

Eduard Norden and his Students: A Contribution to a Portrait, Based on Three Archival Finds

Albert I. Baumgarten

In Memory of Hayim Tadmor
1923-2005

Since March 2004, I have been engaged in research for a planned monograph length biography of Professor Elias Bickerman (1897-1981).¹ That work will focus on Bickerman as a historian of the Jews in antiquity, and will be based on intensive archival work based on the files of the institutions with which Bickerman was in contact.² My archival work has also yielded three items concerning one of Bickerman's Berlin teachers, Eduard Norden (1868-1941). They are all outside the range of the biography I am preparing on Bickerman as a historian of the Jews, and properly belong in the intellectual domain of Classics; hence this article.

I. Norden's Letter to Bickerman of December 29, 1926

After arriving in Berlin in April of 1922,³ Bickerman began studies at the University of Berlin, where his principal teacher of high classical literature was Eduard Norden.⁴ Bickerman wrote three papers on Tacitus during that time, the last two of which were

¹ First results of this effort will be presented in an article 'Elias Bickerman on the Hellenizing Reformers: A Case Study of an Unconvincing Case', to appear in *Jewish Quarterly Review* 97.2, Spring 2007. The monograph should be submitted for publication by the end of 2007.

Elias Bickerman and his family spelled their last name at least three different ways over the course of their lives. Elias was Bickermann during his German years, Bikerman in Paris, and Bickerman in the USA. His father and brother, Joseph and Jacob, also experimented with various spellings, but eventually settled on Bikerman.

² For the larger project I depend heavily on the archives of these institutions, as Bickerman ordered his personal files destroyed on his death, without being read. These instructions were carried out faithfully by his friend, colleague and successor at Columbia University, Morton Smith. See M. Smith, 'Elias J. Bickerman', in Elias Bickerman, *Studies in Jewish and Christian History, Part Three* (1986), xi. Bickerman also instructed his executors to destroy all drafts and unfinished/unpublished works: see M. Smith and E. Gabba, 'Preface', Elias J. Bickerman, *Religions and Politics in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods* (1985), vii.

³ Joseph and Jacob Bikerman, *Two Bikermans, Autobiographies by Joseph and Jacob Bikerman* (1975) is a major source of information on the life of the family; here, Joseph Bikerman, *Two Bikermans*, 69. Elias was invited by his brother Jacob to submit an autobiography of his own to the family anthology, but — not surprisingly for someone who ordered his personal papers destroyed — refused. See Jacob Bikerman, *Two Bikermans*, 83 and A. Momigliano, 'The Absence of the Third Bickerman', *Essays on Ancient and Modern Judaism* (1994), 218.

⁴ As opposed to papyri and other documentary sources, where his *Doktorvater* was Ulrich Wilcken.

definitely read by Norden. Bickerman brought these papers with him from Berlin to Paris when he left Germany in 1933 or 1934, from Paris to New York when he escaped France in 1942, and from Columbia University to his office at the Jewish Theological Seminary when he retired in 1967. They were found there after his death in Israel on August 31, 1981, and are now in the Bickerman archive at the Jewish Theological Seminary Library, ARC 19.⁵

The first paper, apparently written in 1923, is 'Der Bataveraufstand'. It is six pages long (Box 4, folder 7). The typescript I found is incomplete, missing the end. The second is 'Taciteische Schlachtschilderungen', complete in twenty-three pages, with corrections and comments in Norden's hand (Box 4, folder 9). It too was written early in Bickerman's years in Berlin, as his address is Charlottenburg, Schlossstrasse 64, and he signed the paper as 'El. Bickermann of St. Petersburg, for the time-being in Berlin' ('z.Z. Berlin'). The family moved to other shared quarters in Charlottenburg (a major center of Russian refugee life in the city), living at Sybelstrasse 40 in February 1926,⁶ but by the end of 1926 at the latest they were in shared quarters in Grünewald, Dachsberg 13 (see below).⁷ The St. Petersburg (z.Z. Berlin) signature is a further indication of its date in the early Berlin years: only Bickerman's first two German articles were signed that way, the one on the messianic secret in Mark, and that on the empty grave of Jesus, in *ZNW* 22 (1923), 122-140 and *ZNW* 23 (1924), 281-292. The corrections in Norden's hand make it certain that he read this paper, but it is not certain just when. Perhaps he read it before December 1926, perhaps at the same time as he read the third paper. In any case, in this second paper Bickerman complained that Tacitus, when describing battles, seemed to be putting them all into a standard mold. In the letter presented below Norden referred to this complaint of Bickerman's and tried to explain why Tacitus had written the way he had. Thus whenever Norden had read the second paper, he evaluated its conclusions in the letter below.

The final paper in this group is 'Clades Germanica-Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis der historischen Auffassung des Tacitus'. It is eighteen pages long, dated December 1926

⁵ As this is the formal designation of all the Bickerman archival materials at the Jewish Theological Seminary Library, references to this archive in this paper will be by box and folder number only.

All documents from ARC 19 at the Jewish Theological Seminary Library that I refer to, cite and publish in this article appear courtesy of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary. I would like to thank Professor David Kraemer, Librarian of the Jewish Theological Seminary, for permission to utilize these sources.

The Bickerman material at the Jewish Theological Seminary Library was the first I consulted when I began work on Bickerman's biography. Never having worked in an archive before, I owe a great debt to the staff there. I would like to thank Ellen Kastel, Archivist; David Wachtel, Research Librarian for Special Collections; and Chana Barr, of the Special Collections staff, for their help and encouragement.

⁶ Jacob Bickerman, *Two Bickermans*, 149-150, 159. For the Sybelstrasse 40 address see Bickerman's letter of February 22, 1926 in the Humboldt University archive, Phil. Fak. 643, 5.

⁷ Boarding houses were the usual abodes of Russian émigrés in Berlin. To have your own kitchen and bathroom was a luxury beyond the reach of many. In Vladimir Nabokov, *Mary*, his first novel set in émigré Berlin, boarding house life is crucial to the plot.

(Box 4, folder 12). The address on this paper is Grünewald, Dachsberg 13.⁸ In this paper Bickerman brought together and expanded the results of the two previous efforts, attempting to understand the nature of Tacitus' work as a historian and its relationship to the events in ancient Germany. Tacitus, Bickerman argued, had a specific philosophy of history, which led him to present events as he had. While Tacitus never explicitly stated this philosophy, it could be inferred from his works, and Bickerman proposed to tease out these ideas by an analysis of Tacitus' account of the revolt in Germany in *Hist.*, Books Four and Five. According to Bickerman, this philosophy emphasized the role of one leader on each side, throwing almost all the light on him and leaving all others and their actions in deep shadows. Success and failure in war, as Tacitus presented it, depended entirely on the commander, his personality, and the army's loyalty to him. Since Tacitus constructed his account according to these principles, Bickerman argued that modern scholars can either accept Tacitus' account as a whole, or reject it completely and then try to build a better one of their own out of the ruins of the information supplied by Tacitus. Bickerman noted that the latter course had been taken by Mommsen, and suggested that Mommsen may be closer to the truth than Tacitus. A middle way, following Tacitus on the whole, but correcting him on certain points, was impossible. Bickerman concluded 'Clades Germanica' by restating the principle on which his analysis had been based: While Tacitus never explicitly elaborated his philosophy of history, this implicit philosophy shaped the narrative so pervasively that anyone who does not share that philosophy of history cannot accept Tacitus' account.

