

GERHARD STRAEHLE

INTRODUCTION TO
'THE NAUMBURG MASTER IN GERMAN ART
HISTORY' (2020)

My history on the Naumburg Master, 'Der Naumburger Meister in der deutschen Kunstgeschichte', published 2009 in print and on ART-Dok (fig.1), pursued two goals: on the one hand, it aimed to provide a portrait of German art historical research, and on the other hand, it evaluated the contributions of this research and asked what they could still contribute to explaining a sculptor and his workshop, who have left testimonials of their work in various places in Saxony, the Rhineland and in neighbouring France. The interest in the factual results of this research led my study to an attempt to explain the main work of this master, the *Naumburg Founders' Cycle* in a fundamentally new way. This explanation is based both on the works of the art historians presented in my study and on my own research into sources.

Under methodological and ideology-critical aspects, the history of Naumburg research had already been presented twice at the end of the last century by art historians. In 1979, Willibald Sauerländer dealt in detail with the *fortuna critica* of the famous Naumburg cycle in a programmatic essay on the Naumburg Founders Figures^a

^a Willibald Sauerländer: *Die Naumburger Stifterfiguren, Rückblick und Fragen*. In: *Die Zeit der Stauer. Band 5 (Supplement): Vorträge und Forschungen, Stuttgart 1979, p. 169 - 245.*

Gerhard Straehle

Der Naumburger Meister
in der deutschen Kunstgeschichte

Einhundert Jahre deutsche Kunstgeschichtsschreibung 1886-1989



Kritische Kunstgeschichte
München 2009

fig.1: Straehle, *Der Naumburger Meister in der deutschen Kunstgeschichte*, 2009, Cover of the print edition

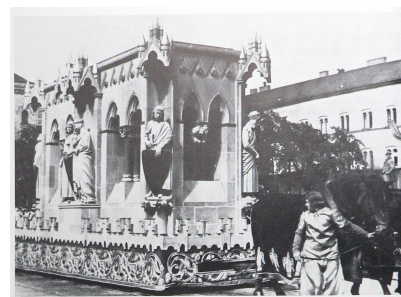


Abb. 80
Festzug 1000 Jahre deutsche Kultur, München 10. Juli 1938.

die Ursachen für ihr bewegtes Auftreten und ihre heftigen Gehörden, bleiben im Dunkel, sie werden der Phantasie der Betrachtenden ausgeliefert. Solche Phantasie kann diese stummen steinernen Schauspiel in die ihr erwünschten Rollen eintreten lassen, mit ihren Narzissen besetzen, für ihre Interessen ansetzen.

Die Naumburger Figuren sind über Jahrzehnte hinweg mit solcher Vielseitigkeit in die jeweilige deutsche Gegenwart transportiert worden, daß ihnen noch heute kein Betrachter im Stande der Unschuld gegenüberbetreten kann. Die Kamera des Lichtbildners hat sie allgegenwärtig gemacht, ins Licht moderner Effekte gesetzt, als historische Nippes auf Glaspapier für den Bücherschrank der Nation aufbereitet. Das deutende, leuchtende Wort hat ihnen immer wieder anderes Leben eingehaucht, sie distanzlos an sich gerissen. «Dann schaut wohl auch Du irgendwann einmal Frau Uta. Du weißt ihren Namen nicht und fragst auch nicht nach ihrem Namen. Du siehst eine junge unbekannte Frau

am Wegrand sehen und über den Acker der Heimat blicken. In ein großes, graubraunes Tuch, vielleicht ist es ein Kartoffeltuch, hat sich die junge Frau gewickelt. Nur das Haupt ist unverhüllt, und das helle Haar, gleich einer Krone um das Haupt gelegt, leuchtet. ... Und jede reiche Frau im deutschen Volk trägt unsichtbar die Krone, die Frau Uta schmückt», so ließ sich Lothar Schreyer in einem aufgeweckten Bündchen der Reihe «Schleppen an die Nation» 1934 vernehmen.¹ In fadler Zeitgemäßheit nimmt diese triviale Umdeutung die Naumburger Stifterin, welche nicht durch mysteriöse Artverwandtschaft, wohl aber durch überbewusste Vererbung in Photographien inzwischen sorgsam buchstäblich an jeden deutschen Acker stand, als «Uta» und Lichtbild eines reifen völkischen Edelkitsches in Anspruch. In Naumburg sind die Bildwerke und ihre Rezeptionsgeschichte so unersättlich miteinander verknüpft, daß sie sich auch thematisch nicht mehr voneinander trennen lassen. Wenigstens in Form eines knappen und involu-

fig. 2: Sauerländer, *Die Naumburger Stifterfiguren, Rückblick und Fragen*, 1979, p.170

