

# Wikipedia

## Opportunities for an Infrastructure of Knowledge

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### 1. Introduction

A conference on infrastructures of (non-)knowledge invites to considering some ideas on how to engage with Wikipedia from the perspective of an art historian. Thereby, the *opportunities* mentioned in the title do not focus on the *raison d'être* of the free encyclopedia, nor—as so often—on whether one should be ›allowed‹ to use the content found there, if this information can be considered ›credible‹ or on how one must approach this project of ›non-specialists‹. Rather, the *opportunities* take up a critical question from the article »Eine vertane Chance? Wikipedia und die Geisteswissenschaften« by Gleb Albert, published in 2021 to mark the 20th anniversary of the project launched in 2001.<sup>1</sup> Albert asks »why, in fact«, academics (hereinafter referred to as *we*) persist on their reluctance to use the platforms offered by the Wikiverse (including Wikipedia and other sister projects, such as Wikidata, Wikisource, Open GLAM, etc.)<sup>2</sup> to publish new results from their research.<sup>3</sup>

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- 1 Albert, Gleb (2021): »Eine vertane Chance? Wikipedia und die Geisteswissenschaften«, in: Geschichte der Gegenwart. Online: <https://geschichtedergegenwart.ch/eine-vertane-chance-wikipedia-und-die-geisteswissenschaften/> (last access: 10.06.2025). German Wikipedia was founded two months after English Wikipedia, cf. [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deutschsprachige\\_Wikipedia](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deutschsprachige_Wikipedia) (last access: 10.06.2025); with more than 3 million articles (increasing), the project is significantly more comprehensive than, for example, the *Brockhaus* Encyclopedia, which in its last, the 21st edition of 2014, comprised around 300,000 lemmata in 30 volumes, or (just for comparison) the 35-volume *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* with 70,000 entries, cf. <https://www.goethe.de/prj/zei/de/art/24771010.html> (last access: 10.06.2025); for the prehistory of Wikipedia, cf. Richter, Pavel (2020): *Die Wikipedia-Story. Biografie eines Weltwunders*, Frankfurt a.M./New York: Campus, pp. 93–117.
  - 2 Wikipedia: Wikiversum, <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikiversum> (last access: 10.06.2025).
  - 3 <https://geschichtedergegenwart.ch/eine-vertane-chance-wikipedia-und-die-geisteswissenschaften/> (last access: 10.06.2025); cf. for the field of the historical sciences Wozniak, Thomas (2012): »Zehn Jahre Berührungängste. Die Geschichtswissenschaften und die Wikipedia. Eine Bestandsaufnahme«, in: *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 60, pp. 247–264.

After all—and this is often forgotten—there is no anonymous *Wikipedia community* to be blamed for a lack of information, under-complex descriptions and outdated positions but only *we* ourselves, or rather our lack of willingness to participate: as *we* (see above: the community of academics) continue to not sufficiently contribute to this collaborative project based on democratic principles.<sup>4</sup> User-generated content either contains our knowledge—or it does not. Regretting that our positions have not yet found their way into Wikipedia makes about as much sense as sighing at the sock in your hand and pondering why it is not on your foot.

## 2. *kuwiki*: living handbook

In 2021 the *kuwiki* working group was founded in order to connect scholars from the field of art history with Wikipedians who volunteer in the field of art history. The idea was to create a forum in which the expertise of both groups merges to ensure that »die Kunstwissenschaften die freie Online-Enzyklopädie Wikipedia als Wissensspeicher, Arbeitsinstrument und wichtiges Medium der Wissenskommunikation anerkennen und reflektieren« (the sciences of art recognize and reflect the Wikipedia free online encyclopedia as a knowledge store, tool and important medium of knowledge communication)—and finally start to contribute significantly to the online encyclopedia.<sup>5</sup> Different formats were created for this purpose; among other things,

4 Wikipedia depends on the commitment of volunteers to protect this free encyclopedia, otherwise it will fall into the hands of trolls and political groups who abuse it for their agenda, cf. Sockenpuppenzoo – Angriff auf Wikipedia.

<https://www.ardaudiothek.de/sendung/sockenpuppenzoo-angriff-auf-wikipedia/13996869/>; for Wikipedia's »verifiability policy« (Wikipedia: Verifiability, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Verifiability> (last access: 27.11.2025).) among others Famiglietti, Andy (2019): »Wikipedia«, in: Niels Brügger/Ian Milligan (eds.): The SAGE Handbook of Web History, London: SAGE, pp. 315–329. See also: O'Sullivan, Dan (2009): Wikipedia. A new Community of Practice?, Farnham: Ashgate, esp. chapter 13: Wikipedia and the Nature of Knowledge zum Gebot des Neutral Point of View (Wikipedia: Neutral point of view, on trolls, edit wars and vandalism, etc. Lorenz, Maren (2006): »WIKIPEDIA. Zum Verhältnis von Struktur und Wirkungsmacht eines heimlichen Leitmediums«, in: WerkstattGeschichte 43, pp. 84–95; another threat to Wikipedia is the still too homogeneous group of authors, cf. Rosenzweig, Roy (2006): Can History be Open Source. Wikipedia and the Future of the past, <https://rrchnm.org/essays/can-history-be-open-source-wikipedia-and-the-future-of-the-past/> (last access: 10.06.2026) »... Wikipedia's authors do not come from a cross-section of the world's population. They are more likely to be English-speaking, males, and denizens of the Internet.«

5 Wikipedia: Arbeitsgemeinschaft Kunstwissenschaften + Wikipedia, [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Arbeitsgemeinschaft\\_Kunstwissenschaften\\_%2B\\_Wikipedia](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Arbeitsgemeinschaft_Kunstwissenschaften_%2B_Wikipedia) (last access: 27.11.2025).—Unless otherwise stated, the translations are by Mirko Wittwar, whom we would like to thank warmly for his efforts.

we jointly developed a *living handbook* with the objective—using monographic articles on works of art and buildings in Wikipedia as a starting point—of offering guidelines and suggestions for creating and editing art historical entries. Due to its self-image, the established structure and the operating routines, this *living handbook* cannot and will not limit the polyphony of Wikipedia to a standardized norm. This would not be within our competence, nor can it be in our interest; rather, the idea was to develop recommendations for the structure of articles, for the correct use of terminology and for improving the scientific quality through the cooperation between specialised scientists and committed volunteers (= Wikipedians): An effort like this always provides the opportunity to reflect (for ourselves and for others) on hidden narratives, outdated forms of knowledge and problematic terminology we continue to use. After all, Wikipedia does not have to be the site of some 'improved' art history but can only show the results of what the discipline has created so far.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, we can play an active role with ensuring that inherited concepts, attitudes and approaches are not propagated without critical reflection.

