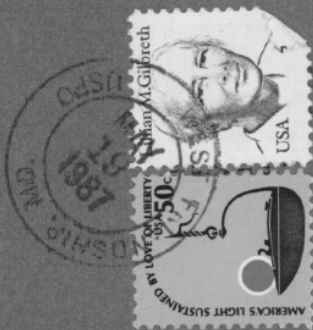


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*Rackham Reports*

*Horace H. Rackham  
School of Graduate Studies  
The University of Michigan*

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This issue inaugurates a fresh set of directions for Rackham Reports. We are moving to a single annual publication, one which will enable us to explore, in some depth, major issues — some exciting, some controversial, some troubling, but all significant — confronting graduate education in these years, and to share these explorations with you, the University of Michigan's graduate alumni and alumnae, faculty, and friends.

Our hope is to inform, to stimulate, to challenge and to celebrate. I expect to share with you, in each issue, some of my thinking about current directions in graduate education — both at the University, and nationally. Essays by our faculty will attempt to highlight some of the changing considerations in individual disciplines, and broader re-orderings of knowledge. We will attempt to pay attention to our intellectual traditions and heritage because I believe that greater awareness of the ways in which our academic present comes out of our past may help to make us all more thoughtful about the patterns and pace of change — in graduate teaching, research and scholarship.

Two new Associate Deans, John R. Chamberlin (Professor of Political Science and Public Policy, and Research Scientist at the Institute for Public Policy Studies) and Susan S. Lipschutz (Adjunct Associate Professor of Philosophy, and formerly Assistant to the President) have joined the Graduate School in recent months. They are both unusually thoughtful and imaginative colleagues, and you will be hearing also from them.

Finally, we intend to bring you up to date on the achievements of our faculty, and, especially, on the accomplishments of the remarkably talented, diverse body of graduate students who enrich, and often help to set the agenda for, the intellectual life of our University. We shall occasionally be focusing on the Rackham Building itself, which is arguably one of the most magnificent amalgams of neo-classical design and art-deco ornament of any academic building in the country. It is a splendid setting in which to advance the many forms and formats of disciplined discovery and open exchange at the heart of graduate education.

In short, our hopes for *Rackham Reports* are ambitious, and, we think, exciting. We await your reactions, and welcome your suggestions.

John H. D'Arms  
Dean

groups include the Michigan Society of Fellows, the Cognitive Science and Machine Intelligence Laboratory, the Evolution and Human Behavior Program, the Humanities Institute, the Program in International Peace and Security Research, the Group on Law and Culture. They also include a number of strongly inter-disciplinary graduate degree programs, for example, Neurosciences, the Institute for Public Policy Studies, and Classical Art and Archaeology. All of these groups have (or should have) this feature in common: their members are more interested in exploring new and unfamiliar intellectual territory than in policing academic borders and controlling academic boundaries. Will we issue assistant professors with licenses to participate in these hunting expeditions?

Sceptics will object — reasonably — that assistant professors need to establish themselves within disciplines before venturing outside them. But I am not advocating disciplinary emigration so much as a changed environment, one in which assistant professors are less engulfed, sometimes even imprisoned, by their departments. When faculty come to realize that there are attractive opportunities to congregate, converse and debate in extra-departmental, cross-college settings, the University may begin to seem less like an agglomeration of specialized academic and professional sub-divisions, and more like an intellectual community. Such a changed environment would have pleased President Henry P. Tappan who, in advocating broad gauged and vigorous graduate training, wrote in 1859: "In these higher courses we are advancing to the scope and dignity of a true University and maturing the noble plans of the founders." ❖

# Tappan, Bismarck, and the Bitter Connection:

## Reflections on Men and their Dogs in the Artful Memory

by  
Margaret  
Cool Root



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Tappan Hall, hard by the President's mansion on the central campus of The University of Michigan, was constructed between 1891 and 1896 — one evidence among many of an era of extraordinary growth initiated by President James B. Angell. When its doors were opened to students for the academic year 1894-95 (in advance of its total completion) Tappan Hall became the first “recitation hall” on campus which was devoted exclusively to this function (Fig. 1a)<sup>1</sup>. It is now the oldest surviving classroom building at The University; and for many years it has been the home of the Department of the History of Art (Fig. 1b).

As a result of an energetic fundraising campaign co-chaired by Vivian Shapiro and Bruce Benner, the Revitalization of this distinguished edifice was begun in 1983.<sup>2</sup> In the course of work, John P. Weidenbach, Director of University Business Operations, suggested that a certain bronze commemorative relief be resurrected from storage and installed in the lobby of the newly renovated building. This memorial sculpture, which now greets the visitor there in splendid fashion, depicts Dr. Henry Philip Tappan (1805-1881): first president of The University of Michigan, and posthumous eponym of the Hall itself (Fig. 2).<sup>3</sup>

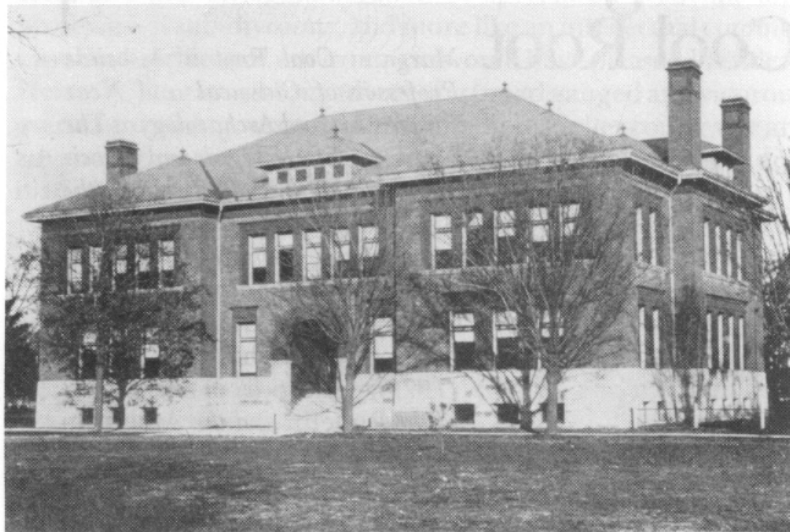


Fig. 1a. Tappan Hall in the early years. From Burke A. Hinsdale, *History of the University of Michigan* (Ann Arbor 1906) 68.



Fig. 1b. Tappan Hall in 1986. From the archives of The University of Michigan Department of Photographic Services.

