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Review of *Inside the Third Reich: Memoirs*, by Albert Speer

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Skilled stonemasons and stonecarvers are now difficult to find, and there are few books in print on these hard crafts. *The Stones of the Vienna Ring*, subtitled *Their Technological and Artistic Significance*, is an extraordinary volume.

The author is an Emeritus Professor of Geology at the Vienna Polytechnic who became interested in building stones about fifty years ago. He was active as a consultant to preservationists of architecture, and he eventually became a formidable authority in his interdisciplinary field. (The sixteen-page bibliography of the present book includes thirty-three books and articles by Professor Kieslinger, published between 1929 and 1972.) His expertise was particularly valuable after World War II when many buildings in Vienna were damaged by bombing or artillery and had to be restored or razed. Clambering about blackened walls, the author was able to identify hundreds of kinds of stone and brick and to make appropriate recommendations.

The volume is divided into a "Technical Part" and a "Descriptive Part." The first part discusses materials and methods which are rarely mentioned by architectural historians. In nineteenth-century Vienna there was a hierarchy of wall construction. In ascending order:

1. *Brick Wall*. Called in Vienna by the pejorative name *Rohbau* ("raw construction"). Used only for utilitarian buildings like factories and stables.

2. *Brick Wall, stuccoed*. The most common type of construction. Often trimmed with stone.

3. *Brick Wall, faced with stone slabs*. Only the brick is load-bearing. Similar to the American brownstone house.

4. *Stone Ashlar, backed with brick*. Both stone and brick are load-bearing.

5. *Stone Wall*. On the Ring only the Votive Church, Opera, University, Parliament, City Hall, and Burg Theater were entirely built of costly cut stone.

Hundreds of kinds of building stone were brought to Vienna, not only from all parts of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy but also from Italy, Germany, France, Belgium, Sweden, and Spain. Their very names have a rich, romantic sound—Rosmarino, Brocatello, Porto Venere, Wöllersdorfer, Savonnière, Grotto Chiaro, Bardiglio, Margaretenner, Rouge Royal, Breitenbrunner, Sankt Philippiner, Polcevera, Nalresina Galleria, Seravezza Brèche

Violette, Gallo di Siena, Engelsberger, Negro Marquina. The author remarks that most of the names are now unfamiliar in Vienna and unknown abroad.

The author also discusses some virtually extinct nineteenth-century crafts: the *Marmorierer* ("marblers") boasted that their artificial veined marble could not be distinguished from real marble in the same room; the *Punktierer* ("pointers") did all the hard carving for the eminent sculptors who modelled statuary in clay and never wielded hammer and chisel in their lives.

The second part of the book gives concise data and excellent descriptions of some 460 buildings. The public and private buildings of the Ring were enriched with muscular telamons, voluptuous caryatids, and other sculptural decoration. The author treats sculpture as an integral part of architecture. The Ring is a veritable outdoor museum of statuary, and more than 100 monuments and fountains are also described here.

The illustrations are without doubt among the finest architectural photographs ever published. It is evident that Elfriede Mejchar always found the precise place and time of day at which the bold relief of these buildings shows to best advantage.

This is an original, scholarly, and beautiful book. It was also a labor of love.

*

In the October 1970 *JSAH* this reviewer wrote about the first volume of this series: "On the evidence of this introductory volume and the announced program, *Die Wiener Ringstrasse* is a monumental work of relevant historical scholarship. It should be of outstanding value and interest to all serious students of nineteenth-century architecture and civilization."

The two volumes under review have kept the promise.

JOHN MAASS
City of Philadelphia

Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich; Memoirs*, trans. from the German by Richard and Clara Winston, Introduction by Eugene Davidson, New York: Macmillan, 1970, xviii + 596 pp., illus. \$12.50 hardback, \$1.95 paper.

"Out of our new ideology and our polit-

ical will to power we will create stone documents."¹ As early as 1920, when the Nazi movement had hardly begun, Adolf Hitler made this statement to his assembled audience at the Hofbräuhaus in Munich. From that time forward, until Berlin was crumbling in ruins around him, Hitler consistently repeated his promise to create a new monumental architecture, one which would leave "stone documents" of the "thousand-year Reich."

