

Wilamowitz at War

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Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff is now principally remembered by non-classicists not as the great scholar of Greek antiquity that he was, but for his famous dispute with Nietzsche and with Stefan George and his Circle. However, Wilamowitz also played a central role that is less well known in yet another and vastly more significant conflict. In the opening weeks of the First World War, he gained new notoriety as one of the most prominent and influential signatories of the notorious manifesto signed by 93 German intellectuals and scholars addressed to the civilized world: "An die Kulturwelt!" In this essay, I explore some of the reasons why Wilamowitz would have participated in this ill-advised endeavor and consider some of its consequences.

Whether by inclination, conviction or simply because he was unable to restrain himself, Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff was, throughout his long and immensely productive life, *streitbar*: a word that is hard to translate, but incorporates the various meanings of "argumentative," "disputatious," "pugnacious," and, most strongly, "militant" and even "belligerent." The man Gilbert Murray still called in 1954 "the greatest Hellenist of our time,"¹ and who was undoubtedly one of the greatest classical scholars of all time, showed a corresponding talent not just for seeking out conflict, but also for choosing opponents of extraordinary, indeed formidable, stature. His first and most famous dispute, with no one less than Friedrich Nietzsche, was emblematic of things to come: in May 1872, at the age of twenty-three (and, perhaps not incidentally, when he was fresh from a nine-month stint serving as a grenadier in the Franco-Prussian War), Wilamowitz subjected Nietzsche's just-published *Birth of Tragedy* (*Geburt der Tragödie*) to a

1. Gilbert Murray, "Memories of Wilamowitz," *Antike und Abendland* 4 (1954), p. 14.

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scathing critique with the derisive title *Zukunftsphilologie*, in which he not only rejected Nietzsche's book as amounting to no more than a "Dionysian-Apollonian work of art," but more generally, and more damningly, he repudiated the newly appointed professor's scholarly credentials as well. Ostentatiously refusing to address him by his academic title, Wilamowitz wrote that "Mr. Nietzsche does not appear as a scientific researcher" in his book, but instead more resembled a "journalist," and Wilamowitz patronizingly advised him to "step down from the podium from which he ought to teach science"² and devote himself to more appropriate pursuits, such as swinging a thyrsus and gathering panthers and tigers at his knees. The review caused a minor uproar, and although Nietzsche himself did not respond to the attack, his friend Erwin Rohde loyally wrote a sharply pointed rejoinder with the scabrous title *Afterphilologie*, and even Richard Wagner joined the fray by issuing an open letter in defense of his young acolyte.³ Well after Nietzsche's fame and influence had far eclipsed his own, Wilamowitz would only concede that his review had been perhaps "naïve" and "juvenile," but he never retracted its substance, remaining instead serenely confident that Nietzsche "did what I called on him to do, gave up his teaching post and science and became a prophet of an irreligious religion and an unphilosophical philosophy."⁴

A quarter of a century later, and just after assuming the chair at the University of Berlin in 1897 that he would retain until the end of his career, Wilamowitz again took aim at another daunting adversary, this time not a fellow academic, but rather the poet Stefan George, whom many were beginning to regard as the best poet then writing in German. Wilamowitz, like virtually all educated Germans of his generation, maintained a fervent devotion to Goethe and thus to a conception of literary art that was rooted in actual, lived experience. Wilamowitz thus had little patience for the refined artifice of Symbolism, which George had done more than anyone to domesticate in Germany, and Wilamowitz plainly regarded George as little more than a frivolous dilettante. "Whatever is made according to the principle of *l'art pour l'art*," Wilamowitz later wrote on another occasion, "can be pleasing only as long as one can and may play. Real art, however, will achieve its end most surely during serious times."⁵ As if to demonstrate that George's poetry was not even worth

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2. Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Zukunftsphilologie! Eine Erwiderung auf Friedrich Nietzsches ord. professors der classischen Philologie in Basel "Geburt der Tragödie"* (Berlin: Gebrüder Bornträger, 1872), pp. 6; 32: "herr Nietzsche tritt ja nicht als wissenschaftlicher forscher auf"; "journalisten"; "steige er herab vom kathedr, auf welchem er wissenschaft lehren soll." This text was reprinted in: Karlfried Gründer, ed., *Der Streit um Nietzsches „Geburt der Tragödie“ Die Schriften von E. Rohde, R. Wagner, U. v. Wilamowitz-Möllendorff* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1969).
 3. Richard Wagner, "An Friedrich Nietzsche," *Gesammelte Schriften und Dichtungen*, 3rd ed. (Leipzig: E. W. Fritsch, 1898), vol. 9, pp. 295-302. Cf. on the entire controversy William M. Calder III, "The Wilamowitz-Nietzsche Struggle: New Documents and a Reappraisal," *Nietzsche-Studien* 12 (1983), pp. 214-254.
 4. Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Erinnerungen 1848-1914*, 2nd. exp. ed. (Leipzig: K. F. Koehler, 1928), pp. 129-130: "naiv," "knabenhaft," "getan, wozu ich ihn aufforderte, hat Lehramt und Wissenschaft aufgegeben und ist Prophet geworden, für eine irreligiöse Religion und eine unphilosophische Philosophie."
 5. Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, "Heroentum," *Reden aus der Kriegszeit* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1915), pp. 97-98. "Was nach dem Prinzip *l'art pour l'art* gemacht

a serious, which is to say scientific, appraisal—and perhaps also to show how easily such trifles could be tossed off—Wilamowitz composed several verses parodying George.⁶ As parodies go, the poems are less than overwhelming—for all of his other undeniable qualities, Wilamowitz was no Heine—but they were effective nonetheless, although in ways Wilamowitz could not have foreseen or, for that matter, much welcomed.⁷ During the next three decades, George attracted a dedicated following encompassing an impressive number of poets and scholars known collectively as his “circle,” many of them brilliant minds in their own right, and all of them united in their antipathy toward Wilamowitz.⁸ In 1910, George’s short-lived journal, *Das Jahrbuch für die geistige Bewegung*, published a caustic essay by one of his adherents, Kurt Hildebrandt, called “Hellas und Wilamowitz,” which basically argued that the two had nothing in common. Similarly, when Wilamowitz’s book on Plato came out in 1919, Friedrich Gundolf, one of George’s closest and most gifted disciples, memorably dismissed it as a “Plato for handmaidens.”⁹ And in the authorized biography of the Master in 1930, Friedrich Wolters noted with mock irony that Wilamowitz enjoyed “the sad renown” of having “defiled every German genius his time brought forth, Wagner, Nietzsche, George.”¹⁰

In this essay, I principally want to consider the most audacious, most protracted, most bitterly waged battle of Wilamowitz’s life, yet the one that is least well-known or understood. Even the great historian of historiography, Arnaldo Momigliano, who knew him as well as anyone else, suggested there were only “two main clashes in Wilamowitz’s intellectual life,” namely the dispute “with Nietzsche and then with Stefan George.”¹¹ But Wilamowitz fought in another and far greater conflict, one that, given the stakes involved and the eventual outcome of the struggle, makes those controversies seem

ist, wird nur gefallen, solange man spielen darf und kann. Die wahre Kunst dagegen wird in ernster Zeit gerade am sichersten ihr Ziel erreichen.”

6. Cf. Ulrich K. Goldsmith, “Wilamowitz and the *Georgekreis*: New Documents,” in *Wilamowitz nach 50 Jahren*, ed. William M. Calder III, Hellmut Flashar and Theodor Lindken (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1985), pp. 583-612.
7. It was not the first time that Wilamowitz had applied his poetic talents to such ends. In 1869, he had also written a satirical poem that so offended his professor, Hermann Usener, at the University of Bonn, that Wilamowitz transferred to Berlin, where he received his doctorate “among rather uncongenial teachers.” Cf. Arnaldo Momigliano, “New Paths of Classicism in the Nineteenth Century,” in idem, *Studies on Modern Scholarship*, ed. G. W. Bowersock and T.J. Cornell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), p. 253; cf. also p. 188. It may be pertinent to recall that Northrop Frye defined “satire” as “militant irony”; see *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 223.
8. For more on this issue, see my *Secret Germany. Stefan George and His Circle* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002).
9. Cf. Kurt Hildebrandt, *Erinnerungen an Stefan George und seinen Kreis* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1965), p. 55 n. 11; “Platon für Dienstmädchen.”
10. Friedrich Wolters, *Stefan George und die Blätter für die Kunst* (Berlin: Bondi, 1930), p. 183: “der traurige Ruhm” “daß er jeden deutschen Genius, den seine Zeit gebar, Wagner, Nietzsche, George angemistet hat.”
11. Momigliano, “New Paths of Classicism,” p. 274. The essay first appeared in 1982.

like inconsequential squabbles by comparison. I am referring to Wilamowitz's participation in the struggle of and for minds during the First World War.

