

## **WILLIAM C. McDONALD: *Concerning the Use and Abuse of a Medieval Statue in Germany from 1920-1940. The Case of the Bamberger Reiter***

### **ABSTRACT**

In June, 2009 DasErste (Erstes Deutsches Fernsehen), the prominent publicly owned German TV channel, ran a provocative report by Ulf Kalkreuth on the possible membership of the author Dieter Wellershoff in the NSDAP. The report cites Wellershoff's remark on his attitude toward Adolf Hitler: "Ich stellte mir einen deutschen Führer ganz anders vor—so wie den Bamberger Reiter." Then Kalkreuth responds: "Der Bamberger Reiter—ausgerechnet! Von den Nazis vereinnahmt, als arisches Symbol schlechthin." This arrogation of a 13<sup>th</sup>-century equestrian statue standing in the Bamberg cathedral is the topic of our essay, which is part *Forschungsbericht* and part analysis of a question: "How is it possible that the image of the Bamberger Reiter, chosen personally by Edwin Redslob, the *Reichskunstwart* of the Weimar Republic, to decorate legal tender in 1920 as "ein Symbol des deutschen Menschen," appeared in the same decade on the cover of books on *Rassenkunde* by Hans F.K. Günther, the favorite of Wilhelm Frick, as an icon of National Socialist racial theory?" Surprisingly, given the wealth of research on the Bamberger Reiter, this question is scanted in scholarly accounts. Here the author sketches the forces at play in the transformation of the Bamberger Reiter from representative democratic citizen to Nazi beau ideal, then surveys the efforts of five intellectuals to promote, and sustain, this metamorphosis. They are Günther, Paul Schultze-Naumburg, Walter Hege, Wilhelm Pinder, and Fritz Hippler. The author, aware that the matters raised here might more properly be treated in a monograph, conceives of this piece as a preliminary study and offers it with the hope that it engenders further research.

"Der Bamberger Reiter- ausgerechnet! Von den Nazis vereinnahmt, als arisches Symbol schlechtin."

Ulf Kalreuth<sup>1</sup>

"Die SA marschiert nämlich für Goethe, für Schiller, für Kant, für Bach, für den Kölner Dom und den Bamberger Reiter."

Horst Wessel<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Rückschau: Die braune Karte und der Schock: War der Schriftsteller Dieter Wellershoff in der NSDAP?" 21.6.2009. [www.daserste.de/ttt/beitrag\\_dyn~uid,h4g4zl6o9az15vr7~cm.asp](http://www.daserste.de/ttt/beitrag_dyn~uid,h4g4zl6o9az15vr7~cm.asp).

<sup>2</sup> Helmut Heiber, *Goebbels* (Berlin: Colloquium Verlag, 1962), 84. Heiber notes: "Goebbel's [Wilfrid] Bade [legt die Sätze] dem jungen Helden in den Mund..." Bade, biographer of Joseph Goebbels, describes the activities of Horst Wessel in *Die S.A. erobert Berlin. Ein Tatsachenbericht* (Munich: Verlag Knorr und Hirth, 1933)..

In 1937, during the fourth year of the National Socialist dictatorship, the Rassenpolitisches Amt of the NSDAP, organized, with the aid of the city of Frankfurt am Main, a major exhibition called: *Das Deutsche Antlitz im Spiegel der Jahrhunderte*.<sup>3</sup> The purpose was to show the public the great faces of the German past. The Rassenpolitisches Amt, entrusted with oversight over all racial-political questions concerning the Party, exercised many functions, including organizing a speakers bureau, sponsoring institutes at universities, and funding films (for example, *Alles Leben ist Kampf*, in the same year as the exhibition). It is logical, therefore, to assume that the Frankfurt exhibit of 1937, showing the countenances of great Germans, was intended to indoctrinate an audience, and to sway it with visual propaganda. The use of images of the human face, particularly of Hitler's face, was an established tactic of the Nazis.<sup>4</sup> Pictures of athletes, for example, conveyed the ideals of the party in a manner that words could less easily achieve.

The images in this exhibition ranged in time from the first century A.D. (Arminius), to the present (Günther Groenhoff, the deceased glider pilot). They displayed thirteen-hundred years of German achievement, including military affairs (Frederick the Great) and science and technology (Werner von Siemens). One of the faces of the exhibition surprises the modern reader. It is that of a statue, the Bamberg Reiter. Carved of sandstone in life-size proportion around 1227, the crowned figure standing in the Bamberg Cathedral is the foremost equestrian sculpture of the German Middle Ages. What, one immediately asks, does a medieval statue have to do with issues of racial policy—in crude terms of the time, the *Rassenfrage*—in Hitler's Germany? It is the task of this paper to sketch how a powerful arm of the NSDAP, the Rassenpolitisches Amt, would even harbor the idea of including a depiction of a statue from the Middle Ages in a propaganda exhibition.

The Bamberger Reiter is today the object of very different attention. It has elicited fantasy (a murder-mystery based on the carving of the statue),<sup>5</sup> as well as intensive research on art-historical aspects (dating, original placement of the statue, original coloration, artistic school, and more).<sup>6</sup> But most research focuses on the identity of

<sup>3</sup> "Das Deutsche Antlitz im Spiegel der Jahrhunderte," *Von Werk zu Werk*, 25 (Mai, 1937), 90ff. Cited by Alexander Michel, *Von der Fabrikzeitung zum Führungsmittel. Werkzeitschriften industrieller Großunternehmen von 1890 bis 1945* (Stuttgart; Franz Steiner Verlag, 1997), 300. In the same year appeared what is perhaps the ultimate example of exploitation of the Reiter under the NSDAP: the cover of Wilhelm Kottenrod's book, *Deutsche Führer und Meister. Geschichtliche Einzelbilder aus Gegenwart und Vergangenheit* (Frankfurt a.M.: Diesterweg, 1937). There, in profile, the head and shoulders of the statue are juxtaposed against those of a Nazi soldier who wears a helmet. Both "soldiers" glance to the left with a determined expression, looking off into an unspecified space. Very popular, this book had eight editions by 1939. See Stefan Schweizer, 'Unserer Weltanschauung sichtbaren Ausdruck geben,' *Nationalsozialistische Geschichtsbilder in historischen Festzügen* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2007), 100.

<sup>4</sup> In 1935, Karl Richard Ganzer wrote *Das deutsche Führergesicht. 200 Bildnisse deutscher Kämpfer und Wegsucher aus zwei Jahrtausenden* (Munich: J.F. Lehmanns Verlag, 1935). The concluding image was of Adolf Hitler. See, recently, Claudia Schmolders, *Hitler's Face. The Biography of an Image* (U. of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

<sup>5</sup> Guido Dieckmann, *Die Nacht des steinernen Reiters* (Berlin: Aufbau Taschenbuch Verlag, 2005).

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Hannes Möhring, *König der Könige. Der Bamberger Reiter in neuer Interpretation* (Königstein im Taunus, K.R. Langewiesche, 2004); Heinz Gockel, *Der Bam-*

the Reiter. Speculation ranges from Emperor Constantine and the Ottonian Emperor Henry II to Hohenstaufen rulers (most prominently, Frederick II) and to Christ Himself. Every few years the “definitive” identification of the Bamberger Reiter is made, most recently by the Bamberg professor Achim Hubel. He argues that one of the earliest theories was indeed correct: the Reiter “is” Saint Stephen I, King of Hungary (d. 1038).<sup>7</sup> Stephen was brother-in-law of Henry II, the founder of the Diocese of Bamberg who is interred in the cathedral.

Given the wide scholarship in evidence, it is strange that critics pay least attention to three sometimes interconnected matters: first, why the statue sparked keen interest in the citizenry of the Third Reich; second, the process whereby the statue became the beau ideal under National Socialism; and third, which forces sustained this metamorphosis. Our study considers these questions, while sketching the efforts of several intellectuals to identify the Bamberger Reiter with nationalist racial dogma. They were an academic (Hans Friedrich Karl Günther), an architect (Paul Schultze-Naumburg), a photographer (Walter Hege)<sup>8</sup>, an art historian (Wilhelm Pinder), and a film director (Fritz Hippler). Agents of this transformation were therefore the cultural elite, beginning during the Weimar Republic who, using various media, readied the German public for the kind of racially “pure” exhibition of images of the “Nordic race” in Frankfurt am Main mentioned at the beginning of this paper. Especially effective in fixing an image of the Reiter in the public mind was black-and-white photography (mainly by Hege). Photography, focusing tightly on the face of the horseman, used lighting, perspective and image-cropping to make him seem like a human being. These techniques promoted a close personal connection between the Bamberger Reiter and the German public, but photography twice removed the statue from its proper environment, first, from its emplacement as a mounted rider in a holy space, and again from its historical locus in the medieval period.<sup>9</sup>

Decisive in the determination of a Nordic race was physical appearance; and that ideal type was reflected in art.<sup>10</sup> One beneficiary of this type of art criticism was the

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*berger Reiter* (Munich/Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2006); and Franz-Josef Körner, *Der Domreiter* (Reinbek: Rowolt, 2006).

<sup>7</sup> Achim Hubel, “Der Bamberger Reiter. Beschreibung-Befundauswertung-Ikonographie.” *Bericht des Historischen Vereins Bamberg*, 143 (Bamberg, 2007), 121-157. The best review of early scholarship is by Otto Hartwig, *Der Bamberger Reiter und sein Geheimnis. Ein Beitrag der hochmittelalterlichen Reiterdarstellungen* (Bamberg; C.C. Buchners Verlag, 1939). Hartig opts for Emperor Constantine as the subject of our statue.

