Precursors

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Martial Sculpture of the Imperial Era: Georg Kolbe's Predecessors and Environment

A sculptor is dependent on potent clients and willing buyers if he does not want to overfill his studio with sketches, models, and realized works in a short period of time. For this reason, he—or, theoretically, she, the sculptress, who, however, will not be considered in the following—strives to satisfy the prevailing tastes and needs of the time. This influences the formal language and determines the attitude—and probably occasionally leads artists to compromise with regard to the formal language demanded or promoted by the clients and buyers. Thus, when there is talk of artistic forms in the following, they are to a large extent to be understood as an expression of social expectations, that is to say, of a political, philosophical, or ideological-historical context.[1]

The official expectation of the German Emperor Wilhelm II, who had ascended the throne in 1888, was clear: he demanded that sculpture should represent, instruct, and illustrate.[2] Various "neo" styles existed in parallel and were associated with specific tasks. For example, neo-Baroque was used for state representation, neo-Gothic for state-conformist church buildings, and neo-Romanesque for patriotic national themes and motifs in the service of legitimacy. Under Wilhelm II, Germany left behind late Classicism with its realistic connotations in sculpture. Adolf von Hildebrand's neo-Classicism became the language of the humanistic tradition and thus remained a relatively ideologically remote art of an elite, even when fountains and monuments were created under the sign of these sculptural views—at any rate, far from the Wilhelminian demonstration of power. Hildebrand and his school, however, shaped the image of sculpture only for small sections of the artist community and art experts. The most modern tendencies turned to Auguste Rodin, who was initially celebrated and collected more vehemently in Germany than in France. In addition, in the early twentieth century, the Secessions from Berlin to Munich cultivated a classically connoted style that interwove the serene and occasionally melancholically harmonious or elegiac human figure with an Impressionistically animated surface texture, thus bringing a sense of both calm and liveliness into subtle harmony, as exemplified by Georg Kolbe's *Tänzerin* (Dancer, fig. 1), created in 1911/12. This may help to describe the major lines of development in sculpture immediately before and after 1900: the neo-Baroque representational tradition of Reinhold Begas, the neo-Classical idealistic tradition of Adolf von Hildebrand, the genial, anarchic tradition of Auguste Rodin, and the Secessionist harmonizing tradition of Georg Kolbe.

This essay is concerned with another line of tradition, namely that of martial, hard sculpture in the Wilhelminian period—that is to say, with Georg Kolbe's predecessors and environment, as well as with that which continued into the twentieth century.

Aggressiveness and belligerence, severity, notions of dominance and authoritarianism, the will to fight, angularity and motifs of strength, war allegories and colonial claims, the colossal figure and gigantomania, self-promotion, the desire to win, and the certainty of victory culminate in a fundamental will to defend and a *dégoûtant* lust for defense: a disturbing glorification of conflict took hold in the late nineteenth century. The stylistic development of the decade and a half to two decades before the First World War—that is to say, the art of the generation that followed Adolf von Hildebrand— was described in

1 Georg Kolbe, *Tänzerin* (Dancer), 1911/12, bronze, h. 154 cm, historic photograph

1920 by the Berlin-based editor and art critic Willi Wolfradt as the "monumental style,"[3] although this is only partially accurate, since this style, with its "pre-Expressionist hardening of form,"[4] can be traced from the colossal format and architectural sculpture to the medal format. In the following, this phenomenon of the trend directed against realism, naturalism, and neo-Baroque, its often hard and angular forms of expression, and its scope of application will be examined. The period and region under consideration is the late Wilhelminian Period in Germany, in which there was an intense interest in Impressionism and Symbolism, and in which Expressionism, with the founding of the artists' group Die Brücke in 1905, was also an innovative movement, but in which the "monumental style" played an important publicly present role as a "defensive style."

The focus here is on Georg Kolbe. This is justified not only by the context of this essay, but also by the fact that his work reflects stylistic transformations connected with this development, and that the understanding of Kolbe's late creations must be seen against the background of precisely these precursors, which go back several decades. It is well known that Kolbe derived decisive impulses from the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche;[5] and the same can be assumed for many other sculptors and their clients and buyers. Kolbe was also enthusiastic about Ludwig Derleth from the circle around the poet Stefan

George, whom he portrayed in a bust with a hard physiognomy and a strong emphasis on a masculine strength of will,[6] as well as about the late Romantic-mystical artists Arnold Böcklin and Max Klinger, who were celebrated as outstanding masters of their time: will, success, greatness, and strength were the guiding principles behind which the veneration of any outstanding power was concealed. The life models and ideals of the time centered on intellectual greatness, glory and heroism, power and strength, entitlement and assertiveness. Many of these models of thought reemerged and became even more radical after the Weimar Republic (and continued to guide conservative circles in the 1920s). Tracing the sculptural forms of expression that captured these values in images and thus kept them present and alive is the goal of this essay. The concept of "power" will run through it as a *basso continuo*.

Struggle for Power on the Part of the State

Within Germany, the former Prussian state had acquired a position of supremacy since the founding of the German Empire, which was also to be expressed in the erection of monuments. The National Kaiser Wilhelm Monument, which honored Wilhelm I, was erected opposite the Berlin City Palace. Reinhold Begas's design (fig. 2) from the early 1890s was the one that "attracted the most public attention"[7]—and with its equestrian statue, allegories, larger-than-life lions, and the twelve "Heroes of the Franco-Prussian War,"[8] it was a highly complex symbol of the imperial claim to power, the result of a multi-step process in which Wilhelm II took an interested part.[9] In this genesis, as in many later projects, the architects were actively involved: on the one hand, Bruno Schmitz and on the other, the court architect Ernst von Ihne, but above all—the emperor himself.[10] In 1897, the nearly one-meter-wide model was cast in bronze for Kaiser Wilhelm I. The original—a large-scale urban planning project that anticipated later colossal dimensions—was inaugurated in the same year, and the artist was decorated with medals.[11] As if the project were an anticipation of National Socialism, Adolf Rosenberg noted in 1897: it "seems that the Kaiser Wilhelm Monument will serve as the first element in a structural transformation of the heart of Alt-Berlin."[12] Monument, cityscape, and urban redevelopment had thus already entered into a not-so-blissful alliance before 1900, though not yet as ill-fated as would later be the case. The sculpture—in conjunction with the architecture—served to formulate a national claim to power that was interwoven with urban redevelopment aspirations (fig. 3). This national monument became an expression of the fundamental antagonisms of the late nineteenth century, such as those between power and spirit, between nation and Europe. The orientalist and cultural philosopher Paul de Lagarde, born with the surname Bötticher, who had died shortly before, had developed the idea of a national church in Germany, the idea of a Germania that would encompass the German-speaking countries—similar ideas are known, for example, from Ludwig I of Bavaria—and that would be governed under Prussian hegemony.[13] The author became a reference figure for the National Socialists.

2 Reinhold Begas, model of the national monument to Emperor Wilhelm I, 1894/97, bronze, h. 37.9 cm, Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe

3 Reinhold Begas, national monument to Emperor Wilhelm I, 1895–97, stone, bronze, historical photograph

4 The Siegesallee in Berlin, ca. 1900, colored historical photograph

5 Reinhold Begas, *Merkur entführt Psyche* (Mercury and Psyche), 1870/74, marble, h. 205 cm, Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz

Another parallel may seem cynical, referring to the Berlin sculpture of the Begas School on the one hand and to the Boer Wars on the other. In 1904, Victor Laverrenz published *Die Denkmäler Berlins und der Volkswitz. Humoristisch-satirische Betrachtungen* (The Monuments of Berlin and Popular Wit. Humorous-Satirical Reflections), in which he wrote: "The Siegesallee [fig. 4] is, to use a modern catchphrase, a 'concentration camp of Märkische sovereigns.' Like those English camps of the same designation in South Africa during the Boer War, it is surrounded by barbed wire fences and is well guarded; here by Berlin policemen."[14] (We will return to the fatal term "concentration camp" later.) Sarcastically, the author goes on to fabricate that there had been a visit by the Italian king, who, in view of the Berlin sculptures, had stated that "one notices that Germany has become an industrial state,"[15] i.e., that a serial production of sculpture had emerged.

All this took place around 1900, when people were already looking back at earlier times:

> "And yet it had been so different in the past, when Begas still found time for elated Mercuries [fig. 5], trembling Psyches, and gallant Centaurs. As Cronos devoured his sons, so then the Berlin master also consumed the band of his pupils, who had already become mature artists through him, again as his creations for himself, by using them to cope with the masses of monument commissions."[16]

In this way, the master had gained a sense of power over the minds of the next generation. And Wilhelminian centralism gave him a power of aesthetic influence that manifested itself in hieratic subjects such as Otto Lessing's Roland fountain in Berlin, which, though it goes beyond Begas's playful suppleness, insistently articulates the notion of national identification.

Promethean Heroes

Since the end of the eighteenth century, Prometheus, capable of resistance and suffering, had become, as is well known, the symbol and epitome of rebellious artistry, but then also, in a broader sense, of resistance to tutelage, restriction, authority, power, and superiority. The Prometheus of German intellectual history is a countervailing force. He embodies the power that resists and withdraws from experiences of powerlessness. Worthy of brief mention here is Georg Kolbe's *Prometheus* of 1901, a figure hardened by suffering, also known under the title *Gefesselter* (Bound Man), which, documented by a photograph, likewise belongs in this context.[17]

Promethean heroes are the subcutaneous forerunners of a heroism that remains uncompromising and is no longer legitimized by myth. Three examples may be cited, including Eduard Müller's *Prometheus, beklagt von den Okeaniden* (Prometheus Bound and the Oceanids, fig. 6) from 1868–79, one of the largest sculptures in the Nationalgalerie in Berlin.[18] This work, as well as its prominent position in the museum, is part of the tradition of furnishing cultural and educational institutions, in which the suffering and rebellious

6 Eduard Müller, *Prometheus, beklagt von den Okeaniden* (Prometheus Bound and the Oceanids), 1868–79, marble, h. 302 cm, Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz

7 Hermann Prell, *Prometheus*, 1899 (cast probably 1900), bronze, h. 60 cm, Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz

habitus of the mythological hero became a cipher for the hard-won artistic existence, for the struggle against authority, and for the necessary willingness to suffer: Prometheus, who had rebelled against Zeus and brought fire to humanity, was understood as the rebel who would ultimately be vindicated, in other words, as a forbearing hero. The sculptor had even originally planned a counterpart depicting Prometheus's liberation, which would have further emphasized the hero's victory.

Müller's colossal sculptural group was also reproduced in small-scale copies that could be purchased in plaster and bronze. Hermann Prell's statuette *Prometheus* (fig. 7) from 1899/1900 is also directly related to an architectural sculpture: the staircase of the Albertinum contained statues and murals executed by Prell, including a large-scale version of Prometheus.[19] The motif recalls Renaissance motifs of David triumphing over Goliath and the Michelangelesque language of forms, i.e., references that were easily recognizable, even familiar, to the educated bourgeoisie. This made Prell's statuette of Prometheus socially acceptable and acceptable to the majority. We will not address the many different ways in which the subject was taken up by sculptors, but that there was a clear tendency to monumentalize the ancient hero is illustrated by Joseph von Kopf in his *Lebenserinnerungen* (Memoirs), in which he refers to a note from 1862: "Yesterday, I began to model my larger-than-life Prometheus in clay. He is already hanging on his rock."[20] Unfortunately, the clay model

then fell down, so one could be forgiven for thinking, with a certain amount of sarcasm, that the hero had been transformed into an Icarus. This was not the plan, however, but rather an irony of fate. The number of sculptures dealing with the figure of the suffering creator is large. On the façade of the Berlin University of the Arts (UdK, formerly HdK) is Emil Hundrieser's Prometheus group[21]—an appellative sign of creative nonconformity. A little later is Reinhold Begas's *Der gefesselte Prometheus* (Prometheus Bound, fig. 8), a figure originally conceived as a sculpture in the round, which depicts the athletic hero in chains, martially bound to the wall, harassed by the eagle, which gorges itself daily on his liver and, like a vulture, stares at the hero, who is unwilling to die. Begas focuses the gaze on the deed of the indomitable hero, who, though depicted as bound, defiantly rebels. Comparable attitudes will be discussed in the context of Max Klinger's *Beethoven*. Who was this Prometheus for the people of 1900? Thomas Mann's *Zauberberg* (The Magic Mountain) may provide an answer: Prometheus "was guilty of hubris—and his torture on the Scythian cliffs was, from our point of view, a holy martyrdom."[22] Martyrdom or hubris—this raised the question of triumphant power in the supposed impotence of martyrdom versus that of hubris, a theme that has always been central to the figure of the artist.