Bickerman sent this paper for comment to his teacher Norden, and Norden replied on December 29, 1926, in the letter presented below. This was a particularly apt moment to consult Norden on the topic, as Norden was teaching a *Vorlesung* on Tacitus and Quintilian in the winter semester of 1926/27.⁹ One can be certain that of the three papers in the find and others that may have been destroyed on Bickerman's death (see above n. 2) Norden was responding specifically to 'Clades Germanica'. First, this makes the most sense: a paper definitely written in December 1926 was the subject of a letter written on December 29, 1926. Next, without explicitly putting the words in quotation marks, Norden nevertheless cited a few words from 'Clades Germanica' in his comments (the citation is printed in small capitals in my transcription below). Finally, Norden indicated his disagreement with Bickerman's appeal to Mommsen in his letter. Mommsen has a prominent role only in 'Clades Germanica'.

As Bickerman told Martin Hengel, years later, Norden once replied to an article Bickerman had sent for comment in a brief professorial postcard, saying that he had read the paper twice, but had not been convinced. As a result Bickerman decided not to

⁸ This was the apartment in which the family lived together until 1933, when Jacob married. At that time, Elias moved into a place of his own and the rest of the family remained in Dachsberg 13 until a few months later, when Jacob and his bride moved into the apartment vacated by her parents, who had left for Paris. Jacob Bickerman, *Two Bickermans*, 149-150, 159, 179. As a consequence of Nazi race laws, Elias too was not to remain long on his own in Berlin. By October 1934, at the latest, he was in Paris.

⁹ J. Rüpke, *Römische Religion bei Eduard Norden* (1993), 92.

publish the paper.¹⁰ It is unlikely that this story is about some other article(s); Bickerman's account to Hengel has echoes of the beginning of Norden's letter, but as the reader will see below, Bickerman's recounting to Hengel was a somewhat simplified and prettified account of what took place. As I would reconstruct the story, Norden's reply was this detailed letter.¹¹ Norden was supposedly known for his diffidence (see below, n. 18), but his comments in this letter were in strong terms.

I found that letter with the 'Clades Germanica' article in Box 4, folder 12. The letter reads as follows:¹²

29.12.26

Lieber Herr Doktor:¹³

Ich habe es mir mit Ihrem Mscr. nicht leicht gemacht. Erstens habe ich es ganz langsam, Wort für Wort, gelesen. Zweitens den ganzen Bericht des Tacitus (wer weiß, zum wievielten Mal in meinem Leben). Drittens die Darstellung Mommsens. Dann viertens nochmals Ihr Mscr. in großen Zügen. Ich muß Ihnen nun — mit der von Ihnen verlangten Offenheit¹⁴ — gestehen, daß ich Ihre Auffassung nicht zu der meinigen machen kann. Sie postulieren von einem Historiker, der eine Kriegserzählung in sein großes Geschichtswerk aufnimmt, etwas, das höchstens von einem Spezialwerk zu verlangen wäre (etwa so, wie es das Thukydideische erfüllt). Nennen Sie mir einen antiken Verfasser eines großen, komplexen Geschichtswerkes, der es anders gemacht hätte als T.¹⁵ Ich kenne keinen einzigen. Und wenn in der nächsten Generation ein moderner Historiker die Geschichte des 20. Jahrh. schreiben wird, so wird er selbst die Gesch. des Weltkrieges verkürzen, d.h. auf das Wesentliche konzentrieren müssen. Da werden auch die großen Heeresgruppen u.

¹⁰ M. Hengel, 'Elias Bickermann: Erinnerungen an einen grossen Althistoriker aus St. Petersburg', *Hyperboreus — Studia Classica* 10 (2004), 174-175. Respecting Bickerman's decision not to publish the(se) paper(s), I am only publishing Norden's letter, together with a brief summary of enough of Bickerman's papers to make Norden's remarks intelligible. Since Bickerman instructed his executors to destroy all drafts (above, n. 2) it is not clear how these papers survived. Perhaps only material found in his apartment was destroyed, and not that in his office, where these papers were found. In the end, however, one can only speculate on just how or why these drafts survived.

¹¹ Perhaps Norden, in fact, responded by postcard (since lost) and Bickerman asked for a more detailed evaluation; hence this letter. In that case, the story Bickerman told Hengel and the letter would not contradict each other. On the other hand, I have found a regular gap between the stories Bickerman told about his past (his 'oral autobiography'), and the version revealed by the documents; hence I would guess that it is much more likely that Norden's only response was this letter and that Bickerman improved the story in his oral retelling, as he did with other events in his past. All this will be discussed at length in the monograph I am now preparing.

¹² Only a small number of Norden's letters have been preserved. That makes this find relatively rare. See further W. Abel, 'Studium Berolinense 1924-1931', *Gymnasium* 91 (1984), 449.

¹³ Bickerman's doctoral thesis, directed by Ulrich Wilcken, had been approved earlier that year, on August 6, 1926, E.J. Bickermann, *Das Edikt des Kaisers Caracalla in P. Giss.* 40 (1926).

¹⁴ Consulting Wilamowitz about an article he had written, Norden asked for serious criticism. His students expected nothing less from Norden: Abel, 'Studium Berolinense 1924-1931', 463. If this letter to Bickerman is any indication, they got it.

¹⁵ T. = Tacitus, and so throughout, including the English translation to follow.

ihre Führer, nicht die Abteilungen u. die Unterführer genannt werden, auch nicht alle Nebenschauplätze des Krieges. Natürlich wird eine solche Darstellung anders aussehen, wenn ein Strategie, anders wenn ein Nichtstrategie ihr Autor ist; jener wird das Technische, dieser das Allgemeine u. Persönliche stärker betonen. Ein Forscher, der alle Einzelheiten wissen möchte, muß die Generalstabswerke der Parteien, daneben die stenographischen **Berichte**¹⁶ Verhandlungen aller Parlamente studieren.

Ich vermisse also das für T. Charakteristische.¹⁷ Wenn Sie nun gar am Schluß sagen, man müsse seine Darstellung entweder in toto annehmen, oder sie ZERSTÖREN U. AUS IHREN TRÜMMERN DIE UNSRIGE AUFBAUEN,¹⁷ so muß ich das als ein unbegründetes Urteil ansehen. Und es ist mir nicht verständlich, wie Sie sich auf Mommsen berufen können; ich finde, daß er den T. im Großen u. Ganzen, ja in den meisten Einzelheiten *nacherzählt*! Er konnte ja auch gar nicht anders. Denn die Darstellung des T. ist, als ganzes betrachtet, gut; daß man hier u. da mehr wissen möchte, ist ja klar; aber das ist überall so, u. selbst wenn wir Plinius besäßen, würden wir immer noch die Originalberichte vermissen, auf die dieser zurückging.

Sie werden sich nicht für überzeugt erklären: das sehe ich voraus, denn ich habe selten erlebt, daß ein Autor sich überzeugen läßt. Und ich beanspruche ja auch für mich nur eine persönliche Meinung. Diese freilich werde ich behaupten müssen, da ich gerade diesen Schriftsteller, wie auch den allgemeinen Tenor der antiken Historiographie, einigermaßen zu kennen glaube.¹⁸

¹⁶ 'Berichte' crossed out in the original and replaced by 'Verhandlungen'.

¹⁷ As noted above, I have utilized small capitals to indicate that these few words are a partially acknowledged direct quotation by Norden from 'Clades Germanica', 16, lines 21-22 from the top.

