

History and politics — discretion and inner meaning: Menzel and historicism.

Susanne von Falkenhausen

The English public, unlike the German, has not yet been faced with a mass of popular and scholarly publications about Adolph Menzel. It also lacks a clear image of the artist, such as that formed in Germany by the enormous and wide popularity which Menzel at one time enjoyed. Wanting to provide English readers with some basic information about the artist's life and work, we nevertheless decided that it would be more useful for the introduction to focus on possible approaches to interpretation. The texts accompanying the drawings will then introduce the three periods of Menzel's work, providing an overview of his development as a draughtsman.

The focal point of what follows is Menzel's relationship to historicism, which is not to say that his entire *œuvre* will be subjected to a one-sided, exclusively historicist interpretation. We intend, rather, to limit the discussion to this single aspect of Menzel's work which, in the course of the 'historicism' debate of the last ten years, has become increasingly important. The present interest in historicism goes beyond a concern for a specific period of art history. It is also concerned with the fundamental significance of the phenomenon today and thus touches on an important factor in the new relevance of Menzel's work. A few brief introductory remarks will help set the scene. The middle of the nineteenth century represents a watershed in German history. The revolution of March 1848 (the 'March Revolution') breaks the continuity of history, splitting the century into two distinct periods. Even contemporaries experienced the period between the French Revolution (which made many middle-class Germans aware of the need for social change) and the events of March 1848 as the 'age of revolutions'. Before 1848, the restoration of the old order which followed the defeat of Napoleon provoked bitter political and intellectual opposition among republicans and liberals of nationalist sympathies. Historians call this opposition and the period in which it occurred *Vormärz* — 'pre-March' — a word which refers to the month in which the revolution eventually occurred.

The 1848 revolution was abortive and the old order was once again restored. During the second half of the century, social change, powered now by the effects of the industrial revolution but taking place in a climate of political reaction, was accompanied by massive economic growth. The triumphant war against France of 1870-71 encouraged a new kind of patriotism — nationalism — and sparked off the euphoria of the years which immediately followed: the age of the parvenu, the age known in German as the *Gründerzeit* because it began with the foundation of the new German empire. The division of the 19th Century into 'pre' and 'post' revolutionary periods is of great significance both for Menzel's artistic development and the history of historicism. It will appear again in what follows.

"By . . . revealing the styles of past epochs as they emerged, matured and declined, and by presenting carefully chosen examples to illustrate that development, the sober critical spirit of this undertaking seemed to spread to the public at large. An educated public gradually emerged, but taste decayed and became eclectic. One feels just as much or just as little about everything, and the sun which shines into a modern room through old-fashioned, bottle-glass windows, must illuminate at once the *Hermes of Praxiteles*, coquettish Meissen figurines and convoluted Japanese creations."¹

Thus did one of Menzel's contemporaries characterise the taste of the second half of the 19th century, a description of the historicist phenomenon which, in recent years, has come to interest art historians. Indiscriminate enthusiasm for historical styles and a mania for detail, the traits which seem to have surprised and fascinated art historians at the time of the last two Menzel exhibitions (Kiel 1981, Hamburg 1982), are here described as part of a general cultural atmosphere and as the taste of a bourgeois consumer society. Menzel, born in 1815, saw the



Entry of Sophie of Brabant with her little son Heinrich into Marburg in 1247, 1847-48, formerly Kaiser Friedrich Museum Magdeburg

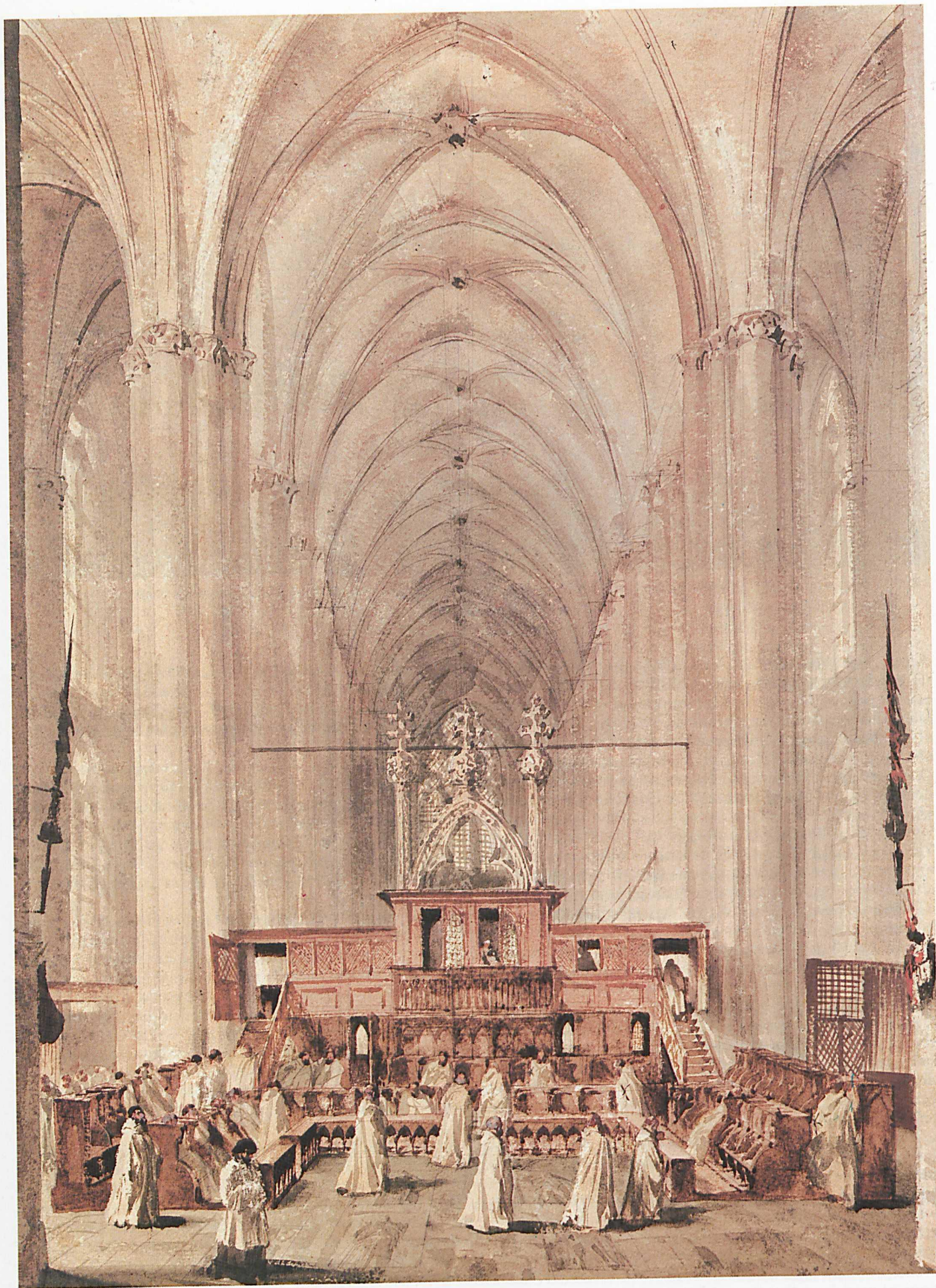
rise of a new educated class, formed from the petite bourgeoisie, to which he himself belonged. His work helped inform the eclectic taste of that class and the knowledge which was a part of it. After the revolution, historicism was reduced to the level of the above-described fashion embracing all forms of art, architecture and craft. Before the revolution, however, historicism had taken other forms and had other purposes. During the decades before 1848, historical art was “shaped by the historic experience of the ‘age of revolutions’”² and was intimately related to the philosophy of history of the ‘pre-March’ period. The crucial experience of the French Revolution as a total break in the continuity of history changed attitudes to the past and its traditions. The idea of history as a process, as something developing, being created, as ‘act’ (a concept central to the bourgeois image of itself), as an ‘historicisation of reason’, now supplanted the metaphysical notion of the absolute, of the idea of history as something immutable. ‘History as the history of freedom’ became the bourgeois philosophy of emancipation which held up the individual’s moral right to self-determination against the subordination of all to the ossified social models of feudalism. The bourgeoisie was no longer prepared to be subjected to absolute, morally and culturally prescriptive traditions, but chose traditions for itself from a “consciously conceived wealth of possibilities”³ in order to relate its own contemporary political actions to them. That inspired a new kind of historical research and the habit of thinking in terms of historical periods. One of these was the present itself, defined as the ‘age of revolutions’. The study and use of past traditions, especially as an aid to the “understanding of state and nation”⁴ were the means, both political and cultural, by which the bourgeoisie sought to find its identity before the revolution. In art, this search found expression in history painting, in ‘pictures of events’ in which the artist’s aim was to present historical situations as models so that the public could identify with them. Large-scale history painting, especially when intended for public exhibition, aimed to educate the ‘pre-March’ public in history and therefore in politics as well. The style of this kind

of painting was derived from romanticism and characterised by a declamatory pathos, centrally arranged compositions and by an emphasis on line and form — in contrast to the dominance of light and colour in the naturalism which followed it.

In 1848 Menzel was 33 years old. Born, educated and already mature before 1848, he witnessed the entire course of historicism: from the romantic history painting of the ‘pre-March’ days (intimately related to the revolutionary, bourgeois idea of ‘the nation’), to the ‘living-room genre’ painting of the nouveau-riche Wilhelmine salon. The stages of this development, as reflected in Menzel’s work, are traced in what follows.