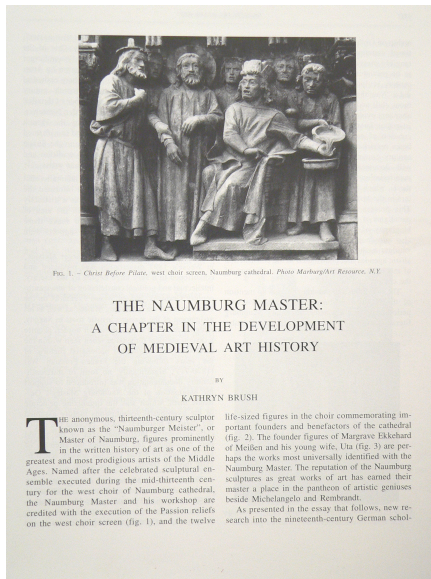


fig.3: Brush, *The Naumburg Master: A Chapter in the Development of Medieval Art History*, 1993, p. 109

(fig.2), and in 1993, the Canadian researcher Kathryn Brush attempted to present the Naumburg Master as an invention of modern research in a study on the reception history of the Naumburg Master.^b (fig. 3)

Both publications, the studies by Brush and Sauerländer, largely coincided with the topic of my own study which was also committed to their critical claim. However, the results of my study deviated from those of the two art historians in decisive points. They concerned fundamental questions: Above all, Willibald Sauerländer's accusation that entire generations of

researchers have succumbed to an ideological projection through which the work of the sculptor in Naumburg ... *has been transported into the German present with such vehemence over decades that even today no viewer is able to look at them in the state of innocence.*^c Sauerländer's criticism was triggered by the subjective form of description, which had made this research susceptible to an unreflected ideological stance. This thesis, or rather Sauerländer's polemical assertion, has been examined in my study on the basis of individual authors and thus either confirmed, modified or refuted.

Indeed, until the Second World War, the earlier research has always tried to grasp its subject matter primarily in terms of description and style analysis, and then in further steps to include historical, iconographic, developmental and other considerations. This method also remained the predominant method in Naumburg research until the 1920s. It was only towards the end of the 1930s and then after 1945 that theological attempts at explanation pushed description into the background as a recognised method for explaining the Naumburg sculpture, and description lost its importance as the basis for interpretation and as the

^b Kathryn Brush: *The Naumburg Master: A Chapter in the Development of Medieval Art History*. In: *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 6e période, tome 122 (1993) p. 109-122 ; here p. 110.

^c Sauerländer 1979 (as per note a), p. 170. [My translation, G.S.]

yardstick for judging an art-historical object. Instead of conclusions which the researchers attempted to draw from a previously made description of the object, criteria were used which, as general historical findings and hypotheses, were not subject to examination by the art viewer. Ideas about the Middle Ages in general, about medieval man, medieval religiosity, medieval theology, etc. seemed to expose the modern view as a modern deception and to discredit the phenomenological description as a subjective, naive and even ideological effort that would be unsuitable for the recognition of the object. But as Hegel already knew, the researcher's and observer's own interest, his own subjective view, is always the first prerequisite in explaining an object, even an art historical one; otherwise, any explanation is nothing but disinterested, dead mind.

With this equation of subjective view and ideological bias Sauerländer published his programmatic polemic against the near-sighted description, which would have led to what he called an extreme form of 'pygmalionism' around 1930.^d Sauerländer tried to show, that the same ideological tendencies had been at work in the close-up descriptions that had led to the nationalist developments in German political history. In her 1993 study, Kathryn Brush essentially followed Sauerländer's view and exacerbated the accusation of nationalism.

Against the representations of Sauerländer and Brush, my study attempted to justify the subjective description and to rehabilitate it as an indispensable research tool. It is based on the assumption that art historians in general, and thus also the Naumburg researchers of the period under consideration here from 1886 to 1989, were able to adequately characterize and analyze their subject matter when they captured these sculptures at first in subjective observations and in a descriptive manner and understood their descriptions as a first step for their further occupation with the object.

Just as subjective and close-up descriptions form the basis of all art historical research, so also in the history of Naumburg research. It was with their descriptions that art historians before and after 1900 laid the foundation for the scientific discourse of the following period. It was only through such attempts at descriptive recording that researchers were

^d „A common feature of all these descriptions from the time around 1930 is the striking reduction of distance, the „pygmalionism“, to which they indulge uncontrollably and sometimes as if hypnotized by images, impressions, moods.” (Sauerländer 1979 [as per note a], p. 176.) [My translation, G.S.]