Our *living handbook* is available to everyone for use and improvement<sup>7</sup>: After general information aimed primarily at art historians who want to start working in Wikipedia, specific considerations follow on how to logically structure and organise articles on individual works of art or buildings. In addition to the basic how-to, we focussed on taking up specific points we found problematic and tried to clarify them within a broad context. This covers topics such as a sensitive way of describing objects<sup>8</sup> or the importance of their object history (Objektgeschichte)<sup>9</sup>, which not only include the *genesis* of the work (Werkgenese) but also suggest its *background* (Entstehungshintergrund), *function*, *spatial situation*, *historical contexts*, *location(s)*, *translocations*, *provenance* and *exhibition history* as well as *alterations/restorations* as possible fields of inquiry.

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6 It is a well-known fact that this is one of the basic principles of the online encyclopedia: »Die Wikipedia bildet *bekanntes Wissen* ab (Wikipedia depicts *known knowledge*).« Wikipedia: Keine Theoriefindung, [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Keine\\_Theoriefindung#:~:text=Als%20originäre%20Forschung%20unzulässig%20sind,entwikelten%20Erklärungen%20und%20Theorien%20beruhen](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Keine_Theoriefindung#:~:text=Als%20originäre%20Forschung%20unzulässig%20sind,entwikelten%20Erklärungen%20und%20Theorien%20beruhen) (last access: 10.06.2025).

7 Wikipedia: Arbeitsgemeinschaft Kunstwissenschaften + Wikipedia/Living handbook, [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Arbeitsgemeinschaft\\_Kunstwissenschaften\\_%2B\\_Wikipedia/Living\\_handbook](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Arbeitsgemeinschaft_Kunstwissenschaften_%2B_Wikipedia/Living_handbook) (last access: 10.06.2025).

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

### 3. The Importance of Naming an Artwork

Using the topic of *lemma/object reference/title*, I would like to illustrate that this is not art-scientific nitpicking but that titles—such as historical classifications, period terms and stylistic evaluations<sup>10</sup>—may transport influential hierarchies and assessments that may have political impact and must be recognised; the *living handbook* comments on this: »In einem Lexikon ist ein Gegenstand unter einem Lemma verzeichnet, in der Wikipedia ist das der Seitentitel der Beitragsseite. Anders als bei Begriffen (Kunst, Malerei ...) ist die Auswahl des Lemmas bei Werk-Artikeln oft eine Setzung der Autor:innen. Das gilt besonders bei älterer Kunst. Anders als moderne Kunstwerke haben die meisten vor dem 19. Jahrhundert entstandenen Kunstwerke keinen feststehenden Namen oder Titel, den ihnen die Künstler:innen gegeben haben. Nur sehr wenige Objekte besitzen einen fixen, in Fachwelt und Öffentlichkeit akzeptierten und üblichen Namen (z.B. Sixtinische Madonna)« (in an encyclopedia a subject is listed under a lemma, with Wikipedia this is the title of the site. Other than with technical terms, choosing the lemma for contributions on objects is often left to the authors. This is particularly true for older works of art. Other than modern works of art, most works of art produced before the 19<sup>th</sup> century have no fixed name or title given to them by the artists. Only very few objects have a fixed name accepted by experts and the public (e. g. the Sistine Madonna)).<sup>11</sup>

This seeming banality is significant, as for many years names have been established for artworks that are allegedly their *titles* in the public consciousness. However, these names were by no means chosen by the artists (by an authorial, even intentional gesture) and must therefore be understood and interpreted as part of the historical creative process and the »intended« meaning of the work. Rather, these are conventions established much later and mostly by third parties, including interpretations that reflect the current state of research and can (and must) be modified

10 See also the article by Huth, Andreas (2024): »Unordnung. Zur Kritik kunstwissenschaftlicher Ordnungssysteme«, in: von Engelberg-Dočkal, Eva/Herold, Stephanie (eds.): *Ordnungssysteme. Auswählen, Werten, Sortieren, Siegen*: Universitätsverlag, pp. 91–95 on the critique of the »chronological and geographical points of view« according to which works of art are classified and the conceptual figures concealed therein (genre, progression, decay, masterpiece, centre/periphery, mannerism/styles, etc.) as well as the invitation to use Wikipedia to tackle the usual categories in a constructive manner and to name the artist's place(s) of work instead of, for example, anachronistic nationalities, p. 94: »Die Wikipedia kann als Schnittstelle einer solche Fragen reflektierenden Kunstgeschichte und der Öffentlichkeit eine entscheidende Rolle bei der notwendigen »Umordnung« einnehmen.« (As an interface of a kind of art history reflecting on such issues and the public, Wikipedia may play a crucial role for the necessary »restructuring«).

11 Wikipedia: Arbeitsgemeinschaft Kunstwissenschaften + Wikipedia/Living handbook, [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Arbeitsgemeinschaft\\_Kunstwissenschaften\\_%2B\\_Wikipedia/Living\\_handbook#Lemma,\\_Objektbezeichnung,\\_Titel](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Arbeitsgemeinschaft_Kunstwissenschaften_%2B_Wikipedia/Living_handbook#Lemma,_Objektbezeichnung,_Titel) (last access: 10.06.2025).

and updated over time. Take a work by Rembrandt that is known today under the title *Self-Portrait as Zeuxis*:<sup>12</sup> This title is not by Rembrandt himself, the work is one of his many self-portraits, the artist's advanced age is notable. The second face to the left and Rembrandt's facial expression, which has been interpreted as ›laughter‹, are also noteworthy; the mahlstick he is holding (which identifies him as a painter) is not immediately recognisable. The age, the face, the laughter and the stick have led—to not immediately and not without controversy—to the interpretation that a legend of an ancient artist has been depicted here: According to this legend, the famous Greek painter Zeuxis died of laughter over the vanity of an old woman he was commissioned to portray. This may be valid, but a new article might, in the future, suggest a completely different interpretation of the picture's content. The important thing is a. that not only the academic community develops an awareness that today's titles of artworks are suggestions and agreements; and moreover, b. that biases may be encapsulated in many of these apparently neutral denominations. In Rembrandt's case, this is clearly a misogynist verdict, which—consistent since antiquity—perceives the aged female body as useless and ugly (unlike the old male body, which is associated with wisdom and dignity) and which condemns the desire for visibility and representation of women as vanity to be sneered at. Moreover, in many cases the brevity of the title is trivialising—for example, a work of art should not be called *Apollo and Daphne* (or even better *Apollo, inflamed with love*) but rather *Daphne flees in fear from a man; she only manages to escape with the help of her father who sacrifices her shortly before Apollo is about to rape her by turning her into a laurel tree*. This practice of denomination becomes even more problematic if it perpetuates forms of racism as an apparent ›historical fact‹; and the case of the *Old Masters* in Dresden is an impressive example of how this can be exploited by fascist forces. In Dresden, the recent renaming of 143 objects (out of a total collection of 1,488,059 works of art) was followed by a parliamentary enquiry by the AfD.<sup>13</sup> This was less about the fact itself, but rather the renaming (which included the cancellation of racism) was being raised to

12 Wikipedia: Selbstbildnis als Zeuxis, [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selbstbildnis\\_als\\_Zeuxis](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selbstbildnis_als_Zeuxis) (last access: 10.06.2025).

