

**Report on the
alleged Maria Reiter
letters
to be auctioned by Alexander
Historical Auctions, Chesapeake City,
MD, USA, July 14, 2020**

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by Jaap van den Born and Bart FM Droog
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Introduction

On July 14, 2020, Alexander Historical Auctions, Chesapeake City, MD, USA plans to auction two 'Maria Reiter letter[s] to her lover Adolf Hitler. These form lot 8¹ and 9² at their 'Historical Militaria and Autographs' auction. The starting bid is 1000 US dollars for each letter; the selling price is estimated at 2000 to 3000 dollars a piece.

The auctioneer's description:

Lot 8: MARIA REITER LETTER TO HER LOVER, ADOLF HITLER: "WITH FOND KISSES UNTIL WE CAN MEET AGAIN..."

Lot9: MARIA REITER LETTER TO HER LOVER, ADOLF HITLER: "I GREET AND KISS YOU..."

MARIE REITER (1911-1992), known as 'Mimi' or 'Mitzi'. Obersalzburg shop keeper intimately associated with Adolf Hitler. Hitler met Reiter when she was 16 and working in Obersalzburg. According to her account, the 37-year-old Hitler became friendly towards her and asked her out. At the end of the evening he made a 'coarse' sexual advance towards her which she rejected, but they finally kissed. They had a number of other dates during which Hitler became increasingly passionate towards her. He told her he wanted her as his wife, but children were not a possibility until after he had 'saved Germany'. This plunged her into depression and in 1928 she attempted to hang herself. A short marriage was followed by a visit from Rudolf Hess. Reiter went to Berlin where she spent the night with Hitler and 'let everything happen'. Their last meeting was in 1938, when, according to Reiter, Hitler expressed dissatisfaction with his relationship with Eva Braun. Still wanting a family, she married an SS officer, later killed at Dunkirk. Hitler's sister Paula confirmed the relationship. Excessively rare A.L.S. 'Maria', with holograph transmittal envelope addressed to 'Adolf Hitler' and canceled in Prien, Apr. 9, 1945, 1p. 8vo., Prien, Apr. 8, 1945.

In full: 'Dear Adolf! I am sorry I cannot write a longer Sunday letter to

1 https://web.archive.org/web/20200706110741/https://www.alexautographs.com/auction-lot/maria-reiter-letter-to-her-lover-adolf-hitler-wit_9EA4EF38F6

2 https://web.archive.org/web/20200706110931/https://www.alexautographs.com/auction-lot/maria-reiter-letter-to-her-lover-adolf-hitler_EA64A47A69/

you today. I am in a good mood and my confidence in you and my belief in Germany's victory is undaunted. I am sending you the heartiest greetings and remain with fond kisses until we can meet again. Your unwavering always true Maria'.

Lightly toned and a bit brittle, else very good. Interestingly, Reiter has used a pseudonym in her return address on the envelope, which undoubtedly was known to Hitler and those receiving his mail. This letter is described in the works of Charles Hamilton, author of many autograph reference books, in this case 'Leaders & Personalities of the 3rd Reich: Their Biographies, Portraits, and Autographs'.

The description of lot 9 is the same; apart from the description of the actual letter:

Excessively rare A.L.S. 'Maria', with holograph transmittal envelope addressed to 'Adolf Hitler' and canceled in Prien, Apr. 19, 1945, 1p. 8vo., Prien, Apr. 19, 1945 - one day before Hitler's 56th, and last, birthday. In full: 'Dear Adolf! It is a special pleasure for me today to congratulate you on your birthday. Most of all I wish with all my heart that all your wishes may come true and that you won't have to be alone for long. May our Lord keep you a very very long time in good health and grant you and your courageous troops a speedy victorious peace. On your birthday I greet and kiss you especially fondly in love and loyalty. Your Maria'."

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A critical view of the auctioneer's description

The auctioneer states that Maria Reiter was:

“intimately associated with Adolf Hitler.”

In reality, there had only been a short flirt between the two in 1926, when she was 16 and Hitler 37 years of age. After the war³ she claimed that she had sex with Hitler in 1931 – but by then Hitler was only interested in one woman: his half niece Geli Raubal.