Other authoritarian rulers were lavish patrons of architecture. Often they sought to embody the ideals of their regimes in the forms of the buildings they commissioned. But no other regime ever made so much of its architecture in propaganda and public relations. None, for that matter, had a frustrated architect as dictator, a former architect as principal ideologue,² or a successful architect as minister of armaments and war production. Hitler's admiration for architects and architecture was unbounded. His desire to create a personal, but lasting, monumental architecture was a passion which sometimes even overrode his love of conquest, to which it was closely allied.

The publication, in 1969 and 1970, of Albert Speer's memoirs³ has renewed public interest in these and other aspects of the Nazi regime. Aside from Rudolf Hess, still serving his life term in Spandau prison, Speer is the only surviving wartime intimate of Hitler; he was, for a time, the second most powerful man in the Third Reich. But as the dust has settled, it has become apparent that Speer's lengthy memoirs reveal surprisingly little about the mechanics of Nazi government. Scholars have observed so many gaps in his account of the operation of his ministry as to shed considerable doubt on the whole.⁴ Speer's characterization of Hitler as a man both forceful and modest has helped to explain to a broad popular audience in this country Hitler's appeal to his followers, although

1. Barbara Miller Lane, *Architecture and Politics in Germany, 1918-1945* (Cambridge, Mass., 1968), p. 147 fn. 3.

2. Alfred Rosenberg.

3. *Erinnerungen* (1969) and *Inside the Third Reich* (1970). The English edition is more than a translation: it omits a number of details present in the German edition and includes a few new passages. Unless otherwise noted, page references in the notes below are to the English version.

4. See, for example, Felix Gilbert, "The Dynamics of Nazi Totalitarianism," *Social Research*, xxxix (1972), 191-203.

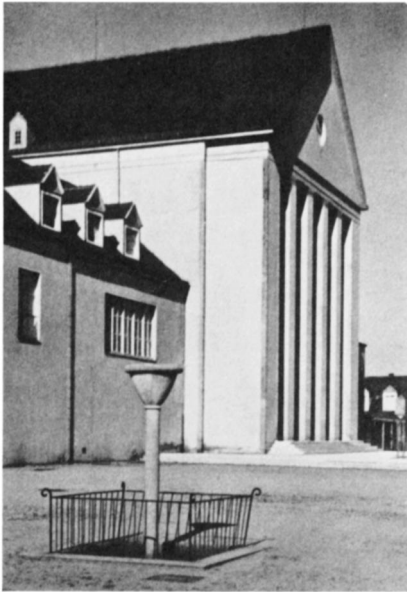


Fig. 1. Tessenow, Dance School, Dresden-Hellerau, before World War I (from Rittich, *Architektur und Bauplastik der Gegenwart*).

this characterization has been familiar to scholars for years from other memoirs. Speer's memoirs have also been much touted as a study in self-analysis, and certainly a truthful account of the motivations of a leading Nazi official would be good to have. Yet Speer's introspections, then and now, never go much beyond banal triviality:

In writing these memoirs I became increasingly astonished to realize that before 1944 I so rarely—in fact almost never—found the time to reflect about myself or my own activities, that I never gave my own existence a thought. Today, in retrospect, I often have the feeling that something swooped me up off the ground at the time, wrenched me from all my roots, and beamed a host of alien forces upon me.⁵

Thus in retrospect too, Speer fails to understand his reactions to the seductions of power and prestige.

Speer's descriptions of how and why he designed the major public buildings of the Third Reich are, on the surface, equally disappointing. He tells us that he succeeded in Hitler's favor because he could accommodate himself to what Hitler called the "American tempo" in building: he was able to design and execute structures such as the new Reichs Chancellery in a comparatively short time. He tells us also that the Führer liked him because he was very

5. Speer, pp. 32–33.

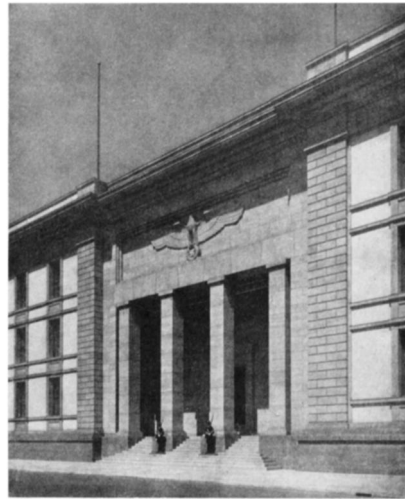


Fig. 2. Speer, New Chancellery, Berlin (from Speer, *Neue Deutsche Baukunst*).

young, respectful, and eager to learn from Hitler's earlier favorite, Paul Ludwig Troost, who died in 1934. He says too that, although Hitler's architectural ideas were sometimes a little grandiose for his taste, he shared with both Hitler and Troost a fondness for Neo-classical styles, modernized and brought up to date. Speer's own liking for Neo-classicism was acquired, he says, partly from his father and partly from his teacher and supervisor at the Berlin Technische Hochschule, Heinrich Tessenow.