¹⁸ I presume this sentence is an example of what contemporaries took to be Norden's diffidence. This quality was noted by F.W. Lenz, 'Erinnerungen an Eduard Norden', *Antike und Abendland* 7 (1958), 164. Unlike Lenz who offered no explanation for this character trait, O. Skutsch (O. Skutsch, A. Bierl, & W.M. Calder III, 'Recollections of Scholars I Have Known', *HSCP* 94 (1992), 395) explained this diffidence as the result of Norden's having been born Jewish, but converted to Christianity as a schoolboy. Norden tried to conceal the fact that though German he was not Germanic, and this diffidence was the outcome. As a consequence, according to Skutsch, Norden would never publish anything that he had not given a friend to read. I find Skutsch's explanation of Norden's diffidence unconvincing. If I had to guess I would venture that Norden found it daunting to work as a specialist in Latin, not Greek, in the high achievement environment of Berlin, where success at the most distinguished levels was always expected, and with a colleague like Wilamowitz, who was the embodiment of that sort of attainment. Wilamowitz' recommendation to Norden for dealing with the bouts of depression from which Norden suffered was to undertake a big academic project! In general, Wilamowitz seems to have had little patience or sympathy for more delicate psychological problems or analysis. See further F. Solmsen, 'Wilamowitz in his Last Ten Years', *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 20 (1979), 103; W.M. Calder III, "'Aquila in Nubibus': Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff in his Letters to Eduard Norden (1893-1931)", in B. Kytzler, K. Rudolph & J. Rüpke (Eds.), *Eduard Norden (1868-1941), ein deutscher Gelehrter jüdischer Herkunft* (1994), 185-186. Wilamowitz explained that he argued so frequently against Norden's conclusions in *Die Antike Kunstprosa* because it was such a wonderful book, Calder, 'Aquila in Nubibus', 177, n. 10. What would this do to someone uncertain of himself? In any case all these explanations barely exceed the level of dime store psychology, at the best.

Novum annum feliciter. Mit herzlichen Grüßen. Ihr

ENorden

^{*)} Daß er, wie immer, auf die Spannung des Lesers bedacht ist, versteht sich für ihn von selbst. Aber darauf wollen Sie ja auch nicht hinaus. Und ich finde auch, daß diese seine Kunst in der Erzählung des Bataververkrieges gar nicht besonders stark hervortritt. Er hat sich, wie mir scheint, eng an Plinius angeschlossen, natürl. verkürzend.

29.12.26

Dear Doctor:¹⁹

I did not treat your manuscript lightly. First, I read it carefully, word for word. Second, (for the umpteenth time in my life), Tacitus' entire report. Third, Mommsen's account. Fourth, [I went over] the main points in your manuscript again. Now, I must confess to you — with the candor that you requested — that I cannot adopt your way of seeing things. You expect of a historian, who incorporates an account of a war into his large historical work, something that might at most be demanded of a specialized work (something like [the expectations] met in a work of the Thucydidean type). Name me a single ancient author of a large comprehensive historical work who might have done things differently than T. I don't know of a single one. And if in the next generation a modern historian writes the history of the twentieth century, he will have to shorten even the account of the World War, that is, to concentrate on what is essential. Thus, the large army units and their commanders would be named, not the smaller units and the lower ranks of officers, nor all the minor theaters of engagement. Naturally, such an account would look one way if written by a general, differently if its author is a civilian. The former would put more emphasis on technical aspects, the latter on general matters and the people involved. A scholar who wants to know all the details must study the acts of the General Staffs of the combatants, along with the stenographic minutes of all the Parliaments.

In fact, I miss [in your analysis] the qualities characteristic of T.*). When towards the end you say that one must either adopt his account *in toto*, or DEMOLISH IT AND BUILD UP OUR OWN OUT OF THE RUINS, I must consider that an unfounded conclusion. And I can't understand how you appeal to Mommsen. I find that [Mommsen] in the larger picture—and even in most details—follows T. And he couldn't have done otherwise, since T.'s account is sound, on the whole. It is obvious that here and there one might like to know more [than Tacitus related], but that is always the case. And even if we had Pliny [on whom Tacitus based his account], we would still lack the original accounts on which [Pliny] depended.

You will declare that you are not persuaded. I foresee that, as I have seldom encountered an author who allowed himself to be persuaded, and I claim even for myself only my own opinion, but I must insist, of course, that I believe I know something about this author in particular and also about the general tenor of ancient historiography.

¹⁹ In translating this text, as well as Bickerman's portrait of Norden, below, I have aimed for an idiomatic English rendering, even if at the expense of a literal reproduction of German constructions and idioms. Thus, in the opening phrase, instead of 'Dear Mr. Doctor', stilted at best in English, I have simply 'Dear Doctor', and so throughout. Norden's letter is abrupt at times. I have tried to reproduce this staccato effect by keeping explanatory additions to a minimum; those explanatory additions that seemed essential are in square brackets.

Novum annum feliciter. Best Wishes. Yours,

ENorden

*) It is self-evident that [Tacitus], as always, is concerned with [keeping the] reader in suspense, but your argument does not go in that direction. I also find that this very skill of his is not at all especially prominent in his account of the Batavian War. My sense is that he followed Pliny quite closely, of course while abbreviating [what Pliny had written].²⁰

II. Bickerman's Portrait of Norden, *Berliner Hochschul-Nachrichten*, October 1927

When Norden was inaugurated as Rector of the University his student, Bickerman, himself already a Doctor, supplied this account of his teacher for the local student newspaper. While formally published and in the public domain since 1927, its existence was unknown to the compilers of Bickerman's bibliography, and to others who were present and related the events of the day.²¹ I found it in Box 3, folder 25, among a number of publications from the popular press (mostly anti-communist, as part of his father, Joseph Bickermann's, fight against the Bolshevik regime). Norden's harsh comments on 'Clades Germanica', only a few months earlier, do not seem to have soured the relationship between teacher and student. To the extent that the rectorate was an office with real authority or an honor worth attaining, Bickerman had to be careful, as the other candidate for the position, over whom Norden prevailed, was Bickerman's *Doktorvater*, Ulrich Wilcken.²² In any case, Bickerman wrote:

Eduard Norden.

Vom wissenschaftlichen Wirken des neuen

Universitäts-Rektors.

Eduard Norden ist Philologe. Zunächst in unmittelbarer Bedeutung des griechischen Begriffes: er liebt das Wort an sich, den Klang der schönen Rede, den sinnvollen Ausdruck. Die ihn am 15. Oktober hörten, werden sich erinnern, wie rhythmisch und gemessen, mit sichtbarer Freude am schönen Ton des feierlichen lateinischen Spruches, er den Amtseid las.²³ Seine Rede, die darnach folgte, war auch eine rhetorische Leistung, zugleich aber zeigte sie den neuen Rektor von der anderen Seite seines philologischen Temperaments.²⁴ Denn er sprach ausdrucksvoll von Ausdrucksmitteln der Sprache in ihren Zusammenhängen mit dem Gedankeninhalt, dem sie dienen sollen. *Gehalt und Gestalt, Wort und*

²⁰ I would like to thank Dr. Daniel Stoeckl Ben Ezra of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, for his help in reading, transcribing and translating Norden's letter.

²¹ Bickerman, *Religions and Politics*, xv-xxvii. For a portrait of Norden from an unidentified newspaper, published in July 1927 when Norden was elected rector, see E. Mensching, 'Texte von und über Eduard Norden', *Latein und Griechisch in Berlin* 36 (1992), 208. Mensching, *ibid.*, characterizes that account as annoying, full of errors and omissions, and perhaps written in haste in order to make a publication deadline. For accounts of the day of Norden's inauguration see Abel, 'Studium Berolinense 1924-1931', 467-468; M. Norden, 'Erinnerungen aus Eures Vaters Leben des Professors Eduard Norden', in: E. Mensching (ed.), *Latein und Griechisch in Berlin, Sonderheft* 36 (1992), 156-160.

²² See M. Norden, 'Erinnerungen', 156.

²³ A photograph of that event can be found in Kytzler et al., *Eduard Norden*, plate 4.

²⁴ This address has since been re-published as 'Logos und Rhythmus', in E. Norden, *Kleine Schriften zum klassischen Altertum* (1966), 533-551.

