

ENOCH POWELL'S *THE HISTORY OF HERODOTUS* AND THREE LETTERS FROM FELIX JACOBY: A RUDE PREFACE, NAZI GERMANY, AND ANTISEMITISM*

Abstract: This paper discusses three unpublished letters from Felix Jacoby (1876–1959) to J. Enoch Powell (1912–98). They met in Germany in December 1938 and corresponded in 1939. Jacoby took offence at the way Powell treated him in his book *The History of Herodotus*. The conversation veered quickly from scholarship to antisemitism. In the third letter Jacoby questioned Powell on his 'strong antisemitic bias' and declared himself 'no friend of the Jews on the whole', which raises questions about his own self-identification as a non-Jewish baptised German and his nationalistic views. It also allows to reconsider the long-standing issue of his alleged support of Nazism in a lecture in spring 1933 reported by Georg Picht in a controversial article published in 1977. Finally, Jacoby's personal tragedies and political opinions come out in his discussion of Pericles' citizenship law in the commentary on the fragments of Philochorus published in English in 1954.

Keywords: Felix Jacoby, J. Enoch Powell, Paul Maas, Herodotus, German nationalism, antisemitism, Pericles' citizenship law

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I. John Enoch Powell and Paul Maas

In December 1938, J. Enoch Powell (1912–98),¹ at the time Professor of Greek at the University of Sydney, went to Germany to visit his friend Paul Maas (1880–1964) in Königsberg (today Kaliningrad in Russia). Their conversations revolved around classical scholarship, but also around the possibility of Maas emigrating to England. The atmosphere in Germany was tense, especially for a Jewish family after the pogrom of 9–10 November 1938 known as *Kristallnacht*. Maas himself was arrested on 11 November 1938 and detained in a *Konzentrationslager* near Königsberg for eight days. Willy Theiler (1899–1977), a close friend and former colleague of Maas at the University of Königsberg, wrote to Powell on 13 November reporting on his arrest.²

There had already been an attempt to find a post for Maas outside Germany after he had been forced to resign his Professorship at Königsberg following the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service (*Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums*) passed by the Nazi regime on 7 April 1933. In 1936, Hans Lewy of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem contacted the Oxford Society for the Protection of Science and Learning (SPSL)³ regarding Maas' case. There was the possibility of finding a job for Maas in Belgium and the SPSL contacted Professor Henri Grégoire of the Free University of Brussels.⁴ The response was vehemently negative for political reasons: according to Grégoire, Maas was an 'extreme nationalist' and prior

¹ The most authoritative biography of Powell is Heffer (1998), with only a limited interest in Powell's career as a classicist. For Powell as a classical scholar see Todd (2004) and Matijašić (2020) 219–22 with further bibliography.

² Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge, POLL 1/6/12 (Part III): 'Leider ist Ihr Freund [sc. Paul Maas] im Zuge der Judenmassregeln verhaftet worden, seine Frau weiss seit drei Tagen nichts Genaueres, hofft natürlich, dass er bald freigelassen wird. Weder Sie noch ich können mit Nutzen etwas für den grossen Gelehrten unternehmen' ('Unfortunately, your friend [sc. Paul Maas] has been arrested in the course of the campaign against the Jews; his wife has not heard anything more definite for three days, but of course hopes that he will soon be released. Neither you nor I can usefully do anything for the great scholar').

³ The SPSL was founded in Oxford in 1933 with the aim of assisting university teachers dismissed by the Nazi regime. It provided short-term scholarships or lectureships, or assisted refugee scholars in finding new employment in Britain or in other countries.

⁴ Grégoire was the creator and enthusiastic promoter of the most original and active school of Byzantine studies in the pre-WW II period. For his obituary see Lemerle (1965); see also Ševčenko (1991).

to being dismissed ‘he had never ceased to favour the very movement which finally led to his own ‘fall’’.⁵

In late 1938, however, it was Maas’ own life that was at stake and Powell’s aim in Germany was to obtain for his learned friend a visa from the British Consulate in Berlin. He also contacted the SPSL as well as two influential colleagues in Oxford, Eduard Fraenkel, another German *émigré*, and Cyril Bailey, the editor of and commentator on Lucretius.⁶ Bailey’s college, Balliol, was able to offer Maas a grant, and Kenneth Sisam, Assistant Secretary to the Delegates of the Oxford University Press,⁷ offered him a job at the Press.⁸ His visa was ready on 31 January 1939, but Maas left the country just before the outbreak of hostilities in late August 1939. He travelled alone from Königsberg to Hamburg on 25 August, stayed at Bruno Snell’s house for the night, and headed to the port of Hamburg on 26 August. There were no more passenger ships heading towards the British Isles. Maas was determined to go back to Königsberg, but Snell offered another solution: he convinced Maas to take the train on that same day to Hoek van Holland, and from there by ferry he reached Harwich in England. The final stretch from Harwich to Oxford was the easiest part of the journey. ‘Without the efforts of Enoch Powell and Bruno Snell ... it would hardly have been possible to make the rescue train journey from Hamburg to Hoek van Holland’.⁹ Maas spent the rest of his life in Oxford

⁵ Henri Grégoire’s letter to the SPSL is quoted in Davies (2017) 89. See below, p. 132 for a further discussion of Maas’ extreme nationalism.

⁶ On Fraenkel see below, p. 116; on Bailey: Green (2004).

⁷ On Sisam see Stray (2016).

⁸ Letters from Fraenkel and Bailey, as well as correspondence with the British Foreign Office and the British Passport Control Officer in Berlin (addressed directly to Maas in Königsberg), are preserved among Powell’s papers at the Churchill Archives Centre: POLL 1/6/12 (Part III). On 10 December 1987, Powell gave an interview to the Imperial War Museum concerning his recollections of the war from 1939 to 1945. The interview was recorded and transcribed. The transcription is preserved today at the Churchill Archives Centre, POLL 1/6/26: pp. 1–2 include a recollection of Paul Maas. The recording of the interview is also available on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U_Se_QDKcC8.

⁹ Mensching (1987) 73: ‘Ohne den Einsatz von Enoch Powell und Bruno Snell ... wäre es kaum zu der rettenden Eisenbahnfahrt von Hamburg nach Hoek van Holland gekommen’. The detailed reconstruction of these turbulent years in Maas’ life is to be found *ibid.* 63–73. In Maas’ obituary in *The Times* (17 July 1964, p. 14) the anonymous author inaccurately reported: ‘For years he refused to leave Germany; and in 1939 he was imprisoned by the National Socialists. No doubt he would have perished in a concentration camp had not Mr. Enoch Powell flown to Germany a month before the outbreak of war and somehow managed to obtain his release’. This was corrected by Powell himself in a letter to *The Times* (18 July 1964, p. 10), which ends with a Thucydidean tribute to Maas:

and remained in close contact with Enoch Powell even after the end of the war, when Powell left academia and embarked on a career in the Conservative party to become one of the most divisive politicians of the second half of the twentieth century.¹⁰

II. Powell's *History of Herodotus* and Felix Jacoby's Reaction to His Preface

While paying a visit to Maas in Königsberg in those final weeks of 1938, Powell had the opportunity to meet another great German scholar, Felix Jacoby (1876–1959).¹¹ They met on 17 December 1938 at Ernst Grumach's house in Berlin.¹² Just like Maas, Jacoby had to resign from his Classical Philology chair in Kiel in 1934 because of his Jewish heritage. His father Oscar was a prosperous grain merchant in Magdeburg, her mother Gertrude was born Löwenthal. Jacoby was baptised at the age of eleven in the St Johanneskirche in Magdeburg on 30 March 1887, with the confirmation taking place four years later, on 22 March 1891. He did not consider himself Jewish. Like Paul Maas and Eduard Norden¹³—to mention just two scholars with whom Jacoby was personally acquainted—Jacoby was fully assimilated in German society and the academic environment, at least until the antisemitic regulations of 1933.

After being forcibly retired from his chair in Kiel, he moved to Finkenkrug, west of Berlin, with his devoted wife Margarete, born von der Leyen. Their house was ravaged by Nazi thugs during Kristallnacht on 9–10 November

‘He was my master; and what I learnt from him, far beyond the bounds of textual criticism and of Greek, is a possession for ever’.