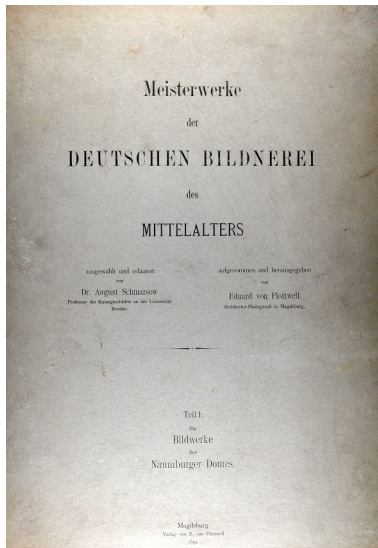


fig.4: Schmarsow, Die Bildwerke des Naumburger Domes, 1892, Front page

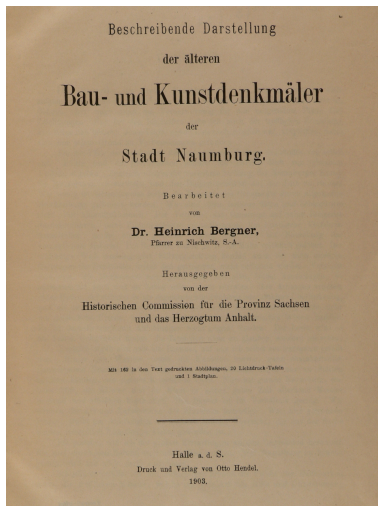


fig.5: Bergner, Beschreibende Darstellung der älteren Bau- und Kunstdenkmäler der Stadt Naumburg, 1903, Front page

able to come to an agreement on the subject of Naumburg sculpture, and the term 'Naumburg sculpture' can be considered a first result of these detailed descriptions. Even before the term 'Naumburg Master' came into use, these descriptions provided an idea and definition of the object of Naumburg sculpture. The two early explorers of the sculpture in Naumburg Cathedral, August Schmarsow^e (fig.4) and Heinrich Bergner^f (fig.5), are of fundamental historical importance because of their descriptions, which is why their representations has been given an extensive consideration at the beginning of my study, for both historical and systematic reasons.^g

Sauerländer and Brush have made the correlation between close-up, subjective description and nationalistic representation a commonplace in modern Naumburg research. This 'unholy alliance' of near-sighted description and nationalist ideology is said to have been the hallmark of Naumburg research par excellence during the Wilhelmine era, the Weimar period and the Nazi years. This is contradicted by my treatise with concrete individual

^e August Schmarsow: *Die Bildwerke des Naumburger Doms*. Magdeburg 1892.

^f Heinrich Bergner: *Beschreibende Darstellung der älteren Bau- und Kunstdenkmäler der Provinz Sachsen. Band 24: Naumburg*. Halle 1903.

^g The first historical and scientific treatise on the Naumburg Founders' Cycle had already been published 70 years earlier: Carl Peter Lepsius: *Ueber das Alterthum und die Stifter des Doms zu Naumburg und deren Statuen im westlichen Chor. Mittheilungen aus dem Gebiet historisch-antiquarischer Forschungen, Heft 1. Naumburg 1822*. This first fundamental historical research on the Founders' Cycle lies outside the scope of the present investigation. The present study begins with the first comparative studies on Naumburg sculpture, which began to take on a systematic form with the photographic recording of the sculptures. Nevertheless Lepsius already belongs to the history of scientific research into Naumburg sculpture. This is not at least shown by the fact that research to this day has to draw on the genealogical results of his investigation. (fig.6)

investigations and examples of the authors. Sauerländer's and Brush's general verdict on the work of entire generations of researchers has led to the condemnation and disqualification of authors who, on closer examination, hardly deserve the title of nationalist. Hermann Beenken, for example, is described by Brush with his monograph on the Master of Naumburg of 1939^h (fig.7) as the prototype of the Nazi author par excellence, who in his treatise presented a compilation of earlier scholarship mixed with thinly-veiled National Socialist political and racial ideologyⁱ and Peter H. Feist summed up in Metzler's *Kunsthistoriker Lexikon* from 1999 on Beenken's publication, that although it shows a sensitive understanding of the characteristics of Naumburg art, it is of a mystifying Germanicity that seems frightening today.^j

If one follows these clues and searches in Beenken's book itself for relevant evidence of racial ideology and mystifying Germanicism, one does not find anything there. One finds the word race there only once, but not in a racist sense (which is what this proof would depend on). The related word 'völkisch' is not used at all by Beenken, and the word 'Volk' is only used in connections like Nachbarvolk, which means neighbouring people, i.e. France.^k On the other hand, Beenken was one of the few authors of the