Menzel’s contact with history as a source of ‘pre-March’ identity began early. As a child he was inspired “by school history lessons . . . to (draw) his first compositions derived from Roman, medieval and even from most recent history, everything taken very seriously and precisely delineated in pencil.”⁵ Menzel’s first larger works also dealt with historical subjects, at that time the touchstone of artistic quality. In 1847 he advised the son of Arnold, his friend in Kassel, to follow the same path as an artist: to gain a wide knowledge of the Bible, mythology and above all of history in order to acquire the “intellectual stuff” which “will start to heat the blood”.⁶

As early as 1839 scholarly accuracy in the description of historical detail and the aim of political instruction combined and found new expression in Menzel’s illustrations for Franz Kugler’s ‘History of Frederick the Great’. Even the choice of period was unusual: in 1839 it must have seemed part of a very recent past and, as the period of the Rococo, precluded the pathos of conventional history painting. Frederick, then a controversial figure, was to be presented to the ordinary reader as an enlightened, popular king and as a human being. He was also to be shown as part of the bourgeois tradition. Menzel wanted “to show Frederick as a man of the people”, “as a father who lived for his people and whose memory is therefore especially



IV Middle aisle of the Elisabethkirche in Marburg, 1847 (cat. no. 13)

revered by that social class in which the seeds sown by his institutions are bearing most fruit... without degenerating into obsolete and rambling motives."⁷

Criticism of the pomp of history painting is explicit here, but it emerged not in a history painting (probably because of the rigorous stylistic conventions which applied) but in the freer form of book illustration. Menzel added to the text some 'historical notes to an understanding of some illustrations' and prefaced them with the following: "Everything relating to the outward aspects of life, the taste of the time and the variety of same in buildings, implements, costumes and general habits... is based on studies of characteristic examples as they have been preserved." The decisiveness of this was new. The aim of educating the ordinary reader — politically, historically and culturally — is unmistakable. At that time education meant making the world, past as well as present, accessible: it was a strategy for emancipation. Menzel's role as teacher entailed a conscious dependence on his public which he cultivated over a long period. Menzel was never one of those Berlin bohemians (rare birds in that city in any case) who played the genius, combating the 'idiot' public. He lived in and with the world which interested his public or which he wanted to make accessible to them. That removes the musty smell of the museum from his historical precision.

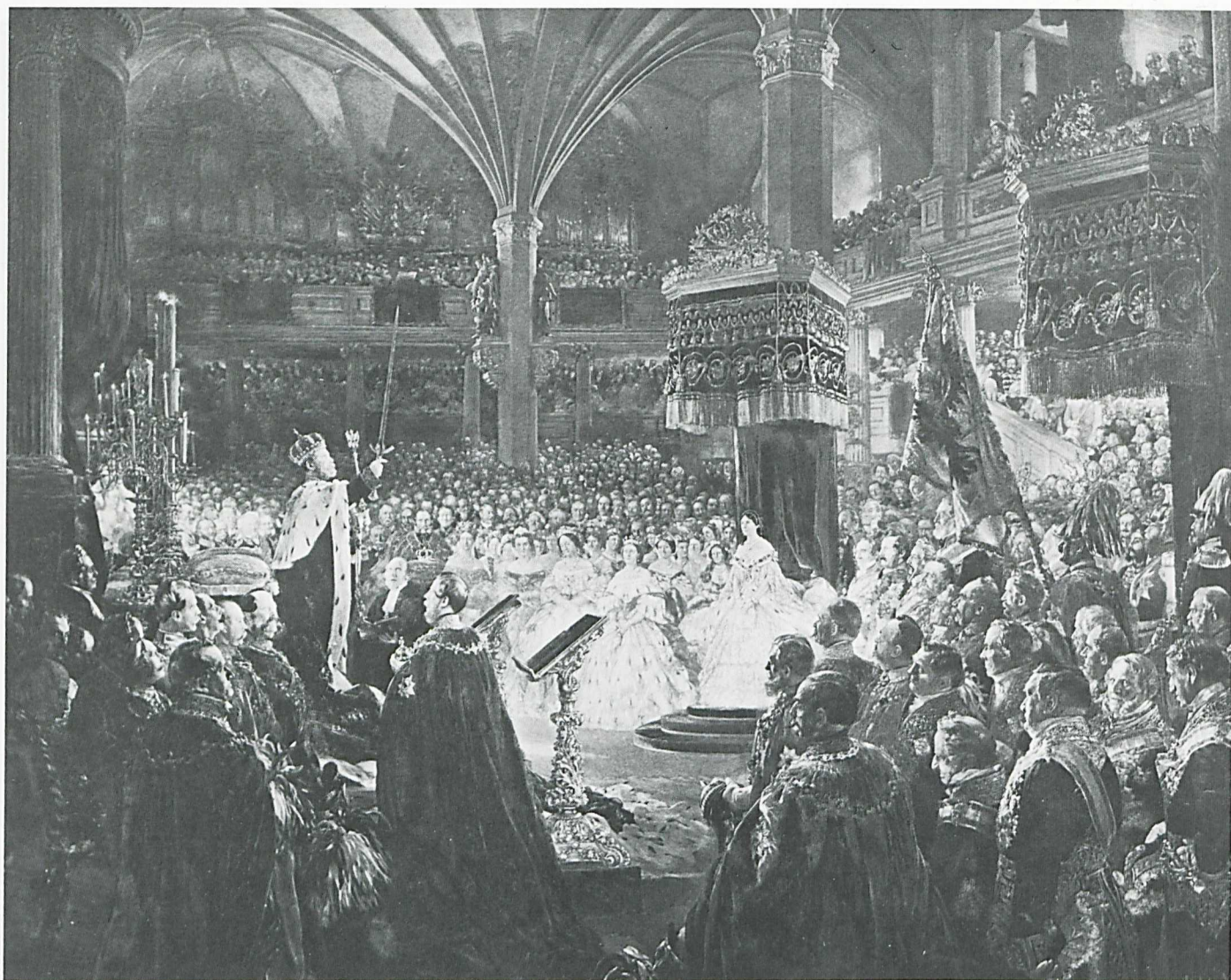
The last historical commission Menzel carried out before the revolution seems like a retrograde step. The cartoon 'Entry of Sophie of Brabant with her little son Heinrich into Marburg in 1247' was commissioned by the Kassel Art Society (*Kunstverein*) in 1847 and was completed in March 1848. It reveals an attempt to depart from the stiff emotionalism cultivated by the Munich and Düsseldorf schools of painting and to inject some life into a traditional form, but nevertheless remains trapped by stylistic criteria, and especially the emphasis on line, prescribed by conventional history painting. In this, the purpose and conditions of the commission were obviously important. The pencil study of a horseman and a man (no. 18) and the view of the choir in the Elizabeth-Kirche in Marburg (no. 19) are two of the preparatory studies for this cartoon. The circumstances in which this public commission was carried out clearly demonstrate the significance of history painting in general before 1848 against the background of the pre-revolutionary conflict between the populace at large and the court and state. The Kassel *Kunstverein* commissioned Menzel to produce a cartoon on a subject from 'national history'. This was to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the ruling house of Hesse. The subject, the entry of Sophie of Brabant with her son into Marburg in 1247, relates to the ending of the rule of the Thuringian Landgraves by the Hessian Landgraves, a dynasty founded by Sophie's son. The *Kunstvereine*, of which that in Kassel was only one, were a typical result of bourgeois initiatives during the 'pre-March' period: they were founded in several cities from the 1820s onwards and all had elevated educational aims. The modest contributions of ordinary people would, when combined, make it possible to commission public works of art, which otherwise only courts were able to finance, and the works commissioned by the *Kunstverein* would encourage a bourgeois, patriotic culture. This was in obvious contrast to the official court art of, for example, Ludwig I in Munich, whose painters were attacked by the democrats as 'aristocratic lackeys'. In spite of their communal funds, the *Kunstvereine* — including the one in Kassel — were able to commission only relatively modest works. Costs prohibited frescoes and large oil paintings and the only monumental medium they could afford was the cartoon. The size of Menzel's cartoon was formidable — 3 × 6.5 metres — and it was executed in a variety of media, but mostly in charcoal. The subject of the cartoon — the founding of a dynasty — was typical of court history painting and it is therefore surprising that it should have been commissioned by a *Kunstverein*. Political distinctions were not always clear-cut,

however, especially in those parts of the country with both relatively progressive rulers and moderate, liberal subjects. Many bourgeois art associations enjoyed royal patronage. The aim of the liberals was in any case not the destruction of the monarchies, but only the introduction of a constitution guaranteeing individual rights. Even history was absorbed by the mood of nationalism. Here, therefore, it was the national aspects of the subject which dominated the motif — something with which the court was able entirely to sympathise.

Menzel went to Kassel in 1847, armed with portfolios of historical costume studies. In Kassel he had to make do with models and "costumes of all kinds, as good as it was possible to find here".⁹ The horseman in our study (no. 18) wears an old-fashioned hat and cloak together with contemporary trousers and shoes. By comparison with the accuracy of the Kugler illustrations, the costumes in the cartoon are anachronistic. They point less to the 13th than to the 15th or 16th century. This may have stemmed from the era's imperfect knowledge of the medieval period, but also from the contemporary weakness for the Renaissance. The cartoon was part of an already-dead tradition, which was quickly demonstrated by political developments. On March 18th and 19th, the days during which the cartoon was completed, fighting broke out on the streets of Berlin. The revolution had begun. At the moment of the cartoon's completion, politics had made it redundant. As Menzel was forced to see eighteen years later, the cartoon led a shadowy existence, hanging unnoticed on a dark wall in the Kassel library. The mood of resignation which dominated the post-revolutionary age had supervened.

A comparison of the study of costume for the cartoon with the study of Voltaire for 'Frederick II's round table in Sanssouci' of 1850 (no. 38) demonstrates the extent of the break that had occurred. From line to colour, from rhetorical rigidity to the greatest directness of expression, the manner of dealing with an historical subject, now depicted in oils, had changed. The first Frederick paintings, begun in the year after the revolution, still betray a desire to show an enlightened, popular monarch. What had changed with the crucial experience of the political watershed of 1848 was historicism itself — the role it now played, the degree of its populism and the form it assumed. After 1848 historicism in art was not, as it had been before, the arena in which the cultural and political views of the courts confronted those of the population at large. It had become just a taste, a fashion, and won the broad support of that 'eclectic public' referred to above. The path was now free for the citizen who had been made rich by Prussia's industrialisation but remained powerless, to choose from the now politically impotent repertoire of traditional styles in order to see himself portrayed in princely fashion. At court, on the other hand, historical subjects, now robbed of their revolutionary significance, were put to work in the glorification of Wilhelmine statecraft.