13 Homepage AfD | Fraktion Sachsen: Herr Kretschmer, stoppen Sie die Sprachpolizei!, <https://afd-fraktion-sachsen.de/herr-kretschmer-stoppen-sie-die-sprachpolizei/> (last access: 10.06.2025) and Kleine Anfrage des Abgeordneten Thomas Kirste (AfD) | Drs.-Nr.: 7/7287 | Thema: »Umbenennungen« von Objekten durch die Staatlichen Kunstsammlungen Dresden, [https://edas.landtag.sachsen.de/viewer.aspx?dok\\_nr=7287&dok\\_art=Drs&leg\\_p\\_er=7&pos\\_dok=1&dok\\_id=undefined](https://edas.landtag.sachsen.de/viewer.aspx?dok_nr=7287&dok_art=Drs&leg_p_er=7&pos_dok=1&dok_id=undefined) (last access: 10.06.2025); the AfD intentionally uses the democratic instrument of parliamentary questions to harass institutions and disrupt their work, often in the media, for example: Rosbach, Jens (2018): AfD contra Demokratie-Vereine. Die parlamentarische Anfrage als Kampfmittel, <https://www.deutschlandfunkkultur.de/afd-contra-demokratie-vereine-die-parlamentarische-anfrage-100.html> (last access: 10.06.2025).

the level of a cultural war and staged as a kind of public iconoclasm. The Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (SKD) felt compelled to issue a public statement and a clarification on their website, in which they answered the question »Won't the SKD's cultural treasure be jeopardised by the renaming? Some speak of *iconoclasm*«. Their answer was calm and objectively (but not as publicly visible as the AfD with its advertised outrage)<sup>14</sup>: »No, because the artworks themselves remain untouched. Earlier iconoclasts destroyed the works because they considered them dangerous or obscene. The SKD's task is to preserve and protect the works. This includes giving them correct and contemporary names. The historical titles are preserved internally for research purposes. The more precisely the various titles are recorded in the database, the better the works of art can be analysed in terms of their history.«<sup>15</sup> This episode may vividly underline how important it is not to create a false perception of the naming of artworks in Wikipedia—being a highly visible and therefore highly effective public medium.

#### 4. How to use Wikipedia ... for teaching

In his article in the special issue *Wikipedia* of the journal *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* Winfried Schulze asks what degree of »scientific reliability can be attributed to an information system such as Wikipedia« and »what consequences can be drawn from this for university education«.<sup>16</sup> In our post-factual times this question sounds like greetings from a simpler era in the face of the challenges of AI use by students—be they schoolchildren or university students. But at the same time we can find parallels regarding educational situations, as the discussion about whether Wikipedia (or AI) should be used remains absurd. Since everyone does so anyway, the aim must be to provide a *correct* (in the sense of *purposeful, creative, enriching*) approach to Wikipedia instead of the generally ignorant approach of condemnation.

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- 14 And also in conjunction with Bild newspaper, which headlined on 14 September 2021: »Weil sie ›rassistisch‹ oder ›diskriminierend‹ sein sollen: Sprach-Polizei benennt 143 Kunstwerke um. Aus ›Zwerg‹ wird zum Beispiel ›kleinwüchsiger Mann‹, aus ›Knabe‹ wird ›Junge‹.« (Deutschmann, Michael (2021): »Weil sie ›rassistisch‹ oder ›diskriminierend‹ sein sollen. Sprach-Polizei benennt 143 Kunstwerke um. Aus ›Zwerg‹ wird zum Beispiel ›kleinwüchsiger Mann‹, aus ›Knabe‹ wird ›Junge‹.«, in: Bild 14.09.2021, online. (Because they are said to be racist or discriminating: language police renames 143 works of art. For example, ›dwarf‹ becomes ›growth-restricted man‹, ›lad‹ becomes ›boy.‹)
- 15 Dresden, SKD: Berichte aus der Forschung | Information zur Aktualisierung von Werktiteln (in Reaktion auf die Parlamentarische Anfrage der AfD), <https://www.skdmuseum/forschung/werktitel/> (last access: 10.06.2025).
- 16 Schulze, Winfried (2012): »Editorial«, in: *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 63:5/6, p. 260.

To this end, a second *kuwiki* group project is promoting the active use of Wikipedia for university teaching among art historians, as there is hardly anything that increases critically informed expertise more than trying it out for oneself. To this end, university teachers must first be given the necessary skills and thus be enabled to start working with Wikipedia, as it helps nobody if traditionally written papers are simply ›unloaded‹.<sup>17</sup> As an encyclopedia, Wikipedia follows its own structure and logic; the collected knowledge is organised in a specific way and follows rules the acknowledgement of which is a fundamental prerequisite for sustainable work. To answer questions relating to the broad field of art-scientific knowledge and action, the working group has established the online series *tips & tools*.<sup>18</sup> After all, there is often a lack of basic knowledge in the academic disciplines of how to work with and within Wikiverse. It is not just a matter of creating completely new articles, it is much more important to edit existing knowledge material, correct texts, to update references and/or provide missing images. One of the purposes of *kuwiki* is therefore to provide the community with existing image collections that are stored in the private archives of art historians as hitherto unused research data, so that *kuwiki* can also offer advice on technical issues relating to uploading and naming image files.<sup>19</sup>

In addition, becoming familiar with the basic rules of Wikipedia can be integrated into the seminar as a constitutive part of the learning process, thereby sharpening media literacy, as I would like to illustrate by a brief example: A seminar on the *Heribert Shrine* (a goldsmith work of art from the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century) with the aim of expanding the existing article in Wikipedia began with an analysis of the given text:<sup>20</sup> Since when has the article existed, who can be identified as the author, how can the development of the text be traced, which literature was used, were there any

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17 This practice has led to—quite comprehensible—disgruntlement among the Wikipedia community which has been forced to edit incorrect layouts, false references and texts that are per se unusable—a task that remains the responsibility of the supervisors at universities. In many cases, overly restrictive module catalogues with rigid examination requirements also prevent meaningful work in and with Wikipedia, so that our colleagues need more information in order to be able to implement effective modifications to the study guidelines.

