

WOMEN WRITERS IN THE ROMANTIC AGE



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Cover image: the Brontë sisters (Anne, Emily and Charlotte) by Patrick Branwell Brontë, oil on canvas, ca. 1834. ©National Portrait Gallery, London

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3. Writers from German Lands

German history, 1776–1848, can be divided somewhat neatly in two: the last three decades of the Holy Roman Empire, followed in 1806 by Francis II's abdication and then the remapping of the entire region after 1815 as the German Confederation. The term "German Lands" reflects the fact that Germany, as much as Italy, was a geographical concept prior to Bismarck's work to create a unified Prussian state after 1862. But like Italy, indeed like almost every national territory retraced in this volume, German lands were also unified by language, and indeed, the German national tradition has recovered thirty-one women writing and publishing in German for the period 1776–1848, a number surpassed only by writers speaking French and English.

Germany (31 writers)

Annette von Droste-Hülshoff

Die Judenbuche. Ein Sittengemälde aus dem gebirgigten Westfalen (1842)

Friedrich Mergel, geboren 1738, war der einzige Sohn eines sogenannten Halbmeiers oder Grundeigentümers geringerer Klasse im Dorfe B., das, so schlecht gebaut und rauchig es sein mag, doch das Auge jedes Reisenden fesselt durch die überaus malerische Schönheit seiner Lage in der grünen Waldschlucht eines bedeutenden und geschichtlich merkwürdigen Gebirges. Das Ländchen, dem es angehörte, war damals einer jener abgeschlossenen Erdwinkel ohne Fabriken und Handel, ohne Heerstraßen, wo noch ein fremdes Gesicht Aufsehen erregte, und eine Reise von dreißig Meilen selbst den Vornehmeren zum Ulysses seiner Gegend machte—kurz, ein Fleck, wie es deren sonst so viele in Deutschland gab, mit all den Mängeln und Tugenden, all der Originalität und Beschränktheit, wie sie nur in solchen Zuständen gedeihen. Unter höchst einfachen und häufig unzulänglichen Gesetzen waren die Begriffe

der Einwohner von Recht und Unrecht einigermaßen in Verwirrung geraten, oder vielmehr, es hatte sich neben dem gesetzlichen ein zweites Recht gebildet, ein Recht der öffentlichen Meinung, der Gewohnheit und der durch Vernachlässigung entstandenen Verjährung. Die Gutsbesitzer, denen die niedere Gerichtsbarkeit zustand, strafften und belohnten nach ihrer in den meisten Fällen redlichen Einsicht; der Untergebene tat, was ihm ausführbar und mit einem etwas weiten Gewissen verträglich schien, und nur dem Verlierenden fiel es zuweilen ein, in alten staubigten Urkunden nachzuschlagen.—Es ist schwer, jene Zeit unparteiisch ins Auge zu fassen; sie ist seit ihrem Verschwinden entweder hochmütig getadelt oder albern gelobt worden, da den, der sie erlebte, zu viel teure Erinnerungen blenden und der Spätergeborene sie nicht begreift. So viel darf man indessen behaupten, daß die Form schwächer, der Kern fester, Vergehen häufiger, Gewissenlosigkeit seltener waren. Denn wer nach seiner Überzeugung handelt, und sei sie noch so mangelhaft, kann nie ganz zu Grunde gehen, wogegen nichts seelentötender wirkt, als gegen das innere Rechtsgefühl das äußere Recht in Anspruch nehmen.¹

Friedrich Mergel, born in 1738, was the only son of a so-called Halbmeier or lower-class landowner in the village of B., which, poorly built and smoky as it may be, still catches the eye of every traveler by the extremely picturesque beauty of its location in the green forest gorge of an important and historically remarkable mountain range. The little territory to which it belonged was, at that time, one of those isolated corners of the earth without factories or trade, without military roads, where a foreign face still caused a stir and a journey of thirty leagues made even the most distinguished people the Ulysses of their region—in short, a spot like so many others in Germany, with all the shortcomings and virtues, all the originality and limitations that only thrive in such conditions. Under extremely simple and often inadequate laws, the inhabitants' concepts of right and wrong had become somewhat confused, or rather, a second law had formed in addition to the legal one, a law of public opinion, custom and the statute of limitations arising from neglect. The landowners, to whom jurisdiction over the lower courts was given, punished and rewarded according to their honest understanding in most cases; those subject to them did what seemed feasible and acceptable to them with a somewhat broad conscience, and only the loser sometimes thought of looking up old, dusty documents.—It is difficult to look at that time impartially; since its disappearance it has either been arrogantly blamed or foolishly praised, because those who experienced it are blinded by too many dear memories and those born later do not understand them. However, one can say that the form was weaker, the core was stronger, offenses were more frequent, and lack of conscience was rarer.