All serious historians agree that Maria Reiter's post war story of her 1931 love affair with Hitler is a concoction.⁴

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3 In this article: Günter Peis. 'Hitlers unbekannte Geliebte'. *Stern*, Hamburg, 13-07-1959. See too: NN. Violetter Plüsch. *Der Spiegel*, Hamburg, 17-06-1959.
<https://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-42625688.html>

4 See a.o.: Ian Kershaw. *Hitler. 1889-1936: Hubris*. W.W. Norton & Company, New York / London, 2000. Page 284-285. (First edition 1999).
Volker Ullrich. *Adolf Hitler. Biographie. Band 1: Die Jahre des Aufstiegs 1889-1939*. S. Fischer, Frankfurt am Main, 2013. Page 681.

Charles Hamilton

The auctioneer states too, at both letters:

“This letter is described in the works of Charles Hamilton, author of many autograph reference books, in this case 'Leaders & Personalities of the 3rd Reich: Their Biographies, Portraits, and Autographs'.”

Now the American Charles Hamilton (1913-1996)⁵ is known as a reliable handwriting expert. He claimed to have been one of the first to have identified the Hitler diaries as forgeries. But he traded in Hitleriana in the 1970's⁶ and 1980's⁷ himself. He was also of the opinion that the very bad Hitler forgeries made by one particular forger (whom we have identified as the Austrian swindler Hans Müllern a.k.a. Dr. Johannes von Müllern-Schönhausen⁸) were of excellent quality.⁹ True, Hamilton described the letters 'from Maria Reiter' in the mentioned book¹⁰, but failed to spot a phenomenon which he described in an analysis of alleged Hitler documents forged by “Herr Ohne Namen” (= Hans Müllern):

“The first group of 15 pages contains items all of which bear the easily identifiable marks of forgery, including very crude imitations of Hitler's signature. On many of them the ink has feathered (or spread by capillary attraction), a phenomenon which occurs when fresh ink goes on old paper, a sort of blotter effect. This is one of the most obvious effects of forgery.”¹¹

5 Robert Mcg. Thomas Jr. Charles Hamilton Jr., 82, an expert on handwriting. *The New York Times*, New York, 13-12-2020.

<https://www.nytimes.com/1996/12/13/arts/charles-hamilton-jr-82-an-expert-on-handwriting.html>

6 NN. Hitler flower painting sold for \$4,500. [Auctioneer: Charles Hamilton]. *The Times*, London, 25-03-1978.

7 NN. Geen Hitler op de veiling. *Trouw*, Amsterdam, 14-09-1982

<https://www.delpher.nl/nl/kranten/view?coll=ddd&identifier=ABCDDD:010818909:mpeg21:a0223>

Reuter – Nazi souvenirs fetch £14,500 in New York [at auction of Charles Hamilton Galleries]. *The Times*, London, 02-07-1983.

8 Jaap van den Born en Bart FM Droog. Dr. Johannes von Müllern-Schönhausen. *Droog Magazine*, Eenrum, 18—03-2020 (first version December 2016).