The impressive monument comprises an eight-foot high concave panel framed by an austere bead-and-reel moulding, from within which a life-size portrait of Tappan emerges. Standing on a roughened base, he strides toward the viewer, his right leg and arm projecting forcefully from the confines of the frame. The vigor of his gait is enhanced by the way a gust of wind seems to have caught his waistcoat on its right side and by the way he holds his cane in his right hand. Clearly he is just about to thrust the walking stick forward and down in preparation for his next step. Tappan holds his left arm at his side, clutching a soft felt hat. Flanking him, a great mastiff stands, partially hidden behind the figure of his master. He emerges at a diagonal, with his head turned to echo the line of gaze assumed by Tappan. Although the man does not explicitly relate to the dog, an implicit intimacy is conveyed by the way in which the dog's face curves out from the rear plane and brushes against the master's firmly clenched hand.



Fig. 2. Bronze Memorial Relief of Henry Philip Tappan. By Karl Bitter, 1912. Photo by George Swain. Courtesy of the Bentley Historical Library, The University of Michigan.

When I first saw this Tappan memorial, I was finishing work on the study of a Greek funerary vase from South Italy, dating to the fourth century B.C., and recently acquired by the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology.<sup>4</sup> Since the central representational image on the Greek vase incorporates a man and his dog, I had become preoccupied with the range of meanings which this motif may have held in ancient Greek memorial sculpture and painting. Thus my immediate reaction to the Tappan relief was mild amusement at encountering so unexpectedly this particular evidence of the persistence of an eminently classical theme into the twentieth century. Because I had already wondered about this sort of thing in connection with Greek representations of men and their dogs, I was curious to know whether Tappan's dog was an artistic device (a figure added for compositional balance and/or as an emblem connoting the loyalty-inspiring attributes of the primary subject) or whether it was in its own right a portrait of an actual canine companion of the man. Preliminary research revealed the following.

The Tappan memorial was created by the sculptor Karl Bitter in 1912, some thirty years after the death of its subject. A monograph on this artist by James Dennis discusses the Tappan monument within the context of his other academic portrait commissions.<sup>5</sup> According to Dennis's interpretation of Bitter's artistic intentions (gleaned from remarks in correspondence and interviews with an associate of the sculptor), the dog was introduced into the composition "as an accessory figure" meant visually to complement the dynamic aspect of the man himself.<sup>6</sup> There seems from the artist's records to have been no notion of the dog's having been of particular iconographical significance for a portrait of Henry Tappan — no inkling that the presence of the dog would be a meaningful attribute of reminiscence about the man. While the portrait of Tappan is clearly designed with reference to photographs taken in his prime (Fig. 3), the image of the dog (we are told through Bitter's correspondence) had to be formulated with the aid of a borrowed mastiff whom Bitter used as a live model for several days.<sup>7</sup> A study piece for the final relief shows the difficulty Bitter had in achieving just the right dynamic for the dog (Fig. 4). In this trial version, the dog is awkwardly posed and looks in the opposite direction from his master.



Fig. 3. Photograph of Henry Philip Tappan. From Hinsdale, *History of the University of Michigan* 42.

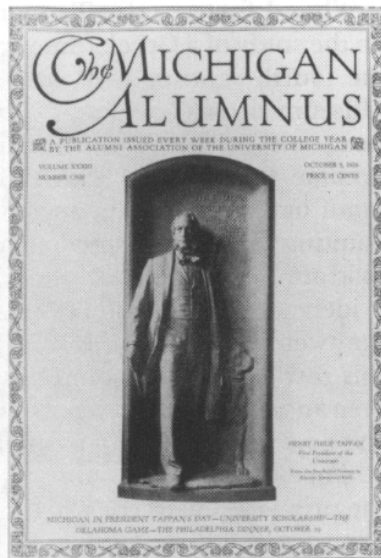


Fig. 4. Study for the Tappan Memorial relief, incorrectly published as the actual memorial monument. From *The Michigan Alumnus* 33 (Oct. 1926) cover.

Since it seemed clear that the dog was in fact merely a representational device, I then became curious about the possibility that the artist resorted to this particular motif because he wished to experiment with a type of imagery that had recently made an impression upon him. This idea presented itself because the Tappan portrait does, after all, depart significantly from the severely bookish iconography of mainstream academic commissions of the day — as these are exemplified by Bitter's contemporary study of Michigan's President Angell (Fig. 5).<sup>8</sup>

Why, in other words, did Karl Bitter feel that Tappan-the-philosopher needed a *dog* to complement his commanding presence — rather than, say, a tower of rakishly piled open volumes of Plato with pages aflutter as if caught by a breeze of intellectual inspiration? What would have inspired the artist to depart so radically from canonical academic imagery in his quest for compositional balance? Why did Bitter labor so over the inclusion of a dog — especially when, as is clear from his preliminary study, representations of dogs did not come easily for him? Now if this

relief had been created by a different artist and in the Victorian era of Tappan's own lifetime, I might have been inclined to see its man-and-dog imagery as an attempt to imbue the primary subject with an aura of the English country gentleman. Certainly the paintings of Edwin Landseer (a precise contemporary of Henry Tappan) might then have been understood as the type of sentimental, noble-dog genre which Bitter was emulating.<sup>9</sup> But



Fig. 5. Model for a bronze commemorative relief of James B. Angell. By Karl Bitter, 1909-1910. From James Dennis, *Karl Bitter* (Madison 1967) fig. 71.



Fig. 6. Stone funerary stele of a man with his dog. By Alxenor of Naxos, late sixth century B.C. Athens National Museum. Albumen print by an unknown photographer, dating before 1900. Photograph courtesy of the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology (61.8.1436).



Fig. 7. Bronze Commemorative Statue of Otto von Bismarck in Leipzig. Adolf Lehnert and Joseph Magr, 1895 and 1897. From Dr. Gustav Wustmann, *Bilderbuch aus der Geschichte der Stadt Leipzig* (Leipzig 1897) 240.

Karl Bitter was a sculptor with creative agendas which are not likely to have permitted the embrace of this particular brand of Victorianism. Returning to James Dennis's monograph on the sculptor, I found an answer to my question of formal prototypes — and one which pleased me greatly. Shortly before beginning work on the Tappan memorial, Karl Bitter had traveled to Greece and had been much affected by the archaic and early classical sculptures which he had seen there.<sup>10</sup> Archaic funerary reliefs such as the Stele of Alxenor were on display in Athens by the late nineteenth century (Fig. 6); and this art was indeed an inspiration to numerous sculptors of Bitter's generation.

With all of this in mind, I wrote a brief addendum to my article on the Kelsey Museum's funerary krater with its man-and-dog imagery: a note on the marvelous impact that the discoveries of ancient Greek sculpture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had on the artists who encountered this material. I was gratified to be able to legitimize my sense of the Tappan relief as a reaffirmation of the classical tradition which it was really my business to study.