In his continuing involvement with the figure of Frederick the Great even Menzel could not ignore these factors. The pedagogical intentions of the 'pre-March' works now disappeared behind painterly perfectionism, precision and anecdotal narrative. Symptomatic of the end of this development in Menzel's work is the reduction of history painting, which before 1848 had to be as large as its historical message, to the tiny dimensions of the gouache — without, however, reducing the number of narrative details. The historically significant 'picture of an event' was thus transformed into the anecdotal genre painting. 'Frederick II visiting the painter Pesne on the scaffolding at Rheinsberg' (1861, no. 40) provides an eloquent example of this. From now on, the only function of large-scale history painting was to legitimise the court — a development, it should be said, which Menzel did not follow. In his work, this cultural shift had two extreme consequences. One of them was our tiny gouache of an historical subject which takes the function of his-



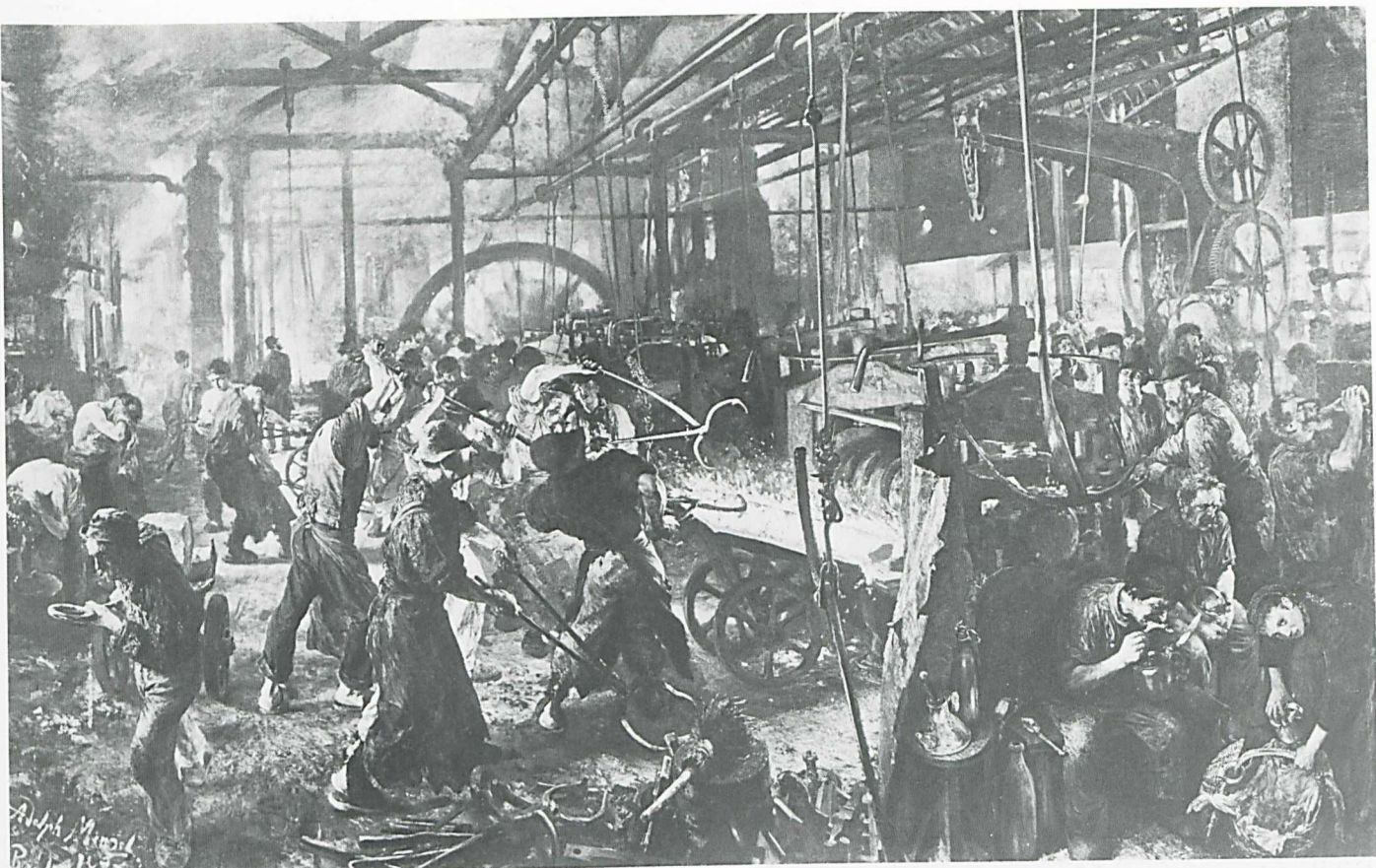
The coronation of Wilhelm I in Königsberg on 18 October 1861, 1861-65, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (East), Nationalgalerie

tory painting to an absurd extreme. It was one of a series of nine gouaches commissioned by a bourgeois collector (Kahlbaum of Berlin) who probably hung them all together in one of his rooms. The other consequence was Menzel's colossal painting of the coronation of Wilhelm I in Königsberg in 1861, begun in the same year as the gouache. The obvious purpose of the coronation picture (see nos. 45-47, Introduction) was to legitimise this act of royal arrogance in the face of the modest achievements of the 1848 revolution, by applying the function and format of the history painting to a contemporary subject. That placed Wilhelm I's coronation in the tradition of past, historically significant events, a popular subject for a history painting. A tradition was fabricated, no longer as an aid to the pre-revolutionary, bourgeois search for identity, but now precisely to obscure the crisis of a tradition, the one to which the ruler — by the grace of God but not by the grace of the people — himself belonged.

The preparatory studies for the portraits in this painting (nos. 45-47) show why Menzel could not succeed in the task expected of him. The unifying philosophical conception which informed the history painting of the pre-revolutionary period was no longer present. Its place was now taken by pure reportage. The courtiers present, 132 of them in all, were portrayed from nature with the same mania for facts with which Menzel also recorded the appearance of things — like the Gothic iron-work in the Welf Museum (no. 54). The result was like a sparkling sea of faithful likenesses, but with an insignificant Kaiser

in the middle ground on the left. Menzel had thrown the compositional rules of history painting, which served to stress the significant aspects of an event, out of the window. In the coronation painting, historicism and naturalism combine in a contradictory way: the format and purpose of a history painting have to contend with an extremely naturalistic approach in which each detail is endowed with equal significance. The result cheated the royal patron of the legitimising effect he desired.

The 'Iron Rolling Mill', which Menzel originally called 'Modern Cyclopes' and completed ten years later (in 1875) demonstrates the way in which the combination of historicism and naturalism now developed further. After finishing the coronation picture Menzel abandoned history painting and began to look for his subjects in contemporary, and above all city life. 'Modern Cyclopes' was a logical continuation of this development. One of the most fascinating technical achievements of the time, the rapidly developing iron industry which employed the most modern techniques, now became Menzel's subject and, with it, the industrial worker himself. After Menzel had come into contact with the iron industry through the commission in 1869 for a print to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the firm of Heckmann, he began to work on a large-scale painting. Once again, the collecting of information began. In 1872 he spent several weeks in the sheds of the iron rolling mill in Königshütte and sketched workers, tools and machine parts there (nos. 60-65). Before 1872 Königshütte, the site of the big-



The Iron Rolling Mill, 1875, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (East), Nationalgalerie

gest smelting-works in Silesia, had grown up out of various smaller towns and had become, for the time, a gigantic industrial landscape. The drawing 'Open-cast mine in Königshütte' (no. 60) gives an impressive idea of this landscape transformed by production.

Menzel learned to understand this world by applying the same system which he had developed to reconstruct the Rococo period of Frederick II. His working method, the achievement of accuracy with the aid of countless detailed studies, is most often regarded as the expression of a radically realist approach (the term 'naturalism' would actually be more apposite here), and he had developed it to meet the demands of his history pictures. The common roots of historicism and naturalism in the world view, shaped by learning and science, of the rising bourgeois class, can be found in the concern for objectivity which is shared by both types of picture.

Like the coronation painting, the 'Iron Rolling Mill' bursts with figures and detail. But there is no sense that the centre is missing. The workers manoeuvring the glowing lump of iron towards the rollers are the pivotal point of the composition. Accentuated by the glow of the iron, the group is precisely composed and dramatically stressed. The Kaiser raising his sword in the coronation picture cannot pretend to such significance. The noticeable emphasis on the description of that moment in the production process which Menzel, after lengthy study, regarded as the most crucial and difficult, betrays a sympathy and an engagement which go far beyond anything in the Frederick paintings or the city pictures. They also emerge in the sketches of workers (nos. 63-65). The only work which comes close in this respect — although here the engagement is political — is the unfinished 'Lying in state of the March dead' of 1848 (Hamburg, Kunsthalle). How can the nature of Menzel's engagement be defined more closely? Did he want to glorify technology, industrial production or the worker? And what is

the connection between this contemporary subject and historicism? As we have seen, historicism shaped Menzel's entire attitude and it should always be borne in mind, precisely because it helps us achieve an historically more accurate interpretation of his motives. In contrast to the Frederick pictures which often remain merely anecdotal, the 'Iron Rolling Mill' is, in its emphasis and centrally arranged composition, a 'picture of an event' and in this it essentially corresponds to the history painting of the pre-revolutionary period which is only capable of moving the spectator in terms of its committed message. Menzel's own verbal description of the painting concentrates on the industrial working process. Is this a glorification of labour, sympathetic to the worker? Might it even be socialist? In 1875 Max Jordan, director of the recently founded Royal National Gallery, stressed in his enthusiastic account of the painting the "glorification of heavy toil", the "moving description of the heroic courage of duty".¹⁰

"There are very good reasons why the bourgeoisie ascribes supernatural creative powers to labour; for precisely because work is essential, it follows that a man, who has no possessions other than his labour, must, in all societies and cultures, be the slave of other men who have made themselves the owners of the conditions of work." This quotation from Marx precisely describes the attitude to industrial progress held by the liberal bourgeoisie at the beginning of the *Gründerzeit* and expressed in Max Jordan's description of Menzel's painting. The concern for inner meaning now takes us along another path — that of the *allégorie réelle*. Werner Hofmann discusses the term in connection with Courbet and then defines it in his essay on Menzel's 'Studio wall': "*Allégorie réelle* means that the every-day, the mundane and the banal are ennobled within their environment and rendered transparent (as the vehicles) for meaning."¹² The repertory of symbols used in this kind of allegory was not derived, as was the case with traditional painting, from the Classical or Renaissance periods, but from the present, and

preferably from areas which previously were thought scarcely worthy of inclusion in art. Industry is the most extreme example of both. The original title of Menzel's picture 'Modern Cyclopes' nevertheless alludes directly to its allegorical character and links the present again with tradition — a tradition which, moreover, is from the distant past. 'Modern Cyclopes' links the Classical era with the idea, important since the 19th century, of 'modernity'.

Why is it the Antique and not a less distant period that is related here to modernity? Why is the Antique made more contemporary than Frederick the Great whose influence was at that time still being felt? "Of all the relationships into which modernity enters, the one with the Antique is outstanding . . . Modernity characterises an epoch; it simultaneously describes the power, at work in this epoch, which relates it to the Antique."¹³ Benjamin thus describes the concept of modernity, new in Menzel's time, and, with it, the post-revolutionary sensibility of artists and people. Encouraged by historicism, they had developed the habit of seeing even contemporary history in terms of eras. The 'age of revolutions' had ended in 1848 in a mood of resignation. What they now saw looming up before them was a new age of modernity, shaped by rapid social and historical developments. Menzel was at home in both periods.

