
Lycurgus in Leaflets and Lectures: The *Weiße Rose* and Classics at Munich University, 1941–45

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THE MAIN building of the university at which I used to teach is situated in the heart of Munich, and the square on which it stands—*Geschwister-Scholl-Platz*—is named after the two best-known members of the *Weiße Rose*, or “White Rose,” a small group of men and women united in their resistance to Hitler.¹ On February 18, 1943, at about 11 AM, Sophie Scholl and her brother Hans, both students at the university, were observed by the janitor in the central hall as they sent fluttering down from the upper floor the rest of the leaflets they had just set out on the steps of the main staircase and on the windowsills. The man detained them and took them to the rector, who then arranged for them to be handed over to the Gestapo as swiftly as possible. Taken to the Gestapo’s Munich headquarters, they underwent several sessions of intensive questioning and—together with another member of their group, Christoph Probst, who was arrested on February 19—they were formally charged on February 21 with having committed “treasonable acts likely to advance the enemy cause” and with conspiring to commit “high treason and demoralization of the troops.”² On the morning of the following day, the *Volksgerichtshof*, its presiding judge Roland Freisler having journeyed from Berlin to Munich for the occasion, sentenced them to death. That same afternoon at 5 PM—only four days after the first arrests—they were guillotined. Soon after this, three more people who were associated with the university and who belonged to the inner circle of the *Weiße Rose* fell into the hands of

the Nazis: the students Alexander Schmorell and Willi Graf, and a professor of philosophy and musicology, Kurt Huber. They had to wait considerably longer for trial and sentencing, but they too were put to death by the guillotine: Schmorell and Huber on July 13, 1943, and Graf on October 12 of the same year.

What had these six people done that made them in Nazi eyes capital offenders? It was little more than the actions for which Sophie and Hans Scholl were arrested: they had written and distributed leaflets calling for resistance to the Nazi terror regime. Alexander Schmorell and Hans Scholl had drawn up the first of these in the summer of 1942. Within the space of a few weeks they had produced four leaflets—in all, the *Weißer Rose* would write six such texts—and had sent a few hundred copies of each by post to a selection of recipients, for the most part academics. The timing could scarcely have been worse, given the stage that the war had then reached. By the summer of 1942, more territory than ever before was occupied by German troops, and the greater part of the Reich's population was more inclined to accept the Nazis than to take a stand against them, the *Endsieg* still being a seemingly real prospect. In January and February of 1943, when the *Weißer Rose* circulated several thousand copies of leaflets 5 and 6 and managed, with the help of friends at other universities, to spread their ideas not just in Munich, but far afield as well, the political situation appeared, by contrast, to be considerably more favorable: Hitler had just been faced with the worst defeat yet—Stalingrad. The *Weißer Rose*, which had had to suspend its activities in autumn 1942 when Graf, Schmorell, and Hans Scholl, all drafted as medical orderlies, were sent to the Russian front for three months, now resumed its appeals for resistance to the Nazis regime and could point to the disastrous losses in Russia to fuel their arguments. In the weeks before their arrest, the three young men also found the courage to embark upon other lines of action. On three separate nights—3rd to the 4th, 8th to the 9th, and 15th to the 16th of February—they painted slogans

such as *Freiheit!* [Freedom!] and *Nieder mit Hitler!* [Down with Hitler!] on a number of walls in streets near the university. And on February 9, the same three, together with Kurt Huber, talked to Falk Harnack, the brother of Arvid Harnack, an imprisoned Communist, arranging a meeting between members of the *Weißer Rose* and some people with connections to the military resistance group centered around Beck and Stauffenberg. It was planned for February 25 in Berlin, but obviously never took place.

Distributing a relatively small number of leaflets, slogans on walls, an attempt to get in touch with the “big” resistance names—this may all sound fairly harmless compared to the activities of these latter with their bomb attacks and carefully orchestrated plans to overthrow Hitler. However, the contents of the leaflets³ betrayed the readiness of the *Weißer Rose* to move against the Nazis with more than the pen. Moreover, the specific criticism of the regime that was voiced by this group had never before in wartime Germany been articulated in such public, accessible form. The leaflets talked, for example, openly and in detail about Nazi atrocities; there the annihilation of the Jews is named as “the most appalling crime against the dignity of man, a crime to which nothing similar in the entire history of the human race can be likened.”⁴ The *Weißer Rose* called for passive resistance and sabotage in all sectors of public life. The powers that eventually would defeat Hitler are requested in the leaflets not only to impose severe punishment on all Nazis, including all the system’s “little villains,”⁵ but also to found a democratic German state within a new Europe. Two things were calculated to lend the message being put across in these texts particular weight: on the one hand their extremely aggressive language and style, which lashed out against the regime with biblical wrath and apocalyptic metaphors, on the other the employment of classical texts on ideal political and social systems. The *Weißer Rose* writers especially liked to cite ancient philosophy and the classics of German literature that drew on such older writings: Aristotle’s *Politics*, Cicero’s *De legibus—salus publica suprema lex* [the