1 Annette von Droste-Hülsoff, *Die Judenbuche. Ein Sittengemälde aus dem gebirgigten Westfalen* [The Jews' Tree. A Painting of Customs from the Hills of Westphalia], ed. Walter Hugel (Ditzingen: Reclam, 2014), pp. 3–4.

*For anyone who acts according to his conviction, no matter how flawed it may be, can never completely perish, and nothing is more soul-killing than invoking external law against the inner sense of justice.*²

German writing in the mid-nineteenth century saw the flowering of a characteristic genre, the *Novelle*. Formally, it is a long short story; typically, its world is realistic or believable, though often with a window on the supernatural. That is the case in Droste-Hülshoff's famous example of the genre, *Die Judenbuche* or *The Jews' Tree*, 1842, a beautifully written meditation on justice and the law. The *Novelle* is based on a true story, published by Droste-Hülshoff's uncle in 1818: in 1783, a man on her grandfather's Westphalian lands had murdered a Jewish man, fled, spent years in Algerian slavery, then returned in 1805 and hanged himself (p. 68). Droste-Hülshoff chooses to push these events back two decades, and she builds the beech tree of her title into an emblem of fate or almost magical justice: the Jew's body is found beneath the beech tree, and on it, twenty-eight years later, the murderer hangs himself. The short *Novelle* contains one line of Hebrew, carved into the tree after the murder by the area's Jewish community: "When you approach this place, it will befall you as you did me" (pp. 46, 58). One may think of the German Romantic *Schicksalstragödie* or tragedy of fate exemplified by Zacharias Werner's *Der 24. Februar*, 1810, in which the element of the fantastic is more clearly foregrounded.

Droste-Hülshoff's opening paragraph follows a short prefatory poem. We begin in 1738—a century in the past—and the tale ends in 1788, a year before the seismic event that was the Fall of the Bastille, within a Holy Roman Empire still defined by its *Kleinstaaterrei*: German lands had been splintered since the 1648 Peace of Westphalia into over 300 separate principalities. This *Novelle*, for instance, takes place in a hilly and relentlessly Catholic setting, though Catholic Westphalia is in largely flat and Protestant North Germany. The two highest peaks in Westphalia are just over 2,760 feet high. Droste-Hülshoff prefers local color to painting with a broad brush; but if local color is a Romantic preoccupation, as is her contrast of inner spirit with external law, Droste-Hülshoff's emphasis on how laws affect social norms directly echoes Charles de Montesquieu's *De l'esprit des lois* of 1748. The entire criminal

2 Translation reviewed by Roger Paulin.

narrative in fact takes place in a setting where forest laws are routinely broken, with the state either impotent or complicit.

The opening paragraph unfolds elegantly. We move from the birth of Friedrich Mergel, the murderer's father, to his village, to its picturesque setting (a *Waldschlucht* somewhat akin to that of Carl Maria von Weber's 1819 *Der Freischütz*), to the laws and customs that governed the area in that vanished age. People, it appears, are anchored both in topography and in social norms: Droste-Hülshoff's main characters thus have individual traits that define them, even from childhood, but nurture plays an equal part in their development.

The *Novelle* is informed by the Catholic faith: crosses, rosaries, the Hail Mary, confession. The murderer returns (and dies) because he does not want to end his days among heretics in nearby Holland; meanwhile his mother, like the villagers, is casually antisemitic (p. 10). The tale presents as gospel the reported deathbed confession of another Jew to the murder (p. 47), before the conclusion posits that that was a convenient fiction; indeed, justice comes not from any of the murderer's Catholic compatriots, but from the beech tree the region's wronged Jews carved anathema into. The narrator here is limited, compiling data to the best of their ability, which makes for a subtle story. But what of the victim? He is barely seen, though his wife makes an appearance. The justice he receives is strangely impersonal, in keeping perhaps with the word 'dog' (*Hund*) thrown in his direction and then reused by the murderer to describe how his Turkish captors viewed Christians. The three Abrahamic religions coexist here in mutual incomprehension and dislike, a world far removed from Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's enlightened dream of tolerance in *Nathan der Weise*, 1783. Nor, amid this wealth of context, is any context provided as to why Droste-Hülshoff's victim might have become a moneylender. His Jewish universe, in short, remains occluded in the *Novelle*—a glaring lacuna in her narrator's storytelling, and resonant today.