8 Reinhold Begas, *Der gefesselte Prometheus* (Prometheus Bound), 1900, marble, h. 380 cm, Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Art Collection

It is noteworthy that Begas exhibited a version of his *Prometheus* at the *Deutsche Kunstausstellung* (German Art Exhibition) in Dresden in 1899, next to *Raub der Sabinerinnen* (Rape of the Sabines), a scene of violence, and the sculptural group *Kain und Abel* (Cain and Abel), the first biblical scene of violence par excellence:[23] heroes, struggle, rivalry, murder, and manslaughter everywhere. Whether Begas's group of *Prometheus, von zwei Männern gefesselt* (Prometheus, Bound by Two Men), which verifiably existed already in 1898,[24] was conceived as a counter-image to Eduard Müller's work in the Nationalgalerie must remain an open question: this forbearing fighter and heroic spirit remained for decades a key figure in the negotiation of force and power in sculpture. Begas's *Prometheus*, however, his last autonomous and large-scale sculpture, remained in the estate and then, through an unknown owner, found its way to the Berlin Academy of Arts via Albert Speer, Adolf Hitler's favorite architect, in 1941, thus proving its effortless adaptability to the National Socialist aesthetic.

Antique Heroism

In his *Deutsche Geschichte* (German History), first published in 1958, Golo Mann describes the time of Kaiser Wilhelm II, a politically inexperienced, and at times downright simple, regent, as follows: "One had to offer the people something inspiring, […] fight against someone, have a victory over something."[25] Politics was and became a system of competition, society became a battlefield, and thus representations of struggle, strength, and victory became a central topos in sculpture—often presented in public. The omnipresence of wrestling—that is to say, of a culture of competition and the question of victory and inferiority—had long been in the making. Initially, however, it was not the expression of sheer power that prevailed, but rather the expression of superiority of thought, of superior thinking.

Ernst Herter's *Ruhender Alexander* (Resting Alexander, fig. 9) from 1875 depicts the military commander who demanded of himself that he remain alert and vigilant at all times.[26] In case he falls asleep while reading or thinking, he holds a bullet in his left hand, which—should sleep overtake him—would fall out of his hand into the shield and wake him up immediately: intellectual vigilance thus concealed the vigilance of the commander, who strove to secure his superiority through iron discipline, who sought to unite thought and strength in his conduct of life, and who could thus be elevated to a kind of ethical role model. In the statue *La jeunesse d'Aristote* (The Youth of Aristotle),[27] which was created almost at the same time, the French sculptor Charles Jean Marie Degeorge used the motif of a young man with a ball in his hand, meant to keep him awake, entirely in the context of a philosopher. This marble statue had been acquired for the national museums in Paris in 1875; it is not known whether Herter knew of this work.

In 1886, Herter completed his *Sterbender Achilles* (Dying Achilles, fig. 10). According to mythology, Achilles had been wounded by Paris by means of an arrow in the only vulnerable spot on his body, the (Achilles) heel. Herter created his life-size figure of the sufferer with reference to the ancient *Dying Gaul* in the Capitoline Museum in Rome. Still entirely in the tradition of classicism, Herter's dying man appears serene. Significantly, the statue was part of the holdings of the Nationalgalerie, was lost in the twentieth century, and is now in Poland.[28] A second version was commissioned by Empress Elisabeth of Austria and placed in the Achilleion on the island of Corfu, which clearly reveals its proximity to political power. It is also known that Wilhelm II visited the artist, who was loyal to the emperor and was a German citizen, in his studio.[29] As far as the subject is concerned, a possible model can also be identified here, namely Jean-Baptiste Giraud's *Achille mourant* (Dying Achilles, fig. 11) from 1789: there, too, one encounters an athletic or downright steeled hero pulling the arrow out of his heel with his left hand. In the same year, 1789, the sculptor became a full member of the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture in Paris—"on the basis of a marble statuette of the dying Achilles now in the Mus[eum]. in Aix."[30] Created during the time of the French Revolution, this figure embodies the radical human will to fight, but at the same time also the superiority of the gods over mankind—and thus the danger of the fighter.

9 Ernst Herter, *Ruhender Alexander* (Resting Alexander), 1875 (cast 1878), bronze, h. 75 cm, Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz

10 Ernst Herter, *Sterbender Achilles* (Dying Achilles), 1886, Tyrolean marble, h. 160 cm, Alte Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz (lost in the war, today Elblag/ Poland), historical photograph

11 Jean-Baptiste Giraud, *Dying Achilles*, 1789, marble statuette, h. 55 cm, Musée Granet, Aix-en-Provence

12 Hermann Hahn, *Schlangenwürger* (Serpent Slayer), 1890/91, bronze, life-size, Müller'sches Volksbad, Munich

13 John Leighton, *Athlete Wrestling with a Python*, 1877, bronze, h. 1746 cm, Tate, London

14 Auguste Henri Modeste Pontier, *Ixion, King of Lapithes*, 1877, plaster, h. 11.3 cm, Musée Granet, Aix-en-Provence, acquired in 1877 as a gift from the artist

Hercules

The themes of struggle for survival and self-assertion are leitmotifs in late nineteenth-century sculpture; think of the figure of Siegfried, which was taken up by Rudolf Maison, Heinrich Wedemeyer,[31] Peter Breuer, Ludwig Habich, Hermann Hahn, and Franz Metzner, as well as of the Valkyrie or—legitimized by antiquity—of the numerous Amazons. Friedrich Nietzsche and Arthur Schopenhauer stood in the background as philosophical godfathers; Richard Wagner with his pathos no less. Reflections on the role of struggle and of men led to numerous militant figures, to formulas of strength and superiority. The Nibelungen were, as the Swiss sculptor Carl Burckhardt put it in 1904, "the truly Germanic, which, despite and in contrast to the Odyssey, confronts us as a second, equally significant power."[32] For him, as for his contemporaries in general, the focus was on fate and the question of life and death, and danger was an obligatory part of the myth: "In the Nibelungen, however, the heroes are giants cast down from the heavens, dragging even a

god like Siegfried down with them to their doom."[33] Heroism and downfall—this was to be an uncanny topos of the first half of the twentieth century.

The figure of Hercules, the strong and defensible son of Zeus, was often used as a symbol of power, especially in the Baroque era. He was the epitome of invincibility. The motif of the serpent slayer, which is also interwoven with his myth, took on a life of its own in Hermann Hahn's *Schlangenwürger* (Serpent Slayer, fig. 12)[34] from 1890/91, a free adaptation of the theme of Hercules fighting the Lernaean Hydra. The bronze based on the existing model was initiated and financed by a foundry owner, undoubtedly as an advertising gesture for his company. The motif embodies in a timeless way man's struggle with nature, with evil, with fate. It is, however, not about Hercules, but about man himself, about a man struggling. And this had at least one essential precursor, for John Leighton's *Athlete Wrestling with a Python* (fig. 13) from 1877 combined the motif of a standing man entangled by a snake, depicted the struggle against the forces of nature, and combined a hard face with a steeled body.[35] It is difficult to imagine that Hahn was unaware of this work, which offers a non-mythological man-animal battle group of the utmost intensity. It is interesting to note that a recent essay on the tradition of municipal baths does not discuss this atypical element of the Müller'sches Volksbad in Munich and its athletic dimension,[36] but this can be explained by the existence of another study.[37]

It is noteworthy that, in the same year, namely 1877, a battle motif depicting a man wrestling was also created in France, namely Auguste Henri Modeste Pontier's *Ixion, roi des Lapithes* (Ixion, King of the Lapiths, fig. 14), the plaster model of which is in the museum of Aix-en-Provence and whose creator became not only a curator at the museum but also the director of the drawing school there. *Ixion* is one of the few verifiable works by the artist;[38] it depicts the hero bound to the wheel as punishment for refusing to pay the promised bride price. Thus, it is not about a winner or even a potential winner, but rather a clear loser. The snakes are not actually necessary here, even in terms of the motif. But on another level, the sculptor is referring to a motif with snakes, namely the famous Laocoön group. And this applies to him as well as to the other Herculean subjects discussed here.

Titanic Battles

Wilhelminian Germany produced numerous heroes and male figures with strained bodies, some of which were more widely disseminated. Among them were Franz von Stuck's *Amazone* of 1897 and his *Athlet* of 1892 (fig. 15), works that replaced neo-Baroque traditions with strong stylization. Adolf von Hildebrand had long since moved away from the painterly turbulence of the neo-Baroque to greater formal rigor in both theory and practice. With his Symbolist tendencies, Franz von Stuck, the "artist prince" with imperial charisma, was inclined to exaltation. His *Athlet* is a world-bearing Atlas, a powerful Hercules, and—credibly, especially in view of the numerous photographs of Stuck—a stylized self-portrait or at least a self-image of the draftsman, successful painter, villa owner, and professor who saw himself as a titan. It has long been commented that this athlete is stylized "into an indirect

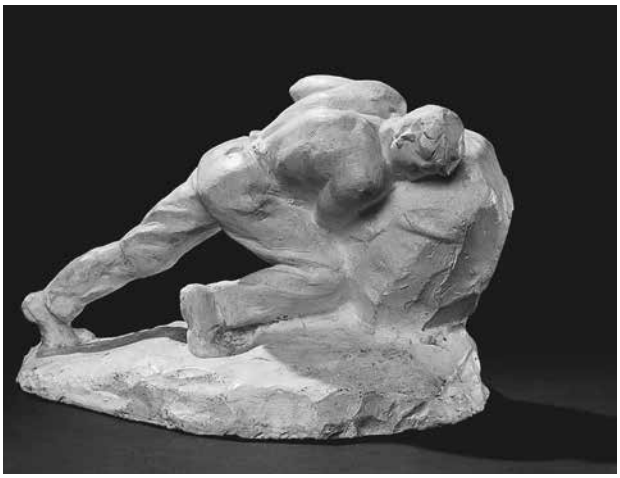
allegory of his own person,"[39] but also that he is meant to represent the embodiment of all masculine strength. The counter-image remained the Amazon, the motif of the female warrior. Thus, such a world of motifs is subject not only to the dimension of the titanic battle, but also to that of the battle of the sexes, which will be touched upon later.

Wilhelm Lehmbruck's *Steinwälzer mit Hose* (Man with Trousers Rolling a Stone, fig. 16) from around 1904/05, known not only under this descriptive title but also under the allegorical *Die Arbeit* (Work), could be understood as a titan of everyday life, in terms of the motif in the tradition of the Belgian artist Constantin Meunier.[40] A man braces himself against an overweight stone and is doomed to failure by human standards. However, it is not about work processes as in Gustave Courbet's *Stone Breakers*, but rather about the embodiment of strength, which can already be seen from the fact that preparatory sketches were given titles such as *Tatkraft* (Vigor) or *Siegfried*.[41] The title *Steinroller* (Stone Roller) was also used, and references to Sisyphus were made.[42] Thus, for the artist, the anatomical mastery of the muscular hero is initially in the foreground, flanked by the Symbolistic polyvalence of the motif, which can be embedded in the most diverse interpretive contexts. Is this Titan an artistic five-finger exercise in preparation for the treatment of ancient or Wagnerian myths? A probable answer can be found in the contemporaneous debates about a "monument to labor," which was intended to combine the abstract concept of work with representations of trades and professions, and which, in turn, must certainly be seen in the context of the discussions of the "social question" at the time, i.e., ultimately as a public recognition of the proletariat and the peasantry, which was intended to serve to secure social peace and thus had a calming character.