Some of this is surely true: Speer's youth does seem to have appealed to Hitler, as did his speed and efficiency. But if one closely examines Speer's executed buildings, they show little resemblance to Troost's work, and less to Hitler's own early tastes in architecture. Nor is it possible to discern in them more than the most tenuous link to German Neo-classicism. Speer in fact developed his own quite distinctive style of monumental architecture, and successfully sold it to his patron, presumably over some objections. The nature of this monumental style, its origins and significance, are among the more interesting problems raised by Speer's memoirs.

Speer's architecture is not always easy to characterize; if one takes all the buildings and projects together what emerges is an extreme eclecticism. The planned great hall for Berlin, for example, is conventionally Neo-classical; the model of the Nuremberg Stadium, pseudo-Roman; the façade of the projected palace for Goering, Mi-



Fig. 3. Speer, studio for sculptor Josef Thorak (from Speer, *Neue Deutsche Baukunst*).

chelangesque.⁶ If, on the other hand, one confines oneself to Speer's best-known and most effective work, the complex of party congress grounds at Nuremberg, Speer's talent appears to be that of a stage-designer rather than an architect. Much of the drama of the Nuremberg buildings resulted from the use of flags as quasi-architectural elements (Fig. 8); Speer's ingenious arrangement of searchlights at night also helped to create excitement among the participants in the Nuremberg Congresses. But among the principal executed works, the party congress grounds, the new Chancellery (Fig. 2), the German pavilion for the Paris World's Fair of 1937 (Fig. 6), and the little-known studio for sculptor Josef Thorak (Fig. 3), there are common and significant formal elements. Speer was very fond of free-standing square piers, sharply cut, sometimes very elongated, with a fluted surface, as at Paris, sometimes smooth and framed by massive masonry, as in the entrance to the Chancellery or at Nuremberg. In the case of the Luitpoldhalle (Fig. 8), the flags, firmly anchored and columnar, visually take the place of piers set in a framework of solid masonry. These groups of square piers never supported any semblance of a capital or pediment. It is virtually impossible to see them as Neo-classical, as Speer professes to do, or to accept his claim that they came from Tessenow, who only used them once, and in a rather different manner (Fig. 1).⁷

6. Illustrated in Speer.

7. Troost, of course, used a somewhat similar pier in his Ehrentempel in Munich (see Gerdy Troost, *Das Bauen im Neuen Reich* [Bayreuth, 1938], 1, 17).

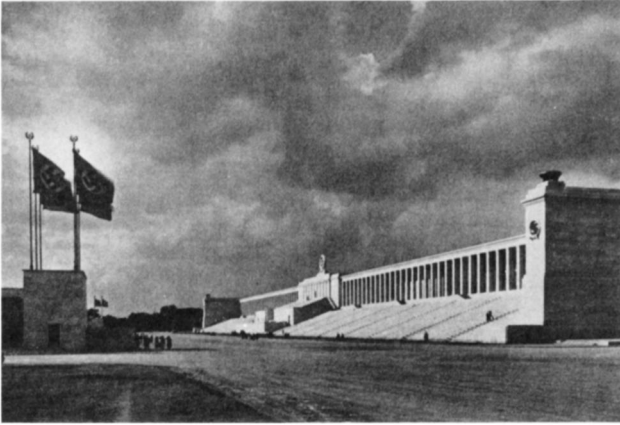


Fig. 4. Speer, Zeppelinfeld, Nuremberg (from Rittich, *Architektur und Bauplastik der Gegenwart*).



Fig. 5. Tomb of Queen Hatshepsut, Deir el-Bahari, Egypt (from Millon, *Key Monuments in the History of Architecture*).