*Begriff, wie verhalten sie sich zueinander?*²⁵ Das ist der Mittelpunkt, zu dem Nordens Forschung wieder und wieder zurückkehrt. Und damit ringt seine zunächst zünftige Arbeit zugleich um das *Erfassen der letzten und allgemein bedeutenden Probleme unserer Kultur*. Der Dienst an der Philologie wird zum Dienst am 'Logos'. Eben darum konnten auch seine sich so speziellen Untersuchungen, wie die über die antike Kunstprosa, schon die vierte Ausgabe erleben.

Nehmen wir als Beispiel seiner Art das Buch, das den griechischen Titel "ἄγνωστος θεός — Der unbekannte Gott" trägt. Es ist der Gott, von dem, wie die Apostelgeschichte erzählt, Paulus in Athen predigte. Der Apostel sprach griechisch, griechisch ist auch der Bericht davon, sowohl der Sprache, wie der Komposition nach. Der Begriff des 'unbekannten Gottes' ist aber unhellenisch, orientalisch. Norden zeigt das, indem er das Wort 'ἄγνωστος' in seiner Wandlung verfolgt, sein Fehlen in der echthellenischen Welt, seine Verbreitung im orientalisierten Hellenismus nachweist. Und mühsame, 'kleinliche' lexikographische Untersuchungen führen zu der Erkenntnis, daß diese semitische und dann christliche 'Gnosis' nicht das verstandmäßige Raisonement vom Gotte, sondern das mystische Einfühlen, das Sichversinken in die Gottheit bedeutet. So führt die Wortuntersuchung zum Erfassen jener uns gerade jetzt so fühlbar nahen Zeit, da das Schauen der Mystik den überspannten Intellektualismus zu überwinden begann.²⁶

Eine andere Reihe lexikalischer Untersuchungen hängt damit zusammen: Rein grammatisch typisiert Norden Formen der Lobpreisungen des Gottes, und aus der Anhäufung von Zitaten und syntaktischen Beobachtungen entstehen allmählich das Verstehen und die Unterscheidung des hellenischen und des semitischen Typus der Frömmigkeit: der Hellene preist nur die Taten der Gottheit, der Orientale auch ihre Eigenschaften. Der erste spricht zum Gott: 'Du kannst', der andere auch: 'Du bist'. *So verbindet sich in Nordens Werk die Kunst der Analyse mit dem Willen zur Synthese.*

²⁵ Throughout this transcription and its translation I have represented emphasis, indicated in the original by separated text, by italics.

²⁶ In Norden's address he discussed a kind of mysticism, a drop of which might not hurt as it would provide an antidote to contemporary materialism, but warned against other forms of mysticism that would lead to magic, occultism, astrology and an abandonment of personal responsibility, a mysticism that was the enemy of clarity and thought, all that was characteristic of the Greek soul and of its related German counterpart ('Logos und Rhythmus', 549). I suggest that Bickerman would have found these ideas congenial, although perhaps he would have preferred to situate them as his teacher from St. Petersburg and fellow anti-communist émigré, M.I. Rostovtzeff, did. The latter proposed much the same conclusions on the decline of rationalism and rise of mysticism in antiquity, and drew contemporary implications, in a book that appeared just before Norden's inauguration as rector in Berlin. See M. Rostovtzeff, *Mystic Italy* (1927), 3-23. Note for example the following, *ibid.*, 22: 'From the depth of human conscience mystic aspirations in their higher and lower aspects are coming up afresh, especially among those people who learned a bitter lesson in the turmoils of revolution led by the materialistic spirit of socialist teachings'.

As far as Rostovtzeff was concerned the contemporary outburst of mysticism was not something desirable, as it might 'work the end of our proud civilization', much as mysticism had contributed to the undoing of what was best in the ancient world. Rostovtzeff pinned responsibility for this unhappy contemporary outcome on the socialists and those who had been harmed by their revolution. Bickerman would have been happy to concur in finding fault with the socialists.

Es ist darum oft ziemlich gleichgültig, ob die von ihm gegebene Lösung des Fachproblems richtig ist, viel wichtiger als der unmittelbare zünftige Gewinn sind die neuen ungehobenen Schätze, zu denen er dabei führt. Es ist gewiß fachmännisch betrachtet wichtig, ob die Deutung, die er dem Ursprung des Namens 'Germani' in einem seiner anderen vielbeachteten Werke gab, richtig ist oder nicht. Für alle bedeutend ist es aber, daß er dabei wieder ein grundlegendes Problem erfaßt und untersucht hat: Wie verhält sich in Berichten der antiken Ethnographie das unmittelbar Beobachtete zu dem vom Erzähler auf Grund seiner allgemeinen Vorstellungen und Kenntnisse in die Darstellung Hineingebrachten, was sah er und was wollte er sehen? Es ist klar, daß Norden hier die Frage stellt, die für die Bewertung aller, auch moderner Erzählungen von anderen und wesensfremden Völkern zentral ist.²⁷

Wie können wir aber in einem für uns sonst unkontrollierbaren Berichte das Ererbte vom Neuerworbenen, das Traditionelle vom Frischen unterscheiden? In seinem letzten Buche, das den eigenartigen Namen 'Die Geburt des Kindes' trägt — demzufolge wurde es in einem Universitätsinstitut unter 'Medizin' katalogisiert — formuliert Norden selbst seine Auffassung, zeigt, warum der philologische 'Kleinkram' so wichtig sein kann: 'Die Formel ist geprägte Form, sie stellt die Dauer im Wechsel dar. Bei der Ideengeschichte sind wir, wenn wir unser Augenmerk nur auf den Gehalt richten, leicht der Gefahr unterworfen, uns durch Konvergenz den gleichartigen geschichtlichen Zusammenhang nur vorzutäuschen, also Genealogie zu treiben, wo es sich nur um Analogie handelt'.²⁸ In dem eben genannten Buche übt nun Norden diese *Kunst, von Wortformeln zu den Gedankenverbindungen vorzudringen*, an der Geschichte einer zentralen religiösen Vorstellung: der vom Heiland und von der Heilszeit. Vergil verkündete inmitten des Bürgerkrieges die Geburt des Retters, des Gotteskindes. Die Frömmigkeit des christlichen Mittelalters verehrte darum im römischen Dichter den Vorgänger der Evangelisten. Indem Norden die Formeln und Ausdrücke der antiken Heilserwartung untersucht, kann er zeigen, daß und wie der lateinische Dichter und der jüdische Kündler Jesu beide in demselben Flusse der religiösen Hoffnung standen, dessen Quelle Norden in Aegypten wiederfindet und an dem die Menschen schon vier Jahrtausende sich laben.

Soviel — nicht von den Büchern — (es wäre dann noch vieles zu nennen), sondern von der wissenschaftlichen Persönlichkeit, wie sie sich in den Büchern erkennen läßt. Vom Menschen und Lehrer zu sprechen, verbietet die Ehrfurcht vor dem Lebenden.

E.B.

Eduard Norden.
On the Academic Contributions of the New
Rector of the University

Eduard Norden is a philologist. First, in the literal sense of the Greek term: he loves words for themselves, the sound of beautiful speech, the meaningful expression. Those who heard him on October 15 will remember how he read the oath of office, rhythmically and

²⁷ Bickerman is here expressing some reservations about detailed points in E. Norden, *Die germanische Urgeschichte in Tacitus' Germania* (1920), while at the same time praising the work's conception and approach to ethnography as a whole.