The numerous titanic figures of the years around and after 1900 can be traced back to other important roots, namely to the thought and influence of Friedrich Nietzsche and his skepticism. "It is the age of the masses: they lie on their belly before everything that is massive. And so also in *politicis*. A statesman who rears up for them a new Tower of Babel, some monstrosity of empire and power, they call 'great.'"[43] Monuments to labor: Were these not also something like Babylonian—and thus ideally and intentionally all-encompassing—constructs, expressions of a purported communality with simultaneous hubris? And is the statesman who promises something not to be found in Wilhelm II, just as later in Hitler's initially dazzling politics of promises? Nietzsche's thinking revolved around the power or powerlessness of the form of government, that is to say, around power and force, as well as around the role of heroes within society. In 1882, he wrote to Heinrich von Stein: "About 'the hero': […] it is the most acceptable form of existence."[44]

It is precisely this glorification of the hero, of fighters and Titans, that proves to be expansive, to determine society, to be omnipresent. Martial thinking was able to creep into even the most poetic corners, as shown by the fountain created by Josef Heu in 1903 for the Stadtpark in Vienna (fig. 17), located on the Wienfluss promenade: two muscular, overstated men, their joints martially bent, hunched over, lift an enormous stone—similar to Lehmbruck's sculpture—and thus, according to legend, cause the spring below to bubble. The man—as a synonym for "humanity"—subjugates nature and makes life possible in the first place. It should be noted that this fountain was created in Rome as the first work of

15 Franz von Stuck, *Athlet* (Athlete), 1892, bronze, h. 66 cm, Kunsthalle Bremen



16 Wilhelm Lehmbruck, *Steinwälzer mit Hose* (*Die Arbeit*) (Man with Trousers Rolling a Stone [Work]), ca. 1904/05, hard plaster cast with lacquer coating, h. 18.5 cm, Lehmbruck Museum, Duisburg

17 Josef Heu, fountain on the Wienfluss promenade (*Die Befreiung der Quelle* [Freeing of the Source]), 1903, Leitha limestone, larger than life, Vienna

Josef Heu, who thus broke away from his role as a student of Caspar von Zumbusch. It is also titled *Titanen wälzen einen Fels, der die Quelle geschlossen hat, fort* (Titans Roll Away a Boulder That Has Closed the Fountain):[45] power and charitable service intertwine synonymously, as it were. This formal language and way of thinking were to earn Josef Heu further important commissions, such as the architectural sculpture for the Haus der Kaufmannschaft (House of Merchants) on Schwarzenbergplatz in Vienna in 1903, in which the "power of trade on land" is symbolized by Atlas and Mercury and the "power of trade at sea" by Triton and Nereids.[46]

Modern Heroes—Wrestlers

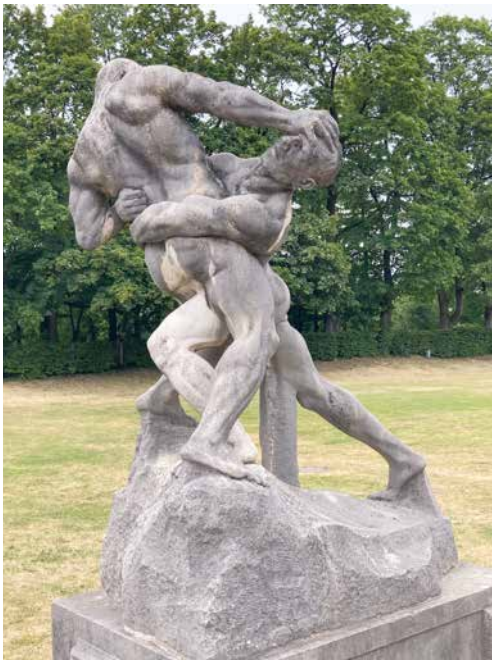
The body language is revealing: broad shoulders, stiffly outstretched arms, hands ready to grab or grasp, springy standing posture, well-formed or even "steeled" musculature, a

18 Reinhold Begas, *Ringer* (*Athlet*) (Wrestler [Athlete]), 1888, bronze, h. 65.5 cm, LETTER Stiftung, Cologne

19 Adolf von Hildebrand, *Stehender junger Mann* (Standing Young Man), 1881–84, marble, h. 183 cm, Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz

powerful neck, and—*horribile dictu*—a sexual organ reduced to inconspicuousness, the inferiority of which is obviously meant to signal that this is not about eros and eroticism, but rather about strength, presence, physicality, corporeality; Reinhold Begas's warrior, titled *Ringer* (Wrestler) or *Athlet* (fig. 18), from 1888 thus towers above a pedestal with reliefs. He has "assumed the pose of the concentrated wrestler, about to stride into battle, who will soon measure himself against his opponent, as the relief scene on the front of the pedestal depicts,"[47] while the sides are decorated with victor's wreaths, thus presupposing superiority per se. Contemporaries already noted that Begas did not repeat the concrete forms of an individual human being.[48] And indeed, it is probably above all else a matter of body language. However, if one compares the expression with the other style-defining *Stehender Mann* (Standing Man), that of Adolf von Hildebrand (fig. 19) from 1881–84, it is unmistakable that the latter is oriented toward grounded worldliness and serene inwardness, whereas the hero created by Begas is oriented toward confrontation and a test of strength. Begas, the emperor's favorite sculptor, struck the tone of the powerful of his time. Hildebrand, on the other hand, prepared the attitude of modern sculpture; about his *Stehender Mann* he wrote in a letter to his friend, the art theorist Conrad Fiedler that

20 Reinhold Begas, *Ringer* (Wrestlers), ca. 1900, plaster, h. 47 cm, private collection



21 Matthias Gasteiger, *Ringergruppe* (*Herakle und Antäos*) (Wrestlers [Hercules and Antaeus]), 1893/1901, stone, larger than life; former gymnastics playground on Schyrenplatz, Munich, today, Sachsenstrasse 2, Munich

this figure (mind you, he does not write "this man") "wants nothing at all, does nothing, and has, I believe, the charm of mere existence."[49] In this way, he restored the language of sculpture and focused attention entirely on the expressive content of body language.

The wrestlers, which were widely used as a motif, ran through the work of Reinhold Begas via August Hudler to Wilhelm Haverkamp.[50] They legitimized the depiction of the male nude—but pure sports, such as the game of bowls,[51] would have done the same: they thus carried a different impulse, perhaps even unconsciously. Wrestling, on the other hand, is obviously competitive; since antiquity, it has had a warlike, military "training" quality. And the fact that we are dealing with a combative zeitgeist becomes undeniable at the latest when one hears that Begas acted as a referee at wrestling matches and donated wrestling statuettes as trophies.[52]

In Hugo Lederer's lost *Ringkämpfer Peruse* (The Wrestler Peruse) from 1899, the inequality of the fighters with the simultaneous absence of the second figure is further emphasized by the expressions of disapproval, contempt, and disdain.[53] The cult of heroes typical of the period, which can be associated with Ludwig van Beethoven, Wagner, and Nietzsche in equal measure, continued with Reinhold Begas's group of two *Ringer*

(Wrestlers) in action (fig. 20), a subject executed in plaster, bronze, and marble: the work in marble was auctioned from the artist's estate and has been lost since 1940.[54] Everything testifies to "fighting forms"—to anticipate the title of Franz Marc's painting—to turbulence and a mutual struggle, to shimmering light on entangled limbs.

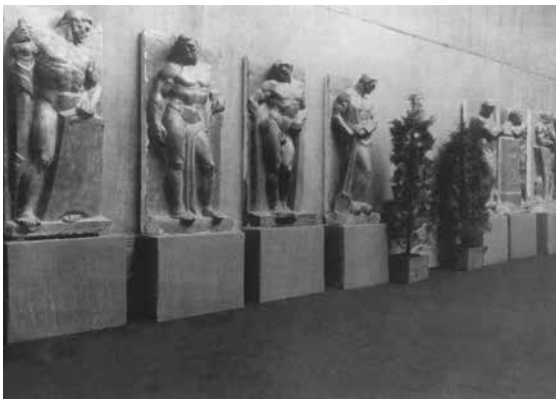
While Begas's group dates from around 1900, the Munich-based Matthias Gasteiger completed his *Ringergruppe* (Group of Wrestlers, fig. 21) in the following year, 1901. Since it is also known as *Herakles und Antäos* (Heracles and Antaeus),[55] ancient mythology still peeks out here from the garb of the naked test of strength. Gasteiger not only created this work of rival figures, but also, for example, the monumental sculptural group *Herkules mit Hydra* (Hercules with Hydra), which, in crass exaggeration, depicts the athletic body in almost berserk violence, but is dated around 1921. Nevertheless, his "tendency to exaggerate the form of monumental figures […] has been recognizable since 1900."[56] The fact that the group of wrestlers was installed at the Munich gymnastics playground reveals the concept behind it: the municipal school sports grounds were thus emblematically elevated to a place of preparation for combative wrestling, for any test of strength.

State Fighters

Emil Schaudt designed the architectural parts, Hugo Lederer the figurative elements for the Hamburg Bismarck Monument of 1906 (fig. 22): the Iron Chancellor as Roland, as a guardian, equipped with the gigantic sword, carved in granite—Germany could not show itself more capable of defense. Otto von Bismarck, Chancellor of the German Empire, social reformer, dismissed by Wilhelm II and therefore all the more appreciated by many, lived on his estates near Hamburg and was stylized as the antipode and victim of the ruler, maneuvered politically for several more years. Golo Mann sketches his last years: "In his last days, Bismarck became a demagogue, almost a democrat. It was necessary, he said again and again, to strengthen the constitution."[57] That Bismarck monuments soon became legion and served a national self-definition is obvious. As hard, hieratic works, they presented a human image of patriotic unity, honoring the lone warrior as the bearer of glory. And the echoes of the "Iron Chancellor" were to reverberate well into the twentieth century.

In Hugo Lederer, on the other hand, lived, as the art historian Alfred Kuhn noted in 1921, "the love of the gigantic form. He can hardly tame these monstrous bodies […]. They writhe with their powerful thighs, their muscles are tensed to bursting, their breasts swell. The horses grind their teeth, they can hardly be held. Everything is gigantic, all the passions seem gathered here and forced into shape. But it is hollow."[58] Kuhn's lucid analysis is astonishing because it is valid both backwards and forwards, i.e., also in the continuation of pathos formulas in the 1930s. Already in the year of the monument's unveiling, the perceptive essayist Alfred Kerr had commented on it with ambivalent enthusiasm and reservation, because it was undeniably "immense, mythical, and unforgettable."[59] And the forcefulness already began with the fact that the reliefs, at almost two meters high, served the slightly colossally exaggerated scale even in the model (fig. 23), lined up in the *Große*

22 Emil Schaudt (architecture), Hugo Lederer (sculpture), Bismarck monument, 1906, Hamburg, historical photograph



23 Hugo Lederer, pedestal reliefs for the Bismarck monument in Hamburg, 1906, plaster, h. ca. 190 cm, exhibition view from the *Große Berliner Kunstausstellung,* 1907, historical photograph

Berliner Kunstausstellung (Great Berlin Art Exhibition) of 1907 like industrious warriors:[60] martial, defensive, fearsome in their exaggerated athleticism. Even small trees cannot be reconciled here.

Hugo Lederer and Franz Metzner were active around 1900 in the "period of the style seekers,"[61] as this time of pre-Expressionist hardening of form, of martial masculinity, of "constrained humans"[62] was once called, in a time of "megalomaniacal stylizers"[63] and cyclopean figurations that stood in sharp contrast to the late neo-Baroque and no longer served the cult of the emperor, but rather a new image of Germany or democracy, as the example of the veneration of Bismarck shows.

But the difference, or even the discrepancy, between claim and reality could no longer be concealed. Germany was in a crisis, and sculpture showed it. Metzner possessed "only the longing for power, not power itself," as Kuhn noted in 1921.[64] Again, one senses the reproach of hollowness, and to this day the *Völkerschlachtdenkmal* (Monument to the Battle of the Nations, fig. 24) remains problematic in this ambivalence of patriotic pathos and national emptiness, of a monument to the dead and a place of consecration, of the darkening and hardening of form, of crypt and temple. Kuhn's 1921 comment seems visionary: "There is no doubt that there is a primordial humanity in these images; these giants are brooding on self-indulgent dreams."[65] It was precisely this self-indulgence, so astutely perceived, that led into the second third of the century. And there is much to be said about the colossal projects of the first third of the century, which is echoed here as a quotation: Metzner was a sculptor "whom the megalomania of Wilhelminian Germany drove into

24 Franz Metzner, monument to the Battle of the Nations, Leipzig, statue *Willingness to Sacrifice*, ca. 1906, granite, larger than life, historical photograph

the cyclopean."[66] Here, as with later artists, it goes without saying that the sculptors were not driven into a formal language by an epoch, but rather—as a historian, one must take into account the reciprocal nature of the impulses—that they, for their part, participated in the aesthetic shaping of the respective ideas and ideologies.

Ideal Heroes—Spiritual Fighters

It would be a further criminal oversimplification to think that the willingness to fight around 1900 was concentrated only on motifs such as athletes and statesmen. Rather, it is obvious that the themes of power, the martial, and the claim to dominance can also be found in the field of those subjects with which thinkers, literary figures, and artists were to be memorialized: the discourse of power conquered the mind. Monument and claim were intertwined, not infrequently under the sign of hypertrophic genius and absolutized creative power.