The proportions of Speer's executed structures were also consistent. The buildings were never very large, especially by American standards, and they were always visually very accessible. No massive bases set the piers up above the viewer, no long flights of steps intervened between the visitor and the entrances to his buildings. Doorways and windows (Figs. 3, 10) were high and vertical in proportion, but without lintels, or with very low sills, giving a feeling of immediacy and participation to the viewer. The New Chancellery, like many of Speer's buildings, was set right against the sidewalks, with windows almost at eye level; even the casual passerby could thereby sense the accessibility of the Führer.⁸ These characteristics of Speer's buildings have been too long overlooked: they were large but not colossal; by their proportions they encouraged access and may well have made the viewer feel larger than life; and they were austere and sharply chiselled, often showing considerable feeling for the abstract interplay of solid and void.⁹ Speer was evidently trying to sug-

gest both the authoritarian and the democratic natures of the Nazi regime in these buildings—the first by massive monumentality, the second by proportion and accessibility.

Was he also, by omitting obvious historical referents, implying that the new regime had no historical precedents? Hitler himself vacillated on the question of whether Nazi architecture should take a wholly new form, or whether it should revivify some German past.¹⁰ Hitler admired both the Vienna Ringstrasse and the architecture of Imperial Rome. But these models were exceptionally difficult to reconcile with any exclusively German tradition. Thus when Hitler invoked historic styles in architecture, he referred more often to the Greek tradition, asserting, like many other racial theorists of the time, that the Greeks were among the original "Aryans."¹¹ Our assumptions about the overwhelming importance of race in Hitler's thought have led us to take these references very seriously and often to generalize, on the basis of insufficient evidence,¹² about the Neoclassical character of Nazi architecture.

small, simple but cozy houses, seems to me an unlikely person to have conveyed them to him. The only other radical architect whom Speer admits that he admired was Hans Poelzig, whose work was extremely erratic, highly decorative, often monumental, and very different in character from that of most modern architects in Berlin.

10. Lane, *Architecture and Politics*, pp. 189–190.

11. *Ibid.*

12. See, for example, Hellmut Lehmann-Haupt, *Art under a Dictatorship* (New York, 1954); Hildegard Brenner, *Die Kunstpolitik des Nationalsozialismus* (Hamburg, 1963); Anna Teut, *Architektur im Dritten Reich, 1933–1945* (Berlin, 1967), and fn. 9 above.

Speer's memoirs reinforce this position, since in them he insists that the predominant influence in his own work, apart from Tessenow, came from his admiration for the Doric.¹³ Apparently he clearly remembers being inspired by some antique prototype. How then can the absence of Neoclassical motifs in his executed buildings be explained?

The memoirs, despite their emphasis on the supposed classical inspiration, do help explain the actual origins of Speer's work. For when he is not talking about style, but is describing the size and character of his constructions for Hitler, he repeatedly compares them to Babylon and Karnak. And in my opinion, the most obvious prototypes for Speer's work are Egyptian and Mesopotamian. The visual similarity between the view of the Nuremberg stadium (Fig. 4) and the remains of the tomb of Queen Hatshepsut at Deir-el-bahari (Fig. 5) is striking; the studio for Thorak too (Fig. 3) bears a close resemblance to some of the smaller buildings being reconstructed at Karnak in the early 1930s.¹⁴ Even more convincing is the similarity between the fluted piers at Paris and contemporary reconstruction drawings of Assur (Figs. 6, 7). Speer's method of framing these piers or columnar devices can often be observed in such reconstruction drawings (Figs. 8, 9). Even the proportions of windows and doors are surprisingly similar to drawings

13. Speer, pp. 62–63.

14. Temple of Khons, Karnak, illustrated in E. Baldwin Smith, *Egyptian Architecture as Cultural Expression* (New York, 1938), opposite p. 169. See also Heinrich Schäfer and Walter Andrae, *Die Kunst des Alten Orients* (Berlin, 1925), pls. 204, 308, 319.

8. Set on some steps, the Paris pavilion is so tall and narrow that it dwarfs them; the viewer is scarcely aware of them. The Nuremberg stadium has, of course, no windows, but most of its entrances appear to open directly onto the sidewalk; even the main entrance to the main tribune is approached by a few very low steps. See Troost, *Bauen*, p. 29.

9. It was this kind of use of abstract forms in Speer's work which led me in 1968 to describe Speer's work as "a combination of modernity and neo-classicism" (*Architecture and Politics*, p. 193). I am here rejecting the latter assertion, and retreating from the former. It is possible that Speer absorbed some of the teachings of the modern movement in a general way while he was a student, but Tessenow, with his interest in



Fig. 6. Speer, German Pavilion, Paris World's Fair (from Rittich, *Architektur und Bauplastik der Gegenwart*).