18 Wikipedia: Arbeitsgemeinschaft Kunstwissenschaften + Wikipedia/tips & tools, [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Arbeitsgemeinschaft\\_Kunstwissenschaften\\_%2B\\_Wikipedia/tips\\_%26\\_tools](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Arbeitsgemeinschaft_Kunstwissenschaften_%2B_Wikipedia/tips_%26_tools) (last access: 10.06.2025).

19 Kulac, Kurt (2015): »Wikipedia. Wissen ist Macht – Wissen teilen ist mächtiger«, in: Friesinger, Günther et al. (eds.): Open Culture. Ökonomien zwischen Öffnung und Begrenzung, Wien: edition mono, pp. 43–51, about the images and Wiki loves Monuments (»Der größte Fotowettbewerb der Welt ist also aus der größten Enzyklopädie der Welt entstanden«), pp. 49–50; Wiegand, Alice (2024): »Raimond Spekking verstärkt das Präsidium«, in: Wikimedia Deutschland. Online: <https://blog.wikimedia.de/2024/07/25/raimond-spekking-verstaerkt-kt-das-praesidium/> (last access: 10.06.2025).

20 Wikipedia: Heribertschrein, <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heribertschrein> (last access: 10.06.2025).

controversies, what is good, what is deficient, what is lacking? On this basis, specific subject areas can be named and further elaborated—and the structure of the article can be discussed together to determine which information should be outsourced to other articles and which links are necessary. Does the vita of St Heribert belong in the article on the artwork or in the biographical article on Heribert of Cologne—even if enamel medallions on the shrine depict scenes from his life?

Should the technique of enamelling (= *émail champlevé*) be explained in the Shrine article—or should it be linked to a summary article on artistic techniques concerning enamel technique; and how comprehensive is the *émail champlevé*-article? Does an entry on reliquary forms of the High Middle Ages exist, is there an article on reliquary shrines—and is the Heribert Shrine already listed there? How do we deal with the fact that the Shrine's current appearance is the result of extensive restorations since the mid-19th century—and how can this be concisely presented in the article (see above: living handbook, object histories)? The benefits of such seminar work are not only obvious for the cognitive and psychomotor learning objectives—it is motivating for the students to see how their work has an impact and is noticed, how they contribute to the growth of Wikipedia while also gaining many insights (including affective learning objectives): on collaborative ways of writing, on the question of what can actually be communicated regarding art historical knowledge—and which way—, on image rights, on the organisation of very complex and interwoven bodies of knowledge, on linking in Wikipedia, on interacting with their previous authors and much more.

## 5. Two Cultures ... Authorships

There are further opportunities in the merging of Wikipedia and art history, as C. P. Snow also emphasises in his consideration of two cultures: »the clashing point of two subjects, two disciplines, two cultures—of two galaxies, so far as that goes—ought to produce creative chances. In the history of mental activity that has been where some of the breakthroughs came. The chances are there now. But they are there, as it were, in a vacuum, because, those in the two cultures can't talk to each other...«<sup>21</sup> With this in mind, it is important to point out the obstacles and challenges that need to be overcome in order to eliminate this ›can't talk to each other‹ and to emphasise the great opportunities that lie in ›talking to each other‹ when Wikipedia and art history come together. Here, after all, where one begins the conversation and the reflection on how academic debates can be organised in an encyclopedic structure,

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21 Snow, C. P. (1961): The two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution. The Rede Lecture 1959, New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 17.

fundamental questions arise for one's own discipline and the possibilities and limits of its communication.

In 2026 it remains a common practice to make generalised complaints about supposedly poor content quality—without being open to looking at where Wikipedia is excellent; without engaging with what can be depicted; without being capable of creatively engaging with these other forms, or without asking what we could contribute ourselves. But Snow very clearly states that the opportunities are there—as a challenge to art history to think about what characterises its discipline, what can be transported and in which ways an encyclopedia could do so.

The academia is an acknowledged meritocratic system—your own authorship is of great importance for your career path. Not only the number of contributions but also the right place of publication, the intellectual home of a series or the citation rate are relevant. In addition, it is generally essential to closely link one's own name with certain positions within the scientific community—for example, the study *Facets of Specialisation and Its Relation to Career Success: An Analysis of U.S. Sociology, 1980 to 2015* demonstrated the benefits of specialisation as a career strategy: the clearer the topical consistency, the faster the rise to professorship.<sup>22</sup> In Wikipedia, this understanding meets a completely different culture in which authorship does not have, or at least does not appear to be, top priority.<sup>23</sup> For example, the list of names and the pie chart for the article on Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*—every article in Wikipedia has such a summary—shows the authors' contributions to the article. It is easy to see that there is no dominant main author, ›Immanuel Giel‹ has the most shares on the article with 10%; the largest percentage, however, is taken up by the many co-writers, most of whom do not contribute more than 2%.<sup>24</sup> It is equally striking (and common) that only a few of the authors appear with their actual names: Many contribute under pseudonyms, many are (probably) not experts in the eyes of the discipline but belong to the group of highly committed citizen scientists who are not recognised

22 Heiberger, Raphael H./Munoz-Najar Galvez, Sebastian/McFarland, Daniel A. (2021): »Facets of Specialization and Its Relation to Career Success. An Analysis of U.S. Sociology, 1980 to 2015«, in: American Sociological Review 86:6, pp. 1164–1192. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1177/00031224211056267> (last access: 10.06.2025), cf. Forschung & Lehre »Welche Publikationen die Karriere befördern« vom 9. Dezember 2021.

23 Stegbauer, Christian (2009): Wikipedia. Das Rätsel der Kooperation, Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, investigates the motivations of the contributors who are willing to cooperate in a project like Wikipedia beyond traditional sociological explanations such as personal benefit / individual advantages, demands or values (religious, communal; conscience collective; altruism, benevolence); in his analysis he examines the relationship between different authors, the structures offered by Wikipedia and the related hierarchies, etc. pp. 207–236.