Bettina von Arnim, née Elisabeth Catharina Ludovica Magdalena Brentano (4 April 1785–20 January 1859), born in Frankfurt-am-Main, was the granddaughter of Sophie von La Roche and the sister of the poet Clemens Brentano. Bettina knew Karoline von Günderrode before the latter's suicide in 1806 and published their fictionalized correspondence in 1840. From 1806–1808, she helped her brother and Achim von Arnim

collect the songs in *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*. She met Goethe in 1807, a friendship he ended somewhat acrimoniously in 1811; in 1835, she published their fictionalized correspondence as *Goethes Briefwechsel mit einem Kinde*. She met Beethoven in 1810, later publishing a fictitious letter from him. She married Arnim in 1811 and published some few art songs before his death in 1831, when she resumed publishing, including social criticism.³

Charlotte Birch-Pfeiffer (23 June 1800–25 August 1868), born in Stuttgart, made her stage debut in 1813, appearing across Germany from 1818–1826. In 1825, she married Christian Andreas Birch. From 1827–1839, she directed the Theater an der Wien, then the Stadttheater in Zürich from 1837–1842, moving to Berlin after 1844. She wrote over 100 plays and libretti, later collected, along with three volumes of tales in 1863–1865, specializing in adapting popular novels for the stage: Wilkie Collins, Victor Hugo, George Sand, Charlotte Brontë.⁴

Helmina von Chézy, née Wilhelmine Christiane von Klencke (26 January 1783–28 January 1856), born in Berlin, married in 1799, then divorced in 1800 and moved to Paris, editing her *Französische Miszellen* from 1803–1807. Dorothea Schlegel there introduced her to Antoine-Léonard de Chézy, whom she married in 1805. Around 1810, Chézy parted from her husband and had a brief liaison with Adalbert von Chamisso, with whom she worked for a time on translating Staël's *De l'Allemagne*. In Germany after 1810, Chézy moved to Dresden in 1817, writing the libretto for Carl Maria von Weber's *Euryanthe*. In 1823, Franz Schubert wrote the music for her play *Rosamunde*; Chézy moved to Vienna, growing close to Beethoven. She published extensively from 1804–1833. Nearly blind in later years, Chézy retired to Geneva after 1848.⁵

Anna Elisabeth "Annette" Franziska Adolphine Wilhelmine Louise Maria, Baroness von Droste zu Hülshoff, known as **Annette von Droste-Hülshoff** (10 January 1797–25 May 1848), born in the Hülshoff chateau in Westphalia, gave her first singing concert in 1820, later composing seventy-four *lieder* for voice and piano. Corresponding with

3 Helmut Hirsch, *Bettine von Arnim*, 6th edition (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1987).

4 Katharina M. Wilson, ed. *An Encyclopedia of Continental Women Writers*, 2 vols (New York & London: Garland Publishing, 1991).

5 Ibid..

the brothers Grimm, A.W. Schlegel, and Clara and Robert Schumann, Droste-Hülshoff published books of poems in 1838 and 1844, *Die Judenbuche* in 1842, and a poem cycle *Das geistliche Jahr*, 1830–1840. She retired to Lake Constance near her sister and mother. Droste-Hülshoff was discovered as a composer posthumously in 1877, though Robert Schumann had set one of her poems to music.⁶

Magdalene Philippine Engelhard, née **Gatterer** (21 October 1756–28 September 1831), born in Nuremberg, was one of the five Göttingen University *Universitätsmamsellen*, along with Meta Forkel-Liebesskind, Caroline Schelling, Therese Huber, and Dorothea Schlözer. Gatterer published occasional pieces in the *Göttinger Musenalmanach* and elsewhere from 1781–1787, a book of poems in 1821, and a translation of Béranger in 1830. Her correspondence with the poet Gottfried August Bürger appeared posthumously.⁷