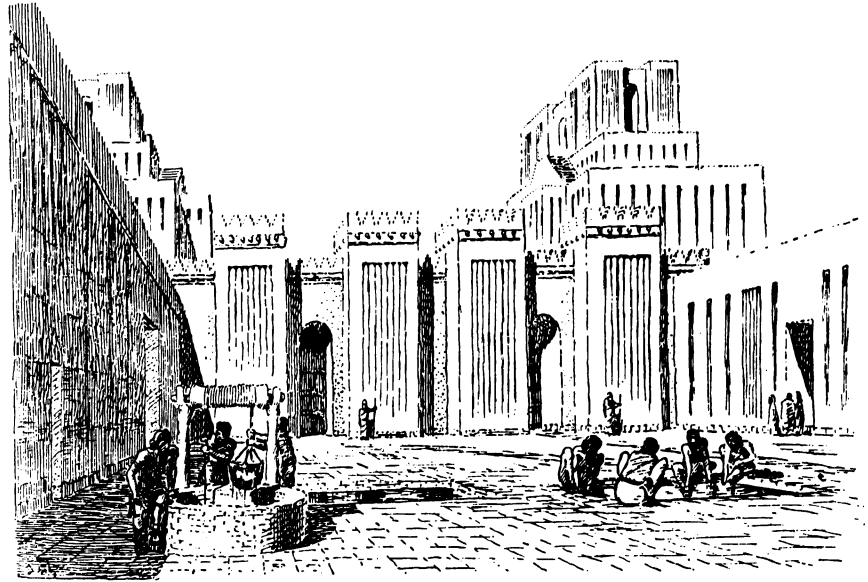


Fig. 7. Walter Andrae, Anu-Adad-Temple in Assur, reconstruction drawing, 1914 (from Andrae, *Das wiedererstandene Assur*).

of the interiors of Egyptian and Mesopotamian buildings (Figs. 10, 11).¹⁵ It is probable then that Speer substituted for one set of antique prototypes—classical and Neo-classical—another of greater antiquity.

Egyptian monuments have long been influential in the history of western architecture;¹⁶ in the middle 1920s they entered a new period of wide popularity because of the sensational discoveries connected with the tomb of Tutankhamen. Speer, however, probably saw the prototypes which influenced him not in the popular press, but in his classes in architectural history at the Technische Hochschule in Berlin (he studied there from 1925 to 1927, and taught there from 1927 to 1932). His principal professor of architectural history, mentioned in passing in the memoirs, was Daniel Krencker, archaeologist and author of works on both Roman and Egyptian architecture.¹⁷ Even more important as a prob-

able influence on Speer was Walter Andrae, Krencker's assistant in architectural history, a leading excavator at Babylon, director of excavations at Assur, head of the Near Eastern Division of the Berlin museum, and author of all the reconstruction drawings illustrated here.¹⁸ As a student of architectural history, Speer must have attended Andrae's lectures; as a teacher of architecture he may have known him personally. And even if Speer did not know Andrae personally, he would have known of him as he presided over the exciting and ambitious reconstruction, begun by the famous Robert Koldewey, of the Ishtar Gate in the Berlin Museum: the reconstruction was coming to an end during Speer's last

sum, Boghazköi, Trier, and elsewhere. Published, *inter al.*, *Das Mithrasheiligtum in Schwarzerden* (Berlin, 1925); *Das römische Trier* (Berlin, 1923); *Vom Kolossalien in der Baukunst* (Berlin, 1926); and, with M. Schäfer, "Neue Art altägypt. Riegelschlöss," *Zeitschrift für ägyptischen Sprache und Altertumskunde* (1906).

18. Walter Ernst Andrae, 1875–1956. Andrae was also the author, with Heinrich Schäfer, of the standard volume in the Propyläen Kunstgeschichte series on Egypt and the Near East (*Die Kunst des Alten Orients*), a book which Speer would certainly have used as a textbook. He was the author, in addition, of many publications on Assur, and a co-worker not only with Krencker and Koldewey, but also with Ernst Herzfeld and Friedrich Delitzsch. He was thus the most influential figure in near eastern archaeology in Germany after Koldewey's death in 1926.

years at the Technische Hochschule.¹⁹ The Egyptian finds of this period, while sensational, were not accomplished by Germans; those in Babylon and Assur, on the other hand, led by men like Koldewey and Andrae, were a source of German pride. The material remains in the Berlin Museum, together with the widely discussed reconstruction drawings, must have stirred the imagination of a young student and teacher of architecture in Berlin.