24 Wikipedia: Autorschaft | Mona Lisa Article, [https://xtools.wmcloud.org/authorship/de.wikipedia.org/Mona\\_Lisa?uselang=de](https://xtools.wmcloud.org/authorship/de.wikipedia.org/Mona_Lisa?uselang=de) (last access: 10.06.2025).

within the scientific system.<sup>25</sup> They have a different set of skills: first of all, they have mastered Wikipedia's writing rules, are ranked higher within the Wikiverse due to a large number of edits, have long been part of a community that for newcomers is difficult to understand at first, and much more.<sup>26</sup> Wikipedia emphasises that it is of no importance who edits the knowledge, as the aim is not to produce hitherto unknown knowledge from new sources but to present established information in a way that is easy to understand, verifiable and accessible to many. The habitus of the scholarly world and the habitus of Wikipedians are known to repeatedly clash here.<sup>27</sup> Another

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- 25 Ciffolilli, Andrea (2003): »Phantom authority, self-selective recruitment and retention of members in virtual communities. The case of Wikipedia«, in: First Monday 8:12. Online: <https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v8i12.1108> (last access: 10.06.2025) identifies the concealment of authorship as a potential problem for Wikipedia in the future: »The reputation of Wikipedians grows with the number of their contributions. By visiting the previous version pages of each article, it is possible to go back to its author or authors. However, the names or the nicknames of the authors, unlike print encyclopedias, do not appear at the bottom of the articles. In my view, this is a pity because the possibility to directly show the names of the authors would represent a powerful incentive and a strong gratification for contributors. The current anonymity may represent, in the long run, a threat to retention of members.«
- 26 Pentzold, Christian (2007): Wikipedia. Diskussionsraum und Informationsspeicher im neuen Netz, München: Reinhard Fischer, pp. 24–32 for user classification and (3.3.) the power structure, p. 31: »Nutzer begegnen sich ›auf Augenhöhe‹ in einer relativ strukturarmen Kommunikationssituation. Zur Beschreibung dieser völligen Gleichordnung der Autoren schlägt [Schmalz] das Konzept der Heterarchie vor. Merkmal heterarchischer Organisation im Vergleich zu hierarchischer ist die dynamische, kompetenzabhängige, sich aus dem Arbeitsprozess heraus entwickelnde Rollenausprägung, welche gleichwohl nicht mit der oben beschriebenen Abstufung der Nutzungsrechte (Admin, Steward etc.) zusammenfällt, sondern sich im Editierhandeln mehr oder minder spontan ausbildet.« (Users meet at ›eye level‹ in a rather unstructured communication situation. To describe this absolute equality of the authors [Schmalz] suggests the concept of heterarchy. The typical feature of heterarchic compared to hierarchical organisation is the dynamic characteristic of the role, which develops from the work process but is not the same as the above-described levelling of usage rights (admin, steward etc.) but develops more or less spontaneously in the course of editing.)
- 27 G. Albert (2021) considers whether this is perhaps the main reason why academics do not contribute to Wikipedia: »Mein Verdacht ist eher, dass die größte Zumutung der Wikipedia für etablierte Forscher:innen in der kompletten Aushebelung akademischer Hierarchien liegt, die durch die meritokratischen Hierarchien der Wikipedia-Community ersetzt werden: So wird in einer Artikeldiskussion die Stimme einer pensionierten Postbeamtin, die über Jahre hinweg Tausende *Edits* vorgelegt hat, höchstwahrscheinlich mehr Gewicht haben als die eines Universitätsprofessors, der sich erstmals traut, einen Artikel zu seinem Forschungsfeld zu korrigieren, und sich, aus Angst vor einem vorgeblichen Reputationsverlust, womöglich nicht einmal als solcher zu erkennen gibt.« (My suspicion is rather that the greatest imposition of Wikipedia on established researchers lies in the complete undermining of academic hierarchies, which are replaced by the meritocratic hierarchies of the Wikipedia community: For example, in an article discussion, the voice of a retired postal worker who has submitted thousands of edits over the years will most likely carry more weight than that of a university

problem, however, seems almost more important to me and does not emerge clearly in the dualism of ›expert knowledge‹ vs. collaborative and invisible authorship.<sup>28</sup> After all, in the current academic discourse we hear repeated calls for authors to clearly position themselves. Not only since Donna Haraway's influential essay on *situated knowledge* has the concealment of the speaker's position been exposed as a gesture and a strategy used to marginalise ›other‹ positions and to devalue them as unscientific, supposedly being linked to an agenda.<sup>29</sup> The traditional—male, western, humanistic, enlightened—position appears as being disembodied, decoupled from a speaker perspective—Haraway calls it the *God Trick*—that cannot be located either spatially or temporally and thereby proclaims eternally valid truth. Her concept has been taken up and transformed time and again since then, be it in the motifs of the »home-works« called for by Gayatri Spivak in 1990, which commission speakers to develop a »historical critique of your position as the investigating person«,<sup>30</sup> or the loci of enunciation designed by Walter Mignolo, which encompass both the speakers as well as their own scientific traditions and places of speech.<sup>31</sup> They as well as many other theorists are vehemently calling for the disclosure of one's own point of view, as the idea of objective science seems to be less and less sustainable: Who gets to decide what knowledge is considered relevant?<sup>32</sup> Who has to disclose which

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professor who is daring to correct an article in their field of research for the first time. And who for fear of a supposed loss of reputation, may not even identify themselves as such.) But at the same time he suggests a possible way out: »Doch gerade für Akademiker:innen gibt es die Möglichkeit, ihr symbolisches Kapital aus der Wissenschaft in die Wikipedia-Community zu transferieren: Durch offenes Auftreten als Expert:innen.« (But academics in particular have the opportunity to transfer their symbolic capital from academia to the Wikipedia community by openly presenting themselves as experts.) Albert: Eine vertane Chance?. See also Adams, Julia/Brückner, Hannah/Naslund, Cambria (2019): »Who Counts as a Notable Sociologist on Wikipedia? Gender, Race, and the *Professor Test*«, in: *Socius. Sociological Research for a Dynamic World* 5, pp. 1–14.