<sup>8</sup> Aware that Hege practiced several professions (cinematographer, movie director, painter, ), we focus below on one that was crucial to the promotion of the Bamberger Reiter as a “person” familiar to the German public at large: black-and-white still photography.

<sup>9</sup> One must be reminded here of the case of Uta von Naumburg in the Naumburger Dom. See Wolfgang Ullrich, *Uta von Naumburg. Eine deutsche Ikone* (Berlin: Klaus Wagenbach, 1998). Cf. the treatment of the *Germania* of Tacitus during the Third Reich. Citing the uses to which Hitler put Germanic culture, Allan A. Lund might well be speaking of the Bamberger Reiter: “Die Prähistorie [trug] in extremem Maße zur Bildung eines neuen, rassistisch begründeten Selbstverständnisses der Deutschen bei...” Cited in: *Germanenideologie im Nationalsozialismus. Zur Rezeption der ‘Germania’ des Tacitus im ‘Dritten Reich’* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1995), 104.

<sup>10</sup> Eric Michaud, *The Cult of Art in Nazi Germany*, trans. J. Lloyd (Stanford: Stanford U Press, 2004), 128. He cites, particularly, the views of the race theorist Hans F.K. Günther, who is treated below in our paper.

Reiter, whose alleged Nordic facial features (narrow face, high-standing nose, narrow forehead, clear-cut chin) resonated with art critics who put him forward as a model of the Nordic man. The head-shot of the Bamberger Reiter therefore became a kind of fetish in National Socialist aesthetic theory. For example, the architect Schultze-Naumburg, a Nazi member of the Reichstag and colleague of Hitler, rhapsodizes in 1932 about the face of the statue:

Dies ist der Kopf des Reiters, der ein ganzes  
Heldengedicht auf die 'Nordische Rasse'  
bedeutet.<sup>11</sup>

As soon as the Reiter carried the loaded adjective *nordisch*, and had therefore joined the loose body of aesthetics that scholars call the “nordische Gedanke” in Germany, a movement beginning around 1920,<sup>12</sup> the statue ceased to be an object of art, whose place in the canon scholars could dispassionately assess. Instead, it served as an ideological instrument, bent and shaped to the pseudo-science of *Rassenkunde*, the branch of anthropology that argues for the unlikeness of men and for the alleged superiority of the Nordic race.

Our thesis is that the more the ordinary German citizen identified with the Nordic racial myth that was propagated heavily during the 1920s, the more acceptable it became for authors and propagandists to cite the Reiter as the epitome of Nordic beauty. Aesthetics, patriotism, and self-identity thus help to explain the appeal the Bamberger Reiter held for the populace in the Third Reich. The firm intellectual bond that the statue enjoyed with its audience was, of course, a carry-over from the Weimar Republic, inasmuch as the nationalization of the statue occurred before Hitler came to power. To maintain reverence for the Reiter, the NS-propaganda machine placed images of the statue (mainly the head) on poster art, parade floats, in films, music, magazines, poetry, book; the Bamberger Reiter is even the subject of an oratorio work.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Paul Schultze-Naumburg, *Kampf um die Kunst* (Munich: F. Eher, 1932), 14-15. See, also Susen Krüger Saß “Nordische Kunst. Die Bedeutung des Begriffs während des Nationalsozialismus.” *Kunstgeschichte im 'Dritten Reich'*. Ed. R. Heftrig, O. Peters and B. Schellewald (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2008), 230. In 1930, in a conversation with the party official Otto Strasser, Hitler said (as cited in the English translation): “There is only one eternal art—the Greek-Nordic art...” *The Speeches of Adolf Hitler April 1922-August 1939*, ed. Norman H. Baynes (London/New York/Toronto: Oxford U Press, 1942), I: 567.

<sup>12</sup> Hans-Jürgen Luthhöft, *Der Nordische Gedanke in Deutschland 1920-1940* (Stuttgart: Klett, 1971).

<sup>13</sup> See the summary by Schweizer, ‘*Unserer Weltanschauung sichtbaren Ausdruck geben.*’ Exkurs. Der ‘Bamberger Reiter’ als Sinnbild deutscher Kunst, 91-106. For the “Tag der Deutschen Kunst” in Munich (Oct. 1933), an elaborate float of the Bamberger Reiter was guided through the streets, accompanied by men costumed in the style of the Middle Ages. See Michael Hermann, “2000 Jahre deutsche Kultur- historische Festzüge im nationalsozialistischen München,” *Oberbayrisches Archiv* 121 (1997): 361-376; and Michaud, *The Cult of Art in Nazi Germany*, Plate 44. See, also, Wolfgang Hartmann, *Der historische Festzug* (Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1976), Plate 128: “München, 1933: Grundsteinlegung zum Haus der Deutschen Kunst.” On the publishing front, the head of the Bamberger Reiter spears on the cover of a special issue of the popular art magazine *Kunst dem Volk* (July, 1939). See Jan Tabor, ed., *Kunst und Diktatur* (Baden: Verlag Grasl, 1994), I: 267. Regarding music, the school teacher and composer Karl Schüler won a Nazi prize in 1940



The gaps in knowledge about the statue were vital to the expropriation of the Bamberger Reiter by nationalists. No-one could state with authority, for example, whether the Reiter was a king, saint, or knight. Nor was it possible to determine for which purpose, and why, contrary to architectural practice, an equestrian statue had been placed in a cathedral. All observers saw a slim, unarmed young man without a beard, childlike in some respects, but alert, as if he were a sentinel on an important mission. At the close of World War I, Germans were less eager to de-code the Reiter's identity than to claim the statue as representing a glorious past, not least because its inspiration was likely foreign (statuary in the Cathedral of Notre-Dame de Reims), and because one persistent theory considers the Reiter to be no German ruler or knight at all, but an 11<sup>th</sup>-century Hungarian king (Saint Stephen I). The NS- apparatus energetically identified the Bamberger Reiter as a German, discouraging the suggestion that a non-Nordic figure could be so represented in a German cathedral.<sup>14</sup> (The only comparisons tolerated were to Greek and Roman art, which Nazi aesthetics interpreted as belonging to Nordic culture.<sup>15</sup>) The very inscrutability of the statue was fodder for ideologues, who took advantage of the people's embrace of the Reiter. Part of the appeal of the statue was its ability, like a Rorschach test, to convey to the beholder a range of associations.<sup>16</sup> Since any observer could "fill in the blanks," viewer-response was highly contradictory. Some saw a knight, thus recalling an honor code of a rosy past, while others saw a ruler whose crown and face betokened an era of stability—and political order. Some witnessed a saint—perhaps a canonized German emperor: Henry II. Some saw sternness of expression, while others de-

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for his oratorio *Bamberg, dein Reiter reitet durch die Zeit*, which is based on the poem by Herbert Böhme, *Bamberg, dein Reiter reitet durch die Zeit* (Munich: Deutscher Volksverlag, 1937). See below. The oratorio was performed in Munich in 1939, on the 6<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Hitler's rise to power. Fred K. Prieberg, *Musik im NS-Staat* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1982), 267-268. See Claudia Friedel, *Komponierende Frauen im Dritten Reich* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 1995), pp. 197-198, who labels Schüler's oratorio "Nationale Volksmusik."

<sup>14</sup> Hellmut Fuhrmann, in *Die Furie des Verschwindens. Literaturunterricht und Literaturtradition* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1993), reminds us that assertions that the Bamberger Reiter possessed an "eminent deutsche Charakter" began already at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century during a period of anti-French sentiment. To characterize these efforts, Fuhrmann chooses the phrase "Ideologisierung der Tradition," and cites Adorno [*Parva Aesthetica*] in reference to "manipulierte Tradition" (41-42).

<sup>15</sup> Hitler's term for this consanguinity is "der nordische Geist." See, for example, "Adolf Hitlers Rede auf der Kulturtagung der N.S.D.A.P.," *Die Reden Hitlers am Reichsparteitag 1933* (Munich: F. Eher, 1934), esp. p.27: "Griechen und Römer werden dann plötzlich den Germanen so nahe, weil alle ihre Wurzeln in einer Grundrasse zu suchen haben..." See, also, George Hagman, "Hitler's Aesthetics.," *Psychoanalytic Review*, 92 (2005) 963-981.

<sup>16</sup> See Wolfgang Ullrich, "Der Bamberger Reiter und Uta von Naumburg," in *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte*, ed. E. Francois and H. Schulze (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2001), I: 328-330. The absence of a verifiable identity of the Reiter, Ullrich has argued, evokes ideological fantasies and psychological ascriptions, making the statue a projection-figure onto which people could fix their hopes and dreams. He is also convincing when describing the psychology of post-World War I Germany: "...Deutschland verfiel nicht nur ökonomisch in tiefe Depression. In dieser Situation lag es nahe, sich als geschmähtes Volk, das die Kriegsschuld nicht anerkennen wollte, mit den vom Erbfeind geschmähten Werken der eigenen Kunsttradition zu identifizieren und, trotzig, gerade das Mittelalter als Hort deutscher Seligkeit zu romanistieren" (p.328).

tected passive forbearance. Still others thought they saw a prince of peace, but some were disposed to see its counter-pole, a heroic figure, a Barbarossa-like crusader, evoking a glorious martial past and an auspicious future.<sup>17</sup>

During the Third Reich the last of these interpretations, the bold and courageous avatar of heroism, had ascendancy. Authors skillfully played on the deep, intellectual connection that existed between the German populace and the Bamberger Reiter, manipulating that devotion to further the ends of the NSDAP. We cite a typical passage in an art history from 1937:

Immer wieder wird er [Bamberger Reiter] als Verkörperung edlen Mannestums, als Urbild einer Führerpersönlichkeit nordischer Rasse des deutschen Mittelalters gewürdigt.<sup>18</sup>

Here, in a single sentence, are the chief qualities of the statue as viewed from a National Socialist perspective: the manifestation of manliness; its function as heroic archetype; the Reiter's identity as a German; the reference to racial theory, *nordische Rasse*;<sup>19</sup> as well as connections with the *Führer*-cult.<sup>20</sup> Any such interpretation relied on a primitive appeal to febrile pride and patriotism, added to which was a malignant sense of cultural superiority.