Caroline Auguste Fischer, née **Venturini** (9 August 1764–26 May 1842), born in Brunswick, married Cristoph Johann Rudolph Christiani before 1791, moving to Copenhagen with him by 1793, where she met Jens Immanuel Baggesen. The couple divorced in 1801 and she moved to Dresden, marrying Christian August Fischer in 1808 and divorcing in 1809. Fischer published her first novel in 1801, but after 1820, hardship meant less time for writing: she ran a reform school in Heidelberg and sold books in Frankfurt, where she died penniless in 1842. Her novels called for equality and women's right to independence: *Gustavs Verirrungen*, 1801; the anonymous *Die Honigmonathe*, 1802–1804; *Der Günstling*, 1809; *William der Neger*, 1819.⁸

Sophie Dorothea Margarete "Meta" Forkel-Liebesskind (22 February 1765–1853), born in Göttingen, was one of the five Göttingen *Universitätsmamsellen*, along with Philippine Gatterer, Caroline Schelling, Therese Huber, and Dorothea Schlözer. She was a writer and translator.⁹

Karoline Friederike Louise Maximiliane von Günderrode [or

6 Clemens Heselhaus, *Annette von Droste-Hülshoff. Werk und Leben* (Düsseldorf: Bagel, 1971).

7 Ruth P. Dawson, *The Contested Quill. Literature by Women in Germany 1770–1800* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2002).

8 Clementine Kügler, *Caroline Auguste Fischer (1764–1842). Eine Werkbiographie*, Diss. (Berlin: Freie Universität Berlin, 1989).

9 Eckart Kleßmann, *Universitätsmamsellen. Fünf aufgeklärte Frauen zwischen Rokoko, Revolution und Romantik* (Frankfurt am Main: Eichborn, 2008).

Tian] (11 February 1780–26 July 1806), born in Karlsruhe, lost her father aged six, moving to Frankfurt in 1797. There, she met the Brentanos and Friedrich Carl von Savigny, her first love. Günderrode published her first work, *Gedichte und Phantasien*, in 1804, combining poems and a philosophical text. Her *Geschichte eines Braminen* followed in 1805, her *Nikator. Eine dramatische Skizze* in 1806. In 1804, Günderrode met Georg Friedrich Creuzer, married and ten years older, who introduced her to Indian civilization. In 1806, he informed her that he would not leave his wife, and Günderrode committed suicide. Her friend Bettina von Arnim published their correspondence in 1840 as an epistolary novel. Günderrode's collected works appeared in 1920.¹⁰

Ida, Countess von Hahn-Hahn (22 June 1805–12 January 1880), born in Tressow, married her cousin Friedrich Wilhelm Adolph Graf von Hahn in 1826. They divorced in 1829, and she lived unmarried with Baron Adolf von Bystram until 1849, defying convention. After his death and the 1848 revolutions, Hahn-Hahn embraced Catholicism, retiring to a convent in Mainz after 1852. Her novels about female autonomy (*Ulrich* and *Gräfin Faustine*, 1841, *Sigismund Forster*, *Cecil*, and *Sibylle*, 1843–1846) were popular, her later Catholic proselytizing less so. Her collected works appeared in forty-five volumes in 1903–1904.¹¹

Luise Hensel (30 March 1798–18 December 1876), born in Linum, moved with her family to Berlin at her father's death in 1809. Around 1816, she met Clemens Brentano, whom she influenced; Wilhelm Müller's love for her may be reflected in the two song cycles of his that Schubert set to music, *Winterreise* and *Die schöne Müllerin*. In 1818, she joined the Catholic Church, taking a vow of virginity in 1820. In 1821–1823, she taught the widow of the poet Count Friedrich Leopold zu Stolberg, moving to Aachen in 1827, then Berlin and Paderborn after 1833. Her *Gedichte* appeared in 1858, her *Lieder* in 1869.¹²

Henriette Julie Herz, née de Lemos (5 September 1764–22 October 1847), born in Berlin, was descended from a Portuguese Jewish family and shared tutors with Moses Mendelssohn's daughters. At fifteen, she

10 Doris Hopp, *Karoline von Günderrode* (Frankfurt am Main: Freies Deutsches Hochstift, 2006).

11 Carol Diethe, *Towards Emancipation: German Women Writers of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Berghahn Books, 1998).