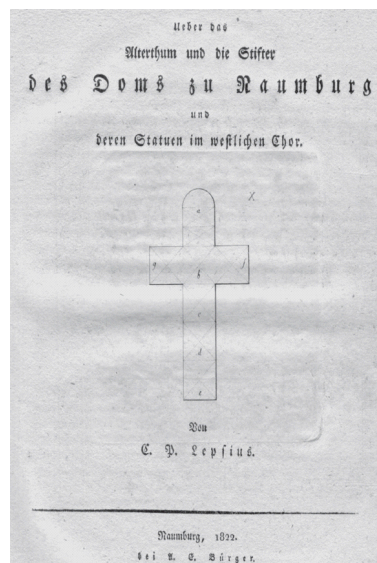


fig.6: Lepsius, Ueber das Alterthum und die Stifter des Doms zu Naumburg und deren Statuen im westlichen Chor, 1822, Front page (cf. Footnote g)

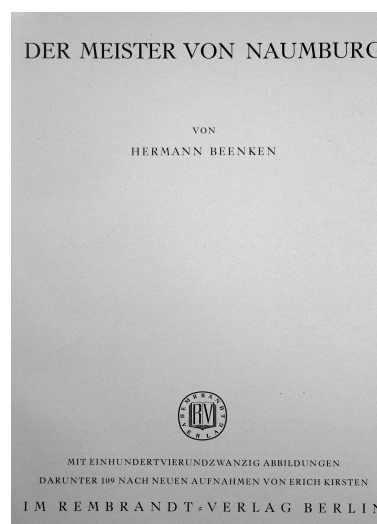


fig.7: Beenken, Der Meister von Naumburg, 1939, Front page

^h Hermann Beenken: *Der Meister von Naumburg*. 1. Auflage, Berlin (Rembrandt-Verlag) 1939.

ⁱ Brush 1993 (as per note b), p. 115.

^j Peter Feist in: Metzler *Kunsthistorikerlexikon*. *Zweihundert Porträts deutschsprachiger Autoren aus vier Jahrhunderten*. Stuttgart/Weimar 1999, p. 19.

^k Beenken 1939 (as per note h), p. 12.



fig.8: Metz, Zur Deutung der Meissner und Naumburger Skulpturenzyklen des 13. Jahrhunderts, 1940, [Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte, Cover, which contains the article by Metz]

Nazi period (including also Otto Schmitt)^l, who - although not in the main text, what did not often occur at that time - referred to publications by emigrants, such as Erwin Panofsky and Paul Frankl in the publication mentioned here.^m

Conversely, under this premise, descriptions could be considered progressive that have had only the one advantage of not being nearsighted. Thus, in 1940, Peter Metz published an article about the Crucified of the west rood screen of Naumburg, which did without a near-sighted description.ⁿ (fig.8) The interest in

Metz's essay from the Nazi era had been

heightened even more by the fact that an article in Metzler's Lexicon of Art Historians conceded the author the rank of an opponent of the Nazi regime. In a brief overview of the academic career of Peter Metz, who is still one of the most important authors for the interpretation of the Naumburg sculpture after 1945, because his publications have had a lasting opinion-forming effect, the lexicon contributor Christiane Fork painted the picture of an art historian who was *politically persecuted* during the Nazi period.

Metz was according to Fork dismissed from the Hanau Goldsmith School in 1935 *for political reasons*, was then offered the directorship of the Historical Museum in Frankfurt am Main, but rejected it *for political reasons* and finally found a job in the sculpture department of the Berlin museums.^o In 1940, however, Peter Metz, who had been dismissed *for political reasons*, was able to publish an article in the *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* - it is dealt with in detail in my study - which differed from the publications of other Nazi-era authors primarily in that it far outshined the folk ideology of racial intolerance that could be found there

^l Otto Schmitt: *Das Mainzer Dommuseum und die deutsche Bildhauerkunst des 13. Jahrhunderts*. In: *Dom und Diözese Mainz, Festgabe für Georg Lenhart*. Mainz 1939, p. 78, n.14.

^m Beenken 1939 (as per note h), p. 156, n.2 und p. 158, n.37.

ⁿ Peter Metz: *Zur Deutung der Meißner und Naumburger Skulpturenzyklen des 13. Jahrhunderts*. In: *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 9 (1940) p. 145-174, here p. 159/160.