¹⁰ The Churchill Archives Centre in Cambridge preserves several letters from Maas to Powell, most still unpublished (Giorgio Ziffer is currently working on their publication). For the study of the text of Herodotus, the most important of these letters are the short notes regarding Powell's translation of Herodotus, where he published an appendix that include his own emendations: Powell (1949) 687–722. This appendix, as well as other materials, have been used by Nigel Wilson in his recent OCT of Herodotus: see Wilson (2015) xi–xii.

¹¹ On Jacoby see Theiler (1960), Chambers (1990a), id. (2009), Mensching (2003), Wittram (2004), as well as various contributions in Ampolo (2009b).

¹² The Jewish classical philologist and philosopher Ernst Grumach (1902–67)—a student of Martin Heidegger and Paul Friedländer in Marburg, Lektor in Königsberg from 1930 to 1933, and from 1949 employed at the Humbolt University in Berlin and the Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin—is known for his work on the ancient Stoa and for his studies on Goethe, esp. his book *Goethe und die Antike* (1949): see Flashar (1968).

¹³ On Eduard Norden see Schröder (1990), Kytzler–Rudolph–Rüpke (1994), and Schlunke (2016).

1938. On 3 December 1938, the couple received an invitation from the Dean and Governing Body of Christ Church in Oxford to ‘continue your important work on the fragments of the Greek historians as soon as possible here in Oxford where conditions seem to be particularly favourable for carrying on such an undertaking’.¹⁴ The agent behind the invitation was Eduard Fraenkel, who had been a colleague of Jacoby’s in Kiel from 1923 to 1928 and, like Jacoby, was a baptised Jew who had lost his job at the University of Freiburg im Breisgau with the passing of the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service of 7 April 1933. In 1934 he had been appointed to the chair of Latin at Oxford University.¹⁵ Felix Jacoby and his wife arrived in England on 29 April 1939 and settled down in Oxford.¹⁶

A few months after their encounter, Jacoby wrote to Powell a short, handwritten message, dated 2 February 1939, that followed a discussion they had in person:

Dear Professor Powell!

I am very sorry, that there won’t be no [*sic*] continuation of our discussion about Herodotus before your sailing for Australia. There is a quite unexpected hitch in the proceedings, and our coming to Oxford is at present extremely doubtful. With many good wishes your
FJacoby.¹⁷

When Powell met Jacoby in Berlin, they had discussed Powell’s forthcoming book *The History of Herodotus*, which was being printed at that very moment by Cambridge University Press. The book was published on 17 February 1939, and Powell immediately sent out copies to a number of colleagues, including Jacoby.¹⁸ However, the German scholar was not pleased with the content of

¹⁴ Letter quoted in Chambers (1990a) 208 and, a little more extensively, in Chambers (2009) 22–3.

¹⁵ On Fraenkel see Lloyd-Jones (1971) and Stray (2014) with further bibliography. For a personal recollection of Fraenkel’s time in Oxford see West (2007). Jacoby and Fraenkel also shared a course on ‘Nikolaos und Sueton’ in *Winter Semester* 1926/1927 and *Sommer Semester* 1927: Wittram (2004) 38, 55–6, 168.

¹⁶ For the vicissitudes of Jacoby’s relocation to Oxford and his time there see Mensching (2003), which includes several letters from Jacoby’s wife Margarete to their children, and Wittram (2004) 113–31. See also Brockliss (2017) 65–6, 72–3 (who repeatedly refers to Jacoby as ‘the historian of ancient Greece’, although Jacoby never considered himself a historian: see below, pp. 129–30); Davies (2017) 81–2, 87–8.

¹⁷ Churchill Archives Centre, POLL 1/6/12 (Part III).

¹⁸ Details on the publication process of *The History of Herodotus* are to be found in Churchill Archives Centre, POLL 1/6/18 (Part I), including a letter from the Manager of Cambridge

the book. He wrote a vehement letter to Powell on 16 March 1939 from Finkenkrug:

Sir!

Yesterday I read your 'History of Herodotus'. I inferred from the tone of your references to my article in the *Realencyclopaedie*, especially from the 'cucu' in the preface, that you have a deep-rooted aversion not only against my writings but (as far as I can judge) against my person. As one cannot please everybody, I must put up with that aversion; but I am very sorry that I did not know of it before your coming to Berlin in December '38. Theiler and Maas should have told me instead of asking me—both and repeatedly—to meet you at Dr. Grumach's. I see now that they gave me a thoroughly false impression of the circumstances; and I think it necessary to assure you that I would not have obtruded myself on you, if they had told me the truth. Yours obediently
FJacoby.¹⁹

Powell replied on 17 April 1939, as we can gather from an annotation beneath Jacoby's signature. Unfortunately, we do not possess Powell's letters to Jacoby, and must reconstruct their correspondence solely from Jacoby's perspective.

What so infuriated Jacoby that he felt the need to write immediately to Powell? Jacoby—as is well known to Herodotean scholars—was the author of a formidable entry on Herodotus for the *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*.²⁰ It covers 315 tightly-spaced columns, and still represents a starting point for anyone venturing to do serious work on Herodotus. Powell, however, mentioned Jacoby's name only dismissively in the preface to his book:

As I care more about the soundness than the novelty of my reasoning and conclusions, acknowledgment to predecessors is rare. I have, besides, profited much more often from their mistakes than their successes. Yet the names of Kirchhoff, de Sanctis [*sic*] and even Jacoby will be found once or twice. Adolf Kirchhoff, indeed, is my only

University Press, R. J. L. Kingsford, writing to Powell on 7 February 1939: 'I have fixed February 17th as the date of publication for your book. You will be receiving your presentation copies in due course and I hope that you will be pleased with their appearance'.

¹⁹ Churchill Archives Centre, POLL 1/6/18 (Part I).

²⁰ Jacoby (1913).

predecessor in the compositional analysis of Herodotus whose work has stood the test of time.²¹

Other references to Jacoby included in Powell's *The History of Herodotus* are equally dismissive. Powell calls Jacoby's assumption that Herodotus visited Scythia before Delphi 'ludicrous';²² he contradicts Jacoby on the famous reference to Herodotus' proem in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (1409a29: 'Ἡροδότου Θουρίου ἧδ' ἱστορίας ἀπόδειξις), which Powell deemed an interpolation;²³ and considered it impossible to dismiss οὕτω ὥστε κτλ. at Hdt. 9.73.3 as a later addition, as Jacoby had argued.²⁴ But there is also room for agreement: 'I now think this impossible, in view of ἐμήκυνα as true past below, and agree with Jacoby (*P.-W. Suppl.* II, 222) in attributing the absurdity to Herodotus himself.'²⁵

The above-quoted passage from the preface was already singled out by the general editors of the Cambridge Classical Studies series in which the book was eventually published. Francis Cornford, the author of *Thucydides Mythistoricus* (1907),²⁶ wrote a letter to Powell on 3 July 1938:

Dear Powell

My co-editors and I would like to publish your 'History of Herodotus' in the Cambridge Classical Studies, but we feel bound to make one condition, namely that you will consent to alter one short passage in the Preface:

'As I care more about the soundness than the novelty of my reasoning and conclusions, acknowledgment to predecessors is rare. I have, besides, profited much more often from their mistakes than their successes. Yet the names of Kirchhoff, de Sanctis [*sic*] and even Jakobý [*sic*] will be found once or twice. Adolf Kirchhoff, indeed, is my only predecessor in the compositional analysis of Herodotus who is above contempt'.

²¹ Powell (1939) vii.

²² Powell (1939) 28: see Jacoby (1913) 257.

²³ Powell (1939) 63 n. 3: see Jacoby (1913) 207.

²⁴ Powell (1939) 75: see Jacoby (1913) 243.

²⁵ Powell (1939) 49 n. 1.

²⁶ See Bowen–Segal (2004). For a reconsideration of Cornford's *Thucydides Mythistoricus* see Chambers (1991). For a brief reference to *Thucydides Mythistoricus* in Powell's lecture, *The War and its Aftermath in their Influence upon Thucydidean Studies* (1936), see Matijašić (2022) 99 and 118.

We feel that the editors of the Series cannot disown all responsibility for the content of the Preface, as distinct from the body of the work, and that we cannot permit such a judgment on scholars whom we regard as worthy of respect.