12 Barbara Stambolis, *Luise Hensel (1798–1876). Frauenleben in historischen Umbruchszeiten* (Cologne: SH-Verlag, 1999).

married Markus Herz, a physician seventeen years her senior. After a few years, their salon split in two, Markus hosting a science salon and Henriette, a literary one. Her circle included Jean Paul, Friedrich Schiller, Mirabeau, Friedrich Rückert, Barthold Georg Niebuhr, Johannes von Müller, Friedrich von Gentz, Madame de Genlis, Dorothea and Friedrich Schlegel, and Wilhelm von Humboldt. Alexander von Humboldt visited and studied Hebrew with her. Friedrich Schleiermacher, a frequent guest, encouraged Henriette's conversion to Protestantism after her husband's death.¹³

Therese Huber (7 May 1764–15 June 1829), born in Göttingen to the classical philologist Christian Gottlob Heyne, was one of the five Göttingen *Universitätsmamsellen*. She married traveler and ethnologist Georg Forster in 1785. He left for Paris in 1792 and Forster moved with her lover Ludwig Ferdinand Huber to Neuchâtel. Georg died in 1794 and the Hubers married, though Ludwig died in 1804. Huber wrote novels, novellas, and travel journals, at first under Forster's name; she also edited the *Morgenblatt für gebildete Stände*, translated, and composed essays. She wrote over 4,500 letters and edited the works of both her husbands. Her novel *Abentheuer auf einer Reise nach Neu-Holland*, drawing on Georg's travels, appeared in 1793–1794.¹⁴

Anna Louisa Karsch (1 December 1722–12 October 1791), born on a dairy farm in Hammer, Silesia, was hit as a child for her *Lesesucht*, her reading compulsion. In 1738, she married a weaver, winning the first divorce in Prussia in 1745. Penniless, she married a tailor, Karsch, who moved them to Fraustadt. Here, Karsch began composing occasional poems for celebrations, appearing in the Silesian press. A Prussian general took her to Berlin in 1761 and she visited the salons, meeting Johann Wilhelm Ludwig Gleim, who published two volumes of her poetry in 1764–1772. Frederick II gave her a pension; Friedrich Wilhelm II had a house built for her. Helmina von Chézy was her granddaughter.¹⁵

Johanna Kinkel, née **Maria Johanna Mockel** (8 July 1810–15 November 1858), born in Bonn, composed her first piece of music in 1829; it was published in 1838. In Berlin, she continued composing,

13 Hertz, Deborah, *Jewish High Society in Old Regime Berlin* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988).

14 Katharina M. Wilson, ed., *An Encyclopedia of Continental Women Writers* (1991).

15 Ibid.

attending salons and making friends: Bettina von Arnim, Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel. In 1832, she married the abusive Johann Paul Matthieux; they divorced in 1840. In 1843, she married Gottfried Kinkel. Following the 1848 revolutions, Kinkel fled to London. She was found dead in her garden in 1858; suicide was suspected but never proven. Kinkel reviewed music for the *Bonner Zeitung* that she and her husband edited; her autobiographical novel, *Hans Ibeles in London*, appeared in 1860. She also composed for the *Maikäfer* group of poets she directed, 1840–1848.¹⁶

Caroline Philippine von Briest [or **Caroline de la Motte Fouqué**] (7 October 1773–20 July 1831), born in Nennhausen, married Friedrich Ehrenreich Adolf Ludwig Rochus von Rochow, whom she divorced in 1798. He committed suicide in 1799. She then married the writer Friedrich de La Motte Fouqué in 1803. She published about twenty novels and sixty short stories between 1806–1829, as well as poems, fairy tales, essays, travelogues, romances, and comedies.¹⁷

Marie Sophie von La Roche, née **Gutermann von Gutershofen** (6 December 1730–18 February 1807), born in Kaufbeuren, became engaged to Christoph Martin Wieland but married Georg Michael Anton Frank Maria von La Roche, to Wieland's surprise. From 1761–1768, Sophie was a lady of the court at her father-in-law's palace near Biberach, with a large library. Moving to Bönningheim, she composed the sentimental novel *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim*, published by Wieland in 1771. That year, the couple moved again to Koblenz: their salon hosted Heinse, Lavater, and Jacobi. Georg was fired in 1780 and died in 1788; French occupation of the Rhineland ended her widow's pension. La Roche then relied on her writing for income, traveling in Europe and the British Isles. She was grandmother to the Brentanos.¹⁸

Fanny Lewald (21 March 1811–5 August 1889), born in Königsberg, converted from Judaism to Christianity for a marriage canceled when the fiancé died. She traveled in the German Confederation, France, and Italy, first publishing a letter in her cousin's Stuttgart periodical, *Europa*, then

16 Monica Klaus, *Johanna Kinkel. Romantik und Revolution*. (Cologne: Böhlau, 2008).

17 Petra Kabus, ed., *Caroline de la Motte Fouqué: Ausgewählte Werke* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2003–2005).