- 28 Wolf, Anneke (2006): »Wikipedia. Kollaboratives Arbeiten im Internet«, in: Thomas Hengartner/Johannes Moder (eds.): *Grenzen und Differenzen. Zur Macht sozialer und kultureller Grenzziehungen*. Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, pp. 639–650.
- 29 Haraway, Donna (1988): »Situated Knowledges. The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective«, in: *Feminist Studies* 14:3, pp. 575–599.
- 30 Spivak, Gayatri (1990): *The Postcolonial Critic. Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*, Routledge: London, p. 62.
- 31 Mignolo, Walter D. (1994): »Editor's Introduction«, in: *Poetics Today* 15:4 (Loci of Enunciation and Imaginary Construction. The Case of (Latin) America, I), pp. 505–521.
- 32 Prodöhl, Ines (2011): *Die Politik des Wissens. Allgemeine deutsche Enzyklopädien zwischen 1928 und 1956*, Berlin: Akademie/De Gruyter—emphasizes on p. 1 as *pars pro toto* for the research on hidden narratives in seemingly objective sites of knowledge, such as archives, encyclopedias, etc., the role of dictionaries as »Verhandlungsort dessen, was eine Gemeinschaft für wissenswert hält« (place of negotiating that what a community considers worth knowing)—with the resulting criteria for exclusion and the actively generated and perpetuated gaps,

fields of knowledge have not been considered at all—for a variety of reasons which certainly include the positions of speakers and the institutions, politics of citation, money, visibility etc. associated with them?<sup>33</sup> This demand for the disclosure of one's own origins, scientific traditions and the prejudices inherent in the field itself, which is becoming increasingly important to me as a scientist and which always includes reflection on value judgements and canons, is difficult to map in the structure provided by Wikipedia.<sup>34</sup>

## 6. Linking as an opportunity

One further point concerns the question of structures and networks regarding the absence of women in Wikipedia.<sup>35</sup>

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and she defines p. 23: »Allgemeine Enzyklopädien sind das Medium einer national geprägten Zivilgesellschaft, die sich beeilt, ihre Begriffswelt und ihr Selbstverständnis anderen Nationen als »Allgemeinwissen« anzubieten.« (Common encyclopedias are the medium of a national civic society which hastens offering its own world of concepts and its own self-understanding to other nations as »common knowledge.«)

- 33 Grashöfer, Katja (2020): »Wikipedia. Virtuelle Autorschaftskonzepte, virtuelle Enzyklopädie«, in: Dawid Kasprowicz/Stefan Rieger (eds.): *Handbuch Virtualität*, Wiesbaden: Springer, pp. 533–555, is investigating the use of bots that are involved in the community as a separate user group.
- 34 A small insight into the mindset of the authors in Wikipedia is possible via the respective author pages, which can provide information about the fields of interest of the (after all anonymous) authors: For more information on how this data can be used, see Haber, Peter (2012): »Wikipedia. Ein Web 2.0-Projekt, das eine Enzyklopädie sein möchte«, in: *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 63:5/6: Schwerpunkt Wikipedia, pp. 261–270, p. 264. In 2014 a project was launched to analyse the progress of discussions: <https://contropedia.net> (last access: 10.06.2025).
- 35 Ebersbach, Anja (2013): »Wikipedia. Lexikon sucht Frau«, in: Kampmann, Birgit et al (eds.): *Die Frauen und das Netz. Angebote und Nutzung aus Genderperspektive*, Wiesbaden: Springer Gabler, pp. 159–171, lists the well-known reasons why the number of female authors is so small, among them the rough, misogynistic tone, the lack of time, which often excludes women who are additionally burdened with care tasks from voluntary (also political) commitment, but also a lack of self-confidence; Paling, Emma (2014): »Wikipedia's Hostility to Women«, in: *The Atlantic*. Online: <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2015/10/how-wikipedia-is-hostile-to-women/411619/> (last access: 10.06.2025); Ford, Heather/Wajcman, Judy (2016): »Anyone Can Edit, Not Everyone Does. Wikipedia's Infrastructure and the Gender Gap«, in: *Social Studies of Science* 47, pp. 511–527; Fister, Barbara (2016): »The Woes of Wikipedia. There's a lot to like about Wikipedia, but it's becoming a hostile place for many editors«, in: *Inside Higher Ed*. Online: <https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/library-babel-fish/woes-wikipedia> (last access: 10.06.2025); Steinert, Hanna (2023): »Feministische Kritik an und in der Wikipedia«, in: *kritische berichte* 51:1, pp. 58–65. Online: <https://doi.org/10.11588/kb.2023.1.92830> (last access: 10.06.2025); Schwarzl, Anna (2024):

The problem is a well-known one: the majority of Wikipedia's authors are male, they continue to refuse to use gender-appropriate language,<sup>36</sup> and many articles on female researchers, writers, politicians, artists, composers, etc. are missing from the encyclopedia which ›actually‹ aims to bring together the world's knowledge, after all.<sup>37</sup>

As part of the working group on women in art history, I contribute to making more women visible with their specific involvement in and contribution to art studies.<sup>38</sup> Certainly the necessity needs no justification anymore, but the question of ›how‹ is still a major concern, and not just for us.<sup>39</sup> This cannot, however, be solely a process of reconstructing lost biographies or reflecting on where women were structurally and systemically excluded from institutions and centres of influence.<sup>40</sup> Such

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Macht und Geschlecht in der Wissensproduktion von Wikipedia. Eine qualitative Untersuchung der Herausforderungen von Wikipedianerinnen\* beim Einbringen von Wissen in einer offenen Organisation, <https://unipub.uni-graz.at/obvugrhs/content/titleinfo/10599102/full.pdf> (Masterarbeit Graz) (last access: 10.06.2025).

- 36 Wikipedia: Generisches Maskulinum, [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Generisches\\_Maskulinum](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Generisches_Maskulinum) (last access: 10.06.2025) und Wikipedia: WikiProjekt Frauen/Geschlechtergerechte Sprache, [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProjekt\\_Frauen/Geschlechtergerechte\\_Sprache](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProjekt_Frauen/Geschlechtergerechte_Sprache) (last access: 10.06.2025).
- 37 Menking, Amanda/Rosenberg, Jon (2021): »WP:NOT, WP:NPOV, and Other Stories Wikipedia Tells Us. A Feminist Critique of Wikipedia's Epistemology«, in: Science, Technology, & Human Values 46, pp. 455–479; <https://suegardner.org/2011/02/19/nine-reasons-why-women-dont-edit-wikipedia-in-their-own-words/> (last access: 10.06.2025).
- 38 Ulmer Verein. Verband für Kunst- und Kulturwissenschaften e.V.; [http://www.ulmer-verein.de/?page\\_id=14618](http://www.ulmer-verein.de/?page_id=14618) (last access: 27.11.2025), see also Chichester, K. Lee/Sölch, Brigitte (eds.) (2021): Kunsthistorikerinnen 1910 – 1980. Theorien, Methoden, Kritiken, Berlin: Reimer; Chichester et al. (eds.) (2025): Kunsthistorikerinnen im 20. Jahrhundert. Institutionen, Strukturen, Handlungsräume, Berlin: Reimer.
- 39 Richter: Die Wikipedia-Story., p. 201: *Wikipedia in Gefahr – und nur Autorinnen können sie retten*, p. 204 based on a study by the Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences in Mannheim and ETH Zurich (2015): »In Artikeln über Frauen sind Beziehungsstatus oder Familie häufiger Thema, als dies bei Artikeln über Männer der Fall ist. Hier zeigt sich, dass die Männer, die Wikipedia bisher überwiegend schreiben, bewusst oder unbewusst Frauen anders darstellen als ihre Geschlechtsgegnossen. Offensichtlich erscheint ihnen bei Frauen wichtig, mit wem sie verheiratet sind und ob sie Kinder haben.« (Contributions on women discuss relationship status or family more often than those on males. Here it becomes obvious that those males who as yet write mostly in Wikipedia consciously or unconsciously depict women in different ways than their male counterparts. Obviously, in the case of women they believe it to be important to whom they are married or if they have children.)
- 40 Bösl, Elsbeth (2024): »Quellen. Fragmentiert, lückenhaft oder ganz ohne Frauen«, in: AktArchä. Online: <https://doi.org/10.58079/12zmo> (last access: 10.06.2025) illustrates for the discipline of archaeology how difficult the reconstruction of forgotten women is in itself; for sociology cf. Holzhauser, Nicole (2023): »Die unsichtbare Hälfte. Frauen in der Geschichte«, in: Soziopolis. Gesellschaft beobachten. Online: <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168->