Immediately after World War I the historical identity of the Reiter was much less a concern of art critics and German citizens than was its link, in a time of political and social upheaval, to a (romanticized) Middle Ages during the Hohenstaufen rule, a safe harbor from memories of war and the humiliation of defeat. German medieval art therefore ameliorated in some measure disillusionment with present conditions. The idealized image of a German knight of circa 1200 resonated with a populace that had lost a brutal war, providing a fantasy-object of what was best about the German past. The appeal of the Reiter was thus essentially backward-looking: the statue elicited great pride as a master work from centuries past.<sup>21</sup> This all makes the Bamberger Reiter an example of the phenomenon scholars call a "usable past,"<sup>22</sup> according to

<sup>17</sup> See Berthold Hinz, "Der 'Bamberger Reiter'," *Das Kunstwerk zwischen Wissenschaft und Weltanschauung*. Ed. M. Warnke (Gütersich: Bertelsmann Kunstverlag, 1970), 26-47; and Schweizer, "Unsere Weltanschauung sichtbaren Ausdruck geben," esp. 91-106.

<sup>18</sup> Johannes Arndt, *Deutsche Kunst im Reich der deutschen Kaiser* (Leipzig: Bibliographisches Institut, 1937), 2: 28

<sup>19</sup> Cf. the remarks by Richard Suchenwirth: "Das Reiterstandbild im Bamberger Dom...ist die edelste Verkörperung nordischen Heldengeistes des Mittelalters, in seinem gebietenden Adel, der ruhigen Kraft des Ausdrucks ein solches Denkmal einstiger deutscher Kaisergröße." In: *Deutsche Geschichte* (Leipzig: Dollheimer, 1941), 144. Already a decade prior to these remarks, Lothar Schreyer had maintained: "Der Reiter...ist eines der edlen Werke Deutscher Kunst, die zeigen, wie das Herrentum des deutschen Wesens ruhig und stolz sich einordnet in die große Botschaft des Heils" (*Die bildende Kunst der Deutschen* [Hamburg/Berlin/Leipzig: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1931]), 270. I thank Prof. Berthold Hinz (Kassel) for pointing me to Schreyer's words.

<sup>20</sup> Fundamental to National Socialist racial theory was the belief that the Nordic race was pre-disposed to leadership by nature. See for example, *The Nazi Primer: Official Handbook for Schooling the Hitler Youth*, trans. Harwood L. Childs (New York: Harper, 1938), 20.

<sup>21</sup> See esp. Hinz, "Der 'Bamberger Reiter'," 26-47; and Fuhrmann, *Die Furie des Verschwindens*, 41-2.

<sup>22</sup> This concept is most closely associated with Van Wyck Brooks, "On Creating a Usable

which the horseman was as much a mental construct as a material object. The mark of that usable past is what cultures 'elect to remember' (Van Wyck Brooks). The entire political spectrum in post-war Germany chose to remember the Bamberger Reiter as a symbol of artistic florescence suffused with self-identification. All claimed the rider to represent the German national character. Thus, almost immediately after the war, democratic politicians of the Weimar Republic, as well as supporters of the NSDAP, claimed the statue, each ascribing to its beautiful blankness and enigmatic identity their own dogma.

No accident that in 1920, when the infant Weimar Republic sought out images for its paper currency, Edwin Redslob, the *Reichskunstwart*, selected the Bamberger Reiter for the 100-mark bill. Redslob's tasks included re-working the eagle of the *Kaiserreich* and designing postage stamps, seals, coins, and paper money.<sup>23</sup> His artistic vision for the Republic was, in the case of the Reiter, a glance at the past. By placing the Reiter on currency, Redslob wished to promote national unity through the selection of an uncontested artistic achievement of which all Germans could be proud. He was also motivated by two convictions, first, that the Bamberger Reiter belonged to the national heritage ("nationales Besitztum"); and second, that the statue held extremely high status as a symbol of the German people itself: "ein Symbol des deutschen Menschen."<sup>24</sup> Awareness of Redslob's motivation affords us with a clear window on the status of the Reiter circa 1920. Pride, patriotism and the past explain the choice of the Bamberger Reiter for legal tender, where, as an official state-symbol, it "circulated" among the people as the self-representation of a nation, untainted by an imperialist legacy or contemporary politics.<sup>25</sup>

In a very brief span, the Reiter went from being the symbol of the democratic citizen into an image of the Nazi warrior. One important means in effecting this transformation was to claim that the statue provided historical continuity: the Reiter blazed the path for contemporary German youth. As Schultze-Naumburg expressed it in a periodical sponsored by the NSDAP:

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Past [1918]." *Van Wyck Brooks. The Early Years*. Ed. C. Sprague (Boston: Northeastern U Press, 1993, pp. 219-226. See also Henry Steele Commager, *The Search for a Usable Past, and other Essays in Historiography* (New York: Knopf, 1967).

<sup>23</sup> Christian Welzbacher, *Edwin Redslob* (Berlin: Matthes & Seitz, 2009), 148-167. See Edwin Redslob, *Die künstlerische Formgebung des Reichs* (Berlin: Werkkunst Verlag, 1926), esp. 22-23.

<sup>24</sup> Edwin Redslob, "Banknoten-Stil," *Vossische Zeitung*, 4 March 1921: "...Ein gelegentliches Besinnen auf nationales Besitztum (ist nötig)...Der Kopf 'bedeutet' keine Allegorie, wohl aber ist er ein Symbol des deutschen Menschen und zugleich das Werk aus einer Zeit beispielloser künstlerischer Entfaltung..." See Annegret Heffen, *Der Reichskunstwart. Kunstpolitik in den Jahren 1920-1933* (Essen: Blaue Eule, 1986), 142, n. 146. Cf. the formulation by F. Luebbecke: "Der Bamberger Reiter ist Abbild der deutschen Jugend wie Polyklets Speerträger das der griechischen." In: *Die Plastik des staufischen Mittelalters* (Munich: Piper, 1922), p.73. Redslob also hoped, by choosing the Bamberger Reiter for his currency emblem, to begin a tradition of "Neue Sachlichkeit," See Gisbert Laube, *Der Reichskunstwart. Geschichte einer Kulturbehörde 1919-1933* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1997), 90.

<sup>25</sup> The Bamberger Reiter did have a place in the armed forces, however. One thinks of the cavalry regiment, Bamberger Reiter-Rgt 17, RR 17, to which Claus von Stauffenberg belonged.

Allen voran der Bamberger Reiter, dessen Kopf  
allein wegweisend ist für deutsche Jugend, deutsche  
Geistigkeit, heldisches Rittertum.<sup>26</sup>

By blurring the distinction between past, present and future, this kind of art criticism succeeded in severing the Bamberger Reiter from the Middle Ages, or any historical context, placing it in the service of nationalist ideas. We hasten to add that the Nazi usurpation of a popular statue would have failed, had it not been for the willingness of German citizens to embrace the Reiter as a dauntless model-hero in the service of the state and as a Janus-like figure, facing both the past and the future, with determination and confidence.

The attempt to make the Reiter timeless, and thus a living presence during the Third Reich, emerges clearly from the title of Herbert Böhme's popular, lengthy poem (which was in Hitler's library with a personal dedication from the poet): *Bamberg, dein Reiter reitet durch die Zeit*, composed in 1937.<sup>27</sup> The Reiter of the title gallops through the realm—and time—serving as an eternal “Rufer ins Reich,” riding over the countryside, while breathlessly waiting. That he is awaiting the arrival of Hitler is strongly implied. From Tannenberg to the Pfalz he rides, celebrating the land and watching over all the Germans. Böhme calls the Reiter a metaphor (*Gleichnis*), whose function is to sing “den Traum deines ewigen Volks” (p.23). The horseman, we learn at the conclusion, is more than a watchman, admonisher, prophet, alert guardian and singer, however. He holds the honor of being the eternal German:

Bamberger Reiter, du stehst,  
ein Bild, doch du siehst  
ewig den Traum deines Volks.  
Jugendlich noch, schon ein Held...  
reitest du über die Zeiten,  
der ewige Deutsche.<sup>28</sup>

There were literary attempts to identify the Reiter with Hitler, or to claim the Reiter could safely dismount (!) upon Hitler's arrival as leader of Germany, since the chan-

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<sup>26</sup> Paul Schultze-Naumburg, “Deutsche Kunst im Mittelalter, II,” *Der Schulungsbrief*, 3.7 (1936), 269. See the discussion of Schultze-Naumburg below in this paper.

<sup>27</sup> Böhme, *Bamberg, dein Reiter reitet durch die Zeit*. One of the editions of this work has the head of the Reiter on the cover, this time showing a left profile. Recall that Karl Schüler set the poem to music, creating an oratorio. See n. 13. On Böhme, see Jürgen Hillesheim and Elisabeth Michael, *Lexikon nationalsozialistischer Dichter* (Würzburg; Königshausen & Neumann, 1993), 75-77.