18 Barbara Becker-Cantarino, *Meine Liebe zu Büchern. Sophie von La Roche als professionelle Schriftstellerin* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2008).

her first novel there in 1841: *Der Stellvertreter*. Lewald settled in Berlin in 1845, marrying Adolf Stahr in 1854 and publishing several novels advocating for women's rights, 1843–1883, alongside two broadsides on the emancipation of women. Her autobiography appeared in 1861–1862. She moved to Dresden at her husband's death in 1876.¹⁹

Sophie Friederike Mereau, née **Schubart** (27 March 1770–31 October 1806), born in Altenburg, studied Spanish, French, English, and Italian, and in 1791 was the only female student in Johann Gottlieb Fichte's private seminars. She married Karl Mereau in 1793, moving to Jena with him where she met Schiller and published her first novel, *Das Blüthenalter der Empfindung*, but divorced Karl after the death of their first child. In 1800, while editing three literary journals, Mereau published her *Gedichte* [Poems] and wrote another novel, *Amanda und Eduard*. Parts appeared in Schiller's *Die Horen*, with whom she also published poetry. Mereau also translated from French and Italian. In 1802, she resumed a relationship with Clemens Brentano, marrying him in 1803. She died in childbirth in 1806.²⁰

Clara Mundt, née **Clara Maria Regina Müller** [or **Luise Mühlbach**] (2 January 1814–26 September 1873), born in Neubrandenburg, married the writer Theodor Mundt in 1839. She wrote historical fiction, on Frederick the Great, on Andreas Hofer, on Napoleon, on the Empress Josephine, on Goethe and Schiller, on Henry VIII, to some contemporary success.²¹

Benedikte Naubert, née **Christiana Benedicta Hebenstreit** (13 September 1756–12 January 1819), born in Leipzig, studied Latin, Greek, English, French and Italian. Naubert anonymously published more than fifty historical novels to considerable praise, publishing a novel a year or more after *Heerfort und Klärchen* in 1779. Several men were suspected as authors. In 1797, she married Lorenz Holderieder; he died in 1800 and she married Johann Georg Naubert. A newspaper revealed her identity in 1817, against her will, and her reviews abruptly became more negative.²²

19 Margaret E. Ward, *Fanny Lewald. Between Rebellion and Renunciation* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006).

20 Kontje, Todd Curtis, *Women, the Novel, and the German Nation, 1771–1871: Domestic Fiction in the Fatherland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

21 Cornelia Tönnesen, *Die Vormärz-Autorin Luise Mühlbach. Vom sozialkritischen Frühwerk zum historischen Roman; mit einem Anhang unbekannter Briefe an Gustav Kühne* (Neuss: Ahasvera-Verlag, 1997).

22 Nikolaus Dorsch, ed. *Sich rettend aus der kalten Wirklichkeit. Die Briefe Benedikte Nauberts* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1986).

Louise Otto-Peters [or **Otto Stern**] (26 March 1819–13 March 1895), born in Meissen, published several novels, 1843–1887 (*Schloss und Fabrik*, 1846–1847), volumes of poetry and political articles. She wrote two opera libretti. In 1843, she became a staff member for the democratic periodicals *Der Wandelstern* and *Sächsische Vaterlandsblätter*. Her *Frauen-Zeitung*, founded in 1848 specifically for women, resulted in a new law banning women newspaper editors in Saxony. She moved the paper outside Leipzig until it folded in 1853. Otto-Peters then founded *Neue Bahnen* in 1855, which she edited until her death. She became engaged to August Peters in 1849, but his imprisonment delayed the marriage until 1858. In 1865, Otto-Peters co-founded the Allgemeiner Deutscher Frauenverein or General German Women's Association.²³

Luise von Ploennies, née **Leisler** (7 November 1803–22 January 1872), born in Hanau, married August von Ploennies in 1824. After his death in 1847, she traveled to Belgium for some years, then settling in Darmstadt. She published several volumes of poetry, 1844–1870, and two biblical dramas, *Maria Magdalena*, 1870, and *David*, 1873. Ploennies also published two collections of poems translated from the English, in 1843 and 1863.²⁴