²⁸ This quote is from the concluding section of the book, E. Norden, *Die Geburt des Kindes: Geschichte einer religiösen Idee* (1924), 165. The sentence that follows immediately, not quoted by Bickerman, is: 'Daher bin ich seit langem für eine Kontrolle der Ideengeschichte durch die Formgeschichte eingetreten'.

in a measured way, with visible joy at the beautiful sound of the solemn Latin phrases. His speech, that followed, was also a rhetorical achievement, but at the same time it showed the other side of the new rector's philological disposition, for he spoke expressively about the means of expression in language and their connections to the intellectual content these means of expression are supposed to serve. *Content and form, word and concept: how are they related to each other?* That is the central point to which Norden's research returns time and again. And as a result, his work, which is above all professional, at the same time encompasses *the comprehension of the most profound and significant problems of our culture*. Allegiance to philology becomes allegiance to the 'logos'. That is what makes it possible for even his very specialized studies, such as that about ancient artistic prose, to appear already in a fourth edition.

Let us take his book, that has the Greek title, "ἄγνωστος Θεός: The Unknown God", as an example of his craft [as a scholar]. This is the God about whom, as narrated in Acts, Paul preached in Athens. The apostle spoke in Greek, and the account of the event is in Greek not only in language but also in composition. But the concept of the 'unknown god' is not Hellenic; it is oriental. Norden proves this by following the development of the word 'ἄγνωστος' and demonstrating its absence in the truly Hellenic world, and its wide distribution in oriental Hellenism. And so painstaking, 'nitpicking' lexicographic studies lead to the realization that this Semitic and later Christian 'gnosis' was not rational discourse about God, but a mystic identification that means becoming immersed in the godhead. And in that way the investigation of words leads to the understanding of that bygone time, which just now feels so close to us, when mystic vision began to prevail over extravagant intellectualism.

Another series of lexical studies is connected with this. Norden categorizes forms of praises of God from a purely grammatical point of view, and from the accumulation of quotations and syntactical observations there gradually emerges the distinction between Greek and Semitic types of piety: a Greek praises only the deeds of the godhead, while an oriental also praises its attributes. The former says to God: 'you can ...'; the latter also says, 'you are'. *In this way Norden's contribution ties together the art of analysis with the drive to synthesis.*

It is therefore often not quite relevant whether his solution of a professional problem is correct; the new treasures, previously hidden, to which he leads in the process are more important than the direct contribution to the discipline. From a scholarly perspective it is certainly important whether the interpretation he gave in one of his widely noted books for the origin of the name of the [ancient] 'Germani' is correct or not. But it is universally significant that along the way he again identifies and investigates a fundamental issue: in reports of ancient ethnography, what is the relationship between the immediately observed and that imported by the narrator into the account on the basis of his general preconceptions and knowledge? What did the narrator see and what did he want to see? It is clear that Norden here poses a question that is central to the evaluation of all narratives of other peoples whose ways are different, modern accounts as well.

In otherwise unverifiable accounts, how do we distinguish the inherited from the newly acquired, the traditional from the innovation? In his most recent book, that has the distinctive title *Birth of the Child* — as a result of which it was catalogued under 'Medicine' in one University institute — Norden himself formulates his conception, and shows why philological minutiae can be so important. 'A formula is a fixed form that represents continuity at a time of change. In the history of ideas if we focus our attention only on content we are easily subject to the danger of falling into the illusion that two similar

things are related historically, and therefore positing derivation, where there is only analogy'. In the book mentioned above Norden exemplifies this *ability to progress from verbal formulas to the interconnection of ideas*, in order to reach the history of a central religious notion: that of the Savior and of the time of salvation. In the middle of the civil war, Vergil announced the birth of the savior, of the divine child. For that reason, medieval Christian piety honored the Roman poet as a forerunner of the evangelists. As a result of Norden's investigation of the forms and expressions of ancient hopes of salvation he can show how both the Latin poet and the Jewish Herald Jesus stand in the same current of religious hope, whose sources Norden identifies in Egypt, and in which people have been finding comfort for four thousand years.

So much — not about the books — (for in that case there would be much more to mention), but about the academic figure, as it is revealed in the books. The respect due to the living does not allow me to speak about the person and the teacher.

E.B.²⁹

III. Schwabe on Lewy on Classics in Berlin

The picture of Norden as seen from his relationship with his students is rounded out by the information in the memorial address, in Hebrew, delivered by Moshe Schwabe at the meeting held in Jerusalem on November 18, 1945 to mark the death of Bickerman's close personal friend from Berlin student days, Hans (Yohanan) Lewy.³⁰ This address was published in a pamphlet, distributed a year later, that I found in the Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem, Yohanan Lewy archive, ARC, Ms. Var. 376, file 68. Schwabe offers an interesting and important complement to the view of Norden sketched by Bickerman. Schwabe began by noting that Lewy died at age 44, after a brief illness, on July 22, 1945. He then outlined Lewy's Berlin childhood, up to the point where Lewy began his studies at the university, stressing Lewy's Zionist loyalties and education in Jewish studies, as a result of which Lewy mastered Hebrew, Syriac and Arabic. Schwabe continued:

²⁹ Again, I would like to thank Dr. Daniel Stoekl Ben Ezra of the Hebrew University for help with transcribing and translating.

³⁰ It was a mark of his very special friendship with Hans Lewy that some six months after arriving in the USA, Bickerman wrote to Lewy that he and his wife were safe in the USA, while his brother and family were in London, and that his father had died in Nice in January 1942. In that same letter, Bickerman congratulated Lewy on his recent marriage, informed him that he would be happy to visit Lewy's mother, then in the USA, and invited Lewy and his wife in his name and that of Mrs. Bickerman to visit them in Paris after the war: Bickerman to Lewy, February 15, 1943, Jewish National and University Library, ARC, Ms. Var. 376, file 71. Normally, as Rostovtzeff noted, Bickerman did not write about personal matters to his correspondents: Rostovtzeff to Johnson, October 4, 1940, Duke University, Rostovtzeff Archive; G.M. Bongard-Levin, *Skifskii Roman* (1997), 333, no. 9.

When Lewy died, Bickerman wrote to Mrs. Lewy as soon as he learned of his friend's death, describing Lewy as 'an old, old and dear, very dear friend'. He added that Mrs. Lewy was not the only one grieved by Lewy's death: 'Hans' friends, and I among them, will not stop to love him': Bickerman to Mrs. Lewy, September 4, 1945, Jewish National and University Library, ARC, Ms. Var. 376, file 71.

Berlin was then rich in scholarly life. Who shaped Lewy's scholarly character at that crucial period in his life? Jaeger, Diels, Norden, and Eduard Meyer were his teachers. The 'Nestor' of the philologists, Wilamowitz, was no longer as active then as he had once been. Alongside the 'old school' there arose a 'new school', headed by Jaeger. Jaeger's method consisted of tracing the lines of development of the central ideas, utilizing the history of ideas to draw a picture of the period. His colleague, Norden, uncovered and elucidated the spiritual connections between periods, on the basis of a subtle understanding of the text. Lewy and his contemporaries learned from both, but were enthused by Jaeger, by his analysis of culture and by his description of the formation of the basic notions of *aretē* and the Greek state, by his way of describing Plato. All Lewy's fellow students learned how to interpret texts from Norden, but Jaeger, who was brilliant, was the heart of the department. Jaeger knew how to use both approaches, but was especially influential because of his analysis of ideas. Lewy also learned how to interpret texts from Eduard Meyer, but Norden's way of focusing on the form of the text and (Jaeger's way) of focusing on the central ideas were what caught his attention.