One of the most extraordinary things to have emerged from the outbreak of hostilities in August 1914 was the debate that erupted about the deeper causes, purpose, and meaning of the war—a debate that, like the war itself, was unprecedented in its scale, scope and intensity. Almost overnight, a “mobilization of intellect” arose that quickly turned into an existential struggle comparable in its virulence and impact to the physical battles taking place on the front. Although this was a broadly European phenomenon, it was in Germany that it achieved its fullest expression. Virtually every intellectual authority of the time, many of whom were eminent figures of national and international standing in their respective fields of history, economics, sociology, philosophy or theology—men such as Friedrich Meinecke, Adolf von Harnack, Ernst Troeltsch, Rudolf Eucken, Werner Sombart, Ferdinand Tönnies, Max Scheler, and Georg Simmel, to name only some of the most prominent—all addressed the war and its attendant complexities in a torrent of speeches, pamphlets, newspaper articles, letters, essays and books.¹² Wilamowitz was no exception, and in a little over a year, between August 1914 and October 1915, he gave at least thirteen public lectures devoted to the war, some of them focusing directly on current events, some retrospective or historical—on “The World Empire of Augustus,” for example, or, intriguingly, “The Harmony of the Spheres”—and some delivered on official occasions, such as the Emperor's birthday, but all filled with a seemingly imperturbable confidence in the rightness and ultimate victory of the German cause.

Most commentators have passed over this period of Wilamowitz's life and thought in silence or have made either defensive or censorious claims about his political allegiances.¹³ One of his younger associates, Friedrich Solmsen, admitted that, in retrospect, he found “Wilamowitz's political reactions [...] somewhat embarrassing,” explaining that Wilamowitz “never rid his mind of the notions which German official propaganda had spread during

12. The literature on the subject is prodigious. Of fundamental importance are Klaus Schwabe, “Zur politischen Haltung der deutschen Professoren im Ersten Weltkrieg,” *Historische Zeitschrift* 193 (1961), pp. 601-634; by the same author, *Wissenschaft und Kriegsmoral. Die deutschen Hochschullehrer und die politischen Grundfragen des Ersten Weltkrieges* (Göttingen: Musterschmidt, 1969); Hermann Lübke, *Politische Philosophie in Deutschland. Studien zu ihrer Geschichte* (Basel: B. Schwabe, 1963); and Kurt Flasch, *Die geistige Mobilmachung. Die deutschen Intellektuellen und der Erste Weltkrieg* (Berlin: A. Fest, 2000).

13. One extreme is represented by Egon Flaig, “Towards ‘Rassenhygiene’: Wilamowitz and the German New Right,” in *Out of Arcadia. Classics and Politics in Germany in the Age of Burckhardt, Nietzsche and Wilamowitz*, ed. Ingo Gildenhard and Martin Ruehl, *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 79 (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 2003), pp. 105-127. This essay has not been well received. In his review of the volume, Oswyn Murray called Flaig's argument “an idiotic perversion of the facts;” in *German History* 23 (2005), p. 274; and in his discussion, William M. Calder III calls it simply “bizarre;” in *The Classical Review* 54 (2004), p. 552. See the more measured works by Luciano Canfora, “Wilamowitz: ‘Politik’ in der Wissenschaft,” in *Wilamowitz nach 50 Jahren*, pp. 56-79; and especially his *Cultura classica e crisi tedesca: gli scritti politici di Wilamowitz, 1914-1931* (Bari: De Donato, 1977).

the war."¹⁴ But this way of putting it gives Wilamowitz both less and more credit than he deserves for the "notions" he expressed at the time. For Wilamowitz did not suddenly adopt those ideas at the beginning of the war, nor did he somehow passively or uncritically conform to some "official" ideology. Rather, in both his person and his post, Wilamowitz embodied that ideology, he was one of its most influential and visible exponents, and far from feeling any need to disencumber his mind from the ideas he held, he felt called upon to persuade—or, more precisely, to instruct—the world concerning their validity and truth.

Although the German professoriate had by 1914 largely retreated from the level of active political engagement that characterized the revolutions of 1848, they were still highly conscious of their status as *Beamte*, that is, not just as employees but also as representatives of the government, and they realized that their actions and words were by definition an expression of the *res publica*. In his study of the German system of higher education at the turn of the century, Friedrich Paulsen had commented at length on what he called "the task of the university for political education and public life." Ideally, the university and thus the professors should represent "in their entirety something like the *public conscience* of the people with respect to what is good and evil in politics, in both domestic and foreign affairs."¹⁵ It was thus natural and in fact expected that members of the university should offer guidance and orientation to their compatriots during what even the reform-minded economist Lujo Brentano was already calling in 1917 "the greatest catastrophe since the fall of the ancient world."¹⁶

Even among the illustrious group of scholars who voiced their support of Germany during the war, Wilamowitz played a special and arguably unique role. When war was declared, he was sixty-five years old and not only one of the most celebrated professors at Germany's premier university, he was also regarded as the preeminent Hellenist in Europe. It was the time when the special relationship between Germany and Greece, already a century and a half old, had reached its apex, an achievement owing in no small part to Wilamowitz's own Herculean labors. "Since Wilamowitz," it has been said, "we are able to speak Greek better than before."¹⁷ In a letter to his former teacher, Hermann Usener, Wilamowitz had already articulated in 1883 what was to become something like his scholarly credo: "Ancient poetry (and naturally law and belief and history) is dead: our task is to enliven it."¹⁸ This he had done

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14. Friedrich Solmsen, "Wilamowitz during his Last Ten Years," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 20 (1979), p. 115. This essay was reprinted in Solmsen's *Kleine Schriften* III, *Collectanea* IV/3 (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1982), pp. 430-463.
 15. Friedrich Paulsen, *Die deutschen Universitäten und das Universitätsstudium* (Berlin: A. Asher, 1902), pp. 329-331: "Die Aufgabe der Universität für die politische Bildung und das öffentliche Leben." "in ihrer Gesamtheit etwas wie das öffentliche Gewissen des Volkes in Absicht auf gut und böse in der Politik, der inneren und äusseren."
 16. Lujo Brentano, *Elsässer Erinnerungen* (Berlin: Erich Reiß, 1917), p. 130; "die größte Katastrophe seit dem Untergang der antiken Welt."
 17. Harald Patzer, "Wilamowitz und die klassische Philologie," in *Festschrift Franz Dornseiff* (Leipzig: Bibliographisches Institut, 1953), p. 250: "Seit Wilamowitz können wir besser Griechisch als frühere Zeiten."
 18. Cited in Patzer, p. 245.

through his many editions, commentaries, and translations of ancient texts and of course through his activities as teacher, mentor and role model. But Wilamowitz's ambition was to comprehend, and thereby reanimate, the totality of ancient life as it really was, and not as it was imagined or thought to have been. He wanted literally to grasp the full reality of antiquity. For this reason, Wilamowitz did something that none of the great German philhellenes—neither Winckelmann, nor Goethe, nor even Nietzsche—had done before: he went beyond the requisite Italian journey and actually went to Greece itself, and not just once, but repeatedly. Wilamowitz thought that this kind of direct, personal experience of the physical context of ancient culture was indispensable to the complete apprehension of its lived actuality that he saw as the goal.¹⁹ It was, he felt, this immediate exposure to the sights and textures of the ancient world, and not only its ideas, which turned mere knowledge of the past into true understanding. As he described it elsewhere:

The task of philology is, through the power of science, to make that past life vital again, the song of the poet, the thought of the philosopher and of the magistrate, the sanctity of the temple and the feelings of the faithful, the colorful bustle of the marketplace and the port, land and sea and the people in their work and in their play. Here, too, as in all science, or to speak Greek, in all philosophy, amazement about what is not understood is the beginning; the pure, gratifying perception of what is understood in its truth and beauty is the goal.²⁰

But Wilamowitz was more than just a classical scholar—although he was that to an unequalled degree among his contemporaries—he was also a superlative representative of the German university and, more broadly, of *Wissenschaft* itself. Indeed, it was the ideal of *Wissenschaft*, the pursuit of truth without regard to authority or tradition in the interest of creating understanding for its own sake and producing new knowledge, that enabled the revivification of antiquity that he saw as the aim of philology. In other words, as Wilamowitz expressed it when he assumed the post of Rector of the University of Berlin in 1915, “to learn to think scientifically” is “to seek the truth, oblivious to all feelings of love and hate, and to affirm it without fear, defiant