It is a pleasant task to acknowledge at this point that I was saved from committing my addendum to print by my friend and colleague, Professor Marvin Eisenberg, in his capacity as editor of the *Bulletin of the Museums of Art and Archaeology*. He pronounced that the discussion did not belong in an addendum; and furthermore, that there just might be more to it than I thought. On this latter aspect, he referred me to Mrs. Valerie Meyer, retired head librarian of the Fine Arts Library at the University.

When Valerie Meyer first laid eyes on the Tappan memorial, her immediate reaction did not relate to ancient Greece at all — but rather to the Leipzig of her childhood memories before World War II. She reports an overpowering sense of déjà vu attendant upon her encounter with the vision of Henry Tappan and his dog. In her cherished pre-war picture book about Leipzig, Mrs. Meyer showed me a colossal commemorative statue of Chancellor Otto von Bismarck erected in that city in 1897 (Fig. 7).<sup>11</sup> Here stands the Iron Chancellor of Prussia informally attired, holding a walking stick and a felt hat, with a large dog at his side. This pair are set atop a rusticated pedestal made to resemble a rocky outcrop. At the base of this an allegorical Worker kneels in adoration of the Chancellor. But without this

added extravagance, the sculpture indeed is strikingly similar to the Tappan relief.

Here again, it was a simple matter, with the aid of Dennis's monograph, to discover that in 1909 — shortly before beginning the Tappan commission — Karl Bitter had traveled in Austria and Germany. He was in fact a native of Austria who left Vienna in 1889, ultimately to make his permanent home in the United States. This European trip of 1909 was his last return home before his death in 1915. He had previously traveled in Germany in 1895, by the way — the year of Bismarck's eightieth birthday and the occasion of the unveiling of the preliminary version of the final bronze colossus at Leipzig. Bitter's journal for 1909 informs us of a visit to Leipzig and specifically of his admiration for the work of sculptors Schmitz and Metzner on the immense *Volkerschlacht* monument which was then under construction there. He had to have seen the Bismarck sculpture as well. He could hardly have missed it, even though he does not refer to it in his diary. And interested as he was in the conflicting trends in German sculpture at this period, it seems probable that he already knew about this portrait of the ex-Chancellor by virtue of his earlier sojourn in the year of its first unveiling. Indeed, it seems that the Bismarckdenkmal must have been firmly fixed in Bitter's memory when he set to work on the design for Henry Tappan's bronze commemorative.

My story could well end here, as a brief exposé on the dangers of easy conclusions in scholarship. Where I had earlier seen the classical tradition as a direct motivating force behind Bitter's abandonment of bookish imagery in favor of man-and-dog imagery for the Tappan portrait, it now became obvious that it was Bitter's encounter with the Bismarckdenkmal in Leipzig which must have been the essential catalyst. In all fairness to my earlier assumption about the impact of ancient Greek models on Karl Bitter's design for the Tappan relief, I can, however, interject one note. The Bismarck monument in Leipzig may have struck a particularly responsive chord in him precisely because it evoked in his artful memory something of its ultimate archaic and classical Greek prototypes in funerary sculpture. That is to say, if Bitter had not been so profoundly receptive to and influenced by *classical* models such as the funerary stele by Alxenor, the Bismarck monument might not have affected him so strongly.

From this point forward, however, the important issue for me became increasingly removed from the substantive particulars of my own field of ancient art and increasingly concerned with a universally applicable problem in art history: the need to disentangle the web of creative process that is spun from the inherent and perceived qualities of the representational subject itself, from the expressed desires of the patron, and from the complex identity of the artist. To wit: Otto von Bismarck and Henry Philip Tappan were historical contemporaries who became linked posthumously through Karl Bitter's visual associations. Why? Were Bitter's associations between these two figures based upon anything more profound than formal reminiscence? What follows in conclusion here, is a brief excursion into the worlds of Bismarck and Tappan. Its value will be unashamedly sentimental; scholarly by implication only.

Otto von Bismarck (1815-1898) was born of an aristocratic Prussian family and received an education in law and political science at the Universities of Göttingen and Berlin. By the early 1850s he had achieved real political prominence in the Prussian court. He was to become, of course, the militant architect of a united German empire that would rise out of the factionalized ashes of the recently defunct Holy Roman Empire of nearly 1000 years' duration. Not for nothing was he called the Iron Chancellor.<sup>12</sup> Bloodshed and coercion rather than rhetoric and conciliation characterized his approach to the craft of statesmanship. Interestingly, however, he was also responsible for initiating legislation to better the lot of the working class which ultimately laid the basis for State Socialism in Germany.

Bismarck had his private side as well, and this included a long series of close relationships with favorite dogs. A painting from 1850 shows Bismarck in his prime accompanied by a great hound (Fig. 8).<sup>13</sup> As a genre specifically within the Prussian milieu, this imagery has a fine pedigree of predecessors among the portraits of the Holy Roman Emperors.<sup>14</sup> But it is evident that for Bismarck the man-and-dog motif was much more than an iconographical device, an allusion to personalities of the imperial past.

Especially in his later years, Bismarck and his dogs seem to have been inseparable. A famous (and somehow prophetic) documentary photograph of the aged Chancellor greeting the





Fig. 8. Painting of Otto von Bismarck as a young man. Moritz Berendt, 1850. From Max Lenz and Erich Marcks, *Das Bismarck-Jahr* (Hamburg 1915) opp. 20.

newly crowned Kaiser Wilhelm II in 1888 is one of many which show the imposing old warlord leaning on his walking stick with his great dog beside him (Fig. 9).<sup>15</sup> After a series of clashes with the young Kaiser, Bismarck was removed from office in 1890. He lived out his remaining years in bitter seclusion from the political arena. An eloquent visual statement attesting to the typicality of his appearance with dog in tow is a political cartoon published on the occasion of his dismissal from the Kaiser's service (Fig. 10).



Fig. 9. Photograph of Bismarck and the Emperor Wilhelm II, 1888. From Louis L. Snyder, *The Blood and Iron Chancellor* (Princeton 1967) no plate number.

Here, Bismarck is about to leave his office (literally and metaphorically), while his huge dog has already preceded him. The great beast is halfway out the door, so that we see only the wrong end of him (tail between his legs) in a mocking inversion of proper canine protocol.<sup>16</sup>

There is abundant evidence that Bismarck really loved his dogs, that they meant more to him than a kind of actualized iconography of authority and machismo. A picture of one of them hung over his bed—as reported by an eyewitness on the day of his death.<sup>17</sup> And a large dog's head may be seen over a cupboard, set



Fig. 10. Political cartoon published in *Kladderadash* 1890. From Louis L. Snyder, *The Blood and Iron Chancellor* (Princeton 1967) no plate number.