^o Metzler *Kunsthistorikerlexikon* (as per note j), p. 267f.

through a consistently anti-Semitic interpretation of the Naumburg Passion Cycle.^p While the folk views of Lothar Schreyer,^q Alfred Stange,^r Herbert Küas^s and Ernst Lippelt^t - which are also dealt with in my study - have rather an isolated character within the framework of the overall interpretations of these authors and by no means - even in the case of out-and-out Nazi authors such as Schreyer and Stange - determined their entire analysis, a single anti-Semitic thought runs through Peter Metz's entire interpretation of the Passion of Christ and the Crucified of the west rood screen of Naumburg Cathedral: the idea that *the synagogue herself would have called down judgment upon herself* (fig.9) and the idea of *the Murder of God by the Synagogue*. (fig.10)^u

verurteilt. Man wird an eine Stelle des Karfreitagsoffiziums erinnert: „Tradiderunt me in manus iniquorum et inter iniquos proiecērunt me. . . ; congregati sunt adversum me foras. Et sicut gigantes steterunt contra me. . .“. Die frontale Haltung Christi hat hier ganz besonders den Charakter der Passivität. In ihr und in der Art, wie der Vertreter der Synagoge links den Arm Christi faßt, sehen wir den Ausdruck der Isaias-Stelle (c. 53, 7): „. . . sicut ovis ad occisionem ducetur, et quasi agnus coram tonante se obmutescet, et non aperiet os suum.“ Die Geste des genannten Juden, der mit der rechten Hand auf sich zeigt, könnte — wie schon Bergner vermutet hat — die Worte veranschaulichen (Matth. 27, 25): „Sanguis eius super nos et super filios nostros.“ Sie würde besagen, daß die Synagoge selbst das Gericht über sich herabrufft. In der Gestalt des Pilatus scheinen zwei verschiedene Handlungen ausgedrückt zu sein. Als Richter sitzt er auf seinem Amtssitz. Mit der linken Hand entspricht er der bekannten Stelle bei Matthäus (24, 27), an der er durch Hände waschen seine Unschuld dokumentieren will: „Innocens ego sum a sanguine iusti huius: vos videtis.“ Der Ausdruck des Kopfes aber, insbesondere der weit geöffnete Mund, paßt durchaus nicht zu dem eben zitierten Ausspruch. Er ist Träger der zweiten Handlung. Wir deuten ihn als den Ausdruck des Richters, der

fig.9: Metz, Zur Deutung ... 1940, p. 159: „Die Geste des genannten Juden, der mit der rechten Hand auf sich zeigt, könnte ... die Worte veranschaulichen (Matth. 27,25): ‚Sanguis eius super nos et super filios nostros.‘ Sie würde besagen, daß die Synagoge selbst das Gericht über sich herabrufft.“ (*that the synagogue herself would have called down judgement upon herself*)

den Spruch fällt; d. h. Pilatus gibt den Befehl zur Geißelung und zur Kreuzigung. Auf den gleichen Inhalt weist offenbar auch der Gestus der rechten Hand des Pilatus; es ist der Befehlsgestus, wie wir ihn in einer ganz ähnlichen Form etwa am Denkmal des Kaisers Otto auf dem Magdeburger Marktplatz beobachten können. — Nicht ohne Aufschluß für den tieferen Sinn der Szene sind vielleicht Gedanken aus einer Lesung des Karfreitagsoffiziums (Ex tractatu Sti. Augustini super Psalmos). Dort wird ausgeführt, die Juden hätten Christus dem ‚Richter Pilatus‘ übergeben, um selbst von seinem Tode frei zu erscheinen, und zwar indem sie sagten: ‚Nobis non licet occidere quemquam.‘ Auch diese Worte könnte man dem Zeigegestus des Juden, der Christus am Arme führt, unterlegen; er erschiene uns hierdurch sogar noch besser begründet. In der Lesung heißt es dann weiter, die Juden hätten die Bosheit ihres Verbrochens dem ‚menschlichen Richter‘ unterschoben (refundere) wollen; den ‚göttlichen Richter‘ aber hätten sie nicht täuschen können. Wenn Pilatus schuldig sei, so habe er doch widerwillingig gehandelt; die Juden aber seien in keiner Weise unschuldig. Als Pilatus den ‚Richterspruch‘ fällte und Christus ‚zu kreuzigen befahl‘, habe er ihn ‚quasi‘ geäußert; in Wahrheit aber hätten ihn die Juden geäußert: durch das ‚Schwert der Zunge‘, indem sie riefen: ‚cruzifige, cruzifige‘. Hiermit tritt neben den ‚Gottesraub‘ des Judas der ‚Gottesmord‘ der Synagoge.