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19. Solmsen, p. 105, relates a telling anecdote about this aspect of Wilamowitz's ambition: “[Wilamowitz] realized of course that his approach—his way of seeing things whole—was not to survive him, but he kept his disappointment to himself. The only pertinent remark of which I know was made by Frau von Wilamowitz. ‘Wollen Sie eigentlich alles rückgängig machen?’ [‘Do you want to undo everything?’] she asked a brilliant young scholar when in the course of the conversation he admitted that he had never yet been to Greece.”
20. Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Geschichte der Philologie*, 3rd ed. (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1959), 1. The work was first published in 1927. “Die Aufgabe der Philologie ist, jenes vergangene Leben durch die Kraft der Wissenschaft wieder lebendig zu machen, das Lied des Dichters, den Gedanken des Philosophen und Gesetzgebers, die Heiligkeit des Gotteshauses und die Gefühle der Gläubigen und Ungläubigen, das bunte Getriebe auf dem Markte und im Hafen, Land und Meer und die Menschen in ihrer Arbeit und in ihrem Spiele. Auch hier wie in aller Wissenschaft, griechisch zu reden, in aller Philosophie, ist das Verwundern über das Unverstandene der Anfang; das reine beglückende Anschauen des in seiner Wahrheit und Schönheit Verstandenen ist das Ziel.”

toward all attempts to dim its light no matter from where they come."²¹ It was a noble ideal and, as the last metaphor hints, nothing less than the attempt to realize the loftiest goals of the Enlightenment, and worthy of the phenomenal energy, seriousness and total dedication that Wilamowitz brought to its pursuit.²²

And, finally, in addition to being a preeminent exponent of both classical philology and science—or, as the two are neatly conjoined in German, of *Alttertumswissenschaft*—Wilamowitz was also, as the member of a distinguished Prussian aristocratic family, a proud and self-confident member of the Junker class. He grew up on the familial estate at Markowitz in Eastern Prussia, now in Poland, which his father had acquired in 1836. His grandfather had fought against Napoleon, which earned him the *Pour le mérite* in 1807, and he was related to the Field Marshal Wichard Joachim Heinrich von Moellendorff, who bequeathed his name to the Wilamowitz line. His mother, born von Calbo, belonged to a family that had been connected to the court of Frederick the Great.²³ Nevertheless, although a patriot, he was no blinkered chauvinist. He maintained scholarly contacts across the globe, and he spoke all the modern European languages, including of course Italian and modern Greek, but also Swedish, Danish and Dutch,²⁴ and it was said that “his accent was practically perfect in English”²⁵—and even during the war he took pains to recall the contributions that all cultures and religions had made to human civilization. In one of his lectures in 1915, for instance, he made a point of affirming that “the Parthenon was harmed less by being transformed into a mosque than into a Christian church, and we possess the panels of the east frieze in magnificent condition because the Turks carefully placed them to one side.” And in a disarmingly quaint aside, Wilamowitz even reminded his listeners that “the tulip is a flower that was brought by the Turks.”²⁶ It was thus deeply painful for him to watch the cosmopolitan world of learning he had known and helped to build collapse into tribal feuding after 1914. Referring to this development, Wilamowitz said:

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21. Wilamowitz, “Rede beim Antritt des Rektorates der Berliner Universität. 15. Oktober 1915,” *Reden aus der Kriegszeit*, p. 255: “wissenschaftlich denken lernen;” “die Wahrheit suchen, unbeirrt durch alle Gefühle von Liebe und Haß, und sie bekennen ohne Furcht, Trotz bietend allen Versuchen, ihr Licht zu trüben, einerlei, woher sie kommen.”
 22. Patzer, p. 245, notes that Wilamowitz’s work ethic even made him “refrain from requesting even a single semester of research leave during his more than fifty-year teaching career, although two four-hour lectures and several seminars per semester were the rule;” “versagte es ihm, in seiner mehr als 50jährigen Lehrtätigkeit auch nur ein Semester Urlaub zu erbitten, obwohl zwei vierstündige Vorlesungen und mehrere Seminarübungen im Semester die Regel waren.”
 23. Cf. Momigliano, “New Paths of Classicism,” p. 273.
 24. Solmsen, p. 121. Cf. also Patzer, p. 249.
 25. Murray, p. 11.
 26. Wilamowitz, “Orient und Okzident,” *Reden aus der Kriegszeit*, p. 248. The fact that Turkey was one of Germany’s few allies during the war no doubt contributed to Wilamowitz’s benevolent views toward the Turks here. “Die Umwandlung in eine Moschee hat dem Parthenon weniger geschadet als die in eine christliche Kirche, und wir besitzen die Platten des Ostfrieses in wunderbarer Erhaltung, weil die Türken sie sorgsam beiseite gestellt hatten.” “Die Tulpe ist eine Blume, die von den Türken mitgebracht ist.”

The man of science who has endeavored all his life to seek friendship and understanding within all civilized peoples and who also found it, who has befriended men among all peoples whose fate he worries about as about those of his own sons and friends, is permitted to feel sorrow that this, his life's work lies in ruins.²⁷

Despite the ecumenical largesse of his scholarly views, however, Wilamowitz did share two fundamental convictions with the vast majority of his colleagues and compatriots when it came to the political realities of the day: namely, that Germany had been forced into the war and thus carried no ultimate moral or legal responsibility for it, and that the prime offender, the true culprit in the conflagration, was England, which most believed had united its allies through guile and coercion in a devious plot to force Germany into a confrontation it had not sought. "We did not want the war," Wilamowitz thus said in his first speech that August, "no one, no king, no statesman, no commander."²⁸ Rather, as Wilamowitz unequivocally stated: "England is the enemy, all of the others stand against us in the field for England."²⁹ In brief, the argument was that at the turn of the century, the British saw their world hegemony being threatened by an increasingly sophisticated and powerful German economy and they deliberately pushed the world into war primarily to protect their imperial, which is to say their financial, interests. On August 12, the renowned biologist and naturalist Ernst Haeckel, then eighty years old and a personal acquaintance of such English scientists as Charles Darwin, Thomas Huxley, and Sir John Murray, also gave a speech in Jena proclaiming *England's Bloodguilt for the World War*. Haeckel argued that, faced with the choice of letting "the world-historical decision fall in favor of peace, justice and the good, or in favor of war, crime and evil," England chose the latter to pursue its goals of "exploiting all other nations to its advantage and to fill its insatiable purse with the gold of all other peoples!"³⁰ Wilamowitz, with his

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27. Wilamowitz, "Die geschichtlichen Ursachen des Krieges," *Reden aus der Kriegszeit*, p. 37; "der Mann der Wissenschaft, der sich ein Leben lang bemüht hat, Freundschaft und Verständigung bei allen Kulturvölkern zu suchen und der sie auch gefunden hat, der unter allen Völkern befreundete Männer hat, um deren Schicksal er bangt wie um das der eigenen Söhne und Freunde, darf wohl Schmerz empfinden, daß dies sein Lebenswerk zertrümmert liegt."
28. Wilamowitz, "Krieges Anfang," *Reden aus der Kriegszeit*, p. 12: "Wir haben den Krieg nicht gewollt, niemand, kein König, kein Staatsmann, kein Feldherr."
29. Wilamowitz, "Die geschichtlichen Ursachen," p. 24: "England ist der Feind, für England stehen die anderen wider uns im Feld."
30. Ernst Haeckel, *Englands Blutschuld am Weltkriege* (Eisenach: Oskar Kayser, 1914), 7-8: "die welthistorische Entscheidung entweder zu Gunsten des Friedens, des Rechtes und des Guten fallen zu lassen, oder zu Gunsten des Krieges, des Verbrechens und des Bösen." "die Ausbeutung aller anderen Nationen zu seinem Vorteil und die Ausfüllung seines unersättlichen Geldbeutels mit dem Golde aller übrigen Völker." Intriguingly, Haeckel reminded his listeners that "world history teaches us with sufficient clarity that a permanent universal dominion of a single people is impossible" and he predicted that Britain would inevitably lose control over its Empire: "just as the United States of North America separated itself from its tyrannical motherland England in 1789, so too will Canada and Ireland, India and Australia, Egypt and South Africa follow their example sooner or later." Pp. 10-11: "Die Völkergeschichte lehrt uns mit genügender Deutlichkeit, daß eine dauernde Universal-Herrschaft eines

penchant for using telling, anecdotal detail to enliven his point, made the same case this way: "When an English naval officer now looks through a precise and beautiful telescope, searching for German cruisers, he is annoyed—we don't blame him for it—that the lens was ground in Jena, and the cables that run through the oceans are largely manufactured on the Nonnendamm in Charlottenburg. The quality of German work rankles."³¹