<https://www.bartfmdroog.com/droog/dd/mullern-schonhausen.html>

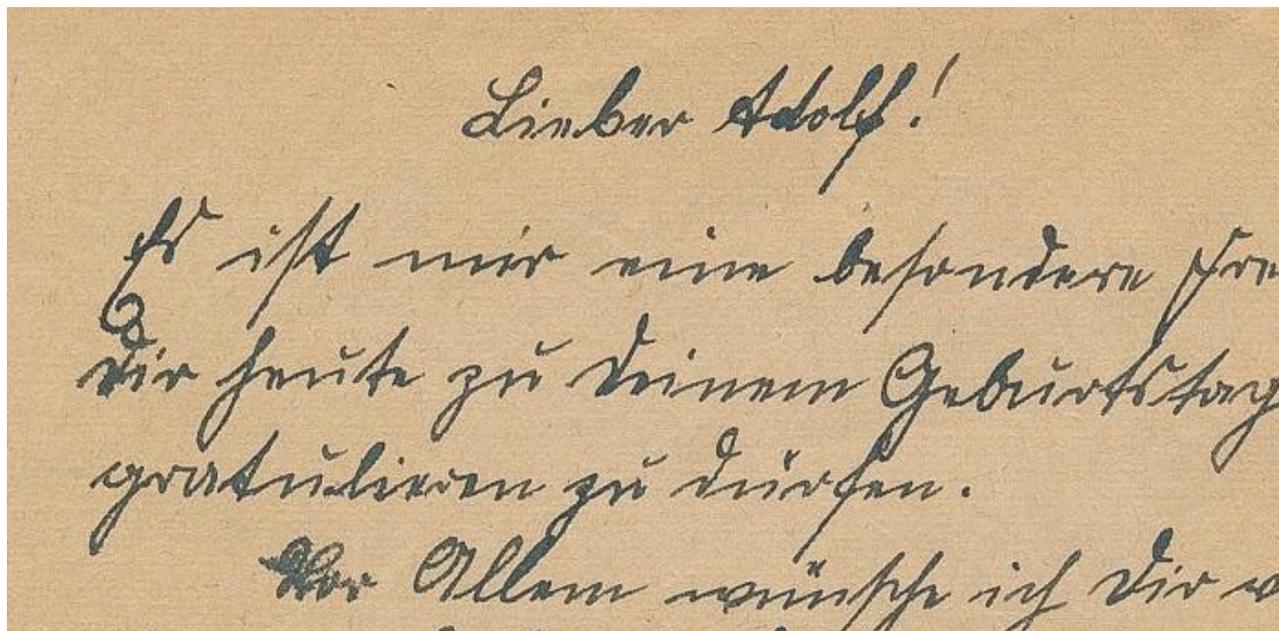
9 Charles Hamilton. *The Hitler diaries. Fakes that fooled the world*. University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky, 2009 (first edition 1991). pages 186-190.

Digitalized version: https://uknowledge.uky.edu/upk_european_history/11/

10 Charles Hamilton. *Leaders & Personalities of the 3rd Reich: Their Biographies, Portraits, and Autographs*. R.J. Bender Pub, San Jose, Calif, 1996. Page 210-213.

11 Charles Hamilton. *The Hitler diaries*. Page 187.

As Hamilton was familiar with this phenomenon, his appraisal is rather disturbing, as are his activities as a trader in Hitleria – including fake Hitler paintings.



Fragment of the 'April 19, 1945' letter. The feathering of the ink is clearly visible.

As an auctioneer he received for every object he sold a commission. Every 'authentic' object he bought, he sold with profit – so it was not in his interest to identify fakes in his collection or at his auctions.

The same applies to the American handwriting expert Kenneth W. Rendell, friend of Hamilton and the former owner of the now terminated International Museum of World War II in Natick (MA, USA), in which a large collection of fake Hitler objects was exhibited as being 'authentic.'¹² Rendell sold this collection with the core of the museum's holdings in 2018 for 25 million dollars to billionaire Ronald S. Lauder.¹³

Auctioneer Bill Panagopulos remarked about this:

“You question the autograph expertise of Messrs. Hamilton and Rendell, the top experts in the field of autographs, each with over 50 years of experience in the field. Clearly, you have no knowledge of their

12 Jaap van den Born and Bart FM Droog. The Anni Winter Collection or: the miracle of the suitcase. *Droog Magazine*, Eenum, 20-05-2019, page 23.

<http://www.droog-mag.nl/hitler/2019/anni-winter-or-the-magic-suitcase.pdf>

13 Alex Greenberger. Billionaire Collector Ronald S. Lauder Reveals Himself as Owner of \$25 M. Collection of World War II Memorabilia in Lawsuit. *Artnews*, 29-09-2019.

<https://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/ronald-lauder-world-war-ii-museum-lawsuit-13053/>

Steve Maas. In Natick, World War II museum abruptly shuts down. *The Boston Globe*, Boston, 02-09-2019.

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2019/09/02/natick-world-war-museum-abruptly-shuts-down/kidNpWeGOjVKA07sJp0MYJ/story.html>

reputations.”¹⁴

Mr. Panagopulos is wrong on this: we don't question the *autograph* expertise of Hamilton and Rendell – we question, with good reason, their expertise on Hitler related objects. Objects which they bought and sold as 'authentic', even though a child could see these objects were fakes.