fig.10: Metz, Zur Deutung ... 1940, p. 160: „... in Wahrheit aber hätten ihn die Juden geäußert: durch das ‚Schwert der Zunge‘, indem sie riefen: ‚cruzifige, cruzifige‘. Hiermit tritt neben den ‚Gottesraub‘ des Judas der ‚Gottesmord‘ der Synagoge.“ (*Herewith the 'theft of God' by Judas is accompanied by the 'Murder of God' by the synagogue.*

^p Christiane Fork may not have read this essay by Peter Metz. But she could at least have asked herself whether it seems plausible that a person dismissed „for political reasons“ in 1935 should receive an offer for the directorship [!] of the Historical Museum in Frankfurt am Main in the same year, be asked to join the NSDAP at the same time, reject this offer with a refusal, then find employment in the sculpture department of the Berlin museums and thus become a resistance fighter. - One could also argue that the Nazis knew exactly why they were asking Peter Metz to join the NSDAP: Peter Metz suited them.

^q Lothar Schreyer: *Frau Uta in Naumburg. Eine Beschreibung und Deutung der Stifterfiguren*. Oldenburg/Berlin 1934, p. 11.

^r Alfred Stange und Graf Wolff Metternich: *Der Bassenheimer Reiter*. 2. Aufl. Bonn 1937, p. 10.

^s Herbert Küas: *Die Meisterwerke im Naumburger Dom, Leipzig 1938, p. 66.*

^t Ernst Lippelt: *Der Dom zu Naumburg. Führer durch den Naumburger Dom*. 4., völlig neu bearbeitete Auflage. Jena 1939, p. 22.

^u Metz 1940 (as per note n), p. 159 interprets the scene 'Christ before Pilate' from the Passion reliefs of the Naumburg west rood screen and the gesture of the Jewish captain leading Christ before Pilate as follows: „The gesture of the mentioned Jew, who points to himself with his right hand, could ... illustrate the words (Matth. 27,25): 'Sanguis eius super nos et super filios nostros.' It would mean that the synagogue herself calls down judgment upon herself.“ And p. 160: „But in truth the Jews had killed him: by 'the sword of the tongue', by calling out, 'Crucify, crucify, crucify.' Herewith the 'theft of God' by Judas is accompanied by the 'murder of God' by the synagogue.“ - Against the

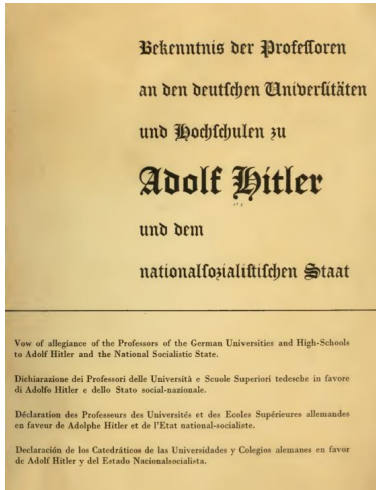


fig.11: Vow of allegiance, 1933, Front page



fig.12: Pinder, Die Kunst der deutschen Kaiserzeit, 1935, Cover

An opposite case, which is dealt with in the present study, is that of Wilhelm Pinder, who is regarded as a figurehead of Nazi art historiography and rightly deserved this reputation through his early emphatic commitment to National Socialism and his co-authorship as a professor of art history of the notorious *Vow of allegiance to Adolf Hitler*^v (fig.11) published after Hitler came to power in 1933. Since 1935 Pinder headed the leading German art historical institute in Berlin and advocated an expansive Ostpolitik in the same year.^w And finally he participated in the Festschrift for Hitler's 50th birthday in 1939.^x And yet Pinder cannot be dismissed as a Nazi scholar. In 1935, Pinder published the only explicit critique of Hitler's race ideology from an art-historical point of view that can be traced back to the Nazi era.^y (fig.12)

In the context of my investigation, many more examples of a disfigured and distorted reception by art historiography, still represented today, had to be cited, which cannot be traced back to a superficial equation of nearsightedness = nationalism,

background of the events of 1940, this can certainly be read as a theological justification of the genocide of the Jews ('synagogue') by Metz.