welfare of the state is the chief law] is the motto heading the third leaflet—St. Augustine’s *De Civitate Dei* [The City of God], Goethe’s short dramatic piece *The Awakening of Epimenides*, and Schiller’s essay *The Legislation of Solon and Lycurgus*. In leaflet 1, quotations outweigh the text actually written by the *Weisse Rose* authors, and the influence of such works is also reflected at times in the phrasing of the first and of the following three leaflets: some sentences there match Ciceronian periods in their length.

Needless to say, only a relatively small section of the German population, i.e., the educated middle classes, could properly and completely understand what these leaflets—especially the first four—were trying to say. And how did the academics and other educated addressees react within their own four walls when confronted with the texts? We know next to nothing about this, except that some of the recipients deemed it necessary for whatever reason to deliver their copies to the authorities: the Gestapo knew about the leaflets right from the start and was keen to find the “perpetrators.” The official and semi-official stance taken by the University of Munich and the closely affiliated Technical University are, on the other hand, well documented. The university not only made no effort at all to protect or defend its members, but actually publicly dissociated itself from them by debarring the imprisoned students forthwith from all further studies anywhere in Germany, and Kurt Huber was formally stripped of his Ph.D. title. On February 22, 1943, the Nazi-appointed student leaders organized and held a “demonstration of loyalty”⁶ that same evening in the university’s *auditorium maximum*—just after the Scholls and Probst had been murdered. The intention was to make it clear for all to see that the members of the *Weisse Rose* had been “typical loners” and that their “criminal actions” should not give rise to sweeping generalizations that vilify all students.⁷ The auditorium was packed, and those present sat in silence as the local student leader, the *Gaustudentenführer*, ranted about the—now dead—“ignominious and base gang.”⁸ An eyewitness reported

that “hundreds of students cheered and stamped their feet in applause for the denouncer and university janitor, and he took this standing and with his arm outstretched,”⁹ that is, with a Nazi salute. Parallel to this, Munich’s Technical University was holding its own demonstration, to which students had been summoned by their leader with, for example, the following words: “On Thursday morning traitors scattered an outrageous pamphlet over the central hall of the university. In it, its perpetrators befoul most basely the Führer and the people in the very hour of our national sacrifice at Stalingrad . . . We are demonstrating in full view of the public our contempt for these creatures . . . Long live the Führer, long live Greater Germany.”¹⁰

It can be no surprise that Munich University reacted to the *Weißer Rose* activities and the execution of six of its members with such marked declarations of allegiance to the Nazi regime. This was a university that had been quicker to embrace brown-shirted ideology than any other similar academic institution in the country, and more eager to put it into practice.¹¹ Six years before Hitler even came to power, for example, the first chair of *Rassenhygiene* [Racial Hygiene] was created here—in 1927—and in 1933 the Department of Indian Studies (*Indologie*) was renamed *Abteilung für arische Kultur- und Sprachwissenschaft* [Department of Aryan Culture and Language]. Walter Wüst, a friend of Himmler’s, was professor there from 1932 onwards¹² and it was he—in his capacity as university rector—who handed Sophie and Hans Scholl over to the Gestapo after they had been apprehended by the janitor; photographs of Wüst often show him wearing the uniform of an SS *Oberführer*. As for the Munich students, it seems certain that the vast majority of them were happy to go on accepting Nazi politics and ideology even far into the war years. In the winter of 1942/43, however, as it became known that the German advance was being stopped on all fronts and that ever-increasing losses were being incurred, the general mood among students appears to have shifted.¹³ One indication of the changed mood is an occurrence that is documented for

January 13, 1943, a good month before the Scholls were arrested. In his speech marking the 470th anniversary of the university's founding, the *Gauleiter* Paul Giesler suggested to the women students in his audience that, instead of wasting their time at the university, they should be "presenting the Führer with babies"; his adjutants would visit the less attractive girls, who could thus, he promised, be assured of a "pleasurable experience."¹⁴ Many of the women present tried to leave the auditorium at this point, but they were prevented from doing so and then arrested, whereupon there was a terrific outcry on the part of the male students. They managed to free the women, although this involved putting up a fight against riot police. Everything would seem to suggest that Sophie and Hans Scholl interpreted the tumult as an endorsement of their own resistance struggle and that this is the reason why they so patently threw caution to the wind on the morning of February 18: not only did they choose to deliver the leaflets themselves in broad daylight, but, having actually set out most of them as planned, they even came back one more time to fling the rest down from the upper floor.