an approach does not change the ways in which we think about the histories of art as a discipline; the reconstruction of female positions, as we all know, no longer requires simply emphasising that women ›also‹ participated in a discipline but rather that they pursued art historical studies ›despite‹ their systematic structural exclusion. Furthermore, it is important not to stop at this point but to examine what other paths female scholars took in art history, whether and how their marginalised position affected their choice of fields and theoretical formation, and how it is possible today to ensure sustainable and structurally impactful recognition and participation from this ›despite‹.

It is well known that there are many initiatives that fight the gender bias in Wikipedia, one project with great prominence is *Women in Red*, »a project that focuses on creating content regarding women's biographies, women's works, and women's issues.«<sup>41</sup> *Women in Red* is just one example out of many initiatives that try to make female positions and protagonists more visible—but I chose it for a specific reason: as the title refers to a feature of Wikipedia, a structure that works not only with isolated stand-alone articles but also with references and networking through linking. A link, as we all know, is indicated by a word highlighted in blue and informs me as a reader that I can click on this word to be directed to the next article. A black word is not linked, but a red word indicates that an article would be desirable here: after all, it is already set up as a link. And for women, it is great to already appear as a link, because this indicates that the missing part has been recognised and that an article exists in which the name of a woman or a female position should be inserted because of its absence. It cannot, however, be our goal to augment the existing canon of male theorists with some hitherto deliberately forgotten female researchers. It cannot be about perpetuating the established—and inherently misogynistic—narratives of mastery, virtuosity and genius, after all;<sup>42</sup> but rather in the spirit of Umberto Eco's characterisation of an encyclopedia that has »neither a centre nor a margin«:<sup>43</sup> to start telling other stories, to build other

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ssoar-87470-0 (last access: 10.06.2025); Siân, Evans/Mabey, Jacqueline/Mandiberg, Michael (2015): »Editing for Equality. The Outcomes of the Art + Feminism Wikipedia Edit-a-thons«, in: Art Documentation. Journal of the Art Libraries Society of North America 34:2, pp. 194–203.

41 Wikipedia: Women in Red, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women\\_in\\_Red](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_Red) (last access: 01.12.2025).

42 Pollock, Griselda (1988): »Feminist Interventions in Art's Histories«, in: kritische berichte, 16:1, pp. 5–14, p. 12: »No doubt theories of the social production of art combined with the structuralist assassination of the author would also lead to a denunciation of the archaic individualism at the heart of art historical discourse. But it is only feminists who have nothing to lose with the desecration of Genius.«

43 Eco, Umberto (1989): Im Labyrinth der Vernunft. Texte über Kunst und Zeichen, Leipzig: Reclam, p. 106. In his chapter *Die Enzyklopädie als Labyrinth*, pp. 104–111, Eco categorises the image of the labyrinth according to three types: the linear one, in which one must reach the centre (Theseus and Minotaur); the maze, with choices between alternative paths that

networks, with other centres, and if one almost wants to get a little utopian, with not so many *margins*.<sup>44</sup>

## 7. and last but not least: the state of research

My final example stems once again from the field of medieval art history and focuses on the importance of outlining the research history. The living handbook comments on this under the caption ›The fiction of the factual‹: »In vielen Artikeln zu Kunstobjekten in der Wikipedia fehlt der Forschungsstand—vermeintlich gehört ›so etwas‹ nicht in einen populärwissenschaftlichen Artikel, der kurz, übersichtlich und verständlich die wichtigsten Fakten zu einem Werk vermitteln soll. Aber ist der Forschungsstand tatsächlich etwas, das nur die Fachwissenschaft interessiert? Und was genau ist mit ›Fakt‹ in der Kunstgeschichte gemeint? Was ist fundierte Forschungsmeinung, was steile These, worauf basiert gesichertes Wissen?« (Many contributions on art objects in Wikipedia do not refer to the state of research—allegedly ›something like this‹ has no place in popular-scientific contributions which are supposed to tell the most important facts on a work briefly, clearly, and in an understandable manner. But is the state of research really something only the discipline is interested in? And what exactly is meant by ›fact‹ in the history of art? What is established research, what is a bold thesis, on what is safe knowledge based?)<sup>45</sup> The article on the famous Cappenberg Head illustrates the extent to which the state of research can evolve (and what further implications may arise as a result): the version dated 25 December 2013 identifies the head as a *portrait bust of Emperor Freder-*

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in parts lead nowhere; the network or rhizome as an entanglement, with the typical feature that every point can be connected to every other point, »und wo die Verbindungen noch nicht entworfen sind, können sie trotzdem vorgestellt und entworfen werden« (and where the links have not yet been drafted, nevertheless they can be presented and drafted).

44 Of course, what has been said above does not only apply to the expertise and achievements of women but must also be claimed for other marginalised groups—not only in Wikipedia but in all encyclopedias, cf. Velden, Maja van der (2011): »When knowledge meet. Wikipedia and other Stories from the Contact Zone«, in: Geert Loving/Nathaniel Tkacz (eds.): *Critical Point of View. A Wikipedia Reader*, Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, pp. 236–255. Online: [https://www.networkcultures.org/\\_uploads/%237reader\\_Wikipedia.pdf](https://www.networkcultures.org/_uploads/%237reader_Wikipedia.pdf) (last access: 18.02.2026) and Ford, Heather (2011): *The Missing Wikipedians*, in: Loving/Tkacz (eds.): *Critical Point of View*, pp. 258–268.