If you are willing to send me a revised version of these sentences which we can accept, we will go on at once to the printing. Robertson is sending you a few notes on points of detail.²⁷

As anticipated by Cornford, a letter to Powell by Donald S. Robertson, Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge,²⁸ arrived a few days later (6 July 1938). It contained a series of annotations on points of detail regarding the manuscript of *The History of Herodotus*. It began with the following words: 'Dear Powell, Cornford, I believe, has sent you our decision about your Herodotus work—we were unanimous about the passage in the preface being cut out'.²⁹ Finally, the day after Robertson's letter, Adcock's message arrived, where he, too, mentioned the incriminated passage in the preface and the need to cut it out or radically change it.³⁰ He also mentioned that once Powell accepted the editors' request, they would send the manuscript to the printer and urge them to have the first proofs by 1 November 1938, since that would fit with Powell's travelling schedule from Sydney to the UK for the Australian summer break.

Two more letters from Robertson (25 August 1938) and Adcock (26 August 1938) are preserved among Powell's papers: both refer to the final arrangement for the publication of the book.³¹ Adcock informed Powell that he has taken his *Herodotus* to the Press, but also makes a final attempt: 'I very much hope you will be persuaded to make some further changes in the preface; I am sure you would not regret doing so'.

Powell did not make the requested changes in the preface, apart from a slight alteration to the final reference to Kirchhoff: 'Adolf Kirchhoff, indeed, is my only predecessor in the compositional analysis of Herodotus who is above contempt' in the first version was replaced by 'Adolf Kirchhoff, indeed, is my only predecessor in the compositional analysis of Herodotus whose work has stood the test of time' in the published preface. The rest is unaltered, despite the unanimous opinion of the three eminent editors and Adcock's very last effort in August 1938.

²⁷ Churchill Archives Centre, POLL 1/6/18 (Part II).

²⁸ Cf. Smith (2004).

²⁹ Churchill Archives Centre, POLL 1/6/18 (Part II).

³⁰ Churchill Archives Centre, POLL 1/6/18 (Part II). On Adcock, see Graham (2004).

³¹ Both are preserved at Churchill Archives Centre, POLL 1/6/18 (Part II).

Perhaps Powell did come to regret his choice of words in the preface to his book on the composition of Herodotus' *Histories* when he received Jacoby's message. A few days later, on 24 March 1939, Willy Theiler also sent Powell a letter of thanks for sending a copy of the book to the Institut für Altertumskunde in Königsberg:

My dear Mr Powell,
 as managing director of the Institute I have the pleasant duty of thanking you most sincerely for sending your Herodotus book. I myself have read the book with great interest and am particularly pleased that you are essentially transplanting the German analytical method to English soil. In a lecture I came to strangely similar conclusions to yours concerning the first book. I also think your opinion on the *Assyrioi logoi* is probable. Where else you go beyond the authoritative treatment of Jacoby, I am admittedly not without reservations. Thus in the assumption of a booksellers' first edition, which seems to me inconceivable at least in its conclusion.

Hoping to be able to see you here again, I send you my best regards.
 W. Theiler.³²

Theiler refers to Jacoby's *Realencyclopädie*-entry and displays some reservations about Powell's conclusions that go beyond Jacoby's treatment of certain issues, like his hypothesis on the circulation of a first edition of Herodotus' work in the 440s BCE.³³ An oblique criticism of the passage from the preface might also linger in Theiler's letter, given the fact that he mentions Jacoby.

Powell was evidently aware that the content of his book might incur some criticism, as he already annotated in the preface: 'I make myself no illusion about the unpopularity to which a work of dissection is doomed—in England

³² Churchill Archives Centre, POLL 1/6/18 (Part I): 'Sehr geehrter Herr Powell! | Als geschäftsführender Direktor des Institutes habe ich die angenehme Pflicht, Ihnen für die Überreichung Ihres Herodot-buches bestens zu danken. Ich selber habe das Buch mit grossem Interesse gelesen und freue mich besonders, dass Sie die im Wesentlichen deutsche analytische Methode auf englischen Boden verpflanzen. In einer Vorlesung bin ich bezüglich des ersten Buches zu merkwürdig ähnlichen Ergebnissen wie Sie gelangt. Auch Ihre Auffassung von den Assyrioi logoi halte ich für wahrscheinlich. Wo Sie sonst über die massgebende Behandlung von Jacoby hinausgehen, bin ich freilich nicht ohne Bedenken. So in der Annahme einer buchhändlerisch festen ersten Auflage, die mir mindestens in ihrem Abschluss nicht denkbar erscheint. | In der Hoffnung Sie wieder einmal hier sehen zu können, grüsse ich Sie bestens | W. Theiler'.

³³ This is what the last sentence of Theiler's letter on the 'buchhändlerisch festen ersten Auflage' refers to. Powell (1939) 34–5 and 85 ('In the 'forties his [Herodotus'] first work was published and became known there [in Athens], attracting the attention of Sophocles').

especially'.³⁴ But there is also another, more personal, testimony in a letter from a colleague, Frederick A. Todd, Professor of Latin at the University of Sydney from 1922 to his death in 1944. Powell evidently lent his copy to Todd in Sydney who in turn wrote to Powell on 17 March 1939:

Dear Powell,

Thank you very much for letting me see so soon [...] your paradoxically-to-be-named magnum opusculum on Herodotus. [...]

But why, *mi Paulle*, take for granted that the critics will arise and rend you? Why not wait and see? We who know you are not deceived; we know that you are by nature the friendliest soul, fairly oozing the milk of human kindness, the mildest-mannered man (in the words of the poet) that ever patched a text or writ a note: so why assume this Athanasius contra mundum attitude and invite the little fraternity of Herodoteans (also friendly souls, I imagine, most of them) to tread on the tail of your coat?

Yours as ever

Frederick Todd.³⁵

The book was received with much more enthusiasm than Powell possibly expected: most reviewers praised his meticulous analysis of the compositional layers of the *Histories* and regarded this *magnum opusculum* of less than a hundred pages as a serious contribution to the problem. For example, the French linguist and *Helléniste* Pierre Chantraine, wrote:

In its details, the hypotheses of Powell will raise, I believe, many objections. But his book makes an important contribution to the internal criticism of Herodotus' work. Even if one does not agree with his point of view, one should refer to this ingenious little book³⁶

An openly negative review was written by M. Cary in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies*: 'His [Powell's] work embodies much hard thinking and makes many good points on various matters of detail, but its main thesis remains not

³⁴ Powell (1939) viii.

³⁵ Churchill Archives Centre, POLL 1/6/18 (Part I).

³⁶ Chantraine (1942) 77: 'Dans le détail les hypothèses de M. Powell soulèveront, je crois, beaucoup d'objections. Mais son livre apporte une contribution importante à la critique interne de l'œuvre d'Hérodote. Même lorsque l'on n'admettra pas son point de vue il faudra se reporter à ce petit livre ingénieux ...'.

proven'.³⁷ Another reviewer, Richmond Lattimore, complained about the 'tone of the Preface' and the 'abrupt' treatment of predecessors:

A word must be said about references to earlier works. Controversy would have destroyed the desirable conciseness of this monograph; yet writers from whom the author has profited (if only by way of their mistakes!) need hardly have been dealt with quite so abruptly. A very few brief references are given to the work of Kirchhoff, Meyer, Jacoby, De Sanctis, Macan, and a few others; the names of Bauer, Focke, and Pohlenz are to be found only in the Bibliography. Nor does the ungracious, not to say peevish, tone of the Preface seem to be justified even by the high standards which the author has set and maintained.³⁸

As evidently displayed by these complaints, as well as by the unfulfilled suggestion of the general editors of the Cambridge Classical Studies series to cut out a passage from Powell's preface to *The History of Herodotus*, Jacoby's rage was not unjustified.

Powell's polemical bias—as well as his scholarship and predilection for textual criticism in general—was influenced by A. E. Housman, Professor of Latin at Cambridge from 1911 to his death in 1936, and, like Powell, a Fellow of Trinity College.³⁹ Housman's criticism of earlier scholarship, and especially of well-known scholars of the day, provoked considerable offense. His first published book, an edition of Book 1 of Manilius' *Astronomica* (1903), includes a lengthy introduction where he demolished most of the previous textual critical work on the Latin poet.⁴⁰ But already in one of his earliest articles on the manuscripts of Propertius, Housman chastised earlier works with the following programmatic statement:

Controversy is inseparable from the discussion of our subject, and the ensuing pages will of necessity contain a certain amount of polemical matter; but my purpose is not in the main controversial. My purpose is to establish my own theory: to demolish the theories of others is only a necessary incident in the process.⁴¹

³⁷ Cary (1939) 173. It should be recalled that Cary was born Max Otto Bismarck Caspari.