At the end of the twenties the circle of philologists (in Berlin) turned its back on old Wilamowitz, who was then retired in Westend. Although they spoke of him with due honor and respect, they talked about him as someone whose time was past.³¹ Jaeger was then busy elaborating the notions that he would publish in the first volume of *Paideia*. As the book approached the stage of proofs Lewy moved further and further away from Jaeger. It was characteristic of Lewy that he did not usually discuss this. After 1930 Lewy broke completely with Jaeger. When Lewy visited Israel in 1931 there was no longer any inner affinity between them. A look at Jaeger's book, which first appeared in 1934, explains the break. Jaeger's point of departure was the *rassenmässige Formanlage des griechischen Geistes* (9). He found the basis for the connection between Homer and later Greeks in *den verborgenen Erbeigenschaften der Rasse und des Blutes* (88).³² He emphasized the *Führeranspruch der sich weder auf adlige Abkunft stützt noch auf staatliche Stellung* (111). In discussing Sparta, he noted that the problem of a more uniform education was only *die Ueberwindung des Individualismus und die Formung des Menschen nach einer für die Gesamtheit verpflichtenden Norm*. The extent to which

³¹ Compare F. Solmsen, 'Wilamowitz in his Last Ten Years', 94: 'A few students still "swore by" Wilamowitz; most of those in Berlin turned to Jaeger, Eduard Frankel and Regenbogen, who were closer to the students' minds and were aware of the issues that ailed the world'. See also W.M. Calder III, 'Doceat Mortuus Vivos: In Quest of Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf', *Emerita* 48 (1980), 226.

³² Jaeger's interpretation of Homer and his way of connecting Homer to later Greek history and culture were key flaws in his larger structure, to which B. Snell directed attention in his review when the first volume of *Paideia* appeared. That review is now reprinted in B. Snell, 'Rez. Werner Jaeger: *Paideia. Die Formung des griechischen Menschen, Bd. 1* (35)', *Gesammelte Schriften* (1966), 32-54. According to Snell, as summarized by Calder, Jaeger's vision of Greece, to form a basis for Germany in the mid 1930's, boils down to heroism and Platonic authoritarianism. It is so vague as to become the servant of any politics. At times, before his departure for America, Jaeger was perilously close to, if not over the line of, acting as the mouthpiece of his profession for the new regime. See W.M. Calder III, 'Werner Jaeger', in W.W. Briggs and W.M. Calder III (Eds.), *Classical Scholarship: A Biographical Dictionary* (1990), 219-221.

Jaeger's notions and formulations were shaped by the era can be seen most clearly from his remark on Pindar, who adopted *sein Ideal des blonden hochrassigen Menschentypus* (8) from the Dorians.³³ The break between pupil and teacher was permanent, even though Jaeger's fate brought him far from his (original) concepts and formulations.³⁴ It is clear that Lewy's path as a scholar was shaped not by Jaeger, whose approach at that time tended to sink in a fog of words,³⁵ but became that of Norden, whose work was always tied to the text, and who did not indulge in pointless philosophical reflections. Norden never strayed far from the text he was explaining. Lewy followed Norden, but even exceeded his master in certain respects. When Lewy came to study ancient religious syncretism he could take advantage of his knowledge of Eastern languages — Hebrew, Syriac and Arabic — while his teacher could only analyze Eastern elements on the basis

³³ Lewy was not the only one to notice the racist character of the work. See M. Braun and W.M. Calder III, "'Tell it Hitler! Ecco!': Paul Friedländer on Werner Jaeger's *Paideia*", *Quaderni di storia* 43 (1996), 211-248. In subsequent editions of *Paideia* these embarrassing reminders of Germany in the 1930's were removed.

³⁴ Jaeger's second wife, whom he married in 1931, was Jewish, as was their daughter. Jaeger was Sather Professor in California in 1934. He resigned his position in Berlin and the couple left for the USA in 1936. Unlike many other émigrés, Jaeger enjoyed a comfortable and secure exile, with appointments first at Chicago and then in 1939 as University Professor at Harvard. Despite this, Jaeger was never completely at home in the American university scene. See further J.P. Hallett, 'The Case of the Missing President: Werner Jaeger and the American Philological Association', in W.M. Calder III (Ed.), *Werner Jaeger Reconsidered. Proceedings of the Second Oldfather Conference, Held on the Campus of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, April 26-28, 1990* (1992), 37-68.

Perhaps Lewy should have been more forgiving, and re-established contact with Jaeger after he left Germany for the USA. On the other hand, Jaeger never resigned from the Berlin Academy (which had expelled its Jewish members, Norden included) and continued to publish in Nazi Germany during the war — volume II of *Paideia* appeared in Berlin in 1944: Calder, 'Werner Jaeger', 220.

Norden's encounter with Nazism was far more traumatic and left him a confused and broken man. His conversion to Christianity at age seventeen was of no avail. Nor were remarks that verged uncomfortably close to support for Hitler as the strong man who might save Germany; Norden even fired Jewish assistants. At times Norden openly acknowledged his Jewish origins, at others he asked to be designated an Aryan. Nazi race laws and public persecution of Jews, by contrast, were clear and explicit. Norden had four Jewish grandparents, who were also practicing Jews. He was forced to leave Berlin for exile in Switzerland, where he died on July 13, 1941. See Lenz, 'Erinnerungen', 170-171; B. Kytzler, 'Eduard Norden', Briggs-Calder, *Classical Scholarship*, 341; W.A. Schröder, *Der Altertumswissenschaftler Eduard Norden (1868-1942): das Schicksal eines deutschen Gelehrten jüdischer Abkunft* (1999), 33-49.

³⁵ A.D. Momigliano also noticed the 'scant grip on reality' of Jaeger's work, and commented that 'it bears the mark of an epoch of political dissolution', as cited by Calder, 'Werner Jaeger', 215. Wilamowitz too would come to repudiate Jaeger, whom he had backed to be his successor in Berlin, remarking that he much preferred ordinary philology to Jaeger's new (third) Humanism. See W.M. Calder III and C. Hoffmann, 'Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff on the Basel Greek Chair', *Museum Helveticum* 43 (1986), 260, n. 15.

of their impact in the Greco-Roman world. Norden viewed the eastern body in its Greek garb, while Lewy knew the body itself (directly).³⁶

It is easy to recognize the extent to which Norden was the inspiration for Lewy's scholarly work; at times Lewy continued Norden's analysis. The pupil maintained constant contact with his teacher, in writing and in visits, up until the war. The crucial stages in Lewy's scholarly method can be organized in parallel to Norden's publications. In 1913 Norden's book *Agnostos Theos* appeared. The impact of this book, which explored the history of the forms of religious style, was ever wider, especially after 1918. The author utilized small and subtle points of style to establish connections between major concepts. In 1924 Norden added his epoch making book on Vergil's fourth eclogue, called *Die Geburt des Kindes*. The subtitle of this work was 'History of One Religious Idea'.³⁷ In 1926 Lewy submitted his dissertation to the University of Berlin, *Sobria Ebrietas*, that appeared afterwards, in 1929, in enlarged form in *Beihefte z. Zeitschrift f. Neutest. Wissensch.* Norden's book revealed a new chapter in the development of Egyptian, Jewish, Greco-Roman and Christian ideas. Reading the three books³⁸ reveals that the two years between the completion of *Geburt des Kindes* and Lewy's dissertation were the crucial period for Lewy's formation as a scholar and for the fixing of his method. Lewy's scholarly personality was fully formed and mature by the time of his first book. Philosophical and historical analysis were based on a rich corpus of sources, read brilliantly and thoroughly. Facts in the history of ideas were established on the basis of facts of style, while the young scholar was perfecting the scholarly method of his teacher. He was completely confident in studying the history of Christian ideas up to the fourth century on the basis of wide ranging knowledge of the Church fathers. In the foreword to his book Lewy thanked Norden for directing his research with interest and good advice. After that he thanked Bousset and Reitzenstein.³⁹ The latter received the work of the young scholar with great enthusiasm in a favorable review in *Deutsche Literaturzeitung*.⁴⁰

³⁶ For Norden's own description of his minimal knowledge of Hebrew see 'Logos und Rhythmus', 541: 'Von dessen Idiomen verstehe ich nur das Hebräische so weit daß ich mir einigermaßen ein eigenes Urteil bilden kann'.