Spirit and fighting—are they not causally contradictory? Max Klinger's colored plaster model (fig. 25) for his *Beethoven* in Leipzig, his search for a polylithically valid version, demonstrated as early as 1885 how he intended to combine the Beethoven veneration of his time with a modern aesthetic and a gigantic pathos.[67] The composer thus became the projection surface of rebellious creativity, the solitary Olympian of earthly descent, the fighter for his music, lonely in the isolation of physical deafness and surrounded, as it were, by the inner voices of angelic faces. A few years earlier, the twenty-eight-year-old

25 Max Klinger, model for the Beethoven monument in Leipzig, 1885/86, plaster, painted, h. 131 cm, Beethoven House, Bonn

26 Max Klinger, Beethoven monument in the artist's studio (today in the Museum der bildenden Künste Leipzig), 1902, historical photograph

Klinger had met Johannes Brahms, just such a giant of music, and on his own initiative had created with *Beethoven* an "example of the quasi-religious veneration of a genius,"[68] a pathos formula of the tragic and lonely genius, a quasi-Promethean glorification of an artist-god, which naturally demanded a separate, almost sacral presentation from the very beginning. The fact that Ludwig van Beethoven here and in the subsequent polylithic execution (fig. 26)[69] became a symbol of the individualization that has increasingly determined society since the Enlightenment makes him a Promethean-heroic lone fighter. Adolph Menzel slandered this work: "The most beautiful part of it is only seen by the sun, namely the back."[70] Or, one might ask even more ironically, do only the gods see it? Only Zeus! They or he, after all, seem to have sent the eagle that perches next to the genius, peering and ogling, if that is what an eagle is capable of doing: as if it had the mission of creating a constant state of suffering and thus emphasizing Beethoven's fighting spirit.

At this point, one could easily add Klinger's somber bust of Nietzsche, created in 1904, which is in the Nietzsche Archive in Weimar and which, with its sinister gaze, aptly captures the genial loneliness, the suffering isolation, the distant and misanthropic thinking that prevailed around the more or less "mentally deranged" philosopher.[71] The bust is not a portrait, but rather a symbol, an allegory of the absolute. And the veneration of the thinker was probably just as absolute. Here, however, hero worship slipped into a fatal direction, into that of the domineering man. And Hermann Hahn's monument to Franz Liszt

27 Hermann Hahn, Franz Liszt monument, 1902, Lasa marble, h. 250 cm, Park an der Ilm, Weimar

28 Ö. Fülöp Beck, plaque commemorating the hundreth birthday of Franz Liszt, 1911, bronze, h. 6.3 cm, Klassik Stiftung Weimar

from 1902 (fig. 27), also a work of the intellectual world of Weimar in the late nineteenth century, hardly has a different effect: the symbol of a martial spiritual fighter who, as a lonely person looking far away, thinks he draws his inspiration from the infinite nature of the cosmos, and seems to be listening to an inner voice. Cosima Wagner told the writer Houston Stewart Chamberlain laconically and overplaying the abysses: "The monument is beautiful, very simple, without symbolism."[72] This assumption must seem wrong to us. In fact, the statue has a kind of hidden symbolism: the gaze is not directed at the beholder, but rather at the intangible, quasi-divine sources of creativity in the composer's infinite range of vision. At this point, a few biographical details about Hermann Hahn: He developed his art from the late realism of Wilhelm von Rümann through the neo-Classicism of Adolf von Hildebrand to a modernist who, like Ernst Barlach, Georg Kolbe, Wilhelm Lehmbruck, and Franz Metzner, was admitted to the Prussian Academy of Arts in 1919. In 1937, he was dismissed from his posts because of his age, and his chair went to Ludwig Thorak.[73] The fact that Hahn had been an advisor to the Bavarian State Advisory Office for War Graves since 1916 and that he carried out numerous such commissions from 1919 onwards should neither be ignored nor overrated, but nevertheless shows the continuities in biographical detail.

Franz Liszt remains an exemplary case: the plaque by Ö. Fülöp Beck, created on the occasion of Liszt's hundredth birthday (1911, fig. 28), seems more like an homage to Stefan George—hard in outline, imperious in expression: as if images of spiritual fighters, heroes of thought or invention, were needed. And Ernst Freese's portrait bust of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (fig. 29) from 1908 seems no different: an exaggeration of the Weimar poet's physicality and presence, a martial pathos formula that presents Goethe not as a lyrical poet and ethereal aesthete, but rather as a defiant and Olympian heroic character. This marble head was commissioned by the Senckenberg Naturalist Society and stands in the stairwell of its main building in Frankfurt am Main: Goethe is stylized here in an almost disturbing way as an obsessive spiritual fighter.

29 Ernst Freese, *Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*, 1908, marble, life-size, staircase, main building, Senckenberg Society, Frankfurt am Main

The Will to Fight

A thinker, a poet, an artist, or a composer does not want to actually fight; that is left to athletes, sportsmen, or even warriors. The multitude of archers, discus throwers, and ballplayers who populated the salons of the late nineteenth century[74] can be disregarded here by concentrating on the body language of the sports depictions and bypassing the traditional sporting attributes. What does Max Klinger's *Athlet* (fig. 30) from 1898 say with his compact body, the apparently relaxed yet dismissive posture of hands and arms folded behind the head, and the almost Impressionistic shimmering surface texture? Klinger called the statuette a study and had it cast in five bronze copies, one of which, for example, ended up in the possession of the wealthy Jewish Viennese family Wittgenstein:[75] all of this elevates the alleged study to a work to be considered final.

The model for the male nude was a professional athlete who went by the pseudonym Rasso and whose steeled body had provoked the greatest hymns of enthusiasm. Klinger modeled him "far beyond life size."[76] Why? Was the "body hero" so impressive, engaging, compelling? There were other male models of this kind, such as Eugen Sandow and Lionel Strongfort—a pseudonym for the athlete?—some of whom were extremely well paid for their services.[77] Here, weightlifting and the cult of the body come together.

30 Max Klinger, *Athlet* (Athlete), 1898, bronze, h. 69 cm, Lindenau-Museum Altenburg

Athletes were *en vogue*. Were they politically connoted, was their popularity due to the naturism and reform movements of those years? They deserve a highly differentiated view and careful consideration, as Sascha Schneider demonstrates with his *Siegerknabe* (Boy Victor, fig. 31) from 1911. Schneider was a professor in Weimar, a monumental and mural painter who, like Max Klinger, Ernst Moritz Geyger, and others, oscillated between color and form, painting and sculpture, who could be described as conservative to reactionary in spirit, and who wrote texts such as "Kriegsgestalten und Todesgestalten" (Figures of War and Figures of Death), published in Leipzig in 1915.[78] This reflects a tendency. The *Siegerknabe*, created before the First World War, has the attitude of departure already known from Begas, but thanks to the title and the award of the golden headband, it evokes the battle already won: superiority is the concept here. From the concentrated posture comes tension and self-confidence, presence and pride, the certainty of victory. The *Gürtelbinder* (Boy Buckling His Belt, fig. 32) from 1913 is hardly any different, with similarly broad shoulders and a comparably athletic body as he fiddles with his accessory, his figure literally spread out on the surface, blocking the way and the view, and is virtually a counter-image to the figures that Julia Wallner once so aptly described as "sensitive men," questioning them under the aspects of weakness, war, and asceticism.[79] Schneider's *Gürtelbinder* is not a sensitive man, but rather a teenager arming himself, and it is precisely these models that will be further explored here.

31 Sascha Schneider, *Siegerknabe* (Boy Victor), 1911, copper, hollow galvano, patinated, gilded headband, 185.5 × 57 × 51 cm, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Skulpturensammlung from 1800/Albertinum

32 Sascha Schneider, *Gürtelbinder* (Boy Buckling His Belt), 1913, hollow galvano, 85.3 × 37.5 × 20 cm, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Skulpturensammlung from 1800/Albertinum

Berserker

It seems that many images of men have been characterized by militancy and athleticism. But there are also emotional outbursts that had never been seen before in such expressiveness. Ernst Barlach's *Berserker* (fig. 33)[80] from 1910 is a frenzied, uninhibited, distressed man. In the age of Johann Joachim Winckelmann, rage and despair, frenzy and destruction—uncontrolled, mind you—had become an impossibility as representations. A man had to prove his strength and composure. With Barlach's motif, however, the dynamics of body language gain an unprecedented vitality. As closed as the form appears, the language of the body is energetically eruptive and yet seems to be confined and held together by the cloak-like garment. The lunge and gesture of the figure wrestle with the cloak: emotion and reason are in competition.

These radical transgressions of classical statuary can be traced further. Ludwig Habich created a bronze *Berserker* in 1921, which was acquired by the artists' colony in Mathildenhöhe in Darmstadt. Only a year later, Georg Kolbe followed up with his smaller-than-life figure *Zorn (Flamme)* (Wrath [Flame], fig. 34), a now vertically erect rather than horizontally extended symbol of passionate release and dangerous, even destructive emotional

33 Ernst Barlach, *Berserker*, 1910, bronze, h. 55 cm, Ernst Barlach Haus, Hamburg

34 Georg Kolbe, *Zorn* (*Flamme*) (Wrath [Flame]), 1922, oak, h. 166 cm, Georg Kolbe Museum, Berlin

outbursts.[81] However, these images of men remained rather the exception; the gender role remained fixed: they had to fight, defend, win, wrestle—for country, power, role, or even just for a woman.

Battle of the Sexes

Many of the sculpturally exceptional motifs owe much to the cross-genre work of painters and graphic artists who also incorporated the third dimension. This is also true of Max Klinger and his *Drama* (fig. 35) from 1904. The model was begun in 1899 and shows the influence of Auguste Rodin.[82] Initially, there were only two figures: the lying female nude clinging to the rock before she falls, and the athletic male nude with his back turned to her, embodying an extreme counterforce and clinging to a root formation on the back, but without reference or even relationship to the accompanying figure. Later, the girl in the lower left was added, another isolated, desperate figure. One can see this motif in the tradition of the numerous depictions of the Deluge. At the same time, it stands in the context of other motifs already mentioned, for which "the strength athlete Rasso sat as a model,"[83] that is to say, which are completely anchored in Klinger's body-enthusiastic time. With regard to the oppressive isolation and at the same time the supposed sense of community, references to the contemporaneous dramas of Henrik Ibsen and August

35 Max Klinger, *Das Drama* (The Drama), 1899–1904, Lasa marble, 212 × 230 × 112 cm, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Skulpturensammlung from 1800/Albertinum

Strindberg are suggested, even in the terminology, for Klinger called the lying figure "the sinking woman"[84] and thus conjured up female versus male roles. As if that were not enough polyvalence. Strangely enough, Klinger sometimes even imposed a political interpretation on the work, which is over two meters high, by relating it to the war in South Africa—with the interpretation that a heroic Boer was defending his wife and child. Klinger considered the inscription "Belli boerorum imago" for this, because he saw in it an image of the Boer War, which was fought between the British and the German-Dutch immigrants in South Africa from 1899 to 1902. At that time, the British imprisoned the women and children of the Boers in specially created "concentration camps"—the term probably appears there for the first time in world history—so that the man's gesture of strength and defense acquires a factual relevance. At the same time, this composition remains a metaphor of heroism for the family, a struggle of the man for the family rather than of the sexes between themselves—but it thus remained part of the gender role assignments typical of the time.

There is no doubt, however, that a "battle of the sexes"[85] underlies Klinger's *Mann und Weib* (*Genie und Leidenschaft*) (Man and Woman [Genius and Passion], fig. 36),[86] for it is hardly a foreplay, an amorous game. The plaster model of 1903, which has been preserved only in the historical photograph, is based on the opposing lines of force resulting from the wrestling arms, the legs placed against each other, and the intersecting visual axes: turbulent directions of thrust and pressure.

36 Max Klinger, *Mann und Weib* (*Genie und Leidenschaft*) (Man and Woman [Genius and Passion]), 1903, plaster, h. 245 cm, formerly Museum der bildenden Künste, Leipzig, historical photograph of the plaster model

37 Hugo Lederer, *Kauerndes Mädchen* (Crouching Girl), 1897, plaster, h. 49.5 cm, Georg Kolbe Museum, Berlin

38 a Georg Kolbe, *Sitzendes Mädchen* (Seated Girl), 1904, limestone, h. 45.5 cm, Georg Kolbe Museum, Berlin

38 b Georg Kolbe, *Kauernde* (Crouching Woman), 1906/09, marble, h. 49 cm, Georg Kolbe Museum, Berlin

38 c Georg Kolbe, *Sklavin* (Slave), 1916, bronze, h. 71.5 cm, Georg Kolbe Museum, Berlin

Georg Kolbe, who owed much to Max Klinger, especially in his younger years,[87] created *Liebeskampf* (Amorous Battle) in 1911: a similarly intertwined group of two figures.[88] In 1918, the work was also called *Kämpfende Amazonen* (Battling Amazons),[89] which would transfer it from the battle of the sexes to homoeroticism, meaning that the masculine world of battle, which has already been observed many times in the course of these investigations, would also be transferred to that of the female warriors, the Amazons. Does this perhaps indicate feminist tendencies? Or does it rather belong to the imagery of the Amazons that has been so often thematized, which would then extend battle, war, and conflict to the gender that has been described as soft and feminine for so long?