14 E-mail from Bill Panagopulos to Bart FM Droog, 08-07-2020, 18:02 hrs (CET).

More oddities

These letters are offered with the envelopes in which Maria Reiter allegedly sent them to Hitler. Yet the envelopes have no post stamps on them, only ink stamp prints. They were addressed to the Führerhauptquartier (the Führer's headquarters), yet no information is given what happened to these letters after Hitler's death.

Conclusion

As there exists no evidence at all that corroborates Maria Reiter's stories having met or having contact with Hitler after 1926, these letters are very likely to be pure fantasy products.

They are very likely to have been produced at the earliest after the *Stern* publication in 1959. The forger appears to have used 'old paper', a well known forger's trick to fool eager collectors of historical documents.

It is unlikely however that it will ever be known who wrote these two letters, and when exactly. As far as is known there exists no 100% authentic handwritten texts by Maria Reiter from 1945 – making comparison impossible.

Aftermath

Not surprisingly, the letters remained unsold at the July 14, 2020 AHA auction.

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Comment by auctioneer Bill Panagopulos

We've sent Bill Panagopulos, the owner of Alexander Historical Auctions, the first version of this report, as well as two other reports on suspect Hitler related lots at the same auction.¹⁵

He commented:

“Normally I would respond to you, but I find your qualifications somewhat lacking to comment on your claims. Your pieces are not credible for a number of reasons, not least of which are:

1.) You cite your own writings in your footnotes, a practice very much frowned-upon by investigative journalists.

2.) Your research into many of the statements in our catalog descriptions is faulty, if not entirely biased. For example, you are completely wrong re: the 328th (Glider) Infantry Regiment. I do, however, thank you for helping us identify our typo error in the description, where we in one instance wrote "Division" versus "Regiment". This has been corrected.

3.) You put forth your conjecture as fact. Therefore your pieces cannot be labeled as "investigative reporting" but instead should be sold as "opinion" pieces. Of course, you are entitled to your opinion.

4.) You question the autograph expertise of Messrs. Hamilton and Rendell, the top experts in the field of autographs, each with over 50 years of experience in the field. Clearly, you have no knowledge of their reputations.

5.) Germania International is not associated with this auction house, nor will we do business with that firm in any way, nor will we discuss that company in any manner.

There are any number of other claims and exhortations you make that again point to your writings as simply being your opinion. I do not

15 Jaap van den Born and Bart FM Droog. Report on the alleged Hitler drawing to be auctioned by Alexander Historical Auctions, Chesapeake City, MD, USA, July 14, 2020. Droog Magazine, Eenrum, 09-07-2020. <http://www.droog-mag.nl/hitler/2020/report-on-auction-of-%20hitler-drawing-july-2020.pdf>

Jaap van den Born and Bart FM Droog. Report on the alleged Adolf Hitler's black formal coat and top hat to be auctioned by Alexander Historical Auctions, Chesapeake City, MD, USA, July 14, 2020. Droog Magazine, Eenrum, 09-07-2020.

<http://www.droog-mag.nl/hitler/2020/report-on-auction-of-hitlers-frock-coat-and-top-hat-2020.pdf>

know your motivation, nor do I care, but I would think it prudent to take care in assaulting the reputation of long-standing reputable auction houses and dealers, especially when you have little experience in the field.

As an aside, I do want to commend you for your work on exposing a number of fake Hitler artworks. They are spread throughout the market. Ours is completely as described.

As an aside, you might want to know that I have consulted with the Justice Department and FBI on a number of forgery and theft cases, and still consult with them today.

I appreciate your efforts, but self-promotion through the public denigration of reputable firms, especially with poorly-researched attack pieces, is no way to advance your career.

I wish I could rebut your answers more thoroughly, but you have only given me a few hours to respond. Since I am assisting in the auction held by an affiliate in a few minutes and that obligation obviously takes precedence, my comments above will have to suffice.”¹⁶

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16 E-mail from Bill Panagopoulos to Bart FM Droog, 08-07-2020, 18:02 hrs (CET).