The worker became the hero of this modern age. "What the wage earner does in his daily work is nothing less than what, in ancient times, brought the gladiator applause."¹⁴ As though requiring the applause of some public, the worker could only become a hero in the eyes of those people who knew the world of industrial production only from the outside. The rolling mill became the 'forge of Vulcan'. According to this picture of industrial production, physical energy acquired a crucial significance out of all proportion to its actual role. 'Modern Cyclopes' is therefore motivated by the wish to create a picture of the industrial revolution as part of the people's search for a modern mythology. Here it is exemplified in the expression of intoxicating power, stressed by the new demand, imposed by the machine, for uninterrupted labour. It was the representation of this and not the exploitation of the worker that was Menzel's aim.

The bourgeoisie, the initiators of Prussian economic growth during the *Gründerzeit*, discovered a new identity in this role once their political emancipation, their participation in legislative and executive councils, had been greatly restricted after 1848. The new, economically vital significance of the generation of the March revolution probably reconciled it to the repressive political system under Friedrich Wilhelm IV and Wilhelm I. Menzel's changed attitude to the court would have been influenced by the mood which dominated his social class. He seems more happily to have played this role than that of a supporter of the revolution. That he should nevertheless have created a picture offering a wealth of opportunities for identification and interpretation demonstrates the openness of artistic language to a variety of readings, but this should not lead us away from the actual ideological conditions of the time.

'Modern Cyclopes', although novel in subject and approach, was immediately received by the public with enthusiasm. A year after its completion, Max Jordan received official permission to buy it for the Royal National Gallery. For him it was the equal of the 'greatest history paintings' of the time. The triumphant awareness of the middle class of its role as protagonist of its epoch transformed the present age of industrial 'progress' into history and 'Modern Cyclopes' into the allegory of this awareness.

- 1 Karl Neumann: *Der Kampf um die neue Kunst*, Berlin 1896, pp. 197-198.
- 2 Hardtwig, p. 18.
- 3 Hardtwig, p. 24.
- 4 Hardtwig, p. 21.
- 5 *Curriculum vitae* of 1872 in Menzel's own hand quoted in: *Kunst und Künstler*, 22, 1924, p. 127.
- 6 Wolff 1914, p. 100.
- 7 Wolff 1914, p. 21.
- 8 Franz Kugler: *Geschichte Friedrichs des Großen*, Leipzig 1840, p. I.
- 9 Wolff 1914, p. 110.
- 10 Quoted in: Riemann-Reyher 1976.
- 11 Karl Marx: "Randglosse zum Programm der Deutschen Arbeiterpartei", quoted in: Walter Benjamin: "Das Paris des Second Empire bei Baudelaire", in: *Gesammelte Schriften*, Frankfurt on Main 1974, vol. I.2, p. 574.
- 12 Hamburg 1982, p. 37.
- 13 Walter Benjamin, op. cit. (n. 11), p. 584.
- 14 Walter Benjamin, op. cit. (n. 11), p. 577.



V The artist's hand with a paint dish, 1864 (cat. no. 44)



Studies for a horseman and a man resting on a stick

Studie für einen Reiter und einen auf einen Stab gestützten Mann

1847

Pencil, 35 × 25.7 cm

Signed b. r.: Menzel 1847

Prov.: Estate of the artist

Lit.: Berlin 1905, no. 2423. Ebertshäuser, vol. II. ill. p. 920.

Exh.: Berlin-Dahlem 1955, no. 155

Nationalgalerie, no. 1095

The precise style, the reduction to essentials and the way the sketches are arranged show that this must be a preparatory study. The drawing consists of details of historical costume. A man resting on a stick is wearing a robe without a collar, fastened at the waist and draped around his shoulders. It is decorated with a sort of heraldic device and reveals a smooth area of chest. The horseman is wearing trousers and shoes typical of 1847, but his cloak and hat point to the late Middle Ages.

In 1847 Menzel received two commissions for historical compositions, both of them from the Kassel Art Society (*Kunstverein*). The oil sketch for 'Gustavus Adolphus receiving his consort before the castle at Hanau' (Tschudi, no. 34) is today in Leipzig. Menzel sent it to Kassel where it was well received. At the same time he was commissioned to produce "a cartoon relating to the anniversary of your ruling house" (letter to Arnold of 1. 7. 1847, quoted after Wolff 1914, p. 105). The subject Menzel chose was the entry into Marburg in 1247 of Sophie of Brabant and her son, later Landgrave Heinrich, the founder of the Hessian dynasty. Menzel worked on this cartoon in Kassel and Marburg from 11 August 1847 until 20 March 1848.

Of the studies for the Kassel cartoon (see Hamburg 1982, nos. 29, 30) only very few made after the drawings of costume details and fixing the poses of individual figures have come to light which were incorporated into the final composition. All of them are drawn with the same fine pencil and in the same linear, hatched style as this drawing, and all date from the same year—1847. Neither of the figures here reappears in the same pose in the cartoon, but the horseman's hat seems almost identical to that of the horseman at the far right in the cartoon. It is therefore probable that these sketches are generalised studies of period-fashion and not intended for direct transfer onto the cartoon.

A comparison of the cartoon with the oil sketch for 'Gustavus Adolphus receiving his consort...' nevertheless shows that, in spite of all attempts at historical accuracy, Menzel's 'romantic' vision

has made the costumes of Gustavus Adolphus's early Baroque period and the fashions of the medieval Sophie of Brabant look very similar.

The narrative conception of an historical moment as an 'idea' is still stronger in these works than the historically accurate treatment of an epoch in terms of objects and atmosphere. In his Frederick pictures of the 1850s Menzel's work is marked by much greater historical realism.

Half-Length drawing of a man, profile to the right. Study for Voltaire in 'King Frederick's round table in Sanssouci'.

Halbfigur eines Mannes, Profil nach rechts. Studie zu Voltaire für 'König Friedrichs II. Tafelrunde in Sanssouci' 1850

Pastel chalk on brown paper, 29.6 × 22.5 cm
Prov.: Probably coll. Pächter, Berlin, acquired 1889

Lit.: Donop, no. 1412. Berlin 1905, no. 1682.
Tschudi, no. 287. Ebertshäuser, vol. II, ill. p. 1016 (with wrong acc.no. 1214)
Exh.: Würzburg 1966, no. 9

Nationalgalerie, no. Donop 1412.

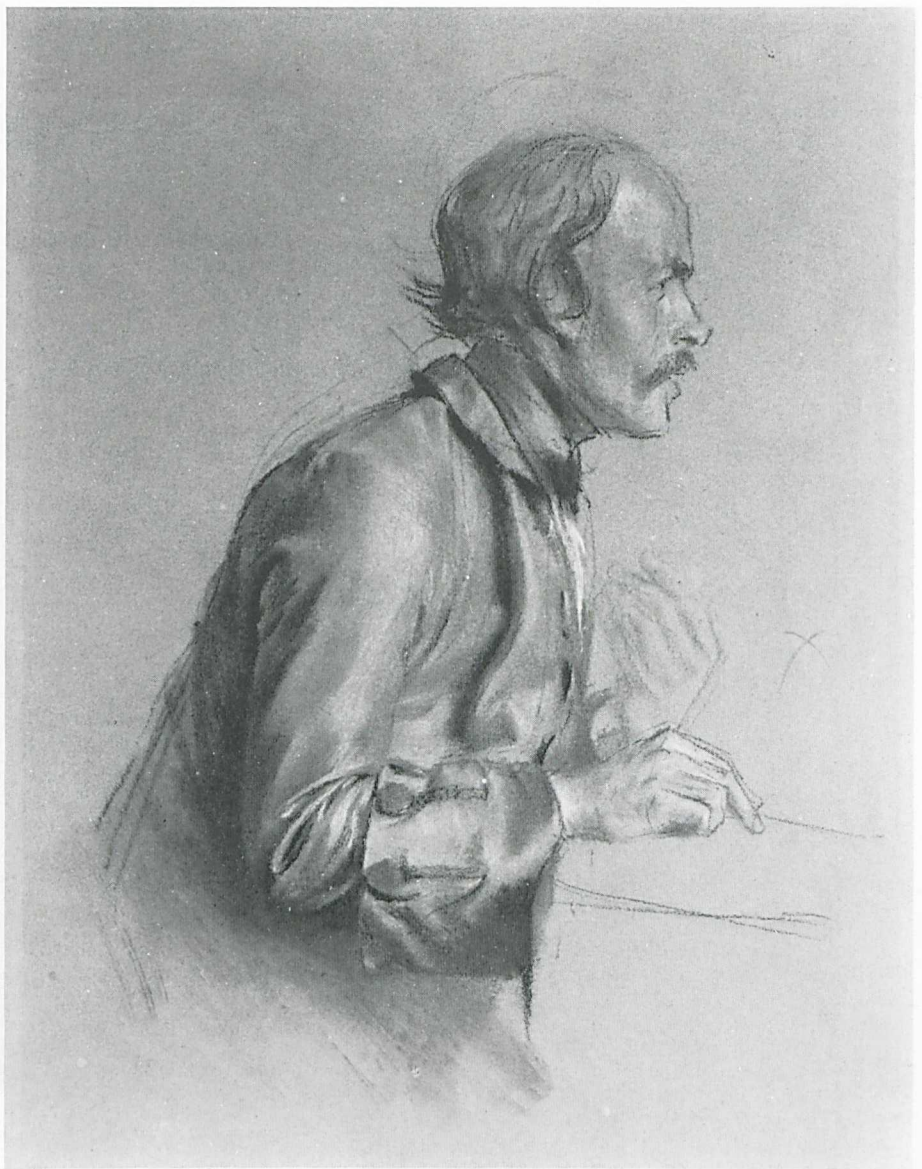
A study of costume and pose in the pastel technique which Menzel preferred to use during the 1840s and 1850s in his studies for the figures of his Frederick-related paintings and prints. The technique appears to have attracted him because it provided the same chalky solidity which he later achieved with the carpenter's pencil.

This drawing was made as a study for the figure of Voltaire who, in the 'Round table' painting, inclines towards the King, probably to answer him.

A pastel study for another figure in the same painting, General von Stille, is in the Sammlung der Zeichnungen, East Berlin (acc.no. cat. 474, ill. cat. Berlin (East) 1980, no. 20b), as is the oil sketch for the whole composition (acc.no. AIII 503, ill. Berlin (East) 1980, no. X and Tschudi, no. 66). The painting itself (Tschudi, no. 67), the first Menzel painting to be acquired by the Nationalgalerie (in 1873) was destroyed during the Second World War.