³⁸ Lattimore (1940) 333.

³⁹ Cf. Irwin (2004) with further bibliography; various contributions in Butterfield–Stray (2009). As an undergraduate, Powell attended Housman's lectures at Cambridge, but did not have a strong personal relationship with the famous professor: see Heffer (1998) 17–34, 42–53 and esp. Bloomfield (1998).

⁴⁰ Housman (1903) xi–xxiii.

⁴¹ Housman (1893) 109 = (1972) 238). Cf. Naiditch (1990), esp. 197.

Housman's pose and witty remarks towards his predecessors—often bordering on outright insults—had a strong impact on younger British scholars, especially those educated at Cambridge who came directly under the spell of the great Latin professor. Powell was certainly one of them.⁴²

Many years later, in September 1987, the Rt. Hon. J. Enoch Powell replied to an enquiry made by Mortimer Chambers on his involvement in Jacoby's emigration to Oxford in 1939. Powell courteously replied on 29 September 1987 that he had 'no part in the arrangements for him to come to Oxford'. He was probably right in pointing out in a following letter (19 October 1987) that Jacoby's name must have been confused with that of Paul Maas. The last part of this letter also includes the following reference to Powell's quarrel with Jacoby:

I do personally remember meeting Jacoby on a number of occasions. I am afraid that he took very ill a reference which I was unkind enough to make to him in the Introduction to my book, *The History of Herodotus*, Cambridge University Press, 1939.⁴³

Even after all those years, the main thing he had to say about Jacoby was that he took offence at the treatment he got in Powell's preface.

III. 'Somebody Told Me That You Had a Somewhat Strong Antisemitic Bias'

In the first letter Jacoby sent to Powell, on 2 February 1939, there is a reference to a possible relocation to Oxford. The second letter on 16 March 1939 displays Jacoby's irritation at Powell's treatment of his work on Herodotus. The third and last letter in Powell's archive was sent from Christ Church, Oxford, on the day of Powell's twenty-seventh birthday, 12 June 1939:

Dear Professor Powell!

Thank you for your letter from April 17. I am glad to know that it was only the 'critic-tradition' that dictated the wording of your preface, and I am quite prepared to understand this tradition, especially as I myself

⁴² See also Powell's preface to the *Lexicon to Herodotus*, where he derided the scholars who preceded him: Powell (1938) viii–ix.

⁴³ I have located the two letters from Enoch Powell to Mortimer Chambers in the latter's personal archive at his home in Los Angeles. His widow Catherine Chambers was kind enough to let me inspect her late husband's archive where I found the letters: they are still in the possession of Catherine Chambers, to whom I offer heartfelt thanks for her kindness.

have the disposition to use sharp words in the manner of Housman and the older philologists in a measure that I am sometimes sorry about. There was another point that provoked my letter. Somebody told me that you had a somewhat strong antisemitic bias. Now I am no friend of the Jews on the whole, and I have only few and not very intimate relations with them. But as things now are in Germany, although I can not change my feelings, I try now to repress them; and naturally one is perhaps unduly suspicious against other people, whose opinions one happens to know or believes to know.

It was a pity that we could not discuss the subject matter of your book personally; I would have much liked it, because I am not convinced by your method to solve the vexed question. The thing is to [*sic*] complex to treat it by letter. On the whole it seems to me that you try to revive the to me unconceivable [*sic*] theory of Kirchhoff, so that I can not quite understand your predilection for De Sanctis. But that is neither here nor there.

We are here since the beginning of May and trying to settle down for at least a year. I should have liked to take Herodotos for the subject of my first class in October-term, to try if on massive reflection I could change my opinion about the composition of his work. But as the committee [*sic*] for advanced studies wished for historical fragments, I shall have to take the Atthidographers. Maas has not yet arrived. In a letter by Grumach there was talk about June. But as one never gets accurate information out of German letters, I don't know, whether he can really come out or what his difficulties are now. There seem to be new regulations about the permits and passports of the so-called intellectuals, and new difficulties in taking one's library out of the country.

Yours truly
FJacoby.⁴⁴

The letter is extraordinary for several reasons. First, it is testimony to Jacoby's antisemitism and to the possibility that Powell had the same feelings. It also gives us a glimpse of Jacoby's initial intention to stay in Oxford for 'at least a year', which would later result in a much more permanent relocation. He would return to Germany only in early 1956 and died in Berlin in 1959.⁴⁵ In the letter we hear about his intention to teach a course on the Atthidographers. Jacoby's labour on the Athenian local historians was becoming, in his own

⁴⁴ POLL 1/6/18 (Part I).

⁴⁵ Chambers (1990a) 208; (2009) 23–9.

words, 'the work of my life',⁴⁶ and he would eventually publish a monograph, *Atthis*, with Clarendon Press in 1949.⁴⁷ Finally, the letter to Powell ends with a reference to their mutual friend Paul Maas and his difficulties in emigrating to England.⁴⁸

The reference to Housman and the 'critic-tradition' in Jacoby's letter shows that Powell must have mentioned his Cambridge professor to justify, and at the same time legitimise, the wording of his preface. Jacoby admitted that he was no stranger to this kind of attitude. In his own preface to the *Atthis* (1949), he declared:

The opinion about the foundations of Athenian history which I have argued in this book entailed a good deal of polemic. I have tried to keep this distasteful part of the work in reasonable bounds, and have confined it as far as possible to the annotations.⁴⁹

When Momigliano reviewed the book, he noted that

The tone of the book is polemical, but after all, no one will take Jacoby at his word when he earnestly declares that an assertion of Wilamowitz or Mommsen 'lacks sense' (125, 329), or mistreats Beloch or E. Meyer (331), or invokes the wrath of the gods on his noble and gifted colleague K. v. Fritz. For should anyone be inclined to feel embarrassed by such academic facetiousness, there is a note ready for them too: 'jokes in a scientific book are apt to be misunderstood as personal polemics by decorously grave colleagues' (379).⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Jacoby (1954) 'Preface', where he thanks the University of Oxford and the Dean and Governing Body of Christ Church 'who made it possible for me to go on with a work which by necessity has become more and more the work of my life'.

⁴⁷ Jacoby (1949): the genesis of the book has been brilliantly reconstructed by Chambers (1990b).

⁴⁸ See above, pp. 113–14.

⁴⁹ Jacoby (1949) v.

⁵⁰ Momigliano (1949/2012) 572: 'Il tono del libro è polemico, ma dopo tutto nessuno vorrà prendere sulla parola il J[acoby] quando egli afferma serio serio che una asserzione di Wilamowitz o Mommsen 'lacks sense' (125; 329), o maltratta Beloch ed E. Meyer (331), o invoca l'ira degli dèi sul suo nobile e doto collega K. v. Fritz. Ché se qualcuno fosse incline a sentirsi imbarazzato da simili facezie accademiche, c'è una nota pronta anche per lui "jokes in a scientific book are apt to be misunderstood as personal polemics by decorously grave colleagues" (379)'.

Perhaps Jacoby recalled the feeling that Powell's words had provoked and decided to be somewhat milder—even playful at times—in his criticism of other scholars' opinions in his next book.

IV. Jacoby's Own Feelings

Let us focus now on the remarks, 'somebody told me that you had a somewhat strong antisemitic bias. Now I am no friend of the Jews on the whole, and I have only few and not very intimate relations with them'. This is by far the most controversial statement in Jacoby's letter to Powell from June 1939.⁵¹ Whether Powell himself was an anti-Semite is problematic. The person who reported this rumour to Jacoby must have been someone in Germany, since Jacoby refers to 'another point that provoked my letter', meaning the previous letter of 16 March complaining about the tone of Powell's preface.