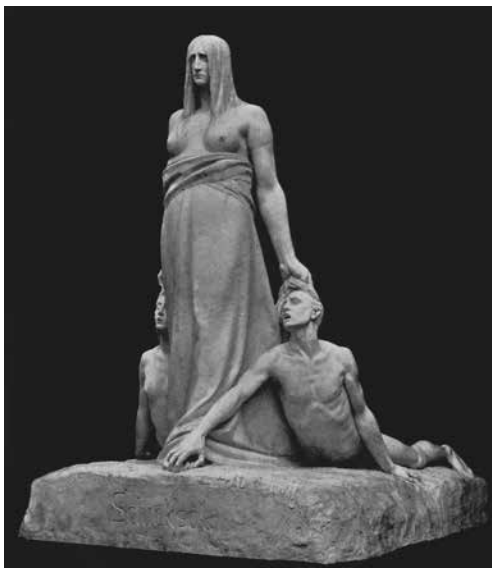
It would be a topic in itself to consider the constrained female figures of Georg Kolbe,[90] Hugo Lederer,[91] and others, which, at least in Kolbe's case, are also due to the influence of Max Klinger, and then in the years leading up to 1920 increasingly unfold, rise up, expand, and liberate themselves, even where the figure depicted is ostensibly a slave (figs. 37 and 38a–c).[92]

Struggle of Fate

Two works of Symbolist density stand in large German cemeteries—and yet were not intended for them. The fact that they are installed there is nevertheless significant for the theme of the "constrained human":[93] the broken figuration and mortality are intertwined, as Sibylle Einholz has lucidly demonstrated, and have become a topos of funerary sculpture. This can therefore be disregarded here. However, two programmatic works should be considered, namely the Christ relief (fig. 39) from 1909–11 by Ludwig Manzel, a sculptor who had worked under Begas on the Siegesallee and who, in 1889, had created the large sculpture *Der Friede, durch Waffen geschützt* (Peace, Protected by Arms),[94] which won many medals. Begun in 1909, the broad relief with Christ vaulted by the round arch and the faithful, the infirm, children, and adults approaching him was originally conceived for a church, as we know from comparable motifs, but in the 1920s—because it was not needed at the intended site—it was installed as a kind of programmatic sculpture in the Stahnsdorf South-Western Cemetery. Theologically, it is an appeal to all to turn to the faith; in the new context, however, it seems like a social-utopian formula for integration: in death, all are equal. The pathos formula of the many bent over and oppressed was sacrally obsolete and now created a community in death. Whether the *Monument aux Morts* in the Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris or even its original plaster in the Dresden Skulpturensammlung served as a model for the installation of this work, which was already anachronistic in the 1920s,[95] must remain open, but that work, too, is to be understood as a relief of the bent-over, fallen, tortured, and maltreated.

In 1905, Hugo Lederer created the dark, sinister figure *Das Schicksal* (Fate, fig. 40),[96] a symbol of every conceivable humiliation of man by an impending fate, a cipher between Norn and Sphinx, an image of humiliating horror. The towering, bare-breasted Valkyrie-like figure drags a woman and a man by the hair behind her, their facial expressions somewhere between surrender and pain, and their gestures expressing weariness and hopelessness. While the

39 Ludwig Manzel, Christ monument, 1909–11 (installed 1923), marble, larger than life, Stahnsdorf South-Western Cemetery, Berlin



40 Hugo Lederer, *Das Schicksal* (Fate) (Ohlsdorf Cemetery), 1905, stone, h. 200 cm, Hamburg, historical photograph

female figure has surrendered, the man still resists by bracing himself against the ground. This work, too, was not conceived for the cemetery but rather for a private pavilion belonging to Eduard Lippert's family, and was only later installed here. The Lippert family had made its fortune in the colonial trade of South African gold mines—and was active in charity. What does this fatalistic group of figures mean in this context? Is it the expression of an apocalyptic mood à la Nietzsche, of a Wagnerian will to fight, of a nihilistic fanaticism? And how appropriate or fatal is its placement in a cemetery at a time when the Christian hope of resurrection is collapsing? This group now stands in the Ohlsdorf Cemetery in Hamburg, and it takes up something that is also known from other places of peace in death, namely from military cemeteries such as the one in Gotha. There we find a guardian leaning on his sword, his nakedness covered by a stone cloth; he looks over the stone grave crosses, and the inscription on the pedestal provides the reference: "In Memory of Germany's Heroes. The City of Gotha. 1914–1918"—a man bent over, but more a sinister genius of retribution by the sword than an allegory of inevitable fate.

Fight for Survival

41 Fritz Klimsch, Rudolf Virchow monument, 1906–10, stone, larger than life, Karlsplatz, Berlin, historical photograph

Nature has often placed sickness before death; and in sickness, man struggles with mortality. Fritz Klimsch cast this unequal struggle, this attempt at self-assertion, in a most remarkable formula with the *Denkmal für Rudolf Virchow* (Monument to Rudolf Virchow, fig. 41) from 1906–10 on Karlsplatz in Berlin. The monument to the physician Virchow stands near his former place of work, the Charité, and reverses tradition: the honored man is no longer raised on a pedestal as a heroic figure but is present only as a portrait relief on the front. On the high pedestal with Doric forms, however, is the symbolic scene, the battle. The male figure, also described by Klimsch as a Titan, is wrestling with the Sphinx, which at the same time is reminiscent of Hercules's fight with the Nemean Lion. The reference to the Sphinx recalls the mysteries of nature traditionally embodied by the Sphinx. Here, man—Virchow—conquers the mysteries of nature, namely the elements of nature that are not visible to the eye, such as the world of bacteria. At this point, one could make some remarks about Klimsch's patrons, such as the art historian and museum director general Wilhelm von Bode, and about the hostility to modernism of these formative old elites, but instead one must refer to previous studies.[97]

Territorial Conflicts

When Hugo Lederer was commissioned around 1899 to create the allegories *Der Krieg* (War) and *Der Frieden* (Peace) (fig. 42) for the Oberlausitzer Ruhmeshalle (Hall of Fame or Honor) in Görlitz (now Zgorzelec, Poland)—a kind of scaled-down Reichstag architecture—a frighteningly close connection was established between glory and war, glory and peace—and thus glory and victory. The female Siegfried with sword (as if allegories had to be female) towers over the pyramidal composition, while the heroes and heroines cower on the ground, writhing, suffering, and exhausted from battle. The message, however, boils down to the fact that war and victory go together. Alfred Kuhn's superb description speaks volumes: "Enormous, writhing athletic bodies, forced movements, stage thunder, a personification of war with an inevitable sword, a cloak swirling around her

42 Hugo Lederer, *Der Krieg* (War) for the Oberlausitzer Ruhmeshalle, Görlitz (now Zgorzelec, Poland), ca. 1899, stone, larger than life, historical photograph

43 Hermann Hosaeus, *Nach dem Kampfe* (After the Battle), 1899, bronze, h. 48 cm, Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz

head, seemingly frozen in mid-swing"[98]—this conglomerate of motifs shows all the characteristics of the articulation of power and a Michelangelesque pathos, which in architecture and sculpture is intended to dwarf people before the colossal titanic creation of the turn of the century.

Those who thought around 1900 that, after three decades of peace, war was no longer conceivable on German territory may have thought for their own relief that it could be outsourced and thus exported in space or postponed in time. Such hopeful speculations are still dangerous today, because they are based on delusions. Hermann Hosaeus shifts the hymns of victory into the space of abstraction by showing in *Nach dem Kampfe* (After the Battle, fig. 43)[99] from 1899 a healthy, uninjured rider, powerful with his intact weapons, leading his thirsty horse to the watering trough, as if only this horse had suffered: the surviving horseman is the victorious warrior, the conqueror of his opponents, and thus the survivor, against whom the dead, absent from the image—the victims, euphemistically called "fallen"—are to be held. Hosaeus, who approached Hugo Lederer's formal language around 1910, taught at the Technische Hochschule (Technical College) in Berlin during the Weimar Republic and was appointed professor of sculpture there in 1933. Certainly, one cannot and must not attempt to explain works of art on the basis of biographical details, especially when they lie in the future of the work; however, under certain circumstances, they and their formal language gain an astonishing plausibility in retrospect. In the case of Hosaeus, who had already openly endorsed National Socialist positions before 1933, this is further underscored by the fact that he participated in monument competitions for Richard Wagner or for fraternity monuments, i.e., for decidedly value-conservative reference figures.

The war shifted to earlier times is scenically reenacted in Oskar Erich Hösel's *Hunne zu Pferde* (Hun on Horseback, fig. 44) from 1897.[100] The Hun wars took place centuries earlier. But the supposed historical distance is deceptive: according to general education in Germany at the turn of the century, the Huns were a Mongolian people who, as a traditional enemy of the Chinese, had induced them to build the Great Wall of China. They besieged Europe from the east: "To the terror spread by the great number and rapidity of the victories of the H[uns]. was added the horror instilled by the piercing cries, coarse gestures, and repulsive ugliness of the Huns."[101] Among the available knowledge of the habits of life were that they lived by cattle breeding, hunting, and robbery, dressed in skins, ate raw meat, and did not shave—in short, they embodied not only something exotic, but also something hostile to Europe in every way, something uncivilized. Nearly four decades later, the Brockhaus encyclopedia put it even more succinctly: "The name H[uns]. is often used as a synonym for barbarians."[102] This has a long tradition. Kaiser Wilhelm II, on the occasion of the Boxer Rebellion in China, expressed that the German troops should spread terror as the Huns once did. This was in reference to the xenophobic fighting in China, in the wake of which the German envoy to China was assassinated in 1900, resulting in war against the colony under German leadership. At that time, Oskar Erich Hösel's *Hunne zu Pferde* had been completed and cast in bronze for only three years: an image of danger per se, of uncivilized savagery and murderous destructiveness—and an occasion for debate about the values of society at that time and their relevance today.

44 Oskar Erich Hösel, *Hunne zu Pferde* (Hun on Horseback, 1895 (cast 1897), bronze, h. 178 cm, Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz

The conservative Felix Dahn had dealt with the figure of the Hun in his poem "Der Hunnenzug" (The March of the Huns), in which the danger posed by the Huns leads to the unification of the Goths and the Germanic tribes. Börries von Münchhausen's "Hunnenzug" and Friedrich Wilhelm Weber's "Die Hunnen" (The Huns) continued the theme of the dangers looming from the east: murder and rape, kidnapping and plunder, looting and arson. Hösel's large bronze was thus at the center of the preoccupation of the time with an image of the enemy that could be derived from history but was inherently topical. It is therefore not surprising that this motif could also be acquired as a porcelain version, which is still produced today in Meissen, where Hösel taught. Finally, it should be noted that the motif shows the horse recoiling and its rider bending over as a skull and a broken shield lie on the ground: the warrior thus contemplates the victim of the past

and dismounts in astonishment, but not in reverence. The young rider is amazed, but the horse shies away, as if it associates the objects with gruesome memories. Hösel was honored for this work at the 1896 *Internationale Kunstausstellung* (International Art Exhibition) in Berlin; the social consensus could not be more clearly expressed. The fact that the bronze was installed next to the Nationalgalerie also placed it in the context of Wilhelm von Kaulbach's lost wall paintings in the Neues Museum, which also dealt with the same subject.[103] Given this zeitgeist, it is not surprising that Kaiser Wilhelm's speech was fierce:

> "Should you encounter the enemy, he will be defeated! No quarter will be given! Prisoners will not be taken! Whoever falls into your hands is forfeited. Just as a thousand years ago the Huns under their King Attila made a name for themselves, one that even today makes them seem mighty in history and legend, may the name German be affirmed by you in such a way in China that no Chinese will ever again dare to look cross-eyed at a German."[104]

What a beacon, what an anticipation of later diction, what circular reasoning. But the groups of horses and riders that National Socialism brought forth and that was installed in the vicinity of the Olympic Stadium in Berlin seem harmless by comparison.[105]

Façades of Power

Feminine and narrative, architectural sculpture in the German-speaking world after the mid-nineteenth century sought to indicate the functions of a building by means of beautiful allegories. Consider, for example, Hans Gasser's 1859 series of allegories of commerce, industry, and railroads for the Österreichische Creditanstalt, a series of sleek allegories with traditional attributes such as the cogwheel (figs. 45a, b).[106] Wherever political power was to be legitimized, male figures were traditionally used, as in the case of the Hamburg City Hall, the façade of which, designed around 1893 in the neo-Renaissance style, has a pictorial program (fig. 46) that refers to "patriotic history"[107] and, with statues of emperors and clerics, sets local history in relation to overall German or national history, as is also known from other city halls.[108] But that was not all in the age of Wilhelm II. "In reality," according to Golo Mann, "the German Empire was an immensely strong, concentrated nation-state, driven forward by the engine of a powerful industry,"[109] within which Prussia held a dominant position but was flanked by other highly industrialized states—one thinks, for example, of Saxony. The accompanying economic prosperity was manifested, for example, in the increasing general affluence as well as in the decoration and pictorial programs of public buildings, from town halls to courts and from trading companies to financial institutions.

