

[From Prof. Robert Lowie, Anthropology]

February 1, 1940

Professor Frederic L. Paxson,  
Department of History,  
Campus.

Dear Paxson:

I am profoundly grateful to you for the references to the papers which, I understand, you submitted to the Committee last Friday.

With the exception of Brackmann's first critique I have found and read them all. The 35-page essay by Hampe is obviously the most important of the documents, and I am *extremely* curious how much of it was made accessible to our members.

I am even more curious whether *any* work by *any* member of our permanent History staff has ever been so thoroughly scrutinized by an acknowledged master of his special field and in the same spirit. Hampe characterizes K.'s achievement as "exceptionally original" (p. 475); but he also states that K.'s command of the sources is "exemplary" (p. 441), that he completely controls the historian's techniques (p. 441 f.). There are references to "penetrating description," to a "notable achievement" (p. 458), to "always brilliantly formulated discussions" (p. 472).

Since these remarks appeared in 1932, they are not subject to cheap gibes at the charitable spirit toward refugees.

Until evidence of comparable brilliance coupled with professional competence is offered on behalf of our Campus historians, I must maintain and voice the opinion I have held for some time, that Kantorowicz is not only superior to any present member of the History Department, but represents a superior order of intellect and scholarship.

Pardon my candor: I prefer churlishness to the reproach of talking behind the Department's back. And I cannot remain silent in the face of crass provincialism, fatuity, and malice.

I say "provincialism" because of the Department's phobia of foreigners and its emphasis on efficiency in the dispatching of routine Department business, which certainly need not be allotted to every single member of a large staff.

I say "fatuity" because it is absurd to let a man of distinguished ability go when he can be had at a ridiculously low price.

I charge malice because in my opinion essential facts have been suppressed, viz. that reputable historians not only hail K.'s work as "eine hervorragende künstlerische Leistung," but leave no doubt as to his superb control of the source material (*Historisches Jahrbuch*, 48:518 f.,

1928; also Hampe, l.c.). I charge malice also because the Department can hardly help knowing that the candidate it has been pushing for the Ehrman chair is highly subjective in his judgments; in short, it is applying different standards in different cases to suit its personal predilections.

Sincerely yours,  
[signed]  
Robert H. Lowie