classical scholar of Germany in our time, and as one of the soundest and most permanently influential of all time.”

The loyalty of a distant student is moving. Because Heidel had never known Wilamowitz, Diels becomes foremost. The subsequent judgment that he was among the soundest and most permanently influential is the fitting tribute to Diels' achievement. The Heidel *Nachlaß* deserves attention. Professor Sider informs me: “Essentially, Heidel sees a clear parallel between Diels' scholarly interests and his own, even to the point that Heidel had begun a collection of the Presocratic fragments before he learned that Diels was also planning such a volume. Heidel took Diels' course in history, part 2, which ended with

³³ William A. HEIDEL, *Pseudo-Platonica* (Diss. Chicago, Baltimore 1896) with formulaic thanks to Diels at p.4.

³⁴ I cite the text at Diels, *KS* 12. It was first published at *NJahr* 51 (1923), 76.

³⁵ Wilamowitz would remain in Göttingen until SS 1897 and hence provided no competition.

Alexander and Pergamon; a course on Herodotus; on Greek lyric poets; an introduction to Greek philosophy (where Diels spoke of the *Vetusta Placita* as well as the Sophists, Sophocles, and Euripides). I learned all this from looking at his class notebooks in the Heidel archive at Wesleyan University³⁶.

OTTO SKUTSCH

"The facts of history are what people believe", Arthur Darby Nock often declared. Otto Skutsch records departmental gossip, jokes that students told one another about their professors. Whether the matters joked about are "true" or not is beside the point. But a joke to be effective must be plausible, that is containing the probability of truth. He recalls of Wilamowitz³⁷: "But I can tell you an anecdote which characterizes the man. One day his colleague Hermann Diels, of the Presocratics and Greek technology, returned to his office and greatly shocked, rushed out again. In the corridor he met Wilamowitz: 'Herr Kollege, Herr Kollege, what I have just seen in my office: my assistant, sitting on the sofa, with a girl student!' Wilamowitz: 'Was she naked?' The aristocrat and man of the world, poking fun at his bourgeois colleague". The historicity of the anecdote is supported by Wilamowitz' good-humoured shocking of Eduard Meyer³⁸. It reveals that when Wilamowitz was with Diels he could not be himself. He had to assume the persona of the bourgeois. This would limit their friendship. It was lasting and loyal rather than deep. Or, as in other matters, they tacitly agreed to disagree. The

³⁶ There are preserved at Wesleyan the notes (in German and English) of four sets of lectures delivered by Diels in Berlin (1888-1890).

³⁷ Otto SKUTSCH, "Recollections of Scholars I have known", edited by Anton BIERL and William M. CALDER III, in *HSCP* 94 (1992), 397. The joke was told in 1928 six years after Diels' death.

³⁸ Wilamowitz in June 1914 aged sixty-six and rector elect of the Berlin University pursued two young women up a tree at a garden party given by Eduard Meyer: see Gottlieb HABERLANDT, *Erinnerungen, Bekenntnisse und Betrachtungen* (Berlin 1933), 196-197.

anecdote also shows that students did not take Diels seriously als Mensch. In easy going Weimar Berlin Wilamowitz was closer to them.

PAUL FRIEDLÄNDER

We have preserved the letter that Friedländer wrote to Wilamowitz upon learning of the sudden death of Diels. He writes on 9 June 1922 from Marburg³⁹:

“Sie wissen wohl, dass ich mich als junger Student mit leidenschaftlicher Einseitigkeit an Sie anschloss. Von Diels habe ich wohl vieles gelernt, aber Wesentliches hat er mir damals nicht bedeutet. Wer und was er eigentlich gewesen ist, das habe ich erst sehr allmählich gelernt und habe dann auch die Freude gehabt, zuweilen mit ihm sprechen zu dürfen und seine Freundlichkeit zu erfahren. Aber das Wichtigste ist mir doch seine objektive Leistung. Die werde ich immer als nie erreichbares Vorbild preisen, so sehr ich überzeugt bin, dass unser Wille auch nach anderer Richtung gewandt sein muss.”

Friedländer was observant, informed, introspective and candid. Hence the value of his evaluation. He had learned a lot from Diels but Diels meant nothing to him in a really important sense. Diels never changed him in the way Wilamowitz did. Diels could not easily attract intelligent young students. He lacked charisma⁴⁰. How many dissertations were written under him? and why? When the student had become a scholar, he saw, as a young colleague, the abiding value of Diels' achievement and that, because it was devoid of passion, it was so long-lasting. Wilamowitz replied on 11 June⁴¹:

³⁹ See William M. CALDER III and Bernhard HUSS (Editors), *The Wilamowitz in Me*. 100 Letters between Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff and Paul Friedländer, UCLA. Department of Special Collections. Occasional Papers 9 (Los Angeles 1999), 167.

⁴⁰ See his student's assessment at REGENBOGEN 552: "...aber nie die volle göttliche Freiheit des charismatischen Menschen..."

⁴¹ *Op.cit.* (n.39 above), 169.

“Nun bin ich der Überlebende allein der Bonner, der römischen Zeit, auch meiner Anfänge als Dozent. Freude gibts nicht mehr⁴², Arbeit durch Diels’ Tod mehr als ich leisten kann. Er ist, wie Heiberg gleich schreibt, überall ganz unersetzlich⁴³. Viele werden’s erst an der Lücke spüren, was er alles durch seine Person ausfüllte. Er war voll von Schaffenslust, mehr als manche Jahre früher. Ich werde die Aufgabe sehr unzulänglich erfüllen, von dem, was er war, wollte und konnte, ein Bild zu geben.”

Fortunately J.L. Heiberg’s (1854-1928) letter to Wilamowitz survives. He wrote on 8 June 1922⁴⁴:

“Die Trauerbotschaft von Diels’ plötzlichem Tod trifft uns als ein Blitzschlag, er war hier ungemein frisch und vergnügt und hat bei allen einen sehr sympathischen Eindruck hinterlassen. Hoffentlich hat er sich auf der Reise nicht überanstrengt; nach seiner Rückkehr bekam ich noch einen sehr vergnügten Brief. Für das Corpus medicorum ist er unersetzlich, und die Wiederherstellung der internationalen wissenschaftlichen Arbeit leidet durch seinen Tod einen schweren Verlust.”

Heiberg revealingly has only *topoi* for the man. The loss is the end of the work that the man had accomplished based on his international connections, his expertise owed experience both in the material and in organization. Who can fill his shoes? There is nothing for a friend that is gone. This evaluation Wilamowitz fully approved and cited.

