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**The 1822 Congress of Verona
and European Literature:
Liberalism and Philhellenism
in Julius Mosen's
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James Vigus

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**THE 1822 CONGRESS OF VERONA
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LIBERALISM AND PHILHELLENISM
IN JULIUS MOSEN'S *DER CONGRESS VON VERONA*
(1842)**

James VIGUS (*Queen Mary University of London*)
j.vigus@qmul.ac.uk

RIASSUNTO: Questo saggio presenta il romanzo storico *Der Congress von Verona* (1842) di Julius Mosen, il trattamento letterario più profondo e sostanziale di questo evento politico, in confronto con le poesie di Lord Byron e Thomas Moore, e ne ricostruisce la contrastata ricezione. Sebbene scriva come un liberale e un anticapitalista contrario alla restaurazione europea in vigore dal 1815, Mosen tratta le idee politiche di quasi tutti i suoi personaggi con un certo grado di satira, in parte ricorrendo a nozioni di carattere nazionale. Fa eccezione la causa del filellenismo: presentando in una luce favorevole il movimento che era riuscito a ottenere l'indipendenza greca, Mosen raccomanda implicitamente questo orientamento ai lettori.

ABSTRACT: This essay argues that Julius Mosen's historical novel *Der Congress von Verona* (1842) is the deepest and most substantial literary treatment of this political event. The essay compares the novel with the poems of Lord Byron and Thomas Moore, provides an account of the plot, and reconstructs the conflicted reception of Mosen's work. Although he writes as a liberal and anti-capitalist broadly opposed to the European restoration regime in place from 1815, Mosen treats the political ideas of almost all his characters with some degree of satire, partly by deploying notions of national character. The exception is the cause of philhellenism: by presenting in a favourable light the movement which had succeeded in achieving Greek independence, Mosen implicitly recommends this form of mentality to his readership.

PAROLE CHIAVE: Julius Mosen, Restaurazione, filellenismo, Congresso di Verona, Friedrich von Gentz, Lord Byron, Thomas Moore

KEY WORDS: Julius Mosen, Restoration, Philhellenism, Congress of Verona, Friedrich von Gentz, Lord Byron, Thomas Moore

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When a man hath no freedom to fight for at home,
Let him combat for that of his neighbours;
Let him think of the glories of Greece and of Rome,
And get knocked on the head for his labours.¹

Introduction

This article compares the work of three politically liberal authors who were critical of the restoration regime, the term I will use to denote the new European order that lasted from the 1814-15 Congress of Vienna until the end of the German *Vormärz* period, sometimes alternatively known as *Restaurationszeit*, in 1848. These were Thomas Moore, George Gordon Lord Byron, and Julius Mosen. All three focused on the 1822 Congress of Verona. In artistic and creative terms, indeed, the Congress of Verona was not just an occasion for bespoke creation, performance, and spectatorship. It also elicited responses from several writers, including the French plenipotentiary François-René de Chateaubriand, and the disappointed German nationalist Joseph Görres, who embraced the authority of the Pope while vehemently rejecting that of the Holy Alliance.² Chateaubriand's *The Congress of Verona* (1838) was an important source for Mosen,

- 1 Lord Byron in a letter to Thomas Moore, 5 November 1820, quoted in David Roessel, *In Byron's Shadow: Modern Greece in the English and American Imagination*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 29.
- 2 See Joseph von Görres, *Die heilige Allianz und die Völker, auf dem Congresse von Verona*, Stuttgart, J. B. Metzler, 1822; François-René de Chateaubriand, *The Congress of Verona: Comprising a Portion of Memoirs of his Own Times*, 2 vols., London, R. Bentley, 1838. All translations from the German are my own unless otherwise stated.

who also mentions Görres, as we will see. But Moore, Byron, and Mosen, a trio brought together in a musical setting by Robert Schumann, all approached the topic very differently from either Chateaubriand or Görres.³ These links are not coincidental. The two British poets, friends with each other, were famous in Germany: for example, the philhellene poet Wilhelm Müller presented Byron and Moore (along with Sir Walter Scott) as representing the three great tendencies of contemporary British poetry in 1823.⁴ My focus is primarily on Mosen, whose now-forgotten novel *Der Congress von Verona* created a certain stir on first publication in 1842. My analysis builds on a recovery of its reception as well as its content.

As Paul Hamilton has suggested, art aspiring to large-scale political change emerged not only in the wake of the French Revolution but also in the circumstances of its defeat. For «Restoration implies an imaginative opportunity for political change [...] comparable with Revolution»; and, conversely, «the idea of a proper Restoration, as opposed to a reactionary settlement, is often embedded in the idea of Revolution».⁵ I argue that Mosen's novel exemplifies this principle. It does so in a complex fashion, but primarily through its valorization of the cause of philhellenism. The substantiveness of Mosen's treatment of the 1822 Congress and the political and social atmosphere in European societies of that time will emerge through comparison with the earlier poems of Moore and Byron, with which I begin.

Moore and Byron, satirists of the Holy Alliance and the Congress of Verona

The Irish poet Thomas Moore, whom Müller termed a patriotic lyric poet, had in common with Mosen (and Müller, too) a successful career in re-elaborating and composing folk songs. He followed up his witty satire

3 See Robert Schumann, *Myrthen: Liederkreis von Göthe, Rückert, Byron, Th. Moore, Heine, Burns, & J. Mosen: Für Gesang und Pianoforte: Opus 25*, 2nd edition, Leipzig, Fr. Kistner, 1840.

4 See Wilhelm Müller, *Über die Gedichte des Thomas Moore*, «Hermes oder kritisches Jahrbuch der Literatur», XX, vol. 4, 1823, pp. 184-211.

5 Paul Hamilton, *Future Restoration*, in Sophie Laniel-Musitelli and Céline Sabiron (eds.), *Romanticism and Time: Literary Temporalities*, Cambridge, Open Book Publishers, 2021, pp. 3-24, paragraph 6, <https://books.openedition.org/obp/19633?lang=en> (last access: 01.07.2024).

on post-1815 British travellers to the Continent, *The Fudge Family in Paris* (1818), with a pseudonymous collection promoting the cause of European liberalism and dedicated to Byron, which included *Fables for the Holy Alliance*.⁶ The underlying movement of ideas through the early poems is as follows: Moore, characteristically for writers critical of the Holy Alliance and the Congress dispensation, first excoriates the restoration regime and then invests hope for change in the Greek rebellion against Ottoman rule.

The volume's epigraph proclaims the desire, quoting Dryden's translation of Virgil, to «clip the wings | Of these high-flying, arbitrary Kings». The first poem in the volume is titled «Fable I. The Dissolution of the Holy Alliance. A Dream». In anacreontic style, using a comic type of ballad meter, the poet presents an ironic dream-vision of an ice-palace resembling that of Empress Anna Ioannovna in St Petersburg (1739-40). Moore's mockery turns on the predilection for ceremonial dancing – especially the fashionable waltz – among the post-Napoleonic rulers, and most famously tsar Alexander I of Russia, much in evidence from the 1814-15 Congress of Vienna to the 1822 Congress of Verona and beyond:

In this said Palace, furnish'd all
And lighted as the best on land are,
I dreamt there was a splendid Ball,
Giv'n by the Emperor Alexander,
To entertain, with all due zeal,
Those holy gentlemen, who've shown a
Regard so kind for Europe's weal,
At Troppau, Laybach, and Verona.⁷

The final line of this quotation names the sequence of three conferences in as many years (1820, 1821, 1822), at which the Holy Alliance, established in 1815 and at that stage consisting of the powerful monarchies of Austria, Prussia, and Russia, consolidated its power. Feminine rhymes («land are - Alexander»; «shown a - Verona») create a ludicrous effect, a technique pioneered by Byron, as was the use of ridiculous rhymes with non-English words, such as «Waterloo» and the half-French «save qui

6 Thomas Brown [i.e. Thomas Moore], *Fables for the Holy Alliance, Rhymes on the Road &c &c.*, London, Longman, 1823.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 2.

peut».⁸ An irregular stanza form, too, reflects Moore's pose as «Thomas Brown», a «pococurante» (Italian for careless or indifferent) author. Moore's political message, however, lies precisely in the parallel between the strenuously achieved sense of light frivolity and the absurdity, as Moore sees it, of the rulers' conduct.⁹ The ice palace is a metaphor for the restoration regime's power structure, superficially spectacular yet spectacularly flimsy. Encouraged by the prediction of his pietist advisor Juliana Krüdener that there was no danger, the Tsar in the poet's dream capered and waltzed on. Prussia, «though to slippery ways | So us'd, was cursedly near tumbling»; yet Russia and Austria jointly demanded dancing a fandango «to an Italian air», possibly alluding to the location of Verona for the 1822 Congress.¹⁰ The poet muses: «Why, why will monarchs caper so | In palaces without foundations?»¹¹ The famously obese King Louis XVIII of France turns into a fondu, while the river produced by the melted ice glides on «Happy as an enfranchised bird», suggesting the general liberation that would ensue from a collapse of the restoration regime.¹² The poem ends inconsequentially, in true 'pococurante' style: «there's my dream—And Madame Krudener, the she-prophet, | May make just what she pleases of it».¹³ Moore's verses specifically target Alexander, «That mighty Northern salamander», «Whose icy touch, felt all about, | Puts every fire of Freedom out».¹⁴ Moore's second fable relates that once upon a time kings pretended that they were beautiful and the people ugly, until mirrors became widespread and everyone saw that there was no inherent difference.¹⁵ Then, in Fable III, the flame of liberty is imagined as passing from nation to nation – specifically from Spain to Naples to Greece, whence (classically) it originated.¹⁶ From the critique of the restoration regime emerges the spirit of philhellenism.