In 1895, Kaiser Wilhelm II proudly declared that the German Empire had become "a world empire"[110] that had caught up with England and France. This claim to be a world trading power and world political power was consequently also articulated in buildings.

45 a, b Hans (Hanns) Gasser, allegories of industry and commerce (designs for the figural building decoration of the Österreichische *Creditanstalt für Handel und Gewerbe*), 1859, plaster, h. 46.5 cm, Wien Museum, Vienna

They manifested the potency of an "industry second only to that of America, an army of incomparable power,"[111] as Golo Mann defined it—in treacherous military diction. This, in turn, led to highly revealing sculpture programs on the buildings of institutions such as the Reichsbank in Hamburg, next door to the city hall on Rathausmarkt, the main façade of which was decorated around 1914/18 with martial sculpture on the north gable and on the portal on the east side with sculptures already pointing ahead to the decorative 1920s (figs. 47a, b). Angular and hard warriors and heroes have been carved in stone and squeezed between the horizontal entablatures as if they had to support the façade. However, even with the help of the *Dehio Handbook*, it is not possible to identify the artist. Today, such sculptural programs—in this case, personifications of professions—are generally treated as insignificant. But this is a subject in itself.

The "pre-Expressionist hardening of form" manifested in such buildings led, on the one hand, to Art Deco, which operated with decorative and often small-scale forms and tended to marginalize architectural decoration—further research on this would be useful—and, on the other hand, to late Expressionist forms.

The hard figurations applied to the façades from the period before the First World War were found everywhere, including at universities such as the main building of the Ludwig

46 Sculptural decoration on the main façade of the Hamburg City Hall by various sculptors of the late nineteenth century, 1893

Maximilian University on Amalienstrasse in Munich, completed in 1909 (fig. 48). The figures of philosophers and thinkers in togas are reminiscent of antiquity on the one hand and of Romanesque saints on the other, entirely in the spirit of national tradition, whose attachment to the wall documents their supporting character; moreover, with their comparatively small heads, they seem like heroes of a coming future. Clear contours, hard tuff, and concise reminiscences of antiquity and the Middle Ages—this syncretism articulates an all-encompassing postulate of power and heritage, i.e., the claim to be the legitimate heir of all the historical merits of European intellectual history. Humanism and hegemony appear in harmony.

The building of the publishing house of the newspaper *Münchner Merkur*—one of the leading among its kind in the city—was sculpturally designed only a little later, probably around 1910/12 (fig. 49): a building with mercantile interests and an intrinsic educational mandate of the newspaper publishers. Above the large windows are cartouches and emblems; on the last full floor, human figures are squeezed between them. On the left, a young male nude reading a scroll—perhaps a proofreader? On the right, an athletic nude with a box, which may be interpreted as a reference to the typesetting box. In the center, an older, bearded man in a cap, coat, and leggings stands beside a press with a spindle: an adaptation of the figure of Johannes Gutenberg, the father of movable type printing. Allegories thus flank the historical reference figure and the professional profile; the present and the past are intertwined—the power of history is carried into the present.

The sculptures presented thus far testify to the aesthetics of constraint, the lack of space, the oppressed figure. The façades after the turn of the century bear witness to this image of man in many ways, oscillating between the irrepressible power of athletic musclemen on the one hand and the feeling of "man-without-space" and the lack of room for development or play on the other. In the following, we will focus on a sculptor whose work has only recently been the subject of more extensive scholarly research: Georg Grasegger. The commissions he received are eloquent reflections of the times. *Schmied an der Esse* (Blacksmith at the Forge, figs. 50a, b), a façade decoration for the Barmer Bank-Verein in Iserlohn, was created in 1906/07 and is part of a complex iconography of creation of value at a recognized site of the coal and steel industry.[112] The existing title of the work would probably be more correctly modified to a title such as

47 a, b Sculptural decoration on the main façade of the Hamburg Reichsbank building on Rathausmarkt, ca. 1914/18, north gable with sculptural decoration (left), portal on the east side with sculptures (right)

48 German Bestelmeyer (architecture), Georg Albertshofer (sculptures), sculptures on the façade of the Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich, 1906/09, limestone and tuff, Amalienstrasse, Munich, historical photograph

49 Allegorical architectural sculpture on the façade of the publishing house of the *Münchner Merkur*, probably ca. 1910/12, limestone, Paul-Heyse-Strasse 4, Munich

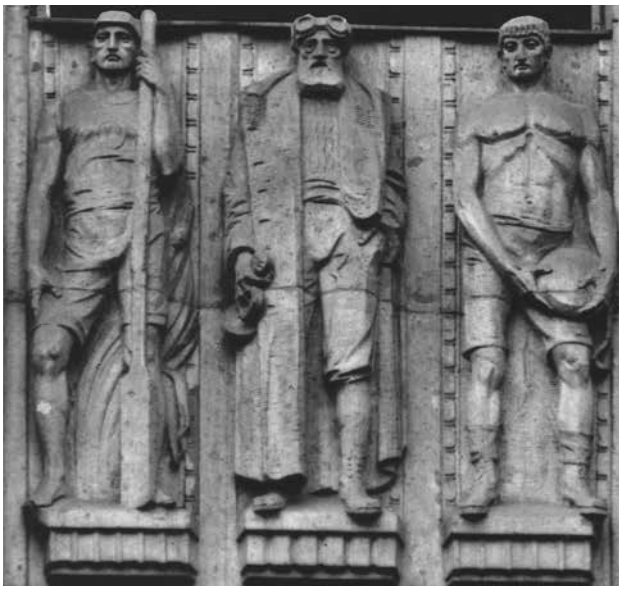
Der Abstich (Tapping), since the laborer—an iron puddler (Constantin Meunier had also sculpturally depicted this working-class world)—is working with a poker at the fire hole. The counterpart, of course, also shows Mercury squeezed into a flat as a relief: thus the god of money as a counter-image to a man of labor—but not to a more complicated iconography, as it would have been the case, for example, with Hephaestus, the god of fire and blacksmiths.

50 a, b Georg Grasegger, *Schmied an der Esse* (Blacksmith at the Forge) (left), Hermes (right), façade decoration for the Barmer Bank-Verein in Iserlohn, 1906/07, material and dimensions unknown, Unnaer Strasse 3, Iserlohn

51 Georg Grasegger, *Fleiß* (Diligence) (left), *Handel* (Commerce) (right), façade decoration on the building of the Rheinisch-Westfälische Disconto-Gesellschaft in Recklinghausen, 1907, stone, dimensions unknown, Kaiserwall 21, Recklinghausen

52 Georg Grasegger, tympanum above the main portal of the building of the Rheinisch-Westfälische Disconto-Gesellschaft in Düsseldorf, 1909, material and dimensions unknown, Breite Strasse 10/12, Düsseldorf

Grasegger's pair of figures *Fleiß* (Diligence) and *Handel* (Commerce) (fig. 51), a façade decoration on the building of the Rheinisch-Westfälische Disconto-Gesellschaft in Recklinghausen from 1907, is based on a similar fusion of ancient and modern motifs: on the left, Diligence with a beehive, and on the right, Commerce with a winged cap and the caduceus, i.e., with the ancient attributes of Mercury, who, as mentioned, is also the god of money. The architecture has features of Art Nouveau, while the figures interweave the stylistic features of Near Eastern Assyrian sculpture, oscillating between frontality and profile. Nothing is accidental, even the bee in the center—a well-known heraldic animal that refers to diligence—has found its place and serves not only as an ornament. And yet, if one looks at the hard contours, the decidedly empty mimic, the gestural pair of figures crystallized to the point of icing, it becomes clear that this is, as it were, an expressively supercooled demonstration of power. Diligence and commerce are the foundations of prosperity—worldwide and in Recklinghausen.



53 Georg Grasegger, *Ruderer, Automobilist, Fußballspieler* (Rower, Motorist, Soccer Player), façade decoration for the building of the Barmer Bank-Verein Hinsberg, Fischer & Comp. in Barmen (fragmentarily preserved sculptural cycle), 1909, red sandstone, dimensions unknown, Fischertal 1, Wuppertal-Barmen

It is fascinating and insightful to examine the world of motifs of Rhenish financial institutions prior to the First World War, but this requires preliminary research such as that on Grasegger. His photographically documented tympanum from the main portal of the Rheinisch-Westfälische Disconto-Gesellschaft in Düsseldorf from 1909 (fig. 52) was described on the historical photograph as "Mental and physical work under the protection of the bank."[113] The financial institution thus becomes the potentate and protector, the enabler of thought and action, of science and business. Once again, we find syncretic pictorial motifs that incorporate ancient elements of education and modern everyday experience. On the left are the master builder, a woman with an owl (Minerva as an allegory of wisdom and education), thinking, pondering men, a male figure with winged shoes (Mercury as the god of commerce and money), and a man with a model ship referring to the Rhine as an artery for transporting ore and coal, and even steel products. In the middle is a woman unveiling herself—a free adaptation of archaic figures—referring to the unveiling of truth itself, i.e., to financial and banking institutions. This is probably the same motif that Grasegger used elsewhere, namely a free adaptation of Fortuna as the goddess of fortune, who—more or less benevolently—unveils herself or refuses to do so: for a bank, an exemption from responsibility, as it were, since this figure conceals and reveals fortune and misfortune as a veiled future. On the right, it then approaches the base and production. The bent figure on the side symbolizes agriculture with grain according to the ancient goddess Ceres. Towards the center of the field follow men with hammer and cogwheel, i.e., the members of industry and mechanical engineering.

What was completely new was that leisure and hobbies became worthy of depiction as activities of the non-professional world. But here, too, there are powerful bodies, splayed postures, frontal torsos, and hard faces. *Ruderer, Automobilist, Fußballspieler* (Rower, Motorist, Soccer Player) (fig. 53) was created in 1909 as a façade decoration for the

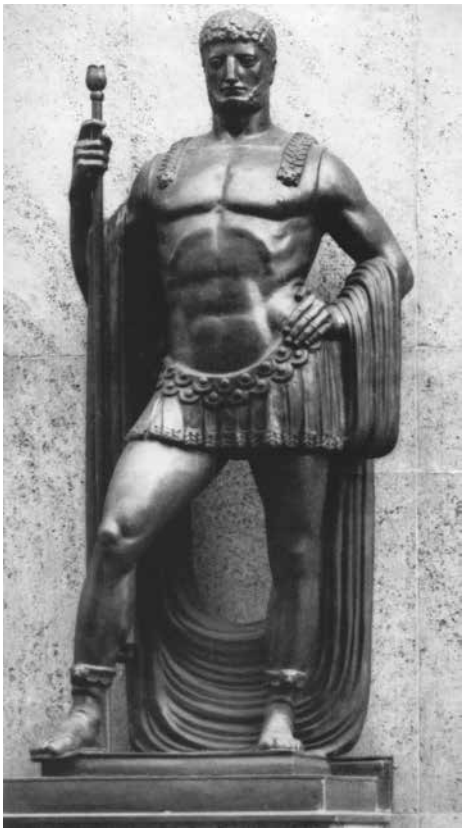
building of the Barmer Bank-Verein Hinsberg, Fischer & Comp. in Barmen (now part of Wuppertal).[114] Leisure-oriented society becomes worthy of depiction, albeit hard-bodied, to cloak it in a verbal metaphor. However, the subject is not just any sport—not badminton, for example—but rather a male world associated with power, strength, and struggle. With his façade decoration, Grasegger oscillated between outdated hierarchies of social standing—one of the groups of three dealt with motifs such as "courtier, emperor, and warrior," another with "craftsman, burgher, and farmer"—and modern social differentiations. The other motifs, typical of the period, were based on polarizations and, in some cases, simplifications: industry and commerce, mining and agriculture, peace and war, poverty and wealth. With these motifs, Grasegger and his patrons refer to history and the present in equal measure, dissolving traditional thematic groups, but using the hard contour as an expression of a hard form of existence, thereby evoking the ideal human hardness.