WERNER JAEGER

A case could be made that Werner Jaeger was Diels’ greatest student. The obvious rival would be Felix Jacoby. The evidence for Jaeger’s view of Diels is almost non-existent. I can say from my

⁴² Comparable is his letter to Gilbert Murray of 14 March 1923 on his loneliness following the death of Diels: see *Briefe Murray*, 118-120. Jaeger repeatedly observed to me in the late fifties that he now understood “the loneliness of Wilamowitz at the end”.

⁴³ Wilamowitz cites this epithet again in his memorial address to the Academy: see *KS VI* 71.

⁴⁴ The letter has been earlier published at *Wilamowitz-Friedländer* (n. 39 above), 169 n. 429.

own experience that he spoke as often of Wilamowitz as he said nothing of Diels. To his students we were told, he was "Papa Diels". There were no recollections of his teaching, no treasured mots, no anecdotes of eccentric behaviour. I recall only one story in its way revealing. Jaeger told me (ca. 1953) that Diels sent to Wilamowitz then on active service in the Franco-Prussian War a copy of his dissertation *De Galeni historia philosopha* (Diss. Bonn 1870). It was delivered to Wilamowitz as he was lounging in uniform before a campfire with his comrades. He took the dissertation, rolled it up, lit the end of it in the fire and ignited his cigar with it saying: "When I am scholar I am 100% scholar; when I am soldier, I am 100% soldier". I have no idea of Jaeger's source. Perhaps it was a student myth. What does it tell us? Wilamowitz was the greater man. He was a soldier fighting for his country while Diels stayed at home and read Pseudo-Galen. Wilamowitz was master of the great theatrical gesture. Diels assumed Wilamowitz would have time to read a dissertation. Already we have the *topos* of Diels as the hardworking, well meaning but naive second fiddle.

But on the other hand Jaeger showed no bitterness, no regret. The vita of the dissertation confirms that Diels was the director and Wilamowitz second reader⁴⁵. Also that Jaeger avoided Diels' lectures on Aristotle⁴⁶, the subject of his disser-

⁴⁵ On 6 August 1998 Professor Dr. Albert Henrichs (Harvard) kindly communicated to me "Diels' draft for the Doktordiplom in the Jaeger Nachlass at Houghton Library." The document makes it clear that Diels was director and Wilamowitz second reader. I cite it here in his transcription: "Da das Prädicat der Beurteilung mit Rücksicht auf beide Arbeiten gegeben worden ist, müssen beide auf dem Diplom genannt werden. Ich schlage folgende von dem Hrn. Correferenten und dem Decan zu genehmigende Form vor postquam examen etc. et dissertationes duas eximias tradidit unam lingua germanica scriptam cui titulus est 'Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte der Metaphysik des Aristoteles', alteram latine scriptam cui inscribitur Emendationum Aristotelearum specimen, quod quidem nunc auctoritate ordinis edidit Philosophiae etc.

Diels

[in Wil.' hand] Ganz einverstanden

Wilamowitz"

⁴⁶ See W. JAEGER, *Five Essays*, 30: "I did not hear his lectures on Aristotle's Ethics".

tation, is revealing⁴⁷. He came to Aristotle through private reading with the octogenarian Adolf Lasson. His interest in textual criticism he owed Vahlen. Wilamowitz preferred Plato to Aristotle and one feels the choice of Diels as director was *faute de mieux*. Who else could do it?

Certainly a factor was that Diels died in 1922, Wilamowitz in 1931. That meant Jaeger was a colleague of Diels only two semesters. Jaeger successfully delayed the appointment of Diels' successor for four years⁴⁸. The Diels-Wilamowitz correspondence yields little other than that Diels loyally and successfully supported his former student in 1913 at his Habilitation and for the prize of the Charlottenstiftung⁴⁹.

HILDEBRECHT HOMMEL

Hildebrecht Hommel (1899-1996)⁵⁰ was the last man alive to have known Diels personally. He participated (1921/22) in the two last seminars that Diels held at Berlin. His recollections are certainly the most positive we have. He even prefers Diels to Wilamowitz. What precisely does he report? And what was the reason for his enthusiasm?⁵¹ Briefly the tale follows. Hommel's father, the Munich orientalist, had met Diels at Erman's in Berlin in 1920 shortly before the student's arrival in October 1920. Hommel was required to take an examination for

⁴⁷ See W. JAEGER, *Emendationum Aristotelearum Specimen* (Diss. Berlin 1911). This is reprinted at *Scripta Minora* I (Roma 1960), 1-38 but with the revealing suppression of the *vita*.

⁴⁸ Ludwig A. Deubner (1877-1946) was imposed on Jaeger in 1926 as successor in Diels' chair: see Otfried Deubner, in Ludwig DEUBNER, *Kleine Schriften zur klassischen Altertumskunde*, Beiträge zur Klassischen Philologie 140 (Königstein/Ts. 1982), p.XIV-XX.

⁴⁹ See *Briefe Diels* 284 with n.1020.

⁵⁰ For an exemplary necrology of an occasionally controversial figure see E. HECK, in *Gnomon* 69 (1997), 651-6 and Manfred FUHRMANN, in *FAZ* 27 January 1996. He directed 55 dissertations.

⁵¹ What follows is taken from Hildebrecht HOMMEL, "Berliner Erinnerungen 1920-1921. Hermann Diels zum Gedächtnis. Anhang zu einer H. Diels Nachlese Leipzig 1984", in *Symbola. Kleine Schriften zur Literatur- und Kulturgeschichte der Antike* II (Hildesheim 1988), 442-451.

admission to Diels' middle seminar on Aristotle, *Athenaion Politeia*. The top twelve would be admitted. Diels graded him thirteenth. Rather than being angered, Hommel admired Diels' honesty: "Vielleicht hätte ein anderer als er, nach den verheißungsvollen Ankündigung meinem Vater gegenüber, ein Auge zugeedrückt und mich durchschlüpfen lassen. Aber bei ihm gab es so etwas nicht, und so erhielt ich zum ersten Mal ein Zeugnis seiner unbestechlichen Objektivität, die mir gewaltig imponierte, obwohl ich sozusagen ihr Opfer war" (444). He was allowed to audit the class and worked all the harder to prove himself. When Diels interpreted *AthPol* 53 on the lawcourts, the young Hommel dared to disagree with the master and at the next meeting placed his refutation on the Katheder. A week later Diels announced that he had revised his view "zur Meinung des 'als Gast teilnehmenden Mitglied'" (444). Diels brought a French work to Hommel's attention. Hommel wrote a critique of it which Diels submitted shortly before his death to *Philologische Wochenschrift*. Hence Hommel's first publication⁵². This he later considerably expanded and it became his Munich dissertation published in 1927⁵³. Diels was a lucid, patient teacher of facts. Hommel recalls his mnemonic devices, clearly a legacy of his school teaching. The students learned the Attic months by memorizing an hexameter "Hék- Meta- Bóe- Py- Maí- Po- Gam- 'Anth- Ela- Múny- Tha- Skíro-!" In SS 1921 Hommel heard Diels' Kolleg on "Griechische Religionsgeschichte"⁵⁴. He went from the Hagia Triada Sarcophagus to Neoplatonism and Hellenistic syncretism. He sometimes simplified but made a difficult subject understandable. He used Greek literature not least the satyr-play as