Menzel's brother Richard sat for both studies: Menzel often used him as a model during the years in which the Frederick pictures were executed. Of particular interest here are two further drawings showing Richard in a baroque coat, closely related in technique and style and made at about the same time: the study for Molière for the series of lithographs 'Essays on stone with brush and scraper' of 1851 (private coll., Munich, ill. Hamburg 1982, no. 52) and the study for P. E. Bach for 'Frederick the Great's flute concerto in Sanssouci' (completed 1852) in the Sammlung der Zeichnungen, East Berlin (acc.no. cat. 679; Berlin (East) 1980, no. 214).

A comparison of our drawing with both the oil sketch and the final painting reveals that in the latter Menzel had changed Voltaire's pose. Our pastel shows the pose of the final painting. This means that the drawing must have been made after the oil sketch. The same can be assumed in the case of the study for General von Stille. Menzel therefore must have proceeded from a preliminary but elaborate outline of the whole

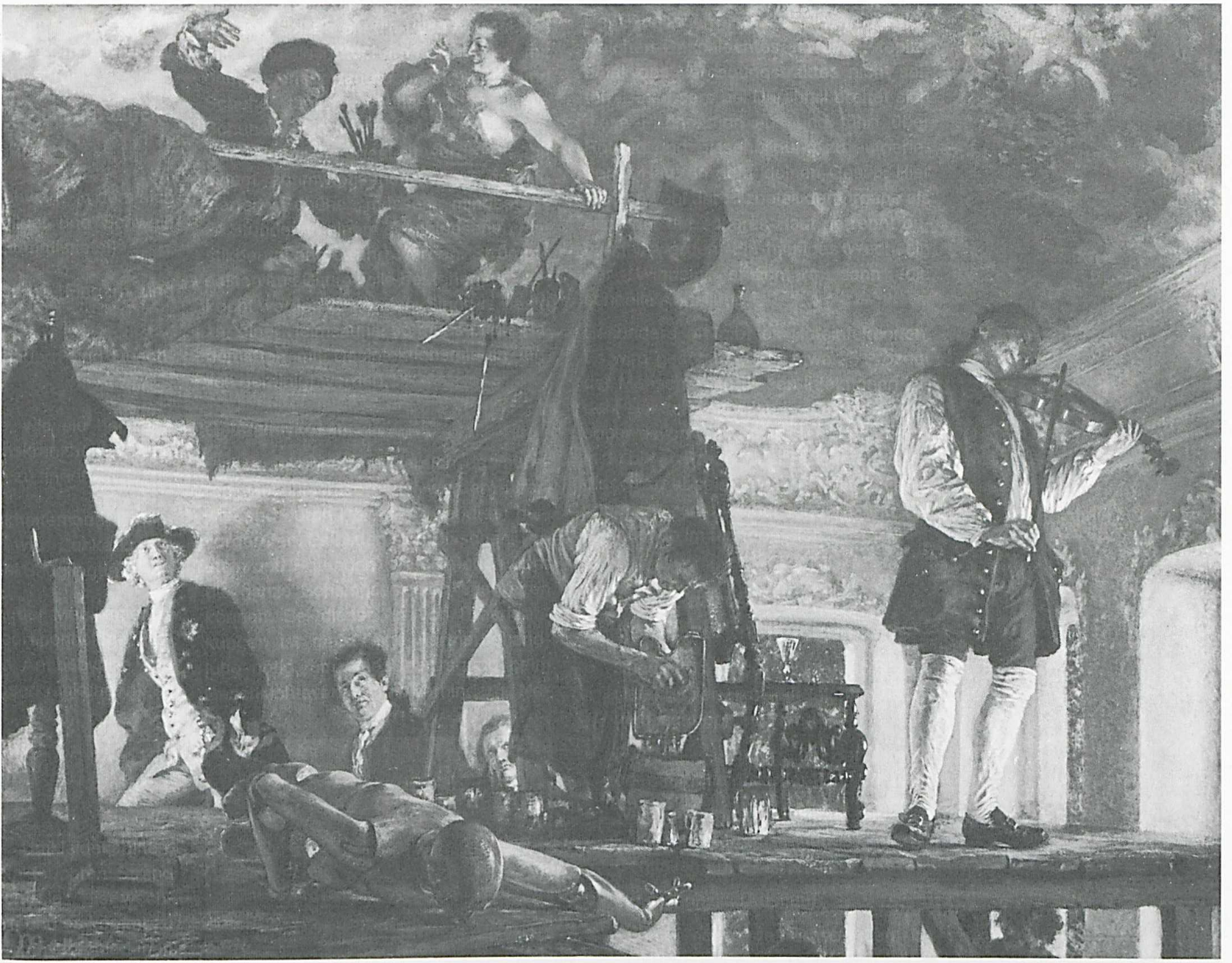


composition (the oil sketch) to detailed studies made from posed models and of the original buildings, viz: pastel studies of details of the room decorations in Sanssouci: Sammlung der Zeichnungen Berlin (East), acc.no. cat. 159, cat. 160, cat. 165, cat. 168, ill. Berlin (East) 1980, nos. 207-210).

Why did Menzel decide to use pastels? We can only speculate. In the 1840s and 1850s pastel was his preferred medium, not only for studies made from posed models but also for everyday subjects, like the vivid portraits of the 'Electors' (see no. 37). One obvious reason for Menzel's choice of pastels was the painterly possibilities afforded by a medium in which line can be diffused and dissolved, producing a telling description of the atmospheric interplay of light and colour. Pastels therefore allowed Menzel to experiment in a drawing with effects which he could then more or less directly transpose into painting. His interest in this problem was so great that he would actually create situations which

forced him to paint highly complex light effects—the room in the 'Flute concerto', for example, which is lit only by candles.

Menzel did not like to work with professional models. In his studies for works on Frederick-themes he preferred to dress up members of his family in historical costumes. This may explain why a particular kind of figure study proliferates at this time. Our drawing is an example of it and has almost nothing to do with the academic tradition of figure drawing. The intensity and spontaneity of characterisation reveal that Menzel knew and related to the personalities of these 'models'. The details of the costumes are incidental—the 'disguise' seems much more to be an aid for capturing the person in character and atmosphere as a figure from Frederick's time.



40

Frederick II visiting the painter Pesne on his scaffolding at Rheinsberg

Friedrich II. besucht den Maler Pesne auf dem Malgerüst in Rheinsberg
1861

Gouache, 24 × 32 cm

Signed b.l.: Menzel 1861

Prov.: Coll. E. Kahlbaum, Berlin, 1939 to the Reichs Chancellory

Lit.: Berlin 1905, no. 263. Meier-Graefe, p. 193. Tschudi, no. 409. Berlin 1968, plate 37, p. 145. Berlin 1976, p. 278, ill. p. 279, plate p. 14. Honisch 1979, ill. 108, p. 146. Berlin 1981, p. 40 (ill.)

Exh.: Berlin-Dahlem 1955, no. 96. London 1965, no. 43. Berlin 1965, no. 37. Würzburg 1966, no. 10. Hamm 1978, p. 13.

Property of the Federal Republic of Germany. Listed in the Nationalgalerie inventory as 'Fremdvermögen no. 46'

Between 1860 and 1862 Menzel painted nine small gouaches for the Berlin collector Kahlbaum. Four of them depict events from Frederick II's life at Rheinsberg when he was Crown Prince. They are the 'Trip on the water in Rheinsberg' (*Wasserfahrt in Rheinsberg*, 1860, Tschudi, no. 356), the paint-

ing exhibited here, the 'Vestibule in Rheinsberg' (*Vorhalle in Rheinsberg*, 1861, Tschudi, no. 411) and the 'Court ball at Rheinsberg' (*Hofball in Rheinsberg*, 1862, Tschudi, no. 414). Apart from two smaller works ('Frederick the Great at the tomb of the Great Elector'—*Friedrich der Große am Sarg des Großen Kurfürsten*, 1878, Tschudi, no. 149, and the small gouache, 'Frederick the Great', *Friedrich der Große*, 1903, Tschudi, no. 686), these were the last works to deal with the life and times of the king, the subject which had dominated Menzel's *oeuvre* during the 1850s. Menzel first used a similar subject (Pesne on the scaffolding at Rheinsberg) when illustrating Kugler's 'History of Frederick the Great'. In 1860 he stayed at Rheinsberg, making sketches and studies on which the four Rheinsberg gouaches were based. The drawing of the 'Temple of Apollo in the Amalthea Garden, Neuruppin' was also made at the same time (no. 49). Some figure studies for the painting discussed here are in the Sammlung der Zeichnungen, Berlin (East) (cat. nos: 831, 833, 1083, 1335, 1386).

Unnoticed by Pesne, the Crown Prince Frederick, accompanied by the architect Knobelsdorff, climbs up the painter's scaffolding. Meanwhile, Franz Benda plays the viola and Pesne tries to dance with his model.

In this small gouache, Menzel has adopted the at once detailed and monumental approach of his large paintings for a vividly anecdotal scene which contradicts the heroic view of history and the conventional image of Frederick that was cultivated by Menzel's contemporaries. Not by chance do these Rheinsberg gouaches mark the end of Menzel's consuming interest in Frederick the Great. With his work on the 'Coronation of Wilhelm I', which enabled him to treat the present in historical terms, Menzel virtually abandoned history painting.

The portrait studies for the 'Coronation of Wilhelm I in Königsberg', 1862-1865

On 12 October 1861 Menzel wrote to his friend, the engraver and painter Fritz Werner (1827-1908): "I have just returned from Minister B. Hollweg who had me summoned to propose to me that I paint the coronation picture. H.M. has commanded, etc. I did not say no, but—Now I am departing for Königsberg early on Monday, or at the latest on Monday evening, and naturally as many studies of the place, etc., must be made on the spot before the ceremony takes place: and now I am thinking of you! Four eyes see and observe more than two; and although I can admittedly make use of photographs, all the photographs in the world would not be enough, e.g. with regard to colours. Especially on the day of the event itself. Would you, respectfully, could you be my second pair of eyes for that week...?" (Wolff 1914, p. 196-197).