<sup>28</sup> 47. The formulation “der ewige Deutsche” recalls Alfred Stange's words: “...Er (ist) das Denkmal des ewigen Deutschen.” From “Der Bamberger Dom und seine Bildwerke,” *Deutsche Kunst*, 1 (1935). No pagination. Cited by Hinz, “Der Bamberger Reiter,” 29. Cf. Hans Timotheus Kroeber, *Der Bamberger Reiter. Eine vergleichende Kunstbetrachtung* (Düsseldorf: Eigenverlag, 1936), 42: “Ehrfürchtig und stolz zugleich richtet das neue Deutschland seinen Blick auf deises Meisterwerk deutscher Plastik. Ein Heiligtum von unversiegbarer Kraft und Reinheit ward uns hier geschenkt. Bleiben wir uns dieses Werkes bewusst! In diesem Zeichen ruft Deutschland.”



ging of the guard was complete. For example, the artist, illustrator and literary scholar Hans Timotheus Kroeber took pictures of the Reiter—which he called one of the *Deutsche Heiligtümer*—composed a rhapsodic text in prose and poetry about the statue, and published the volume himself. The reader cannot easily discern whether the author is speaking of the Reiter or Hitler; and that is precisely Kroeber's point:

Ein neuer Tag bricht an...  
 Und leuchtend stehst Du da  
 Im Frankenland  
 Im Heiligtum  
 Im Dom  
 Beim Aufbruch Deines Volks,  
 Das hohe Sinnbild wahren Führertums.  
 Durch Deinen Adel der Gesinnung,  
 Nicht durch brutale Machtgebärde  
 Ziehst fest Du uns in Deinen Bann...  
 Du gottgesandter Führer bist uns  
 Sinnbild, Ziel und Kraft!  
 Wir folgen Dir!<sup>29</sup>

Kroeber presented the first copy of this book and the original manuscript of this hymn, which one scholar calls a "Hymne auf den Reiter-Führer,"<sup>30</sup> to Hitler. It is unclear whether Heinrich Anacker, the so-called "S.A.-Dichter,"<sup>31</sup> offered up a like tribute with his collection of effusive poems on the *Anschluss*, subtitled *Gedichte um Österreichs Heimkehr*.<sup>32</sup> But he similarly merges the identity of the Bamberger Reiter and Hitler. The one has waited for the other to save the German people, and can now climb down from his horse, for the person who can assume his duties has arrived. Anacker concludes his poem *Erfüllte Sehnsucht*, which is addressed to the *Reiter von Bamberg*, with a phrase: "dein Reich," words he applies both to the Reiter and to Hitler:

Weit dehnt der Adler die stolzen, beschirmenden Flügel.  
 Glückliche Mütter und Kinder zur Sonne aufsehn.  
 Reiter von Bamberg, nun steige getrost aus dem Bügel—  
 Denn wir beschwören: dein Reich wird für immer bestehn!<sup>33</sup>

This may hint at the various roles assigned, and ascribed, to the Bamberger Reiter in Nazi Germany. He not only mutates into a modern-day warrior, whose crown is the equivalent of a steel helmet and whose vigilant pose and serious expression signal a readiness to defend the fatherland and to inspire patriotic youth; he also functions as Hitler double, or stand-in. The fascination ordinary citizens had with the Reiter is ea-

<sup>29</sup> Kroeber, *Der Bamberger Reiter*, 8.

<sup>30</sup> Ullrich, "Der Bamberger Reiter und Uta von Naumburg," 324.

<sup>31</sup> Jürgen Hillesheim and Elisabeth Michael, *Lexikon nationalsozialistischer Dichter* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1993), 13-21.

<sup>32</sup> Heinrich Anacker, *Ein Volk-ein Reich-ein Führer! Gedichte um Österreichs Heimkehr* (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, Fran Eber, 1938).

<sup>33</sup> Anacker, *Ein Volk-ein Reich-ein Führer! Gedichte um Österreichs Heimkehr*, 54.

sily understood, especially when he was paired with Hitler and proclaimed to be the eternal, model German and exemplar of the Nordic race— therefore the embodiment of German exceptionalness and racial pride.

Hitler himself helped early in his rule to ratify the shift in the Reiter from nostalgic image to contemporary icon by identifying art in the Bamberg Cathedral as Nordic art, that is, a blending of *Rasse und Tradition*.<sup>34</sup> Hitler saw in the artworks of that important church a melding of medieval and National Socialist aesthetics: the “heroische Schönheitsideal der nordischen Rasse.” It is therefore vital to the process of transforming the Reiter into a Nazi emblem that it fit the Party’s art program perfectly. The statue met all the criteria. It was beautiful, German, and heroic, with strong hints that it exercised powers of leadership expected of the Nordic *Leistungsmensch*. It was knightly<sup>35</sup> and spoke to the *Volk*.” And the Reiter’s physiognomy, attesting to the superiority of the Nordic race, offered a standard for imitation, while expressing the German spirit.

It is apposite at this point to examine more closely the contributions of specific intellectuals to what one might call the Reiter-cult. The process of appropriating a democratic symbol proceeded in small steps, beginning with the same reverence for the past that motivated most democrats. The difference is that ultra-nationalists used the past (in this case, medieval equestrian sculpture) to ratify present “truths,” making a patriotic appeal to notions of German cultural and racial superiority. We begin with a prominent racial theoretician, Hans F. K. Günther, a NSDAP party member and professor of social anthropology in Jena—a post he achieved through Hitler’s associate, Wilhelm Frick. (Hitler was present when Günther gave his introductory lecture in 1930.) So closely was Günther identified with theories of race as determining factors for culture and intelligence that he was known as *Rassen-Günther*.<sup>36</sup> During the Weimar Republic Günther, publishing prolifically, fervently advocated the superiority of the Nordic race. He is best known for his widely circulated volume on so-called race science, *Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes* (1922), which had reached 16 editions

<sup>34</sup> Hans Kiener, “Dem Tag der deutschen Kunst entgegen,” in *Kunstabstrachtungen* (Munich: Neuer Filser-Verlag, 1937), 330. This art historian explains: “Der Führer...will die deutsche Kunst positiv fördern und er hat ihr Richtlinien gegeben... Rasse und Tradition sind die beiden Voraussetzungen der Kunst, die der bewussten Beeinflussung unterliegen. [Er] hat [1933] ein Bekenntnis abgelegt zum heroischen Schönheitsideal der nordischen Rasse. Nordisch heisst nach dem heutigen Sprachgebrauch ungefähr soviel wie indogermanisch; es bezeichnet ethnologisch die führende Oberschicht, die die klassischen Kulturen Griechenlands und Roms, unsere grosse mittelalterliche Kunst (Naumburg, Bamberg) so gut geschaffen hat...”

<sup>35</sup> *ritterlich*, as in the formulation “ritterliche Gerechtigkeit” is one of the qualities of the Nordic race according to the important race theorist Hans F.K. Günther, *Kleine Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes*, 3<sup>rd</sup>. ed. (Munich: J.F. Lehmanns Verlag, 1933), 59. Günther is treated below in this paper.

<sup>36</sup> Elvira Weisenburger, “Der ‘Rassepapst.’ Hans Friedrich Karl Günther, Professor für Rassenkunde,” *Die Führer der Provinz. NS-Biographien aus Baden und Württemberg*, ed. M. Kißener and J. Scholtyssek (Konstanz: Universitätsverlag, 1997), 161. - See Thomas W. Heilke, *Voegelin on the Idea of Race* (Baton Rouge /London: Louisiana State U Press), esp. 106-114; Uwe Hoßfeld, *Geschichte der biologische Anthropologie in Deutschland* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2005), 220-231; Hans-Christian Harten, Uwe Neirich and Matthias Schwerendt, *Rassenhygiene als Erziehungsideologie des Dritten Reichs* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2006), 139ff; and Peter Schwandt, *Hans F.K. Günther. Entwicklung und Wirken des rassistisch-nordischen Denkens* (Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag, 2008).

by 1933.<sup>37</sup> This book was so popular that Günther brought out a condensed version in 1928, as *Kleine Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes*, which likewise enjoyed multiple editions.<sup>38</sup> Günther had hit a nerve. His writing, Peter Emil Becker explains, appealed especially to young, non-intellectual persons, who appreciated its easy-to-grasp and graphic message, delivered simplistically.<sup>39</sup> This readership sought, and found “evidence” for German superiority among the peoples of the world. Günther, identifying the Nordic race as an ideal type, ascribes to it a long list of positive qualities: physical appearance, intellect, ambition, quality of character, morality, inclination to justice, courage, and so on. In addition, the Nordic race supposedly possessed farseeing leadership (“weitblickendes Führertum”).<sup>40</sup> Concocting a blend of psycho-physical doctrine, physical anthropology, hyper-nationalism, eugenics and racial theory, Günther illustrates his ideas on facial characteristics, skull-types and-measurements, and bodily stature with maps, illustrations, and photographs. He thereby attempts to contrast less desirable types with those embodying beauty and culture: the Nordic man, a species with an heroic disposition.<sup>41</sup> George L. Mosse, in his fundamental study on culture in the Third Reich, correctly cites Günther’s exposition on the Nordic race as one of the foundations of the racism practiced in Hitler’s Germany.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Hitler had in his personal library Günther’s *Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes* (1923, 1928, 1930 and 1933 editions), his *Der nordische Gedanke unter den Deutschen* (Munich: J.F. Lehmanns Verlag, 1925 and 1927 editions), as well as Günther’s *Rasse und Stil* (Munich: J.F. Lehmanns, Verlag, 1926). See Philipp Cassert and Daniel S. Mattern, *The Hitler Library. A Bibliography* (Westport, Conn., and London: Greenwood Press, 2001), 125-126.