Fig. 11a. Bismarck monument in Berlin. From *The Warner company, Bismarck von der Wiege bis zum Grab* (Akron, Ohio, etc., 1898) 138.

between two stag antlers, in a photograph showing the foyer of Bismarck's home in Friedrichsruh on the day of his funeral. This dog's head is, by the way, clearly a taxidermic creation rather than a coroplastic one.<sup>18</sup>

Given all this, it is not perhaps so surprising that for the sculpture in Leipzig commemorating the former Chancellor's eightieth birthday a radical departure from the traditional iconography of public portraiture might have been undertaken. The Bismarckdenkmal is a quintessentially sentimental portrait. It is, in a sense, a popular reminiscence of the man as a private person and as a champion of social justice for the proletariat. Even the extraordinary Wagnerian proportions of the whole and the histrionic posturing of the allegorical Worker cannot detract from this overwhelmingly disarming vision of human aspect — an aspect which is surely enhanced by the presence of the dog. No blood and iron here. The earlier monumental images of Bismarck (as fierce equestrian in spiked Prussian helmet, and the like) belong to a different frame of reference altogether (Fig. 11 a-b).<sup>19</sup> Whatever we may think of Bismarck — and of the seeds of Third Reich megalomania that his strategies planted — his monument in Leipzig must still be reckoned with as a profoundly interesting social testimony by virtue of its extraordinary synthesis of the personal and the propagandistic.

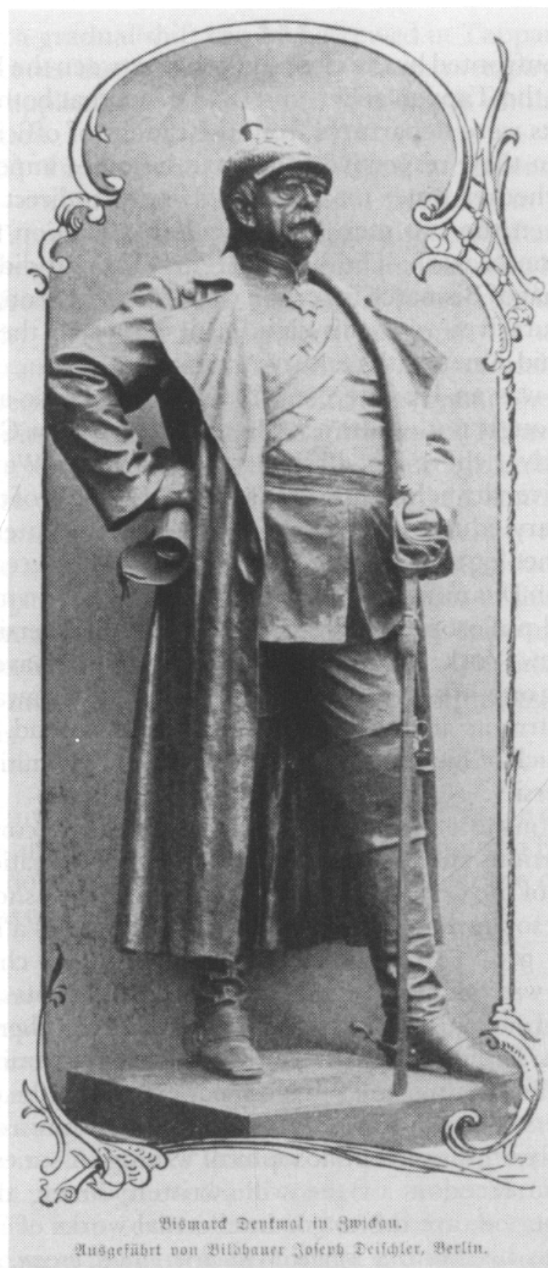


Fig. 11b. Bismarck monument in Zwickau. From *the Warner company, Bismarck von der Wiege bis zum Grab* (Akron, Ohio, etc., 1898) 140.

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When confronted by the close similarity between the Bismarck statue and the Tappan relief, and by the fact that both of these monuments were departures from the canons of official representation in their respective spheres, it becomes imperative to question whether Bitter meant to imply some indirect relationship between the two men by his evident quotation from the earlier German work. The life of Henry Tappan did, in fact, intersect that of Bismarck in certain ways. From here on, we must concern ourselves with this significant figure in the learned circles of mid-nineteenth century America.

Tappan was an Upstate New Yorker, aristocratic and cultivated, although not wealthy.<sup>20</sup> He attended Union College in Schenectady (where he, like President Francis Wayland of Brown University before him, was a favored student of the gifted and visionary educator, Eliphalet Nott). Later he attended the Auburn Theological Seminary, whence he ultimately earned his Doctorate in Divinity. In 1832 he accepted the chair in moral and intellectual philosophy at the newly founded University of the City of New York. This environment seems to have been a stimulating one — not least because it made Tappan aware of the exciting currents in higher education from abroad. Tappan focused much of his attention on the issue of the definition of the ideal university.

But not long after Tappan's arrival there, internal controversy caused a serious split between faculty and administration at the University of the City of New York. Tappan, already showing his colors as a somewhat uncompromising idealist, was a leader of the faculty group challenging the practices of the chancellor. The result was that he, along with several other professors, was dismissed from the university in 1838.<sup>21</sup> For a number of years henceforth, Tappan supported his large family by administering a seminary for young ladies in New York. Perhaps the dismissal from university teaching was fortunate, as it gave him a chance to focus briefly on his own philosophical writing. A series of publications on freedom of the will, written during this post-dismissal period, are the major intellectual works of Tappan's career (e.g., his *Doctrine of the Will determined by an Appeal to Consciousness* published in 1840; and *Doctrine of the Will Applied to Moral Agency and Responsibility* published in 1841). Clearly,

however, a gradual shift can be perceived in Tappan's intellectual concerns during these years — from metaphysics to the practical applications of his theories and ideals within the arena of education.

In 1851 Tappan and his family took an extended trip to Europe — where they were warmly welcomed in intellectual circles. Tappan's description of this tour is full of ambivalence about how different forms of government related to his doctrine of ideal freedom. He was a platonist at heart, convinced of the plausibility of benign constitutional monarchy as an effective administrative instrument. He was, however, critical of the despotic aspects of the Prussian monarchy — even as he was full of praise for its patronage of the arts and sciences. It was during this European tour that Tappan really developed his bold visions for the future of higher education in the United States along the lines of an encyclopedic Prussian-style university rather than along the traditional American lines of the sectarian seminary. Selected passages from his published account of this formative European adventure will suffice to convey Tappan's mood of aspiration for higher education in America: The idea that universities must be of slow growth is not justified by the history of Prussia.