⁵² See H. HOMMEL, review of G. COLIN, "Les sept derniers chapitres de l' *Ἀθηναίων πολιτεία* d'Aristote" (in *REG* 30 [1917], 20-87), in *PhilWoch* 42 (1922), 721-730.

⁵³ H. HOMMEL, *Heliaia. Untersuchungen zur Verfassung und Prozeßordnung des athenischen Volksgerichts, insbesondere zum Schlußteil der ἈΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ ΠΟΛΙΤΕΙΑ des Aristoteles*, *Philologus Suppl.-Bd.*19,2 (Leipzig 1927).

⁵⁴ Best on Diels as *Religionshistoriker* is Ernst SAMTER (Berlin 1923), who, however, has little on the man.

sources but included a *damnatio* of Euripides, who had no feeling for religion and was more curious than informative⁵⁵. Hommel took it down in his notes of 17 June 1921:

“Ein Sophistenschüler, erst in zweiter Linie Dichter, ohne sittliche Maßstabe, Verfasser psychologisch-pathologischer Seelenanalysen, erkältend mit seinem nackten Realismus, letzten Endes ohne rechte künstlerische Note; hat er sich einmal allzusehr in Widersprüche verrannt, blieb ihm nichts anderes übrig, als den Deus ex machina zu bemühen; zu all dem war er ganz anhängig von der öffentlichen Meinung. Seine Beliebtheit verdankt er dem Umstand, daß man bei seinen Rühreffekten weinen konnte und Sentenzen mit nach Hause trug, mal von dieser, mal von jener Art. Unter den Epigonen finden sich heute wie damals selbst bedeutende Namen, die auf diesen Blender hereingefallen sind.”

This is polemic of a sort one does not associate with Diels. His *collega proximus* had done as much as anyone in his time to rescue Euripides from the *damnatio* of A.W. Schlegel not to speak of the dread Nietzsche, who in fact had never read the author he damned⁵⁶. What caused Diels' explosion? The use of *Sophistenschüler* as a term of reproach recalls his scepticism of Gomperz' rescue under the influence of Grote of the sophists in his *Griechische Denker*⁵⁷. An easy explanation is that Diels did not like poetry and had just passively accepted at an early age the *opinio communis* on Euripides, sc. Schlegel's. But the *damnatio* of Euripides easily implies Nietzsche and hence implies a merciless attack on what was a central feat of Wilamowitz' scholarly life. Students of Weimar Berlin must have taken it as a naive puritanism. Hommel

⁵⁵ A dislike for Euripides is suggested at REGENBOGEN 553: “Für Euripides, den Problematiker, hatte er nichts übrig”.

⁵⁶ See the late Ernst BEHLER, “A.W. Schlegel and the Nineteenth-Century *Damnatio* of Euripides”, in *GRBS* 27 (1986), 335-367; Albert HENRICH, “The Last of the Detractors: Friedrich Nietzsche's Condemnation of Euripides”, *ibid.*, 369-397; and William M. CALDER III, “Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff: *Sospitator Euripidis*”, *ibid.*, 409-430. Diels' student hearers would immediately have thought of Wilamowitz.

⁵⁷ See e.g., *DGG* 73 p.107-108.

records his reaction: "Mein Banknachbar Otto Rieth und ich, wir konnten uns bei dieser Eskapade kaum des Lachens erwehren. Aber solche Augenblicke, in denen Diels' Grenzen sichtbar wurden, waren selten und konnten bei dem, der einmal von seiner gewiss einseitigen Bedeutung erfüllt war, sein Bild nicht verdunkeln". At least not for Hommel and his benchmate. But how would men like Jaeger, Reinhardt, or Schadewaldt have reacted?

Hommel provides a rare glimpse into the homelife of Diels. After the death of his wife, Achille Vogliano⁵⁸ boarded with him and Hommel was often asked to Sunday dinner. He reports (446): "Es gab stets zum Braten einen ausgezeichneten Weißwein, für den er [Diels] selber als Kenner einstand, während ihm das Rauchen verpönt war. Die Tischgespräche waren niemals lebhaft, stets temperiert und von ihm in gemessenem Takt geleitet". One can only contrast W.E.J. Kuiper's enthusiastic report of a party of over one hundred guests at the Wilamowitzes on Saturday evening 20 June 1909 in two letters to his mother and fiancée⁵⁹. Hommel preserves a revealing incident where at dinner Diels reported a trauma of his youth. As a schoolboy he was to recite a memorized narrative but forgot the end and was publicly humiliated as only a schoolboy can be. Diels concluded (447): "Seit dieser Zeit habe ich nie mehr bei öffentlichen Anlässen ohne Manuskript gesprochen". However, when the occasion called for it, he could speak in a way that affected his hearers. Hommel notes especially his farewell address as Sekretar of the Academy in 1921 and that Diels procured a ticket for a mere student to attend. Diels would show his library with the books he had bound himself. The last visit was in spring 1922. Hommel rang the doorbell, entered and on the stairs above stood Diels,

⁵⁸ See R. KEYDELL, in *Gnomon* 26 (1954), 287-288 and especially Marcello GIGANTE, "Achille Vogliano compagno del sabato", in *Quaderni di storia* 31 (1990), 129-136.

⁵⁹ See J.M. BREMER and W.M. CALDER III, in *Mnemosyne* S. IV, 47 (1994), 208-210.

his arms spread "eine wahrhaft väterliche Geist". His student admired, loved and trusted him. What more can one ask? Hommel's report remains the best known to me.