<sup>38</sup> Günther, *Kleine Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes*. See Gretchen E. Schafft, *From Racism to Genocide. Anthropology in the Third Reich* (Urbana: U of Illinois, 2004).

<sup>39</sup> Peter Emil Becker, *Sozialdarwinismus, Rassismus, Antisemitismus und Völkischer Gedanke. Wege ins Dritte Reich, Teil II* (Stuttgart/New York: George Thieme Verlag, 1990), esp. 235. Note that Günther’s book *Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes* is cited in Hitler Youth-manuals. See *The Nazi Primer*, 14.

<sup>40</sup> Günther, *Kleine Rassenkunde* 59. Cf. the reference to the Nordic race as producing “Leistungsmenschen” by Ludwig F. Clauß, *Rasse und Seele. Eine Einführung in den Sinn der leiblichen Gestalt*, 15<sup>th</sup> ed. (Berlin: Büchergilde, Gutenberg, 1939), 46. See, also, Clauß, *Die nordische Seele. Eine Einführung in die Rassenseelenkunde* (Munich and Berlin, J.F. Lehmanns Verlag, 1940).

<sup>41</sup> The qualities of *der nordische Mensch/ der Norde* are further explored by Clauß in his book *Die nordische Seele* (see previous note): “Der Norde geht hinaus als Kulturbringer und glaubt die Welt zu beschenken, und er hat gar oft sich selbst in diese Rolle gefeiert, besonders in jüngster Zeit. Man man ihn als einen Heiland gepriesen, der sich selbst hinopfert für die Welt” (32).

<sup>42</sup> George L. Mosse: *Nazi Culture* (New York: Schocken Books, 1981) 57-65. See the contemporary review of Günther by M. Gaster, in *Folklore*, 40.2 (1929), 204. Gaster reviews *Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes*, as well as his *Rassenkunde des jüdischen Volkes*, the 1928 edition of the former, and the 1930 edition of the latter--both published by J.F. Lehmann Verlag. Karl Loewenstein, in *Hitler’s Germany* (New York: Macmillan, 1939) gives this early summary of the National Socialist “notion of race,” which mirrors Günther’s: “Only the ‘Aryan’ race is creative of cultural values. Aryan and Nordic were the Greeks, the Romans, and finally the Germanic people. They were the state-builders, the creators of perennial works of art, the trail-blazers in science and culture. Their main spiritual criterion is honor. Creative capacity is innate and transmitted by blood alone. Only one who has the proper racial inheritance has the creative spirit” (101).

Psychologists, seeking to account for the popularity of Günther's books, would certainly point to the longings of a defeated people to achieve cultural victory. A means to achieve that victory was, besides celebrating the German past, to re-shape it to contemporary contingencies. Important to our study are the attempts of Günther and his notorious publisher, Julius F. Lehmann, to associate Günther's theories with the Bamberger Reiter. They hoped to co-opt the figure that the high Weimar official Redslob had called "ein Symbol des deutschen Menschen" by pairing it with nationalistic racial theory. The coupling was blatant and direct, involving four acts. First, Günther describes the Nordic race with a vocabulary that evokes the German Middle Ages, for instance, "edler, vornehmer, heldischer Mensch; " "eine Neigung zu ritterlicher Gerechtigkeit;" and an "ausgesprochen heldische Gesinnung."<sup>43</sup> Accordingly, the ideal German citizen possesses qualities suitable to a knight, or hero, from the nation's past; and the Reiter is the assumed archetype of that knightly posture. Second, the Bamberger Reiter is the prototype of the Nordic race. This becomes clear when Günther, in his *Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes*, illustrates the aspects of a *nordisch*-head by using a black-and-white photograph of the profile of the Reiter; the picture crops the crown, and only the head, neck and part of the shoulders appear. The legend under the photo reads: "Der Reiter des Bamberger Doms, ein deutscher König des 13. Jahrhunderts. Nordisch."<sup>44</sup>

The king to whom Günther refers is likely Philip of Swabia (d. 1208), the Hohenstaufen ruler who was murdered in Bamberg.<sup>45</sup> The importance of bringing Philip and the Reiter together is the link it provides between medieval Germany and the Nazi ascendancy. Philip of Swabia and the Bamberger Reiter are the nexus to the Third Reich, so the subtext goes, and both figures are easily assimilated into the 20<sup>th</sup>-century cultural milieu. To state it again, in order to bring the Reiter into Nazi Germany, his revivers and engineers needed to re-contextualize and re-form the statue. What remained of the finest equestrian sculpture from the German Middle Ages were black-and-white photographic images of a noble—avowedly Nordic—head. Third, the advertising apparatus of Günther's publisher, Lehmann, actively employed headshots of the Bamberger Reiter to publicize its books.<sup>46</sup> For example, in 1933, the pu-

<sup>43</sup> Günther, *Kleine Rassenkunde*, 59. Becker, in *Sozialdarwinismus, Rassismus, Antisemitismus und Völkischer Gedanke*, summarizes Günther's views: "Den nordischen Menschen eignet Ritterlichkeit..." (238).

<sup>44</sup> Hans R.K. Günther, *Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes*, 15<sup>th</sup> ed. (Munich: J.F. Lehmanns Verlag, 1930), 409.

<sup>45</sup> See, also, Helmut Paulus, *Der Bamberger Reiter: Novelle* (Dresden: Heyne, 1936). Cf. Hans Fiedler, *Dome und Politik* (Bremen and Berlin: Angelsachen Verlag, 1937), who argues that the Reiter is the *Sühnmal* for King Philip of Swabia. Paulus fictionalizes the story of Philip's life and death in Bamberg. In an introductory note, the narrator observes that, 30 years after King Philip's death, the Cathedral intended to set up an equestrian statue of St. George. The model for the statue, the story leads the reader to believe, was, Philip of Swabia. On the cover of Paulus's book is a bust-portrait of the Reiter by Walter Hege (see below), facing left against a dark background.

<sup>46</sup> Julius Friedrich Lehmann, was extraordinarily influential in spreading, through newspapers and books, doctrine that was anti-democratic, anti-Weimar Republic, anti-Semitic, pro-nationalistic, and pro-racial theory. A financier of the Nazi party in the 1920s, he sought through his racial anthropology to reach a wide audience, including medical professionals, to whom his titles preached so-called *Rassenhygiene*. His list of authors (Günther, Hou-



blisher accompanies an advertisement for Schultze-Naumburg's book *Kunst und Rasse* (first published in 1928) with a black-and-white photo of the Reiter, here identified as "Kopf des Reiters im Dom zu Bamberg." This book celebrates Nordic art, bemoaning the lack of the same during the Weimar Republic. Among the Nordic treasures of the German past that Schultze-Naumburg discovers is the Bamberger Reiter.<sup>47</sup> The picture of the Reiter's head that he publishes in this volume is the same one used in the book advertisement.

Fourth, beginning in 1926, only a single year after the Bamberger Reiter ceased to appear on the Weimar 100-mark bill, editions of Günther's *Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes* and his *Kleine Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes* placed a 1.5 x 2 inch etching of the Reiter on the cover of these books on racial theory.<sup>48</sup> The etching, like the banknotes of the Weimar government, crops the statue so that the horse disappears from view. All that remains of the Reiter are the crown, head, and neck. Nowhere do Günther's books identify the portrait on the cover, the point being that the image is sufficiently familiar and recognizable as to make identification unnecessary.

Already by the mid-1920s, then, the Bamberger Reiter had become an advertising icon—and a kind of logo—for ultra-nationalistic theories advocating the supremacy of the Nordic race. *Rasse ist Gestalt*: so reads a book title by one of the fabricators of the Nordic Myth;<sup>49</sup> and the Reiter, identified as *nordisch* by Günther, exemplified that *Gestalt*. The statue gave concrete form to the morphological characteristics so admired by contemporary race theorists. Lehmann's marketing campaign succeeded because an eager public — consuming many editions of Günther's books — accepted the association of a medieval statue with a psychophysical theory of race for the sake of avowed cultural supremacy.

Günther was not alone in exploiting the Bamberger Reiter for the promotion of theories on the Nordic race. His friend Paul Schultze-Naumburg, mentioned above as a Nazi member of the Reichstag, a colleague of Hitler and a race theorist, was also a prominent architect and was well-versed in aesthetics, proposing standards for sound and sane art.<sup>50</sup> It was Schultze-Naumburg, we recall, who makes extrava-

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ston Stewart Chamberlain, Ludwig F. Clauß, Joseph Arthur de Gobineau, Walther Darré, and many more) made the publishing house what Paul Weindling has called a "nursery of Nazi racial activists." See Weindling, "The Medical Publisher Julius Friedrich Lehmann and the Radicalising of German Medicine," *Die 'rechte Nation' und ihr Verleger. Politik und Popularisierung im J.F. Lehmanns Verlag 1899-1979*, ed. S. Stöckel (Berlin: Lehmanns Media, 2002), 169.

<sup>47</sup> Paul Schultze-Naumburg, *Kunst und Rasse* (Munich: J.F. Lehmanns Verlag, 1927), 68. Schultze-Naumburg cites the Reiter as proof "daß ein erheblicher Teil der Oberschicht [in medieval Germany] nordisch gerichtet gewesen muß und daß auch das Schönheitsideal sehr darauf hinweist" (69). Günther also occupied himself, as the title of a book proclaimed, with the connection between *Rasse und Stil* (Munich: J.F. Lehmanns Verlag, 1926).