Wilhelm I's coronation took place on 18 October, the anniversary of the battle of Leipzig, in the church of Königsberg castle. Unlike all previous kings of Prussia on their accession, Wilhelm I did not take the oath of allegiance but decided to "revive the ceremonial crowning" (quoted after Berlin (East) 1980, p. 49) with which Friedrich I had founded the Prussian dynasty in 1701. Seen against the background of the continuing constitutional conflict between the king and his subjects which had come to a head in the revolution and as a consequence of which Friedrich Wilhelm IV was obliged to take a constitutional oath in 1850, the coronation of 1861 seemed a reactionary step, marking the re-emergence of the kind of sovereign who believed that his authority came from 'the grace of God.' The coronation clearly initiated the era of Prussian hegemony in Germany and, by the significant choice of a 'patriotic' date, began the move towards a nationalist monarchy which was realised politically in 1870 when the nation was united under the Prussian emperor. Menzel accepted the commission out of loyalty but without enthusiasm—a clear sign that his attitude to the monarchy had changed since 1848. It is strange that he was given such short notice of the commission—probably because there was a dispute at court about whether Menzel should be chosen for the task. (See Becker With, p. 246). His reputation as a history painter was based only on his Frederick pictures and they were often criticised as being too realistic.

The way Menzel worked as a 'painter-reporter' is vividly described in the letter to Werner quoted above. The preliminary work of documentation was followed by a first sketch of the whole composition (Berlin (East) 1980, no. 249).

Two months later, the rough first drawing of the composition was sketched in on the canvas. Countless detailed studies followed: of the clothes, objects and furniture used at the coronation (most of them now in the Sammlung der Zeichnungen, Berlin (East)). Menzel described the next stage in a later report: "Because of the size of the canvas... it was not possible to paint in the large number of portrait figures directly from nature. Therefore all of them [had to be done] only from studies. In addition, with so many people from so many different walks of life and living in so many different places [there was] the uncertainty of getting hold of them for a second sitting, i.e. at the necessary time, and because of that I had to get down to a realistic impression while it was still fresh in my mind, after hastily executed studies—all that obliged me to dare to paint the picture from start to finish *alla prima*. . . I had to paint the people involved . . . whenever I could get hold of them. Today for the background, tomorrow for the foreground, etc. . . ." (quoted after Berlin (East) 1980, p. 53). The Royal Nationalgalerie acquired an album containing all the studies and sketches in watercolour for the coronation picture in 1880. Today the Nationalgalerie in West Berlin owns five of the 111 coloured portrait studies which Menzel made of the participants in the coronation between 1862 and 1865. Most of them are done in pencil and watercolour, occasionally with some gouache additions. Nine people who had died or were otherwise unavailable for sittings were painted from photographs. The accuracy of these portraits of Prussian worthies, participants in an event which became history the moment it happened, was immediately criticised—as was the completed painting. The sacred and significant nature of the occasion, which a history painting was expected to reflect (and the court and public saw the coronation picture as a history painting), was clearly absent from Menzel's work. As early as 1866 the painting was described as a "laborious, inwardly dry, representational picture" (quoted after Berlin (East) 1980, p. 54) which failed to transcend the purely documentary aspects of its subject.

Menzel's portrait sketches share this sobriety, treat all their subjects equally, irrespective of their social position, and they never idealise. Nevertheless—and perhaps because Menzel had to work rapidly—they have a powerful immediacy which the final painting lacks.

Menzel's precision brought "characterisation to previously unknown heights" (Emil Waldmann: *Das Bildnis im*

19. Jahrhundert, Berlin 1921, p. 145). "The result of this work was a series of portraits of unimagined clarity . . . the best ever produced by a superb chronicler. But they do not possess the ultimate and greatest attributes of the art of portraiture: the greatness and freedom of the human spirit" (ibid). Such judgments disregard the purpose of these drawings. They were studies for a host of tesseræ in the large and detailed mosaic of his composition. The subject itself also fascinated Menzel far less than Frederick the Great and his times. The artist's own statements make it clear that the only aspect of this commission which truly interested him were the technical problems it posed and the opportunities to learn which it provided (see Berlin (East) 1980, p. 52, letter from Menzel to Frau Pecht, and Kirstein 1919, p. 113).

Portrait of the Oberburggraf Karl Otto Magnus von Brünneck

Bildnis des Oberburggrafen Karl Otto Magnus von Brünneck
1862-1865

Pencil and watercolour, 28.5 × 22.5 cm

Prov.: Acquired 1880 from the artist, 1940 on loan to Minister Rust, stored in Silesia, 1958 re-purchased with the aid of the German Klassenlotterie Berlin

Lit.: Donop, no. 888. Berlin 1905, no. 1209.

Tschudi, no. 464. Longstreet, ill.

Exh.: Kiel 1960, no. 73. London 1965, no. 44.

Berlin 1965, no. 39

Nationalgalerie, acc. no. 14/58

Tschudi lists another drawing consisting of several studies of this man, some of them from the side (Tschudi, no. 463). In this drawing two astonishingly different portrait studies are combined. On the left we see an infirm, suffering old man, while the study on the right portrays him as a dignitary—collected, disciplined and looking much younger. Menzel used the dignified version in the painting but could not resist the temptation to produce an expressive character study of an old man close to death.

Karl Otto Magnus von Brünneck (1786-1866) was considered to be a liberal among his peers. He fought as a young officer against Napoleon in 1806 and again in the war of liberation in 1813. He then abandoned his military career and returned to his estates where he distinguished himself as a landowner by improving the Prussian agricultural economy which had suffered badly during the Napoleonic wars. He was a permanent member of the provincial parliament and finally 'Landtagsmarschall'. In the revolutionary year of 1848 the peasants in his constituency elected him to be their representative in the Berlin National Assembly.

Friedrich Wilhelm III conferred the title of Oberburggraf upon him and gave him a seat in the upper chamber of parliament. It is in this role that he appears in the coronation picture.





Cf. colour plate IX

46

Portraits of Count Eulenburg and Count Dönhoff

Bildnisse Graf Eulenburg und Graf Dönhoff
1861-1865

Pencil, watercolour and gouache,
28.8 x 22.5 cm

Signed b.r.: Graf Dönhoff Landhofmeister von Preussen, b.l.: Graf v. Eulenburg Regierungspräsident u. Kammerherr 5' 6-7 Prov.: see no. 45

Lit.: Donop, no. 896. Berlin 1905, no. 1217. Tschudi, no. 473. Ebertshäuser, vol. II, ill. p. 1064

Exh.: Kiel 1960, no. 74. London 1965, no. 46. Berlin 1965, no. 41. Berlin 1979, no. 8

Nationalgalerie, acc.no. 16/58

It was not August Heinrich Hermann, Count von Dönhoff (1797-1874), who was the 'Landhofmeister'—as Menzel mistakenly describes him in his pencilled note. That was his father, August Friedrich Phillipp. August Heinrich was a diplomat and, after 1842, Prussia's representative at the Frankfurt Federal Assembly. In 1848 he supported the 'national union' of Germany by means of the union of the princes and was briefly a minister in General von Pfuel's cabinet. In the coronation picture he appears as a member of the Prussian upper house. At the time of the coronation Botho Heinrich, Count zu Eulenburg (1804-1879) was governor of the west Prussian province of Marienwerder and 'Landtagsmarschall' of Prussia. The figures at the bottom left refer to Eulenburg's height in feet and inches.

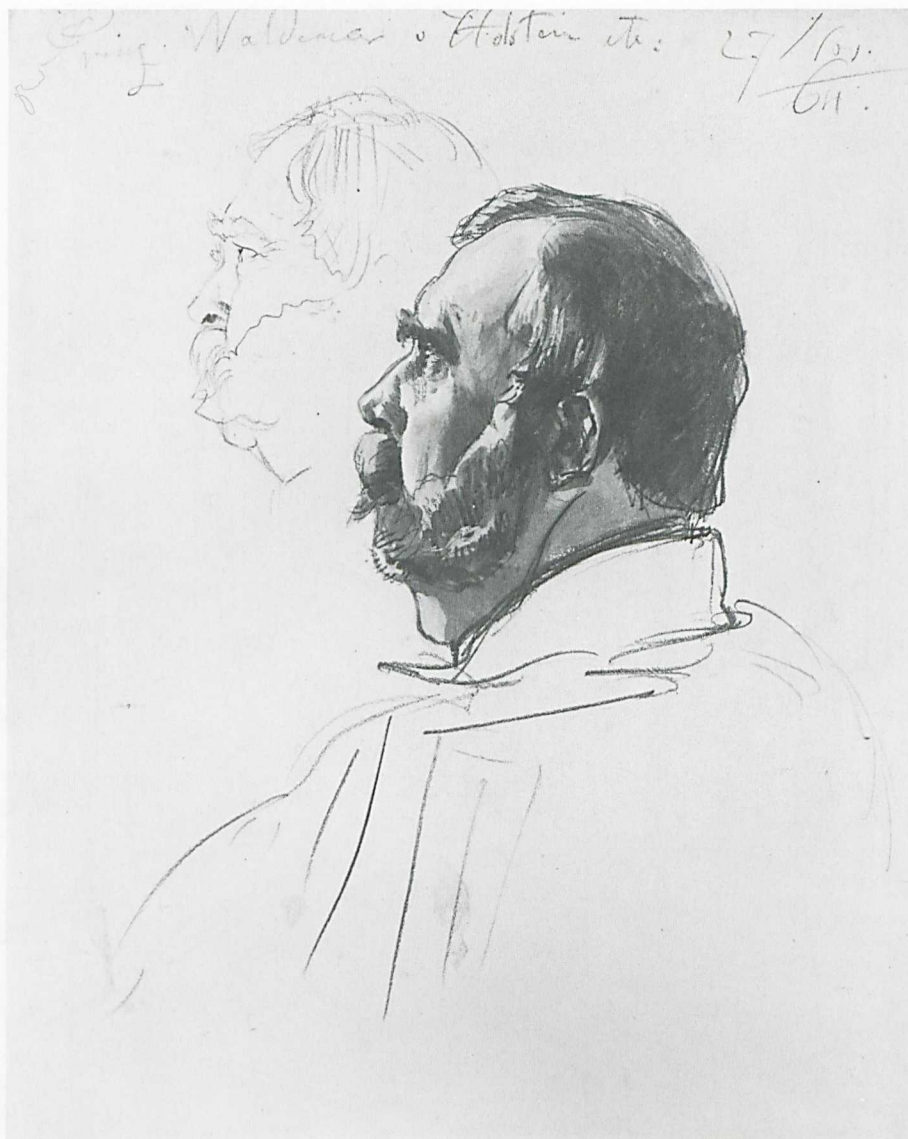
Portrait of Waldemar, Prince of Holstein

Bildnis Waldemar Prinz von Holstein
1864

Pencil and watercolour, 28.5 x 22.4 cm
Signed t.: Waldemar Prinz von Holstein
27. Nov. 64
Prov.: see no. 45
Lit.: Donop no. 922. Berlin 1905, no. 1243.
Tschudi, no. 489. Ebertshäuser, vol. II,
ill. p. 1071

Nationalgalerie, acc.no. 17/58

At the time of Wilhelm I's coronation, Prince Heinrich Carl Waldemar von Holstein-Sonderburg, born 13 October 1810, was still a Prussian Major-General and commander of a brigade of cavalry. By 1864, when this drawing was made, he had risen to the rank of Lieutenant-General and Adjutant-General to the King. He was commander-in-chief of the federal forces in Frankfurt am Main.