I interpret the most disturbing phrase ('I am no friend of the Jews on the whole ...') and the following statement ('... naturally one is perhaps unduly suspicious against other people, whose opinion one happens to know or believes to know') as follows. Jacoby reacted not only to the tone of Powell's preface, but also to what he believed was an insult dictated by antisemitic feelings on the part of Powell. This also explains why in the second letter (16 March) Jacoby wrote: 'I inferred [...] you have a deep-rooted aversion not only against my writings but (as far as I can judge) *against my person*'. But when Powell responded—as we can only imagine—that his preface was influenced by Housman and the 'critic-tradition', Jacoby was happy to hear that it had nothing to do with antisemitism. At this point he could also express his own feelings: he defined himself as 'no friend of the Jews' because he obviously did not consider himself a Jew. Nonetheless, he could not express his antipathy because of the situation in Germany and the persecution of the Jews, and people of Jewish origins, by the Nazis. That is why he was trying to repress his feelings.

The phrasing of the first part of Jacoby's letter of 12 June 1939 is quite contorted since he is trying to elucidate the difficult and complex relation he has with his Jewish heritage, his feelings towards other Jews, and the fact that other people considered him Jewish. As the philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah showed in discussing social and political identity, there is a clear distinction that is often ignored between internal and external identification. If we apply Appiah's reflections on the politics of identity, we can consider that

⁵¹ This part of the letter to Powell is reproduced, without further comment, in Goldhill (2022) 75 n. 60, where the author is discussing Werner Jaeger's complex relationship with Nazism.

Jacoby self-identified as a non-Jew, but the Nazi authorities still considered him Jewish, which had immediate consequences in real life.⁵² Jacoby's alienation from Judaism could evidently lead to a more or less manifest antisemitism.

V. Powell and Antisemitism in British Academia in the 1930s

Unfortunately, Powell's replies to Jacoby are not preserved among his papers in Cambridge. Of the three letters by Jacoby, only the second one from 16 March 1939 has a handwritten note 'answered' and '17 April 1939' stamped underneath Jacoby's signature. It is probable that Powell never replied either to the first letter of 2 February nor to the third of 12 June.

Was Powell an anti-Semite? In an interview given to the Imperial War Museum in December 1987 focused on the period 1939–1945, Powell was provocatively asked whether he had read Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. His reply runs as follows:

No. But I'd read enough to know what Nazism was about. And having been for three weeks in Germany in the winter of '38–'39, mainly living with Jews, I had no delusions as to the nature of the state with which one was concerned—not that I hadn't learnt the primer in Fascist Italy and was able to recognise, very well, the marks of a fascist state and its behaviour towards its own citizens.⁵³

Powell was no sympathiser of Nazism nor Fascism: he had a first-hand experience of both realities from his long sojourns in Italy and Germany in the 1930s.⁵⁴ What he despised most about these two forms of totalitarian regimes was the lack of liberty and their oppressive nature. When Italy attacked Ethiopia in early October 1935, Powell enquired of the college authorities whether his fellowship could be suspended if he volunteered to fight on the Abyssinian side.⁵⁵ But rather than an ideologically-driven contempt for Fascism, this episode displays Powell's desire to defend Britain's interests in Africa and the Suez Canal, as he himself admitted in the 1987-interview: 'I had entertained that sense of hostility towards Fascist Italy as threatening Britain's

⁵² Appiah (2005), esp. 110–13; id. (2006) 16.

⁵³ Churchill Archives Centre, POLL 1/6/26: p. 8. Cf. above n. 8.

⁵⁴ I have treated some of these issues in Matijašić (2022).

⁵⁵ Churchill Archives Centre, POLL 1/6/26: p. 11. Powell's statement is supported by several letters from late 1936 and 1937 from the Board of Military Studies at Cambridge and the War Office at Whitehall in London, preserved at the Churchill Archives Centre.

command of communications in the Middle East and particularly, the Suez Canal'.⁵⁶

This does not mean that we should exclude the possibility that Powell had antisemitic biases. In fact, Jacoby's letters testify to the fact that he was perceived as an anti-Semite by his German friends.

How widespread was antisemitism in British academia in the 1930s? The University of Oxford, which assisted Jewish scholars purged by the Nazi regime on a large scale through the SPSL, was no stranger to antisemitic sentiments: 'The university's general lack of enthusiasm for assisting the victims of Hitler's academic purge must be attributed in part to a residual anti-Semitism that Oxford shared with large parts of British society in the 1930s'.⁵⁷ Even though Powell later in his life defended his actions in the pre-war period and argued that he had many Jewish acquaintances (the reference in the interview is mainly to Maas), we cannot exclude that his general sentiments towards the Jews was hostile.

VI. Georg Picht's Testimony on Jacoby's Support of Nazism

There is also the possibility of treating Jacoby's self-identification as an anti-Semite as ironic when addressing Powell, whom he thought to have antisemitic feelings. However, I don't believe this is the right path to follow, since there is other circumstantial evidence that we might consider.

Jacoby's letter to Powell leads to another controversial issue in Jacoby's biography: his alleged praise of Nazism and Hitler in 1933. The story goes as follows. In 1977 the philosopher and educator Georg Picht⁵⁸ published the article 'Gewitterlandschaft. Erinnerungen an Martin Heidegger', where he discussed his personal acquaintance with Heidegger. In order to convey the measure of the 'Konfusion der Geister' ('confusion of the spirits') in the fatal year 1933, and implicitly absolve Heidegger for his support of Nazism, Picht recalled, among other examples, the beginning of Felix Jacoby's seminar on Horace in spring 1933:

When I studied in Kiel in summer semester [1933], Felix Jacoby, a great scholar and irreproachable individual, began his lecture on Horace with the following words: 'As a Jew, I find myself in a difficult position. But as a historian, I have learnt not to judge historical events from a private

⁵⁶ Churchill Archives Centre, POLL 1/6/26: p. 11.

⁵⁷ Brockliss (2017) 64.

⁵⁸ For Picht's biography and his significance for German culture see Bossina (2021).

perspective. I have voted for Adolf Hitler since 1927 and consider myself fortunate to be able to lecture on the poet of Augustus in the year of the national uprising. For Augustus is the only figure in world history who can be compared to Adolf Hitler'. He later emigrated to Oxford. A friend who visited him there after the war told me that his German nationalism was completely unbroken.⁵⁹

This testimony came to be known to classicists through Cesare Cases, Professor of German language and literature, who signalled it in a letter to Luciano Canfora in December 1977.⁶⁰ When Canfora published the book *Ideologie del classicismo*, he inserted on the back cover part of Picht's recollections:

In Germany, the German Jew, later an exile in Oxford, Felix Jacoby began the 1933 summer semester in Kiel by recalling that 'in universal history Augustus is the only figure that can be compared to Adolf Hitler.' A simple phenomenon of opportunism?⁶¹

The text inserted in the blurb is not quoted or discussed in the book itself, but one prominent reviewer of *Ideologie del classicismo*, Arnaldo Momigliano, reacted to this presentation of Jacoby's words with indignation.⁶² He questioned the veracity of such a recollection: how could Picht recall with precision the words of Jacoby 45 years after the event? One would have to imagine detailed

⁵⁹ Picht (1977) 962: 'Als ich im Sommer in Kiel studierte, eröffnete Felix Jacoby, ein grosser Gelehrter und untadliger Charakter, seine Horaz-Vorlesung mit folgenden Worten: "Als Jude befinde ich mich in einer schwierigen Lage. Aber als Historiker habe ich gelernt, geschichtliche Ereignisse nicht unter privater Perspektive zu betrachten. Ich habe seit 1927 Adolf Hitler gewählt und preise mich glücklich, im Jahr der nationalen Erhebung über den Dichter des Augustus lesen zu dürfen. Denn Augustus ist die einzige Gestalt der Weltgeschichte, die man mit Adolf Hitler vergleichen kann.' Er ging später in die Emigration nach Oxford. Ein Freund, der ihn nach dem Krieg dort besuchte, erzählte mir, sein deutscher Nationalismus sei völlig ungebrochen." The testimony was reprinted by Picht in different publications: see Ampolo (2009a) 294 n. 3 for the specific references.

⁶⁰ Canfora (2020) 16–17. See also the correspondence between Cases and Sebastiano Timpanaro, especially in two letters from Cases to Timpanaro dated 24 December 1978 and 3 February 1979, published in Baranelli (2004) 273 and 284.