In *The Age of Bronze*, a long, satirical poem also published in 1823, Byron adopts a Juvenalian mode, taking on the pose of Diogenes the Cyn-

8 *Ibid.*, p. 5.

9 I adapt this thought from Paul Hamilton's re-evaluation of Moore: *Thomas Moore and the National Lyric*, chapter 5 of his *Orientation in European Romanticism: The Art of Falling Upwards*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2023, pp. 110-130.

10 Thomas Brown [i.e. Thomas Moore], *op. cit.*, p. 4.

11 *Ibid.*, p. 5.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 7.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 8.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 30.

15 See *Ibid.*, pp. 9-16.

16 See *Ibid.*, pp. 17-21.

ic to denounce the repressiveness he saw embodied in the Congress of Verona. Byron's heavy sarcasm contrasts with Moore's predominant tone of light amusement. Having complained that the present is an age of bronze by contrast to the classical golden age (or even the 1790s), Byron endorses the Spanish revolutionary cause, then exclaims with mock wonder at the proceedings at Verona: «But lo! a Congress!».¹⁷ Byron then condemns the leaders of the Holy Alliance as more irrational than Egyptian deities, «for these, more hungry, must have something more, | The power to bark and bite to toss and gore».¹⁸ This sets up Byron's next «hit» (his word)¹⁹ at the Congress, the assertion that Verona has housed far greater people than these greedy, shallow-minded rulers. With an eye on his own Diogenes-like condition of exile, Byron recalls the time of Dante and specifically Dante's Veronese patron, asking ironically:

for what was "Dog the Great",
 "Can Grande" (which I venture to translate)
 To these sublimer Pugs?²⁰

Like Moore in *Fables for the Holy Alliance*, Byron takes aim at tsar Alexander I above all, ironically contrasting him with Alexander the Great and exposing his opposition to «true Liberty» as well as his personal vanity:²¹

Resplendent sight! behold the Coxcomb Czar,
 The Autocrat of Waltzes and of War!
 As eager for a plaudit as a realm,
 And just as fit for flirting as the helm;
 [...]
 How well th'Imperial Dandy prates of peace,
 How fain, if Greeks would be his Slaves, free Greece!²²

17 George Gordon Byron, *The Age of Bronze*, ed. Peter Cochran, 2009, line 378; *Peter Cochran's Website: Film Reviews, Poems, Byron*, https://petercochran.files.wordpress.com/2009/03/the_age_of_bronze.pdf (last access: 06.05.2024).

18 *Ibid.*, lines 404-405.

19 *Byron's Letters and Journals*, Volume X: 'A Heart for Every Fate', 1822-1823, ed. Leslie A. Marchand, Harvard, Harvard University Press, 1980, p. 94.

20 George Gordon Byron, *The Age of Bronze*, cit., lines 416-418.

21 *Ibid.*, line 442.

22 *Ibid.*, lines 434-437, 444-445. David Roessel (*op. cit.*, pp. 15-16) endorses Byron's comment here about Alexander and Greece.

The support here for the Greek war of independence typifies literary opposition to the restoration regime. As all philhellenes knew, Byron was to turn from literature to activism in the years 1823-24, when he helped to lead a Greek military corps, dying at the age of 36 in Missolonghi in 1824 following a severe fever.²³

Byron's *The Age of Bronze* was translated into Italian prose and annotated by Carlo Rusconi (also a translator of Shakespeare, historical novelist, autobiographer and politician) within his complete edition of Byron (1842). However, censorship caused large swathes of the poem to be blanked out by dashes, a visible sign of the difficulty of public complaint about the restoration regime. The excisions begin in earnest after Byron's exclamation «But lo! A Congress!». For example, the assertion that Alexander was willing to free Greece from the Turks in order to enslave the Greeks himself remains in Rusconi's version, and yet the Tsar's name and the epithet «Autocrat of Waltzes and of War» are erased.²⁴ The European reception of Byron's poem has not been studied fully; but the suggestion has been advanced that Mosen's *Der Congress von Verona* (also 1842) makes common cause with *The Age of Bronze*.²⁵ Although there is no obvious internal evidence of direct influence, general affinities in Mosen and Byron's satires of Congress politics are apparent. It is anyway likely that Mosen was affected by Byron's philhellenism, which had begun in the first two cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812), and concluded in the activism of the years 1823-24.²⁶ This is because Mosen's novel is above all philhellenic in orientation. With this work we turn from Byron's relatively heavy satire and Moore's lightly amusing send-ups to a text that represents both ideas and politicians in a more complex fashion.

23 For a full interpretation, see James Vigus, "Strange Sight this Congress!" *Byron's The Age of Bronze (1823) and the Congress of Verona*, «English Literature: Theories, Interpretations, Contexts», IX, 2022, pp. 25-42, <https://edizionicafoscari.unive.it/media/pdf/article/english-literature/2022/1/art-10.30687-EL-2420-823X-2022-01-002.pdf> (last access: 06.05.2024).

24 See *Opere di Lord Byron tradotte dall'originale inglese in prosa italiana da Carlo Rusconi*, vol. 5, Padua, Minerva, 1841, pp. 279-325.

25 See Richard Ackermann, *Lord Byron. Sein Leben, Seine Werke, Sein Einfluß auf die Deutsche Litteratur*, Heidelberg, Carl Winter's Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1901, p. 176.

26 On the strong posthumous influence of Byron's philhellenism, see David Roessel, *op. cit.*

Mosen's *Der Congress von Verona*: genre, philhellenism, anti-capitalism

Emerging from the conflicts of the German *Vormärz* period (1815-1848), *Der Congress von Verona* is a «political novel», as Karl Marx noted.²⁷ It is also a loose, baggy monster. It both enticed and repelled readers on first publication; it demands patience from any reader now. In the remainder of this article, I contend that such patience can be rewarded. I discuss the novel's genre(s), together with Mosen's liberal and philhellenic political stance; the plot, which requires sustained exposition to show how Mosen uses it (in part) to convey the atmosphere of intractable entanglement in Restoration Europe; and the literary nuance that prevails in Mosen's portrayal of certain characters as semi-representatives of their respective nations. Finally, I conclude by returning to the comparison with Byron and Moore. Throughout, I consider how the many contemporary readers strove to make sense of the text.²⁸ These reviews help to highlight how Mosen's work stages the tense relationship between literature and European politics in the first half of the nineteenth century. To preserve the order of my argument, I often cite these reviews in footnotes.

If not quite an example of Friedrich Schlegel's ideal of a 'Mischgedicht', *Der Congress von Verona* freely blends genres. Mosen's dedicatory poem presents it as a historical novel, and homage is paid to the German historical novelist C.F. van der Veldt; while Ludwig Tieck's historical novel *Vittoria Accorombona* (1840), with its romanticized Italian setting, is another likely influence.²⁹ There were precedents for presenting fictitious renderings of very recent history in this way: Ferdinand Stolle's *Der Weltbürger* (1839) was subtitled «Historischer Roman aus den Jahren 1830-1832», be-

27 Karl Marx, *The Polemical Tactics of the Augsburg Newspaper*, «Rheinische Zeitung», 29 November 1842, transl. Andy Blunden (2001), <https://marxists.architexturez.net/archive/marx/works/1842/11/29a.htm> (last access: 06.05.2024).

28 Theodor Storm recommended the novel to his classicist friend Theodor Mommsen, who approved of it (see Lothar Wickert, *Theodor Mommsen. Eine Biographie, Band I: Lehrjahre (1817-1844)*, Frankfurt am Main, Vittorio Klostermann, 1959, p. 139).

29 Tieck is mentioned in Karl Gutzkow, *Ein diplomatischer Roman*, in *Vermischte Schriften*, vol. III, Leipzig, J. J. Weber, 1842, pp. 210-221. Examples of reviews treating Mosen's work as a historical novel are the ambivalent one in «Rosen. Literaturblatt», XXVII, 9, 1842, pp. 210-211, where the reviewer contends that the novel could have made a major impact two decades previously, but not in 1842; and the brief but positive one in the Berlin «Literarische Zeitung» XXVIII, 13 July 1842, Beilage, pp. 680-682, which praises Mosen for combining historical information with imagination.

cause the revolution of July 1830 in France was widely perceived as a watershed in European affairs. The Congress year of 1822 could, then, have seemed two decades later to belong decisively to the past. On the other hand, 1822 was by any standard extremely recent history, with some of Mosen's protagonists still at the helm of world politics, so that by depicting them Mosen must have risked the Prussian censors' attention.³⁰ In that sense, the novel qualifies as a *Zeitroman*.³¹ With its sprawling length – ten books over almost 800 pages – and its huge canvas, characteristic of the *Junges Deutschland* movement, *Der Congress von Verona* is also an epic.³² The name of the novel's hero, Achilleus, is a German variant of Homer's epic hero Achilles. As well as being a man of action, Mosen's Achilleus is a visionary: he dreams directly of rebellion but also of Odysseus, reflecting his own heroic wandering – heroism itself being, as the omniscient narrator early informs us, a component of the Greek national character.³³ The presence of tens of characters reflects the novelist's ambition to portray the interaction of a variety of nationalities and classes within European society. Finally, the novel participates in the gothic genre, including the love plot in which a tirelessly active hero (Achilleus) rescues a heroine oppressed into passivity by powerful men, which is comparable with the novels of Ann Radcliffe published in the 1790s and set in Italy.

Mosen's ideological resolution at the end of the novel needs to be kept in mind from the outset. It reflects the fact that German philhellenism blended admiration of the classical past with ongoing political and military hopes. The versatile Achilleus, a young Greek diplomat whose hopes of convincing the Congress to intervene in the Greek-Turkish conflict on the side of the Christian Greeks are dashed (as the historical record required), eventually returns to Greece as a warrior where he is joined by

30 One commentator, in the «Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung», considered the publication of this book a pleasing sign that censorship was becoming less strict (cited in Karl Gutzkow, *op. cit.*, p. 210).

