

Rediscovering the “other Germany”: A new edition of the works of Stefan Andres

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Stefan Andres. Werke in Einzelausgaben. Christopher Andres, Michael Braun, Georg Guntermann, Birgit Lermen, Erwin Rotermund, eds.:

Die Sintflut. Roman. Ed. John Klapper. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2007. 950 pp. €49.00 (Hardback). ISBN 978-3-8353-0207-5.

Gäste im Paradies. Moselländische Novellen. Ed. Hans Wagener. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2008. 346 pp. €28.00 (Hardback). ISBN 978-3-8353-0251-8.

Terrassen im Licht. Italienische Erzählungen. Ed. Dieter Richter. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2009. 322 pp. €28.00 (Hardback). ISBN 978-3-8353-0427-7.

Wir sind Utopia. Prosa aus den Jahren 1933–1945. Ed. Erwin Rotermund, Heidrun Ehrke-Rotermund unter Mitarbeit von Thomas Hilsheimer. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2010. 316 pp. €28.00 (Hardback). ISBN 978-3-8353-0586-1.

Stefan Andres (1906–1970) was born the son of a miller in the Mosel region of Germany and, following an aborted attempt to join the Catholic priesthood, studied German, art history and philosophy in Cologne, Jena and Berlin. Despite early successes with strongly autobiographical novels and the award of an Abraham Lincoln scholarship which enabled him to spend time writing in the south of Italy, an encounter which was to have long-lasting consequences, he found it difficult to establish himself in Nazi Germany. Following the loss of his job with the Cologne radio station in 1935 owing to his inability to produce the required certificate of racial purity for his “half Jewish” wife Dorothee, the subsequent two years were spent in a state of constant fear of arrest. The famous novella *El Greco malt den Großinquisitor*, with its study of responses to tyranny was published in 1936, and in 1937 the family finally managed to secure permission to leave Germany for the isolated southern Italian coastal of Positano which was to become the family refuge until 1950. Despite enormous physical hardship and the tragic death of a young daughter through illness, the period of “voluntary semi exile” (Wagener 227) and quasi-“inner emigration” proved to be highly productive and decisive for the writer’s development. In the middle of work on his large-scale allegorical reckoning with the Third Reich, *Die Sintflut*, Andres produced his second “master novella”, *Wir sind Utopia* as well as numerous short prose works, many of them historical texts with veiled oppositional content which were published in newspapers in Nazi Germany.

Back in Germany after the war (he was only able to regain residence in 1950), Andres began a highly fruitful collaboration with Klaus Piper in Munich. The Piper Verlag published the considerable *oeuvre* that had developed in Italy and a period of bestseller status ensued during which the writer was awarded numerous literary prizes and became a major public figure, delivering speeches on a wide range of social and political topics and energetically touring the country to give readings from his works. Andres became a particularly committed opponent of West Germany’s so-called “Schmutz- und Schundgesetz”, was an early advocate of German reunification, and a vociferous and active member of the anti-nuclear movement. However, the delayed return to Germany after the war had produced in him an abiding sense

of being an outsider in West Germany – a fate he shared with more typically exiled writers – and he saw himself as “ein kläglicher Prophet in seinem Fisch” (Manchmal im Traum, 31–32). Disillusioned moreover by the apparent failure of the new Germany to learn from the mistakes of the past, evidenced most notably in the blind pursuit of material values in the society of the economic miracle and the acceptance of nuclear weapons on German soil, Andres consequently turned his back on Germany in 1961 and returned to his spiritual home in Rome. In his final decade his work became increasingly imbued with philosophical and biblical themes, while at the same time his readership diminished as his essentially conservative style was seen to be out of step with the increasing experimental literature of the era.