Elisabeth Charlotte Constanzia "Elisa" von der Recke (20 May 1754–13 April 1833), born in Schönberg, Duchy of Courland (now Latvia), was forbidden by her grandmother to read books as a child. She married Georg Magnus von der Recke in 1771, divorcing in 1781. In 1787, she published a critical assessment of Cagliostro's visit to Mitau that earned her a lifetime pension from Catherine the Great. Von der Recke traveled across Europe to meet enlightened aristocrats and intellectuals: Nicolai, Klopstock, Gleim, Kant, Hamann, Goethe, Schiller, and others. In 1798, she settled in Dresden, with her companion Christoph August Tiedge from 1804 until her death. Her works include Pietistic poems and memoirs.²⁵

23 Carol Diethe, *The Life and Work of Germany's Founding Feminist Louise Otto-Peters (1819–1895)* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2002).

24 Gabriele Käfer-Dittmar, *Luise von Ploennies 1803–1872. Annäherung an eine vergessene Dichterin* (Darmstadt: Schlapp, 1999).

25 Valérie Leyh, Adelheid Müller, and Vera Viehöver, eds. *Elisa von der Recke: Aufklärerische Kontexte und lebensweltliche Perspektiven. Germanisch-romanische Monatsschrift. Beiheft 90* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2018).

Dorothea Friederike von Schlegel, née **Brendel Mendelssohn** (24 October 1764–3 August 1839), born in Berlin, Moses Mendelssohn's daughter married Simon Veit in 1783. Their son became a Nazarene painter, while the composer Felix Mendelssohn was her nephew. After her 1797 meeting with Friedrich Schlegel, the Veits divorced in 1799. Her salon was frequented by Tieck, Schelling, the Schlegel brothers, and Novalis; Friedrich published her novel *Florentin* anonymously in 1801, and the two moved to Paris from 1802–1804. Dorothea translated Staël's *Corinne ou l'Italie* in 1807. She and Friedrich, married as Protestants, converted to Catholicism in 1808, though still frequenting Rahel Levin's and Henriette Herz's salons. After Friedrich's death in 1829, Dorothea moved from Vienna to Frankfurt-am-Main.²⁶

Caroline Schlegel-Schelling, née **Michaelis** (2 September 1763–7 September 1809), born in Göttingen, was one of the five Göttingen *Universitätsmamsellen*. Caroline married Johann Böhmer in 1784. He died in 1788 and Caroline settled in Mainz in 1792. Here, she was friendly with Georg Forster and his wife Therese Huber. In 1793, Prussian troops recaptured Mainz and Caroline was briefly imprisoned. She married A.W. Schlegel in 1796, moving to Jena with him. Caroline is credited with help in her husband's translation of Shakespeare and his 300 reviews for the Jena *Allgemeine Literaturzeitung*, 1796–1799. In 1803, she divorced to marry the philosopher Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling. The couple moved to Würzburg, then Munich. From 1805–1807, Caroline published several reviews in her name and assisted in her husband's reviews. She maintained an extensive correspondence.²⁷

Johanna Schopenhauer, née **Trosiener** (9 July 1766–17 April 1838), born in Danzig (then Poland), knew German, Polish, French, and English by the age of ten. In 1784, she married Heinrich Floris Schopenhauer; their son was the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer. In 1793, the family moved to Hamburg, then Weimar in 1805 after her husband's death. Her Weimar salon hosted Wieland, the Schlegel brothers, Tieck, and Goethe. Arthur came in 1809, though mother and son never met again after 1814. Schopenhauer was the first German woman to publish books

26 Carola Stern, 'Ich möchte mir Flügel wünschen'. *Das Leben der Dorothea Schlegel* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1995).

27 Sabine Appel, *Caroline Schlegel-Schelling: Das Wagnis der Freiheit* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2013).

without a pseudonym; in the 1820s, she was arguably the most famous woman writer in Germany. After her first book, a biography in 1810, Schopenhauer published travelogues, fiction (*Gabriele*, 1819; *Die Tante*, 1823), and a two-volume study of Jan van Eyck in 1822.²⁸