If there really were other people in the university apart from the *Weisse Rose* group who, by early 1943, also felt less inclined to go with the Nazi flow, then the question that especially interests me as a Latinist and Hellenist is whether there were any classicists among them. After all, something must surely have stirred in professors and students of Latin and Greek when they saw the many quotations from ancient political theories. How did people who would often use or hear a name like that of the Spartan lawgiver Lycurgus in classes react when they found it in a text calling on them to resist Nazi terror? Given their specialist knowledge of ancient political writing, could they not be expected to have been disposed to agree with the authors of the leaflets and their anti-Nazi argumentation? Again, nothing has documented for us the direct reader responses among the educated classes. It so happens, however, that we do know a little about the Munich Department of Classics and its mem-

bers during the time in which the *Weißer Rose* was active and six of its members subsequently murdered and so we can at least conjecture as to their way of thinking. The source of this knowledge is a handwritten *Chronik* which records events that took place in the life of the department, as it were, and which in fact covers almost solely the years that interest us.¹⁵ It opens with the account of a departmental excursion on July 3–4, 1941, and ends with one entry noting that the American troops had closed in on and then finally entered Munich on April 30, 1945; another describes the loss of about half of the departmental library's books, these having previously been sent in boxes to a castle in northern Bavaria for safety, only to be destroyed there "in the course of military action"¹⁶ on April 4, 1945. The chronicle is written in calligraphic script with India ink and is illustrated with numerous photographs. Various entries bear the signature of Franz Dirlmeier—at that time he was professor of Greek, head of the department, and dean of the Philosophical Faculty¹⁷—and we may assume that he did compose or at least authorize the texts.

As one would expect, the *Chronik* offers no details of the classical authors and works read in lectures and seminars—these would have been listed in the *Vorlesungsverzeichnis*, a sort of official university calendar and program—and says nothing at all about the various classes. It concentrates solely on the *menschliche* side of daily departmental life. We are told about the gathering to celebrate one professor's 60th birthday, about the demise of two other professors and the staff changes that resulted from one of these deaths. We also find detailed accounts of excursions organized by the department and brief reports about any social gatherings arranged for the students and the staff. On the pages covering the years 1941–1943, the war is only mentioned twice, and then only briefly: on August 1, 1941, one of the professors is drafted into the army; on January 7, 1943, he is able to take up his teaching duties again. The general impression one has after reading the chronicle is, therefore, that life in the depart-

ment in those days was not all that different from life there now. The trips undertaken to visit the remains of Roman civilization in Southern Germany and Austria—between 1941 and 1943 there were six such excursions, most of them lasting several days—were astonishingly similar to the expeditions and outings organized today, and the same is true of the “official” Christmas parties. The black-and-white photographs show us the same clusters of smiley, animated academics in rather silly “off-duty” attire, and they capture the same impromptu antics of the odd high-spirited participant as our color pictures do today. After April 24, 1944, the day on which an air raid apparently scored the first direct hit on the university, the entries then often mention such bombings and the restrictions they imposed on day-to-day teaching. But this altered situation is accepted without complaint—that is the picture painted by the *Chronik* anyway—and people still go to classes, party whenever it is party-time (except that the 1944 Christmas gathering planned for December 17 had to be re-scheduled for February 25 1945, because of an air raid and then postponed once more until March 8, as the RAF was busy pounding Munich again); on June 16–17, 1944, four weeks before a large portion of the main university building was destroyed by demolition bombs and incendiaries, they even organized one more excursion.

The entry for the second day of this trip—and indeed all the other texts of this nature in the *Chronik*—could have been written in the year 2015. The group had spent the night in a place by a lake and June 17, 1944, was now described as follows: “Early morning dip for the ‘die-hards.’ After breakfast a walk to the Oster lakes that had to be cut short because of the pouring rain. At the beach: rafting and swimming. Lunch and—with the rain still bucketing down outside—coffee *gemütlich*, then troop to the railway station. Journey home.”¹⁸ It will probably not immediately occur to anyone reading these lines that, two weeks prior to this rafting jaunt, the “die-hards” would have heard about another watery expedition: the Allied landings in Normandy. Are we to take