45 Wikipedia: Arbeitsgemeinschaft Kunstwissenschaften + Wikipedia/Living handbook, [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Arbeitsgemeinschaft\\_Kunstwissenschaften\\_%2B\\_Wikipedia/Living\\_handbook#Rezeptionsgeschichte,\\_Forschung,\\_Deutung](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Arbeitsgemeinschaft_Kunstwissenschaften_%2B_Wikipedia/Living_handbook#Rezeptionsgeschichte,_Forschung,_Deutung) (last access: 10.06.2025).

ick I Barbarossa,<sup>46</sup> while the version dated 21 May 2025 speaks of a »head reliquary dedicated to St John the Evangelist«<sup>47</sup> Here, the version history function offered by Wikipedia, which is logged and stored with a lot of other information in the background, once again proves to be helpful: the readers can access the older version at any time and thus recognise the writing process, the additions to and the changes of the state of knowledge. Changing insights, new findings replacing old certainties do not come as a surprise but are an integral part of research. However, what does not become visible in this example is an important aspect of my own understanding of the discipline: as a medievalist, I am not only concerned with the current state of knowledge. I am also always interested in the archaeology of this knowledge, including the question of why certain objects were researched; who the protagonists were, who took care of the conservation of these objects; what the history of the institutions was where the objects were exhibited and kept on display, why specific fields of research became relevant (and worthy of funding) at which times and in which places. After all, these economies of attention tell a lot about the values and self-conception of societies; just as the changes of supposed knowledge always reflect, as a whole or partly, the changes of these societies. These very general statements can be specified with regard to the Cappenberg Head: It is no coincidence that the so-called baptismal bowl of Frederick Barbarossa associated with the head, today in the Kunstgewerbemuseum (Museum of Decorative Arts) in Berlin, emerges in the circle around Freiherr vom Stein, the initiator of the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (MGH), an organisation founded in 1819 to restore the memory of the perished Empire of the medieval Emperors as the collective history of all Germans after the defeat of Napoleon and the Congress of Vienna, and commissioned to collect and publish documentary sources from the period from 500 to the year 1500.<sup>48</sup> The Cappenberg Head, discovered in 1882 and in 1886 identified as a portrait of the Emperor, is closely linked to the social imperatives in the context of nation building and the creation of a distinct historical depth of German Imperial heritage after the unification of 1871. This may explain why the Cappenberg Head has repeatedly attracted a great deal of attention, much more than other 12th century head reliquaries, which have been researched considerably less – a fact that is also reflected by the articles

46 Wikipedia: Cappenberg Kopf, [https://de.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Cappenberger\\_Kopf&oldid=125771871](https://de.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Cappenberger_Kopf&oldid=125771871) (last access: 10.06.2025).

47 Wikipedia: Cappenberg Kopf (ältere Version), [https://de.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Cappenberger\\_Kopf&oldid=256183601](https://de.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Cappenberger_Kopf&oldid=256183601) (last access: 10.06.2025).

48 Müller-Mertens, Eckhard (1982): »Die Begründung der *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* durch den Freiherrn vom Stein. Bemerkungen zu den politisch-konzeptionellen Positionen«, in: Sitzungsberichte der Akademie der Wissenschaften der DDR. Gesellschaftswissenschaften no. 1/G, pp. 138–150; Berger, Stefan (2008): »Narrating the Nation. Die Macht der Vergangenheit«, in: Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte, issue 1/2 (Europäische Nationalgeschichten), pp. 7–13.

in Wikipedia. This contextual knowledge surrounding the Head can hardly be depicted in the Wikipedia article format, and yet it should also be communicated to the so-called ›interested public‹. It addresses effective social hierarchisations that still determine our canon today; it is part of the origins and institutional formation of art history which were established in the 19th century and whose methods and subject areas still partly transport the legacy of this period, hierarchisations that will always have an impact on what we can describe as art historical knowledge—although the question of non-knowledge often seems much more relevant to me: which objects were scarcely addressed and for what reasons? Out of interest, I checked which of the other popular reliquary heads have their very own article in the German Wikipedia—and the result meets my expectations and reflects the extent to which the historical assessments of our disciplines are perpetuated in the virtual space: Only the Cappenberg Head was given a longer article. There are merely traces of the other known works; only the head reliquary of St Vitalis or Candidus<sup>49</sup> from the treasury of St Lambert's Church in Düsseldorf and the bust reliquary of St Paul<sup>50</sup> from the Cathedral Chamber of St Paul's Cathedral in Münster (without illustration) are mentioned in very brief articles—which is doubtless also due to the fact that they did not attract the same scientific attention as the alleged Emperor's head from Cappenberg.<sup>51</sup>

49 Wikipedia: Reliquienbüste St. Lambertus, [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reliquienbüste\\_\(St.\\_Lambertus\)](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reliquienbüste_(St._Lambertus)) (last access: 18.06.2025).

50 Wikipedia: Pauluskopf, <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pauluskopf> (last access: 18.06.2025).

51 Random searches for other works revealed that the head reliquary of St Eustachius has an article in Wikipedia English [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reliquary\\_of\\_Saint\\_Eustace](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reliquary_of_Saint_Eustace); the reliquary bust of St Baudimus is mentioned in the article on the Church of St Nectaire [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/St-Nectaire\\_\(Saint-Nectaire\)](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/St-Nectaire_(Saint-Nectaire)); the image file of the Alexander reliquary ([https://de.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:Pope\\_Alexander\\_head\\_reliquary,\\_from\\_Abbey\\_Saint-Remacle\\_de\\_Stavelot,\\_Mosan\\_workshop\\_c.\\_1145\\_AD,\\_silver\\_partially\\_gilt,\\_brass\\_enamel\\_precious\\_stones\\_-\\_Cinquantenaire\\_Museum\\_-\\_Brussels,\\_Belgium\\_-\\_D\\_SCo8823.jpg#filelinks](https://de.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:Pope_Alexander_head_reliquary,_from_Abbey_Saint-Remacle_de_Stavelot,_Mosan_workshop_c._1145_AD,_silver_partially_gilt,_brass_enamel_precious_stones_-_Cinquantenaire_Museum_-_Brussels,_Belgium_-_D_SCo8823.jpg#filelinks)) is referenced on the page ›History of Art‹ as well as on the English-language page of the presumed maker [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Codefroid\\_de\\_Claire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Codefroid_de_Claire); an entry for the head reliquary from Fischbeck seems to be completely missing, and the bust reliquary of St Candidus has been included into the article on Saint Maurice Abbey [https://de.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abtei\\_Saint-Maurice](https://de.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abtei_Saint-Maurice) (last access: 18.06.2025)

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