⁶¹ Canfora (1980), back cover: 'In Germania, l'ebreo tedesco, poi esule a Oxford, Felix Jacoby apriva a Kiel il semestre estivo del 1933 ricordando che "nella storia universale Augusto è l'unica figura che si possa comparare con Adolf Hitler." Semplice fenomeno di opportunismo?'

⁶² Momigliano (1981/1984) 518–19. Momigliano's review triggered a controversy that would also compromise the personal relationship between the two scholars: Canfora (2020), esp. 11–21.

minutes of Jacoby's lectures. But another point was even more pressing. Momigliano found the juxtaposition 'als Jude... als Historiker' as improbable. Basing his argument on personal recollections and on Jacoby's own publications, Momigliano stated: 'Jacoby never considered himself a Jew [...]. Even less did Jacoby consider himself a historian'.⁶³

In fact, Jacoby was formally a Protestant, baptised as an eleven-year-old boy.⁶⁴ In pre-WWI Germany, Jews were excluded from access to public posts and university chairs. Assimilation demanded that Jews renounce their ancestral religion, and Jacoby's parents—Oscar Jacoby and Gertrude, born Löwenthal—probably hoped that through conversion their son would have a more integrated life in German society. They were not wrong, but they could not have predicted the strong wave of antisemitism and the rise of Nazism in the 1930s.

As to his academic career, Jacoby studied with the leading philologists of his time: his supervisors were Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff and Hermann Diels. He dedicated his life to the edition of the fragments of the Greek historians, a task for which he still deserves our gratitude, but also published editions of the fragments of Apollodorus' *Chronicle* (1902), the *Marmor Parium* (1904), and Hesiod's *Theogony* (1930), and contributed to the study of Latin elegiac and didactic poetry. He obtained the chair of Classical Philology (*Klassische Philologie, Schwerpunkte Latinistik*) at the University of Kiel in 1907. The Nazi regime expelled him from his chair in 1935 following the *Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums*, which took effect from 7 April 1933. Even though he had renounced the religion of his fathers, for the Nazis—and for some colleagues—Jacoby remained a Jew.⁶⁵

Therefore, the argument adopted by Momigliano to deny the veracity of the words quoted by Picht appears quite persuasive: 'If in the summer of 1933 Jacoby came to define himself as a Jew and a historian, he must have been out of his mind'.⁶⁶

Despite these criticisms and the attempts to slander Picht and his testimony,⁶⁷ Luciano Bossina has recently shown that Picht's words are not so

⁶³ Momigliano (1981/1984) 519: 'Jacoby non si considerò mai ebreo [...]. Ancora meno poi Jacoby si considerò uno storico'. See the reaction of Momigliano after reading Picht's text in a private letter to Canfora recently published in Canfora (2020) 18–19.

⁶⁴ See above, p. 115.

⁶⁵ The bibliography on Jacoby's biography is listed above, n. 11.

⁶⁶ Momigliano (1981/1984) 519: 'Se nell'estate 1933 Jacoby arrivò a definirsi ebreo e storico doveva proprio essere fuori di sé'. See also Ampolo (2009a).

⁶⁷ Dionisotti (1989) 102 called him 'un'oscura fogna tedesca' ('an obscure German sewer') in a clumsy attempt to defend his friend Momigliano, which shows a deep annoyance with Picht's testimony.

easily dismissed: the importance of Picht in German culture after WWII, the context of the quotation, and the comparison with other examples of the 'Konfusion der Geister' that Picht recalled are all weighty factors.⁶⁸ An apologetic intent is certainly evident in Picht's text, as Momigliano promptly recognised,⁶⁹ but there is no reason to dismiss the veracity of his recollections of Jacoby. Jacoby's words in Picht's article should not be read as a faithful transcription of his lecture on Horace in 1933: he indeed lectured on Horace in *Sommer Semester 1933*.⁷⁰ Instead, Picht's own reconstruction of a notable episode he had personally witnessed should be treated like a Thucydidean speech: not a precise reconstruction, but a general sense of what was said. This obviously leads to inaccuracies and distortions, but there is no obvious reason to suppose that Picht made the whole thing up.⁷¹ Of course, unlike Thucydides, Picht did not include a methodological section in his article, nor should one assume that these are Jacoby's *ipsissima verba*, which they are probably not. It seems evident that Jacoby did not identify himself as a Jew, either in 1933 or later. But it is possible that he praised Hitler in 1933 and supported the Nazi party from 1927 onwards because of his conservative views. The letter sent to Powell in June 1939 adds another layer to the complex relation between Jacoby, his German homeland, and his Jewish family background.

Georg Picht's quotation of Felix Jacoby's alleged words aroused much interest, not only among classicists, but also—and perhaps more importantly—in a wider scholarly debate on the political and intellectual role of German Jews in the Third Reich.⁷² Just like Picht, Rüdiger Safranski also used the example of Jacoby to contextualise (and partially absolve) Heidegger's involvement with Nazism. After stating that 'even among the Jewish population—despite the boycott of Jewish businesses on April 1 and the dismissal of Jewish public employees after April 7—there was a good deal of enthusiastic support for the "national revolution"', Safranski quoted Jacoby's

⁶⁸ Bossina (2021).

⁶⁹ Momigliano (1981) 518: 'L'articolo è una presentazione apologetica di Heidegger di un sentimentalismo nauseante' ('The article is an apologetic presentation of Heidegger culminating in a sickening sentimentalism').

⁷⁰ See Wittram (2004) 169.

⁷¹ Wittram (2004) 102–3 relies mainly on Momigliano's arguments and is—in my opinion—too quick in dismissing the whole issue: she declares Picht's quotation 'unglaublich' ('implausible').

⁷² The episode and Picht's quotation of Jacoby's words appear also in several languages of the Wikipedia webpage dedicated to Felix Jacoby: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Felix_Jacoby.

words from Picht's article in *Merkur*.⁷³ In turn, Saul Friedländer, in his well-known *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, used Safranski to recall Jacoby's praise of Hitler: he was actually relying on Picht's testimony.⁷⁴ Friedländer did not question Jacoby's words as reported by Picht, but commented: 'This, however, was a rather exceptional case.' I am not sure it was *that* exceptional.

VII. German Classical Scholars with Strong Nationalistic Views: On Friedrich Münzer and Paul Maas

It might be useful to compare Jacoby's political opinions with those of two comparable figures: Paul Maas and Friedrich Münzer. Let us start with the *Atthistoriker* Friedrich Münzer, the author of the renowned *Römische Adelsparteien und Adelsfamilien* (1920). A nationalist and staunch supporter of the Kaiserreich, Münzer was born into a Jewish family in 1868, but converted to Lutheranism in 1891. He was a Professor of Ancient History in Münster from 1921 to 1935, when he was forced to retire due to the new Nazi legislation discriminating against Jews and people of Jewish descent. Tragically unaware of the risks, he refused to emigrate. Münzer was seized by the Gestapo in July 1942 and brought to the Theresienstadt concentration camp where he died a few months later.⁷⁵

That Paul Maas was an 'extreme nationalist' was Henri Grégoire's opinion in a letter to the SPSL in 1936 quoted above (p. 113). Sebastiano Timpanaro, even if much later and without direct knowledge of the context and the person, expressed similar views on Maas' nationalism and alleged support of Nazism in a letter to Cesare Cases on 20 January 1979:

Maas (who, in his profession, was a kind of mathematical philologist, concerned above all with the formal rigour of statements) prided himself on his knowledge of military art, and had a boundless admiration for the Nazi generals, which led him to foresee to the very end (even when it was clear that the Germans were being beaten on all fronts) the victory of the Nazi armies, and not only to foresee it but, in the end, to wish for it, forgetting (or not caring) that if the Nazis had won he would have ended up in a gas chamber. And even after the victory of the Allies, he was left with a certain bitterness at the defeat of those who, from a technical-military point of view, had been so much better and therefore

⁷³ Safranski (1998) 230 ~ (1994) 271 (for the original German text).

⁷⁴ Friedländer (1997) 16; Jacoby is also briefly mentioned at 55.