31 See Werner Mahrholz, *Julius Mosens Prosa. Ein Beitrag zur Literaturgeschichte der Romantik und des Jungen Deutschland*, Weimar, Alexander Duncker Verlag, 1912, p. 65. On the poetological closeness of the historical novel and *Zeitroman* in the years following 1830, see Dirk Götsche, *Zeit im Roman. Literarische Zeitreflexion und die Geschichte des Zeitromans im späten 18. und im 19. Jahrhundert*, Munich, Fink, 2001, pp. 505-506.

32 See «Zeitung für die elegante Welt», p. 507. This is also the category of the book in the catalogue of Mosen's *Nachlass* at the Goethe-Schiller Archiv in Weimar.

33 See Julius Mosen, *Der Congress von Verona. Ein Roman*, 2 vols., Berlin, Duncker und Humblot, 1842, vol. I, p. 29.

two other major characters: his friend Antonio, an Italian doctor and self-proclaimed philhellene, who shares Achilleus's disillusion with the Congress; and Achilleus's new fiancée Isabella, a Spaniard. This union may symbolize an affinity between the Spanish and Greek rebellions, as well as the rebirth of hope in the wake of the ideologically retrograde Congress of Verona. Achilleus is not a fully developed character in psychological terms, but rather functions primarily as a symbolic hero-figure.³⁴ Mosen implicitly endorses the doctrine associated with Winckelmann that freedom was born in ancient Greece.³⁵ The hero Achilleus effectively instantiates Percy Bysshe Shelley's dictum in *Hellas* (1822): «The modern Greek is the descendant of those glorious beings whom the imagination almost refuses to figure to itself as belonging to our Kind».³⁶ Achilleus, a historically knowledgeable raconteur, tells his companions the story of Scio (ancient Chios), Homer's birthplace, from its glory to its recent destruction and then role in the Greek War of Independence.

The Greek rebellion of 1821 became a focus for the anti-restoration hopes suppressed by the Carlsbad Decrees of 1819. The Greeks proclaimed independence in January 1822, and the new provisional government, the Senate of Argos, sent Count Andrew Metaxas and Francis Jourdain to the Congress of Verona to seek Tsar Alexander I's support.³⁷ Metaxas does appear in *Der Congress von Verona*. Mosen, however, gains an imaginative free hand by having Achilleus perform the part of the historical Metaxas at the Congress. Alexander, at first favourably inclined to Greece, was given «frightful information» by Metternich about philhellenic societies in Germany; this information revived his anti-revolutionary sentiment, and he reflected that «an independent Greece with a liberal constitution would threaten not only Russia's interests but also the cause of

34 See Werner Mahrholz, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

35 «With regard to the constitution and government of Greece freedom was the chief reason for their art's superiority. Freedom always had its seat in Greece, even beside the thrones of the kings, who ruled paternally before the enlightenment of reason allowed the people to taste the sweetness of full freedom» (Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *History of the Art of Antiquity*, transl. H. F. Mallgrave, Los Angeles, Getty, 2006, p. 187).

36 Quoted and discussed in Roderick Beaton, *The Romantic Construction of Greece*, in Paul Hamilton (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of European Romanticism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 601-617: 608.

37 See Irby C. Nichols, *The European Pentarchy and the Congress of Verona, 1822*, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1971, p. 253.

autocracy».³⁸ Mosen knew these circumstances well. He had reviewed the revised German edition of Thomas Gordon's *History of the Greek Revolution*, which laid the blame for the isolation of Greece on the Congress of Verona, stating: «Greece, in 1823, had no relations, amicable or otherwise, with any neutral potentate, a decision of the Congress of Verona, confirmed by that of Teschen, having formally shut her out from the pale of nations».³⁹ However, the great powers did subsequently support the Christian Greeks against the Muslim Turks, and the Greek nation was internationally recognised in 1830, following the joint victory of Britain, France, Russia at Navarino Bay in 1827. This fact, known to contemporary readers of Mosen's novel but not to the characters in the 1822 setting (except in a moment of clairvoyance, discussed below), enables Mosen to imply that the machinations of the Congress of Verona became prematurely obsolescent. The historical reflection that such discrepancies between readers' and characters' knowledge could provoke was implicitly described by one approving reviewer as follows:

Wir sind heut zu Tage in den Vierzigen dieses Jahrhunderts um vieles klüger geworden, wir sträuben uns weniger gegen die Macht der Nothwendigen im Völkerleben; und können wir sehr wohl den Zeitgeist der zwanziger Jahre als einen uns fremden hinstellen, jene Entartung des modernen Geschlechtes als Krankheitszustand behandeln.⁴⁰

Nowadays in the 1840s we have become much wiser, we are less resistant to the force of necessity in the life of nations; and we can readily situate the spirit of the age in the 1820s as alien to us, treat that degeneration of modern humanity as a diseased state.

Mosen is best known today for his regional loyalty to his native Vogtland. His «Andreas Hofer» song about the 1809 uprising against Napoleon remains the official hymn of the Tirol region.⁴¹ But he also participated in multiple nationalisms with a liberal, anti-authoritarian, even – within lim-

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 254.

³⁹ Thomas Gordon, *History of the Greek Revolution, and of the War and Campaigns arising from the Struggles of the Greek Patriots in Emancipating their Country from the Turkish Yoke*, vol. 2, Edinburgh, Blackwood, London, T. Cadell, 1844, p. 73.

⁴⁰ D. B., «Zeitung für die elegante Welt», 1 July 1842, p. 502.

⁴¹ Fred Frank Stapf, *Julius Mosen: Der Vogtländer Dichter des Andreas-Hofer-Liedes*, Lappisdorf bei Regensburg, Kerscheneiner Verlag, 2001, p. 130.

its – cosmopolitan purpose. A decade previously, Mosen had contributed to the German pro-Polish movement with a poem distributed as a popular broadside, yet ineffective as a call to action owing to its romantic portrayal of Polish warriors as medieval knights.⁴² *Der Congress von Verona* operates in a partly similar vein, its romance tropes conveying nostalgia for the medieval past.⁴³ Why, though, did this work take the form of a novel at all, when Mosen's previous work was primarily in verse? A likely answer may be found in an earlier novella (translated into English as *The Italian Novel*), where Mosen's principal character asserts the following axiom:

Every nation politically oppressed, becomes a hot-bed for the production of novels; it is impossible it should be otherwise, than that the load of human passions which an extended political freedom consumes, or renders harmless, should find vent in some other way [...]. [O]ppress an enlightened people, and you favour the poetry of novel writing.⁴⁴

This suggests that Mosen regarded novels as a vehicle for protest (however indirectly expressed), whereas lyric poetry was for him the purer imaginative form.

The location of the 1822 Congress provided Mosen with an ideal backdrop. This was partly because Italy was a suitable country in which to set a philhellenic novel, owing to perceived Italo-Greek commonalities: both countries had arguably lost their freedom to a powerful oppressor, Austria and Turkey respectively. Further, Mosen had visited Verona himself, aged 22, in the summer of 1825. There he had watched a comedy in the ancient amphitheatre, noted the liveliness of the Italians, and viewed churches and artistic treasures, recording his impressions in his manuscript «Tagebuch zur italienischen Reise» (the title adapting that of Goethe's *Italienische Reise*).⁴⁵ A direct result of this eyewitness experience was that reviewers of the novel, most notably the leading critic and novelist in the politically liberal 'young Germany' movement Karl Ferdinand Gutzkow,

42 See Peter Sprengel, *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur*. Bd. 8: *Geschichte der deutschsprachigen Literatur 1830-1870. Vormärz – Nachmärz*, Munich, Beck, 2020, p. 167.

43 See Dieter Seidel, *Julius Mosen. Leben und Werk. Eine Biografie*, Lappersdorf, Kerchensteiner Verlag, 2003, p. 238.

44 Julius Mosen, *Stories Translated from the German*, London, Longman, 1842, p. 43.

45 See *Julius Mosens italienische Reise*, «[Oldenburg] Nachrichten für Stadt und Land» XLIV, 356, 1. Beilage, 28 Dezember 1910, pp. 1435-1436 («Tagebuch zur italienischen Reise», manuscript, Goethe-Schiller-Archiv, GSA_67_93).

praised the immersive realism of the descriptions of Verona at the time of the Congress.⁴⁶

The unwieldy length of *Der Congress von Verona* may have been partly a pragmatic ploy: works of over 320 pages were usually exempt from Prussian censorship.⁴⁷ Besides, the overworked censors might have given up on combing through the endless variety of scenes for subversive material, while savvy readers might have been thrilled by the selectively iconoclastic character portrayals. Be that as it may, the spirit of Mosen's work hovers between anti-restoration liberalism and a retreat into an imaginative world of fiction. For example, his most direct denunciation of the restoration regime appears very late, at the start of the final 'book'; and the narrative then immediately swerves off into a history of the fictitious Frankenstein family. The key passage, which probably represents the core of Mosen's social critique, yet requires some dedication from the reader even to find, is this:

Wo kein naturwüchsiger Staat besteht, welcher sich so zu dem Geiste der Nation verhält, wie der menschliche Leib zu seiner Seele, welche ihn belebt, da vertritt seine Stelle der mechanische Polizeistaat, welcher keine Staatsbürger kennt, sondern nur träge Massen von nutzbaren Spießbürgern verwaltet nach den Grundsätzen der Stallfütterung, wo Licht und Luft, Futter und Getränke, Lager und Stand, Bewegung und Ruhe den Thieren zugemessen wird.