Andres is thus not an easy figure to categorize. Though he was consistently opposed to the Nazi regime, much of his early work was nevertheless praised by Nazi commentators for its alleged ties to the German soil, while *El Greco* was seen as a welcome attack on the Catholic Church. During his Italian exile he continued to publish in Nazi Germany but several of these published works can be readily interpreted as exercising veiled criticism of the regime. Amidst the general post-war suspicion of former exiled writers (Grosser; Schonauer), Andres, now established as a former “inner emigrant”, rode the wave of popular success, yet became anything but a conformist, establishment figure, coming into public conflict with inter alia Adenauer. Andres was also a lifelong critic of the Catholic Church and aspects of its teaching (Klapper), and his work is best characterized as being informed by a spirit of Christian humanism which explores the tensions between freedom, guilt, evil and salvation and evinces a non-dogmatic form of faith strongly informed by Neoplatonist belief. He employs the myths of classical Greece and Rome to address timeless themes of human existence but his work always has a direct contemporary relevance, whether it be in the use of the biblical myth of the Flood to explore the evils of National Socialism or the myth of Jonah and the Whale to dissect the shortcomings of post-war society.

Conceived as a nine-volume selected works series, this “leserfreundliche kommentierte Leseausgabe” (from document “Leitfaden für die Einzelherausgeber”) aims to make available to a contemporary audience Andres’ works, most of which are long since out of print. The achievement in getting this initiative under way in these financially constrained times should not be underestimated, and both the scope of the undertaking and the timely appearance to date of the respective volumes are testimony to the commitment and diligence of sponsors and series editors, the latter including the writer’s grandson and four established scholars of modern German literature. The project is now at the half-way stage, a suitable point at which to take stock.

The series is organized according to genre, rather than chronological phase, with volumes focusing variously on major novels, stories and shorter prose works, autobiographical writings, drama and lyric poetry, essayistic work and speeches, correspondence and interviews. The titles of individual volumes are all recognizable original Andres titles (e.g. *Wir sind Utopia*).

Within the broader plan, editors of individual volumes have, in consultation with the main editors and rights holders, been given freedom to select the texts to be included in their particular volume. While the aim is as a rule to present the version of the first publication in book form, individual editors have ultimately been given a free hand in deciding which of often several possible versions of the selected texts to adopt (archival manuscript version, “letzte Hand” version or the form adopted in posthumous publications). Where items were

first published in newspapers or journals, as was frequently the case with Andres' work from the 1930s and 1940s, editors have been asked to compare this version with the first publication in book form and to explain the more important variations. All such editorial matters are reported on and justified in a standardized "Editorischer Bericht" which precedes the "Nachwort" in each volume. These Introductions also follow a standardized format, reporting on the genesis of the various texts, the (at times complicated) history of their publication, and their critical reception, offering a self-contained interpretation with appropriate notes and references to secondary literature. Comments on individual sections of text are kept to a minimum, in keeping with the "reader edition" concept and, where they prove necessary, are restricted to explanations of specialist terms, historical and mythical figures, events and concepts, as well as translations of foreign terms, most notably Latin and Italian.

It was a long-held desire of Andres' to produce an edited and abridged version of his 2,000-page allegorical trilogy *Die Sintflut* which charts the rise, fall and aftermath of a German dictator and his political movement, the "Norm". In doing so, he was motivated in part by a desire to address the numerous negative critical comments which had greeted the publication of the original novels (*Das Tier aus der Tiefe*, *Die Arche*, *Der graue Regenbogen*) and which had suggested the works suffered from prolixity, excess descriptive detail and convoluted plot. On three occasions he substantially revised the works for publication, but the Piper Verlag eventually decided not to proceed with what was felt to be a commercially precarious undertaking. Following Andres' death, his widow again cut sections from the reduced text, including the biblical myths of Noah which had formed an important element of the trilogy's allegory. Andres' changes had been made by hand in copies of the published novels and Dorothee Andres subsequently produced a typescript based on these and on her own supplementary editing. The editorial task for this edition,¹ fully documented in the "Nachwort", was to use the, in places, inaccurate typescript as the basis of the text but to check it against the author's original deletions in order to establish a definite authorized version. Besides individual annotations, the editorial apparatus includes glosses of the substantial number of Latin phrases employed by Andres throughout, indications of textual ambiguities, a comprehensive glossary of the many characters involved and a lengthy interpretation of the work, including a view of the novels as a study in Totalitarianism, resistance and "inner emigration", their criticism of the modern state and the "Bürger", their critique of the Catholic Church, and Andres' use of a complex mythical framework, of satire and autobiographical elements. At just under a thousand pages, the book is no light read but the abridged novel provides a good example of the accomplished novelist steeped in the conservative epic narrative tradition of the nineteenth century, in particular of Tolstoy and Melville, both much admired by Andres.

