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Friderich von Hûsen by D. G. Mowatt

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In summary, Dr Milde's monograph is an excellent piece of work, thorough, systematic, carefully executed and lucidly written. The author acknowledges and uses previous scholarship, but his critical mind and pioneering spirit carry him much further so that the results he achieves are not only much more refined and detailed but also in most respects definitive. The book is especially stimulating methodologically and should set an example for many similar studies to come. A word of appreciation is due to the editors of *Euphorion*, "Zeitschrift für Literaturgeschichte," who accepted this monograph for publication, attesting to an admirably broad concept of literary history. Dr Milde recently continued his studies on the much neglected influence of Cassiodorus' works with an article: "Literaturgeschichte und Bibliotheksgeschichte. Bemerkungen über Bücherverzeichnisse und Literaturverbreitung am Beispiel Cassiodors," in *Jahrbuch für Internationale Germanistik*, 3 (1971), pp. 186–194. May he find many enthusiastic followers.

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D. G. MOWATT, *Friderich von Hûsen*. Introduction, text, commentary and glossary. (Anglica Germanica Series, 2.) Cambridge, England and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1971. Pp. 212. \$13.50.

D. G. MOWATT presents us with the meat of his University of London dissertation in an extensive introduction in which he outlines the textual tradition and scholarship on it and on the biography of Friedrich von Hausen and makes a "trial investigation of one poem" (MF 47, 9). He demonstrates his critical attitude with the aid of an edition of, commentary on and glossary to the poems. The most valuable feature of his book is his perceptive explication of numerous passages from Hausen's songs; the most provocative, his insistence on a basically New Critical approach: interpretation restricted (except, to an extent, for lexical definition) solely to the Hausen texts as transmitted. In challenging widely-accepted views on edition, textual criticism, metrics and methods of interpretation, he clearly intends the book as a critique of the foundations of our understanding of *Minnesang* rather than as a mere edition.

Mowatt's convincing reading of MF 46, 22–25 (= B 8, C 22, 4–7) supports his contention that the basis for interpretation must be the text transmitted in the manuscripts, not the constructs of the editors (pp. 28–33). He points out that interpretation of the emended text may indeed be easier, since the editors frequently revised the text to remove readings they did not understand.

His exegesis of the four strophes MF 47, 9 (pp. 47–95) does not answer all the questions one might raise about the song or songs, but his reading of the first three strophes as one song and the last as another is certainly the most satisfactory to date. The interpretation he gives MF 47, 23 (= B 11, C 26, 7) *wer sol dir dine sorge helfen enden* (C *helfē wendē*) 'to help you out of your misery by removing you from temptation' (p. 90) is unlikely. In the context of the whole strophe, which asks the rhetorical question "What will happen to you, my heart, if you are to be with the lady without me?", the line must be understood together with the following line as 'who can help you [in my absence] achieve an end to (or,

with C, prevent) sorrow with proper fealty as I [i.e. the rest of me] have done?' Thus the vainly wished-for freedom from such *swere* in the first line of the next strophe is freedom from the necessity of being torn between the service of God and lady. His heart will not let him serve God properly, since its fealty, and (as Mowatt demonstrates) therefore also *his* fealty is too greatly concentrated on the lady. The interpretation of the last part of the second strophe suggested here thus actually improves Mowatt's general argument.

Mowatt's intention in providing a close reading of this poem is to exemplify and argue the superiority of his critical method over others. The quality of his paraphrases does suggest that reliance on the texts as transmitted is not only possible, but also desirable. In general, his discussion of lexical meaning is careful and enlightening. However, he can be rather arbitrary. He rejects Jungbluth's understanding of the word *swere* in MF 47, 9, which Jungbluth supports with the other occurrences of *swere* in Hausen's work, as 'Liebesleid' (pp. 66–67). Contextual considerations supercede definitions suggested by literary usage. He defines *ir wort* and *tumpheit*, however, by their usage elsewhere in *Minnesangs Frühling* (pp. 79–80). This, his usual procedure, is surely to be generally preferred. His arbitrariness is justified by the results; in both cases his definitions are convincing, but this is due more to his perspicacity than to the adequacy of his critical method.

His basic tenet is that the interpreter must restrict himself to the trustworthy facts. Any knowledge of biography, history, cultural backgrounds or literary traditions which the interpreter may possess must be excluded. In essence, he dismisses practically all previous Hausen scholarship on the grounds that it is not based on his axiomatically stated method. This does not in itself prove the superiority of his method, but merely his devotion to it.

He considers studies on form "irrelevant to interpretation" (p. 41), since form and content cannot meaningfully be examined separately. With the exception of some well-intentioned but misguided remarks on metrical emphasis, his examination of form is restricted to outlining the distribution of content in successive strophes or, rarely, within strophes. For instance, in MF 47, 33 he shows a pattern of two-line "shocks" — the third of which is assumed, since he feels *sumer von triere* to be "an unexpected, perhaps amusingly incongruous collocation" (p. 77) and perhaps for this reason no longer understandable. Nevertheless, despite his occasional pertinent remarks on patterns, interpretation for Mowatt remains essentially a matter of paraphrasing the contents. One would wish he had considered, at the very least, some of the studies by Kuhn, Maurer and Mohr which could have shown him how a proper examination of form together with content can enhance our understanding of both.