it from the untroubled air which characterizes this account that the students of those years lived their lives in the same way as today's students do, i.e., that they had no quarrel with the government that made, for example, such excursions possible for them? Are we to assume that they were accordingly horrified when the news came, barely five weeks after their outing to the lake, that Graf Stauffenberg had tried to blast their head of state to hell? Should we suppose, then, that the students also looked upon the activities of the *Weißer Rose* as criminal? A lot of the evidence seems to suggest this. However, we should remember that it is clearly the official voice of the department that is speaking to us through this chronicle, and that this voice is coming from the mouth of the departmental head who, as we shall see below, was very probably a follower of Hitler. The voice of the student body, by contrast, is not actually to be heard here. But there is one entry in the *Chronik* which at least tells us how this voice did once articulate itself in a way that perhaps betrays something of the speaker's, that is, of the students' thoughts on Nazi Germany. The entry in question records a recitation by students of Greek texts. It took place at a departmental gathering on December 16, 1943—the annual Christmas party, then—and the *Chronik* notes: “Greek choruses, framed by Handel sonatas [...] Men's chorus: Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus* 151–89; maidens' chorus: Aeschylus, *Septem contra Thebas* [*Seven Against Thebes*], 720–91; men's chorus: Sophocles, *Antigone* 332–75. Afterwards convivial get-together and oral presentation of jolly poems about shared experiences out and about and during the term's work.”¹⁹ By their recitations ye shall know them? Is that right? I consider it at least possible that the nature of the Greek texts rendered do permit some speculation as to the mood among those who recited them back in 1943.

So, what is the nature of the three choral odes? One of them is taken from *Antigone*, and this heroine is a figure with whom Sophie Scholl has often been compared in more recent times. Two examples: first, Greta Weil, a Jewish holo-

caust survivor who, in 1980, published a novel entitled *Meine Schwester Antigone* [My Sister Antigone] and was awarded the *Geschwister-Scholl-Prize* in 1988, said in an acceptance speech given in Munich that November: “Sophie Scholl, she was the one, the one who said ‘no,’ the Antigone of our time . . . how much poorer would our world be without Antigone, without Sophie”;²⁰ second, Sibyl Oldfield’s book *Women Against the Iron Fist* (Oxford 1989) includes a chapter entitled “Germany’s Antigone: Sophie Scholl.” Certainly, it is in my view highly unlikely that those Munich Classics’ students of 1943 recited a choral ode from Sophocles’s tragedy about this very heroine because they wanted their presentation understood as an implicit reference to a fellow student who had been murdered in February of that year. Even just the fact that they recited texts from other dramas besides this one would seem to prove such a notion wrong. The selection of choral odes was probably simply guided by the wish to illustrate three poetic reflections on the tragic history of the *Labdacid* dynasty: the first chorus utters a prayer to the gods in plague-beleaguered adversity, the second besings the curse of sin that has hung over three successive generations, and the third gives a reaction to the news that Polynices has been buried although that had been forbidden. However, all three contain passages that are striking when we consider the context in which they were now recited: the war year 1943. In the ode from *Oedipus*, for example, the chorus begs Ares, the god of war, to turn his back on the fatherland. The maidens’ chorus in *Seven Against Thebes* talks of past sins and fears that “the city will perish with the kings” (vv. 764–65). And the choral ode from *Antigone* opens with the famous words: “There are many monstrous powerful things, but nothing so monstrous powerful as man” (vv. 331–32). Even if the focus there is not only on the monstrous side of human behavior, but also on man’s powerful capacities, the exhortation at the end of this ode—that divine laws be upheld—is a warning for those who are indeed monstrous.

May we assume, then, that these texts were picked for recitation that Christmas because they could indirectly convey the students' distress at all the suffering and injustice the Nazis had caused by 1943? My guess is yes. The people organizing this recitation could have chosen from a number of Greek and Latin texts which do more than just wish that a given war were over, predicting instead victory over the enemy and expecting of the respective "kings" that they will save the "city" from destruction. Such choices would have fired hopes for Hitler's *Endsieg*, while the pessimism that pervades the choral odes sung on December 16, 1943, could only achieve the very opposite. Let us suppose that the recitation with its pessimistic content was indeed intended as a veiled expression of the organizers' own despair. We now have to ask: who did the "organizing"? Did the initiative come solely from students, just as today's undergraduates take such matters into their own hands? If so, then they would have been the ones who picked the texts. Or was it the department's professors? The question can scarcely be answered now, but it does raise another one: is it at all conceivable that the professors—if they did choose the choral odes themselves—would have wanted the audience to discern a connection between the mythical Theban state and their very own real one? The answer: we cannot say for sure that it is entirely impossible, but, given what we know about these men and their dealings with the Nazis, it is more than unlikely. The three professors who held chairs at the Munich Department of Classics between 1941 and 1945—Franz Dirlmeier, whom I mentioned above, Rudolf Till, and Richard Harder—actually enjoyed, to put it cautiously, a very good relationship with the Nazi party. This is most simply demonstrated by the fact that the end of the war saw them immediately relieved of their duties by the American military authorities so that they could be denazified.