³⁷ Schwabe translated the subtitle into Hebrew, rather than retaining the German; hence I render the subtitle into English in my translation of Schwabe's Hebrew.

³⁸ Norden's two and Lewy's dissertation.

³⁹ I think Schwabe's point, implied pretty clearly, but never stated explicitly, was that even by this relatively early stage of Lewy's career, even before *Paideia*, Jaeger was missing. If that was Schwabe's intention, he was misrepresenting to make his point: Jaeger is thanked for his advice in showing Lewy the connection between Philo and Hermetic Literature in the preface to *Sobria Ebrietas*. In any case, when the Hebrew University consulted scholars in Germany when considering appointing Lewy in 1936, Norden was one of those approached (Ed. Fraenkel and Felix Jacoby were the other two), but Jaeger was not. See J. Geiger and R. Meridor, 'The Beginnings of Classics in Israel: Two Documents', *SCI* 18 (1999), 160, n. 3.

⁴⁰ H. Lewy, 1901-1945, *Memorial Addresses Delivered at the Hebrew University by J.L. Magnes, M. Schwabe, G. Scholem*, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1946, [Hebrew], 7-9. The translation from the Hebrew is mine.

IV. Analysis

I propose to read these three documents in the light of each other. This comparative reading is crucial, as Norden hated scholarly polemics,⁴¹ and would express explicit criticism of other scholars only in private;⁴² hence the significance of the issues being discussed only emerges when each of these sources is used to help understand the others. As Schwabe noted, this was an era in which Werner Jaeger was the emerging academic star, setting the standard for others. He had proclaimed his academic program at his Inaugural Lecture in Basel in 1914. Philologists were to free themselves from historical scholarship and were to regard themselves as 'Interpreten: Verkünder der Sonne Homers, Deuter aeschyleischen Ernstes, pindarischer Frömmigkeit, Wecker demosthenischer Glut, Mysten plotinischen Tiefsinns, Sucher aristotelischer Forschung, Anbeter platonischer Wahrheit'.⁴³ As Jaeger concluded, 'Philologia' was to shine forth as 'die Liebe und Lust zum Logos und zu seiner schöpferischen Werken'.⁴⁴ Philology was to inspire creative thought, which would then serve as a basis for renewed cultural life.

I see Bickerman's work on Tacitus as an attempt to write something in the Jaeger mode, emphasizing the role of philosophy and ideas in shaping history, or at least in the way history was written. Not surprisingly, Norden, who according to Schwabe on Lewy did not indulge in pointless philosophical reflections, did not find Bickerman's arguments convincing. Furthermore, just as Lewy, according to Schwabe, rejected Jaeger's approach, and chose to follow the path set by Norden so too, eventually, did his close friend Bickerman. The rebuke in Norden's letter had its intended effect, not only concerning the specific article(s) never published, but also in the larger scheme of things. Bickerman was that rare author who changed his mind in response to criticism. Bickerman and Lewy, two good friends who agreed with each other on many points of scholarship,⁴⁵ ultimately agreed with each other about Norden and Jaeger as well.

I see this as the implicit theme underlying Bickerman's brilliant portrait of Norden. The focus of Norden's scholarship, according to Bickerman, was on the relationship between content and form, word and idea. Bickerman further asserted that understanding these relationships was at the heart of the recent and most significant cultural issues of the day. If we wish to understand how mysticism overcame rationalism, Bickerman explained, the path Norden teaches us to take is through careful, minute and precise philological studies. This method allows the writing of the history of ideas by starting with verbal formulas and only then advancing to ideas, as a way of surmounting the uncontrolled nature of the received mass of sources. All this, I suggest, is Bickerman

⁴¹ See F.W. Lenz, 'Eduard Nordens Leistung für die Altertumswissenschaft', *Das Altertum* 6 (1960), 252.

⁴² Lenz, 'Erinnerungen', 165.

⁴³ W. Jaeger, 'Philologie und Historie', *Humanistische Reden und Vorträge* (1960²), 16.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ One important disagreement was ideological. Lewy was a Zionist, while Bickerman was not. This possible point of contention does not seem to have impaired the friendship.

presenting Norden, as a 'philologist of religion',⁴⁶ and as a deliberate alternative to the route to understanding the past and its ideas, then so popular, advocated by Jaeger.

In sum, these archival finds show Norden as a scholar of insight, and as a man of enormous erudition. They indicate his role in shaping the agenda and methods of two outstanding students, who would be scholars of the first rank in their own time. He set very high standards for himself and expected the same of others, hopes that these two students, as many others of his pupils, fulfilled. He was master of the details, as well as of the larger picture to be drawn based on these details. Despite his supposed diffidence and hatred of polemic he could speak his mind clearly, as he did to Bickerman in the letter cited, and to others.⁴⁷ All this, however, would likely be true of any distinguished scholar in virtually any field at almost any time: such conclusions are the boilerplate of scholarly biography. What is special about these finds is the window they open on the issues of the age, of the alternate paths being proposed in Germany of the 1920's on how to study ideas that moved people, and how to write the history of those ideas. Both Norden and Jaeger were interested in ideas, especially those that had significant impact on human life. Both somehow wanted to use these ancient notions as prescriptive for the German present and future. The difference was the paths taken. Jaeger's route to discovering the ideas that shaped the past was proving vapid and ultimately too close to racist. Norden's more philological and historical path was adopted by Lewy and Bickerman, and held up by the latter as a model for a more substantial and fruitful method of inquiry into the past that would also have beneficial consequences in the present.

On a personal level, relations between Norden and Jaeger were sometimes strained. Norden was twenty years older, and had been teaching at Berlin since 1906, while Jaeger had been a student at Berlin since 1907, and was first appointed there in 1921. Norden sometimes explicitly acknowledged that Jaeger did not treat him with the respect Norden expected, as he wrote to Wilamowitz at the time of Jaeger's appointment.⁴⁸ As Jaeger recounted, Norden was an accessible intermediary between himself and his fellow students and the semi-divine pair of Diels and Wilamowitz. This was fortunate, as Wilamowitz was very demanding. As Jaeger further recalled, every word of Norden's expressed his highest respect for the old master, Wilamowitz.⁴⁹ As Calder understands Jaeger's recollections, Jaeger was saying politely that the students knew that Norden was not as good as Diels and Wilamowitz. Based on the correspondence concerning Jaeger's appointment in Berlin in 1921, Calder concludes that Jaeger despised Norden and treated

⁴⁶ This characterization of Norden was first suggested by another great 'philologist of religion', A.D. Nock. See further Kytzler, 'Eduard Norden', 343.

⁴⁷ See above, n. 14. See also Norden's letter to Jaeger of April 7, 1925, evaluating Fraenkel, as cited by J. Rüpke, 'Der späte Norden (1925-1941)', in Kytzler *et al.*, *Eduard Norden*, 139, n. 40.

⁴⁸ See Norden's letter to Wilamowitz of June 3, 1921, in W.M. Calder III and B. Huss, 'Sed Serviendum Officio...', *The Correspondence between Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf and Eduard Norden (1892-1931)* (1997), 204-205, no. 210b.