The exact date of Wilamowitz's first war-time address was August 27, just over three weeks into the conflict, after the initial blush of enthusiasm had faded, but when most Germans were still feeling optimistic and emboldened by the steady progress the army was making through Belgium on its way to Paris. That very day, however, and unbeknownst to Wilamowitz and to most of his countrymen, events were occurring that would have an immediate and ruinous effect on the perception of Germany throughout the rest of the war and long thereafter. A week earlier, on August 19, the German army had entered the university town of Louvain, or Leuven, sometimes referred to as the "Oxford of Belgium," famed for its beautiful Renaissance and Baroque buildings, including the university library with its extensive collection of manuscripts and incunabula.³² Despite the occupation, the city had initially remained tranquil—the Belgian troops had left prior to the arrival of the Germans—with the population of shopkeepers, academics, priests and nuns understandably subdued. But on the evening of August 25, the alarm was sounded as shooting broke out in the streets. Who started it and why long remained a matter of dispute: the Germans claimed they were being fired on by civilian snipers, or *francs-tireurs*, which was in violation of international law, while the Belgians denied it, insisting the shooting was unprovoked and caused by drunk and boisterous soldiers. Whatever the cause, by the end of the action, 248 citizens of Louvain were killed, many of them dragged from their houses, beaten and shot in front their families, and over 2,000 buildings were destroyed, or over one-sixth of the structures in the entire city, including the library, which was set on fire using gasoline and inflammable tablets. As the rector of the university reported to the Vatican the following year, "in nine or ten hours, all that remained of this enormous building and the 300,000 volumes it contained were four walls and ashes."³³ On August 27, the very day Wilamowitz delivered his speech extolling the envied superiority of German industry, the army commander in charge of Louvain, Major von Manteuffel,

einzigem Volkes überhaupt nicht möglich ist" "Wie sich 1789 die Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika von ihrem tyrannischen Mutterlande England abgelöst haben, so werden früher oder später Canada und Irland, Indien und Australien, Aegypten und Süd-Afrika ihrem Beispiel folgen."

31. Wilamowitz, "Krieges Anfang," p. 8. The Siemens firm is located on the Nonnendamm in the Berlin district of Charlottenburg, and the optical firm of Carl Zeiss is in Jena. "Wenn der englische Marineoffizier jetzt durch ein feines, schönes Glas hinausschaut, umschaut nach deutschen Kreuzern, so ärgert ihn—wir verdenken es ihm nicht—, daß das Glas in Jena geschliffen sein wird, und die Kabel, die durch die Meere ziehen, sind zum größten Teile in Charlottenburg am Nonnendamm verfertigt. Die Güte der deutschen Arbeit wurmt ihn."
32. See John Keegan, *The First World War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), pp. 82-83.
33. Cf. John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities, 1914. A History of Denial* (New Haven: Yale, 2001), pp. 38-39.

ordered the evacuation of the town's remaining 10,000 inhabitants, declaring that it was to be bombarded by canon fire.³⁴

In the end, no such bombardment took place, but the damage had already been done. As news about the destruction of Louvain quickly spread around the world, shock and outrage were expressed over the "atrocities" committed by the German "barbarians" and "Huns." In Germany, however, where the government had assumed strict control over the press and either banned or heavily censored all foreign news sources, timely and reliable information was difficult if not impossible to obtain.³⁵ Further thickening the already dense fog of war, rumors abounded in Germany alleging that Belgian citizens, in addition to engaging in guerilla warfare, were poisoning the occupying soldiers, cutting off the hands or putting out the eyes of the defenseless wounded, and that medical personnel were likewise being subjected to harassment, physical abuse and even murder. Just as the troops at the front were being confronted for the first time by the realities of modern, mechanized warfare, civilian populations at home were being initiated into the equally new experience of organized mass propaganda.

A week after the action in Louvain, on September 5, Wilamowitz gave a second speech, this one partially devoted to countering some of the international accusations that, despite governmental censorship, still made their way into Germany. Wilamowitz accordingly denounced the "cowardly assassination by the francs-tireurs"³⁶ and he also condemned the alleged use on the part of the British troops of so-called "dum-dum," or soft-nosed, bullets, which expanded on impact and thus created significantly larger and more serious wounds than normal rounds.³⁷ Wilamowitz's speech is notable for the assurance, indeed the certainty, with which he rejects the accusations against the German army and no less unreservedly embraces the inflammatory charges against its foes:

34. *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

35. See, although with caveats, David Welch, *Germany, Propaganda and Total War, 1914-1918. The Sins of Omission* (New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 2000). Matthias Erzberger, the Director of the *Zentralstelle für Auslandsdienst* (Central Office for Foreign Service), the major bureau of propaganda during the war, later criticized the decision to restrict information so drastically, arguing it was counterproductive: "At the outbreak of the World War, Germany was isolated from its enemies, but it also isolated itself. The military offices immediately issued the order that not a single German newspaper should cross the border, and this despite domestic censorship." Cf. Matthias Erzberger, *Erlebnisse im Weltkrieg* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1920), pp. 3-4: "*Beim Ausbruch des Weltkrieges wurde Deutschland von seinen Feinden abgesperrt, aber es sperrte auch sich selbst ab. Die militärischen Stellen erließen sofort die Anordnung, daß keine einzige deutsche Zeitung über die Grenzen gehen sollte, und dies trotz der Zensur im Innern.*"

36. Wilamowitz, "Die geschichtlichen Ursachen," p. 21: "*den feigen Meuchelmord der Franktireurs.*"

37. Wilamowitz, "Die geschichtlichen Ursachen," p. 33. The use of such ammunition, which had been introduced by the British Indian Army in the early 1890s (the rounds were first manufactured at the arsenal at Dum Dum near Calcutta, hence the name), was restricted by the Hague Convention in 1899 at the insistence of Germany.

Thus we know that our warriors are incapable of the baseness, the assassinations, the treachery with which the enemy attacks not only our soldiers, but also our doctors and nurses, and mutilates and slaughters our wounded. We know that a German soldier simply does not have the heart to do that. It is already terrible that he has to punish it. It fills our people with disgust when they have to hang the beasts. But they must do it for better or worse. May God grant that our good people out there are not themselves brutalized by this atrocious business and forced to descend to the lower level of civilization of which our enemies no doubt even boast.³⁸

But the act that had the most lasting impact on public opinion came one month later. On October 4, 1914, a manifesto was issued that directly addressed the events in Belgium, and singled out the volatile issue of what had occurred in Louvain. By virtue of its having been published at all, the manifesto was an official document and thus carried the full weight of German government authority. It was signed by ninety-three members of the intellectual and cultural establishment in Germany, including such luminaries as the philosopher Rudolf Eucken, who had won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1908, the writer Gerhart Hauptmann, who won the same prize four years later, Fritz Haber, who would receive the Nobel Prize for Chemistry in 1918, the physicists Max Planck and Wilhelm Röntgen, Wilhelm Bode, the Director of the Royal Museums in Berlin—and Wilamowitz himself. Indeed, although the manifesto had been principally written at the urging and with the help of the Mayor of Berlin, Georg Reicke, by two once well-known writers, Ludwig Fulda and Hermann Sudermann,³⁹ it was for a long time widely believed that Wilamowitz had been the author of the manifesto.⁴⁰

Addressed “To the Civilized World”—“An die Kulturwelt!”—the declaration identifies the signatories as “representatives of German science and art” and states its intention to protest “the lies and defamations” ostensibly being spread by Germany’s enemies. In both its tone and substance, the manifesto made the impression that the German intellectual establishment, and partic-

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38. Wilamowitz, “Die geschichtlichen Ursachen,” p. 32-33: “Darum weiß man, daß unsere Krieger unfähig sind zu den Gemeinheiten, zu dem Meuchelmord, zu der Hinterlist, mit der sich die Feinde nicht nur an unseren Soldaten, sondern auch an unseren Ärzten und Pflegeschwestern vergreifen, und unsere Verwundeten verstümmeln und abschlachten. Wir wissen, das kann ein deutscher Soldat einfach nicht übers Herz bringen. Es ist schon schrecklich, daß er es ahnden muß. Unsere Leute erfüllt es mit Ekel, wenn sie die Bestien aufhängen müssen. Aber sie müssen es wohl oder übel tun. Gebe Gott, daß unsere guten Leute draußen durch dieses scheußliche Handwerk nicht selbst verroht werden und gezwungen niedersteigen auf den tieferen Standpunkt der Zivilisation, dessen unsere Feinde sich wohl gar behümen.”
39. Jürgen von Ungern-Sternberg, *Der Aufruf “An die Kulturwelt!”: das Manifest der 93 und die Anfänge der Kriegspropaganda im Ersten Weltkrieg. Mit einer Dokumentation*, Historische Mitteilungen 18 (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1996), p. 27.
40. Thus, for example, James J. Sheehan, *The Career of Lujo Brentano. A Study of Liberalism and Social Reform in Imperial Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 188. Sheehan seems to have based his opinion on Fritz Fischer, *Griff nach der Weltmacht: Die Kriegszielpolitik des kaiserlichen Deutschland 1914-1918* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1961), p. 180, n. 4, 3rd ed., p. 186, n. 4 (= idem, *Germany’s Aims in the First World War* [New York: W.W. Norton, 1967], p. 156, n. 1).

ularly the professoriate, was trying to speak on the world stage as it was accustomed to speaking from the lecture podium.