In summarizing the merits of his approach, Mowatt quite properly claims credit for greatly increasing our understanding of Hausen poems. He goes much too far, however, in saying that therefore "*minnesang* may also hold surprises. It may even cease to be a literary-historical problem, and become an uneven body of love-poetry" (p. 100). This has become increasingly more evident quite independently of Mowatt's study, which does not represent a radically new departure, as he supposes, but a substantial corroboration of views widely held.

Helmut Tervooren has suggested a complete reworking of *Des Minnesangs Frühling*. Although he shares with Mowatt a distaste for the editorial practices of Lachmann, Vogt and von Kraus, Tervooren accepts the patent superiority of the text in B and uses it as a head-text, giving the variant readings of C, which he prints in bold-face when he considers them preferable to the B version. Mowatt, on the other hand, prints the strophes in B and C diplomatically, retaining the order of the manuscripts. Thus he essentially duplicates for Hausen the editions of Pfeiffer (B) and Pfaff (C). Pfeiffer notes the pages of the manuscript, Pfaff notes all colored initials (which usually mark the beginning of a new song within the context of the manuscript) and the pages; Mowatt does not give this information.

Mowatt correctly suggests that the reprints could "be made more accurate, and more obtainable" (p. 25) and used in place of *Des Minnesangs Frühling*. To be sure, even if we add Pfeiffer's reprint of A, many poets other than Hausen would be rather inaccessible, especially Reinmar, for whom Mowatt's method of parallel texts in the order of the manuscripts could scarcely be used profitably. For the better of the two reprints, that by Pfeiffer, we now also have that by Otfried Ehrismann (*The Weingarten Manuscript* [Stuttgart 1969], pp. 1(-)310(, 1-11), which is more accurate, though not without mistakes. Pfeiffer's reprint has 5 inaccuracies corrected by Mowatt and 2 not. In contrast, Mowatt has 33, 8 of which are due to his inventing a new diacritical (umlaut plus accent grave) for those scribal superscript *e*'s not written with full quill pressure. In comparison with Pfeiffer's 7, even 25 inaccuracies are rather a lot. Mowatt has, with 26 inaccuracies, more than Pfaff (23) in their reprints of the Hausen (and pseudo-Hausen) strophes in C. Pfaff's are, however, more serious.

In summary, Mowatt's text is inferior to Pfeiffer's, superior to Pfaff's, but not very good in any case. Despite his insistence on exacting reproduction of scribal idiosyncracies, he neither gives a bibliographically and paleographically adequate description of the manuscripts nor does he indicate where such a description might be found.

He rejects all emendations, arguing soundly that those which clarify, correct or adjust sense, including those made ostensibly for grammatical reasons, obscure the evidence and present us with the editor's interpretation by fiat. He also objects to normalization, to recasting the late 13th and early 14th century manuscript forms in the Middle High German standard developed by the editors. His main argument against normalization is that it leads to emendations to accommodate impure rhymes which result (e.g. C 17, 5 *vert*: 7 *verspart* — pp. 35-38). In practice he footnotes (rather too repetitively) unclear scribal practices and mistakes (including his misreadings) and discusses most patently corrupt lines in his commentary.

The commentary and the glossary form the backbone of the edition, since the texts have long been available in comparable form. The glossary seems excellent in conception and execution. The commentary is more uneven. For some poems Mowatt can point to extensive discussions in the introduction (although the separation of C 4 from C 18, 19 is not really explained on pp. 7ff as the note on

p. 147 intimates — the real reference is to studies by Lehfeld and Wisser discussed perceptively in the dissertation pp. 40–48). Others he explicates to a varying degree and generally quite convincingly (cf. comments on BC 1–3; B 26, C 29, 6; B 48, C 50, 7). Many comments, however, are pointless, e.g. C 18, 3 (he does not know that *wan* can be equivalent to *man* [B-M-Z III 492; Lexer I 2023]); B 31, C 33, 1–2 (since the B text reads easily as “denen sie [i.e. *die huote*] nicht zukommt” cf. *Der arme Heinrich*, 11. 273–74, where the subject of 274 is implicit in the verbal adjective *geherret*). His description of the formal divergencies between B 4, 5 and C 4, 18, 19 is totally inadequate — among other things, he breaks B 5, 5–6 improperly, losing a rhyme. Several other comments are faulty or so clumsily phrased as to be unintelligible.