<sup>48</sup> I have not been able to examine all the editions of Günther's *Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes* (1922ff.) to see if the Reiter is on the front of each. The image does appear already in 1926, the 10<sup>th</sup> edition. The same sketch appears on the cover of Günther's, *Kleine Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes*, 3<sup>rd</sup>. ed. (Munich: J.F. Lehmanns Verlag, 1933).

<sup>49</sup> Ludwig F. Clauß, *Rasse ist Gestalt* (Munich: Zentralverwaltung der NSDAP, 1937); Cf. his *Rasse und Seele. Eine Einführung in den Sinn der leiblichen Gestalt*, 15<sup>th</sup> ed. (Berlin: Büchergilde, Gutenberg, 1939), 43.

<sup>50</sup> Diethart Kerbs, "'Vestigis terrent.'" Paul Schultze-Naumburg. Vom Lebensreformer zum

gantly enthusiastic remarks on the “Kopf des Reiters,” which he interprets both as a heroic poem on the Nordic race and as a signpost for German youth. He continues in a similar vein in his book *Nordische Schönheit*, appearing during the Third Reich, which devotes a full page to the horseman’s head and shoulders in black-and-white profile<sup>51</sup>

This book, published by Günther’s ill-famed publisher, J.F. Lehmann, is dedicated to Günther himself, and borrows its aesthetic motto from *Mein Kampf*: “Auch dies ist im Interesse der Nation, daß sich die schönsten Körper finden und so mithelfen, dem Volkstum neue Schönheit zu finden.” One of these “beautiful bodies” belongs to the Bamberger Reiter, and for him Schultze-Naumburg reserves a high complement: the horseman displays beauty comparable to the Greeks. Calling the 13<sup>th</sup> century the *Blütezeit des deutschen Geistes*, he argues:

Es ist die herrliche Kaiserzeit der Hohenstaufen, die....sich zu einem hochgemuten Lebensziele bekennt, das im ‘Ritter’ dem heldischen Reiter, seinen edelsten Ausdruck findet. Betrachtet man den königlichen Reiter aus dem Bamberger Dom (Abb.104), der in vornehm lässiger Haltung auf seinem Pferde sitzt und gelassen ins Weite schaut, so finden wir wohl in ihm den größten Gegensatz zu den ekstatisch aufgeregten Leuten mit verzerrten Zügen, wie sie als Zeugen aus anderem Blute das Christentum so oft in den Vordergrund gestellt hat. Andererseits nehmen wir aber auch mit Überraschung wahr, wie nahe dieser edler nordische Kopf den göttlichen und heldischen Gesichtern der griechischen Antike steht.<sup>52</sup>

Schultze-Naumburg, having argued in his *Nordische Schönheit* that the Reiter is not an imitation of Greek sculpture, even though he believes it summons forth divine and heroic figures in the classical world, suggests there exists a genuine racial consanguinity between Greek and Nordic aesthetics (“echte Rassenverwandtschaft”). Turning to the horseman himself, he claims that his heroic and noble expression make the statue the counterpart to distorted, or grotesque, visages of “inferior” races. But Schultze-Naumburg reserves his fullest praise for last. The statue has an “edler nordscher Kopf.”<sup>53</sup>

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Rassentheoretiker,” *Archiv der Deutschen Jugendbewegung*, 18 (1993/98), 219-232.

<sup>51</sup> Paul Schultze-Naumburg, *Nordische Schönheit. Ihr Wunschbild im Leben und in der Kunst* (Munich: J. F. Lehmann, 1937), p.163.

<sup>52</sup> *Nordische Schönheit*, 159. Schultze-Naumburg goes on to argue: “Man vergleiche dazu nur Abb.92 [Alexander the Great in the Glyptothek in Munich], deren Ähnlichkeit der Züge man in Einzelheiten feststellen kann, um zu erkennen, daß hier nicht Nachahmung, sondern echte Rassenverwandtschaft die Ursache der gleichen Bildung ist.” See Norbert Borrman, *Paul Schultze-Naumburg 1869-1949. Maler-Publizist-Architekt*. (Essen: Verlag Richard Bacht, 1989), esp. 198-200.

<sup>53</sup> *Nordische Schönheit*, 159. Cf. Schultze-Naumburg’s *Kampf um die Kunst* (see our n. 9), 14-15, where under a small photograph of the head and neck of the Bamberger Reiter he writes about this paragon of Nordic perfection: “In solchen Menschenbildern erblickte der Nordische Mensch seine Führer und ihnen widmete er den Ausdruck seiner Verehrung, Ihnen ähnlich zu sein, war das selbstverständliche Streben eines Jeden, dessen Ehrgeiz sich ein hohes Ziel setzte. Alle die Menschen, die durch das Blut an das Nordische Hochziel gebunden sind, werden in solchen Zügen auch heute noch das edelste Vorbild kraftvollen und männlichen Wesens erblicken. Denn der Kopf ist voll des wärmsten Lebens und

His mention here of the head of the Reiter, which in his view displays the quintessential Nordic features in its best light, became a sort of leitmotif in his works. At least twice more, Schultze-Naumburg brings full-page, black-and-white photographs of the head, once in his volume on German art history,<sup>54</sup> and again in a treatment of German medieval art for a periodical published under NSDAP auspices.<sup>55</sup> The reverence this author shows for the Bamberger Reiter, demonstrated in part in detailed close-ups of the head, is well-explained by Susen Krüger Saß. She argues that Schultze-Naumburg located his ideal conception (*Idealvorstellung*) of the Nordic race in medieval art, and that of these works the Bamberger Reiter held sway as the very embodiment (*Inbegriff*) of that race.<sup>56</sup>

Throughout we have stressed how vital to NS racial doctrine were black-and-white photographs of the head of the Bamberger Reiter, which provide, in close-up with extreme clarity, a model for Nordic man. The iconic portraits that fixed this perception in the public mind were taken by the photographer and film maker Walter Hege who, with the art historian Wilhelm Pinder (see below), brought out an influential cathedral guidebook, *Der Bamberger Dom und seine Bildwerke* (1927).<sup>57</sup> By 1938 it had had four editions. Pinder wrote the text and Hege accompanied it with dramatic pictures of the Reiter. The guidebook affirms the conclusion, expressed in many venues from 1920-1945, that the Bamberger Reiter represented the contemporary ideal image, or prototype, of the German citizen.<sup>58</sup> To achieve that effect, Hege, who has been called

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entspricht durchaus nicht irgendeiner verstaubten, kademischen Unwirklichkeit." Note that this book was published in the Nationalsozialistische Bibliothek as Heft 36.

<sup>54</sup> Paul Schultze-Naumburg, *Die Kunst der Deutschen. Ihr Wesen und ihre Werke* (Stuttgart and Berlin: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1934). Of the Reiter, he says in the text: "Wie ein Sinnbild des damaligen Deutschlands erscheint [er] uns..., das Bildnis eines deutschen Königs oder eines St. Georg (?), das uns in nie wiedergesehener Reinheit das Wunschbild des nordischen Helden verkörpert und uns heute wieder Sinnbild wurde" (p. 15).

<sup>55</sup> Paul Schultze-Naumburg, "Deutsche Kunst im Mittelalter, I," *Der Schulungsbrief*, 3.6 (1936), after 220.

<sup>56</sup> Saß "Nordische Kunst. Die Bedeutung des Begriffs während des Nationalsozialismus," 230. Note the statement attributed to Schultze-Naumburg: "Es gibt heute noch genug bei uns, denen der Stahlhelm genau so gut zu Gesicht steht, wie dem Bamberger Reiter die Krone." Cited in the NSDAP-periodical *Mitteilungen des Kampfbundes für deutsche Kultur* 3 (1931), 13ff. which was unavailable to me.

See the alternate version cited by Johanna Schau, in "Zur Faschisierung des Theaters," *Die Linkskurve*, 4 (1932): "...Es gibt immer noch genug Menschen in unserer deutschen Volksgemeinschaft, denen der Stahlhelm genau so gut zu Gesicht steht, wie dem Bamberger Reiter die Krone," p. 21. See Hildegard Brenner, *Die Kunstpolitik des Nationalsozialismus* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1963), 19. Cf. Hans Peter Bleuel, *Das saubere Reich. Theorie und Praxis des sittlichen Lebens im Dritten Reich* (Bern and Munich: Scherz, 1972), 219-220; and Fuhrmann, *Die Furie des Verschwindens*, 42.

<sup>57</sup> *Der Bamberger Dom und seine Bildwerke* aufgenommen von Walter Hege, beschrieben von Wilhelm Pinder, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1938). A sign of the ubiquity of Hege's photographs of the Bamberger Reiter is the full-page, black-and-white picture of the horseman's head that Paul Schultze-Naumburg borrows to illustrate his article "Deutsche Kunst im Mittelalter, I," *Der Schulungsbrief*, 3.6 (1936), after p. 220.