Specifically, the document makes six claims, each one introduced with the categorical assertion, set in bold in the original, "*Es ist nicht wahr*"—"It is not true." The first five state:

It is not true that Germany caused this war. Neither the people wanted it nor the government nor the Emperor. [...]

It is not true that we wantonly violated Belgium's neutrality. [...]

It is not true that a single Belgian citizen's life and property have been touched by our soldiers unless the most aggravated self-defense demanded it. [...]

It is not true that our troops brutally raged against Louvain. Faced with a raving population that treacherously assaulted them in their quarters, they had to retaliate with a heavy heart by shelling part of the city. [...]

It is not true that our conduct of war disregards international law. It knows no undisciplined cruelty. [...]⁴¹

Designed for international consumption and intended to sway public opinion in Germany's favor, the document not only failed to produce the desired result, it had precisely the opposite effect. It was not simply a public relations disaster; it represented to those outside of Germany an unmitigated intellectual and moral catastrophe. Throughout Western Europe and the rest of the world, the manifesto, which so flagrantly contradicted the Allied view of events, provoked an outcry of anger and condemnation that surpassed the response to the destruction of Louvain itself. The historian Friedrich Paulsen had recognized at the turn of the century that "whatever love the German people possess in foreign lands is thanks in large part to its universities."⁴² With the publication of the manifesto signed by ninety-three "representatives of German science," the genuine admiration and respect that German learning and scholarship had enjoyed seemed, almost in an instant, utterly and irreparably destroyed. Even after the war, in 1919, the President of Columbia University, Nicholas Murray Butler, still described the pronouncement as the "astonishing self-prostitution of German scholarship and science." That same year, in a speech before the French Senate, the Prime Minister, Georges Clemenceau, remained so agitated by the manifesto that he called it a "worse crime than all the other deeds we know of."⁴³ A decade later, Clemenceau devoted an entire chapter of his memoirs to excoriating the "German professors" who had signed the offending document.⁴⁴

What must initially strike one as astonishing is that, despite—or, rather precisely because of—the uncertainty about what was actually taking place in

41. Ungern-Sternberg, *Der Aufruf "An die Kulturwelt!"*, pp. 144-145.

42. Paulsen, *Die deutschen Universitäten*, p. 330: "was das deutsche Volk an Liebe im Auslande besitzt, das verdankt es zum grösseren Teil seinen Universitäten."

43. Cited in Hans Wehberg, *Wider den Aufruf der 93! Das Ergebnis einer Rundfrage an die 93 Intellektuellen über die Kriegsschuld* (Charlottenburg: Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft für Politik u. Geschichte, 1920), pp. 30-31.

44. See Georges Clemenceau, *Grandeurs et misères d'une victoire* (Paris: Plon, 1930), esp. Chapter 15, "Sensibilité allemande."

Belgium or anywhere else during the fast-moving and chaotic first weeks of the war, Wilamowitz agreed to sign the declaration at all. For as we now know, virtually none of the manifesto's contentions was, in fact, true.⁴⁵ Now, it might be argued that in war all means are justified, even the manipulation of facts and information, that help achieve victory. But in its appeal to the absolute truth of its assertions, the manifesto laid claim to a value that, for Wilamowitz,

45. As opposed to the ninety-three signatories of the manifesto, there were of course some in Germany who did have access to the facts and knew what was and was not true. Theodor Wolff, the Editor in Chief of the *Berliner Tageblatt*, was one of the few who had privileged access to foreign newspapers and other uncensored sources of information. But, for obvious reasons, he was able to confide what he knew only to his diary. In the entry for October 8, for example, he commented on the manifesto with an admirable mixture of practical realism and detached resignation: "The 'intellectuals' have issued a 'summons to the civilized world' in which they guarantee that no German soldier is capable of committing an outrage. They also expound with absolute certainty the origins of the war. Of course all such pronouncements and declarations must remain ineffective and achieve only the opposite of their intended purpose because they attest to ignorance and do not salvage anything from the wreckage. One can tell that the authors, for example, know nothing about the retreat at the Marne* and everyone outside of Germany, who is following this retreat so carefully in all of its details, is ridiculing them. Needless acts of violence, senseless executions of hostages, etc. have occurred, far too many villages have been burned down, there has also been no shortage of confiscation of private property. I read an army order by General von Plettenberg, Commander of the Garde du Corps, that I would not like to see made public: it places the troops under strict orders to shoot any hostages immediately if, after the command to hand the weapons over had been received, any weapons are found." (*"Die 'Intellektuellen' haben einen 'Aufruf an die Kulturwelt' ergehen lassen, in dem sie die Garantie dafür übernehmen, daß kein deutscher Soldat einer Schandtat fähig sei. Mit absoluter Bestimmtheit äußern sie sich auch über die Ursprünge des Krieges. Natürlich müssen all' solche Kundgebungen und Darstellungen unwirksam bleiben u. es wird nur das Gegenteil des beabsichtigten Zweckes mit ihnen erreicht, weil sie von Unkenntnis zeugen und nicht 'la part du feu' machen. Man ersieht daraus, daß die Verfasser z. B. garnichts vom Rückzug an der Marne wissen, u. das Ausland, das diesen Rückzug so genau mit allen Details verfolgt hat, verspottet sie. Ueberflüssige Gewaltakte, sinnlose Erschießung von Geiseln etc. sind vorgekommen, viel zu viel Dörfer sind eingäschert worden, an Entwendungen von Privateigentum u.s.w. hat es auch nicht gefehlt. Ich habe einen Armeebefehl des Generals v. Plettenberg, Kommandirender d. Gardekorps, gelesen, den ich nicht an die Oeffentlichkeit gebracht sehen möchte: es wird darin den Truppen strengstens befohlen, falls nach der Aufforderung, die Waffen auszuliefern, doch noch irgendwo Waffen gefunden würden, die Geiseln sofort zu erschießen."*) [Theodor Wolff, *Tagebücher 1914-1919*, ed. Bernd Sösemann (Boppard am Rhein: Harald Boldt, 1984), vol. 1, pp. 104-105.]

* The Battle of the Marne, between September 5-12, was the first major turning point in the war and perhaps the decisive one. It halted the German advance toward Paris, which was the centerpiece of the Schlieffen Plan, and it resulted in the stalled Western front that would characterize the rest of the war. When the outcome had become clear after September 13, the German Chief of Staff, Helmuth von Moltke, is supposed to have told the Emperor: "Your Majesty, we have lost the war." Although virtually nothing of these events was reported in the German press, the battle was quickly dubbed "The Miracle on the Marne" in Allied accounts.

transcended even the existential struggle of the war. The establishment of truth, the ultimate goal of all science, stood for him above the particular interests of any one time or place, indeed of a single culture or tradition, and it was far too important to be left to chance or empty conjecture. Wilamowitz, whose career began with a defense of *Wahrheitsliebe* and *Wissenschaft*, and whose scholarly existence was devoted to paring away myths, misconceptions, and illusions about antiquity in order to perceive its true, unadulterated essence, here appeared to join forces with the very foes—error, falsehood, and ignorance—he had fought all his life.

Even more incredibly, however, even though Wilamowitz had reviewed a first draft of the declaration (which he had rejected, he later said, as “inept”), he never actually saw the text itself before allowing his name to be added to it. Although Wilamowitz later admitted in his memoirs “that it was careless and wrong that I did that without knowing the text,”⁴⁶ he seems not to have grasped, or wanted to admit, the gravity of the lapse. Not only did he not have, nor could he have had, independent, verifiable confirmation of the facts that the text put forth as undisputed truth, he, the supreme philologist of his age, who insisted on first-hand knowledge of his sources, did not even review the text to which he was committing his name and reputation. Here, in the one battle of his life in which it was crucial, in fact literally vital, to get his facts right, Wilamowitz failed to live up to the standards that as a scholar he had always rigorously imposed on himself and others. At the very moment when it was most important to safeguard them, he abandoned the very ideals of science, of *Wissenschaft*, that had governed his life and given it its meaning.

How do we explain this apparent surrender, even collapse of scholarly virtue? Part of the answer, clearly, is that Wilamowitz simply did not, and perhaps could not, believe that Germany was in the wrong, and well after the war, when he published his memoirs in 1928, he continued to hold onto that belief, impatiently waiving away “the infamous lie about German war guilt and the equally stupid lies about German atrocities.”⁴⁷ But that was the point: *Wissenschaft*, as Wilamowitz had always practiced it, was not about what we believe but what we know.