In diesen Polizeistaaten, wo der Bürger ein Verbrechen begeht, wenn er sich thätig um die allgemeine Wohlfahrt bekümmert, wird jeder Einzelne auf den Standpunkt des Egoismus versetzt.

Ist der Mensch so von dem idealen Staatsleben verdrängt, welches allein den Menschen aus der Engherzigkeit erheben kann, so bleibt ihm nichts, als der gemeine sinnliche Genuß übrig, welcher durch Geld vermittelt werden kann.

In die größere Menge eines solchen Volkes, welches sich seine Seele hat stehlen lassen, fährt nun der Heißhunger nach Amt und Geld, mit welchem sich die niederträchtigste Gesinnung von selbst verbindet, wenn

46 See Karl Gutzkow, *Ein diplomatischer Roman*, in *Vermischte Schriften*, vol. III, Leipzig, J. J. Weber, 1842, pp. 210-221; first published in Gutzkow's journal «Telegraph für Deutschland», 104, June 1842, pp. 413-416. The strand of immersive realism in *Der Congress von Verona* is likewise praised by the reviewer for «Blätter für Literatur und bildende Kunst», XLVII, 11 June 1842, p. 385.

47 See Fred Frank Stapf, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

auch innerhalb der Schranken der Polizei.

Jede Tugend wird da zum Schein und Deckmantel der Habsucht. Liebe und Freundschaft werden Mittel zum materiellen Zwecke, und wo sie aufhören, dienstbar zu sein, treten die grimmigste Haß, Verläumdung und Verfolgung und alle Kinder der Undankbarkeit schamlos an das Licht.

Solche Krankheitszustände der Staatsgesellschaft charakterisieren sich durch Selbstverachtung und Zerrissenheit der Gemüther, woran sich als nächstfolgendes Glied der Kette - die allgemeine Feigheit schlingt.

Die Heilung dieser Völkerkrankheiten erfolgt in babylonischen Gefangenschaften oder in Revolutionen.

Griechenland und Italien gebrauchen die erstere, Frankreich und Spanien die letztere Cur.

Will man die Symptome des nervösen Faulfiebers ganzer Nationen jedoch schnell auf einen Blick erkennen, so muß man Gelegenheit suchen, irgendwie eine sogenannte vornehme Familie bei der Erbschaft eines reichen, kinderlosen Seitenverwandten zu belauschen.

Wirf unter einen Meute Hunde einen Knochen so sieht Dein Auge noch eine friedliche brüderliche Theilung gegen das Bild, welches Dir die Erben eines solchen unglücklichen Erblassers bieten werden.

Diese innere Verworfenheit der allgemeinen Zustände, tritt jedoch bei den Familien am schönsten in die Blüthe, welche es über sich gewonnen haben, um jede Art von Demüthigung im Leben emporzukommen und sich in ihrer Errungenschaft zu befestigen suchen.⁴⁸

Where there is no naturally-grown state, which bears relation to the spirit of the nation as the human body to the soul that animates it, its place is taken by the mechanical police state, which recognizes no citizens, but only bureaucratizes inert masses of useful philistines according to the principles of stable feeding, where light and air, food and drink, bed and a place, exercise and rest are allotted to the animals.

In these police states, where citizens commit a crime if they actively concern themselves with the general welfare, every individual is displaced into the situation of egotism.

If a person is thus ousted from the ideal life of the state, which alone can raise us out of a condition of pettiness, nothing remains to them but common sensual enjoyment, which can be acquired by money.

In the greater multitude of such a people whose souls have been stolen,

48 Julius Mosen, *Der Congress von Verona*, cit., II, pp. 318-319.

there is now a ravenous hunger for office and money, with which the basest sentiments are naturally connected, even if within the boundaries set by the police.

Every virtue there becomes a pretense and a cover for greed. Love and friendship become means to material ends, and where they cease to be of service, the fiercest hatred, slander and persecution and all the children of ingratitude shamelessly come to light.

Such sick states of society are characterized by self-contempt and inner conflict of the mind, of which the next link in the chain is – general cowardice.

The cure for these diseases of the people happens in Babylonian captivity or in revolutions.

Greece and Italy utilize the former cure, France and Spain the latter.

But if one wants to recognize the symptoms of the nervous fever of entire nations quickly, at a glance, one must seek the opportunity somehow to overhear a so-called noble family dealing with the inheritance of a rich, childless collateral relative.

Throw a bone to a pack of dogs and your eye will see peaceful, fraternal sharing, compared with the picture which the heirs of such an unfortunate testator will present to you.

This inner depravity of the general state of affairs, though, emerges most perfectly in those families which have mastered the art of rising above every kind of humiliation in life, and seek to consolidate their achievements.

With its proto-Marxist hostility to capitalism, this passage epigrammatically sketches the social psychopathology of the restoration regime as Mosen saw it. One reviewer praised its alternation between a cold and a heated tone as reminiscent of the bitter manner of Tacitus.⁴⁹ A crucial point in the logic here is the suggestion that ‘Babylonian’ oppression has a salutary effect, the comparison being with the exiled Israelites whose communal identity was strengthened rather than broken by exile. The ensuing subplot duly satirizes the nobility’s decadent materialism, as denounced in the final three paragraphs just quoted. The question arises: does the long foregoing narrative illustrate Mosen’s accompanying thesis about the amoral lust for gold that prevails in a police state in which all

49 See «Zeitung für die elegante Welt», cit., p. 502. For another contemporary comparison with Tacitus, see Dieter Seidel, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

higher ideals are eradicated? This is indeed the case; and yet it is too subtle, or too convoluted, to amount to a clear allegory. As I will show, what is remarkable given Mosen's fundamental hostility to the restoration regime is the high level of nuance in the depiction of political mentalities: the participants in the Congress are by no means uniformly evil, nor are the revolutionaries purely heroic.

To establish these points requires an overview of the story. As noted, the novel includes real characters. However, the characters endowed with depth of thought and conversation are the fictitious ones – with one fascinating exception, discussed below. The narrative style is episodic, with various threads frequently dropped and then resumed. Challenging though it is to follow, the complex switching of perspectives on a European panorama makes Mosen's the richest and deepest of all the 'Congress literature'.

Mosen's *The Congress of Verona*: what happens?

The novel's action opens with the prayers in the cathedral on 9 October 1822, just prior to the dignitaries' arrival in the city. The charismatic Achilleus is told by his French friend Jouy that his presence in Verona is pointless since the principle that a state is equated to its prince, as opposed to the citizens possessing any independent rights, had become uncontested since the demise of Napoleon.⁵⁰ In diplomatic terms, Jouy will be proven correct, but he angers Achilleus by maintaining Turkey's right to rule Greece. The indomitable Achilleus rejects this, still hoping to influence the course of *Weltgeschichte* in his nation's favour.⁵¹

The politically liberal doctor Antonio lives with his younger sister, the beautiful Francesca, who is immediately star-struck by Tsar Alexander I's handsome appearance when she sees a bust of him made by a local artist. Francesca befriends Isabella, the beautiful daughter of a fanatical pro-royalist delegate from Spain, Malavilla. (One of Malavilla's most treasured possessions is a cigar roller, a present from King Ferdinand VII; he is a follower of Vincente Genardo de Quesada, «General der Glaubensarmee» who attempted to suppress the Constitution of Cadiz in 1812).⁵² This meeting occurs because Antonio is persuaded to renovate a disused part of his prem-

50 See Julius Mosen, *Der Congress von Verona*, cit., I, p. 20.

51 See *Ibid.*, I, p. 25.

52 See *Ibid.*, p. 79.

ises to house Malavilla, due to the shortage of accommodation in Verona. Antonio's medieval building delights the Don Quixote-like Malavilla. The Catholic priest Santello, too, enthuses over the rediscovery of the building, which still contains a chapel and medieval furnishings: he compares its recovery to the revival of the glory of church and thrones under the Holy Alliance, and he consecrates the altar. Santello himself has a backstory: although he laments the loss of Spanish freedom under the present dispensation, he far more vehemently blames the Cortes of Cadiz (the Spanish governing body from 1810) for robbing the church and attacking priests and monks.⁵³ Amidst the characters' various discussions of what constitutes freedom, Santello maintains that it must be grounded in religion.

Joseph von Frankenstein, a scheming opportunist who has used clairvoyance in seeking to further his diplomatic career (his name probably alludes to Mary Shelley's over-reaching antihero), and who now reports to Mathieu de Montmorency (the real French foreign minister), has an early brush with his eventual nemesis Achilleus, promising to relay the latter's request for intervention on behalf of Christian Greece to his superiors. Meanwhile, Francesca is modelling for an official painting of the sleeping Ariadne by a local artist, Malocchio. Joseph is attracted by Francesca; rejected by her, however, Joseph turns his attention to Isabella. Tsar Alexander is delighted by the beauty of the sleeping Ariadne; the Russian interest in the form of Alexander's fictitious compatriot Prince Iwan is to have tragic consequences for Francesca.