Gäste im Paradies. Moselländische Novellen is an altogether different volume. It contains stories which, unlike the *Sintflut* novels, did not undergo the same detailed reworkings and thus the task of establishing a firm textual basis is more straightforward. The five works that constituted the 1937 collection *Moselländische Novellen* were revised by Andres and republished by List in 1949 under a title less redolent of "Blut und Boden" ideology, *Gäste im Paradies*, which also seeks to establish the universality of the stories' themes. Andres subsequently undertook further stylistic changes for the 37–40 thousand reprinting of 1954 which is used as the basis for this volume. The editor, however, does not refer to the later re-

¹ Comments on this first volume are restricted to brief factual ones as the current author was himself responsible for the editing of this text.

publication of the novellas in 1964 (again with List) which the Marbach catalogue annotates as “Vom Verf. neu bearb.”, suggesting further amendments had taken place. The stated aim (“Auf diese Weise wurden in jedem Fall [...] später vorgenommene Kürzungen und stilistische Glättungen bewußt nicht weitergegeben. Es ging darum, die lokal-authentische Bedeutung der Texte zu bewahren und sie als sprach- und sittengeschichtliches Abbild einer Region vorzustellen [...]”, p. 343) is to be supported but it might have been helpful to clarify what precisely was being avoided in rejecting a “letzte Hand” approach and in dismissing the changes effected in later editions. The other works in the volume, *Utz der Nachfahr* (1936), *Wirtshaus zur weiten Welt* (1943) and the much later *Der Mörderbock* (1964) are all based on their first and, in the case of the first and third, only published versions; curiously there is no reference to the post-war republication of the second: had this been reworked by Andres and, if so, why should these post-war changes be rejected while those made to the original *Moselländische Novellen* are accepted as a textual basis?

Hans Wagener’s introduction to the texts is assured and informative, as one might expect from the author of an influential and insightful Andres monograph (Wagener). His tracing of the genesis of the various stories is illuminating, drawing in part on archival correspondence to establish the dates when many of the works were first conceived and drafted and comparing published versions of the *Moselländische Novellen*. The review of the works’ critical reception establishes clearly the extent to which the “Heimatliche” and the “Bodenständige” in these stories caused Nazi literary critics to welcome Andres’ work. Wagener rightly points to this enduring reputation after the war and the fact that for many years the writer was claimed for the conservative camp by ideologically motivated literary criticism. In fact, it was not until after Andres’ death that the oppositional content of a lot of his earlier writing and the social engagement of much of the post-war work came to be recognized and adequately interpreted in the context of the “Gesamtwerk” – most notably in Wagener’s monograph. The interpretations of the stories are lucid and appropriate but, at a little over five pages in length, the reader, especially students new to Andres’ work, might be forgiven for wanting a more extended reflection on the various texts. One other slight regret is that the stories are not furnished with annotations to specific items such as significant place names (“Eifelkurort M.”, “Junkermühle/Haus-Linde”, “Maroul”), historical terms (“dem preußischen Kürassier” 69, “der Siebziger Krieg” 186, “Königlich Deutsche Legion” 18) and mythical/religious terms (“des neuen Kosmokrators” 298, “Orakel” 315, “Te Deum laudamus” 302) or items of Mosel dialect/colloquialisms (“ein Pörzchen Viez” 267, “Faoßbocken” 68, “staatser” 34) although one story, *Die Vermummten*, retains the short glossary originally appended to the story by Andres himself. This would seem to be out of step with the other volumes in the series. Finally, there is a minor typo (p. 343) relating to *Der Mörderbock* which is wrongly dated 1962, when, as the editor makes clear elsewhere, it in fact first appeared in the 1964 collection *Das goldene Gitter*. However, overall the volume is expertly edited and brings to the attention of contemporary readers a number of Andres’ less well known novellas.