Or was it? Friedrich Solmsen reported how, during the 1920s, it was “breathhtaking to watch” Wilamowitz operate during his seminars. “Lexica or indices were not consulted during the meetings, similar passages very seldom looked up. Wilamowitz relied on his memory, which never failed to supply what he needed.”⁴⁸ Others also attested to his “superhuman memory” and marveled that “his head contained more or less everything that is contained in handbooks today, which essentially became possible only through his universal idea of science.”⁴⁹ Thus armed with as comprehensive a knowledge of antiquity as anyone else has ever possessed, Wilamowitz obviously, and not unreasonably, trusted his own judgment and he even obeyed what we might

46. Wilamowitz, *Erinnerungen*, p. 316: “ungeschickt” “Daß ich das tat, ohne den Text zu kennen, war leichtsinnig und verkehrt.”

47. Wilamowitz, *Erinnerungen*, p. 315: “die infame Lüge von der deutschen Kriegsschuld und die ebenso dummen Lügen von den deutschen Greuelthaten.”

48. Solmsen, p. 92-93.

49. Patzer, p. 247: “das übermenschliche Gedächtnis Wilamowitz’” “sein Kopf hatte ziemlich all das beisammen, was heute in Handbüchern steht, die im wesentlichen erst durch seine universale Wissenschaftsidee möglich geworden sind.”

call his instincts or, in a word, intuition. This habit of mind carried over into other areas of his life, and it was noted, for example, that it did not “take him long to form his opinion about a person. Both his observation and the intelligence he brought to bear upon it were keen and constantly active. He grasped the characteristic traits as he grasped so much else, intuitively.”⁵⁰ Remarkably, Wilamowitz himself acknowledged and affirmed the use of imaginative intuition in the scholarly re-creation of the distant past:

A historiography that comes to a halt at what can be exactly proven, that is, determines the facts and places them in context, does not lead into the souls of active people: that can be done only by the intuitive power of imagination, which perceives the whole, for which the figures of the past live and move, that is, which penetrates their soul; for all life and all movement has its origin in the soul. This intuitive power belongs most properly to the poet; he can do nothing without it. But it is also to be wished for the historian that, next to the precision and clarity of the scholar, he also possess a good deal of the poet.⁵¹

Informed conjecture and hypothesis, supported by trained intuition, are appropriate, even necessary, tools in epigraphy and paleography, and are unquestionably indispensable to the imaginative reconstruction of any cultural artifact. But Wilamowitz also combined this readiness to trust his albeit well-informed hunches or feelings with a virtually unshakeable confidence that, after he had come to a conclusion, he was right and all others were wrong. It was again Friedrich Solmsen who noted that the “firm conviction that his opinion was true must have characterized Wilamowitz throughout his life,” adding that “nor would he easily regret, let alone repent a decision.”⁵² These might be the inevitable, but ultimately merely annoying traits in a genuinely accomplished scholar. When it comes to actions in wartime, however, guesswork and speculation, coupled with an unwillingness to revise one’s opinion once formed, can be fatal.

Ironically, four decades earlier, Wilamowitz had castigated Nietzsche for having indulged in precisely the same kind of wild speculation, for having affected, as he put it, “wisdom acquired on the path of intuition.”⁵³ The twenty-three-year-old Wilamowitz had pounced on Nietzsche’s rhapsodic evocation of Greece as the product of a fantasy, and he boasted that “it is easy to prove that the imagined ingenuity and insolence in advancing assertions stands in direct proportion to ignorance and to a shortage of the love of

50. Solmsen, p. 103.

51. Wilamowitz, “Kaisersgeburtstag,” *Reden aus der Kriegszeit*, p. 159-160: “eine Geschichtsforschung, die bei dem stehenbleibt, was sich exakt erweisen läßt, also die Tatsachen feststellt und in Zusammenhang rückt, führt in die Seelen der handelnden Personen nicht hinein: das vermag nur die intuitive Kraft der Phantasie, die das Ganze schaut, der die Gestalten der Vergangenheit leben und sich bewegen, das heißt also, die in ihre Seele eindringt; denn alles Lebens und aller Bewegung Ursprung ist in der Seele. Diese intuitive Kraft gehört recht eigentlich dem Dichter; er kann ohne sie nichts ausrichten. Dem Historiker aber ist auch zu wünschen, daß er neben der Schärfe und Klarheit des Forschers recht viel vom Dichter besitze.”

52. Solmsen, p. 113, 103.

53. Wilamowitz, *Zukunftsphilologie*, p. 6: “auf dem wege der intuition erlangte weisheit.”

truth."⁵⁴ What Nietzsche offered, Wilamowitz concluded, was "an intoxicated dream or a dreamer's intoxication."⁵⁵ But whatever it was, it was most definitely not *Wissenschaft*. Once more, Solmsen provides some tantalizing insights into the dynamic at work:

A stranger to inhibitions, repressions, obsessions and the like, he would have been the last to carry a Nietzsche complex through the larger part of his life. The notion (which seems to have some vogue today) that he could not fall asleep without worrying about what he had done to Nietzsche and that his first thought on waking up was "how can I ever live down 'Zukunftsphilologie'?" represents the height of absurdity.⁵⁶

Solmsen is undoubtedly right: Wilamowitz probably never lost any sleep over his impetuous attack on the man who would become the most influential thinker of the century. And yet: without wanting to engage in any groundless theorizing of my own, the intriguing possibility arises that one reason that the young Wilamowitz had attacked Nietzsche's first published work with such unprovoked ferocity is that he saw much of himself in the book.⁵⁷ While not perhaps technically a return of the repressed, Wilamowitz's own seemingly impulsive reliance on his own intuition at a time when he most needed to heed scholarly scruples may signal that what he had principally opposed in Nietzsche was the very thing they shared in common and in fact may have constituted their greatest strength as well as weakness.

But when Wilamowitz attached his name and prestige to the original "Appeal to the Civilized World," he made perhaps even a graver mistake than abandoning the discipline of *Wissenschaft* and placing so much faith in his own intuitive judgment. It was an error that may have dealt a mortal blow not just to his cherished ideal of science, but also to the very existence of the culture and state with which he so closely identified. For the sixth and final claim in the manifesto had addressed not so much a disputed fact as a matter of interpretation. It read:

It is not true that the battle against our so-called militarism is not a battle against our culture, as our enemies hypocritically maintain. Without German militarism German culture would have been wiped from the earth long ago. [...] The German army and the German people are one.⁵⁸

This last, defiant assertion was meant to counter the argument being advanced abroad about the "two Germanies," namely that alongside of the universally

54. *Ibid.*, p. 7: "leicht ist der beweis, dass auch hier erträumte genialität und frechheit in der aufstellung von behauptungen genau im verhältnis steht zu unwissenheit und mangel an wahrheitsliebe."

55. *Ibid.*, p. 32: "eines berauschten traum oder eines träumers rausch."

56. Solmsen, p. 103-104.

57. Even William Calder, no apologist for Nietzsche, claims that "a comparison of Wilamowitz' own account of the origin of tragedy in his *Einleitung in die Griechische Tragödie* of 1889 is not that different from the historical parts of Nietzsche's book." Cf. Calder, "Wilamowitz-Nietzsche Struggle," p. 230.

58. Ungern-Sternberg, *Der Aufruf "An die Kulturwelt!"*, p. 145.

admired culture of Goethe, Beethoven and Kant there was the more unsavory strain of Bismarck, Treitschke, and Krupp. It was apparently hoped that this appeal to the Germans' higher nature would induce them to forswear their baser inclinations. Most of the signatories were convinced that this distinction was sanctimonious at best and in any case amounted to a blatant attempt to conquer the German people by dividing them. Needless to say, the manifesto's final, truculent claim did not win over any of Germany's antagonists. The acidulous comment by Alfred Capus, a member of the *Académie française*, was representative of the general reaction: "The infamous German intellectuals," Capus wrote in *Le Figaro* on October 15, "through their declaration that their culture is inseparable from Prussian militarism, have covered themselves with shame before the entire world."⁵⁹

Given the dismal, not to say devastating, response to the original pronouncement, Wilamowitz, apparently thinking that its message was either unclear or willfully misconstrued, decided that the best course of action was—to produce yet another manifesto. This time, however, he made sure he had full control over its content by acting as its sole author. On October 16, less than two weeks after the first one had been issued, a single-page statement went out to the world, written by Wilamowitz and signed by more than four thousand academics, or almost the entire faculty of all of Germany's fifty-three universities and research institutes. And, so that there would be no possibility it would be misunderstood, the German original was published simultaneously with translations into English, French, Italian and Spanish.⁶⁰ "We teachers at Germany's universities," the declaration began, "serve science and perform a work of peace":

But it fills us with indignation that the enemies of Germany, England at the forefront, want to make a distinction, allegedly in our favor, between the spirit of German science and what they call Prussian militarism. In the German army there is no other spirit than the one in the German people, for both are one, and we also belong to it. [...] This spirit does not live only in Prussia, but is the same in all lands of the German Empire.⁶¹

As it happens, the word "militarism" was not coined until 1861, when it was first used by Proudhon, who employed it neither positively nor negatively but merely neutrally to characterize the essentially agonistic quality of all human affairs.⁶² When the term made its way into Germany a few years

59. Cited in *ibid.*, p. 97. The statement by Capus is quoted after a German translation: "Die berüchtigten deutschen Intellektuellen haben sich durch ihre Erklärung, dass ihre Kultur untrennbar von preussischem Militarismus sei, mit Schmach vor der ganzen Welt bedeckt."

