

Memorandum concerning Mr. Ernst H. Kantorowicz, Professor of Medieval History

The following opinions were obtained from members of the department of History consulted by me. In each case, except that of Priestley, the notes which are included here were shown to the persons consulted, and correctly express their views. In Priestley's case, I gave a verbal summary of his opinions as I understood them, which he approved. Immediately on leaving his office I made notes in accordance with that summary. In opening the discussions with each individual it was stated that the name of Professor Kantorowicz appeared in the budget and I was anxious to secure information about him. Professor Thompson was willing to convey his opinions to me but was not willing to give them for distribution to the Budget Committee. I asked if he would object to their going to the President and to no other person, and he said there would be no objection. There are no such restrictions on the opinions expressed by the other members of the History department. I gained the impression that each person consulted was speaking frankly and without reservations. It will be noted that I consulted Dr. H.M. Smyth, who holds only the rank of instructor but in whose sound judgment and scholarship I have the highest confidence.

Professor H.I. Priestley thinks K. would be acceptable and would prefer his retention but does not feel very strongly on the matter. Says K. has had small classes but believes he has conducted them competently though he has not talked to any of his students. Thinks his production will probably continue on about the present level. (Note: Mr. Priestley incidentally expressed the opinion that Professor Paxson favors the retention of K.)

Professor W.A. Norris says K. is liked personally, is a competent scholar, but not the type we would prefer to put into a full professorship because it is better to advance men by stages and to drive them to write. Thinks K. will continue to produce but doubts if he will attain a topmost standing in his field. Feels that K. has not had a fair chance recently which may explain the fact that he is so far a man of one book.

Associate Professor G.H. Guttridge thinks that at the price we could not expect to get a man who would be more likely to become famous. Considers K. is already nearly in that class. Feels that he is brilliant without being shallow. Finds him agreeable personally. Guttridge shares an office with K. and knows him well but has no knowledge of his teaching. Authorities whom Guttridge has consulted have a high opinion of K.'s book.

Professor J. J. Van Nostrand. Since Van Nostrand has been on-leave he knows almost nothing of K. but says he uses good and fluent English. He did hear K.'s paper at U.C.L.A. and thinks it indicates scholarly ability. The little Van Nostrand knows is favorable.

Associate Professor F.C. Palm has high admiration for K. as a man and as a gentleman. Finds him personally very agreeable but there is probably some difficulty about his teaching because of the inability of some students to understand him. A report from one student referred to great difficulty in understanding K. Has not read his book but as a result of conversations has been favorably impressed with his scholarship. Palm feels that if we got a medievalist for research purposes and graduate students only, he would prefer K., but for teaching undergraduates he would prefer someone who has better command of spoken English.

Dr. H. M. Smyth has the highest opinion of K.'s scholarship and of his qualifications as a man and as a gentleman. Has looked over K.'s book and has heard it highly praised by authorities. Knows some of K.'s students and finds they hold him in high esteem. Three of them appeared at U.C.L.A. to hear his paper. Smyth considers him the finest of the émigrés he has seen. Emphatically would like to see K. retained. Smyth knows him as well as does anyone in the department.

Professor R. J. Kerner. It is not yet decided whether or not K. should be retained. This is due to lack of information. Thinks it would be unfair to K. to terminate his services at this time without getting more evidence but thinks that to give him tenure now would be taking a chance. Would prefer to see K. on temporary appointment for another year.

Professor C. E. Chapman knows nothing about K.

Professor E. I. McCormac was out of town and could not be consulted.

Professor Guttridge, at my suggestion, sounded out Assistant Professor Paul B. Schaeffer, whom I considered inappropriate to consult in the matter, tells me that Schaeffer thinks K.'s Frederick the Second is a first-rate work of fine, thorough scholarship and would like to see K. retained.

In view of the fact that the members of the History Department seemed to know very little about K.'s teaching I thought it desirable to get an opinion from one excellent student, namely, Peggy Bray. This opinion was obtained through her father, Professor Bray, without his informing her of the reasons for his questions. Miss Bray thinks that K. is a real scholar. In his teaching he exhibits a bad accent but one gets used to it quickly. She considers him one of the most effective and inspiring teachers she has had.

C. D. Shane, Chairman  
Budget Committee

February 26, 1940