\* \* \*

The Universities nourish and bring together men eminent for genius and learning. The Kings of Prussia, from Fredrick the Great down to the present time, have been the enlightened patrons of learning and learned men.

\* \* \*

And now this Prussia is an unlimited monarchy: these kings are despots. I have said in a previous chapter, that despotic governments are beautiful in theory; and I there intimated quite plainly that I deem them such, generally, only in theory. But we must be just. In the educational system of Prussia we have something more than theory. Here is a glorious achievement of an enlightened and energetic despotism. I admit that there are many evils in Prussia, and that the kings are both unwise, and in the wrong, for not granting a constitutional government. But here is a sublime work which they have accomplished for the public good. But, it may be asked, Do you

allow this to be an argument in favor of unlimited monarchies? I answer that the government of Prussia is justly entitled to all the argument that can be made out of it . . . And the only way in which we can nullify the force of the argument is by proving by our works that a republic, too, can create and foster the noblest institutions of learning, can patronize the arts and artists, and learning and learned men.

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Look at the Universities of Bonn and Berlin. We too can create universities at once, if we will. Let us show that the spirit of a free people is no less enlightened and mighty than the unlimited monarchy of Prussia.<sup>22</sup>

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Tappan accepted the post of president of The University of Michigan in 1852. By all accounts Michigan was still a rough-hewn pioneering sort of place at that time. In his sympathetic biography of Tappan, Charles Perry characterizes as inevitable the collision between Tappan's aristocratic aspect and his platonist philosophy of education with the frontier mentality of the west.<sup>23</sup> It seems generally agreed now, that Tappan was too big for the provincial Ann Arbor of the 1850s. His dream of a great

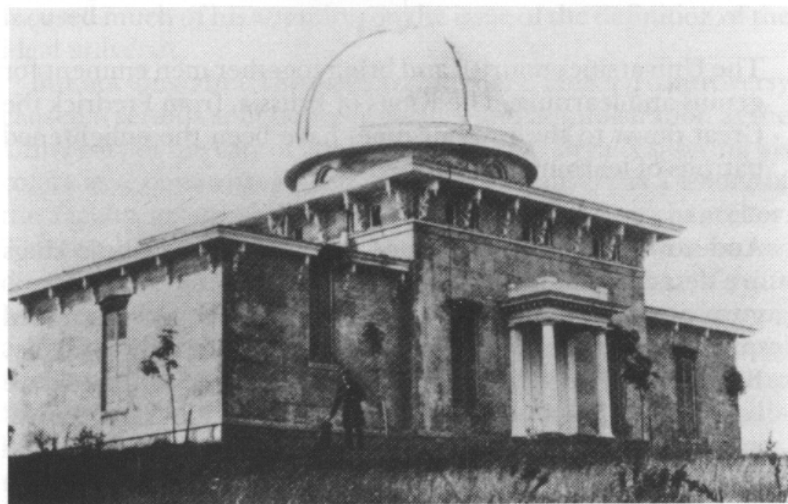


Fig. 12. The University of Michigan Observatory (1854) in its early years. From George S. May, *Pictorial History of Michigan — The Early Years* (Grand Rapids 1967) 211.

university ran counter to the parochial religiosity of the community; his praise of European institutions of learning smacked of anti-Americanism; his persistence in acquiring an observatory for the University (Fig. 12) modeled on the great Royal Observatory in Berlin was seen as a form of empire-building (and perhaps even in some quarters as a kind of religious blasphemy).<sup>24</sup> In a vigorously temperance-oriented society, his drinking of wine with dinner, after the European fashion, was a shocking breach of acceptable morality.

The list of outrages goes on and on. A major factor in the popular hostility toward President Tappan was the vicious smear-campaign conducted by W.F. Storey, who owned and published the *Detroit Free Press* during the early Tappan years. Storey was something of a radical democrat (in the terms of the mid-19th century). He was infuriated by Tappan's unwaivering support of President Lincoln in the controversy over whether or not the South had a right to secede from the Union. While Tappan was a vehement abolitionist and rather militant in his approach to solutions to the secessionist movement, Storey was just as vehement an anti-abolitionist and was, in his own paradoxically violent way, solidly on the side against military engagement between North and South. It may seem ironic, from our vantage point today, that Storey could attack Tappan on the grounds of anti-Americanism — given their sides on this critical set of issues. But we must remember that the issues were not clearcut; to the radical democrat, Lincoln's stance had the ring of its own kind of despotism and coercive subjugation about it.<sup>25</sup>

The collective outcome of all the controversy and mistrust over Tappan which Storey stirred up in the state of Michigan was that The University of Michigan's first president was summarily dismissed from office by the Board of Regents at a clandestine meeting in 1863. Tappan lived the remainder of his life in Europe (primarily in Switzerland, but as a frequent visitor at Berlin). He never once returned to the United States. It is now generally held that his visionary ambitions for a truly great University, run by and for the people of the state, formed the indispensable philosophical basis upon which President Angell was subsequently able to realize such a goal. The secretive action against Tappan by the Board of Regents is an episode that we should prefer to forget; but which, in fairness, emerged out of a

complex social context rife with provincial chauvinism and conflicted systems of values.

A leitmotif of Storey's anti-Tappan campaign was criticism of the educator's predilection for the specifically Prussian concept of the great university. Storey, followed by other Michigan journalists, made frequent caustic reference in this context to the fact that Tappan called himself Chancellor, rather than President, of the University. This rankled. For Storey and others, it was a crisp affirmation of Tappan's Prussian, empire-building pretensions.

As Tappan himself pointed out in response to this charge, he had been described by the Board of Regents, when they appointed him, as Chancellor and President of the University. Still, it is interesting that he preferred the title of Chancellor. He must have had vivid associations of its usage by his former employer, Chancellor Matthews of the University of the City of New York, whom he seems openly to have despised. And of course he could not help but have had associations of the title with the mastermind of Prussian imperialism. Ambivalent as his feelings about these two chancellors surely were, there may have been something of a form of emulation underlying Tappan's free choice of the same title (and perhaps also of the connotations of power that it had for him) rather than rejection of it. Did Tappan see himself as a kind of educational counterpart of Prussia's famous Chancellor Bismarck? Did he (on some level) admire the aristocratic Iron Chancellor, who was hard at work to reveal a manifest Prussian destiny across the Atlantic? And could this have been why he insisted upon using the same title even though it provided such an easy point for attack by his enemies in the press? It is difficult to be sure.