Let us look at the most important of the relevant facts we have on the three "ordinary" professors. In Franz Dirlmeier's case we need note no more than that he studied together with

the later university rector and SS member Walter Wüst, who persuaded his friend to join the party and become a member of Heinrich Himmler's SS research and teaching circle *Das Ahnenerbe* [Ancestral Heritage] as group leader in the *Lehr- und Forschungsstätte für Klassische Altertumswissenschaft* [Teaching and Research Centre for Classics]; and that he was chosen to succeed Rudolf Pfeiffer as Professor of Greek in 1937—not because Pfeiffer was retiring, but because the renowned scholar was married to a Jew and therefore forced to leave his post;²¹ Pfeiffer emigrated to England, settled in Oxford and soon became one of the leading Greek scholars there. Rudolf Till, an SS-*Untersturmführer* and one of Dirlmeier's fellow *Ahnenerbe* members, was given the chair of Latin in Munich at the tender age of 26.²² In his book of codicological studies on Tacitus's *Agricola* and *Germania*, published in 1943, he thanks Himmler, who had used his clout to help secure Till's appointment, "for his all-important inspiration and continuous ever-encouraging support."²³ Richard Harder, who joined the SA [*Sturm-Abteilung*; Nazi militia] in 1933, was appointed professor of Classics at Munich University in 1940 and, in addition to this post, took over the external post of director of the *Institut für indogermanische Geistesgeschichte* [Institute for the History of Indo-Germanic Culture]; this was set up at the suggestion of Alfred Rosenberg, chief ideologist of the Nazis, as a sort of Munich chapter of the *Hohe Schule der Partei*, a Nazi university planned for the victorious post-war era.²⁴ Not only Rosenberg, but also the Gestapo placed their full trust in Harder. Shortly before the Scholls were arrested, he was asked by the secret police to analyze for them the *Weißer Rose* leaflets 5 and 6. In Harder's professional opinion both texts were "of an extremely high standard," and he noted in his report: "The author's German style is excellent, of a kind which only someone who has long been conversant with German literature can write: probably a humanities scholar or a theologian then. [. . .] (The author) shows himself to be . . . a gifted intellectual aiming his propaganda at academic

circles, particularly the student body.” Although the products of his thought “do not sound like those of an embittered loner and therefore a specific clique is probably behind them, they are not, however, the outpourings of a group actively involved in power-politics: their language is too abstract for that; it will not (and cannot) find any echo among the wider circles of soldiers and workers.”²⁵ Ten out of ten, Herr Professor. But, in spite of their “high standard,” the leaflets remain for Harder “shoddy pieces,”²⁶ and he must also have known that the word “intellectual” was to the Nazis—and especially to the Gestapo—like a red rag to a bull.

I would like to turn the tables at this point and analyze a text written by one of the three professors in the Classics Department and preserved for us in the *Chronik*. The piece in question represents an obituary for a colleague and is signed by Franz Dirlmeier. The heading is “Professor Maurenbrecher,” the text reads: “Dr. Berthold Maurenbrecher was born on August 15, 1868, in Dorpat, took up a post as assistant at the University Library in Leipzig in 1891, as *Privatdozent* at the University of Halle in 1894, was granted the title *Professor* in 1909, and became a non-regular professor extra-ordinary at Munich University in 1915. In the closing years of the Great War he began holding lectures and freshman classes on Latin language and literature. He continued to do so until 1933. As a social democrat he was then removed from his teaching post, and in the winter semester of 1937/38 also from the official university calendar. He was, until shortly before his death, a frequent visitor to the reading room of the University Library. He died on December 2, 1943, in Schongau. At his cremation in Munich on December 9, 1943, *Geheimrat* [Privy Councillor] Rehm represented the University in official garb. [Signed] Munich, December 10, 1943. F. Dirlmeier.”²⁷ What immediately strikes one here is the style: this is the diction of official memoranda. It records the death of a scholar, and yet not one word is said about the man’s achievements in his chosen academic field or as a teacher. By comparison, the obituary found in the *Chronik* a few pages before this one is well-nigh

an encomium: Professor Walter Otto had died on November 1, 1941, and he, we are told, had “guided generations of young undergraduates towards an uncompromising love of truth,” had “made a lasting name for himself with his great undertaking of the ‘Handbuch für Altertumswissenschaft,’ and had, “as a fervent patriot,” done much for the international reputation of German scholarship; his death would therefore be acknowledged as a “painful sacrifice.”²⁸ So, there are obituaries and obituaries. And yet Maurenbrecher too was, as we shall see presently, internationally known in the field of Classics; indeed he still is today.