At the sumptuous evening performance of Rossini's opera *L'inganno felice*, Joseph points out some of the key figures to Isabella, including Karl von Nesselrode of Russia, Montmorency, the Duke of Wellington, Napoleon's resplendently attired widow (Maria-Luisa, now Duchess of Parma), Kaiser Friedrich Wilhelm of Prussia (like Metternich and Maria-Luisa, not actually named within the text) and Alexander.⁵⁴ The focus then swings to the seedy underworld of plotters beyond the official festivities, as a certain Bajonna is chosen to take revenge on the Chevalier Bartolo, an infiltrator in the pay of Joseph who had stolen papers from the Italian Carbonari and enabled the execution of certain patriots – the group Antonio essentially supports. Bartolo's backstory is revealed later: an apostate Jacobin, he became an enthusiast for the Spanish Inquisition which once

53 See *Ibid.*, p. 67.

54 See *Ibid.*, pp. 151-153.

interrogated him.⁵⁵ The priest Santello labels him simply an old sinner.⁵⁶

Twin love plots now unfold, the former of which is destined for a happy ending, the latter tragic. The lovers Isabella and Achilleus must resort to subterfuge, Achilleus bribing the maid Ines to arrange meetings, because Isabella's father Malavilla arranges to marry her to Joseph. Meanwhile Arnold, a member of the patriotic *Burschenschaft* at the university of Jena, and an enthusiast for the Teutonic medieval past, is in love with Francesca. Asked by Francesca for the story of his first love, Arnold tells a curious fantasy about a lover called Vrenli living in the woods with a cannibalistic grandmother. When challenged by Francesca he retorts with the rhetorical question: «Ist die erste Liebe etwas anderes, als ein Märchen?» (Is first love anything other than a fairytale?).⁵⁷ In this moment of *Waldromantik*, politics momentarily fade from view.

Joseph, having elaborated his anti-revolutionary views in a verbose document that fails to impress his more pragmatic master Montmorency, pays the Chevalier Bartolo to kidnap Achilleus, his rival for Isabella. At the same moment, the hyperactive Achilleus is conveying letters for philhellene fighters via a Sardinian smuggler. Arnold meanwhile translates a German philhellenic letter for an audience including Jouy, who angers Arnold by scoffing at the mention of a Jewish element within the anti-monarchical resistance. In a sign of the difficulty the international liberals experienced in working together, the pair trade insults in the form of national stereotypes: Arnold exclaims «spottet über Euch, denn Ihr habt Zeit dazu im Sumpfe Eurer Geschichte! [...] Ihr habt alles angefangen, im Nichts zu vollenden» (mock yourselves, for you have time to do so in the mire of your history! [...] you started everything, to end in nothing); Jouy retorts crudely, «verdammte Preuße!» (bloody Prussian!).⁵⁸ Arnold rashly challenges Jouy to a duel, the *Burschenschaftler's* typical reflex. Arnold is seconded by Achilleus, Jouy by Bartolo, who is trying to infiltrate their circle;⁵⁹ a comic reconciliation ensues. Jouy's French patriotic attitude had earlier emerged when he praised Chateaubriand to Antonio, although in the background we might hear the novelist's implicitly more critical view of the author of *The Genius of Christianity*:

55 See *Ibid.*, p. 289.

56 See *Ibid.*, p. 298.

57 *Ibid.*, p. 205.

58 *Ibid.*, p. 230.

59 See *Ibid.*, p. 242.

seht Euch einmal dort meinen Landsmann an! Sieht er nicht aus wie das Genie des Christenthums, wie ein loyaler Engel, vom heiligen Ludwig herabgesandt zur Erlösung der verdammten Welt von der Revolution? Von der Vorsehung bestimmt zu einer Putzmachermamsell mit Talent zu künstlichen Blumen, muß er sich nähern als Mensch, Christ, Schriftsteller, Minister und bourbonischer Royalist, Dilettant, überall zum vergnügen der russischen und österreichischen Diplomaten!⁶⁰

Look at my compatriot there! Does he not look like the genius of Christianity, like a loyal agent sent down by St Louis to redeem the damned world from revolution? Destined by providence to be a cleaning lady with a talent for artificial flowers, he must approach everywhere as a man, Christian, writer, minister, and Bourbon royalist, for the amusement of the Russian and Austrian diplomats!

Achilleus persuades Joseph to introduce him to Chateaubriand at Casa Lorenzi – a true historical detail, for the French writer did stay there.⁶¹ Achilleus finds Chateaubriand sympathetic to his desire to obtain the Congress's support for the Greek rebellion.⁶² This moment may reflect Mosen's reading of Chateaubriand's own political memoir, *The Congress of Verona* (1838), which states: «Athens raised to heaven her suppliant hands in the name of liberty»; even if at the time Chateaubriand was said to have treated the Greek question with indifference.⁶³ However, Mosen's Chateaubriand fears that his influence in Paris will not last long, complaining of an intrusive aristocracy that tends to interfere in the unity between the people and the monarch, and that France has degenerated into a purely reactionary country.⁶⁴

At the altar, Isabella and Achilleus solemnly exchange rings, and he promises to rescue her from Joseph. Achilleus explains his sacred duty to his fatherland, and Isabella fervently endorses his vocation, responding

60 *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

61 The list of delegates' residences is reprinted in facsimile in *Il Congresso di Verona (1822) e la politica mitteleuropea degli Asburgo: Atti del Convegno tenuto il 18 maggio 2018 presso l'Accademia di Agricoltura Scienze e Lettere di Verona*, a cura di Claudio Carceri de Prati, Verona, Accademia di Agricoltura, Scienze e Lettere, 2019, pp. 165-190.

62 See Julius Mosen, *Der Congress von Verona*, cit., I, pp. 235, 237.

63 François-René de Chateaubriand, *op. cit.*, p. 73; Irby C. Nichols, *op. cit.*, p. 254. On Mosen's use of Chateaubriand's work see Karl Gutzkow, *op. cit.*, p. 215; Werner Mahrholz, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-79.

64 See Julius Mosen, *Der Congress von Verona*, cit., I, p. 236.

that she does not wish to belong to a man whom she cannot look up to as to a god.⁶⁵ At such moment Mosen glorifies a martial form of masculinity and its accompanying gender norms – although a charitable interpretation might be that these characters embody a certain historical mentality prevalent during the Greek war of independence.

The violent Neopolitan demagogue Bajonna, earlier seen double-crossing an accomplice named Nicolo, stabs Chevalier Bartolo with a dagger.⁶⁶ As Achilleus's manservant Thriaki will later observe, Verona is a dangerous nest of polecats.⁶⁷ However, Achilleus is on hand to save Bartolo's life – with dramatic irony, since Achilleus was the man whom Bartolo had paid to have killed. Bartolo's salvation is only temporary, however, since the dagger had a poison tip (later identified as a poison from Naples, and thus a distinctively southern-Italian method of assassination). Volume One closes with the priest Santello declaring that Duena Ines should be separated from Isabella because she was the channel for Achilleus to reach her.

Volume Two opens in a restaurant in Roveredo, Switzerland, where Achilleus debates with a newly introduced bevy of compatriots the question of where Greece can now best turn to for help. In a characteristic display of historical knowledge, he remembers the activist poet Rhigas Feraios, «the father of our future» (and translated by Byron into English), yet delivered up by the Austrians to the Turks;⁶⁸ and opines that Greece had already been let down by Russia during the Orlov Revolt of 1770. Achilleus relates, too, that his own sister had died a martyr's death, stabbing herself when captured by a Turkish Pascha.

As rumours of a plot to blow up the Congress turn out to be unfounded, Achilleus persuades a Russian bishop that supporting Greece is a matter of Christian solidarity; but Prince Iwan counters that the Greeks have adopted revolutionary ideas, and in private expresses the fear that Achilleus's papers might influence Alexander in Greece's favour, commissioning Joseph to seize them. Meanwhile Thriaki, Achilleus's garrulous yet loyal and enterprising servant, relates that he was bringing a note from Isabella to Achilleus when he was stopped by two policemen – irreverently termed «Polizeischapphähne»⁶⁹ – whereupon he first hid it in his mouth, then ate it. A tone of serious philhellenism resumes as Achilleus tells the story of

65 See *Ibid.*, p. 308.

66 See *Ibid.*, p. 323.

67 See *Ibid.*, II, p. 49.

68 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

69 *Ibid.*, p. 54.

Sappho's suicide, adding the philhellenic motto: «Wie so einfach groß sind diese Sagen, so fabelhaft und doch so prosaisch wahr» (How simply great these legends are, so fabulous and yet so prosaically true).⁷⁰

In a scene parallel to Arnold's narrative to Francesca, Joseph tells Prince Iwan about *his* first love, a poor clairvoyant with the 'speaking name' of Clärchen. Clärchen's mother bitterly cursed the self-seeking diplomat when he abandoned the girl, but the mother was then pacified by being paid off. Joseph and Iwan decide to visit Clärchen, who recoils in horror from Iwan – evidence of her intuition of the future, as will emerge. In a magnetic sleep, Clärchen accuses Joseph of forging money, reading a black sign that she sees written on his forehead, whereupon he faints. With the stories of Clärchen and Francesca, young women of different social classes, Mosen implies in *Junges Deutschland* style that any close contact with the restoration-regime aristocracy is ruinous.⁷¹

In Book VII Jouy briefly becomes the focalizer of the narrative, making notes on the theatrical spectacle as a journalist. His high-point is a joke about the restoration regime turning to the past: seeing the huge clock, he comments that it will enable the diplomatic corps in Verona at last to see what time it is. Amidst the crowds a thief tries to steal Achilleus's precious papers from him, but the alert Thriaki states that he can smell the Veronese police a mile away: indeed, the house where Achilleus is staying is swarming with police seeking to arrest him.

Santello, the priest administering the last rites to the dying Bartolo, is revealed to be Bartolo's own son. Bartolo repents his many sins, yet appeals to necessity: «aber mein Gewerbe, das ich seit Napoleons Sturz getrieben habe, aus Not und Lust zum Leben, bettet mich auf Degenspitzen und Bajonetten» (but my trade, which I have practiced since the fall of Napoleon, from necessity and desire for life, beds me on sword tips and bayonets). Bartolo advises Achilleus to leave Verona immediately, but also gives him a get-out-of-jail pass that can be used once by handing it to any prison warder.⁷² He soon makes use of this device, to Joseph's wild frustration.

Clärchen overhears Malavilla telling Joseph that Montmorency has now understood the need for France to be empowered to intervene in Spain. In Malavilla's words: «Ein Bourbon wird den andern retten von dem hundertköpfigen Drachen der Demagogie» (One Bourbon will save

70 *Ibid.*, p. 65.