<sup>58</sup> See Barbara Schrödl who, in reference to Hege's treatment of the Bamberger Reiter, uses the phrase "das zeitgenössische Idealbild des Deutschen," in "'Das steinerne Buch.' Eine 'virtuelle' Reise zu einem deutschen Baudenkmal im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland," *Von hier nach 'Medium.' Reisezeugnis und Mediendifferenz*, ed. K. Callsen, et al.

one of the leading propagandists of National Socialism,<sup>59</sup> here cast the Reiter in a new light (“im neuen Licht”).<sup>60</sup> By that phrase he means primarily that he employed artificial light (*Kunstlicht*) and statue-high scaffolding to achieve fresh visual effects. But the phrase is also a metaphor for what he achieves by cropping and re-positioning the statue. Of the seven pictures of the Bamberger Reiter in *Der Bamberger Dom und seine Bildwerke*, only two cast the horseman in full view, that is to say, mounted on a horse; and a single photograph shows a background cathedral arch. Thus foregrounded sans steed and church building, the Bamberger Reiter gazes into Hege’s lens and off to the side with an expression that privileges his facial features and aristocratic bearing.<sup>61</sup> The effect is to remove the Reiter from a medieval setting, investing a statue made of sandstone with strikingly human characteristics.

As a complement to his guidebook to the Bamberg cathedral, Hege directed a black-and-white sound movie featuring the Bamberger Reiter, *Das steinerne Buch* (1937/38). Here the ideology motivating the choice of the statue is even more evident. The “Stony Book/ Book made of Stone” of the title is the Bamberg Cathedral itself and its statuary, the latter of which are the true interest of the (slight) plot. Again, Hege photographs in dramatic shades of dark and light, using artificial light, clever camera angles, and extreme close-ups of the face of the Reiter to encourage intimacy between the film’s viewers and the statue.

As the movie begins, two travelers arrive at the Bamberg Cathedral at night, and the sexton gives a tour of the building. The tour is conceived as an ideological excursion, however, especially when the eye of the camera falls on the Bamberger Reiter. The sexton says, for example:

In einer Zeit, die überall Zerfall und Zwietracht herrschten,  
schuf einer der großen Bildhauer die Gestalt, nach der  
die Sehnsucht unseres Volks verlangte, der Reiter.<sup>62</sup>

Resonances of contemporary politics are plain. The words of the sexton equate the turbulence of the 13<sup>th</sup> century with post-World War I Germany, explaining the creation of the Reiter as an answer to the longing of the *Volk*. Filling in the blank spots, the viewer is moved to make a final equation. Hitler and the Bamberger Reiter are the great figures that arose to manifest the yearnings of the populace.<sup>63</sup>

(Berlin and Münster: LIT Verlag 2004), 150 and 153.

<sup>59</sup> See Friedrich Kestel, Walter Hege (1893-1955). ‘Rassenkunstphotograph’ und/oder ‘Meister der Lichtbildkunst’? *Fotogeschichte*, 8 (1988), 66-75.

<sup>60</sup> “Vorwort zum Bilderteil,” *Der Bamberger Dom und seine Bildwerke*, 10.

<sup>61</sup> “Aristokratische Würde,” Hans-Deiter Gelfert has argued in *Was ist deutsch? Wie die Deutschen wurden, was sie sind* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2005), 16, was the crucial quality making the Bamberger Reiter one of a trilogy of iconic images during the Third Reich. The other two icons were the statue of Uta in the Naumburg Cathedral and the knight in Albrecht Dürer’s engraving *Ritter, Tod und Teufel*. Gelfert claims: “Aus diesen drei Elementen [ein aristokratische Würde, der nach innen gerichtete sinnende Blick, die tragisch-heroische Haltung] formte sich spatter unter dem Einfluss des Rassenwahns das nationalsozialistische Ideal des auserwählten Deutschen, an dessen Wesen die Welt genesen sollte” (16).

<sup>62</sup> Schrödl, “Das steinerne Buch.” 153.

<sup>63</sup> Recall that in 1934 a children’s story told how the Bamberger Reiter rescued a little girl in the deep forest. His epithet is “Retter in der Not.” Helmut M. Soik, “Inge und der Bamber-



What Hege has here achieved with optical manipulation and melodramatic cinematic dialogue must remind the filmgoer of the work of Leni Riefenstahl, Hege's friend and sometime-collaborator. He was, in fact, one of the cinematographers on Riefenstahl's *Olympia*. Both *Olympia* and *Das steinerne Buch* were National Socialist propaganda but, both advanced a brand of persuasion now commonly called "soft" or "sociological" propaganda.<sup>64</sup> This means that Hege, in order to influence his audience in his Bamberg film, generally avoided blatant political indoctrination and glaringly obvious slogans, relying instead on atmosphere, alluring and stylized camera work, pride in the Reiter as a national cultural asset, and a subtly delivered message. That message, meant for the educated middle class, the target audience of Hege's film on the cathedral, was to posit, or affirm, that the Reiter was the true incarnation (*Inbegriff*) of the German citizen in the Third Reich.<sup>65</sup> As noted, filmgoers were also encouraged to equate the political conditions in the Weimar Republic before Hitler's rise to power with the circumstances in the Hohenstaufen period that promoted the creation of the Bamberger Reiter. This double message locates the full palette of Nazi virtues in the Reiter, at the same time it strives to confer legitimacy on the ruling regime through arrogation of a medieval masterpiece.

Hege's co-creator of the Bamberg guidebook, *Der Bamberger Dom und seine Bildwerke* (1927), was the renowned art historian Wilhelm Pinder, Ordinarius in Munich and Berlin.<sup>66</sup> An early enthusiast of Nazi policies, Pinder, writing in the festschrift for Hitler's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday (1939), spoke of the history of German art as inseparable from German racial history ("Äußerungen unserer Rasse").<sup>67</sup> Pinder's text in the Bamberg guidebook is a strangle amalgam of learned scholarship and rapturous flights, as, for example, this passage devoted to the Bamberger Reiter:

Und nun der Reiter! Er ist der dargestellte Geist der deutschen staufischen Ritterdichtung...Als Ganzes ist unser Reiter überhaupt vergleichslos....Die menschliche Gestalt...ist sogar gerade in diesem griechischen Augenblick unserer Kultur das einzig Darstellungswürdige... In Bamberg...herrscht der plastisch- monumentale.<sup>68</sup>

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ger Reiter," *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*. Beilage (*Die Frau*), 29, 22.7, 1934, p. 114. See Ullrich, "Der Bamberger Reiter und Uta von Naumburg," 322. One must believe that the similarity in the words *Reiter* and *Retter* played some role in associating the horseman with a role as savior.

<sup>64</sup> See, especially, Cooper C. Graham, *Leni Riefenstahl and Olympia* (Metuchen, N.J./London: The Scarecrow Press, 1986), with references to Walter Hege. The distinction between political and sociological propaganda is most clearly made by Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda*. Trans. K. Kellen and J. Lerner (New York: Knopf, 1966).

<sup>65</sup> Barbara Schrödl, "Architektur, Film und die Kunstgeschichte im Nationalsozialismus," *Kunstgeschichte im Nationalsozialismus*, ed. N. Doll, C. Fuhrmeister and M.H. Sprenger (Weimar: Verlag und Datenbank für Geisteswissenschaften, 2005), esp. 315-318.

<sup>66</sup> On Pinder, see Marlite Halbertsma, "Wilhelm Pinder 1879-1947," *Altmeister moderner Kunstgeschichte*, ed. H. Dilly (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1990); and Frederic J. Schwartz, *Blind Spots: Critical Theory and the History of Art in Twentieth-Century Germany* (New Haven and London: Yale U Press, 2005), esp. 108-113; and Schrödl, "Architektur, Film und die Kunstgeschichte im Nationalsozialismus," esp. 305-307.

<sup>67</sup> Cited by Ernst Klee, *Das Personenlexikon zum Dritten Reich* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 2003), 462.

<sup>68</sup> *Der Bamberger Dom und seine Bildwerke*, 53-54.

Fundamental to Pinder's assessment of the Bamberger Reiter is not only its German origin, but its German inspiration. This means that Pinder makes a frontal assault on the scholarly *communis opinio* that sculptures in France, most evidently those at the cathedral at Reims, provided the formative influence for the creation of the Reiter in Bamberg.<sup>69</sup> Pinder's attack is nationalistic, emotional and radical. He flatly denies French influence, claiming in a volume on art history that the horseman:

hat kein Vorbild, auch nicht in Reims, gerade auch nicht  
am Philippe-Auguste [King Philip II of France], jener rednerhaften,  
stehenden Figur, die allerdings wirklich einen  
Franzosen gibt, einen geistvollen, fast bösen Diplomatenkopf,  
die damit keineswegs deutsch ist, aber auch aus allem  
Französischen herausfällt...Der Bamberger ist zunächst  
ein Reiter. Schon dies ist beispiellos in der klassischen  
Kunst Nordfrankreichs...Hier [der Bamberger Reiter]  
ist ein kurzer Augenblick, der eigentlich klassische.<sup>70</sup>

In the cathedral guidebook, Pinder goes so far as to speculate that "jener Reimser König [könnte]...sehr wohl von einem deutschen Meister stammen" (p.55). Consonant with his brand of the history of German art is Pinder's wish not to identify the Reiter beyond a concept, an idea. In Pinder's view, it would be false to attempt to conclude that the statue represents a single person (Emperor Frederick II, for example). Rather, the horseman is the spirit, and mind of Hohenstaufen — read imperial — literature.<sup>71</sup>

Later Pinder, with a bow to Nordic aesthetics, characterizes the Reiter as being "von edelster nordischer Schönheit."<sup>72</sup> For him it is not only fully German — without

<sup>69</sup> Georg Dehio, "Zu den Skulpturen des Bamberger Domes" (1890), reprinted in *Kunsthistorische Aufsätze* (Munich/Berlin: R. Oldenbourg, 1914), 93-99. See also, Dehio, *Der Bamberger Dom*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Munich: R. Piper, 1929): "Der Meister...was einer jener als Wanderarbeiter in französischen Bauhütten ausgebildeten deutschen Künstler...Dieser...hatte die entscheidenden Eindrücke in Reims empfangen...Sein Kopf ist voll von Reimser Erinnerungsbildern..." (23). Cf. Hans-Christian Feldmann, *Bamberg und Reims. Die Skulpturen 1220-1250* (Ammersbek bei Hamburg: Verlag an der Lotbek, 1992).