It is possible that all Speer found in such prototypes was a kind of modest monumentality which pleased him visually. It is clear that if he modelled some of his work on Egyptian or Mesopotamian monuments, he chose those of modest scale. He attempted no pyramid or ziggurat. Among the archaeologists producing reconstruction drawings in the period before 1933, Walter Andrae's were the simplest and least "colossal."²⁰ But it seems to me that there were other factors at work as well.

The acceptance of Egyptian and especially Assyrian prototypes involved the conscious rejection of other models and

15. U. Hölscher, *Das Grabdenkmal des Königs Chephren* (Berlin, 1912), pl. III; Hans Gerhard Evers, *Staat aus dem Stein* (Munich, 1929), I, pl. 60.

16. See, for example, J.-C. Lemagny, *Visionary Architects* (Houston, Tex., 1968), pp. 16–65, on Etienne-Louis Boullée.

17. Daniel M. Krencker (misspelled in the English edition of Speer's memoirs), 1874–1947. Professor Ordinarius, Technische Hochschule, Berlin-Charlottenburg, 1922ff., Rector, 1930–1931. Participated in excavations at Baalbek, Ak-

19. The *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft zu Berlin*, nr. 66 (April 1928), p. 23, Abb. 9, shows the reconstruction as not quite completed.

20. See, for example, the six different reconstruction drawings of the Tower of Babel illustrated in the *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts* (Berlin), xxxviii (1933), 746.



Fig. 8. Speer, Luitpoldhalle, Nuremberg (from Rittich, *Architektur und Bauplastik der Gegenwart*).

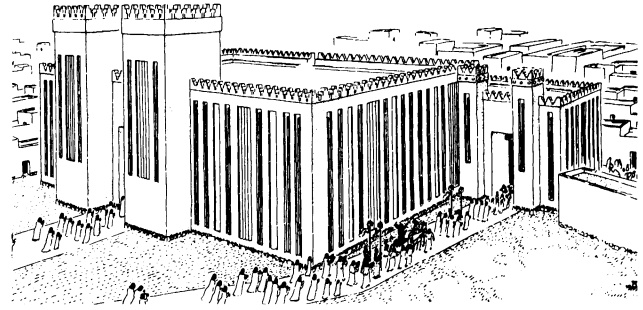


Fig. 9. Walter Andrae, Temple of Tukulti Ninurta, Assur, reconstruction drawing, 1921 (from Andrae, *Die jüngeren Ishtar-Tempel in Assur*).

their attendant associations. Despite Speer's lip service to Doric architecture, he turned away from most of the traditions of Greek architecture, traditions of great influence in Germany, where they were inextricably intertwined both with humanistic studies and with the more snobbish levels of academia. The most prestigious German classicists thought of themselves above all as art historians, though they were often archaeologists and historians of architecture on the side. They taught, not at the Technische Hochschulen, but at the universities.²¹ In the memoirs, Speer describes himself as having been both a practical and a rebellious young man; he must have shared the distrust felt by many young Nazis for academia, and preferred to study antiquity from the technically oriented archaeologists at the Technische Hochschule, rather than from the humanistically oriented professors at the University.

In addition to German classicism, Speer also rejected the teachings of the "Germanic" enthusiasts. He says in the memoirs that he remained unconvinced by Albrecht Haupt's *Die Baukunst der Germanen*, which attempted to trace back a "Germanic" heritage from German Gothic, through the

Romanesque, to the obscure remains of the most ancient Germanic tribes.²² He does not mention Robert Mielke, teaching at the Technische Hochschule when he was there, who attempted to do much the same things for German peasant dwellings, or Gustaf Kossinna, professor of archaeology at the university, a famous and even notorious exponent of the view that German culture and art originated from a primitive, "proto-Aryan" culture along the Baltic.²³ The teachings of Haupt, Mielke, and Kossinna exerted a powerful influence on Alfred Rosenberg, Richard Walther Darré, and ultimately upon Heinrich Himmler, whose enthusiasm for "Germanic" archaeology led him to establish an archaeological institute within the SS.²⁴ An effort to

22. Albrecht Haupt, *Die älteste Kunst, insbesondere: Die Baukunst der Germanen* (Berlin, 1923). For Haupt's rôle in contemporary architectural controversies, see Lane, *Architecture and Politics*, p. 137.