71 See Werner Mahrholz, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

72 See Julius Mosen, *Der Congress von Verona*, cit., II, p. 121.

another from the hundred-headed dragon of demagoguery).⁷³ As Joseph discusses his plan to marry Isabella, Clärchen's teeth chatter noisily in her hiding place, disturbing the schemer. Achilles enters; before Joseph can respond to his challenge to a pistol duel, Clärchen jumps out and seizes Joseph by the throat; soldiers rush in. The narrator describes Joseph's discomfort with a vivid simile: «Achilleus hatte ihn so tief gedemütigt, daß sich seine Seele krümmte wie ein Aal, welcher lebendig in Essig geworfen, an das Feuer gesetzt ist» (Achilleus had humiliated him so deeply that his soul writhed like an eel thrown alive into vinegar and set on fire).⁷⁴ Thus, the night before his wedding to Isabella, rather than feeling elation, Joseph morbidly mourns his evil fate, a feeling intensified by being challenged in the dark by two grim figures who turn out to be his own henchmen.

Achilleus, bitter both at being supplanted by Joseph and by the resolution of the Congress to subdue the Greek people to the «Henkerbeil des Osmanli» (executioner's axe of the Ottomans),⁷⁵ contemplates murdering Joseph at the altar when he marries Isabella. Isabella, for her part, secretly resolves to commit suicide before allowing Joseph to touch her. She refuses to agree to Achilleus murdering Joseph for the philhellenic reason that Achilleus's life belongs to Greece and should only be sacrificed for his country.

Arnold and his Jena friends, followers of Joseph Görres, had composed a letter to the Congress delegates, demanding «Wiederherstellung des deutschen Reichs» (restoration of the German empire), a notable example of the ideals of 'revolution' and 'restoration' effectively coinciding.⁷⁶ Not only did this ambitious letter have no effect on the Congress, but Arnold suffered humiliation even in Jena, when he read it aloud at the *Commerce*, the official meeting of the *Burschenschaft*, and was heckled by a waiter. His own German «Gesamtvaterland» (whole fatherland) seemingly lost, Arnold turns his attention to the Greek cause.

The celebration of Isabella's marriage to Joseph commences in typical Congress style with a series of toasts, including to the monarchical principle itself;⁷⁷ Gentz, ironically given his cynical dismissal of the whole idea of marriage, raises a toast to the couple. The focus of the narrative then turns outward to the concluding festivities of the Congress. Accompa-

73 *Ibid.*, p. 133.

74 *Ibid.*, p. 145.

75 *Ibid.*, p. 168.

76 *Ibid.*, p. 199.

77 See *Ibid.*, p. 205.

nied by the cheering of crowds, locations in Verona such as the ruined Arco dei Gavi, Piazza Bra and the Church of Sant'Agnese are transformed into a state of fairytale beauty by illuminations. The excited Francesca rewards Arnold for his pure love with a «fiery» kiss.⁷⁸ Watching the representations of Hippolyte, Ariadne and Sappho the audience feels transported to Ancient Greece. Alexander dreamily pins a badge of the order of St Anne on Francesca, tears filling his eyes. After he leaves, Prince Iwan's sister drinks a midnight toast to Alexander with Francesca,⁷⁹ and Iwan – ominously, as we had much earlier seen him admire her – carries Francesca away when she has fallen asleep (thus embodying the sleeping Ariadne, the pose in which she had been depicted).⁸⁰

According to the narrator, Achilles now needs supernatural help, and his predicament causes the Eumenides to awaken.⁸¹ Joseph, staying in Antonio's villa that Malavilla has just vacated, is denied entry to his new wife's bedchamber. He angrily resolves to become her jailor, saying grimly to himself: «Ich kenne das ganze Arsenal tödlicher Seelenqualen» (I know the whole arsenal of deadly torments of the soul).⁸² But the supernatural intervention now begins, as the atmosphere becomes increasingly gothic. The ghost of Bartolo arrives to inform Joseph of what would soon come to pass: that the resolutions of the Congress will be overturned, with a revolution in France and Greek independence. According to the ghost, the Congress turned the clock back, when it should have looked to the future; and the terrified Joseph asks in reply: «In welchem Jahr leben wir denn?» (so what year are we living in?).⁸³ The ghost concludes: «Wir haben freilich gedacht, mit eine paar Kanonenschüssen die Welt wieder in den Schlaf zu lullen! Haha! Mit Kanonenschüssen?» (We really thought we could lull the world back to sleep with a few canon shots. Haha! With canon shots?).⁸⁴

Joseph, sleepwalking, follows the ghost, then awakes to hear real footsteps, those of Achilles, who hesitates to knock on Isabella's locked bedroom door – fortunately so, since Isabella is ready to stab herself should her hateful new husband break open the door.⁸⁵ Tormented by jealousy,

78 *Ibid.*, p. 219.

79 See *Ibid.*, p. 226.

80 See *Ibid.*, I, p. 258.

81 See *Ibid.*, II, p. 231.

82 *Ibid.*, p. 235.

83 *Ibid.*, p. 237.

84 *Ibid.*

85 According to Mahrholz, Isabella's decision to accede to her father's arrangement of

Joseph attacks Achilles, who throws him off – and Joseph falls through a wooden railing to his death. The death is presumed accidental: as the body lies at the altar in Antonio's chapel, a nightwatchman (his speech comically interspersed with the demotic tag 'halt') opines that it was unsurprising that a drunken groom would stumble through a banister rail at night. Gutzkow considered this scene to lack verisimilitude.⁸⁶ However, another reviewer found this a peculiarly satisfying end for Joseph, noting the contrast between the two characters – Joseph, «mit feinsten hofmännischen Politur überzogenen Hinterlist und tiefer Verworfenheit einen recht schreienden Kontrast zu Achilles offenem Sinne und geradem Wesen» (with the finest courtly polish and profound depravity, a truly jarring contrast to Achilles's open mind and straightforward nature).⁸⁷

Antonio begins to investigate the whereabouts of Francesca, who has not returned since leaving with the Russian contingent during the night. The policeman confesses significantly that the police can do nothing in regard to their superiors: «wir können bloß unter uns, nicht über uns greifen» (we can only take action below us, not above us).⁸⁸ When Antonio calls on Prince Iwan, the latter is reading Casanova – a symbol of his philandering – and flees from the doctor, who therefore seeks out Gentz. On being told the news of Joseph's death, Gentz anxiously shouts «Mörder! Demagogen!» (murder! Demagogues!).⁸⁹ Although this is a truer conclusion than he can know (given that Joseph died at the hand of the 'demagogue' Achilles), it reveals the fear lurking behind this politician's usually smooth appearance. Metternich, himself apparently untroubled by the untrustworthy Joseph's death and resistant to Gentz's conspiracy theory, nevertheless unquestioningly signs off Gentz's memo regarding the conclusions of the Congress – another realistic touch.

Having gained no useful information from Gentz, Antonio asks a Russian bishop about Francesca, and the bishop in turn questions Iwan, who cries «Ich bin verloren!» (I am lost!).⁹⁰ His confession to the bishop, we infer, is that he seduced Francesca. The bishop blames Iwan, too, for leaking the sensitive papers appropriated from Achilles, which Al-

marriage yet still remain true to her lover Achilles is indebted to Gutzkow's novel *Wally die Zweiflerin* (Werner Mahrholz, *op. cit.*, p. 75).

86 See Karl Gutzkow, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

87 «Blätter für Literatur und bildende Kunst», *cit.*, p. 386.

88 Julius Moser, *Der Congress von Verona*, *cit.*, II, p. 251.

89 *Ibid.*, p. 265.

90 *Ibid.*, p. 278.

exander has been reading with sympathy. True to the historical record, however, Alexander is persuaded by the Austrians not to support the Greek struggle.⁹¹ Iwan hopes to flee to the «freien englischen Volks» (free English people);⁹² does Iwan's compliment to England hint at Mosen's skepticism about this nation of which so little is said in the novel? Antonio, however, outwits Iwan through rapid action. Rather than rely on the Russian bishop, who now sits stroking his cat (named Bonaparte),⁹³ Antonio rushes to beg help from the Podestà of Verona, who agrees, directing his Commandant to order that no-one may leave Verona. Meanwhile, Antonio hears from the bishop that Iwan found Francesca dead in the morning: she must have jumped – Sappho-like – to her death. Iwan's punishment is Siberian exile; a reviewer found the passage in which Alexander discovers Iwan's treachery «[e]rschütternd, tragisch ergreifend» (harrowing, tragically gripping).⁹⁴

Much of the remainder of the novel reflects Mosen's profession as a lawyer. Joseph's grotesque family members try to press Isabella into renouncing her inheritance from her briefest of marriages. Isabella had already decided to do exactly that, to the uncomprehending frustration of Alippi, the solicitor handling Joseph's estate. Alippi is another of Mosen's minor characters who expresses interesting opinions. He tells Isabella that we must accept in this world that everything is done purely for financial gain: «Die kurze Zeit, welche uns zu leben vergönnt ist, gehört dem materiellen Genusse!» (the short time we have to live should be dedicated to material enjoyment!).⁹⁵ Isabella persists in relinquishing her inheritance from Joseph - but rather than let his family have it, she donates it to fund an *Armenhaus*, at the news of which Joseph's hideous brother Karlmann faints in shock. Meanwhile, Antonio admits to feeling overwhelming sadness and claustrophobia in Verona, due primarily to the loss of Francesca and secondarily to loss of hope in the future of Italy following the outcomes of the Congress. He tells Isabella that European countries resemble an individual suffering from fever. The choice presented by the restoration regime was between a life of safe slavery or dangerous freedom – freedom being dangerous because kings prefer ruling over slaves. As the delegates depart Verona in their coaches, giving the appearance of

91 See Irby C. Nichols, *op. cit.*, p. 254.

92 Julius Mosen, *Der Congress von Verona*, cit., II, p. 282.

93 See *Ibid.*, p. 289.

94 «Zeitung für die elegante Welt», cit., p. 506.