During his presidency at Michigan, there may have been a sense in which he consciously or unconsciously affected a certain formal similarity to the Prussian leader. (More on this momentarily.) At any rate, a suggestion of something on this order appears in the account of a citizen of Ann Arbor who wrote in the *Lansing Journal* in 1854:

... His thoughts, his oratory, his conversation, his social manners, his walk, and even his very prayers, are senseless mimics of the follies of a rotten aristocracy over the sea.<sup>26</sup>

Despite such innuendos, we do not have any explicit evidence that Tappan saw Bismarck as a particular model in public affairs

at this period. Yet it would not be particularly surprising if this American unionist of the 1850s understood a similarity between Bismarck's glorious unification of divisive Germanic states into one centralized whole and his own campaign to keep intact (even by military means) the republic that was in danger of splitting apart.

However this may have been, by the period of his self-imposed European exile following dismissal from Michigan, Tappan seems to have viewed Bismarck's blood and iron strategies with a critical eye. In a letter of August 31, 1866, to his good friend William W. Murphy, Tappan remarks:

I never have thought Bismarck a great Statesman & his success has not changed my opinion. I think German Unity might have been brought about peaceably. At all events he has Prussian Supremacy in his head more than German Unity.<sup>27</sup>

It is perhaps also significant in this context that when Tappan presented a memorial discourse on Abraham Lincoln in Berlin on May 2, 1865, Chancellor Bismarck was in attendance as representative of the Kaiser. But when he describes this memorial service in a letter three days later, Tappan makes not a reference to the presence of the Chancellor.<sup>28</sup> Such silence does not have the ring of hero worship.

We must now return to the Bismarckdenkmal and its echo in the Tappan memorial. Tappan does look very much like Chancellor Bismarck here — in terms of dress, soft felt hat, walking stick, general demeanor, and canine companion. Even the rough, rocky terrain that Tappan strides across is, in reduced form, reminiscent of the image of Bismarck atop a craggy boulder. What is the story behind these similarities? Are they the fortuitous result of two portrait commissions portraying two men who just happened to share certain formal attributes (the American possibly in vague emulation of the Prussian)? Or do they reflect a conscious connection made between the two men for the purposes of designing the later sculpture (the Tappan relief)? If the latter, by whom was the connection forged: the artist or the patron?

The Tappan memorial was, of course, a posthumous one. It was a gift to the University by those alumni still living who had studied under the first president. It was unveiled in 1914 as part of a dedication ceremony for Alumni Memorial Hall, which had

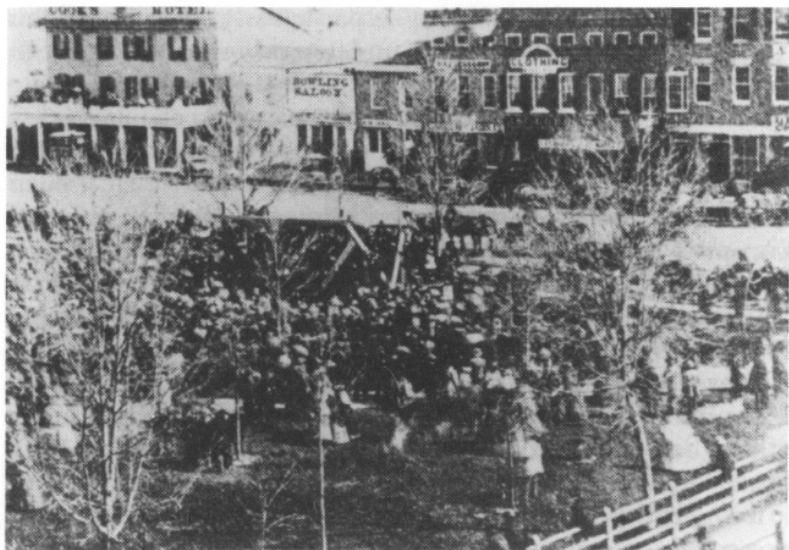


Fig. 13. Photograph of Tappan addressing the citizens of Ann Arbor after the Firing on Fort Sumter. From Michigan Historical Collections, *Pictorial History of Ann Arbor 1824-1974* (Ann Arbor 1974) 27.

been built in honor of those slain in the Mexican War, the Civil War, and the Spanish-American War. One thousand five hundred fourteen Michigan students and alumni had died in the Civil War. To the men studying in Ann Arbor when this tragic episode began, Henry Tappan was remembered reverently for his stirring mobilization of the University community upon receipt of the news of the firing on Fort Sumter (Fig. 13). Their reminiscences as aged alumni in 1914 (Fig. 14), as well as earlier published ones, record warm, personal visions of Chancellor Tappan. This type of material must have been part of any briefing which Bitter received concerning his posthumous subject preparatory to embarking upon the portrait itself.

I cannot resist sharing several lengthy passages from such texts, as they bear poignantly on the matter at hand. First, a portion of the oration by Col. Isaac H. Elliott, '61, toastmaster of the Tappan Memorial Dinner in 1914:

The best teachers of humanity are the lives of worthy men. I speak today of Henry Philip Tappan, and I invite you to study with me, his character, the impulses of his life, the impression he made upon his time and upon those who knew him.



Fig. 14. Alumni of the University from the Tappan Years, gathered to commemorate his presidency, 1914. From *The Michigan Alumnus* (August 1914) 581.

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You men of Dr. Tappan's era; Look again at the Campus as it was then. It is surrounded by a high fence, it is almost bare of trees, and used as a pasture for cattle (Fig. 15). There are the two main buildings, the North College, and the south College, the four professors' houses, . . . , a mere dot of a chemical laboratory and the old medical building with its pretentious

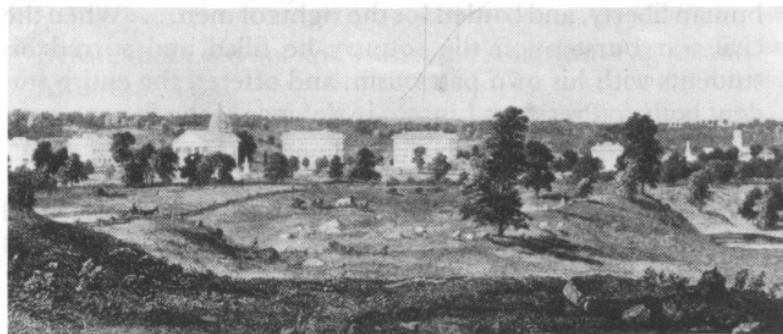


Fig. 15. The University of Michigan Campus seen from the east in an engraving, 1855. From Burke Hinsdale, *History of the University of Michigan* (Ann Arbor 1906) 47.