Powerful Virtues

In the face of over-articulated power strategies, one is reminded of the views of Ernst Moritz Geyger, whose *Fleiß* (Diligence) and *Arbeit* (Work) (figs. 54a, b) from 1904 convey precisely this oppressive awareness of power. The two statues presented here in historical photographs exist today as isolated, partially fragmented museum pieces,[115] but were presumably conceived for an architectural setting. They are not mentioned in the authoritative monograph on the artist.[116] The body language with its strikingly angled gestures, the physique with broad shoulders and the manneristically exaggerated muscles, the defiant gazes—everything is aimed at an explicit expression of power and strength. It is, as it were, "the constrained human in the open air." This brings to mind one of the biggest projects pursued by Geyger—who, incidentally, was patronized by Wilhelm von Bode—namely his so-called *Jugendtempel des Stadion (Gedächtnis- und Ehrenhalle für persönlichen Mut)* (Youth Temple of the Stadium [Memorial and Hall of Honor for Personal Courage]) as a "socio-political and artistic-architectural project" near Heerstrasse in Berlin. He planned statues for this as well, including *Fleiß* (Diligence), *Tapferkeit* (Bravery), *Liebe* (Love), and *Freiheit* (Freedom), which he called the "cardinal virtues of the people."[117] It is known how intensively Geyger studied Friedrich Nietzsche, that he also created illustrations for his parable "Der Riese" (The Giant) in 1895—the dream of the colossal is also evident here!—and that Geyger had a "broad knowledge of Nietzsche's works."[118]

The same spirit of unbridled strength is also found in Georg Grasegger's *Tatkraft* (Vigor, fig. 55), also titled *Stärke* (Strength), which was installed in 1910/12 as a façade decoration on the building of the Barmer Bank-Verein in Cologne. The harshly contoured figure combines the traditions of the Roman warrior with those of old German guardian figures. As a counterpart, Grasegger—no doubt in close consultation with the client— executed a female figure entitled *Klugheit* (Prudence): masculinity (vigor and strength) is juxtaposed

54 a, b Ernst Moritz Geyger, *Fleiß* (Diligence) (left), *Die Arbeit* (Work) (right, fragmentarily preserved), 1904, marble, both h. 182 cm, historical photographs, Alte Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz



55 Georg Grasegger, *Tatkraft* (Stärke) (Vigor [Strength]), façade decoration on the building of the Barmer Bank-Verein in Cologne, 1910/12, bronze, dimensions unknown, Unter Sachsenhausen 21–27, Cologne

56 Franz von Stuck, *Feinde ringsum* (Surrounded by Enemies), 1916, plaster, bronzed, 67 cm. high, Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin

with the feminine role (prudence); the financial institution addresses both sexes, promotes action and contemplation, and identifies itself as armed, which is intended to bind the clientele to it. They are warriors who must serve the common good.

Swordsmen

With his statues, Ernst Moritz Geyger struck a note that was not to be forgotten for decades and which found a gestural, mimic, and athletic-habitual successor in Arno Breker's *Bereitschaft* (Readiness, p. 287, fig. 8) from 1939.[119] But Breker also had other predecessors, such as Franz von Stuck with the statuette *Feinde ringsum* (Surrounded by Enemies, fig. 56) from 1916. Breker's gesture, however, is based on a defensiveness that is consciously designed to frighten, while Stuck's warrior is engaged in active combat: Breker wants to and should frighten and threaten, while Stuck's figure finds himself in a powerful, active struggle. The latter embodies the so-called man of action, the former the latency of action. This is plausible to the extent that Stuck's work was created in the middle of the First World War, while Breker's *Bereitschaft* was created in 1939, i.e., at the historical moment before the outbreak of war, or at least at the same time.

Swordsmen, Roland figures, and statues of Bismarck were part of a repertoire of threat scenarios and not just defense scenarios. "The aspirations and realities of the educated middle classes in the industrialized nation of Germany were bound to diverge more and more, creating a dangerous breeding ground for fear, resentment, and arrogance."[120] How strongly this view was influenced and legitimized by the exploitation of Friedrich Nietzsche's ideas is not to be examined here, but it is no coincidence that the contemporary architecture of Peter Behrens with its colossal proportions was called "Zarathustra style"[121] by Friedrich Ahlers-Hestermann in 1941. And as early as 1903, in the magazine *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration*, there had already been mention of the goal of a "temple art."[122] The various built and sculpturally embellished examples can be cited, such as the monument to the physicist and industrialist Ernst Abbe in Jena, erected by Henry van de Velde, one of the many temples that arose in opposition to the neo-Baroque figure monuments.[123] As an extreme comparison, the vision of the eccentric artist and missionary reformer Karl Wilhelm Diefenbach, executed in drawing form in 1896, should also be mentioned.[124] He envisioned a colossal sphinx as the sculptural crowning of a building

57 Georg Kolbe, *Torso eines Somali* (ehemals: Torso eines Somali-Negers) (Torso of a Somali [originally: Torso of a Somali Negro]), 1912 (cast 1978), bronze, h. 156 cm, Georg Kolbe Museum, Berlin, historical photograph

58 Rudolf Maison, *Eselreiter* (Ohne Sattel und Zaum) (Donkey Rider [Without Saddle and Bridle]), 1892, bronze, h. 53 cm, Berlinische Galerie, Museum of Modern Art, Berlin

described as the "Tempel der Humanitas,"[125] which, despite its reclining figure, was to be so colossal that it was to be several stories high and probably 100 meters long.[126] This concept of colossal projects was to culminate, among other things, in Hermann Hahn's *Siegfried Dolmen*:[127] in the sketch, the viewer appears as small as an ant. Honor to the point of absolute awe, humility to the point of total humiliation is the program.

"Racial Conflict"

Kolbe's focus on aesthetic categories, as he revealed in *Torso eines Somali* (Torso of a Somali, fig. 57)—formerly titled *Torso eines Somali-Negers* (Torso of a Somali Negro)—from 1912, which was preceded by a full nude,[128] suggests how little politicized and stereotyped the Berlin sculptor began, especially when juxtaposed with comparable subjects by other sculptors.

Rudolf Maison's *Eselreiter* (Donkey Rider, fig. 58) from 1892, also known as *Ohne Sattel und Zaum* (Without Saddle and Bridle), reveals the pejorative perspective of Gründerzeit

59 Ernst Moritz Geyger, *Pavian* (Pavian mit Menschen-Maske, ursprünglich: Pavian und Neger-Maske) (Baboon [Baboon with Human Mask, originally: Baboon with Negro Mask]), 1903, bronze, dimensions unknown, private collection, historical photograph

60 Georg Grasegger, *Stammverwandt* (Related by Descent), 1906, bronze, dimensions and whereabouts unknown, historical photograph

sculptors who mocked the lifestyles of supposedly uncultured civilizations: this youthful, carefree rider experiences pain with a facial expression somewhere between scream and mirth. The *Eselreiter* exists in versions with and without a loincloth; it was successful in both Europe and the United States and exists in numerous copies.[129]

Ernst Moritz Geyger, who has already been mentioned here several times, caused even more trouble with his *Pavian* (Baboon, fig. 59), a bronze statuette from 1903, which was also known as *Pavian mit Menschen-Maske* (Baboon with Human Mask) and even originally as *Pavian und Neger-Maske* (Baboon and Negro Mask), which thus intertwined Darwinian teachings with colonial value judgments in a way that is hardly tolerable today.[130] Georg Grasegger, who has been mentioned here several times as a voice of conservatism, also devoted himself to Darwinism with his almost perfidious work *Stammverwandt* (Related by Descent, fig. 60) from 1906, a martial man holding an ape under his arm as a reference to the theory of descent.[131] In comparison, Kolbe's view of the athletic, beautifully formed, and gesturally elegant swing of his model proves to be free of all condescension, a magnificent solution that found and adapted human beauty in a concrete artist's model while remaining completely free of ideological barriers.

61 Ludwig Manzel, *Die Arbeit* (Work), colossal statue in the atrium of the Wertheim department store in Berlin, 1897, bronze, dimensions unknown, historical photograph

Labor Struggle

With the statue *Die Arbeit* (Work, fig. 61), executed in colossal dimensions in 1897, the Berlin-based sculptor and later academy president Ludwig Manzel, who has already been mentioned here in connection with the Stahnsdorf cemetery relief, placed an allegory of productive industriousness in the atrium of the Wertheim department store.[132] This statue seems to be documented only by historical photographs; in comparison, a preserved statuette shows better that we are dealing here with a stocky female worker with machine and workpiece, an allegory of value-creating diligence, the female basis of prosperity, a proper female worker. A few decades earlier, this would have been a Mercury, the ancient god of commerce, or at best an Athena. Now, however, the praise of the industrious labor force moved to the temple of consumption and took the form of a contemporary woman who appears—what would Karl Marx have said?—well-fed and serene and even a little proud. Who was the target audience? It might have been the wealthy townspeople who went shopping there in the opulent department store. No one would have guessed that, in 1933, Manzel would have been in a hurry to execute a portrait of Joseph Goebbels.[133]

The supreme virtue was *Der Fleiß* (Diligence, fig. 62), as Georg Grasegger's relief from 1903 for Haus Dekker in Solingen can attest. It is one of the reliefs placed above the doors and windows of this building, which apparently belonged to one of the most financially powerful industrialists in the city,[134] where a street is named after the family. The gestures of defense culminated in motifs such as the *Wächter* (Guardian, fig. 63), also to be dated

62 Georg Grasegger, *Der Fleiß* (Diligence), façade decoration for Haus Dekker in Solingen, 1903, stone, dimensions and whereabouts unknown, formerly Haus Dekker, Solingen

63 Georg Grasegger, *Der Wächter* (Guardian), façade decoration for Haus Dekker in Solingen, 1903, stone, dimensions and whereabouts unknown, formerly Haus Dekker, Solingen

64 Georg Grasegger, *Die Arbeit* (Work), façade decoration for Haus Dekker in Solingen, 1903, stone, dimensions and whereabouts unknown, formerly Haus Dekker, Solingen

65 Rupert von Miller, *Holz tragender Mann* (Man Carrying Wood), between 1902 and 1925, limestone, dimensions unknown, Reichenbach Bridge, bridgehead east side, northern ramp, Munich

1903, an extreme defensive austerity and defiantly powerful restraint, Germanic-patriotic-Teutsch, combining lance with shield and mail armor. These pictorial elements recall the Solingen coal and steel industry, while the portcullis in the background evokes medieval castles and their omnipresent defensiveness. One could call this "distinctly apotropaic,"[135] but it is imbued with a degree of militancy that would later be called "Cold War": this image of Germany is armed from head to toe. This, in turn, is not relativized when one considers other reliefs from the same building, such as *Die Arbeit* (Work, fig. 64) from 1903, since here as well one gets the impression that the hammer is both a means of production and a weapon.

As soon as one begins to collect material, one is struck by the abundance of constrained figures, of figures carrying loads, of figures bent over. Façades, squares, parks, and bridges are "populated" with bent figures. Rupert von Miller probably conceived the sculptures on the Reichenbach Bridge in Munich during the years of its construction, i.e., around 1903. The realization can only be dated by the fact that the installation took place in 1925.[136] Could it be that the figures, such as the *Holz tragender Mann* (Man Carrying Wood, fig. 65), were actually only realized in the 1920s? The constrained, load-bearing

figure is in the tradition of Adolf von Hildebrand in its relief-like disposition, but also in the tradition of Wilhelminian Germany in its pressed and squeezed-in state, as well as in its athletic body and bent limbs, its surrender and simultaneous resistance. Heroism and endurance are brought into a remarkable balance. The oppressed and maltreated man becomes worthy of representation; his submissiveness becomes visible. Gathering wood by the Isar means using the scattered goods that the river brings to the city, but it also means that the person depicted is not one of the winners and thus represents a marginalized group. In contrast to Ernst Moritz Geyger in the imperial capital of Berlin or Grasegger in the Rhenish West, the depiction here seems quite strained: work is drudgery, and the subject is thus anchored in the present.

Struggles of Faith

At first glance, one might think that Wilhelminian Germany was a land without faith, a land of the militant and martial, the secular and pagan. But once again, such a perception or reading falls short, as a glance at a few examples will show. The old motifs lived on, but they were gradually secularized. The fact that the Cologne mayor and judiciary council Georg Fuchs had the approximately two-meter-high relief *Der heilige Georg* (St. George, fig. 66)—from a formal point of view, his patron saint—by Georg Grasegger mounted on his villa in 1907/09 could be interpreted as blasphemy: a saint on the façade of a private home? But, of course, this motif referred back to the courts of the nineteenth century and the pictorial tradition of the saint,[137] who stood for chivalry, strength, and Christianity in equal measure.[138] The flatness of the relief, the framing by the upturned edge, the composition that fills the picture with overlapping edges—all this refers less to Adolf von Hildebrand's theory than to the ivory carvings of the early and high Middle Ages, to a neo-Romanesque pictorial language that had its parallels in architecture around 1900. Here, it was no longer a matter of Christian faith, but of historical acts of legitimation.