It is quite plain to see that the language Dirlmeier uses to talk about Maurenbrecher corresponds to the style a Gestapo officer might have used for his files. This applies in particular to the sentence: “As a social democrat he was then removed from his teaching post, and in the winter semester of 1937/38 also from the official university calendar.” The image is typical of Naziism and its misanthropic ideology, which decreed that anyone who did not fit into the system had to be “removed,” meaning eradicated like a cancerous growth. And what more than anything else evokes here for us the language of the Nazis is the matter-of-fact way in which a biographical detail that should be anything but matter-of-fact is recorded: a scholar is not allowed to go on teaching and crossed off the register of university members on account of his political persuasions. From this particular sentence, which records glaring injustice with not a word of comment, it is not much of a step to the words used by the public prosecutor at Munich’s District Court I to report to Berlin the beheading of Willi Graf, one of the *Weißer Rose* members: “The execution proceedings lasted, as timed from leaving the cell, 1 minute and 11 seconds, as timed from the transfer to the executioner until the fall of the blade, 11 seconds.”²⁹

The cold, emotionless manner in which the Nazi murderers kept records of their crimes for the files is, as has long been perceived, to a considerable extent the result of the sense of order inherent in “the German character” and espe-

cially of a particular national readiness to submit to authority. German *Beamte*, or public servants, must—and this is still expected of them today—do their duty and carry out the instructions issued by their superiors. The hierarchy within the public service is accepted as a given entity, and this applies equally within German universities, where professors are state employees in a system similar to that of government officials, policemen, and bailiffs. For Dirlmeier, then, one important detail he had to mention in the obituary was that Maurenbrecher was a *nichtplanmäßiger außerordentlicher Professor*, i.e., not a “regular professor-in-ordinary.” As such, the departed colleague had stood lower down on the system’s ladder than the author of his obituary, who was an *ordentlicher Professor* with a chair. Maurenbrecher may have been a prominent scholar: his magnum opus, the edition of fragments from Sallust’s *Historiae*, was first published in 1891, was reprinted in 1967, and is still today, even with the publication of Patrick McGushin’s volumes between 1992 and 1994, which only offer a translation of the fragments, an indispensable standard text known all over the Latin-studying world.³⁰ But Dirlmeier did not feel obliged to mention this achievement. After all, that was in a sense Maurenbrecher’s private concern: within the professorial staff of Munich’s Department of Classics his position as scholar and teacher was so very “non-regular” and “extraordinary” that he had to give his lectures on Saturdays. Only his “elementary Latin” language classes, which were open to students from all faculties and which earned this poorly paid man a little extra money, were granted a slot during the week, that is, alongside the classes taught by the “regular professor-in-ordinary.”³¹

The hierarchical categories in which Dirlmeier thought also explain the positioning of the obituary for Maurenbrecher within the *Chronik*. The death notice honoring Walter Otto stands out clearly from the surrounding texts: it takes up the greater part of one recto leaf, and the preceding verso is blank, with just a photograph of the late

Otto in the center. The obituary for Berthold Maurenbrecher, by contrast, is quasi-inserted between accounts of staff and student leisure activities: dated December 10, 1943, it follows an entry—on the same leaf—about a departmental outing on December 5 to see a performance of Sophocles's *Ajax*, and after it comes, again on the same leaf, the above-mentioned Christmas gathering of December 16. Finally, one more feature of the obituary implicitly makes it quite clear that, even in death, Maurenbrecher was still classed by the public service system as *nichtplanmäßig*. I mean the last sentence. We are told there that the university was represented at Maurenbrecher's cremation by Professor Albert Rehm, and Rehm's presence could be regarded as "in accordance with rank": his status was "merely" that of a professor-in-ordinary emeritus. There was another reason too for Rehm's suitability in this matter: like Maurenbrecher, the former occupant of the chair of Greek was no Nazi. Two years later, with the war over, Rehm was to be appointed rector of the university by the American military government, the previous incumbent and SS officer Wüst having been relieved of his post. However, Rehm did not last long there. Rumor has it that he became involved in an argument with the occupying forces and had to take his leave after he had remarked, "I hardly need Americans to tell me what a university is."³² But that's another story.

NOTES

1. Since this paper is specifically concerned with life in the Munich Department of Classics between 1941 and 1945, only the bare outlines of the *Weisse Rose* story can be offered here. For these I have drawn on Harald Steffahn, *Die Weiße Rose. Mit Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten*. 2nd ed. Rowohlt's Monographien 498 (Reinbek bei Hamburg 1993) and Michael C. Schneider and Winfried Süß, *Keine Volksgenossen: Studentischer Widerstand der Weißen Rose. The White Rose*, George Low, tr. (Munich 1993) whose work presents all the relevant information in an admirably concise form. English-speaking readers will find the following useful: James Donohoe, *Hitler's Conservative Opponents in Bavaria 1930–1945* (Leiden

1961); Inge Scholl, *The White Rose: Munich 1942–1943* (Middletown, Conn. 1983); Toby Axelrod, *Hans and Sophie Scholl: German Resisters of the White Rose* (New York 2001); Annette Dumbach and Jud Newborn, *Sophie Scholl and The White Rose*, first published as *Shattering the German Night* (Boston and Toronto 1986), with an expanded, updated edition (London 2006); and Frank McDonough, *Sophie Scholl: The Real Story of the Woman Who Defied Hitler* (Stroud, Gloucestershire 2009).