FELIX JACOBY

Jacoby was a complex and difficult man⁶⁰. I know no memoir where he recalls his teacher Diels. On 3 January 1895 Diels wrote Theodor Gomperz suggesting that his son Heinrich might be interested in competing for a prize offered by the University of Göttingen for an edition of Apollodorus, *Chronik*.⁶¹ He was not. Presumably as second choice he offered the task to Felix Jacoby (1876-1959), another brilliant Jewish student from Magdeburg not Wien. The result was *De Apollodori Atheniensis Chronicis* (Diss. Berlin 1900), 24 pp. This was expanded and published in 1902 as: *Apollodors Chronik. Eine Sammlung der Fragmente*, Philologische Untersuchungen 16 (Berlin 1902; repr. New York 1973) and dedicated to "Meinem Lehrer Hermann Diels in Dankbarkeit und Verehrung". In a brief *Vorbemerkung* Jacoby gratefully writes: "Wenn ich diesem buche den namen des mannes vorsetze, der vor nunmehr 20 jahren den chronisten Apollodoros von den schatten zu neuem leben erweckt hat, so sind meine gründe persönlicher natur. einer anregung aus seinen vorlesungen verdankt die arbeit ihre entstehung; und während des entstehens hat er sie mit seinem interesse begleitet. so ist die widmung ein schwacher ausdruck des dankes für das, was ich als schüler meinem lehrer schulde". Jacoby, as later Hommel, was inspired by a lecture of Diels to choose his dissertation topic. Jacoby's subsequent lifetime project, the *FGrHist* which he announced

⁶⁰ He is used by the American Jewish historian, Saul Friedländer, as the *Inbegriff* of the anti-semitic semite: see Saul FRIEDLÄNDER, *Nazi Germany and the Jews. I: The Years of Persecution, 1933-1939* (New York 1998), 16. In 1933 Jacoby admitted that he had consistently voted for Hitler since 1927 and in his public lectures alleged: "Augustus is the only figure of world history whom one may compare with Adolf Hitler".

⁶¹ See *DGG* 80 p.116-117.

on 8 August 1908 at the International Historical Congress in Berlin, was far closer to Diels than to Wilamowitz. It was an Aristotelian rather than a Platonic project. At the end of his scholarly life, at Berlin-Dahlem on 25 December 1957, Jacoby wrote⁶²: "...mein alter gestattet mir leider nicht mehr, den lange vorbereiteten kommentar zu dem Ethnographenteil noch selbst vorzulegen. Aber trotz der mir immer lebhaft im gedächtnis gebliebenen düsteren prophezeiung meines lehrers und freundes Hermann Diels über den vor vornherein zu ehrgeizig concipierten plan einer 'kommentierten' sammlung der Historikerfragmente darf ich der sicheren hoffnung ausdrück geben, dass auch diese lücke in absehbarer zeit ausgefüllt werden wird".

Yet one must not forget that in the *Vorbemerkung* cited above immediately after thanking Diels, Jacoby continues to thank ("mit nicht geringerem danke") Wilamowitz, who had carefully read the whole MS and provided numerous "bemerkungen teils besserungen und neue gedanken, teils anregungen zum nochmaligen durchdenken der probleme". In 1904 Jacoby dedicated the *Habilitationsschrift* to Wilamowitz "in dankbarer gesinnung"⁶³.

V. *Diels on Himself*

How well can a man know himself? How far can historians trust memoirs and letters? There is no set rule. Control every statement when possible and draw conclusions from what you learn. There is a vast difference between Schliemann and Wilamowitz. Diels' memoirs are lost. Most of his letters are concerned with scholarly details, often *minutiae* such as *clausulae* in Philodemus, which may interest three people in the world. The point is: the opinion is the opinion of a Diels. Are there

⁶² *FGrHist* III C 1 (Leiden 1958), 7*.

⁶³ Felix JACOBY, *Das Marmor Parium* (Berlin 1904), p.III.

even three men today who may boast his knowledge of Greek? But occasionally there is the letter preserved which reveals very much of the man. I note three. One illustrates the inferiority complex unavoidable in a class society on the part of one who came up from almost the bottom. Another illustrates his dyslexia, if we may call it that, an extraordinary difficulty which he overcame to become one of the greatest scholars of modern times in the most demanding field in the humanities. Finally I adduce a great letter that reveals his ability to judge himself and to speak about it. Here in chronological order are the texts:

1. "Hier in Wien habe ich nur Hartel und Gomperz angetroffen. Letzterer ist als Bankiersohn u. Millionair natürlich fürstlich eingerichtet. Er lud mich zu Tische ein, wo er mich seiner jungen, hübschen Frau vorstellte. Die beiden mögen wol ihre Schadenfreude gehabt haben an dem vom Umherlaufen in der schmutzigen Stadt höchst ungelackten Barbar. Sie ließen es zwar nicht merken, aber ich fühlte mich doch kalt in diesen Prunkgemächern und vor dem mit weißen Handschuhen das Silber auftragenden Johann"⁶⁴.

The citation is from a letter of 13 January 1872 of the twenty-three year old Diels written from Vienna to his Bonn teacher, Hermann Usener. For the first time the railway worker's son is a guest at the palatial villa of a member of the ruling class. Rather than proud of his achievement, he is frightened and ill at ease. His host and hostess, although outwardly charming, must be greatly amused by the rude, unpolished barbarian. Diels identifies rather with the servant Johannes who in white gloves serves the meal on a silver platter. Here is a rare glimpse of the inferiority that Diels felt but overcame. Wien and Berlin were class societies where Diels in his own mind would always be an outsider, tolerated rather than accepted. He cannot imagine the tolerance of an aristocrat. Gomperz and his wife would certainly not be laughing at him. Wilamowitz

⁶⁴ DUZ I 48. The *laudatio* is found at H. DIELS, *PPF* p.V-VIII.

encouraged and approved the marriage of his daughter Adelheid to the son of a rubbish-collector (Abdecker). Wilamowitz was a rebel from his class and so was Gomperz who became a professor rather than a banker. This fundamental insecurity caused Diels to prefer work to parties and surely was a factor in his productive withdrawal from Berlin society.

2. "Kaibels Hingang, der uns ja nicht mehr unerwartet kam und für ihn und seine Familie eine Erlösung bedeutet, hat mich doch sehr ergriffen. Ich erinnere mich noch ganz deutlich an unsere Gespräche vor 30 Jahren über ihn und Wilamowitz, und obgleich der spätere Lebensweg und die Lebensarbeit mich an die zweite Stelle gesetzt hat, sind wir⁶⁵ stets in lebendigem Austausch unserer wissenschaftlichen Interessen und Lebenserfahrungen geblieben. Eine Würdigung seiner Arbeit an den *Fragm. Comicorum*, die ich in diesem Jahre wegen Epicharm genauer kennen und schätzen gelernt habe, wird in der Praefatio der P. Ph. erscheinen"⁶⁶.