⁷⁵ See Kneppel–Wiesehöfer (1983) and Wiesehöfer (2017).

had 'deserved' to win (in all this there was a persistent old-German, Clausewitzian training, mechanically transferred to Nazism).⁷⁶

This is very similar to what we know about Jacoby after the war, as attested by his contemporaries:

All who knew Jacoby testify to his conservative politics and life style. The late Gerhard Müller, a student of Jacoby in Kiel and later professor in Münster and Giessen, informed me that Jacoby shared for a time the optimism of many Germans over the proclaimed policies of the Nazi party, which he saw as reviving discipline and stability. He even advised his students to enter the party in order to bring into it reasonable and honest young men; were he not of a Jewish family, he said, he would enter it himself.⁷⁷

Gerhard Müller's testimony reported by Mortimer Chambers has a striking convergence with Picht's words. It confirms the sympathy that Jacoby had for the Nazi party. A remark such as 'were he not of a Jewish family ... he would enter it himself' could have been trivialised by Picht into the expression 'as a Jew, etc.' that Momigliano found so disturbing.

Other scholars were even more uncompromising when judging Jacoby's political and personal views. According to William M. Calder III, Jacoby was

⁷⁶ The letter is published in Baranelli (2004) 279–80: 'Il Maas (che, nel suo mestiere, era una specie di filologo matematizzante, preoccupato soprattutto del rigore formale delle enunciazioni) si piccava di conoscere molto bene l'arte militare, e aveva per i generali nazisti un'ammirazione sconfinata, che lo portò a prevedere fino all'ultimo (anche quando era ormai chiaro che i tedeschi le cercavano su tutti i fronti) la vittoria delle armi naziste, e non solo a prevederla ma, in fondo, a desiderarla, dimenticando (o non curando) che se i nazisti avessero vinto egli sarebbe finito in una camera a gas. E anche dopo la vittoria degli alleati gli rimase una certa amarezza per la sconfitta di chi, dal punto di vista tecnico-militare, era stato tanto più bravo e quindi avrebbe "meritato" di vincere (in tutto ciò c'era una persistente formazione vecchio-tedesca, clausewitziana, trasferita meccanicamente al nazismo)'. There is another example of such an attitude, this time from a German woman who was helping Jews in Rome just before and during WWII: she believed that the Germans would triumph in their war of conquest: see Stille (2013) 124, discussed below, p. 138.

⁷⁷ Chambers (1990a) 207. Also reported in Chambers (2009) 19. Gerhard Müller (1907–88) studied in Göttingen and Kiel, where he obviously met Jacoby, but also Willy Theiler (who later became his *Doktorvater* in Königsberg) and Giorgio Pasquali, who was *Gastprofessor* there in 1928 and made a strong impression on the young Müller. For Müller's obituary see Graeser (1990). For Pasquali's lectures in Kiel see Bormann (1988) 268 and 274.

a fully assimilated antisemite.⁷⁸ Such a statement—even if it sounds paradoxical—is now corroborated by Jacoby’s own words in the letter to Powell of June 1939. It is one thing to have supported Hitler in 1933,⁷⁹ but quite another to define oneself as ‘no friend of the Jews on the whole’ in June 1939 from his exile in Oxford. He also stated that he could not change his feelings, but tried to repress them because of the current political situation: was he referring to Germany or England? Whatever the answer may be, this removes any doubts as to the possible ambiguity of the antisemitic statement.

VIII. Jacoby’s Opinion on Pericles’ Citizenship Law of 451/0 BCE

When considering the lives of great scholars of the past, one is often seized by a reverential awe for their achievements. However, their moral stances and political views should also be a part of the equation when evaluating their legacy. This does not mean bringing posthumous trials to scholars who lived in troubled times—which has regrettably been done in Italian academia, especially against Arnaldo Momigliano⁸⁰—but rather historicising their deeds to better evaluate their scholarship.

On this premise, we might want to consider Jacoby’s remarks in his commentary on the Athenian local historian Philochorus published in English in 1954. Jacoby compared Pericles’ citizenship law of 451/0 BCE—the law that excluded people born from an Athenian father and a foreign mother from Athenian citizenship—with German antisemitic legislation:

⁷⁸ Calder (1992a) 16 n. 33; according to Calder, the same goes for Eduard Norden. In a review of Karl Christ’s *Geschichte und Existenz*, Calder (1992b) stated: ‘Beloch can only be understood if it is stated clearly that his “fanatical antisemitism” derives from his Selbsthass. Like Felix Jacoby, Friedrich Leo and Eduard Norden, he was the anti-semitic semite’. See also Calder (1999) 20 n. 60 where the author reports that Jacoby ‘is used by the American Jewish historian, Saul Friedländer in his *Nazi Germany and the Jews* as the *Inbegriff* [‘embodiment’] of the anti-semitic semite’, but this seems an exaggeration: perhaps it is simply Calder’s opinion, rather than Friedländer’s.

⁷⁹ See the sensible words of Momigliano in a letter to Canfora of 10 March 1980, published in Canfora (2020) 18: ‘Che cosa un povero uomo potesse dire o fare per salvarsi la pelle nel 1933 non è per noi né da immaginare né (se si tratta di fatti) da giudicare’ (‘What a poor man might have said or done to save his own skin in 1933 is neither for us to imagine nor (if facts are involved) to judge’).

⁸⁰ See Cavaglion (2022) 204–5 and 221–42.

Even the German legislation of 1933 A.D., in defining its fundamental concept, went back no further than the grandparents (on both sides), or where special purity of race was required, to a certain year (1800 A.D. I think it was).⁸¹

This is certainly a rather curious way to define the Nazis' antisemitic laws that brought to the exclusion from public offices of thousands of Jews and people with Jewish ancestry and would eventually result in the genocide of millions of European Jews. Jacoby was not among the victims only because he emigrated to England at the end of April 1939. It should be noted that these words were evidently written after the war and the fall of Nazism: consider the past tense 'was required'. We should also consider what was personally at stake for Jacoby: he was baptised aged eleven, received his confirmation four years later and never considered himself a Jew. Nonetheless, the Nazis, other Germans, and probably also Enoch Powell considered him a Jew. That is why he is trying to elucidate in a forcefully detached way the 'German legislation of 1933 A.D.': this was a deeply personal matter that disrupted his career and endangered his own life. But as a trained philologist in the positivist tradition of Wilamowitz and Diels, he attempted to conceal these sentiments in an overly rationalised comparison between Pericles' law on citizenship and the *Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums* (Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service) passed on 7 April 1933.

Other considerations of Jacoby in his commentary on Philochorus are worth quoting (I have highlighted some passages):

The idealistic conception, which regards [...] Perikles as the spiritual author of the law, regards it as a justified, even necessary measure against the loosening of the old discipline and manner of life, because the marriages with aliens, hitherto not expressly forbidden, 'began to be a serious threat to patriotic feeling'.⁸²

In order to attain this aim he [Pericles] wanted to make the Athenians the 'herrenvolk'. [...] I am not concerned here about the morals of the case, I simply state the facts which do not leave us in doubt about the ultimate aim of Perikles—the destruction of aristocratic

⁸¹ Jacoby (1954) 474. This passage was located and discussed by Irwin (2016) 119–20 with n. 114.

⁸² Jacoby (1954) 479, quoting from Beauchet (1897) 186: 'Mais lorsque les mœurs antiques se relâchèrent et que de fréquents mariages avec des pèlerins vinrent menacer d'altérer gravement le sentiment patriotique, Périclès se trouva dans la nécessité de réagir violemment et il rendit le fameux décret en vertu duquel nul ne devait plus jouir de ses droits politiques que s'il était né de père et mère citoyens'.

Sparta and of the idea of dualism by a democratic and hegemonic Athens.⁸³

However that may be, the political aim of Perikles was dictated by a firm political conviction which we have to respect even if we do not approve of it [...]. Perhaps the policy of Perikles was wrong because his political conviction was wrong, and his outlook [...] was too narrow and lacked imagination. But I am inclined to give him at least the benefit of the doubt.⁸⁴

Pericles' xenophobic law has been identified by several scholars as one of the reasons for the military and political crisis of Athens at the end of the fifth century BCE and its final defeat in the war against Sparta in 404.⁸⁵ The exact contours of the law remain controversial, but why should we have to respect it even if we do not approve of it, as Jacoby suggested? Even more disturbingly, Jacoby equated Pericles' Athenians with Nazi *Herrenvolk* ('master race') and exalted the law that excluded many Athenians from active political participation as a 'necessary measure against the loosening of the old discipline'. Even if the term 'Herrenvolk' in German is not exclusively related to Nazism, it is so in English, which is the language Jacoby used for his commentary on the *Atthidographers*.⁸⁶ His statements in the commentary on Philochorus sound like a mixture of Nazi racist policies and Prussian militaristic ideology.