Ironwork from the Welf Museum

Eisenbeschlag aus dem Welfenmuseum
1868

Pencil and watercolour, 19.1 × 27.2 cm

Signed b.l.: Ad. Menzel Welf. Mus. 68.

Prov.: Estate of the artist

Lit.: Berlin 1905, no. 2311. Ebertshäuser,
vol. II, ill. p. 1090

Exh.: Berlin-Dahlem 1955, no. 182. Bremen
1963, no. 92. Berlin 1965, no. 57. London
1965, no. 52. Berlin 1979, no. 10. Hamburg
1982, no. 101

Nationalgalerie, no. 1021

Menzel first visited Paris for the Universal Exhibition of 1855 and went there again to see the exhibition of 1867. He visited the city for a third time from 9 June until 4 July 1868, when his coronation picture was being shown at the Salon. On his return journey he made stops in Cologne, Hanover, Brunswick and Harzburg. In Hanover he visited the Welf Museum which had opened in 1861 and drew this study of a Gothic chest in which a view of the front and details of ironwork are combined. This and the following drawing of objects from the 18th century throw light on Menzel's attitude to the contemporary taste for historicism. He adopted various stylistic models from the art of the past but without allowing his choice of any particular style to imply a value judgement. This is demonstrated not only by his commercial prints but also by the studies of objects from various historical periods, by no means all of which were made with any specific purpose in mind—in other words, they were not necessarily studies for later work. The two drawings shown here (nos. 54 and 55) belong to this group of studies made entirely for their own sake.



Cf. colour plate X



55

Clavichord and Sedan chair from the Welf Museum

Clavichord und Sänfte aus dem
Welfenmuseum
1868

Pencil, 18.8 × 27.2 cm

Signed b.r.: Welf. Mus. Menzel

Prov.: Estate of the artist

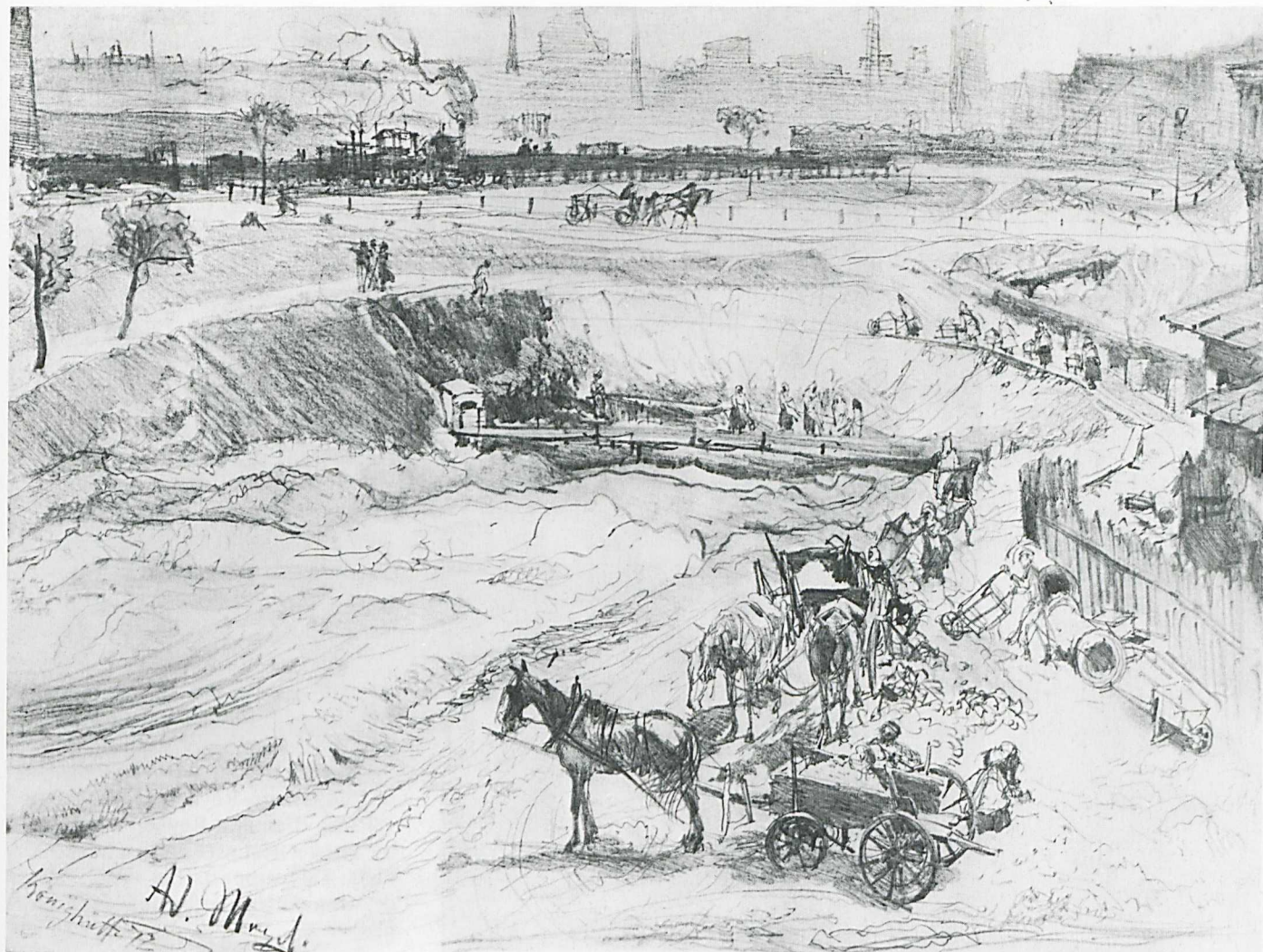
Lit.: Berlin 1905, no. 2309. Ebertshäuser,
vol. II, ill. p. 1091

Exh.: Berlin-Dahlem 1955, no. 182. Bremen
1963, no. 93. London 1965, no. 58. Berlin
1965, no. 53

Nationalgalerie, no. 1020

manufacture of the actual objects. The thing itself and its style are equally important, as shown by the many informative notes added to Menzel's studies of historical objects. This kind of encyclopedic curiosity embraced not only the appearance of surfaces decorated in a particular style but also the function and purpose of the object. This shows Menzel to have been a contemporary of those pioneers of an historical approach to arts and crafts who, in the second half of the 19th century, paved the way for modern, functionalist design.

See also no. 54. Menzel's interest in style is closely related to his concern for the



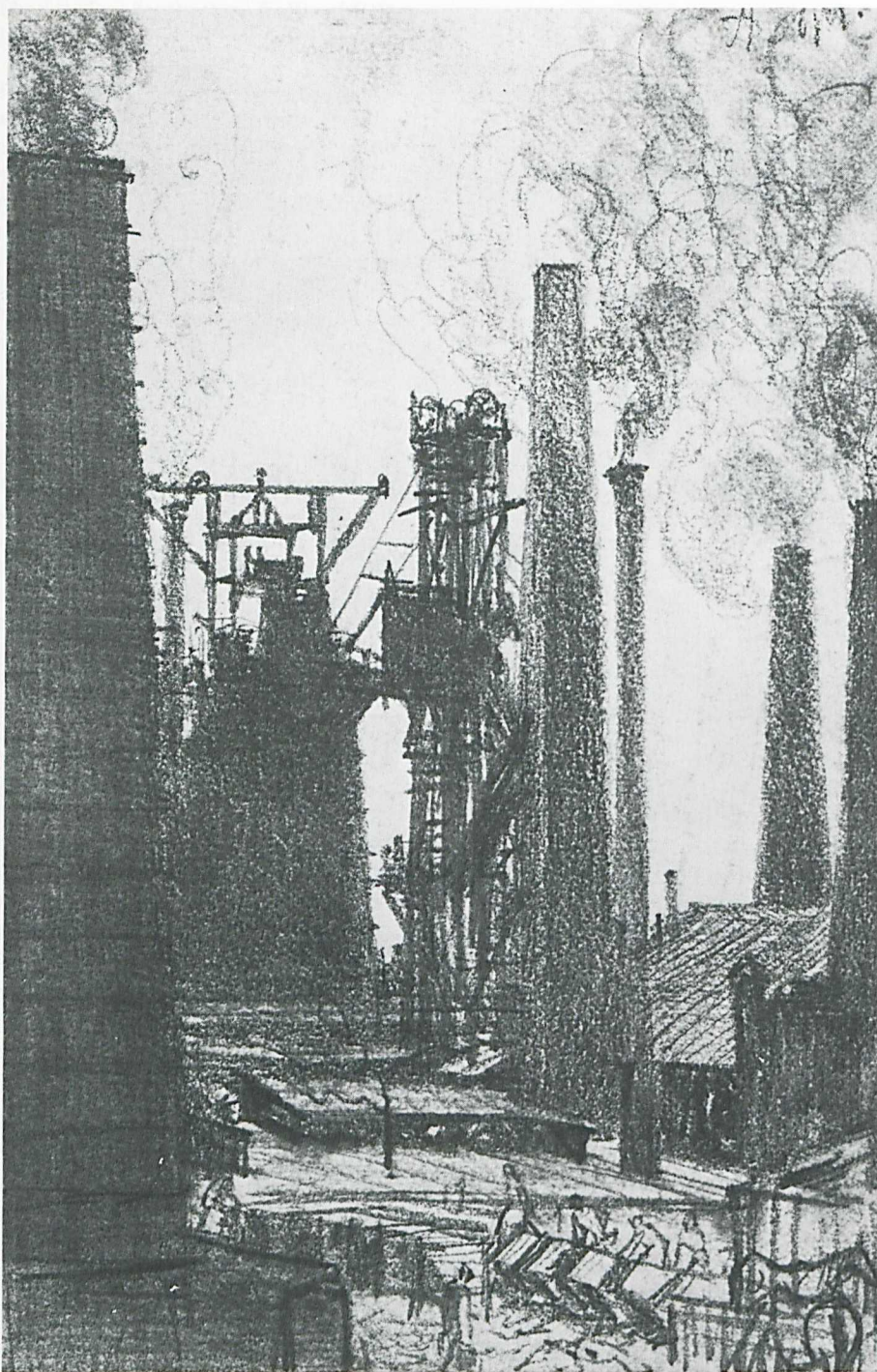
60
Open-cast mine in Königshütte
 Tagebau in Königshütte
 1872