60. Bernhard vom Brocke, "'Wissenschaft und Militarismus,'" in *Wilamowitz nach 50 Jahren*, p. 650-651.

61. Cited in vom Brocke, "'Wissenschaft und Militarismus,'" p. 717. On November 20, 1914, Wilamowitz gave another speech titled "Militarismus und Wissenschaft," in *Reden aus der Kriegszeit*, pp. 77-94, which he intended as an elaboration and amplification of the statements contained in the public proclamation.

62. See Michael Geyer, "Militarismus," *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, ed. Otto Brunner, Werner Conze and Reinhart Koselleck (Stuttgart: Klett, 1972-1997), vol. 4, p. 20.

later, however, it was already marked by a strongly pejorative connotation and employed almost exclusively as a term of critique by various political groups within Germany who were opposed to Prussian policies, such as the Southern-German Liberals, Worker's Unions, and Catholics.⁶³ As Michael Geyer has pointed out:

There was one thing common to the divergent definitions of militarism before the First World War: apart from a few exceptions they were used as foreign or hostile descriptions for the Prussian-German army or for the constitutional and social structure of the Empire. This changed with the outbreak of the war. As early as 1914, the concept "militarism" was adopted as a proper designation for the institution of the army and for the entire German state; "militarism" was advanced as a legitimation and explanation of the Empire and very quickly of the "German character" as well.⁶⁴

Geyer himself does not explain how or why this shift came about.⁶⁵ Nicholas Stargardt has likewise argued that, prior to the war, "militarism may have been a particularly polemical and pejorative term but conventions also governed its use. Not till 1914 did the 'militarists' themselves adopt the word and rework it into a positive, national virtue."⁶⁶ Given the suddenness of this change, and given the tight control and concentration of public utterance after the war commenced, I think it is plausible to conclude that a single event and a single person—aided and abetted by many others of course—precipitated this fateful change in perception. By so explicitly and prominently joining militarism and *Wissenschaft* together, and by equating both with the "spirit" or "character" of the German people as a whole, Wilamowitz had endorsed, and perhaps even created, an association that would haunt Germany for decades thereafter.

The second manifesto, which so stridently embraced militarism in the name of the university, the state and German society at large, was thus a massive and momentous miscalculation, in its consequences far more damaging than the first had been. But this time, instead of generating international fury or dismay, Wilamowitz's vigorous endorsement of militarism was seen merely as confirming the growing consensus abroad about the true nature of the "German character," and many were only too happy to oblige Wilamowitz by taking him at his word. In one of the more restrained British contributions to the war debate, published at the end of 1914, the authors expressed with mock gratitude their appreciation that so knowledgeable and distinguished a spokesman could explain Germany's intentions to the world. "Prussia proper," they sardonically wrote, "is fortunate to-day in possessing in the

63. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

64. *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

65. This is also pointed out in Ungern-Sternberg, *Der Aufruf "An die Kulturwelt!"*, p. 58.

66. Nicholas Stargardt, *The German Idea of Militarism. Radical and Socialist Critics, 1866-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.152.

67. R. W. Seton-Watson, J. Dover Wilson, Alfred E. Zimmern, and Arthur Greenwood, *The War and Democracy* (London: Macmillan, 1915), p. 99. The Preface is dated December, 1914.

greatest living Greek scholar, Professor von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, a man who by birth and breeding is able to put the highest interpretation upon the aims and spirit of the Prussian State."⁶⁷ Others dispensed with such refined circumlocution. William Archer, a leading Scottish theater critic and journalist, published an open letter to Wilamowitz in 1917 that accused of him being nothing less than *The Villain of the World-Tragedy*.⁶⁸

After the war and everything Wilamowitz had fought for had collapsed, he retreated back into scholarly work and became more prolific than ever, producing well over 200 works before he died in 1931. But he never renounced any of his war-time positions, nor did he conceal his bitterness and disappointment that, as he said in 1923: "The world I knew was destroyed."⁶⁹

As we know, much worse was yet to come. Following the conclusion of the next and vastly more destructive war, representatives of the Allied Control Council met on February 25, 1947 to sign into force Article 1 of Law No.

Appendix

An die Kulturwelt!

Wir als Vertreter deutscher Wissenschaft und Kultur erheben vor der gesamten Kulturwelt Protest gegen die Lügen und Verleumdungen, mit denen unsere Feinde Deutschlands reine Sache in dem ihm aufgezwungenen schweren Daseinskampfe zu beschmutzen trachten. Der eherne Mund der Ereignisse hat die Ausstreuung erdichteter deutscher Niederlagen widerlegt. Um so eifriger arbeitet man jetzt mit Entstellungen und Verdächtigungen. Gegen sie erheben wir laut unsere Stimme. Sie soll die Verkünderin der Wahrheit sein.

Es ist nicht wahr, daß Deutschland diesen Krieg verschuldet hat. Weder das Volk hat ihn gewollt noch die Regierung noch der Kaiser. Von deutscher Seite ist das Äußerste geschehen, ihn abzuwenden. Dafür liegen der Welt die urkundlichen Beweise vor. Oft genug hat Wilhelm II. in den 26 Jahren seiner Regierung sich als Schirmherr des Weltfriedens erwiesen; oft genug haben selbst unsere Gegner dies anerkannt. Ja, dieser nämliche Kaiser, den sie jetzt einen Attila zu nennen wagen, ist jahrzehntelang wegen seiner unerschütterlichen Friedensliebe von ihnen verspottet worden. Erst als eine schon lange an den Grenzen lauende Übermacht von drei Seiten über unser Volk herfiel, hat es sich erhoben wie ein Mann.

Es ist nicht wahr, daß wir freventlich die Neutralität Belgiens verletzt haben. Nachweislich waren Frankreich und England zu ihrer Verletzung

68. William Archer, *The Villain of the World-Tragedy. A Letter to Professor Ulrich v. Wilamowitz Möllendorf* [sic] (London: T. Fischer Unwin, 1917). Archer also wrote a play based on the destruction of Louvain; cf. *War is War, or The Germans in Belgium: A Drama of 1914* (London: Duckworth, 1919).

69. Gilbert Murray, "Memories of Wilamowitz," p. 14. Wilamowitz commented often on the political situation after the war, perhaps most vigorously in the essay *Der griechische und platonische Staatsgedanke* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1919). But in his mem-

46, which proclaimed: "The Prussian State, which from early days has been a bearer of militarism and reaction in Germany, has de facto ceased to exist."⁷⁰

Although it would be too much to make Wilamowitz solely or even primarily responsible, however inadvertently, for the dissolution of Prussia, his singular role in cementing its intimate connection with militarism in the minds of its enemies seems incontrovertible. For the perception that "Prussian militarism" and Germany were identical, so firmly held that it served as the justification for eradicating Prussia after the Second World War, far from existing "from early days," had gained currency instead only relatively recently, during the first weeks and months of the previous war, a view promoted and affirmed—indeed, one partially fabricated—by one of the most respected scholars of the day. Thus, it was by his own actions, by being too much of a patriot and too little of a scholar at a critical juncture in his nation's history, by yielding too compliantly to his constitutional *Streitbarkeit*, that Wilamowitz ultimately betrayed the two institutions—the German university and the Prussian state—that had been the lodestars of his life.

Appendix

To the Civilized World!

As representatives of German Science and Art, we hereby protest to the entire civilized world against the lies and slander with which our enemies are endeavoring to stain Germany's pure cause in the grave struggle for existence that has been forced upon it. The iron mouth of events has refuted the fictions being spread of German defeats. As a result, there are even more eager attempts to produce misrepresentation and suspicion. We loudly raise our voice against them. It shall be the herald of truth.

It is not true that Germany is guilty of having caused this war. Neither the people, the government, nor the Emperor wanted it. The most extreme measures were taken on the German side to prevent it. Documentary evidence of this is available to the world. In the 26 years of his governance, Wilhelm II has often enough shown himself to be a protector of world peace; often enough even our opponents have acknowledged this. Indeed, this same Emperor, whom they now dare to call Attila, had been derided for decades for his unshakeable love of peace. Only when a superior power that had long lain in wait at our borders attacked our people from three sides, it arose as one man.

It is not true that we criminally violated Belgium's neutrality. It can be demonstrated that France and England were determined to violate it, and it can like-

oirs as well, which end with the beginning of the war, he admitted *en passant* that "in the hopeless mood just after the downfall of my fatherland, I believed my death was also near." *Erinnerungen*, pp. 178-79: "In der verzweifelten Stimmung gleich nach dem Untergange meines Vaterlandes glaubte ich auch meinen Tod nahe."