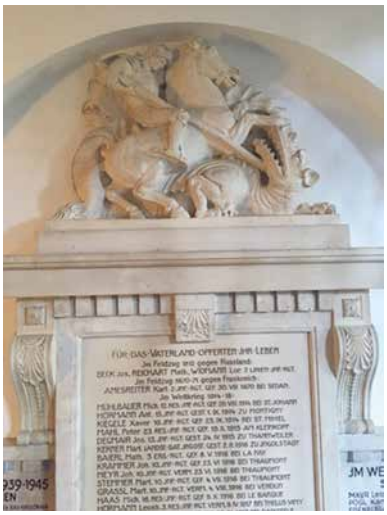
It was no different with the use of the iconography of St. George, for example, on the monument to those fallen in war sculpted by a certain A. Lallinger in Sandizell west of Ingolstadt, where probably in 1918 the—then still—reigning Carl Theodor Graf von und zu Sandizell donated to the church an epitaph to the war dead (fig. 67), which retrospectively integrated the wars up to Napoleon into the local commemoration and which is crowned by the scene of George fighting the dragon. The saint fights chivalrously, and the dragon dies miserably. The message is the value of death "for the fatherland," as stated in the inscription. The beliefs of the Catholic veneration of saints had been definitively adapted, legends had become formulas.

We are accustomed to interpreting the history of art as a chain of innovations. This perspective does not apply when one looks at retarding currents, which to the retrospective historian turn out to be trends that set the direction for later developments.

The *Nonne* (Nun, fig. 68)[139] from 1902 by August Schreitmüller, a Dresden-based sculptor who created twelve sculptures for the façade of the city hall there,[140] has not survived,

66 Georg Grasegger, *Der heilige Georg* (St. George), decoration for the villa of the mayor and judiciary council Georg Fuchs in Cologne, 1907/09, terracotta/majolica, h. ca. 200 cm, Parkstrasse 31, Cologne

but nevertheless it testifies to the austere, pre-Expressionist formal language that was often seen in examples of architectural sculpture. It also has echoes of George Minne's Symbolism. The polychrome lime wood bust testifies to a will to modernity, in which tradition—carved and painted wood—is combined with expressive gesture and contour. Is it here a matter of powers of faith or only of Symbolistic inwardness, well known from George Minne and Fernand Khnopff? It seems—in addition to all the examples of secular sculpture seen—as if the ecclesiastical world was retreating into a tentative inwardness. Years later, a pseudo-classical two-figure group, *Das Erwachen* (The Awakening),[141] was created with ideally formed bodies and a somewhat empty exchange of glances. For the context under discussion, the statement made about it in 1923 is alarming: "Even the most ardent advocate of the ideas of racial improvement would find this perfect couple worthy of becoming progenitors of a new, healthier, more perfect race."[142] The inwardness of the *Nonne* there had already given way so radically to a standardized conservative image of man that the implicit bridge-building to the National Socialist standard of form propagated ten years later is not surprising in view of the photograph of *Das Erwachen*. What had once appeared as an angular, hard form now developed into a coldly conservative design that could be reclaimed in terms of racial ideology and that, according to contemporaries, was the expression of a "genuinely German view"[143]—thus consequently closing the circle to national, racial ideological, and proto-National Socialist aspects, which led to the grave sculpture for a fallen man with a steel helmet, a genre also referred to as "Siegfried figures."[144]



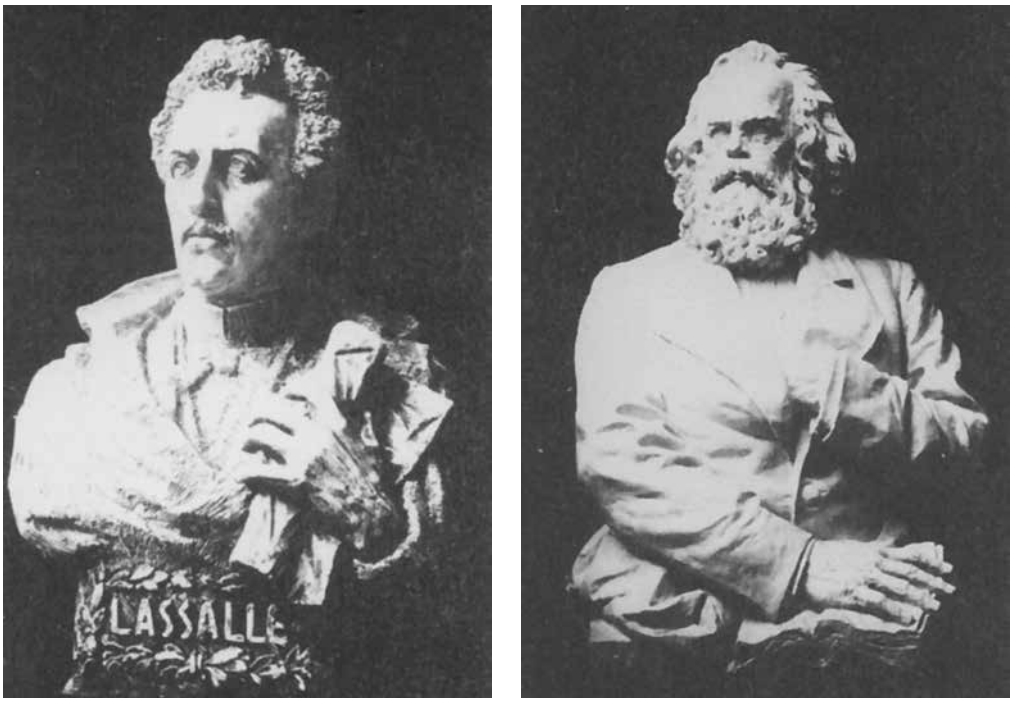
67 Adolf Lallinger, war memorial with St. George, donated by Carl Theodor Graf zu Sandizell and Wanda Gräfin Sandizell Lamberg, probably 1918, stone, dimensions unknown, St. Peter's Church, Sandizell (Schrobenhausen)

68 August Schreitmüller, *Büste einer Nonne* (bust of a nun), 1902, limewood, painted, h. 51 cm, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Skulpturensammlung from 1800/ Albertinum (lost in the war), historical photograph

The fragility of values in the period leading up to and around 1918 also brought forth quite different surprises. While from today's point of view conventional sculptors are occasionally reproached for having portrayed those in power after 1933 and thus for having taken a reprehensible path, a comparable willingness to compromise can also be observed in one of the most important representatives of Wilhelminian sculpture, Gustav Eberlein. In 1918, apparently he had nothing more urgent to do than to portray the representatives of the left-wing positions that had gained in importance with the Weimar Republic, even though they had long since died. (Eberlein's artistic counterpart, Reinhold Begas, was also no longer alive and therefore made no similar compromises.)

Eberlein, who had upheld the values of Wilhelminism all his life, now hypocritically turned to the fathers of Social Democracy and Communism, creating new icons of the new potentates, as it were, depicting Karl Marx with a Napoleonic gesture and Lassalle as a rhetorician with his hand clenched (figs. 69a, b); in contrast, August Bebel is depicted with his left hand resting on his chin and thus as a melancholic.[145] In the same year, another bust was created, which bore the inscription on the front: "Von Hindenburg, the victorious commander of the Eastern Army." For the first three men, the sculptor wrote a text containing passages such as the following:

> "The task of monumental sculpture is to show the world all the great and creative achievements of mankind. No matter from which state it rises, from which nation it develops, and under which political situation it grows beneficially."[146]



69 a, b Gustav Eberlein, *Ferdinand Lassalle* (left) and *Karl Marx* (right), 1918, material, dimensions, and whereabouts unknown

One would think that this was the stammering of an aging Wilhelminian sculptor who had lost his patrons and was now trying to create new gods in the old—even outdated—garb in an attempt to resist development. After all, Georg Kolbe, Käthe Kollwitz, Wilhelm Lehmbruck, Franz Metzner, and Ernst Barlach were now the artists who set the tone, both at the academy and in contemporary art. The fact that the now powerless Eberlein wanted to serve new gods and thus a new power reminds us of how many of the next generation accepted similar turns and compromises a good decade later. When Kolbe continued his prewar work during this period and followed the *Tänzerin* (Dancer) in 1923 with an *Adagio* (fig. 70), it shows, perhaps in a simplistic way, that he continued to adhere to aesthetic values and had not come to the distressing point of compromising with power.

70 Georg Kolbe, *Adagio*, 1923, bronze, h. 81 cm, Georg Kolbe Museum, Berlin

71 Matthias Gasteiger, *Englands Schmerz (Der engl. Löwe)* (England's Pain [The English Lion]), ca. 1915/16, bronze, h. 16.5 cm, Künstlerhaus Gasteiger, Holzhausen

Violence and Irony

Glorifying violence was one thing, mocking the enemy was another. Around 1915/16, Matthias Gasteiger modeled a statuette of a crouching (English) lion, whose paw has fallen into a trap, with the inscription "Made in Germany" (fig. 71).[147] The animal roars, and the viewer laughs: German scorn takes on emblems of the enemy. German nationalism, born of hubris, ironizes the enemy in the year of the outbreak of war. This "derisive laughter" and explicit gloating implicit in the sculpture would not last very long. It was preceded by a similar illustration in the magazine *Simplicissimus*.[148]

Epilogue

The 1920s, with their liberation from the remnants of realism, neo-Baroque, and Wilhelminian pathos, seemed to bring a caesura, a new beginning, a return to the design issues of sculpture that Adolf von Hildebrand, for his part, had already worked toward at the time. The pathos formulas of the constrained figures seemed to be history. And even in the hitherto untouched genre of animal sculpture, a sculptor like Ewald Mataré could take the place of August Gaul or Ernst Moritz Geyger. The latter's colossal, over two-meter-high

72 Ernst Moritz Geyger, *Stier* (Bull), 1897–1900, marble, h. more than 200 cm, historical photograph

73 Adolf Strübe, *Stier* (Bull), 1936, bronze, h. ca. 140 cm, historical photograph

Stier (Bull, fig. 72),[149] created between 1897 and 1900, belonged to the tradition of Wilhelminian power and monumental subjects. The aggressive lowering of the head conveys a sense of power, even menace. The emphasis on the interior drawing and the colossal, voluminous conception appear like looming danger, as a hard form. Created in Florence, the work was brought to Berlin at the beginning of the twentieth century and installed there in the Humboldthain park. The art historian Johannes Guthmann wrote of it in 1909: "The motif is simple; but the stillness in the movement is filled, almost overloaded by the modulations of the surface."[150] There is something unsettling about it, a kinship with Metzner and Lederer, a tendency toward the martial neo-Mannerism of the overdrawn internal form and the exaggerated expression of force. This stone bull, which is also documented by other, bronze casts, was lost until its fragments were found by chance. There were not only factual reports[151] but also perfidious articles, such as in the Berlin newspaper *B.Z.* which, in April 2022, ran the headline "Archaeologists Discover Bull by Hitler Sculptor."[152] Born in 1861, Geyger was already well over seventy at the time of Hitler's so-called rise to power; there are no known documents that he had any connection with the so-called "Führer," but he did have a connection with the conservative forces. So what does such a headline actually say? It announces that there is an intuitive connection between Wilhelminian and National Socialist sculpture, but above all that differentiated studies are needed to analyze precisely the differences in this line of tradition of power and the use or abuse of power. However, the headline also points out that even in the harmless field of animal sculpture it was quite possible to make superficial connections, as a glance at Adolf Strübe's *Stier* (fig. 73) from 1936 at the Reichssportfeld (today's Olympiapark) in Berlin reveals. In this way, even a bull from 1936 can be linked to one from 1900. However, it is not only the motifs and design issues that are important, but also the contexts, so that the undeniable traditions do not lead to superficial, ideologically motivated, and at the same time erroneous conclusions.

Notes

1 This text is based on the evening lecture given at the conference *Georg Kolbe im Nationalsozialismus. Kontinuitäten und Brüche in Leben, Werk und Rezeption* (Georg Kolbe and National Socialism: Continuities and Breaks in Life, Work, and Reception) at the Georg Kolbe Museum in Berlin on September 1, 2022, but goes beyond the manuscript of the lecture.

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