^v *Vow of allegiance of the Professors of the German Universities and High-Schools to Adolf Hitler and the National Socialistic State. Dresden 1933. This includes the speech of Geheimrat Prof. Dr. Wilhelm Pinder, Munich, p. 18-20.*

^w *Wilhelm Pinder: Die Kunst der deutschen Kaiserzeit bis zum Ende der deutschen Klassik. Leipzig 1935, p. 13.*

^x *Wilhelm Pinder: Deutsche Kunstgeschichte. In: Deutsche Wissenschaft. Arbeit und Aufgabe. (Festschrift Adolf Hitler zum 50. Geburtstag) Leipzig 1939, p. 11-13.*

^y *In a speech in 1934 Hitler explained that National Socialism was "based on blood-based knowledge and not on ancient traditions". (Adolf Hitler, Reden zur Kunst- und Kulturpolitik 1933-1939, hrsg. u. kommentiert von Robert Eikmeyer, Frankfurt am Main 2004, p. 75.) Pinder replied in his 'Kunst der deutschen Kaiserzeit' 1935 (as per note w) that it was exactly the other way around: there was no blood-based (=racial) knowledge at all. Even the theory of race knows "neither a German nor an Italian (...), not even a Germanic or Romanic (race)." (Pinder 1935, p. 32). A people is rather constituted from its history. (Cf. Pinder 1935, p. 42).*

but rather owe their existence to a deliberate historical misrepresentation. For example, the review which Sauerländer dedicated to Gertrud Bäumer's blood and soil ideology. In 1940, Gertrud Bäumer boasted that her publication in 1928 had contributed to preparing the growth of the now ruling movement [the Nazis] five years before this movement came to power.^z Willibald Sauerländer, in his 1979 essay on the Naumburg founder figures, commented on this very partisanship of Bäumer for National Socialism as „courageous“ and used this word to claim the author as an opponent of the Nazi regime, as the pioneer of which she understood herself.^{aa} Such and other examples, which are discussed in my treatise, have been intended to demonstrate the necessity of the procedure chosen in my book, to let the authors themselves have their say literally - in the main text and in the footnotes - and to attach more weight to the original statements made by the authors themselves than to the judgments subsequently circulated about them, which on closer examination often enough turn out to be mere misjudgements.

My study proceeds strictly immanently in the historical treatment of the authors. It discusses the investigations according to their own guidelines: style-critical investigations are presented according to their style-critical, iconographic according to their iconographic, historical according to their historical results, and not purposes that the investigated authors did not pursue at all are applied to their works as standards retrospectively. If one wants to reduce the approach of the investigation chosen in my study to a common denominator, it can be described as immanently critical.

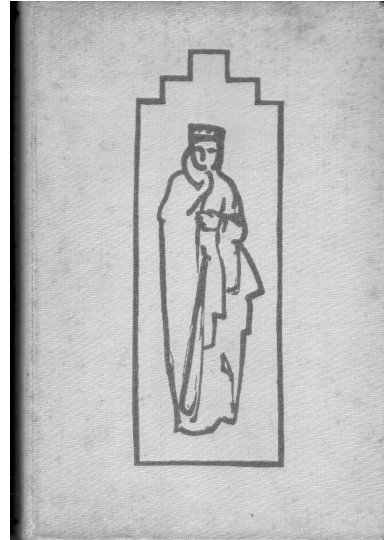


fig.13: Bäumer, Die Frauengestalt der deutschen Frühe, 1940, Cover (with a design of Uta of Naumburg)

^z Gertrud Bäumer: *Die Frauengestalt der deutschen Frühe*. 2. Auflage, Berlin 1940, p. 15-17. (Erstauflage Berlin 1928.)

^{aa} Sauerländer 1979 (as per note a), p. 240, n.37: „Wie entschieden sich andererseits Gertrud Bäumer von der ungehemmten völkischen Vereinnahmung mittelalterlicher Kunstwerke distanzierte, zeigt das mutige Vorwort zur 2. Auflage ihres Buches: *Die Frauengestalt der deutschen Frühe*, Berlin 1940, 15 ff.“[„How Gertrud Bäumer, on the other hand, decided to distance herself from the uninhibited national appropriation of medieval works of art is shown by the courageous foreword to the second edition of her book: *Die Frauengestalt der deutschen Frühe*; my translation, G.S.]