70. Christopher Clark, *Iron Kingdom. The Rise and Downfall of Prussia, 1600-1947* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), p. xii.

entschlossen. Nachweislich war Belgien damit einverstanden. Selbstvernichtung wäre es gewesen, ihnen nicht zuvorzukommen.

Es ist nicht wahr, daß eines einzigen belgischen Bürgers Leben und Eigentum von unseren Soldaten angetastet worden ist, ohne daß die bitterste Notwehr es gebot. Denn wieder und immer wieder, allen Mahnungen zum Trotz, hat die Bevölkerung sie aus dem Hilterhalt beschossen, Verwundete verstümmelt, Ärzte bei der Ausübung ihres Samariterwerkes ermordet. Man kann nicht niederträchtiger fälschen, als wenn man die Verbrechen dieser Meuchelmörder verschweigt, um die gerechte Strafe, die sie erlitten haben, den Deutschen zum Verbrechen zu machen.

Es ist nicht wahr, daß unsere Truppen brutal gegen Löwen gewütet haben. An einer rasenden Einwohnerschaft, die sie im Quartier heimtückisch überfiel, haben sie durch Beschießung eines Teils der Stadt schweren Herzens Vergeltung üben müssen. Der größte Teil von Löwen ist erhalten geblieben. Das berühmte Rathaus steht gänzlich unversehrt. Mit Selbstaufopferung haben unsere Soldaten es vor den Flammen bewahrt. – Sollten in diesem furchtbaren Kriege Kunstwerke zerstört worden sein oder noch zerstört werden, so würde jeder Deutsche es beklagen. Aber so wenig wir uns in der Liebe zur Kunst von irgend jemand übertreffen lassen, so entschieden lehnen wir es ab, die Erhaltung eines Kunstwerks mit einer deutschen Niederlage zu erkaufen.

Es ist nicht wahr, daß unsere Kriegführung die Gesetze des Völkerrechts mißachtet. Sie kennt keine zuchtlose Grausamkeit. Im Osten aber trinkt das Blut der von russischen Horden hingeschlachteten Frauen und Kinder die Erde, und im Westen zerreißen Dumdumgeschosse unseren Kriegern die Brust. Sich als Verteidiger europäischer Zivilisation zu gebärden, haben die am wenigsten das Recht, die sich mit Russen und Serben verbünden und der Welt das schmachvolle Schauspiel bieten, Mongolen und Neger auf die weiße Rasse zu hetzen.

Es ist nicht wahr, daß der Kampf gegen unseren sogenannten Militarismus kein Kampf gegen unsere Kultur ist, wie unsere Feinde heuchlerisch vorgeben. Ohne den deutschen Militarismus wäre die deutsche Kultur längst vom Erdboden getilgt. Zu ihrem Schutz ist er aus ihr hervorgegangen in einem Lande, das jahrhundertlang von Raubzügen heimgesucht wurde wie kein zweites. Deutsches Heer und deutsches Volk sind eins. Dieses Bewußtsein verbrüdernd heute 70 Millionen Deutsche ohne Unterschied der Bildung, des Standes und der Partei.

Wir können die vergifteten Waffen der Lüge unseren Feinden nicht entwenden. Wir können nur in alle Welt hinausrufen, daß sie falsches Zeugnis ablegen wider uns. Euch, die Ihr uns kennt, die Ihr bisher gemeinsam mit uns den höchsten Besitz der Menschheit gehütet habt, Euch rufen wir zu:

wise be demonstrated that Belgium had agreeable to that. It would have been suicide not to have preempted them.

It is not true that the life and property of a single Belgian citizen have been touched without it having been necessitated by the most bitter self-defense. For again and again, despite all warnings, the population shot at them in ambush, mutilated the injured, murdered doctors performing their Samaritan duties. One cannot falsify the facts more abjectly than by keeping silent about the crimes of these assassins in order to turn the just punishment they received into a crime on the part of the Germans.

It is not true that our troops raged brutally against Louvain. They were, with a heavy heart, obliged to seek retribution from a frenzied population, which had insidiously attacked them in their quarters, by firing upon part of the city. The greatest part of Louvain has been preserved. The famous Town Hall stands entirely undamaged. Through self-sacrifice, our soldiers saved it from the flames. – If works of art have been destroyed, or may yet be destroyed, in this terrible war, every German would lament it. But just as little as we would allow anyone to outdo us in the love of art, so too do we just as decisively reject paying for the preservation of a work of art with a German defeat.

It is not true that our conduct of war ignores international laws. It knows no undisciplined cruelty. But in the East, the earth is saturated with the blood of women and children butchered by Russian hordes, and in the West, dum-dum bullets mutilate the breasts of our soldiers. Those who ally themselves with Russians and Serbs and offer to the world the shameful spectacle of setting Mongols and Negroes upon the white race, have the least right to pose as the defenders of European civilization

It is not true that the battle against our so-called militarism is not a battle against our culture, as our enemies hypocritically maintain. Were it not for German militarism, German culture would long since have been wiped from the earth. Militarism emanated from this culture to protect it in a land that for centuries was devastated by marauding raids like no other. The German army and the German people are one. Today this awareness unites 70 million Germans as brothers beyond the distinctions of education, class and party affiliation.

We cannot wrest the poisoned weapon of lies out of the hands of our enemies. We can only proclaim to all the world, that our enemies are bearing false witness against us. To those of you who know us, who have together with us preserved the highest possession of humanity, to you we proclaim:

Glaubt uns! Glaubt, daß wir diesen Kampf zu Ende kämpfen werden als ein Kulturvolk, dem das Vermächtnis eines Goethe, eines Beethoven, eines Kant ebenso heilig ist wie sein Herd und seine Scholle.

Dafür stehen wir Euch ein mit unserem Namen und mit unserer Ehre!

Erklärung der Hochschullehrer des Deutschen Reiches

Wir Lehrer an Deutschlands Universitäten und Hochschulen dienen der Wissenschaft und treiben ein Werk des Friedens. Aber es erfüllt uns mit Entrüstung, daß die Feinde Deutschlands, England an der Spitze, angeblich zu unseren Gunsten einen Gegensatz machen wollen zwischen dem Geiste der deutschen Wissenschaft und dem, was sie den preußischen Militarismus nennen. In dem deutschen Heere ist kein anderer Geist als in dem deutschen Volke, denn beide sind eins, und wir gehören auch dazu.

Unser Heer pflegt auch die Wissenschaft und dankt ihr nicht zum wenigsten seine Leistungen. Der Dienst im Heer macht unsere Jugend tüchtig auch für alle Werke des Friedens, auch für die Wissenschaft. Denn er erzieht sie zu selbststentsagender Pflichttreue und verleiht ihr das Selbstbewußtsein und das Ehrgefühl des wahrhaft freien Mannes, der sich willig dem Ganzen unterordnet. Dieser Geist lebt nicht nur in Preußen, sondern ist derselbe in allen Ländern des Deutschen Reiches.

Es ist der gleiche in Krieg und Frieden. Jetzt steht unser Heer im Kampfe für Deutschlands Freiheit und damit für alle Güter des Friedens und der Gesittung nicht nur in Deutschland. Unser Glaube ist, daß für die ganze Kultur Europas das Heil an dem Siege hängt, den der deutsche 'Militarismus' erkämpfen wird, die Manneszucht, die Treue, der Opfermut des einträchtigen freien Volkes.

Have faith in us! Believe that we shall carry on this war to the end as a people of culture, to whom the legacy of a Goethe, a Beethoven, and a Kant, is just as sacred as are its homes and its lands.

To you we vouch for this with our name and our honor!

Declaration of the University Professors of the German Empire

We teachers at Germany's universities and institutes of higher learning serve scholarship and carry forth a work of peace. But it fills us with indignation that the enemies of Germany, England at the fore, wish—ostensibly for our benefit—to polarize the spirit of German scholarship from what they call Prussian militarism. In the German army, there is no other spirit than in the German people, for both are one and we, too, are a part of it.

Our army also nurtures science and can attribute its accomplishments in no small part to it. Service in the army also makes our youth fit for all the works of peace, including scholarship. For this service educates them to selfless loyalty to duty and lends them the self-confidence and sense of honor of the truly free man who submits himself willingly to the whole. This spirit lives not only in Prussia, but rather is the same in all the lands of the German Empire.

It is the same spirit in war or peace. Now our army stands in battle for Germany's freedom and thereby for all the benefits of peace and morality—not just in Germany alone. Our belief is that salvation for the culture of Europe as a whole depends on the victory that German "militarism" will gain: manly discipline, loyalty, the courage to sacrifice found in a peacefully harmonious, free people.