Pencil, 22.2 × 30.4 cm
 Signed b.l.: Ad. Menzel. Königshütte 72
 Prov.: Coll. Max Liebermann, Berlin. Coll.
 Asta von Friedrich. Acquired 1957.
 Lit.: Berlin 1905, no. 5357. *Berliner Museen*,
 N.F. 7 1957, p. 57. Ebershäuser, vol. II, ill.
 p. 1114; Forster-Hahn 1978, p. 271
 Exh.: Berlin Secession 1899, no. 228.
 Berlin-Dahlem 1955, no. 188. Bremen 1963,
 no. 104. London 1965, no. 62. Berlin 1965,
 no. 57. Würzburg 1966, no. 15. Duisburg
 1969, no. 63. Frankfurt 1975, no. 38. Berlin
 1981, p. 125. Hamburg 1982, no. 103

Nationalgalerie, acc. no. 9/57

This drawing was made in 1872 while Menzel was in Königshütte working on the preparatory stages of the 'Iron Rolling Mill'. It memorably depicts an industrial landscape which had shot up in the space of a few years. Königshütte was a town of some 26,000 inhabitants, with open-cast mines and smelting-works. In the middle ground we see the mine itself and figures, mostly female, carrying away the coal in wheelbarrows

which they push along walkways made of planks. The horizon is dominated by the shadowy outline of rows of countless furnaces, wheel houses and factories. In front of them a railway runs straight across the scene and apparently into a building. Menzel's ultimate concern for just one part of this enormous complex—the iron rolling mill itself—inevitably led to a fascination for the entire area. Just as, earlier in his career, he had had to soak himself in the historical environment to feel properly capable of painting his history pictures, like the Frederick series, so too, here, with a modern subject in a modern environment, he had to explore all aspects of the subject before he felt prepared to concentrate on his chosen motif.



61

Factory area with smoking chimneys
Fabrikplatz mit rauchenden Schloten
c. 1872

Pencil, 19 × 12.1 cm

Signed b.r.: A.M.

Prov.: Estate of the artist

Lit.: Berlin 1905, no. 3262. Riedrich 1923,
plate 40

Exh.: Berlin-Dahlem 1955, no. 192. Bremen
1962, no. 123. Duisburg 1969, no. 65. Berlin
1974, no. 228. Berlin 1978, no. 56. Hamburg
1982, no. 104

Nationalgalerie, no. 3319

The drawing is not dated, but we can assume that it was made either in 1872 in Königshütte or later, in 1872-73 when Menzel was making studies of factories in Berlin. The same can be said of no. 62 which is very similar in style. Both depict the chimneys and towers of a foundry, dynamically reduced in the drawing to a series of simple planes. The dark shadows were made with a soft pencil and details like the horses in the foreground are merely suggested. A similar drawing in the Sammlung der Zeichnungen, Berlin (East) (acc.no. N 1389, ill. in Riemann-Reyher, no. 15) is dated 1872 by Riemann-Reyher and 'c.1872' by Forster-Hahn (Forster-Hahn 1978, ill.5). This supports the view that the drawing shown here belongs to the same period.



62

Smoking factory chimneys

Rauchende Schlotte einer Fabrik
c. 1872

Pencil: 12.8 x 20.8 cm

Signed b.r.: A.M.

Prov.: Estate of the artist

Lit.: Berlin 1905, no. 3260. Hütt 1965, p. 37.

Ebertshäuser, vol. II, ill. p. 1259

Exh.: Berlin-Dahlem 1955, no. 198. Bremen

1963, no. 121. London 1965, no. 71. Berlin

1965, no. 66. Duisburg 1969, no. 62. Berlin

1974, no. 227. Berlin 1978, no. 55. Berlin

1979, no. 21. Hamburg 1982, no. 167

Nationalgalerie, no. 3260

ing Mill'. Any dating which relies exclusively on the idea of a logical and clear stylistic development must remain purely speculative, since certain techniques, and above all those employed to capture effects of light (which Menzel always found fascinating), can quite easily appear in the artist's work at moments which do not fit any hypothetical chronology. Forster-Hahn in any case dates a drawing of a similar subject—a foundry at night—and similarly lacking outlines in the 1870s (Forster-Hahn 1978, p. 271, plate 22) and this supports our view that the work exhibited here was made around 1872.

At first sight this looks like a charcoal drawing. Menzel held his soft pencil at a flatter angle than he did for no. 61 and the contours are dissolved to such an extent that extraordinary effects of light result, reducing the chimneys to schematic shadows. Menzel wanted to depict the kind of illumination, an almost nocturnal light, created by clouds of smoke and dust against the flickering flames from the chimneys. This is an earlier instance of a technique which was to become characteristic of Menzel in the 1880s and 1890s. Because it is unusual of Menzel in the 1870s Ebertshäuser and the 1982 Hamburg catalogue propose a date around the late 1880s. We believe, however, that both the style and subject make it more likely that the drawing was made in connection with the 'Iron Roll-



63

**A worker (study for the
'Iron Rolling Mill')**

Ein Arbeiter (Studie zum
Eisenwalzwerk)
1872-1873

Pencil 37.9 × 24.7 cm

Signed b.r.: A.M.

Prov.: Estate of the artist. 1940 on loan to
Minister Rust, in store in Silesia.

Re-purchased 1958 with the aid of the
German Klassenlotterie Berlin

Lit.: Longstreet, ill. Ebertshäuser, vol. II,
ill. p. 1134

Exh.: Bremen 1963, no. 120. Berlin 1965,
no. 62. Würzburg 1966, no. 17. Duisburg
1969, no. 59. Frankfurt 1975, no. 40.

Recklinghausen 1979, no. 194. Berlin 1979,
no. 18. Hamburg 1982, no. 106.

Nationalgalerie, acc. no. 12/58

This and the following two drawings (nos. 64 and 65) are some of the large number of preparatory studies for the 'Iron Rolling Mill' and, like most of them, are not dated. Kaiser attempts (Kaiser 1953, p. 24f.) to group the studies and thus to trace the genesis of the final painting. He suggests that Menzel worked in three phases. In the first, the artist sketched, observed and collected a wide variety of information. He did not yet have any clear conception of the final painting. This developed through a growing familiarity with the highly complex subject as a whole. In the second phase his idea for the composition emerged, but it was imprecise. This was when Menzel decided to concentrate on the moment in the working process

when the glowing lump of iron was placed on the rolling mill before its final emergence, after several other rolling operations, as sections of railway track. Then, in the third phase, Menzel returned to the actual scene and made precise studies. These were complemented by drawings of posed models. He chose the figures from the sketches and studies which seemed promising and put a cross by them—a practice we know he followed in the Kassel studies of 1847-48. We cannot say how systematically he made his selection and to what extent he refined it with the aid of more searching studies, but there are examples of this kind of progression from phase to phase which Kaiser describes (see Kaiser 1953). The sketches from the first phase are quick, concentrating on the outline and often combine several fragmentary observations—mostly of movement and of groups of figures in action. The three drawings in the Nationalgalerie are individual studies from the third phase of the working process. They are more carefully worked and concentrate mostly on a single person. The workers' faces are now also suggested.

The worker in this drawing can be related to a figure in the painting: the one in the extreme left foreground who is pulling a block of glowing iron on a small two-wheeled cart towards the rollers. The ringed handle on the cart is the same as the one in the worker's hand in our drawing. The pose is slightly different but it captures the same careful, dragging movement. What the worker does remains the same, but the pose is different: this is a sure sign that Menzel required more precise studies of the stage of production he had chosen to illustrate and had not yet conceived the final composition in detail. The spontaneous line of this drawing, made rapidly with the carpenter's pencil held at an angle, reveals that it was made not from a model but on the spot—but already including indications of volume and summary indications of shadow. It must therefore date from 1872 and Menzel's visit to Königshütte, or from 1872-73 when the artist was making studies in a Berlin factory.

**Three studies of workers
(for the 'Iron Rolling Mill')**
Drei Studien nach Arbeitern
(zum Eisenwalzwerk)
1872-1875

Pencil, 39.9 × 26 cm

Signed b.l.: A.M.

Prov.: see no. 63

Lit.: Berlin 1905, no. 3324. Longstreet 1964,
ill. Ebertshäuser, vol. II, ill. p. 1135

Exh.: Bremen 1963, no. 118. London 1965,
no. 66. Berlin 1965, no. 61. Würzburg 1966,
no. 16. Frankfurt 1975, no. 39.

Recklinghausen 1979, no. 195. Berlin 1979,
no. 12. Hamburg 1982, no. 107

Nationalgalerie, acc.no. 13/58

Like no. 63 this drawing was made with a carpenter's pencil and the handling is similarly broad. The line seems more considered, however, and the pose looks more premeditated. It is possible that Menzel had a model adopt the poses suggested by some of the studies made earlier on the spot (see introduction) and that the same model posed for two different studies: the one of two full-length figures slightly varying the attitude of pulling, and the one of the figure from the back with raised upper arm at the top right. This drawing shows that Kaiser's distinction between individual sketches made on the spot and drawings of posed models cannot always be made with certainty. Neither study was used for the painting, but the ones at the bottom could—like no. 63—relate to the worker who is pulling along the cart with the glowing iron at the left in the foreground.

The drawing dates from the period between the visit to Königshütte in 1872 and the completion of the painting in 1875.



Worker holding up a bucket
 Arbeiter, einen Eimer hochhaltend
 1872-1875

Pencil, 20.5 × 12.8 cm

Signed b.r.: A.M.

Prov.: Estate of the artist

Lit.: Berlin 1905, no. 3609. Longstreet 1964,
 ill. Ebertshäuser, vol. II, ill. p. 1131

Exh.: Duisburg 1969, no. 60. Berlin 1974,
 no. 573. Berlin 1979, no. 119

Nationalgalerie, no. 3226

Like the previous drawing, this shows that the boundaries between sketches made on the spot and studies of posed models are indistinct. The inhibited movement of the subject and the considered line nevertheless make it likely that a model was used here. We cannot be sure that this drawing was made in connection with the 'Iron Rolling Mill' since the pose is not repeated anywhere in the painting. But the style and subject are clearly related to it.