2. Steffahn (note 1), 115: “wegen landesverräterischer Feindbegünstigung, Vorbereitung zum Hochverrat, Wehrkraftzersetzung.”

3. Reprinted in Steffahn (note 1), 131–44; see also http://weisse-rose-stiftung.de/fkt_standard.php?aktion=cs&ma=cs&c_id=mamura&topic=033&mod=2&page=1&lang=de. English translation of the leaflets in <http://dieweisserose.weebly.com/the-leaflets.html>.

4. Steffahn (note 1), 134–35: “das fürchterlichste Verbrechen an der Würde des Menschen, ein Verbrechen, dem sich kein ähnliches in der ganzen Menschheitsgeschichte an die Seite stellen kann.”

5. Steffahn (note 1), 141: “die kleinen Schurken dieses Systems.”

6. Schneider/Süß (note 1), 38: “Treuekundgebung.”

7. Schneider/Süß (note 1), 38: “charakteristische Einzelgänger . . . verbrecherische Handlungsweise.”

8. Schneider/Süß (note 1), 38: “ehrlose und niederträchtige Gesellen.”

9. Schneider/Süß (note 1), 38: “Hunderte von Studenten johlten und trampelten dem Denunzianten und Pedell der Universität Beifall, und dieser nahm ihn stehend und mit ausgestrecktem Arm entgegen.”

10. Schneider/Süß (note 1), 95: “Hochverräter verstreuten am Donnerstag Morgen im Lichthof der Universität ein schamloses Pamphlet. Darin besudeln seine Urheber im Augenblick des nationalen Opfers in Stalingrad Führer und Volk auf die gemeinste Art . . . Vor aller Öffentlichkeit manifestieren wir unseren Abscheu vor diesen Kreaturen. . . . Es lebe der Führer, es lebe Großdeutschland.”

11. Elisabeth Kraus and Hans-Michael Körner, *Die Universität München im dritten Reich* (Munich 2006).

12. On Wüst, see Volker Losemann, *Nationalsozialismus und Antike: Studien zur Entwicklung des Faches Alte Geschichte 1933–1945*. Historische Perspektiven 7 (Hamburg 1977), 118ff.; 232 A. 8; 243ff.

13. Schneider/Süß (note 1), 15.

14. Steffahn (note 1), 100; Schneider/Süß (note 1), 31–32: “dem Führer ein Kind schenken . . . ein erfreuliches Erlebnis.”

15. Chronik des Seminars für klassische Philologie. Universität München 1941. Manuscript, 118 unnumbered leaves, 77 black-and-white photographs (of which 4 are picture postcards), 2 drawings, bound, 33.5 x 26 cm (=13.2 x 10.2 inches); in the collection of the library of the Department of Classics, University of Munich. Only 17 leaves contain writing, and clearly by two different hands. The first one (to fol. 14v, line 30) can be identified by the note on fol. 1v: “Entwurf und Ausführung [Drafted and completed

by]: Gabriele Winklmaier" (G. W.).

16. fol. 17v: "im Zuge von Kampfhandlungen."

17. See below, note 21.

18. fol. 15v: "Morgenbad der 'Unentwegten.' Nach dem Frühstück Spaziergang zu den Osterseen, der aber wegen strömendem Regen vorzeitig abgebrochen werden mußte. Am Strand: Floßfahrt und Bad. Mittagessen und—während es draußen immer weiter schüttete—, gemütlicher Kaffee, dann Marsch zur Bahn. Heimfahrt."

19. fol. 14v: "Griechische Chöre, umrahmt von Händelsonaten [. . .]. Männerchor: Sophokles, König Ödipus V. 151–89; Mädchenchor: Aischylos, Sieben gegen Theben V 720–91; Männerchor: Sophokles, Antigone V 332–75. Anschließend geselliges Beisammensein und Vortrag heiterer Gedichte über gemeinsames Erleben auf Fahrt und bei der Semesterarbeit."

20. Ute Schmidt-Berger, "Die deutsche Antigone: Sophie Scholl." Mit einem Geleitwort von Inge Aichinger-Scholl, *Der Altsprachliche Unterricht* 36.2 (1994), 80–94: "Sophie Scholl, das war sie, die Neinsagerin, die Antigone unserer Tage . . . wieviel ärmer wäre unsere Welt ohne Antigone, ohne Sophie" (85).