95 Julius Mosen, *Der Congress von Verona*, cit., II, p. 370.

a mass exodus due to the outbreak of disease,⁹⁶ Antonio sets off with Isabella to Greece via Marseilles; they meet Achilles's family in a boat. Antonio declares «Ich bin ein Philhellene!» (I am a philhellene!); Arnold arrives, as does the armed Achilles; and the novel ends with multilingual cries of «Hoch Griechenland, seine Freunde und die Freiheit!» (Up with to Greece, its friends and freedom!).⁹⁷

Characters and national mentalities in *Der Congress von Verona*

Certain shortcomings in the novel are apparent even from the foregoing summary. The solemnly triumphant final scene sits uneasily with the tragic-comic atmosphere of most of the book.⁹⁸ Earlier, the story of Francesca is underdetermined:⁹⁹ her inner life is not portrayed richly enough for her suicide to amount to more than a convenient literary parallel with Sappho and a means of establishing the guilt of the principal Russian character, Prince Iwan. Isabella, too, is a flat rather than a round character (to use E. M. Forster's distinction). Meanwhile, a series of minor characters compete for the reader's interest.¹⁰⁰ The baroque structure and the titan-like female characters aside, however, Mosen's work is strikingly nuanced.¹⁰¹ In many scenes, the atmosphere of paranoia and surveillance generates a plausibly authentic portrayal of Metternich's Europe. The central clash between Joseph and Achilles momentarily becomes at least symbolic through Achilles's rhetoric: he accuses Joseph of seeking with «[mit] Moschusduft die junge Zeit [zu] entehren und vergiften» (to dishonour and poison the era of youth with musk scent).¹⁰²

Arnold's appearance in Greece at the end represents the coming-together of German philhellenes with other nations.¹⁰³ According to Mo-

96 See *Ibid.*, p. 408.

97 *Ibid.*, p. 430.

98 A reviewer complained of the «Leerheit, um nicht zu sagen die Lüge des Schlußgedankens» (the emptiness, not to say the lie, of the concluding thought); («Zeitung für die Elegante Welt», cit., p. 507).

99 As noted in the biographical sketch in *Julius Mosen. Moderne Klassiker. Deutsche Literaturgeschichte der neueren Zeit in Biographien, Kritiken und Proben. Mit Portraits. Sechsenddreissigster Band*, Cassel, Ernst Valde, 1854, p. 25.

100 See Karl Gutzkow, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

101 On Mosen's titanic women in the style of Jean Paul Richter, see Werner Mahrholz, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

102 Julius Mosen, *Der Congress von Verona*, cit., II, p. 139.

103 On the historical movement in which Mosen's Arnold takes part, see Valerio Furneri,

sen's modern biographer, Arnold is partly a self-portrait – Mosen, too, studied at the university of Jena and joined a *Burschenschaft*.¹⁰⁴ However, the emphasis must be laid on *partly*: the hotheaded Arnold is the kind of German philhellene whom Karl August Varnhagen von Ense (another philhellene) described as espousing «griechische Deutschtümelei» (hellenic teutonocentrism).¹⁰⁵ Arnold, that is, turns decisively to Greece only after the realization that «mein Vaterland ist verloren» (my fatherland is lost),¹⁰⁶ so that his philhellenism emerges as a surrogate for frustrated German patriotism. The author, on the other hand, who establishes Achilles as the hero from the outset, implicitly espouses a more broadly conceived philhellenism for its own sake. Further, that Arnold takes the lead in renovating Antonio's medieval building (he even makes a cabinet of curiosities) contributes to the potent ideological mixture at Antonio's house. On a symbolic level, it suggests the convergence of a revolutionary mentality with an aspiration to restoration. Achilles, too, experiences some inner conflict, passionately cursing heartless diplomats and wondering whether he has any right to love while engaging in politics.¹⁰⁷ He exclaims: «O, wie hab ich mir mein Schicksal verwirrt!» (Oh, how I have confused my destiny!) – as though this were the undesirable alternative to making one's destiny one's choice.¹⁰⁸

The increasingly gothic atmosphere that conveys the sense of fate is enhanced by literary allusion: the clairvoyant Clärchen is dressed as the Ahnfrau, or ancestress, the eponymous character of Franz Grillparzer's first play (*Die Ahnfrau*, 1817), which Prince Iwan's servant Nepomuk reads, shuddering with fear, as events unfold.¹⁰⁹ As a prominent philhellene,

Die deutschen Freiwilligen im griechischen Freiheitskampf, in Gilbert Heß, Elena Agazzi and Elisabeth Décultot (eds), *Klassizistisch-romantische Kunst(t)räume. Imaginationen im Europa des 19. Jahrhunderts und ihr Beitrag zur kulturellen Identitätsfindung. Band 1: Graecomania. Der europäische Philhellenismus*, Berlin and New York, Walter de Gruyter, 2009, pp. 119-132.

104 See Dieter Seidel, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

105 Quoted in Constanze Güthenke, *Placing Modern Greece: The Dynamics of Romantic Hellenism, 1770-1840*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008, ch. 3, note 6. On the broad spectrum of teutonic philhellenisms, see Marco Hillemann, *Wilhelm Müller und die deutschen Philhellenismen* (2023), in *Online-Compendium der deutsch-griechischen Verflechtungen*, <https://comdeg.eu/essay/112982/> (last access: 06.05.2024).

106 Julius Mosen, *Der Congress von Verona*, *cit.*, I, p. 225.

107 See *Ibid.*, I, p. 305; II, p. 49.

108 *Ibid.*, II, p. 49.

109 See *Ibid.*, I, p. 131.

Grillparzer was a useful reference point for Mosen, who uses such references to suggest that as politicians like Joseph obsessively try to control events they find themselves increasingly subject to fate the more desperately they manoeuvre. Elsewhere, the principle of destiny is expressed rather in terms of *Realpolitik*: diplomacy is labelled the art of embracing the inevitable before it happens, thus defusing it. Montmorency lucidly articulates the reactionary principle that revolution is a kind of national fever, and sound diplomacy involves waiting for it to break out and then suppressing it with all possible force.¹¹⁰

National character is a major theme of the book, as reviewers noted. With respect to the history of mentalities, Mosen was perfectly in tune with his time: for example, in his 1838 work on the Congress of Verona, Chateaubriand was still citing Montesquieu's *The Spirit of the Laws* (1748) as an authority on this topic. It has been noted above that Achilles represents a Greek mentality, in accordance with the central principle of Romanticism articulated by John Claimont Isbell: «from the nation's rich soil arises a genius speaking the nation's voice».¹¹¹ Arnold is portrayed as a typical Prussian; the Spaniards are divided between Malavilla and Isabel-la, both equally proud, but respectively regressive and progressive in mentality. The Italians likewise appear as a mixture: Antonio is wise, active, philanthropic, forward-looking; the plotters of different social classes like Bartolo and Bajonna are backward-looking, essentially slavish characters. Joseph is a caricature of the cunning supposedly characteristic of (Metternich's) Austria. The thoughtful Tsar Alexander I, surprisingly worthy of Francesca's admiration, and the destructively selfish Iwan represent divided poles of Russian national character. With such distinctions, Mosen develops the strategy inaugurated in Madame de Staël's *Corinne, or Italy* (1807) of almost, but not quite, allowing characters to stand allegorically for nations.

We have seen that the novel often shows those opposed to the restoration regime (with whom Mosen in principle sympathises) in chaotic disarray; conversely, the potentates are not purely unsympathetic. Even if Prince Iwan is truly malevolent, Tsar Alexander I sweats and struggles to hold back tears as he reads Achilles's papers about Geek suffering un-

¹¹⁰ See *Ibid.*, p. 124.

¹¹¹ John Claimont Isbell, *Introduction*, in Id., *An Outline of Romanticism in the West*, Cambridge, Open Book Publishers, 2022, https://books.openbookpublishers.com/10.11647/obp.0302/introduction.xhtml#_idTextAnchor003 (last access: 06.05.2024).

der the Ottoman Empire.¹¹² Further, whereas in Byron's *The Age of Bronze* the Congress of Verona is condemned as the focus for inauthentic, sycophantic art (despised by Byron-Diogenes), in Mosen's novel the Congress milieu is positively inspiring to genuine artists. Malocchio, painting Francesca, puts forward his own historical argument: whereas previously Christianity was key for artists to find their subjects, now nature and history and have taken its place, meaning that new subjects for the artist's brush constantly arise (even when turning to the past). The audience at the Congress festivities feels transported to Ancient Greece¹¹³ – so that a type of philhellenism is successfully achieved within the restoration regime as well as by Achilleus's tales and revolutionary-restorative actions. Similarly, the narrator tells us that the Congress's presence had a positive effect on even the humblest residents in Verona: «Es war kein Mensch so gering in Verona, welchen der Congress nicht ein goldenes Blättchen des Lebens in den Schoos geworfen, und keiner so undankbar, welcher nicht dafür ein Lämpchen an sein Fenster gestellt hätte» (There was no person in Verona so lowly that the Congress had not thrown a golden leaf of life into their lap, and no-one so ungrateful that they had not placed a little lamp at the window in return).¹¹⁴ Nevertheless, this complex, even paradoxical aspect of Mosen's narrative should not be over-emphasised. Warnings about the restoration regime's self-presentation abound, as when Antonio tells Francesca that she has been dazzled by 'Fremden' – foreigners, and specifically Russians: «Armes Kind, der äußere Glanz täuscht Dich» (poor child, the external lustre deceives you). This deception is said to be enabled through the abuse of history perpetrated by turning back the clock: in Antonio's flowery phrase, they «scheinen Dir so herrlich zu blühen, weil sie aus den Gräbern der Geschichte mit brennenden Farben der Verwesung die Blüte des Lebens füllen können» (seem to you to bloom so gloriously because they can fill the blossom of life from the graves of history with the burning colours of decay).¹¹⁵

Paul Johnson asks, «what exactly was the “spirit of the age” » so often invoked post-1815? He answers that it lay more on the side of desiring stability (restoration) than radical change (revolution).¹¹⁶ The lawyer Alippi

112 See Julius Mosen, *Der Congress von Verona, cit.*, II, pp. 292-293.

113 See *Ibid.*, p. 221.

114 *Ibid.*, pp. 184-185.