Charlotte Albertine Ernestine [or **Charlotta Ernestina Bernadina**] **von Stein**, née **von Schardt** (25 December 1742–6 January 1827), born in Eisenach, moved to Weimar as a child, where she became a lady-in-waiting from 1758 to 1807. In 1764, she married Baron Gottlob Ernst Josias Friedrich von Stein; of their seven children, four daughters died, three sons survived. She met Goethe in 1774; their friendship lasted twelve years, Goethe raising her son Fritz after 1783. The friendship ended when he departed for Italy in 1786 without informing her, though it rekindled in 1800. Stein wrote four plays, one published anonymously but with Schiller's name on the cover: *Die zwey Emilien*, 1800. The others are lost, including her 1794 drama *Dido*, echoing the Goethe affair.²⁹

Rahel Antonie Friederike Varnhagen, née **Levin** (19 May 1771–7 March 1833), born in Berlin, became friends with Moses Mendelssohn's daughters, through whom she met Henriette Herz. Her salon hosted the Schlegel brothers, Schelling, Schleiermacher, the Humboldt brothers, La Motte Fouqué, Tieck, Jean Paul, and Gentz. She met Goethe in 1795 and in 1815. After 1806, she lived in Paris, Frankfurt-am-Main, Hamburg, Prague, and Dresden. In 1814, she converted from Judaism to Christianity and married the Prussian diplomat Karl August Varnhagen von Ense in Berlin, joining him in Vienna in 1815, then Karlsruhe, before returning to Berlin in 1819. Varnhagen published essays in the press; her *Denkblätter einer Berlinerin* appeared in 1830, and after her death, her husband edited her 6,000-letter correspondence along with two memorial volumes.³⁰

Otilie Wildermuth, née **Rooschüz** (22 February 1817–12 July 1877), born in Rottenburg am Neckar, married Wilhelm David Wildermuth in 1843. The couple settled in Tübingen, where Wildermuth's salon drew Ludwig Uhland and Karl Mayer. In 1847, she sent her first story to the

28 Ulrike Bergmann, *Johanna Schopenhauer. 'Lebe und sei so glücklich als du kannst'*. (Leipzig: Reclam, 2002).

29 Doris Maurer, *Charlotte von Stein. Eine Biographie*, 5th edition (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 2009).

30 Heidi Thomann Tewarson, *Rahel Levin Varnhagen* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1988).

press: *Die alte Jungfer*. Stories, biographies, family books, memoirs of Swabian life, and children's history books followed. In 1870, Wildermuth founded the children's periodical *Jugendgarten*.³¹

Caroline von Wolzogen, née **von Lengefeld** (3 February 1763–11 January 1847), born in Rudolstadt, married Friedrich Wilhelm Ludwig von Beulwitz in 1784. Caroline met Friedrich Schiller in 1785; he married her sister in 1790. Caroline's dramatic fragment *Der leukadische Fels* appeared in 1792, and she began her novel *Agnes von Lilien* in 1793; it featured anonymously in Schiller's *Die Horen* in 1796–1797, amid speculation as to authorship. Caroline's other works appeared much later, notably her life of Schiller in 1830. Caroline had left von Beulwitz in 1794 to marry Wilhelm von Wolzogen, though her family and Schiller disapproved. The couple left Weimar, returning in 1796. In 1802, von Wolzogen was contacted by Germaine de Staël, who had admired her novel. Her final novel, *Cordelia*, appeared in 1840. Von Wolzogen's literary remains appeared in 1849.³²

Kathinka Zitz-Halein, née **Halein** (4 November 1801–8 March 1877), born in Mainz, lost her mother in 1825 and was given power of attorney to run the family business. After three years as a governess, she returned to Mainz to support her sister. In 1833–1835, she translated three plays by Victor Hugo; in 1837, she married the 1848 revolutionary Dr. Franz Heinrich Zitz, living together for two years. Zitz wrote for the *Mannheimer Abendzeitung* against censorship and in favor of divorce; in 1848, she founded the revolutionary women's Humania Association. Her fictionalized biographies of Goethe, Heine, Rahel Varnhagen, and Byron appeared in 1863–1867.³³

31 Maria Pfadt, *Ottilie Wildermuth. Profile ihrer Kinder- und Jugendliteratur*. Diss. (Ludwigsburg: Pädagogische Hochschule Ludwigsburg, 1994).

32 Jochen Golz, ed. *Caroline von Wolzogen 1763–1847* (Marbach: Deutsche Schillergesellschaft, 1998).

33 Oliver Bock, *Kathinka Zitz-Halein, Leben und Werk—'Nur was das Herz mich lehrt, das hauch' ich aus in Tönen'* (Hamburg: Igel, 2010).