The 31 stories published in the third volume under the title *Terrassen im Licht* present their editor with a greater challenge than that of the *Gäste im Paradies* novellas. Many were published on more than one occasion, sometimes following numerous minor changes by the author. The decision to use the first publication in each case as the textual basis for the selection is justified by the editor, Dieter Richter, on two grounds: first, the inaccessibility of the “Urtexte”, usually annotated typescripts produced from Andres’ manuscripts by Dorothee Andres, and second, because the versions published under National Socialism (e.g. in the *Völkischer Beobachter*) provide crucial insights into the situation of the author in his hybrid

exile/“inner emigration” and demonstrate the art of what was possible in these circumstances. Four of the stories (*Das tönerne Pferd*, *Die Erben des Lebens*, *Arquà Petrarca* and *Fräulein Melitta*) are published here for the first time and are taken from typescripts found in the Andres “Nachlass” in the Deutsches Literaturarchiv, Marbach.

The notes provided on each story explain the work’s genesis, chart their publication history and provide background information on proper names, specialist terms and foreign, especially Italian and Latin, phrases. The publication history is supplemented by a seven-page chronological bibliography of the various publications of Andres’ Italian stories and essays. Richter’s succinct and highly readable introductory essay explores the different genres employed by Andres in his short fiction, including “Anekdoten”, “Märchen” and “Legenden” but while examples are given of each, the terms are not explained or differentiated from each other sufficiently. The editor is on surer ground when he writes about the single most consistent and significant feature of Andres’ travel essays and descriptions of Italian landscape, people and culture: the way these works lead from the external natural world to the inner human realm to comment on key questions of existence. Thus, in *Pompejanische Betrachtungen* (1943), it is claimed that what man most seeks insight into is himself; like Pompei, man is “eine verschüttete, ganz zugedekte und sogar vielgeschichtete Stadt – und wir gehen und graben und suchen und betasten die Gegenstände der andern [...], um unseres eigenen Wesens habhaft zu werden” (72). This, in turn, is linked to our need for friendship: “[der Mensch] gräbt im andern nach seinem eigenen Bild [...]. In uns selber allein finden wir uns nicht!” (73). In other short prose works gathered here, Andres touches on a (surely in part autobiographical) theme that recurs frequently in his longer prose: the civilized or artistic individual, usually from the city, who seeks to appropriate a simpler, more natural and at times archaic way of life in the rural south and the existential crisis this occasions in the “Zivilisationsflüchtling”. Richter also provides an informative section on the role of Positano, Andres’ southern Italian refuge, and its realization in his fiction as “Città morta”, its mythical significance for Andres as his personal Noah’s Ark, and the autobiographical links with the figure of Clemens in *Die Sintflut*.

Richter points to Andres’ use of the historical anecdote in the years 1935–1949 to portray events set in politically turbulent times, most notably the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. He also refers at some length, under the heading “Das Wagnis des Politischen”, to Andres’ narrative publications in Nazi newspapers as examples of a “verdeckte Schreibweise” (Sternberger). However, it would have been desirable for the discussion to demonstrate more fully, through individual illustrations, how seemingly apolitical historical narratives served to offer contemporary readers “Gegenbilder” to National Socialist reality or indeed to provide indirect commentary on contemporary events. A slight editorial curiosity in this regard is that the “Nachwort” offers interpretations of two stories (*Der Palast des Marquis* (1942) and *Klavichord und Schachbrett* (1943)) which are not included in this collection but rather appear in the subsequent volume where they are not analyzed in the same depth. However, these minor quibbles apart, this is a well chosen and expertly edited collection which serves as an excellent introduction to the writer’s Italian short fiction and displays to good effect Andres’ descriptive and narrative talents.