115 *Ibid.*, p. 59.

116 Paul Johnson, *The Birth of the Modern: World Society 1815-1830*, London, Harper Collins, 1991, p. 116.

in *Der Congress von Verona* understands it in a different way: the *Zeitgeist* is the selfish and acquisitive pursuit of personal pleasure. This is embodied by the character whom most of Mosen's reviewers identified as his finest single achievement in the novel: Hofrath von Gentz.¹¹⁷ Gentz is an exceptional case among Mosen's cast in being a real political figure endowed with full characterization. In one respect Mosen deviates from the historical record: his Gentz rails against marriage, telling Joseph that the only motive he can imagine for a man to marry is *ennui*, whereas the real Gentz was married. Mosen's humorous portrayal stops just short of caricature.¹¹⁸ Mosen's Gentz is a philosophical epicurean: he asserts that ceremonies and customs are needed for enjoyment: «Was ist die Sitte und Etiquette anders, als der Versuch, individuelles Belieben, mit den Ansprüchen, welche zugleich Andere darauf haben, in der Gesellschaft auszugleichen?» (What is custom and etiquette other than an attempt to balance individual desires with the demands that others place on them in society?).¹¹⁹ Iwan enthuses in reply that these words should be inscribed on marble tablets. Gentz proceeds to compare the champagne he is sipping to an elegant dancer: «Haben Sie die junge Fanny Elsler [*sic*] in Wien je tanzen gesehen? fragte er. Aus keinem schwereren Stoffe, als prüselnder Champagner ist, kann diese leichte Else gewoben sein!» (Have you ever seen the young Fanny Elsler dance in Vienna? he asked. This light Else could not have been woven from a heavier material than champagne!).¹²⁰ Such rhetorical flights help to define Gentz's epicureanism, since from a Kantian perspective it would be impermissible to confound the taste for the dancer's art with the taste of wine. That the hideous Prince Iwan speaks in similar terms, comparing a good breakfast to a Beethoven symphony, is a warning sign in Mosen's world.¹²¹ *Ennui* is Gentz's keynote: «Nichts als Ennui hat unser diplomatischer Kleinhandel!» (Our petty trade of diplomacy has nothing but *ennui*!).¹²² Sometimes he expresses this in historical terms: «Wir haben nichts als Ennui nach dem Stürze Buonapartes» (We've had nothing but *ennui* since Napoleon's fall).¹²³ *En-*

117 An example: «Literaturblatt», LXXVIII, 1 August 1842, p. 311.

118 See «Zeitung für die elegante Welt», cit., p. 506. See also Julius Mosen, *Der Congress von Verona*, cit., II, p. 190.

119 Julius Mosen, *Der Congress von Verona*, cit., II, p. 21. See also pp. 222-223.

120 *Ibid.*, II, p. 23.

121 See *Ibid.*, p. 18.

122 *Ibid.*, p. 192.

123 *Ibid.*, p. 244.

nui, however, is not pure boredom, but the kind of anxious state that necessitates the restoration regime's paranoid diplomacy in the first place: thus, Gentz suffers regular insomnia, able to sleep only in the morning;¹²⁴ is anxious about the bad air of Verona («Herbstluft») and about catching influenza; and confesses on hearing the news of Joseph's death and attributing it to violent demagogues, «eine Schwäche in allen Nerven bis zur Ohnmacht» (a nervous weakness to the point of fainting).¹²⁵ The reader eventually witnesses Gentz in action as a writer, too: his thoughts are said to resemble ants as he writes up the result of the Congress, and his pen becomes more fluent as he begins to write about expunging the spirit of revolution.¹²⁶ Mosen thus convincingly renders the historical Gentz, a 'European Burke' in print, and said to be vain, greedy, and cowardly in personality, Metternich joking that he would give the cathedral of Strasbourg for a piece of chocolate.¹²⁷

Conclusion

The differences between Mosen on the one hand and Byron and Moore on the other in their treatments of the Congress of Verona and its restoration milieu are partly those of genre (satirical poetry versus epic fiction) and partly of date (what was current in 1823 had become history two decades later); but more importantly they stemmed from the fact that Mosen was a writer trying to make nationalism work as a progressive ideal. Philhellenism, for him, is not only a refuge from unsatisfactory alternatives but also an idea with positive force, a potential focal point for all (Christian) nations. This is admittedly not a fully developed political program within the novel, which is rather strongest in critiquing the psychopathology of life under the restoration regime. Further, Mosen offers a complex and often nuanced panorama of the lives of all classes of Europeans at that time, and of Verona as a stage on which, in 1822, they all intermingled. Unlike Byron (and Moore), Mosen does not ridicule Tsar Alexander I. His depiction of Alexander also stands in stark contrast to (for instance) Terenzio Mamiani's urgent poetic harangue to Alexander in 1824 to sup-

124 See *Ibid.*, p. 196.

125 *Ibid.*, p. 266.

126 See *Ibid.*, p. 245.

127 See Helene Du Coudray, *Metternich*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1936, p. 26.

port the Christian Greeks.¹²⁸ Neither does he create a very clear binary distinction between the proponents of the restoration regime and the liberal freedom-fighters. Instead, the novel operates with a sliding scale. The brilliant and sincere Achilles contrasts diametrically with his rival for Isabella, the vicious, scheming spymaster Joseph. Antonio is another benevolent character, Iwan a bad one. However, moving to the next level, Malavilla is deluded rather than evil; Arnold thoroughly well-intentioned yet over-hasty; the Frenchman Jouy an intelligent observer but lacking in positive ideals. The real Alexander, Chateaubriand and even Gentz are portrayed with a remarkable degree of sympathy despite their standing on the 'wrong' side of history. Mosen's vignettes are often witty or brilliant, so that as one reviewer expressed it: «In diesen brennenden Gemälden sehen wir [...] den lyrischen Poeten Mosen mit der ganzen Gewalt seines Feuers» (In these burning paintings we see [...] the lyrical poet Mosen with the full power of his fire).¹²⁹ To be sure, such a sparky style becomes strained at such length. This disjunction between content and form accentuates the awkwardness (common with historical fiction) that the reader's suspension of disbelief is disturbed by the effort to work out where history ends and imagination begins.¹³⁰ Another way of putting this is that Mosen cannot solve the dilemma surrounding the historical novel as articulated by one of the era's greatest historical novelists, Alessandro Manzoni: «the historical novel encourages belief, while at the same time removing what is necessary to sustain belief».¹³¹ Nevertheless, Gutzkow, despite his general skepticism toward German Romanticism, concluded that «Mosens Unerschrockenheit in einer Zeit, wo sich so viele Dichter nach der Sonnengunst der Höfe sehnen, macht seine Charakter Ehre» (Mosen's indomitability at a time when so many poets long for the sunny favour of the courts does honour to his character). Gutzkow saw much healthy common sense («gesunden Verstand») in the novel, amidst its gothic flourishes. He considered it a rare positive case in which «die Romantik, die sonst nur der Reaction zu dienen pflegte, dem Fortschritte dienstbar macht» (Romanticism, which usually only served the cause of reaction, made it-

128 Terenzio Mamiani, «Alla I. M. Alessandro I», in *Poesie di Terenzio Mamiani*, Paris, Baudry, 1843, pp. 345-348.

129 «Zeitung für die elegante Welt», cit., p. 505.

130 See Dieter Seidel, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

131 «On the Historical Novel» (1850), quoted in Brian Hamnett, *The Historical Novel in Nineteenth-Century Europe: Representations of Reality in History and Fiction*, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 2011, p. 35.

self useful for progress), so much so that the novel became a joy to read.¹³² The reviewer Wilhelm Arthur Passow concluded that although the theme of *Der Congress von Verona* was a historical one, the realization of its ideas lay in the future.¹³³ This comment recalls Friedrich Schlegel's notion of the historian (or in this case, historical novelist) as a 'prophet looking backwards' – which was surely the way in which Mosen, the philhellenic Romantic novelist, intended his work to be grasped.¹³⁴ Mosen, that is, treats all the political men and their ideas with some level of satire – all except Achilleus and the specific cause of philhellenism. The solemn concluding scene with the philhellenes sailing into battle once diplomacy had failed is programmatic: readers 'knew' that cause to be successful because it had indeed resulted in an independent Greece. Mosen's ultimate message, which must remain implicit in view of the Prussian censors, is that a cause cognate with philhellenism is what will liberate Prussia and other nations currently (in 1842) in a state of servitude.

¹³² Karl Gutzkow, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

¹³³ See Wilhelm Artur Passow, *op. cit.*, p. 455.

¹³⁴ See Friedrich Schlegel, *Athenäum-Fragment 80*, in *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe*, herausgegeben von Ernst Behler, vol. II, *Charakteristiken und Kritiken 1: 1796-1801*, Zürich, Schöningh, 1967, p. 176.