21. See Losemann (note 12), 71–73 (on a letter of Dirlmeiers to Alfred Rosenberg on antiquity and national socialism); 120–23; 135–36 (see esp. n. 17 on p. 233); and Jula Kerschensteiner, "Die Chronik des Seminars für Klassische Philologie der Universität München in den Kriegsjahren 1941–1945," in Werner Suerbaum, ed., *Festgabe für Ernst Vogt zu seinem 60. Geburtstag am 6. November 1990 = Eikasmos. Quaderni Bolognesi di Filologia Classica* 4 (Bologna 1993), 71–74.

22. See Losemann (note 12), 120–23, 136, 232–34; and Kerschensteiner (note 21).

23. *Handschriftliche Untersuchungen zu Tacitus Agricola und Germania (mit einer Photokopie des Codex Aesinas)*. Deutsches Ahnenerbe 1 (Berlin 1943), xi: "für die entscheidende Anregung und immer wieder erneute, durchgreifende Unterstützung." The book itself reflects none of the ideology Himmler expected to find superimposed on classics; its place in international Tacitus studies remains uncontested today.

24. See Losemann (note 12), 140–73, 241–56; Kerschensteiner (note 21).

25. Schneider/Süß (note 1), 33–34: "außergewöhnlich hohes Niveau" [...] "Der Verfasser schreibt einen hervorragenden deutschen Stil, wie ihn nur ein Mensch schreiben kann, der in längerem Umgang mit deutscher Literatur steht, also vermutlich entweder ein Geisteswissenschaftler, oder ein Theologe. [. . .] (Er) stellt sich . . . als ein begabter Intellektueller dar, der seine Propaganda auf akademische Kreise, insbesondere die Studentenschaft abstellt." Wenn seine geistigen Erzeugnisse "nicht den Ton eines verbitterten Einsamen haben, hinter ihnen also wohl eine gewisse Clique steht, so sind sie doch nicht der Ausfluß einer machtpolitisch aktiven Gruppe: dazu ist ihre Sprache zu abstrakt; sie will (und kann) in breiteren Kreisen der

Soldaten oder Arbeiter keinen Widerhall finden.”

26. Schneider/Süß (note 1), 33: “Machwerke.”

27. fol. 14v: “Dr. Berthold Maurenbrecher wurde am 15. 8. 1868 in Dorpat geboren, 1891 wurde er Assistent an der Universitäts-Bibliothek Leipzig, 1894 Privatdozent an der Universität Halle, 1909 erhielt er den Professortitel, 1915 wurde er nichtplanmäßiger ao. Professor in München. In den letzten Jahren des Weltkrieges begann er Vorlesungen aus dem Gebiet der lateinischen Philologie und Elementarkurse abzuhalten. So wirkte er bis 1933. Dann wurde er als Sozialdemokrat aus dem Lehramt und vom Wintersemester 1937/38 ab auch aus dem Vorlesungsverzeichnis entfernt. Er hat bis kurz vor seinem Tode häufig den Arbeitssaal der Universitäts-Bibliothek besucht. Am 2. 12. 1943 ist er in Schongau gestorben. Bei der Einäscherung am 9. 12. 1943 in München hat Geheimrat Rehm im Talar die Universität vertreten. München, 10. Dezember 1943 [gezeichnet] F. Dirlmeier.”

28. fol. 7r: “Generationen von jungen Studenten zu kompromißloser Wahrheitsliebe geführt . . . sich einen dauernden Namen gemacht durch das große Unternehmen des ‘Handbuchs für Altertumswissenschaft’. . . als glühender Patriot [sehr viel] für die Weltgeltung der deutschen Wissenschaft geleistet . . . [sein Tod] als schmerzliches Opfer [zu] empfinden.”

29. Steffahn (note 1), 125: “Der Hinrichtungsvorgang dauerte vom Verlassen der Zelle an gerechnet 1 Minute 11 Sekunden, von der Übergabe an den Scharfrichter bis zum Fall des Beiles 11 Sekunden.”

30. B. Maurenbrecher (ed.), *C. Sallusti Crispi Historiarum Reliquiae* (Leipzig 1891; reprint Stuttgart 1967); P. McGushin: *Sallust: The Histories*. Translated with Introduction and Commentary. 2 vols. (Oxford 1992 and 1994).

31. Raimund Pfister, “Bertold Maurenbrecher (1868–1943),” in Suerbaum (note 21), 263–68; 264.

32. Franz Brunhölzl, “Theodor Hopfner (1886–1945), Viktor Stegemann (1902–1948), Albert Rehm (1871–1949),” in Suerbaum (note 21), 203–16; 213.