23. Robert Mielke, 1863–1935, as Privat Dozent at the Technische Hochschule, 1927ff., taught a course in the history of peasant dwellings. A well-known racial theorist, Mielke's works included *Das deutsche Dorf* (1907) and *Siedlungskunde des deutschen Volkes* (1927). Gustaf Kossinna, 1858–1931, Professor Ausserordinarium of "Germanic Archaeology" at Berlin University from 1902 to 1931. Among his most influential publications were *Die deutsche Vorgeschichte, eine hervorragend nationale Wissenschaft* (1912) and *Ursprung und Verbreitung der Germanen in vor- und frühgeschichtlicher Zeit* (1926).

24. The latter was the "Ahnenerbe" within the SS, which supervised all archaeological activities of the SS (including excavations at Nauen and Altchristenberg) after Darré stepped down as head of the Rasse- und Siedlungs-Hauptamt of the SS in 1938. For influences upon Rosenberg, Darré, and Himmler, see Alfred Rosenberg, *Letzte Aufzeichnungen* (Göttingen, 1955); Lane,

recall a Germanic tradition is apparent in such Nazi buildings as the Ordensburg and the various monuments constructed by the Volksbund deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge.²⁵ The entire absence of any Germanic themes in Speer's architecture suggests strenuous and continuing resistance to these ideas. If Speer was inspired by the teachings of archaeologists, he was very selective about it.

From the point of view of what is known about Nazi ideology, the appearance of Egyptian and Mesopotamian influences in Speer's work is very hard to understand. Scholars are in some disagreement about the nature of Nazi ideology, but they do agree that racial theories ("Germanic," "Nordic," or "Aryan") played a large part, particularly in Hitler's thought, and that these were closely linked with anti-Semitism.²⁶ Speer need not have known much about ancient history to have realized that the empires which produced his prototypes were Semitic, that they could not by any stretch of the imagination be supposed to have been "Aryan" or Indo-European (the two terms were often used interchangeably, even by reputable ancient historians).²⁷

Architecture and Politics, p. 256 fn. 34; and Herbert Arnold, "Archaeology and the SS," lecture at Wesleyan University, May 1971. According to Arnold, excerpts from Kossinna's writings were incorporated into textbooks used in SS training courses.

25. See, for example, the war memorials at Waldenburg and Liny-devant-Dun illustrated in Werner Rittich, *Architektur und Bauplastik der Gegenwart* (Berlin, 1938), pp. 43–45.

26. The variety of current scholarly interpretation of Nazi ideology is summarized in my forthcoming article, "Nazi Ideology: Some Unfinished Business."

27. See, for example, V. Gordon Childe, *The Aryans* (New York, 1926).

21. At the University of Berlin, Alfred Goldschmidt and Wilhelm Waetzoldt as professors of the history of art; F. Rodenwald, who was also president of the German Archaeological Institute, as professor of archaeology. It is true that Julius Kohte, author of one of the standard histories of classical architecture (*Die Baukunst des klassischen Altertums und ihre Entwicklung in der mittleren und neueren Zeit* [Braunschweig, 1915]) taught at the Technische Hochschule, but only as a Privat Dozent. A specialization in architectural history per se, even Greek architectural history, was not prestigious enough for the university.

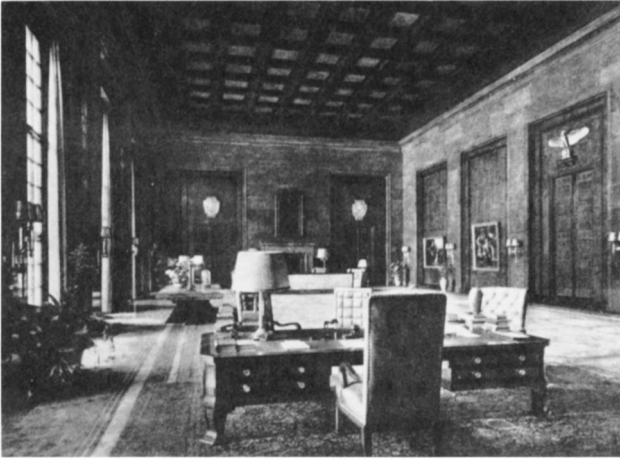


Fig. 10. Speer, Hitler's office, New Chancellery (from Rittich, *Architektur und Bauplastik der Gegenwart*).