Jacoby's words published in 1954 can be compared once again with the testimony of direct witnesses. According to Mortimer Chambers, Dieter Wachsmuth, the last pupil of Jacoby, reported that Jacoby, even after the war, said that the Nazis 'made some mistakes' ('Fehler gemacht hätten' in Jacoby's German), a very neutral expression for a brutal totalitarian and antisemitic regime.⁸⁷ In cases like this, the absence of a strong condemnation indicates a more or less obvious support.

⁸³ Jacoby (1954) 481.

⁸⁴ Jacoby (1954) 482.

⁸⁵ Watson (2010) and Irwin (2016), with further bibliography. For a thorough discussion of the extant sources on this law and a reassessment of its content, see also Blok (2009).

⁸⁶ A quick check on Google Books Ngram Viewer can give a visual idea of the usage of the term 'Herrenvolk' in both German and English: <https://books.google.com/ngrams/>.

⁸⁷ Chambers (2009) 19: 'Anche dopo la guerra, come mi ha informato il Dr. Wachsmuth, Jacoby disse dei Nazisti che avevano "commesso degli errori", verdetto che non mostra una condanna definitiva nei confronti di quel regime brutale'. Wachsmuth's testimony also corroborates Picht's words reported above: 'A friend who visited him there after the war told me that his German nationalism was completely unbroken' (see above, p. 128).

IX. Conclusions

It is not easy to draw conclusions from the old and new material that has been discussed in this piece, especially since it involves controversial political attitudes. Let us start with a recap of the facts. J. Enoch Powell and Felix Jacoby met in December 1938 in Berlin. When Powell sent his book *The History of Herodotus* in early 1939, Jacoby was offended by Powell's treatment of his work and wrote him an angry letter. Powell replied, but the Churchill Archives Centre in Cambridge do not preserve Powell's answer. However, from the following letter from Jacoby on 12 June 1939 we know that Powell defended himself by invoking Housman and the British critical tradition. This seemed to appease Jacoby, who acknowledged that he too was sometimes too critical of his predecessors. In this third letter, sent from Oxford, Jacoby asked if it was true that Powell had an antisemitic bias, and Jacoby declared himself 'no friend of the Jews on the whole'. A conversation that started in person in December 1938 about the text of the Greek historian Herodotus evolved into an exchange of letters culminating in a direct charge of antisemitism against Powell and an indirect admission of antisemitic feelings by Jacoby himself.

Very recently Luciano Bossina remarked that until new documents come to light, we will have to accept the fact that the whole controversy on Jacoby and Nazism must revolve around the testimony of Georg Picht, which has since been widely utilised, thoroughly scrutinised, and highly criticised.⁸⁸ It should be noted that Gerhard Müller's testimony reported by Chambers (above, pp. 132–3) has not been given the proper weight in this controversy: in fact, even if we don't find there the praise of Hitler as a new Augustus, it corroborates Picht's words on his support of Nazism. Be that as it may, new irrefutable documents have indeed come to light in the shape of Jacoby's letters to Powell in 1939, and we can reconsider the whole controversy with a new tile in the complex mosaic on the relationship between German academics and the Nazi regime.

The letter of 12 June 1939 helps to better contextualise Jacoby's praise of Hitler in 1933. Even though a general antisemitic sentiment does not equate to the support of Hitler and Nazism, it is still disturbing that such a sentiment should come from someone who was considered a 'Nichtarier' (i.e., a Jew) by the Nazis, was forced to resign from his professorship in Kiel, and left his native country to avoid deportation and ultimately death. Moreover, Jacoby's comparison between Pericles' citizenship law of 451/0 BCE and the Nazis' antisemitic legislation in his commentary on Philochorus' fragments shows

⁸⁸ Bossina (2021) 77.

that his sentiments were unchanged even a decade or so after the end of the war, as witnesses who knew Jacoby after 1945 confirm.

Glen Bowersock, in a piece on Arnaldo Momigliano's almost obsessive interest in biographies and autobiographies, both ancient and modern, wrote that 'without teachers, family connections, marriages, and personal weaknesses, Momigliano was at a loss to comprehend the person about whom he was writing. He considered these details essential for reaching the person'.⁸⁹ In this vein, the aim of this paper was to present new material on the biography of Felix Jacoby and on the much-debated issue of his adherence to Nazism.

The historian's job is different from that of the judge: the latter is called upon to offer a judgement, the former to understand, as Marc Bloch famously wrote.⁹⁰ We are not here to determine whether Jacoby was guilty of supporting the Nazis or not. It is obviously unfair to judge the behaviour of people in distressful circumstances so distant from our own.⁹¹ Politically, Jacoby was evidently a conservative and a nationalist. He probably supported Hitler and his party in the early stages of the political movement that ruled Germany from 1933. These inclinations are mildly reflected in some of his historical considerations on law and society in ancient Athens. However, when considering his Jewishness, we should probably take a step back and remember that he did not identify as a Jew, even though he was obviously aware of his Jewish origins. This does not in any way undermine Jacoby's contribution to classical scholarship, and his work on the fragments of the ancient Greek historians will remain 'a possession for ever'.

To conclude, it is useful to recall another case of estrangement from the Jewish tradition like the one experienced by Jacoby. In 2013 Alexander Stille published the book *The Force of Things: A Marriage in War and Peace*, which recounts the story of his mother Elizabeth Bogert, the daughter of a WASP Chicago lawyer, and his father, the Jewish-Italian journalist Ugo Stille. Ugo Stille, born Mikhail Kamenetzki in Moscow on 3 December 1919, was for decades the New York correspondent for the Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera* and editor of the *Corriere* itself from 1987 to 1992. His family was Jewish-Russian, but they escaped Moscow in 1920 as a result of the Revolution and its purges. They emigrated first to Germany and then to Italy, finally settling

⁸⁹ Bowersock (1991) 31.

⁹⁰ Bloch (1953) 138–40; see also the revised French edition: Bloch (1993) 156–7. Similar considerations were made by the Italian jurist Calamandrei (1939) 106–13. A different opinion was expressed by Ginzburg (1991a) in a stimulating and very personal book; cf. also Ginzburg (1991b).

⁹¹ Cf. Cavaglioni (2022), esp. 240–2, discussing Momigliano and the debate on his adherence to fascism in the 1930s.

in Rome in 1931 or 1932. Only at that point did his parents tell Ugo and his sister that they were Jewish, but Ugo did not want to have his *Bar mitzvah*, possibly because he was determined to be like other Italian boys. Less than ten years later, when the young Ugo Stille was trying to get a visa for himself and his family in Rome in 1940–41, he felt disgust for the other Jews begging for a visa at a local Jewish organisation: ‘I remember I spent a few days going to these Jewish organizations to find where you can get a visa, and I was so sickened by the people I met, I couldn’t stand actually all these Jews there’.⁹² Alexander Stille remarked: ‘Being Jewish was not something that my father felt to be part of himself, but was an identity that had been imposed on him from one day to the next, an identity with all sorts of negative consequences.’⁹³

Ugo Stille and Felix Jacoby were both legally Jews, but did not feel that they belonged under that label. In very different circumstances, they expressed similar feelings towards the Jewish population of Italy and Germany respectively. As Stille recalled in conversation with his son Alexander: ‘Italy at the time was full of these kinds of contradictions’.⁹⁴ Having followed Jacoby’s emigration from Finkenkrug to Oxford in 1939 and after having considered his letters to Powell, we might conclude by observing that Italy was not the only place that was full of contradictions at that time.

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⁹² Stille (2013) 98–100, 117–31, and quotation from 264. I found out about Alexander Stille’s book and this fascinating family history in Sandro Gerbi’s book *Ebrei riluttanti* (*Reluctant Jews*): see in particular Gerbi (2013) 113–15. Gerbi’s book was suggested in a pleasant conversation with Carlo Franco, whom I heartfully thank.

⁹³ Stille (2013) 264.

⁹⁴ Stille (2013) 124.

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