The fourth volume in the series, *Wir sind Utopia*, is particularly significant in that it reflects current research trends in Andres studies and brings together for the first time many of the short prose works the writer published in German newspapers during the Nazi years, affording an insight into the nature of camouflaged writing within the “inner emigration”. The volume is divided into two principal sections. The first is devoted to the two so-called

“Meisternovellen”: *El Greco malt den Großinquisitor* (1936), which reached 36 editions as a “Feldpostausgabe” during the war and portrays in historical guise the conflict between despotic Church and state on the one hand, and individual free will on the other; and *Wir sind Utopia* (1942), set against the background of the Spanish Civil War, with its in part theological exploration of human responses to tyranny and the guilt experienced by those who had the opportunity but failed to offer resistance, a work which was published and then quickly banned in Nazi Germany but by the mid-1950s had achieved record post-war sales in excess of 150,000. The second section contains “Erzählungen, Anekdoten, Legenden und Parabeln” dating from the period 1935–1943 and all published in one of the following: *Die Neue Rundschau* (DNR), *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* (MNN), *Kölnische Zeitung* (KöZ), *Frankfurter Zeitung* (FZ), *Völkischer Beobachter* (VB) or *Krakauer Zeitung* (KZ).

The total of 29 prose works are supported by detailed notes, as in the preceding volume, a list of first publication details and an extensive and insightful “Nachwort”. The text base is first publication, with the minor exception of *Wir sind Utopia* which appears in its book version of 1943 rather than the original serialized version in the *FZ* of 1942. This editorial principle applies to all the short prose works published in journals and newspapers too, since subsequent reprintings in other newspapers only feature minor changes. In general, this is not problematic but in a couple of cases Andres made minor but significant amendments to stories which originally appeared in the *MNN* for subsequent publication in the *VB* or the *KZ* and these changes reflect the author’s desire to strengthen the potential oppositional content of his stories. Thus, criticism of the ruler in *Der König im Gedränge* (1937) is stronger in the version published in the Nazi press and there are references to “politische Artikelschreiber” and the threat of prison for the oppositionally minded (252). Similarly, the reworked text of the anecdote *Die Instruktion* (*MNN* 1937, *KZ* 1940 under the title *Der Tod als Instrukteur*) refers to the collapse of the hero’s “Hoffnung auf die Zukunft seines Landes” which serves to move his individual protest against his cowardly senior officer to a more general level, one applicable to the situation of Andres’ contemporaries (253). Given the focus of the volume on the political significance of the stories of the 1933–1945 period, one wishes at times to see the revised versions of such texts, in so far as they were published in Nazi Germany, however the editors are careful to record all such significant discrepancies in their notes on the texts and so the reader is provided with sufficient information to make a judgement on the oppositional content of these works.

The editors argue that in Nazi Germany the short story served the purpose of “Unterhaltung mit Weltanschauung” as the authorities believed the entertainment pages were frequently a more effective means of propaganda than lead articles. Newspaper editors’ demand for such material served Andres well at a time when the loss of regular income from his radio job meant he was dependent on literary commissions, and his conception of the anecdote (“dramatische, scharfpontierte Prosa mit einigermaßen didaktischem Einschlag”, 297) fitted the editorial bill perfectly. That the author’s didactic aims had little in common with those of the regime makes his frequent appearance in print all the more striking; while the tacit understanding with liberal minded organs such as the *FZ* can be understood, the publication of works with oppositional sub-text in the party organ *VB* and in the newspaper of the Generalgouvernement, the *KZ*, is a remarkable but still little known fact of “inner emigrant” literary activity. Thus, in *Vom dauerhaften Grabe*, a parable (a favoured genre for Andres at this time, with its implicit message to the critical reader to read the text with one eye on its contemporary relevance), the reader is presented with the discovery of a pharaoh’s reconceptualization of the cult of death and a rejection of the supposedly “eternal” pyramid graves, and is encouraged to read the story as a debunking of the Nazi death cult and the