I find this one of the most admirable passages in Diels' letters. He bares his soul. Wilamowitz probably had some six Du-friends excluding relatives. Kaibel and Diels are attested so by the letters. Kaibel had replaced Wilamowitz as Diels' closest student-friend, after Wilamowitz left Bonn for Berlin WS 1869/70⁶⁷. Wilamowitz and Diels had one of the most productive friendships in the history of our discipline. They were coevals and it lasted over fifty years. There was scarcely a quarrel. Here Diels has the courage and the self-knowledge to confess without bitterness that compared to Wilamowitz he was in Kaibel's mind in second place⁶⁸.

⁶⁵ I prefer a reference to Kaibel and Diels rather than to Wilamowitz and Diels.

⁶⁶ *DGG* 144-145.

⁶⁷ See KERN 37.

⁶⁸ "Zweite Stelle" means that in Kaibel's eyes Diels took second place to Wilamowitz. Correct *DGG* 145 n. 615. It does not mean that Diels was second to Wilamowitz and Kaibel, a modest third. One can contrast the anger that Wilamowitz felt toward Harnack because Mommsen preferred him. The interpretation is disputed: see W.A. SCHRÖDER, in *Eikasmos* 8 (1997), 302, where for "Diels' eigene Einschätzung" I should prefer "Kaibels' Einschätzung."

3. "Da Sie Wert darauf legen, Individualerfahrungen über die Anschauung begrifflicher Dinge zu sammeln, so habe ich zu meiner Beschämung gesehen, daß ich ein gänzlich phantasie-loser Geselle bin, was ja auch wol mit meiner *ἀνουσία* zusammenhängt. Ich stelle mir den Montag nicht blau und den Donnerstag nicht grün vor, die Monate des Jahres bilden bei mir weder eine gerade Linie noch einen Kreis, kurzum alle diese schöne Plastik fehlt mir völlig, was ich für einen Hauptgrund meines schwachen Gedächtnisses halte, das nur für rationale Zusammenhänge, nicht für die zufälligen des Klanges (Gedicht, Memorirtes) oder der Farbe, Sinn hat. Ganz ähnlich muß Helmholtz⁶⁹ construiert gewesen sein, dem man es sogar beim Sprechen anmerkte, wie er alles immer von unten herauf vorbrachte ohne parate und anschaulich vorgestellte Reihen zur Verfügung zu haben. Er hat mir das auch öfter persönlich auseinandergesetzt.

Damit hängt es wol auch zusammen, daß wo gedächtnismäßige Reihen doch vorhanden sind, z.B. die 12 Monate, dieser Besitz gänzlich zusammenhanglos ist mit dem begrifflichen Detail, das ich mit jedem der 12 Monate verbinde. Daher würde, wenn ich, wie man zu sagen pflegt, den Verstand verlöre d.h. die oberste regulirende Function, der Fall jenes von Ihnen geschilderten Paralytikers eintreten. Ich würde nicht rückwärts die Monate aufsagen können, was auch so nicht mit Geläufigkeit, sondern nur durch anstrengende Reconstruction für mich möglich ist. Damit hängt wol auch zusammen, daß ich nichts auswendig behalten kann und wenn ich gezwungen werde das zu thun, was auf der Schule zuweilen vor kam, dann verliere ich völlig das Bewußtsein über das, was ich sagen will, weil die bloße Anstrengung den äußerlichen Zusammenhang zu reproduciren, der durch keine Simonideische Bildermnemonik⁷⁰ unterstützt wird, alle geistige Kraft aufsaugt und mich innerlich zum Papageyen macht. Ich habe daher auch seit meinen Schuljahren es gänzlich aufgegeben irgend etwas auswendig zu behalten"⁷¹.

⁶⁹ Hermann Ludwig Ferdinand von Helmholtz (1821-1894), Professor of Physics and Director of the Institute for Physics at Berlin, Ordinary Member of the Berlin Academy since 1871.

⁷⁰ For Simonides' technique of mnemonics see *PLIN.nat.* 7, 89; *CIC.fin.* 2, 104 and *LONGIN.Rh.* 718 (I p.316 Spengel).

⁷¹ *DGG* 174-175.

The passage is a citation from a letter of 1 October 1896 of Diels aged 48 to Heinrich Gomperz (1873-1942), aged 23. Diels thanks the young man for a copy of his dissertation. The candor with which he addresses his friend's son is remarkable. He is utterly without imagination. He is ἀμουσία. That is he has no feeling for great literature, the theater, art, or music⁷². He does not see days in colors, nor the series of months. He has a poor memory (one can only contrast the almost praeter-natural memory of Wilamowitz, who by age eighteen had memorized extant Greek tragedy). Sound or color do not exist for him. He states specifically that he cannot easily say the names of the months backwards. This is a common symptom of the dyslexic. He cannot memorize anything and clearly he refers to the schoolboy trauma of forgetting the end of a recited speech at school. What ought we to draw from this admission? Certainly not a derogatory critique of Diels. Rather I admire all the more the extraordinary courage of a man who overcame such a handicap to make a lasting contribution to philology, a discipline that requires verbal memory, imagination, articulate-ness of its practitioners. The contribution of Diels is all the more extraordinary.

VI. *Biography as Palaeography*

The great historian of religion and comparative folklorist, Sir James George Frazer (1854-1941), observed almost seventy years ago that the methodology for studying folklore is fundamentally palaeographical⁷³. He wrote⁷⁴:

⁷² This is confirmed at REGENBOGEN 552: "D. war kein eigentlich musischer Mensch mit einer spontanen Liebe zu den Künsten der Musik und des Theaters..."

⁷³ Dr. Tiziano Dorandi would prefer "schematological".

⁷⁴ Sir James George FRAZER, *Garnered Sheaves. Essays, Addresses, and Reviews* (London 1931; repr. 1968), 97.

“In the case of authors who wrote before the invention of printing, scholars are familiar with the process of comparing the various manuscripts of a single work, in order, from such a comparison, to reconstruct the archetype or original MS. from which the various existing MSS. are derived. Similarly in folklore, by comparing the different versions of a single tale, it may be possible to arrive with tolerable certainty at the original story, of which the different versions are more or less imperfect and incorrect representations.”

He then proceeded to apply this method to the story of “The Boy who became Pope”. In an earlier paper on “Some Popular Superstitions of the Ancients”, first published in 1890, he already uses this method. He writes⁷⁵:

“To put it metaphorically, the two sets of customs, the European and the savage, are independent copies of the same original picture; but both copies are somewhat faded through time, and each has preserved some features which the other has lost. Thus they mutually supplement each other, and, taken together, enable us to restore the original with some completeness.”