Greek architecture. That was all. Listen: You will hear the clang of the farm bell that is fastened on a fence post. Look: You will see Dr. Tappan striding toward the chapel, *the faithful Leo by his side*. He enters and stands at the little desk within the railing. What a man: He had that indefinable thing called presence. Tall, erect, dignified, commanding, majestic, you might have thought him Jove with his hands full of thunderbolts. A finely chiseled face, hair that always seemed tossed by the wind. He was of the classic mould — a figure from the antique world. He had the pose of the great statues, the pride and bearing of the intellectual Greek, of the conquering Roman, and he stood in the wide free air as though within his veins there flowed the blood of a hundred kings.

He opens his Bible and reads from the Psalms and Prophets, and comments as he reads. He is an orator, logical, earnest, ample in speech, intense, and picturesque. He satisfies the eye. . . . He spoke as the thundercloud speaks. He was an immense personality. Would that I could picture to you the mental grandeur of this splendid man with that fidelity the artist has given his physical form. . . .

\* \* \*

He was an American, proud of his country. He believed in the royalty of man, in the sovereignty of the citizen, and the matchless greatness of the republic; he was the champion of human liberty, and battled for the rights of men. . . . When the civil war burst upon the country he filled and stirred his students with his own patriotism, and offered the entire student body to President Lincoln in defence of the flag.

Who of us who were here at that time can forget that April Sabbath day when the news came that Sumter had been fired upon? . . .

Forgetting the worship of God in the worship of country, the citizens of this town, men, women and children swarmed to the

public square; the Faculty and students were gathered there. Dr. Tappan was the central figure, and all turned to him as the Romans did to Fabius when Rome was threatened, and like Fabius he counseled calmness and deliberation, but how he flamed against those who threatened the perpetuity of our government.

Who can forget that other gathering a little later, under the "Tappan Oak" when he presented the University Battalion a flag made by the women of Ann Arbor.

It has been so long ago, and my honors have been so few I may be forgiven for saying it was my great privilege to receive that flag from his royal hands, and no knight was ever more thrilled when the blade of his sovereign touched his shoulder. He was at his best and grandest, and that speech, had it been preserved, would rank high among the great orations.

Hands were clinched, faces streamed with tears, and all hearts stood still when he recited that Heaven born anthem  
 "When freedom from her mountain height  
 Unfolded her standard to the air  
 She tore the azure robe of night  
 And set the stars of glory there."

Before that I did not know what the American flag meant. After that, I did.

Two of the companies of the University Battalion were named in his honor, "Tappan Guard," and "Chancellor Greys." What those young men, who were gathered about him that day, did for our country, this beautiful Memorial Hall, a temple erected in their honor, tell[s].

\* \* \*

We are grateful to him because he set the pillars of this University deep and sure. It is the most democratic institution of learning the sun shines on. It can be described as Lincoln

defined our government, it is "of the people, for the people, and by the people." It knows no church, creed or caste, its advantages are as great as that of any other, and it generously offers them to those who cannot afford to seek them elsewhere.<sup>29</sup>

Col. Elliott's stirring praise certainly impresses upon us the fact that Karl Bitter achieved a credible psychological as well as physical likeness of Henry Tappan. At the risk of seeming to focus upon the most trivial passage of his text, I point out the allusion to "the faithful Leo" who accompanied Tappan at his side. This feature of Tappan's persona, coupled with the emphatic characterization of him as one who had earned the virtual adoration of "his people" (the University students), combines to bring him and his posthumous portrait remarkably close to the essential message promoted by the Bismarckdenkmal in Leipzig.

As it turns out, Tappan, like Bismarck, had a dual identity as a leader: in some quarters he was seen as an empire-builder who overstepped the bounds of prerogative; and in other quarters he was adored as a man and a visionary who championed the aspirations of his people. Furthermore, as it turns out, Tappan, like Bismarck, loved very large dogs, carried a walking stick, and habitually went about with a soft felt hat (rather than the customary stove-pipe).<sup>30</sup> As I have already suggested, some of these accoutrements may possibly have been affectations by Tappan, intended to emulate something of the impression of the more famous Chancellor, Bismarck. It is probable, at any rate, that the constant presence of Tappan's St. Bernard, Leo, was one more item that *seemed* like a Prussianism to Storey at the *Detroit Free Press*. But affectation or no, Tappan's love for his dogs was clearly genuine and absolute. Abundant testimony reflects this.

A story told by Watson Ambruster in 1901, and paraphrased by Charles Perry, relates the following scenario from Tappan's philosophy class:

One day one of Leo's fore paws was tied close to his head by a mischievous youth who cared little about Kant or Cousin. The great dog went limping up the aisle to his master's chair on the platform. When Tappan quietly cut the cord, Leo placed his fore paws on the arm of the chair and testified his gratitude by

licking his master's cheek. Tappan, without a word of reproof for the indignity that had been put upon his pet, placed one hand on the dog's head, looked him in the face, and for half an hour discoursed to him on canine nature and the possibility of the existence of a canine soul. The discourse was as delightful as it was learned, as replete with the happiest turns as it was with the most profound speculative inquiry. There was more than one member of the class who entertained the belief that Leo understood it all much better than did the offending and embarrassed student.<sup>31</sup>

And in a letter to Professor Frieze shortly before his death in 1881, Tappan wrote:

I feel much touched by the tender care of Mrs. Frieze in planting foliage & flowers over my old dog's grave. And so do we all. Mrs. Brünnow [Tappan's daughter] sends her love to Mrs. Frieze & Miss Carrie, and desires me thank her for the leaves from Leo's grave. I retain his photograph and I never look at it without experiencing in my heart a gush of tenderness that strengthens my faith that "love is indestructible" whether to man or beast.<sup>32</sup>

\* \* \*

Karl Bitter, just recently back from Germany, would surely have been struck by a connection between the Chancellor Tappan, as he must have been characterized by the alumni patrons of Michigan, and the Chancellor Bismarck of the Leipzig monument. Even though there seems to be no archival material to suggest that the sculptor saw the inner suggestiveness of such a link between the two Chancellors, it now seems probable that in fact Bitter must personally have been struck by its aptness once he had been briefed on his subject in preparation for creating the Tappan relief.

We have in fact learned several things about Bismarck and Tappan which seem to draw them together. Both were Prussophiles (though of very different persuasions); both ended up rejected by the powers they served, but adored in certain quarters of popular sentiment; both loved large dogs who became inseparable mascots of their identities; both favored the felt hat and walking stick; and both, of course, were chancellors.