His unsupported tentative translation of *in gotes ere(n)* (B 24, C 27, 2) as ‘in fear of God’ is emendation by interpretation — giving *ere* an unparalleled sense to make the passage fit his understanding of the poem. His defense of the C reading in B 38, 39, C 40, 41 is one of a number of examples of editorial caprice (preference of an inferior reading despite or even because of the preponderance of evidence against it). His argument in favor of C 41, 1–2 includes a substantially correct reading of lines 1–6, but B 39, 1–2, though slightly different, would fit the context and be less awkward: “I have been unconquered and yet made properly happy by all women.” Mowatt rightly rejects the conjectures of Lachmann and Vogt in favor of the manuscripts’ *doch gemôt* (B 39, C 41, 2).

Mowatt rejects all emendations in principle, but when confronted with metrically anomalous lines, he simply emends metrical rules by fiat. Admittedly, our understanding of the metrical possibilities (and the underlying musical structures) in *Minnesang* is distorted by a century and a half of overly strict rules, but Mowatt all too frequently seems to choose the wrong rules. Thus he often apparently clings to the rule that trisyllabic bars are to be avoided if at least two contiguous syllables are long — although, as he is capable of scanning *kvmb\* der* as |x’v| (p. 155), he is not pedantic about the distinction between long and short syllables. He feels himself constrained, for example, to read *niemèr getúot*, and can only suggest violating the rule upon which he has based his book (the text is sacrosanct) and deleting the *ge-*, so that he is not confronted with an extra beat (p. 88). The most grotesque example of wilful metrical distortion is his scansion of lines six and seven in the four strophes of MF 51, 33 (p. 155) for no real reason other than to defend a dubious reading in C (which is full of them). One rather wonders whether Mowatt’s scornful rejection of Plenio et al. in their analysis of form is not primarily due to his very shaky grasp of the subject. He seems not to have relied much on those such as Kuhn, Mohr, Gennrich, Jammers, Aarburg, Heusler, H. Thomas, Kippenberg, etc., who could have helped him.

Mowatt censures Brinkmann (p. 86) for not finding all the monosyllabic bars in Hausen’s poems (Mowatt himself overlooks at least two: C 10, 7 *wîfen vñ* | — |xx|; B 39, C 41, 1 *Min lip was ie vngetwngen (vngebüden)* x|xx| — |xx|xx). However, if we look at Mowatt’s list on pp. 87–89, we find that of 28 lines containing one or more putative monosyllabic bars, only 8 are probably correct. Mowatt’s remarks on the first of this lesser third of his purported examples is

indicative of how lacking in rigor his "linguistic method" is. He scans B 2, C 2, 2 "trürèn und sörger pflègen" and comments: "It is of course possible to write *unde*, but the manuscripts are unanimous" (p. 87). Indeed. They both have *vñ*. (Mowatt pays little attention to his own text, frequently citing forms not found there.) The 54 examples of *vñ* in Hausen are, with two possible exceptions in dactylic lines, probably all monosyllabic. The full forms never occur.

Mowatt's elaborate defense of the monosyllabic bar, disappointing because the feature he ineptly defends does occur more often in Hausen's poetry than generally supposed, interrupts and dilutes his interpretation of the poem(s) MF 47, 9. Unfortunately, three of the four examples of the feature he postulates for this strophe are quite unlikely. The line which caused his protracted defense, *mit triuwen als ich han getan*, is one beat shorter than the corresponding lines in the other strophes, and this fact is quite sufficient to mark the line for emphasis. Mowatt's emphatic fallacy would have no other effect. Interestingly, however, Mowatt builds up this key line, only to abandon it in his explanation of the strophe.

Mowatt has apparently not consulted a number of articles, which would doubtless not have changed his understanding of Hausen or of his poems, since he has demonstrated amply in his dismissal of other Hausen scholarship his abhorrence of speculative synthesis, but their absence suggests that one cannot use the book as a guide to Hausen scholarship. Since it also does not contain a reliable text or commentary, Mowatt might better have limited himself to explications of Hausen poems, thus concentrating the attention of his fellow scholars on something he can provide.

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A. V. B. NORMAN, *The Medieval Soldier*. (Crowell Medieval Life Series.) New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1971. Pp. x, 278; 25 black-and-white plates, 10 figures. \$7.95.

ACCORDING to the dust jacket, A. V. B. Norman's *Medieval Soldier* "depicts the life of the medieval warrior, his training, his weapons and equipment, and his rights and obligations under the feudal system." Like most such advertising claims, this one is a bit wide of the mark.

What Mr Norman, the curator of arms and armor of the Wallace Collection, has attempted to write is a popular account of warfare and its techniques during the Middle Ages. But what he has actually produced is something quite different: a patchwork collection of unanalyzed narrative, an antiquarian's delight of undifferentiated facts and assorted other oddments. Moreover, the research is frequently so sloppy and vague that it brings into question the accuracy of Mr Norman's extended discussions of his own specialty, arms and armor. Perhaps the best way of illustrating this difficulty is to report that when, in the bibliography, this reader encountered M. Block as the author of *Feudal Society*, he was highly uncertain whether the author would recognize the typographical error involved.

Scholars have never found it hard to denigrate popular history, but much as