The history of research into Naumburg sculpture and the Naumburg Master is presented in my dissertation on the basis of its authors, about fifty of whom are treated in monographic chapters.^{bb} At the end, the research overview leads to an attempt at an own historical interpretation of the Naumburg Founders' Cycle. This new attempt at explanation is developed on the basis of sources on the history of the Naumburg diocese, which, with few exceptions, are being translated for the first time and evaluated to explain the historical background of the Founders' Cycle. The sources can confirm a rudimentary thesis of Friedrich Möbius, which has so far received little attention in research: that the Founders' Choir in Naumburg Cathedral has been planned by Bishop Engelhard, the builder of the late Romanesque cathedral building, as a synodal choir in the then new Gothic forms. Engelhard must have felt all the more compelled to make this plan after his participation in the Reichstag in Mainz in 1235 and then at the consecration of Bamberg Cathedral in 1237, which he performed himself on behalf of his Bamberg episcopal brother, all the more so as he was able to visit the stately western choirs of his fellow bishops in their newly erected state. According to the sources evaluated in my study for the first time, Engelhard organized his episcopal rule not least through the synodal jurisdiction, in which he summoned the secular and clerical nobility to a place of his episcopal sovereignty to settle disputes and to conclude solemn contracts. The Naumburg West Choir was to become such a place of episcopal jurisdiction. Engelhard, however, could no longer implement this plan at the end of his term as bishop.

For with the trend-setting Treaty of Groitzsch in 1238 between bishop and margrave, which represented a de facto transfer of power from the aging bishop to the young margrave, a shift of power began to take place in the diocese of Naumburg, from which the planned concept of a synodal choir could not have remained unaffected. After Margrave Henry the Illustrious had succeeded in enforcing his half-brother Dietrich as successor of Engelhard and thus to claim the episcopal throne for the Wettin dynasty

^{bb} *The main authors of this research, such as Georg Dehio, August Schmarsow, Adolph Goldschmidt, Hermann Giesau, Erwin Panofsky, Wilhelm Pinder, Hermann Beenken and Richard Hamann-MacLean, as well as several other authors, are presented chronologically with their works in several chapters, as this makes the respective contributions of these authors to the research discussion more visible in their historical sequence. The most detailed monographic treatise is dedicated to Willibald Sauerländer, the most influential explorer of 13th century sculpture in France and Germany to this day.*

against the initial resistance of the majority in the cathedral chapter in 1242, the concept of a western choir was realized in a way that took into account the changed balance of power between spiritual and secular nobility. Margrave Henry the Illustrious and his half-brother Dietrich, who acted together at that time of transition, based the legitimate participation of the secular nobility in the Church Synod, which had been marginalized under Bishop Engelhard, on the founding history of the diocese at the time of the Ekkehardian Brethren, as whose legitimate successors they considered themselves.

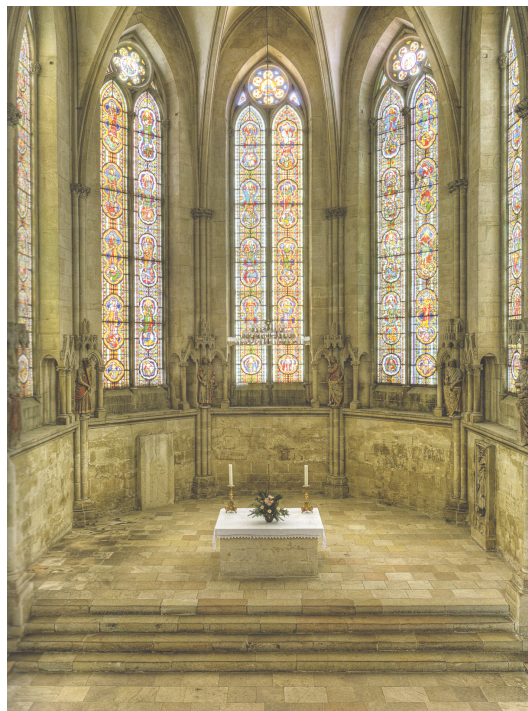


fig. 14: The *Naumburg Synod* in the west choir of the Naumburg Cathedral with historical participants of the synod: historical bishops in the stained glass windows, under whose presidency these synods have taken place and sculptures of donors from the founding period of the diocese, representing the secular representatives of the synod (Catalog 'The Naumburg Master', volume II, 2011, p. 951)

It is the *Naumburg Synod* with a prominent participation of the Wettin nobility in the shape of their Ekkehardine ancestors, who had previously been marginalized by Bishop Engelhard, which is represented in the west choir of Naumburg Cathedral.

The Naumburg Synod received an artistically unique representation with the bishops in the stained glass windows and with the sculptures of the first and most important founders of the Naumburg bishopric depicted at a famous historical court case from the early days of the diocese. The program was and only could have been realized during the first years of Bishop Dietrich's episcopate. An architect from Bamberg, who had been appointed already under Bishop Engelhard, and the Naumburg Master realised the concept of the Synodal Choir in the Wettin sense as a claim of the local nobility to participate - as it had been granted to their ancestors since the foundation of the diocese - in *the Naumburg Synod*.

Gerhard Straehle, Munich in December 2020