To Karl Bitter (if not to the patrons of the Tappan memorial) this range of connections must have been apparent. It is there-



fore somewhat curious that we receive no sense of any of it from the sculptor's own reflections. Remember: from his passing remarks, we gather that the dog in the Tappan memorial was introduced merely to provide a kind of compositional balance to the whole. No mention of the great Leo, anecdotes about whom fill many a page in *The Michigan Alumnus* volumes toward the close of the century and beyond.<sup>33</sup> And certainly no mention of Bismarck and *his* dog, as known through countless caricatures and photographs and ultimately immortalized in Olympian splendor at Leipzig.

Henry Tappan might not have been pleased to think that his effigy was in any sense styled after the Bismarck colossus. That, I think, must remain an open question — although I sense that he might on some level have been rather gratified. As for Karl Bitter, we cannot prove categorically that he made *active* reference to his memory of the Bismarckdenkmal as he created the posthumous Tappan memorial. Nevertheless, it seems inescapable to conclude that the Leipzig monument and its famous subject informed his work at least subliminally. It would be interesting to know whether he had been told enough about Henry Tappan to have realized just how penetrating the connection he forged between the two chancellors was, as a statement about the life and times of Tappan at Michigan.

Finally, and most importantly: however Tappan might have felt about being linked with Bismarck in the artful memory of Karl Bitter, he would most certainly have been pleased to be linked with his dog Leo in perpetuity. And to the alumni of the Tappan years who commissioned his effigy, the presence of Leo (in place of a stack of dog-eared books) must have been an explicit expression of their patronage mandate for a meaningful portrait of Michigan's first and last Chancellor.

#### NOTES

\* I wish to thank the following people for their advice and assistance on this paper: Robert N. Cool, Marvin Eisenberg, Robert Gordon, David Huntington, Valerie Meyer, Pamela Reister, Charles Sawyer, the staff of the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology, the Bentley Historical Library, and the 747-FAST Service at the Harlan Hatcher Graduate Library.

<sup>1</sup> Tappan Hall was used for recitation first, apparently, by the Business School. It became the domain of the Literary College in the late 1920s or early 1930s.

<sup>2</sup> Funds were raised from the University, the College, and private giving — all under the auspices of The Campaign for Michigan.

<sup>3</sup> It was called Tappan Hall from the outset. And it seems fitting that a building was finally named after Tappan during Angell's administration. In many ways Angell has been seen as the executor of the visions which Tappan first brought to Ann Arbor.

<sup>4</sup> Margaret Cool Root, "An Apulian Volute Krater by the Gioia del Colle Painter: Aspects of Context, Attribution, and Iconography," *Bulletin of the Museums of Art and Archaeology*, The University of Michigan, in press.

<sup>5</sup> James M. Dennis, *Karl Bitter: Architectural Sculptor 1867-1915* (Madison 1967) 163-166 and fig. 74.

<sup>6</sup> Dennis, *Karl Bitter*, 165.

<sup>7</sup> Dennis, *Karl Bitter* 165, n. 16.

<sup>8</sup> E.g., Bitter's portrait of Michigan's President James B. Angell (1909): Dennis, *Karl Bitter* 158-163 and fig. 71.

<sup>9</sup> Richard Ormond, *Sir Edwin Landseer* (New York 1981).

<sup>10</sup> Dennis, *Karl Bitter* 254-260.

<sup>11</sup> Dr. Gustav Wustmann, *Bilderbuch aus der Geschichte der Stadt Leipzig* (Leipzig 1897) 240.

<sup>12</sup> E.g., Louis L. Snyder, *The Blood and Iron Chancellor: A Documentary Biography of Otto von Bismarck* (Princeton 1967); Edward Crankshaw, *Bismarck* (New York 1981). The bibliography on Bismarck is vast.

<sup>13</sup> By Moritz Berendt. See Max Lenz and Erich Marcks, *Das Bismarck-Jahr* (Hamburg 1915) opp. 20.

<sup>14</sup> E.g., Titian's experimental portrait of Charles V with his hound (1532), based on a portrait of Emperor Ferdinand by Jacob Seisenegggar: H. Trevor-Roper, *Princes and Artists: Patronage and Ideology at Four Habsburg Courts 1517-1633* (London 1976) 26 and ill. opp. 27.

<sup>15</sup> *Bismarck von der Wiege bis zum Grab* (Berlin, etc. 1893) 107 and 110.

<sup>16</sup> Published in *Kladderadatsch* 1890, and reproduced in Snyder, *Blood and Iron Chancellor* no pl. number.

<sup>17</sup> Snyder, *Blood and Iron Chancellor* 400.

<sup>18</sup> *Bismarck von der Wiege . . .* 152.

<sup>19</sup> Lenz and Marcks, *Das Bismarck-Jahr* for several examples of Bismarck portraits in the *machtkunst* category.

<sup>20</sup> Charles M. Perry, *Henry Philip Tappan* (Ann Arbor 1953), for a detailed biography.

<sup>21</sup> Perry, *Tappan* 70-87, for an interesting account of this episode.

<sup>22</sup> See Henry P. Tappan, *A Step from the New World to the Old and Back Again, with Thoughts on the Good and Evil in Both* (New York 1852).

<sup>23</sup> Perry, *Tappan* 159ff.

<sup>24</sup> Funds for the Observatory were raised by Tappan independently, from generous donors in Detroit. Constructed in 1854, it housed the first large telescope in the United States — imported from Berlin in 1854. This instrument remains in working order within the Observatory, which still stands at 1308 E. Ann and is one of Ann Arbor's most important historic buildings. I am grateful to Professor Nick Steneck for giving me an impressive guided tour.

<sup>25</sup> George B. Catlin, "Little Journeys in Journalism: Wilbur F. Storey," *Michigan History Magazine* 10 (1926) 515-533; and Charles M. Perry, "The Newspaper Attack on Dr. Tappan," *Michigan History Magazine* 10 (1926) 495-514.

<sup>26</sup> Perry, "The Newspaper Attack," 505.

<sup>27</sup> Perry, *Tappan* 384.

<sup>28</sup> Perry, *Tappan* 349-350.

<sup>29</sup> "The Tappan Dinner," *The Michigan Alumnus* 20 (August 1914) 579-582.

<sup>30</sup> E.g., Byron M. Cutcheon, "Chancellor Tappan — A Reminiscence," *The Michigan Alumnus* 1 (June 1895) 128-130.

<sup>31</sup> Perry, *Tappan* 262-263.

<sup>32</sup> Perry, *Tappan* 429.

<sup>33</sup> E.g., the marvelous story of Leo and Fido by R.B. Taylor: "One Reminiscence," *The Michigan Alumnus* 1 (March 1895) 85-87.



# Comparison in the Social Sciences

by  
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