⁴⁹ See W. Jaeger, 'Die klassische Philologie an der Universität Berlin von 1870-1945', in H. Leussink, E. Neumann and G. Kotowski (Eds.), *Studium berolinense, Aufsätze und Beiträge zu Problemen der Wissenschaft und zur Geschichte der Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Berlin* (1960), 474-477.

him with contempt.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, Jaeger eulogized Norden as someone for whom 'the experience of form was the first; the second step the attempt to support this newly awakened sense by the use of observation and parallels'.⁵¹ This evidence all supports Rüpke's suggestion that we need to be more aware of the rivalry between Norden and Jaeger, and of the possibility of explicit disagreement between them about the best way to approach the study of the past.⁵²

Bickerman would later dub a historian 'ce pauvre piocheur des textes'.⁵³ If I may combine Bickerman's later characterization of a historian with his portrait of Norden, the 1927 sketch was Bickerman's way of arguing that Norden gave the historian simple and old fashioned philological tools, that when employed properly were far more reliable than the new-fangled ones, and that would help produce a bountiful and healthy yield, helping to explain the history of ideas and the course of civilization on the basis of a solid analysis of the sources.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Calder, 'Aquila in Nubibus', 189. See also, W.M. Calder III, '12 March 1921: The Berlin Appointment', in Calder, *Werner Jaeger Reconsidered*, 1-24, esp. 22.

⁵¹ Kytzler, 'Eduard Norden', 344

⁵² Rüpke, 'Der späte Norden', 139

⁵³ E.J. Bickerman, 'Utilitas Crucis', *Studies in Jewish and Christian History, Part Three*, 138. It is ironic that 'piocheur' has come to mean 'hacker' in contemporary usage.

⁵⁴ For a concise account of one route to the past popular in the wider German scene of the times, to which Bickerman on Norden should be contrasted, see the portrait of the Stefan George circle in Heidelberg and of its most distinguished historian, Ernst Kantorowicz, in P. Gay, *Weimar Culture — The Outsider as Insider* (2001), 46-51. For the specific clash between George and his devotees and classicists see further L.A. Tritle, 'Plutarch in Germany: The Stefan George Kreis', *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 1, 3 (1995), 109-121, esp. 120-121, n. 62. See also U.K. Goldsmith, 'Wilamowitz and the "Georgekreis": New Documents', in H.E. Barnes, W.M. Calder III, H. Schmidt (Eds.), *Studies in Comparison* (1989), 125-162 and *Idem*, 'Wilamowitz as Parodist of Stefan George', *Studies in Comparison*, 163-172.

One way of understanding the Norden-Jaeger-George relationship is to see the masters and their respective followers as competing answers to the same set of questions, the burning issues of the age. Like many sets of competing answers to the same questions, there were at least as many points they shared as there were points on which they differed. Both the similarities and differences were the source of rivalry. If the social dynamic that I have elsewhere dubbed the 'rule of the Martian', more formally known as the narcissism of small differences, came into play, then the most significant source of friction would have been the smallness of these similarities and differences.

One of the George faithful, Kurt Hildebrandt, *Erinnerungen an Stefan George und seinen Kreis* (1965), 189-190, n. 27, accused Jaeger of being duplicitous in presenting himself to students as if he were one of George's followers by beginning a course with a quote from a poem of the 'master', when in fact Jaeger took a different path. Hildebrandt also charged Jaeger with other instances of double dealing. I take these accusations as one more indication of the competitive overlap between Jaeger and the George devotees.

For an extended discussion of Jaeger's place in the confusing political scene of Weimar see D. White, 'Werner Jaeger's "Third Humanism" and the Crisis of Conservative Politics in Weimar Germany', in Calder, *Werner Jaeger Reconsidered*, 267-288, an account far more nuanced than some of the simplistic assessments cited above.

combined his own philology of religion with mastery of documents — their structure, dating, terminology and the institutions about which one could learn from them — to serve as the basis for his own contributions,⁵⁵ while Lewy, in his few years of life, focused on Jewish and other eastern Hellenistic materials. Bickerman and Lewy were almost certainly in the minority among students in Berlin of that time in preferring Norden and rejecting Jaeger.⁵⁶ Indicative of their marginal position is the fact that only one of the discussions of Norden or memoirs of classics in Berlin in the twenties that I have read mentions Bickerman by name, and that in an offhand way, as having arranged a performance together with F. Solmsen.⁵⁷ Lewy does not appear in any of the studies I have seen.⁵⁸ Yet Bickerman and Lewy's choice of Norden as their master proved remarkably prescient. Calder's assessment of Jaeger may be harsh,⁵⁹ but even C.R. Beye, who would moderate that evaluation, concedes Jaeger's 'indifference to painstaking reconstruction of historical detail and sometimes cavalier treatment of fact'.⁶⁰ Beye describes himself as having read *Paideia* as a youth, and having been reborn as a result into faith in classical antiquity. Beye remains grateful for that experience, but he nevertheless concedes that he now recognizes that this is an 'improbable approach to human existence and finds

⁵⁵ On the centrality of mastery of documents in Bickerman's contributions to the understanding of antiquity see A.I. Baumgarten, 'Foreword', Elias Bickerman, *Studies in Jewish and Christian History, Part Three*, ix.

⁵⁶ Compare Carl Sporn's assessment of Jaeger in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, August 16, 1936, as cited by White, 'Third Humanism', 288, on the occasion of Jaeger's departure for the USA. While expressing doubts about the long lasting validity of Jaeger's academic insights, Sporn wrote with passion about the experience of studying with Jaeger. In addition to Jaeger's intellectual appeal there were good practical reasons for young scholars to hitch their wagons to Jaeger's. He dominated over Norden in the selection of assistants and in the distribution of other material benefits. See Rüpke, 'Der späte Norden', 139.

⁵⁷ See E. Mensching, 'Über Werner Jaeger in Berlin der zwanzigen Jahre', *Latein und Griechisch in Berlin* 34 (1990), 46-47.

⁵⁸ In addition to the works cited elsewhere in this paper see E. Mensching, 'Eduard Norden (21.9.1868-13.7.1941) zum 50. Todestag', *Latein und Griechisch in Berlin* 35 (1991), 66-110, 130-180, 36 (1992), 7-48. Both Bickerman and Lewy are missing from lists of Eduard Norden's students, such as M. Norden, 'Erinnerungen', 152-154.

From a different vantage point, perhaps Bickerman and Lewy were not prominent in student life because they were also devoting their energies to other directions — Bickerman to Russian émigré politics (see above 127, and the Lebenslauf of his Berlin dissertation, *Das Edikt des Kaisers Caracalla*, 39), and Lewy to the Zionist cause.

⁵⁹ Calder, 'Werner Jaeger', 211: 'Today what was acclaimed as his most famous work is read only by dilettantes too naïve to perceive its defects. The Third Humanism has become a passing fashion, an aberration of the dying Weimar Republic, of as little abiding influence as its rival, the George Circle. His name is rarely cited in footnotes of the learned. Modern students of the subject no longer recognize his name'.

⁶⁰ C.R. Beye, 'Review of William M. Calder III (ed.), *Werner Jaeger Reconsidered*', *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, 03.05.02.

Paideia unbearably tedious'.⁶¹ I do not think the same could or should be said of the scholarly works of Norden.⁶²

Bar-Ilan University

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² I have learned much in preparing this article from the suggestions of the editors and their readers. The assistance of Glen Bowersock, William M. Calder III, Hildegard Cancik-Lindemaier, Hubert Cancik, Martin Hengel, Jorg Rüpke, Daniel Schwartz, William J. Slater, and Daniel Stoeckl Ben Ezra has been most beneficial, and is gratefully acknowledged, even if I have not followed all their suggestions.

All my work on Bickerman, this article included, has been enriched by extensive conversations with Hayim Tadmor, an outstanding scholar of international distinction in his own field, one of the last of the circle of Bickerman's Jerusalem friends, and Lewy's student. Tadmor died a few days before this article was submitted. I will miss his friendship, advice, encouragement, generosity, and store of knowledge on so many topics as I finish the planned biography.