By 1902 the palaeographer and writer of ghost stories, Montague Rhodes James (1862-1936), was employing palaeographical methodology to reconstruct the lost archetypes of diverse folktales⁷⁶.

I find the task of the biographer essentially palaeographical. We seek to reconstruct a lost original from scattered traces, often themselves distorted by interpolations and corrupt readings. The more complex the archetype the more the danger of distortion. What was the “true Hermann Diels”? He was different things to different people: to his teachers, his superiors, his colleagues, his students, his family, chance acquaintances. No one, whether his wife or Wilamowitz, knew the whole Hermann Diels. I fear the best we can do is examine the extant evidence and seek to establish an hypothesis that does not contradict evidence proven sound.

⁷⁵ J.G. FRAZER, *ibid.*, 129 = *Folklore* 1 (1890), 146.

⁷⁶ See Richard William PFAFF, *Montague Rhodes James* (London 1980), 133.

VII. *Conclusion*

The evidence yields a thoroughly admirable rather than intriguing man. "A dead philologist is only a bibliography". According to this criterion Diels' life was an unqualified success⁷⁷. He did not produce aperçus lasting for a decade or so and discarded after his death. He made neglected texts of importance available to subsequent interpreters. One thinks only of the Pre-Socratics, the medical writers, the commentators on Aristotle. How has work done with these sources changed our view of antiquity since 1900? What Diels wanted to do he did well. This meant years of hard work on material that was often dull. His accuracy is remarkable and so too his continued production in spite of personal and political difficulties. As a man he was amiable, trustworthy, loyal, modest and dull. He had no lasting problem that consistently complicated his life⁷⁸. I think of the Jewish self-hate of Eduard Norden and Felix Jacoby; the homosexuality of F.G. Welcker, Jacob Bernays, Ernst Kantorowicz, A. E. Housman, and C.M. Bowra; the persecution and hence the divided loyalties of Eduard Fraenkel, Paul Friedländer, Michael Rostovzeff, or Moses Finley; the Nazi sympathies that later shamed them of Ernst Buschor, Wolfgang Schadewaldt, Richard Harder, and Werner Jaeger; the SS past of Viktor Pöschl.

Diels never really shared in the Berlin social whirl and so had more time for his work. No lasting family problems distracted him. Indeed the success of his three sons contrasts dramatically with Wilamowitz' five children. His lower class origin if anything was a "productive neurosis", sc. he worked harder to prove his worth. It would not be just assumed. His relations to his teacher and "Ersatzvater", Hermann Usener, and his older mentors, Eduard Zeller and Theodor Gomperz, were amiable and long lasting. Disagreements were regularly over

⁷⁷ See the Burkert bibliography at n.4 *supra* and the excellent remarks at REGENBOGEN 552-553.

⁷⁸ See W. BURKERT at Diels, *KS* p.VII: "Sein Lebensweg, wie auch sein Charakter, war von großer Geradlinigkeit und Einfachheit".

scholarly points that were reconciled through calm, rational argument. With Usener and Gomperz Wilamowitz had difficulties. Zeller he scarcely knew. Diels never wrote any killer reviews of the sort Wilamowitz or Rohde could. He preferred to document disagreement without rhetoric. He was member of the *Mittwochsgesellschaft*. They did not seem to want Wilamowitz. World War I was relatively kind to him. No son fell; contrast his friends and colleagues Wilamowitz, Ed. Schwartz, Ed. Meyer. He never ran about giving rousing *Kriegsreden*. In fact he disapproved them⁷⁹. As Sekretar his only irritant was Lupulus, who did all he could to impede the founding of *TLL*. He had no bitter enemies but also no close friends. Poetry, music, the theater meant little to him. We have no record of a correspondence with writers, poets, or directors, as Wilamowitz enjoyed. He had some foreign friends; the Gomperzes and Heiberg come to mind, the meeting with Jespersen, the gratitude of Heidel. An uneventful, productive life by a hardworking, amiable fellow. We must all be thankful for the man and what he did and adopt his motto: "Laboremus"⁸⁰!

⁷⁹ See his letter of 4 September 1915 to Heinrich Gomperz: *DGG* 185 with n.756.

⁸⁰ For his motto see *REGENBOGEN* 553. I am grateful to Dr. Robert Kirstein (Münster/Urbanda), who has improved an earlier draught.

DISCUSSION

J. Mansfeld: It is not only a fact that scholars impose their preconceptions on the evidence. They are also "formed" by it. Es gibt nicht bloß Berufskrankheiten, sondern auch Berufsgesundheiten.

W.M. Calder III: Du hast wie immer Recht.

W. Rösler: Diels hatte als Schüler die traumatische Erfahrung gemacht, beim Vortrag von auswendig Gelerntem steckenzubleiben. Er behielt davon zeitlebens ein distanzierendes Verhältnis zum Memorieren (vgl. Kern 9 [aus Diels' Erinnerungen an seine Jugend]; H. Hommel, in *Symbola*, *Kl.Schr.* II 446 f.). Doch war dies kaum mehr als eine harmlose Idiosynkrasie; von einem "Defekt seines Hirns" spricht Diels "launig" (Kern a.O.), d.h. scherzhaft. Verwandter Natur, mit einem Anflug von Sarkasmus, sind meines Erachtens die Äußerungen im Brief an H. Gomperz vom 1.10.1896. In diesem Zusammenhang ist erheblich, daß Diels das Eingeständnis, die Monatsnamen nicht rückwärts aufsagen zu können, an die Voraussetzung bindet: "Wenn ich [...] den Verstand verlöre".

Nicht in die Schülerzeit, doch auch noch in die Jugend fällt die schockhafte Erfahrung sozialen Unterschieds, die der dreiundzwanzigjährige Diels im Hause des Wiener Millionärs Theodor Gomperz machte. Aus ihr scheint für Diels aber keinerlei Problem von andauernder Wirkung erwachsen zu sein. Wir treffen ihn später in Berlin nicht nur in höchsten Kreisen der Wissenschaft (einschließlich des Ordens *pour le mérite*), sondern auch im gesellschaftlichen Kontakt mit Personen, die herausgehobene Positionen in verschiedensten Berufsgruppen bekleideten (Politik, Verwaltung, Kirche, Justiz, Militär, auch

Wirtschaft u.a.). Wichtig sind in diesem Zusammenhang die Mittwochs-Gesellschaft und der durchaus nicht esoterische Kreis der 'Graeca'. Diels zählte geradezu zu den Honoratioren, den Kaiser kannte er persönlich (siehe die Erinnerungen von Otto Jespersen).