<sup>70</sup> Wilhelm Pinder, *Vom Wesen und Werden deutscher Formen. Geschichtliche Betrachtungen* (Leipzig: E.A. Seeman, 1937), I: 251-253.

<sup>71</sup> This view that the statue is no person, but a type, or idea, is echoed a decade later by Arndt, in *Deutsche Kunst im Reich der deutschen Kaiser*: "Die Frage nach dem Namen ist müßig. Das deutsche Volk erkennt im Bamberger Reiter den Idealtyp des Ritters der Stauferzeit" (p.28). See Hinz, "Der 'Bamberger Reiter,'" 26-44.

<sup>72</sup> Wilhelm Pinder, *Sonderleistungen der Deutschen Kunst* (Munich: F. Bruckmann, 1944), 48. Here Pinder concedes French influence in the sculpting of the Reiter ("von einem Meister geleistet, der wohl das nördliche...Frankreich gekannt haben muß" (48). However, he then claims: "Niemand ...kann leugnen, daß keines der Nachbarvölker schon damals zum klassischen empfundenen Reiterbild vorgestoßen ist. Schon zum Bamberger gibt es kein wirkliches Vorbild und keine vergleichbare Erscheinung außerhalb Deutschlands" (50). See Barbara Schrödl, "Der Bamberger Dom im Blick der Kamera. Überlegungen zum NS-Film 'Das steinerne Buch' von Walter Hege" (unpublished lecture from 2004, cordially furnished me by Prof. Schrödl.). I should also like to thank Dr. Ulrich Schürmann and Dylan Goldblatt for productive discussions on the topic.

foreign taint. It is also an expression of German exceptionalism, a *Sonderleistung*.<sup>73</sup> In assessing the Bamberger Reiter, Pinder accepts only the comparison: to classical Greek sculpture—certainly not to French art. His argument hinges on two points: the statue arose in what he labels a “Greek moment” (“in diesem griechischen Augenblick”);<sup>74</sup> and its maker blended the best of Nordic and Greek sculptural ideals. Observe that Pinder’s attempt to fuse into one “southerly” classical Greek art and “northerly” Nordic art has been interpreted as a bow to regnant National Socialist ideals, according to which Germany was the natural dominator of *Mitteleuropa*.<sup>75</sup>

The last of our intellectuals shaping the public perception of the Bamberger Reiter is Fritz Hippler, an early and enthusiastic member of the NSDAP.<sup>76</sup> Hippler, active in the propaganda ministry with newsreels and short documentaries, was appointed head of the film department by Goebbels and given the title *Reichsfilmintendant*. Hippler’s most infamous film, *Der ewige Jude: Ein Dokumentarfilm über das Weltjudentum*, is a feature-length, pseudo-documentary purporting to show the perniciousness of Jewish culture and life and the threat of Jews to Germany.<sup>77</sup> Terri Ginsberg gives this summary:

Fritz Hippler’s 1940 production was the most overt and unambiguous of Nazi anti-Semitic films...It is notorious for its editorial association of rats and Jews, insidious superimposition of ultra-orthodox onto secular Jewish images and devious appropriation of sequences from Jewish-themed and Jewish-produced feature films into a ‘documentary’ warning against the ‘world Jewish conspiracy.’<sup>78</sup>

What interests us here is that Hippler makes the Reiter an important witness for virulent anti-Semitism. Although the statue appears fleetingly in the film, it encapsulates in a single visual impression the premise of the odious production: Jews stand apart from the Nordic race (read: Bamberger Reiter) for psychophysical reasons. They are supposedly different in bodily structure and physical beauty, as well as in intellect, spiritual attitude, and predisposition to leadership.

Using images of the faces of Jewish criminals, Hippler’s film maintains, in the voi-

<sup>73</sup> See our n. 71.

<sup>74</sup> See our n. 67.

<sup>75</sup> Marilite Halbertsma, “Wilhelm Pinder 1879-1947,” *Altmeister moderner Kunstgeschichte*, ed. H. Dilly (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1990), 235-250. Note the side-by-side profile shots of the Reiter and Apollo of Belvedere in the book by Hans Timotheus Kroeber, *Der Bamberger Reiter. Eine vergleichende Kunstbetrachtung* (Düsseldorf: Eigenverlag, 1936), Abb. 12 and 13.

<sup>76</sup> See Roel Vande Winkel, “Nazi Germany’s Fritz Hippler, 1909-2002,” *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 23 (2003): 91-99. Hippler was executive producer for *Der ewige Jude* and coordinated the making of the film.

<sup>77</sup> Stefan Mannes, *Antisemitismus im nationalsozialistischen Propagandafilm. Jüd Süß und Der ewige Jude* (Köln: Teiresias Verlag, 1999), 54. Goebbels comments in his diary, as reported by Mannes, “Mit Hippler einen Ghettofilm besprochen, den ich nun in Polen drehen lasse. Das muß die...antisemitische Propaganda werden, die man sich denken kann” (57).

<sup>78</sup> Book review of Hornshøj-Møller’s *Der ewige Jude*, in *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 13 (1999): 484-488.

ce-over, that all races are unequal in respect to physical appearance.<sup>79</sup> The reference here to *Menschenantlitz* must remind us of the exhibition of great German faces, *Das Deutsche Antlitz im Spiegel der Jahrhunderte*, organized by the Rassenpolitisches Amt of the NSDAP with which our article begins. Both in the exhibition and in the film the Bamberger Reiter exemplifies the ideal German countenance. But Hippler goes a step further by placing the face of the Reiter in direct contrast to that of the Jew. When he lets the camera rest on the horseman, the audience sees the now-canonical head and upper body view of the statue, maintaining the impression promoted by ideologues that it is no artwork, but a living being. The voice-over says:

Am gefährlichsten aber wird das Judentum dort, wo ihm erlaubt wird, sich in die heiligsten Dinge unseres Volkes, in seine Kultur, in seine Religion und Kunst hineinzumischen und darüber seine anmaßenden Urteile abzugeben. Der Schönheitsbegriff des nordischen Menschen ist dem Juden von seiner ganzen Natur aus unverständlich und wird ihm ewig unverständlich bleiben.<sup>80</sup>

While these words are filling the movie auditorium, the camera moves, first, over Greek art (Pallas Athene, Greek horsemen, and others), and then gives a pan shot of the

Reiter.<sup>81</sup> In Hippler's world view the Reiter thus stands for the Nordic concept of beauty that, because it rests on an exclusive racial identity, is incomprehensible –and forever inaccessible--to the Jew. This brings immediately to mind Schultze-Naumburg's book *Nordische Schönheit* which identifies the Bamberger Reiter as the greatest contrast figure "zu den ekstatisch aufgeregten Leuten mit verzerrten Zügen."<sup>82</sup> Those people with grotesque, deformed faces now appear in Hippler's film as Jews. Set opposite them, by the crude equation of this film, is the Reiter, the fullest measure of the (beautiful) Nordic Man.

\* \* \*

Lastly, to chart the permutations of the Bamberger Reiter in post-World War I Germany is to be astonished how, in the briefest space of time, images of the statue migrated from legal tender in the Weimar Republic to covers of books on racial theory.

<sup>79</sup> "Diese Physiognomien widerlegen schlagend die liberalistische Theorie von der Gleichheit alle dessen, was Menschenantlitz trägt." Cited by Stig Hornshøj-Møller 'Der ewige Jude.' *Quellenkritische Analyse eines antisemitischen Propagandafilms* (Göttingen: Institute für den Wissenschaftlichen Film, 1995), 90. See, also, by the same author, Yizhak Ahren and Christoph Melcher, 'Der ewige Jude.' *Wie Goebbels hetzte. Untersuchungen zum nationalsozialistischen Propagandafilm* (Aachen: Alano Verlag, 1990).

<sup>80</sup> Hornshøj-Møller, 'Der ewige Jude,' 126. See Ullrich, *Uta von Naumburg*, 47-48.

<sup>81</sup> After showing the "Kopf und Oberkörper" of the Reiter, Hippler does the same for the statue of Uta von Naumburg. The Bamberger Reiter and Uta are frequently paired in the period. See our n. 8. Ullrich, in *Uta von Naumburg. Eine deutsche Ikone*, argues that the two statues are intended in the film to serve "als Gegenbilder zu jüdischer 'Verfallkunst'" (333).

<sup>82</sup> *Nordische Schönheit*, 159 (see our n. 50).



The metamorphosis of the statue to ultra-nationalist icon proceeded via a complex weaving of the forces of patriotism, aesthetics, and self-identity. Tracing the transformation of the Reiter to Nazi symbol, we have argued that the ordinary citizen's increasing acceptance of the Nordic racial myth made it possible for ideologues to summon a medieval statue as the fullest incarnation of Nordic beauty. Said in another way, in direct proportion to the readiness of the German citizen to accept National Socialist racial theory and notions of the beautiful, the Reiter became credible as the embodiment of Nordic aesthetics--thus providing the matchless avatar of Germans themselves. We even witness the equation of the horseman with Hitler. The case of the Bamberger Reiter thus illustrates one of the classic definitions of the term "identification:" "Perception of another as an extension of oneself."

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