latter's attempt to immortalize worldly deeds in bombastic architecture (e.g. the planned "Totenburgen"). Similarly, many of the short historical works, for which Andres drew on a common source, Johann Konrad Friederich's memoirs (Berger), present an alternative world view to that prevailing in the Nazi present, encompassing: the promotion of a Christian sense of justice in *Die Brücke der Gerechtigkeit* (VB 1937); the championing of self-denial and love of one's neighbour in *Klavichord und Schachbrett* (MNN 1937, KZ 1943); the critique of blind faith in technological progress as it destroys human freedom and free will, in *Das Trockendock* (MNN 1936, KZ 1942); and a soldier's revolt against blind obedience to tyrannical rule in the aforementioned *Die Instruktion*. These short prose works more generally hold up for readers in contemporary Germany an alternative morality; for example, the humane treatment of an epileptic in *Die Stelzen* (FZ 1943) with its implied rejection of Nazi euthanasia practices; the clear rejection of earthly utopias in *Die Parabel vom Ziel und der Sehnsucht* (MNN 1936); and the deceitful mythologization of a fist-fighter who flouts the rules of the Olympic Peace in the story *Der Letzte der Heroen* (KöZ 1940) with its implied criticism of the Nazi cult of boxing.

All these works shed a fascinating light on one of the more prolific members of the publishing literary "inner emigration" and reveal the at times surprisingly extensive public self-distancing from officially prescribed values that was possible in Nazi Germany. What is clear from the selection presented here, however, is the challenging nature of the broad field of cultural reference, including Ancient Greece, Greek and Latin mythology, early Christian mythology, and French, Italian and Spanish history, which presupposes a high level of education in the reader. The "Nachwort" provides limited but sufficient interpretative guidance to help readers find their way through the at times apparently obscure or escapist narrative settings and themes, and to help them recreate, however imperfectly, the likely reception of the stories by suitably disposed critical readers in Nazi Germany, the *sine qua non* of any oppositional literary activity. Directly relevant to this are comments Andres makes in an essay which astonishingly was published twice in Nazi Germany (KöZ 1941, KZ 1943) and yet is remarkably free from the elaborate camouflage of the stories, and which discusses, amongst other things, the roles of the reader and writer of historical fiction – *the genre of the "inner emigration"*; he writes:

Die vor den Zeitgeschennissen ratlos gewordenen Köpfe suchen, da ihnen der Zugang zum eigentlichen Studium der Geschichte fehlt, das Ersatzmittel des historischen Romans, um aus dem Vergangenen Gesetz und Maß des Gegenwärtigen herüberzuholen. Jeder dieser Leser, und selbst der einfältigste, bekommt, über seinen historischen Roman gebeugt, plötzlich den doppelgesichtigen Januskopf: er sieht das Vergangene und denkt an das Heute und sorgt sich um das Zukünftige. Und der Historienschreiber hat seinen Roman ebenfalls als kleinerer oder größerer Janus geschrieben. Er hatte ganz bestimmte Absichten, er zeigt Beispiele und gibt Aufklärungen zum Heute, und er nähert sich dabei häufig einer Art historischen Schlüsselromans. (197)

The mid-term report on the *Werke in Einzelausgaben* is thus very positive and over the next four years one can look forward to the remaining volumes in the series, currently constituted as follows: *Der Knabe im Brunnen* (autobiographical novel and writings), *Tanz durchs Labyrinth* (poems and drama), *Der Dichter in dieser Zeit* (social and political writings and speeches), *Lieber Freund – Lieber Denunziant* (letters and interviews) and *Die Versuchung des Synesios* (posthumous novel). Editors, as with the first four volumes, are in each case recognized Andres scholars with specialist knowledge of the respective genre/texts. While the

series has no aspiration to be “the complete works” and while the general editors have faced difficult decisions with regard to selection, there are omissions which are perhaps to be regretted. The four so-called “Italian novels” would have taken up a lot of space and are not amongst the most successful of Andres’ prose work, however the significance of his novel *Die Hochzeit der Feinde* (1946) which, written in the 1930s, embodies a spirit of German-French reconciliation and thus could not be published before the war, is a work that typifies the author’s Christian humanist standpoint, and some might regret it not being made available once more. Similarly, the collection lacks a volume devoted to Andres’ religious writings, both theological and fictional, and this might have been an opportunity to make accessible to a new readership the highly regarded Noah legends which had formed part of the original *Sintflut* trilogy but which were omitted from the new version. The open-ended nature of the series may mean this omission can at some point be rectified.

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