S. Rebenich: Das von Otto Jespersen überlieferte Zeugnis, Diels habe im Sommer 1911 die Friedensliebe Kaiser Wilhelms herausgestellt, sollte nicht nur als Beweis seiner politischen Naivität verstanden werden, sondern zeigt ebenfalls die Wahrnehmung der weltpolitischen Situation durch einen Gelehrten, der aus den einzelnen Krisen seiner Zeit noch nicht die Gefahr eines Weltkrieges ableitete, sondern der an den Ausgleich nationaler Gegensätze durch internationale wissenschaftliche Kooperation und an die friedensstiftende Kraft der *res publica litterarum* glaubte.

W.M. Calder III: I agree but in the light of subsequent events surely he was naive rather than prophetic.

W.A. Schröder: Ich möchte zu einigen Punkten bzw. Formulierungen Ihres Beitrags Stellung nehmen.

1) In den einleitenden Sätzen stellen Sie u.a. die (rhetorische) Frage "What drew Eduard Norden to Tacitus, *Germania*?" Die Antwort geben Sie *expressis verbis* in der Einleitung zum Briefwechsel Wilamowitz-Norden (p.XIII): Um den Makel seiner jüdischen Abkunft auszulöschen. "Norden sei immer [sic] der jüdische Außenseiter gewesen, der seine Vergangenheit "by playing *Wir Germanen*" habe leugnen wollen". Dagegen möchte ich betonen, daß Nordens Beschäftigung mit Tacitus und den Germanen bis auf seine Schul- und Studienzeit zurückgeht ("als ich an der Küste meiner ostfriesischen Heimat, die mir von der Schule vertraute taciteische Darstellung der Feldzüge des Germanicus abermals las") und daß ein äußerer Anlaß, nämlich eine Limesreise unter Loeschckes Führung kurz vor dem Ausbruch des Ersten Weltkriegs, zu

dem Entschluß führte, die "Urgeschichte" zu verfassen (vgl. das Vorwort), welcher Plan während des Krieges eine nationalpatriotische Komponente erhielt. Ich sehe kein Indiz, daß Norden sich mit der Behandlung dieses Themas als guten Deutschen oder gar Germanen ausweisen wollte; die jüdische Herkunft dürfte Norden frühestens Ende der zwanziger Jahre — schmerzlich — bewußt geworden sein. Es gibt überhaupt keinen Hinweis, daß Norden sich vor 1933 oder gar schon "immer" als jüdischer Außenseiter gefühlt habe; eine solche Annahme ist reine Spekulation, die ihren Ausgangspunkt in den Ereignissen der Jahre 1933ff. hat; sie beruht also auf einer *interpretatio ex eventu*; ebensowenig gibt es ein Zeugnis für einen bei Ed. Norden anzutreffenden "jüdischen Selbsthaß" (wie Sie gegen Ende formulieren). Wilamowitz jedenfalls hat Norden für einen ganz normalen Deutschen gehalten, wie sein Brief an Norden vom 15. April 1919 zeigt, in dem er über eine mögliche Habilitation der Eva Sachs spricht. "Daß wir so viele Dozenten haben, alle Juden beinahe, ist nicht angenehm, aber wie ich den Pr(ivat) Doz(enten) ansehe, ist nur die moralische und wissenschaftliche Qualität maßgebend". Hätte Wilamowitz (der hier in erster Linie über die große Anzahl der Dozenten, nicht über deren Herkunft klagt) so geschrieben, wenn er damit hätte rechnen müssen, irgendwelche Empfindlichkeiten Nordens zu provozieren? Wir wissen nicht genau, wie Norden auf derartige Äußerungen reagiert hat, aber ich bin doch ziemlich sicher, daß seine Herkunft damals kein Problem für ihn war.

2) Mit leichter Variation wiederholen Sie ihre Ansicht, Diels stamme aus der Arbeiterklasse bzw. jetzt aus der "upper working class", und berufen sich dafür auf Kerns Formulierung, Diels komme "aus dem werktätigen Volk". Dabei übersehen Sie, daß Kern von der marxistischen Terminologie noch völlig unberührt war und daß er sich hier nicht auf den Vater, sondern allgemein auf die Vorfahren väterlicherseits bezieht: Und diese waren (s. Kern 2) selbständige Handwerker, die Gesellen beschäftigen; sie waren keine Geistesarbeiter, sondern eben

“werktätig”, aber mit der Arbeiterklasse im heutigen Sinne hatten sie nichts gemein. Weiter: Der Großvater mütterlicherseits hatte eine Gymnasialbildung genossen und war Beamter (Revisionsrat der Militärkasse in Wiesbaden), ein Onkel mütterlicherseits, dem Herm. Diels viel verdankte (Karl Rossel), war Gymnasiallehrer und zuletzt Staatsarchivar in Idstein. Und das Entscheidende: Der Vater Ludwig Diels (1820-1872) war zunächst Lehrer an einem privaten Lehrinstitut, wegen seines Interesses an der technischen Entwicklung des (damals noch in den Anfängen stehenden, dann aber schnell aufblühenden) Eisenbahnwesens wechselte er 1840 in den Dienst der Bahn und wurde Stationsvorsteher (bzw. -inspektor, wie H. Diels in seinem Lebenslauf sagt) in Biebrich und dann in Wiesbaden. Er hatte den Status eines Beamten (im Range eines Hauptmanns), beherrschte das Französische von Jugend an perfekt und später das Englische gut, so daß er sich mit den vielen Fremden, die in den berühmten Kurort kamen, bestens verständigen konnte. Auch wenn dem Vater eine Abneigung gegen gymnasiale Bildung eigen war, so reichen diese Angaben (nach Kern 2ff.; 8ff.) doch völlig aus, um zu zeigen, daß Diels’ Vater Beamter (vielleicht ein niedriger) war und dem niederen bis mittleren Bürgertum zuzurechnen ist; und ich würde (unter Einbeziehung der mütterlichen Linie) Ihre Anm.6 aufgeworfene Frage dahingehend beantworten, daß Diels’ Eltern bestimmt keine Arbeitervereine besuchten oder in Arbeiterkreisen verkehrten, sondern vielmehr in Kreisen des (niederen bis mittleren) Bürgertums. Will man schließlich Herm. Diels’ spätere gesellschaftliche Stellung insgesamt richtig würdigen, so ist auch noch zu berücksichtigen, daß seine Frau Berta Dübell (1847-1919) die Tochter eines Kreisgerichtsrats in Wiesbaden war (Diels 50). Ich halte also in vollem Umfang an meiner früher begründeten Ansicht (in *Eikasmos* 8, 302 und 308) fest und möchte dies um so nachdrücklicher tun, als ich sehe, daß Sie sich letztlich doch nicht von Ihrer früheren Anschauung lösen; denn gegen Ende (S.15) ist Diels bei Ihnen wieder “the railway worker’s son” bzw. einer “who came up from almost the

bottom". Ich halte auch Ihre damit zusammenhängende Auffassung, daß Diels an einem Minderwertigkeitskomplex gelitten habe und daß er "in his own mind would always [sic] be an outsider", zumindest für übertrieben.