It seems to me that racial theories of history meant little to Hitler and less to Speer. German academics examined the racial composition of ancient peoples with anguish,²⁸ but Hitler was often very casual and opportunistic on the subject: he was willing to describe the Japanese as "Aryan" whenever it suited his foreign policy. There are, however, other aspects of the history of the ancient empires which would have attracted both men.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, both the Egyptian and the Assyrian empires were well known to have been despotic. Both, moreover, excelled at conquest, and they were among the oldest of urban empires. Despite the prominence of "blood and soil" ideas in Nazi propaganda and in the thinking of Himmler, Hitler was a city boy, more interested in restructuring Germany's cities than in dissolving them. The ancient near eastern empires, moreover, were both relatively newly discovered and alien in culture; they offered architectural prototypes which were unencumbered by

28. See, for example, Josef Strzygowski, *Europas Machtkunst im Rahmen des Erdkreises* (Vienna, 1941).

generations of teaching about their significance. In attempting to find a pedigree for a "new" Nazi architecture, it is not illogical that Speer would turn to the newly old.

I would also hypothesize a degree of necrophilia on the part of both Hitler and Speer. From 1935 on, Hitler was obsessed by the idea that death was imminent; it is clear that at the same time as his political and territorial ambitions were becoming ever more boundless, he was constantly foreseeing death for himself and destruction for Germany. Similarly, although both Hitler and Speer sought an illusion of permanence in the regime's monumental buildings, both were fascinated by ruins, and often visualized these buildings in a ruinous state.²⁹ The attraction of the buildings of Egypt and Assyria may have been felt in these terms: that as ruins they lasted a long time, testifying to ancient might, but they embodied no living heritage. Perhaps Speer and Hitler envisioned a similar fate for the "stone documents" of the Third Reich.

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29. Speer, pp. 106, 114, and esp. p. 56.

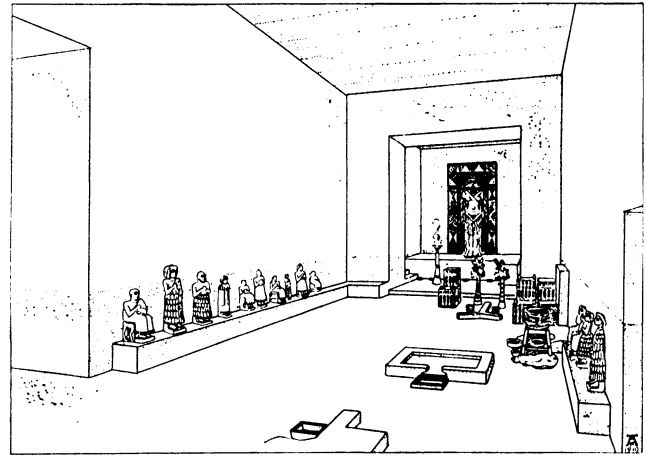


Fig. 11. Walter Andrae, Cella in the Ishtar Temple, level G, Assur, reconstruction drawing, 1919 (from Andrae, *Das wiedererstandene Assur*).

Barbara Miller Lane's important work *Architecture and Politics in Germany, 1918–1945* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard, 1968) was awarded in that year this Society's Alice Davis Hitchcock Book Award, "established to recognize annually the most distinguished work of scholarship in the history of architecture published by a North American scholar." Due to a series of unfortunate circumstances, the book was never reviewed in the *Journal*. Unhappily, it has received little evaluation elsewhere: see *Progressive Architecture*, I (December 1969), 112; *American Institute of Architects Journal*, LIV (November 1970), 73; and *Art Quarterly*, xxxiv (1971), 487–489. Of these five pages, those by Ronald V. Wiedenhoelt in the *Art Quarterly* are the most helpful. A further critique of Lane's analysis can be found in the paper by Kenneth Kaiser, "From *Typisierung* to 'Tableau Vision' in German Political Architecture," delivered at a symposium held at M.I.T. on Art and Architecture in the Service of Politics, 8–9 December 1972. —Editor