3) An späterer Stelle (S.5-6) meinen Sie, daß Diels umgänglicher gewesen sei als Wilamowitz, und fügen hinzu: "He had more patience and tact". Angesichts der in meinem Beitrag publizierten Dokumente — ich denke dabei vornehmlich an Diels' Brief an Wilh. Wagner (Dok. 6-7) — wird man diese Einschätzung wohl etwas einschränken müssen: Der 'junge' Diels hat sich am Johanneum nicht als besonders verbindlich und taktvoll im Umgang mit Kollegen und dem vorgesetzten Direktor erwiesen. Vgl. meinen Beitrag S.59 (mit Anm.35) und Wilamowitz, *Erinnerungen*, 284 (zitiert in meinem Diskussionsbeitrag S.83).

4) Schließlich möchte ich noch Stellung nehmen zu der vertrakteten Stelle aus Diels' Brief an Gomperz (*DGG* 144f.) über ihre beiderseitigen Gespräche über Kaibel und Wilamowitz ("und obgleich der spätere Lebensweg und die Lebensarbeit mich an die zweite Stelle gesetzt hat, sind wir stets in lebendigem Austausch unserer wissenschaftlichen Interessen und Lebenserfahrungen geblieben"). Sie haben sich jetzt nach meiner Kritik (*Eikasmos* 8, 302f.) zu der Deutung entschlossen (S.23 und Anm.68), daß Diels hier mutig eingestehe, daß er nach Kaibels Auffassung gegenüber Wilamowitz die zweite Stelle einnehme (vorher vertraten Sie die Meinung, daß Diels hier zugebe, daß nach Wilamowitzens Urteil Kaibel ihm, Diels, überlegen gewesen sei). Doch auch von Kaibels Auffassung ist hier nirgends die Rede, ebensowenig von einer Rangfolge im wissenschaftlichen Bereich (was Sie jetzt nicht mehr ausdrücklich sagen), sondern von einer Rangfolge in ihren persönlichen Beziehungen, d.h. in ihrer (Diels' und Wilamowitzens) Stellung zu Kaibel; zu beachten ist dabei, daß der Dielsbrief im November 1901 geschrieben ist, zu einem Zeitpunkt also, als Diels und Wilamowitz noch nicht sehr lange gemeinsam in Berlin gewirkt hatten (die spätere langandauernde Freundschaft zwischen Diels

und Wilamowitz bleibt hier also völlig außer Betracht). Ich will meine abweichende Ansicht noch einmal mit etwas anderen Formulierungen zu begründen suchen und der Ihren entgegenstellen: Obgleich Kaibel später, d.h. nach Beendigung ihrer gemeinsamen Studienzeit, enger mit Wilamowitz (als mit Diels) befreundet war ("der spätere Lebensweg") und obgleich Kaibels wissenschaftliche Arbeiten sich in ihrer Thematik stärker mit den von Wilamowitz behandelten Gegenständen berührten ("und die Lebensarbeit"), so sind Diels und Kaibel in der Folgezeit doch immer in wissenschaftlichem und persönlichem Kontakt geblieben ("sind wir stets... geblieben"). Daß diese Sichtweise von Kaibel und Wilamowitz (s. sogleich) geteilt wurde, ist für Diels eine Selbstverständlichkeit, die er nicht besonders ausdrücken wollte und mußte. Ich meine außerdem, daß Ihr Satz "Wilamowitz and Diels had one of the most productive friendships in the history of our discipline" erheblich eingeschränkt werden muß, ja, geradezu widerlegt wird, wenn man Wilamowitzens eigenes Bekenntnis über sein Verhältnis zu Diels heranzieht (*Erinnerungen*, 283f.): "Wir waren seit der Studentenzeit in Fühlung geblieben, und so verschiedene Menschen wir waren, *auch vom Leben verschieden geführt und in der Wissenschaft nicht nur in dem was wir trieben, sondern auch wie wir es trieben, verschieden [...]*". In den von mir hervorgehobenen Teilen dieses Satzes sehe ich zudem eine eindeutige Bestätigung meiner Interpretation dieser schwierigen Briefstelle.

W.M. Calder III: 1) When does upper working class become lower middle class? The best, I think, is Kern's "aus dem werktätigen Volk". Take it as you will. 2) Norden's attraction to the *Germania* and *Germanenideologie* is psychologically easily explicable as a symptom of his *Selbsthaß*. Compare his conversion, his marriage, his references in lectures to "Wir Germanen", his signing of the loyalty oath to Hitler; and his obedient firing at the request of a Nazi dean of his two Jewish assistants, Friedrich Solmsen and Richard Walzer. 3) I agree. With age and job security Diels became more tolerant.

J. Kollesch: 1) Die Bemerkung "to change his mind was always foreign to Diels" erscheint mir nicht hinreichend differenziert; zumindest in Fragen der Textkritik war er durchaus bereit, eigene Entscheidungen zu revidieren. 2) Heibergs Kondolenzschreiben zum Tod von Diels war an Wilamowitz als den offiziellen Vertreter des *CMG* gerichtet. Das heißt bei diesem Brief handelte es sich um ein offizielles Schreiben an die Berliner Akademie, das Heiberg — was ich durchaus nachvollziehen kann — nicht für den passenden Ort hielt, persönliche Gefühle über den Verlust eines langjährigen Freundes auszudrücken. Zumindest sollte man ihm keinen Vorwurf daraus machen, wenn er das in diesem Kontext unterließ.

W.M. Calder III: 1) The remark is Wilamowitz' (*Erinnerungen*, 284) not mine. One can only assume that in the context that Wilamowitz dealt with him Diels was less ready to change his mind than in questions of textual criticism. 2) The point is well taken. I am not certain, however, that this letter is more formal than Heiberg's other extant ones to Wilamowitz.

